

Bhavan Australia

www.bhavanaaustralia.org

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side - Rig Veda, 1-89-i



Life | Literature | Culture

Holy & Wise

Ekam Sad vipra bahuda vadanti

One alone exists, Sages call it by various names.



The unity we desire will last only if we cultivate an yielding and charitable disposition towards one another. (Young India (YI), 11-5-1921, p. 148)

Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well.

-Mahatma Gandhi

The whole world of religions is only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of all of them.

-Swami Vivekananda

I have never found a problem with people from different religions praying together. What I have found is that people are just hungry for God, and be they Christian or Muslim we invite them to pray with us.

-Mother Teresa

Theosophy has no code of morals, being itself the embodiment of the highest morality; it presents to its students the highest moral teachings of all religions, gathering the most fragrant blossoms from the gardens of the world-faiths.

-Annie Besant

All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.

-Albert Einstein

Life is too Short to be Neglected

A responsible captain will never leave the helm of his ship unmanned as he knows the perils of a rudderless ship on the high seas.

Our life too is like a ship, if left rudderless and allowed to drift, very soon it will spin out of control and be out of grasp and reach. Ruination will follow suit and lamenting will be totally futile. According to Hinduism as per Swami Sivananda's interpretation, an uncontrolled mind can experience extreme turbulence and disquiet.

This is because if a mind is not harnessed by its owner then external forces and influences will exert their dominance over it, for an idle brain is the happy feeding ground of the devil.

The devil is a predator lurking about, relentlessly searching for a prey. The devil is not necessarily the devil of the scriptures.

Any evil or wicked idea and thought symbolises the devil. And the devil's workshop is the human mind.

Since the human mind has to be constantly fed, it never lies empty. So if it is not nurtured with good constructive inputs then the devil will insidiously slip in and start infesting it with evil, mischievous thoughts.

And one may never realise that he has been entrapped and bound like Prometheus because one will never ever be able to free oneself.

The brain is the receptacle of all knowledge and all influences. Our constant exposure to our environment and the people we associate with render us vulnerable and at times confused because we are left exposed to conflicting influences, both good and bad. The problem is we are impacted by these myriad influences which sometimes can have very debilitating effect upon us unless we are ready with our safeguards. Evil minded people can be extremely dominating and very often they can have a mesmeric effect over a mentally timid person.

On the other hand if the potential faculties of the mind are adequately developed then the mind becomes very robust and an individual can brush aside all perfidious distractions and forge ahead along his chosen path.

For instance, innumerable leaders have been born, but few succeeded in acquiring the stature of Mahatma Gandhi or Nelson Mandela.

From time to time, innumerable religious leaders have travelled to distant countries but how many have the persona of Swami Vivekananda.

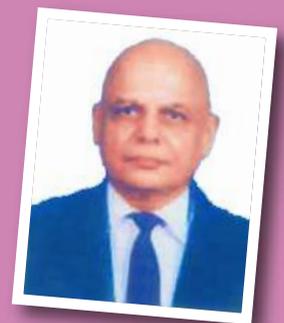
So charismatic are they that these people have a magnetic and salubrious effect on other people. Hand in hand we have examples of men equally famed and powerful who have also held incredible sway over the masses. Despite that, history today treats them as pariahs because their followers were heinously misguided and eventually disowned.

This is the reason why it is so important to think for oneself and to make one's own decisions. Therefore, education is so necessary for us as proper education alone plays a pivotal role in our thought processes and can help in curbing our pride, self-doubts, fears, lust and jealousy. Education refines us, teaches us self-control and emancipates our minds. Here we are reminded of Tagore's prayer to God in the Gitanjali, "Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles". Hence it is important to improve the quality of our thoughts. We have to constantly decipher which thoughts are not serving our highest goals: which thoughts are negative so that we can deconstruct and remove them.

A good thought is blessed in three ways. It benefits the thinker because it improves his mental health. It benefits the person about whom it is entertained. And lastly it will benefit mankind at large. A thought can create and a thought can destroy. Our actions are a reflection of our thoughts. Our actions are really what we think.

As life is transient it is very important to be conscious of these contemplations post-haste. Sooner we learn to steer our life in the right direction, better the control we will have over our life.

-Surendralal G Mehta
President, Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan Worldwide



World Red Cross Day

Each year, on 8 May, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement marks World Red Cross Red Crescent Day by highlighting the role of its staff and volunteers in saving lives and assisting vulnerable communities around the world. The day is extremely significant for Red Cross, as it is the birthday of founder Henri Dunant. America celebrates World Red Cross Day to emphasize the hard work that all National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies dedicate worldwide for the relief of human distress and misery occurring due to disease, famine, disaster or war.

Henri Dunant and the Red Cross

Henri Dunant was appalled at the suffering of thousands of men, on both sides, who were left to die due to lack of care after the Battle of Solferino in 1859. He proposed the creation of national relief societies, made up of volunteers, trained in peacetime to provide neutral and impartial help to relieve suffering in times of war. In response to these ideas a committee, which later became the International Committee of the Red Cross, was established in Geneva.

World Red Cross Society

Today Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have the world's largest humanitarian network to provide relief. It is carrying out its activities and is present in more than 170 countries. So it is the world's largest force of unpaid assistants helping some 233 million recipients every year. The total no. of members of National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent comprises approximately 97 million members and volunteers. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was originated as a result of aspiration to provide the first aid as well as all the possible assistance to the victim on the battlefield thus alleviating the human suffering.

Red Cross helps in averting the deadly and painful diseases like measles etc by vaccinating children during such crises. Nevertheless the eradication of the diseases should be the primary objective to save children from sufferings. The American Red Cross and its partners are accomplishing this mission in many regions of the world. The Africa Women's Initiative (AWI) is another collaboration of the American Red Cross and African Red Cross societies to prevent and lessen the high rate of maternal and child mortality in Africa.

The Africa Women's Initiative (AWI) has also

contributed as a five-year, integrated health education and advocacy program with a gender component. The international Red Cross is an organization whose mission is to safeguard human life and health. Its aim is to prevent and lessen human suffering ensuring indiscriminate on the basis of nationality, race, class or political opinions, religious beliefs. Red colored cross on a white background was symbol originated in 1864 in Geneva Convention, and is recognized as a protection symbol in conflict.

International Committee of the Red Cross

International Committee of the Red Cross consists of 25 members and Red Cross committee authorized and empowered to protect the life and dignity of the victims of national and international war or conflicts, under international human rights law. Red Crescent Societies works in collaboration with World Red Cross today to coordinate activities within the Movement.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies exist in almost every country of the world today. Presently, there are 186 National Societies, recognized by the ICRC. Most of these societies are using the Red Cross as their official organization emblem. Presently, the world Red Cross is working with other Red Cross societies to improve miserable conditions in developing nations. They are reconnecting families separated by emergencies.

The Mission

Red Cross, the volunteer-led humanitarian organisation helps people in crisis, wherever and whenever they are. It enables vulnerable people at home and overseas to prepare for and respond to emergencies in their own communities and when the crisis is over, Red Cross helps people recover and move on with their lives.

Celebrations

World Red Cross Day highlights the need for stronger local and global associations in facing the growing humanitarian challenges. On World Red Cross Day the Red Cross give special focus on programs and activities to provide healthy and safe environment to the children around the world.

**Source: www.altiusdirectory.com,
www.redcross.org.uk**



Holi Mahotsav Acknowledgments

For this Month

The grand festival of Holi is truly a celebration of Harmony and friendship and multiculturalism. Just thinking of Holi Mahotsav fills our heart with extreme joy and happiness Holi harbingers the arrival of spring and new harvest. The festival has an ancient origin celebrating the triumph of good over evil. In India during Holi days one can see colours of joy everywhere. We cannot replicate that seen here in Australia for reasons beyond our control and respecting those who may not like colours being thrown on them.

But our endeavour has been to showcase that Holi ambience of India to the multicultural Australian Society in the heart of the biggest and diverse and most prominent Australian City Hub that is Darling Harbour where flow of people never This enables us to share the celebrations of harmony and friendship with the broader Australian communities. Our continued efforts over past 10 years have made Holi Mahotsav as one of the most important Australian festivals. City of Sydney has included Holi Mahotsav as a part of their Living in Harmony Festival.

This year Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia is celebrating the 12th anniversary of the Holi Mahotsav from Saturday 22 March until Sunday 23 March 2014. Since past three year our Holi Mahotsav has become an integral part of the City of Sydney's Living in Harmony Festival.

We are indeed immensely grateful to all those who have travelled with us in eleven years in turning Holi Mahotsav an Indian festival of harmony and friendship into mainstream grand Australian festival of harmony today. Australian community has made Holi a part of our evolving cultural calendar. Our special thanks are due to Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, India Tourism Sydney and ISKCON Sydney who agreed to and encouraged our plans for Holi Mahotsav in 2003 and have remained with us since then. The Premier of New South Wales has been supporting Holi Mahotsav since 2005 with grants from the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW.

We are grateful to City of Sydney and City Central Command of NSW Police who have greatly supported our Street Procession called Rath Yatra every year since 2005. Our sincere thanks and gratitude are due to them.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors: Community Relations Commission for a multicultural New South Wales, Incredible India, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority City of Sydney and ISKCON Sydney. We are grateful to our media supporters Sydney Morning Herald, ZEE TV, Eastern Suburb Newspapers, Desi Kangaroo, The Indian Telegraph, Indus Age, Indian Link, The Indian Down Under, Punjab Times, Masala Newslines, Navtarang Newspaper & Radio, Nepalese Times, and the Epoch Times, SBS who join us in making this 2014 festival even brighter and diverse.

We are indeed grateful to our stallholders whose names appear separately in this souvenir.

And the performers, staff and volunteers without whom the success of Holi Mahotsav could not have been possible, whose names separately appear in this souvenir. I bow before and salute them with humility and greatest gratitude.

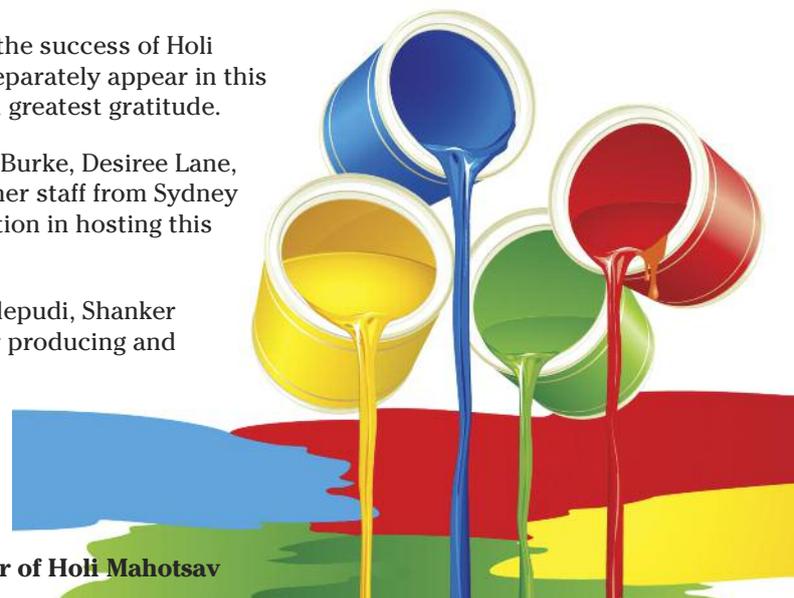
We are grateful to Gracie Low, Kate Scott Eager, Brendan Burke, Desiree Lane, Annie Winter, Graham, Peter Malony, Peter Baker and other staff from Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority for their valuable contribution in hosting this festival.

I am thankful to the fellow Directors Sridhar Kumar Kondepudi, Shanker Dhar, Kalpana Shriram for their valuable contribution for producing and presenting the festival.

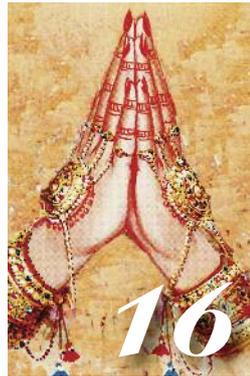


A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gambhir Watts".

Gambhir Watts OAM
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia, Organiser of Holi Mahotsav



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World Harmony Day

Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well.

-Mahatma Gandhi

World Harmony Day was started after the devastation of the September 11 World Trade Center incident in New York, America that shook the world and left it in fear and terror grappling helplessly for some semblance of security and safety.

Significance

World Harmony Day is a day to celebrate ALL of humanity as one global family. It is an observation that is not only symbolic, but most importantly, will bring hope to the rest of the world. This is happening all over the World and it will create a wave of Harmony and become one collective voice—visualising love, light, peace, harmony and unity. World Harmony Day is about sharing, caring, loving and understanding people needs—*“All We Need is LOVE”*.

A Love & Spiritual Movement

World Harmony Day is not a religious organization as such, but rather a movement that embraces common themes found in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other major faiths.

These themes include love and empathy, peace and harmony and tolerance: things which can help liberate citizens of the world from all diverse religious backgrounds.

World Harmony Day is basically a non-denominational spiritual movement that embraces peace, harmony and unity as its core beliefs. A love and spiritual movement helps one to find one's place in the world by spending time proactively to help others. This makes our existence more

relevant and contributes to the bigger picture in our own lives and the lives of others.

Proper actions and decisions made by this generation can help to set the next generations on the path towards peace-keeping with diverse populations. World Harmony Day's "seekers of truth, peace & harmony" are people from all over the world who believe ordinary citizens working together can and will make a profound difference. The true spirit of World Harmony Day is in bringing all the citizens of the world to a deep sense of the "Oneness" of all human beings.

Celebrations

Harmony Day is celebrated on 21 March each year. It's a day when people celebrate their cultural diversity. The Day is celebrated worldwide. Harmony Day in Australia began in 1999 and since then, a wide variety of groups including sports organisations, community groups, local, state and federal government agencies, schools and businesses have staged more than 25 000 Harmony Day events.

People celebrate the important role that sport plays in bringing together Australians from all walks of life to share in a common passion with the message Sport—play, engage, inspire. The aim is to encourage everyone, regardless of background, to participate in a sporting activity, increase understanding and to be inspired or inspire others.

In the dualism of death and life there is a harmony. We know that the life of a soul, which is finite in its expression and infinite in its principle, must go through the portals of death in its journey to realise the infinite.

-Rabindranath Tagore

**Source: www.harmony.gov.au,
<http://worldharmonyday.com>**

Education, Enrichment and Enlightenment

Education goes on from birth to death, the first teachers for us being our mothers and fathers. Education is considered so important in our society and parents take all the trouble to educate their children to the highest levels possible. While present day education is definitely fulfilling the crucial need of getting a job and livelihood and providing critical manpower for the country, the basic purpose of education seems to be missing in the cacophony of all round commercialization of life and its goals. Instead of providing happiness, peace and prosperity education is making the life of youth complex, cumbersome, competitive and conflicting in a predominantly corporate culture that is all pervading.

The background for this that the time of independence we were a completely wreck, having been robbed for two centuries by the British and the first and second industrial revolutions demoralizing the country and the people completely. Steeped in poverty, hunger and a terrible inferiority complex, we simply followed the dictates of the West who told us what to do, what not to do, what to think, even how to think and of course finally what is “development!” And we

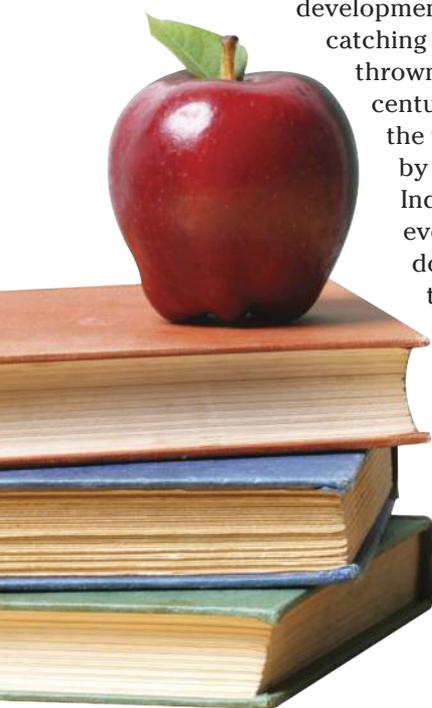
followed faithfully and blindly thereby making development synonymous with catching up with the West. We have thrown all the ancient wisdom of centuries—if not millennia—to the winds. But unfortunately by the time we proved that India is capable of doing every thing the West could do, the path of development the developed countries chose turned out to be not only unsustainable as vindicated by the uncontrollable environmental problems surfaced at the turn of the 21st Century but also by the economic melt of 2008.

Modern education system is essentially designed to provide

Steeped in poverty, hunger and a terrible inferiority complex, we simply followed the dictates of the West who told us what to do, what not to do, what to think, even how to think and of course finally what is “development!”

skilled manpower for the innumerable activities created in the society in the name of development and providing jobs rather than improving the student’s capacity to understand life, its dependence on Nature around and his obligations to the society. It is not making him broader and more open minded in his outlook. Right from teen age students are taught about material sciences, technology, economics, markets, growth rate, GDP etc. Youngsters are burning out fast amidst a horrendous 24 x 7 culture of over work coupled with dangerous food and rest habits, and becoming a wreck by the time they are 30-35 years of age. With money aplenty they don’t know what to do and thus get into dangerous habits and life style, whose adverse effects unfortunately do not show up immediately. Having risen to the higher positions at young age, there is no charm for youth in career also. The reason is the powerful imposition of the Western concept of materialism sans respect for the Nature, celebrity cult sans value system. This has resulted in a culture where only two things are made to look important—money making and merry making.

It will be interesting to note that concepts in modern education keep on changing endlessly with time in tune with the so called advances in science and technology. What is true or important does not appear to be so after a decade or two causing reversals in our thinking. Things like: organic farming to chemical farming and back, cotton to



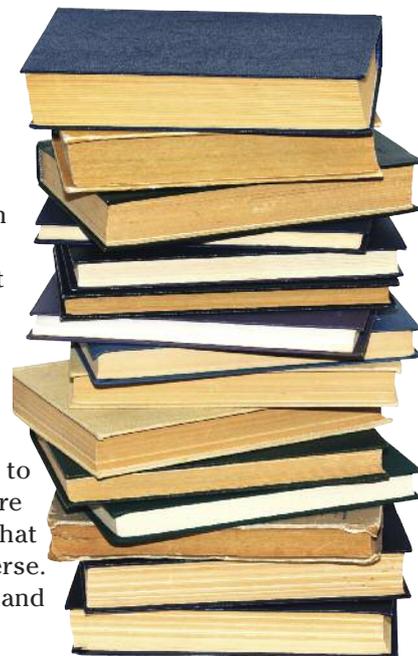


polyester and back, small dams to big dams and back, Nature cure to modern medicine and back are some of the glaring examples. Ancient Indian education based on understanding the self and the Nature around has not changed even after thousands of years. It is also based on superior knowledge and the science-based guidelines were transmitted from one generation to another through lifestyle, culture, festivals, rituals etc. To meet the short term and short sighted objectives of the so called development we are depriving our youth a wholesome education that could make them enlightened. Today we have reached a stage when our elders say we don't believe; if our scriptures are quoted we don't believe. But if it appears in a second rate newspaper or TV channel we take it very seriously and start quoting every where and acting accordingly. Faith and Knowledge are complementary in Nature. The egocentric Man continuously and desperately tries to replace Faith with Knowledge but when he reaches the end of his Knowledge, he falls back on Faith only.

Unfortunately religion is a taboo in modern education. But all religions are value based and promote the concept of a supreme cosmic force (call him god or some thing else) that drives this world, brotherhood, compassion, charity, righteous simple and eco-friendly living. The purpose of God is to instill courage to do good things and fear to stop doing bad things. Religion, whatever be the religion, always has a moderating effect on the conduct and character of man. It also clearly exposes man's frailty as well as critical dependence on Nature around him and the need to respect and preserve Nature.

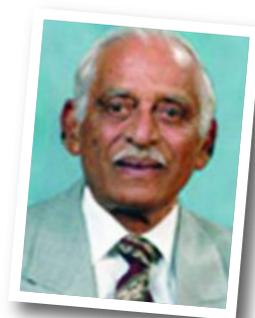
Instead of correcting the aberrations and misunderstandings that crept through religion, we officially dispensed with religion and replaced it with money-centric modern economics paving the way for a free fall of values. Thus there is hardly

any scope for enlightenment through education. Einstein seems to have thought there existed a 'true' religion that couldn't conflict with science. Whether we believe in the invisible God or visible world, we need to obey the Laws of Nature and the cosmic force that drives the entire universe. That is enlightenment and the true purpose of education. You can download data or information but not wisdom or enlightenment.



May we wake up and save the youth and the country from useless and dangerous imitations of the developed countries! In the absence of any responsibility shouldered by the governments which are remotely driven from behind by powerful lobbies with vested interests, it is the responsibility of intellectuals, parents and NGOs in the country to make sure that our youth are not merely enriched but also enlightened.

-T.S. Ramakrishna, Founder and Secretary, Earthsystem Sciences Awareness and Research Association (ESWARA) retired as Director and Head of Geophysics Division of the Southern Region, Geological survey of India (GSI), Hyderabad. He has made major contributions to the GSI in the field of exploration geophysics during his more than three decades of service, which got him the Government of India's prestigious National Mineral Award. He worked as WAPCO's (Govt. of India) groundwater expert in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He has authored two books and several papers and is a Fellow of the Geological Society of India and the Indian Geophysical Union.



The above lecture abstract is a part of series of abstracts on various disciplines of ancient Indian science as well as related aspects in modern science that have a bearing on the present society.

Source: www.eswaraindia.org

Sachin Tendulkar: Cricket's Superlatives Retire with Him

“Here was a Caesar—when comes such another?” says Mark Antony in his memorable funeral oration in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. The question ‘when comes such another?’ was swiftly answered by history with a succession of Caesars; if rhetoric reflects the public sentiment, as it did in Shakespeare’s play, it is only for occasions. But history has produced numerous occasions where the bowing out of a great person evokes the question: When comes such another?

In our own times the question fits aptly with the retirement of Sachin Tendulkar, after almost a quarter century of cricketing excellence matched by impeccable on and off field behaviour. If ever the word genius fits the description in all its ramifications, it is to Sachin Tendulkar as a batsman, and as a cricketer, wholesome and brilliant. It is no wonder that every would-be parent in every part of India wants to name their impending boy child Sachin. He is cricket’s brightest jewel in the crown that India has come to wear these days.

Statistically speaking, few cricketers, Sir Donald Bradman included, come anywhere near the achievements of this diminutive gentleman with a squeaky voice and a super confident mien.

Great bowlers vary their length and line a few times in a six-ball over. Great batsmen try only to fend them out rather than try adventurous strokes. But all these great ones find Sachin Tendulkar ready to send their deliveries over the fence by perfectly positioning himself to meet the ball right in the meat of the bat. People will talk about the manner in which Australian spin legend Shane Warne’s 180 degrees turning ball was sent to the spectator’s stand by Tendulkar, with a slight bending of the back and meeting the ball at good length. The Australian ever since has been an unabashed admirer of the Indian wizard.

As a rule cricketing geniuses have mountains of ego with undisguised contempt for their opponents. Tendulkar, on the other hand, remains a perfect gentleman who never lost his cool whatever the provocation. In a game that has rapidly turned into a stage for ungentlemanly displays, Sachin Tendulkar remains a perfect role model for the younger generations: He wears his stupendous achievements in his shirt sleeves, as it were.

It has been said that Sachin never considered

himself to be above the game, but the truth is that the game of cricket bowed before the batting genius of an entire era.

Tendulkar bats, bowls and throws with his right hand, but writes with his left hand. He is renowned for his picture-perfect stroke play.

The straight drive—the most exquisite sight in cricket—is often said to be his favourite shot. But, he has more shots than any other in the cricket book and he could play three different shots for three identical deliveries.

Tendulkar has incorporated several modern and unorthodox strokes into his repertoire, including the paddle sweep, the scoop over short fine leg and the slash to the third man over the slips’ heads. This has enabled him to remain scoring consistently in spite of the physical toll of injuries and a lean period in the mid-2000s. While Tendulkar is not a regular bowler, he can bowl medium pace, leg spin and off spin. He often bowls when two batsmen of the opposite team have been batting together for a long period, as he can often be a useful partnership breaker. With his bowling he has helped secure an Indian victory on more than one occasion. He has taken 200 international wickets—45 in Tests, 154 in ODIs where he is India’s tenth highest wicket taker, and one wicket in Twenty20 Internationals.

