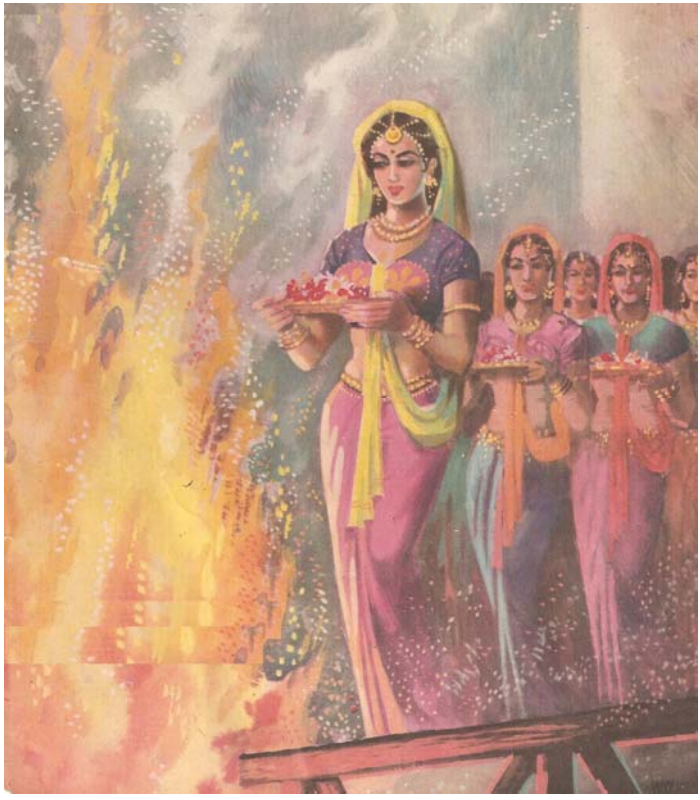
SANDESH BHARATI

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शूरबाहूषु लोकोऽयं लम्बते पुत्रवत् सदा ।

तस्मात् सर्वास्ववस्थासु शूरः सम्मानमर्हित।।

न िह शौर्यात् परं िकंचित् ित्रलोकेषु िवधते।

शूरः सर्वं पालयित सर्वं शूरे पर्ितिष्ठतम् ।।

Arms of the brave (kshatriya) always support and sustain the people like (a father his) son. A brave (kshatriya) is, for this reason, honoured by all, in all situations. There is nothing in all the three worlds, which is beyond (the reach of) bravery. Brave (kshatriya) sustains all, and all depend upon the brave.

(Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, 99. 17-18)

Let's Take Yoga Back

Author: Sheetal Shah
Publication: Hindu Currents
Date: May 13, 2009

I began my Hatha Yoga practice later in life - at the age of 27. I initially began yoga, as so many do, to tone my body. But as I progress through this journey - and yes, I have come to believe that yoga is a journey of the body and mind (I'm still working on the atman part) - yoga is no longer only about toning my body; it has become the most important tool to develop my powers of concentration and focus. Yoga possesses the unique ability to force me to focus on myself alone. In only 90 minutes, my stamina, flexibility, balance and most importantly, concentration are tested as never before.

Instead of thinking in pain, as I used to, "How long is my instructor going to make me hold Vasistasana?," I have now learned to focus on my breath. I now understand that balancing is the art of intense focusing and a momentary loss of concentration leads me to fall out of Virabhadrasana III (Warrior III). Instead of finding a way to avoid Rajakapotasana (Pigeon pose), I now use it as way to focus on my breath and direct my breath to alleviate the aching in my hip.

As I slowly continue to discover the true beauty of yoga, I find myself increasingly proud to be Hindu; to be able to claim the religion that has brought this amazing practice to the world as my own is truly empowering. Yet through my work with the Hindu American Foundation (HAF), a nonprofit advocacy organization, I have become keenly aware of an alarming trend that disassociates yoga from its Hindu origins. I

regularly read Yoga Journal at my gym and am continuously amazed at how many times its editors blatantly avoid using the word "Hindu." As I perused the April 09 issue, I found the Upanishads described as "Tantric yoga texts." Exactly one year ago, HAF wrote to the editors of Yoga Journal about the clear disregard for Hinduism. **Our letter was never published, and upon following up with them, HAF was informed that the journal does intentionally avoid using the word "Hindu" because it carries too much baggage, and ultimately, their goal is to sell magazines! I immediately requested my parents to discontinue their subscription.**

These issues plagued me, but it wasn't until I began furthering my own yoga practice that I found this disassociation so stark. When I look around the yoga studios I frequent, I am almost always the only Indian Hindu in the room. If I lived in a small mid-Western town, this observation may not be so surprising. But I reside in Manhattan, one of the most diverse cities in the US, where Hindus abound and yet, I can't seem to find any in my yoga classes.

