

**25 YEARS JOURNEY OF
HINDU HERITAGE SOCIETY INC,
AUSTRALIA**



SILVER JUBILEE MILESTONE JOURNEY

Published on 08th of July 2023

**25 YEARS JOURNEY OF
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AUSTRALIA**

SILVER JUBILEE MILESTONE JOURNEY

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PREFACE

Dear Readers, “I am delighted to celebrate silver jubilee milestone journey of HHS Australia through this book. A person totally wrapped in herself/himself makes a small package. That is why it is said that any one can live individually but can survive collectively.

“HHS is touching and changing lives of so many through community service in Australia. This book intends to infuse our life with deeper meaning and reach out to others with enlightened inner voice.

History of India-Australia Relations

Australia–India relations also referred to as Australian-Indian relations are the foreign relations and both shared this as “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership” between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Republic of India. Before independence, Australia and India were both part of the British Empire. Both are members of the Commonwealth of Nations. They also share political, economic, security, lingual and sporting ties. As a result of British colonisation, cricket has emerged as a strong cultural connection between the two nations, as well as the English language. Military cooperation between Australia and India includes the regular joint naval exercise **AUSINDEX**.

Prior to 1788

Prior to colonisation of Australia, there is evidence of ancient migration of Indians to Australia around 4,000 to 5,000 years ago based on **DNA** and language development

in native Indians and Indigenous Australians according to a recent study.

Post 1788

The ties between Australia and India started immediately following European settlement of Australia in 1788. On the founding of the penal colony of New South Wales, all trade to and from the colony was controlled by the British East India Company, although this was widely flouted. An early ship built in India from Calcutta, the newly renamed Sydney Cove was marooned, with its cargo of rum, off Tasmania, and the crew (including 12 Indian lascars) made a journey in 1796 CE, initially rowing a long boat, and then a long trek from Tasmania to Sydney, with only one Indian and two British sailors surviving. The Western Australian town of Australind (est. 1841) is a portmanteau word named after Australia and India. Mangalore city is present in both India and Australia (Mangalore, Karnataka, Mangalore, Victoria, Mangalore, Tasmania and Mangalore, Queensland). Australian towns of Cervantes, Northampton and Madura (est. 1876) were used for breeding cavalry horses for the British Indian Army during the late 19th century. The horses were used in the North-West Frontier Province (now Pakistan). In the early colonies, Indians were brought to Australia as labourers and domestic workers, with migration being curtailed after federation. Gradual migration during the later years of the White Australia policy saw workers moving to Australia especially during periods of labour shortage, such as the Sikhs in Woolgoolga. By 1940s. They laid the foundation of the first Sikh community at Woolgoola and first Sikh Temple Gurudwara after 1965. Dr Rashmere Bhatt, born in Woogoola, has researched the history of migration in book “A Punjabi Sikh Community in Australia: From India Sojourners to Australian Citizens” to understand why Sikh community settled down in Woolgoola.

After Indian Independence

After World War II, the Australian government of Ben Chifley supported the independence of India from the British Empire to act as a frontier against communism. Later, under Robert Menzies, Australia supported the admission of India as a Republic to the Commonwealth Nations. In 1950, Menzies became the first Australian Prime Minister to visit India, where he met with the Governor-General Chakravarti Rajagopalachari and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. As part of the Colombo Plan, many Indian students were sponsored to come and study in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. Easing of restrictions in the late 1960s saw an increase in non-European Indians migrating to Australia especially professionals. In 2011–12, Indians were the largest source of permanent migration to Australia. Australia is also the second most popular destination for Indian university students, with nearly 60,000 Indians on student visa in Australia in 2017. After independence, Australia has maintained relations with both India and Pakistan, with some concern from India over defence sales over the border such as 50 Mirage fighter jets and parts in 2007.

Australia's Quad partnership with India, Japan and the United States is a key pillar in Australia's foreign policy. The Quad is a diplomatic network of four countries committed to supporting an open, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was welcomed by around 20,000 cheering fans at a Sydney Stadium on 23rd May 2023 during his second visit to Australia. Modi shared the stage with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. Modi told that he wants to take India's relationship with Australia to the next level including closer defence and security ties to help ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Inclusive and multi-cultural Society of Australia

Australia offers an unsurpassed international exposure with the world's highest proportion of immigrants in a developed country. The multi-cultural society of Australia includes Indians, Chinese, Italians, Greeks and Arabs. There is lingual diversity on account of presence of above ethnicities in Australia.

The Indian Diaspora in Australia

Diaspora is the currency of multiple references of contemporary times. India has the largest diaspora population, according to the United Nations Report 'International Migration 2020 Highlights ' released in January, 2021. The Indian diaspora accounts for only 3.1% of Australia's population but is the nation's fastest growing ethnic minority. As per 2021 Census report, 783,958 declared Indian ancestry (3.1% of the Australian population).

Australia has emerged as popular study destination for Indian students. Roughly 120,000 Indian students are in Australia. There were 42,672 students during 2021-2022. There were 66,449 students during 2018-2019.

Hinduism in Australia

Hinduism is the third largest religion in Australia. The first Hindu temple in Australia, the Sri Mandir Temple, was built in 1977. Today there are more than forty five major temples in Australia. Daniel Mookhey became the first Member of Parliament to be sworn into the office by swearing oath on the Bhagvad Gita. Book launch, Yoga, Ayurveda, Devotional Musical Programmes, Lectures on Ramayan & Mahabharat by enlightened seers and celebration of festivals have become hallmark of activities of Hinduism in Australia.

Birth of the Hindu Heritage Society

Migration has been a way of life for many Indian families.

Some have settled in far-off lands, while others have returned home to India after years of living abroad. The Indian

Diaspora has made its mark all over the world, and the story of the Hindu community that settled in Fiji and then migrated to Sydney, Australia, is a remarkable one. When the Hindu community arrived in Sydney, they were part of a growing Indian diaspora that had settled in the city. Despite being far from their homeland, they were determined to maintain their Indian identity and cultural heritage. One organisation that played a vital role in helping the Hindu community in Sydney maintain their cultural identity was the Hindu Heritage Society. The organisation was founded in 1998 under the guidance of Pandit Narayan Bhatt and Pundit Jagdish Maharaj, two renowned Hindu scholars and practitioners. The pioneering effort of the founders of the Hindu Heritage Society, their foresight and creative instinct led to the foundation of this society.

The Hindu Heritage Society provided a range of services to the Hindu community of Sydney, including priest services and the conducting of sacred Hindu ceremonies. This was particularly important for the community, which wanted to maintain their connection to their Indian roots and celebrate their cultural heritage. Through the Hindu Heritage Society, the community was able to find priests who could perform traditional Hindu ceremonies for their family events like weddings, housewarming ceremonies, and other important occasions. They were able to celebrate their cultural traditions with their extended family and friends, even though they were far from home. For the Hindu community, the Hindu Heritage Society was a lifeline. It helped them maintain their cultural identity and provided them with a sense of community in a new and unfamiliar place. Through their involvement with the organisation, they were able to connect with other Indian families in Sydney and forge deep and meaningful relationships. The

Hindu Heritage Society also organized cultural events, festivals, and celebrations that brought together the Indian community in Sydney in a spirit of unity and camaraderie. These events were an opportunity for the community to come together, share their experiences, and celebrate their shared heritage. As the Indian diaspora in Sydney continued to grow and thrive, the Hindu Heritage Society played an important role in helping the community maintain their cultural identity and celebrate their heritage. Through their efforts, the organisation became a cornerstone of the Indian community in Sydney, forging a deep and lasting connection between the Indian diaspora and their adopted home.

This year on 8th July 2023 the organisation completes its 25years of continous service to Hindu Indian Diaspora living in Australia. On this occasion the Hindu Heritage Society decided to bring a book on their last 25years Journey in Australia.

Who is this book for?

This book is a guide for Indian Diaspora living in Australia especially Hindu Community. All Hindu community people who have migrated long back in Australia either directly or through multiple migration and wish to retain their century old value system by following Hindu tradition and culture can feel them truly at home by connecting institutions like us. By associating themselves with our Hindu Heritage Society not only they will feel connected to their roots, but they can also transfer their future generation century old Sanatan culture and value system. This book intends to represents a true picture of old Hindu traditions and culture that can be kept alive and kicking through Institutions like Hindu Heritage Society.

Special Features of This book

This book not only presents the last 25 years journey

of Hindu Heritage Society, views of the office bearers of this organisation, past and present office bearer details, but it also includes messages from honorable dignitaries from Australia and as well as several articles on Hinduism from different personalities who have deep understanding about Hinduism and its different aspects. This book also represent a true journey of Hindu Heritage Society in Australia and give an idea as how they have been successful in continuously transferring and inculcating Hindu Values System to youths and coming generation by celebrating festivals like Saraswati Pooja, Holi and Guru Purnima throughout the years in Australia.

Chapter Highlights

This book includes 6 Chapters. In **Chapter 1**, we introduce the messages received by several honorable dignitaries from Australia towards the great work being done by Hindu Heritage Society in Australia so far and their warm wishes for future roadmapping. In **Chapter 2**, the Journey of Hindu Heritage Society during last 25 years in Australia has been showcased. **Chapter 3** provides messages from the office bearer of Hindu Heritage Society. **Chapter 4** mentioned about activities of Hindu Heritage Society in Sydney, Australia. **Chapter 5** covers articles on Hinduism from several renowned personalities having deep understanding of Sanatan and Hinduism. **Chapter 6** brief profiles of all our awardees on occasion of Silver Jubilee celebration on 8 July 2023 in Sydney Australia who have immensely contributed in their respective fields have been mentioned. At last we have given details of all our sponsors and contributors for Silver Jubilee celebration, Past Office bearer of Hindu Heritage Society, Certificate of Appreciation list, and Hindu Heritage Society Publication list since beginning, Photo Gallery, and Annual Membership Form for Hindu Heritage Society.

I hope this book is widely read among Indian Diaspora in Australia as well as different parts of the world.

Hindu Heritage Society acknowledges that we are on aboriginal land and recognise the strength, resilience, and capacity of aboriginal people on this land. We would like to acknowledge all of the traditional owners of the land and pay respect to aboriginal elders' past, present, and emerging.

Lastly I am grateful to Anmol Maharaj and Sangeeta Maharaj, Sydney, Hindu Heritage Society Inc (HHS), for their stupendous contributions and sustained endeavour for compilation of this book material relating to HHS. Dr Mrinal Kant Pandey, Dr Shailendra Mani Tripathi and Dr Amit Kumar Mishra have discussed the entire format of the book and its further improvement. The entire idea of this Silver Jubilee Book on HSS, Australia was conceived jointly by Dr. Mrinal Kant Pandey and Yugesh Chand, HHS due to inspiration of my departed grand mother Shyama Pandey, who passed away on 12th April, 2023.

I also express my gratitude to collaborators like Mukesh Saini, Secretary General, Diaspora Foundation, Delhi, Dr C.K.Bhardwaj, Head, Gyanam Suvigyanam and Rakesh Kumar Singh, Journalist, President, Bharati Shramjivi Patrakar Sangh, President (Delhi), and Dr Virendra Mishra, journalist and documentary maker for their valued advice. Lastly it's my duty to thank Pandit Narayan Bhatt, Founder Trustee, HHS, Pandit Jagdish Maharaj, Founder Trustee, HHS, all office bearers and members of Hindu Heritage Society (HHS) in Sydney for their articles, messages and contributions.

Dr. Ashish Pandey

Chief Editor,
PhD Scholar,
Southern Queensland University,
Australia

23rd June, 2023

MESSAGES

THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AUSTRALIA

On behalf of the Coalition, I congratulate the Hindu Heritage Society on your 25th anniversary. This significant milestone is testimony to the dedication and hard work of so many, for a quarter century.

My best wishes to your society too as it celebrate *Guru Purnima* in July. The festival – observed on the full moon day in the month of Aashaadha in the Hindu Calendar– is an occasion when Hindus, Jains and Buddhists pay respect to their academic and spiritual Gurus.

Swami Vivekananda, the great Hindu philosopher and spiritual leader, said “The Guru is the means of Realisation. ‘There is no knowledge without a teacher’”. May your teachers and mentors be warmed as you thank them for their guidance and wisdom on the occasion of *Guru Purnima*.

I also take this opportunity to commend the Hindu Heritage Society for your tireless efforts to promote Hindu heritage, arts and culture; and to thank the more than 684,000 Australians of Hindu faith for your contributions to our nation in many fields of Endeavor.

May the blessings of the divine be with you all as you continue your important work.

Hon Peter Dutton MP Leader of the
Opposition April 2023





**THE HON ANDREW GILES MP
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION,
CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURAL
AFFAIRS**

**MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR
IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND
MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS**

**HINDU HERITAGE SOCIETY 25 YEAR SILVER
JUBILEE CELEBRATION AND GURU PURNIMA**

I extend my congratulations to the Hindu Heritage Society on your organisation's 25th Silver Jubilee celebration, and wish you a joyous Guru Purnima.

Over the past quarter-century, the society has enriched our community by sharing Hindu cultural values through a variety of community activities, festivals, and events that promote Hindu art and culture.

According to the 2021 Census, 684,000 people living in Australia identify as Hindu, hailing from all around the world. The rich history, culture, and traditions of Hinduism have become integral to our shared Australian narrative and enrich the diverse history of Australia.

Diversity is our nation's greatest strength. Australia's success as a multicultural nation is built upon efforts like yours to celebrate the richness of our cultural diversity, and to ensure that bonds of community are forged across various cultures.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy Guru Purnima, a day dedicated to celebrating and expressing gratitude to gurus, teachers, and mentors for the spiritual wisdom, guidance, and teachings they provide in shaping people's lives.

Thank you for your contributions to the Australian community. I wish your organisation continued success for the decades to come.



The Hon Andrew Giles MP

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

May 2023



Hugh McDermott MP

STATE MEMBER FOR PROSPECT

Hindu Heritage Society

25th Anniversary Celebration & Guru Purnima Festival

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Hindu Heritage Society on their 25th Year Silver Jubilee Anniversary as well as acknowledging the celebration of Guru Purnima.

I commend The Hindu Heritage Society for their continuous dedication to bringing our Western Sydney community together so they may experience the wonderful Hindu culture, traditions, and profound beliefs.

I would also like to acknowledge the Spiritual leaders and teachers, who are celebrated and honoured during the festival of Guru Purnima.

As a Member of the Parliament of New South Wales, I am privileged to represent the State Electorate of Prospect, where many Hindu families have chosen to live, work, raise a family and create a community.

I am proud to support The Hindu Heritage Society, and to have the opportunity to collaborate with the Hindu community on cultural, social, and political matters.

Congratulations and have a wonderful Guru Purnima!

Yours sincerely,

Hugh McDermott MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General
State Member for Prospect



Ref: LORDMAYOR/2023/00496

Cr Donna Davis
Lord Mayor

To the President and Members of the Hindu Heritage Society.

I congratulate the Hindu Heritage Society on the significant achievement of its 25th Silver Jubilee anniversary.

The City of Parramatta is proud of our ongoing connections with the Hindu Heritage Society and the broader Hindu community. Thank you for your tireless efforts in providing religious services as well as language, dance and music classes to the people of the City of Parramatta.

I acknowledge this is also the time of Guru Purnima, a spiritual festival held to honour teachers who have shared their wisdom.

May you continue to provide truth and inspiration in our community through religious and cultural activities in the years to come.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Donna Davis".

Cr Donna Davis
Lord Mayor
City of Parramatta Council



The Hon Michelle Rowland MP

Minister for Communications
Federal Member for Greenway

Hindu Heritage Society 2023

To the Hindu Heritage Society,

It is my great pleasure to wish you a meaningful observation of Guru Purnima, 2023.

At this auspicious time, we are reminded of the immense value that our 'gurus' bring to our lives and ultimately, celebrate the guru-shishya relationship.

In a literal sense, 'gurus' may mean our teachers, professors or mentors. Or it can include our family members; our mothers, fathers or grandparents. These are the teachers who bring us into the world and provide crucial, formative life advice.

Indeed, these gurus may even be our children. My two daughters are often providing me with new ways to see the world.

Beyond this, we are also urged to recognise those in our lives who, perhaps indirectly, provide guidance to us – spiritual or practical - and act as role models.

On a personal level, I know that without both my parents, role models and mentors in my life, I would not be able to achieve what I have. These gurus in our lives should not be underestimated. They can allow us to be better people, reach new heights in personal development, and be better people.

These gurus in our lives should not be underestimated. They can allow us to be better people, reach new heights in personal development, and be better people.

May we all take this day as one to express gratitude for the gurus in our lives.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Rowland MP

JOURNEY OF HINDU HERITAGE SOCIETY (HHS) INC, AUSTRALIA

About Hindu Heritage Society Inc.– This is our Story

Indian Diaspora in Australia

Migration has been a way of life for many Indian families. Some have settled in far-off lands, while others have returned home to India after years of living abroad. The Indian diaspora has made its mark all over the world, and the story of the Hindu community that settled in Fiji and then migrated to Sydney, Australia, is a remarkable one.

When the Hindu community arrived in Sydney, they were part of a growing Indian diaspora that had settled in the city. Despite being far from their homeland, they were determined to maintain their Indian identity and cultural heritage.

One organisation that played a vital role in helping the Hindu community in Sydney maintain their cultural identity was the Hindu Heritage Society.

The organisation was founded in 1998 under the guidance of Pandit Narayan Bhatt and Pundit Jagdish Maharaj, two renowned Hindu scholars and practitioners.

The Hindu Heritage Society provided a range of services to the Hindu community of Sydney, including priest services and the conducting of sacred Hindu ceremonies. This was particularly important for the community, which wanted to maintain their connection to their Indian roots

and celebrate their cultural heritage.

Through the Hindu Heritage Society, the community was able to find priests who could perform traditional Hindu ceremonies for their family events like weddings, housewarming ceremonies, and other important occasions. They were able to celebrate their cultural traditions with their extended family and friends, even though they were far from home.

For the Hindu community, the Hindu Heritage Society was a lifeline. It helped them maintain their cultural identity and provided them with a sense of community in a new and unfamiliar place. Through their involvement with the organisation, they were able to connect with other Indian families in Sydney and forge deep and meaningful relationships.

The Hindu Heritage Society also organized cultural events, festivals, and celebrations that brought together the Indian community in Sydney in a spirit of unity and camaraderie. These events were an opportunity for the community to come together, share their experiences, and celebrate their shared heritage.

As the Indian diaspora in Sydney continued to grow and thrive, the Hindu Heritage Society played an important role in helping the community maintain their cultural identity and celebrate their heritage. Through their efforts, the organisation became a cornerstone of the Indian community in Sydney, forging a deep and lasting connection between the Indian diaspora and their adopted home

25 YEARS INSPIRING JOURNEY OF HHS

The purpose and establishment of HHS,

The Hindu population in Australia was gradually increasing in the 1990s. Temples were being built and Hinduism was gaining momentum among Australians.

The Hindu population was coming from many different countries, however primarily from India, Nepal and Fiji.

Pt Narayan Bhatt (Shastri ji) along with Pt Jagdish Maharaj and others established the Hindu Heritage Society (HHS) to address the cultural needs of the growing Hindu population in Australia during the 1990s. Despite the emergence of temples and the increasing popularity of Hinduism among Australians, the community lacked capable Priests and religious leaders, resulting in few activities.

The HHS began as the Indo-Australia Arts Education Centre (Kalaa Mandir Inc.) to promote activity-based practice and uplift cultural awareness. In 1998, the HHS showcased Hindu cultural values through various events, including the highly acclaimed "Sarva Dharma Sammelan" seminar, integrated with the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, India, where sacred Ganga river water was arranged for blessings.

The management committee and community representatives realized that the name "Kalaa Mandir" limited the organization's potential for wider community involvement. In 2002, the HHS was re-named the Hindu Heritage Society Inc. with broader aims and objectives.

We shifted our focus to accommodate more activities.

To reflect our aims, we commenced with organising three

major events every year.

- Saraswati Pooja for youth in January/February.
- Guru Purnima is our “Sanskriti Diwas” in July ,and
- Devi Jagran in September / October every year.

Later we have included two more annual functions: Holi festival and in 2022 Gita Jayanti.

These are the major festivals Hindu Heritage Society has been celebrating for the past 25 years in Australia.

We have conducted Shri Ram Leela, Shri Krishna Leela as well as Music and Dance classes. From 2021 we have been running weekly Gita Classes for members and non members of the Society.

The Society is not limited to Sydney, as we have also travelled to other locations, such as Victoria, Queensland, Canberra, Adelaide and even Northern Territory to help the organisations.

The Hindu Heritage Society has taken part in our share of community service through public events, by participating in major activities with other organisations, such as Hindu Council of Australia and other organisations to grow our culture and religion.

The Hindu Heritage Society has a dedicated team of Purohits and they are busy providing their religious services for the community regularly.

The Hindu Heritage Society has published numerous books, audio CDs, Videos, Magazine and conducted Radio programs to promote our rich heritage. The Society is growing and has been well received by the community.

FOUNDERS OF HHS

PANDIT NARAYAN BHATT & SHRIMATI RADHIKA BHATT



Pt Narayan
Bhatt, (Shastri) Registered
Marriage Celebrant, (Civil &
Religious)
Trustee: Hindu Heritage
Society Inc.
Vice President: Australian Council
of Hindu Clergy Inc.
Member: Brahman Purohit
MahaSabha Inc.
Phone: +61 (0)2 9600 7815
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E-mail: punditji108@gmail.com

Higher education from Haridwar Uttarakhand India. He has always followed in the footsteps of his father.

Pt Narayan Bhatt obtained his Shastri degrees from the Sampurnanand University of Varanasi in 1986. He has also obtained a Master's degree (MA) in Sanskrit from the Gurukul University of Haridwar Uttarakhand.

He has studied Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayan, Gita, Chanda Shasras, Kavya Shasrtas and other related Sanskrit literature. He narrates beautiful katha of Ramayan, Bhagwatam and Devi Bhagwatam. Shri Narayan ji has always had a passion for music and in 1989 he was awarded a Diploma in vocal music and Tabla from Prayag Sangeet Samiti Prayag Raj Uttar Pradesh India.

Shri Bhatt ji has also completed practical Training of Karmakanda of various sanskars and Anusthans conducted by the ministry of Human Resources in India. He is a Marriage Celebrant and conducts all kinds of Satwik Anusthans. (Purva Prayag)

He has been trained in a priest-hood since his teens. Pdt Narayan Bhatt has served the Hindu community of Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra since his arrival in Australia. He speaks fluent Hindi, English, Nepali, Gujarati and Sanskrit languages.

Pundit Narayan Bhatt is a well-respected figure in the Hindu community of Sydney, Australia, and his contributions to promoting Hinduism and its values have been commendable. In addition to founding and serving as the President of the Hindu Heritage Society Inc. (HHS), Pundit Bhatt has many associations with other well-known Hindu institutions of Sydney, such as the Hindu Council of Australia (HCA).

SHRIMATI RADHIKA BHATT



Radhika Joshi was born in Basod, a small village in the district of Pithoragadh in the state of Uttarakhand, India. She was raised in a close-knit family with a strong army background, where she learned the values of discipline, hardwork, and empathy from an early age. These values have stayed with her throughout her life and are evident in her relationships with her family, friends, and the wider community.

Radhika's dedication to education has always been a key part of her life, and she continued her studies after settling in Sydney with her husband, Pandit Narayan Bhatt, in 1997. Her commitment to learning has helped her become an active member of the community, and together with her husband, Radhika became involved in various community projects, including the Hindu Heritage Society's annual functions and publications, which promote education, arts, and Hindu religious heritage.

Radhika's army background has also inspired her to serve her community as a social worker. She is known for her kindness and dedication, and is often seen at cultural events

organized by various organizations. She has supported her involvement with organizations such as the Hindu Heritage Society, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and Hindu Council of Australia, volunteering her time to teach Hindu scripture to primary school children and promoting events to the general public. She is a regular volunteer at Sydney Sanskrit School and attends social functions organized by the Uttarakhand Association.

In addition to her community involvement, Radhika is a loving mother and empathetic friend who is well-liked by many. She has always been supportive of her family, and her children are a testament to her love and guidance. In her free time, Radhika enjoys attending social and religious functions such as Bhagwat katha, Ramayan Katha, Sundarkand path, and spending time with her friends. Her warm and caring personality makes her a joy to be around.

Radhika Bhatt is a remarkable woman whose journey in life has been nothing short of inspiring. She is married to Pandit Narayan Bhatt, and she has been an integral part of her husband's work in the Hindu community. Her work has inspired many other women to act and make a positive impact in their own communities. Radhika's life is a reminder that with hard work, dedication, and the values, we can overcome any obstacle and achieve great things.



**You are what your deep,
driving desire is. As your
desire is, so is your will.
As your will is, so is your
deed. As your deed is, so
is your destiny**

— Brihadaranyaka Upanisha

PANDIT JAGDISH MAHARAJ & SHRIMATI PREMLATA MAHA RAJ



Pt. Jagdish P. Maharaj Justice of the Peace

- Authorised NSW Marriage Celebrant,
- Trustee, Hindu Heritage Society,
- V.P.- Sanatan Dharma Brahman Purohit Maha Sabha, Sydney, Australia.
- Mobile: 0412 931 965. Phone: 02 9896 5156.

Pandit Jagdish Maharaj is the son of the late Shri Parmeshwar Dutt Maharaj and the late Srimati Jasoda Maharaj. He is the grandson of Pundit Gajadhar Maharaj, who came to Fiji under the Indenture system in 1914 from Ayodhya in India.

Prior to finally arriving in Fiji, Gajadharji had also travelled to Rangoon, Burma and Natal and South Africa. Pandit Jagdish was born in Nasinu, a suburb of the capital city Suva in Fiji. Punditji moved to and has resided in Sydney, Australia from 1992.

Punditji is a well-respected public speaker; he is also the co-founder of the Hindu Heritage Society Inc. Punditji is

the co-author of numerous pooja texts and is the editor of Divya Darshan, a quarterly magazine published by The Hindu Heritage Society.

Currently he is a Trustee of the Hindu Heritage Society Inc., of which he is a founding member. He is also the Vice Patron of the Sanatan Dharma Brahman Purohit Maha Sabha of Australia. On various occasions Panditji has represented HHS in Hindu council meetings and other organisations.

Punditji has served the Hindu community of Sydney with distinction, dedication and devotion since his arrival here with his family and continues to offer his services to the community with pride. He has a good command and deep understanding of Shastras.

He is committed to preaching and promoting the Sanatan Dharam and conducts all forms of pooja and yagna.

He performed his very first Satyanarayan Katha and Hanuman Roth Poojan at the age of 14 years. He is a keen scholar of Hindi and Sanskrit and is well versed in the Ramayana, Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and other Hindu Religious texts

Pandit Jagdish Maharaj, a highly esteemed figure, has been acknowledged for his remarkable contributions to the Hindu community. Through his dedicated efforts, he has played a significant role in promoting and uplifting the Hindu faith, both within Australia and beyond.

Punditji has received awards from the Hindu council of Australia and BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha and other various organisations.

Punditji has represented Hindu Heritage Society on numerous occasions.

Pandit Jagdish Maharaj Ji's ancestors are from Ayodhya, Gaon - Halkara ke Purva, Jila - Faizabad.

The Diaspora Foundation of New Delhi has released a book about the Migration Journey of Pandit Jagdish Ji and this is available to all.



SHRIMATI PREMLATA MAHARAJ



Prem is a Sanskrit word for “love.” More specifically, it refers to pure, unconditional love that leads to total devotion and surrender. Of the various paths of yoga, Bhakti yoga is most associated with *prem*, as the highest form of devotion (*bhakti*) is *prem*.

Prem Maharaj Ki Ek Jhalak

Hinduism has several words that translate as love, but each describes a different type of love. Kama, for example, is pleasurable love, but *prem* (also called *prema*) is an elevated form of love in which the devotee loves without selfishness and with no expectations of something in return for that *prem* love.

Mrs Prem Maharaj is a very active member of the Hindu Heritage Society and has been there since its inception. She has seen the society and its members (and their children) grow in the last 25 years. She has been instrumental in its inception and its growth including the Society’s many milestones in Australia. Mrs Maharaj is very involved in the current 25th anniversary celebrations of the Hindu Heritage Society.

Hindu Heritage Society ka Hardik Pranam hai Mrs Maharaj ki samarpan (dedication) aur Sewa (service) ko.

Mrs Prem Maharaj was born in Fiji. The granddaughter of 2 prominent businessmen, she grew up with a very business savvy mind. Mrs Maharaj migrated to Australia with her husband and family in 1992.

As her great grandparents had initially arrived from India, this makes Mrs Maharaj a 4th Generation Fiji born Indian. She has held on to her Indian and Hindu heritage staunchly. Her command of the Hindi language, her knowledge of Hindu Religion and Scriptures are immaculate.

Both Panditji and Mrs Maharaj are devout Hindus and well known in the Indian and Hindu circles of Sydney. As a child, Mrs Maharaj had an active interest in Indian heritage and culture. As a High School Student, she was one of the Indian Cultural Dancers at the Fiji Independence Day celebrations in 1970 in the presence of HRH Prince Charles, (now King Charles III).

Later she was also selected to represent Fiji at the “World Expo 88” held in Townsville, Queensland Australia. This was indeed an honour to represent the Fiji Indian Community on the World stage.



Mrs. Prem Maharaj on tour playing sitar with her Indian cultural troupe.



MEMBERS of the group back from their successful trip to Expo '88 and the South Pacific Arts Festival in Townsville, Australia, pictured here at the Ministry of Indian Affairs office. Sitting (from left) are Mr Bhuwan Dutt, Permanent Secretary for Indian Affairs, the Minister for Indian Affairs, Mrs Irene Jai Narayan, and the acting Chief Assistant Secretary, Mr Samuj Lal. Standing from left are Mr Kuar Singh, Mr Subhash Muneshwar, Mrs Kokila Surti, Mrs Poom Lata Maharaj, Mrs Shobhna Chanel, Miss Kamleshni Ram, Miss Carol Khelawan, Miss Shama Poonam Prasad, Mrs Malti R. Naidu, and Mrs Karuna Gautam.

Indian dancers lauded in Aust

Indian cultural dancers who have returned from their performances at the fifth South Pacific Arts Festival in Townsville and at the Expo '88 in Brisbane made a big impact, says the Minister for Indian Affairs, Mrs Irene Jai Narayan, speaking at a tea party organised at the Ministry of Indian Affairs office in Suva yesterday.

"If the reports I have received from various sources are anything to go by, I would say this group of artists have

done an excellent job," she said.

She congratulated the musicians who went with the dancers to the festival.

Four of the dancers from the group went to the Expo '88 for a show. Their performance had the crowd on their feet calling out for more, according to the leader of the dancers, Ms Shobhna Chanel.

Mr Kuar Singh, the leader of the group to Townsville, said that the two weeks they spent at

the festival were memorable.

"We really felt that our performances were appreciated by the people because they kept meeting us after our show at the Civic Theatre in Townsville to commend us," he said.

The artists, who are students of the Indian Cultural Centre in Suva, were co-sponsored by the Ministry of Indian Affairs and the Expo '88 committee.

The ministry selected the artists.

An article in the *Townsville Bulletin* described the Indian performers as being "remarkably unique".

The festival, held from August 14-27, featured 110 representatives from Fiji, out of whom 10 were Indians.

The Indian group performed 26 items.

The four dancers who later took part in the World Expo Fiji Day celebrations were Shobhna Chanel, Kamleshni Ram, Shama Prasad, and Carol Khelawan.

