



Bhavan's News

Australia

Issue 1. - April 2004

Holi Mahotsav

Indian Festival of colours, friendship and harmony

The Holi Mahotsav is celebrated in India in all its colour and vibrancy on the day after the full moon in early March every year. It is a celebration of a bumper harvest and fertility of the land. Today, Holi is a much needed opportunity for Indians and all races alike to shed their inhibitions and differences of caste, race and culture, for a day of spring fever and fun where teenagers spend their time frolicking in the streets and adults extend the hand of peace.

This year, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia in conjunction with India Tourism Sydney organized the celebrations on Sunday, 14 March at Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour Sydney.

The celebrations commenced at 10.30am on stage with music and dance by our local artistes ranging from the traditional Rajasthani, Bengali, Sindhi, Odissi, Kannada to the more contemporary themes of Bollywood songs, Indian rap, belly dance and jazz fusion. As the crowd kept steadily increasing, the festivities continued with the throwing of coloured powders on one another in a designated area sponsored by Murli Bhojwani. Around the park were various stalls

selling delicious cuisines from the various regions of India, spiritual foundations and yoga schools, cultural and Indian business organizations, where visitors could find refreshment for the body and nourishment for the mind and soul.

SBS Radio a Government funded multicultural community National Radio station had their float for the whole day. They had interactive programs with the crowd and listeners, distributing promotional material, balloons for the children and interviews with some the VIPS and general public members for broadcasting the next day in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Nepalese, Sinhalese and other languages of the Indian Sub-Continent.

Mr Gambhir Watts, President of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia welcomed the VIPs and special guests and extended the message of peace and friendship to all who attended the day's function - people who had congregated to hear and speak about the relevance of the ancient culture of India in modern Sydney. He said, "We Australians of Indian origin are celebrating Holi in Australia for two reasons: one, to share our rich culture of festivals with the vastly multicultural Australian society and two, to celebrate and wish for the prosperity of this land called Australia which feeds us like a mother. We must therefore work for its prosperity and our prosperity will follow automatically."

The Consul General of India in Sydney, the Hon. Madhusudan Ganapathi who has always been active and enthusiastic in his support and promotion of Australia's Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan said that Sydney per se is witnessing the most active Indian

community and the Government of India has been placing a lot of emphasis on the community representing Indian Diaspora.



Dr. K. M. Munshi & S. Ramakrishnan



Hon. Yashwant Sinha - Launch





Bhavan's News *Australia*



Hon. John Brogden MP, Leader of the Opposition in NSW and was also representing the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard and the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister, the Hon. Gary Hardgrave, MP. Mr Brogden mentioned that "The Indian community is one of the most distinguished immigrant communities. Over 150 years, Indians have brought all that is good of Indian culture and community to Australia and also added to ensuring that our business community grows with the strongest, impressive approach to entrepreneurship that you all have".

The Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP, Shadow Minister for Population, Citizenship, and Multicultural Affairs, was the next speaker and was also representing the Leader of the Federal Opposition, Hon Mark Latham. Mr. Ferguson said "I have been aware of the Bhavan's activities since its inception in August last year. This event is typical. In the past I have attended Buddhist, Egyptian, Lebanese and other cultural events and today's event really does stand out. Philosophically and culturally this festival is most important for cultural harmony and unity. It is also virtually a bond of communication between the Indian Diaspora and the broader Australian society. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has indeed undertaken a very important role".

The Hon. Amanda Fazio MLC, representing the Premier of NSW, Hon. Bob Carr MP said on behalf of the Premier "Today is a celebration of the Indian community's diverse culture. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has completed a lot of work in organising today's festival and bringing the festival to Australia. The NSW government wishes to improve its link with the Indian Community and India itself. NSW parliament will be lit on the Divali festival organised by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and other cultural organisations".

Senator Aden Ridgeway, Senator for NSW and Deputy Leader of the Australian Democrats and the only the second Aboriginal person to take seat in the Australian Parliament said "I couldn't help but feel that my people could fit in well here today. We could well be lost cousins. To share the most in this nation is the colour of the rainbow. Australia is a country made of many people of many countries. It is certain that our fate is bound together. Let us talk more and walk more together".

The Bhavan had the opportunity to invite Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman of the 12th Finance Commission with the Rank of the Cabinet Minister to the Government of India and his delegation who were on an official visit to Australia, to grace the occasion. He said that Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has had a forefront role of spreading awareness of Indian culture. Indians staying abroad have done their country proud. They have done immense service to the country to which they have gone. Other members of the Delegation of the 12th Finance Commission, Government of India were Mr. Som Pal, Mr. T. R. Prasad, Dr. D. K. Srivastava all with rank of a Minister of State to the Government of India, Dr. G. C. Srivastava, Member Secretary, with rank of a Secretary to the Government of India and Dr. J. V. M. Sharma, Economic Adviser with rank of a Joint Secretary to the Government of India

Mr. Stepan Kerkyasharian AM, Chair of NSW Community Relations Commission said "I would like to congratulate

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on bringing this festival to such a public place as Darling Harbour. It stimulates the process of sharing traditions that have endured for centuries and contributes greatly to the eventful cultural life of multicultural society which is ensuring the best of traditions for all our people in Australia.