During the course of a project for HAF, I reached out to my personal yoga instructor, an Iyengar practitioner who is well networked in the Western yoga world and actively practices in Rishikesh yearly, if she could point me in the direction of a yoga instructor in the US who is Hindu. She could not. I then turned to one of my studio instructors and posed the same question. She had no idea either. Immediately, I scanned the names of instructors of five well-known and successful yoga studios in Manhattan...from approximately 90 instructors, I found only four Hindus, as well as a handful of instructors

who had given themselves Hindu names such as "Ganesh Das". I was stunned. Where are all the Hindu American yogis? So, perhaps it's time for the Hindu community to look inward and accept our share of the blame in losing the affiliation between Hinduism and yoga. How can we maintain and promote the Hindu origin of yoga if the majority of yoga studios don't have Hindu students, forget the idea of Hindu yoga teachers? Our Hindu forefathers understood the unique benefits of yoga and shared yoga with the Western world. The West understood, fell in love with yoga, morphed it into a physical and "spiritual" practice - thereby removing any religious association - and proclaimed their expertise. And while so many non-Hindu Americans delve into yoga with passion, the majority of Hindu Americans seem to have forgotten its importance in uniting their mind, body, and soul and relinquished their knowledge and ownership of this life changing practice. As yoga seems to move further and further away from is Hindu origins, I am fearful of the day when instructors will altogether stop naming the various asanas in Sanskrit or ending class with the traditional 'Namaste' - that is the day yoga as a Hindu practice will truly be lost.

In an effort to avoid such a catastrophe, I urge you, as a Hindu American, to reclaim yoga by once again becoming an expert in its practice. We cannot lay claim to a practice if we as a community don't follow it ourselves. As a proud Hindu, it is a humbling experience to learn a practice originating in Hinduism from so many non-Hindus. But it encourages me to push forth with my yoga practice and perhaps, teach it to others one day. I urge you to take a beginners' yoga class at a local studio and encourage your children, siblings, parents and friends to do the same. Many of our local Hindu temples

offer free yoga classes taught by instructors who are born Hindu, and some of you already attend them...next week, bring a friend or family member with you. If you practice basic asanas at home, move your practice to the next level and take an intermediate yoga class at a studio. Swami Ramdev's yoga has surged in popularity with Hindus in America and around the world... continue to strengthen that practice and share that knowledge with others. I am not denying that many Hindu Americans are regular yoga practitioners - but that number is still a fraction of the strength of our two million strong Hindu American community. We can and should do more. Yoga is one of Hinduism's greatest gifts to world - something that can be practiced by anyone, without relinquishing the religion of one's birth, and is beneficial to everyone. As you practice yoga, you too will find an immense pride in being Hindu and once again, the world will credit the practice of yoga to its rightful mother - Hinduism.

If Hindus become united, India will become strong, glorious-*Mohan Bhagwat*

From Khajuria S Kant in Jammu

"We have forgotten that Hindus from Ramesh-waram to Amarnath are one and let us start within ourself for maintaining this unity among the Hindus", said Sarsanghachalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Shri Mohan Bhagwat while calling for transformation of India into Vishwa Guru Bharat.

Addressing a function of social workers organised by Sanatan Dharma Sabha at Abhinav Theatre on August 23 during his four-day maiden visit to this border state of J&K after assuming the charge of Sarsanghachalak of RSS, Shri Bhagwat, who was the

chief guest at the function, emphasised that we have to stand up and maintain social quality and work to transform India into Vishwa Guru Bharat.

Commenting on the plight of Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu and Kashmir, the Sarsanghachalak assured the Kashmiri Pandits that their pain of exodus is in the heart of all Hindus in India and abroad and stressed on the unity among Hindus in support of Kashmir Pandits.

He said, "Kashmiri Hindus are not different from other Hindus living in the country. If our brethren in Kashmir Valley face some problems, it should be the problems of every Hindu and we should come forward for their help."

"Existence of J&K is only with India", Shri Bhagwat asserted and added that Jammu and Kashmir is an undivided and integral part of the country. Talking about the world order unity with Hinduism enlightening the path of truth to be embraced by all, he warned over the receding borders of the Hindu domain shrinking very fast denying space for the community to survive.

"A Hindu is a Hindu till he feels pain about other Hindus living in any part of the world," maintained Shri Bhagwat. Citing reference to last year's agitation on Amarnath land row, he said that Hindus of entire India were concerned over the issue. If the agitation had extended any more, it would have given vent to ire of Hindus outside J&K state also.

Referring to the controversy over the central university, he said like the Amarnath land row agitation, the central university cause too needs an initiation for which the same awakening is needed. As the Amarnath land row issue last year here showed an exemplary way of securing the rights, more such issues that still remain unresolved need the same resolve and conduct, the Sarsanghachalak said, adding that no section of the society should remain devoid of its rights due to the nonchalant attitude of governments.

"The Sangh will support Jammu people in their ongoing protests for demanding the establishment of a central university in Jammu, as in this case the nationalist people are being discriminated against by those holding anti-national activities and the Sangh always favours the nationalist people," Shri Bhagwat said and added that all issues concerning discrimination have their solution in fighting the evil unitedly. The entire nation should wake up for the cause, he exhorted.

Quoting the example of human body, he said that importance of any part of body is only as long as it remains with body and separation of it would pain both-body and part. Similarly, separation of countries like Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar, Tibet, Pakistan, etc, has created problems for those countries and they in turn are creating problems for us. As a result of this, Indian borders are contracting and the day will come when there would be no place for Hindus to live in Hindustan, he warned and advised that the ugly situation can be avoided by following the doctrine of Hindutva and living in unity.

While addressing the swayamsevaks at another function organised in Ved Mandir, Shri Mohan Bhagwat said: "India has a rich cultural heritage of thousands of years and we should realise this fact and unitedly strengthen the Sangh so that this nation again emerges as a vishaw guru-the goal for whose realisation the Sangh is in the service of the nation. The programme of swayamsevaks from the Prant was organised by the J&K unit of RSS to felicitate Shri Mohan Bhagwat on his first visit to the state after assuming the charge of Sarsanghachalak.