In 2011, Tendulkar achieved his dream of helping India winning the Cricket World Cup at the Wankhede stadium in Mumbai. He has played the highest number of Test and ODI matches. Among many laurels he had won—the most prominent ones being Padma Vibhushan, India’s second highest civilian award, and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, India’s highest sporting honour. Tendulkar won his first ICC cricketer of the year award in 2010. In February 2010, he became the first batsman to break the 200-run barrier in one-day cricket. He was chosen as one of the five Wisden Cricketers of the Year in 1997 and is ranked by the Wisden 100 as the second best test batsman and ODI batsman of all time.

In April 2012, Tendulkar accepted the Rajya Sabha nomination proposed by the president. He is the first active sportsperson and cricketer to have been nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Tendulkar was born in Mumbai on 24 April, 1973. His father Ramesh Tendulkar was a reputed

Marathi novelist and his mother Rajni worked in the insurance industry. Ramesh named the infant Tendulkar after his favourite music director, Sachin Dev Burman. Tendulkar has three elder siblings Nitin, Ajit, and Savita. He spent his formative years in the Sahitya Sahawas Cooperative Housing Society, Bandra (East), Mumbai.

In 1987, at the age of 14, he attended the MRF Pace Foundation in Madras (now Chennai) to train as a fast bowler. A couple of months later, former Indian batsman Sunil Gavaskar gave him a pair of his own ultra light pads. "It was the greatest source of encouragement for me," Tendulkar said nearly 20 years later after surpassing Gavaskar's world record of 34 Test centuries. His season in 1988 was extraordinary, with Tendulkar scoring a century in every innings he played.

On 14 November, 1987, Tendulkar was selected to represent Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy. A year later, on 11 December, 1988, Tendulkar made his debut for Mumbai against Gujarat at home and scored 100 not out in that match, making him the youngest Indian to score a century on first-class debut.

Tendulkar made his Test debut against Pakistan in Karachi in November 1989. In the fourth and final test in Sialkot, he was hit on the nose by a bouncer bowled by Imran Khan, but he declined medical assistance and continued to bat even as blood gushed from his face.

In 1992, at the age of 19, Tendulkar became the first overseas-born player to represent Yorkshire, which prior to Tendulkar joining the team, never selected players even from other English counties. Tendulkar played 16 first-class matches for the county and scored 1070 runs at an average of 46.52.

His first double century was for Mumbai while playing against the visiting Australian team at the Brabourne Stadium in 1998. He is the only player to score a century in all three of his domestic first-class debuts.

Sachin Tendulkar surpassed Brian Lara's record tally of 11,953 runs as the highest run scorer in test matches in the second Test of Australia's 2008 tour of India in Mohali.

He also holds the record of highest number of centuries in both Test (51) and ODI (49) cricket. On 16 March, 2012, Tendulkar scored his 100th international hundred. It

came against Bangladesh in the league matches of Asia Cup 2012.

Throughout his career, he has made a strong impact on Indian cricket and was, at one time, the foundation of most of the team's victories. Tendulkar was the highest run scorer of the 1996 Cricket World Cup and 2003 Cricket World Cup. After his century against England during group stages of 2011 Cricket World Cup, he became the player to hit most number of centuries in Cricket World Cups with six centuries and the first player to score 2000 runs in World Cup cricket.

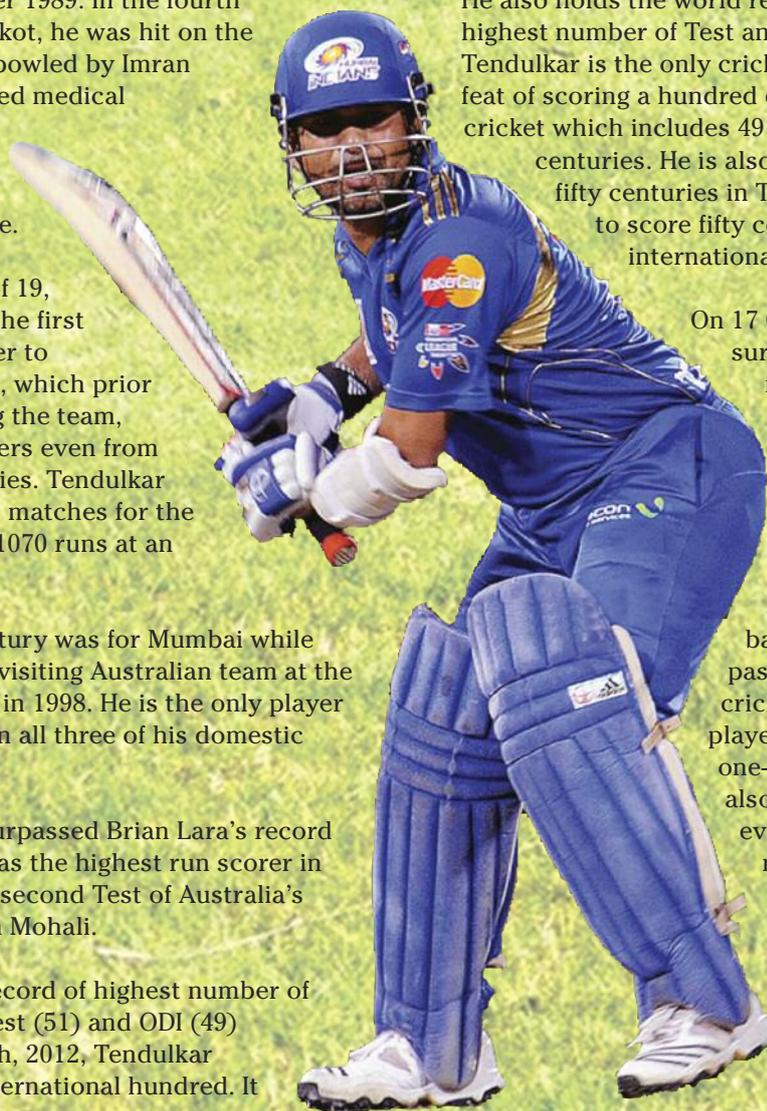
Tendulkar has scored over 1000 runs in a calendar year in ODIs 7 times, and in 1998 he scored 1894 runs, easily the record for the highest number of runs scored by any player in a single calendar year for one day internationals. On 24 February, 2010, Tendulkar became the first male cricketer to score a double-century in one-day cricket.

He has been Man of the Match 13 times in Test matches and Man of the Series four times. He has been Man of the Match 60 times in One day International matches and Man of the Series 14 times.

He also holds the world record for playing the highest number of Test and ODI matches. Tendulkar is the only cricketer to accomplish the feat of scoring a hundred centuries in international cricket which includes 49 ODI and 51 Test centuries. He is also the only player to score fifty centuries in Test cricket, and the first to score fifty centuries in all international cricket combined.

On 17 October, 2008, when he surpassed Brian Lara's record for the most runs scored in Test cricket, he also became the first batsman to score 12,000, 13,000, 14,000 and 15,000 runs in that form of the game, having also been the third batsman and first Indian to pass 11,000 runs in Test cricket. He was also the first player to score 10,000 runs in one-day internationals, and also the first player to cross every subsequent 1000-run mark that has been crossed in ODI cricket history.

In the fourth Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia, Tendulkar





surpassed Australia's Allan Border to become the player to cross the 50-run mark the most number of times in Test cricket history, and also the second ever player to score 11 Test centuries against Australia, tying with Sir Jack Hobbs of England more than 70 years previously.

On 24 February, 2010, Tendulkar became the first man to score a double century (200) in an ODI against South Africa. On 8 November, 2011, Tendulkar became the first batsman to score 15,000 runs in Test Cricket.

On 24 May, 1995 at the age of 22, Tendulkar married Anjali, a paediatrician and daughter of Gujarati industrialist Anand Mehta and British social worker Annabel Mehta. They have two children, Sara (born 12 October, 1997) and Arjun (born 24 September, 1999). In January 2013 Arjun was selected in Mumbai under-14 team for the west zone league.

Tendulkar is an ardent devotee of Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi. He has visited Puttaparthi on several occasions to seek Baba's blessings. In 1997, Tendulkar captained the Indian National side, playing against a World Eleven team, in the Unity Cup which was held at the hill view stadium in Puttaparthi, in Baba's presence. After Sai Baba's death, Tendulkar broke into tears when he saw the body of Baba in Puttaparthi, and cancelled his birthday celebrations. The cricketer is also known to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi at home and frequently visits temples during night when it is calm and quiet.

From about 2002 to 2006-07, Tendulkar's batting often seemed to be a shadow of its former self. He was inconsistent, and his big knocks mostly came in sedate, accumulative, uncharacteristic fashion. However, after the 2007 World Cup, his career had

a second wind and his consistency and form returned.

On the second day of the Nottingham Test (28 July 2007) Tendulkar became the third cricketer to complete 11,000 Test runs. In the subsequent One day series against England, Tendulkar was the leading run scorer from India with an average of 53.42. In the ODI Series against Australia in October 2007 Tendulkar was the leading Indian run scorer with 278 runs.

Tendulkar has got out 27 times in the 90s during his international career. On 8 November, 2007 he got out on 99 against Pakistan in an ODI at Mohali to the bowling of Umar Gul. In the fourth ODI, he got out on 97 (off 102 balls with 16 fours) after dragging a delivery from Gul on to his stumps, falling short of another century in ODIs in 2007.

In the 2-Test Series against South Africa, Tendulkar made seven and 100 in the first test and 106 in the first innings of the second test. In the course of the second 100 (his 47th Test Hundred) he passed several landmarks, in that he had scored four hundreds in his last four matches and that the hundred against South Africa in the first Test was the first at home against South Africa. The century was also his hundredth score over 50 in International Test cricket, moving him to 92 international hundreds (Tests and ODIs combined). In the second match of the subsequent ODI series, Tendulkar scored 200 not out to become the world's first person to score a double century in ODI cricket.

Tendulkar scored his much awaited 100th international hundred on 16 March, 2012. He became the first person in history to achieve this feat. Incidentally, it was Tendulkar's first ODI hundred against Bangladesh. Tendulkar passed 30,000 runs in international cricket on 20 November, 2009. On 5 December, 2012, Tendulkar became the first batsman in history to cross the 34,000 run aggregate in all formats of the game put together.

Two years later he became the first player to score 100 international centuries. As of October, 2013, Tendulkar has played 662 matches in international cricket. On 5 October, 2013, Sachin Tendulkar became the 16th player and first Indian to aggregate 50,000 runs in all recognised cricket (First-class cricket, List A cricket and Twenty20 combined).

-VNN and Veena Adige with inputs from internet.

Source: Bhavan's Journal, November 15, 2013

Philosophers—Spiritual Leaders—Cultural Ambassadors

Swami Vivekananda went to America and other countries and addressed the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893.

In all his speeches he emphasized the Universality of Religions. He founded the Vedantic Society in America. He gave to the west his message of Vedanta as the universal principle basic to all religions.

Returning to India, he gave lectures emphasizing that in India “the keynote of the whole music of national life was religion, a religion which preached the spiritual oneness of the whole universe”.

Swami Vivekananda visited America a second time in 1899. He renounced his mortal body in 1902, July 4.

The following is an extract from the lengthy article entitled “Universal religion” by Swami Vivekananda (Bhavan’s Journal, Jan. 16-31, 1984), which is useful in understanding inter-religious harmony, a part of Indian culture.

“I find in the study of the various religions of the world that there are three different stages of ideas with regard to the soul and God. In the first place, all religions admit that, apart from the body which perishes, there is a certain part of something which does not change like the body; a part that is immutable, eternal and never dies. We—the essential part of us—never had a beginning and never will have an end. And above us all, above this eternal nature, there is another eternal being without end—God. People talk about the beginning of the world, the beginning of man. The word ‘beginning’ simply means beginning of a cycle. Your body will meet with death, but not the soul.”

The soul in itself is perfect. The New Testament admits man as perfect at the beginning. Man made himself impure by his own actions. But he is to regain his old nature, his pure nature. All religions teach that the human soul is in its very nature perfect and that man is to regain that original purity. How? By knowing God.

What is the idea of these different religions? The primary idea of God is vague. The most ancient had different deities sun, earth, fire, water. We next find one God standing supreme. But the idea differed. But all the old ideas are gone.

Next come the monotheistic ideas; belief in one God who is omnipotent and omniscient, the one God of the universe. This one God is extracosmic; he lives in the heavens. He is unapproachable; nothing can come near Him. In the New Testament it is taught our father who art in Heaven. God in the Heavens separated from men.

Further on we find the teaching that he is a God immanent in nature; he is not only God in heaven, but on earth too. He is the God in us.

Then there is the non-dualistic stage, in which man realises that the God he has been worshipping is not only the Father in Heaven and on earth but that ‘I’ and ‘My father’ are one. He realises in his soul that he is God himself, only a low expression of him. All that is real in me is He. All that is real in him is ‘I’. The gulf between God and man is thus bridged. Thus far find how, by knowing God, we find the kingdom of heaven within us.

The different stages of growth are absolutely necessary to the attainment of purity and perfection. The varying systems of religion are at a bottom founded on the same ideas. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is within you. Again he says “Our Father who are in Heaven”.

How do you reconcile the two sayings? The latter is meant for the masses who were uneducated in religion. The masses want concrete ideas, something the senses can grasp. When a man has developed a high state of spirituality he can understand that the kingdom of heaven is within him.

Thus we see that the apparent contradictions and perplexities in every religion mark but different stages of growth. And as such we have no right to blame anyone for his religion. There are stages of growth in which forms and symbols are necessary; they are the language that the souls at that stage can understand.

The next idea that I want to bring to you is that religions do not consist in doctrines or dogmas. It is not what you read or what dogmas you believe that is of importance, but what you realise. ‘Blessed are the pure in spirit, for they shall see God’. Yes, in this life. And that is salvation. The power of attaining it is within ourselves. We live and move in God. Books never make religions, but

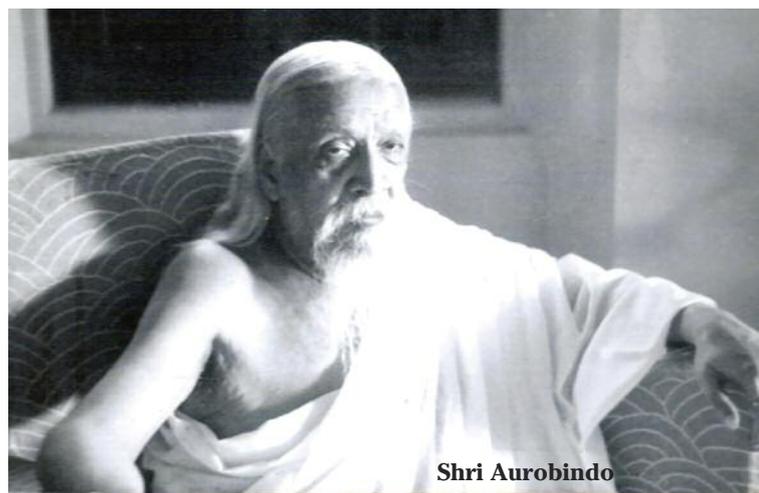
religions make books. The end of all religions is the realising of God in the soul. That is the one universal religion”.

Aurobindo

Shri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on August 15, 1872. At seven he went to England and stayed for 14 years taking classical Cambridge Tripos. For a short while he was Professor of English and French at Baroda having mastered the two languages in addition to Greek and Latin while in England. He became interested in politics and decided to practise yoga to give the political programme a spiritual dimension. He was arrested following a violent incident associated with the revolutionary movement but was released after a long trial. He left for Pondicherry and withdrew from politics. The works of Sri Aurobindo include the “Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga, poetry, essays on the Gita and the Secret of the Veda and the great epic poem Savitri”.

According to Sri Aurobindo matter and spirit are real and neither matter nor spirit can be ignored in philosophy. One is incomplete without the other. This receives emphasis in the Upanishad statement “Matter is also Brahman” (Annam Brahmety Vyajanat). There should not be any choice between the two-matter and spirit. Unfortunately the spiritualist denounces matter as an illusion of the senses and the materialist feels spirit as an illusion of the imagination. Materialist lays emphasis on sensuous knowledge and feels reason cannot go beyond the date of the senses. Spiritualism derives the ability of the sensuous world. According to him, “In India the one-sided affirmation of the spirit to the exclusion of matter has been much too strong because of the Vedanta, the oft quoted ‘Brahma Satyam Jagam Maya’ impact on individuals and collectives.

The world process involves two aspects, the aspect of ascent and the aspect of descent. Unless there is descent of the spirit into the world there cannot be any ascent of the world into the spirit. The descent of the spirit into matter leads evolving into life and in turn life evolves into mind. “Mind ascends to something higher than itself. Supermind, the ascending process continues till the absolute spirit of Satchitananda is reached. Shri Aurobindo calls the ascending process as Evolution and the descending process as Involution. “The evolution of matter is possible only because there has been an involution of the spirit into matter. So he considers matter also as spiritual. According to him the Vedantist accepts the ascent and ignores the descent of the spirit. The order of evolution will be: Matter, Life, Soul, Mind, Supermind, Bliss (Ananda), Consciousness Force (Chit), Existence (Sat).



Shri Aurobindo

The conquest of death and an earthly immortality is possible by complete transformation of body, Life, Soul and Mind. The rejection of matter becomes rejection of the spirit as well and hence the task of evolution is to spiritualize matter. The evolution of the world has already reached four stages. Matter, Life, Soul and Mind. It will take a step into the next stage, Supermind, with this a total transformation of the world will result.

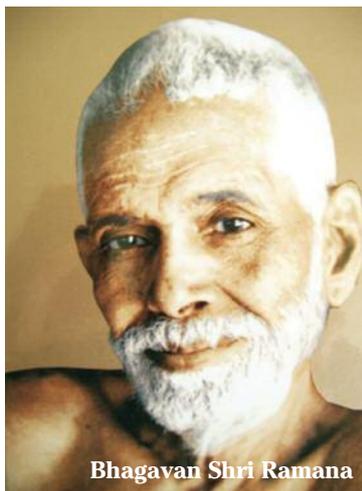
Bhagavan Shri Ramana

Bhagavan Shri Ramana was born on the 30th December, 1879 near Madurai at Tiruchuzi, Tamil Nadu and was named Venkatraman. At the death of his father, he moved to Madurai and had his high school education. Before he took the tenth standard examination, one day suddenly a fear arose in him that he was going to die. Death was experienced. What did he come to know at that time? All right, this body is dead. Now I will be taken to the cremation ground and burnt. It will become ashes. But with the destruction of this body, am I also destroyed? Am I really this body? Untouched by this death which has turned the body into a corpse, there and now I am still existing and shining. Then I am not this perishable body. I and it are different. I am the indestructible ‘I’ (self). Of all things, I unbound by the body alone am real. The body and the world are meant for destruction, but I who transcend the body am the eternal supreme thing”.

Venkatraman decided to leave the house and proceeded to Tiruvannamalai to the shrine of Arunachala. He withdrew from the sight of people by going to a nearby cellar ‘Pathala Lingam’ where nobody dared to go and sat immersed in Samadhi. Days rolled by, oblivious of the surroundings in the midst of ants, termites etc., a veritable Valmiki. After many days people removed him while still in samadhi and occasionally he was fed. To avoid crowd he shifted from the Arunachaleswara temple



Sri Vallabhacharya



Bhagavan Sri Ramana

to Gurumurtam temple far away from the town, and remained there in samadhi for over an year. To the entreaties of his mother his only answer was silence. By the sword of silence he was cutting at the knot of attachment. Later he moved to Virupakshi cave. Swarms of people gathered and “silence was the speech given by the beloved guru and the doubts in the minds of the disciples were cleared”. Shri Bhagavan said “silence is the unequalled eloquence—the state of Grace that arises within”. “Silence is the unfailing teaching (Upadesa); writing, speech cannot stand equal to it. To questions, he gave reply in writing and these have been published. He was a poet in Tamil as also in Sanskrit, Malayalam and Telugu. To questions, he gave answers, spiritual instructions for the salvation of humanity. Sometimes sweet and precious Tamil verses would flow in answer to questions. All of them, when collected and edited make up his complete works. Among them five stotras, hymns, and three sastras, scriptures are the important works —Sri Arunachala stuti Panchakam, — Upadesa Undhiyar, Ulladu Narpadu and Guru Vachaka Koval. The buildings grew which now constitute the present Shri Ramanashram.

Perfect equality was the principle at the Ashram. Not only human beings but even cows, dogs, monkeys, squirrels, crows, peacocks enjoyed perfect freedom. People throughout the world visited the Bhagavan. The story is told that Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the former President of India went to meet Mahatma Gandhi and said “Bapuji, I have come to you for peace”. Gandhi advised, “If you want peace go to Shri Ramana Maharishi without talking or asking any question”.

Maharishi Ramana taught two paths as the main spiritual practise (Sadhana) for the salvation of humanity. They are (1) the path of self-enquiry, that is knowing oneself (one’s real nature) by enquiring, ‘who am I’ and (2) the path of self-surrender, that is surrendering oneself (the ego)

completely to God. The former is the path of knowledge (Jnana marga) and the latter is the path of devotion (Bhakti marga).

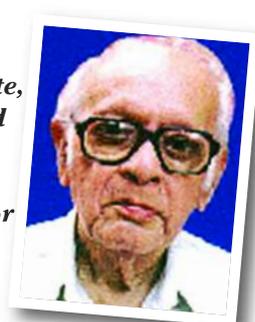
What is the benefit of attaining self-knowledge? It is only when one knows oneself then knowledge is obtained, otherwise one cannot truly love all creatures. It is only when one experiences the whole world and all the souls in it as the first person singular that the real love, (ananya bhakti) will be achieved. The sole and immediate need of the world is self-enquiry, the medicine that destroys the evil ego. Self-surrender and self-enquiry are in fact one and the same both in their result, the extinction of ego.

The last days of the body of Shri Bhagavan were a clear mirror which showed the greatness of a Jnani. At the last stages, Shri Bhagavan was afflicted with sarcoma and a major operation had to be done. He refused to be given chloroform saying “even the pain is not apart from us”. As the end was nearing the body was seated in Padmasana and on 14th April, 1950 “Shri Bhagavan removed his human disguise and shone unveiled in His own nature as the whole the one infinite space of self, where there is no coming or going. The devotees saw a bright light flash and engulf the small room where Bhagavan was seated and a brilliant meteor suddenly appeared in the sky and moved northwards towards Arunachalam and vanished behind the summit”.

“I am not this body. I am the ever existing Supreme thing”.

References are available on request. (Concluded)

- Dr. J. Thuljaram Rao, an Agricultural Scientist with Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, was associated with The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan at Coimbatore as Honorary Vice Chairman for a period of 22 years till 2003. During the 22 years, Dr. Rao had the unique opportunity to read the Bhavan’s Journal from 1956 for the last 50 years (the store house of the history of Indian culture) covering over 300 issues and books and understand the history of the culture of the country from Rig Vedic times to the present day with its ups and downs in relation to social conditions.



Source: Cultural Heritage of India by Dr. J. Thuljaram Rao, Impress, Coimbatore, India

Our Culture

“Trot!” said Aunt Betsey to young Copperfield when she rehabilitated him and sent him to school, “be a credit to yourself, to me and Mr. Dick, and Heaven be with you! Never be mean in anything; never be false; never be cruel. Avoid these three vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you.”

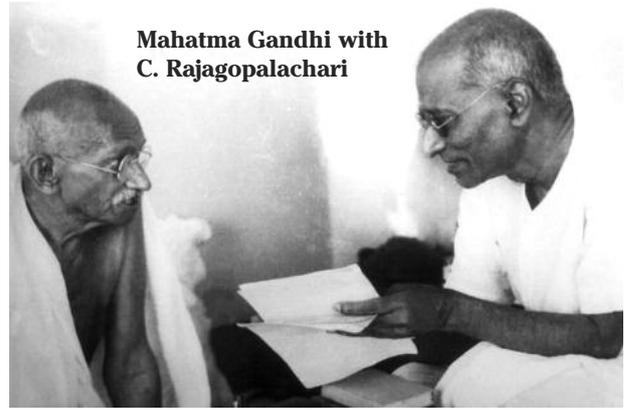
Meanness, dishonesty, cruelty: the avoidance of these three vices make culture.

Do not be mean: be noble, be large-hearted. Do not be false: be honest always and in everything; detest dishonesty, keep away from it as from offal. Do not be cruel: show tenderness to every being that is weaker than yourself. Every living thing loves its own life and is sensitive to pain as you yourself are. Every being, be it dog or child or girl or man or woman, is sensitive to pain; be tender to them all. If you are mean, false, or cruel, every-one will know it and know you are not a cultured man or woman. Do unto others as you would be done by. This is the essence of culture in word and action.

We can exaggerate and caricature every discipline. It is easy to paint the picture of foolish concern for the bugs and the ants and the mosquitoes. It is easy to prove the impossibility of avoiding all killing and to establish that eating one another is the law of nature. But culture consists essentially in putting yourself in the other man’s position and thinking and feeling in that position.