Mr. Neville Roach AO, Chairman of the Australia India Business Council addressed the gathering, Swami Maheshwarananda, Founder of Yoga in Daily Life, a self-confessed 'ambassador of peace' traveling the world promoting global harmony, Dr. A. Balasubramaniam, Chairman of the Hindu Council of Australia and Mr. Ivan Brownrigg, President of Art of Living Australia also spoke about the history and importance of celebrating the Holi Festival, lifestyle and world harmony. As His Grace Atmarama Das, President of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) supported the festival by active involvement and sponsorship through food and books stalls.

A formal vote of thanks was given by N. Vishwanathan, Secretary, Bhavan Australia. The VIP program concluded around 3.00pm with an Indian patriotic song sung by Swami Gajananda of 'Yoga in Daily Life'. The VIPs / special guests were well looked after by Gambhir Watts, Lalli Sethuram, Vice President, Bhavan Australia assisted by N Vishwanathan and Rohitas Batta.

More cultural entertainment programs followed in the form of Indian and Western music and dance, including Australian Aboriginal performances and cultural demonstrations. The festivities continued until 6.00pm and culminated with people dancing in exuberance on the Bhangra performances by Devinder Singh Dharia.

The entire cultural program for the day was conceived and produced by the Cultural Committee for Holi Mahotsav headed by Avijit Sarkar, Cultural



GRAMS: BHAVYA MUNSHI
GIRGACH



Bharatya Vidya
Bhavan

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(Founded in 1928 by Kulapati Dr. K. M. Munshi with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi)

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MESSAGE

March 26, 2004



Kulapati Dr.K.M.Munshi, the founder of Bhavan, chose the vedic injunction "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", -the world is one family- as the Motto of Bhavan, because in it he found reflected the very essence of everything that the Vedas proclaimed.

Establishing a center of Bhavan, Down under, in Sydney, is in actual fact a reiteration of the profound truth that the clasp is made by the hands of brothers, members of the same family.

Difference in location, distance and time have brought about distinctions between ways of living of groups of people. Knowing each other, aiding each other and sharing with each other everything that is good between the groups would only enrich each other.

This is what the Bhavan seeks to achieve with its presence in Sydney.

I send my prayerful good wishes to my brothers and sisters of Australia including those of Indian origin who have now made Australia their home.

My best wishes to the first issue of Bhavan's News. May it truly reflect the credo of Bhavan, *Aa No Bhadrak Kratavo Yantu Viswataha* - Let noble thoughts come to us from every side.

Dhiru S. Mehta

Dhiru S. Mehta
Executive Secretary
& Director General

Director, Shantha Viswanathan and Bhoji Watts, who also managed the stage with assistance from Manju Chand. A large number of artists and performers invited by the Cultural Committee performed on voluntary basis. Dr Swati Kapila, Indrani Mukherjee and Moksha Watts shared the entire function as Master of Ceremonies. Their contribution which was the heart of the function is greatly lauded. Kumar of AID Australia, Vish Vishwanathan, Nayana Purohit and a number of other volunteers, arranged by Rohitas Batta, Volunteers Director, Bhavan Australia, contributed to the success of the grand festival. We have arranged a special musical evening serving snacks to honour the artists and volunteers. Certificates of appreciation will be issued to them.

Over 10,000 people were estimated to have passed through the event on this busy day. Everyone were in good spirits and greatly enjoyed the day. It was a pleasure to see such a mix of cultures coming together under one banner to experience the happiness and depth of traditional Vedic Indian culture. We hope many people went away having learnt a little more, about the significance of the Holi festival, the ability for people to unite and transcend boundaries of race, caste, culture, age and gender, or simply having rejoiced in the rich colour and diversity of life in God's creation.

Holi Report prepared by J Rao Palagummi, Director Publications and website, approved by Gambhir Watts, President and released by N. Vishwanathan, Secretary.

We are thankful to our Sponsors:

India Tourism, Sydney; SBS Radio; BMG Poseidon Corp Pty Ltd / Small Business Guru; Murlu Bhojwani, MNB Variety Imports; Art of Living; Australian Association of Yoga in Daily Life; ISKCON Sydney / Hare Krishna Food for Life; Planet Bollywood; Sagar Raniga of Coffee Dreams; Woodlands Family Restaurant; ZAFFRAAN; Central Equity Ltd; Mortgage Avenue; Exotic India; India Exclusif; The Immigration Centre.

For more information and more photographs please visit: www.bhavanaustralia.org



Shining India, Indeed

Editorial , Bhavan's Journal

Vol. 50 No.13

February 15, 2004

The mass media have joined the debate, largely political and primarily partisan, on whether India is shining or not.