Shri Bhagwat, while expressing his dismay over the reservations expressed by certain quarters over the words "Hindu Rashtra" and instead liked to be called the Bhartiya, said that the word Hindu has larger connotations than the word Bharat and these people who don't accept themselves to be the part of this civilisation are mistaken.

Bharat as a nation is linked to geography, he said and added that he wanted to know whether they want to call themselves the

part of that Bharat which was prior to August 14, 1947 or the Bharat that was when Gandhar (Afghanistan) was also its part. He made it clear that everybody living in India is part of Hindu samaj which is based on the strong values of humanism and brotherhood. He emphasised it is not the leaders who can bring about a revolution in this nation but the united resolve of the people, which works for cultivating the Hindu thought and philosophy, can only make this possible.

The RSS Sarsanghachalak pointed out that the countries where the Hindu population decreased were cut off from India and are facing the problems at present. In this connection, he gave examples of Afghanistan, Myanmar as well as Pakistan and added that the same is the case with those parts of India where Hindus are in minority at present.

The main objective of the Sangh is to rid the nation of the problems like last year's Amarnath land row and it needs the people of strong character for achieving this goal. "A swayamsevak is in the service of the nation with the same objective and it is through the Sangh shakhas that such a spirit is infused into them," he added.

Earlier Brig (retd) Suchet Singh, Sanghachalak, made the introductory speech.

Earlier on August 21, addressing a "Meet the Press" programme, Shri Mohan Bhagwat opposed the dialogue with terrorists and Naxalites and said till they don't shun the path of violence, government should adopt a strong policy to eradicate this menace from the country. Arms and bullets should be replied with equal force", he added.

Asking the administration and government to remain vigilant against disruptive forces in the country, he said it should redress the problems of youth by providing them employment opportunities and ensure that they don't join terrorism and Naxalism. Shri Bhagwat further said the society should also come forward and play its vital role in this regard.

Shri Mohan Bhagwat strongly opposed any move to repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and demilitarisation of the state. He said there are certain reasons for which security forces have been deployed in the state and until the situation returns to normalcy, they should stay in the state. This was also maintained by Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, J&K, Ali Mohammed Sagar, he added.

Reiterating the RSS stand on abrogation of Article 370, and giving special constitutional powers to J&K state, he said this Article is a barrier between J&K and the rest of the country and it should be abolished. He held this Article responsible for discrimination being faced by different regions of the state.

On the demand of reorganisation of the state, he said the RSS has already made a proposal and it will stick to that until regional discrimination ends.

He criticised the Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh for holding dialogue with Pakistan, saying though all successive governments held dialogue with Pakistan since 1948 but it was due to ineptness of the present government that Pakistan held India responsible for Balochistan issue. This indicates that the stand of Prime Minister in recent talk in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, was weak, he added.

He stressed on change in the Indian policies vis-a-vis China, which is the main competitor of our nation not only in Asia but in the rest of the world also.

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'Lord Krishna existed. School texts are wrong'

August 29, 2009

Did Krishna exist?

Most certainly, says Dr Manish Pandit, a nuclear medicine physician who teaches in the United Kingdom, proffering astronomical, archaeological, linguistic and oral evidences to make his case.

"I used to think of Krishna is a part of Hindu myth and mythology. Imagine my surprise when I came across Dr Narhari Achar (a professor of physics at the University of Memphis, Tennessee, in the US) and his research in 2004 and 2005. He had done the dating of the Mahabharata war using astronomy. I immediately tried to corroborate all his research using the regular Planetarium software and I came to the same conclusions [as him]," Pandit says. Which meant, he says, that what is taught in schools about Indian history is not correct?

The Great War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas took place in 3067 BC, the Pune-born Pandit, who did his MBBS from BJ Medical College there, says in his first documentary, *Krishna: History or Myth?* Pandit's calculations say Krishna was born in 3112 BC, so must have been 54-55 years old at the time of the battle of Kurukshetra.

Pandit is also a distinguished astrologer, having written several books on the subject, and claims to have predicted that Sonia Gandhi would reject prime ministership, the exact

time at which Shankaracharya Jayendra Saraswati would be released on bail and also the Kargil war.

Pandit, as the *sutradhar* of the documentary *Krishna: History or Myth?*, uses four pillars -- archaeology, linguistics, what he calls the living tradition of India and astronomy to arrive at the circumstantial verdict that Krishna was indeed a living being, because Mahabharata and the battle of Kurukshetra indeed happened, and since Krishna was the pivot of the Armageddon, it is all true.

You are a specialist in nuclear medicine. What persuaded you to do a film on the history/myth of Krishna? You think there are many who doubt? Is this a politico-religious message or a purely religious one?

We are always taught that Krishna is a part of Hindu myth and mythology. And this is exactly what I thought as well. But imagine my surprise when I came across Dr Narhari Achar (of the Department of Physics at the University of Memphis, Tennessee, in the US) and his research somewhere in 2004 and 2005. He had done the dating of the Mahabharata war using astronomy. I immediately tried to corroborate all his research using the regular Planetarium software and I came to the same conclusions. This meant that what we are taught in schools about Indian history is not correct.

I also started wondering about why this should be so. I think that a mixture of the post-colonial need to conform to western ideas of Indian civilization and an inability to stand up firmly to bizarre western ideas are to blame. Also, any

attempt at a more impartial look at Indian history is given a saffron hue.

