

WBF 2nd Annual Convention Press Release (July 23, 2006)

The World Brahman Federation (WBF) held its second Annual Convention on July 7, 8 and 9, 2006 at the Crowne Plaza, Monroe Township, New Jersey. The theme of the convention was “Sanatan Dharma of the new millennium.” Prof. Ramanath Sharma, author of six volumes on Sanskrit grammarian Panini, said that this convention should be remembered for a long time for highlighting the excellence of Brahmanical knowledge at one place and at one time. The family-oriented, fun-filled three-day long extravaganza attracted about 200 Brahmans of all ages, coming from far away places such as Hawaii, California, Texas, Canada and India. A stand-out exhibition on Kashmir and the plight of Kashmiri Hindus was on display, called “A Glimpse of a Tragedy without an End” designed by award-winning journalist and author Francois Gutier.

Mr. Ashok Trivedi, Chairman of iGate Global Solutions, delivered the keynote address. He explained how with sheer hard work and good forward thinking, his company translated a concept into a global enterprise. He stated that it is a long way from a good concept to a successful company, and asked aspiring entrepreneurs to treat time as money and be frugal with both.

Prominent scholars touched on a variety of themes relating to Brahmanism. In the inaugural address, Dr. Srinivas Yegnasubramanian, Chairman of the Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation, USA, and the Sanatan Dharma Foundation, USA, declared that if Vedic Brahman priests were to perish, so would dharma itself, the root of Indian civilization. In the Inspirational Keynote address, Dr. M G Prasad of Stevens Institute of Technology said that Vedic Dharma was not only ‘Sanatana’ (meaning eternal) but also ‘Pracheena’ (meaning ancient), as well as contemporary, all at the same time. Prof. Ramanath Sharma of University of Hawaii stated that Brahmana Dharma is not a religion but a value system. Dr. B. N. Hebbar, Prof. of Religion, George Washington University, discussed the developmental history of philosophical schools, including Buddhism and Jainism. Dr. K Ramkrishna, former president of North American Sankethi Association (NASA), presented Vedant in a very systematic way. Mr. Umesh Jois, founder of the Omkar Foundation, spoke about the Hindu religious services program that his foundation offers to students in colleges.

Community members contributed to a robust debate on the relevance of birth to Brahmanism. Saroja Hanasoge, a Ph.D. student at Columbia University, ruffled the feathers of the stalwarts of Brahmanism this year again by saying that those who are on path towards realization of Brahman should be Brahmana without regards to birth. Jaldhar Vyas, a British born, 35 year old, IT professional, and a practicing priest, defended the classic definition of Brahmanism and Brahmanatva. Dr. Ravi Chandrasekhara, a physician practicing Internal Medicine in Dallas, Texas, suggested that we should honor those who have noble characters but are not Brahmana by birth.

Dialogue at the convention focused on the situation of Kashmiri Pundits. Dr. Rabinder Koul, a representative from the Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), spoke of the

history of Kashmiri Pundits, and the atrocities that are being committed on a daily basis by the terrorists. Mr. Aswath Hanasoge talked about the threats that the Brahman community was facing both here as well as India. Sailesh Mishra, a 27 year old IT professional, proposed for a day to be declared 'Brahman Day'. He faulted successive governments of India for the miserable conditions of Brahmans whom he called "Dalits of India today".

The convention also brought together a diverse menu of educational sessions. Dr. Jayram, a medical practitioner in the US Army, made a presentation on diabetes, a disease that is quite prevalent among middle-aged Indian men and women. He was joined by Dr. Ravi Chandrasekhara. Ms. Ranjana Pathak, vice president, Endo Pharmaceutical (where she has won the Industry Rising Star award), spoke of the attributes necessary for success in corporate America. A hilarious session on learning conversational Sanskrit was held by Shekher Shastri.

Mrinal Shukla, a 20 year old student at Emory, described the feeling of the youth group members, where "This convention is a scholarly gathering in which a youth can get lost in the abstract ideas. However, each individual at this convention appealed to my generation because we shall carry our faith and tradition into the future." Ajay Malaviya, a 22 year old RPI graduate, felt that the convention lived up to the part of the WBF mission which was to educate the next generation about our values, and asked for more work shops in future conventions. There was also a well-attended poster session held for younger children on the topic "My trip to India."

With 40% participation rate for families with origins in South India, Nirmal Choubey, the president of WBF, declared that the linguistic divide was a thing of the past. He further said that the Brahmans of the world were united against atrocities committed against Kashmiri pundits. He also called for all Indians to work with the Brahman community to secure a merit-based India. Dr. Azad Kaushik, the president of WBF Canada, professor at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, stated that Brahmans must take up again intellectual, spiritual, cultural, economic, and socio-political leadership in India, and across the globe.

WBF held its first Kavi Sammelan that was organized by Anoop Bhargava, a great Kavi himself. The star of the evening was Abhinav Shukla who came from Seattle, Washington. Dr. Vinod Tewary of Boulder, Colorado and Surendra Tiwari of New Jersey also entertained the audience. This year again, Dr. Anita Dubey organized a great cultural program that included two vibrant Bharatnatyam dances by Gayathri Suswaram, a student at Rutgers, a dance by Ranjana Pathak, and bhajan by Asha Janardhan, a prominent teacher in Karnatic music, and several others.

On the occasion of the convention, a 96 page souvenir magazine, *Brahmodaya*, and a 16 page pre-convention issue newsletter, *Eko'hum*, were also published.

World Brahman Federation was established in year 2000 as an umbrella group, and is registered in the state of New York as a Not-For-Profit organization. Apart from annual conventions in North America it also holds international conventions worldwide. The President urged everyone to attend the WBF-sponsored World Brahman Convention 2007, being held in Mauritius, on December 20 & 21, 2007. WBF has units in Canada, India, Nepal and Mauritius.

For additional questions please contact Mr. Nirmal Choubey, President (609-792-5927), or Mr. Sanjay Tripathi, Press Secretary (732-979-3022). The website address is www.brahmanworld.org.