As of now the shine, like beauty and contact lenses, is in the eye of the beholder. The political divide on the question is predictably focused. The ruling alliance, having its eyes steadily fixed on the coming general election, claims that it is not just a shine but a blinding sparkle.

The opposition, contending for power, refuses to see any good happening around.

While the former talks about the booming economy, the burgeoning foreign exchange reserves and the buoyant stock market besides the dominant Indian role in the global IT phenomenon, the latter harps on continuing rural poverty, illiteracy and uneven development.

It is a case of seeing too much or too little depending on which side of the political fence one happens to be. Sadly enough, there is no dearth of people on the fringe who seem to dread the very idea of India shining. They deny vehemently the successes claimed by the government by a steadfast refusal to see even obvious facts before their eyes.

Perhaps we should look beyond the political spectrum to answer the question: Is India shining? For those, like our dear President Abdul Kalam, who could easily spot silver linings piercing black clouds, India is always shining.

The President's Vision 2020, which encompasses all areas of India's socio-economic development, blends the opposing stands of the India shining debate. President Kalam says he had made to himself two assurances when he



assumed the highest office of the country. "One was to work for transforming India into a developed country and the other was to work for unity of minds".

In one sentence the Vision focuses simultaneously as 26 crore poor people living below the poverty line and 30 crore young people below the age of twenty.

"These two groups are in need of social and economic development in an atmosphere of peace and harmony".

For President Kalam India shines not because of any social and economical indicators of industrial growth, stock market buoyancy or IT boom but because of the basic values that sustain the psyche of our country.

India is one of the earliest societies of the world to devise social systems that reconciled poverty with happiness and graceful living. It also solved the problem of coping with affluence without suffering psychosomatic problems.

In sharp contrast, modern nations of the West have achieved economic prosperity

at the cost of social disharmony.

This issue of Bhavan's Journal is dedicated to three great Indians who never had any doubt about a glorious and shining India.

February is the month of the Death Anniversary of Kulapati K. M. Munshi (30-12-1887 to 8-2-1971) who visualised a free India wholly in terms of its culture, tradition and the rich heritage of wisdom and knowledge. The Bhavan was a product of this composite vision of a great Indian.

The issue is also dedicated to C. Rajagopalachari (10-12-1878 to 25-12-1972) whose 125th Birthday was observed in parts of India which were capable of remembering and paying homage to its great sons.

Rajaji, as he was better known, was another visionary who never had any doubt about the eternal shine that marked India. He wore dark glasses but never missed seeing white in everything including in his spotless dress smeared with black tar thrown by hooligans. He could laugh off protesters waving black flags at him by telling them that even if they were waving white flags it would have seemed black to him.

Last but not the least, this issue is also dedicated to the memory of Shri S. Ramakrishnan (22-7-1922 to 14-2-2003), who died exactly one year ago after having been the heart and soul of the Bhavan for all its years of existence and growth.

SR was also an eternal optimist. In his eyes India never stopped shining!

Bhavan's Activities Report

30 August 2003 - 14 March 2004

- Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia was launched on **Saturday 30 August 2003** by the Minister for External Affairs India, the Hon. Mr. Yashwant Sinha. Nearly 250 guests attended the launch of the 7th international centre of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, in the Grand Ballroom of Sheraton on the Park. Among those present were Philip Green, Director of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Alexander Downer and Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Phillip Ruddock; Laurie Ferguson MP, Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs; Michael Abbott QC, Chairman of the Australia India Council; Dhirubhai Mehta, Executive Secretary and Director-General of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan worldwide; Mr R. S. Rathore, High Commissioner for India; M. Ganapathi, Consul-General of India; and Mr. Neville Roach, Chairman of Australia India Business Council.

The primary role of the Bhavan in Australia is, as a cultural and educational vehicle, to promote cultural harmony in Australia by raising awareness of the diversity of the Indian culture to the mainstream Australian people and helping in understanding and adjusting to the multicultural fabric of Australia.

- **The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan library at its Kent Street (Town Hall) office was opened by Mr. M Ganapathi - The Consul General of India on 2nd October, 2003.** The library will be open to the public with prior appointment on weekdays between 10am and 6pm. Titles include *Spiritual Socialism (S R Sengupta)* and *Gandhi and the break-up of India (Rafiz Zakaria)*. The library opening was attended by Prof. Peter Oldmeadow (University of Sydney) and Shri Atma Ram of the Iskcon Hare Krishna Movement.

Also on the 2nd October, Gambhir Watts co-hosted with ISKCON the

interface dialogue at State Centre, Level 44 Grosvenor Place, Sydney. This conference was attended by high profile religious and spiritual leaders including, His Holiness Sankaracharya Swami Divyananda Tirtha and His Grace Sri Atmarama Das (Hinduism), Ven. K Sri Sumedha Thero and Rev. Shigenobu Watanabe (Buddhism), Keysar Trad (representing Sheik Taj El Din Al Hilaly) and Mahmood Ahmad (Islam), Rabbi Raymond Apple and Rabbi Geoffrey Cohen (Judaism), Mark Yettica Paulson (Aboriginal) and Bishop Manning (Christianity).