I decided that I could take this nonsense no more, and decided to make films to show educated Indians what their true heritage was. The pen is mightier than the sword is an old phrase but I thought of new one: Film is the new pen.
Any ideas I have will receive wide dissemination through this medium.

I wanted to present a true idea of Indian history unfettered by perception, which was truly scientific, not just somebody's hypothesis colored by their perceptions and prejudices.

Why not a documentary on Rama, who is more "controversial" in India today? Proof of his existence would certainly be more than welcome today...

A documentary on Rama is forthcoming in the future. But the immediate reason I deferred that project is the immense cost it would entail. Whereas, research on Krishna and Mahabharata was present and ready to go.

Further more, Rama according to Indian thought, existed in the long hoary ancient past of Treta Yuga, where science finds it difficult to go.

There is a controversial point in your documentary where someone ISKCON monk alludes to Krishna as being the father of Jesus. How can you say that since there is an age gap of roughly 3000 years between the two spiritual giants?

Is Krishna the spiritual father of Jesus? That is what the person who was training to be a Roman Catholic priest, and who now worships Krishna, asks. The answer comes within the field of comparative religion and theology.

The Biblical scriptures qualify Jesus as the son of God. Most Indians have no problems accepting this as Hindus are a naturally secular people. However, then the question that arises is, if Jesus is the son, then who is the Father or God Himself?

Now, Biblical scriptures do not really give the answer except to say that the Father is all-powerful and omnipresent. Now, of course, we know that Jesus does not say that he is omnipresent or omnipotent.

Now, no scripture can live as an island, all by itself, and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and other scriptures such as the *Bramha Samhita* all call Krishna as an all powerful, omnipresent being. So, if we use these words of Bhagavatam, there can be no other truth, which means that Krishna is the father of all living creation.

But it does not mean that Jesus is not divine. Jesus is indeed divine. What I liked about the monks in my documentary is that they do not denigrate Jesus although they worship Krishna as God. They keep Jesus in their hearts, while worshipping Krishna. What could be more secular or more Christian?

3067 BC is when the Mahabharata war took place, says Dr Achar. Please explain

There are more than 140 astronomy references in the Mahabharata. Dr Achar used simulations of the night sky to arrive at November 22, 3067 BC, as the day the Mahabharata war began. He used the references common to *Udyoga* and *Bhisma Parvan* initially, and so Saturn at Rohini, Mars at Jyestha with initially only the two eclipses, Lunar at Kartika and Solar at Jyestha.

Let me tell you how rare this set of astronomical conjunctions is: The Saros cycle of eclipses is periodic at 19 years and so is the Metonic cycle of lunar phases. So if I say that Amavasya has occured at Jyestha, then this will occur again in 19 years, but if I say that a solar eclipse has occured at Jyestha, then this occurs again at Jyestha only after 340 years. Add Saturn at Rohini and we take this to 1 in 7,000 years. This set of conjunctions takes all of these into consideration, but also takes all the other data into consideration.

So now, we know about Balarama's pilgrimage *tithis* and *nakshatra*s, and believe it or not, all that fits the 3067 BC date perfectly. And to top it all, so does the repetition of the three eclipses described at the destruction of Dwarka 36 years later.

This would explain why so many other researchers tried and failed to find the date of the Mahabharata war as it is based on such a unique set of astronomy that it occurred only once in the last 10,000 years.

So essentially, your thesis is that since the Mahabharata war actually happened, as confirmed by astronomical deduction,

Krishna was also a living entity since he's the fulcrum of the Great War?

Not just that, but the fact that archaeology, oral and living traditions point to the same. And yes, we cannot separate the Mahabharata war from Krishna. If one is shown to have happened, then the other must be true as well.

There is talk of a banyan tree which the documentary says was a witness to the Battle of Kurukshetra, where 4 million people are said to have died in 14 days. Where exactly does this exist? Has the tree been carbon-dated to confirm its age?

There is indeed a banyan tree at Jyotisaar in Kurukshetra which is worshipped as such. This concept is similar to the tree in Jerusalem, which is thought to have witnessed Jesus's arrival. Carbon-dating of this banyan tree is unlikely to give any concrete answers. I have included it in the documentary to show the living tradition of India --- like worship of the Ganges cannot be carbon-dated to give any answers.

There is a gentleman named Ram Prasad Birbal, who said he has found many bones which are said to belong to the Kurukshetra battle. Has this been scientifically proved?

Ram Prasad Birbal is a resident of Kurukshetra. I am not aware of carbon dating of those bones. But I am informed that thermo-luminescent dating of other relics as well as carbon-dating at other sites in Kurukshetra have given dates far older than the Indus valley civilisation. Further, Euan Mackie, an eminent archaeologist, had found a clay tablet of

Krishna's Yamalaarjuna episode at Mohenjedaro, a site of the Indus Valley civilisation proving that even in 2200 BC, there was a culture of worshipping Krishna.

You said Hinduism spread across South East Asia in those times ... how big was this religious empire?

The Hindu religious empire extended across the whole of the Asian sub-continent to South East Asia, from Afghanistan to Thailand (where Ramayana and Krishna are still shown through dances), Burma, Cambodia (Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Bayon, etc), Vietnam, Laos (little Kurukshetra and temples), Malaysia (which was Hindu until recent) up to Java (more temples), Bali (where Hinduism is still the religion) and Indonesia, where Bhima's grandson is said to have performed a thousand fire rituals at Yogyakarta. Afghanistan was of course home to both the Yadu race and Shakuni (Kandahar or Gandhar).

