

Brahmodaya



Convention 2K4

Brahmans

Traversing the sea of ignorance since the dawn of time

Messages of Goodwill

**Welcome and thanks
to everyone
attending the
WBF New Jersey convention.
With best wishes
Manoranjan Mishra & family
Chicago**

**Best wishes
to WBF
for a very fruitful and successful
Convention**

**With compliments
from
Ghanshyam and Leela Pandey**

WBF Regional Convention (NJ) 2K4

World Brahman Federation

welcomes

Purnima Jha

The Kathak Exponent

and

Upendra Chivukula

The Keynote Speaker

**at the Regional North American
Convention, New Jersey (USA)**

August 2K4

From Your President

FOREWORD

August 4, 2004

My Fellow Brahmans:

In four years since the founding of World Brahman Federation (WBF), we have come a long way. We held the first World Brahman Convention in India in December 2003. Brahmans from all walks of life and five continents attended the convention. Some were leaders in the Central and State governments in India. This was indeed an historic event.

The WBF executive committee was so impressed with the success of the first world Brahman convention that it decided to hold the next world Brahman convention in London, UK, in year 2005. We are very thankful to Brahman Samaj of UK for hosting the event. Let us work together to make the North American delegation the largest.

On May 2nd this year, we announced holding the North American regional convention, in Edison, New Jersey. Many have worked tirelessly since then to make this convention a grand success. As you will see, a lot has been achieved in a very short time. We have been welcomed with open arms by Brahman communities throughout North America, irrespective of their linguistic origin. You will have a chance to meet them at this convention. The bond that you forge with them will help us cement the relationship in weeks and months to come.

The idea of publishing the Brahmodaya is no more than 6 weeks old. Since then, we have managed to gather articles from some very highly respected authors. At the same time, we have managed to excite some very young members of our community to write. Publishing a souvenir magazine of such a high standard within such a compressed time frame, was not an easy task. This achievement is a great tribute to the Editor-In-Chief, Prof. Ramanath Sharma, Managing Editor, Mr. Anoop Bhargava, and Editors, Dr. Anita Dubey & Ms. Richa Mishra, and Dr. Vinod Tewary.

I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Upendra Chivukula for kindly agreeing to give the keynote address and the great Kathak exponent Ms. Purnima Jha for accepting our invitation to perform at the convention. I thank the executive committee, members of the board of trustees, the group leaders, the members of the convention management committee, the editors of Brahmodaya, Eko'hum and the web site for having accomplished so much in such a short time. I take great pride in being a member of your team.

Sincerely,

Nirmal Choubey, President

From the Chairman of Board of Trustees

I would like to welcome you to the First World Brahman Federation (WBF) regional convention in the U.S.A. This convention is a follow-up of the very successful WBF convention we had in India in December 2003. The WBF which has been conceived and planned for several years is now on the firm footing and is embarking with full vigor and strength to achieve its major objective of uniting the Brahman community throughout the world and to address the issues and concerns facing each of these communities. It will also make efforts to unite and integrate each of the individual Brahman organizations and explore and pursue steps to enhance the Brahman value and Brahman cause. In this respect, the regional WBF convention is an important step in bringing together the various Brahman organizations in the North American region, which is well represented in this convention. This convention also provides a prelude to the 2nd World Brahman Federation Convention to be held in London, UK in August 2005. The success of this regional convention will ensure the success of the WBFC in London.

Best wishes for the very successful convention and I'm sure each one of you will enjoy the fellowship as well as the activities of the convention.

Ghanshyam N. Pandey, Ph.D.

Chairman, Board of Trustees

From the Convention Director

It gives me great pleasure and pride to present this message to my fellow Brahmins throughout the whole world under the auspicious of World Brahmin Federation. It is about time that, we Brahmins all over the world unite and form such umbrella organization that caters our needs and nurture our values and our rich culture.

Brahmins are scattered throughout the world. They all have there in origin from different parts of India. Although they come from different regions and states of country & may speak different languages, they have common culture, common values and rituals. It is like different faces, but one family. Technology and communication advances have brought the people from all around the world together. Internet and computers have revolutionized the way we interact and communicate with each other's. Thus such umbrella organizations have become possible and reality. It is doable, people are doing it, I am sure we can also do it successfully with very candid support from each of you.

United we progress, divided we fall. Brahmins are scattered throughout the world including North America and Europe. They have formed their groups and associations and have been celebrating various festivals and cultural Holidays. Because of time constrains and other factors, there is no united focus beyond these activities. Therefore, it is very important that we have one umbrella organization like World Brahmin Federation.

I urge you all to whole heartedly support this organization, which will take us beyond the current status of regional fragmented activities carried out by each separate organization. If each of our organizations are united together or represented under one umbrella organization with keeping independence of each as it is, it will surpass the strength of our community at large.

Long live Brahmins and our rich heritage culture. God bless our strength and unity.

Hitendra C. Upadhyaya – Founding member of Nandera Brahmin Samaj Trusty Board, Former president and Current member of Trusty board, Brahmin samaj Of USA (BSOU), Vice President, World Brahmin federation

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(Front cover designed by Richa Mishra)

At your service

From your editorial team

We are pleased to present this souvenir issue at your service. The issue commemorates the first Regional North American Convention of the World Brahman Federation (WBF). We all appreciate that WBF has a strong role to play in bringing the international community of Brahmans together. A convention is an important activity of the WBF and we are honored to welcome all the delegates to the convention. This publication is meant to be not just a souvenir to remind us of the wonderful time that is in store for all of us at the convention, but also to reflect the intellectual and spiritual makeup of our great community. A lot of effort has gone into this publication. We sincerely hope that it meets, at least partially, the standards that our readers have come to expect from us.

We were fortunate to get the contributions of excellent authors and also help and assistance from a large number of friends. The credit for whatever merit this publication has, goes to our authors and friends. The faults, which will be many, are entirely ours.

Your Editorial Team

Ramanath Sharma (Editor-in-Chief)
Anoop Bhargava (Managing Editor)
Richa Mishra (Design Editor)
Anita Dubey
Vinod Tewary

New Jersey (USA)
August 2K4

Brahma, Braahmana and BraahmaNatva

By
Rama Nath Sharma

I. BRAHMA

Indian tradition, under the concept of sanaatana-dharma, developed the concept of Brahman as the supreme. The word brahma is derived from verbal root brmh 'to grow, increase' with the introduction of affix manIN. It is perhaps this meaning of the root that underlies the notion of eko' ham bahusyaama 'though one I shall be many'. Brahman as a concept is perhaps the eternal sattaa 'existence'. The sattaa of Brahman is considered eternal, it is located in stability (permanence) and hence called kuuTastha. The word kuuTa can also be used in the sense of falsehood. This does not mean that Brahman is permanently located within falsehood. Since permanence cannot be located within falsehood, and also since falsehood is a sattaa in negation of truth, a different meaning of kuuTa must be understood. Thus, Brahman is eternal because it is a true sattaa, and it cannot be negated. The Brahman of KuuTastha-nityataa view remains eternally fixed, motionless (avicaali), and does not get changed by way of negation, qualification or modification. It is absolute. We recognize Brahman as absolute because it does not travel in space with time.

Space and time are no perspectives in consideration of Brahman as absolute. rahma does not travel in time and space, Brahman is considered zero for reckoning time in

space. Brahman, the absolute, is the source of all processes that move in space. This space is samsaara and Brahman is the source from whence the samsaara springs up:

anaadinidhanam brahma shabdatatvam
yadaksaram /

vivartate' rthabhaavena prakriyaa
jagato yatah //

About the author

Prof. Rama Nath Sharma is a Professor of Sanskrit, at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu. He is an internationally known scholar of Linguistics and particularly famous for his treatise on Panini consisting of a series of volumes.

Bhartrhari (7AD) states that brahma does not have any beginning, it does not have any end, it is the essence of shabda 'word' which does not perish ever. Shabda in the Indian philosophical

tradition is considered the same with the absolute Brahman. Thus shabda is brahma and Veda is its parimaaNa 'manifestation, transformation'. This parimaaNa concept of the Vedic sages is compared with curds (dadhi). What is milk to curds is also shabda-brahman to Veda. This is the reason why Vedas are called apaurusheya 'not man made'. It is this brahma from whence derives the processes of the samsaara. Notice that Bhartrhari defines this samsaara as the vivarta 'manifestation, modification, rolling on'. The fact that Brahman does not move, and does not get modified, makes us believe that the absolute does not get modified. The absolute remains absolute. But vivarta is modification or manifestation, hence the question: how could something go through a modification and / or manifestation, yet that could remain absolute, unmodified, un-

affected by vivarta. To answer: vivarta is a process where by that which is manifested does not differ from what manifests it. Consider suvarna 'gold' which goes through all kinds of processes of modification in making of ornaments. But gold always remains gold. Consider what the Upanishads tell us

**PuurNamadah puurNam idam
PuurNaat puurNam ucadcyate /
PuurNasya puurNam aadaaya
PuurNam evaavashisyate //**

'that is complete (absolute); this is complete; that which is complete remains complete when the same is substracted from that which is complete;

when one takes out the complete from that complete

and brings it to a complete; that which remains back is also complete.

But there is also another view of this eternality. It can be compared with the flow of time in space. It is like the flow of a river. This is what the samsaara is: a flow of water in time and space. But it is not absolute, nor it is absolute truth. That is why we say: brahma satyam jagan mithyaa 'brahma is true samsaara is false'. Samsaara is false because it grows, decays, gets modifies and destroyed. There are rivers which also flow in space with time. Take for example Ganga whose water we call jalam. Why are other waters called water and the ganga's water is called jalam? Because this water is not simply water but it is culture. It is part of the tradition. Ganga is our tradition. This further attests to the view of eternality of a flow in time and space. Let us return to the idea of samsaara.

The samsaara which is brought about by the absolute is his creation. Creatures which are created in this samsaara are called bhuutas 'those which were brought about'.

See what the Taittiriya Upanishad says:

yato vaa imaani bhuutaani jaayante
'that from which these bhuutas come about';

yena jaataani jiiivanti 'that by which brought about they live';

yat prayanty abhisamvihsanti... 'to which they return and enter';

tad brahma 'that is brahma'.

The absolute of the Upanishads is the creator, preserver and destroyer. He is the supreme-self from whence self comes to the bhuutas. This is the supreme-self (Atman) which gave rise to akaasha 'sky, ether'; ether gave rise to vaayu 'wind'; vaayu gave rise to agni 'fire'; agni gave rise to waters; waters brought about the earth; from earth we got plants; from plants we got food; from food we got Man. The views of the Upanishads on creation speak more about the Brahman and moksha than the actual process of creation.

Hymns of the Vedas and also Upanishads state that the absolute creates the universe and then enters into it. The vaisheshika recognize the creation of universe as desire of god to create. They believe in the presence of atoms. When god desires to create the universe he strikes the atoms which produce activity among atoms. A combination of two atoms produces a two-fold combined atom (dvyaNuka); a combination of three produces three (tryaNuka). The Vedas accept a principal spirit (purusha). It is one fire which is kindled at many places, the one Sun which appears over the whole Universe, and one dawn which shines over all. The Rgveda declares that purusha alone is the reality of the universe: both what has been in the past and what it will be in the future. This in turn happens to be the basic principle of creation as explained by the Purusha-suukta, of crea-

tior which creates the universe and then enters into it.. I hear leave out any further details of creation, hiranya-garbha ‘golden egg’ and the primal yajna.

The Vedic absolute Brahman, even though KuuTastha-nitya though existant (asti), was not real insofar as reality was concerned. For, the reality was that there is no universe outside the Brahman. Brahman was (asti) but was formless (naasti). The asti which created the Self, i.e., Brahman, also created the Universe. The Universe was non-Truth and Brahman was Truth. The non-Truth created by Truth emanated from within Truth, yet resided within the Truth. The Upanishad, perhaps looking at the Purusha, transformed the formless (nirguna) Brahman into a reality-based with-form notion of Brahman (god; saguna Brahman). Shankaracharya, in the Vedaanta-sutra I.1.12), says that the Upanishads describe Brahman in two ways: both para ‘higher’ and apara ‘other, lower’. A higher (para) Brahman will be devoid of all upaadhis ‘adjuncts’, i.e., form, name, object of creation, etc. An apara-brahma will have all the upaadhis. He shall be called sopaadhika or saguna ‘with qualities. It is the sopaadhika Brahman who will be creating the universe. The Upanishads describe the para-brahman as that in which there is no diversity or part-whole relationship (neha naanaasti kimchana); that in which there is no activities; that which is without any blemishes, and tranquil. But one must realize that the apara Brahman is all aatman ‘self’. The Prashnopanishat combines both these concepts of para and apara Brahman into one single syllable (ekakshara Brahman): OM.

II. BRAAHMANA

A man, moving backward beginning with earth, through water, fire, wind and ether, ultimately returns to Brahman. This is

why a man must meditate upon Brahman to whom he returns. A realization of this return is moksha where knowledge (jnaana) becomes the means of realizing Brahman. It is this realization which is called brahma-jnaana. Geeta defines moksha as release from demerits (paapas):

**sarvadharmaan parityajya
maam ekam sharanam vraja /
aham tvaam sarvapaapebhyo
mokshayishyaami maa shuca //**

Since a man lives in the samsaara, and also since a man cannot realize the Brahman without realizing the full knowledge of the samsaara, knowledge about samsaara becomes an important condition for realizing the knowledge of the Brahman. This knowledge about samsaara can be accomplished by using one’s practical intelligence (vyavasaayaatmika-buddhi) such that he, with dhyana and yoga, further develops his prajnaa and then as a yogi moves into samaadhi. He can opt not to follow this path, and thus follow the path of karma, instead. Karma is called purushartha ‘purpose of a man’s life’. There are four goals of attainment in life: dharma, artha, kaama and moksha. It is very important to note, however, that attainment of moksha is compared with amrtatva ‘immortality’. A person who becomes immortal, in this sense of the term, attains the Brahman. The Upanishads state that this immortality is attainable only when one is able to free himself of all desires located within one’s heart (Kathopanishat: yadaa sarve pramucyante...). Geeta states that when a person is able to abandon all desires and when he finds fulfillment of all his desires within himself he is called stitha-prajna ‘man of steady intellect’. To perform actions diligently by use of viveka and by means of

yoga develop one's intellect to levels of sthita-prajna is the dharma of humans in this samsaara. The way of sthitaprajna is the way of jnaana.

A person can also follow the way of karma with bhakti as his dharma. The word dharma is explained as 'that by means of which someone is saved from falling apart'. Dharma is a glue which keeps us afloat intact, in the ocean of samsaara. Dharma is value system. The most important feature of our value system is Truth. The same truth which is equated with the absolute Brahman. Yoga is described as 'control of wanderings of mind (yogash cittavritti-nirodhah). But yoga is also described in the Geeta as yogah karmasu kaushalam 'yoga is balancing among karmas'. How does one strikes a balance between the karmas. By following the value system and performing actions with application of viveka 'intuitive faculty of mind', and without any attachment. One must be aware that this is samsaara and there are certain standards which one must follow. I shall here quote a verse from the Mahaabhaarata:

kaa ca vaartaa kim aashcaryam kah panthaa kash ca modate /

'what is the matter?; 'what is most astonishing';

'what is the road to follow'? 'who is most happy'?

These were four important questions that the yaksha asked Yudhishthira and said, 'if you could answered these questions correctly, your dead brothers will become alive'. Yodhisthira ansewere them correctly:

1. "this samsaara is a big kettledrum of moha; sun is fire; night and day are firewood; months and seasons

are ladles; Time (kaala) is cooking us by constantly stirring up: this is what is the matter" ;

2. "everyday people are going to the house of yama; those who remain think they are never going to die; what could be more astonishing than this";
3. "a path which great men follow is the right path to follow";
4. "a man who works his fields on an empty stomach through the day, and returns home for a dinner only of leafy vegetables, if he is not in any debt and is not staying away from his family, he is the happiest".

Upanishads teach us to desire to live to be a hundred years. This desire to live to

be a hundred (jiivema sharadah shatam, etc.) is further accompanied with the desire of being able to see, hear, and speak for a hundred years. But this desire to live to be a hundred was

not wished for enjoying the samsaara. It was wished for a very specific purpose. The Upanishads clearly state that one should wish to live to be a hundred only when one could perform action:

**kurvann evehi karmaaNi
jjiivishec chatam samaah //**

Let us now return to Brahmana. A brahmana is defined as 'he who resides in Brahman, or he who pursues Brahman'. That is he whose dharma is to spend his life in pursuit of brahman. What about karma 'action, activity'. Like all human beings, a brahmana is also required to perform actions in life with the use of viveka, and thus seek all of four purusharthas 'goals of life'. The shastras define a brahmana as: brah-

....A brahmana is defined as 'he who resides in Brahman, or he who pursues Brahman...'

manyaam jaatah braahmanah ‘a child born in a braahmanii from a braahmana is called braahmana’. This happens to be the most common-sense definition of a braahmana. A braahmana, because of his conduct, has established himself as a tradition. Let us see how the mahaabhaasya (2nd century AD) of Patanjali defines an ideal (shishta) braahmana’:

...ye braahmanaah kumbhiidhaan-
yaa alolupaah agrhyamaana-
kaaranaah kimcid antarena kasyaash
cid vidyaayaah paaragaah tatra bha-
vantah shishtaah ‘ the brahmanas
who have but one small pitcher-full
grain as their property, who are non-
greedy, and who without any ulter-
rior motive have transcended in
knowledge of at least one branch of
learning, those venerated brahmanas
were standards (of Brahmanism)’

People say it is very difficult to live like a brahmana, especially in this day and age. On the contrary, it is still not difficult to live as a Brahmana. The above definition has two basic points: non-greed and attainment of knowledge. Hinduism is a religion of choice. It has been the religion of choice in the sanaatana-dharma. You choose your action and you enjoy the fruit of your actions. In the yaksa story we find that this samsaara is a kettle-drum of moha (attachment). Krishna says in the Bhagavadgeeta:

yadaa te moha-kalilam buddhir
vyatitarisyati
tadaa gantaasi nirvedam shro-
tavyasya shrutasya ca //

‘when your buddhi is able to tran-
scend the quagmire of moha

(ego, false-pride, arrogance), you
will reach the state of nirveda

‘repentance’ for what you should

have heard (understood) and
what you heard (understood)’

A braahmana lives in the land of bud-
dhi. He develops his viveka and moves
from acquiring vyavasaayaatmikaa buddhi
‘practical intelligence’ to the status of hav-
ing attained the ideational steady intelli-
gence (sthitaa prajnaa). He does not have
any choice whether he should develop
viveka and gradually following the path of
knowledge reaches the stage of steady in-
telligence. A braahmana develops his bud-
dhi into prajnaa and there he is distin-
guished from the others. Of course, sam-
skaaras boot out his system and with his
conduct a braahmana becomes a role model.
He will be able to gradually pull himself to
the level of nirveda by controlling the won-
derings of mind and thus by checking his
sanga ‘attachment’. Here again, Krishna
says;

**sangaat sanjaayate kaamah
kaamaat krodho’ bhijaayate /
krodhaad bhavati sammho-
hah sammohaat smritivibhramah /
smritibhramshaad buddhi-
naasho buddhi-naashaat pra-
nashyati //**

‘desires arise from attachment; an-
ger arises from desires (when not
fulfilled); anger generates confusion
(sammoha); confusion causes mem-
ory-lapses; memory-lapses cause a
person’s intellect to be destroyed; a
destruction of intellect leads to total
destruction’

A braahmana does not have any choice
but to stay non-greedy. Greed is a desire to
obtain what one wishes to obtain; failure to
obtain something desired makes one frus-
trated. It is this frustration which makes one
angry. Anger leads to total destruction via

confusion, memory lapses, destruction of intellect, to total destruction. A brahmana follows the path of buddhi in performing his duties of karma such that he cannot afford to be greedy, frustrated and confused. A brahman must develop his viveka and thus not remain ignorant. The tradition says that:

viveka-brashTaanaam bhavati vini-
paato shatamukham

‘the downfall of those whose viveka
has reached deprivation,
occurs in hundreds of ways’

A braahmana must observe sanmdhya
‘meditating upon Gaayatrii at junctional
times’ . Gaayatrii thus becomes a mantra
par excellance for brahmanas: Gaayatrii,
i.e., tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya
dhiimahi dhiyo yo nah
pracodayaat

‘may that excel-
lent splendor of god
savitr inspire our con-
sciousness’

Gaayatrii is chanted
with the Pranava and
three of the ma-
haavyaahrtis ‘great utter-
ances’ : Om Bhuur Bhu-
vah Svah. Notice that
this hymn can hardly be called a prayer.
For, structure of a prayer includes invoca-
tions by means of which one praises the
form or function of a diety. Prayers also be-
come a means of seeking personal favors of
a particular deity. Gaayatrii simply praises
the splendor of savitr who, as aaditya ‘sun’,
gives and sustains life throughout the cos-
mos. An inspiration received by the con-
sciousness of a devout brahmana, in turn,
becomes the pleasure (prasaada) of Savitr.
All miseries disappear in prasaada ‘pleasure
(of the lord; prasaade sarvadhukhaanam
haanih)’.