- On Wednesday 21st January 2004, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan hosted the lecture "The Myth of Aryan Invasion in Ancient India" a lecture by internationally renowned Scholar and Historian Dr. Navratna S. Rajaram PhD at the Ethnic Community Council Hall in Waterloo.
- The Indian Consul General Mr Ganapathi launched Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's website - www.bhavanaaustralia.org - with the lighting of traditional lamps on **26th of January 2004**. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan also participated in the Australia Day celebrations at Darling Harbour at the invitation of Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority.
- Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia actively supported the Wesley Mission Family Centre Quakers Hill and the various associated community groups in organising the **Multicultural Family Festival in Quakers Hill on 21st February 2004**. The NSW Government sponsored the event. The festival was declared open by the Hon Laurie Ferguson, Shadow Minister for Population, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs. Mr Ferguson spoke of his prior dealing and admiration for Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and had the following to say regarding multiculturalism.

It has been my daily experience in an electorate where 48% of residents were born overseas that people gain by knowledge and interaction. Those who

are hostile and ignorant towards people from other cultures often change when they become connected to their neighbours, fellow members of sports clubs or where family members form relationships with those of other ethnicities. Often those previously against migration are the next to hassle me to help people"

- **On 25 February 2004** Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was involved in the Northern Sydney Indian Info Expo held at the Dougherty Community Centre in Chatswood. The event was hosted by Migrant Network Services, Centrelink, NSW Police, Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW and Willoughby City Council along with various other councils and community groups.
- The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan along with India Tourism Sydney celebrated **Holi Mahotsav on the 14th of March** at Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour. Various cultural performances representing different states of India and the day long cultural program were enjoyed by more than 10,000 people throughout the day. A more detailed report appears on the front page.
- Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia has announced **Sanskrit** classes for beginners under the guidance of Dr Peter Oldmeadow of University of Sydney, and Indian Classical Music classes under the guidance of Nayana Purohit, an eminent Bhavan scholar from Mumbai.
- Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is running an ongoing essay competition for enrolled university students. The current essay topic is "The Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi Today" and prizes include a five night holiday for two to India, an 80cm colour TV, a Laptop Computer and a number of other consolation prizes. Entries close last mail 30th April, 2004 with the winners announced sometime mid of June, 2004.

For more information regarding Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan please refer to the website www.bhavanaaustralia.org



Information for the Indian Community

New Arrangements make Australian Visa Applications Easier

Applying for an Australian business or tourist visa in India will soon be made easier with the opening of six new visa application and collection centres.

From March 1, Indians will be able to lodge their applications at centres in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore. More centres are expected to open in other regions.

The new centres mean Indians wishing to travel to Australia for business or tourism no longer must apply directly to the Australian High Commission in New Delhi or the Consulate-General in Mumbai.

This current requirement often meant Indians faced significant travel and inconvenience to apply for a visa.

The new network of centres would provide a better service to the growing numbers of Indians seeking to travel to Australia, Australian High Commissioner for India, Penny Wensley AO, said today.

"There has been a large increase in the numbers of Indians seeking to travel to Australia including student, tourists, businesspeople and officials," Ms Wensley said.

"We expect this trend to continue and accelerate as our bilateral relations grow in strength, scope and substance.

"This new user-friendly system will help us manage this welcome growth."

Australian High Commission Immigration Counsellor, Greg Kelly, said he was delighted at the prospect of having the new application and collection centres spread throughout India.

"Applicants will have greater choice in where they lodge their applications," he said.

The centres will have comfortable waiting areas and sufficient capacity to ensure clients will not have to wait for extended periods.

Each will be open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

Business house TT Services will provide the new centres. TT Services is a division of TT Enterprises - the first company in India to offer visa support services to diplomatic missions.

The exact locations of the visa application and collection centres can be found at: www.usgovindia.com

20 February 2004

Media Inquiries:

Public Affairs, Department of Immigration Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

02 6264 2244 (BH);
0419 44 2000 (AH)

Dual Citizenship Update

Reference is invited to the Media Release dated December 29, 2003 from the Consulate General of India, Sydney on the subject of Dual Citizenship.

As indicated in that note, the Citizenship Amendment Bill was passed by the two Houses of the Indian Parliament in December 2003 and received Presidential assent on January 7, 2004. Pursuant to that, changes in the Citizenship Rules 1956 are being effected by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. These amended rules will have to be notified. After notification, the rules will have to be laid on the table of both Houses of the Indian Parliament before they come into force.

In view of the forthcoming General Elections in India, it is envisaged that the next Parliament session will be held in June 2004. It is therefore expected that the proposed Citizenship (Amended) Rules 2004 could come into force only after June 2004.