When Rama spoke cruel words to Sita on the great occasion when she was brought before him after the battle was over and Ravana had been slain, Sita burst out: “Why do you utter these harsh and unworthy words like an uncultured man speaking to an uncultured woman?”

Praakrta is uncultured. Samskrta is culture, the result of discipline and enlightenment. The cultured man avoids harsh words. The soft word is what definitely marks a man as cultured. Tiruvalluvar, the Tamil saint-poet, in his world-famous Kural says: “The speech of cultured men consists of truth soaked in affection. Gentleness of speech is not pleasant falsehood, but truth spoken by one who knows the whole of the law and is not misled by dry dogma, who is full of affection for the person to whom the truth is addressed and



**Mahatma Gandhi with
C. Rajagopalachari**

therefore is able to find the words that save truth from harshness. The kindly word and the glad and loving look accompanying a gift are appreciated by the poor man receiving it, even more than the gift itself. To give is good. But the sweet manner accompanying the gift touches the heart of the receiver, even more than the gift. That is culture. The relief of distress consists in the kindly countenance and speech marked by genuine consideration for the feelings of the man who is in distress. The gift that is thrown by the uncultured man at the distressed, without these accompaniments of the welcome look and soft word, does not reduce suffering, but hurts.”

“Not jewels, but courteous deportment,” continues Tiruvalluvar, “and gentleness of speech are the things that truly adorn the housewife. It is strange indeed that people speak harsh words when they have themselves felt and experienced the joy that the kindly speech of others begets in them. Every moment we have direct personal experience of the marvellous effect of kind words from others. Yet when we speak ourselves, we forget it and indulge in harsh speech. Is it not foolish to pick un-ripe berries when ripe ones can be had for the plucking? Equally foolish it is, to choose the word that hurts when gentle words are available.”

I have given you this somewhat long quotation from the Tamil poet, although I know that you have exactly similar advice in plenty in the language of the North. Courteous but frank speech is one of the principal elements in culture.

The accomplishments that go to make culture in the artistic sense give pleasure to others besides making one’s own life sweet. The man who sings and the man who listens both enjoy the music. The painter, the sculptor, and others all add to the joy and help the self-restraint of others around them besides

themselves finding delight in the practice of their art.

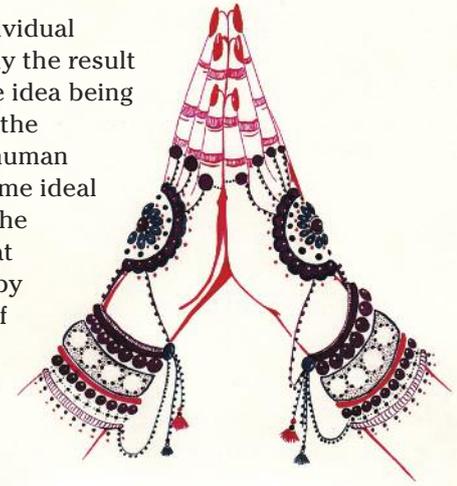
Man attains completion only when culture is added to what he has acquired for fulfilling his wants for the physical body and for satisfying his thirst for knowledge.

The culture of a group of people or of a nation which we take up for enquiry may either be the ideal aimed at by those people, the standard of behaviour laid down by the enlightened of that group and accepted by the general opinion; or it may be the prevailing behaviour of that people including the prevailing lapses and failures. This is a common source of confusion in criticism. The standard placed before the people and accepted by their communal conscience and maintained steadily, as the foot-rule for measure and judgment, should be taken as the culture of a particular nation or community, rather than the factual conditions. The historian records and surveys facts and not ideals, although he may take notice of the latter. Semantically speaking, it is the standard of behaviour set before a people, and kept up steadily by the enlightened among them, that should be called the culture of that group and not the actual performances and failures.

I should not be misunderstood. The unreachable abstract ideals laid down by the high moralists of a people cannot of course be taken literally and as a whole as the pattern of their culture. This would lead us nowhere. Undoubtedly culture has definite relation to fact and prevalence and cannot rest on mere ideology. The culture of a people is what is desired and expected by the best among the people, actually to prevail and govern their daily life. It is what the people accept as a practicable standard of conduct and deportment, which men and women would claim they are acting up to and which they would be ashamed to admit as having disregarded. To a certain degree what may be derogatorily called lip-service to an ideal has a large function in the definition of what is the particular culture of a people or a community or a country. But it is not only lip-service to an ideal admittedly unreachable; it is a standard to reach which the people strive every day or at least appear to be doing it and wish to be taken to be doing it.

Another remark I should like to make is that since culture has a general as well as a particular sense; the difference between one pattern and the others may be taken by some, not as its distinguishing

feature giving it its individual character, but as merely the result of impeded growth; the idea being that all proceed under the pressure of truth and human desires to reach the same ideal and make progress in the same direction, but that some get stunted, not by choice but by reason of unwelcome circumstances. For example, if a national culture is marked by simplicity, we may put it down either as just impeded development, progress having been stopped by historic causes, or as a deliberately adopted ideal. I am inclined to the view that so far as India is concerned, where we find simplicity in the pattern of our culture, it is not mere stunted development, but deliberate preference for simplicity and a conscious rejection of the complicate life and multiplication of wants, this being consistent with the philosophy and ethical code of our people.



-Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, popularly known as "Rajaji" or "C.R." was a great patriot, astute politician, incisive thinker, and one of the greatest of Indians. As a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, as an ardent freedom-fighter, as Chief Minister of Madras, as Governor of West Bengal, as Home Minister of India and as the first Indian Governor-General of India he rendered yeoman service to India and left an indelible impress on our contemporary life. Rajaji's books on Marcus Aurelius, the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads are popular. In Mahabharata and Ramayana he displays his inimitable flair for story-telling and applying the moral of stories to the needs of modern times. The thought-processes of this patriarch retained their sharp edge, while the notes of his silver tongue did not lose any of their charms even when he was a nonagenarian. He passed away in 1972 at the age of 94.

(Concluded)

Source: 'Our Culture' book by C. Rajagopalachari, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Bombay (Mumbai), India



Rituals

Rituals are an integral part of a religion. They consist of modes of worship, codes of dress and other peripheral aspects of religion. Over ninety per cent of people really love rituals more than their object of worship! They are lured by rituals and become their slaves in course of time.

Every religion has two major aspects. One is its philosophy as indicated by its tenets. The second is a set of rituals. The first is the core and is almost the same in all the religions of the world and it is pure and unsullied love and its different facets.

The second viz. the rituals and mode of worship make them all separate religions. It is very sad that people ignore the core and stick on to the rituals meticulously. Indeed, for most people rituals and the strict observance of them constitute religion!

Rituals were not prescribed by the original founders of religions. In fact, most of the religions emerged as a cry against the over-ritualism of pre-existing religions.

Adi Shankara had contempt for rituals. In two slokas of “Bhajagovindam” Shankara criticises rituals. In one he says: “You may go to Ganga and the seven oceans and have holy dips. You may observe vigils and penances. You may do charities. But unless you get the right knowledge, all these rituals even if you do them repeatedly for hundreds of janmas, you will not get liberation.”

In the other sloka he comes out with sharp criticism of Veshya Sanyasa. He says:

“One is clean shaven. The other one is having a tuft. They wear ochre robes and pretend to be very devoted. The fool appears to see but does not really see. All these outward shows are only for the sake of their stomachs.”

Rituals are observed for several reasons. One: Out of fear. Second: Because of sentiments. Third: Rituals are misunderstood for devotion. Fourth: To

put on a show. Some people are able to act as ardent devotees by putting on a show by doing rituals to exhibit devotion. They smear vibhuti (holy ash) all over their bodies like a leopard and gain sympathy, and adoration of others. Fifth: For the orthodoxy and the priestly-class, rituals provide a lucrative profession!

In regard to people belonging to any religion, when there is a bereavement in the family, the rituals compel people to invite near relatives to funeral ceremonies. Rituals compel the family to take care of the guests and serve food, coffee, water etc. All these divert the mind of the bereaved.

During the performance of funeral rites in a Hindu family, one has to sit facing a particular direction, sit or kneel or lie down and change these postures according to the mantras. One has to chant the mantras attentively with correct pronunciation as far as possible. The sacred—thread has to be changed from correct position to its opposite position, depending on to whom the mantras are addressed!

There are innumerable rituals, including Ganesh pooja, Varuna pooja and Havan etc. All these are done for 10 to 16 days. Every member of the bereaved family participates in the rituals in different ways. All these rituals divert our mind from the grief of bereavement to strict observance of the rituals! As part of the rituals, at the end, one has to eat! It is also a ritual!

In the normal course, when one loses one’s very dear one, in the first few hours to few days of bereavement, one will be so dejected, and so sorrow-stricken that one may even die of deep sorrow. The bereaved family in its grief may not feel like eating at all for days together.

In Indian families, the family-bond is so well-knit that but for the rituals, there would have been several suicides and even involuntary automatic deaths out of shock and sorrow when they face bereavements. Voluntarily starving or starving to put up a show of grief, lead to death or ailments. Rituals come to their rescue and compel them to eat! This is the sole positive contribution of rituals.

In the normal course, rituals cause grave havoc to religion and its core which is nothing but love. The rituals have resulted in grave conflicts and even court cases! In several Hindu temples, there are ritualistic procedures as to who should get the special honour and in what order of priority, if more persons are entitled to it. There will be so much of ego-clash and acrimony over this, resulting in in-fights and even murders! See the distortion!

The whole religion and its core-philosophy, consist



only of three major objects:

- I) Detachment to the world by attachment to God.
- II) Development and transformation of individual selfish and possessive love into universal love seeing the same God in everything.
- III) Ego—effacement brought about by above two processes.

Without detachment, universal love can not be developed and without universal love, ego can not be effaced at all. In fact, ego is the last one to overcome in religion, since it is ego that separates God and Man.

The great poet Saint Meera says: “The path of love is so narrow that either “I” can be there or My Lord can be there. Both can not be there.” The meaning of this conundrous statement is that ego is the last persistent separating element, separating Man from God. According to Sathya Sai Baba, the cross in Christianity, symbolises cutting out of this I-feeling. Therefore, the only goal of religion—any religion—in the final analysis is this ego-effacement which goes hand-in-hand with detachment and universal love. While so, this rivalry to get first honour in the temple emanating from ego-clash, goes against the very purpose of religion! There are court cases over this rivalry.

Some 150 years ago, in a South Indian temple (Devarajaswami Temple of Kancheepuram) there was a legal tussle between two sects of Vaishnavites as to “Whether on the forehead of the temple-elephant, ‘U’ mark should be put or the ‘Y’ mark?”

“U” mark indicated “Vadakai (Northern) sect” and “Y”—indicated “Thenkalai (Southern) Sect”. This tussle went up to the Privy Council in England!

Thereafter, after 150 years the matter came before the Supreme Court of India! There was bitter fight between the two sects!

Fortunately, this litigation came in 1992 before Mr. Justice M.M. Punchhi (who later became the Chief Justice of India), a judge endowed with tremendous pragmatic wisdom. Very often, great erudition or scholarship is a grave obstacle in a judge to come to a quick and just decision.

After hearing the matter for 20 minutes, Justice Punchhi asked the lawyers on both sides:

“Is there any prohibition in the temple rules or tradition to have two elephants in your temple?” After examining the Rules, the lawyers on both sides reported that there was no such prohibition. Justice Punchhi directed the Temple to have two elephants and to have “U” mark on the forehead of one and “Y” mark on the forehead of the other! The



150 year old problem was amicably resolved in just 30 minutes on 4th Feb. 1992!

Coming back to rituals, a lot of them are ridiculous and irrational. They boost up the ego and fan up passion and thereby cause grave injustice to the cause of religion.

Some religious practices which are purely ritualistic kindle emotion and passion and make people feel fanatic about their religious faith.

Muharram is observed amongst the Muslims to condole the killing of the Prophet’s grandson Hazarat Imam Hussain several centuries ago. In Muharram procession, to show their attachment to religion, the precisionists beat up and whip up their own chests with a sharp metal tied to a chain to scourge themselves to such an extent that profuse blood oozes out from their chests! This creates a fervour in the person who beats his own chest as well as in the onlookers!

Likewise, amongst the Hindus, people pierce their mouth or tongue or other parts of the body by thick needles or tridents or spears and show their bravery and fanatic attachment to God by such self-inflicted torture!

No community is an exception to such kindling of emotions by such violent ritualistic practices.

To bring about harmony and curb such superstitious faiths and rituals the people have to be educated that such self-inflicted injuries are against any religion since love, peace and bliss are the goals of all religions and that these awe-inspiring practices are a distortion of religion. The main reason for public rituals like Durga Pooja or Ganapati Pooja which arouse emotions and involve people in religious fervour in a collective way, is twofold: to make huge collections and to commercialise religion; to promote art and craft.

Because of the second one, the first is hiked year

Varanasi



after year. People vie with one another in making different types and sizes of Ganeshas and Durgas!

What is worse, recently a group from Kerala came to meet the author for donation to its religious sect. They wanted to collect a huge amount. Author asked them, whether they were planning to construct a hospital to give free treatment to the poor or to build an orphanage or to run a free-school. They said “no”.

When the writer asked them why they required such a huge donation, their answer was : “We have a Guru. We want to make a life-size idol of him in 22 carat solid gold. This comes to some crores of rupees.”

The writer felt irritated to hear this and he refused to give them even a pie after telling them firmly: “First of all, why an idol for your Guru? Secondly all the idols even in great temples in this country are made of granite or marble or brass or panchaloka or wood, then, why golden idol for your Guru?”

There is a racket going on to collect money to build more and more temples all over India. This has to be discouraged. There are so many temples already. They are being neglected by these very people. These devotees want to gold-plate the temple tower and to feed 108 or 1008 people brought from different parts of the country belonging to a particular community who are already over-fed and pot-bellied.

Further, most of our temples lack hygiene. They are kept unclean. We revere our rivers. But we pollute them and have made almost all the rivers in our country dirty. It is an insult to our spirituality. We throw even dead bodies into our rivers! Our rivers get polluted and infected. The industrial pollution is one thing. Nature’s fury will not wait for long. Very soon, unable to tolerate the

politicians and industrial tycoons polluting them, both Yamuna and the Ganga would clean and purify themselves by coming as uncontrollable floods destroying in one hour all the polluting industries along side them.

There is no other way to purify them. But we too pollute our rivers. Efforts and attempts to improve the hygiene and facilities in the already existing temples, should be encouraged.

Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says: “I strongly discourage attempts to build a temple for Me. I ask instead, the existing temples be renovated and used more. The mania for Mandirs has become a popular adventure. People armed with lists, search for likely victims and squeeze donations out of them using My name.”

There are other pernicious practices perpetrated in the name of religion. Human and animal sacrifices and such practices were undertaken allegedly to appease certain deities, viz. village gods and goddesses.

There were Mallaries who would sacrifice a live girl by throwing her from a mountain to roll down and die! There were other sects indulging in sacrifice of boys! Even recently certain parents in Delhi who were greedy, advised by a Tantrik killed their own son thinking that the ritual will make them multi-millionaires!

There are some cases of mental disorders, where, instead of taking the demented people to psychiatrists are taken to mantravaadis who purport to ostracise some bad spirit catching hold of such persons!

These man travaadis would put a hole in the skull to extricate the so-called “bad spirit”. Certain Western investigators have found such trephined skulls with heal marks and have opined that such holes created by trephining perhaps subsided cerebral pressure giving some relief to the patients. Many tantriks, man travaadis and



soothsayers are commercialising religion by amassing huge money.

Out of ignorance even educated persons are fooled because of blind faith and desperation. When no positive result is experienced, out of shame, such people keep quiet.

Swami Vivekananda has said that religion has to conform to reason. Every idea in religion should be put to acid test. Rituals and practices created by the orthodoxy or vested interests in religion have to be outrightly condemned and deprecated when they are illogical and absurd.

Idol worship itself is a ritual. People say that the devotees treat the idol of God as a human-being and give the idol a bath, nice dress and tasty food as offering! They wake up the Lord in the morning by singing devotional songs in Boopala raga, and enable Him to sleep in the night by singing a lullaby in Neelambari!

We also pour milk, curd, honey, and panchaamrutam (a sweet dish prepared out of honey, jaggery, ghee, etc) on the idol of God. If He is to be treated as a live human-being, will it not be of immense discomfort to Him to pour ghee or curds or honey over Him?

No one can denounce Idol worship per se. It is necessary at the initial stage of spiritual development. Idol worship is like learning of the alphabets by a child. It is indispensable. But we all get stuck to the idols and we become so emotionally attached to the idol that we are unable to develop spiritually. Unfortunately most of us stop at the level of the alphabets!

We should understand the purpose of Idol-worship. Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai says: "When you stand in front of the idol in a temple, when you are in the peak of your bhakti, what do you do? Don't you not close your eyes? Yes! You do so because the All-pervading God who is formless, can not be seen by you with your physical eyes. Moreover, by going to temples you train yourself to see the All-pervading God even in grossest substance like granite or marbles with which the idol is made. But, after training yourself to see Him even in stone, you have to see Him in softer substances like flowers, insects, birds, animals and man and realise His immanence in His creation. This is the true purpose of Idol Worship."

Lord Kapila, the propounder of Sankhya philosophy, who is regarded by Srimad Bhagavatam as one of the 24 Incarnations of Lord Vishnu, says:

If one disregards Me present in all as Soul and Lord, but ignorantly offers worship only to images, such worship is as ineffective as sacrificial offerings

made in ashes, instead of fire."

-Chapter V Sloka 21
Chanakya too says:

*"For a Brahmin, God is in fire
For a sage, God is in the heart.
For a jnani, He is everywhere
For a dull-witted, God is in idol."*

All great spiritual leaders have been against rituals and superstitions.

Swami Vivekananda repeatedly advised people not to believe in astrology since unless the astrologer is sincere and selfless, his predictions would not come out to be true.

Today, politicians and businessmen waste crores of rupees on astrologers. Some of them are ruined by certain unscrupulous astrologers.

Hindu religion in the true sense is Vedanta, not rituals. When Swami Vivekananda was on his deathbed, he said his last wish was: "Establishment of a Vedic college." When a disciple asked: "Swamiji, how a Vedic college would serve any purpose in this age?" His emphatic answer was: "That alone will kill all superstitions."

Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj was also against superstitions and rituals. He started in pursuit of this aim a movement called: "Back to the Vedas."

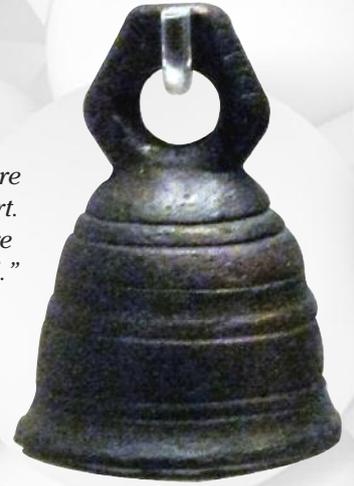
Swami Ram Tirth says with deep anguish: "Instead of wasting precious ghee into the mouth of artificial fire, why not offer even hard crusts of dry bread to the gastric fire which is eating up the flesh and bones of millions of the starving but living Narayanas?"

Rituals, of course, bring some discipline in people. They bring solace and they divert us from our sorrow, when people face bereavements.

But, more important than rituals is true bhakti (devotion) which prompts us to see the same God in every human being and even in animals and plants and which impels us to love and serve all beings in that understanding of immanence of God.

-M.N. Krishnamani, President of Supreme Court Bar Association, is President of Delhi Tamil Sangam. He has authored several books and was conferred: National Law Day, Award in 1998, "Paramacharya's Seva Ratna award" in 2005.

Source: Bhavan's Journal, March 15, 2014



Kasturba Gandhi

In the transformation of Mohandas Gandhi into Mahatma Gandhi, there was one person who played a very prominent but silent role. Needless to say, but it was his wife, Kasturba Gandhi, on whose death after more than sixty years of life together, Gandhi mourned—*“I can’t imagine a life without Ba. She went away to freedom, imprinting on the heart to work or to die.”* Gandhi, the apostle of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and *Satyagraha* (non-violent resistance) had admitted more than once that he learned the art and science of *Satyagraha* from Kasturba. He felt that her life was an extremely sacred one.

In discharging her duty as a wife she had even sacrificed her conscience. She never stood in between him and his sacrifices. Everyone called her Ba in great respect. *“She had assisted me properly in my observance of celibacy”*, Mahatma Gandhi certified in *‘My Experiments with Truth’*, his autobiography. Kasturba was to develop into a very considerable figure in her own right, but she has scarcely received the attention she deserved.

Early Life

Kasturba Gandhi, wife of Mahatma Gandhi, the great leader of Indian Freedom Movement, was born to a prosperous businessman Gokuladas Makharji of Porbandar on 11 April, 1869. She got married to Mohandas Gandhi, when she was just thirteen years old. At the time of her marriage, Kasturba was illiterate. She had not been given formal education, as was the custom in conservative families of the period.

The husband taught the wife to read and write in their mother tongue, Gujarati and she picked up enough language to go through the daily newspapers. Although Kasturba Gandhi stood by her husband, she did not always easily accept his



ideas. Gandhi had to work hard to persuade her to see (and agree to) his side of the viewpoint. Kasturba was deeply religious. Like her husband, she renounced all caste distinctions and lived in ashrams.

The Family

When her husband left for London for pursuing further studies, she remained in India for upbringing their newly born son Harilal. The couple had three more sons. Kasturba gave birth to a male child in 1885, but it died soon. They had four more sons—Hiralal (1896), Manilal (1897), Ramdas (1898), and Devadas (1900). When Gandhi went to South Africa, *Ba* accompanied him with the two kids. They lived in Durban, South Africa for more than 19 years.





Kasturba and her sons

The Ideal Wife

Like a good wife, Kasturba always stood by the side of her husband, even if she didn't approve of some of his ideas. She went along with her husband to South Africa in the year 1897. From the period between 1904 and 1914, she was actively involved in the Phoenix Settlement near Durban. In the year 1913, she raised her voice against the inhuman working conditions of Indians in South Africa.

She was arrested, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment at hard labor. On numerous subsequent occasions in India, she took Gandhi's place when he was under arrest, and was always closely associated with the struggle in India, giving encouragement to women volunteers. In 1915, she accompanied her husband and supported the

Indigo planters. There, she taught women and children about basic concepts like personal hygiene, discipline etc.

The Ideal Companion

In 1915 they returned to India. When Gandhi set up the *Satyagrahashram* in Sabarmati, *Ba* was his chief assistant in running the *Ashram*. When Gandhi started the *Khadi* (handspun cloth) movement, *Ba* organized its propaganda. Whenever Gandhi went into a fast against what he thought was unjust, *Ba* was with him. The husband's goal was the wife's motto. The wife was the husband's shadow, especially when the husband had been sacrificing his life for the country. She gave leadership to the women in the Satyagraha movement and had been jailed many times. The frequent fastings that Gandhi undertook ate into her health also and her own internment in prisons added fuel to this malady.

Kasturba Gandhi suffered from the problem of chronic Bronchitis. To top it, the stress level caused during the Quit India Movement's arrests aggravated her illness. Her health began to decline. The situation got worse, when she got victimized by pneumonia. Her husband disagreed with her idea to go in for penicillin. Medical attention was there but to no avail; and on 22 February 1944, this great lady who was the shadow of her husband who became the Father of the Nation and one of the greatest men of all times, breathed her last, lying on his lap.

I can't imagine a life without Ba.

-Mahatma Gandhi

**Source: www.iloveindia.com,
www.indiavideo.org, www.rtd.nic.in,
www.sscnet.ucla.edu, www.whereincity.com**



Scientific Agnostics: Think Out of the Box

Intellectual integrity made it quite impossible for me to accept the myths and dogmas of even very great scientists, more particularly of the belligerent and so-called advanced nations. Indeed, those intellectuals who accepted them were abdicating their functions for the joy of feeling themselves at one with the herd.

-Bertrand Russell

Be a scientific agnostic to be able to think out of the box but become a scientific fanatic when it comes to accepting the outcomes data. Autism is an area where we do not have any remedy available.

Eric Hollander is the Chief of Autism research at Montefiore Medical Centre at New York. He was hypothesising that since Autism is more of a hyper-immune response of the body we might get relief by giving some serious job to the immune system of protecting the body against our ancestral enemies like intestinal worms who have become a rarity these days thanks to the "hygiene hypothesis".

He studied a group of grown up Autism patients by giving them orally harmless whip worm ova, the only side effect being an occasional diarrhoea attack. All most all of them improved significantly in their Autism scores. This work has to be done on a larger sample before being let out into the public domain.