A braahmana must lead an austere life.

That is, he must lead a disciplined life:
study till the age 25 diligently focusing on
education and with no indulgence. After 25
comes the real life when karma and pursuits
of pleasure come into play. A braahmana
must now deal with the samsaara. A brah-
mana must have self-respect, only then he
can get respect. This sense of self-respect
should not be confused with ego
(ahamkaara). Ego is the enemy of a braah-
mana. A braahmana must have vinaya
‘humility’. His riches are vidyaa and vi-
naya. A brahmana must also have sarva-
bhuuta-dayaa ‘compassion for all’. It is for
this reason that a braahmana looks at every-
one with the same buddhi.

**....desires arise from attach-
ment; anger arises from desires
(when not fulfilled); anger gener-
ates confusion (sammoha); con-
fusion causes memory-lapses;
memory-lapses cause a person’s
intellect to be destroyed; a de-
struction of intellect leads to to-
tal destruction..**

III. BRAAHMA- NATVA

The word braahma-
natva ‘braahman-ness’
is interpreted in two
ways: a state in which
a braahmana exists.
This can be called a
braahmana’s pursuit of
the supreme self. An-
other meaning of Brah-
manatva is straightfor-

ward brahmananess. Since a brahmana pur-
sues the supreme self, he is also a seeker of
truth. Truth thus becomes the cornerstone of
a braahmana’s dharma. A brahmana must
have respect for and devotion to truth.
Unless he has this respect (shraddhaa) he
cannot bring himself to the difficult task of
translating truth into his action. Following
the path of truth is not easy. For this a
braahmana must persevere. It is this perse-
verance which is called the tapas ‘austerity’
of a braahmana. Perseverance brings cour-
age in him. It is this courage which is re-
quired for speaking the Truth. A brahmana
must have courage. A brahmana’s conduct
must be without any blemishe

(braahmanena na mlecchitavai).

Brahmananess personifies knowledge, character, pride, humility, austerity, and dedication to truth, and welfare of others. In these changed time, and places, one can still pursue the spirit of the brahmana way of life. After all, look at the shishtas of Patanjali who wandered about nearly 2500 years ago. We are in a much better position to live as a brahmana. All we need is our desire to pursue the dharma of truth. Incidentally, wherever in the literature a braahmana is required to take an oath, he is required to take the oath in the name of truth (satyena shaapayed vipram).

Vaataayana 1:

kaa ca vaartaa kim aashcaryam kah panthaa kash ca modate /

‘what is the matter?; ‘what is most astonishing’;

‘what is the road to follow’? ‘who is most happy’?

These were four important questions that Yaksha asked Yudhishtira and said, ‘If you answer these questions correctly, your dead brothers will become alive’. Yodhishtira answered them correctly:

“This samsaara is a big kettledrum of moha; sun is fire; night and day are fire-wood; months and seasons are ladles; Time (kaala) is cooking us by constantly stirring up: this is what is the matter” ;

“Everyday people are going to the house of yama; those who remain think they are never going to die; what could be more astonishing than this’;

“A path which great men follow is the right path to follow”.

“A man who works his fields on an empty stomach through the day, and returns home for a dinner only of leafy vegetables, if he is not in any debt and is not staying

away from his family, he is the happiest”.

Vaataayana 2:

Krishna says in the Bhagavadgeeta:

Yadaa te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitarisyati tadaa gantaasi nirvedam shro-tavyasya shrutasya ca //

‘When your buddhi is able to transcend the quagmire of moha (ego, false-pride, arrogance), you will reach the state of nirveda

‘repentance’ for what you should have heard (understood) and what you heard (understood)’

Here again, Krishna says;

**sangaat sanjaayate kaamah
kaamaat krodho’ bhijaayate /
krodhaad bhavati sammohah
sammohaad smritivibhramah /
smritibhramshaad buddhi-
naasho buddhi-naashaat pra-
nashyati //**

‘Desires arise from attachment; anger arises from desires (when not fulfilled); anger generates confusion (sammoha); confusion causes memory-lapses; memory-lapses cause a person’s intellect.***

A traveller's recollections

Tower of Pisa was leaning sublime,
Music to the ears was Big Ben's
chime,
In a thought momentary,
He found them complementary,
One had the inclination and other the
time.

Turning to the Past for Advice on the Future

By
Richa Mishra

The proverbial image of a quiet sage, eyes closed, in deep meditation, seated beneath a tree—this tableau is the first that comes to mind when one says the word, “Brahman”. In modern times, the Brahmans of ancient India are popularly perceived as calm, quiet savants who did little more than sit, sleep, and meditate. However, though it is true that ancient India boasted numerous Brahmans who were contemplative philosophers, educating the masses from ashrams throughout India, a number of Brahmans shaped their society in a far different (and less recognized) way—through seeking a multi-faceted background.

In ancient India, enlightened Brahmans served as royal and spiritual advisors to kings, masters of Vedic astrology, and proponents of Ayurvedic medicine. Most were Vedic scholars who acted as teachers, educating children and adults alike, in law, grammar, literature, science, and philosophy. For instance, it was a Brahman—Guru Vashisht—who instructed the legendary princes of King Dasarath’s era.

It was he who oversaw their military training, so that the borders of the empire would be safe and strong. He also acted as a political advisor, suggesting royal alliances and determining the need for war. Thus, though Guru Vashisht did not rule outright, no decision on behalf of the

kingdom was made without his consent and advice. Moreover, Guru Dronacharya, another Brahman of ancient times, enlightened his royal students in the tenets of karma, dharma, and the warrior code—all fundamental to the success of his students and to the prosperity of the entire society. Therefore, though the power to rule was outwardly vested with ancient kings, these royals ruled in accordance with directives given

About the author

Richa Mishra was born on April 17, 1987 in Philadelphia. She spent most of her early years in Drexel Hill, before moving to Royersford, Pennsylvania. She enjoyed school from an early age and was notorious for her curiosity and mischievousness.

She first became involved in the Brahmin community when she delivered a speech on the plight of Indians in Fiji. She was thirteen years old at the time. Currently, she attends Springfield High School, where she leads several cultural clubs and delivers speeches on a regular basis. Her hobbies are reading, writing, and debating.

by the Brahmans.

In fact, Brahmans were so respected in ancient Indian society, that a king even suspected of straying from the path of dharma could be overthrown, as Brahmans held enough power to lead the people in a revolt against him. In ancient times, Brahmans boasted a multi-faceted education—they sought a nuanced understanding of all disciplines and all fields of study, not wishing to be confined to one area or another.

In modern times, however, this thirst for an all-encompassing knowledge, has somewhat died out. Today, the sons and daughters of Brahman immigrants (especially in North America) are overwhelmingly encouraged into a few career fields, namely, medicine and engineering. Though these are undoubtedly noble pursuits, Brahmans have been pushed into these domains so extensively, that their participation in other fields has been overlooked. Too many youths are not encouraged to expand creatively, or to think, speak, and act freely. Too many are not persuaded into taking on leadership positions in more diverse fields of interest such as: politics, education, and the arts.

This lofty goal can only be accomplished if the community's youth are allowed to explore diverse opportunities, and become free thinkers.

Brahmans of old times valued a diverse education, and they realized that a varied background could allow them to better humanity. Yet today, the children of Brahman immigrants are virtually nonexistent in less traditional career spheres. If Brahman youths were encouraged to seek leadership positions in the Senate, in a university, or in a journalistic magazine, then perhaps, they could work toward policy changes, and such policy changes might result in the amelioration of society's ills.

For how can the Brahman community expect to better society if it is not willing to branch out of its normal spheres of influence, and try something new?

In many ways, modern Brahmans have

honored their ancient heritage by performing pujas and educating their children in karma and dharma. However, throughout the centuries, the Brahman community has overlooked its most sacred and most ancient ideal—to ensure the betterment of humanity. This lofty goal can only be accomplished if the community's youth are allowed to explore diverse opportunities, and become free thinkers. If a majority of Brahmans attain leadership positions in the areas of politics and education, they can be a potential force for good in domestic and international spheres. Now is the time for the Brahman community to pursue a varied background—a concept espoused by its ancestors of ancient times. Ultimately, this renewed commitment to society's improvement will be the greatest homage to Brahman ideals.

Wrong direction

Everybody is aware of our Indian roads. Especially in rainy season one can enjoy riding his/her vehicle. Even more enjoyable if you are on a 2 wheeler. Mr. X was going to his office in one of those rain days. The roads were full of mud. Eventually his car broke down and he had to walk all the way. He arrived late by 3 hours to his office. His boss shouted at him as bosses always do.

"Is this the time to come?"

In his explanation Mr. X said "My car broke down, sir, and the roads were so slippery that if I put one step forward I used to slip two steps backward." His boss sympathetically looked at him for a change, and said "Then why didn't you returned home?"

Mr. X replied "Exactly sir. That's what I did and ended up here."

Hinduism, a Monotheistic Religion!*

By
C.R. Anand

Here is a logical proof that Hinduism is a Monotheistic rather than polytheistic religion. This article is intended to help readers in this computer age to analyze the problem in their own comfort zone. Now the problem: Why cannot there be more than one {say 2 or 3} Independents if not all? This is a classic problem of distributed systems. For those who are not familiar with distributed systems, the following 2 sentences may be useful.

1. A server serves a client. (For crude eg: You connect to rediff.com. Your computer is the client and a server machine in rediff is the server).

2. There may actually be many servers in rediff, one of which will serve you. All servers in rediff will, however, have the same content among them. So it does not matter to you, which server is serving you. OK, so lets take God to be a server and all of us (Jivas (Living beings), Jadas (objects) and Lakshmi (gods and goddess, saints etc..)) to be clients who want Godhood from Him.

The extremes of such a system are:

1. All of us are God ourselves (as some Hindu System claims). That is to say, there is no client-server idea at all. All of us are inherently servers, with all knowledge. (Only we are not working due to Maya). This is completely peer-to-peer as the jargon goes.

OR

2. There is one God to whom we all put forth our requests and He is capable of running the show with databases of each one of us, and without crashing down even once. Not even coming down for maintenance.

The intermediate optimization in case of man-made servers is distribution of the workload among servers and robustness to avoid single point failure. That is, rediff may have a server for all guys in India, one for all in US.

We need to see if this kind of distribution is possible in case of a Service called Godhood (don't take the term "service" seriously). If we want to distribute rediff servers, the first question is: "How many servers to deploy?". This has to be greater than or equal to 2. Now, how do we decide what is an optimum number of Gods? Lets begin with a modest number of 2, and see if there can be two Gods who are independent and equal in all respects.

Just as a server has some characteristics, God should have certain basic characteristics such as:

1. Omnipotence - should have unlimited power otherwise He cannot be God. (If He has limited powers, then He is no different from me, as I too have limited powers.

2. Omniscient - all knowing, otherwise I can also be God.

3. Omnipresent - present everywhere.

4. Faultless.... and so on ad infinitum. Now, two entities (say servers S1 and S2),

...how do we decide what is an optimum number of Gods? Let's begin with a modest number of 2..

exist as separate entities only if they differ from each other in some characteristics. S1 and S2 should do different work otherwise the very purpose of having S1 and S2, instead of just one server, is defeated. Lets take the characteristic of Omnipotence. If one God has infinite power, there is no requirement for another to share the workload.

In fact if there are two Gods, and assuming that they are amicable, the second one would be redundant. In case of a server, redundancy is required only if the first server fails. But a God is defined to be faultless (Doshahita). So there is no use for a second redundant God. Omniscience, all knowing: two servers need a protocol to update their Databases. That is, if S1 changes its information tank, then S1 should inform S2 about that change, so that S2 can also make that change. Two Gods cannot have this kind of info exchange. In fact they should have knowledge of the change before it happens. That is, they have all data from past, present and future. So if they are working on the same data, there is no use for two of them.

Note that they cannot work inferentially on the same data because of the following reasoning: We refer to God as an ultimate entity to resolve all issues. Now if there are two authorities (Gods) to resolve issues, they should resolve at least one issue differently, in order to be considered as two authorities. If they have no two standpoints on any issue, they are very much the same authority. (Difference is fundamental and foundational). However, if they have differing view points, then there must be an authority above them to resolve their conflict. This is impossible as we consider God to be supreme. By the way, I never heard of two supremes.

We find no difference in two of His

forms. So when we say He is not different in His avatars (Transcendental form), we mean that His knowledge bank and the capacity to use them are not different in those avatars.

In technical terms:

"I" think of His avatars as multiple instances of the same program, sharing the same memory, but without synchronization problems. Further, every instance of this program has complete knowledge of what is happening in every other instance. So Godhood is a unique combination of distributed and centralized systems.

These are the reasoning that "I" (note I in double quotes) use to convince myself about the one-God requirement. As Saint Madhvacharya (www.dvaita.org) says in logic can be used only to convince oneself of core issues and logic is not the final authority to validate knowledge.

(*Source: Internet. Author- C.R.Anand. Submitted with minor modifications by Prasad Bhargava)

From Ramcharit Manas

By Tulsidas

**Vaari mathe ghrīt hoye baru,
siktaa te baru tel.
Bin Hari bhaje na bhav tarahi,
Yahu siddhaanta apel.**

Approx translation:

**May be one can get butter by stirring
water long enough, may be even oil out
of sand, but no one can cross the sea of
the world (bhavsaagar) without devotion
to God. This theorem can not be violated.**

Importance of Brahmanism in Society

By

Dr Thirumala Raya Halemane (rhaleman@optonline.net)

Introduction

In recent years, Brahmins (or Brahmans or Brahmanas as we may prefer to call them, these words being closer to the original – we use all three as equivalent) have been the victims of negative, maligned publicity and unjustified accusations. Perhaps, much of this maligning is actually done by some among the Brahmins themselves, blaming the Brahmanic traditions for all the ills in Hindu society. There is also another section of people who blame the poverty of the Brahmin communities on their clinging to their Brahmanic practices and traditions, and their inability or refusal to become like others. These are poor-thinking, ill-advised, mis-educated, confused and mis-guided (even when otherwise successful in the outside world) people who are causing damage to the entire civilized fabric of the world. This is a very sensitive topic, and there is a lot of confusion and incomplete understanding to be cleared.

Maligning Brahmanism Causes Damage:

Often, it is the desire for what they think is the politically correct and fashionable position, that makes people incorporate anti-Brahman positions in their views, writings and utterings. They may think it is a very harmless road to take, as these critics are rarely opposed or challenged in public. Brahmins do not resort to any strikes or rallies. But the damage done by these maligning critics is huge, because it grows

slowly like a cancer, as more people read it and repeat it, and finally an environment is created which begins to permanently damage continuation of Brahman heritage. Another factor is the migration of Brahmanas in large numbers to cities and abroad in large numbers to seek better living and more gainful occupations, where it may not be easy to practise or to educate their children in Brahmanism. However, emigration abroad from India to the West and other countries is a challenge and as well as an opportunity to show the virtues of Brahmanic qualities and the benefits of satvik guna to these societies outside India.

Transfer of Knowledge: From Generation To Generation

...emigration abroad from India to the West and other countries is a challenge and as well as an opportunity to show the virtues of Brahmanic qualities...

In any society, there have to be mechanisms to transfer knowledge from one generation to the next. And knowledge is of various kinds - trade or professional skills, culture,

spirituality, art, music, heritage, history, philosophy, virtues, values, traditional practices - everything you can think of, and also many things you do not directly think of, but actually learn by living in that society - for example attitudes, behaviors, responsibilities. Of course, not all knowledge can be written in books and transmitted. Actually even knowledge of the hard sciences and engineering are transmitted today in the colleges and companies from one generation to the next directly from person to persons.

The books serve as aides for temporary, even when very long, storage before transmission. So we should not be surprised or look down upon our heritage of oral transmission of the Vedas, mantras and other knowledge over thousands of years, with only some help from written manuscripts. A living knowledge is always orally transmitted from person to person, every day, in the classrooms, in the laboratories, in the companies, in the market place, in the public. The storage media, like books and tapes are learning aides. When people fail to transfer any knowledge orally, that knowledge is in a dying mode. After that, it would be lucky for the next generations if that knowledge was written and preserved in some books, otherwise, it will be lost forever.

In order to learn every nuance and every detail possible of any profession, the student has to associate very closely with the leading practitioners of that profession, it is not enough to just learn in the classroom - Take for example medical practice, it is a 24/7 profession, not just a 9 to 5 phenomenon. The aspiring student has to learn to live the life of a doctor or surgeon as a 24hours a day, 7 days a week profession, that is as his life. The same is true of a soldier's profession, and in general true of every profession, although some professions by nature may be more intensely so than the others. That's why living in a gurukula with the teacher was an opportunity for a better education than if you could just visit the guru during the day. Of course, in the olden days when transport and communications were not as easy as it is today, students had to walk very long distances to reach noted places of learning and stay there for years, until they finished their studies.

All individuals are born equal before

the law and as citizens of the nation (or of the world, for that matter) everybody enjoys the same fundamental rights and have the same fundamental obligations and responsibilities.

Racism, sexism, discrimination, bias and untouchability are not supported by Dharma. Contrary to the arguments many people make, true Brahminism has nothing to do with promoting social bias or untouchability. In fact, the opposite is the case, because Brahminism promotes nonaggressive, compassionate satvik behavior. And, shastrically, crimes and bad behavior by Brahmans are expected to be punished more severely compared to a non-Brahmana with the same crime.

Social structure has many levels, in every society, and people belong to groups of different kinds and different breadth and vastness. There are groups and subgroups, subgroups within subgroups. There are exclusive groups and inclusive groups. This is so in every society, and that is unavoidable.

...everybody enjoys the same fundamental rights..