Following the above steps, formal advice conveying instructions on the modalities of the implementation of the Act relating to Dual Citizenship will be received from the Government of India. As soon as this is received, the Consulate General of India Sydney

shall give wide publicity to the same through the Indian media, Indian Associations, community leaders and others.

Sydney, March 1 2004

Consulate General of India, Sydney
www.indianconsulatesydney.org

News from FAIA

The Federation of the Australian Indian Associations Inc encompasses a number of Indian Associations.

FAIA participated in the clean up Australia day on 7th March '04, for the third year successive. Do look out for the Blood Donation Day coming up in April '04; "unity in diversity" cultural night followed by the Spring festival in near future.

Jayant Pattekar, FAIA President

Contact: (02) 97691159 or
(02) 9858 1112

News from UIA

United India Association is the premier body consisting of no less than 9 associations. Our president has achieved a lot in the past year. We are happy that Shuba Kumar being chair person has carried UIA to new heights. India fair at Olympic Park was a show piece. New committee will be elected in the near future.

Dr. Siddalingeswara Orekondy,
Actg President, UIA Contact:
(02) 9642 0027

Acharya Kainkarya Sabha

By the grace of Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, SANKARA JAYANTHI is planned to be conducted on 26 April 2004, between 8am and 2.30pm at ERMINGTON COMMUNITY CENTRE (MAIN HALL), 10 River Road, Ermington NSW 2115

Swamy Sridharananda, President, Vedantha Society (Ramakrishna Mission), Sydney will talk. Contact: Shri N. M. Sundaram: sungan8@yahoo.com; Shri N. Viswanathan: vish_4@hotmail.com; Srimathi Nalini Sankar: nsankar@optusnet.com.au

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Religions are Beautiful Gardens

Rashtrapati A.P.J. Abdul Kalaam (President of India)

Published in Bhavan's Journal Vol 50, No 14, Feb 29 2004.



Rashtrapati A.P.J. Abdul Kalaam
(President of India)

While assuming the office of the President of India, I had made two assurances, one was to work for transforming India into a developed nation; the other to work for unity of minds. Two hundred and sixty

million of our people live below the poverty line. There are also 300 million youngsters below the age of 20.

These two groups are in need of social and economical development in any atmosphere of peace and harmony.

In my search for unity of minds, I have visited many great religious places, in our great country and abroad.

Tawang is a Shangri-La at an altitude of 3000 metres in a misty corner of Arunachal Pradesh. The people there seem truly happy and tranquil, living under the kindly umbrella of one of the worlds' oldest Buddhist monasteries. During a visit there, I asked the chief monk about the secret of Tawang's tranquility.

The chief monk said, "If you look at 3000 years of Indian history, you'll find that the country has always stood for peace. It worked for peace; if prayed for peace and it lives for peace. But these days, peace does seem to be in short supply."

"So, how does one bring back peace?" The monk asked rhetorically.

"Paradoxically, the 'I' in you wants peace. Nevertheless, to get peace you have to first get rid of the 'I' and 'me'.

"If you remove these entities, ego will vanish," the monk said to me. "When ego vanished, hatred fades away. When hatred

goes away, then violence in mind and body will disappear. Therefore, peace comes when you forsake ego and the sense of self."

I visited a Christian Monastery at Rila located in the hills of Bulgaria. This holy site played an important role in the spiritual and social life of medieval Bulgaria. Destroyed by fire due to invasions at the beginning of the 19th Century, the complex was rebuilt later and is now surrounded by a big fort.

I went to the altar and asked permission of the Reverend Bishop John to recite a part of the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is hatred let me sow love.*

I still remember one experience during my childhood, when I was around the age of 10. Every day when I returned from school in the evening, my father would have gone for *namaz*. And my mother would look angelic in the *namaz*. After *Thakbhir* position, she would recite two suras from the Holy Quran. One starts with *Alhamdhu*, and the other "*Lakkum, Thenukum*". One day I asked my father and mother what *Lakkum Thenukum* meant. My mother recited the sura "*Lakkum Thenukum Valiyatheen*" that is the end of the sura *Alkhafbeerun*.

My father interpreted it, and told me that it means, "Everyone follows a path. He or she who decides the path is accountable for their actions." My father also said, being a Muslim I meet my friends quite often as you would have seen me meeting Pakshi Lakshmana Shastrigal, a great Hindu devotee of Raneshwaram Siva temple along with the priest and Reverend Father Bodal who built our Island's first church.

I was indeed blessed during my childhood to hear the discussions of these three persons. They met and discussed the integration of thoughts of the Holy Quran,

the Old Testament and the Bhagavad Gita. From their discussions

I learnt that whatever your religion, the path you select will lead you to bliss, based on your good action. One's life should be just like a flower that gives fragrance and beauty in the morning and silently falls to the ground in the evening where it was born.

I have never come across such a beautiful message about the essence of life.