During her time in Fiji, Mrs Maharaj had sent both her daughters to learn the "kalaa" of Bharatanatyam Dancing from the wife of the then Indian High Commissioner to Fiji, Mrs Lekha Shrinivasan. Both Sangeeta and Swaran had followed their mother's footsteps and performed many times on stage in Fiji and were also featured as Indian classical dances in the annual calendar issued by Fintel Fiji Ltd in 1992.

Mrs Maharaj, was also a keen volunteer for the Poor Relief Society in Fiji for many years. The Society helped provide food and other items to poor families in Fiji. Mrs Maharaj was an active fund raiser for the Charity and helped organise many functions for fund raising activities on behalf of the Charity. This is a trait she has utilised in successfully organising many functions for the HHS in Sydney during

their 25 years of existence.

Mrs Maharaj has brought up her children and grandchildren with strict Hindu values. Recently, He organised the Janeo Sanskaar for their grandchildren Saurav and Siddharth Maharaj.

Most recently the Maharaj Family had a week-long Shrimad Bhagwat Saptah Parayan at their premises in August 2022. To date in Australia, she is supporting her husband, Pandit Jagdish Maharaj in his journey as a Hindu Priest in Sydney.

Her children Sangeeta, Swaran, Aanant and Anmol are volunteers with the Hindu Heritage Society and Aanant is the Secretary of the Hindu Heritage Society at the current moment, taking over from his Father.



Mrs Prem Maharaj with her entire family, 4 children their respective spouses and 9 grandchildre

HG Harisharan Maharaj



Born in 1977, at a remote part of Uttarakhand and border of western Nepal, Harish Bhatt had a deep interest in Sanatan Dharma lifestyle. By nature, he used to get immense pleasure in helping others in need, was obedient but at the same time had curiosity about nature and the creation. People knew this child would be a famous yogi in the future as he also had a deep

interest in Meditation and Yoga.

After completing his primary education, he studied Sanskrit language and scriptures including Srimad Bhagwatam and Geeta under guidance of his elder brother Pandit Narayan Bhatt (Shastri) and gained a deep understanding of Vedik Bangmay, the Scriptures and Sanatan Dharma in general.

He spent some time in Vrindavan to gain some more spiritual upliftment.

He has an educational background as below.

- Bachelor in Arts (B.A.) from Jodhpur National University, Jodhpur.
- Intermediate Grade in Drawing from Chitrachaman College of Art, Dehradun
- Diploma in Computer Software from Mumbai
- Primary education in Haridwar.

He was invited to Sydney Australia by Indo-Australia Art Educational Centre (Kalaa Mandir) in 1999. After spending about a year teaching art at Indo-Australia Educational Centre, Mr Bhatt along with the management committee decided to change the name of this Centre as “Hindu Heritage Society Inc”

He worked tirelessly to introduce Sanatan Sanskriti in Australia and was affiliated with many organisations such as Brahman Purohit Maha Sabha, Australian Hindi Indian Association (AHIA)

He was principal organiser of many events and taught Yoga and Drawing and Painting to many people. He has organised many seminars and exhibitions to promote Hindu Heritage in Australia.

After returning from Australia, HG Harisharan Maharaj entered into family life, but continued to contribute for the benefit and unity of his motherland Nepal.

Pt Harish Bhatt received “Vaishana Diksha ‘ ’ from HDG Mohansharan Devacharya Maharaj of Nepal and his name was changed to HG Harisharan Maharaj.

On instructions from his Guru, HG Harisharan Maharaj established a charity organization “Lok Kalyankari Sewa Trust” in Nepal with the aim of transforming the local and global society into a harmonious and peaceful society by eradicating the unsocial elements such as addiction and crime and by offering our care not only for the humans, also for the animals (specifically vulnerable cows, who are regarded as sacred in Sanatan Dharma).

He worked hard to provide shelter to the cows who were left abandoned on the streets and is still working with the general public, various organisations and the governmental bodies to establish a holistic “Cow Shelter”. The honesty and discipline are still engraved in his heart and due to this very nature, he has gained widespread support among general public as well as from Pandits, Saints and Scholars to promote the Sanatan Dharma globally and hence the Hindu Mahasangh has nominated him for the post of “Vishwa Hindu Prabhari”.

Hindu Heritage Society Australia extends its well wishes for his mission and brighter future



Trainer and Practitioner of:
Spiritual Hypnotherapy Clinical
Hypnotherapy Bowen Therapy
Senior Associate Member of
ASCH Senior Executive Member of
IICT Mobile: 0415483459
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SHRIMATI VIMLA RAO

Shishya of Swami SatyaNand Saraswati – Shree Ram Sharnam

Vimla Rao is a very friendly and enthusiastic spiritual therapist and instructor, practicing various modalities in order to give a vibrant life-style to all those who seek help.

Vimla was born and brought up in Fiji but, in 1985, chose to make Australia her home. She had been employed at various universities as a physics technical officer until 2003 when her thirst for working in the healthcare industry led her to the role of Home Care worker during which time she built an amazing rapport with her elderly, sick and disabled clients. Her passion led her to the Bowen Therapy world when, in 2005, she completed her Diploma of Bowen Therapy and started on her new journey of helping clients through their various physical and emotional ailments. She pursued this career further and, by 2010, became an international instructor of Bowen Therapy, teaching in Australia, Fiji, India and Pakistan.

While on the path of healing, Vimla realized that there was a subtle aspect beyond the physical and the emotional. Her search led her to Dr Yogesh Choudhary, the founder and Director of the Indian Institute of Hypnotherapy, where she mastered Clinical as well as Spiritual Hypnotherapy. Under Dr Yogesh Choudhary's Guidance, Vimla learned

about talking to the organs and systems of the Body as well as treating clients with issues due to the presence of spirit in their vicinity.

Along with her spiritual knowledge that she has been blessed by a Guru and gained through her study of scriptures, she now runs a very successful clinic and is able to bring all her knowledge gained over the years into her work as an instructor for AusHealth College of Vibrant Therapies.

Vimla's message to mankind is:

“Help yourself live a vibrant life to keep yourself and all those who seek help, happy with total fulfillment, contentment and inner peace”.





***S**haping our lives, a collective endeavor,
Opening doors to connections that will never sever,
Cultivating communities, bonds that intertwine,
Inspiring unity, embracing diversity, so fine,
Envisioning progress, a shared vision we hold,
Transforming lives, with stories yet untold,
Yearning for justice, a compassionate plea.*

Where there is joy, there is creation.
Where there is no joy, there is no
creation. Know the nature of joy.

— Maitri Upanishads

TRUSTEES OF HINDU HERITAGE SOCIETY:

Pt Narayan Bhatt, (Shastri)
Is a Registered Marriage
Celebrant, (Civil & Religious),
is a founder member of Hindu
Heritage Society Inc. and he is
serving the community as
Trustee of the society.



Pt. Jagdish P. Maharaj

Pt. Maharaj is a Justice of the Peace Authorised NSW Marriage
Celebrant, V.P.- Sanatan Dharma Brahman
Purohit Maha Sabha, Sydney, Australia.
He is a founder member of Hindu Heritage Society Inc. and he is
serving the community as Trustee of the society.

TRUSTEES OF HINDU HERITAGE SOCIETY:



Mrs Malti Maharaj is married to Pt Shailenda Maharaj and is a proud mother of sons Kavish and Akshay , mother in law to Saras and Vikantha and grandmother to Aryan. The eldest daughter of late Mr & Mrs Janmai Jai Prasad, Malti is the third generation of her paternal line, born outside India. Malti has been member of Hindu Heritage Society since 2006. Malti is currently one of the three Trustees of the Hindu Heritage Society.

Malti was born in Fiji and studied in New Zealand, Fiji and Australia. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Accounting and Finance and is a Certified Practicing Accountant (CPA). Malti has been a CPA for over 30 years. Malti has worked as an Accountant for large corporations and the Australian Government. For the twelve years prior to her retirement Malti held teaching positions at both Macquarie University and the Western Sydney University. Malti is passionate about promoting Hindu Tradition & Culture and has immense interest passing on the Hindu philosophy to the younger generations in Australia.

She strongly believes that the role played by Hindu Heritage Society will help promote the growth of Hindu cultural traditions in Australia. Malti strongly believes in the principal of giving back to one's society and puts this into practice as every opportunity.

Malti volunteers her time to the HHS, the New South Wales Cancer Council and Arthritis NSW. In February 2023, Malti's contribution to Arthritis NSW was acknowledged by Her Excellency the Honorable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales at a ceremony at Government House in Sydney.

Malti is grateful to Pundit Narayan Bhatt for his ongoing guidance and support. She would like to acknowledge and thank him and the HHS's Hindu Priests for their tireless efforts in the promotion of Hindu traditions & values in New South Wales and Australia.

HHS life member and Patron

SHRIMAN PADAM LALA AND FAMILY



Padam Raj Lala is the Managing Director and founder of Lotus Garments Ltd. Mr. Lala has served as the Chairman of R. B. Patel Group of Companies (Fiji), Merchant Finance, Hume Industries, Standard Concrete Industries and Land Transport Authority, He was the Deputy Mayor of Suva City Council and Deputy Chairman of the Fiji Development Bank. Mr. Lala served as a Board member of the Fiji Trade & Investment Board and was the Chairman of the Textile Clothing and Footwear Council of Fiji . He was the President of Fiji Manufacturers Association. And Chairman of Fiji TV and the President of the Rotary Club of Suva.

Mr. Lala has vast experience in textile manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade. He has been a successful real estate investor and developer. He has been involved various activities with the business community in Fiji and is recognised for his political, cultural, educational and community involvement. Mr and Mrs Lala are practicing Hindus and from its inception have been regular sponsors of the Hindu Heritage Society. Mr and Mrs Padam Lala together with their family had sponsored the 108 Kund Havan Yagna hosted by the Hindu Heritage Society in 2008. On

this occasion they donated 50 sets of Hawan Kunds. The Hindu Heritage Society, regularly use these hawan kunds in their Prayer functions and Havan Yagnas. Their son, Rajeshwar Lala is also a devout Hindu and over the past 25 years has been a major financial donor of the Hindu Heritage Society.

Mr Padam Lala comes from the extremely well-known family in Fiji. He was born in Nausori Fiji in 1942 and is married to Mrs Gaitri Devi Lala. They are the proud parents of 3 sons who are all married and well settled in their lives.

Padam Lala joined the family business in 1960's and developed Lala's Store into a major and well-known men's boutique shop. In the late 1970's, he established a garment manufacturing plant – Lotus Garments Limited, which is still in operation today and employing approximately 300 people and is regarded as the quality manufacturer of mens and ladies clothing and corporate uniforms. In the late 1990's, Mr. Padam Lala established SUN Insurance Company Limited which is successfully operating and rendering General Insurance to the public of Fiji.

Mr. Lala has been a prominent as a real estate developer in Suva and has developed a number of residential and commercial properties.

The Lala Family has been instrumental in educational, cultural and religious activities in Fiji and has been instrumental in the establishment of Krishna Vedic School in Kuku Nausori, Arya Boys School and DAV College for Boys and Girls.

Mr. Lala has served as Chairman of various Statutory Bodies in Fiji and as a Deputy Mayor of City of Suva, and President of Charitable Organizations like Apex Club and Rotary Club of Suva.

Those who donate enthusiastically make constant efforts to increase their income so that they never find problems in making charity

— Rig Veda

MESSAGES FROM OFFICE BEARERS:

Mr Sachindra Shandil, President (2023),

HinduHeritage Society



Mr Sachin Shandil is a son of Pt Sukhendra Shandil and Mrs Padma Shandil, was born in Suva, Fiji and has lived in Sydney Australia since migrating with his parents and elder sister in the year 2000.

Sachin is the 4th generation of Late Pt Muni Prasad Shandil and Late Mrs Basuda Shandil. Sachin's grandfather and paternal uncles (dada's) were very well recognised and prominent purohits of Fiji especially served their community in Labasa and wider Fiji.

Sachin completed his High School Education at Dudley High School. He has a Bachelor of Information System from University of Western Sydney and Diploma in Business Management. His studies has enabled him to work with few high IT tech organisations here in Sydney and has built a successful career.

Sachin is married to Namrata who also has served HHS with dedication. Their kids Vivaan and Viraat are now becoming engaged with younger generation of the HHS family. As Sachin had exposure since his childhood to attend Bal Vikas, Sachin saw value in sending his kids to Bal Vikas in Sydney which teaches human values, shlokas and religion.

Hindu Heritages Society's light came in the year 2000 whilst

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accompanying Pt Narayan Bhatt Ji in a Tabla during an event. Since then slowly becoming aware of HHS events and was given an opportunity to perform duties (sewa) towards the society.

Hindu Heritage Society has played an important role in awareness and sensitization of the legacy of Art, Culture, History, and Heritage of Indian Civilization among all the age groups of Indian community.

Hindu Heritage Society is creating a spirit of oneness among different segments of Indian community tracing their roots from various states of India. It's a matter of pride and celebration for me that I have been given an important role as president of this society during this milestone year 2023 when HHS is going to celebrate silver jubilee years.

We must accelerate the momentum of togetherness and inclusiveness of Indian community through important festivals like Sarswati Pooja, Holi, Guru Purnima, and Durga puja throughout the year. Since, the inherent nature of the society of Australia is multi-racial and polaristic with high sense of respect for all the major religions of the world. The Hindu Heritage Society also believes in inter faith harmony and alignment with other peace living communities in Australia in fostering the spiritual values of peace loving and sustainable society. One of the focus area of Hindu Heritage Society will be to strengthen the youth segment of the Indian community and involve them actively in various segments of community work and celebrations. The youths are the future pillars of the future and their cultural and spiritual orientation about our traditional values, ethos, and family system will give a lasting future roadmap. During the important year 2023, Hindu Heritage Society, Australia will plan a cultural visit of a big delegation of Indian community of Australia to Ayodhya, Mathura, Vrindavan, Banaras, Tirupati, and Rameshwaram to have a real exposure of Indian culture and meeting with similar organisations in India for fostering a unity of purpose.

Mr. Aanant Maharaj, Secretary (2023),

HinduHeritage Society



I am Aanant Maharaj, currently serving as the Secretary of the Hindu Heritage Society (HHS). My journey with HHS began as a volunteer when it was first established, and over the years, I have taken on various roles within the organization. In 2019, I became the treasurer, and in 2023, I was entrusted with the position of Secretary.

My connection to Hinduism and our cultural heritage runs deep. As the eldest son of co-founder Pdt. Jagdish Maharaj and Mrs. Prem Maharaj, I was introduced to the basics of Hinduism through Bal Vikas classes in Suva, Fiji. These Sunday classes, conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Kamath, played a vital role in teaching local children about our rich culture and religion. Our family roots can be traced back to Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, in India, and my ancestors made their way to Fiji through the Girmitee Indenture system under the British government. My great grandfather, Gajadhar Maharaj, worked in Natal, South Africa, and Rangoon, Burma before settling in Fiji, brought there by CSR Sugar, his employer. My grandfather, Parmeshwar Dutt Maharaj, and my father, Pdt. Jagdish Maharaj, were both born in Fiji. I myself was born in Suva in September 1979, and later

moved to Sydney, Australia in 1994, where I continued to embrace and practice my religious and cultural heritage through regular visits to temples and participation in pujas. In 2008, my wife Kaveeta and I had a traditional Hindu wedding ceremony in Fiji, and we have continued to maintain our connection to our faith by regularly attending temples and participating in various pujas. Celebrating major festivals like Diwali with our extended family has always been a significant part of our lives.

In 2021, we had the honor of celebrating the Janeo Sanskar/Yagnopavit ceremony for our son Saurav and my nephew Sidharth. This two-day program, led by Pdt. Narayan Bhatt as the Janeo guru, held great significance for us as it marked a continuation of a family tradition. My younger brother Anmol and I had completed our own Janeo Sanskar in Fiji in 1991 when I was around 11 years old and Anmol was approximately 7 years old. Witnessing our sons undergoing the same ceremony with all the religious rituals filled us with immense pride. In 2022, our parents organized a Bhagwat Katha at our residence, spanning over the eight days of Krishna Janmashtami. This auspicious event brought together individuals from Sydney, Melbourne, Fiji, and the United States. The presence and positive feedback from our neighbors, who were amazed by the magnitude of the event held in an Australian suburb, added to the joy and success of the Bhagwat Katha. As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Hindu Heritage Society, I feel a deep sense of pride and joy in being part of this momentous occasion. It is an honor to contribute to the ongoing success of HHS and to continue promoting and preserving our Hindu heritage for future generations.

Mr. Kavish Maharaj, Treasurer (2023),

Hindu Heritage Society



Mr Kavish Maharaj is a son of Pt Shailendra and Mrs Malti Maharaj. He is the current Treasurer and past Secretary of the Hindu Heritage Society. Kavish was born in Suva, Fiji and has lived in NSW, Australia since migrating with his parents and younger brother in the late 1980's.

Kavish completed his High School Education at St Paul's Catholic College. He has a Bachelor of Commerce & Economics from Macquarie University and a Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from the University of Technology, Sydney. Since completing his undergraduate studies, Kavish has built a successful career in Institutional Banking and is currently a Vice President at State Street Australia Limited.

The elder of 2 sons, Kavish and his younger brother Akshay are third generation descendants of Pt Ram Charitar Maharaj who migrated from India to Fiji in 1913. Both Kavish and Akshay are active members of the HHS.

Growing up in Australia in the 1990's, the Hindu Heritage Society's vision of promoting culture, with a focus on education set it apart from Indian Cultural associations. This was something that appealed to me, my younger

brother Akshay and many others of our age group. I remember attending functions that featured oratory in Hindi, dance, and other cultural activities. Much of the credit goes to Pandit Narayan Bhatt and the Hindu Priests that work closely with him.

This structure and community provided by the HHS would take on greater meaning as I completed my degree, began developing a career and settled down with my wife Saras. Pundit Bhattji & HHS community was present at mine and Saras wedding and continues to be a key part of our lives as we look to raise our son Aryan and teach him the importance of cultural identity and tradition that has been carefully preserved by each successive generation of our family.



**Two identities would fight each other, while two truths would
co-operate and co-exist together**

—Unknown

Mr.Yugesh Chand, Overseas Co-ordinator, Hindu Heritage Society



I am delighted to be part of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of Hindu Heritage Society. As International Director of Diaspora Foundation , Delhi , India , I visited Delhi in April , 2023 on their invitation and took opportunity to apprise all in Delhi to attend the 8th July , 2023 Silver Jubilee Function of Hindu Heritage Society in Sydney. I was welcomed by Diaspora Foundation as International Overseas Director of Hindu Heritage Society in Delhi on 8th March, 2023 in the presence of so many dignitaries. Diaspora Foundation Delhi was announced as collaborative joint partner of the Silver Jubilee July Event of Hindu Heritage Society and to help in the special launch of a book on this occasion in Sydney. A roundtable discussion was also held on “the Reflexion on the Perspective of Indo- Australian Relation”. I was also invited by Namō Sādhavāna Samiti as a Guest in a 5 day Maha Yagya Celebration held in Chhatarpur Temple Complex from 6-10 April, 2023 . More than 15000 thousands attended this spiritual event including Ministers, diplomats, heads of religious and spiritual ashrams/ institutions, spiritual seekers and educationists. I informed so many dignitaries in this function about the July event of Hindu Heritage Society in Sydney .

I am grateful to Dr Mrinal Kant Pandey, President of Diaspora Foundation, Delhi and Mukesh Saini, Secretary General, Diaspora Foundation who have supported our event in Sydney as joint partner. Even in the past, they came to Sydney and awarded so many distinguished personalities of Indian community in Sydney on 15th August, 2019. Mr Narayan Bhatt and Mr Jagdish Maharaj, founder trustees of Hindu Heritage Society, Australia (HHS) were also recipients as awardees. NRI Achievers Magazine has always covered special stories on the Indian Community of Sydney with focus on all events. We are always grateful to Dr Mrinal Kant Pandey as Editor of this magazine. The Youth Segment of HHS is being enlightened with awareness of the history, culture and traditions of India through annual activities of HHS IN Sydney. We are also planning delegation of HHS to Delhi , Ayodhya , Mathura Vrindavan , Haridwar-Rishikesh , Banaras , Rameswaram and Tirupati so that youths can get connected to their roots with realistic exposure and senior members of Hindu Heritage Society can also meet other religious and spiritual organisations in India for common purpose. Diaspora Foundation (in Delhi, India) as our joint partner and collaborator of HHS Inc Australia will give us all support in India regarding coordination, stay, visit and delegation meeting in different places . Diaspora Foundation of Delhi is also sending short films on Indian culture, art and music to HHS for showing to the community. This is the age of partnership, collaboration and collective consciousness. Let us be united to support Hindu Heritage Society Inc in Australia. Lastly, we are thankful to Members of Parliament of Australia who have always supported and motivated us in an inclusive, harmonious and multi-cultural society of Australia.



Shri Sunil Mishra :

Immediate past President 2019-2023

Justice of the Peace (NSW)
BA (Economic & Management)
President – Australian Hindu
Educational & Cultural Society 2006
- 2017
Secretary -Australian Hindu
Educational & Cultural Society 1998
- 2006

Sunil Mishra is a highly respected community leader and is well known in the Fiji Indian community. He is a known philanthropist at heart and has supported many sporting clubs and charity organisations through sponsorships and donations.

He has been an active member of various religious and cultural groups and has been active in promoting (Sanatan Dharma) religious and cultural values since arriving in Australia in 1990.

Sunil comes from Fiji islands where his forefathers were brought in by the Colonial powers to cultivate Sugar plantations.

Mr Sunil Mishra is a self-made man who comes from humble beginning, hailing from the beautiful Island Nation of Fiji with Indian descent. His great great grandfather was from Sarwan Pur village in the town of Basti in Uttra Pardesh, India.

Mr Mishra migrated to Sydney with his wife and two beautiful daughters in 1990. As a graduate from the University of the South Pacific with experience in the financial sector, Sunil pursued his career in the industry to

establish his own finance broking business, Mortgage Hotline NSW.

As a mortgage broker and Director of Mortgage Hotline NSW, Mr Sunil Mishra, continues to serve the public of Sydney and the surrounding regions for over 30 years with assistance in personal and mortgage financing via banking and non banking channels.

Mr Sunil Mishra is also highly respected and widely known on the community front, serving the community as a current Justice of the Peace and being an active member in executive roles of various community-based associations, Sunil is the immediate past president of Hindu Heritage Society of Australia and currently holds the position of Vice President.

Apart from being a successful businessman and a leader in the community,

Mr Mishra is also a proud grandfather of three beautiful little munchkins, Diya, Riyaan and Ariana.

AWARENESS OF HERITAGE AND CONTINUITY OF TRADITIONS

***“Holding the tales of our ancestors past
Enriching our souls, a legacy that will last
Respecting the roots that define our worth
Immersed in the cultures from which we birth
Treasuring traditions, a tapestry of age
Appreciating our heritage, our history’s stage
Grateful for the lessons, the values it imparts
Eternal connection to our roots and our heart”***

ACTIVITIES OF HINDU HERITAGE SOCIETY IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



“The Hindu Heritage Society conducts poojas throughout the year, including Saraswati Pooja, Holi, Guru Purnima, and Durga Pooja. These poojas serve as opportunities for devotees to connect with their spiritual roots, seek blessings, and celebrate the divine energies associated with each occasion. They provide a platform for fostering unity, promoting cultural traditions, and deepening one’s spiritual journey within the framework of Hinduism.”

FOUR MAJOR ANNUAL EVENTS - FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

Hindu Heritage Society conducts several significant events throughout the year:

Saraswati Pooja

1. Saraswati Pooja is dedicated to the Goddess Saraswati, the embodiment of knowledge, wisdom, and the arts. The Hindu Heritage Society organises this pooja to invoke the blessings of Goddess Saraswati for learning, education, and creative pursuits. Students, artists, and scholars gather to worship the Goddess and seek her divine guidance. This pooja is especially significant for students, who seek the blessings of the

Goddess to excel in their studies.

Holi

2. Holi, also known as the Festival of Colors, is a vibrant and joyous celebration that marks the arrival of spring. The Hindu Heritage Society organises Holi festivities, where people come together to play with coloured powders, sing and dance, and exchange greetings.

Guru Purnima

3. Guru Purnima is a sacred day dedicated to expressing gratitude and reverence towards spiritual teachers and gurus. The Hindu Heritage Society conducts a Guru Purnima pooja to honour the lineage of enlightened masters who have imparted spiritual wisdom. This pooja is a reminder of the importance of spiritual guidance and the role of gurus in illuminating the path of enlightenment. It is a time for introspection, reflection, and deepening one's spiritual connection with the divine.

Durga Pooja

4. Durga Pooja is a major Hindu festival that celebrates the triumph of Goddess Durga over the forces of evil. The Hindu Heritage Society organises elaborate Durga Pooja rituals during Navratri, a nine-night celebration dedicated to the divine feminine energy. Devotees worship Goddess Durga, who represents strength, courage, and protection. This pooja invokes the blessings of Goddess Durga and seeks her divine grace for the removal of obstacles and the attainment of spiritual and worldly prosperity.

Saraswati Pooja for Youths

by Radhika Bhatt



It is interesting to learn about the spiritual significance attached to the worship of Goddess Saraswati and how men of principle prioritize spiritual enlightenment over the pursuit of wealth and power. The symbolism behind the vehicle assigned to each of the three goddesses is also noteworthy, with the white swan of Saraswati representing purity and discrimination.

The celebration of Vasant Panchami, which heralds the arrival of springtime and new life, is an occasion of great religious, seasonal, and social significance for Hindus all over the world. It is heartening to know that HHS has been initiating Maha Saraswati Pooja on this occasion since its inception, and that it has been held in different public places to encourage youth participation.

It is also commendable that HHS has been teaching the first letter to new kids before they start school, emphasizing the importance of education and the role of Goddess Saraswati in acquiring knowledge and wisdom.

Initiatives like these are crucial in preserving our cultural heritage and ensuring that future generations continue to appreciate and value our diverse traditions. It is heartening to see HHS taking the lead in promoting the worship of Goddess Saraswati and imparting knowledge and wisdom to the younger generation.

Vasant Panchami is a festival full of religious, seasonal and social significance and is celebrated by Hindus all over the world with verve and a new sense of optimism. Magh Sukla Panchami (5th day of the bright fortnight of the lunar

month of Magh) is the day of Vasant Panchami. Hindus all over the world celebrate this festival with great enthusiasm. This Panchami is also known as special Saraswati worship Day. It is believed that this day is Goddess Saraswati's incarnation day. Hindu Heritage Society is the first organisation who has publicly introduced this prayer in Australian soil.

Yellow colour is given special importance on this day. On Vasant Panchami, Saraswati is dressed in yellow garments and worshipped (with Puja, Havan etc.).

Men of principle (men who can discriminate) worship goddess Saraswati for spiritual enlightenment. In their opinion, there can be no comparison between the king and the learned (spiritually advanced). The king is honoured within his kingdom, whereas the learned is respected (or worshipped) everywhere. Sainly people and people inclined towards spiritual progress attach great importance to the worship of goddess Saraswati.

The vehicle assigned to each of the three goddesses also symbolically represents their special powers. The white swan of Saraswati symbolises Sattva Guna (purity and discrimination). The owl of Lakshmi and the lion or tiger of Durga symbolise the other two gunas (Rajas and Tamas).

The first faint signals of the forthcoming festival of Holi manifest at Vasant Panchami. Seasons undergo change. The coming of springtime is heralded. Trees are displaying new shoots. New life is evident in the woods and fields. Nature decorates Mango trees with new blossoms. Wheat and other crops enliven with evidence of new life.

Vasant Panchami is a festival full of religious, seasonal and social significance and is celebrated by Hindus all over the world with verve and a new sense of optimism.

HHS has held the Maha Saraswati Pooja, since its inception. Every year, on the occasion of Vasant Panchami,

which comes between January and February, the event is held in different public places, where youth are encouraged to take part, by worshipping Mata Saraswati.

Youths of the Indian community are given following inputs by Hindu Heritage Society on the importance of Saraswati Puja as awareness program on annual basis:

Goddess Saraswati

The Goddess Saraswati is worshipped as the Goddess of Learning and the fountain of fine arts and science, and also the symbol of supreme vedantic knowledge. It is also believed that goddess Saraswati endows human beings with the powers of speech and wisdom.

Sanskrit Mantra

¶;kdqUnsUnqrqdkkjgkj/oyk] ;k'kqèkzoL=kko`rk]
;koh.kkojn.Mef.Mrdjk];k'osriÁkluk
;kczākū;qr'kadjçèk`frfèk] nZsoS%lnkiwfrtk]
lkekaikrqllLorhèkxorhfu%'ksdtkMÔkigk,

*Yaa Kundendu tushaara haaradhavalaa, Yaa shubhravastraavritha/
Yaa veenavara dandamanditakara, Yaa shwetha padmaasana||
Yaa brahmaachyutha shankara prabhritibhir Devaisadaa Vanditha/
Saa Maam Paatu Saraswatee Bhagavatee Nihshesha jaadyaapahaa||*

Translation

“May Goddess Saraswati, who is fair like the jasmine-colored moon, and whose pure white garland is like frosty dew drops; who is adorned in radiant white attire, on whose beautiful arm rests the *veena*, and whose throne is a white lotus; who is surrounded and respected by the Gods, protect me. May you fully remove my lethargy, sluggishness, and ignorance?”

The Sanskrit word sara means “essence” and swa means “self.” Thus, Saraswati means “the essence of the self.” Saraswati is represented in Hindu mythology as the divine consort of Lord Brahma, the Creator of the universe. Since knowledge is necessary for creation, Saraswati symbolizes the creative power of Brahma.

Goddess Saraswati is worshipped by all persons interested in knowledge, especially students, teachers, scholars, and scientists.

In Her popular images and pictures, Goddess Saraswati is generally depicted with four arms (some pictures may show only two arms), wearing a white sari and seated on a white lotus. She holds a book and a rosary in her rear two hands, while the front two hands are engaged in the playing of a lute (veena). Her right leg is shown slightly pushing against her left leg. She uses a swan as her vehicle. There is a peacock by her side gazing at her. This symbolism illustrates the following spiritual ideas:

* **The lotus** is a symbol of the Supreme Reality, and a white lotus also denotes supreme knowledge. By sitting on a lotus, Saraswati signifies that She is Herself rooted in the Supreme Reality, and symbolizes supreme knowledge. The white colour symbolizes purity and knowledge. The white sari that the Goddess is wearing denotes that she is the embodiment of pure knowledge.

* **The four arms** denote Her omnipresence and omnipotence. The two front arms indicate Her activity in the physical world and the two back arms signify Her presence in the spiritual world. The four hands represent the four elements of the inner personality. The mind (manas) is

represented by the front right hand, the intellect (buddhi) by the front left hand, the conditioned consciousness (chitta) by the rear left hand, and the ego (Ahankara) by the rear right hand.

* **The left side of the body** symbolizes the qualities of the heart and the right side symbolizes activities of the mind and intellect.

* **A book in the rear left hand** signifies that knowledge acquired must be used with love and kindness to promote prosperity of mankind.

* **The rosary** signifies concentration, meditation, and contemplation, leading to samadhi, or union with God.

* **A rosary in the rear right hand** representing ego conveys that true knowledge acquired with love and devotion melts the ego and results in liberation (moksha) of the seeker from the bondage to the physical world.