No form of social structure, whether in the west or in the east has been able to make soci-

ety as one uniform ocean, because it is not possible. If you smooth out the wrinkles in one place, other wrinkles will appear in another place. All individuals are not equal mathematically - their characters, physical, mental, spiritual attributes are different, learning and performing capacities are not the same, history is not the same. Society is very complex at any point in time. We want to take into account the differences, and yet, consider the people as equally deserving in other respects, and provide opportunities based on people's capabilities, merits, performances, accomplishments etc. Children inherit some things (genes, family heritage and wealth, parental care etc) and learn,

work for and earn the rest.

Knowledge is open to all, and any one can learn the vedas, mantras or the priestly profession, or any of the other professions. Children of a doctor or a farmer are better exposed to their particular profession, and are able to pick up a lot of knowledge at home, same is true with a carpenter or a priest or any other profession. But it was possible (if strongly desired) to change professions, in the past, and is even easier to do so now with the much easier access, especially in cities, and for people with money, to different lines of work or profession or livelihood. Not everybody wants to be (or can be) a surgeon or lawyer even if it may be more lucrative to do so. There is no waiting list for people to learn vedas or become priests, despite the fact that the number of vedic teachers may be very limited. It is not a lucrative field.

To be a priest is more a path of suffering and sacrifice, and not one of luxury or glorification. But, non-Brahmins also do become pundits, swamis, priests, experts in vedas and shastras, and that should be encouraged. Standing for equal rights and no discrimination in the larger society does not go against Brahmanism.

Heritage Is Important

Culturally, of course, any group of people have a right to study, inculcate and practise their cultural heritage, whether it is learning the mantras, doing poojas, chanting the vedas, telling puranic stories, discussing upanishads. Brahmins have a right (and responsibility) to learn their heritage and pass it on to the next generation. It is very important, just like for any other community. If it is not done, children when they grow up are more likely to feel lost and confused, and

may even be taken advantage of by other creeds and cults trying to enlist them.

Brahmanism, Satvik And Other Gunas

Brahminism involves satvik guna or satvik character. The satvik character is enshrined in Brahmanism, just like the rajasik character is enshrined in kshathriyas. Satvik character is neither aggressive nor timid. It is neither about being aloof nor about being boisterous. It is dignified but not arrogant. It has a kind of quiet, compassionate assertiveness to it, but it is not egotistical. It does not seek to lift up the ego, instead seeks to remove it when possible.

However, gunas cannot be taught properly and completely by just lecturing on them in the classroom or writing about them in books. In

..society has to know it today as a desirable virtue...

order to properly and completely transmit them from one generation to the next, children have to learn them from their parents, teachers, relatives, friends and others. The society has to know it today as a desirable virtue and inculcate it into younger generations. This is possible if it exists in at least a section of society, and has the respect of the rest of society. What happens to this guna if society undergoes bad times, like oppression, violence, turbulence, revolt from external or internal causes? Will it survive?

There are, of course, other gunas. The most delicate among them being sthree guna, or womanly character, which incorporates love and self-sacrifice in its fundamental core. This is even more delicate than satvik character because, at times, in sthree guna, the assertiveness is done in a way that sacrifices self-interest for the wellbeing of the loved ones.

There are also the rajasik (provide good leadership), and tamasik (provide good workmanship) gunas. These are all based on

dharma. There is also the rakshasik guna which ignores dharma, and elevates aggressiveness and selfishness. If taken to extremes, the rakshasik society could result in disrespected womanhood, where women are treated mainly as sex objects, and in perished or distorted Brahmanism where satvik character cannot survive. The other good values and virtues will gradually decline.

In general every individual in today's society, is a combination of all the different gunas, he/she has picked them up (all 5 gunas listed above) in different proportions based on their circumstances, upbringing, environments they were exposed to. The need for survival and living in the midst of others in their specific environments shapes and hones their gunas to different degrees.

Transmitting Satvik Guna Needs Brahmanism

Brahminism is important in society for the following fundamental reason - preservation of satvik character in society as a value to be cherished, without which other virtues and values cannot flourish. For the nurturing and preservation of satvik character for long periods in society (and thus the world) it has to live in society at least in a sub-group, call it the Brahmin community. In the absence of a self-sustaining Brahmanic sub-environment, hostile, aggressive and rakshaseeya environments will easily devour and destroy satviks.

Can Brahminism Be By Profession And Not By Birth ?

Can Brahminism be by profession, instead of inherited by birth ? The preservation of satvik characteristics over the long run requires that Brahmanism be inherited by birth, at least to the major part. But there have been exceptions. Sometimes exceptions may be necessary - for example, it

may be as a correction to long accumulated non-satvik arrogance within Brahmin communities and /or as a recognition of a person's or group's spiritual advancement. We may note that, almost always, every rule has exceptional situations, even though rarely. However, satvik guna will not survive if Brahmin community does not accept membership by birth. Why so? What other alternatives exist? By profession? If it is accepted as a community by profession, as in the medical or engineering or scientific fields, the problems of elitism, power, polish, influence, position, sycophancy, corruption etc creep in, and these are the very opposite of satvik character, then it is almost impossible to get rid of these problems. Then, true satvik behavior becomes the casualty and cannot be cultivated as a respected and desirable way when that happens and very soon the community will forget what satvik character truly is. Because of this, Brahminism is different from the other jathis (castes or professions or qualities). The others can be propagated by profession (and need not be by birth, especially when teaching is done mostly in schools/colleges, and not at home). The priestly profession can also be taught to anybody, and that's fine. When Brahminism is by birth, and is not based on wealth or position or recognition or power or nearness to such, the satvik character flourishes and survives even in hostile surroundings.

If Brahmanism is by profession, it will perhaps be taught in the classroom by expert teachers, who will then give grades and certificates to the more deserving ones, there will perhaps be an association or society of Brahmans (much like the IEEE or APS or AMA), after some years or generations, the Brahmin profession will be ridden with the same issues and problems as any other profession, that of power and corruption, of influence and arrogance.

The satvik guna will get mixed up with power and position and influence and hierarchy within the Brahmin profession and association. The non-Brahmins will see nothing special in the character of the Brahmins, it will be just another group of people possessing some education and skills (which could be learnt by anybody). In other words, satvik guna will disappear - the remaining satviks will be viewed as timid people by the rest of society for not being aggressive enough to go after their selfishness.

Preservation of Satvik Guna In Hostile Environments Needs Brahminism By Birth

Satvik behavior is desirable and is to be cherished for its own sake, and for providing the environment for all sorts of other virtues to survive freely (including the quality of freedom, which everyone today recognizes as important). Also, when satvik guna disappears from society, there will be no respect for womanhood. Womanly qualities are based on self-sacrifice - one's own interests are undermined for the welfare of the others. If the men's culture does not respect satvik behavior, there will be no respect for womanly qualities either, the aggressive and rakshas qualities will rule, and women will be mainly sex objects and service providers or second class citizens.

Societal structure determines the what / how / when of transmission from one generation to the next - transmission of knowledge, skills, virtues, culture, characteristics etc. Societies that are successful over very long periods, like Hindu society, are not based on blind respect and adulation for power and aggressive behavior but are based on truth and dharma. This in-

volves recognition and respect for the roles of different human qualities - satvik, rajasik, tamasik, and, of course, the most delicate are the womanly qualities.

It is not a question of up / down hierarchy or discrimination or privilege or wealth or even just the efficiency in the oral transmission of knowledge. The question is really how to create a special environment where the best virtues and values will not get lost, but will get transmitted from one generation to the next even when the surrounding larger society and the ruling structures / powers are not supportive and may even be hostile (as was in India for the last 1000 years).

The answer is Brahmanism. In the past Indian rulers used to invite Brahmans to come and settle in their kingdoms. Sanatana Dharma has survived because Brahminism was able to withstand both the British colonial rule and manipulations, and, the Islamic onslaughts and terrorization before that. And the Indian non-Brahmana communities, knowing the importance of having Brahmans amidst them, and respecting their satvik characteristics and priestly duties, supported the Brahmans strongly in withstanding those externally imposed hostile environments by the colonial rulers and Islamic invaders and oppressive rulers.

..when satvik guna disappears from society, there will be no respect for womanhood...

Only Brahmans Can Save Brahminism

It is only the Brahmans community that can, in the end, sustain and nurture Brahmanism. And they need to realize that the well-being of the whole civilized society and the world is hinged on the respect for survival and well-being of the Brahmanical satviks.**

Tourism in India for Unity

By

Dr. Ganesh Mishra

Now tourism is removing the social barriers. Unity in diversity can be clearly seen in India. The other countries are coming closer because of the needs of the day. Tourism is expediting that process. Tourism has already become an industry and it needs understanding and arrangement with others. It brings them closer culturally and hastens the cultural exchanges. Tourism plays pivotal parts in promoting international brotherhood, peace and nationality. Nationally also it helps people in knowing the pulse of other states and their people. We can't ignore the importance of transportation as an important factor in the promotion of modern day tourism. We can call it as the backbone of today's tourism. After the prehistoric ox, donkeys, camels and elephants, today transportation in the form of Roadways, Railways, Air and Waterways has brought for superior effect in bringing different segments of the world in close contact with each other.

The constraints of time and comfort have been improved to a great extent. Some 70% of Indian population lives in villages. They use wheeled vehicles drawn by animals, power or the mechanical one. Our country is a country of pilgrimages. Showing all the four great Dhams, other centers like Jyotir Lingas, Shakti Peethas and important Religious places like Kanya kumari, Badrinath, Ajmer sharief, Kailash-ansarover, Vaishno Devi and Amarnath have been attracting people from one part to an-

other. Twelve Jyotir Lingas situated in several places in India and they attract millions of pilgrims every year.

Hinduism has been great binding and unifying force for the nation. Vishnu, the all pervading, all sustaining Godhead, Shiva, the lord of tapas, of divine destruction, Ganesha of divine knowledge, always the first to be worshiped, whether in the north or the south, the east or the west, the Hanuman, the faithful servitor of the divine, the de-

stroyer of all obstacles – none of these Gods is alien to any Indian and therefore no place is alien to him, whatever maybe his state of origin. The legends are common heritage and what the

traveler finds in actual practise the devotee remember in his daily prayer, that his own God and deity is worshiped in all parts of the land.

The following passage, dear to every devout Hindu, enumerates the various places of Shiva worship scattered through out the whole of India; which literally refers to “One should utter in the evening and in the morning, names of the following luminous symbols of Shiva: Somanatha in Saurashtra (Gujarat); Mallikarjuna in Shri-saila (the Palni Hills in Madura); Mahakala in Ujjayini (Ujjain); Omkar in Amaresvara (near Mandaleshvara and Mahishmati); Kendara (Kedarnatha situated on the heights of the Himalayas); Bhimashankara in Dakini (unknown); Vishvesha in Varanasi; Tryambaka on the banks of the Gautami

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(Godavari); Vaidyanath in Chitabhumi or Parali (Vaidyanath) ; Nagesh or Kamesh in Darukavana; Ramesha in Setubansha (Rameshvara); and Ghushmesh in Shivalaya (unknown). Reciting and recalling the names of these holy places the accumulated sin of seven births is nullified.”

..Hinduism has been great binding and unifying force for the nation...

A similar passage enumerates the principal sacred places consecrated to Vishnu, which are daily repeated by millions of Hindus all over the world, Can also be located in Shastras.

The role of our Gurus like the Adi Shankaracharyas has played an important part in making the people of south to visit north and from north to south in search of emancipation. they did not forget the importance of east and west also in this matter. These pilgrimages have bound us together. This common urge and the common thought had been there for centuries in India but the great gurus gave it the shape and form. Finally, we are united in this great land mass known as Bharata mainly because of its holiness and spirituality. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru too has covered this. He has written about it in detail in his book Discovery of India, and we may reveal find that through tourism, behavior of human beings is stipulated as a catalyst for National Integration and this socio-psychological transformation is the base of Indian Religious tourism.

Just a joke

You know you are having a bad day when you trip over a cordless phone.

Poetry Column

Wrinkles of Time

The wind stops to caress a strand of hair
across my forehead,
Your thin weary fingers move to caress it
aside.
You see my forehead wrinkled with time.

I saw you reading my thoughts across my
forehead.
I saw you mocking my benign thoughts,
With your gleaming eyes.

The rites of passage,
Still write something on my forehead,
Some hold the mirth in those lines,
Some sit quietly by my side,
And when you smooth those lines with thin
weary fingers,
Some gather me in their embrace,
Some long for a longing in your eyes,
And,
Then the world seems just a tiny speck in
time.

Just a thought

It's fall and all is bare,
cool wind sometimes whips through the air,
then I thought of you,
some touched me, some were deep,
some were sad like fallen leaves.

Kids are playing happy and wild,
their thoughts are not like mine,
then I thought of you,
some were happy, some were wise,
some were free like a song in the wild.

***By
Rajni Bhargava***

Are you a Brahmin?

By

Saroja Hanasoge

I am not a Brahmin and neither are you. Although we might think that we are Brahmin because we were born into a so-called Brahmin family, we are not Brahmins. When was the last time we disagreed with a Swamiji? When was the last time we threw out an interpretation of the Vedanta that we were not satisfied with? Have we ever told our father or mother that it appeared to us that they were performing a puja more by rote than sincerity? Once we recognize that we are “nothing more” than Vaisyas (those who tend agriculture, cattle, and trades) then we can get on with thinking about what a “true” Brahmin might be. The word “Brahmin” has as its root Brahman. What is Brahman? It is *absolute reality* in the Vedic sense of the word. Absolute reality encompasses everything in the universe. Literature and current scholars suggest that the Brahmin of ancient times was one who pursued knowledge of Brahman. A Brahmin was dedicated to understanding and *knowing* the Absolute Reality. He did not fear to challenge and inquire in order to deepen his understanding. Valmiki, Satyakama Jabala, Viswamitra, Nachiketha, Adi Shankara, and Ramanuja are all examples of Brahmins. Today it seems that the Brahmin is more anxious about ensuring that his children marry within the so-called Brahmin community than he is about his children’s or his own union with Brahman.

Valmiki, who gifted posterity with the Ramayana, was *not brought up by a Brah-*

min family. Further he had an active and adventurous career as a hunter and thief prior to his writing of the Ramayana. The Ramayana was born after Valmiki had a change of heart, chanted Rama’s name backwards (he couldn’t say it correctly) for years and years (which caused eponymous ant hills to grow around him), and finally was inspired by Sage Narada’s narration of Rama’s life to write it. The Ramayana is

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one of the fundamental scriptures of Hinduism as it exists today. All the characters, ideas, and morals that influence us today from the Ramayana are

concepts that came from a former animal killing and meat-eating hunter and thief; He was not originally a Brahmin but he *became* one. However because of his sincere dedication to knowing God, he left an indelible mark on the Indian ethos.

The special cow Nandini was the initial catalyst for Viswamitra’s pursuit of Brahman. At the very beginning, Viswamitra, unquestionably a Ksatriya, (he was a king), was more interested in pursuing this bovine creature than he was Brahman. How was it that a cow motivated Viswamitra’s transformation to a Brahma Rishi? One day, Viswamitra, and his retinue visited Vashista, a venerable Brahma Rishi. To the astonishment of the visitors, each one was fed with as much milk as he wanted because Nandini had the special ability to supply as much milk as needed (no matter how many visitors there were). Viswamitra, of course, promptly desired this special cow and requested it from Vashista. As it turned out,

Nandini was not Vashista's cow and instead belonged to the ashrama itself. Further, she had her own mind and could not be given away unless she herself agreed to go. A displeased Viswamitra sent his best representatives, army and finally himself with bow and arrow to defeat Vashista and bring home the cow. Of course, Viswamitra was entirely unsuccessful. In fact, Vashista's kamandala (hand rest) attracted all of Viswamitra's arrows and neither Nandini nor Vasishta were hurt. Viswamitra could no longer ignore the fact that in spite of all his physical and military might, Vashista with *only* his spiritual and mental prowess had defeated him. Viswamitra realized that spiritual and mental ability surpassed any strength and power arising from the physical plane. Viswamitra decided then and there to attain the same spiritual status as Vashista and set off for the forests to start his *sadhana* (practice in pursuit of a goal). In the end, Viswamitra successfully became a Brahma Rishi and was accepted as a Sapta Rishi. While Viswamitra became a Brahma Rishi, he had not been born into a Brahmin family.

Next, the Chandogya Upanishad presents us with yet another non-Brahmin: Satyakama Jabala. This particular story demonstrates yet again that Brahmin status is a function of effort and character *rather than* birth. Satyakama wanted to become a *brahmachari* (a student of sacred knowledge). At the time it was customary to present a teacher with a student's family genealogy before studies began. Satyakama asked his mother, Jabala, to which family he belonged. Jabala did not know the answer because she had conceived him in her youth when she was a maid and had to attend to a lot of guests. Because her name was Jabala, and she was his mother, she suggested to

Satyakama that he refer to himself as "Satyakama Jabala." Satyakama then went to the teacher Haridrumata Gautama and requested that he be taken as a student. When Gautama asked him to which family he belonged, Satyakama told him truthfully exactly what his mother had told him. Gautama was so pleased with Satyakama's honest and unembellished answer that he declared, "A non-Brahmin would not be able to explain thus.... I will receive you as a pupil. You have not deviated from the truth."

And of those Brahmins who influenced Hindu philosophy and happened to be born into a Brahmin family, they did not simply feel content that they were Brahmin merely because they wore the sacred thread, nor that they performed Sandya every day, or knew all the words to the Gayathri

..they did not simply feel content that they were Brahmin merely because they wore the sacred thread..

Mantra and had made sure to marry a Brahmin woman from the same community. In fact the reason that these Brahmins were able to make such a difference is because they challenged their own father (during the performance of a ritual no less), challenged the reigning Brahmin community (Namboodri Brahmins), challenged certain interpretations of the Vedas and Upanishads, and argued with their own teacher (Yadavapraksha), and separated from a spouse who was a Brahmin elitist.

Nachiketha who was born into a Brahmin family, challenged his father who was performing a yagna and giving away old decrepit cows as part of the yagna dakshin. Though Nachiketha was a Brahmin, he did not sit quietly during the sacrifice that his father was performing and instead interrupted the sacrifice to comment on the unjust donation of useless cows and question

the meaning of the yagna. Instead of assuming that his father knew best, Nachiketha asked his father, “Whom will you give me to?” The father promptly became angry and replied, “To Death.” And thankfully for Hindu posterity, Nachiketha’s desire to ensure that his father’s words were not in vain later resulted in the content of the Katha Upanishad. Nachiketha left the yagna and traveled to Yama’s palace and awaited the God of Death’s arrival. The Katha Upanishad narrates Nachiketha’s conversations with the God of Death in which Nachiketha with curiosity and persistence methodically solicits answers from Yama about the nature of being, death, and the universe. Nachiketha was fearless, inquisitive, questioning and confrontational. He was actively using his mind. He did not sit back and take comfort in the fact that it was sufficient that he was born a Brahmin, and that a yagna was being performed. He wanted to understand and he had the courage to speak up (to his own father) when he saw something that was nonsensical.