I have traveled to almost all parts of the country during the last 18 months. The message I have received from my travels is that most Indians, whether experienced and old, energetic and middle-aged, young and innocent, all look to religion for solace and safety.

Religions are like exquisite gardens, places full of surpassing beauty and tranquility, like sacred groves filled with beautiful birds and their melodious songs, I truly think that religions are beautiful gardens. But they are islands. They are enchanting islets, veritable oases for the soul and the spirit. But they are islands nevertheless. However, if we can connect all islands with love and compassion, in a 'garland project' for the new millennium, we will have a prosperous India in front of us, and even on our planet.

God has created human beings with a brain and a thinking faculty. He has commanded His creation that this faculty must be used with reasoning to reach His image. This is the mission of human life.

Science is the best boon God has bestowed upon mankind. Science with reasoning can become the capital of society. In whatever field we work, be it science, technology, medicine, politics, policing, theology, religion or judiciary, we have to remain in the service of the common man, whose well being is central to all human knowledge and endeavour.



Every religion has a central component - spirituality that is driven by compassion and love. Rationality and logic are intrinsic to science and spirituality. A spiritual experience is the goal of a deeply religious person whereas a major discovery or an invention is the goal of a scientific mind. If both aspects are unified, we can transcend to that level of thinking, in which unity is a cohesive aspect. For this environment two major components - science and spirituality - have to interact. A Peace prayer can be the foundation for both.

Every religion has a central component - spirituality that is driven by compassion and love. Rationality and logic are intrinsic to science and spirituality. A spiritual experience is the goal of a deeply religious person whereas a major discovery or an invention is the goal of a scientific mind. If both aspects are unified, we can transcend to that level of thinking, in which unity is a cohesive aspect. For this environment two major components - science and spirituality - have to interact. A Peace prayer can be the foundation for both.

*"Oh Almighty, create thoughts and actions
In the minds of people of the nation
So that they live united.
Oh Almighty, bless the people
To take a path of life with righteousness
As righteousness gives the strength of character.
Help all religious leaders of the country to
Give strength to the people to combat the divisive forces.
Guide the people to develop an attitude to appreciate different
Ideologies and transform enmity among individuals.
Organisations and nations, into friendliness and harmony.
Embed the thought 'Nation is bigger than the Individual'
In the minds of the leaders and people.
Oh God, bless the people to work with perseverance to
Transform the country into a peaceful and prosperous nation
and promote world peace."*

(Excerpts from the President of India's address at the International Summit 'Towards a Culture of Harmony and Peace' in New Delhi on December 7, 2003).

News from Head Quarters

Mumbai Head Quarters

Italian scholars visit Bhavan

Three Italian scholars Prof. Giuseppe Zanghi, Prof. Luigi Bruni and Prof. Judith Povilius, associated with Focolare Movement, a religious inter-faith movement supported by the Vatican, visited the Bhavan on Monday 29th December 2003. Mr. Robert Catalano and Ms. Marina Pracchia local coordinators of Focolare Movement accompanied them.

Shri Dhirubhai Mehta, Executive Secretary and Director General, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan describing the various cultural and educational

activities of the Bhavan, emphasised on the teaching of values like tolerance, liberalism and brotherhood. He also stressed on the spread of the concept of trusteeship advocated by Mahatma Gandhiji.

Prof. Giuseppe Zanghi, Director of Centre for cultural activities of the Focolare Movement in Rome, described the various activities of the Centre and emphasised on the importance of the inter-



Shri Dhirubhai Mehta, Bhavan's Executive Secretary welcoming Prof Giuseppe Zanghi



(L. to R.) Urvashiben Bhatt, Marina Pracchia, Prof Giuseppe Zanghi, Robert Catalano, Dhuru S Mehta, Prof Luigi Bruni, Prof Dr Ms Judith Povilius, Luciana Cura, H N Dastur, A N Chaturvedi, Prof S A Upadhyay, P N Santhanagopal, Girijashankar Trivedi, and Prakash Shah.

religious and intercultural dialogues for the propagation of love and universal brotherhood.

Prof. Luigi Bruni, Associate Professor in Economics at the Bocconi University, Milan (Italy) emphasised on the Economy of sharing as a means to achieve peace and harmony all around.

Ms. Marina spoke on the noble activities of Focolare Movement and its founder Rev. Chiara Lubich, Prof. Dr. Judith

Povilius, member of Abba School for interdisciplinary studies of Focolare Movement, Mr. Catalano, Mr. Luciano Cura, Shri H. N. Dastur, Jt. Executive Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Shri A. N. Chaturvedi, Director (Legal and Estate) participated in the discussion. Prof. S. A. Upadhyaya, Director, Bhavan's Post-Graduate and Research Dept., proposed the vote of thanks.

Mumbai Head Quarters

Smt. Sonia Gandhi Visits Mani Bhavan

Shri Dhuru S. Mehta, Vice-President of Mani Bhavan and the Executive Secretary and Director General of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and Smt. Aloo Dastur, President of the Mani Bhavan and Mumbai Gandhi Smarak Nidhi received Smt. Sonia Gandhi, President of Indian National Congress, when she paid a visit to the Mani Bhavan, sanctified by Mahatma Gandhi.