* The Goddess is shown **playing a musical instrument** that is held in her front hands, which denote mind and intellect. This symbol conveys that the seeker must tune his mind and intellect in order to live in perfect harmony with the world. Such harmonious living enables the individual to utilize acquired knowledge for the welfare of all mankind.

* **Two swans** are depicted on the left side of the Goddess. A swan is said to have a sensitive beak that enables it to distinguish pure milk from a mixture of milk and water. A swan, therefore, symbolizes the power of discrimination, or the ability to discriminate between right and wrong or good and bad. Saraswati uses the swan as Her carrier. This indicates that one must acquire and apply knowledge with discrimination for the good of mankind.

Knowledge that is dominated by ego can destroy the world.

* **A peacock** is sitting next to Saraswati and is anxiously waiting to serve as Her vehicle. A peacock depicts unpredictable behaviour as its moods can be influenced by the changes in the weather. Saraswati is using a swan as a vehicle and not the peacock. This signifies that one should overcome fear, indecision, and fickleness in order to acquire true knowledge.

ljLorhueLrqè;a] ojnsdke:fi.khA fo|kjEèkadfjd;kfefllf/èkZorqeslnkAA

“Saraswati Namastubhyam Varde Kamroopani, Vidya Aarambham Karishyami Siddhi Bhavatu May Sada”

Translation: Oh! Goddess Saraswati! my humble prostrations unto Thee, who is the fulfiller of all wishes. I start my studies with Thy worship and always pray for success.

Hindu Heritage Society Promoting Hindi Oratory as part of Sarswati Pooja

In Australia, where English is the official language, the Hindu Heritage Society (HHS) recognizes the importance of preserving the Hindi language and cultural heritage.

To address the concern of losing the mother tongue, HHS has taken initiatives to encourage children to learn Hindi. Several Hindi language schools have been established in Sydney under the HHS's guidance.

While HHS acknowledges the presence of Hindi schools, it also identifies a gap in the education system. Learning is confined to the classroom, lacking a platform for students to practice and express themselves effectively in Hindi. To address this, HHS has introduced the concept of Hindi Oratory in schools. This program brings together participants from various schools, providing students with an opportunity to develop their Hindi speaking skills and express their thoughts confidently.

HHS has developed guidelines for the Hindi Oratory

program and has fostered strong relationships with schools. By communicating the importance of enhancing spoken Hindi, HHS collaborates with school principals to prepare students for the annual event.

Effective time management and communication skills are crucial in ensuring the smooth conduct of the oratory competition and maintaining proper documentation.

The Hindi Oratory program caters to three age groups: years one to five, six to eight, and nine to twelve. Each school selects three students per age group to participate. HHS recognizes the efforts of these students by presenting them with certificates and trophies.

The oratory event coincides with the Mata Saraswati puja, allowing students to seek blessings from Goddess Saraswati while showcasing their language skills and the first letter is taught to new kids, before starting their school year. (Akshar Arabmh, Vidya Rambh)

HHS extends its gratitude to parents, teachers, and school committees for their continuous support in promoting Hindi Oratory. Their dedication and coaching plays a vital role in preparing students for this annual event.

Other institutions in the Sydney region are also actively contributing to the preservation of Hindu heritage. The Green Valley Languages and Arts School has been serving the local Fiji-Indian community for over 25 years, offering Hindi language, music, and dance classes. In addition to language education, this school instils ethical values, positive morals, and life skills to nurture productive and valued members of society.

The Saturday School of Community Languages, a program by the NSW Department of Education, is the largest provider of face-to-face language education in NSW. Operating across 15 high school sites, this school offers 26 language courses on Saturdays, including Hindi, for students from Year 7 to Year 12.

The Indo-Aust Bal Bharathi Vidyalaya Hindi School, established in June 1987, is the first Hindi-language institution dedicated to teaching Hindi in Sydney. With support from the NSW DTEC Community Languages program, this non-profit school is run entirely by volunteers. Teachers receive an honorarium for their services.

The Australian Hindu Multicultural Association & School of Language Studies operates the Western Sydney Hindi School, which has been serving the community for 29 years. Alongside Hindi language classes, the school offers Bharatanatyam, Bollywood dance, Harmonium, and Tabla instruction. The curriculum incorporates content on Hindu religion and spirituality, and the school introduced meditation classes for parents and grandparents in 2022.

The Australian Institute of Hindi Language Studies, which began in 2003, initially focused on teaching Hindi but later expanded to include Bharat Natyam, Harmonium, and Tabla classes. The school gained popularity, attracting up to 120 pupils. It also published a well-known magazine called “Hamari Pehchaan,” which featured student work and messages of support from community members and the State Minister of Education.

Hindi Oratory has become a prominent program in the HHS calendar of events, drawing significant participation from students, parents, siblings, teachers, and friends. This community initiative is dedicated to preserving the language, culture, and art for the future.

Oratory by HHS by Pt Sukhendra Shandil

The efforts made by the Hindu Heritage Society (HHS) in promoting the Hindi language among students in Sydney are commendable. The initiative of organizing the Hindi Oratory, which allows students to practice and express themselves in Hindi outside the classroom, is a significant step in preserving the mother tongue. The collaboration with school principals and the preparation of students for the

annual event demonstrate the dedication of HHS. The inclusion of three age groups ensures that students of all ages have the opportunity to participate and be recognized. The distribution of certificates and trophies acknowledges the hard work of students, parents, and teachers. Additionally, holding the Oratory in conjunction with the Mata Saraswati puja adds a cultural and spiritual aspect, allowing students to seek blessings from Goddess Saraswati. The community expresses gratitude to HHS for promoting the Hindi language and recognizing the support of parents, teachers, and the school committee. Such initiatives are vital in preserving cultural heritage and ensuring the appreciation of diverse linguistic and cultural traditions for future generations.

Some images of Annual Saraswati puja Ceremonies hosted by HHS



Children participating in Vedic Mantra recitals



Children participating in writing Hindi script activities as orated by Punditji



Participants with their awards and school principals



with their appreciation certificates

Awards prior to presentation to students for Oratory



Hall prepared for Saraswati Pooja

*Young and Old alike Annual Saraswati Puja -
Parents with their young Children*



*Pundit Narayan Bhatt and his team of Musicians
at the Annual Saraswati Puja*





Holi (*The Festival of Colours*)

-By Mrs Malti Maharaj

The Holi celebration organised by the Hindu Heritage Society truly encapsulates the essence of this ancient festival. The harmonious melodies of traditional instruments, the captivating chautaal singing, the joyous playing with colors, and the sumptuous traditional cuisine all combined to create a memorable and immersive experience.

Holi is celebrated by the Hindu Heritage Society, in Sydney annually, although Holi Festival is primarily celebrated by Hindus, the Holi Festival is very inclusive. The community has great participation in this festival in Sydney.

Holi is a very traditional Hindu Festival celebrated in India and many parts of the world including Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, United Kingdom, United States, Nepal, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, South Africa, and other countries where Hindus reside.

The story of Prahlad and Holika is a significant legend associated with the origins of Holi. Prahlad, a devotee of Lord Vishnu, was targeted by his demon king father Hiranyakashipu. Together with her brother, Holika, who possessed a magical cloak, they planned to kill Prahlad by trapping him in a pyre while Holika remained protected. However, divine intervention caused Holika's cloak to lose its power, and Prahlad emerged unscathed due to his unwavering faith. This tale symbolizes the victory of good over evil and the triumph of righteousness, which is celebrated during Holi through bonfires and the joyful splashing of colors.

As the arrival of spring brings with it a riot of colors and a spirit of joy, members of the Hindu Heritage Society
70 :: 25 Years Journey Of Hindu Heritage Society Inc, Australia

(HHS) came together in a joyous celebration of Holi, the Festival of Colors. The HHS, known for its dedication to preserving and promoting Hindu culture, organized a lively event that encapsulated the essence of this ancient festival.

One of the highlights of the celebration was the enchanting sounds of live traditional instruments that filled the air. Talented musicians played melodic tunes on tablas and other classical instruments, creating a vibrant atmosphere and setting the stage for the festivities to come. The rhythmic beats and soul-stirring melodies transported participants to a different realm, evoking a sense of unity and harmony.

The joyous gathering was further enhanced by the soulful singing of chautaals, a traditional folk singing style that has been passed down through generations.

The melodious voices of the performers resonated with the essence of Holi, expressing the joy, love, and unity that the festival symbolises. The powerful lyrics and lively rhythms of the chautaal captivated the audience, inspiring them to join in and celebrate the spirit of togetherness.

Of course, no Holi celebration is complete without the playful splashing of vibrant colors. HHS members embraced this age-old tradition with enthusiasm and joy. Laughter filled the air as people joyfully smeared each other's faces and drenched one another in a rainbow of hues. The vibrant colors reflect the exuberance of the occasion and symbolize the breaking down of barriers, prejudices, and differences.

In addition to the music, singing, and colorful revelry, the event also features a variety of traditional delicacies, adding a gastronomic delight to the festivities.

The aroma of 'gujiya', 'laddoos', 'jalebis, pakoras' and a wide variety of food add to the feasting and celebrations fills the air, tantalizing the taste buds of all those present. Sharing these delectable treats further strengthened the sense of

community and camaraderie among the HHS members.

Through the celebration of Holi, the Hindu Heritage Society demonstrated its commitment to preserving and cherishing the rich cultural heritage of Hinduism. This vibrant festival served as a reminder of the importance of unity, love, and the triumph of good over evil. It brought together people of different backgrounds, transcending boundaries and fostering a sense of inclusivity.

The event not only showcases the cultural richness of Hindu traditions but also fostered a deep sense of community spirit and togetherness.

Holi is celebrated in the Hindu calendar in the month of Phalgun, which usually coincides with the Gregorian calendar month of March, or sometimes even late February.

It is a two-day festival commencing on a full moon night, (Purnima) with Holika Dahan. Main Holi festival is celebrated on the next day of Holika Dahan.



Traditional Chautala (folk song) singing in session with live instruments



A wet Holi with Chautala's



Holi Khele Raghubeera - Sydney Australia mein Holi Khele Raghubeera



Maximum colour and noise with Dhol



HHS Resident "Dholakia" Mr Satya Prakash with his wife Manita (left)

They are very devout Hindus and are always available to provide Instrumental music and sing Bhajans at HHS functions



Children enjoying Holi

Burn your ego, expectations and ill thoughts in the fire of Holi .Let the colours of Holi spread the message of peace and happiness .



Guru Purnima Ceremonies hosted by the HHS

By Pt. Jagdish Maharaj and Abhi Bohra

Guru Purnima festival is organised by HHS in Sydney with great enthusiasm with community support on annual basis during the month of either July or August.

Guru Purnima is an annual festival celebrated in India and Nepal to honour and express gratitude towards one's spiritual teacher or Guru. It falls on the full moon day or Purnima of the Hindu month of Ashadha, which usually falls in July or August.

On Guru Purnima, devotees pay homage to their Gurus by performing various rituals and expressing their gratitude. The day begins with a traditional puja or worship of the Guru's feet, followed by chanting of mantras and devotional songs. Some devotees also offer gifts or donations to their Gurus as a token of respect and gratitude.

Guru Purnima is celebrated not only by Hindus but also by followers of other spiritual traditions such as Buddhism and Jainism. It is believed that Gautama Buddha gave his first sermon on this day at Sarnath, and so it is also known as Buddha Purnima

The word "guru" comes from Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language of India. In Sanskrit, "guru" means "teacher" or "guide." The word has been used for centuries in India and other parts of South Asia to refer to spiritual teachers and mystics who have achieved a level of wisdom and enlightenment.

Guru Purnima is a spiritual festival celebrated by Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs. It is typically celebrated on the full moon day (Purnima) in the Hindu month of Ashadh

(June-July), and is also sometimes known as Vyasa Purnima. The festival is particularly associated with the sage Vyasa, who is credited with editing and compiling the ancient Vedic texts of India, including the Mahabharata. On Guru Purnima, it is believed that Vyasa was born, and some Hindus also perform pujas in his honor on this day.

The festival is dedicated to the guru, an important figure in our region where gurus are considered to be a spiritual guide, teacher, and mentor. It is a time to honor and express gratitude towards one's guru for their guidance, knowledge, and support on the spiritual path.

Here is a small list of the Guru's as there are many great spiritual teachers, saints and masters in each religion who have guided and inspired millions of people over the centuries.

- Hinduism: a. Swami Vivekananda b. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa c. Swami Sivananda d. Paramahansa Yogananda e. Mata Amritanandamayi
- Buddhism: a. Gautama Buddha b. Dalai Lama c. Thich Nhat Hanh d. Ajahn Chah e. Pema Chödrön
- Jainism: a. Mahavira b. Acharya Kundakunda c. Acharya Shantisagar d. Acharya Hemachandra e. Acharya Bhikshu
- Sikhism: a. Guru Nanak b. Guru Arjan Dev c. Guru Gobind Singh d. Bhai Gurdas e. Bhai Nand Lal.

In Hindu traditions, the mother is considered to be the first guru of a child, as she is the one who teaches the child their first words, instills moral and ethical values, and provides a foundation for their spiritual development.

The importance of a guru or spiritual teacher in our life can be significant in many ways, regardless of one's religious or philosophical beliefs

1. The guru can provide guidance and support on the spiritual path, helping us to navigate through the

challenges and obstacles that arise along the way. The guru can offer teachings and practices that can help us to deepen our awareness and understanding, and to cultivate virtues such as compassion, wisdom, and gratitude.

2. A guru can serve as a mentor or role model, offering insights and perspectives based on their own life experience and spiritual realization. This can be especially valuable when we are facing difficult decisions or transitions, as the guru can provide a broader perspective and help us to stay rooted in our spiritual values and priorities.
3. The guru can offer a sense of community and support, connecting us to a wider network of spiritual seekers who share our values and goals. This can be especially important for those who may feel isolated or disconnected in their spiritual journey, or who may not have access to other sources of spiritual community or support.
4. Finally, the guru can offer a sense of inspiration and motivation, reminding us of our own potential for growth and transformation, and helping us to stay committed to our spiritual path over the long term.

On this day, disciples perform pujas, seek the blessings of their gurus, and listen to their discourses Overall; Guru Purnima is a time to reflect on the importance of teachers and mentors in our lives, and to commit ourselves to the pursuit of our growth and enlightenment with their guidance and support.

Overall, Guru Purnima is a day to celebrate the profound relationship between a Guru and his or her disciples, and to acknowledge the role of the Guru in guiding one towards spiritual growth and enlightenment.

Thousands of years ago Hindu religion was prominent in most parts of the world. However, advent of other

religions, effects of war and natural migratory practices saw a diminishing effect in Hindu religious beliefs and cultural changes. About 5 thousand years ago Lord Vishnu incarnated as “Vedavyas’ ‘ who reinvigorated the Hindu religion, with the blessing of Lord Ganesha and Mata Saraswati, through the Vedas and other Puranas and Upanishads.

Guru Purnima is celebrated to recognize the birthday of Vedavyas and the historical significance that he has to our culture and heritage. All the Sects associated with Hinduism, celebrate and honor their own “GURUS” on this auspicious occasion. They pray to them and remember their sacrifices to have preserved the religion and heritage for the forthcoming generations.



Collection of prominent Gurus’ Photo Proudly on display with a brief outline of their story for people to read and be inspired



OTHER NEW SEGMENTS OF EVENTS ORGANISED BY HHS

The Hindu Heritage Society has recognized this event as their main celebration each year. It is our firm belief that this will help propagate a sense of “belonging” to our future generations. In recognition of the Rishis, Munis and various Gurus each year we pay absolutions to them. So far we have held events such as:

- ❖ ·Sarva Dharma Sammelan,
- ❖ ·Shri Krishna Leela,
- ❖ ·108 Shiva Linga Abhishek,
- ❖ ·Shri Vishnu Sahastra Naam Yagya,
- ❖ ·108 Kundi Maha Yagya
- ❖ ·1,111 Hanuman Chalisa Parayan,
- ❖ ·Akhand Ramayan Path,
- ❖ ·Shri Hari Gita Gyan Yoga etc.

From time to time HHS has also displayed articles and pictures of these revered Gurus at our events. To us and our devotees, they are an important link to our great religious heritage. Although the festival of “Raksha Bandhan” is typically known as the Sanskriti Diwas, in our view the “Guru Purnima” fulfills this definition appropriately.

Vedavyas Ji was born to provide this path to our heritage and the Lord's incarnation was for the purpose of SanskritiDiwas celebrations.

As the national defence force protects the boundary of the country –likewise religion and heritage protects one'sinner belief and personal space. This is an opportune day tocelebrate the vast sacrifices of our Gurus and HHS providesyou with this opportunity to partake in this event and offerthanks and obeisance to your Gurus.

HHS has formulated standard replies to the questions of youths of the community regarding various dimensions of GURU PURNIMA. Some Questions and Answers about GURU (Masters):

Question: What is the traditional wisdom of Hinduism about the importance of GURU?

Answer: Kabir, 15 century Indian mystic poet influence Bhakti movement of Hinduism and defined the importance of GURU in a very different way:

*“Sab Dharti Kagaz Karu, Lekhan Ban Raye
Sath Samundra Ki Mas Karu, Guru Gun Likha Na Jaye.”*

Above beautiful Doha (couplet) is by the great saint Kabir. The meaning of this doha is; “Even if the whole earth is transformed into paper with all the big trees made into pens and if the entire water in the seven oceans are transformed into writing ink, even then the glories of the Guru cannot be written. So much is the greatness of the Guru.”

Kabir again, expresses his feelings for Guru as follows:

*“Guru Govind donou khade, kake lagav paay
Balihari guru apne, jin Govind diyo dikhay”*

And the meaning of this doha is “Guru and Govind (God) stand together, to whose feet should I bow. I will bow to my Guru as he guides the way to reach the Govind (God)”.

We have a shloka in which it says that Guru's place is

higher than the Divine Trinity.

**“Guru Brahma Gurur Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwaraha
Guru Saakshat Paar Brahma, Tasmai Shree Gurave Namaha”**

Guru is verily the representative of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. He creates, sustains knowledge and destroys the weeds of ignorance. I salute such a Guru.

In the Bhagavata Purana, Dattatreya enumerates a list of his twenty-four gurus- earth, air, sky or ether, water, fire, sun, moon, python, pigeons, sea, moth, bee, bull elephant, bear, deer, fish, osprey, a child, a maiden, a courtesan, a blacksmith, serpent, spider, and wasp.

It proves that we can learn and get wisdom from anyone and everything. Everyone and everything can be our Guru from whom/which we can learn something and enrich our knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, we must be thankful to our parents, gurus, teachers, our elders, youngsters, siblings, friends, acquaintances etc. from whom we learnt something new in our life.

Although we respect elders as our shiksha gurus, there is a difference between Shiksha Guru and Diksha Guru, thus: Lord Sri Krishna made an earthly appearance in roughly 3220 B.C., and He left this planet in 3102 B.C. However, because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes, He is eternally existing. Therefore, these dates are simply a recording of His incarnation in Dvaparayuga (the age prior to the present Age of Kali).

He spoke the Bhagavad-Gita to Arjuna in Dvapara-yuga, but this does not limit His position as the Adi-purusha (the original Supreme Person) and the Adi-guru (the original teacher). In the Vedic literature Lord Krishna is described as the ultimate source of all knowledge; hence, He is the most reliable source of knowledge. The whole Guruparampara—the disciple succession—begins with Him because He is the original preceptor.

The Guru who teaches the knowledge of worldly arts

is the Siksha Guru. The Guru who shows him the path of Realization is the Diksha Guru. Siksha Gurus can be many - as many as the things he wishes to learn. The Diksha Guru can be only one - the one who leads him to Moksha).

Q. When is Guru Purnima and would you please explain for the benefit of many, the significance and why Gurus are so important in our lives and Hinduism at large?

A. Firstly, let us understand who a Guru is and its true meaning.

Guru Purnima is the day Vyas Ji was born. It is religiously known as VYAAS JAYANTI, the author of THE VEDAS and PURANAS.

In Hinduism we revere and adore our GURUS. On behalf of every True Hindu and God Lovers, we will endeavour to stipulate the essence of a Guru and their innervations.

In Sanskrit GU- means darkness or ignorance in its true context. RU-Means remover of the same and illuminates the spiritual path.

Hindu scriptures assert that more valuable than gold and diamond, also far rarer, is a GURU, a knower of spiritual truths, also may reach to be a Sat Guru (Most top Guru Status through his spirituality).

A Guru is the devotee's best friend, a father, a mother, a trusted confidant, the demanding mentor and guide on the path to God. The Guru embodies all that the spiritual seeker aspires to be. In the Guru, one sees his own infinite potential. Hindus honour these rare leaders and the Guru Purnima, or the FULL MOON Day in June/July, the Hindu Month of Ashada (vklk<+).

Q. What is Guru Purnima and how to celebrate it?

A. Firstly, we would like to say that the Guru Purnima is not a festival but a propitious and meritorious and highly adorable day for a true Hindu, therefore is religiously observed and not celebrated. This is the annual observation which honours spiritual teachers, preceptors and mentors who dispel the darkness of ignorance by bringing forth wisdom and illumination. Purina (Purnima) is the Sanskrit word for full moon. I have already explained other relevancies above.

Q. What are the customs of Guru Purnima?

A. On this special day all of one's thoughts are focused on the holy preceptor, turning into his mind, meditating on his teachings and expressing gratitude for his blessings and guidance. In ashrams, monasteries, halls, homes, shrines and Tiraths, etc. Hindus gather to venerate the Guru of their lineage. This is as valuable, as far as possible the one should use the Guru from the Guru's Lineage. We understand this is not practical in view of many circumstances, as the lineages are not worthy of being a Guru for various obvious reasons. The day's primary activity is a formal ritual, called Puja, in which his holy feet or a pair of his sandals are honoured. At the Guru's major centres, the Puja is a grand event, preceded by Satvik Meals (veggie and sweets) is served or offered to The Guru if visited at his home. It is especially auspicious to pilgrimage to the Guru's ashram or home on this day. In today's calamitous times a Guru and Shishya (disciple concept) has become, rather incorrigible and faux. When Guru and Disciple are in aspect, the slander communication is rather a faux veneration.

Shree Ram Ji has said in Ramayana

ॐ॥xaxkcMhuxksnkojh] ukrhjFkcMsc;kkx] ldyrhjFkdkiqU;% ogh ^tgk* fbn;jkedkohl,

Means wherever and however, you perform PENANCE, it will not be benefiting or meritorious. You must have Ram Ji, reside in your heart. I will rather be precise and specific; the heart or inner self must be pure and cleansed to welcome The Lord residing within you. You do not expect anyone to live in a polluted home so how will the lord.

Q. Why is the Full Moon of Ashada the day of the Guru and the first day of learning dedicated to honouring the preceptor (spiritual teacher).

It is believed this custom became established as Vyas Purnima, the Guru of Vedic knowledge. Here Full Moon refers to illumination (knowledge) and Guru Purnima, the Birthday (Jayanti) of Vyas Ji, the source of all spiritual knowledge.

The full moon is also known as a propitious (auspicious) time for attaining fulfillment, completeness, spiritual advancement and the beginning to all new endeavours.

Q. Why are the Guru's feet the focus of veneration?

According to tradition, God's presence can be most clearly and completely felt in the illumined Guru.

To sit at his feet is to be close to God and our own deepest Self because he is the giver of Dharmic Knowledge and all nerves' currents terminate in the feet. Vital energy points relating to every organ of his physical and inner bodies— astral (Godly), mental (thoughts of mind) and soul (pertaining to religious values)— are there. Touch the feet and we touch the spiritual master. Venerating the feet of the guru is also an acknowledgement of our deepest respect and spiritually advancing our knowledge by following his footsteps, therefore, we will attain spiritual perfection. We bow down, in salutation.

Q. Are Gurus worshiped as God?

A few Hindu denominations worship their Gurus as the embodiment of God, and may even revere him as an avatar, but most Hindus see their Guru as a great illumined soul in whom God's presence is most powerfully apparent. I will not suggest you compare a Guru with God. Even the Guru's picture must not be kept on the same altar or platform as the God's, keep it a step below. The Mantra below is generally misinterpreted. It is usually the thoughts of iffy minds. The Lord is the ultimate truth.

Q. Would you please explain a Guru's role?

A. It is the Guru's task to lead aspirants to God? He sets souls on the spiritual path, corrects those who stray, softens karmas, inspires lifelong practice and, through initiations, awakens the seeker's super, conscious knowing. He helps us become aware of our shortcomings and strengths and gives us tools to overcome weaknesses and refine ourselves.

The Guru, knowledgeable in Hindu scriptures, its sacred, practical and philosophical treatises, has the ability to help us unlock their esoteric meaning and gain insight as we study. Generally, this is not the case nowadays, it is all faux shamefully.

He guides us in our meditations, helping us navigate the mind and ultimately transcend it. In today's time it is rather impossible to find a true Disciple and Guru; it is rather calamitous, maligned.

Q. What is Darshan and its values?

A. Darshan, literally means “sight,” and is the mystical meeting of Guru and the Devotee. Hindus travel great distances to experience Darshan and receive the blessings of the illumined soul established in his enlightenment. Hindus believe that the spiritual power, called Shakti, coming from a great soul accelerates their spiritual evolution, changes patterns in their life by purifying their subconscious mind, renewing their spirit and commitment to religious life.

Q. Are all Gurus supposed to be unmarried?

A. Hindu spiritual teachers or Gurus may be either unmarried or householders. Many Hindu institutions are led by luminaries who follow the householder path. Some Gurus however, are celibate Monks—Swamis, Sadhus or Acharyas—who have renounced worldly life and received initiation into a monastic order.

Q. Are Gurus centrally organized?

A. Hinduism is actually a multitude of faiths and lineages bound together by common beliefs and practices. There is no central organization. Each Guru within his or her own sphere of devotees is the authority on religious matters, his or her wisdom sought and words obeyed. Some are heads of institutions with large followings, while others are reclusive Sadhus who rarely appear in public, but yes, they must be religiously Astral.

Q. What are the Traditional Offerings for a Guru?

A. When visiting a guru, just as when going to a temple, devotees bring an offering, such as flowers, sweets, fruits (alime is traditional) and, for renunciation of The Gurus, a piece of unstitched cloth is offered as well.

These items are presented in a Basket or on a metal tray. A monetary gift, called Dakshina, wrapped in a betel leaf (Paan), is often included. In ancient days, Gurus were given gold by the king and cows by the wealthy to sustain their schools and allow them to freely share wisdom.

Q. Fact & Fiction in this regard.

A. FACT: Hindus consider the mother to be a child’s first Guru. She and the father are responsible for their offspring’s upbringing, welfare and education. Upon coming of age, youth may

turn to a Guru to begin their spiritual training.

FICTION: Some incorrectly criticize Hinduism as a world-negating faith that overemphasizes asceticism and austerities. In fact, while its large contingent of celibate monks pursues the path of renunciation, yoga and deep meditation, the vast majority of Hindus are householders dynamically engaged in family life, career and community service. Tradition affirms the pursuit of four goals: righteousness, wealth, pleasure (including sensuality) and liberation.

Your heart should melt and flow toward God. Only then can you attain His grace. People may talk as they please; do not be carried away by them. Unmindful of hardships and difficulties, hold on to the principle of divinity and reach the goal of life. Today, people lack the will and determination to reach the goal of life.

How can those who do not understand the goal of life attain it? True love cannot be fragmented. One cannot have love for God as well as for ephemeral (short lived) objects and relationships. The love which is fragmented is artificial only. I may sound inimical but your thoughts must be circumspect as you have only one heart.

For example, you cannot break it into pieces and distribute it to various people. It is not like a Ladoo or sugarcane, which can be broken into pieces and distributed. It is the eternal truth. It is nectarous and full of bliss. Ignoring the immortal bliss within, people tread the worldly path thinking that bliss lies therein. It is only a figment of their imagination. He who makes efforts to attain God with full faith and determination without caring for trials and tribulations is a true devotee

Q. What is it that you are supposed to know on this day of Guru Purnima?

A. You must understand that God is in you, with you, around you, above you, below you. In fact, you are God. Let me reiterate on the Panch Tatva, that the living bodies are made of, including Bhagwan. His Almighty as well ascends to our Earth in any body form like other species. We are analysing the word BHAGWAN.

BH- Bhoomi. **A-** Agni. **G-** Ganga or Gal. **W-** is Wayu. **A-** Aakash (Ether) and **N-** refers to Nirgun (formless) . Recognize this

truth in the first instance. Do not entertain excessive desires and become beggars. Do your duty sincerely. That is the true Sadhana.

Question. What is the conclusive advice?

Answer: Prudent advice to all is that please pay circumspect values to:

For example, when you are in office, do office work only; do not think of your family matters. Likewise, when you are at home, take care of the needs of your wife and children. Do not make your home an office.

But today, because of too much work in the office, people take office-papers to their homes to complete their work.

They are thus facing difficulties because they mix up their office work, household work, business and spiritual matters. Right from this day, try to reduce your attachment to the world to the extent possible. Be happy and make others happy. Do not hurt anybody. Consider difficulties as passing clouds. You have developed family relationships and there are bound to be some worries. But do not be perturbed by them. When you look at the vast sky, you find many clouds. Likewise, in the sky of your heart there are clouds of attachment. They just come and go. Do not worry about them. What is the shape of worry? It is a mentally created fear. It is the result of your imagination. Every man is bound to encounter difficulties and losses. We should face them with courage.

From this day of Guru Purnima, make your hearts sacred. Just as you wave away the mosquitoes that bite you, brush aside any difficulties that assail you. Do not be depressed by sorrow nor be elated by happiness. Develop
From this day of Guru Purnima, make your hearts sacred. Just as you wave away the mosquitoes that bite you, brush aside any difficulties that assail you. Do not be depressed by sorrow nor be elated by happiness. Develop equanimity and strive to attain Divinity.

Source of this article: various

Durga Pooja

Navaratri Celebrations and The Hindu Heritage SocietyDevi puja

Compiled by

Mrs Prem Lata Maharaj & Kaveeta Maharaj



The Hindu Heritage Society (HHS) holds a special place in their hearts for the grand celebration of Durga Puja, a major Hindu festival commemorating the victory of Goddess Durga over the formidable demon Mahishasura. This vibrant festival, filled with enthusiasm and devotion, holds a significant position, particularly in West Bengal, Assam, and Odisha, where it is celebrated with great fervor.

The ten-day long festival, usually occurring in the Hindu

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month of Ashwin, sets the stage for an awe-inspiring celebration. The tale of Goddess Durga's triumph over Mahishasura serves as a reminder of the power of good prevailing over evil. In Hindu mythology, the gods, unable to vanquish the demon, combined their strengths to create the mighty Goddess Durga. Her valor and prowess led to the defeat of Mahishasura, restoring harmony to the universe.

During Durga Puja, the Hindu Heritage Society brings together friends and family to rejoice in the triumph of good. Elaborate rituals form an integral part of the festivities, including the worship of Goddess Durga and her nine forms, known as Navadurga. Skilled artisans meticulously craft and adorn idols of the Goddess and her avatars with vibrant flowers, radiant lights, and ornate embellishments. The devotees hold these idols in high reverence and offer prayers with utmost devotion.

The celebration of Durga Puja extends beyond religious rituals and delves into a realm of cultural events. The air is filled with melodious music, graceful dance performances, and captivating drama enactments. It is a time for artistic expression and creativity to flourish. Additionally, the aroma of delectable food and sweets wafts through the air as families and communities prepare and share sumptuous meals together.