Adi Shankara is a Brahmin scholar of more recent times. Adi Shankara, a “brilliant dialectician and debater” from the 9th century tied together Advaita philosophy, and managed to ruffle the Namboodri Brahmin community of Kerala. In order to successfully pull together the elements of Advaita contained in the Vedas and Upanishads, he had to *go against interpretations of the Upanishads and Brahma-Sutra* by individuals like Bhartrpranacha who suggested that Brahma is transformed into this world. He had to *reject the Mimamsa view of the Veda that suggested that the Vedas* primarily urged action. He had to demonstrate that Vaishesika, Nyaya, and Sankhya philosophies were not correct represen-

tations of the Vedas at all. In other words, Adi Shankara had to confront, dissect, debate, and negate what appeared contradictory, inconsistent, or nonsensical to him. In fact a fundamental position in Hindu philosophy: Advaita, is a function of dissent, debate, and logical acrobatics. It had nothing to do with the sacred thread, marriage within the community (Adi Shankara was a sanyasi), chanting of the Gayathri Mantra, or separation of the castes. Furthermore, Adi Shankara had to fight, provoke and challenge. If he had sat around simply performing Brahmin rituals and being satisfied with that, the world may never have re-

In fact a fundamental position in Hindu philosophy: Advaita, is a function of dissent, debate, and logical acrobatics

ceived a cohesive version of Advaita philosophy. Clearly Adi Shankara was not afraid of challenging and rejecting accepted interpretations and views of sacred positions and texts. Finally, when Adi Shankara’s mother died, he came back from the North to Kerala to perform her funeral rites. However, the Namboodri Brahmin community to which he belonged at the time refused to give him wood for the cremation if Adi Shankara performed the rites. They believed that a sanyasi had renounced the world and as a result could no longer claim ties to his mother and perform her funeral. Adi Shankara of course disagreed, he had promised his mother that he would cremate her, and created a fire for his mother’s body through his meditative energies. He stood up to the Namboodri community.

Ramanujacharya a philosopher of the 11th century was another Brahmin who did not rest on his sacred thread. During his life, he formulated a Vedantic position, Vishishtadvaita, which countered the reigning Advaita and Dvaita philosophies of the time and also separated from his wife by becoming a sanyasi because she had insulted two

of his teachers who were of lower castes. Vishistadvaita proposed a theistic interpretation of the Vedas that included an important place for *bhakti* (devotion), a personal God, and an affirmation of the unity of the many without “giving up on the reality of distinct persons, qualities, universals, or aesthetic and moral values.” As a young student, Ramanujacharya regularly got into fights with his teacher Yadavaprakasha over the proper interpretations of the Upanishads. While Ramanujacharya favored a personal interpretation of Brahman, Yadavaprakasha favored an impersonal one, as he was an Advaiti. Ramanujacharya never felt reticent about expressing his views even though they went against his teacher’s position. Ramanujacharya was so skillful at presenting his arguments that his teacher felt threatened and hatched an unsuccessful murder plot against him. Even after finding out about the murder plot, Ramanujacharya went back to Yadavaprakasha and requested that he continue to be taught but did not recant his views. In the end, Yadavaprakasha asked Ramanujacharya to leave his school.

Ramanuja was also fearless in the face of caste prejudice. Ramanuja had invited his childhood mentor Kanchipurna, a non-Brahmin, to his home for dinner. Kanchipurna arrived before Ramanuja made it back to his home. In Ramanuja’s absence, his wife fed Kanchipurna, and then ritually cleaned the home, threw away the food that Kanchipurna had eaten and re-cooked dinner before Ramanuja’s arrival. When Ramanuja arrived he felt very upset because he had hoped to eat some of Kanchipurna’s leftovers as prasada. Later on in life after his separation from Yadavaprakasha, Ramanuja finally found a teacher, Mahapurna,

whose views he shared. And from whom he learned for 6 months. However, one day, Ramanuja’s wife picked a fight with Mahapurna’s wife since Mahapurna’s family was of a lower caste. And Ramanuja’s lessons came to an expected end. Ramanuja was so upset that he renounced family, became a sanyasi, and sent his wife back to her father’s home. Here again is an example of a Brahmin who contributed significantly to Hindu philosophy, but did so by not being afraid to question, challenge, and use his own mind to arrive at conclusions at satisfactory conclusions. He challenged his own

example of a Brahmin who contributed significantly to Hindu philosophy, but did so by not being afraid to question, challenge..

teacher. Furthermore, he did not accept his wife’s caste elitism and sent her home. As a matter of fact two of his most important teachers were of lower castes.

At the end let us not forget the Nasadiya Sukta

(Creation Hymn) which describes the beginning in one of the most compelling parts of the Rig Veda. “Whence this creation has arisen – perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not – the one who looks down on it, in the highest heaven, only he knows – or perhaps he does not know.” Notice that the writers did not pronounce anything definitive about the source of the universe. In fact, the “one who looks down on it” who one might suppose is “God” it is suggested that even “he” may not know. The nature of reality then is wrought with mystery and uncertainty. But, our ancestors did not try to cover it up: neither the mystery nor their ignorance. They showed tremendous humility and honesty in emphasizing the ambiguity of our very origins. Moreover they were liberating and opening up their minds so that if some realization were to occur they would not be biased by a predefined expectation of Brahman. Now, this humility and unswerving commitment to truth is what

seems to be the recommended path for Brahminism. Clearly the contributions of these individuals and stanzas mentioned never once mention concern over marriage to a fellow Brahmin or maintenance of any specific tradition or culture. If anything, in order to start pursuing knowledge of Brahman it seems incumbent that one let go of the comforts of tradition, culture, and ritual, and the satisfaction of having been born into a “Brahmin family.”

Now, which of us has ever confronted a Swamiji? Our own father? A teacher? A scripture we may have read? Wondered if some of the scriptures we read were consistent? Or thought, “Whether or not I wear my sacred thread, I’m no closer to understanding the nature of Brahman today than I was yesterday.” Our ancestors had the mental honesty and courage to question God itself. Again: “.... [T]he one who looks down on it, in the highest heaven, only he knows – or perhaps does not know.” In my opinion Brahmin ekta (unity) refers to the coming together of all of those who are interested in truth, have the courage to ask uncomfortable questions, take action, and live with compassion (towards all ... not just one’s family). This or course has nothing to do with who our parents are, whether our spouses are Brahmin, empty mantra chanting, or blind performance of pujas, yagnas and the like. But, it has everything to do with the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagvad Gita, and all the great thinkers that have contributed to Hindu philosophy till now. So unless you become inquisitive, start criticizing Swamijis, stop listening to self-appointed “experts” on Hinduism, and start actually using your own mind and thoughts to perceive your reality, you are not a Brahmin. The sacred thread, Gayathri Mantra, a sense of purity, and a Brahmin spouse will in no way substitute for an active mind. An active and curious mind un-

fettered by prejudice, privilege, dogma and ritual is requisite for pursuit of Brahman.

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Always one up

Once Mr. Laloo Pd. went to Hollywood where he met Julia Roberts and promptly fell in love. Thinking hard in English, Mr Laloo Pd managed to say, “Me love you.”

Julia was quite amused and replied with her usual smile, “I love you too.”

Mr. Laloo is obviously not the type to be less than any one so he said with pride, “Julia, me love you three.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TO THE VALUES AND GOALS OF THE WORLD BRAHMAN FEDERATION

By
Sudha Tiwari Kantor

Introduction

To achieve certain specific goals of the World Brahman Federation (WBF), civic engagement is essential. The discussion herein seeks to impart the importance of civic engagement and its link to the achievement of the WBF goals of: 1) Developing and promoting Brahman communities; 2) Encouraging Brahman communities to enhance the welfare of their communities; and, 3) Uplifting the international Brahman community.

Civic engagement is a broad term to define a person's involvement in life outside his or her doors. A few examples include voting, attending local government meetings, joining community organizations such as the Parents/Teachers Association or the Rotary club, and volunteering.

There have been various academic articles expressing concern for the "unprecedented and troubling" lack of civic engagement, or a "detachment from civic life." Professor Robert D. Putnam at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University has written prolifically about the lack of civic engagement in America. One of his noted writings, Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital explores "the absence or obliteration of traditions of independent civic engagement and a widespread tendency toward

passive reliance on the state." The trend of the decline of civic engagement has been measured. For example, in the early 1970s, approximately 50% of 18 to 29 year olds voted in presidential elections, yet in 2000, less than 33% voted. In congressional elections, 33% voted in early 1970s, whereas less than 20% percent voted in 1998.

The concern about the lack of civic engagement centers on its ill effects on people and society. Specifically, people do not feel connected to one another nor to their neighborhood community or local/state government. In addition, there is basic dislike of politics and a feeling of apathy germinating from the belief that one can not have any impact on the world outside their doors.

The benefits of civic engagement is that it "enhances support for democratic values, promotes political participation, helps citizens to understand better the impact of public policy on their interests, gives citizens the framework they need to learn more about civic affairs and reduces generalized mistrust and fear of public life."

As a community, Brahmans have the opportunity for civic engagement which helps the community achieve Brahman values and goals.

World Brahman Federation Values and Goals

..Brahmans have the opportunity for civic engagement which helps the community achieve Brahman values...

Dr. Vinod Tewary has listed the Salient Features of the WBF on its web site (www.brahmanworld.org). These features, which I am referring to as the values and goals of the WBF, relevant to civic engagement are:

The objective of the WBF is to promote social, cultural, educational, and religious links between Brahmans of the world and to uplift the international Brahman community. WBF collaborates with like-minded Brahman organizations of the world, and help them to achieve that.

WBF realizes that the community of Brahmans must transcend geographical and political boundaries. We must create an international community of Brahmans by bringing them together and help them seek their own cultural and social identity that has a tremendous psychological, social, economic, and political value. For a group to become a socio-economic force, it must evolve from a crowd to a community. The main task of the WBF is to create such an international community and encourage them to work not just for the welfare of their own community but for the whole society and the country in which they live.

In the present age of fragmented society and localized irrational forces, it is of paramount importance for individuals to form regional as well as international links and communities. WBF, by promoting Brahman values, provides that link.

By joining and recruiting members to a Brahman organization, we are forming a community. This Brahman community can then practice and pass on its social, cultural, educational, and religious heritage and teachings. By linking with other Brahman communities through the WBF, the commu-

nity grows and becomes stronger. WBF values Brahman communities in seeking cultural and social identity which has a tremendous psychological, social, economic, and political value to Brahmans. One of the WBF goals is achieved: forming of Brahman communities.

Civic Engagement of the Brahman Community

The formation of Brahman communities then positions Brahmans to affect the world outside their doors. In order to impact the communities within which Brahmans and their organizations exist, we must become civically engaged. As a community, we can utilize our civic engagement and participation to affect change and require cultural competency in social, cultural, educational and religious issues and policies.

...formation of Brahman communities then positions Brahmans to affect the world outside their doors...

Some examples of civic engagement include joining social services organizations such as The Boys and Girls Club, Big Brother/Big Sisters, etc. Civic engagement includes volunteering for the American Red Cross, American Cancer Society or the American Heart Association. Brahmans can become engaged in professional organizations and take leadership roles (Medical, Legal, Accounting, College/Universities, etc.) It can be as simple as participating in your neighborhood association or as ambitious as joining a national campaign.

Through Civic engagement, Brahmans can be “heard and seen”. Brahmans as a group have socio-economic impact. The socio-economic impact of a community leads to that community’s ideas, thoughts and values being heard. When the Brahman community’s voice is “at the table”, the community can impact change. Decisions

will include an awareness of Brahman values (social, cultural, educational and religious). One of the values of WBF, to encourage Brahmans to participate in the welfare of not only their own “community but that of the whole society and the country in which they live, is achieved through civic engagement.

In order to fulfill some of WBF’s goals and fulfill its values, Brahmans organize as a community, participate in their wider community and link with other Brahman communities to present a strong voice in the international community. Thus, Brahmans develop and maintain their identity as a community while also participating, through civic engagement, in the greater community of their neighborhood, government and the international community.

Notes:

1. The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 16, 2001.
2. Journal of Democracy, Volume 6, Number 1, January 1995.
3. For more information, go to www.ksq.harvard.edu/Saguaro/ to learn about “The Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America is an ongoing initiative of [Professor Robert D. Putnam](#) at the [John F. Kennedy School of Government](#) at [Harvard University](#). The project focuses on expanding what we know about our levels of trust and community engagement and on developing strategies and efforts to increase this engagement. A signature effort was the multi-year dialogue on how we can increasingly build bonds of civic trust among Americans and their communities.”
4. The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 16, 2001.
5. The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 16, 2001.



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Sudha Tiwari Kantor is an associate attorney in the Family Law, Business Law and Civil Litigation Departments of Ger-

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Sudha initially worked at a large law firm in Princeton, NJ and then in Cherry Hill, NJ. In 2002, Sudha went in to public service and served as the Director of Legal, Policy and Legislative Affairs at the N.J. Department of Human Services (DHS). Ms. Kantor is currently a Fellow in the 2004 class of Leadership New Jersey. Ms. Kantor is a member of the New Jersey State Bar (Family Law, Women in the Profession and Minorities in the Profession sections); the Burlington County Bar Association where she has served as a Trustee since 2001; the Camden County Bar Association as well as the Association of Trial Lawyers of America - New Jersey (ATLA-NJ).

Ms. Kantor has written many legal articles, conducted various legal seminars for the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education and Chaired the ATLA-NJ Annual Boardwalk Seminar Matrimonial Paralegal program from 1997-2002. Ms. Kantor served as an MESP Panelist for Burlington, Camden, Mercer and Hunterdon Counties and was a Barrister in the Thomas S. Forkin Family Law American Inns of Court for the 1998 and 1999 terms. Ms. Kantor resides in Mount Laurel, New Jersey with her husband Craig.

Brahminism - Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

By
H.S. Aswathnarayan

When Nirmalji asked me to speak at the meeting, I did not know the subject matter. I was wondering about what to speak. In Email exchange with members Nirmalji mentioned about the challenges faced by the Brahmins and the need to come together. Immediately I decided to speak about Brahminism of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.

Rig Veda is the earliest known scripture for the mankind. It is mentioned that one is born in a Brahmin Family on account of Poorva Karma. Just being born in a Brahmin family does not make one a Brahmin until the person qualifies himself through education and practice and acquires such knowledge as to apply for the well being of the individuals and society. In the scriptures of Sanatana Dharma one can see plenty of references where persons have changed their caste based on their capabilities and practice.

One can easily see that many contributors to Vedas were non Brahmins and women. Vedas never mentioned about untouchabilities as practiced or seen to-day in the Indian society. In Vedic teachings the importance of every section of the society is very much recognized and all persons are treated with equal

respect while keeping the highest respect for persons of Knowledge.

One need to know Shri Rama, Shri Krishna whom we worship are not born as brahmins. The writers of Ramayana and Mahabharatha are not Brahmins. Sage

Vuswamitra who is not a brahmin was given the highest honor as Brahma Rishi. We can quote many such examples.

In every day chanting of Purusha Sukta reference is made for different caste and explains how each caste has been formed from the different sections of the human

body. While Brahmins come out of face, Shudras come out from feet. In between Kshatriya came out of shoulders and Vaisya from thigh. Without understanding the real meaning of it Hindus have been brain washed by the wrong interpretation given by the vested interests. For a human being to stand erect, firm and to move forward feet forms the essential part of the body. It is associated with productivity, economic growth, mobility and progress. Shudra community is associated with productivity and economic strength.

The wellbeing of the society, and the Nation depends on the productivity. It is a common practice with Hindus to touch the feet of the elders and Gurus to get the blessings. Hindus wash the feet of the holy persons

About the author

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and elders. Feet forms an important part of the human body so also the society, hence Shudra community forms a very important section of the society. Feet was never intended to depict a low status of any community.

As Brahmins have Gotras, similarly one can see many non Brahmins in different parts of India use the Gotra to define their lineage. Most of the non Brahmins for some unknown reasons gave up using the Gothra. Later generations of non Brahmins lost it since they did not know it.

For many cast based prejudices Manu Smrithi is quoted. Most of the time it is quoted out of context with wrong interpretations as given by vested interests. Manu Smrithi is not a scripture. It is a treatise written by a sociologist at that time. As it is always said while interpreting and applying we need to know the KAALA, DESHA and STHITHI. If writings are not interpreted based on the time, place and the conditions, no wonder they lead to misinterpretations causing hate, prejudice and disharmony in the society. Untouchability of the present type did not exist during Vedic period.

If a person gets a law degree and takes up a salaried job then he is a Shudra, if one conducts or does business with that knowledge then he is Vaisya, if used in the field of politics and leadership then he is a Kshtriya and if used to promote justice and Dharma without taking money then he is a Brahmin. Today most of the Brahmins are practicing Shudras.

For all the ills of the present day society in India, it has become a fashion to blame Brahminism and the Brahmin Community. It is interesting to look at the history of Brahmins in India. At any

time in the history, Brahmins were neither an economic nor a political power. In the history their number was always insignificant to make any difference. As of today Brahmins only constitute 4% of the population in India. In order to protect Brahminism and Sanatana Dharma Brahmins always migrated from place to place when threatened. Brahmins waging war for their survival is unheard of. Brahmins are seen as instrumental in bringing about reforms for the wellbeing of the society. Looking at the history of Brahminism, we need to divide the time as follows:

- 1). Before 400 B.C.
- 2) Between 400 B.C and 7th Century A.D.
- 3) Between 7th and 12th century A.D.
- 4) 12th century to 1800 A.D. and later.

The first attack on Brahminism came from Buddhism. During Buddhistic wave many Brahmins took to Buddhism. Large populations, especially in North India took to Buddhism. India also got disarmed. Buddhists attacked Vedic thought and rituals. Brahminism took back seat. In 7th century A.D. when Adi Shankara came on the scene once again Vedic thought prevailed. Between 7th and 12th century a transient India coming out of disarmament but not enough to withstand the onslaught of Islam. Once again Brahminism became a casualty. Many practices not followed during Vedic times were introduced to save the society from humiliation, dishonor and destruction. By attacking Brahminism, the attackers realized the easiness with which one could demoralize the Hindus and the Hindu thought.

All over India during this time one can see mass movements of migrations of Brahmins. With British establishing rule on India while the migration of Brahmins stopped, systematic onslaught on

Hinduism in a very subtle way was institutionalized. Every thing Brahminical was attacked, population was fed wrong information to create division. Hate towards Brahmins was promoted without the direct knowledge of the population. During British time, while most of India was under the rule of Kings, the areas which were under the British like Bombay, Madras Presidencies and Bengal etc. saw an erosion of Hinduism, and Brahmins slowly were demoralized. Hate towards Brahmins was well cultivated. Today one can find the result of such a cultivation.

Brahmins never denied education to the masses. As per British statistics 80% of the students in schools were non Brahmins in all parts of India during 18th and 19th century.. In 17th and 18th century there were more percentage of educated persons in states than what was at the time of freedom (1947). Public Schools in villages (Pathashalas or Gurukulas) were systematically closed by denying the economic support. Brahmins never sought salaried jobs. They lived a frugal life at the good will of the society / villagers. As villages lost their independence people found it difficult to meet even their basic needs. Brahmins lost their independence and became salaried employees.

More harm is done to Brahmins in free India than in British India. When India became free, including Kings every one was poor. Every one was looking for economic improvements. Education was key to success for a meaningful living. Who ever had education got the jobs in the Government and else where. Brahmins who had the highest percentage of educated people got jobs which became the eye sore of other communities. While reservation was good to protect the interest

of weaker sections of the society, if used at the cost of other communities both the society and Government suffers. We see that effect in the society in India to day.

When ever Dharma is eroding, Brahmins have a major part to play to reestablish the Dharma (Moral and Ethical standards). Brahmins for no fault of theirs are blamed, hence one can see a low self esteem, low pride and a guilt feeling with Brahmin youth. Ritualistic part of life has lost its meaning.

When younger generation marry outside the Brahmin community, the gene pool gets altered. The Satvik attributes gets diluted. For the good of the society Satvik, Rajas and Tamas attributes are important ingredients. Propagation of Dharma is mostly done by persons of Satvik attributes. What has been nourished over a period of thousands of years, is very hard to see that it is getting diluted. In every state in India Brahmin population is decreasing. If not recognized and corrective actions initiated no doubt Brahmins may become extinct. Family planning should not be followed indiscriminately. One can see in India some highly educated communities are already on the verge of extinction.