Shri Dhuru S. Mehta presented Smt. Gandhi with the Italian version of Bhavan's publication

Krishnavatara Part I & II authored by the Bhavan's founder, Kulapati Dr. K. M. Munshi.

Accompanying Smt. Gandhi were Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Shivraj Patil, Shri Murli Deora, Shri Vayalar Ravi and others.



Shri Dhuru S. Mehta and Smt. Sonia Gandhi.



Shri Dhuru S. Mehta presenting a set of Italian version of Bhavan's publication Krishnavatara Vol. I & II by Dr. K. M. Munshi to Smt. Sonia Gandhi. Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde, Shri Murli Deora and Smt. Aloo Dastur are also seen in the picture

Poetry-Reading

Bhavan's Kala Kendra, Mumbai and Bhavan's Gujarati Monthly, "Navneet Samarpan" launched a monthly programme of Poetry-reading, where young and upcoming poets in Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati and other languages will read or sing their own poems and songs explaining their creative process.

The first programme was held in the Gita Mandir at the Central Bhavan on January 11. The well-

known novelist and poet of the Gujarati language, Shri Dhruv Bhatt recited his creations in the presence of several prominent personalities from the world of literature, arts and drama.

The Editor of Navneet-Samarpan, Shri Deepak Doshi welcomed the guests and introduced Shri Dhruv Bhatt. The Deputy Director of Programmes of the Kala Kendra, Shri Kamlesh Mota proposed a vote of thanks.

Mumbai Head Quarters

Graha Shanti Puja performed

On the occasion of the completion of the first phase of renovation at the Central Bhavan, a Graha-Shanti Puja was performed on January 22, 2004.



Seen in the picture are (from R. to L.) Shri Pravinchandra Gandhi, President of Bhavan, Shri Manek Dalal, Chairman, Bhavan's U. K. Centre, Shri Dhuru Mehta, Bhavan's Executive Secretary and Parahitiji Shri Vishwanath Joshi (a former student of Bhavan's Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya).



Shri Manek Dalal, Chairman of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's U. K. Centre, visited Bhavan's Head Quarters in Mumbai on January 21, 2004. In the picture Shri Dalal is flanked by Bhavan's President, Shri Pravinchandra Gandhi and Executive Secretary, Shri Dhuru S. Mehta on his right and Bhavan's Joint Executive Secretary, Shri H. N. Dastur and the internal auditor Shri Prakash Lakshmi on his left.



The editor of Bhavan's Gujarati Magazine 'Navneet Samarpan' Shri Deepak Doshi offering flowers to Poet Jawahar Baxi

Grand Mushaira celebrated

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan - Kala Kendra & Navneet Samarpan jointly organized a "Mushaira" on 23rd January 2004.

The renowned poets who participated in the Mushaira were Shri Adi Mirza, Shri Jawahar Baxi, Shri Udayan Thakkar, Shri Hemen Shah, Shri Mukesh Joshi and Janab Khalil Dhantejvi.

They enthralled the audience by the recitation of their Gazals and other poetic works.

Shri Suren Thaker 'Mehul' conducted the Mushaira and

Dy. Director of programmes of Kala Kendra Shri Kamlesh Mota welcomed the poets and the audience.

The Editor of Navneet Samarpan, Shri Deepak Doshi and the poetess Ms. Sonal Parikh offered floral greetings to the poets.

On this occasion, various other programmes were announced:

- Live interviews with renowned writers, authors, artistes and masters on 4th Sunday of every month.

- A meeting with successful individuals in different fields who have achieved outstanding results in spite of difficult circumstances on the 3rd Saturday of every month.

- A play reading for Theatre loving audience on the 3rd Sunday of every month.

- One Act Drama and monologues in different languages by young amateurs on the platform of Bhavan's Experimental Theatre on 2nd & 4th Saturday of every month.



Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

9-11 January, 2004, New Delhi

Dr. L.M. Singhvi, M.P. Chairman, High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora and Chairman, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Organising Committee is Co-Chairman of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Worldwide and Life Patron of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

I attended the 2nd Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 9-11 January 2004 in New Delhi.

9th January was the day Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa. This day has been chosen by the Government of India to honour the Pravasi Bharatiyas i.e. the Non-Resident Indians and Persons of India Origin living in other countries.

The three days function consisted of conferences/forums with the top most personalities of India including the President of India, Prime Minister of India, various other senior Ministers and Dignitaries and high class Cultural/entertainment functions and of course a very delicious and sumptuous Indian Cuisine from every State of India with special hospitality from the respective States.

Her Excellency Penelope Wensley AO, High Commissioner of Australia in India hosted a



cocktail party at her residence for the delegates from Australia. Mr. John Fisher, First Secretary and Mr. Philip C.W. Lowday, First Secretary and other senior officials of the Australian High Commission and AUSTRADE also joined in the cocktail party.