Killer diseases of ageing like diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and many such defy any serious analysis by us. A recent book, *The Story of the Human body* by Daniel Lieberman, a Harvard biologist, tells a new story which when proved might open up a new vista of human wisdom. His main hypothesis is that the Palaeolithic human body might not get well with our recent cultural evolution.

An example would be eating large amounts of sugar or being very physically inactive leads to problems like diabetes or heart disease that then make us sick. So mismatched diseases are diseases that are

more modern in the sense that they are more prevalent, or even novel or more severe, because we don't live in the way in which our bodies are adapted. Now we have plenty of sugar and simple carbohydrates that give us much energy but we do not have the required metabolism for that resulting in life style diseases.

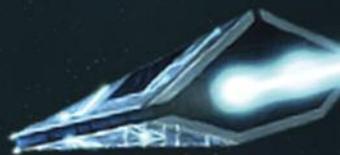
In addition, we were also endowed with the hormone cortisol for the fight-fright response which today has become a menace again craving more food and the vicious cycle to push us towards further life style diseases.

We have also seen how some of the infectious diseases defy our onslaught with multiple antibiotic molecules to all of which the germ has become resistant. Such bugs are called super bugs. In the latter category even some commensals like clostridium deficile have joined the ranks and kill children and some adults with depressed immune system.

Out of the box thinking solution to this, developed by a Johns Hopkins physician is to replace their gut germs by the normal gut flora from a healthy person. This is given a dignified name-faecal transplant. This has saved many lives. If the healthy stool comes from the patient's mother all the more easier to control the infection as the species of germs in the gut could be related.

Once a professor of surgery in London wrote to tell me that he very much liked my article in the Kuwait Medical Journal and wanted to discuss further and keep in touch. I suggested that I was any way going to London in a couple of months and would love to go to his medical school and present my data.

I had a shock when he told me that to give a talk in his college I must have a paper either in Nature or Science! I was so happy to read today from the mouth of a 2013 Nobel Laureate about the inner secrets of these and some "top" science journals



and I better quote that in his own words: “Dr. Schekman chose the week of the prize giving (the medals and cheques were handed over on December 10th) to announce that the laboratory he runs at the University of California, Berkeley, will boycott what he describes as “luxury journals”. By that he meant those commonly regarded as the most prestigious, such as Cell, Nature and Science. He levels two charges against such journals. The first is that, aware of their pre-eminence and keen to protect it, they artificially restrict the number of papers they accept acting, as he put it in an interview with The Guardian, a British newspaper, like “fashion designers who create limited-edition handbags or suits... know[ing] scarcity stokes demand”. Their behaviour, he says, is more conducive to the selling of subscriptions than the publishing of the best research.

Second, he argues that science as a whole is being distorted by perverse incentives, especially the tyranny of the “impact factor”, a number that purports to measure how important a given journal is. Researchers who publish in journals with a high impact factor—like the three named above—can expect promotion, pay rises and professional accolades. Those that do not can expect obscurity or even the sack, a Darwinian system known among academics as “publish or perish”.

Dr. Schekman may not be the most disinterested commentator. Besides his job at Berkeley, he also edits eLife, an open-access journal (in other words, one that does not charge its readers) with ambitions to compete with the top dogs, and which is bankrolled by a trio of wealthy science charities.” “But working scientists will tell you, perhaps after a few drinks, that he is far from alone in his views. Scarcity of space is meaningless in a world in which more and more research is distributed online. And many worry that the pressure to publish flashy research in glitzy journals encourages hype and faddishness, and rewards being first over being thorough. Jobbing scientists can be reluctant to

speak up; fearful of the damage they might do to their careers by rocking the boat. But one of the many perks of being a Nobel laureate is that you no longer have to worry about such things,” writes the editor.

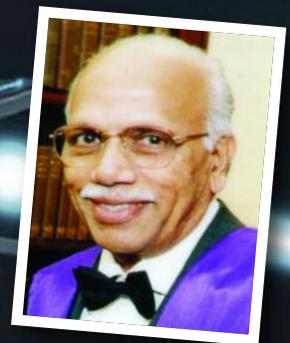
That is what is wrong with science today especially of the western belligerent nations where some of the most arrogant “scientists” reside. India is no exception to their ilk! We too have some such bloated headed scientists who keep praising themselves.

In conclusion if one wants to do good science one must think out of the box to refute false dogmas. To do that one must become a scientific agnostic to begin with but a scientific fanatic while analysing the data.

If one does not bother about the status of the Journal in which one’s work is published and one is not looking to climb up the academic ladder one has to think out of the box.

“Science is always wrong. It never solves a problem without creating 10 more.” -George Bernard Shaw

-B.M. Hegde, MD, FRCP, FRCPE, FRCPG, FACC, FAMS. Padma Bhushan awardee 2010. Editor-in-chief, The Journal of the Science of Healing Outcomes; Chairman, State Health Society’s Expert Committee, Govt. of Bihar, Patna. Former Prof. Cardiology, The Middlesex Hospital Medical School, University of London; Affiliate Prof. of Human Health, Northern Colorado University; Retd. Vice Chancellor, Manipal University, Chairman, Bhavan’s Mangalore Kendra.



Source: Bhavan’s Journal, February 28, 2014

India's Disrupted Democracy

New Delhi: India's 15th Lok Sabha (the lower house of Parliament) passed into history ignominiously this month, following the least productive five years of any Indian parliament in six decades of functioning democracy. With entire sessions lost to opposition disruptions, and with frequent adjournments depriving legislators of time for deliberation, the MPs elected in May 2009 passed fewer bills and spent fewer hours in debate than any of their predecessors.

As if that were not bad enough, the final session witnessed new lows in unruly behavior, with microphones broken, scuffles in the well of the house, and a legislator releasing pepper spray to prevent discussion of a bill he opposed. In the latter incident, the Speaker was rushed, choking, from her seat, and three asthmatic MPs were taken to the hospital, prompting the offender to explain that he was acting in self-defense against those who sought to prevent him from engaging in less exotic forms of disruption.

To those of us who sought election to Parliament in order to participate in thoughtful debate on how to move India forward, and to deliberate on the laws by which we would be governed, the experience has been deeply disillusioning.

To be sure, democracy has proved to be an extraordinary instrument for transforming an ancient country—one featuring astonishing ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity, myriad social divisions, and deeply entrenched poverty—into a twenty-first-century success story. Only democracy could have engineered such remarkable change with the consent of the governed, and enabled all to feel that they have the same stake in the country's progress, equal rights under its laws, and equal opportunities for advancement. And only democracy could defuse conflict by giving dissent a legitimate means of expression. Some observers express astonishment that India has flourished as a democracy; in fact, it could hardly have survived as anything else.

But the "temple of democracy," as Indians have long hailed their parliament, has been soiled by its own priests, and is now in desperate need of reform. Parliament's functioning has become, to most Indians, an embarrassment and, to many, an abomination. People turn on their televisions and watch in disbelief as their elected representatives shout slogans, wave placards, scream abuse, and provoke adjournments—indeed, do almost anything but what they were elected to do.

The result is that most Indians consider Parliament a colossal waste of time and money. After all, its dysfunction not only cheapens political discourse; it also delays essential legislative business. Bills



languish, policies fail to acquire the legal framework needed for implementation, and governance slows.

The errant MPs are not just betraying their voters' confidence; they are also betraying their duty to the country and discrediting democracy. But the complacency with which the political establishment accepts the disruption of Parliament suggests that even experienced politicians do not understand this.

Because a parliamentary system usually results in predictable outcomes, with the ruling majority typically getting its way, India's opposition MPs (and any government MPs who disagree with the cabinet's position on a specific issue) prefer disruption to debate. And this is greeted on both sides of the aisle with a shrug, as if intentionally drowning out one's colleagues with shouted slogans were just another parliamentary maneuver, as valid as a filibuster or an adjournment motion.

In fact, an unwritten but sacrosanct convention ensures that the Speaker almost never uses the position's authority to suspend or expel errant members, except when there is a consensus between the government and the opposition to do so—which of course rarely occurs. (The pepper-spraying MP was, however, suspended for the rest of the session. Even complacency has its limits.)

What the political establishment overlooks is the broader damage that such behavior does to Parliament's public standing, and therefore to democracy itself. The shambolic performance of elected parliaments in Europe, especially in

interwar Germany and Italy, had a great deal to do with the rise of authoritarianism and fascism in the first half of the twentieth century. When democracy is discredited by its own practitioners, there is much greater public willingness to embrace a seemingly efficient alternative.

India's neighbors have proved this often enough, welcoming the overthrow of elected governments in popular coups. India has never seemed likely to succumb to a similar tendency, but the irresponsible custodians of Indian democracy should not tempt fate.

If India's founding fathers, like the passionate democrat Jawaharlal Nehru, had not been cremated, they would be turning over in their graves. With a general election to be held by the end of May, voters should insist that those who seek to represent them in Parliament go there to debate and deliberate, not to disrupt and destroy. As of now, that seems to be a forlorn hope.

Shashi Tharoor, a Minister of State for Human Resource Development and a former UN Under-Secretary General, is the Author of a dozen books, including India from Midnight to the Millennium and Nehru: the Invention of India and his most recent, Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st Century.



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Guru Arjan Dev



Guru Arjan Dev

*“He who lives in a ruined hut,
with all his clothes torn:
Who has neither caste nor lineage, nor respect;
Who wanders in the wilderness.
Who has no relation or kinsmen,
Is yet the King of the whole world,
If his heart is imbued with the love of God.”*

-Guru Arjan Dev

Guru Arjan Dev, born on 15 April, 1563, at Goindwal (Punjab), inherited his capacity for selfless service, loving kindness and humility from his mother, the daughter of Guru Amar Das (the third Guru), and scholarship and piety from his father Guru Ram Das (the fourth Guru).

He was fond of the company of saints and ascetics and made friends with Mian Mir, Shah Hussain, Chhaju and Peeloo. Later he left all his property for his haughty, greedy, intriguing and unscrupulous brother Prithi Chand and lived “like a lotus on the water that floats on the Sea of Maya.” He was a man of parts, a man of immense erudition, a marvellous musician and a great poet.

*“No field of life,
whether temporal,
social or
political, is excluded
for the operation of a
mystic.”*

-Guru Nanak Dev

The Guru

The succession of Arjan Dev to the Guruship in August 1581 brought immediate opposition from his elder brother Prithi Chand who even plotted to kill his son Hargobind. But the manifold activities in which Guru Arjan Dev engaged himself endeared him to his followers and soon off-set the effects of opposition from Prithi Chand. Places of worship were built where all could go. Free kitchens were started and lands were set apart, the proceeds from which supplied the provisions. Dispensaries were set up to succour the sick and the Guru himself worked hard to relieve the sufferings of the lepers. His rich followers established a sort of Bank service for the community.

Material and Spiritual World

Guru Arjan Dev called the material world “a passing mirage” and the spiritual world “an eternal reality” which can reach our consciousness not through the eye, ear, hand or mouth or any other physical organ but only through the mind attuned to the praise of the creator. “As the pillar supports the edifice, so does the praise of God support the mind,” he said. His religion embraced everybody and united all living creatures into one related family and attached no value to social or political status.

Dignity of Labour

He restored the dignity of labour and his usual instruction was to trust in God and to keep the hands busy. He understood the language of human distress and declared all classes equal and all occupations sacred. The result was extremely encouraging and his followers took up horse dealing, farming, banking, embroidery, carpentry, trade and all other occupations. He himself worked with his own hands and would not even mind cleaning the shoes of the devoted disciples.

Golden Temple

The Guru was deeply moved at the sight of the lepers and he had an asylum built for lepers at Tarn Taran. Another asylum of the same type was later built at Amritsar. In order to counteract the instinctive aversion of dogmatic people towards new ideas and the hatred of the established religions the Guru had temples built at Tarn Taran and Amritsar.

The Golden Temple at Amritsar is famous not only for its splendour, grandeur and architectural design, but is also the symbol of the service and devout spirit of the Sikhs. Its foundation stone was laid by a Muslim divine, Saint Mian Mir. Unlike the temples of other religions, it has four entrances in four directions offering welcome to all irrespective of

caste, colour, creed, country. No idol or image is put in the temple and only the praise of God is allowed to be sung. The completion of the temples at Tarn Taran and Amritsar, and later the completion of the sacred Granth Sahib, laid the foundation of a regular rallying place for the Guru's followers.

The socio-religious gatherings absorbed all alike as recruits in the army. This made the people think and act in a particular fashion and thus brought into constant use the spiritual faculties which otherwise lay unused. To worship a common God every day became a common drill which encouraged companionship, equality fraternity and a sense of belonging. The Guru brought life to the stream of religion which had dried up in the sands of stereotyped formulae and classifications.

Guru Granth Sahib

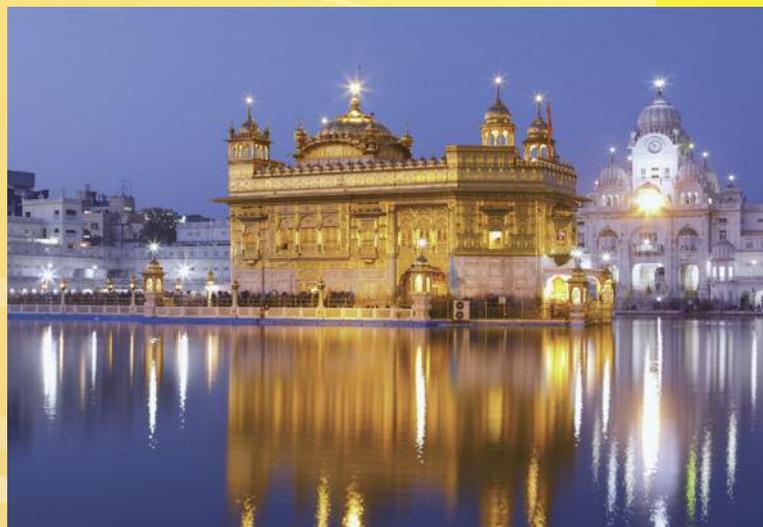
The Guru compiled the holy book, Guru Granth Sahib which has 1430 pages and 15,575 stanzas, out of which the poet prophet Guru Arjan Dev himself wrote 6,204. Guru Granth Sahib can be really called the synthesis of scriptures, a syncretism of religions, a spiritual dictionary or an encyclopaedia of philosophy. It is a collection of hymns arranged according to 31 classical Indian tunes and is a guide for the social betterment and spiritual uplift of humanity.

The Granth Sahib is unique in many ways. It is in poetry whereas most of the other religious books of the world are in prose. A large part of it is written by the originators of the Sikh religion. It is an excellent record of social, political and religious thought in India between the 12th and the 17th centuries. It is secular in character. Like a bee, Guru Arjan Dev has collected spiritual honey from many flowers.

King Jahangir

Guru Arjan Dev burst upon the petrified dogma of the early 17th century. He shattered old prejudices and flooded the nation with the sunlight of his new ideas. Multitudes assembled round him but some people closed their eyes and shut their hearts. A religion which in its universal tolerance admitted all into the delights of heaven, became an anathema to King Jahangir and the Guru was charged that Guru Granth Sahib carried references derogatory to the founder of Islam and was asked to justify the bonafides of his intentions.

The Granth Sahib was sent to the King and a random reading from the scriptures brought out secular and all embracing ideas. But still the Guru was unjustly fined Rs. 200000 for his so called anti-social and irreligious activities, The Guru refused to be thus cowed down and declined to pay anything out of the public offerings which he said



were not his property but that of the people.

Prince Khusrau

Meanwhile Prince Khusrau fled towards the Punjab. Rumours reached the Emperor that he had taken shelter in the Guru's camp. The Guru's motto was, "Whosoever comes to me, I embrace him; for this is the tradition of my faith." Infuriated out of all proportions, the Emperor sent for the Guru, who readily reached Lahore knowing the Emperor's intentions.

The Sentence

The Guru was incarcerated at Lahore in the custody of Chandu Lal, a Hindu Minister at Lahore court and was sentenced to be tortured to death. He was kept hungry for three days and no water was allowed to him. On the fourth day he was taken out and hot burning sand was ordered to be poured on the Guru's pliant body. Not content with this, he was finally made to sit on a hot plate of iron. Like the pillar of a city gate, unmoved, like a pellucid lake, unruffled, he squatted on the plate. There were many to jeer him but only One to cheer him and that was his Muslim friend Mian Mir who showered imprecations on Jahangir's head and asked for the Guru's permission to use his spiritual might to ease the situation. The Guru gently raised his hand in a way that meant "Forgiveness is more manly than revenge." With a flood of tears and crying bitterly, Mian Mir could not say any more, couldn't see any more. Burnt and blistered, the Guru was ordered to be sewn into the hide of a cow but thinking that a bath after roasting was more tortuous, he was taken to the river Ravi under a strong escort. The Guru plunged into the Water and became absorbed into the Almighty like a ripple in the ocean or a spark in the fire, proving thereby that there is no permanence in individuality and that the brightest hope is of losing the individuality in the universal light.

Source: www.gurmat.info

Festivals of the Month—Australia



Blue Mountains Music

Blue Mountains Music Festival—14–16 March 2014, Katoomba, NSW

Blue Mountains Music Festival of Folk Roots and Blues, now in its 18th year is a venue to numerous musical performances by world class acoustic practitioners, seasoned campaigners and emerging talents.

Byron Bay International Film Festival—28 February to 9 March 2014, Byron Bay, NSW

The Byron Bay International Film Festival provides a platform for independent filmmakers locally, nationally and from around the world showcasing a diverse range of films with an emphasis on content that seeks to raise social, cultural and environmental awareness, human rights, diversity and multiculturalism, creativity, indigenous culture, spirit, healing, connecting to nature, conscious thinking and positive living, music of every variety, marine preservation etc.

Yackandandah Folk Festival—22–23 March 2014, Yackandandah, VIC

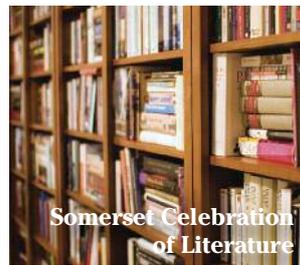
Yackandandah Folk Festival provides a wide range of entertainment (music, song, dance, poetry, literature, theatre, film, visual arts and food) that reflects a commitment to the preservation and development of the folk culture. It showcases talents of local people involved in artistic and cultural activities that promote community expression or development of the folk culture.

Somerset Celebration of Literature—19–21 March 2014, Somerset College, Mudgeeraba Queensland

The Somerset College Celebration of Literature is the premier school based literary festival held in Australia. The festival has a primary focus on Literature, Reading and Writing but in addition has displayed inclusiveness while promoting the Arts:



Bayron Bay International Film Festival



Somerset Celebration of Literature



National Folk Festival



Yackandandah Folk Festival

literature, music, theatre, film and the visual arts. The festival is offered to the Queensland and Australian cultural community by Somerset College as its contribution to the literary and cultural landscape of the nation.

National Folk Festival—17-21 April 2014, Canberra

First Folk Festival was held in Victoria in 1967 patterned on the Newport Folk Festival in the United States of America. The festivities include dances, circus and activities related reflecting folk culture.

Source: www.festivalaustralia.com.au



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
"The Whole world is but one family"

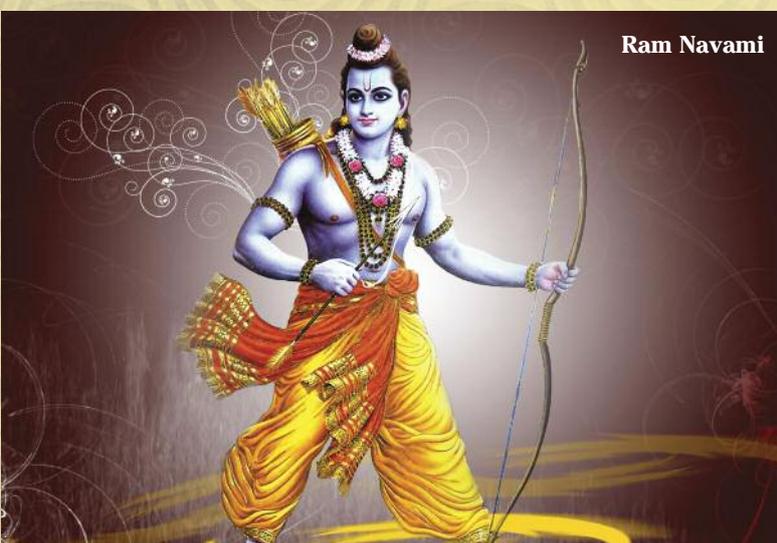
Festivals of the Month—India



Holi



Holla Mohalla



Ram Navami

Holi—17 March, 2014

Holi, the grand Festival of Colors to celebrate good harvests and fertility of the land is one of the most ancient festivals celebrated throughout world. People greet each other with colours and celebrate the occasion with gaiety and excitement.

Holla Mohalla—18 March, 2014

Holla Mohalla, a Sikh festival a day after Holi, was started by the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh who had tried to gather Sikhs for military exercises and mock battles after Holi. Sikhs celebrate this festival joyfully by watching and performing in martial arts parades, led by the Nishan Sahibs of the Gurdwaras.

Ram Navami—8 April 2014

Ram Navami is a festival that celebrates the birth of

Lord Rama. Lord Rama is an avatar of Lord Vishnu who came down to earth to battle the invincible Ravana in human form. The festival commemorates the birth of Rama who is remembered for his righteous reign. Ramrajya (the reign of Rama) has become synonymous with a period of peace and prosperity.

Source: www.festivalsindia.in,
www.panchangam.org,
www.hindudevotionalblog.com,
www.drikpanchang.com

Incredible India
India Tourism Sydney

Guru Amar Das

“The True Guru is the field of Dharma, in which one reaps whatever one sows. The Gursikh sow the nectar and get the ambrosial fruit of God. They are pure in both worlds and in the Court of the Lord, they receive a robe of honour.” (Guru Ram Das, Var Gauri)

Guru Amar Das was the third of the Ten Gurus of Sikhism and became Guru on 26 March 1552 at the age of 73 following in the footsteps of Sri Guru Angad Dev Sahib, who died on 29 March 1552 aged 48. He was a very religious Vaishnavite Hindu who spent most of his life performing all of the ritual pilgrimages and fasts of a devout Hindu. He often went to Haridwar and Jwalamukhi on pilgrimages and strictly observed all religious rites and ceremonies. His brother Manak Chand lived nearby his house, Manak Chand's wife Bibi Amro used to sing Guru Nanak's hymns. Bhai Amar Das must have heard her singing many times before. It was not until his old age that Amar Das met Guru Angad and converted to the path of Sikhism. He established new centres for conveying to the people the message of Guru Nanak.

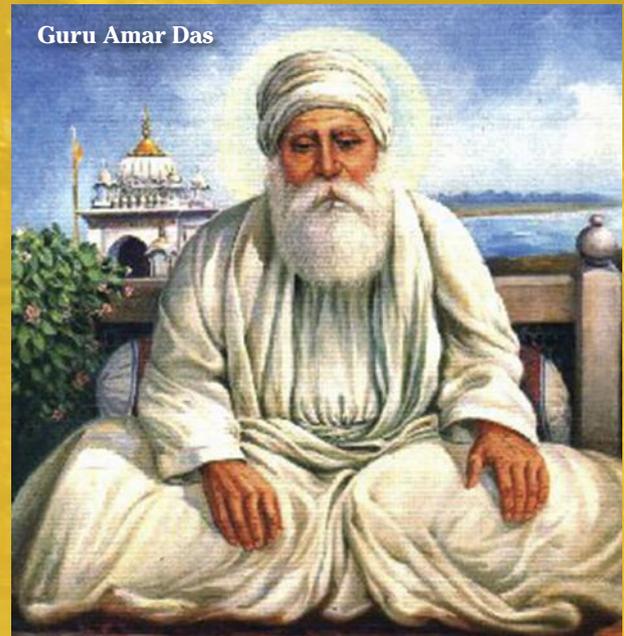
Early Life

Guru Amar Das was born on 5 April 1479 at Basarka village in Amritsar district. He was the eldest son of his parents, Bhai Tej Bhan and Mata Lakhmi. At the age of 24, he was married to Mansa Devi who gave birth to two sons, Mohan and Mohri, and two daughters, Bibi Dani and Bibi Bhani.

Datu

Guru Amar Das served his master Guru Angad for 12 years. Guru Angad's sons were upset because they claimed that after their father, they were the legitimate heirs to Guruship. Guru Angad's son Datu proclaimed himself as Guru in Khadur; but the Sikhs did not accept him as such. Datu proceeded to Goindwal where the Guru was stationing. Guru Amar Das was sitting on his religious throne and was delivering instructions to the congregation. Datu came along with a large number of his companions and kicked the Guru, who fell down the platform. Datu took possession of the platform and proclaimed himself as the Guru. Guru Amar Das got up and said in extreme humility, “Sir, pardon me, my hard bones might have hurt your tender feet.” After this the Guru left Goindwal and went to his village Basarka. He confined himself in a house outside the town without letting anybody know about his whereabouts.