Time is ripe for Brahmins to come together to evaluate objectively their status in the society. Act to assert their identity. Educate the masses about the misinformation spread by the vested interests against Brahmins. If Sanatana Dharma is to survive, it is essential for Brahminism to be preserved.

After a nuclear war, the question will not be what was right but what is left.

Brahmans in Mauritius

By
Vidyadhar Mishra

If Hinduism is thriving in Mauritius, credit goes to the Brahmans who have been the torch bearers of Hinduism against all odds. It is thanks to them that our religion has survived in Mauritius". Dr Sir Sewsagur Ramgoolam, First Prime Minister of Mauritius.

In a Prize Giving Ceremony held in the Theatre of Port-Louis in 1973, for newly qualified priests, the then Prime Minister of Mauritius, made the

above remarks. Following the liberation of slaves, the former slaves refused to return to the sugar cane fields

as free labourers. Indians werebrought to Mauritius mostly from Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as from 1834 as Indentured Labourers. By their toils and sweat they made Mauritius a prosperous Island. They were mostly poor labourers who came to Mauritius hardly with anything besides their clothes. However, they brought along their culture, religion and language which still thrive some 170 years after in the Republic of Mauritius.

Prior to that in 1810, when the British captured Mauritius from the French some 10 000 Indian soldiers were part of the British Army. Among the Indians there were some Thakurs who hailed from the radius of Banaras. They were very religious minded. When they came to capture Mauritius, they must have felt that they were on a simple mission and once it was over they will return to India. But this was not to be the case.

As the Durga Puja approached many of them applied for leave to return to their villages for the prayers. Leave however, could not be granted to a large contingent of the Army. Without their Purohit the Puja could not be conducted. The British Authority suggested that a Purohit be brought from India and this was agreed. The Purohit came, conducted the prayers and returned to India. For some two to three years it was going on like

..credit goes to the Brahmans who have been the torch bearers of Hinduism..

this, then the Authority suggested to the Purohit to take up his residence in Mauritius. At first the Purohit was reluctant because he needed

a proper place with fresh running water and a temple to carry out his daily oblations. The Authorities provided him with some land at the feet of the Pieter Both Mountain and nearby there was a little stream of river flowing. A temple was built at that place with wood, stone and straw. With the frequent visits of cyclones the temple must have been damaged and re-built on several occasions. It is probably the oldest temple of the Island.

Later the Purohit was joined by his wife and in due course his lineage was established in Mauritius. The Purohit was Pundit Daby Dayal Mishra and he hailed from Ramoli village in the distict of Chandauli near Benares. He had five sons namely Vishnu Dutt, Brahma Dutt, Shiva Dutt, Ram Dutt and Krishna Dutt. All were Mauritian born. However, link with the village was kept and from time to time some one from the family would go to India to pursue higher studies. The studies were

mostly of religious orientation.

Unfortunately, as fate would have it, one of the brothers got drowned in Ganga in his student days and the other brother died of some ailments on his way back to Mauritius in Bombay. Another brother died a bachelor, thus only two brothers were finally married. Again one brother had only daughters whose children are still surviving and the other brother Pundit Ramdutt Mishra had three sons, the eldest was Pundit Banny Madho Mishra, (my grand-father) and Pundit Lutchmee Prasad Mishra and Pundit Jugnu Mishra. My grand father had six sons, namely Pundits Mahadev Prasad, Thakur Prasad (my father), Durga Prasad, Guru Prasad, Ambika Prasad, and Ganesh Dutt.

The Mishra family was the first Brahmin family that came to Mauritius officially as Hindu Priests (and perhaps the first Brahmin family to have migrated to a foreign country) and over the generations this family has produced reputed and respected Priests of the Hindu community.

My great grand father Pundit Ramdutt Mishra, spent quite some time in India studying the various Hindu Shastras. He was among those who brought the first copy of Ramayan of Tulsidas and Shrimad Bhagwatam to Mauritius. Due to the then prevailing circumstances and family constraints, none of his sons could proceed to India for higher learning. They nevertheless had the good fortune of learning Sanskrit, Jyotish and Karma Kanda at the feet of their revered father. Pundit Banny Madho Mishra was a reputed exponent of Shrimad Bhagwat Maha Purana and Ramayan. Besides he also had a very good knowledge of Sanskrit.

My father Pundit Thakur Prasad Mishra who was later to become one of the best qualified Sanskrit scholars in Mauritius

and Africa had mastered the Laghu Siddhanta Kaumuddi at the feet of his father who never had the fortune of setting his feet in India until he was some 81 years old. Because from a very young age Pundit Thakur Prasad Mishra had shown a deep interest in Sanskrit, he was at the suggestion of the household Guru Pundit Surya Narain Choubey, sent to India to learn Sanskrit at the age of 13 years. He spent some 18 years at the feet of his illustrious Gurus, who were the very incarnations of Sanskrit and personifications of Sanatan Dharma namely, Pundit Kashinath Sharma and Pundit Raghunath Sharma. (Grand father and father of Prof Rama Nath Sharma of Hawaii, USA).

Besides the Mishra family, several Brahmins came from India from time to time either as Karma Kandis or Indentured Labourers. Those who came, as Indentured Labourers were soon absorbed into priesthood and many of them proved to be unadapted for the hard work in sugar plantation. At a given time the British Authorities imposed restrictions on the immigrations of Brahmans to Mauritius. To counter this many Brahmans adopted Singh in their names, thus we have Gokulsingh, Gajadharsingh, Mohabeersingh etc. who are in fact Brahmans.

Some of the prominent Brahmins who came from India and have left their marks in Mauritius were Pundit Soorya Narain Choubey, Pundit Lutchmeenarain Choubey, Pundit Tarkeshwar Choubey, Pundit Ambika Prasad Pathak (my maternal grand father), Pundit Basdeo Tiwari, Pundit Radha Krishna Shastry and more recently we had Acharya Ram Mani Tripathi, Acharya Dwarka Nath Tiwari, etc. Mauritian born Pundits were Pundit Bhimsen Vajpayee and his three brothers, Pundit Dowlut

Sharma, Pundit Jagdish Sharma, Pundit Bal-doe Choubay Toolsee, Pandit Ramsewak. At the moment we have the illustrious Acharya Ram Janma Mishra, retired head of Jyotish at Benares Hindu University and Acharya Uma Nath Shastri from Nepal.

In 1935, the Brahman Maha Sabha was established; the following Pundits were the founder members of the Sabha viz Pundit Amar Tiwari, Pundit Hurrydial Ruchpaul (Pathak), Pundit Dowlut Sharma Ayriga, Pundit Khushiram Sharma, Pundit Hurryshankar Dikshit, Pundit Basdeo Tiwari, Pundit Damodar Beeharry Panray, Pundit Radha Krishna Shastry, Pundit Ram-sawarat, Pundit Banymadho Mishra, Pundit Rajnarain Ramsoondur Tiwari, and Pundit Ramkhelawon Toolsee.

The broad aims of the Sabha were to promote Sanatan Dharma in Mauritius. To encourage the teaching and learning of Sanskrit and Hindi, and to publish a calendar of Hindu festivals in Mauritius. To train Brahmans in Karma Kanda etc.

However, it is not only in the field of Dharma that Brahmans have flourished but also in the fields of trade unionism and politics (Pundit Jagdambi Sharma and Pundit Ramnarain) in the field of Education (Burrenchoubay and Ramchurn), in the field of Administration and Finance (Baguant, Banymandhub), Law (Mr Doorgesh Ramsewak), to name but a few.

Just like in India, Brahmans have been victims of false propaganda mainly in Hindi films. They have often been portrayed as greedy, ignorant, arrogant, selfish, exploiters of the weaker section of the population and on occasion as loose characters. As a result people have some bitterness against Brahmans. History has often been distorted to project a negative picture of the Brahmans. All these have contributed to malign the

Brahmans from the rest of the community.

In spite of all these negative propaganda, thanks to their hard working and perseverance Brahmans have been able to make a breakthrough in several spheres of life besides religion. Hindus and Non Hindus hold Brahmans in high respect when they know that a Brahman is a virtuous man, one who follows his religion in letter and spirit and who has control over his senses.

Those who regarded Brahmans merely as a caste group and were dead against Brahmans have now come to realise that Brahmans are not merely the product of birth but also they are the embodiment of perseverance and sacrifice. Such Brahmans are indeed worthy of worship.

In spite of the changing context, Brahmans are flourishing well in Mauritius and their future depends on their own hard work and achievements rather than on favours from any quarter. A genuine Brahmin to achieve something in life neither needs the favour or political backing of anyone; he has no one but himself to rely upon. Brahmans must not be looked upon as a mere caste but it is an institution established on certain moral values that have stood the test of time and I have no reason to despair for the future of or survival of Brahmans in Mauritius or elsewhere in the world. A Brahman will continue to be a Brahman so long as he wills it. He ceases to be a Brahman the moment he relinquishes the value system of the Brahmans.

We do not have to apologise for being born Brahmans; We have the rights to live as Brahmans.

Srinivas Aiyangar Ramanujan

By
N. Sankaran

Srinivas Ramanujan was one of India's greatest mathematical geniuses. There are several Indians with that name but universally this appellation is attributed to this twentieth century mathematical genius. We are not here to discuss his mathematical work. That has been done the world over by professional mathematicians. Our discussion of this great man will be restricted to his human aspects and will be in anecdotal way.

Ramanujan was born on December 23, 1887. This year is remarkable in that that year produced several famous sons of India. Among others Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, and a leading world statesman in the fifties, and Sir C.V. Raman, the first Nobel Laureate in physics from India, are the foremost. A point to ponder: all three gentlemen were Brahmanas. Ramanujan was the most orthodox of them all, and also the poorest. His father worked in a textile merchant shop as a clerk for a pittance, and his mother supplemented the family income by giving lessons in devotional music in the Kumbhakonam temple. This is where Ramanujan received most of his early education including High School.

As was the custom in those days- still prevalent in several orthodox families in South India- Ramanujan was born in his

maternal grandmother's house in Erode. In one way or another he must have been attracted to and influenced by the deity in Namagiri, a neighboring town. We will return to this point a little later in our narration.

Ramanujan's appetite for mathematics manifested itself quite early and even before he completed his matriculation (11th standard) he was working on his own on elementary trigonometric problems, summation of arithmetic and geometric series, etc. His access to books was limited but the one book that influenced him the most was G.S. Carr's Synopsis of Elementary Rules in pure mathematics. The influence of this small and little known book pervaded throughout Ramanujan's brief but momentous career.

About the author

N. Sankaran is a retired Professor, and Head of the Department) of Mathematics, Punjab University, Chandigarh. He did his post-doctoral work in the U.S.A., and has been visiting various campuses as a faculty. He has authored many research papers in scientific journals. He currently lives in Bangalore (India) with his wife.

The book is a series of statements of diverse result without any serious explanations by way of proofs, and this aspect is reflected in the statement of deep, difficult and significant results which may be seen in Ramanujan's notebooks.

As an orthodox Aiyangar (Vasnavite) brahman, Ramanujan sported a hefty tuft and exhibited his sectarian affiliation by the vermilion mark sandwiched between two thick vertical white lies on his broad forehead. When he had to shave (or cut) off his tuft for a western style hair-

cut before proceeding to Cambridge, England, during the second decade of the twentieth century, he must have experienced some trauma.

It is sometimes said that he had some divine inspiration. As evidence thereof, it is oft quoted that he always retired to bed at night with a slate, chalk, and when he woke up either in the middle of the night or early morning, he used to jot down mathematical formulae of a very complicated variety. Somewhere I read that it was goddess Namagiri who

..Ramanujan worked in splendid isolation, without the luxury of books, periodicals or a mentor..

came in his dreams and inspired him. True or not it shows his unrestricted devotion to the goddess. It may be remarked that Ramanujan worked in splendid isolation, without the luxury of books, periodicals or a mentor. More often than not, in his early career, he worked mostly without any monetary assistance.

He was a very patriotic man, and a product of his abilities, not only in his chosen field of mathematics but also in culinary arts. Once while at Cambridge, he had invited some of the other Indian students to his apartment for a dinner. He served a lentil soup, commonly called Rasam, and asked one of the guests his opinion. When the expected opinion was not forthcoming, and a lack of quantity of a certain ingredient was pointed out, Ramanujan took it as an insult. He went into the kitchen and shipped out of the apartment leaving his guests to tend for themselves. His absence was reported to the police, and he was later found far from his residence.

Not much is known about his attitude towards religion although he never

neglected the rituals or the daily observances required of a traditional Brahman. This may be attributed to his upbringing- in the performance- and his single minded devotion to mathematics- in his attitude- as mathematics, his first love demanded his undivided attention. It may be pointed out that before embarking on a voyage to England he sought the advice of some teachers in the Madras Presidency College and Pachayappa's College and most- in fact all except one- were brahmans.

Ramanujan was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and he was the first Indian to honor this august body. Since then, as far as I know, only four more were elected in Mathematics, and of these five, four are South Indian Brahman Aiyangars. Professor Andre Weil once, during his two years stay in India in the 1930's, remarked that for abstract thinking in fields such as Mathematics, a certain amount of cultural background with a philosophical bent is required. And such a background was provided in the Brahman families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

A spiritual connection with numbers

Hardy, Ramanujan's friend and Mentor, came to see him when he was almost on his death bed. Hardy, obviously depressed, remarked that his ticket number 1729 must be unlucky. Ramanujan's tired eyes sparkled. He said 1729 is a beautiful number. It is the smallest number that can be written as sums of cubes of two different sets of numbers. In other words, while close to death, he solved the following problem. What is the smallest value of m such that $n_1^3 + n_2^3 = m$ and $n_3^3 + n_4^3 = m$? The solution is $m=1729$ with $n_1=10$, $n_2=9$, $n_3=12$, $n_4=1$.

Spiritual Support for Hindu Youth

By

Umesh K. Jois, Plainsboro, NJ

The increase in the number of Hindu students on American universities' campuses has led to the search for a way to facilitate the practice of their religion while away from home. There is a large and growing Hindu student population across the United States that is in need of spiritual support, guidance and solace during their young adult years. Religion should be an important part of our youngsters' lives as they pass through their most critical years and establish their identities. At present, Hindu students do not have the benefit of religious guidance and lack facilities to practice their religion on college campuses. In response to this need, Omkar Foundation USA, was formed in 2001 to work with the Hindu students at various universities.

Omkar's goal is to organize Hindu religious services at least once weekly, on a Saturday or Sunday morning, for about an hour, on or near college campuses across the USA, so that the students at these institutions can practice *sanatana dharmic* religion while attending school. *This is a simple pooja (worship), prayer and meditation program* for everyone to attend, just like going to a temple. Since most of the students do not have easy access to a temple, Omkar service creates the temple atmosphere for them to gather and pray.

This is a community-based program. For the success of this mission, help and support from local Hindu communities is

essential. Although as families we practice religion at home or go to temples and religious groups (satsang), there is no outreach and support from the community for the youth when they are on their own.

Community volunteers conduct Omkar's services. A group of six to eight volunteers is assigned to a college or university. By rotation, each volunteer performs the services once every six to eight weeks (approximately once every two months). Omkar provides the training and all the service material necessary for the volunteers. There is no cost involved either for the volunteers or the students to participate in this program.

The service, which is approximately one hour long, starts with beginning prayers followed by Ganesha pooja for about ten minutes. This is followed by group chanting of shanti mantras (prayers of peace),

simple pranayama and three meditations: Om meditation, gayathri meditation and silent meditation. This is followed by religious reading, taken from various dharmic scriptures, for about five minutes. Bhajans and religious singing follow the religious reading. The service concludes with everyone partaking in aarthi and receiving prasad.

Since April 2001, Omkar has been conducting these services regularly at Univ. of Pennsylvania and Rutgers University, and on a limited basis at Georgetown University (DC), Princeton University, Cornell University and Carnegie-Mellon University (PA).

For the success of this mission, help and support from local Hindu communities is essential.

OMKar's services have been received enthusiastically and with a lot of interest at all of these universities. Other universities including Boston University, Harvard University, Perdue University and University of Maryland have expressed interest in starting OMKar services.

Community help is essential for the success of this important mission. Any amount of time, resources and money you can donate will be the foundation of a worthy cause. If you are interested, want more information or want to know how you can start a OMKar volunteer group at a college or university in your area, please call 609-779-9272 or email Ukjois@aol.com.

Anagrams (continued from column 2)

Tom Cruise = So I'm Cuter

Animosity = Is No Amity

Mother-in-law = Woman Hitler

Snooze Alarms = Alas! No More Z's

Vacation Times = I'm Not as Active

Software = Swear Oft

Silicon Graphics = A Long Chip Crisis /
Can logic ship, sir?

The Detectives = Detect Thieves

A Gentleman = Elegant Man

A Decimal Point = I'm a Dot in Place

The Earthquakes = That Queer Shake

Twisted words

Anagram Hall of Fame

Internet Anagram Server = Isn't re-
arrangement rave?

Dormitory = Dirty Room

Elvis = Lives

Clint Eastwood = Old West Action

A Telephone Girl = Repeating "Hello"

Western Union = No Wire Unsent

The Country Side = No City Dust Here

Evangelist = Evil's Agent

Astronomers = Moon starers / No more
stars

The Cockroach = Cook, Catch Her

Desperation = A Rope Ends It

The Morse Code = Here Come Dots

Slot Machines = Cash Lost in'em

Conversation = Voices Rant On

Disraeli = I lead, Sir.

Clothespins = So Let's Pinch

The Great New York Rapid Transit Tunnel
= Giant Work in Street, Partly Underneath.

(Please go to column 1 of this page)

Brahman Electoral Group

By
Arvind Acharya

A time like the present, when we are attending the Brahman Convention, is the right time to think about what we need to do as a community. But why do we need to do anything as a community? Well, we do, because we have common values and a common culture that we are interested in protecting, and then nurturing and enhancing.

How does a community or a group of people protect their common wealth, and their common culture? How do a group of people use their collective strength, their collective zeal and their numbers to ensure that their claims and interests are protected in a pluralistic society? How do a group of people ensure their community dignity and its continuance in today's turbulent times?

The answer to the above questions is: the political process. But, what exactly is the political process? Who controls it? How do we, as a group with a proud cultural heritage do something that we may not have done anytime before?

In a democratic polity, such as India and the United States, the political process acts as the mainstream process in balancing the interests of various groups and communities. The people who are active in the political field, known as leaders and politicians, act together in evolving a common social agenda. The first step for this agenda is the enactment of broad policies. These policies are later translated into government

actions that impact the environment at large.

In order to ensure items of our interest on the agenda, we need to understand how the political system works. Each system is dependent on choice, particularly the choice we exercise during the elections. We have adequate time to examine and understand the broad inclinations of various political actors, leaders and parties, before we exercise our choice via the vote. Sometimes, these broad inclinations are dynamic, changing with time and tide. It can be to our advantage, therefore, to organize ourselves and represent our claims and interests continually. Our first step should be to influence the formulation of the agenda. If the agenda is already formed, then we should focus our efforts on altering it to suit

our needs. It is here that the flexibility of the political process comes to our aid.

But alas, we as

Brahmans, are notorious for our aloofness from this process. Most Brahmans consider themselves distinctly above the hurly-burly of politics. Some of them actually rationalize their inactivity with statements like "with less than 2% of the Indian population, what can Brahmans hope to achieve? Besides, we are already split into various languages, regions, gotras and economic classes. It is best for us to compete with each other and try to advance ourselves individually".