The Australia India Business Council (AIBC) has signed a mem-orum of understanding (MoU) with 20 global India business associations and chambers of commerce to formalise a global network among them. The agreement was signed at the second Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the Government of India's flagship event, to build stronger links with the 'Global Indian Family'.

Left to Right: Mr. Atul Temurnikar, Mrs. Singhvi, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, Jean-Pierre Harrison (husband of late astronaut Kalpana Chawla), Mr P.A. Ramakrishnan & Mr Gambhir Watts

We encourage all persons of India Origin and Non Resident Indians living in Australia to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas at least once which is celebrated every year from 9-11 January.

Gambhir Watts, President,
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia

Arts of India

Art Gallery of New South Wales is holding lunchtime lecture series on Arts of India on Tuesdays 1pm to 2pm Domain Theatre, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery Road, Domain, Sydney NSW 2000 Tel: 02 9225 1878 Fax: 02 9221 6234.

Email: bookings@artgalleriesociety.org.au Online: www.artgalleriesociety.nsw.gov.au/membership/courses

New High Commissioner of India

H.E. Prabhat Parkash Shukla is the Indian High Commissioner-designate to Australia. He arrived in Australia on March 6 to replace the outgoing High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr Rajendra Singh Rathore, who will be taking up new posting in Cairo.

Mr Shukla has 30 years experience in the Indian Foreign Service, starting in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1974 and going on to serve variously in Moscow (twice), Brussels, Kathmandu, London, Kiev and lastly in Singapore (where he was also High Commissioner). He has post-graduate qualifications in economics and speaks four languages fluently (English, Hindi, Russian and French). Mr Shukla is married and has one daughter.

Qantas to fly direct to Mumbai

Qantas, Australia's national flag carrier, has applied to the International Air Services Commission for the rights to commence non-stop services from Australia to Mumbai in India and Shanghai in China. Executive General Manager John Borghetti said the Mumbai services would operate three times per week from 1 September 2004 on two-class Boeing 747-300 aircraft. For the first time, these services will operate non-stop to Mumbai, leaving Sydney on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays and landing in Mumbai 11.5 hours later.

Yoga Expo 2004

ISKCON Sydney is hosting Australia's largest ever gathering of Yoga Schools in Paddington Town Hall on 17 April, including vegetarian buffet, and free astrology, ayurveda & vastu consultations. Tel: 02 9956 6831 Fax: 02 9957 1893

Email: percy@yogaexpo.com.au Web: www.yogaexpo.com.au

THE SANATANA-DHARMA

All Vedic knowledge is infallible and Hindus want Vedic knowledge to be complete and infallible.

Vedic knowledge is not a question of research. It is the eternal function of the eternal living entities in relationship with the eternal supreme whole. Sanatana-Dharma refers to the eternal occupation of the living entity. Ramanujacharya has explained the word sanatana as "that which has neither beginning nor end."

The English word "Religion" is a little different from Sanatana-Dharma. Religion conveys the idea of faith and faith may change. One may have faith in a particular process, and he may change his faith and adopt another, but Sanatana-Dharma refers to that activity which cannot be changed. For instance, liquidity cannot be taken from water, nor can heat be taken from fire. Similarly, the eternal function of the eternal living entity cannot be taken from living entity. Sanatana-Dharma is

eternally integral with the living entity. That which has neither beginning nor end must not be sectarian, for it cannot be limited by any boundaries.

The swarupa or constitutional position of the living being is rendering of service to the supreme personality of Godhead. We can see that every living being is constantly engaged in rendering service to another living being and that no living being is exempt from rendering service to another living being. We can therefore, conclude that service is the constant companion of the living being and that the rendering of service is the eternal religion of the living being.

Yet man professes to belong to a particular type of faith with reference to particular time and circumstance and thus claims to be Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist or any other sect. Such designations are non-Sanatana-Dharma. The Hindu, Muslim or

Christian in all circumstances is servant of someone. Thus, to profess a particular type of sect is not to profess one's Sanatana-Dharma. The rendering of service is Sanatana-Dharma.

BY GAMBHIR WATTS

(This article is based on the commentary of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's 'Bhagavad-gita As It Is', introduction)



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H.E. Rajendra Singh Rathore, Former High Commissioner of India in Australia

Affiliated to: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (Central Bhavan) Mumbai, India

(founded in 1938 by Kulapathi Dr. K.M. Munshi with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi)



Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
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Upcoming Events 2004

17 April - "An Evening for our Stars" Musical program to honour the performers and volunteers of the Bhavan.

Mid June Date TBA -
Essay competition awards

15 August - Multicultural dances and Arts of Australia,
Sydney Town Hall

2 October An especial program TBA.

Early-Mid November
A major dance ballet/musical program TBA and celebrating Deepavali at the NSW Parliament jointly with other Indian organizations

Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan
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