The Sikhs were very much distressed at losing their Guru. They searched all over but could not find him anywhere. Under the leadership of Bhai Buddha, they



prayed and then let Guru's mare loose and anxiously followed it for a short distance. The mare made her way to the Guru's house in Basarka, and stood before his door. It was written on the door, “Whoever openeth this door is no Sikh of mine, nor am I his Guru.” They did not open the door, but made an opening in the wall and made supplication before the Guru. The Guru could not disregard the love and devotion of his Sikhs and returned to Goindwal. The Guru's return was celebrated with illuminations, rejoicing and feasting.

The Baoli at Goindwal

Guru Amar Das purchased some land in Goindwal and laid the foundation of a Bawli (a well with descending steps) in 1559. All Sikhs joined in the work of digging the Bawli. There was great activity throughout the construction of the Bawli. The Bawli when finished yielded sweet drinking water. The Sikhs rejoiced at the successful completion of their labour. There were eighty-four steps reaching down the Bawli. It is believed that whosoever recites Jap attentively and reverently at each step, is saved from the cycle of transmigration.

Guru ka Langar

Guru ka Langar started by Guru Nanak and developed by Guru Angad was further strengthened by Guru Amar Das. It was the injunction of Guru Amar Das that none would have his audience unless he had first eaten from the Langar. The Guru intended to remove the caste restrictions and prejudices of untouchability. It was, therefore, declared

unequivocally that all persons of all castes, high or low, rich or poor, Brahmans or Sudras, Hindus or Muslims, must sit in the same line and eat the same food from Guru's kitchen. In this way people were lifted above the hypocrisy of caste system and were able to look at one another as brothers and equals.

Emperor Akbar

Akbar, the Emperor of India, on his way to Lahore, paid a visit to the Guru at Goindwal. He was informed that he could not see the Guru until he had dined with others from the Guru's kitchen. Akbar partook of the food in the Langar, the more he had it, the more he relished it. After that the Emperor had an interview with the Master. It is said that the Guru rose to receive the Emperor in his arms, but Akbar spontaneously bowed to touch the feet of the Master. The monarch felt a thrill of joy and peace by the holy touch.

Having seen the large number of people fed from the Guru's kitchen, Akbar requested the Guru to accept his services and his offerings. But the Guru replied, "I have obtained lands and rent-free tenures from my Creator. Whatever comes daily is spent daily, and for tomorrow my trust is in God." Akbar then replied, "I see you desire nothing. From thy treasury and thy kitchen countless people receive bounties, and I also entertain similar wishes, I will grant these 84 villages to thy daughter, Bibi Bhani." This was the estate where Guru Ram Das built the city of Ramdaspur which is now called Amritsar.

Abolition of Sati

The status of women in Hindu society at that time was very low. When the husband died, the wife either voluntarily burnt herself on the pyre of her husband or was thrown into the fire without her consent. The woman who did perform this act was called Sati (truthful). Guru Amar Das carried out a vigorous campaign against the practice of Sati. He gave special attention to the improvement of the status of women and thus prohibited this practice. The Guru lifted the status of women as equal to men. He prohibited the practice of Sati and preached in favour of widow marriage.

He asked the women to discard 'Purdah' (veil). He introduced new birth, marriage and death ceremonies. He raised the status of women and protected the rights of female infants who were killed without question as they were deemed to have no status. These teachings met stiff resistance from Orthodox Hindus and Muslim fundamentalists.

Man

Guru Amar Das appointed women to conduct Sikh

missionary and parish work. Districts under the charge of men were known as 'Man an'. Those in the charge of women were known as 'Pirhian', on which they sat to minister to the disciples. Their selection for this important task indicated the faith of the Guru in the capacity of women for organisational work.

The Guru's following increased considerably. Steps were taken to organize the scattered congregation into a unified whole which was called Man system. His whole spiritual domain took the shape of 22 Man's (dioceses). It was so named because the in charge of a Man sat on a cot (called Man in Punjabi) to deliver the message of the Guru. The in charge of each and every Man was a devoted Sikh who was blessed by the Guru before he was appointed to that position. His function was to preach the mission of the Guru, to keep the Sangat (congregation) in touch with the Guru and he was also responsible for the offerings of the Sikhs which they made in token of their reverence to the Guru.

The Successor—Guru Ram Das

Guru Amar Das chose his son-in-law Jetha as his successor as he found him in every way right heir to the Guruship. He asked Bhai Ballu to bring coconut and five paise. He asked Jetha to bathe and clothe in new raiment. Then the Guru descended from his throne and made Jetha seat on it and called him Guru Ram Das. Bhai Buddha, according to the custom attached the tilak of Sovereignty to Guru Ram Das's forehead. Among great rejoicing all Sikhs made offerings according to their means and saluted Guru Ram Das on his appointment.

The Departure

Guru Amar Das proclaimed, "God's summons hath come. Let there be no mourning when I have gone, sing God's praises, read God's Word (Gurbani), hear God's Word and obey God's Will." Guru Amardas did not consider anyone of his sons fit for Guruship and chose instead his son-in law (Guru) Ramdas to succeed him. Certainly it was practically a right step not as emotional, because Bibi Bhani and Guru Ramdas had true spirit of service and their keen understanding of the Sikh principles deserved this. This practice shows that Guruship could be transferred to anybody fit for the Sikh cause and not to the particular person who belonged to the same family or of other. Guru Amardas at the ripe age of 95 passed away for heaven on September 1, 1574 at Goindwal Sahib near District Amritsar, after giving responsibility of Guruship to the Fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas.

Source: www.allaboutsikhs.com,
www.gurusfeet.com, www.sikh.com.au,
www.sikh-history.com

India's Decade of Decay

New Delhi: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who has been in office since 2004, recently held what was only the second press conference of his current five-year term, which is rapidly approaching an inglorious end. Betraying his yearning for approval, Singh told the assembled journalists that he hoped that history would judge his tenure more kindly than his political adversaries do.

That outcome seems unlikely, at best. On the contrary, Singh's once-great Congress party is now at a political impasse, from which it can escape only if it frees itself from its destructive dynastic leadership. After more than a half-century in government—much of India's modern life as an independent country—the era of Congress dominance appears to be over.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the party's decline occurred in December, when it suffered crushing defeats in four key state-assembly elections. In Rajasthan, Congress won only 21 seats, while India's second-largest political force, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), won 162. This represents a massive shift from the 2008 election, when Congress gained 96 seats, compared to the BJP's 78.

Likewise, in Delhi, Congress was reduced to just eight of 70 seats after 15 years in power, with even Sheila Dikshit, Delhi's longest-serving Chief Minister, losing her seat to a political newcomer. Only in the small northeastern state of Mizoram did Congress retain its majority.

This was an unprecedented rout—and does not bode well for Congress in the upcoming national elections. To see why—and to determine whether the party can stem its own decay—requires understanding what has happened since Congress regained national leadership from the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in 2004.

As the largest party, Congress became the hub of the newly established United Progressive Alliance (UPA). But, in a surprise move, the party's leader, Sonia Gandhi, declined to become Prime Minister, naming Singh—an academic and civil servant, with no electoral experience—as the UPA's choice. After nearly 40 days of melodrama, Singh was finally sworn in, though he had not won voter support directly in any constituency.

This unnatural arrangement instantly earned acid comments. As one observer astutely remarked, "Where there is authority, there is no ability; but where there is some ability, there is no authority." Despite Singh's academic abilities, his potential as India's top politician was severely limited. Over time, it became apparent that Singh's government was worse than ineffective; it was doomed to fail, because Singh's strengths lie in serving as an obedient and capable subordinate, not as an agenda-setting leader who acts decisively.

Consider his role in managing India's economic transformation when he was the country's finance minister in the early 1990's—an effort that his supporters have often cited as an example of his

vision and ability. Last year, former External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh disclosed that it was actually then-Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, a shrewd and experienced Congress veteran, who pushed India's economic reform and restructuring. Singh, reluctant to do what was needed, would have achieved very little had Rao not provided a platform—and the needed political support—to pursue the government's agenda. Early on, there were intimations that Singh should neither be underestimated as a political manipulator, nor overestimated as an effective economic manager.

But Singh's ineptitude as a leader was already apparent before the revelation of Rao's role. Not only has economic reform come to a virtual standstill since he took office, but he has also acquiesced to all of Gandhi's demands, legitimate or otherwise.

As a result, governance, and thus the economy, has been deteriorating, India has been taken hostage by an extra-constitutional body composed of NGOs, brought together under the National Advisory Council, which is chaired by Gandhi. With the cabinet having become superfluous, the NAC's decrees—including half-baked ideas inspired by the European welfare state—became policy.

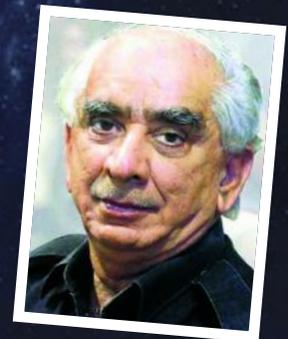
As a result, Singh has presided over a sharp economic slowdown and soaring prices, especially for food. Meanwhile, political scandals, financial scams, and other criminal activities have proliferated under Congress rule since 2004. The

UPA regime has effectively looted the country, and rampant corruption and a lack of accountability have decimated its leading party's credibility.

Through all of this, the supposedly economically literate Singh was little more than a silent spectator, offering only denials of responsibility or trite remarks from the perspective of a political outsider. And, while the damage that he has caused to Congress is for the party to solve, the damage that his aloofness has caused to the institution of Prime Minister is a problem for all Indians.

Manmohan Singh's decade of disastrous leadership has been characterized by weakness and decay. India will suffer the consequences for years to come. Far from vindicating him, historians will know exactly whom to blame.

Jaswant Singh, a former Foreign Minister, Finance Minister, and Defense Minister of India, is a member of the opposition in India's Parliament. He is the Author of Jinnah: India—Partition—Independence and his most recent book is India at Risk: Mistakes, Misconceptions and Misadventures of Security Policy.



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Guru Tegh Bahadur

Guru Tegh Bahadur was born on 1st April, 1621 in the holy city of Amritsar in a house known as Guru ka Mahal. He had four brothers Baba Gurditta, Baba Suraj Mal, Baba Ani Rai, Baba Atal Rai and one sister Bibi Veero. He was the fifth and the youngest son of Guru Hargobind and Mata Nanki. His childhood name was Tyag Mal. The Sikhs began to call him Teg Bahadur after the battle of Kartarpur against Painda Khan in which he proved to be great sword-player or gladiator. But he preferred to call himself 'Degh Bahadur'.

Early Life

From the very childhood Guru Teg Bahadur used to sit inside the house and spend most of his time in meditation. He seldom played with other boys of his age. Due to the rich religious atmosphere at home he developed a distinct philosophical bent of mind. He developed inspirations towards a life of selfless service and sacrifice. Guru Tegh Bahadur had a regular schooling from the age of six. He also learnt classical, vocal and instrumental music. Bhai Gurdas also taught him Gurbani and Hindu Mythology. Apart from the schooling he was also given the military training like horsemanship, swordsmanship, javelin throwing and shooting. He had witnessed and even participated in the battles of Amritsar and Kartarpur. But inspite of all this, he developed an extra ordinary mystic nature in due course of time.

Marriage

Guru Tegh Bahadur was married to Gujri (Mata), daughter of Lal Chand and Bishan Kaur of Kartarpur at an early age on September 14, 1632. A son (Guru) Gobind Singh was born on December 22, 1666. Gujri (Mata) was also a religious lady. She was disciplined in behaviour and modest in temperament.

Baba Bakala

Soon after the death of Guru Hargobind, Mata Nanki, the mother of Guru Tegh Bahadur took him and his wife (Gujri) to her natal village (Baba) Bakala near the river Beas. Some Chronicles state that Bhai Mehra, who was a devout Sikh of Guru Hargobind, got



constructed a house for (Guru) Tegh Bahadur where he lived in complete peace and led a normal life for the next twenty years from 1644 to 1666.

Through meditation Guru Tegh Bahadur developed aspirations towards a life of selfless service and sacrifice, with a moral and spiritual courage to abide by the will of God. When Guru Hargobind invested Har Rai with Guruship, Guru Tegh Bahadur was the first to bow to Guru Har Rai. He never contested the will of his father (Guru).

During the stay at Baba Bakala, Guru Tegh Bahadur paid visits to many holy and historical places like Goindwal, Kiratpur, Haridwar, Prayag, Mathura, Agra, Kashi (Banaras) and Gaya. A devoted Sikh of Guru Hargobind, Bhai Jetha took Guru Tegh Bahadur to Patna. Here he heard the news of the passing away of Guru Har Rai (6th Oct, 1661) and decided to return to Kiratpur. On the way back he reached Delhi on March

21, 1664, where he learnt the arrival of Guru Harkrishan at the residence of Raja Jai Singh. He alongwith his mother and other Sikhs paid visit to Guru Harkrishan and after expressing profound sense of sorrow and sympathy towards Guru and his mother Mata Krishan Kaur, he left for Baba Bakala (Punjab).

The Ninth Nanak

Guru Harkrishan on the eve of his death prophetically uttered only two words “Baba Bakala” meaning that his successor would be found at (Baba) Bakala. In the month of August 1664, Sikh Sangat arrived at village Bakala and acknowledged Baba Tegh Bahadur as the Ninth Nanak.

The Mughals

A reign of terror was let loose on the Hindus in India by the Muslim theistic state. Augranzeb made up his mind to rout out Hinduism from India and introduced many Islamic fundamentalist programs like special taxes for the Hindu traders, religious tax (Zazia) for non-Muslims. Celebration of Diwali and Holi was forbidden. He demolished many important and sacred Hindu Temples, and erected mosques in place of them.

Muslim theistic state executed forceful conversions in order to make India, Dar-ul-Islam and to achieve this goal as soon as possible, the Hindu Pandits and Brahmins were identified for this purpose. All types of atrocities were let loose on them. They were given an ultimatum either to embrace Islam or to be prepared for death.

Brahmins approached Guru Tegh Bahadur at Anandpur Sahib in May 1675 and told their tales of woe to Guru and requested to protect their honor and faith. Guru heard their views and agreed to resist the nefarious act of forcible conversions by peaceful means. Guru made up his mind to sacrifice himself for the cause of “Righteousness” and for the freedom of “Dharma” (Religion).

The Sacrifice

On the advice of Guru, the Brahmins presented a

petition to the Emperor and in lieu of this an imperial court of Delhi, issued summons asking Guru Tegh Bahadur to appear in the said court. But on the other hand, before the imperial summons reach Anandpur Sahib, Guru started his journey towards Delhi after installing his son (Guru) Gobind Singh as the Tenth Nanak in July 1675. Bhai Dayal Das, Bhai Moti Das, Bhai Sati Das and many more devoted Sikhs followed Guru him. When Guru Tegh Bahadur reached near village Malikpur Ragharan near Ropar, an imperial armed contingent led by Mirza Nur Mohammad Khan, arrested Guru him and some of his prominent followers. He kept them in a prison at Bassi Pathanan and tortured daily.

Guru Tegh Bahadur remained calm and quiet. He was offered three alternatives: (1) To show miracles, or (2) to embrace Islam, or (3) to prepare himself for death. Guru accepted the last. On seeing Guru adamant and immovable, the authorities ordered the executioner to sever the head from the body. The order was implemented.

Gurdwara Sis Ganj at Chandni Chowk, Delhi marks the place where the execution was done on November 11, 1675. There was a furious storm after this brutal deed. It caused confusion and havoc in and around the city. Under these circumstances Bhai Jaita, took away the holy head of Guru and set out for Anandpur Sahib. He reached Kiratpur Sahib, near Anandpur Sahib on 15 November. He was received with great honour by young Guru Gobind Rai and honoured as “Rangretta Guru Ka Beta.” The cremation of head was performed with full honour and proper ceremonies on the next day. Taking advantage of the same situation the other part of the body of Guru Tegh Bahadur was whisked away by a brave Sikh Lakhi Shah Lubana and he immediately built up a pyre inside his house and set fire to it in the evening. Thus whole house including other valuables were burned and destroyed. It is said that a royal police guard arrived at the scene in search of the body, but returned, finding the house burning and the inmates weeping bitterly. Gurdwara Rakab Ganj in Delhi marks the place. Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life for the cause of Dharma, truth and the betterment of humanity.

Source: www.sgpc.net

Dr. Veena Mazumdar: Doyen of Women's Studies Movement

With the passing away of Dr. Veena Mazumdar, our Veenadee, the Indian Women's movement has experienced an irreparable loss. Veenadee personified a far-sighted and strong willed thinker and forceful speaker and convincing debater who had faith in 'human goodness'. Her intellectual prowess did not make her an ivory tower in her approach towards her colleagues and fellow travellers-academicians, policy makers, researchers and feminist activists. She always remained warm at heart, easy to approach, instant building of rapport, kind and accessible to 'inarticulate', 'less known' and 'less influential' people from remote places, civil and decent with her adversaries, magnanimous in sharing her knowledge and institutional resources as the Director of Centre for Women's Development Studies.

Her charm lay in her electrifying persona, always smiling, conveying optimism, down to earth approach, ideological sharpness, story-telling with witty humour and most importantly the courage of conviction combined with honesty of purpose.

This is what explained her commanding of agenda, setting power whether she was in the decision making bodies of UGC, ICSSR, Planning Commission of India and several ministries or outside of them.

She could galvanise students, teachers, researchers, women's organisations, trade unionists, bureaucrats, politicians and law makers into action as she was one of the best 'argumentative Indians' produced by 'women's studies movement'.

Born in 1927 Veenadee was very good at coining catchy phrases such as 'women's studies movement', The Indian psyche defined by binary 'Ma' versus "Maal, dichotomy that worships motherhood and dehumanises / commodifies the rest of women. Her contemporary powerful men in the universities, research institutions and ministries



Dr Veena Mazumdar

called her 'bulldozer' while women scholars and practitioners found her the most trustworthy friend and mentor.

I worked closely with Veenadee during 1981 for the Women's Studies Conference hosted by SNTD Women's University, in 1985 for preparation of 'End of the Decade' alternate country report on Status of Women in India, in 1986 for Research Committee 32's panel discussion on 'Ante Natal Sex Selective and Abortions of Female Foetus in India' for World Sociological Conference and in 1988 for a multi-centric research project on 'Child Care as an Essential Input for Women's Development'.

-Vibhuti Patel

Source: Bhavan's Journal, July 31, 2013

Don't Spin a Better Story. Be a Better Company

Companies frequently hire public relations people when they sense that the tide of opinion is turning against them. They may be facing nasty headlines and want them to go away. “We’re misunderstood,” the company’s CEO will say. “We just need to tell our story better.”

There is often some truth to that. When I joined Walmart, the company was focused on running an efficient business and making customers happy. Even after we became America’s largest company, much of the information the public got came from our detractors. So yes, it was necessary to tell Walmart’s story better.

But it’s a huge mistake to assume that once you’ve explained your perspective, the public will embrace you. Having spent many years in consulting, I know what doesn’t work: thinking you can tell a better story without actually becoming a better company.

For Walmart, the turning point was Hurricane Katrina. When the storm hit, we mobilized to provide meals, emergency supplies, and cash. No internal debate was needed—those were obvious right things to do. But the experience opened our eyes to the broader opportunity to make a difference. Two months later, then-CEO Lee Scott gave a landmark speech in which he asked, “What would it take for Walmart to be at our best all the time? What if we used our size and resources to make this country and this earth an even better place for all of us? And what if we could do that and build a stronger business at the same time?”

We made a strategic decision to go where those questions would lead us. My role was to find the places where being better would make the biggest difference and to create a culture that would enable us to get those things done.

We started by encouraging the organization to get out of its defensive crouch and listen to its critics. It wasn’t easy to open up to the outside, but the learning opportunity was clear. Ten NGO leaders around the table bring you 100 years of experience.

We set big goals in areas such as sustainability, women’s economic empowerment, and more-healthy food—even when we couldn’t yet see how to reach them. Then we made sure the goals lived inside the organization. If you want to source \$20 billion from

companies owned by women, someone with a broad perspective on the business has to identify which merchandising areas have that potential. Someone needs to tend to the metrics. And the CEO has to set the tone, as Mike Duke has done. But ultimately, the challenge isn’t the CEO’s job, or any one person’s job; it’s everyone’s job. Today every merchandise buyer’s annual objectives call for progress in sustainability or in women’s economic empowerment. Finally, in order to have the greatest impact, we took a 360-degree approach to the work, engaging our entire supply chain and our customers, communities, and employees.

These principles are working for us—and we are showing others that taking on large social issues can be compatible with building a stronger business. Increasing the efficiency of our truck fleet and turning our waste stream into recycling income improve our bottom line. Hiring veterans gives us strong leaders. Implementing recently announced energy initiatives will eventually save \$1 billion a year. Buying much more from businesses owned by women will yield both stronger communities and more-relevant products for our customers.

Walmart gets its story out better these days. But the reason the story resonates is that it’s a story of real change. So here’s my advice: If a drumbeat of criticism starts up against your company, don’t rush to raise your voice above it. Stop to listen. And commit to getting better.

-Leslie Dach wrote this column shortly before stepping down as the executive vice president of corporate affairs at Walmart. He previously served as the vice chairman of Edelman, a global communications firm.



Source: Harvard Business Review, October 2013

Provided by Gambhir Watts OAM, Proud Subscriber to Harvard Business Review



Love the Bank, Hate the Banker

New Delhi: Public discourse is rarely nuanced. The public's attention span is short, and subtleties tend to confuse. Better to take a clear, albeit incorrect, position, for at least the message gets through. The sharper and shriller it is, the more likely it is to capture the public's attention, be repeated, and frame the terms of debate.

Consider, for example, the debate about bank regulation. Bankers are widely reviled today. But banking is also mystifying. So any critic who has the intellectual heft to clear away the smokescreen that bankers have laid around their business, and can portray bankers as both incompetent and malevolent, finds a ready audience. The critic's message—that banks need to be cut down to size—resonates widely.

Bankers can, of course, ignore their critics and the

public, and use their money to lobby in the right quarters to maintain their privileges. But, every once in a while, a banker, tired of being portrayed as a rogue, lashes out. He (it is usually a man) warns the public that even the most moderate regulations placed on banks will bring about the end of civilization as we know it. And so the shrillness continues, with the public no wiser for it.

A more specific example drives home the point. A significant number of banks operated at very high levels of leverage prior to the recent crisis, with debt/equity ratios of 30-1 (or more) in some cases, and with much of the debt very short-term. One might reasonably conclude that banks operated with too little equity capital, and too little margin of safety, and that a reasonable regulatory response would be to require that banks be better capitalized.

But this is where the consensus breaks down. The critics want banks to operate with far less leverage, especially regarding short-term borrowing; indeed, some want all-equity banks, so that the system becomes safe. The bankers retort that they must pay a higher return on any additional equity that they issue, so that more equity would increase their cost of capital, forcing them to raise interest rates on the loans they make, which would reduce economic activity.

Neither side is quite right in their public arguments. The bankers do not seem to have internalized a fundamental axiom of modern finance: risk emanates from the assets that a bank holds. According to the Modigliani-Miller theorem, the mix of debt and equity that it uses to finance its assets does not alter its average cost of financing. Use more "cheap" debt, and equity becomes riskier and costlier, keeping overall financing costs the same. Use more equity, and equity becomes less



leveraged and less risky, which causes investors to demand lower returns to hold it, and again the overall financing cost remains the same. Put differently, given a set of cash flows from a bank's assets, the bank's value is not affected by how those cash flows are distributed among investors, so more leverage does not reduce the bank's cost of funding.

If their public argument is incorrect (and they must know it), why do bankers prefer short-term borrowing to long-term equity finance? The critics would say that it is because of the tax preference accorded to debt, or because banks are too big to fail.

But these arguments do not withstand scrutiny. If the tax deductibility of interest made debt attractive, then bankers should be indifferent between long-term debt and short-term debt. Yet they seem to prefer the latter.

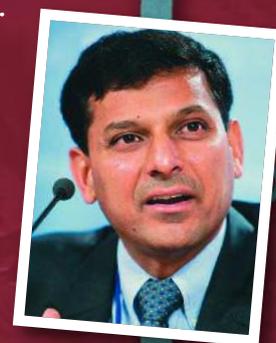
Similarly, too-big-to-fail banks would not care about the failure risk associated with debt financing. But, again, it is unclear why they should prefer short-term debt. After all, if bankers were trying to benefit, would they not issue long-term debt, for which the default risk, and the gain from the implicit government guarantee, is high? Furthermore, why do small banks, which have no implicit backing from the government, also have so much leverage?