This approach may have worked earlier when the population was much smaller than it is today. The pressure of the increasing

How do we, as a group with a proud cultural heritage do something that we may not have done anytime before?

population is forcing the sharing of resources. This means that the groups that are organized are better able to stake their claims and share the spoils. It is this means of staking claims that leads us to consider what we need to do next.

In a democracy, the primary means of protecting a group's interests is to ensure that the elected representatives are aware of a group's concerns. A group can go one better and ensure that some of their members are deeply involved in the electoral process and are willing to contest elections with a view to safeguarding the group's interests and helping to achieve the group goals. In order for this to happen, the group will have to select, promote and elect a few representatives.

Following the above line of argument, it is imperative for today's Brahmins to actively participate in political activity. In India, the influence of the government is felt enormously on all walks of life. Therefore, a Brahmin elected representative will be able to articulate our hopes and aspirations and work to embed them within the domain of public policy.

As a corollary, we will all have to go out and cast our vote. The great tragedy of Indian electoral life is that the more educated a person is, the less likely he or she is to go out and exercise his/her franchise when there is an election. This has got to change. If we are prepared to participate, we will surely be able to find several leaders who are willing to work with us.

As a group, we need to start working on this now. The next election may be almost five years away, but a plan such as ours will take some time to implement. We should initially focus on placing 5 to 10 Brahmin candidates in the next elections to the Indian Parliament. Already there is some talk of giving voting rights to NRIs

and to ensuring that NRIs get to elect 2 or 3 MPs; if this happens, it will be a bonanza.

Make no mistake, however. This is not an easy process. Yet, this is the only one that will ensure our survival and then, growth. We have many opportunities to influence people and policy. We cannot, however, do it by taking an isolationist approach. We need to wholeheartedly participate and ensure that our strength is reflected in the results that emanate from our public representatives.

Let us initiate this subject for discussion at every convention and at every occasion. These efforts will snowball into something big very soon.

Grand deduction

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson go on a camping trip. After a good dinner and a bottle of wine, they retire for the night, and go to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes wakes up and nudges his faithful friend. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

"I see millions and millions of stars, Holmes" replies Watson. "And what do you deduce from that?" Watson ponders for a minute. "Well, astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful, and that we are a small and insignificant part of the universe. What does it tell you, Holmes?" Holmes is silent for a moment. "Watson, you idiot!" he says. "Someone has stolen our tent!"

Our Destiny is in Our Hands

By
Dr. Ashok Rudrapatna

We all learned in our civics courses years ago, that there are two sides to our role in the society: our rights and our duties as individuals. This is true whether we view it from our role as citizens of a country or our role as Brahmans in the society at large. We all need to be cognizant of both aspects. In this article I shall confine my views primarily to our duties or responsibilities as Brahmans. Everyone focuses on our rights, so I don't have much to say here.

Brahmans have played a unique and a key role in the development and sustenance of SanAtana Dharma (aka Hinduism), India, and in recent generations the world at large. Although we Brahmans represent a very small fraction of India (about 4%), we have made a positive impact much larger than our numbers. We have always been called up on as pradhAna mantris or divans of rulers of various kingdoms (Hindu, Muslim, or the English) in India in the past. And that has continued until recent past. While various communities have made contributions to SanAtana Dharma, Brahmans have been its backbone preserving and protecting its core practices, values and traditions.

What are the quintessential qualities of Brahmans? What sets us apart from others? A study of Brahmans reveals that we

have been known uniquely for:

1. Learning and scholarship in SanAtana Dharma: by excelling in our scholarship of the VedAs, Upanishads and other allied shastras.

2. Upholding the core practices, values and traditions of SanAtana Dharma. This

responsibility has been left up to and has been proudly carried on by the Brahman community.

3. Scholarship in Sanskrit: We are known for learning, propagating, and keeping alive this ancient, glorious, and crucial language

of our culture.

4. Teachers: Imparting our knowledge to society at large. Over the several millennia of glorious history of SanAtana Dharma, we Brahmans have excelled at the above responsibilities and one in which we performed an unparalleled unique yeoman service to our religion and culture. However, in the recent past we have neglected our duties to the detriment of everyone. Now I submit to you, that it is our duty as Brahmans to continue to fulfill our responsibilities in these areas. Now one might ask, why is it important in this day and age to carry on with these duties, and why must we the Brahmans do it? I will outline my views in the limited space available in this forum.

SanAtana Dharma is not only important for our own individual well being but also

About the author

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to all humanity. It is the mother of all religions: more ancient than any other active religion in existence, and addresses the highest aspirations and deepest needs of all mankind. Our very existence, self-worth, and self-esteem rest on a solid footing of a healthy SanAtana Dharma.

Just imagine a world in which no trace of SanAtana Dharma exists! What an incalculable loss that would be to humanity. Or that it is derided as a primitive, animistic religion. Imagine its consequence on our and our children's self-worth. Many other cultures and communities that have suffered this fate have seen a complete disintegration of their social fabric, causing untoward consequence on their survivors. We should never let that fate fall upon our glorious heritage, culture and religion!

Our very existence, selfworth, and selfesteem rest on a solid footing of a healthy SanAtana Dharma..

Many have argued that what was important in the past is no longer important now. We must discard excess and unnecessary baggage. Evaluate everything and retain only those that are useful for this day and age. Although this sounds like a prudent imperative, we need to be ultra careful not to ignore long term consequences and throw the baby out with the bath water. SanAtana Dharma is like a gigantic, glorious, and an ancient tree that has provided sustenance, and shelter to all of our culture, our ancestors and all of us. Its foundation is made up of many large roots. The tree will weaken and eventually die if any root rots and collapses. If any major root is weak, we must strengthen it, not chop it off! Let us contribute to the healing of the bruised root not to its collapse!

All of the unique duties outlined above that we Brahmans have performed historically in the past are severely neglected now. Many elite Brahman has stopped its practice; it is no longer fashionable to keep it up. We are neglecting the sacred dharma handed to us by our ancestors and have become one with the masses. We wonder why we are not respected, but are instead resented! Many view us as Brahmans only by birth, not deserving the privileges we have.

Although we hold secular careers, we must not give up our essential Brahman duties. We must carry out our NityakarmAs (daily sacraments such as SandhyAvandanam), study VedAs and shastras, keep with adequate knowledge of Sanskrit, and continue the practice of SanAtana Dharma. And in addition, we must be teachers of our faith, and provide leadership to our communities in the area of religious education. In many of these areas we have failed. We have been accused of exploiting our unique position to gain financial (extorting money for religious services) or other advantages for ourselves (seeking privileged positions). We must live the lives deserving of the appellation Brahman!

Subjective logic

An Alsatian dog went to a telegram office, took out a blank form and wrote:

“Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof. Woof.”

The clerk examined the paper and politely told the dog: “There are only nine words here. You could send another ‘Woof’ for the same price.”

“But,” the dog replied, “that would make no sense at all.”

21 Commandments of Sanatana Dharma

By
Dr. Maheswar P. Kasinadhuni

The Preceptor, having given the Vedic Instructions, advises the outgoing student, in keeping with the Vedic tradition, as follows:

[This is a list of twenty one commandments of Sanatana Dharma, for one and all, to follow in every day life .]

1. Speak Truth [Be an expression to truth and be truthful in thought and action; do not take to falsehood !]

2. Be Righteous, Just, Duty-bound and Responsible [Be intent upon being righteous always, everywhere and to everyone.]

3. Do not be heedless towards continued practice of Scriptures [do mean, meditate and reflect upon and above all Practice them.]

4. Be generous in giving gifts to the Learned, the Guru and those who uphold the Tradition, in support of your Lineage.

5. Do not fail to pay attention to being truthful and never swerve from the path of Truth.

6. Do not fail from doing your duty and never swerve from the Path of Duty, Justice and Righteousness.

7. Do not be careless about what is proper and what is Good to you and to every one as well.

8. Be gentle kind and humane with all forms of life man bird and beast, not even to the exclusion of the most insignificant.

9. Never be indifferent to the continued

support of the Scriptures followed by the dissemination of this Knowledge.

10. Be mindful of what should be offered to the Gods and Manes that you owe.

11. May your mother be an expression of God to you. [Mother indeed is verily the known expression of God in this world to you, to begin with !]

12. May your Father be an expression of God to you. [Father is the expression of

...twenty one commandments of Sanatana Dharma, for one and all, to follow in every day life...

God in this world and this world itself is an expression of God.]

13. May your Preceptor be an expression of God to you. [He is instrumental in reaching you to Knowledge both the worldly and spiritual as well.]

14. May the Guest be an expression of God to you. [You are a guest into this world, for, this world is a big guest house and God is our Host.]

15. Those acts that are irreproachable alone are to be performed and not otherwise.

16. Those virtuous actions alone must be performed, that leave good history behind, for the ages to come and not otherwise.

17. To those, more distinguished in session, you should not even breathe out a word before you offer your seat to them.

18. Charities you must believe in and give willingly gladly out of friendliness and never give unwillingly or out of disrespect.

19. Give appropriate gifts, always in-

private, in fear, with humility, modesty, in accordance to your wealth and your ability.

20. For such actions that you are uncertain of, you should seek to the advice from the experienced, just and the objective.

21. And to those who are falsely accused, be cautious and you should rule yourself and act in keeping with Law and Justice.

This is the Direction ! This is the Advice ! This is the secret Instruction ! and this is the Commandment !!

Verily after having understood one must rule oneself in life in the manner stated and act continuously in the way taught above till the last and not otherwise.

Poetry Corner

Anger

Anger is blazing red.

It smells like burning chocolate.

It looks like a firebreathing dragon.

It tastes like dry, rough sand.

It sounds like the shouting of help in a deserted island.

Anger feels like a rock in your heart trying to break its way out.

By

Kanu Bhargava (Age 12)

Jokes? Not quite!

Old sayings– new understandings

The grass is always greener when you leave the sprinkler on.

A rolling stone plays the guitar.

The grass is always greener when you remember to water it.

A bird in the hand is a real mess.

No news is no newspaper.

It's better to light one candle than to waste electricity.

It's always darkest just before I open my eyes.

You have nothing to fear but homework.

If you can't stand the heat, don't start the fireplace.

If you can't stand the heat, go swimming.

Never put off 'til tomorrow what you should have done yesterday.

A penny saved is nothing in the real world.

The squeaking wheel gets annoying.

We have nothing to fear but our principal.

To err is human. To eat a muskrat is not.

I think, therefore I get a headache.

Laugh and the world laughs with you. Cry, and someone yells, "Shut up!"

Better to light a candle than to light an explosive.

It's always darkest before 9:30 p.m.

Early to bed and early to rise is first in the bathroom.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a blister.

There is nothing new under the bed.

The grass is always greener when you put manure on it.

Don't count your chickens -- it takes too long.

A woman is as old as she looks. A man is old when he stops looking.

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Aryabhata's Life By Richa Pandey

Accomplishments

Aryabhata was the first of the great astronomers of the classical age of India. He was born in the Asmaka region of the Vakatika dynasty in South India in 476 AD, but lived most of his life in Kusumapura in the Gupta Empire of the north India. He died in 499 AD at age 23. He was known as Aryabhata I or Aryabhata the Elder, to distinguish him from another Indian mathematician of the same name born in the 10th century. Aryabhata the Elder, flourished in Kusumapura-near Patna.

It is said that Aryabhata was the author of at least three astronomical texts and wrote some free stanzas as well, but only one survived, the small but famous masterpiece the *Aryabhatiya*. Written by him at the age of 23, he organized and combined his own theories, and existing knowledge of astronomy and mathematics.

It was written in 118 verses giving a summary of Hindu mathematics and astronomy up to that time. It contains an introduction of 10 verses, followed by a section on mathematics, which contains 33 verses giving 66 mathematical rules without proof. Next is a section of 25 verses on the reckoning of time and planetary models, with the final section of 50 verses being on the sphere and eclipses

In mathematics he broke his work into three main sections..

1. Ganita (mathematics),
2. Kala-kriya (calculation of time)
3. Gola (sphere)

The *Ganita* deals with mathematics and addresses the methods of determining square and cube roots, geometrical problems, progression, problems involving quadratic equations and indeterminate equations.

Kala-kriya is perhaps the most famous section of his works. It contains the system for representing numbers that Aryabhata invented and used throughout the book. It consists of giving numerical values to the 33 consonants of the Indian alphabet to represent 1, 2, 3, 25, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100. The higher numbers are denoted by these consonants followed by a vowel to obtain 100, 10000, etc. In fact the system allows numbers up to 10¹⁸ to be represented with an alphabetical notation. It proves that he was familiar with the numerical values and place value system. It is extremely likely that Aryabhata knew the sign for zero and the numerals of the place value system. This is because, the invention of his alphabetical counting system would have been impossible without zero or the place-value system, and secondly, he carries out calculations on square and cubic roots, which are impossible if the numbers in question are not written according to zero.

In *Gola*, Aryabhata defines, that all the circles given in the armillary sphere together with the small circles represent the diurnal motion of the sun. He was the first astronomer to mention that the diurnal motion of the heavens is due to the rotation of the earth around its axis.

Other contributions Aryabhata made towards mathematics were his sine tables, and his approximation of pi. He found pi

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by adding four to one hundred, multiplying by eight, and then adding sixty-two thousand. The result was approximately the circumference of a circle with the diameter of twenty thousand. By this rule the relation of the circumference to diameter is given, and it is how Aryabhata deciphered pi.

Aryabhata, in the words of Parameswaran, a respected mathematician is the master who, after reaching the furthest shore, and plumbing the inmost depths of the sea of ultimate knowledge of mathematics, kinematics, and spherics, handed over the three sciences to the learned world.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, one of the most celebrated Bengali novelists and pioneering essayists, was born in Kantalpara near Naihati in an orthodox Brahmin family on 26th June 1838. Chatterjee was the youngest of three brothers in the family - the second, Sanjeeb Chandra, too, was a notable Bengali writer. He was married when he was only a boy of eleven. His first wife died in 1859. He remarried Rajlaxmi Devi of Hali's famous Choudhury family.

Bankim Chandra belonged to a Brahmin family of Hooghly district. He began his education in Midnapore. In 1856 he joined Presidency College and became one of the first graduates of the Calcutta University. Afterwards he sat for a law examination in 1869 and had a brilliant academic carrier. He was a man of refined culture and good taste. He was brought up in the atmosphere of racialism in Bengal. His personality brought him into contact with distin-

guished men, but his deep sense of self-respect & mastery of facts made him planned into bitter controversies with his superiors. His famous novel Anandmath was published in 1882. In 1874 he composed "Bande Matram" which was sung at the second session of Indian National Congress in 1886. He realized that English education could not be neglected but felt that the western ideas could penetrate the masses through vernacular literature, which would bring out a social regeneration. As his concept of Nationalization was wider, he has been referred to as the "Prophet of Indian Nationalism".

Bankim Chandra's literary career started in the late 1850's with publication of a number of youthful compositions in the Sambad Prabhakar and with his first book of poetry Lalita O Manas. Serialisation in 1964 of his English novel Rajmohan's Wife in the Indian Field provided a mere hint of a talented author in the making. His first Bengali novel Durgeshnandini written between 1862-1864 and published in 1865 ushered in a new era in Indian literature. Severely criticised though, by the conservatives, it was enormously popular as is evidenced by its thirteen editions (in those days) in three decades after its publication. The fountain of his creative genius started flowing freely after birth of the Bangodarshan magazine under his editorial supervision. His novels had large subject matter of which varied from mundane matters of economics to serious analysis and evaluation of literature, art, science, society, philosophy and religion.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's death on April 4, 1894 as he started a major project on the ancient Indian Vedic and Puranic lit-

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erature suddenly brought a sudden end to this brilliant literary star of Bengal.

To begin an evaluation of this literary giant's contribution one has to understand the nature and decaying state of the Bengali language and literary discipline at the time. Bengali literature, in its infancy, was almost facing extinction - a sad state of affairs. Tagore later referred to this as its 'pratosandhya' or sunset at dawn. Tagore, who probably was one of first few, who genuinely appreciated the prolific nature and depth of Bankim Chandra's contribution to Bengali language and literature, wrote after the author's untimely death. When Bankim appeared in Bengali literary scene with his treasure of fresh talents, the old-fashioned folks of that era did not welcome his writings. Bankim had to suffer from a barrage of criticisms, ridicules and slanderous accusations ... It was that time as we reached adolescence, the Bengali literary sun was setting at dawn.

Whatever will make us immortal, that great power, the only medium which will enable us to hold, maintain, express and to publicize everywhere, it is he who strengthened and glorified that mother tongue.

Bankim himself treated Bengali language with utmost respect and he expected others to do likewise. His extraordinary language skills, crystal-clear analytical logic and judgement, great sense of humor, fearless conviction, free-thinking mind and allegiance only to truth made him an ideal writer who was willing, able, and strong enough to easily lead the way by setting examples in each branch of the infant literature. He was a pioneer - the master of his craft. He was a reformer and a true builder.

He did not, however, stop there. He took upon himself the duty of a critic, as well, to ensure that certain minimum standards were maintained. His unforgiving attitude towards literary weeds or outgrowth often landed him with unnecessary heartaches at times. But he remained firm in his objective - he continued with his own ideals and plans regardless.

He dispelled superstitions with reason, mythology with history and belief with scientific principles. *Krishnacharitra*, in which the author traces available classical literature to establish the historical existence. The Shri Krishna persona shall remain as the best testimony and timeless monument to his immense intellectual and methodological ability to dissect the fact from fiction, history from legend, truth from imagination, fire from smoke and man from God. A task any writer would find extremely difficult as he or she would have to negotiate a fine line between popular beliefs and dearth of concrete evidence either for or against such mythology on the one hand and the logical impossibility of a man being God. Tagore said that in *Krishnachaitra*, Shrikrishna is not the lead character - the free-thinker, that resides in the human mind, is. It is that free-thinking mind the author glorified for ever.

Bankim's sense of humor in its satirical best is captured in his timeless *Kamalakanter Daptar*. Undoubtedly one of the best of its kind, it is witty, intellectually agile and satirically most gruesome in detail comments on the social, economic and cultural issues of the time.

Bankim's *Bande Mataram*, the greatest patriotic hymn that aroused the entire nation

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to fight for their freedom - one, which unfortunately fuelled the Muslim's anger - which in turn caused congress to drop it from its most favored position as the national anthem of free India. It is the single most important evidence of the author's ability to read and understand the great Indian people and its way of life. It is that understanding which reinforced his literary work with the essence of Indian existence.

Through his vision and his immense authority as an administrator, he endowed Calcutta and West Bengal with certain crucial systems and assets that survived a long period of turmoil and stagnation and now, though radically modified at times can serve as the basis for future growth.

The National Song Composed by Bankim Chandra; Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's English translation

Vande Mataram!
I bow to thee, Mother,
Sujalam, suphalam,
richly-watered, richly-fruited
(malayaja shitalam),
cool with the winds of the south,
Shasyashyamalam,
dark with the crops of the harvests,
Mataram!
The Mother!
Shubhrajyothsna
Her nights rejoicing in the
pulakitayaminim
glory of the moonlight
Phullakusumita drumadala
her lands clothed beautifully
shobinim
with her trees in

Suhasinim sumadhura
flowering bloom
bhashinim,
sweet of laughter, sweet of speech
Sukhadam varadam,
The Mother, giver of boons,
Mataram!
giver of bliss!