Dr Achar said the Kurukshetra war must not have happened on a full moon day...

The Mahabharata war did not start on an Amavasya. That is straight forward.

Krishna tells Karna *"Saptama chappi divasat Amavasya Bhivasyati"* and says that Karna should tell Drona and Bhisma to do the ayudha (weapons) pooja on that date. But not start fighting the war on that date.

The documentary is quiet crisp. I am told this is the first time you held a camera, and learnt how to shoot. How many days did this take and what was your budget?

I learnt film editing first using a variety of software such as Final Cut 6 as I realised that a film director must be able to do decent basic editing to realise what to shoot, from what angles and for what duration. I bought a professional grade HD movie camcorder initially and then learnt to shoot before we went filming in 8 major Indian cities, the US, UK and Cambodia. However, nothing prepares you as thoroughly as filming on your own. Most of this was done with a skeleton crew, mostly handling audio.

I later was funded to buy the latest Cinealtatru HD movie cameras, which are not available in India, and which I am now proficient in using. I also taught a few crew members how to shoot. Then came the task of assembling a team of professionals to do editing, graphics, voice over and all else, so that I had a team of people for my next set of documentaries.

It was a steep learning curve, as I never went to film school, but it has worked out well, with people within the industry who are veterans complimenting my work. I personally think that it was all God's grace. The budget was 15,000 pounds or approximately Rs 12 lakh. It took me 18 months to complete.

S R Rao, the marine archaeologist from the National Institute of Oceanography, found a 9th century building, and an entire city. Where was this and when did he find it?

S R Rao found the sunken city of Dwarka a few years ago at Bet Dwarka in the 1990s.

Apparently, this city near Dwarka was set up 36 years after the Mahabharata war. Is this the summation of Rao?

It is believed that due to damage and destruction by the sea, Dwaraka has submerged six times and the modern-day Dwarka is the 7th such city to be built in the area. Scientifically speaking, we see that 36 years after the war there were the same repetitions of an eclipse triad as we have shown in the documentary.

From Dwarka to Kurukshetra is more than 1,000 km. How do you think Krishna travelled to help the Pandavas?

As a scientist, I believe that they travelled on horses which enabled them to reach pretty fast. If you consider 1,000 km, that should take him 7 days if he had a string of horses. Of course if faith is taken into account, it could have happened in a twinkling of an eye.

What's the link between the two comets that Sage Vyasa talked about, the retrograde motion of Mars (Mangal or Kuja) at Antares (Jyestha) to all this?

The idea that comets are harbingers of doom is well-documented. The thing is that there is a set of statements describing comets and their positions. Only Dr Achar has arrived at the correct deduction, that those sentences in *Bhisma Parvan* relate to comets, not planets --- which is

where previous researchers found it difficult. We know that Halley's comet was seen in that year as well.

Dr Achar interpreted verses from the *Bhism Parvan* and *Udyog Parvan* to arrive at various conclusions. One of them is that when Saturn in at Aldebaran (Rohini) it brings great bad tidings. The last time this happened was in September 2001, when 9/11 happened. When does this happen next?

Actually Saturn at Rohini is long known to be a bad omen by astrologers. *Rohinim Pidyannesha Stitho Rajan Shanischarah*. This transit happened in 1971 where a million or so were killed, and again in 2001 September, when 9/11 happened. The next time is in 2030/2031 AD approximately.

When is the next time Mars will be in Antares?

Mars at Jyestha has to be taken in conjunction with the other things mentioned by Karna when he talks to Krishna, as it occurs every year. In any case, those people were great astronomers and not just warriors, so we don't know what the extent of their knowledge was regarding these events, In my personal humble opinion it was perhaps even better than that which we have today.

Contact Dr Pandit at manish@saraswatifilms.org
Courtesy: DNA

WE ALL ARE HINDUS NOW

News week 24-31 August 2009

America is not a Christian nation. We are, it is true, a nation founded by Christians, and according to a 2008 survey, 76 percent of us continue to identify as Christian (still, that's the lowest percentage in American history). Of course, we are not a Hindu-or Muslim, or Jewish, or Wiccan-nation, either. A million-plus Hindus live in the United States, a fraction of the billion who live on earth. But recent poll data show that conceptually, at least, we are slowly becoming more like Hindus and less like traditional Christians in the ways we think about God, our selves, each other, and eternity.

The Rig Veda, the most ancient Hindu scripture, says this: "Truth is One, but the sages speak of it by many names." A Hindu believes there are many paths to God. Jesus is one way, the Qur'an is another, yoga practice is a third. None is better than any other; all are equal. The most traditional, conservative Christians have not been taught to think like this. They learn in Sunday school that their religion is true, and others are false. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me."

Americans are no longer buying it. According to a 2008 Pew Forum survey, 65 percent of us believe that “many religions can lead to eternaI life" - including 37 percent of white evanaelicals, the group most likely to behave that salvation is theire alone. Also, the number of people who seek spiritual truth outside church is growing. Thirty percent of Americans call themselves "spiritual, not religious," according to a 2009 NEWSWEEK Poll, up from 24 percent in 2005.