The critics' arguments about the benefits of equity are equally unsatisfying. Of course, given a set of bank assets, more equity would reduce the risk of failure. But failure is not always a bad thing; a banker operating an all-equity bank, with no need ever to repay investors, would be likelier to take unwarranted risk. The need to repay or roll over debt imposes discipline, giving the banker a stronger incentive to manage risk carefully.

For example, when Washington Mutual collapsed in 2008, following an uncontrolled lending spree (it was the largest bank failure in American history), it was not because equity holders decided to close it down, but because depositors did not trust it anymore. How much more value would Washington Mutual's management have destroyed if the bank had been all-equity financed?

In sum, there are tradeoffs. Too much short-term debt makes banks more prone to failure, while too much equity places little restraint on bankers' capacity to destroy value. The truth lies somewhere between the positions of today's strident critics and indignant bankers, which may be why the moderately leveraged bank has been a feature of Western economies for a thousand years. Our distaste for the banker must not be allowed to destroy the bank.

-Raghuram Rajan, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), a Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and the chief economic adviser in India's finance ministry, served as the International Monetary Fund's youngest-ever chief economist and was Chairman of India's Committee on Financial Sector Reforms. He is the author of *Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy*, the Financial Times Business Book of the Year.



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Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar

*A great man is different from an eminent one in that
he is ready to be the servant of the society.*

-Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar

14 April is celebrated as birthday of Dr Ambedkar all over India. Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, popularly known as Baba Saheb Ambedkar, was one of the architects of the Indian Constitution. People observe his birthday to commemorate his contribution to the Indian Society. He was a well-known politician and an eminent Jurist. He was philosopher, thinker, historian, prolific writer, editor and Buddhist activist. He published several books for the upliftment of Dalits, some of them are: The Annihilation of Caste; The Untouchables: A Thesis on the Origins of Untouchability; Who are Shudras etc.

Dalit organizations of India celebrate the day to pay tribute to this great leader. Huge processions and rallies are taken on and several cultural programs are organized. His statues are decorated and political leaders offer obligations to him. Dalit Melas are organized and prayers and meetings are held to commemorate his birthday. Dr Ambedkar is viewed as a Messiah of dalits and downtrodden in India.

Early Life

*Cultivation of mind should be the
ultimate aim of human existence.*

Dr Ambedkar was born in Mhow (Madhya Pradesh). He was the fourteenth child of Ramji and Bhimabai Sakpal. Bhim Rao Ambedkar belonged to the untouchable Mahar Caste. His father and grandfather served in the British Army. In those days, the Government ensured that all the army personnel and their children were educated and ran special schools for this purpose. This ensured good education for Bhim Rao Ambedkar, which would have otherwise been denied to him by the virtue of his caste.

He was one of the first “untouchables” to get a college education in India. He continued his studies abroad where he got his doctorates in law, political science and economics from Columbia University and London School of Economics. He practiced law and contributed for the rights of India’s untouchables.

A Fighter for Downtrodden

The life of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar was marked by struggles but he proved that every hurdle in life can be surmounted with talent and firm determination. The biggest barrier in his life was the caste system adopted by the Hindu society according to which the



Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar

family he was born in was considered ‘untouchable’. While Bhim Rao was an ardent patriot on one hand, he was the saviour of the oppressed, women and poor on the other. He fought for them throughout his life. He was devoted to spreading education and culture amongst the downtrodden, improving the economic status and raising matters concerning their problems in the proper forums to focus attention on them and finding solutions to the same.

The Societal Discrimination

*In Hinduism, conscience, reason and independent
thinking have no scope for development.*

The problems of the downtrodden were centuries old and difficult to overcome. Their entry into temples was forbidden. They could not draw water from public wells and ponds. Their admission in schools was prohibited. Bhim Rao Ambedkar experienced caste discrimination right from the childhood. After retirement, Bhim Rao’s father settled in Maharashtra. Bhim Rao was enrolled in the local school. Here, he had to sit on the floor in one corner in the classroom and teachers would not touch his notebooks. In spite of these hardships, Bhim Rao continued his studies and passed his Matriculation examination from Bombay University with flying colours in 1908. Bhim Rao Ambedkar joined the Elphinstone College for further education. In 1912, he graduated in Political Science and Economics from Bombay University and got a job in Baroda. In 1913, Bhim Rao Ambedkar lost his father.

In the same year Maharaja of Baroda awarded scholarship to Bhim Rao Ambedkar and sent him to America for further studies.

From America, Dr Ambedkar proceeded to London to study Economics and Political Science. But the Baroda Government terminated his scholarship and recalled him back. The Maharaja of Baroda appointed Dr Ambedkar as his Political Secretary, but no one would take orders from him because he was a Mahar. Bhim Rao returned to Bombay in November 1917. With the help of Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, a sympathizer of the cause for the upliftment of the depressed classes, he started a fortnightly newspaper, the "Mooknayak" (Dumb Hero) on January 31, 1920. The Maharaja also convened many meetings and conferences of the "untouchables" which Bhim Rao addressed. In September 1920, after accumulating sufficient funds, Ambedkar went back to London to complete his studies. He became a Barrister and got a Doctorate in Science. After completing his studies in London, Ambedkar returned to India.

A Messiah for Dalits

In July 1924, he founded the Bahishkrit Hitkaraini Sabha (Outcastes Welfare Association). The aim of the Sabha was to uplift the socially and politically downtrodden and bring them to the level of the others in the Indian society. In 1929, Ambedkar made the controversial decision to co-operate with the all-British Simon Commission which was to look into setting up a responsible Indian Government in India.

The Congress decided to boycott the Commission and drafted its own version of a constitution for free India. The Congress version had no provisions for the depressed classes. Ambedkar became more skeptical of the Congress's commitment to safeguard the rights of the depressed classes. When a separate electorate was announced for the depressed classes under Ramsay McDonald 'Communal Award', Gandhiji went on a fast unto death against this decision. Leaders rushed to Dr Ambedkar to drop his demand. On September 24, 1932, Dr Ambedkar and Gandhiji reached an understanding, which became the famous Poona Pact.

The Architect of Indian Constitution

In 1947, when India became independent, the first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, invited Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, who had been elected as a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bengal, to join his Cabinet as a Law Minister. The Constituent Assembly entrusted the job of drafting the Constitution to a Committee and Dr Ambedkar was elected as Chairman of this Drafting Committee. While he was busy with drafting the Constitution, India faced several crises. The country saw Partition and Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. In the beginning of 1948, Dr Ambedkar completed the draft of the Constitution and presented

it in the Constituent Assembly. In November 1949, this draft was adopted with very few amendments. Many provisions had been made in the Constitution to ensure social justice for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes.

The Bharat Ratna Award

Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules, it ceases to be a religion, as it kills responsibility which is an essence of the true religious act.

Dr Ambedkar's patriotism started with the upliftment of the downtrodden and the poor. He fought for their equality and rights. His ideas about patriotism were not only confined to the abolition of colonialism, but he also wanted freedom for every individual. For him freedom without equality, democracy and equality without freedom could lead to absolute dictatorship. In 1990, Dr Ambedkar, the Chief Architect of Indian Constitution, was bestowed with Bharat Ratna. The same year Dr Ambedkar's life size portrait was also unveiled in the Central Hall of Parliament. The period from 14th April 1990–14th April 1991 was observed as 'Year of Social Justice' in the memory of Babasaheb, the Champion of the poor and the downtrodden.

Buddhism

In 1950, Ambedkar travelled to Sri Lanka to attend a convention of Buddhist scholars and monks. After his return he decided to write a book on Buddhism and soon, converted himself to Buddhism. In his speeches, Ambedkar lambasted the Hindu rituals and caste division. Ambedkar founded the Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha. His book "The Buddha and His Dhamma" was published posthumously. On October 14, 1956 Ambedkar organized a public ceremony to convert around five lakh of his supporters into Buddhism. Ambedkar travelled to Kathmandu to attend the Fourth World Buddhist Conference. He completed his final manuscript, "The Buddha or Karl Marx" on December 2, 1956.

Final Days

Dr Ambedkar was suffering from serious health problems including diabetes and weak eyesight. On December 6, 1956, Baba Saheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar died peacefully in his sleep at his home in Delhi. Ambedkar had adopted Buddhism as his religion so a Buddhist-style cremation was organized for him. The ceremony was attended by hundreds of thousands of supporters, activists and admirers.

Source: www.in.ygoy.com, www.iloveindia.com, www.culturalindia.net, www.ambedkarfoundation.nic.in, www.4to40.com

Mahadevi Verma

Mahadevi Verma was a well-known Hindi poet of the *Chhayavaad* generation, the times when every poet used to incorporate romanticism in their poetry. She is more often called the modern *Meera*. This famous Hindi poet and writer was born on 26 March 1907, in Farrukhabad in a family of lawyers. She was the eldest among her four siblings. She received her education at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. She went to Allahabad University for higher education and obtained her Master's degree in Sanskrit from Allahabad University.

Married Life

Mahadevi Verma was married to Dr Swarup Narayan Verma at an early age. After marriage she continued to live with her family and receive education. She met her husband for some time in the princely state of Tamkoi somewhere around 1920. Thereafter, she moved to Allahabad to further her interest in poetry. Unfortunately, she and her husband mostly lived separately and were busy pursuing their individual interests. They used to meet occasionally. Her husband died in the year 1966 and then Mahadevi Verma decided to permanently shift to Allahabad.

Chhayavaad

Mahadevi Verma was one amongst the other major poets of the *Chhayavaadi* School of the Hindi literature. She was the epitome of child prodigy. Not only she wrote fabulous poetry, but also made sketches for her poetic works such as *Deepshikha* and *Yatra*. *Deepshikha* is one of the best works of Mahadevi Verma. She was also famous for her book of memoirs. She was highly influenced by the values preached by the Buddhist culture. She was so much inclined towards Buddhism that, she even attempted to become a Buddhist *Bhikshuni*.



Mahadevi Verma

Notable Works

Some of her notable works included: **Prose:** *Ateet ke Chalchitra*, *Kshanda*, *Mera Parivaar*, *Path ke Saathi*, *Sahityakaar ki Aastha*, *Sambhashan Sankalpita*, *Shrinkhla ki Kadiya*, *Smriti ki Rekhayen*.

Poetry: *Deepshikha*, *Himalaya*, *Neerja*, *Nihar*, *Rashmi*, *Sandhya Geet*, *Saptaparna*.

Collection: *Geetparva*, *Mahadevi Sahitya*, *Parikrama*, *Sandhini*, *Smarika*, *Smritichitra*, *Yama*.

Honours

Her writings were well-acclaimed and earned her an important position in the world of Hindi literature. Her amazing poetry collection *Yama* brought her the *Gyanpeeth Award* (1940), the highest Indian literary award. In the year 1956, the Government of India honoured her by conferring the title of *Padma Bhushan* upon her. She was the first Indian woman to become a Fellow of the *Sahitya Akademi* in the year 1979. Her most famous works include *Atita ke Chalchitra* (The Moving Frames of the Past) and *Smriti ki Rekhayen* (The Lines of Memory). Her famous poetic publications are *Nihar*, *Rashmi*, *Neerja* and *Sandhya Geet*. Her work *Shrinkhala ki Kadiyan* reflects the plight of Indian women.

The Mirabai

Mahadevi Verma was deeply aesthetic. Her poetry is marked by a constant pain, the pain of separation from her beloved, the Supreme Being. Due to this she is also sometimes compared to Mirabai. There is



an element of mysticism in her poetry. Her poems are addressed to her distant lover, while her lover remains quiet and never speaks. With her work *Deepshikha*, which contains 51 poems, she ventured into new field of Hindi literature—*Rahasyavaad*. She also served as an Editor of the famous Hindi monthly *Chand*.

The Social Reformer

Mahadevi Verma was also a social reformer. She strongly advocated the cause of women in India. Many of her prose works reflect her views on the plight of Indian women. She was appointed the first Principal of *Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth* and started to impart education to girls through Hindi medium. Later she became the Chancellor of the institute. She believed that, only by educating women, society becomes enlightened. She wanted women to be empowered and become self-dependent.

The Literary Figure

Mahadevi Verma was one of the top ranking figures in the world of Hindi literature. She was always remembered with reverence along with the pioneers of the “*Chhayavad*” movement, such as Jai Shankar Prasad, Surya Kant Tripathi ‘*Nirala*’ and Sumitra Nandan Pant. Her style was such that she could easily integrate mysticism of nature with the highest imagination of a human being where sorrow and happiness are interwoven. She not only enriched Hindi literature but also gave it a new direction, directing it towards newer objectives leading to a more enjoyable and rejoicing path.

Her readers were not only impressed by her flowery language and beautiful expression but also in the deep aesthetic stream of philosophical realization of eternal truth emerging from a sense of union with the Supreme Reality, which enabled her readers to have a taste of eternal happiness or bliss. In most of her works the essence of spirituality can be seen. She was a lover of nature like Wordsworth. For her the beauty of nature was not only a thing of joy, but also an object of worship and adoration.

Nature, for her was an eternal source of inspiration leading to self-realization. To her, prose was a subject of the intellect and poetry dealt with emotions. In prose, one needs subjects to ponder over and discuss, but poetry flows by itself. It does not need any sort of external support. She enriched Hindi literature by expressing herself beautifully both in prose and poetry. She was also deeply involved in fine arts, culture and self-expression through her poems, articles and other writings.

Mahatma Gandhi

She had no interest in politics but she was very much aware of the contemporary scenario. She was

against the evils existing in the society in the form of corruption, bribe, treachery, untruth, falsehood and hypocrisy. She was a profounder of truth and was a faithful admirer and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. She said, “At the time of Mahabharata only one untruth brought a lot of misfortune for both *Pandavas* and *Kauravas*, but now everyone is taking shelter under untruth, falsehood and hypocrisy. Hence, we find everywhere in society deep distress, unhappiness and misery. Only God knows what will happen to the country.” In her Presidential Address at *Hindi Sansthan*, Lucknow, she expressed her anguish over the ways of the politicians who were selfish and self-centered.

They always gave importance for their well-being and ignored the common well-being of the people. According to her, politicians had become mere puppets in the hands of the dishonest tyrants and their only objective was to achieve the highest seat in the corridors of power. She said, “I can understand if someone dreams to serve the country and devote himself for the important task of nation building or to serve mankind at large, but I cannot understand how a person can dream to be at the helm of affairs by snatching the highest chair in the power-achieving game and still think that he is a great person.”

Final Days

Mahadevi closely followed Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of life. She worked with towering personalities like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr Rajendra Prasad. She realized that truth and happiness flows naturally from sacrifice, from reunion with the Supreme Reality. She practiced what she preached in her life so much so that each and every word in her poems became more or less a sermon, or a piece of scripture. Mahadevi Verma died on September 11, 1987.

Source: www.iloveindia.com,
www.mapsofindia.com, www.indianetzone.com



Bhavan's Holi Mahotsav 2014



Holi Hai . . .

It is Holi time – a time to celebrate!

The festival of Holi is a celebration of the colours of unity and brotherhood - an opportunity to forget all differences and indulge in unadulterated fun. It has traditionally been celebrated in high spirit without any distinction of cast, creed, colour, race, status or sex. It is one occasion when sprinkling coloured powder (gulal) or coloured water on each other breaks all barriers of discrimination so that everyone looks the same and universal brotherhood is reaffirmed.

In our multicultural Australian society, the uniqueness of the Holi festival is very significant. By its very nature, Holi celebrations help strengthen the social fabric and secular character of the society as people work on building cordial relations, forgiving any hard feelings for others.

As is well known that Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's ideal is 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' - the world is one Family. It nurtures a firm belief that there are elements in all cultures, which transcend all barriers and knit people together.

It is therefore very natural and most appropriate that the Bhavan is bringing to you, once again, a cultural extravaganza – 'Holi Mahotsav 2014' – a celebration of friendship and harmony from 22- 23 March 2014 at Darling Harbour in the heart of Sydney.

This year, the Holi Mahotsav marks its 12th anniversary. While it started as a one day event, its recognition and support by a wider Australian community over the years has encouraged us to extend it. We are immensely grateful to all those who have travelled and toiled with us in the last 12 years in turning Holi Mahotsav into a mainstream grand Australian festival of harmony and friendship today.

The Bhavan has put together an impressive and colourful programme. The dance performances and the music promise to rejuvenate your mind and soul. And, apart from refreshing your social ties, the Mahotsav provides an excellent opportunity to let loose all the tension and de-stress your mind.

On behalf of everyone at Bhavan Australia, I heartily welcome you all to Holi Mahotsav 2014 – a celebration of hope and harmony, joy and fulfilment, unity and brotherhood.

HAPPY HOLI!

Shanker Dhar

**Chairman
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia**

Holi Mahotsav 2014

Post Event Report

Over two sunny days Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia celebrated the 12th anniversary of the Holi Mahotsav starting on Saturday 22 March and finishing on Sunday 23 March 2014 at Tumbalong Park in Darling Harbour, Sydney. An estimated 15000 - 20000 people attended the festivities.

Over five hundred artists performed during the festival days and represented a rich mixture of culture, spirituality and entertainment. The cultural performances included: Indian, contemporary, classical, folk and belly dances, fusion and folk music, Punjabi songs, Balinese and Chinese performances and a street dance which engaged into dance the standing audiences.

And we had Yoga, prayers, chanting, meditation and dance and art workshops over the two days. Another feature was Did You Know and One City Celebrates exhibitions from Bhavan's special marquee.

This year Bhavan's Chandigarh Vidyalaya (School) participated: students and teacher presented a variety of authentic Indian music and dances.

Highlights of Saturday (Spiritual Day) include: Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannātha (Street parade with hand pulled Cart) starting from Hyde park passing through the main streets of Sydney City CBD and culminating in to Darling Harbour by ISKCON and Yagna (Sacred fire ceremony) by The World Gayatri





Pariwar visiting from Haridwar, India.

The audience enjoyed delicious vegetarian Indian food and craft stalls.

On Sunday the traditional practice of colour throwing took place in the designated area in multiple sessions throughout whole afternoon. This joyful activity brought many people of different cultural background together and was celebrated with happiness and harmony among the participants and viewers.

During the special VIP session held on the Sunday the special guests expressed the importance of such events as Holi Mahotsav and demonstrated their support and pleasure of being part of the celebrations. Among the respected speakers who graced the festival there were: The Hon. John Robertson MP, Leader of the Opposition & Deputy Leader of the Opposition; Hon. Amanda Fazio MLC, Opposition Whip; Felice Montrone, Deputy Chairperson of Community Relations Commission; The Hon. Arun Kumar Goel, Consul General of India; Paul Andersen, Director, Strategic Place Management Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority; Kersi Meher – Homji, Prolifics Sport Writer and Peace Contributor; Dr Phil Lambert, General Manager, Australian Curriculum Assessment and

Reporting Authority; Mrs Alka Goel; Ana Tiwary, Producer / Director Individual Films; Shanker Dhar.

The success of Holi Mahotsav could not have been possible without the selfless untiring support of nearly thousand artists and performers from a large number of dance academies and cultural groups. We bow before and salute them with humility and greatest gratitude. The crowd passionately danced and sang with the performers and enjoyed every bit of the multicultural program.

Our special thanks come to all performing artists – All World Gayatri Parivar; Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigarh; Aparna Dixit; Sahaja Yoga; Aziff Tibal Belly Dance; Chinese Traditional Dance; Expression; Rythmic Squad; Hip Hoppers; The Global Gypsies; Arpita Shome; Indian Mystique Pty Ltd; Kiran Shah; Taraana Indian Classical Dance; Rhythms Dance Troupe; Nartan Institute of Performing arts; Geetanjali School of Dance and Performing Arts; Mango Dance; Nupur Dance Group; SGGHS Bollywood; Team Ace Japanese Dance Group; Shysta Sodhi; Aleem Mohammed and Shireen Mohammed; Electric Korma Musical Band; Prabhu OSONIQS Rhythm and Bhangra Performers.

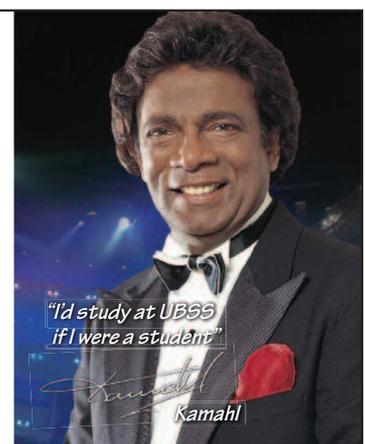
The stage performances were provided under direction of our eternal and incredible stage

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managers Manju Chand Raja and Bhoji Watts assisted by great masters of ceremonies: Monalisa Grover, Soim Raja, Jignasha Bhatt and Saurabh Arora.

The food stalls during the Holi Mahotsav pepped up the festival by adding variety to the event. A wide selection of delicious Indian vegetarian meals, beverages and sweets was offered by renowned Indian restaurants: Taj Sweets & Restaurant and Khaana Khazanna. Stay Cool Tropical Sno, Sugar Cane Juice and Fresh Sugarcane Juice brought cooling and calming drinks.

This year we introduced Merchandise marquees instead of stalls showcasing traditional dresses, tops, fashion accessories, fancy bangles by The Saree Collection and artistic Henna art tattoos from Zenat Art Henna Tattoos and Psychic Readings (Tarrot and Palmistry).

Indian Mystique offered free dance workshops for kids and face painting. Among other craft marquees we had: India Tourism Sydney - Incredible India

UAE Exchange Australia PTY LTD, TV, Bank of Baroda, Central Equity, TEG Immigration.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to our main sponsors and supporters: NSW Government: Premier of NSW, Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, India Tourism, Sydney and Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. We are grateful to the LAC City Central NSW Police for supporting with street parade and ISKCON Sydney for organising and running Rath Yatra.

Holi Mahotsav has become an integral part of the month long Living in Harmony Festival hosted by the City of Sydney and we are grateful to them for inclusion.

We are grateful to our media supporters Sydney Morning Herald, ZEE TV, Easter Suburn Newspapers, Desi Kangaroo, The Indian Telegraph, Indus Age, Indian Link, The Indian Down Under, Punjab Times, Masala Newline, Navtarang Newspaper & Radio, Nepalese Times and the Epoch Times, SBS TV who join us in making this 2014







festival even brighter and diverse.

We applaud with immense gratitude the help of the volunteers Karina Flores Sasse, Jonathan Peticara, Katerina Hristovska, Nagma Ansari, Shirin Ansari, Tarun, Charisma Kaliyanda, Anousheh, Joshna, Dhiya, Marvin, Divya, Nisha, Nabila, Navjeet, Gio, Amy, Bushra Qazi, Dheeraj Kishnani.

We acknowledge the support of Mr Sridhar Kumar Kondepudi, Director Bhavan Australia and Mr Govinda Watts in managing the security.

And we acknowledge with deep gratitude the contribution of our incredible staff Jessica Flores Sasse, Shabana Begum, Parveen Dahiya, Jessica Zheng, Jignasha Batt for their valuable contribution without which we would not have been able to host the festival.

We are grateful to Brendan Burke, Alison Jenny, Gracie Low, Desiree Lane, Graham, Peter Malony, Peter Baker and other staff from Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority for their valuable contribution in hosting this festival.

Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigarh participates in Bhavan's Holi Mahotsav 2014

We extended invitations to Bhavan's schools in India to showcase authentic Indian culture in our annual Holi Mahotsav.

Dr Vineeta Arora, Principal Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigarh has been kind enough to send at their own expenses a group of students who are multi-talented performers and artists in dance as well in music. Only the local hospitality was looked after by Bhavan Australia.

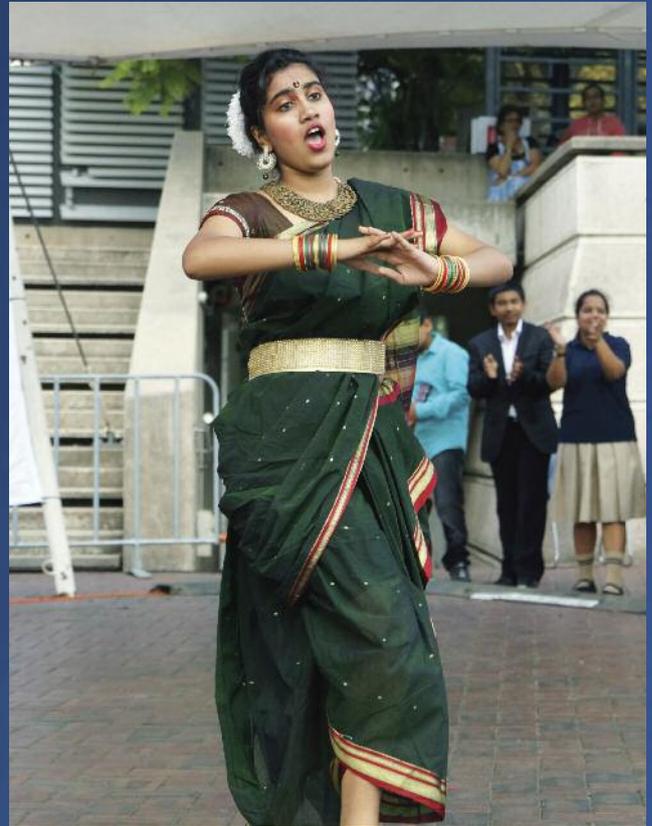
The brilliantly talented students; Saurabh Gupta, Pramiti Garg, Arushi Lamba, Irama, Jai Dhami, Aryan

Kakkar and Sanskriti accompanied by their Music Teacher, Ms Purabi Barua (herself, an accomplished classical and folk music artist) showcased the authentic representation of various forms of Indian music, dance and cultural performances, including classical, folk, patriotic (Vande Mataram), school and Holi songs. The cultural dance performance included Devotional Dance in Bharatnatyam style, Punjab Folk Dance, Semi Classical Dance, Maharashtrian Folk Dance along with Guitar performance by these versatile student artists.