C.V. Raman by Ankit Bhardwaj

C.V. Raman (Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman) was a great Brahman that won the Nobel Prize in Physics. He received this Nobel Prize for his discovery of the inelastic scattering of light, also known as the Raman Effect. He was born in Tiruchirapalli, India in 1888. From 1917-1933, Raman was a professor of physics at the University of Calcutta. In 1922, Raman published the book, Molecular Diffraction of Light. It was in 1930 that he received his Nobel Prize. He then became the head of the Department of Physics of the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore in 1933. In 1934, Raman became the president of The Indian Academy of Sciences. After that, Raman became the Director of the Raman Research Institute, in Bangalore (1947). In 1951, he then published, The New Physics; Talks on Aspects of Science.

One can also look into Raman's impressive early life. The first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of his first accomplishments is that Raman finished school by the age of eleven. He acquired his BA degree from the Presidency College, Madras, where he did original research in the college laboratory, publishing his results in a philosophical magazine.

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The details of the Raman Effect are most important as well. The Raman Effect occurs when a ray of incident light excites a molecule in a sample that subsequently scatters the light. While most of this scattered light is of the same wavelength as the incident light, some of it is scattered at a different wavelength. This inelastically scattered light is called 'RAMAN SCATTER' resulting from the molecule changing its molecular motion. Energy difference between incident light & the Raman scattered light is equal to the energy involved in changing the molecule vibrational state.

Indira Gandhi **By Ritu Pandey**

INDIA COMES FIRST!!! While growing up, this is what Indira Gandhi heard over and over again; she believed it too. This belief helped her achieve many great things for India.

Early Childhood

Indira was born on November 19, 1917 in her grandfather's house, called Anand Bhavan, in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, Northern India. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru was a famous freedom fighter and later became The Prime Minister of India. Her mother, Kamala Nehru was a housewife and also helped her husband with India's freedom fight.

Early childhood for Indira was not a very joyful period. During the freedom fight movement her mother and father both went to jail. Even her grandmother, grandfather, aunts and uncles spent time in

jail for the same cause as her parents. She was an only child but because of these events she was an only and lonely child. This made her mature faster. When she was very small she became interested in politics. She would gather servants and their children and make political speeches.

Once Mahatma Gandhi said that Indians should use only Indian things. Indira's family thought this was a good idea so they burned all their British things. Indira had a little British doll that she loved but she remembered INDIA COMES FIRST and so she burned her doll.

Childhood

Indira's father and grandfather led a political group called the Indian National Congress party. When Indira was eleven she wanted to join. "No! Not until you are eighteen," she was told. Indira was sad so she formed a group called the Monkey Brigade. It was a hit, more than a thousand kids joined. They did things for grownups in the Congress party, like giving them water during meetings and things like that. The kids did all of this behind the backs of the police.

Schooling

Indira went to many different schools. She even went to a school in Switzerland. In 1934 she went to a University in Calcutta called Visva- Bharati. In 1935 she had to leave school because her mother was ill with tuberculosis. Since her father was in jail, Indira had to go to Switzerland with her mother.

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Unfortunately, her mother died in 1936 when Indira was only 19 years old.

Indira also went to England to study at Oxford University and this was a happy period for her. While in England, during World War II, Indira worked as an ambulance driver for the British Red Cross. After a while she started feeling homesick because there was a lot of work to be done for India's freedom. So in 1941 she decided to return back to India with Feroze Gandhi.

Married Life

On March 26, 1942, Indira married Feroze Gandhi and became Indira Gandhi. In 1944 she became a mother when Rajiv was born. In 1946 their second son Sanjay was born. By now India's freedom fight was very intense. Finally in 1947 India won her independence. A new chapter began for India as well as Indira.

Political Life

Indira's father Jawaharlal Nehru became first Prime Minister of India. Indira knew that her father needed a lot of help so she decided to go and live with her father. This was not good for her marriage but she did it because INDIA CAME FIRST. Indira traveled with her father all over the world. She observed her father during these travels and learned to be a great politician. In 1959, she became the president of the Congress party. She was tough. She got rid of people who were not doing their jobs. She helped party members to work together.

In 1964 Jawaharlal Nehru died. Indira became a minister of information and

broadcasting in the cabinet of Lal Bahadur Shastri. In 1966 Lal Bahadur Shastri died and Indira Gandhi became The Prime Minister of India.

Most Powerful Woman in the World

All of a sudden from a simple minister she became the leader of millions of people of India. She was strong, she was firm, and she knew what was good for India. She created green revolution in India. She worked at India's money problems. And she minimized threats from Pakistan. During her period as Prime Minister, Pakistan got divided as Bangladesh and Pakistan. She showed rest of the world that India was a great power.

In 1980 her younger son Sanjay died. It was a very sad time for her. But she did not stop working for the country because she knew INDIA CAME FIRST.

A very sad moment came in Indira's carrier. A group of Sikhs wanted to divide India in two countries. She knew that it was not good for India or for the Sikhs. She aggressively tried to stop the efforts of this small group. She succeeded in stopping this movement but paid very dearly. A day before her death, addressing a huge crowd, she said, "I am not afraid... if I die today every drop of my blood will invigorate the nation. On October 31, 1984 at the age of 66 she was shot dead by her own Sikh guards while she was walking through her garden. When Indira Gandhi died a brilliant chapter in the history of India was gone with her. Once again she proved to the nation and to the world that no matter what INDIA COMES FIRST.

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Madan Mohan Malaviya by Anubhav Bhargava

Madan Mohan Malaviya was born in Allahabad on December 25, 1861. His family was poor but had a high social status and was known for their Sanskrit scholarship.

Mohan was a very hard working boy, entered University in 1879 and joined the Muir Central College and finally graduated from the Calcutta University in 1884.

The legal profession did not attract him though he studied law and passed the LL.B. examination in 1891. Although he was a strong supporter of the Congress he founded the Hindu Mahasabha in 1906. It was established, according to its supporters, to oppose not the just claims of the Muslim community but the "divide and rule" policy of the British Government. Malviya became a High Court Vakil in 1893.

Madan Mohan withdrew from the legal profession in 1909 but he made an exception in 1922 in regard to the appeal of 225 people that were condemned to death in connection with the Chauri Chaura riots (Gorakhpur District, U.P.) on account of which Mahatma Gandhi suspended the civil disobedience movement, and saved 153 accused from the gallows.

Madan Mohan was very much involved in newspapers. He started the Abhyudaya as a Hindi weekly newspaper in 1907 and made it a daily one in 1915. He also started the Maryada, a Hindi monthly in 1910 and another Hindi monthly, in

1921. He started the Leader, an English daily in October 1909. He was the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hindustan Times from 1924 to 1946.

In result of the active work that he did as Senior Vice-Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality, he was elected to the Provincial Legislative Council in 1902.

He took a keen interest in the industrial development of the country and was therefore appointed a member of the Indian Industrial Commission in 1916.

Because of the non-cooperation movement started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, he did not seek election to the Indian Legislative Assembly in 1921 in order to display his own 'non-cooperation'. But he became a member of the Assembly from 1924 to April 1930. He resigned shortly after the salt satyagraha started by Mahatma Gandhi and took part in it. He was invited to the Round Table Conference in 1931, but he eventually returned dissatisfied with the attitude of the British Government.

He had a strong opinion about the injustice done to the depressed classes in connection with temple entry and pleaded their cause before the pandits in 1936. He also favored raising of the position of Hindu women in all types of the economy.

He had the courage to stand against more than one idea from the Mahatma even at the risk of becoming unpopular. He opposed, for example, the boycott of schools and colleges, the burning of foreign cloth and the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1921.

Madan Mohan died in 1946 at the age of 85.

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Mangal Pandey: First Freedom Fighter

By Kunal Choubey

The first freedom fighter and martyr Shree Mangal Pandey was born in village Nagwa District Ballia. He was famous for bravery amongst his colleagues. An English scholar "Fisher" has written that Shri Mangal Pandey had all the qualities of a good soldier. The first war of freedom (1857-58) was the first widespread uprising against the rule of the British East India Company.

He was a soldier in the army of the British East India Company. At the time of the First War of Independence, the Company introduced new rifles, which used animal fat for greasing the cartridges. Influenced by the example of his compatriots in Behrampur, Mangal Pandey refused to use the greased cartridges and broke into open mutiny on March 29, 1857, at Barrackpore near Calcutta and used his comrades to join him. Surrounded by guards and European Officers, he tried to commit suicide by shooting himself and was seriously wounded. He was court-martialled on April 6 and hanged at Barrackpore on April 8, 1857. Indian Posts & Telegraphs Department is privileged to issue four commemorative stamps in the memory of these great Freedom Fighters.

Pandey's actions set off India's First War Of Independence, the tremors of which began on this day in 1857 at Meerut, escalated to a violent rebellion against the British on May 10 and later to an uprising that

spread out over Northern India. While India marks most of the dates that highlighted India's freedom march against the British, the Sepoy Mutiny, (or Uprising) has been largely ignored. It has been seen as a movement that the Crown ruthlessly crushed, but it was, in fact, India's First War Of Independence. Through history, accounts of India's sepoy uprising have survived many retellings and it's difficult to separate fact from fiction. But there's no denying the events leading up to India's big rebellion against the East India Company is a rousing story, a part of which is currently being filmed.

Even before the cartridge controversy broke out, Indians were chafing at British imperialism. Records say that many believed in a prophecy-that a hundred years after Robert Clive's victory at the Battle of Plassey (1757), the British rule would come to an end. Then the British Army got the special Enfield rifles. Its cartridges were coated with grease, the soldier would have to bite it, then load the rifle.

Pandey's actions set off India's First War Of Independence, the tremors of which began on this day in 1857 at Meerut, escalated to a violent rebellion against the British on May 10 and later to an uprising that spread out over Northern India. When the sepoys learnt that the grease coating was made of beef and pork fat. It enraged the Hindus and Muslims. The British tried to switch to vegetable oil fat instead, but the damage had been done.

General John Hearsey was the Officer Commanding in Barrackpore in 1857. In January, he informed the Governor-General that the sepoys had to be reassured, but little

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was done. The storm broke out on March 29, 1857. Mangal Pandey (said to be 24 years old), a sepoy of the 34th Native Infantry, was storming up and down the parade ground, in a "religious frenzy", as Hearsay later put it in his report.

When Lieutenant R H Baugh tried to snatch the rifle away from him, Pandey fired at his horse from beneath and the officer was thrown off. Baugh sprang up and fired at the sepoy, but missed him. He reportedly threw the pistol at Pandey and rushed at him. However, Pandey slashed at Baugh with his sword, injuring him severely.

Hearsey was at his bungalow, when he heard of the furore. He rushed with his two sons to the parade ground. Some accounts describe Hearsey yelling out to his son to finish the job, if he wasn't able to stop Pandey.

Pandey reportedly panicked and tried to shoot himself, pointing the rifle at him and trying to pull the trigger with his foot. He failed, was arrested, court-martialled and hung by the British army. The whole garrison was disbanded, but the stage had been set.

On May 9, 85 troopers of the 3rd Light Cavalry in Meerut refused to handle the cartridges. They were stripped of their uniforms, their legs shackled and sentenced to ten years hard labour before the whole garrison. On May 10, a Sunday, enraged sepoys broke through the jail and released their comrades. They poured into the cantonments, killed all the Europeans, including women and children, and set fire to it.

Fearing retribution, the sepoys escaped to Delhi and declared Mughal emperor Ba-

hadur Shah as their titular leader. The uprising later spread to areas like Lucknow and Kanpur, but the British army gathered reinforcements and struck back. By September 1857, the uprising was mostly quelled.

Unarmed sepoys were bayoneted, fired from cannons or sown up in carcasses of the very same pigs and cows that they had refused to touch. The army had pounded down a rebellion, but the Sepoy Uprising, 147 years on May 10, had set the foundation of India's struggle for independence.

Shri Mangal Pandey was due to be executed on 18th April but he was hanged ten days before i.e. 8th April and it was kept secret. Because English rules were well aware of the fact that if Mangal Pandey remains alive it will endanger British rule. Thus Mangal Pandey became the first freedom fighter and martyr of 1857. The name of Mangal Pandey became an emblem of revolt against British rule.

Nehru by Shival Bajpay

Jawaharlal Nehru was born on November 14, 1889 in a Brahman family in a place called Allahabad, which is located in central India. His father, Motilal Nehru, played an important role in leading India to its independence.

Nehru went to England and studied in Cambridge University until he returned to India in 1912. During the next thirty years Nehru slowly rose up the ranks until he was finally the top political leader of the Indian National Congress Party. He helped India greatly in its struggle to gain independence from Britain. Nehru was sent to jail several

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times during his life. He had only one daughter, Indira, who later became Prime Minister of India.

After India finally became independent, Nehru served as India's first Prime Minister. Nehru served from 1947 until he died in May of 1964. He was also a great internationalist, and one of the founders of the non-aligned movement. Nehru was a renowned orator. He was very fond of children and he was called "Nehru Chacha". Now Nehru's birthday, November 14, is celebrated as children's day in India. Sometimes he could be found giving many extemporaneous during the same day. His most famous speech, "Tryst With Destiny", was given on August 14, 15 of the year 1947 to the Constituent Assembly of India. On that day this is what Nehru said, "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity."

Pt. Rajan and Sajan Mishra By Shreya Bajpay

About the Artists

Pandits Rajan and Sajan Mishra are two of the most beloved and highly regarded

vocalists in India. These two brothers are considered the foremost exponents of the Banaras style of Khayal (a form of North Indian classical music) singing. Bhajan. Their voices have reached every part of India.

Their Training

Born into the famous Banaras gharana, Pandit Rajan Mishra and Pandit Sajan Mishra belong to a family of great maestros. They were trained in vocal music under the able guidance of their father, Pandit Hanuman Mishra, a well known vocalist himself.

Their Singing Style

Pt. Rajan and Sajan Mishra must be acclaimed as the best in jugalbandi (duet) singing which requires immaculate coordination among other things. With their immense skills, imagination, and energy they have raised the status of jugalbandi music to the heights rarely heard before.

About the Music of Pt. Rajan and Sajan Mishra

Pt. Rajan Sajan Mishra are best known for rendering Hindustani music in the Khayal tradition which is perhaps the most popular of all the North Indian classical music. The word Khayal literally means "imagination". Khayal is several hundred years old. Originating in the courts of the Moghul emperors as a less rigid alternative to the Dhrupad style.

Khayal texts draw freely from Hindu and Muslim poetic traditions, and are usually romantic or devotional -- or a combination of the two. Performances of Khayal often start with a song in a very slow rhyth-

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mic cycle, perhaps of 10, 12, 14 or 16 beats. This music presented in a jugalbandi format, as the Mishra brothers do, surely should provide rapturous delight to the audience.

Pandit Srinivasa Ramanujan By Vedant Misra

(31 July 2004)

"A short uncouth figure, stout, unshaven, not over clean, with one conspicuous feature - shining eyes - walked in with a frayed notebook under his arm.... He opened his book and began to explain some of his discoveries. I saw quite at once that there was something out of the way...."

That passage, authored by the founder of the Indian Mathematical Society, describes a quiet, humble man from a South Indian Brahmin family named Srinivasa Ramanujan, who later became renowned as one of the world's most brilliant mathematical prodigies.

Ramanujan was born in a small village outside Madras in 1887. At the age of five, he started attending primary school in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, where he did well in all of his classes - a well-rounded scholar. It wasn't until Ramanujan's adolescence that his love of mathematics first manifested itself. In high school, Ramanujan came across what would serve as the archetype for the theorems he produced throughout most of his mathematical career - a textbook entitled *Synopsis of Elementary Results in Pure Mathematics*, by G.S. Carr. *Synopsis* was written in a very concise style, thus enabling Ramanujan to teach himself

mathematics. However it was based almost entirely on short proofs and theorems, and since this was the primary and most influential source of mathematical education that Ramanujan had, it adversely affected the style of his future work.

By 1904, at the age of 17, Ramanujan began undertaking more complex research. He calculated Euler's constant to 15 decimal places and worked with hypergeometric series and Bernoulli numbers. But it wasn't until 1913 that the catalyst for Ramanujan's career took its effect. Ramanujan wrote to a British mathematician, G.S. Hardy asking for advice on how he should continue his research; Hardy was impressed with the 100 theorems that Ramanujan had included in his letter and soon became convinced that he was reading a letter written by a true mathematical genius. Hardy invited Ramanujan to come to Cambridge. Although hesitant to leave his home and culture behind to move to an ostensibly hostile foreign land, he eventually consented to the move and was admitted to Trinity College in 1914.

Ramanujan's time in England was very mathematically productive. He gained the recognition that he yearned for: Cambridge granted him a BSc degree "by research" in 1916. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1918 (the first Indian to be granted that honor), and then a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge. However, the alien climate, culture and Diet at Cambridge took a toll on Ramanujan's health. He was accustomed to a tropical climate and vegetarian cooking, both of which were difficult to procure in England. Wartime shortages only made things worse. In 1917 he was

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hospitalized; doctors feared for his life. By late 1918, partly as a result of the honors he had attained, his health improved. In 1919, he returned to India, but his health failed again and he died the next year.

The fact that Ramanujan lacked formal mathematical instruction worked to his advantage. He would often arrive at results through inexplicable and seemingly illogical means. It is his brilliance and ingenuity that spurred me to choose Srinavasa Ramanujan for this task

Biography

The government first acknowledged my existence as a legally recognized individual on the third of January, 1988. I was also born on this day. I hail from North Carolina, although it's not much of a home state, since I was there for only a short time. Of course, I can't consciously recall anything from the first few years of my existence, so I won't bother making things up.

From what I hear about what I was like as a toddler, I have always had an inclination towards science and math. I still have a great interest in math (and physics), which is principally why I chose to write about Ramanujan for this task.

I would go into more detail about what little Vedant was like, but honestly, it's not that interesting, and it's beyond the scope of this blurb anyway.

I'm going to be a senior next year. I haven't thought about what I want to do for a living, although I should get started. I'm told that I spend a disproportionate amount of time inviting carpal-tunnel syndrome in front of a glowing computer monitor. This is partially due to the fact that I'm a com-

puter programmer, I write music on the computer, and most importantly, I learn.

I have eclectic taste in music, and I have completely un-eclectic taste in books: JRR Tolkien is the way to go. I've been playing the piano since childhood; music has also always played a large role in my life. I'm a Tae Kwon Do black belt and I like to play tennis whenever I can.

Works Cited:

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Ravi Shankar by Shantum Misra

"Behind every object is infinity. Behind every event is knowledge. Behind every person is love. Love yourself to find your Self."

"Meditation is seeing God in yourself. Love is seeing God in the person next to you. Knowledge is seeing God everywhere."

Reading these quotes you can understand why I chose to write about Ravi Shankar as my famous Brahman. Ravi Shankar is a distinguished virtuoso whose exceptional sitar playing leaves people in awe. Throughout India Ravi Shankar is a singular phenomenon in classical music

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worlds of east and west.

Ravi Shankar was born on April 7, 1920 in Benares into a Bengali Brahmin family. He studied under the guru Baba Allaudin Khan. The sitarist became famous worldwide in 1966 when he became George Harrison's (The Beatles) mentor. George began experimenting with the sitar and soon they were playing in sold-out concerts worldwide. Ravi Shankar has worked with Yehudi Menuhin on violin-sitar compositions and with Jean Pierre Ramped. Ravi Shankar saw a meteoric rise in his fame across the globe as he became an renowned musician, composer and recording artist.