Stephen Prothero, religion professor at Boston University, has long framed the American propensity for "the divine deli- cafeteria religion" as "very much in the spirit of Hinduism. You're not picking and choosing from different religions, because they're all the same," he says. "It isn't about orthodoxy. It's about whatever works. If going to yoga works, great-and if going to Catholic mass works, great. And if going to Catholic mass plus the yoga plus the Buddhist retreat works, that's great, too."

Then there's the question of what happens when you die. Christians traditionally believe that bodies and souls are sacred, that together they make up the "self," and that at the end of time they will be reunited in the Resurrection.

You need both, in other words, and you need them forever. Hindus believe no such thing. At death, the body burns on a pyre, while the spirit-where identity resides-escapes. In reincarnation, central to Hinduism, selves come back to earth again and again in different bodies. So here is another way in which Americans are becoming more Hindu: 24 percent of Americans say they believe in reincarnation, according to a 2008 Harris poll. So agnostic are we about the ultimate fates of our bodies that we're burning them-like Hindus-after death. More than a third of Americans now choose cremation, according to the Cremation Association of North America, up from 6 percent in 1975. "I do think the more spiritual role of religion tends to deemphasize some of the more starkly literal interpretations of the Resurrection," agrees Diana Eck, professor of comparative religion at Harvard. So let us all say "om."

Maharani Padmini

In the medieval history of Bharat Desh, Maharani Padmini of Chittor holds a very prominent position. She was the perfect model of ideal Bharatiya womanhood – one who valued her virtue and honor as greater than her own life. She and her associates willingly gave up their lives in *Jauhar,* the great sacrifice of self-immolation, but refused to submit to the lecherous and barbaric invaders from Central Asia. Maharani Padmini's valor and courage has been immortalized in *Padmavat*, a poem written by Malik Muhammad Jayasi in the year 1540.

First, it is important to give a brief description about this mighty kingdom, as it was here that the flower of Rajput (among the greatest Hindu martial groups, akin to the *Kshatriyas* of the medieval times) chivalry sprang to life, and the great stretch of its sacred walls and ruined palaces even today relate the saga of innumerable sieges and heroism.

In fact, Chittor remains replete with historic associations and holds a very special place in the hearts of Rajputs, as it remained a bastion of the clan at a time when every other stronghold had succumbed to invasion. When almost all other Rajput kingdoms had bended their knees towards the Muslim rulers, the Mewar rulers (of which Chittor was the capital) alone refused to bow and maintained Hindu pride and dignity.

In fact, Chittor (short form for Chittorgarh) was one of the most fiercely contested seats of power in Bharat. It was founded by Bappa Rawal in 734 AD, a Guhilot (which later became known as the Sisodiya dynasty) chieftain. Located in the southern part of the present state of Rajasthan, Chittor became the capital of the Mewar Empire, which Bappa Rawal created, and remained so till the 16th century when the rulers decided to shift the capital to Udaipur.

During the 12th and 13th centuries, the Sultanate of Delhi - the kingdom set up by the invaders - was growing in power across North India. The Sultans made repeated attack on Mewar on one pretext or the other.

During this time, Maharaja Ratan Singh was the king of Chittor, a brave and noble warrior – king. And, the great, valiant Padmini was the name of his queen. The Mewar kingdom was renowned not just for her prowess in warfare and bravery, but also was a center for the fine arts and literature. Thus, in the court of Maharaja Ratan Singh, there were many talented persons, one of whom was a famous musician named Raghav Chetan.

But, unknown to anyone else, Raghav Chetan was also a sorcerer. He used his evil talents to run down his rivals and unfortunately for him, was caught red-handed in his dirty act of arousing evil spirits.

On hearing this, Ratan Singh was furious and he anished Raghav Chetan from his kingdom after blackening his

ace and making him ride a donkey. This humiliation made Raghav Chetan very bitter, and not realizing that he himself was to blame for the punishment, he began to plot for revenge, and as a step in that direction, made his way to Delhi. His aim was to befriend the Muslim Sultan of Delhi, and provide all the services he could for Ala-ud-din Khilji to attack Chittor. In his hatred towards Ratan Singh, he was ready to betray his own people, his own country.

On approaching Delhi, Raghav Chetan settled down in one of the forests nearby Delhi which the Sultan used to frequent for hunting deer. One day on hearing the Sultan's hunt party entering the forest, Raghav Chetan started playing a melodious tone on his flute. When the alluring notes of Raghav Chetan's flute reached the Sultan's party, they were surprised as to who could be playing a flute in such a masterly way in a forest.

The Sultan dispatched his soldiers to fetch the person and when Raghav Chetan was brought before him, Ala-ud-din Khilji asked him to come to his court at Delhi. The cunning Raghav Chetan asked the king as to why he wanted to have an ordinary musician like himself, when there were many other beautiful objects to be obtained. Wondering what Raghav-Chetan meant, Ala-ud-din asked him to clarify. Upon being told of Rani Padmini's exceptional and exquisite beauty, the lusty Sultan there and then decided that he would send a large army to march to Chittor.

But to his dismay, on reaching Chittor, Allah-ud-din found the fort to be heavily defended, and knew that it would not be easy to breach the defenses. Wanting to win through treachery, and most desperate to have a look at the legendary beauty of Maharani Padmini, he sent word to King Ratan Singh that he wanted to make friendship with the king, but he had heard so much about his wife's legendary beauty, that he wanted to just take one look at Padmini. He assured the king that his intentions were noble, as he regarded the queen as his sister.