Some of the well-experienced dance group from

Bhavan Vidyalaya Chandigarh with VIPs





Sydney were shocked with joy to see the young artists performing “like professionals” in the Holi Mahotsav.

We are indeed thankful to the Principal, Dr Vineeta Arora, P.R. Aggarwal, IAS (Retd.) Hony. Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Chandigarh and the Music Teacher, Ms Purabi Barua for making this participation of Bhavan Vidyalaya Chandigarh at our Holi Mahotsav possible.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the students and the teacher of Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigarh in front of VIP guests.

We expect 2-3 Bhavan’s schools from India participating in our next Holi Mahotsav 2015.

Gambhir Watts OAM
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia
Organiser of Holi Mahotsav

22 & 23 March Performances

All World Gayatri Parivar



Kiran Shah

All World Gayatri Parivar presents Bhajans and Yoga

*Inspirational Discourse and music covering
spiritual aspects of Holi festival also.*

Spiritual preacher and musicians, from All World Gayatri Pariwar, Haridwar India with over 25 years' experience in preaching Hindu philosophy; delivering inspirational discourses and music perform Inspirational Discourse and music along with covering spiritual aspects of Holi festival.

*Demonstration of Pragma Yoga, Surya Namaskar;
Jiven Tatva Asanas etc and Pranayam.*

Sahaja Yoga

Sahaja Yoga presents Yoga performances. Sahaja Yoga is a method of meditation which brings a breakthrough in the evolution of human awareness. It was created by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi in 1970 and has since spread all around the world.

Kiran Shah presents: *A Story! A Story*

Kiran Shah, an international storyteller now residing in the Blue Mountains has been performing and training teachers, students and parents in the oral tradition of storytelling. She has a special interest in folktales which she sees as the collective wisdom of generations which still hold relevance to our lives today.



Australian Chinese Community Association
Dance The spring of Xinjiang Dance

Join Kiran Shah as she takes you across India to tell you tales of long ago; tales of good and evil, of wonder and wisdom, of hope and humour. Discover how Holi came to be and why you are here celebrating this festival today.

Australian Chinese Community Association Dance

Australian Chinese Community Association Dance Group belonging to ACCA (Australian Chinese Community Association), a peak Chinese Community organization in NSW established 40 years ago, presents group dances. Australian



Jagannath Rath Yatra

Chinese Community Association Dance Group presents: Peach Blossom Dance, Chinese “Kung Fu” Fan, Beautiful Skirt, Martial Artist Sword and The Spring of Xinjiang” Dance.

Jagannath Rath Yatra

Jagannath Rath Yatra is a large street procession from Martin Place going through Sydney CBD and Sydney Town Hall culminating in to Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour. The procession includes Rath Yatra (hand pulled Chariot) and other community floats.

ISKCON Bhajan and Kirtan

Bhajan and Kirtan performance by ISKCON team.

All World Gayatri Parivar

All World Gayatri Parivar performs Yagya ceremony.

Jitendra Mishra; Onkarlal Patidar; Kamlesh Chaudhary from All World Gayatri Parivar, Haridwar India perform Yagya ceremony.

Yagya (or Yajna) is an ancient ritual of offering and sublimating the havana sāmagri (herbal preparations mixed with ghee) in the sacred fire.

The spiritual preachers and musicians are masters in conducting rituals with over 25 years of



Indian Mystique

experience in preaching Hindu philosophy, delivering inspirational and motivational discourses, conducting rituals, teaching Yoga and singing inspirational and devotional music.

Indian Mystique Pty Ltd

Richelle Garinge presents dance performance. She has 5 years’ experience as a face painter – she has participated in various events like the royal easter show, The Royal Melbourne show, etc. She is passionate about face painting and believes it transforms the child into their dream superhero.



Aparna Dixit



The Global Gypsies

Aparna Dixit, Singer

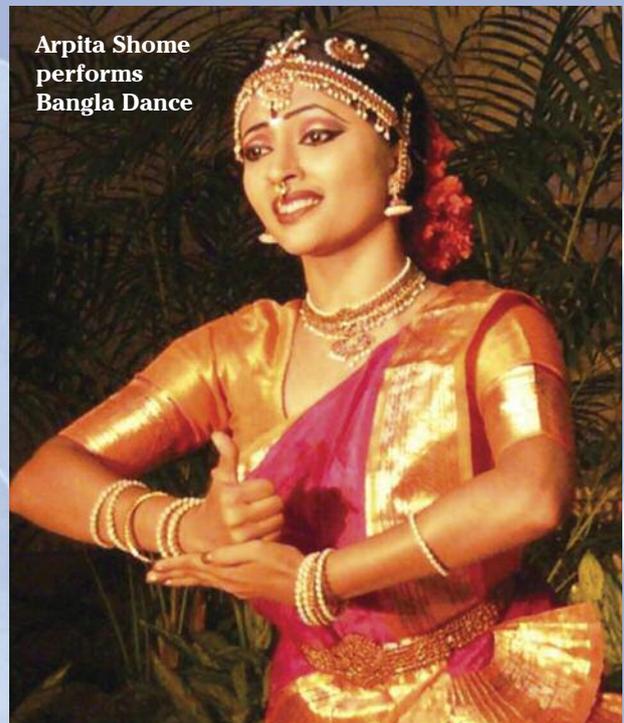
Aparna Dixit has pursued Hindustani classical music and completed “Madhyama Pratham” (4th level) from Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in India. She has given Light music performances as an artist in All India Radio and has also performed in many musical events. She has sung various genres of vocal music including—Bhakti Geet/Bhajans, Bhavgeet, Vachanas and film songs; in Kannada, Marathi and Hindi. Her performances in Sydney include—Vachanas during Basava Jayanti and Mahashivaratri organised by Basava Samiti, Sydney. Film songs during Indian Republic day and Australia day organised by FAIA, Sydney.

The Global Gypsies

The Global Gypsies present Gypsy style dance. The Global Gypsies, from the south-west of Sydney, present a colourful & eclectic repertoire in their unique & popular Gypsy Fusion style. They have appeared at various performance events over the years, including the Sydney Mind Body Spirit Festival, the Royal Easter Show, Community events & Festivals, live performances with Kirtan musicians, as well as entertaining audiences in Coastal & Regional areas of NSW. The Ladies are proudly dedicated to their art & exude a captivating energy as they perform with commitment & passion, promoting the essence of enjoyment & well-being.

Arpita Shome performs Bangla Dance

Arpita Shome performs on Bangla fusion music. Bangla fusion music can be considered the soul of the festive culture like Holi. This music certainly gives away the festive essence of Holi and spread about the feelings and desire of the people. Bangla



Arpita Shome performs Bangla Dance

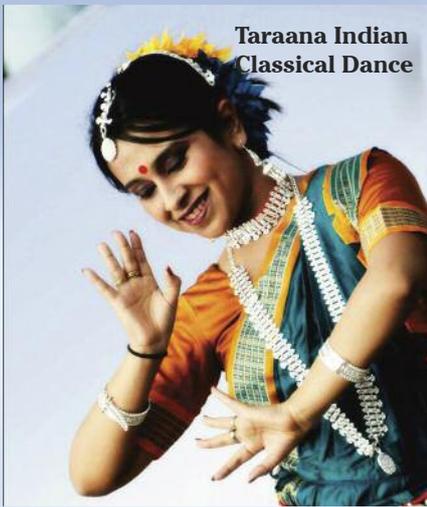
fusion music performance is a combination of traditional and modern music.

Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigarh

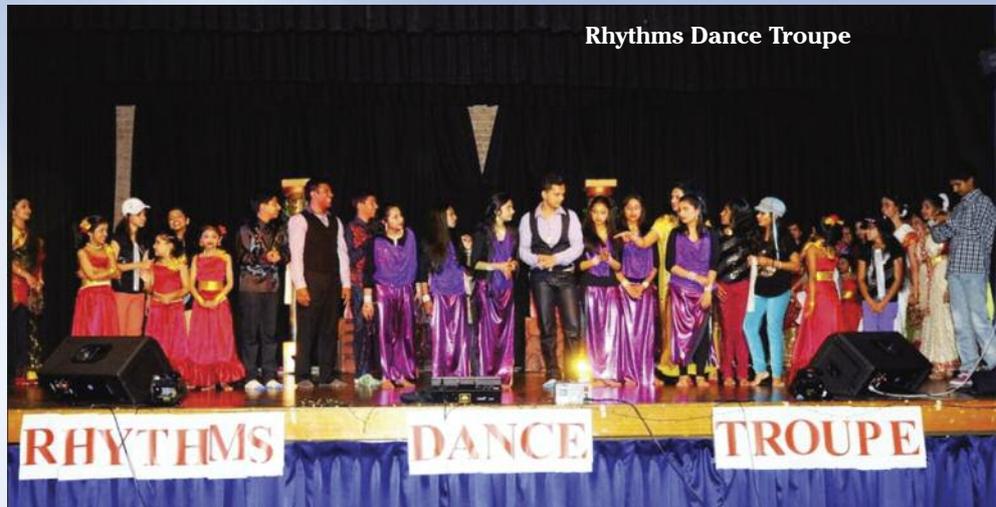
Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigarh presents songs folk songs and dances as School song of Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Patriotic Song Vande Mataram, Medley of Holi Songs, Devotional Dance in Bharatnatyam style, Punjab Folk Dance, Semi Classical Dance, Maharashtra Folk Dance and Guitar performance by the students.

Taraana Indian Classical Dance

Born in the temples of Orissa, Odissi is a unique



Taraana Indian Classical Dance



Rhythms Dance Troupe

classical Indian dance best known for its excellent melange of Abhinaya (acting) and Nritya (dance). Poetry and music harmoniously embellish this graceful dance form.

Anwasha Goswami of Taraana, trained under different classical dance is an Indian classical dancer and choreographer who perform both Bharatnatyam and Odissi.

She presents Odissi classical dance on raag Basanta which is also the season of love, happiness and colours.

Rhythms Dance Troupe

Rhythms Dance Troupe presents 3 vibrant, energetic and fun-filled Holi dances inspiring the essence of love and harmony within the community.

The dances with elements of folk and a touch of Bollywood fusion depict the joy in Holi celebrations within various cultures of India. The performing artist include: Jana, Rai, Zara, Prisha, Radhika, Oishika, Poulomi, Ayantika, Riya, Reesha, Angela, Aishwariya, Pragya, Roshni, Priya, Rajshri, Zohan, Joy and Ajanta for Holi Hangama dance performance.

Gajanan Cultural Mission and Shivgarjana Drumming Performance

Maharshi Raval from Gajanan Cultural Mission and Shivgarjana, Sydney Based team of drummers and performers give a wonderful peace of drumming together.

The Playing of the dhols and tasha symbolises a call to arms for soldiers preparing for battle or the start or the end of an auspicious occasion.



Gajanan Cultural Mission and SHIVGARJANA



Nartan Institute of performing arts



Aziff Tribal Belly Dance



Expression

Alan Matthew, Rishi Pillai, Brendon and Siddharth.

Aziff Tribal Belly Dance

Aziff Tribal Belly Dance, now drumming and dancing present dance class. Dancers and drummers include: Angela Scibberas, Angela Brown, Karen Kelly, Mel Wekeem, Patricia Allender, Christine Allen, Ruza Ladyani, Sharrie Hannan, Sally Chariton and Sandy Burrow.

Expression

Expression, a Bollywood Dance academy that strives to share with all people the thrills of Bollywood dance performs regularly at the Holi festival, Diwali festival and many other events. Their performances are cutting-edge and entertaining as they fuse classical and modern Indian dance styles, with influences from hip hop, contemporary and jazz, pairing it with the latest hit Bollywood songs.

Jimit Parekh

Jimit Parekh present songs.

DJ EM

DJ EM is Australia's first Bollywood Female DJ who has played with the likes of India's top most DJ's like DJ Akeel, DJ NYK n DJ Suketu along with various Bollywood parties & events in Sydney.

Performers include:

Senior Expression: Sonali, Natasha, Nikita, Pri, Kavisha, Sachi, Sargam, Rimjhim, Ashna, Rhea

Junior Expression: Ayana, Aahana, Aarya, Aryana, Saisha, Serina

Holi Colours throwing Sessions

Holi Colours throwing Session commences at 12 pm and will run throughout the day.

Geetanjali School of Dance and Performing Arts

Geetanjali School of Dance and Performing Arts presents Classical Dance.

Nartan Institute of performing arts Bollywood Dance

Nartan Institute of performing arts boys Bollywood Dance. The performers include: Pranshav Shah,

Mango Dance

Performance by Mango Dance studio artists.

VIP Session

Holi Mahotsav Speeches by: Shanker Dhar, Director,



Bhangra Performance

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (Welcoming); Paul Andersen, Director, Strategic Place Management Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority; Felice Montrone, Deputy Chairperson of the Community Relations Commission; The Hon. John Robertson MP, Leader of the Opposition & Deputy Leader of the Opposition; The Hon. Arun Kumar Goel, Consul General of India, Sydney; The Hon. Amanda Fazio MLC, Opposition Whip, Kersi Meher – Homji, Prolifics Sport Writer and Peace Contributor; Dr Phil Lambert, General Manager, Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, Mrs. Alka Goel, Ana Tiwary, ABC TV.

Nupur Dance Academy

Nupur is a Sydney based dance academy specialising in Bollywood and Fusion Indian classical styles of dance. Nupure has created a platform for those who share the same passion for dance and bring them together while also instilling social awareness.

Rhythmic Squad

Rhythmic Squad presents dance performance.

Hip Hoppers

Hip Hoppers group presents dance performance.

SGGHS Bollywood

SGGHS Bollywood presents Bollywood fusion dance, a mix of modern and classical.

Team Ace Japanese Dance Group

Team Ace is comprised of Nao and team present dance performance.

Shysta Sodhi

Shysta Sodhi, 8 years old, has been into Indian classical and folk dance since the age of 5 and won prizes in national competitions. Shysta presents classical and folk dance performance.

Aleem Mohamed and his daughter Shireen present Songs Performance

Sydney Rhythm Master (Aleem Mohamed), a naturally talented Singer from Chennai has been performing in three different bands in India and for ten years as DJAleem in Ireland. Aleem is also a music producer and currently working on his original songs and will be releasing his brand new single this year. Shireen Aleem, born in Ireland is a gifted singer and she has been performing in Ireland since the age of four.

Dance ki Masti

Dance ki Masti presents a mix of folk and recent Bollywood songs (mostly contemporary). The performance tends to bring all sorts of dance styles and most importantly representing our culture.

Electric Korma Musical Band

Electric Korma Musical Band presents Bollywood classical songs. Electric Korma is a three piece band that plays live Hindustani film music. While these Aussie boys can't speak Hindi, they're taken by the dazzling wealth of Hindustani film music and have brought to it their own expertise in rock and roll music.

Bhangra Performance

Harpreet Singh and group present Bhangra folk dance. They have performed all over Sydney, in various events like The Indian Australian friendship fair, Dance competitions and wedding receptions. They have 7 years of experience of performance in the Bhangra folk dance field, with a performance at the Schools Spectacular 2007 at the Sydney Opera house.

Prabhu OSONIQS Rhythm

Prabhu OSONIQS The Rhythm presents music on Tabla and Hang. Musical nomad Prabhu OSONIQS journeys through both the entertainment music and the conscious music world. He is at home at a concert or corporate event playing music and at same time at the temple or meditation centre offering conscious music.

The 'O' in OSONIQS represents the emptiness (nothingness) like Shunya (zero), and also 'O' as a circle holds the complete dance of universal energies. And 'SONIQS' stands for Sound and energy vibration.

Stage Managers and Ceremonies



Ceremonies

Jignasha Bhatt, Sonia Gandhi, Monalisa Grover,
Soiam Raja, Sophil Raja

Stage Managers

Manju Chand Raja, Bhoji Watts.

Organisers and Staff

Jesi Flores Sasse, Shabana Begum, Parveen Dahiya,
Jignasha Bhatt, Saurabh Arora, Jessica Zheng,
Govinda Watts.

Official Photos

Greg Dickins of Photo Sydney

Official Videos

Francesco Chiari and Anurag Kaul of Bhavan Films

Volunteers

Bushra Qazi, Dheeraj Kishnani, Saloni Desai,
Karina Flores Sasse, Jonathan Peticara, Katerina
Hristovska, Tarun, Charisma Kaliyanda, Sharran,
Dhruv, Anousheh, Joshna, Dhiya, Masvin, Divya,
Nisha, Nabila



Jignasha Bhatt



Sonia Gandhi



Monalisa Grover



Soiam Raja



Sophil Raja



Manju Chand Raja



Bhoji Watts



Jesi Flores Sasse



Shabana Begum



Parveen Dahiya



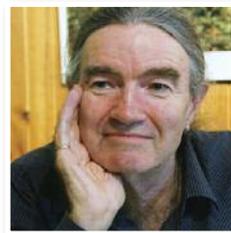
Saurabh Arora



Jessica Zheng



Govinda Watts



Greg Dickins



Francesco Chiari



Anurag Kaul



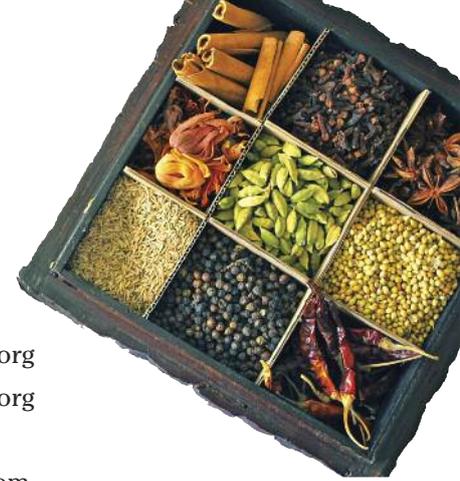
Divya Sriram



Kalpana Sriram



Sridhar Kumar



Stall Holders

| | |
|--|--|
| Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia | Email: pr@bhavanaustralia.org |
| Did You Know Exhibition | Email: pr@bhavanaustralia.org |
| Lord Jagannath Temple | Email: vara108@gmail.com |
| TEG Immigration | Email: yashpal.teg@gmail.com |
| All World Gayatari Pariwar | Email: u2jam@hotmail.com |
| Central Equity | Email: lindrayv@centralequity.com.au |
| Bank of Baroda Sydney (Bank of Baroda) | Email: ce.australia@bankofbaroda.com |
| India Tourism | Email: info@indiatourism.com.au |
| UAE Exchange Australia PTY LTD | Email: limoj.manuvel@uaeexchange.com |
| The Saree Collection | Email: pooja.bharti@hotmail.com |
| Zenat Art Henna Tattoos | Email: hennaartbyzeenat@hotmail.com |
| Indian Mystique | Email: shalu.gupta@indianmystique.com.au |
| Bungee Bankstown | Email: amusementrides1@gmail.com |
| Fortune Teller, Tarot Card & Palm Reader | Email: belindajohan1@yahoo.com.au |

Food Stall Holders

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Stay Cool Tropical Sno | Email: staycooltropicalsno@live.com.au |
| Taj Sweets & Restaurant | Email: ramesh@tajindianrestaurant.com.au |
| Fresh Sugarcane Juice | Email: info@tallgrasscanejuice.com |
| Sugar Cane Juice | Email: info@noahsnatural.com.au |
| Khaana Khazanna | Email: soumilshah@yahoo.com |



Incredible India



Planning & Infrastructure
Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

Message



Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority is honoured to host the 12th annual Holi Mahotsav – The Grand Festival of Friendship and Harmony – at Tumbalong Park and Chinese Garden Forecourt in Darling Harbour.

Darling Harbour has been home to this free and inclusive celebration of cultural harmony for 12 consecutive years and we are very proud to continue this tradition during the current period of redevelopment.

Sydney will soon be home to new world-class convention, exhibition and entertainment facilities that will ensure NSW remains a first choice destination for major business and entertainment events.

In the meantime, we are still very much open for business and excited to host the Holi Mahotsav again in 2014.

Catherine Gallagher
CEO
Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority



Planning & Infrastructure
Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

Community Relations Commission of NSW

Message from Vic Alhadeff



HOLI MAHOTSAV 2014

I am delighted to send greetings from the NSW Community Relations Commission to this celebration of the festival of Holi Mahotsav.

Holi is a great feature of the Sydney festival calendar, bringing colour, fun and cultural tradition from the Sub-Continent – which is why the CRC has been pleased to support this event for more than a decade.

Holi Mahotsav is recounted in sacred Hindu texts and the celebrations have been handed down from generation to generation. The high-spirited nature of this festival has created an opportunity for social barriers to be removed for a day of exuberant behaviour, the richly-coloured powders creating walking works of modern art in an atmosphere of carefree abandon.

While welcoming spring in the northern hemisphere, the festival also delivers an important lesson in equality, where no-one is safe from the enthusiasm of the colour-throwers.

I wish everyone a very Happy Holi and a healthy and prosperous year ahead.

Vic Alhadeff
Chair, Community Relations Commission of NSW



COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION
For a multicultural NSW

Lord Mayor of Sydney

CLOVER MOORE MP

Sydney Town Hall

GPO Box 1591
Sydney NSW 2001 Australia
Phone 02 9265 9229 Fax 02 9265 9328
Email cmoore@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au



Message from the Lord Mayor of Sydney

On behalf of the City of Sydney, I welcome the Indian community, who are celebrating the 12th Holi Mahotsav Festival in Sydney between 21 and 23 March 2014.

The City values the important role the Holi Mahotsav Festival plays in displaying Indian culture and achievement, and fostering a deeper understanding and harmony in people from different cultural backgrounds.

The festival is a wonderful way of bringing people together to celebrate India's incredible culture and achievements, through live music and dance performances, demonstrations, as well as through food and craft stalls.

I commend the Indian community for the important contribution you have made, and continue to make to life in Australia. I hope you have a wonderful time at the festival, and wish you every success for 2014 and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Clover Moore
Lord Mayor of Sydney



city of villages

OLM2014 000220-02 R OLM2014 000220 MESSAGE OF SUPPORT.



Premier of New South Wales
Minister for Western Sydney

HOLI MAHOTSAV 2014

I am pleased to send my very best wishes to everyone gathered in Darling Harbour to celebrate the 12th annual *Holi Mahotsav* festival.

Holi Mahotsav provides a joyful and celebratory atmosphere for people of all ages and backgrounds in New South Wales to engage with Indian cultural traditions. It also allows our interstate and international visitors to enjoy the best of multiculturalism in action.

Like the Holi celebrations in India, the festival unifies people of all cultures and faiths, encouraging us to shed our differences.

The NSW Government is a proud supporter of *Holi Mahotsav* and appreciates the role that the community plays in strengthening our friendship with India and fostering greater understanding and appreciation for our cultural diversity.

On behalf of the NSW Government, I thank Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia for its commitment to making this festival a success each year and for its contribution to community harmony in our State.

Barry O'Farrell MP
Premier





Michelle Rowland MP

Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism



HOLI MAHOTSAV

It is with great pleasure that I send my best wishes to everyone celebrating this year's Holi festival and to all those present at the Holi Mahotsav in Darling Harbour.

Holi is an exciting occasion for Hindus and the wider community right around the world. Originally a time of transition, as the winter cold was swept away by the warmth and colour of spring.

Today, it is a time to celebrate together; for enjoying each other's company and that beautiful Holi tradition of throwing coloured powder.

Here in Australia, it is a time for our Hindu community to reconnect with other followers in Australia and around the world. And through these rituals, Holi remains a very vibrant feature of our multicultural landscape.

On this special occasion I wish to pay tribute to Australian Hindus for all you have done to shape the strong nation we enjoy today.