Embracing the spirit of the festival, people don new clothes and visit beautifully crafted pandals, temporary structures erected to house the magnificent idols of Goddess Durga. These pandals serve as sacred sanctuaries where devotees gather to offer their prayers and seek the blessings of the Goddess. The atmosphere brims with devotion, joy, and a sense of unity as people from all walks of life come together to pay homage to the divine.

Durga Puja holds profound significance, not only as a time of celebration but also as an occasion to reflect on the triumph of good over evil. It is a period of spiritual renewal

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and an opportunity to express gratitude for the protection and blessings bestowed by the mighty Goddess Durga. As one of the most prominent festivals in the Hindu calendar, Durga Puja brings people together, fostering a sense of togetherness and reinforcing the values cherished by the Hindu Heritage Society.

The Hindu Heritage Society wholeheartedly embraces the essence of Durga Puja, promoting the celebration as an integral part of their cultural preservation and awareness efforts. Through their participation and support, they ensure that the spirit of this joyous festival continues to thrive, reminding everyone of the power of righteousness and the significance of unity in the face of adversity.

Every year devotees come and enjoy the melodious bhajans, Archana and Aarti. We have travelled to different suburbs over greater Sydney and in some years we have completed 9 days of prayer at devotees' residence.

OTHER IMPORTANT BACKGROUND INPUTS FOR THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DURGA POOJA
"NATU MAM SHAKYASE DRASHTUMANENA IV SVACHAKSHUSHA DIVIYAM DADAMITE CHAKSHU PASHAY ME YOGAMESHWARAM"

Your external eyes will not be able to comprehend my Divine form. I grant you the Divine Eye to enable you to behold Me in my Divine Yoga. Gita Chapter 11.

The word *Durga* (nqxkZ) literally means "impassable", "invincible, unassailable". It is related to the word *Durg* (nqxZ) which means "fortress, something difficult to defeat or pass" as stated in the Devi-Atharvashirsha Upanishad

;L;k%ijrjaukfLrISdkknqkxZçdhfrZrkAAüþAA

She who is renowned by the name "Durga" is superior to whom no one exists.

As Durga Saptashati stats, She is eternal, embodied as the universe. By her all this is pervaded. Nevertheless, she

incarnates in manifold ways; hear it from me. When she manifests herself in order to accomplish the purposes of the devas, she is said to be born in the world, though she is eternal.

Maa Durga in Hinduism the Goddess Durga also known as Shakti or Devi, is the protective mother of the Universe. She is one of the faith's most popular deities, a protection of all that is good and harmonious in the world. Sitting astride a lion or tiger, the multi-limbed Durga battles the forces of evil in the world.

The name Durga means the invincible one. As the Consort of Lord Shiva, Durga is the most auspicious one, the daughter of mountains and the remover of obstacles.

Durga Puja coincides with Navratri and Dussehra celebrations observed by other traditions of Hinduism. Over the years Durga pooja has morphed into an inseparable part of Indian culture with a diverse group of people celebrating this is their unique way while on traditions.

Our ancients have prescribed the worship of Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Saraswati during Navratri (nine nights). Durga is the embodiment of all powers.

Durga represents the combination of all the powers of body, mind and soul. Maha Kali symbolises destruction of evil with the help of these powers.

Maha Kali and Maha Durga are not elsewhere. They reside in everyman. When the mind and the senses, instead of following the dictates of conscience, follow wicked qualities, man becomes a slave to evil habits and turns wicked.

Navaratri is to annihilate cruelty and wickedness in man to bring forth the principle of the Atma in pristine form. -
Satya Sai BABA

The significance of Nava Durga

çFkea 'kSyiq=khp] f}rh;a czâpkfj.khA
PRATHAMAM SHAILPUTRI CHA DWITIYAM
BRAHMACHARINI
r`rh;apUn?k.Vsfr] dw"ek.Msfr prqFkZdEAA
TRITIYAM CHANDRAGHANTETI
KUSHMAANDETI CHATURTHAKAM
iapea LdUnekrsfr]" k"BadkR;k;uhfr pA
PANCHAMAM SKANDMAATETI SHASHTHAM
KAATYAYNEETI CHA
llrea dkyjk=khfrJegkxkSjhfr pk"VeEAA
SAPTAMAM KAALRAATRITI MAHAGAURITI
CHAASTAMAM
uoea flf!4nk=kh] p uonqkxkZ% çdhfrZrk%A
NAVAMAM SIDHHIDAATRI CHA NAVDURGAAH
PRAKEERTITAAH



Goddess Durga represents protection, love, prosperity, and knowledge. Unlimited and vibrant love, compassion and mercy are regarded as the divine attributes of Mother Goddess. She is known as Durga and worshipped in different forms.

Although she has over 1000 names and many different forms, the main 9 forms are as below;

1. SHAEL PUTRI -

Goddess Parvati, the daughter of the King of the Mountains Himalava, is called as 'Shailputri'. In her previous birth she took birth in the house of Dakhsa,

the Prajapati, as his daughter. She was also known as Sati. Once Prajapati Daksa organized a very big sacrificial ceremony in which he invited all gods to receive their sacrificial share. Lord Shiva was the only exception.

2. BRAHM-CHARINI - The second Durga Shakti roop is of Goddess Brahmcharini. Brahmcharini originated from the word “Brahma” that is who observes penance (tapa) and good conduct. Thus she is the one who practices penance. she practiced terrible penances in order to obtain Lord Shiva as her divine consort. Due to her unearthly penances she was termed as Brahmcharini.

3. CHANDRA-GHANTA - Third among the Shakti Roopas is Goddess Chandraghanta. Chandraghanta originated from the word Chandra (Moon) and Ghanta (Bell). She has crescent moon on her forehead and her roaring voice is like a tumultuous sound of a bell that makes the atrocious demons tremble. By worshipping her one can get rid of all worldly sorrows, and attain the supreme goal spontaneously.

4. KUSH MAANDA -The fourth among Shakti Roopas is goddess Kushmanda. Kushmanda (Ku+Usma+Anda) has been originated from the word ‘Ku’ means ‘a little’; ‘Usma’ is warmth, heat or energy and ‘Anda’ means the cosmic egg or universe. She resides in the universe, in the inner portion of Surya loka and she emanates a solar aura. Kushmanda Devi helped create the brahmand or universe when there was nothing except darkness everywhere.

5. SKHAND MATA - Skandmata is also called Parvati, Maheshwari and Gauri. Being the mother of Skanda she is Skandamata. Riding a lion, she holds her son Skanda in her lap. She displays three eyes and four hands - two hands holds lotus while the other two hand display defending and granting mudras, respectively. It is said that by pleasing Skandmata, even a fool becomes a master of knowledge.

6. KATYAANI MATA – Sage Katyayana practiced

penance for several years to propitiate mother Goddess. At the time of boon he requested Mother Goddess to take birth as his daughter. The goddess was pleased to accede to his request. She accepted the worship of Katyayana for three days and then killed the demon Mahisasur.

7. KAAL RATRI MATA - most known as maha kali devi. she derived her name from her looks being completely dark black (kala). although her features appear scary, devotees who worship find immense benefits and help in resolving daily problems.

8. MAHA GAURI - like her name, this devi is completely gaura (or fair). As parvati, she did a lot of sacrifice to find lord shiva as husband despite so much opposition from families; rishi munis (saints).

9. SIDHI DATRI - gives you 18 main elements like wealth & health in

life. Shri devi puran says that with the blessings of this devi, did lord shiva earn half female body for himself.

Devis Weaponary and its significance

Durga carries a variety of weapons and other items that she uses in her fight against evil. Each has a symbolic meaning important to Hinduism; these are the most significant:

The conch shell symbolizes the Pranava or the mystic word Om, which indicates her holding on to God in the form of sound.

The bow and arrows represent energy. By holding the bow and arrows both in one hand, Durga demonstrates her control over both aspects of energy—potential and kinetic.

The thunderbolt signifies firmness in one's convictions. Just as a real bolt of lightning can destroy anything it strikes, Durga reminds Hindus to attack a challenge without losing confidence.

The lotus in Durga's hand, not yet fully in bloom, represents the certainty of success but not finality. The lotus in Sanskrit is called Pankaj, which means “born of mud,” reminding the faithful to stay true to their spiritual quest amid the worldly mud of lust and greed.

The Sudarshan-Chakra or beautiful discus, which spins around the index finger of the Goddess, signifies that the entire world is subservient to the will of Durga and is at her command. She uses this unfailing weapon to destroy evil and produce an environment conducive to the growth of righteousness.

The sword that Durga holds in one of her hands symbolizes knowledge, which has the sharpness of a sword. Knowledge free from all doubts is symbolized by the shine of the sword.

The trident or Trishul is a symbol of three qualities: Satwa (inactivity), Rajas (activity), and Tamas (nonactivity). Deva uses these to alleviate physical, mental, and spiritual suffering.

Durga's Transport- In Hindu art and iconography, Durga is frequently depicted standing atop or riding a tiger or lion, which represents power, will, and determination. In riding this fearsome beast, Durga symbolizes her mastery over all these qualities. Her bold pose is called Abhay Mudra, which means “freedom from fear.” Just as the mother goddess confronts evil without fear, Hindu scripture teaches, so too should Hindu faithful conduct themselves in a righteous, courageous way.

The Dasa (Ten) Mahavidyas

**“KALI TARA MAHAVIDYA SODASHI BHUVANESWARI,
BHAI RAVI CHHINNAMASTA CHA VIDYA DHUMAVTI TATHA,
BAGALA SIDDHA VIDYA CHA MATANGI KAMALATMIKA,
ETAHAH DASAMAHAVIDYAAHA GUPTA VIDYAAHA PRAKEERTITAAHA”**

In Tantra, worship of Devi-Shakti is referred to as a Vidya. Of the hundreds of tantrik practices, the worship

of the ten major Devis is called the Dasa Mahavidya. These major forms of the goddess are described in the Todala Tantra. They are Kali, Tara, Maha Tripura Sundari (or Shodasi-Sri Vidya), Bhuvaneshvari, Chinnamasta, Bhairavi, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi, and Kamala. These ten aspects of Shakti are the epitome of the entire creation. Chapter 10 also outlines their consorts, although Dhumavati, the widow form, is not allocated a consort.

There are several “levels” at which these Devis can be worshiped with the prescribed Mantra and Yantra. Like a simple worship of the yantra with the mantra recitation, as a remedial astrological measure, elaborate worship with all tantric rituals for obtaining various siddhis associated with these tantras and for spiritual salvation.

Successful sadhana of these Vidyas gives several boons to the practitioner. The Tantrik-Yogi who has control over his senses and is positively inclined uses the boons to guide people and for the benefit of mankind. The ones whose head starts spinning with success use them for the gratification of the senses, gather a bunch of disciples around them and become fake gurus.

The last chapter of todala Tantra equates Vishnu’s ten incarnations with the ten Mahavidyas as follows:

“Shri Devi said: Lord of Gods, Guru of the universe, tell me of the ten avatars. Now I want to hear of this, tell me of their true nature. Paramesvara, reveals to me which avatar goes with which Devi.

“Shri Shiva said: Tara Devi is the blue form, Bagala is the tortoise incarnation, Dhumavati is the boar, Chinnamasta is Nrisimha, Bhuvaneshvari is Vamana, Matangi is the Rama form, Tripura is Jamadagni, Bhairavi is Balabhadra, Mahalakshmi is Buddha, and Durga is the Kalki form. Bhagavatī Kali is the Krishna murti.” (Todalatantra, chapter 10)

The worship of these is also prescribed as an astrological remedy – for the 9 planets and the Lagna as follows:

Kali for Saturn, Tara for Jupiter, Maha Tripura Sundari (or Shodasi-Sri Vidya) for Mercury, Bhuvaneshvari for Moon, Chinnamasta for Rahu, Bhairavi for Lagna, Dhumavati for Ketu, Bagalamukhi for Mars, Matangi for Sun, and Kamala for Venus.

The tantric worship of these most powerful Vidyas must be practiced only under the guidance of a siddha Guru.



Durga Maa with offerings of Red Chunrari from her Devotees

Maa Ki Chauki – Live singing of Durga Maa Bhajans by prominent singers and musicians





Gita Jayanti:

By Mrs Lalita Singh:

Gita Jayanti is a very important day for Hindus. On this day, the holy book of Hindus, Bhagavad Gita was born, ie Gita Jayanti is the day when Lord Shri Krishna told the Gita to Arjuna. It is celebrated on Shukla Ekadashi on the 11th day of Margashirsha month of the Hindu calendar. The Bhagavad Gita was described by Lord Krishna himself before the Mahabharata war began. It is believed that in the Mahabharata, the seeds of the Pandavas and the Kauravas had decided to go to war even after every possible reconciliation effort.

Gita Jayanti is an annual celebration to commemorate the day when Lord Krishna rendered his philosophical teachings and imparted the essence of Vedic knowledge to Arjun, over 5000 years ago. Krishna enlightened Arjun about the ultimate goal of life. The sermon is delivered on the battlefield of Kurukshetra in an epic battle full of ethical dilemmas. But that is only metaphorical, for it quickly moves beyond the immediate context of the battlefield to the larger realm.

When Arjun refused to fight against his cousins, the Kauravas in the battle, Lord Krishna sent\forth the truth of life and the

philosophy of Karma and Dharma to him, thereby giving birth to one of the world's greatest scriptures: the Gita.

The Bhagavad Gita is considered to be the most important and influential Hindu scripture for its philosophical, practical, political, psychological, and spiritual values. Bhagavad Gita Jayanti, or simply Gita Jayanti, marks the birth of this holy book. According to the traditional Hindu calendar, Gita Jayanthi falls on the Ekadashi day of Shukla Paksha, or the bright half of the Margashirsha month.

The Bhagavad Gita is not just an ancient scripture, but even today, it also serves as an essential guide to the 'Art of Living'. Gita prompts an individual to think, to make a fair and just decision, and to look at life from a different perspective, without surrendering one's identity. The Gita has been addressing contemporary issues and solving everyday problems of humanity for many thousands of years, the relevance of which should not be just confined to the mystical and spiritual pursuits.

The timeless and universal message of Gita is all-encompassing in its expression of truth. Bhagavad Gita means the "Divine Song," the divine communion of truth-realization between man and his Creator, the teachings of Spirit through the soul, that should be sung unceasingly.

We learn from the Bhagwat Gita about the permanence of universal truth, and if it is universal, it must be so for the entire mankind.

For thousands of years Gita has been a spiritual and philosophical guide to an entire civilization. Sages, scholars, philosophers, religious teachers and leaders alike, have all tried to interpret its message for us, they have dived to its depth to understand its message and the Truth, and now, as the world discovered it, it has become a subject of universal study.

Such is the power of the Divine Message. It is timeless and universal; it endures through time and space. It is difficult for anyone to claim to have fully understood it. Gita is a journey of discovery, with no destination bar, only constant progress.

We should not reduce Gita to reading and rituals only. We should deep dive in it, understand the message behind it, and relate it to our lives.

It goes without say that we should celebrate Gita Jayanti continuously, not only for offerings and prayers, but also for discussions and debates, in order that the next generation can begin to think deeply on the message and relate it. So too, for older generation who can reflect deeper in its meaning and understanding.

**GITA SUGITA KARTAVYA, KIM ANYAIH SASTRA-VISTARAIH
YA SVAYAM PADMA-NABHASYA, MUKHA-PADMAD VINIHSRTA**

The Gita should always be sung with devotion. This divine song emanated from the holy lotus mouth of the Supreme Lord Himself, Lord Sri Krishna. What more can any other scriptures give?

ARTICLES ON HINDUISM

Hinduism –Celebrating the Past, Enlivening the Present and Envisioning the Future

– By Dr. Mrinal Kant Pandey

(Dr Mrinal Kant Pandey is prolific writer on Indian Diaspora and currently President, Diaspora Foundation in Delhi)

Chapters

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THE COLOUR CODE OF HINDUISM

The yellow or saffron (shade of yellow or orange) is considered sacred color in Hinduism. It is used by ascetics (sadhus) seers and religious community for their clothes. When any fruit become fully ripe, it becomes either yellow or slightly saffron/red. Similarly coded meaning conveys the fact that when mind – intelligence become ripe, it takes

the shape of wisdom (acquiring sense of proportion in thought, action, perception and perspective). A fully ripe fruit falls from the tree after breaking bondage of attachment and becoming detached. Similarly an ordinary man becomes ascetic (or detached from excessive material world) with sense of proportionate maturity. The sacred color of yellow and red (during sunrise and sunset) is also close to never – ending radiance of the cosmic energy giver sun.

NO ONE GOD, NO ONE HOLY BOOK

Hinduism is the world's oldest religion with civilizational legacy of roots, traditions and customs dating back more than 4000 years. Hinduism believes that their religion has no identifiable beginning or end and, as such, often refers to it as Sanatan Dharma (or the eternal way). Religion has no specific one founder and one holy book. It embraces so many gods, goddesses, traditions, philosophies and schools of thought. It is also construed as 'way of life'. It is a fusion and confluence of so many beliefs. There are multiple paths to reach to the God. There is continuous cycle of life, death, reincarnation and life after death.

Hinduism is deeply pluralistic traditions, promoting respect for other religions and acknowledges the potential for truth in them. Hindus see varieties of religions and philosophies as different ways to understand and relate to God. The core philosophy is search for truth, not the specific path taken. A quote from the Vedas that summarizes the Hindu perspective is, "Truth is one, and the wise call it by various names".

GODDESS WORSHIP A TRUE MIRROR OF GENDER EQUALITY

The Earth Mother continues to be worshipped in India. Mother is symbol of creation and continuity. It nurtures the seed and brings it to fruition. Goddess worship is oldest

time-honored traditions in India as potential indicator of powerful matriarchal culture. Tridevi or three Goddesses, is a term used in Hinduism to describe three main female deities .These are Saraswati (consort of God Brahma, as originator of the universe), Lakshmi (consort of God Vishnu as preserver of the universe) and Parvati (consort of God Shiva as destroyer of the universe). Saraswati is goddess of learning, arts and music .Lakshmi is goddess of good fortune and wealth. Lakshmi is also shown with four hands which represents the four goals of Hindu's life: dharma (good conduct), Kama (longing or desire in life), artha (earning money legitimately) and moksha (liberation from birth and death). Parvati is wife of God Shiva and represents continuity in life.

Shakti is personified as the benevolent Uma or Parvati or Kali (as terrifying force destroying the evil) and the Durga who conquers forces that threaten stability of universe. Annapurna, the goddess of nourishment and abundance, is an aspect of the goddess Parvati.

VEDAS, OLDEST SCRIPTURE AS SOUL-CONSCIOUSNESS LABORATORY OF THE WORLD

The Vedas are oldest scriptures of the world and are cornerstone of Hinduism as Sanatan Dharma (meaning Eternal Order or Eternal Faith). The term 'Vedas' connotes 'knowledge'. The Vedas existed and preserved in oral form (shruti tradition) and passed on from enlightened seers (Masters) to accomplished students for generations until they were written between 1500-C.500 during Vedic period in Ancient India. It means their antiquity is more because they existed as sacred oral traditions till written. The philosophical foundation of Vedas show direction and purpose of life, cycle of life and death , true nature of the Divine and so many aspects related to sublimer nature of existence.

There are four Vedas - Rig Veda, Sam Veda. Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda .Each of four Vedas are further divided into types of text included within them: Aranyakas (rituals, observance), Brahman (commentaries on said rituals), Samhitas (benediction, prayers and mantras) and Upanishads (philosophical narrative and dialogues). The four Vedas are literal sounds of the Divine which, when recited or sung recreate the primal vibrations of the universe.

Vedic seers were soul-scientists and believed in spiritual awakening through the process of experimental science of self-discovery, inner-mining and inner alignment with the Cosmic Source (including its manifestation of the Nature). Vedas are oldest spiritual heritage of humanity. The Upanishads are best read part of Vedas because their discourse is explained in dialogue and narrative form. Upanishads were first to be translated in different languages of the world.

HINDUISM CONSIDER THE GLOBE AS ONE FAMILY

Hinduism believes in the concept of “Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam” (means global family). It also talks about “Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinaha, Sarve Santu Niraamayaa “meaning thereby” May all sentient beings be happy and not suffer from illness.” Welfare of the entire global humanity is ingrained in the Hinduism. Vedic seers advice that “Let Noble Thoughts Come from All Directions”. Hinduism is a very receptive religion and open to progressive ideas from all directions, faiths, philosophies and thoughts. Almost all other religions like Islam, Christianity and Parsis have existed in India from a very long time. Even Parsees, when expelled from Iran, took shelter in India. The Parsees also called “Persians” descended from Persian Zoroastrians (Greater Iran) to Gujarat and Sindh between the 8th and 10th century to avoid the religious persecution of

Zoroastrians by Muslim invaders who conquered Iran. They (Zoroastrian Iranians) refused to adopt Islam during Arab conquest. Jews have been living in India from long time. They are concentrated in Mumbai. They are also in different parts of the world as successful enterprising community. Buddhism and Jainism, considered a part of Hinduism, also developed with substantial presence. Even Buddhism travelled from India to countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, China, and Japan. Korea, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Bhutan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Mongolia and so many other countries. Saint Thomas Syrian Church was established by St Thomas in Palayoor in Kerala in 52 AD. He established seven churches across Malabar coast in Kerala. Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar is famous mosque and houses the sacred hair of Prophet Muhammad's beard.

All of us breathe the same air no matter which country or socio-cultural background we come from. Food, thirst, pain, pleasure, sleep and desire knock the door routine life of all individuals with the same intensity. Hinduism believes that no religion can claim to have monopoly over tolerance, love, compassion and non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi used non-violence as a political tool of political struggle and independence and changed the class movement into mass movement. Gandhi had respect for even opponents and he told that "hate the sin and not the sinner" That is why so many countries liked and accepted Mahatma Gandhi as epoch making personality.

Real problem arises when I say that "My God is better than yours". Sometimes this problem of religious supremacy comes to our mind out of either false sense of supremacy or highly precarious sense of lost identity.

ALL GREAT MINDS SYNK ALIKE

Basically, we float in an ocean of thoughts - absorbing some and repelling others. Thoughts are living entities.

Individuals cease but thoughts outlive them. Thought-culture is an art of thinning out and pruning out ideas. Mental journey through the vehicles of thought teaches us the lesson of differentiating the chaff from the grain. In this process of identification of dichotomy between the virtual and the real, we gradually narrow down the gap between the value-based and value-starved thinking. Life is not a well-trimmed garden of readymade thoughts. It is an inevitable process for everyone to pass through its different stages. Purification at the level of thought is essential. Slightest impurities in our thought can create imbalance in our action. In this divided world of rigid mindsets, there is a greater need of synergy of views, convergence of ideas and harmony of voices of varied faiths. The inquisitive mind should be allowed to question the rationality of any thought, system of faith structure. Sometimes critical comparison with others shows us the hollowness of our thinking. Therefore we should be ready to alter our lives by altering our attitudes and fine tuning our consciousness for inner unity.

THE KUMBH LARGEST CONGREGATION OF FAITH

The Kumbh Mela (fair) is the largest pilgrimage, massive congregation of faith and biggest festival of the world with duration of 30-45 days. Full kumbh mela is organized after gap of 12 years in Prayagraj in India and half Kumbh fair is organized after gap of 6 years in Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik of India.

The ritual is marked by holy dip in the sangam (confluence of three rivers) of Prayagraj. The devotees believe that bathing in the river is a means of atonement for past mistakes and cleansing of sin. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica and Indian authorities, more than 200 million Hindus gathered for Kumbh mela in 2019, including 50 millions on the festival's most crowded day. As

many as 90 million devotees came to half kumbh mela (fair) in Prayagraj from January-March, 2023. Kumbh is beyond the words. Jack Henbner and David Osborn have described Kumbh appropriately, adding “We photographed until we ran out of film and were left only with a feeling of haplessness. Kumbh mela was indeed a magnificent and as awesome encounter. It was impossible to capture the festival. Indeed, it was the festival that captured us. Words, film, print and paper cannot do justice to the event- it is one that has to be experience personality.”Kumbh is covered under UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. When you flow with the immersion of faith with the largest gathering of the world in the pious place like Prayagraj, you go beyond intellect to get the nectar of coming together – a spirit that permeates the Kumbh. It is like going with tidal wave of the sea effortlessly when one is pushed far away without swimming. Collective bhakti (devotion) is always the easiest way for salvation then karma (actions and rituals) and gyan (knowledge).

PRAYERS GO ABOVE AND BLESSINGS COME DOWN

It has been aptly said that prayers go above and blessings come down. Prayers link us with cosmic consciousness and operate at a very high level, far away from self-centric petty gains and mundane considerations. If there is a force of piousness, purity and sublimity in our prayer, divine blessings enrich our life in multiple ways. Prayers give us the ability to experience spiritual dimensions that supply us the energy and insights to redirect and transform our life from within. With powerful praying and embracing heart, we change our surroundings with love, tolerance and compassion. If individual prayer is not possible in this fast-paced life, vibrations of collective prayers in any religious place are the best space for us. When we do any good act for others,

our satisfaction is converted into fulfillment. But it is also true that blessings of the recipient come to us as donor. The gratitude of the recipient serves as a praying wish for our well being.

Vedic seers nurtured the view that the most sacred sound of the universe, ‘Om’ resonates within the space of the sixth chakras, located mid-brow, between the eyes, in the area known as ‘third eye’. The essence of thought, word and sound is ‘OM’, says the Chandogya Upanishad. ‘Om’ represents pure consciousness. Inner power of intuition is harnessed from recitation of Vedic mantras. Prayers through the sacred mantras generate healing sounds that have a far deeper effect than their audibility. Just as the Earth moves in harmony with the vibrations of the celestial music, we too can become aware of the rhythms and move in harmony with healing chants.

Prayer is emotional surrender to God. It is devout breathing of our faith. It is an inward quest for inspiration. It charges us from within. Wilfred A. Peterson beautifully sums up that “praying is not to get more, but to be more. Prayer brings God into our relationship with our fellow men. Prayer is thinking and thanking.” When we expect something from God in return for prayer, it is bargaining with God.

A family that prays together stays together. In the contemporary world, prayer through devotional music has become more popular. Music has a great healing power. When music enters in sacred religious and spiritual places, it is like a tidal wave to immerse all. We forget all the problems of our daily life as long as we sit in the session of musical and devotional prayers.

Ravi Shankar, one of India’s best-known classical musicians, eloquently expressed the idea in his autobiography, *My Music-My Life*: “ Our tradition teaches that sound and the musical experiences are preparatory steps

to the realization of the self. We view music as a kind of spiritual discipline that raises one's inner being to divine peacefulness and bliss.....The highest aim of our music is to reveal the essence of the universe it reflects, and the ragas are among the means by which this essence can be apprehended.”

Vedic seers knew thousands of years ago that we are immersed in an ocean of sound energy. In temples, churches and monasteries, the sound of the bell, chanting and instrumental sounds are integral part of prayer through music. Music therapy is being used on patients for their mood management and fast recovery during treatment.

NO CAMERA CAN ENTER INTO THE SOUL

No camera can enter into the soul. The eyes of the camera cannot capture the inner beauty of either creature or living being. No high tech laboratory of the world can fathom and quantify attributes like honesty, trust, loyalty, compassion, and true love. No apparatus and tools of logic are applicable on faith. Our road, sea, and air travel can be measured exactly. But is it possible to even guess the length of inner journey? Tools of empirical logic are no longer relevant to verify trust and faith. There are so many scientific theories that were once accepted as verified truths were later discarded in the light of new inventions of modern science.

Our inner space is bigger than outer space. Inner journey is simply like travelling in borderless world without any restrictions. That's why our mental health or wellness operates at the level of our thoughts. Thoughts colour our mental and physical activities. It also impacts our emotional health. If any mind is too much concerned about financial uncertainties, loss of job, unwanted comparison with others, over-sized expectations, family discards, and etc., she/he is bound to suffer. But if she/he is enlightened by this

thought that suffering with struggle is essence of life and every problem is an opportunity to grow and enhance our learning curve in positive direction. A change in perspective alters our way of thinking. Spirituality teaches us contentment and gives us signal to be happy with whatever we have. After becoming seriously I'll, we understand true meaning of the wealth of health. When we see that any celebrity committed suicide, we understand that over dose of ambition is the worst enemy. Sometimes our endless desires become a breeding ground of mental tension and depression. After suffering over a period of time, we are ready discard a lot of things and prefer mental peace. Peace cannot be purchased from any market. Ultimately, spirituality fine tunes our thought process and enriches our life in many ways.

After becoming parent, we understand better the sacrifices and sufferings of our own parents. It is a matter of self-realization and no x-ray machine can detect it. No syllabus of any school or college teaches the concept of 'how to ignore'. The Buddhist theory of middle path or theory of moderation may prove effective to avoid extreme polarity in life. Too much hatred and vengeance proves counter-productive. When any one commits crime in the name of such ill-guided passions and goes to jail and subsequently regret for it, he/she carries a vast weight of guilt.

No digital or technical device can train our 'inner eyes'. Spirituality tells us to have company of the enlightened friends and life coaches who can give us precision of insight to avoid extremes and be balanced. Yoga and meditation promotes our inner alignment and flexibility of body and mind with advanced coping capacity. It might be alluring to utilize the weekends to recoup sleep debt. When we oversleep for even a few days, expert say we risk resetting our body clock to a different cycle. Comfort level of body

should not be over protected. We should tone down the craziness of comfort level with age.

The format of the life is unstructured. It is not defined like syllabus of any university examination. Life never follows the trend forecast. First thing is to explore, observe and experience the nature, pattern, trend and tendency of one's life and life cycles of others. After that one can understand it with sustainable tenacity of focus.

Similarly, it is not taught in schools and colleges 'how to enlarge the horizon of imagination' and stimulate 'culture of curiosity'. Albert Einstein said that I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious. Einstein, most influential physicist of all times, further says "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination embraces the entire world. Logic will get you from A to Z; imagination will get you everywhere." Our ancient wisdom also teaches us that "Let Noble Thoughts come to us from all directions."

Sometimes, there is no concept of gender, because soul, imagination and thoughts are genderless. When mental peace is in 'pieces', we cannot experience difference between 'peaceful' and 'blissful'. So many people are living in elite peaceful localities without peace of mind. There is difference between conditioned soul and liberated soul. There is a subtle difference between holding a hand and chaining a soul.

When you fail, you have a chance of learning from your mistakes and doing better next time provided you are kind to yourself. Let your emotions get a better deal. 'Job crafting' is an harmonizing art to make ones current role more meaningful.

So many cancer survivors after battling advanced stages of the fatal disease were convinced by the fact that faith is a better healer than medicine. Such cancer survivors started curing their own thoughts and harmonize them with inner spiritual self without any fear of death. Spirituality and

music heal with amazing power with inner radiance. Modern life style based on information overload and illusive impressions result in short attention span and makes it difficult for people to think deeply about the choices and danger of impulsive choice-making. Spirituality, Yoga and Meditation fortify our mind to filter our thinking process, curtail our greed, enhances simplicity , teach humbleness, highlight proper diet, counter toxicity of surrounding pollution and make happiness-oriented with loving care for others .

We float in a vast space of timelessness. Sometimes the sinking feeling of our emotional void and vacuum teaches us no person from outside can make us free. The quietude of the mind, the tranquility of the senses and stillness of the thought can give us more clarity. A harmony with the nature can be more healing than medicines. Agitated waves of mental pollution and material manifestations need to be silenced. A wave less lake reflects the stars in the night.