The unsuspecting Ratan Singh asked Rani Padmini to meet her newfound `brother`, but the Queen also had a sharp brain and could smell a trap. She refused to meet him; instead, she insisted that her husband only allow the Sultan to look at her reflection in a mirror.

Ratan Singh agreed and called for Ala-ud-din. He instantly arrived to meet Rani Padmini, accompanied by his most trusted generals and soldiers. While Ala-ud-din waited eagerly to meet Rani Padmini, his generals watchfully examined the fort's defenses to help them plan their attack of Chittor.

Padmini stood by a lotus pool and as Ala-ud-din looked at her reflection in the mirror, he was stunned and awed by her sparkling beauty. Never in his life, and in any part of the world, had he ever seen a woman as beautiful as the chaste Maharani Padmini. After having looked at her reflection, he started planning his next treacherous move.

As Ratan Singh accompanied him out of the fort, as a good host should, his men pounced upon the King and took him as a prisoner to the Sultan`s camp. Ala-ud-din then sent a note to Rani Padmini that if she wished her husband to get freed and unharmed, then she should immediately agree to become his mistress and surrender herself to him.

The Rani responded that she would meet the Sultan the next morning. At the very opening of dawn the following day, one hundred and fifty palanquins (covered carriages in which royal ladies were carried about in medieval times) left the fort and moved towards Ala-ud-din`s camps.

The Sultan was led to believe that inside one of these palanquins was Maharani Padmini herself, and her maids. But, instead once these palanquins were inside the camp and opened, out emerged 150 strong and stout soldiers, escorted by Rani Padmini`s brother, Badal. They pounced upon the enemy's men and made mincemeat of them. They managed to rescue Maharaja Ratan Singh and escort him safely to Chittor Fort. The Rajputs scored an important, though temporary, victory over the Sultan of Delhi.

But, Ala-ud-din, after getting over the big shock, responded by laying blockade to the fort of Chittor. After a long drawn out operation, supplies within the fort gradually decreased and Ratan Singh gave orders for the fort`s gates to be flung open and an all-out attack

be planned on the would-be invaders as they could not hold out any more.

Rani Padmini was aware that her husband`s troops were very less in number and they would be easily defeated and the womenfolk would then be dishonored. For Hindu women, honour is most important. So, the women immediately made preparations to commit *Jauhar*, with the great, brave Maharani Padmini leading the ladies. The children were moved out of the fort with trusted escorts and attendants in order to save them from the invaders.

At dawn on August 26, 1303, a huge pyre was lit in a room with a single door. Rani Padmini and the noblewomen belonging to her court, the wives, sisters and daughters of ministers, courtiers and the soldiers, moved away their young children and menfolk out of the area, then dressed up in their wedding finery and went into the room with the pyre, locked the door behind them and jumped into the flames in mass.

The men with heavy heart put on saffron robes, and threw open the gates of the fort. Almost all of these Rajputs died in the battle that day. However, they fought like lions. Despite being so few in number, they took a very heavy toll of enemy lives. They became maryrs for our country.

The Sultan and his troops entered the fort, eager to seize all the females, but were highly disappointed when confronted with the evidence of the *Jauhar*. Thus, one of the prime reasons for Ala-ud-din's battle over Chittor

ended in absolute defeat; he could not lay his evil hands over the purity of the chaste and great Maharani Padmini.

Padmini`s life and death has been the subject of many ballads, movies and a TV series released recently. Though this is definitely the most famous incident of Hindu women committing *Jauhar* to save their honor from the invaders, it was by no means the first one. In fact, the very first successful Arab to conquer India was Mohammed Bin Qasim. Even at that time, when the last major Hindu king of Sind, Maharaja Dahir Sen died treacherously in the battlefield, his wife and other royal ladies committed *Jauhar*. This occurred in the early 8th century in Sind province in Bharat, and is perhaps the first instance in history when *Jauhar* was recorded.

No images of Padmini have been preserved to tell about her exceptional beauty and personality, although her courage and sacrifice continue to make an impression today as they did during her lifetime more than seven centuries ago. Hindus always feel inspired when reading the pages of their glorious history of how our ancestors fought to preserve our culture and our honor – we bow our heads in reverence towards such great personalities like Maharani Padmini. – ***Maharani Padmini Ki Jai, Maharaja Ratan Singh Ki Jai, BHARAT MATA KI JAI***

Cow: The integral part of our life

By Sunil Mansinghka

Ours is agro-based economy since ancient times. Cow has been integral part (backbone) of our agriculture. But during industrial development and Green Revolution, we switched over to chemical based and machine based farming and tried to find alternatives to cow dung, cow urine, bull's and bullocks, etc.

Today chemical-based farming (Green Revolution) has rewarded us with degradation of soil, low yields of crops, emergence of new pests and diseases and percolation of toxic chemicals into the food chain.

This has resulted in:-

(i) More than 1.85 lakh farmers committed suicide all over India in last 15 years.

(ii) All farm products imports are on the rise, such as wheat, oil seeds, linseed, edible oil, sometimes milk, and milk products, etc.

(iii) Spreading of various diseases in humans like diabetes, blood-pressure, allergies, weakness, skin problems, asthma, heart & renal failures, cancer of various types, etc., one or other reaching to almost every house.

(iv) Above all, misgivings are threatening the very existence of life on biosphere. Now it is high time that we should seriously think that why cow is revered like mother of universe in Vedic Indian traditions and why it is called Aghnya (i.e., not to be killed)? Why panchgavya was compulsory for human consumption before performing yajna every day?