Australia's story is driven by the individual narratives of its people, from all backgrounds and cultures. This diversity is of great value and reinforces our ties with the region and the world around us.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the outstanding contribution of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia in promoting multiculturalism in Australia and wish all my Hindu friends a very happy Holi.



सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान कोसल
CONSUL GENERAL

भारत का प्रधान कोसलावास
सिडनी

CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA
Level 27, 25 Bligh Street
Sydney, NSW 2000
Tel: (61-2) 9223 9239
Fax: (61-2) 9223 9246

E-Mail : indianc@indianconsulatesydney.org
Website: www.indianconsulatesydney.org

MESSAGE

I extend my greetings and warm wishes to all Indians in Australia on the joyous occasion of Holi. May the Festival of Colours affirm our positive spirit of brotherhood and bring peace, prosperity and happiness in our lives.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia would be celebrating the festival – the 12th version of their Holi Mahotsav, at the Darling Harbour from 21 – 23 March 2014. The event has become an integral part of the cultural calendar of Sydney.

On completion of my tenure here, I would be leaving Sydney in the first week of April. I take this opportunity to convey my sincere gratitude to all members of the Community for the cooperation and courtesies extended to me and my family. We will be leaving Sydney with very fond memories.




(Arun K. Goel)
March 2014

Please note our new address from 21.10.2012 : Level 03, 109 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000



12th Annual Holi Mahotsav Bhavan Australia

Showcasing and bringing together a diverse mixture of cultures is something that Bhavan Australia's Holi Mahotsav festival has done fantastically well for the past 12 years.

Affectionately known as the Festival of Colours, the Holi Mahotsav is also a celebration of friendship and harmony,

The Holi Mahotsav brings together dancers, musicians and performers to give Sydney a genuine snapshot into one of the richest cultures in the world. With the smell of traditional food and the sights and sounds of traditional performances, the Holi Mahotsav is undoubtedly one of the star attractions of the Sydney multicultural calendar.

To Bhavan Australia, I extend my warmest congratulations to you and your team for another successful Holi Mahotsav festival. I convey my appreciation for the hard work and dedication that you and your team put in year in and year out to ensure that Holi Mahotsav is a continued success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Robertson".

John Robertson MP
NSW Leader of the Opposition



Leader of the Opposition
Room 1011, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone: 02 9230 2310 Facsimile: 02 9230 3355
Leader.opposition@parliament.nsw.gov.au



Victor Dominello MP

Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



12th Holi Mahotsav Bhavan Australia 21-23 March 2014

Message from the Minister for Citizenship and Communities

I am delighted to send my best wishes and congratulations to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia for organising the 12th annual Holi Mahotsav – *The Grand Festival of Friendship and Harmony* held at Darling Harbour.

The Festival focuses on promoting peace and unity within the Australian-Indian community and coincides with Harmony Day (21 March), a national celebration of our cultural diversity.

Over the past decade the Festival has grown in popularity – marked by its emphasis on activities which entertain, provide cultural enrichment and are inclusive of all.

Holi Mahotsav is visually renowned for its traditional dress, dance, craft, vegetarian food offerings, yoga and meditation workshops. Another highlight is the practice of young people throwing brightly coloured powder (Gulal) at one another, which is a symbol of peace among Indian people.

New South Wales is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world and we are very fortunate to have a vibrant and active Indian-Australian community.

Today nearly 100,000 Indian born residents call New South Wales home, with an additional 130,000 coming from Indian ancestry.

This Festival, which runs over three days, is a strong reminder of the links that have developed between Australia and India through migration, commerce, entertainment and sport.

It embraces the broader NSW community, offering us an opportunity to strengthen our understanding of Indian culture and participate in traditional activities.

The enthusiasm of the Indian-Australian community, with its strong sense of civic duty and service, has built a solid foundation for our harmonious multicultural society in New South Wales.

Bhavan Australia's work across different communities is a clear demonstration of these important attributes.

On behalf of the NSW Government, I again thank them and all the festival's sponsors for supporting this important event. I wish everyone attending this year's Holi Mahotsav my very best wishes.

Hon Victor Dominello MP
Minister for Citizenship and Communities



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Hon. Amanda Ruth FAZIO, MLC

**Member of the Legislative Council
Opposition Whip in the Legislative Council
Member of the Australian Labor Party**



Message for the Holi Mahotsav Festival 2014

Congratulations to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia for organising the 12th Annual Holi Mahotsav Grand Festival of Friendship and Harmony.

It is wonderful to see how the Festival has grown since it was first held in 2003. The three day festival that we now enjoy is a great showcase for cultural harmony and a great credit to those who organise this event.

The contribution made by the Indian community in Australia is commendable and the Holi Mahotsav Festival provides a wonderful opportunity for all Indian Australians and the wider community to enjoy the throwing of colours, friendship and harmony.

Hon Amanda Fazio MLC

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
House, Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
P (02) 9230 3593, F (02) 9230 3591
E amanda.fazio@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Speech by Hon Julie Owens in Parliament Parramatta Electorate: Rath Yatra Festival

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia and ISKCON decided to take Annual Rath Yatra to Parramatta Park. Inaugural was on 22 February, 2014.

I often say about my electorate of Parramatta that we have the world in us. When Australia opened its doors at the end of the White Australia policy back in the seventies the world came in. I live in a community where the character, philosophy and history of some of the great nations are now woven into the fabric of our society. I love them all, but today I particularly want to talk about the nation of the subcontinent, and some of the wonders that are now in my community because of the presence of quite an extraordinary community. We have already seen, because of this great arrival of people around the world, wonderful new festivals—the festivals of Holi and Diwali. We have seen Carnatic music and dance, which is incredibly strong in my community. We have seen wonderful new restaurants that celebrate the cuisines of different regions of India and the Punjab, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In Parramatta we can eat the foods of the different regions of India.

On Saturday, a new festival arrived. We saw the first celebration of Rath Yatra in Parramatta Park. Rath Yatra is one of the great Hindu festivals of the world. It is known as the chariot festival. It celebrates an event that started in Puri in India and now takes place in many locations around India. The festival is about taking the deity, Lord Jagannath, and his two siblings on a chariot out to meet the people. It is about bringing the religion of Hinduism out to the people. It is known to us as the Rath Yatra, a chariot festival.

The festival was an extraordinary event. The deities were loaded on the chariot near Parramatta pool. The chariot was pulled with ropes by members of the community about 400 metres through Parramatta Park and then turned around and brought back. It was an incredibly colourful event—an event of great meaning to the people who participated.

A thing to know about this festival which might be quite interesting for Western people is that the word 'juggernaut' came from this festival. The Jagannath chariot, as it is called, is pulled through the streets and once it starts it is very difficult to stop so the

word 'juggernaut' that we use on a daily basis comes from this quite ancient festival Rath Yatra.

I congratulate the organisers—ISKCON and also Gambhir Watts of Bhavan Australia, for what was an extraordinary event and a great addition to the ceremonial life of Parramatta.

***-Hon Julie Owens, MP,
Labor Member for
Parramatta in the
Australian Parliament has
been a member of the
Australian House of
Representatives since
October 2004. Born 17
October 1958 in
Rockhampton,
Queensland, she was
educated at the Queensland
Conservatorium of Music and at the University of
Sydney. Before winning the seat of Parramatta
she was a small-business owner and head of the
Association of Australian Independent Record
Labels (AIR). She is chair of the House of
Representatives Standing Committee on
Economics, Chair of the House Committee on
Procedure, and a member of the Standing
Committee on Publications.***



Ramayana in a Nutshell

Brahma's Visit to Valmiki

Delighted with Narada's narration, Valmiki along with his disciples, offered him obeisance with great respect and humility. After Narada's departure to the celestial regions, Valmiki went to the river Tamasa near Ganga for his noon-bath. He was followed by his disciple Bharadwaja. Feeling happy at the sight of the clear water flowing in the river, Valmiki turned to his disciple and said, "Bharadwaja, look at the water of this river, which is transparent like the hearts of good people. I desire to take bath in this pure water. Dear boy, please place on the bank my water jug and clothes."

The sage, who had mastered his senses and emotions, then took a walk for a while in the extensive forest on the bank. In the course of the walk he saw two krouncha birds in supreme happiness of sexual bliss. Just then a cruel fowler struck the male bird with a deadly arrow. It fell on the dust below with its feathers soaked in blood. At the sudden death of its golden-crested mate, the female bird shrieked in great anguish and despair which deeply stirred the kind heart of the saint. This gruesome and sinful deed of the savage hunter in killing the male bird while engaged in love-play, made the sage very

sad and angry and he cursed the hunter thus:

"O, cruel hunter, May you not have peace of mind for endless years for the sinful deed of killing one of the pair of the krouncha birds infatuated with passion."

After pronouncing the curse, the sage began to ponder over the words he had uttered and he said to himself, "these words of mine, born out of deep pity and sorrow—soka—have formed into a beautiful metre—sloka. From soka, sloka is born. It is sheer poetry." He then exclaimed to his disciple Bharadwaja by his side:-

*"With equal lines of even feet
with rhythm and time and tone complete
the measured form of words I spoke
in shocked grief be termed a slake"*

His disciple got by heart this melodious sloka and took delight in repeating it in a melodious murmur.

Having finished his mid-day ablutions with due ceremony in the river Tamasa, Valmiki returned to his grove brooding over the incident of the hunter and the birds. His disciple followed him in a submissive and respectful manner carrying the



Lord Narada



Chandra Moon God, Lord Narada and Agni Fire God

pitcher filled with water.

In the hermitage just when he had finished his austerities, Brahma the most effulgent, the creator of the earth and the sky, the four-faced God, suddenly appeared. Greatly surprised at his sudden and auspicious visit the sage Valmiki rose in haste, prostrated himself at the feet of the celestial visitor and stood before him with folded palms in reverence. He honoured the world-creator by washing his feet, offered him sacred water according to the scriptural ordinance and placed him on an elevated seat. After comfortably seating himself the most exalted Brahma who was covered all over by his own effulgence, directed Valmiki to take his seat.

Even though the sage sat before the great one in all reverence, he was deeply and sorrowingly absorbed in the thought of the loving krouncha birds in the forest, the sinful act of the hunter and the mournful fate of the poor bird lamenting over her slaughtered mate. Brahma looked at the thoughtful face of the sage who was muttering to himself the couplet cursing the fowler, and said with a smile playing on his face, "O, sage Valmiki, today unconsciously, you have made a beautiful couplet, a fine sloka—by uttering a curse on the fowler. Do not get agitated at the curse you have uttered. The tuneful lines which burst out of your bosom spontaneously were directed by me and by my divine consort Sri Saraswathi, the goddess of learning. You are destined to be the poet of Sri Rama's glory. You have to put in immortal verse the life of Sri Rama. You have to complete this divine task of relating in verse the whole story of Rama as narrated to you by the celestial bard Narada."

"All the acts, words and thoughts, open and hidden in the minds of Sri Rama, Lakshmana and Sita as well as of the rakshasas will be crystal clear to you. Everyone of your words in this great work will be truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth. The fine Sanskrit metre in which you will render the life of Sri Rama will be sweet and melodious to the ear. Your great work, the epic of Rama—Ramayana—will live as long as rivers flow and mountains stand in the world, and as long as Ramayana is current you will dwell in the World of my Creation." Uttering these words of benediction, Brahma



Ramayana

disappeared and returned to his celestial abode. Valmiki and his disciples were surprised at the sudden disappearance of the divine form. Enthused and encouraged by the words of Brahma, Valmiki and his disciples chanted the sloka again and again. The words that burst forth in shocking grief became a charming sloka. It was a fine metre with four equal parts, each part made of equal syllables—sweet, musical and soul-ravishing.

As directed by Brahma, Sri Valmiki wrote the glorious life of Sri Rama in the form of a great epic full of fine, rich poetry, lilting music and deep meaning. "Listen, O Men of the world, listen to the great song of Valmiki full of meaning and music, about the exploits of Sri Rama, the greatest of Raghus, and listen to the destruction of the ten-headed Ravana, the terror of the three-worlds."

(To be continued...)

-Prof. N.S. Mani learnt Sanskrit, at the feet of his revered father, a great scholar, well versed in our ancient lore. Of all the ancient texts, Valmiki Ramayana fascinated him and he translated Ramayana and Sundara Kanda into English. Bala Kanda, the first book of Srimad Ramayana,



describes in detail the birth of Sri Rama, his boyhood, his superlative prowess, his benevolence to all, his training under the great sage Viswamitra, his magnificent feat of breaking the mighty bow of Lord Siva at Janaka's Court, his marriage with Sita and Parasurama's challenge and Sri Rama's victory. The book also describes vividly sage Viswamitra's incredible adventure and dedicated endeavour to rise to the spiritual status of Vasishtha thus demonstrating by his example to what celestial heights human soul can rise.

Source: Sri Valmiki Ramayana Bala Kanda (Childhood Episode) by Prof. N.S. Mani, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay (Mumbai), India



Mahatma Gandhi in Africa



It was the Imperial government which finally acted and made General Smuts release the prisoners. In the meanwhile, Gokhale had sent two Englishmen who were men of great honour to try and resolve the crisis. They were Charles Freer Andrews and W.W. Pearson, both men of integrity and dedication. An all White commission was formed by General Smuts but Gandhi did not trust them and decided to start the resistance again.

At this moment, fate intervened. The White workers of the South African railway went on strike. General Smuts declared martial law. Gandhi, the man of peace decided to stop the civil resistance, for this was Gandhi's way. He would never attack a weak adversary. He saw that General Smuts was in difficulty and went to his help. This gesture of goodwill astonished and touched everyone. General Smuts asked for a meeting. The result was the abolition of tax, marriages according to Indian law were made valid and many of the grievances removed.

Gandhi had won by peaceful means, without violence and hatred; a battle had been fought without terrible killing or bloodshed. Gandhi recalled the Magna Carta of liberty in this land. It had taken eight years of struggle and much suffering. Passive resistance had triumphed against brutality and bloodshed!

It was after ten eventful years in South Africa that Gandhi returned home to India. There were not many in India who knew of his achievements in South Africa, but Gokhale who was his political guru, gave him a warm welcome and Rabindranath Tagore, a home in Santiniketan. Again, it was an Englishman, who had been responsible for the friendship between the poet and the Satyagrahi. It

M.K. Gandhi

was the poet who first called Gandhi "The Mahatma."

Sadly, Gokhale died on February 19, 1915 when Gandhi left for Pune. He had promised his guru that he would travel extensively and study his country's men and women.

Observing the hypocrisy of many of the pilgrims in Haridwar, the waste of food, the dirt and greed, he decided to take only five articles of food a day, never more than absolutely essential for the body's health.

For a year he travelled and then decided to settle down to form a permanent settlement as he had done in South Africa. He chose Ahmedabad, and founded his ashram on the banks of the river Sabarmati. Those who joined the ashram took vows to adhere to truth, to be celibate and non-violent and non-possessive in every sphere of life.

Ahmedabad, the centre of the textile industry was a wealthy city. Many of the industrialists promised help and gave generously till they heard that an "untouchable family" had been admitted in the ashram. All donations stopped abruptly, except for one. Ambalal Sarabhai of Calico Mills donated anonymously a sum large enough to save the ashram.

-To be continued...

Mrinalini Sarabhai, an internationally recognized dancer and choreographer is a director as well as an author of scholarly books, novels and children's books. She was Chairperson of the Gujarat State Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation Ltd and is one of the trustees of the Sarvodaya International Trust, an organization dedicated to promoting the Gandhian ideals of Truth, Non Violence, Peace, Universal Brotherhood and Humanitarian Service. She is closely associated with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for the past more than three decades. The Bhavan has published her book 'Sacred Dance of India', 'The Mahatma and the Poetess', a selection of letters exchanged between Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu edited by Mrinalini Sarabhai.



Source: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi by Mrinalini Sarabhai, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, India



Untold Stories of King Bhoja

Madanarekha Vindicated

At this, the Brahmarakshas laughed boisterously, Said he: "Oh, my dear chaste sister, what makes you hurry all alone at this dead hour of the night? Who are you? What is your name? Who is your husband? And where are you going now? Tell me truly."

Hearing the Brahmarakshas speak thus, Madanarekha relaxed and told him truthfully all about her and the true reason for her present haste.

The Brahmarakshas replied: "I am really surprised that all the people in this drama of yours should be living in a fool's paradise. Where is that poor Brahmin boy and where are your status and beauty? Your promise to him is really wonderful. But what beats me is the permission given by your husband to fulfil your promise! Are there people in this world who are so naive as that? That is all by the way. I need not concern myself with them. The stark fact is you are in my hands now. I am very hungry. I want to eat you up now and satisfy my hunger here and now."



"O, Great man! Is there a-greater dharma than the satisfying of another's hunger? If you wait for a few hours, I will certainly return to you and you can then gobble me up," said Madanarekha.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" chuckled the Brahmarakshas. "You seem to be really very clever. Do you think you can pull the wool over my eyes by your sweet words and meaty stories? I am not such a fool, and I am not going to leave you even if all the Devas and all the Asuras come to your help. I will kill them all and cut you up into pieces and eat your flesh."

On this, the doe-eyed Madanarekhai replied: "I entirely agree with you that you are a valorous man. Did I say 'No'? But what strikes me most about you, is your sense of right and wrong. Learned people like you will have no difficulty in supporting my case. Having promised to go to a man, would it be proper for me to go back on my promise? When I fail to keep my promise, won't I become untruthful? And won't the flesh of that untruthful woman reek of foul smell? I do not want to contaminate a sacred man like you. Please, therefore, permit me to fulfil my obligation to the Brahmin boy first. I promise to keep my word and return to you, cleansed of heart and mind, when you can eat my flesh. Do not argue further on this issue and give me passage."

Said the Brahmarakshas: "True, the following three categories are really great among men: those who keep their words; those who repay their debts in time; and those who are not affected by prosperity or adversity. Even Devas will praise their conduct.

-To be continued...

V.A.K. Ayer

Source: *Untold Stories of King Bhoja, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan*

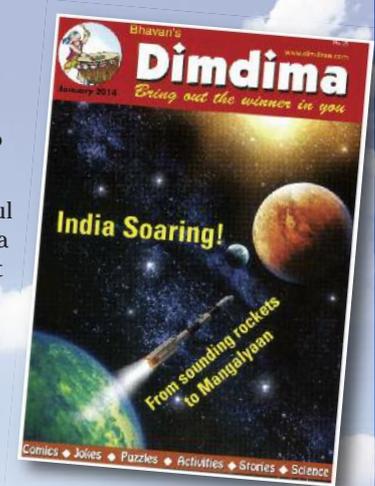
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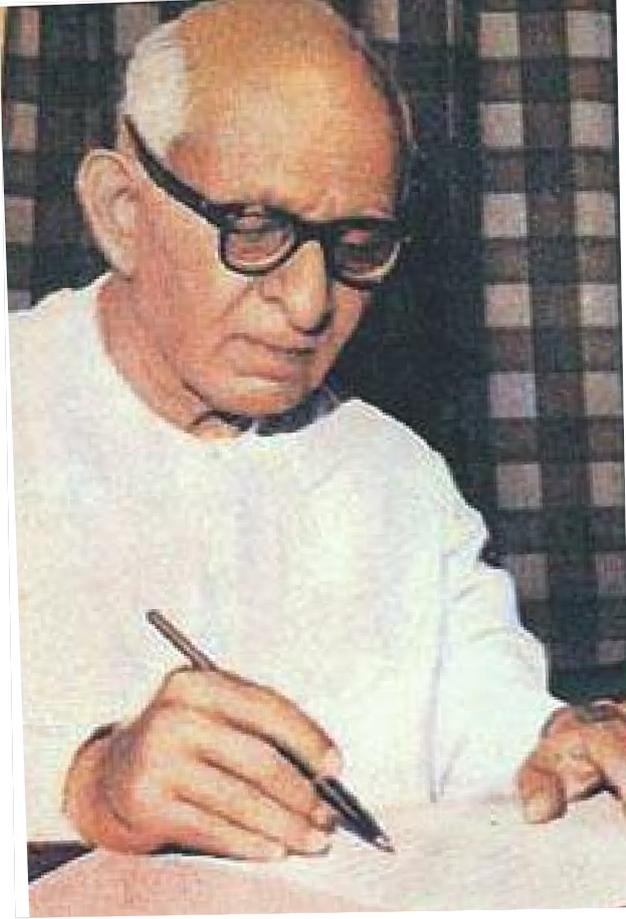
Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 'Dimdima' is one of the most renowned magazines for children in India. Dimdima is a Sanskrit word which means 'drumbeat'. In the days of King Ashoka road shows named 'Dimdima' were held to disseminate news of the king's victory.

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Kulapativani

Indian Art

In India, Art found its home in the temple which was not only the physical core, but the soul of the community. It was not a monastery of the ascetic, nor the fortress of the priest claiming semi-divine powers, but the home of Dharma. The shapes and forms of its sculpture and the colour on its walls only recorded the heart-beats and the spiritual aspirations of vigorous racial life.

This meaning and significance of the temple has persisted from age to age, though its materials have changed from bamboo to wood, from wood to rock, from rock to stone, brick and marble.

Dr K.M. Munshi
Founder, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

The Test of Bhavan's Right to Exist

The test of Bhavan's right to exist is whether those who work for it in different spheres and in different places and those who study in its many institutions can develop a sense of mission as would enable them to translate the fundamental values, even in a small measure, into their individual life.

Creative vitality of a culture consists in this: whether the 'best' among those who belong to it, however small their number, find self-fulfilment by living up to the fundamental values of our ageless culture.

It must be realized that the history of the world is a story of men who had faith in themselves and in their mission. When an age does not produce men of such faith, its culture is on its way to extinction. The real strength of the Bhavan, therefore, would lie not so much in the number of its buildings or institutions it conducts, nor in the volume of its assets and budgets, nor even in its growing publication, culture and educational activities. It would lie in the character, humility, selflessness and dedicated work of its devoted workers, honorary and stipendiary. They alone can release the regenerative influences, bringing into play the invisible pressure which alone can transform human nature.





*From Bhavan's Journal February 2, 1964
Reprinted in Bhavan's Journal February 15, 2013*

Humanising Humanity: First Steps

The time has come to recognise that good intentions are not enough. We must part with those who advocate sentimental Socialist follies. We must expose the politicians who call the Welfare State democracy. We should make it crystal clear that there is no one panacea for the problems of society. We should admit that fanatic Communists, Fanatic Fascists and Fanatic Religionists—who would transform the world by hate and revolution—have only misery and frustration to offer mankind.

This is a call to thoughtful and concerned people everywhere in the world. Let us take over the intellectual and moral leadership of mankind from those who have demonstrated incompetence, lack of vision, greed and brutality.

-Ralph Borsodi

Man must be Humanised

Patriotism, like asceticism is a jealous mistress. It demands undivided attention on the part of its votary. If total renunciation is the hallmark of sannyasa, exclusive dedication to the country's cause is the hallmark of patriotism.

The coward and the cad have no place in the scheme of either, even though they abound in both. The logical end of true sannyasa is to make one a god-head while the logical end of true patriotism to make one a national idol.

The story of the rise of Kamaraj from the coconut mandy (shop) and cloth shop of Virudupatti to the Congress gaddi at Bhubaneswar via Fort St. George is a saga of the triumph of a flaming spirit over limitations of environment. There is an interesting story about how he got the name Kamaraj. His father Kumaraswamy, a coconut wholesaler, was the adopted child of his grandfather. Their family deity being Kamakshi, the elders gave that name to the first-born out of gratitude. But mother Sivakami wanted to call him 'Raja'. As a compromise she made it 'Kama-Raja', little realising that no woman

would succeed in attracting him despite the name! Kamaraj was a bachelor, a teetotaller, a 'political sannyasi' as Finance Minister T.T. Krishnamachari once described him.

-K. Kamaraj

Our Book Shelf

Gandhiji's Discovery of Religion,
by N.A. Niram, Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

The volume under review is a diligent and earnest attempt at a philosophical study and exposition of Mahatma Gandhi's writings by one of our veteran professors of Philosophy. The book is the text of the three lectures delivered by the author before the All-India P.E.N. Organisation, Bombay and The Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore.

The author points out, with the support of ample citations from Gandhiji's writings, that Gandhiji's conception of religion is "an inward awakening, and is a awakened living.' He answers the critics of Hinduism, who hold that Indian ethic is world-negating and unethical. The desire to do good to all and feel the sarvaatmabhaava is not possible without the experience of the fundamental oneness of reality. Gandhiji's life and philosophy are summarised best in the words of G.V. Mehta: "He tried to proclaim the verities of religion by living them—not by precept but by practice—such ancient but vital verities as truthfulness, compassion, social justice, tolerance and, above all, love." This neat little book is a valuable philosophical introduction to the study of Gandhiji's thought.

-Dr. P Nagaraja Rao

◀ ◀ ◀ *Flashback*



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