No machine can measure and define intuition. Intuition goes against dynamics of logic. It is construed as sixth sense. Intuition is wired to soul. Intuition and instinct are closely related. Common human instincts are material comfort for livelihood, greed, self-recognition, self- protection, concern for family, community etc. But intuition is upgraded form of instinct. Intuition is also a minute indication either about any coming events or about anything/any person. It guides a person to act a certain way without fully understanding why. Usually we fail to explain why we are inclined to like any person without judging her/him. Intuition colors our likings or disliking or decisions without any logical filter of mind. Inner sacredness or less mental pollution creates more space for intuitive signals. Excessive traffic of thoughts, thought impurities, jealous rivalries, cravings for vendetta and indecisiveness dispel the purity of intuition. When brain

gives us an intuitive answer to our heightened anxiety, problem, fear and uncertainty, we feel like reaching to the solution of the problem. Whenever natural calamities like earthquake, sunami and devastating hurricane come, few animals get advance intuitive signals for defense. Parents too feel so when any unfortunate incident is set to happen in the life of their children. Since Indian seers or enlightened person with focused density of awareness (meditation) remain away from onslaught of agitated waves in detached way, so they smell better intuitive signals and forecast the shadow of coming events. God is above and beyond reason. The faith is also beyond reason. The inner conviction verges on the boundary of faith. No eyes of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) can reach to the outskirts of that boundary.

SENSE OF COSMIC ONENESS AND BORDERLESS WORLD

The world is undivided in terms of underlying unity of humanism and rationality. The concept of love, tolerance and compassion has only one shade and dimension irrespective of its varied manifestations in any society. The ethical principles of all religions, share and nurture common philosophy. The moral codes of all pantheons have much in common in spite of difference in details, emphasis and tone. Altruistic impulses of all religions underline the inner unity of mankind. The body and face may have multi-racial and multi-cultural variations, but the colour of blood is always the same. Despite vicissitudes of time, force of truth has kept the inner consciousness of every society on. All of us breathe one and the same air no matter which country of socio-cultural background we come from. Food, thirst, pain, pleasure, sleep and desire knock the door of routine life of all individuals with the same intensity. The means and ways of drinking may be different but water is the only

source of liquid through which quench our thirst. Similarly, death is the greatest leveler of all. The semblance of unity and similarity pervade everywhere. What we need is liberation from delusion-afflicted intelligence so that we may see the temple of understanding commonality and consensus.

HIMALAYAS - BLISSFUL ZONE OF THE WORLD

Attachment and detachment are two faces of the life-matrix. Livelihood and family responsibilities bind us with attachment of material pursuits. Company of enlightened one, valued readings, focused thinking, short spiritual retreats, and spending quality time with the Nature are pathways to detachment. Ashram is a system of age-based stages of life in Hindu texts of ancient India. The four ashrams are Brahmacharya (student) , Grihastha (householder), Vanaprastha (forest walker/ forest dweller) and Sanyasa (Renunciation). Before matter (never ending cycle of maya) becomes hard wired in our thought and habit, ancient seers advised us to take asylum in the forest and mountains near river bank to cut off bandage of attachment. In modern times, people are going on short term religious and spiritual retreats (yoga, meditation, healing, community service, lectures etc) to mitigate the rigour and rigidity of stressed life lacking work-life balance. All these are sacred corners of divinity to acquire and earn value-based insight to counter devastations of fast-paced life with never-ending agenda.

This is the reason the sacred Himalayas, the source of so many rivers, healing ecology and forest kingdom, have remained source of inspiration to truth seekers. From ancient time, so many seekers lived in seclusion in the blissful zone of Himalayas to decode life and align with Nature.

The Himalayas Mountain is traditionally considered “sacred mountains” in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and

Sikhism. This ancient mountain is considered abode of gods and goddesses and spiritual center of the world. So many mythological stories, legends and pilgrimage sites are associated with these sacred mountains. Mount Kailash is centre point of the world where heaven meets earth. This is the most intriguing mountain range in the whole of Himalayas, is considered inaccessible. Both Mansarovar lake and Mt. Kailash are located in the western of Tibet. Lake Mansarovar is unique as it is a freshwater lake, whereas most of the lakes in Tibet are saline lakes.

According to Hindu scriptures, Lord Shiva resides at the top of Kailasa with his wife, Parvati, where they rest in eternal meditation.

In Buddhism, the mountain is known as Gang Rinpoche which means 'Precious Snow Mountain'. In the Buddhist texts, Mount Kailash is believed to be the legendary Mount Meru, the Centre of Buddhist Cosmology. It is also believed to be the home of Demchok, one of the central deities of Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet. It is a holi pilgrimage for Buddhists.

Mt Kailash is more than 2000 meters lower than the world's highest peak, Mount Everest. However, no one has ever climbed to Mount Kailash's summit. It is a virgin (unclimbed) mountain. All climbing plans in the past were abandoned due to so many reasons.

Even today many seekers and tourists visit sacred places in Himalayan region and spend quality time to understand awareness, detachment, meditation, liberation and immersive sync with the wonders of the Nature.

Rama: An Ecotourist

By - Dr. Richa Agrawal D.Phil. (English)

(Dr Agrawal has done doctoral research on “Lord Rama as Eco-tourist”)

The term Ecotourism came into prevalence in the second last decade of the twentieth century using it as an alternative to mass tourism in order to enable the tourists to enjoy Nature in a responsible manner thus minimizing ecological destruction. Hector Ceballos-Lascurain, a Mexican green architect, environmentalist and ecotourism expert coined the term ‘Ecotourism’² in 1983. It was he who defined Ecotourism to the world. According to him

“Ecotourism is that tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any cultural aspects (both past and present) found in these areas.” (Ramamoorthy

Thiyagarajan) Before discussing ecotourism, the term ecosystem needs to be defined. Ecosystem includes the sky, the water, the earth, and the living as well as the non-living objects in all these systems. It is a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living surroundings working in an interactive manner as a functional unit.

On the other hand, ‘tourism’ stands for ‘the practice of travelling for pleasure’. Thus, ‘Eco-tourism’ stands for “Tourism involving travel to areas of natural or ecological interest, typically under the guidance of a naturalist, for the purpose of observing wildlife and learning

about the environment and at the same time focus on wildlife and promotion of understanding and conservation of the environment.” (Ramamoorthy Thiyagarajan) But very few of us know that ecotourism existed in the era of the Ramayana itself and Sri Rama was an eco-tourist. Rama travelled from Ayodhya to Lanka through the forests of Citrakuta, Dandakaranya, Panchvati, and Kiskindha. There are certain principles which need to be practised by an ecotourist. An ecotourist should:

- Adopt low-impact tourism in order to protect ecological integrity of wilderness areas, and maintain the wildlife values of the tourist destination and its surrounding areas;
- Build awareness and respect for the ecology and environment;
- Facilitate the sustainability of ecotourism enterprises and activities; 3
- Use locally produced, indigenous, and ecologically sustainable and environment friendly materials for tourism activities. It also provides livelihood opportunities to local communities; (Ramamoorthy Thiyagarajan) Valmiki himself prescribes the code of conduct for an ecotourist in the Ayodhyakanda by using various devices. When Kaikeyi demands the fulfillment of her boons from king Dasaratha, the latter laments: *katham rathairvibhurgatvaa gajaashvaishcha muhurmuhuh|| padabhyam raamo mahaaranye vatso me vicharishyati|* (2-12-95, Valmiki Ramayana) {How can my beloved son Rama, who was hitherto travelling as a Lord, time and again, in chariots, on elephants and horses, move on foot in an intense forest?} Ralph T.H.Griffith translates it as: How shall my Rama, whom, before, His elephant or chariot bore, Now with his feet, a wanderer tread The forest wilds around him spread The afore-mentioned sloka highlights the prohibition of

using chariots and ridden animals while moving in the forest. Also, an ecotourist should move on foot in the forest and not on any vehicle in order to save the vegetation from being crushed and to save the wildlife from being harmed or disturbed. Noise caused by the rattle of chariot wheels could increase the risk of death in animals by alerting predator or prey detection and also interfere with their reproductive cycle. Thus, this particular sloka imposes certain prohibitions while travel to and in the wild that 4 minimize the negative impact of the traveller on the ecological integrity of wilderness areas and secures wildlife values of the destination and its surrounding areas. The ecotourist should survive on the wild edibles available in the forest. This rule of ecotourism has been portrayed in Dasaratha's worries when he says that Rama, accustomed to eating a variety of cuisine cooked by trained royal cooks, will now actually sustain his life living on alkaline, bitter, pungent fruits and other wild edibles. He further worries how Rama, accustomed to dress up in expensive robes, will wear ochre-coloured garments. Slokas 2.12.96-98 depicts these worries of Dasaratha. These slokas have been translated by H.P.Shastrri as: "Now my son, accustomed to ride on chariots, horses and elephants will have to walk barefoot in the forest. He who formerly was served at table by attendants in jeweled livery, each vying with the other, saying: My dish is sweeter, O Lord,' how shall that Rama henceforth live on the bitter and insipid fruits of the forest? How shall he pass his life dependent on fruits and roots? How shall Shri Ramachandra, accustomed to costly apparel and a luxurious couch, sleep on the bare ground, clothed in the yellow robe of a mendicant?" While declaring the sentence of banishment to Rama, Kaikeyi utters these words: Saptā sapta ca varshaani dandaka aranyam aashritah| Abhishekam imam tyaktvaa jataa ciira dharah vasa|| (2-18-37, Valmiki Ramayana) { You have to leave this coronation

function and dwell in the forest of Dandaka for fourteen years, wearing braided hair and covered with a hide} This again states the eco-sensitive principle. It gets very clear that while living in the forest one should dress in a way suitable to that region. At the same time, the riches and the luxuries are to be left behind in the town. 5 In Ayodhyakanda, when Sita asks Rama to take her to the forest along with him, he while describing the various hardships of forest life also tells her that: *Krodhalobhe vimoktavyau kartavyaa tapase matih |* (2-28-24, Valmiki Ramayana) (Anger and greed are to be completely abandoned by the dwellers of the forest, and one's heart has to set on asceticism.) Griffith translates it as: Hope, anger must be cast aside, to penance every thought applied: During the first phase of his exile, sage Bharadwaja advised Rama to settle in the Citrakuta forest. Citrakuta is a hill to the north of which flows the Mandakini River. Branches of bel trees were going down due to the heaviness of its fruits and flowers. Honeycombs were hanging from the trees. Peacock and Cakravak birds were crying and answering to their mates. The whole jungle was full of chirpings of a variety of birds. In Griffith's translation, slokas 2.56.1,2 have been presented as: Then Rama when the morning rose, Called Lakshmana gently from repose: 'Awake the pleasant voices hear Of forest birds that warble near. Whereas R.C.Dutt while translating the very same sloka, writes: "Wake, my love, and list the warbling and the voices of the wood," 6 That is, he has probably increased the range of the sounds heard in the wild. As in the original 'vanyu valga' (forest birds) have only been mentioned but along with 'warbling', Dutt has also included 'voices of the wood'. Thus Dutt, the ornitho-environmentalist has a super-audibility towards the phonetic spectrum of the environment. Nature is at its utmost vibrancy in the aforesaid translated sloka. In Valmiki Ramayana the efflorescence of several trees like Kinsuka

gets a scenic presentation in the description of Citrakuta forest in spring, a common feature of Madhya Pradesh forests till today. The forest comprises beautiful flowering trees which surround it on all sides. There, the Kinsuka tree, laden with blossom on all sides, welcomed the trio. Rama , seeing the blossom laden trees of Kinsuka, spontaneously utters to Sita , “See,O Sita,the Kinsuka trees laden with blossoms on all sides and appearing as though illumined and adorned with garlands due to their flowers in this vernal season, synchronizing with the close of winter.” Griffith puts it as: ‘Look round thee, dear; each flowery tree Touchedwith the fire of morning see The Kinsuk, now the frosts are fled,- How glorious with the wreaths of red! R.C. Dutt describes the beauty of the Kinsuka as ‘Mark the flaming flower of Kinsuk’. Thus, awareness, respect, and appreciation are the striking features of such a description of Nature. Marking Nut tree (bhallalaka) and bel were the other vegetation reported here. The abundance and the capacityof Nature to fulfill the needs and the requirements of mankind has been very 7 efficiently portrayed in Ayodhyakanda: “Look at the marking nut and Bel trees, notmade use of by men (being out of their reach) and bentlow under the weight of their fruits and blossoms”. Griffith translates it as: The Bel trees see, so loved of men, Hangingtheir boughs in every glen. O’er burthened with their fruit and flowers: A plenteous store of food is ours’. On theirway to Citrakuta, the trio (Rama, Laksmana, and Sita) experience the richness of the locale with its flora and fauna. In the ‘fair wood’ they get startled by the cries of the ‘wild cock’ and the scattered petals of flowers make their foot- falls ‘soft-to-tread’. There the peacock’s voice and the free roaming elephants and the ‘sweet birds’ songs’ enrich the environment with a rainbow effect of melody. Feeling the soothing effect of Nature’s display of the Citrakuta hill Rama spontaneously utters: O brother in that holy shade How happy shall we be. At

Citrakuta, the three ecologies meet—the hill (Citrakuta), the river (Mandakini), and the dense forest encircling the mountain-hill. Wilderness however is absent in the portrayal of natural surroundings

of the three associating ecosystems of the forest ecology. Rama's next halt was at Dandaka-aranya where he constructed an ashrama. Soon after entering the vast wilderness of Dandaka, Rama saw a circle of ashramas where ascetics dwelt. It was a place of refuge for all creatures; its grounds were always kept perfectly clean. The rules of the protection of Ecology and Environment were strictly followed by the sages and seers in that wilderness. Along with human population, the Siddhas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, and even Gods resided here. A complete separate cultural atmosphere pervaded there which in modern term is known as religious ecology. Grim and Tucker define religious ecology as “ways of orienting humans to the universe, grounding them in the community of nature and humans, nurturing them in Earth's fecund processes and transforming them into their deeper cosmological selves, opening us toward the creative force in the cosmos.” This particular definition is an apt description of the locale of the ashramas in Dandaka-aranya. In the Aranyakanda the ashramas are described as “aranyaisca mahavriksaihpunyaih sveduphalairvritam”, which means abounding in tall forest trees, sacred trees and sweet fruitbearing trees. The forest of Dandaka consists of a wide forested plateau with numerous hills and sub-forests. Mandakini, Godavari, and many streams flow by its sides. The next halt of the trio was at Pancavati. Two yojanas from Agastya's hermitage Rama built his forest dwellings in the woods of Panchvati (The scene now shifts from Northern India—crossing the Vindhya Mountains—to the Deccan and Southern India.) from where Sita was abducted. Having its growth on the calm and holy environment on the bank of the Godavari, a holy and

beautiful ever-blossoming forested plain (samam) shows an ecologically balanced stretch within the big forest. It was rich in floral contents comprising fruit-yielding, flowery, aromatic, hardwood trees and sacred holy basil with abundance of aquatic lotus and aquatic birds like kraunca and sarasa in dancing mood. Fauna mainly comprised the deer-herds and peacocks. Such flora and fauna are given due importance as a part of ecology of the place. Pancavati has been characterized as having a flavour of tranquility. 9 During the course of their wanderings in search of Sita, Kabandha directed Rama and Laksmana westwards towards the Pampa sarovara and Kiskindha. This lake lies to the west of the Rishyamukha hill and east of the Matanga hill. Presently it is located in the Bellary district of Karnataka. Description of Pampa sarovara enabled the text of Valmiki to portray the features of Lake Ecosystem in specific and of aquatic ecology in general. The pleasantly cool, sparkling like silver, crystal clear and the limpid water of Pampa lake was fragrant with the scent of lotuses. The beauty and the splendour of the Pampa's surroundings added to Rama's pangs of separation from his wife Sita and reminded him of her charm. Canto I of Kiskindhakanda in Srimad Valmiki Ramayana depicts this intensified pang of Rama. This absolute absorption of the observing self into Nature is achieved only with a surrender of the self-consciousness. After crowning Sugriva, Rama and Laksmana retired to mount Prasavana. A large and long cave on the summit of this mountain was chosen by them as their residence during the rainy season. This cave was lovely, spacious, and well-ventilated. Nearby was a lovely pond embellished with full blown lotuses. On the other side of the cave flowed a river—in easterly direction—absolutely free from mud. Then comes the Osadhi –parvata. This alpine region semi-forest system, Himalayan in particular is not adequately described. Nor did Rama have a firsthand experience of treading it. But what

is important here is the location of the medicinal plant growing mountain in Himalayan region. During the battle between the Ravana's army and Rama's army, Laksmana being hit by shaktibana fell unconscious. As

suggested by the local physician Sushena, Hanumana rushed to the Dronagiri Mountain (Osadhi peak) to fetch four highly potent drug plants named after their particular curative properties. These were Mrita-Sanjeevani (that is the plant that revives the 10 dead using the life-principle), Visalyakarani (the plant that enables the removal of darts from the body), Suvarnakarani (i.e. giving glowing complexion or bringing back one in natural complexion wasted due to some reasons), and Sandhanakarani (for healing of fracture). Finally comes the ecology of Lanka which can be classified as Evergreen Natural Forest and Naturalised Forest thus forming the two fold character of the Lankan forest. The Natural Forest comprises mainly sub-forest, rock-plants, sufficient water sources, biodiversity and other features of a Natural Forest. The Naturalised Forest is best described in the graphic account of the Ashoka – vana, named after its principal plant species, the Ashoka tree. It consisted of varieties of Ashoka of different colours viz, golden, fiery red, dark coloured, blue, and skin coloured. Also Kalpa-vriksha, which is excellent in fragrance and the continuous oozing of the juice from them, is described as entwined with hundreds of creeping plants. Its pool also consisted of the Lily-forest which covered the entire water surface. The evergreen Ashoka-vana might be described as a garden where Nature is portrayed in all its glory. Though Rama did not go to the Ashoka vatika himself it played a very significant role during the search of Sita. It was glorified and destined to become a venue to observe the turn of events in Rama's favour. Thus the Ramayana provides vast and interesting information about Nature

.Going against Nature is unethical and disastrous. The holy

sages living in forests and meditating on the banks of the rivers were honouring Mother Nature. Those who made the forests and sacred spots their hideouts for macabre and unscrupulous activities were destroyed by Rama, thus leaving a note that living in conformity with Nature is the way of the civilized and this was welcomed by all. 11 In course of his journey, Rama came across rivers, mountains, extreme weather conditions, enchanting beauty of Nature, and battle in Lanka. But during Rama's journey, Nature unfolded itself, revealing that the rivers were full of wholesome, limpid and sparkling crystal like water, and the breeze was pure. Rama had to cover his journey in the wild through both—mild and rough—aspects of Nature, moving through various ecosystems. At times, the mineral wealth of the mountains fascinated him; at times moving through them became tedious. But Nature helped him in giving expression to his feelings and sentiments. Conclusion: Rama began his journey to the wild from Ayodhya as a banished prince, but his movement through the various ecosystems, admiring the variety of flora and fauna, vegetations, topographies, and water bodies, turned his sojourn into an ecotourism and provided him with the status of an ecotourist till the time he returned to Ayodhya.

Pride of wealth destroys wealth, pride of strength destroys strength, and in the same manner pride of knowledge destroys knowledge

—Sam Veda

The Global Expand of Hindutwa

-By Dr. Shailendra Mani Tripathi

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DhrtiKcamâDamotsteyamÚaucamindriyanigraha 1

DhîrvidyâSatyamakrodhoDaúakamDharmalakcaGame 11

(Patience, forgiveness, restraint, not to thieve, purity, Control of sensory organs, Wisdom, Knowledge, Truthfulness and Absence of anger — these are the ten basic features of dharma)

-Manusmriti

Sanatan, that considered this verse as the maxim of dharma, never took the help of temptation nor torture for its spread. The presence of Hindutva is today all over the earth and it is without use of any unfair means or effort.

Throughout its history, Hinduism has never been expansionist in the sense that the monotheistic religious communities of the West have. There has never been a dearth of service in Hinduism. Such kings have happened here who always kept their treasures open for the poor. Not only kings, but such poor people are also found in these communities who have fed the hungry even after fasting themselves. This Sanatan has given the formula of 'Atithi Devo Bhava' (Treat a guest as god) and King Shivi, who cut off flesh from his body to protect the pigeon that came for a refuge to him, has also been a progeny of Sanatan. There are countless examples of people in Sanatan taking up arms to protect the downtrodden. But no Sanatani has ever done any of these things for expansion of their religion.

In the event of disaster, we provide all kinds of help even to our enemy countries and also participate in international defense operations when feel necessary. These facts are enough to dispel one's illusion that we cannot do what some other communities do for an expansion. But, none of this has ever been the way of Hindutva, neither temptation nor coercion or terror. Hindutva can never take to these ways.

Yes, we taught the world how to live, gave solutions to its physical, emotional, and other worldly and spiritual problems. Sometimes we did this through yoga and sometimes through *bhakti* or philosophy. But we have never told anyone, even by mistake, that he should become a Hindu or leave his religion and adopt ours. It is the influence of these ten qualities – *Dh[ti]* (patience), *Kcamâ* (forgiveness), *Samyama* (restraint), *Asteya* (Not to thieve), *Āeauca* (purity), *IndriyaNigraha* (Control of sensory organs), *Dhî* (Wisdom), *Vidyâ* (Knowledge), *Satyam* (Truthfulness) and *Akrodha* (Absence of anger) – that attracts everyone towards it. Like the fragrance from flowers, whoever it reaches cannot help but appreciate it in his heart. This is the reason that outside India, you see the existence of grand Hindu temples in many countries of Asia, Africa, Europe, America and Australia.

Despite Sponsored Protests

It is true that proportionately Hindu population is on a regular decrease in Indian peninsula since country's independence. The reasons behind this are many. Some of those are appeasement policy of previous governments, bank politics and dividing Hindus through many fake pretexts. A large number of Hindus had been massacred after partition.

The exodus of Hindus from Kashmir is enough to prove the governments' attitude towards this community.

The previous governments completely closed their eyes to the complaints of atrocities against Hindus. The condition is that today when a film is released on that event of the history closest to our time, all anti Hindu forces gather to create an atmosphere against it and their toolkit sitting here leaves no stone unturned in their conspiracies. From literature and films to government courses, all conspiracies to tighten the so-called test of science remained confined only to Sanatani scriptures, traditions, and symbols. All the power of the previous government system was spent only in propaganda against the caste-system of the Hindus. But, even by mistake, no government system has ever questioned the caste system of Muslims and Christians. Baseless allegations were leveled against many Hindu saints. Not only was this, in 2011 a conspiracy clearly hatched to enact such a law which would directly force Hindus to convert.

Not Even Minimal Protection

After the partition, there was a massacre of Hindus in West and East Pakistan (now Pakistan and Bangladesh), against which no action was taken by the then Government of India. No proper law was even made to give citizenship of India to the victimized Hindus who came from the parted land nor to rehabilitate them. When a duly elected parliament enacted a proper law for granting Indian citizenship to the unfortunate Hindus and other minorities in neighboring countries, major places of the national capital were jammed against it for months. What can be a bigger proof of the subversive mentality of those who call themselves unifiers, that the sects of Hindus were divided into many parts even after independence according to the classification done by the British.

Despite this, 79.8 percent of India's population is Hindu.

Hindus constitute 81.3 percent of the population of Nepal, a Hindu nation till 2007. Despite partition and the extreme atrocities of Muslim fundamentalists that resulted, 8.54 percent of the population in Bangladesh is still Hindu. Apart from India, Nepal and Bangladesh in Asia, there is a substantial Hindu population in many countries like Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Myanmar etc. Hindus constitute 50.63 percent of the population of Mauritius, 27.9 in Fiji, 27.4 in Suriname, 24.9 in Guyana, 22.6 in Bhutan, 18.2 in Trinidad and Tobago, 15.1 in Qatar, 12 in Kuwait, 6.3 in Malaysia. This is only a small description of some countries.

I was amazed to see the magnificence of the Lord Sri Murugan Temple in the Bathu Caves of Malaysia and its self-disciplined arrangement. I had visited Pashupatinath, Dakshinakali and Janakpur temples in Nepal for many times. There is hardly any country where there are no Hindu temples. There are over a dozen vibrant Hindu temples in Cambodia alone. There is a complete complex of 240 temples assembled in Kandy Prambanan located in Central Java, Indonesia. Apart from this there are many other temples in Indonesia. Hindu temples located in almost all big and small countries like Thailand, Canada, Russia, United States of America, Australia, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia etc. are not only telling the story of piety and creative thinking of the Hindu community but also its splendor. These temples were not built by humiliating or occupying someone else's religion or their religious place or property. All these temples are just proof of our harmony and enterprise towards any society.

The Advancing Chariot of Hindutva

It was a matter of surprise for the world when Sukumawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Sukarno, the former President of Islamic country Indonesia, left Islam

and adopted Hinduism. People were surprised because Hindutva does not even do any publicity of its own. Use of any temptation and force cannot even be thought of from this side. Still people are not only attracted towards it, but they also completely get engrossed in it. But really there is nothing surprising in this. This is the only religion which never works like advertising agencies for itself. On the contrary, it literally dissolves in the air like a fragrance wherever it goes. As sannyasins we have given the world spiritual intellectuals of the highest level. The saplings planted by spiritually conscious persons like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Prabhupada, Paramhansa Yogananda, Dr. Swami Ram, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Swami Ved Bharati and the organisations associated with these people were not for the spread of Hindutva, but for the welfare of the world. There were remedies for humanity suffering from various physical, emotional, and spiritual ailments. Their efforts were to solve the problems of the people. But the shadow of these trees, planted selflessly, influenced the pure consciousness in such a way that even outside India, the peepal tree of Hindutva automatically got stretched.

**When there is harmony between the mind, heart and resolution,
then nothing is impossible**

— Rig Veda

ROOTS OF MODERN LAW IN ANCIENT INDIA

By- Anand Mishra

(Anand Mishra is advocate in Supreme Court of India and researching deeply on the legal system, jurisprudence and polity of Ancient India)

Today when we study law, we are taught that all the sources and principles of law and their propounders are either from Europe or from America. The entire history of law is accredited to western world stretching maximum upto Rome. This makes one to believe as if before the civilization of the western and American world, there was no law. Thanks to the efforts of some irreproachable and conscientious people and archeological evidences dug out by them, at least that much is not under dispute that the Europe and America were not the first to be civilized. Before civilization reached to the Europe and America, a major portion of the world was already civilized and these societies were performing miraculous tasks in science, mathematics, arts and literatures etc. These advance civilizations were led by Bharat that is now known as India. Bharat itself means the land of the people keenly engaged in pursuing knowledge. Yet we do not come across the names of any well-known jurist from this civilization or their legal principle for study. We need to ask a very obvious and equally prominent question, did a civilization as great as Indus-Saraswati civilization, which gave Vedas, philosophy, music, art, medicine, economy and polity etc., to the world, survived

for thousands of years without any law? And, if there was law, what was it like? Who were the jurists who propounded those laws and interpreted them? What was the judicial system during those periods? Another crucial aspect that demands consideration in the present scenario is, whether the modern law is something propounded by some intellectuals in the last three-four centuries at max or the system has already been there in the various parts of the world and it just has been plagiarized with few modifications by the modern jurists and acclaimed to be their own robbing the ancient jurists and thinkers of their efforts and credit therefor? Further, whether the modern judicial system is really a creation of some genius in the modern history or is it reenactment of the old system in modern cover? My objective here is not to declare any system or its philosopher lesser but to assert that real propounders of juridical thoughts and legal principles must be given their due credit. The present paper delves into these antagonizing questions and makes an effort to remove some dust to initiate more thorough and focused research and deep exploration in this area relating to Bharat. It shall not only help realizing another contribution of this civilization to this planet but also help understand the drawbacks of the modern systems and to improve it. Space limitation has resulted though into only a glimpse of a magnificent organization, rules and its functioning yet I believe it would implore many readers to look into it further and deeper. Introduction: To say that a civilization as great as Bharat did not have any law and legal system would be like saying Britain has no constitution or that there was no gravitational force before Isaac Newton. When we say Veda is not a law, to say that Vedas do not contain anything on a subject that can be parallel to modern law would be nothing but fallacy and ignorance. Bharat has

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was area comprising vast land including majority of nation in the present Asia and southeast Asia viz., India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iran, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Thailand, Cambodia, Bhutan etc. 2 Vedas have unlimited knowledge. T \neg always been a society that has given utmost importance to law and the law has always been the supreme in India, 3 therefore, it cannot be said that it did not have any law unless the sayer wishes to rob it of her credit to the civilization. The biased teaching and motivated study are apparently visible. When we talk about a constitution, we are taught that the 1780 Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, drafted by John Adams, is the world's oldest functioning written constitution. No one talks about the Vedas, which have been functional in India for millenniums even before the Christian era started. They have been working as the Constitution of Bharat where anything beyond them has been unacceptable and till date their relevance has not even diminished. Similarly, when we talk about the national anthem, we are told the oldest being the Wilhelmus of the Netherland, which was adopted in 1932 but written in the 16th century AD. We are never taught about the national anthem of Bharat that has been composed thousands of years before the Anno Domini and is contained in the 12th chapter of the Atharva Veda. Term 'law', which was 'lagu' in old English, has been borrowed from Old Norse 'lög' that means 'things laid down or firmly established'. What was firmly established in India from time immemorial, rather more firmly established than in any other country of the time, was Dharma. Thus, the firmly established rules for people to conduct themselves in their personal as well as social and professional life were called Dharma in India. Dharma has had far firmer role in the life of people than the present-day law. Therefore, what is known as law in the world today was and is known as Dharma in India.

Unfortunately, certain people with ulterior motives and polluted intentions owing either to their sheer ignorance misunderstood Dharma as religion or narrated it so knowingly out of ill-will. Dharma is never a religion. While religion is a very narrow concept, Dharma is wide and inclusive. Religion is personal and private, Dharma is not. A person has choice of his own religion and he can change his religion whenever he wants but Dharma is universal, eternal, unalterable and enduring. There may be different religions for different people but Dharma is one for all in a given situation. Dharma has been the ancient law of India and is still the code of conduct. Dharma and its literature in India contain so profound principles and doctrines, many of them are still either unknown to the modern world or haven't been understood well and applied. The most unfortunate has been the fact that dharmic literature of India has been considered by the men without wisdom only as rules for rituals. The ever-increasing gap between the Dharma and the modern law started more than a century ago and even though the concern was highlighted at the initial stages itself, nothing substantial has been done yet to fructify into a force to be reckoned with. It was observed way back in 1941: "Legalist enthusiasm for Dharmasastra⁴ rapidly waned with the growth of case-law and the ever-widening rift between the traditional Hindu law⁵ and the judge-made law of the British Indian courts. If and when the proposal under consideration to codify Hindu Law (on the basis obviously of judicial decisions and re-formist advocacy) becomes fait accompli, the little interest which survives among professional men will vanish completely⁶." And, we can observe this palpably today. ³ I refer Bharat as India for maintaining symmetry and easy understanding. Use of term 'India' refers to Bharat and vice versa. ⁴ Treatise containing rules of dharma like modern-day statutes viz., the Smritis. ⁵ Means the law as per the Vedas and Smritis

etc. and not the Hindu Law as is in operation today, which regulates personal affairs of Hindus in India. 6 Rajadharmā, @ pg. xii, a compilation of Dewan Bahadur K. Krishnaswami Row Lectures, University of Madras by K.V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, Central Archeological Library, Government of India. These lectures were delivered in 1938.