I picked Ravi Shankar because there is something common between us. Like him, I come from a Brahmin family with roots in Benaras. We both share a common interest in string instruments. Though Ravi Shankar plays the sitar, I play similar instruments: the guitar and violin. Like him, I've also composed some songs on the guitar.

Now Ravi Shankar resides in Encinitas, California and regularly plays in concerts throughout America. He recently won a Grammy (his third!) for his latest album 'Full Circle/ Live at Carnegie Hall 2000'. His daughters Anoushka Shankar and Norah Jones are also musicians. Anoushka, like her father, is a professional sitarist; Norah professionally sings.

I hope I have educated you a little about one of India's best musicians.

Hello, I am Shantum Misra, and I currently reside in Harriman, New York. I am thirteen years old and going into ninth grade. In my free time I enjoy playing baseball, tennis, and basketball. When not playing sports I'm usually playing my guitar

or violin. Whenever I need to relax I usually find something to do on the computer, or grab a good book to read.

Pandit Ravi Shankar **By Isha Misra**

Pandit Ravi Shankar is one of India's most renowned sitarists and composers. As a performer, composer, teacher and writer, he has done more for Indian music than any other musician. He is well known for his bringing Indian music to the West. He was born on April 7th, 1920 in Banaras into a Bengali Brahman family.

Shankar's early upbringing was steeped in music and culture. As a child he played and sang in several school functions. When Ravi Shankar was a child, his father and his brother, Uday Shankar, moved to Europe. In 1930, Ravi moved to Paris to be part of his brother's troupe. In Paris, he was exposed to both Indian and Western music and dance. His vast knowledge of both made him a formidable opponent in the world of music.

In 1938, he returned to India to begin his formal training in music. He became an apprentice to Ustad Allauddin Khan, affectionately called Baba. He spent several years learning sitar under Baba's tutelage. After completing his apprenticeship, Ravi Shankar set out to pursue his professional career. He began to become very well known in radio and music. He composed music for such films as Dharti Ke Lal and Neecha Nagar. He even composed the music for the most famous version of Mohd. Iqbal's Sare Jahan Se Accha. He became a music director for All - India radio in 1949. In 1966, George Harrison of the Beatles became Ravi Shankar's student. This associa-

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tion made Ravi Shankar internationally famous. He performed at various places such as Woodstock and Monterey.

Shankar has won several awards including various Grammy awards and honorary doctorates, and even the Bharat Ratna; the highest award that can be given to an Indian civilian. Ravi Shankar is also the 2003 recipient of the ISPA Distinguished Artist Award. The award is given to performing artists who have made an outstanding contribution of talent, artistry, dedication and service to the world for performing arts. Past recipients of the ISPA Distinguished Artist

Award have included Yehudi Menuhin, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Simon Rattle, Martha Graham, Cameron Mackintosh and Kurt Masur. The award was presented to Ravi Shankar by Minister of State for the Arts, Estelle Morris, at the ISPA conference in

London. Also, Ravi Shankar's latest album 'Full Circle/ Live at Carnegie Hall 2000' took first place in the 5th Annual NAV Music Awards in the Traditional World category. Not only that, but Ravi Shankar has been awarded an honorary knighthood by the Queen of England.

Ravi Shankar is currently married to Sukanya; and his daughter, Anoushka is well known sitarist. Another daughter, Norah Jones, whose first album, "Come Away With Me" went multi - platinum and won her eight Grammy awards. The love and respect he commands both in India and in the West is unique in the annals of the history of music. Perhaps no greater tribute can be paid to this genius than the words of his colleagues:

"Ravi Shankar has brought me a pre-

cious gift and through him I have added a new dimension to my experience of music. To me, his genius and his humanity can only be compared to that of MOZART'S."

- Yehudi Menuhin

"Ravi Shankar is the Godfather of World Music"

- George Harrison

RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861-1941)

By Lokesh Ojha

Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 6, 1861 as the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore's twelve children. As a Brahman from Bengal, Tagore succeeded as a Hindu philosopher, an inspirational leader, and most notably, an Indian poet.

Awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913, Tagore was the first Asian writer to be so honored. In addition to being author of India's National Anthem, he founded a school and university at Shantiniketan, his birthplace. A few books by Tagore are Gitanjali, The Cabuliwallah, and The Hungry Stones. During his time, he was honored not only as a great poet, but also as a great spiritual guide. It is said that his work, The Post Office, "was read over Radio France the evening before Paris fell to the Nazis, and was performed by children in the Warsaw ghetto just before they were taken away to be murdered" (Dutta, 22).

Mahatma Gandhi named him "The Great Sentinel." Albert Einstein also regarded Tagore as a very wise man. Traveling the world, Tagore shared his artistic talents and gained praise from some of the

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most well-known people. India's first Prime Minister, Jawarhalal Nehru, wrote: "Among the world's great men today, Gandhi and Tagore were supreme as human beings"(Dutta, 3). The best way to understand why so many hold Tagore in such high regard is to begin by reading some of his works which I have included below.

The Indian National Anthem

On January 24th, 1950, Janaganamana, a song by Rabindranath Tagore, was adopted as India's national anthem. Before this, Vande Mataram, written by Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyaya, was the national anthem of India. Only the first five stanzas of Tagore's piece were designated as the anthem.

Jaana Gaana Maana Adhinayaka
Jayehe

Bharata bhagya vidhata;
Punjaba Sindhu Gujarata Maratha,
Dravida Utkala Banga,
Vindhya, Himachala, Jamuna, Ganga,
Ucchhala Jaladhitaranga;
Taba Shubha Naame Jaage
Taba Shubha Ashish Mange
Gaye taba jaya gaatha.

Jaana Gaana Maana Adhinayaka
Jayahe Bharata bhagya vidhata;

Jaya he Jaye he Jaye he

Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya he.

This translates into English as:

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people, Dispenser of India's destiny.

Thy name rouses the hearts of the Punjab, Sind, Gujarat, and Maratha, Of the Dra-

vid, and Orissa and Bengal. It echoes in the hills of Vindhya and, Himalayas, mingles in the music of the Jamuna and the Ganges and is chanted by the waves of the Indian sea. The pray for the blessings, and sing by the praise. The saving of all people waits in thy hand. Thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee.

The following is another example of the many fine works by Tagore:

Twelve O'clock

Mother, I do want to leave off my lessons now.

I have been at my book all the morning.

You say it is only twelve o'clock.

Suppose it isn't very late; can't you ever think it is afternoon when it is only twelve o'clock?

I can easily imagine now that the sun has reached the edge of that rice-field, and the old fish-woman is gathering herbs for her supper by the side of the pond.

I can just shut my eyes and think that the shadows are growing darker

under the MADAR tree, and the water in the pond looks shiny black.

If twelve o'clock can come in the night, why can't the night come when it is twelve o'clock?

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3. Dutta, Krishna and Andrew Robinson. Rabindranath Tagore An Anthology. St Martin's Press: New York, 1997. (quotes)

Sachin Tendulkar Biography by Uday Misra

Sachin Tendulkar is a very good cricket player. Cricket is a famous sport in India-something like baseball here. Just like baseball, players in cricket use a bat and ball to score runs. Cricket is different from baseball because the pitches are different and the pitchers are called bowlers. Also instead of throwing the ball straight, bowlers in cricket spin and bounce the ball.

Sachin is as famous in cricket as Babe Ruth was in baseball. Babe Ruth was a great hitter and so is Sachin. He is the highest scorer in one day matches with nearly 10,000 runs to his credit. All one-day cricket matches are only allowed 50 over (balls) per team and whoever scores the most runs with ten wickets lost, wins the match. 11 people play on both sides. In test matches too which last over several days, Sachin has got a great record with 6000 runs (as of January 2000). He has got the highest average among Indian cricketers.

Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar was born on 23rd April 1973, in an ordinary Mumbai brahman family. He began to play cricket at the age of 15 years. He started in local matches, and then went on to play state-level Ranji trophy matches for the state of Maharashtra. He scored an unbeaten hundred runs against Gujarat in his very first match! He first became famous throughout

India when he joined the Indian team in its match against Pakistan at Karachi's National Stadium way back in 1989. He became the youngest Captain of the Indian team at the young age of 24 in 1997. I think he is one of the greatest players that India has ever had. Along with Raphael Palmero and Michael Jordan, Sachin is one of my favorite sports heroes!

Tulasidas by Kanupriya Bhargava

Tulasidas was born in the year 1532 to a Brahman family. He was born in the town of Rajapur. Tulasidas was separated from his parents at a very young age and his relatives did not take care of him. He was advised by saints to surrender to Lord Rama.

Tulasi met his guru in Sukkheta, not much is known about his guru. He was advised by his guru to take up the path of devotion to Rama.

One of the best poets of Bharat was Tulasidas. His work, referred to as 'the greatest book ever written' by Gandhiji made him well known. To appreciate Tulasidas, the person, the poet, the philosopher, the saint, and the devotee of Lord Rama you must read Ramacharita Manasa.

Tulasidas got married to a woman named Ratnavali in his youth. Without the great words of Ratnavali, Ramacharita Manasa might have not been written. Rantavali said to Tulasi one day, 'I am just a bag of flesh and bones. Why are you so attracted to it? Why don't you love Lord Rama with the same fervor?' After this remark Tulasi contemplated on this remark and left all connections with the family life.

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After leaving family life, he lived in Chitrakuta for some time before 1564. One day, he came to his wife's house asking for alms, he didn't recognize her but she did. The wife asked him to take her with him but he refused saying that he has forgotten family life. Ratnavali was angered and said, 'You have spices in your possession, but not wife. What kind of renunciate are you?'

Tulasidas recognized the folliness of being attached to food, and thanked his wife for the lesson and threw away all his remaining possessions and migrated to Kashi.

Author of Bhaktamala, Nabhaji writes Tulasidas was an incarnation of Valmiki itself born again to explain Ramayans in the vernacular language. He authored 22 works. In Kashi, he became the head of the monastery in Iolarka Kunda and was designated 'Gosain'.

Around 1612 he started suffering from acute arm pain. Tulasi passed away on the third day of the dark fortnight in the month of Shravana in 1623.

Hard work pays off in the future, laziness pays off now.

I intend to live forever - so far, so good.

Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.

If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.

Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

Questionable Wisdom

I'd kill for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Borrow money from pessimists - they don't expect it back.

Half the people you know are below average.

99% of lawyers give the rest a bad name.

42.7% of all statistics are made up on the spot.

A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good.

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

If you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.

All those who believe in psycho kinesis, raise my hand.

The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

I almost had a psychic girlfriend but she left me before we met.

If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.

Ambition is a poor excuse for not having enough sense to be lazy.
(Please see column 1, this page)

Messages of Goodwill

**Best wishes
to WBF
for a very fruitful and successful
Convention
With compliments
from
J.P. Dubey and Family**

Vishwa Madhva Sangha congratulates the organizers of the World Brahman Federation Regional Convention 2004 in New Jersey during August 7-8. We pray for this Convention to be successful and raise the awareness of Brahmins around the world for togetherness and peace.

**Namaste.
Sincerely,**

**G. V. Bindu Madhavan, Ph. D.
Director, Vishwa Madhva Sangha
A national religious and educational non-profit corporation (ID 522126009)
11413, Potomac Oaks Drive,
Rockville MD 20850
Ph: 301-838-5585; E-mail:madhva@bigfoot.com**

Messages of Goodwill

**Best wishes to the WBF
for a very successful
Convention
*from***

**HSBC
The World's Local Bank**

**Best wishes to the WBF
for a very successful
Convention**

from

**Brahman Samaj of Nepal
Er. Ramagya Chaturbedi
General Secretary**

Messages of Goodwill

**Best wishes to the WBF
for a very successful
Convention
*from***

**Brahman International
Prabhakar Mishra
National President**

**Best wishes to the WBF
for a very successful
Convention**

from

**M.R.Sharma
National Patron All India Brahmin Mahasabha
Incharge- WBF, South Asia**

Messages of Goodwill

The President and Members of the Executive Committee of Shri Sanatan Dharmiya Brahman Maha Sabha of Mauritius are very pleased to learn of the holding of the Regional Convention of the World Brahman Federation in New Jersey USA on August 7, and 8, 2004.

As Brahmans, we are proud to learn of the developments being made by our Brahman brothers around the world and the fact of their willingness to continue to exist as Brahmans. Not to perpetuate the erroneous notion of the caste system, but to preserve the Values and the Heritage of Brahminism that has come down to us from our illustrious ancestors.

Brahmans have ever been willing to share their values and knowledge with not only members of the Hindu Community but with the world at large. A Convention is a moment of stock taking but at the same time a moment of planning for the future. We have to see how we can forge a common bond among the members of our community to share information of mutual interests.

The foundation of Brahminism is based on knowledge. Today we find Brahmans excelling in all the fields of knowledge. In the modern context however, progress without an Economic background is meaningless. Therefore, it is important for Brahman's to build up an Economic Base where the haves can make regular contributions for the promotion and enhancement of the have-nots within the Brahman Community.

This Economic power base must first be set up on a regional or country wise basis. When the Economic power base is built up into a strong power block then we can devise schemes of promotions among Brahmans worldwide.

Solidarity, unity, common cause, fundamental values and heritages are all v a i n words if we do not have a strong economic power base.

I hope in future we can take up this issue at our World Forum

Damodur Toolsee
President
Shri Sanatan Dharmiya Brahman Maha Sabha
17 Jules Koeing Street
Port-Louis – Mauritius

Messages of Goodwill

The objective of organizing conventions, seminars and cultural events is to bring the community on one platform and promote the sense of unity. These events strengthen the community and give the sense of belonging. The forthcoming regional convention 2004 of World Brahman Federation in New Jersey is similar great effort by its organizers to bring the community together.

On behalf of all the members of BSUK I wish the convention a great success. We are fortunate to have the great inspirer and dedicated worker Mr. Nirmal Choubey whose untiring efforts are bring the Brahmans of the world on one platform. Such events are un-imaginable without him. Once again our heartiest congratulations and best wishes to the delegates of WBF Regional Convention 2004 New Jersey.

BRAHMAN SAMAJ OF UNITED KINGDOM
10 NEW TRINITY ROAD LONDON N2- 8EE
Phone:020 88830283 –E-MAIL: ramtiwari41@yahoo.co.uk
Registered in England & Wales Reg No. 1104847

Best Wishes For the Convention of World Brahman Federation

***The Havyaka association recognizes and commends the efforts
undertaken by the World Brahman Federation in preserving our heritage
and culture.***

President, Office Bearers and Members of Havyaka Association of Americas

(www.havyak.com)

Messages of Goodwill

Our belief is that the Brahmin Community was the Soul stabilizers of the Hindu Society and rendered the peace and tranquility among the Hindus of the yore.

As long as the Brahmins keep this goal of Human peace and community harmony we can bring back the reverence and respect that will enable us to serve society and accomplish this goal again.

We support the World Brahman Federation in its endeavors and facilitate fraternity among Brahmins and harmony among the Hindu community. We believe in the motto : “ *Vasudhaiava Kutumbakam* “ and practice: *Satyam Vada & Dharmam Chara* “

**Sriram Sonty
American Association of Telugu Brahmins**

On behalf of the All India Kanyakubja Board/Delhi Kanyakubja Samaj, myself Dr. Ganesh Mishra and my wife, Dr. Pratima Mishra, congratulate the WBF on making this convention happen and wish it much success

It's nice to know that in this fast paces world, we still care about our culture and our values. WBF is a big step towards preserving our values not only in India, but all across the world, thanks to Mr. Nirmal Choubey, and all the people involved for their wonderful efforts which has made this convention possible.

**Regards to all family members.
Dr. Ganesh Mishra
Dr. Pratima Mishra
B4/26, Safdarjung Enclave
New Delhi - 110029, India
Tel. 91 11 51651788
Email. drganeshmisra@hotmail.com.**

Messages of Goodwill

**May Paramatma give us the
wisdom to follow and strength to
fulfil our Swadharma**

**With Best Wishes
The Rudrapatna Family
Ashok, Roopa, Vivek, and Tara**

**With Best Wishes to WBF
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JCMS, Inc.
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609-631-0808 (Fax)
<http://www.jcms.com>**

Umesh Jois and Family

Messages of Goodwill

**Best wishes to the WBF
for a very successful
Convention
*from***

Mahesh Kasinadhuni and family

Everyone born as a Brahmin has without asking for any reason necessarily and as matter of duty to learn, study and practice a Veda Sakha which is one of the branches of the Vedas.

The performance of Vedic karmas and rituals are for Brahmins and not for others. But when others perform whatever jobs they are required to do, lead them to mental upliftment and Self realization. To whatever caste a person may belong, the zealous performance of one's duties as laid down and dedicating one's fruit to God lead them to the goal.

The most important aspect of our worldly lives is to obtain the GRACE OF GOD. It is the duty of the Brahmins to obtain such a grace for the benefit of the society. It is the duty of the Brahmins to obtain the goodwill of the Devatas, who are in the nature of God's officials, to men of classes.

"The Vedas" by Sri. Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, 68th Shankaracharya of Kanchi Math

Best wishes from the Chandrasekhara Family:
Ravi, Darshna, and Krishna.

Messages of Goodwill

On behalf of NASA (North American Sankethi Association) I am very happy to send you our felicitations on this occasion.

The objectives and goals of WBF are noble and well thought out. We live in a world in which the lifestyles are becoming increasingly materialistic at the expense of simplistic, and spiritual lifestyles once they used to be. The work of WBF in strengthening the bonds among brahmins around the world, for the benefit of not only brahmins, but also the community at large, without regard to caste, creed or national origin is noteworthy. Through its work on a global scale WBF is perhaps in the best possible position to preserve, protect and promote thoughts, actions and lifestyles based on Hindu philosophy and Vedic principles.

I am certain that in the years to come, the world will be a better place to live, through the contributions of WBF. Mr. Nirmal Choubey and his team have done admirable work in promoting the cause of WBF. They deserve our congratulations. On behalf of NASA I wish the forthcoming WBF Convention a Grand Success.

Namaskar.

**Sincerely yours,
K.V. SRIKANTIAH, President
North American Sankethi Association
Ph: 203-426-3182**

WBF– Organization Chart

Founded on July 3, 2000 in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania

Registration

Registered in the state of New York as a Not- For- Profit Corporation. This is an umbrella organization with limited individual membership.

Main Objective:

To promote social and cultural interaction, and kinship amongst members of world Brahman community with emphasis on youth.

Founding Organizations:

Brahman Samaj of North America (BSNA), USA

All India Kanyakubja Brahman Samaj (AIKB), India

Brahmin International (BI), India

All India Brahmin Mahasabha (AIBMS), India

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WBC 2005-UK Mr. Ramchandra Tiwari (Dir), Mr. Satish Sharma (GS)

Messages of Goodwill

**Best wishes
to WBF
for a very fruitful and successful
Convention
With compliments
from
Sudhendu, Prakashy, Neha,
and Anisha Choubey**

Our very best wishes for the WBF and wishing the organization great success for the 2nd Regional Convention. The WBF will go a long way in bringing the world wide Brahman community together and thus allow our culture and values to continue with time.

**Ramendra, Leela, Usha and Ritu Pandey
New Jersey.**

**Shanta Choubey & Family
welcomes
the delegates of the first
World Brahman Federation
Regional Convention
August 7 & 8, 2004
At Holiday Inn, Edison, NJ**

**We are grateful to our friends around the globe
for the trust placed in us and the interest shown
in uniting the Brahman community.**

**A Warm Welcome To All Delegates of The World Brahman
Federation's First USA Convention in Edison, NJ**

**The Shukla Family
Uma, Bhaw, Neelu & Ryan**