→ What is Dharma or Law?: This probe is the same as for any other subject since it is important to know what the subject is. When we see the definition of Dharma from the ancient shastras, we realise that often the definition of Law given by the western jurists goes close to the definition of Dharma given by the Indian Rishis. However, one of the major differences that we find in the definition of Dharma and the definition of Law is that the Dharma has been defined in a far more precise and compact manner. The definition of Dharma has been given in a single phrase or maximum in one couplet i.e., shloka in comparison to phrases in defining law. This has been possible for two reasons, firstly that our Rishis have always been practicing to write or compose using minimum words⁷, sometimes even just a single letter⁸ and connoting deep meanings. Secondly, the language that they chose, the Samskritam, is so rich that it made this concise form of writing and speaking possible. Dharma has been defined by many of our ancient sages in their treatise of unparalleled intellect on science, philosophy and literature etc. and an entire book can be written on the definition only. ^/k;jrsfbr /ej%* codes of conduct) which are actionable being for larger good are dharmā- /kj.kkn /efjerkj] /eks /kj;rsitk% 9dharmā is actionable and in return it protects the subjects- Rishi Jaimini¹⁰ is one such scholar whose definition of law is perfectly relevant even today- Rishi Jaimini in his treatise defines law as% pksnukyd.kksSFkks /ej%A11(chodana lakshano artho dharmah) Dharmā is that has injunctions from the Vedas and is desirable by the society for its benefit. In other words what is accepted

by the society and is not contrary to the Vedic commands is Dharma. John Austin, the English Jurist of 18th century defined law as set of rules having command of a sovereign and backed by sanction. While it cannot be said that the Austin's definition of law was not influenced by that of the Jaimini, as by the time, Indian knowledge had already reached the Europe in abundance, yet Austin failed to get the gist of the deep connotation of Jaiminian concept of law. Where Jaiminian concept of law does not have any person as a sovereign and it does not make punishment on breach of law as a precondition, Austinian concept does. What Austin failed to grasp was 'desirability of law by the society'. While Jaimini says that law is that has authority, that is accepted by the society and that is good for the society and its well-being, Austin's focus is on command and sanction only. Thus, Austin ended up making the law not as a supreme but a servant of the king or the sovereign. Bhartiya jurists have always been of the opinion that law i.e., Dharma was meant for benefit and upliftment of the society and all its constituents. Like Rishi Jaimini, Rishi Kanad¹² also defined Dharma as % 7fera p lkja p opks gh ofkxrka (Mita? cha sara? cha vacho hi vagmita-) meaning ^Concise and firm&These are feature of eloquent speech*- 8 nknnks nqnnqknh nknnks nwnnhnks% A nqnkna nnsnqnsnknknnnnkssnn% AA 19-114#- f'k'kqikyo/Ek-&egkfd ek?k° nknn (nku nsusokys) nqnks (nq"kks) dks mrkr nsusokys] nknkn ('kfqn nsusokys]) nwnks (fijrki nsusokysnq"kkks) ds uk'kd ckgokys nkrkvksa(nsusokyks) rFkk vnrkvks a(uk nsusokyks) nksuksa dks nsusokys'kh Ñ "k Hkxoku usnqn (nq°•nk;h) ij nq°•nk;h ck.k dks pyk;kA Bhagvan Shri Krishna, who is benevolent, omnipotent, purifier, destroyer of evil, the generous, killed the wicked one with his painful arrows. 9 Mahabharat, Shanti Parva, 108/11 10 Rishi Jaimini wrote Poorva Miamansa Sutram (MS) prior to 2,500 BCE, which makes it at least 4,500 years old. MS is a classical treatise on interpretation of Dharma and Vidhi and its rules of interpretation are

still fully relevant. 11 MS, 1.1.2 12 Rishi Kanad gave Vaisheshik Darshanam (VD) prior to 2,600 BCE making it at least 4,600 years old. It is one of the six schools of Indian philosophy. Rishi Kanad was not only a scholar of Philosophy but also of physics and and ऋषिः कणादः । यत्तोऽभ्युदया निश्श्रेयसा सिद्धिर्सा धर्ममाह । He says law is which fulfills the needs of the society, takes it to the path of evolution and growth alongwith enlightenment (abhyudaya) and results into accomplishment of exaltation. Thus, making it clear that the law in India was given far wider meaning and objective. Its objective was not only to control people but to take people on the path of evolution and spiritual growth. In India it was never meant to be tool for rule rather even the rulers were subjected to law. Objective of Dharma or Law: One of the very well-known English jurists of the 18th century Jeremy Bentham argued the same theory as Rishi Kanad when he asserted “it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong.” However, he also missed on the point of what would the real happiness be? Unless we know objectively what the happiness is, ‘right’ for one can be ‘wrong for another’. Can we say that in a society of thugs, robbery is the rule and robbing is justified as it gives pleasure to maximum numbers of people? This also we clarified in 6th century AD i.e., more than thousand years before Bentham, thus: लोकायतानां धर्मो योऽस्ति तस्यैव श्रेयसायुक्तः । All the actions of living beings are for attaining happiness. Even in unrighteous conducts, the basic motive is attaining happiness. However, there could be no happiness without Dharma; hence, Dharma must be always followed. If someone steals, he does it for happiness but that happiness can neither be towards an evolution nor towards accomplishment of exaltation therefore, it would be nothing but a fleeting happiness followed by unfading trouble. For that, the modern world’s first and the

incomparable economist and politician Chanakya said धर्मो रक्षति अक्षयते इत्येवमिदं 15 i.e, Dharma is root cause for all the happiness. The law is a necessary tool for administration was also not alien to the Indians. Thousands of years ago we asserted धर्मो रक्षति अक्षयते इत्येवमिदं 16 i.e, the code of conduct of Dharma is implemented for the sole purpose of running the administration smoothly. This cannot be denied as the same role being played by the modern law. This also clarifies the above position that what we call law in English is Dharma in Bhartiya language. Why is it necessary to follow Dharma and what would be the consequences for not following Dharma has also been explained in the Mahabharata thus, अक्षयते इत्येवमिदं 17 i.e., those who do not follow Dharma are destroyed and those following it meticulously are protected by Dharma. To see it in the modern perspective, we can easily observe that the law protects only those who protects i.e., follow it. A person who does not follow law can never expect any protection from law and those who are following it even slightly are protected from large perils. अक्षयते इत्येवमिदं 18 i.e., even if Dharma is followed to a small extent, it protects from larger danger; for example, one by just not jumping a traffic signal, ends up saving his as well as other's lives. he discovered atoms (credit for which is given to British chemist John Dalton in 1808) and it is for that reason that though the atom is called 'anu' and 'parmanu', it is also called 'kan' in the honor of the Rishi. 13 VD, 1.1.2 14 Vagbhat (Ashtangarhodaya, Sutrashtan, Adhyaya 2, Shloka 19) 15 Chanakyasutra, Adhyaya 1, Sutra 1-9 16 Mahabharat, Shantiparva, Adhyaya 259, Shloka 5 17 Mahabharat, Vanaparva, Adhyaya 314, Shloka 128 18 Shrimad Bhagwad Gita, Adhyaya 2, Shloka 40 → Sources and structure: Was there any source of Dharma like there are sources of law? We all know that at present there are three sources of law viz., legislation, precedent and customs. What have been, if there has been

one, the sources of Dharma? Dharma has had well-established structure in India. The source of all the Dharma has been the Vedas, which came directly from the God¹⁹. The Vedas are called shruti as they were heard by the sages from the God. The four Vedas have been the constitution of the Bharat. Any law propounded by anyone, if it was contrary to Vedic principles and rules, it was adharna similarly as any law contrary to the constitution is no law. Vedas lay down various rules and guidelines for administration and security of a nation. For example, soldiers of enemy king must be incarcerated and punished; those who trouble a peaceful nation must be punished severely; even if the enemy is flying, he must be struck down; prohibition on using foul languages; liars, cheaters, fraudsters must be punished and so on²⁰. After the Vedas come Smritis. The Smritis are codified laws at par with modern day statute. The Smritis in India have known history of minimum three thousand years. The oldest one, the Manu Smriti, is considered to have been written not later than first millennia BCE, though the exact date is not known. This shows that when most of the world was living in the caves, we were codifying the law. There are total twenty Smritis²¹ but sadly many of them are lost. Apart from the Shrutis and Smritis, Vedangas, ²² Vedantas²³ and Darshans²⁴ also sometimes play role of sources of law though they are concerned with different fields of knowledge. In addition to them the sadachara and vyavahara are also sources of Dharma. While Shrutis and Smritis are considered the highest category of law²⁵ at par with the constitution and the statutes respectively of the modern day, sadachara and vyavahara are customary law sources. Rishi Yajnavalkaya has, in his Smriti given the sources of Dharma²⁶ and specified what all can be considered to be Dharma. Thus, it appears that our Rishis were well versed and competent to codify and interpret law and Dharma that

we casually translate to religion was actually law. While Dharma was the substantive law, Vidhi was the procedural law. Apart from that there were sadachara and vyavahara, customary practices, also prevalent and were basis for administration and adjudication. All the conducts, which were according to law of the time, were Dharma by name and dharmic in nature and other conducts were adharna and adharmic. There also existed a neutral ground where an action was neither dharmic nor adharmic. Anything that was not prohibited by law of the time was not adharmic in the similar fashion as anything that is not prohibited by law is not illegal today. The position and the system of law: 19 Bentham and some other jurists argued on the same line for natural law. 20 e.g., Atharva Veda, 8th Chapter, Sukta 3 & 4 21 Ângirasa, Âpastamba, Atri, Auúanasî, B[haspati, Dakca, Gautama, Hârîta, Kâtyâyana, Likhita, Manu, Parâúara, Samvartta, ÚaEkha, Úâtâta, Vaúicmha, VicGu, Vyâsa, Yajnavalkya and Yama. Parâúara, in his list of twenty Smritis, replaces names of Samvartta, B[haspati, and Vyâsa, with the names of Kaúyapa, Bh[gu and Prachetas. 22 There are six Vedangas and they comprise of knowledge of science, politics, grammar etc. 23 Vedantas are Upanishads and other treatises which are mainly on philosophical discussions and science. 24 There are total six darshans, which schools of philosophy and contains science. 'kfqríek.kdks /ej: (dharma is what is testified by the Vedas) treatise of Harit and Kulluk on Manusmriti 2-1. 'kfqrílf`rfvogrks /ej: (conduct that is approved by the Vedas and Smritis is dharma) Vashishtha Dharmasutra, 1.4.6 26 'kfqr% lf`r% lnpk% ll pf í;ekruA led- ladyt% dkeks /ejewyfena l`rEk-AA1.7 (principles of Vedas and Smritis, conduct of rishis, right conduct in one's wisdom and desire arising out of beneficial commitment are the sources of Dharma) → We all are aware of 'rule of law' today and we believe that a society that is ruled by law is the best. It is always better to have a society that is

governed by law and where law is the same for everyone rather to have a society where either there is no law for the king or the law is different for the king. India has always been a society ruled by law. In India the Dharma has always been the supreme and there has not been anyone above Dharma²⁷. In Ramayana though Shri Rama is the supreme yet Shri Lakshmana, his younger brother, when required, tells him to follow Dharma asserting that Dharma is above everyone and even Bhagvana Rama is bound by Dharma²⁸. In India the codification of Dharma was not entrusted to the Kings to ensure that the King having power must not be able to use the same for his personal benefits. The king was executor not legislator. The legislation or say the codification of Dharma, was done by the Rishis, who were either not a part of the society and were living in jungles or were so enlightened that they were willing and ready to follow the same Dharma at any cost out of their own will. In India the Kings subjected themselves to Dharma like any other commoner. The conversation between Shri Rama and Jabali, who was one of the counselors of King Dasharatha, in Chitrakoot when Bharat goes to meet him and convince him to come back to Ayodhya and resume the throne, is an example how Shri Rama relinquished everything just to follow the Dharma despite being persuaded by many men by all the means to leave the exile. Not only that the Rama did it even his predecessors followed Dharma even at the cost of their lives and story of King Shibi is well known²⁹. Equally known is the story of King Harishchandra, who sacrificed everything, including his family and dignity, to follow his Dharma. It has never been the concept in India that the king was above the law. Not only in ancient times Kings in India were so committed to Dharma but even in relatively modern history we can easily find many early incidents where the kings followed Dharma even at the cost of their own love and family. ³⁰ Even today in many places

in India, we can find people who are staunch follower of Dharma and they can go to any extent to fulfil their dharmic duties. The patience that an Indian shows while fighting for justice in the courts for years and sometimes even for generations is an example of their commitment towards Dharma. The legal system in India was more of inquisitorial system (where court or part of it is equally involved in investigating the true fact) than the adversarial system (where court is only a referee) that is prevalent today. The Vedas and later the Smritis and other texts provided a complete structure of administrative units and process to render justice and punishments³¹. They also provide for methods and extent of punishment. 27 /ej% rlnknejRijaukLvFkks vcyh;kUcyh;k;lekk;lrs/es.k ;Fkk jktSoEk-A ;ks oSl /ej% lraoSrUklkraonuekgj/ejonrfhr /ejok onu;lraonrhR,rnsoSrnqHk;aHkforAA Nothing is higher than dharma. The weak overcomes the stronger by dharma, as over a king. Truly that dharma is the Truth (Satya); therefore, when a man speaks the Truth, they say, “He speaks the Dharma”; and if he speaks Dharma, they say, “He speaksthe Truth!” For both are one. — Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 1.4.14 28 ^/ejiÑ "kekuks o xksik /ejl ok Hkoku* (the king is the subject as well as the protector of dharma), V. 30. Mahaviracharit by Bhavbhuti 29 King Shibi was from the Lunar dynasty and he offered his own flesh to the eagle to save a pigeon. Since the pigeon had taken refuge under him while being chased by the eagle and protecting the one who has taken refuge was Dharma, he protected yet eagle was hungry and that was the only way he could eat. So, by protecting the pigeon the king was keeping the eagle hungry, which again was adharmā. Therefore, the King did justice by giving his own flesh to the eagle and followed Dharma by both protecting the refugee and feeding the hungry. 30 King Ellan, who was from the Chola Dynasty, was known as ‘Manu Needhi Cholan’ and ruled Anuradhapura Kingdom, which is present day Sri Lanka

between 205 to 161 BCE. He executed his own son to render justice to a cow. 31 Athrava Veda, Chapter 8 sukta 5 provides for administrative structures e.g. the king, commander, counselor etc. Also in Smritis by Manu, Narad, Yajnavalkya etc. and Arthashashtra by Chanakya. → certain examples of legal concepts and practices in modern context: While we all have a fair idea of modern legal system, it is not difficult to comprehend that in Bharat the legal system was robust and at par with the modern system. There is hardly anything substantial in modern system that cannot find its base in the ancient Bhartiya legal system. As discussed earlier the Vedas have been as the modern-day constitution of any nation and the Smritis have been as a modern-day statute. The law was divided into substantial and procedural and Vidhis were the procedural law of the time. Justice was one of the most important aspects of the Dharma and rendering justice was in our prayers. 32 The concept of nation, the king, his counselor, commander of his militaries, punishment to rogue people all have been narrated in the Vedas and Smritis as explained herein. The Vedas are so advance that they even contain national anthem. 33 Manusmriti not only lays down the law but also provides how the king should behave and what should be the number of his ministers. The punitive theory or retributive justice has also been known to us. The theory that is credited to Cicero (106 BCE), Hobbes (1651), Beccaria (1764) and Bentham (1789) finds its place in the Vedas, 34 which are composed thousands of years before Cicero and further in the Manusmriti 35, which also precedes Cicero. The Manusmriti does not give this theory in isolation. It also says that the king must be wise and punish with wisdom and justice thus, paving way for reformative theory as well. If too harsh punishment is given people revolt and the king gets destroyed. 36 The importance of education and especially girls' education has also been highlighted by the

Vedas. 37 The utilitarian theory for which credit is given to Jeremy Bentham has been prevalent in the Indian system for long and has been surfacing in its better and worst forms from time to time. If Jabali's arguments with Shri Rama were the worst form of this concept, Arjuna's arguments with Shri Krishna were a different form. And, in both the versions, its short comings have been highlighted with possible consequences in details. Not only these concepts and theories but the entire judicial set up has been provided by Chanakya in his Arthashashtra. 38 In the Arthashashtra the legal provisions and principles covering civil, criminal, taxation, mining, trade and commerce including meteorology and international law have been provided. Not only that, even the law of arbitration finds its genesis from Chanakya's Arthashashtra. 39 It is fully elaborated along with the provision to appeal to the king. Not only the substantial and procedural law has been provided in the scriptures but even our ancestors were mindful of need for interpretation of the same. Rishi Jaimini around 2,500 BCE composed his Mimamsa Sutram prescribing sound rules of interpretation of law and giving various profound legal maxims known as 'nyaya', which have been lost sight of. Though these principles have been seldom relied upon by the courts in India but they have yet not gained any momentum despite the fact that their utility was advocated way back in 1905. 40 That many of the rules of interpretation given by Maxwell in 1875 AD are already present in this treatise. 32 fllitkHk% fij iky;arka] uk;su ekxs.k egh egh'kk%A xksckg.kshkk 'kqHkelfqura yksdk% telk% lfq•uks HkouqAA (May the well-being of all the people be protected by the powerful and mighty leaders who may always do so with law and justice. May the success be with all divinity and scholars, may all the worlds become happy and content.). 33 Atharva Veda Chapter 12, Sukta 1. 34 Ibid Chapter 8 35 Manusmriti 7.16 & 20 36 Ibid 7.27 37 Rig Veda, 1.164.46 38 Estimated to have been composed around

3rd century BCE 39 Arthashashtra part-3, Chap.9 pada 11-26 40 K.L. Sarkar in Tagore Law Lectures, 1905 → The examples can go on and there can be provided a long list of legal principles, theories, provisions and judicial systems from literatures of India yet the limitation of space acts as a stop point. Substance: The above examples are merely a glimpse of a mammoth civilization and its legal principles and judicial system. A civilization that has attained such height in law and legal principles is being ignored today in study of law, which is disastrously unfortunate depriving all the upcoming generation of profound knowledge and vast experience. After this brief discussion we can comprehend that the Bhartiya civilization or even the one known as the Indus-Saraswati civilization had not only made great sewage system, barn and swimming pool but also profound political, legal and administrative system and the system was working smoothly till the foreign reigns destroyed it. We have not only had profound legal system but also many brilliant jurists viz., Rishis Atharva, Valmiki, Vyas, Manu, Jaimini, Kanad and scholars like Chanakya, Bharvi, Vijnaneswara, Jimutavahan and so on. Their legal philosophies, principles and works are jurisprudence par excellence. While one section of relatively a very new civilization has been propagating its own jurists and legal system, which has been riddled with many short comings, we have simply ignored ours and we are hardly even interested in knowing about them. It needs thorough research and exploration if their intellectually insightful contribution can bring the required change in the existing system. It's never too late to start good deed yet it should be started at the earliest. 41 Notree, howsoever big, survives if its roots are ignored.

*** -'kkfUr%AA

RAM DOES NOT NEED US, WE NEED RAM!!!

- By Vandita Nain

(Vandita Nayan is advocate in Supreme Court of India and also contributing a lot to print and electronic media)

All modern nations in the present world have their roots in the long continuing traditional and cultural practices of its subjects reflecting the belief system of that civilization. It was this civilizational memory, protected in the form of various practices and rituals, that gave every upcoming generation a deep-rooted connection with the previous generation and ensured the cultural immortality. This is how important and apposite this thread of culture is.

We Indians, have been cherishing our traditions and culture for a much longer period as compared to other nations and the reason for it is that we believed in the values, principles and virtues, which have developed over ages and have always been universally applicable. The beauty of our civilization is that it's the oldest and still as relevant as any modern one, catering to all the requirements of every generation irrespective of gender, nationality and religion. One such epitome of truth, morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband and above all, the ideal king is SHREE RAM. Besides being a prominent deity of Hindus all over the world, SHREE RAM can be simply described as a man who displays perfect moral as well as social behaviour. He is a symbol of the victory of good over the evil. Shree Ram sets an example

as to how a man should fulfil his moral commitments and adhere to his limits so that social order can be maintained. It is this exceptional quality of Shree Ram that he is still known as "Marayada Puroshattam", the finest man who

defines the perimeter of ideal conduct. Shree Ram is just not a deity but a heritage of not only the entire Hindu society but of the entire world. Our society has always based itself on the strong value system that is portrayed by Shree Ram. In a traditional Hindu household, even today Ramayana is favoured for recitation as compared to any other text, as it perfectly pictures and lays the foundation of a true family where every family member displays the most relatable character traits and is socialized to be selfless, honest, and courageous with highest standards of integrity.

The recitals of Ramayana in our household are intended to make family members, especially the younger generation, aware of the importance of inculcating virtues in life. Ramayana is not only an epic alone. It is a culmination of philosophy, tradition, culture and spirituality along with model code of conduct for any family. What larger people often miss today is that Shree Ram has never been about “identity” but about “values”, values which are universally applicable and desirable by all even today irrespective of their faith and religion.

If Shree Ram would have been just a religious figure and wanted to spread his religion and beliefs, he could have converted all the Rakshasas into his own clan after killing Ravana but he consciously chose not to do so. He gave the clan a king of their own origin and ensured that a kingdom on equality and truth prospers following its own way of life and cultures. The fight was over principles and not over the identity of the two parties involved. These are the same principles, which we need to recognise and practise today. Shree Ram symbolizes an idol son, brother, pupil, husband, friend, warrior, king, father and even an enemy.

All the facades of a human being can be Ram. Ram pervades the entire world. Though he was born in Ayodhya, he still rules the entire world. He once came into this world and never left thereafter. He is still there with everyone in the world either in their heart or in their mind or in their thought or in their desire or in their love or in their hatred. He is there and giving reason to everyone to live in this world and find a purpose of life.

Even today we refer a perfect world to be 'Ram-rajya'. Ram is: one who infuses the soul and each of the pores of the body with happiness and serenity, one who is divinely beautiful, one who attracts everyone and gives pleasure, is Ram] is Ram (jearsfbr jke%) -

-- Who is sea of joy and peace--- (tkv vkuan fla/qlq• jklhA) Who is adobe of happiness, which bestows peace to the universe, is Ram (lks lq• /ke jke vl ukeKA vf•y yksd nk;dfc'kkeKAA) wherein yogis find joy and peace is Ram- (jears;r ;ksfxu% l jke%) Isn't that the kind of deity everyone would want to worship and look upon. Besides Shree Ram, his wife Sita and his brothers Bharat and Lakshman are also ideal examples to look upto.

Devi Sita, who is considered to be epitome of all womanly virtues for Hindu women, was indeed an ideal example of a woman. She was the ideal daughter to her parents, ideal wife to her husband, ideal daughter-in-law to her parents- in-law and an ideal mother to not only to her own twin sons but to the entire kingdom. She is not considered ideal because she was quiet, obedient and submissive to all, she is considered to be an ideal reflection of a real woman, because she displayed her feminine traits to the highest standards and discharged her responsibilities with flawlessness despite possessing strength that could be matched only by a few. Despite the fact that she had to undergo a lot of trials and tribulations in her life, it was her courage, chastity and adherence to Dharma (righteousness) that finally made her

emerge as ultimate winner. Even when Shree Ram tries to discourage her from joining him in exile, she persists and says that she would be with him, no matter what, as it was the duty of the wife to be at his side at all times.

Sita, who has been used to live in the lap of luxury, willingly sacrifices everything for the sake of her husband and happily joins her husband on his vanavasa. This is only the first of the sacrifices she makes for her husband. Even today there is not a man on earth who would not want a wife like Sita. The Ramayana though mostly centres around Shree Ram and Sita is generally considered to be a quiet and submissive figure but this is not quite the case.

Yet one must not forget that she picked up the bow of Shiva with one hand, which no warrior but only Shree Rama, could pick up. There are instances in the Ramayana when Sita speaks out powerfully in favour of or against some principle, heroically displaying the empowerment and clarity of thoughts she possesses. In the first such instance, during their stay in Chitrakuta, Sita enters a discussion with Shree Ram, after which Shree Ram solemnly vows that he will never slay anyone without extreme provocation. Sita even subdues Ravana with her powerful words when Hanuman manages to locate her in Ashokavan.

When Hanuman says that had there been command from Shree Ram he could have taken Devi Sita back to be with Shree Ram but Sita does not encourage such idea. Sita firmly states that she would never want to run away like a cowardly thief and that she would want her husband to battle and victor against Ravana not only to save her but also the other innocents who are suffering the wrath of Ravana. The kind of qualities she displayed, she not only becomes an epitome of female strength and empowerment but also becomes a true

practitioner of her 'dharma' be it towards her husband or people around. Even in Ashokavan, she displays immense strength coupled with great kindness and affection towards the other innocents who were suffering the atrocities of Ravana. Her bravery, her kindness, her affection and highest level of integrity makes her an ideal woman transgressing all boundaries of nation, religion or caste that we have created today. Sita can be imbibed and lived by every single woman today from any corner of the world and that's what makes her worthy of worship. Bharat epitomizes a man of virtues and loving brother.

When he comes to know about the plot, his mother hatched, to make him king, he despises her and points her 'adharma' without hesitation and 'moh' (affection and illusion). He leaves the entire kingdom for his brother. He goes to the jungle to convince Shree Ram to come back and resume kingdom. When Shree Ram refuses, Bharat starts fast-unto-death and even satyagraha (persuasion for truth with benign force).

When Shree Ram convinces him that it is necessary for him to stay in exile, Bharat brings Shree Ram's footwear (khadaun) and rules for fourteen years in his name. Bharat despite having been given the entire kingdom, stays out of the palace compound, lives in a hut and sleeps on ground for fourteen long years in the similar way as Shree Ram did. He chose the same life with same difficulties as being led by Shree Ram in 'vanvasa' and chose to ignore all the comforts he had. Not even today can a single man save himself from the craving of having a brother like 'Bharat'. This is what makes 'Bharat' and his relation with his brother Shree Ram immortal. Next is Lakshman, who stayed with his brother like his shadow through thick and thin. Whatever had been the situation he never slept for fourteen years just in order to protect his brother and sister-

in-law. He served his brother and sister-in-law the entire period. He puts his life into danger for his brother and he never lived his life away from his brother. He became another name for Ram, another face for Ram, another body for Ram.

What was Lakshman for Ram, Shatrughan was for Bharat. Shatrughan dedicated his life to the commands of Bharat and religiously did whatever he was told. Lastly was Hanuman who was awakened during the journey of Shree Ram and still consciously chose to dedicate his life in the service of Ram leaving behind his identity.

Hanuman's dedication and immense commitment towards Shree Ram made him an epitome of 'bhakti' and world could recognize the power of selfless commitment and dedication. The principles of truthfulness, integrity, honesty, selflessness and righteousness were worn by these characters on their sleeves making them relevant then and making them immensely relevant now. What we need to understand is that the 'Ram' will never be just a symbol of Hindu pride, 'Ram' is a symbol of national pride since he is exuding the right kind of qualities required in a fine man, which are necessary to build a great civilization in this world. Ram represents a culture of our country, as an icon of stability, balance, peace and above all, justice.

A king who is worshipped as God for displaying divine qualities and conduct, for at least 10,000 years now, who subjected his own self to various atrocities for the sake of administering justice to the people of his kingdom, whose state till date is the epitome of a fair state, is being stamped as only a Hindu god and vehemently opposed by a small section of the nation, is unfortunate but nothing more than a misguided, misunderstood and propaganda to spread bitterness.

Ram is just not the symbol of a community united in strength, Ram has always been the symbol of the culture this nation thrived on. Those who claim that Shree Ram is just another Hindu deity are the individuals who suffer mental paralysis as they are unable to see that Shree Ram is not just a Hindu deity but a reflection of your desire of the qualities you would look into your sin or husband or brother or friend, a much needed value system, which is the most effective and advanced solution to all the persisting problems of mankind.

Only if every man imitates half of what Shree Ram is, only if every woman imbibes half of what Sita is, only if every brother replicates half of what Bharat and Lakshman is, this world would be an entirely different place. It is high time that we realise that Shree Ram, Sita, Bharat, Lakshman or Ramayana does not need us. Shree Ram does not need us, we need Ram, to survive and rise to our greatest human conscious. Ram doesn't need any of us, we did not make him what he became rather the entire world needs Ram to become what ideal, what Shree Ram practiced rather than preaching.

**Good work done with bad intentions inevitably leads to failure.
That is why one should refrain from evil tendencies**

— Yajur Veda

Solah Sanskars

– By Pandit. Jagdish Maharaj

*“Garbhadhaan Punsavanam, Seemanto Jaatkarm cha,
Naamkriyaa Nishkramane,
Annashaanam Wapana kriyaa, Karnavedho Brataadesho,
Vedaarambha Kriyaavidhih,
Keshaantam snaanmuddaho, Vivaah agni-parigrahaah,
Tretaagni Sangraha-cheti,
Sanskaaraa Shodasha Smritaah”*

The Hindu Heritage Society (HHS) may incorporate and promote various aspects of Hindu culture, including the observance and practice of the Solah Sanskars. These sixteen traditional Hindu rituals or ceremonies are considered significant milestones in a person’s life, and they are meant to guide individuals through different stages, from birth to death.

As part of their cultural preservation and awareness efforts, the HHS may organize and facilitate the performance of these Sanskars within the Hindu community. By following and promoting the Solah Sanskars, the HHS aims to uphold and pass down the rich traditions and values associated with these important life events. These ceremonies play a vital role in spiritual and social development and contribute to the overall well-being of individuals within the Hindu community.

The sixteen Sanskars are as follows:

- 1. Garbhadhan Sanskar:** The conception ceremony performed before pregnancy.
- 2. Punsavan Sanskar:** The ritual performed during the third month of pregnancy for the well-being of the fetus.
- 3. Simantonnayana Sanskar:** The baby shower ceremony performed during the seventh month of pregnancy.

4. **Jatakarma Sanskar:** The birth ceremony performed immediately after the child's birth.
5. **Namkaran Sanskar:** The naming ceremony performed within a few weeks of the child's birth.
6. **Nishkraman Sanskar:** The first outing of the child from home.
7. **Annaprashan Sanskar:** The introduction of solid food to the child for the first time.
8. **Chudakarma Sanskar:** The first haircut ceremony.
9. **Karnavedha Sanskar:** The ear-piercing ceremony.
10. **Vidyarambha Sanskar:** The initiation of formal education.
11. **Upanayana Sanskar:** The sacred thread ceremony, symbolizing the beginning of the student stage.
12. **Keshanta Sanskar:** The shaving of the beard and cutting of hair after the completion of formal education.
13. **Samavartana Sanskar:** The completion of formal education and the return home.
14. **Vivaha Sanskar:** The marriage ceremony.
15. **Vanaprastha Sanskar:** The stage of retirement from worldly responsibilities.
16. **Antyeshthi Sanskar:** The funeral and cremation ceremony after death.

These Sanskars vary in rituals, customs, and regional practices, but they all hold significant cultural and religious importance in Hinduism. They help individuals navigate different phases of life with spiritual guidance and reinforce the values and traditions of the Hindu community.

**The space between bondage and liberation eases two feet only.
Bondage says 'this is mine' and liberation says 'nothing is mine'
—Mahopanishad**

Perception of Youths and Continuity of Traditions and Scope of New Inclusive Segments

– By Sachin Shandil

As we said above, youth organizations can be started by two broad groups of people: young people themselves, or an adult who cares about them. Both options make sense, and HHS has taken both options to offer youth inclusion.

My journey with Hindu Heritage Society started in 2000 during my tertiary education days in Sydney. I was made aware of all the events and attended them. Pt N Bhatt gave me an opportunity to play Tabla, sing Bhajans, and included me slowly to be part of the society. The only requirement to me was “commitment” when required to assist with any events from cleaning to closure of an event site. I made new friends at every event and they were all engaged through Pt N Bhatt’s motivation. We slowly became a small team to perform bhajans, playing musical instruments, sound controls; not only at our hosted events but to the community. The important thing here was guidance from the adults of the HHS community, priests, and from feedback. I have seen like many of HHS members now current executives were then little youths are now being put on front of the Hindu community and to run the society with guidance from our senior HHS leaders.

Societies, communities, and organisations should encourage youth’s involvement and some benefits seen are:

- Youth in Hindu societies can help change public awareness of young people from being “the problem” to an important part of making life better in the Hindu and wider community.

- Involving young people in the HHS has helped see themselves as part of the whole inclusion of the community and society
- By involving young people, the HHS is allowing them to carefully develop their leadership potential within the Hinduism remit, so that as they grow and learn they can become thoughtful, prepared leaders of the Hindu society. Such as e.g. kids are encouraged by their parents to set up events, coordinate events, and showcase other youths to be part of the society; such events give kids opportunity for public speaking, singing, music, dramaplays and prayer recitals.

In conclusion young people can bring a remarkable amount of life to an organization; often, their energy, enthusiasm, creativity, and perspective are invaluable to members of larger community initiatives that choose to actively involve them.

Youth is also an impressionable age wherein we try to model our life against that of a ‘role model’ or ‘icon’. This is the time when one is ready to take on tasks however onerous they are; the time when our ideals can drive and determine one’s actions; the time when we believe that we can do anything under the sun. This is the time when we are easily motivated by the environment and by what we see and value around us.

From Swami Vivekananda’s message of social service for the Youth of India.

Truth can not be suppressed and always is the ultimate victor

— Yajur Veda

PROFILE OF AWARDEES WHO MADE THE JOURNEY OF HINDU HERITAGE MORE IMPACTFUL

HINDU COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA



Hindu Council of Australia is a peak body organisation founded in 1998 with an aim to create a strong and unified Hindu community in Australia. Since HCA was founded, it has been acting as a representative of the Hindu community in Australia in dealing with the federal, state and local governments, apart from reaching out to other Hindu organisations and institutions

Hindu Council of Australia's mission is to work for a strong, cohesive and active Hindu community in Australia, aiming to live in harmony with other religious and cultural communities while also devoted to preserving, promoting and sharing Hindu faith, culture and traditions with others in the society.

Hindu Heritage Society is a member organisation with the Hindu Council of Australia.

**SANATAN DHARMA SABHA OF
AUSTRALIA. SHRI RAMA KRISHNA MANDIR
AUSTRAL, NSW.**

The Shree Sanatan Dharm Sabha of NSW inc is a religious organization based in New South Wales, Australia. It is dedicated to promoting and practicing the teachings of Sanatan Dharma, which is also known as Hinduism. The organization runs the Ram Krishna Temple in Austral (Sydney), which is a place of worship and community center for the Hindu community in the area.



**Pt Narayan Bhatt together with Mr Ajay Singh (President of
Shree Krishna Temple)**

**Lawyer by profession, Ajay Singh ji is President of Shree
Ramakrishna Temple and very keen,
devoted, also knowledgeable individual
who has big vision for his community.**

SANATAN DHARMA BRAHMAN PUROHITMAHA SABHA

A few HHS priests are members of the BPMSA and are holding very important positions with BPMSA. HHS members are genuinely involved in organising and running religious events of BPMSA such as annual Gayatri Maha Yagya, Mirtunjaya Yagya and Ganga Pooja .They are also involved in preparation of yearly Hindu Festival Calendar.

The Brahman Purohit Maha Sabha has three primary objectives at its core. Firstly, it aims to provide services that meet the religious, spiritual, and cultural needs of the Hindu community in Australia. Secondly, it seeks to promote Hindu rituals through educational programs and the training of prospective Hindu priests. Lastly, the Sabha strives to ensure that all Sanatan Vedic samskaars (sacraments) are performed according to the rituals prescribed in the Vedas, Purans, and Upanishads. In addition to these key objectives, the Sabha engages in various projects involving the Ethnic Hindu and other communities, including celebrations such as Saraswati Devi poojan for children, Indra/Ganga poojan, Maha Mritunjai yagan, Maha Gayatri yagan, and Kirtan samelan. The educational program, which has become a favorite topic among members, is seamlessly integrated into the routine administrative work conducted during monthly meetings. The Sabha maintains strong relationships and collaborative work ethics with brother organizations such as the Sanatan Pratinidhi Sabha of Australia, Sanatan Dharam Sabha of NSW, Hindu Heritage Society of Australia, Hindu Clergy Society, Sita Ram Mandir in Carramar, as well as several other organizations from India, Fiji, and New Zealand.

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AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF HINDU CLERGY

The Australian Council of Hindu Clergy (ACHC) is an organization that represents the interests of Hindu priests and clergy in Australia. It was founded in 1989 and aims to provide a unified voice for the Hindu community in matters relating to religion, culture, and tradition.

The ACHC comprises Hindu priests and spiritual leaders from various sects and traditions of Hinduism. Its main objectives include promoting the practice of Sanatan Dharma, preserving the cultural heritage of the Hindu community, and providing guidance on religious and spiritual matters to the community.



Do not be led by others, awaken your own mind, amass your own experience, and decide for yourself your own path

— Atharva

VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD



**VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD OF AUSTRALIA INC
NEW SOUTH WALES**

R. Subramanian - National President

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) Sydney is a chapter of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a global Hindu organization dedicated to promoting Hindu culture and values worldwide. The VHP Sydney was established to serve the needs of the Hindu community in Sydney, Australia, and promote the practice of Sanatan Dharma.

The VHP Sydney is involved in a range of activities and initiatives aimed at promoting Hindu culture and values. It organizes cultural events, festivals, and religious celebrations, and provides educational resources on Hinduism and Indian culture. The organization also works to promote interfaith dialogue and understanding, and engages with other religious and cultural groups in the community.

One of the key objectives of the VHP Sydney is to promote the welfare of the Hindu community in Australia. It provides support and assistance to individuals and families in the community, and advocates for the rights and interests of the community at a local and national level.

The VHP Sydney also plays an active role in promoting social and environmental causes. It supports various charitable and humanitarian initiatives in Australia and India, and works to promote sustainable living and environmental awareness.

Overall, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad Sydney is an important organization that serves the needs of the Hindu community in Sydney, and helps to promote the values and traditions of Sanatan Dharma in the country.

SYDNEY SANSKRIT SCHOOL **School Of Vedic Sciences (Australia) Inc.**



Sydney Sanskrit School, affiliated with the School of Vedic Sciences (Aust) Inc., was established in 2006 to fulfill the need for a community language school teaching Sanskrit primarily to the migrant community in Australia. With the support of well-wishers and community members, it became the first Sanskrit community language school under the NSW Community Languages program. The school's curriculum focuses on reading, writing, speaking, and listening to Sanskrit, introducing students to the Upanishads, Puranas, Ramayana, and Mahabharata through stories, rhymes, and songs. In 2011, the school affiliated with Sura Saraswati Sabha, Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya Peetam, providing certifications for Sanskrit learning. The school has witnessed tremendous growth, with students achieving the third level of Sanskrit exams, equivalent to a bachelor's degree. The school has also released a bilingual songbook, "Yabun" (Matra), showcasing a blend of Sanskrit and indigenous Aboriginal culture. Students actively participate in recitals and competitions, receiving

unwavering support from the Hindu Heritage Society and Sri Mandir, Auburn. The school's vision is to disseminate Sanskrit knowledge to the younger generation, and the support from organizations and community members reinforces this vision. The journey of the school was further sweetened when one of its senior students received a Minister's Award for Learning in 2022, the highest recognition for academic achievements in community language schools. The school expresses gratitude to the NSW Department of Education, committee members, and community organizations like the Hindu Heritage Society for their support and assistance.

Shree Sanatan Dharm Pratinidhi Sabha of Australia Inc.



Our organisation has been teaching the philosophy of Hinduism and allied religious cultures in accordance with Vedic Sanatan Dharma. We also promote sports, music, arts, meditation and other cultural art forms. Our organisation also uses resources to encourage participation in bhajans, kirtans, folk songs and pravachans as collective and communal forms of religious cultures.

Green Valley Languages & Arts School

Keeping culture alive in our community through quality
Hindi language and arts education.

ABN 29 336 906 047

greenvalleylaschool@gmail.com

<http://www.greenvalleyhindischool.com/>



Green Valley Hindi Language and Arts School (GVLAS) is dedicated to providing excellent cultural and language education services under the guidance of the NSW Department of Education and the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools. The school offers Hindi language classes from kindergarten to grade 12, including the opportunity to study Hindi at the Higher School Certificate (HSC) level. In addition to language education, GVLAS also offers art classes, including vocals, harmonium, tabla, and Bollywood/Bharatanatyam dances.

Mr Deo Narayan, President, Green Valley School is actively supporting and participating various activities of Hindu Heritage Society



IABBV INDO AUSTRALIAN BALBHARTI VIDYALAY HINDI SCHOOL

The Indo-Aust Bal Bharathi Vidyalaya Hindi School (IABBV-Hindi School) was established by a group of migrant mothers from India who wanted their children to maintain their language and culture in Australia. The school provides Hindi language education to children and adults, fostering bilingualism and biculturalism. In addition to language classes, the school offers a diverse curriculum including sports, music, drama, dance, and cultural exchange. The supportive environment of the school allows students to connect with others facing similar challenges and helps them shape their identities as Indo-Australians. Supported by the NSW DTEC Community Languages program, IABBV-Hindi School operates as a non-profit organization run entirely by volunteers. With multiple classes and over 140 students each year, the school covers a wide range of ages and proficiency levels, preparing students for Hindi language exams and offering comprehensive Hindi education in Sydney.

Mala Mehta OAM

President/Honorary Founder/Hindi Teacher

IABBV Hindi School Inc. (IBNID: 91)

NSW DET Community Language Schools

Committee Member Modern Languages Teachers Association (MLTA)

Vice Chair & Founding Board Member Women's Shed Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Inc.

SWAMI NARAYAN SANSTHAN (BAPS)



The Swaminarayan Sansthan, commonly known as BAPS (Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Sanstha), is a global Hindu organization dedicated to the spiritual, social, and cultural upliftment of individuals and communities. Founded in 1907 by Bhagwan Swaminarayan, BAPS follows the teachings and principles of Swaminarayan Bhagwan and is guided by its spiritual leader, His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj. BAPS centers around the world serve as hubs for religious worship, education, and humanitarian services. The organization promotes moral values, family harmony, and selfless service through various activities, including spiritual discourses, festivals, youth programs, and socio-economic initiatives. BAPS is known for its magnificent temples, intricate craftsmanship, and devotion to the principles of spirituality, knowledge, and unity. With millions of followers worldwide, BAPS continues to inspire individuals towards a balanced and fulfilling life rooted in spirituality and service to humanity.

NATYA NIVEDAN:

A school of Indian Classical Dancing – Bharatanatyam

For promoting Bharat Natyam in Sydney Natya Nivedan School of cultural dance such as Bharat Natyam has voluntarily participated in HHS programs from time to time and has a good reputation in the community.



Natyanivedan & Guru Smt. Nikhila Kiran Natyanivedan, a sincere and dedicated school aspiringly endeavours to propagate this elegant, divine and ancient form of dancing to the world with the blessings of God, Gurus & Elders. This is a presentation of Bharathanatyam to the community established in the year 1997 in Sydney imparting training in classical Bharathanatyam. The school offers technical & professional training of this divine art to students. In the last few years Women's group classes have been introduced as well allowing women in pursuit of bharathanatyam seeking Bharthi path in this way.

Guru Smt Nikhila Kiran is the disciple of **Natyacharya Guru Sri H R Keshavamurthy**. After completing Diploma in Bharathanatyam by Keshava Nrithya Shala, she obtained Vidwath Grade (Proficiency) in Bharathanatyam from Karnataka State Education Board. She is a graded artist in Doordarshan channel 9. Vidushi Nikhila Kiran discovered her passion for dance at an early age, fascinated by the deep connection of body, mind and soul. Upon arriving in Sydney to a community largely unaware of Indian classical arts, she felt compelled to propagate this art form to younger generations. Nikhila has dedicated 26 years of her tireless efforts to continue the passing down of ancient Indian values and customs. She is an internationally recognised teacher and performer, but her greatest reward will always be watching her young girls blossom into empowered women. Smt Nikhila Kiran fiercely encourages her students to train their bodies as much as their minds, making them do various body weight exercises and yoga. In this way she is not only empowering young girls and women mentally and spiritually, but also physically.

Guru Nikhila Kiran believes in giving back to the society through the art form, hence has participated in many charity events like raising funds for Cancer Council Australiathrough their event Dancing with the Stars, Fundraising for Westmead Hospital, fundraising for artists in India affected during Covid, Hindu Council of Australia, Sri Venkateswara Temple Helensburgh, Sri Siddhi Vinayaka Temple at Townsville and many more organisations forvarious great causes.

As a Choreographer & Director, Vidushi Nikhila Kiran in her conceptual production Sharanaagathy, Bhajanaa-Natya, Ramayana Katha Nrithya, Shri Krishna Namamrutham, Prakruthi and Andal these were very experimental. Under her able tutelage and guidance many arangetrams, salangai puja and productions have met great public appraisal.

She has been conferred with many accolades for her work in this divine art form, including the highly coveted Aryabhata International Award, Gargi Award by Hindu Council, awards by Sydney Kannada Sangha, United Indian Association and Basava Samrithi Australia wing for her contribution to Bharathanatyam.

The Natyanivedan recently got accepted and accredited by International Dance Council - COD, and is recognised by UNESCO.



DHARAM JEET SINGH & SON

Dharam Jeet Singh & Son is a long term supporter of the Hindu Heritage Society with regular donations to HHS events over the years since its inception as Kala Mandir. This is the story of Dharam Jeet Singh Indian Diaspora – Mrs Prem Maharaj’s great Grandfather, (Par Aaja/or Par Dada in Hindi), Late Thakur Kuldip Singh, was one of the Original Girmitya’s from India. He arrived on board the ill-fated Syria Jahaj on 14th May, 1884. The ship sank off the coast of Nausori after striking a reef. Very few people were rescued after the disaster, of which Late Thakur Kuldip Singh was one.

Thakur Kuldip Singh’s family was settled in Raralevu after completing the Indentured period of 5 years. They moved to the present property on the Raralevu mountain area. The family has been in this place for over 100 years. The landmark is the Dharam Jeet Singh Store. This was established in 1943. Thakur Kuldip Singh’s family originally hails from Bihar in India. The families have been in contact all these years. Letters were exchanged regularly between the parties in India and Fiji.

The Hindu Heritage Society is grateful to the extended family members of the Dharam Jeet Singh Family who have volunteered their time and have also contributed financially towards the events that have been hosted by the Society.

May the Blessings of the Almighty always remain upon your family!



A rare photo of Late Mr and Mrs Dharam Jeet Singh of Raralevu Nausori. Mr and Mrs Dharam Jeet Singh were both born in Fiji

PUNDIT. HARISH SHARMA



Shri Harish Chandra Sharma is a former Fiji Indian politician who became the leader of the National Federation Party in 1987. He was also the leader of the organisation

representing most of the Hindus in Fiji, the Shree Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji.

Mr Sharma was born in Nausori, Fiji in 1932. He worked as a civil servant and as an insurance agent before departing for Tasmania in 1960, where he received the LL.B. from the University of Tasmania in 1964. On his return to Fiji he first worked for Sidiq Koya then for A. D. Patel, before setting up his own law firm in 1969. He was nominated to the Senate by the Leader of the Opposition in 1970 and remained a Senator until the 1972 general election.

Mr Harish Sharma was the President of the Fiji Law Society from 1989 to 1990 and was honored with the life membership of the Fiji Law Society in 2007.

Social and religious contribution

Pandit Sharma was a founding member of Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji which was formally formed on 29th November 1958 at the Sanatan Shiv Mandir Samabula. He was later the secretary of Sanatan Dharam Shiv Mandir, Samabula and was actively involved in the formation of the national body. After 35 years he was elected the national president of the Sabha and held the position successively for ten years

Upon his retirement he was awarded "Sanatan Ratna" and made life member of Shri Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji. He was awarded a second "Sanatan Rattan" by Shri Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha of N.S.W. inc in November 2013 for his services to the Sanatan community in Australia

In February 2018 he was honoured with "Hindi Gaurav Samman" by International Hindi Parishad Adharshila

He helped establish Korovuto Secondary school which is now known as Korovuto College and was its very first manager for a period of ten years. He was later made life member of the school on retirement.

He also helped establish Nawai Junior Secondary School, now known as Nawai Secondary School and was its manager for more than a decade. Made life member of the school on retirement. Both the schools have made amazing progress since inception

Mr Sharma enrolled as a law student at the University of Tasmania at the beginning of 1960. He formally qualified as a lawyer at the end of 1964. He practised law for one year in Hobart, Tasmania under a Queen's Counsel

Upon his return to Fiji, he joined Koya and co as a Legal practitioner in 1966.

Joined A.D Patel and Co in 1968 as Mr. Patel's Associate. Upon Mr. Patel's death formed the firm of Patel and Sharma with Mr. P. B Patel.

In March 2005, he was given a special certificate of appreciation by the Fiji Law Society for dedicated and invaluable service rendered to Fiji Law Society and the legal profession.

SANATH & NIRLA PANDEY (Brisbane)



Pundit Sanat Pandey is married to Nirla Pandey and has two daughters and four grandchildren. He is a retired Chartered Accountant who migrated to Australia in 1987 after the first coup in Fiji. Pundit Sanat Pandey has dedicated most of his time to his community, especially the Fiji Indian Community.

As a practising Hindu priest, Pundit Sanat Pandey offers his services to the Gayatri Temple in Boondall, Lakshmi Narayan Temple in Burbank and Sanatan Centre in Berrinba conducting prayer meetings and giving sermons during religious ceremonies such as Shiv-Ratri, Ram Naumi, Krishna Janam-Ashtami, Hanuman Jayanti, etc. He also conducts Sola-Sanskar prayers according to the needs of various devotees. He is also a Religious and Civil Marriage Celebrant and he has conducted several marriage ceremonies locally, nationally and destination weddings as well.

He also conducts funeral rites and many other religious ceremonies as and when required by the Indian Community. He has authored a book titled 'Lakshmi Poojan for Diwali' and is currently writing an additional book on 'Sixteen Sanskaars'.

He is actively involved in promoting and supporting the study of the Hindu religion at various educational levels. Being invited to speak at Graduation Ceremonies in different Faith Centres is a testament to his knowledge and expertise in the Hindu religion. Such opportunities allow him to share his insights and inspire graduating students as they embark on their next chapters in life, providing interpreting services to hospitals, government institutions, and courts indicates

his linguistic abilities and willingness to bridge communication gaps. Interpreters play a crucial role in ensuring effective communication between individuals who speak different languages, and his contributions in this area are commendable.

Offering prayer services to sick patients in hospitals is a compassionate act. Providing spiritual support to those who are unwell can bring comfort and solace during challenging times. It's wonderful that he has been able to provide this service to those in need.

Collaborating with the State Government to prepare a booklet specifically tailored to the needs of Hindu patients is another noteworthy endeavor. Such initiatives demonstrate a commitment to enhancing cultural understanding and ensuring appropriate care for individuals from diverse religious backgrounds.

Overall, his dedication to volunteering and serving various communities through different roles reflects his passion for his faith and his desire to make a positive impact on the lives of others.

Pundit Sanat Pandey has been serving community members as a qualified Justice of Peace since the year 2000 and has been involved in numerous fund-raising projects for the poor, needy and temples. He is a regular speaker at various Senior Citizen Associations and religious organisations. He has been the vice president of Lakshmi Narayan Temple at Burbank for numerous years and also served as a treasurer and auditor for various religious groups. As a highly respected and trusted Priest, he is also called upon to help people having problems with their marriages and children not complying with the norms of the community.

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA OF AUSTRALIA
Suresh Chand



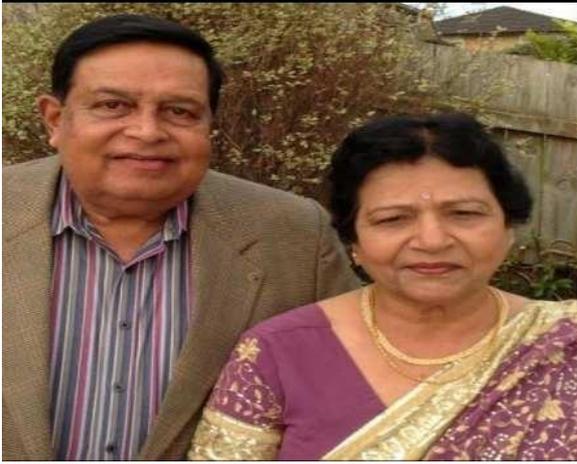
President, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Australia.

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Australia Incorporated was formed on 15th February 1994. In 2003 APSA purchased 69 Shane Park Road at Shanes Park NSW and established their office.

The members of APSA participated in Arya International Maha Sammelans in Delhi and Singapore. This inspired us and Arya International Maha Sammelan was held at our Shane Park property from 27th November to 29th November 2015. It was a very successful event. We have been successfully organising Yog, Meditations and Vedic Studies throughout Australia. Various scholars and parcharakas have been successfully conducting Vedic teaching here. In near future more scholars from Bharat will be arriving here to conduct Vedic Dharma teaching etc.

I would like to extend, special thank you to all our members, support groups, friends and well wishers, who worked continuously to bring the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Australia to what it is today. God bless you all!

SHRIMAN PADAM LALA AND SHRIMATIGAITRI DEVI LALA



Mr Padam Lala hails from the extremely well-known Lala family in Fiji. He was born in Nausori Fiji in 1942 and is married to Mrs Gaitri Devi Lala. They are the devoted parents of three professionally successful children and are proud grand parents.

Mr Padam Raj Lala and Mrs Gaitri Devi Lala (from Fiji) deserve award for their outstanding contribution to community service in Fiji and Australia, supporting 108 Kund Havan Yagna in Sydney, promoting scio-cultural activities, festival programmes and establishing Krishna Vedic School in Kuku Nausori in Fiji. He has played substantially a key role in expanding the wings of Hindu Heritage Society in Australia for last 25 years. They come from extremely well known Lala family of Fiji. Lala family nurtures the belief that lindividual service gives satisfaction but community service gives supreme sense of fulfilment.

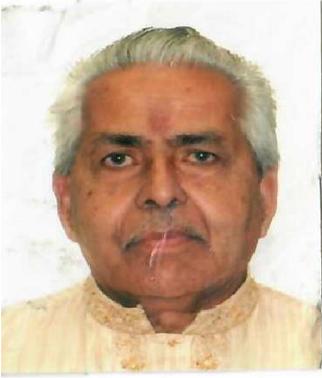
NEPALESE HINDU COMMUNITY



Nepalese Hindu Society of Australia (NHSA) is an organization to preserve Hindu religion and practice Hindu rituals continuously for all Hindus.

It was established in 2011. NHSA serves all Hindus living in Australia according to Hindu religion through a voluntarily available Hindu Priest to carry out the religious activities, which will be required during birth, death and other necessary ritual religious activities in an affordable method according to Hindu religion.

PUNDIT SADA NAND SHARMA



I have much pleasure in writing about a nonagenarian, who “single handedly” saved the Hindu /Sanatan Dharma in Sydney Australia.

Pandit Sada Nand Sharma was born in Ba in the western division of Fiji. He was a first generation Fijian Indian Diaspora to arrive in Australia in 1973, as a practicing Sanatani purohit, still in the “White

Australia Policy”. The number of Hindus in Australia at that time was few.

While in Fiji he was a practicing Hindu purohit, conducting all Sanatani rituals, including weddings, funeral rites and other samskaras.

He together with Pandit Khushi Ram Sharma and Pandit Ramayan Maharaj was instrumental in establishing the WAILAILAI KUTI (Mandir), which to this day is still a well known Mandir, patronized by thousands of devotees each year.

In Australia he was yearning to establish a similar Mandir, he quickly partnered with one Mr. Gyan Singh and others formed the FIRST Sanatan Dhram Mandir in

Sydney, Australia at Chipping Norton. As the patronage increased, the Mandir was later relocated to more spacious premises at Prestons near Liverpool. Pt. Sadanand was the first “Sansthapak ‘’ and “Pracharak in both of these mandirs. Today this Mandir is in AUSTRAL, LIVERPOOL, the SANATAN DHARM RAM KRISHNA MANDIR, boasting a modern mandir, function hall and a huge carpark. Pt. Sadanand is still associated with this mandir, although not as a fulltime priest.

In addition to a practicing purohit, he was the first Hindu Marriage celebrant appointed in Australia.

His entire family followed him to Australia in 1978. He has been doing Ramayan Prachar; Kirtan bhajans and katha pravachan in Sydney ever since.

Pt. Sadanand ji has performed many weddings, officiated at numerous funerals and provided counselling to many in need.

With ailing health, he now performs with reduced workload, but is still active in the Hindu community.

He is regarded as a father figure, in so far as the Hindu community and the Sanatan Dharm in Sydney is concerned.

COLLABORATORS AND PARTNERS



HARDIK THAKKAR

MANAGING DIRECTOR
ICONIC TILES AND BATHWARE
120-122 Warren Road Smithfield NSW

Iconic Tiles & Bathware

Mr. Hardik Thakkar is a successful businessman and the owner of Iconic Tiles and Bathware, a reputable company that specializes in importing and distributing high-quality tiles, timber flooring and bathroom fixtures in the Western Sydney area.

Born and raised in Gujarat, India, Mr. Thakkar arrived in Sydney in 2009 as an international student, with a dream to pursue a career in business. Despite facing numerous challenges, he remained focused on his goal and worked hard to gain the necessary skills and experience. He started his career in the industry by working at a tile and bathroom fixtures store, where he gained extensive knowledge and experience in the field.

In 2017, Mr. Thakkar achieved a significant milestone when he became a 50% partner in a multi-million-dollar company. His dedication and hard work had paid off, and he was finally making his mark in the business world.

However, Mr. Thakkar didn't stop there. He continued to work tirelessly to grow the company and expand its reach. By 2021, Mr. Thakkar had achieved another milestone - he bought the company out and rebranded it to Iconic Tiles & Bathware, that is one of the biggest showrooms in Western Sydney that is spread over 3000m² of warehousing space. This was a momentous achievement for Mr. Thakkar, who had come a long way since his days as an international student.

Under Mr. Thakkar's leadership, Iconic Tiles and Bathware has become a well-known name in the industry, thanks to its excellent customer service, quality products, and competitive prices. The company offers a wide range of products, including tiles, bathroom fixtures, natural stone, timber flooring and more, catering to the needs and preferences of a diverse range of customers.

Mr. Thakkar is a hands-on owner who takes an active role in the operations of his business. He believes in building strong relationships with his customers and providing them with personalized service to ensure their satisfaction.

Today, Iconic Tiles is a thriving business that has cemented its place as a leader in the tiles and Bathware industry. He is a very well known in the Indian business community of Sydney. In addition to his work at Iconic Tiles and Bathware Smithfield, Mr. Thakkar is also actively involved in various charitable activities, such as supplying tiles and bathroom products to temples, churches and gurudwaras. He believes in giving back to the community and supports several organizations that work towards social causes.

He treats his staff at iconic tiles as family members. Mr. Thakkar values the people who work with him, and he has established a workplace culture that is built on mutual respect, trust, and care. He believes that when a company operates like a family, it can create a more engaged workforce, leading to increased productivity and ultimately a successful endeavor.



In conclusion, Hardik Thakkar's story is a testament to the power of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. His journey from an international student to the owner of a multi-million-dollar company is truly remarkable, and he serves as an inspiration to us all.



The Diaspora Foundation is a non-profit organization based in New Delhi, India, that aims to connect and empower the Indian diaspora worldwide. The organization was founded in 2014 by a group of Indian professionals living abroad, who recognized the need for a platform to facilitate engagement and collaboration between the diaspora and India.

The Diaspora Foundation focuses on several key areas, including education, entrepreneurship, culture, and social impact. The organization hosts events and workshops to promote knowledge exchange and networking among diaspora members, as well as to showcase the rich diversity of Indian culture and heritage.

In addition to its events and initiatives, the Diaspora Foundation also conducts research and advocacy work to support the Indian diaspora community. The organization has published several reports on topics such as diaspora philanthropy and the impact of COVID-19 on the Indian diaspora.

Overall, the Diaspora Foundation plays an important role in promoting engagement and collaboration between the Indian diaspora and India, and in supporting the growth and success of the diaspora community.

Dr Mrinal Kant Pandey and Mr Mukesh Saini are two remarkable individuals who have dedicated their lives to

serving the Indian diaspora. As President and General Secretary of the Diaspora Foundation in New Delhi, they have been at the forefront of efforts to support and empower members of the Indian diaspora across the globe.

Under their leadership, the Diaspora Foundation has become a beacon of hope for millions of Indians living abroad. The Foundation works tirelessly to provide support and assistance to Indian diaspora communities, helping them to navigate the challenges of living in a foreign land while maintaining their cultural identity and heritage.

Dr Pandey and Mr Sahini's tireless efforts have helped to create a more connected and inclusive world, one in which members of the Indian diaspora can feel a sense of belonging and pride in their heritage. Through their work, they have built bridges between communities and brought people together in a spirit of unity and understanding.

Their contributions have been nothing short of remarkable. They have helped to promote Indian culture and traditions around the world, working to preserve the rich legacy of India's past while embracing the challenges and opportunities of the present.

Join us on this journey of discovery as we explore the lives and work of two remarkable individuals who have dedicated themselves to serving the Indian diaspora, and to creating a more connected, inclusive, and vibrant world.

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We understand that you have a lot to think about during this difficult time. So we promise to carefully and clearly explain everything to you. Every step of the service is on our shoulders

ASHWIN AND NAMITA GOVIND

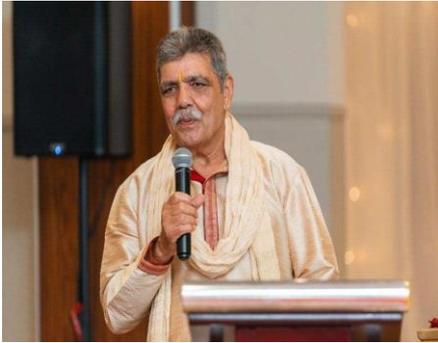
Mr. Ashwin Govind and Mrs. Namita Govind are a highly respected couple who have made a successful life for themselves in Sydney, Australia, after migrating from Auckland, New Zealand. They are well-known for their philanthropic work and their active involvement in the Hindu Heritage Society. Mrs. Namita Govind is originally from the famous Dharam Jeet Singh & Son Family of Raralevu Nausori in the Fiji Islands. She is highly regarded for her strong sense of community and dedication to promoting cultural heritage. As a member of the Hindu Heritage Society, she has been actively involved in organizing cultural events and promoting the rich cultural heritage of India. Mr. Ashwin Govind is an accomplished businessperson who has worked in the IT industry for several years. He has a reputation for being highly professional and has built a successful career for himself in Sydney. He is well-respected in the community for his entrepreneurial skills and his commitment to supporting local businesses. Together, Mr. and Mrs. Govind are highly involved in philanthropic activities, supporting various charities and community organizations in Sydney. They are passionate about giving back to the community and have been actively involved in supporting the Guru Purnima Program in 2023 as sponsors. Their commitment to promoting cultural heritage and giving back to the community has earned them widespread respect and admiration in Sydney. Their

dedication to supporting various charitable causes is a testament to their strong sense of community and their belief in making a positive impact on the world around them. Mr. Ashwin Govind and Mrs. Namita Govind are highly respected members of the community who have made a significant contribution to promoting cultural heritage and supporting charitable causes in Sydney. Their commitment to giving back and making a positive impact on the world around them is truly inspirational.



Pandit Shailendra Maharaj – Hindu Priest,
Commonwealth Registered Marriage Celebrant, JP NSW –

***Diaspora story: My Ancestral Journey from India
to Fiji and to Australia***



My grandfather Pundit Ram Charitar Maharaj was brought to Fiji under the British Indenture system. He arrived in Fiji in September 1913 and travelled on the SS Ganges No2. He was from Gorakhpur Belwa Jila, Uttar Pradesh. On the SS Ganges No2 there were a total of 784 Indians being brought to Fiji. Many got sick on the voyage, and some passed away before reaching Fiji.

After completing five years of indentured labour contract, my grandfather was given 2.5 acres of land by the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company and settled in Daku village, (Fijian name Dakuina). Daku is forty Kilometers (twenty-five miles) from Labasa town on the island of Vanua Levu.

My grandfather walked for kilometers to get to homes where he would perform the poojas. My elder brother and I often accompanied him on these pooja visits.

My father Pandit Ram Dutt Maharaj was the second child among five brothers. He was married to my mother Tara Wati and I am fifth among my eight siblings. My maternal grandfather Pundit Mahadeo Maharaj, was born in Fiji and my maternal great grandfather Pandit Ram

Bharos Maharaj was born in India, however, very sadly the exact details of the name of the Jila or district he came from has been lost.

I am very grateful to my grandparents and parents who preserved the Hindu religion and culture in Fiji and passed on their language, religion and culture from generation to generation. My uncle Pundit Hari Dutt Sharma after doing tireless search was successful in tracing our ancestral connections and visited my grandfather's home in Gorakhpur, Belwa Jila on 17 November 2010.

I moved to Australia in 1989 with my wife Malti and two sons, Kavish and Akshay. Kavish is married to Saras and they have a son Aryan. Akshay is married to Vikantha.

Since moving to Australia, we have always been affiliated to Ramayan Madali's. This has allowed my family and I to continue to celebrate all the Hindu Parvas. Being part of the Hindu community has enabled us to keep our language, religion and culture alive. In our Australian Fijian community, we celebrate Holi, Ram Navami, Krishna Ashtami, Navratri and Diwali festivals.

My family and I have been closely associated with Pt Narayan Bhatt ji and the Hindu Heritage Society since 2006. The HHS is a non-profitable organization and promotes Hindu religion, language and culture. Malti and I are now retired and we continue with our work with HHS to promote our Hindu religion, language and culture so that our future generations continue with their Sanskriti, Sabetha and Sanskar.

On this occasion of HHS's 25th anniversary, I together with my family wish the Society and its member's best wishes in the future.

Pt Sukhendra Shandil



*From L-R Top: Padma Shandil, Pt. Sukhendra Shandil
Bottom: Namrata Shandil, Viraat Shandil, Vivaan Shandil and
Sachin Shandil.*

Pundit Sukhendra Shandil, a third generation Fiji Indian now living in Sydney, Australia is following in the footsteps of his ancestors in serving the community.

His great grandparents and grandparents late Pt. Ramdin Shandil and Pt. Sarju Prasad Shandil of Dauesh district, Kamhari Thana, Sagoui village, India arrived in Fijion 27 March 1904. For a brief period, they lived in Samabula, Suva and later moved to the second largest island, Vanua Levu and provided community services as a Hindu priest. His grandparents and parents were very actively involved in helping in establishing temples; schools and Ramayan Mandalis' in Fiji to ensure Hindu culture and religion were kept active.

Pt. Sukhendra is the youngest son of Late Pt. Muni

Prasad and Basuda Shandil and is a practicing Hindu priest. He is married to Padma Shandil, and they have two children and two grandchildren.

Some of the achievements in community services as listed below:

- Past President of Suva Jaycees
- Past Vice President of Fiji Jaycees
- Past Member of Sanatan Dharam, Suva, Fiji
- Past Secretary of Navyuak Satsangh Ramayan Mandali
- Member of Hindu Heritage Society
- Members of Australian Hindu Clergy
- General Secretary of Brahman Purohit Maha Sabha of Australia
- Recipient of Youth Exchange program to Queensland, Australia, 1984
- Recipient of Rotary International student exchange program, Oregon, USA, 1985

Pundit. Sukhendra is very actively involved with Hindu Heritage Society, Brahman Purohit Maha Sabha of Australia and Ramayan Mandli's in promoting religious and cultural activities.

He has been associated with HHS for over 20 years and have many treasured memories. Over the years we have formed a very strong bond among the members which saw my family being actively involved in the HHS activities in one way or another. I value the principles and values of the HHS and fellowship which has made me a better person.

Some of the highlights where I took active roles at HHS as follows:

- Represented HHS at the Australian Hindu Council meetings and supported in the organising Deepavali puja.

- Assisted in organising a conference for all Priests from Brahman Purohit MahaSabha of Australia, Australian Hindu Clergy and HHS.
- Initiated and successfully organised Hindi Oratory Contest for Hindi schools in Sydney region.

Service to the community is the best work of life and through small contributions that we can make for the wellbeing of all we can make the world a better place to stay.



Mr Ramendra Kumar



Ramendra Kumar was born in Ba, Fiji Islands to Babu Kuar Narayan and Sumittra .

Fiji a country and archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean. The Indian diaspora made Fiji its home since 1879 when the Indians were brought by the British to work on sugar cane, cotton and banana plantations.

Remendra's father came from India at the age of 3 with his paternal grandfather. His maternal grandfather came from Jamaica to Fiji to work in the sugar cane plantation.

Growing up in Vatulaulau, Ba Ramend attended Vatulaulau Sanatan School and later

completed his secondary education at Xavier College. He began his career at Westpac Banking Corporation .He continued with his studies by completing a degree from the

University of the South Pacific and continued working at the Westpac Banking Corporation as an accountant in the finance and planning department. He is married to Pushpa ,also from Xavier College. Pushpa also worked for Westpac Bank in Suva.

In 1995 Ramendra migrated to Sydney Australia, with his wife and two sons Raj and Romi. He continued his studies and became a Chartered Professional Accountant and is also Justice of the Peace in NSW . Currently he is self-employed and runs his own tax agency. Ramend is a religious person and regularly takes part in religious and cultural activities in Sydney .

He has keen interest in religion and music (bhajans and old classics), Ramend continues to work and loves to spend time with his two grandsons Kush and Dhruv. He is a supporter of HHS and together with his family is very thankful to Pandit Narayan Bhatt ji for his support and introducing his family to Hindu Heritage Society. As the Society celebrates its 25th anniversary, he wishes the society and its members all the best in future.



Pooja and Niten Singh



" My name is Niten Singh, son of late Dal Bahadur Singh. I was born in 1980, and grew up in Raralevu, Nausori, Fiji. I joined Raralevu Sanatan Navyuwak Ramayan Mandali at a very young age, and developed a keen interest in our religious scriptures and in Holi (Faag) singing. I genuinely enjoy studying our scriptures like The Gita, and helping spread the knowledge. I married Pooja Sen in 2011, and we have one daughter Ambar Singh. Pooja also has a keen interest in the Hindu way of life, and supports me in every step. We take a keen interest in volunteering at the events organised by HHS. Personally we are very grateful that an organisation like HHS exists in Sydney because we as a family benefit a lot from HHS activities".

Shri Indar K Nair and Mrs Damayanti Nair ji receiving an appreciation certificate on occasion of silver Jubilee celebration of HHS on 2023.



Indar Kumar Nair is among the very few singers from the Indo-Fijian community who has not only excelled but is a sought-after performing artist in Australia.

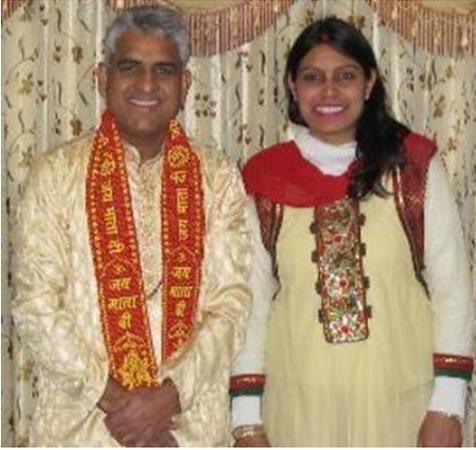
He is a versatile singer who sings most genres, from folksongs, bhajans, Bollywood melodies and ghazels. Being a regular guest of Radio Fiji in the 1980s gave him national acknowledgement. Release of his songs by **T Series of India** inclusive of other platforms such as **Red Ribbon and Sheemaroo Music** has given him global recognition which is a matter of pride for many music lovers.

It must be noted that writing lyrics and singing is his leisure. Although he has not taken up music as his principal occupation, Nair has fascinated and excited his listeners wherever he performed. As an artist he is deeply passionate.

His particular style of singing is akin to meditation where the artist brings out the value and insights of the stanzas.

Such a talent is a rare gift where the artist does justice to the composition of the prose. In this way his talents are scholarly where many see Nair as a symbol and an icon of Indian music.

Pt Shashi Maharaj



My Grandparents were from 'teerthraj' Prayaag UP India and my Fiji born parents were Ram Lakshman Maharaj and Lilawati Maharaj. In 1986 married ever loving and caring Saras Maharaj and our daughter Shivika Maharaj and son Shonit Maharaj were also born in the island nation.

Migrated to Australia in 1991 and settled in Sydney.

Very privileged to have done teerth yatra to India, Nepal and Kailash Mansorowar on numerous occasions and twice during Maha Kumbh in Prayaag and Haridwaar got the blessings of His Holiness Anant Shri Vibhushit Dwaarka Shaarda Peethadhishwar Jagad Guru Shankaraachaarya Swami Shri Swarupananda Saraswati Ji Maharaj.

It's been a pleasure to be associated with the Hindu Heritage Society in

Australia and I am very thankful to Param Pujniye Pt Narayan Bhatt Shastri Ji for passing his Karmakand Vidhya and aashirvaad to make me what I am today.

Namo Narayan



PDT BHARAT SHARMA

Pdt Bharat Sharma was born and raised as a Hindu by his parents - Ms Ifa Sharma and Pdt Davendra Sharma. He plays harmonium and dholak and instruments with as much flair as he is able to recite difficult mantras and shloks and does perform weddings, funerals, as well as other poojas and havan.

Trained under Shahstri Pdt Narayan Bhatt - founder of Kalaa Mandir, the original form of Hindu Heritage Society - Pdt Bharat Sharma is a confident individual with loads to offer to our ever growing Hindu community in Australia.

From early age, Pdt B Sharma attended weekend Hindi vernacular classes from 2004-2008.

He also undertook music lessons to become a keen artist in singing both bhajans, kritans and faag sangeet. He has performed and obtained awards at many public events.

At his tender age of 14, Pdt B Sharma took his Guru diksha from Pdt N Bhatt and under his care, he has also recited sapta parayan katha - Devi bhagvat, Ramayan, Shiv Maha Puran and srimadh bhagvat Gita. From the year 2008, Pdt B Sharma also started performing puja vidhi around Sydney at various localities and homes. Later, he also mastered performing 16 sacraments like weddings and funerals.

He has travelled around NSW, Queensland and Fiji to perform sanatan dharma rites and puja vidhi.

While on his annual teerath yaatraa, Pdt B Sharma also undertook sanskriti classes in AJOYDHYA from Pdt Lallan

Tiwari, a local scholar.

In 2015, Pdt B Sharma acquired membership of Australian Council of Hindu Clergy - the premier organisation representing Hindu priests around Australia. It was under ACHC, he obtained credentials to perform funeral rites after attending a course in 2022.

Pdt B Sharma is also a co founder of Hindu Cosmos Mandir - also operating as Sri Shani Sankat Mochan Mandir Sydney.

He is a regular priest at that Mandir as well as a preacher there.

Pdt B Sharma is a man of all occasions and is admired and respected by many in our Hindu community in Australia.



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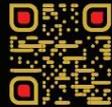
Our compassionate team will guide you through, every step of the process ensuring a farewell that truly reflects the life of your loved one.

Our services start from the respectful transport of your departed loved one to our funeral home and end with the Ashes returned to you in 4 Hours.

In the case of a funeral on Saturday, you will have the ashes on Saturday night for Visarjan on Sunday. Please speak with us today, to learn more.



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CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

The Following people have received a certificate of appreciation from the Hindu Heritage Society for their tireless efforts in organizing and promoting cultural events and festivals in the community over the last 25 years.

List of Individuals who have been helping HHS including foundation and Life members:

- Mrs. Savitri & Mr Amrit Ram
- Mr. Yadav & Mrs Basundhara Dhungel
- Mr. Ashok & Mrs. Sudha Singhal
- Mr. Hitendra & Mrs Renuka Ram
- Pdt. Shashi & Mrs Saras Maharaj
- Mr. Anand Narayan
- Mrs. Shashi & Mr. Satish Dass
- Mr. Indar & Mrs Damyanti Nair
- Mr. Dinesh Chander & Mrs. Anita Gupta
- Mr. Anil & Mrs Neelam Fulwaria
- Mr. Anil & Mrs. Soni Kumar
- Mr. Arvind & Mrs. Roselyn Narayan
- Mr. Kamal Krishna & Mrs Swapna Laha
- Mrs. Neera Srivastava
- Mr. Yash & Mrs. Mamita Mishra
- Mr Niten & Mrs Pooja Singh
- Mr Anand & Mrs Ashika Prasad
- Mr Satya & Mrs Manita Prakash
- Mr Satish & Mrs Sarita Sharma
- Mr. Andrew Prasad
- Mr Ashwin & Mrs Namita Govind

- Mr. Sachin & Mrs Shivon Govind Desai
- Mr Shamal & Mrs Neelam Singh
- Mr. Dhurup & Mrs. Kiran Singh
- Pdt. Sukhendra & Mrs Padma Shandil
- Pdt. Shailendra & Mrs Malti Maharaj
- Mr Satish & Mrs. Lalita Singh
- Pdt. Gautam Maharaj
- Mr Sunil & Mrs. Sunita Mishra
- Pdt. Amrit & Mrs. Shanta Prasad
- Mr. Sashi and Mrs. Roma Singh
- Mr. Kuar Pal & Mrs. Angela Indrani Sharma
- Mr. Anil & Mrs. Swapna Doma
- Pdt. Davendra Sharma
- Mr. Ramendra & Mrs. Pushpa Kumar
- Pdt. Bharat Sharma
- Mr Avichal & Mrs Amita Narayan
- Mr Ashutosh Sharma
- Mrs Seema Bhardwaj
- Pdt. Krishna Murthy Venkatraman
- Pdt. Lalbahadur Mishra
- Pdt. Jatin Kumar Bhatt
- Pdt. Prakash Dodhari
- Pdt Bhalchandra Adhikari
- Mrs Shradha Tewari
- Mr Sanjesh Nand
- Shiva Chandiran
- Ms Aruna Gandhi
- Yogeshwar Singh

Abiding in the midst of ignorance, thinking themselves wise and learned, fools go aimlessly hither and thither, like blind led by the blind

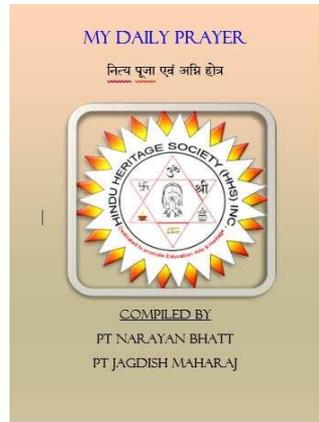
—Katha Upanish

Hindu Heritage Society Publications

By Pundit Jagdish Maharaj

Divya Darshan - Divya Darshan is a quarterly magazine released by the Hindu Heritage Society, dedicated to promoting Hindu culture, spirituality, and values. The magazine serves as a platform for sharing knowledge, insights, and perspectives on various aspects of Hinduism. Divya Darshan features articles, interviews, and scholarly pieces written by experts and enthusiasts in the field, covering topics such as Hindu philosophy, mythology, rituals, festivals, and social issues. It aims to provide readers with a deeper understanding of Hindu traditions and their relevance in the modern world. The magazine also showcases inspiring stories of individuals who embody the principles of Hinduism in their lives and make a positive impact on society. Divya Darshan is a valuable resource for those seeking to explore and connect with their Hindu heritage as well as fostering a sense of pride, identity, and spiritual growth among readers.

PDT JAGDISH MAHARAJ
– 60TH BIRTHDAY release
My Daily Prayer



AMRIT KALASH - Amrit Kalash, a Hindu religious radio program hosted by Pt Jagdish Maharaj, is a divine source of spiritual nourishment for listeners. The program offers a rich tapestry of religious facts, captivating stories, devotional songs, and soul-stirring bhajans that resonate with the hearts of the audience.

Pt Jagdish Maharaj, with his profound knowledge and wisdom, enlightens listeners about various aspects of Hinduism, guiding them on a spiritual journey filled with meaning and purpose. The program goes beyond entertainment, featuring insightful interviews with prominent Hindu religious leaders, who share their deep understanding of scriptures and offer valuable insights into spiritual practices. Additionally, Amrit Kalash serves as a valuable resource for devotees seeking guidance on performing poojas, providing clear instructions and guidelines to ensure the correct observance of rituals and ceremonies. Through this divine platform, Pt Jagdish Maharaj spreads the essence of Hinduism, fostering a deeper connection with the divine and inspiring individuals to embrace spirituality in their daily lives. Amrit Kalash is a beacon of light that illuminates the path of seekers, nourishing their souls with the wisdom and devotion of Hindu traditions.

Online diwali youtube (channel) :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CLcmiOORcI&t=16s>

Simple Dipawali Puja Conducted by Pt Narayan Bhatt, showcasing the Step by Step procedure on conducting Diwlai Poojan. Kindly assisted by Ptji's Family

List of booklets published

- 1-Divya Darshan : a quarterly Newsletter
- 2-Our Great Sages - 2004
- 3-Satya Narayan Vrat katha (Hindi version) 2006
- 4-Vishnu Sahastra Naamam 2006
- 5-FAQ in Hinduism- 2007
- 6-Panchdev Puja vidhi (Hindi version) 2010
- 7-My daily pooja English Hindi version 2011
- 8-Panchdev Puja vidhi (English version) 2011
- 9-Saral Bhajanaawali-2012
- 10-Satya Narayan Vrat Katha (English version) 2013

HHS is also recorded Panchdev poojan vidhi and bhajans available in MP3 format to be converted as MP4 format for devotees soon.

YouTube link for Shri Ganesh Stuti

<https://youtu.be/cmI99JN-Jhc>

Photo Gallery



Deepti Bhatt. Daughter of Pdt. Narayan Bhatt ji And Shrinati Radhika Bhatt Ji was one of the Officials Masters of Cermonies for the Prime Minister Modiji and PrimeMinister Anthony Albanese's Function in the Sydney. She spoke to a crowd of 20,000 plus.

Her remarkable words were:

***“EK PYAS HI KAFI HAI SAAGAR TAK JAANE KE LIYE
EK HAWA KA JHOKA HI KAFI HAI, THANDAK PAHUCHANE KE LIYE
EK CHINGARI HI KAFI HAI UTKRANTI LANE KE LIYE
APANA DESH PREM HI KAFI HAI, MODI JI KE AANE KE LIYE.”***

The other important line she mentioned during her address was:

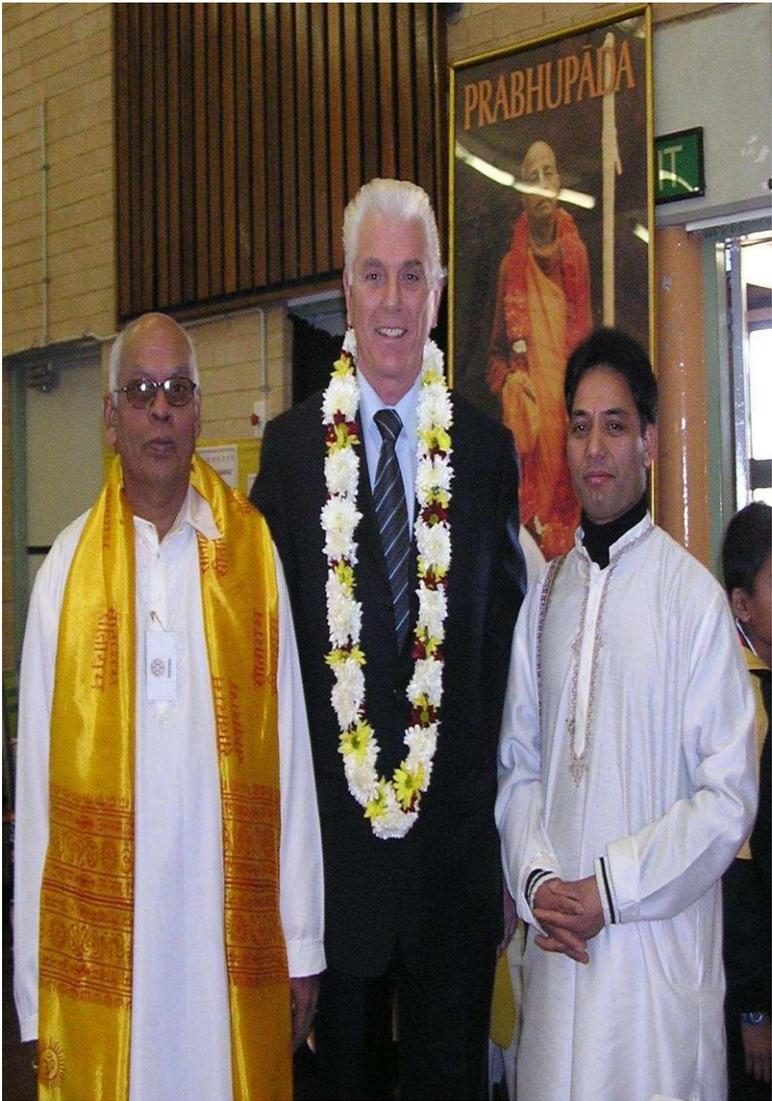
***“VASANT ME PHOOLON KA KHILNA ACHHA LAGTA HAI
BAGICHE ME BHANVARON KA MADRANA, ACHHA LAGTA HAI,
AISE SAANSKRITIK MAHOTSAV ME AANAA ACHHA LAGTA HAI,
VISHWA SHANTI KE DOOT MODI JI SE MILNA, ACHHA LAGTA HAI”***







HINDU HERITAGE SOCIETY was one of the “Welcome Partners” for function of PM Narendra Modi during his May, 2023 visit to Sydney. Pt Narayan Bhatt was one of the official priests to welcome Modiji and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. Pt. Bhatt welcomed PM Modi with chanting of Sanskrit Mantras during grand function with Indian Community in Australia



Pundits Shri Jagdish Maharaj Ji (left) and Shri Narayan Bhatt Ji (Right) with local Mayor



Hindu Heritage Society (HHS) has organised A BRAHMAN PUROHIT SAMMELAN in association with Brahman Purohit Mahasabha and Australian Council of Hindu Clergyon 7th October 2012 first time in Sydney, Australia. This Seminar was intended only for the practicing priests aiming to be extended to the wider community in future. Priests from Sydney and Canberra attended the seminar.



HHS Annual General Meeting



Real life Durga Ma Guffa (Cave)
Diorama built for participants to experience divine
energy of Mata



Shrimate Lalita Singh manning the Archana Table for
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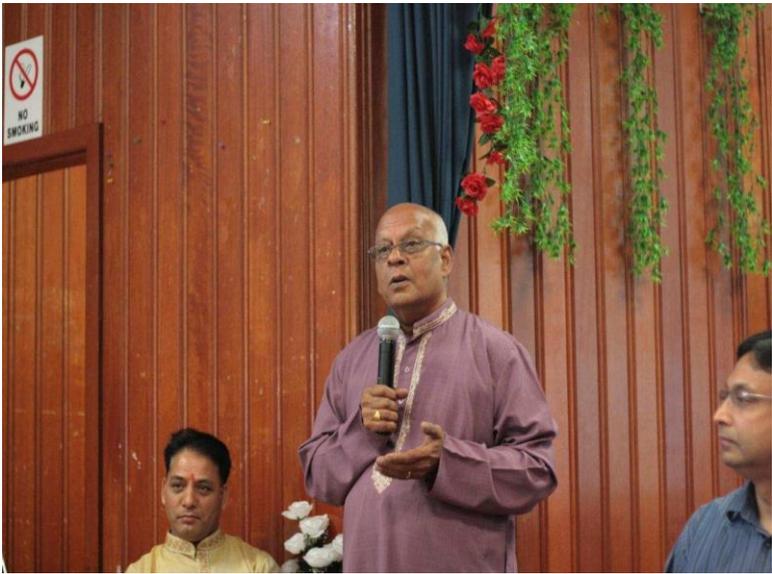
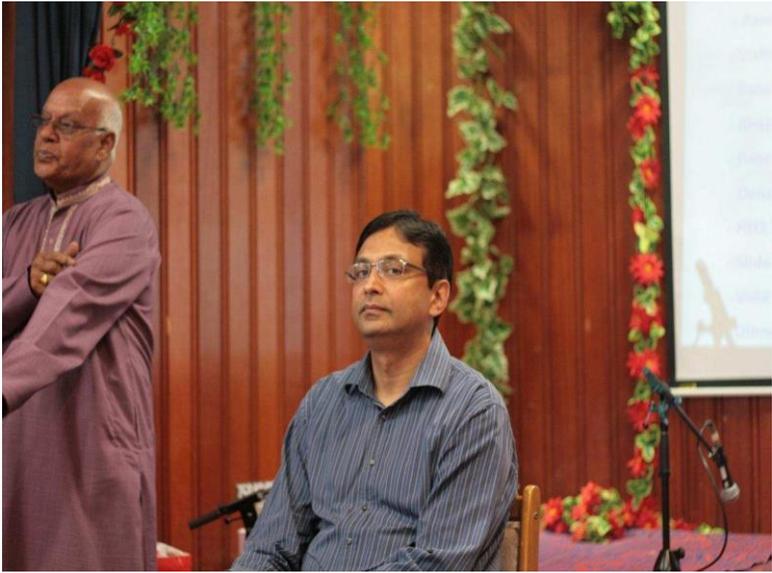
Yajmaans



Havan Yagna at Hindu Heritage Society Puja Function







It was an honorable moment to receive an award for Hindu Heritage Society from Gladys Berejiklian, The Premier of New South Wales during Diwali Mela 2017 at Parramatta Park for community service.





An appreciation award from centra Australia







Devotees at an Annual Guru Purnima Function organised previously by Hindu Heritage Society

Pundit Shri Narayan Bhatt and Shrimati Radhika Bhatt with a Devotee









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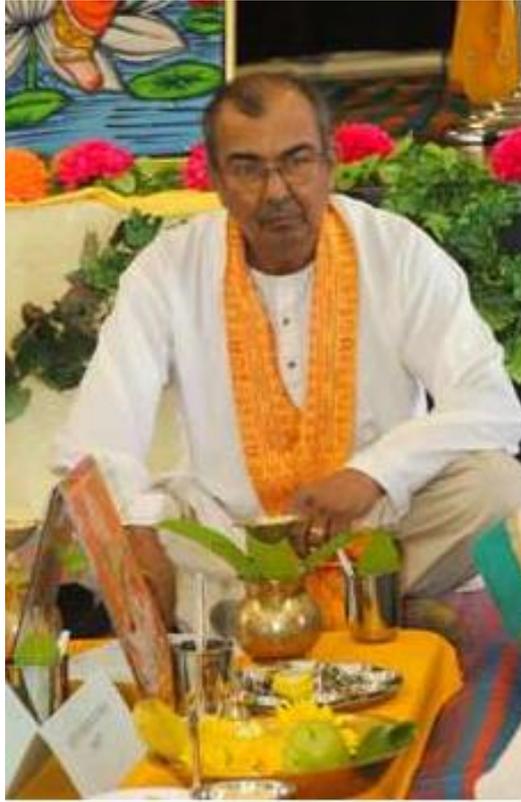














Members singing Bhajan





GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT TERMS

- ❖ Ashram— is a system of age-based stages of life in Hindu texts of ancient India. The four ashrams are Brahamcharya (student), Grihastha (householder), Vanaprastha (forest walker/ forest dweller) and Sanyasa (Renunciation).
- ❖ Atman- Divine or higher self, pure consciousness
- ❖ Athar Veda— Fourth Veda
- ❖ Ayurveda — Vedic medicine
- ❖ Bhagavad Gita —Scripture of the avatar Krishna
- ❖ Buddhism — The teachings of Lord Buddha
- ❖ Brahma — Form of the Hindu trinity governing creation
- ❖ Brahmanas—Brahmin or evolved or mature soul
- ❖ Deva — God, deity
- ❖ Devi —Goddess, deity
- ❖ Durga —The Goddess as destroyer of demons
- ❖ Guru—Spiritual leader
- ❖ Kailash —The world mountain
- ❖ Kali —The dark form of Goddess as power of death and transformation
- ❖ Mahabharat—Epic story of God Krishnas and Pandavas
- ❖ Maya—Divisive force of the Divine, the mirage that

- hides the ultimate and relative Reality
- ❖ Om— Mantra of the Divine
 - ❖ Ramayana—Epic story of God Rama
 - ❖ Rig Veda —Oldest Hindu scripture, Veda of chant
 - ❖ Rishis — Ancient Vedic seers
 - ❖ Sanskrit —Vedic and mantric language
 - ❖ Sam Veda—Vedic hymns containing the chants used in ceremonies and rituals
 - ❖ Sanatan Dharma —The eternal teaching, traditional name for Hindu religion
 - ❖ Shakti —The power of consciousness and spiritual evolution
 - ❖ Shankaracharya—The great philosopher of non-dualistic Vedanta
 - ❖ Shiva—Form of Hindu trinity governing destruction
 - ❖ Sikhs —Indian spiritual tradition since the fifteenth century
 - ❖ Sita —Consort of Rama
 - ❖ Upanishads —Vedic philosophical texts meaning “sitting near”.over 200 Upanishads exist but Vedic traditionalists recognise only 108 of them, these Upanishads are organised in eight distinct groups,
 - ❖ Upasana —Worship including meditation
 - ❖ Vedas - Ancient scriptures of the world, four vedas - Originally Vedic texts were not written, but memorized and transmitted from teacher to disciples by word of mouth
 - ❖ Vedanda—Vedic philosophy of Self-Knowledge
 - ❖ Vishnu —Form of Hindu trinity governing preservation
 - ❖ Viveka—discrimination

- ❖ Yajna—Sacrifice
- ❖ Yajur Veda—Vedas of ritual or sacrifice
- ❖ Yoga —Techniques of developing and integrating energy
- ❖ Yoga Sutras—Classical text of the Sage Patanjali on Yoga
- ❖ Yugas—World-ages

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