Gouvigyan Anusandhan Kendra, Nagpur has tried to find the answer for why there is so much reverence and respect for cow in ancient Hindu literature. The Kendra is also trying to find out

the relevance of Ayurveda, krishi (agriculture, veterinary) science etc. in today's world.

Till date following achievements at international level are quite sufficient to prove the necessity of existence of cow to guarantee a peaceful sustainable life on earth i.e. to maintain a natural life cycle with minimum pollution and health hazards:

- Two US patents have been granted for cow urine distillate (US Pat. No. 6410059 & 6896907) for Anti-microbial, Anti-bacterial, Anti-fungal, Anti-cancer properties, also it is having a lot of Anti-oxidants. Since it has got immunomodulatory compounds in it, it is a very good bio-enhancer to facilitate drug availability to high extent in our body. Patent from China is also granted to cow urine distillate as a DNA protector.

- One global patent has been granted for cow urine, neem and garlic as a pest repellent, fungicidal and growth promontory properties for all different crops (WO 2004/087618Al).

- Another US patent has been granted for strains obtained from Sahiwal cow milk for plant growth promoter phytopathogenic fungi controlling activity, abiotic stress tolerating capability, phosphate solubilisation capability, etc. (US patent No. 7097830 dated 29/8/06)

All the above claims have been very well given in Charaka Samhita, Sushrut, Vaghbhatt and Nighantu, Ratnakar, etc.

Also CSIR has filed US patent for Amrit Pani (mixture of cow dung + cow urine + jaggery) from NBRI Lucknow for soil health improvement properties.

The above examples very well prove the utility of cow dung and urine for sustainable agriculture as well as for almost curing or giving relief in many serious diseases like psoriasis, eczema, asthma, diabetes, blood pressure, renal failures and cancer, etc.

This confirms Vedic message Gomay vaste Laxmi i.e. cow dung is a source of wealth. Whereas in western culture dung and urine are considered to be waste.

Village Economy and Gram Swaraj

Cattle can be reared in villages conveniently because villages have open grazing lands and natural atmosphere and ponds, etc.

From cow we get dung, urine, milk, curd, ghee and butter milk which are valuable products for mankind. When all these gavya are utilised in maximum possible ways, village economy gradually develops automatically. Few are the following types of their uses:-

Dung in Agriculture: Vormi composts and other composts. Amrit Pani (Dung + Urine + Jaggery).

Agnihotra (Homa) based farming:

Seed, soil, air, water treatments through dung & urine (various sanskars)

Use of bullocks for agriculture as well as transport and draft power.

Gobar gas as renewable energy source for generating electricity as well as fuel. Village electrification can be easily achieved by the optimum use of gobar only.

Panchgavya Ayurveda for human

1. Kamdhenu Ark is now-a-days prepared in houses/huts of Vanvasis in earthen pots. This is having 3 times better properties than prepared in glass vessel by electricity.

2. Similarly asav, manjan, marham, soap (tikiya), ubatan, dhoop sticks, mosquito repellent coils, phenyls can very well be prepared in villages at very low cost. These can be sold in urban areas at quite high prices.

3. Milk butter, milk, curd and ghee directly have their own market.

4. From dung, agnihotra cakes, havan samagri (yajna), cleaning powder are manufactured. Coating of huts and nearby premises etc. is also done.

5. Tiles and paper boards from dung are being prepared.

When we want to develop any industry or any production unit availability of raw material is the basic requirement. For cow-based rural economy cow dung and cow urine are best raw material to prepare useful products necessary for agriculture, human medicine and veterinary medicine. Milk, curd, butter milk, ghee are best known for several preparations right from sweets to medicines too.
There is big threat developed by multinational companies (MNC) through seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals for agriculture. Tractors and costly implements make agriculture unaffordable. There aggressive marketing network and lobbying in government hierarchy also give a jolt to the rural economy.

When we promote organic sustainable system these threats are reduced due to farmers developing their own inputs, no market purchases are required. It reduces the dependency of farmers. Even seeds are being prepared by farmers in several villages now-a-days.

Hence, village-based economy can very well be developed with sustainability through cow based products. It is a holistic and integrated approach to save environment (eco-friendly products) with no damage to natural cycle of life, avoiding hazards of percolation of toxic synthetic chemicals into food chain, etc.

(The writer is head of Gou Vigyan Kendra, Devlapar, Nagpur and can be contacted at gauseva@yahoo.co.in)
http://www.organiser.org/dynamic/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=304&page=23

Jinnah, Jaswant and Jihad: A Justification for the Jejune

Dr. Saradindu Mukherji,
25-08-2009

A certificate from the Pakistani establishment is the latest craze in Delhi and voodoo historians are in great demand.

Be that as it may, the outlandish attempt to de-"demonise" Jinnah by another 'thinker and scholar" of Enron-Kandahar-unilateral nuclear moratorium fame, is in poor state.

The partition of India was caused primarily because of the ideology, built on a separatist, intolerant world view that came with the barbaric invaders from Central Asia. This was carried on by these rulers, theologians, many local converts (Jinnah's grandfather was a Hindu) and other ideologues, as we clearly see in the activities of Sirhindi, Waliullah, Titu Meer, Sir Syed Ahmad, Syed Ameer Ali, Mohammad, Iqbal and a host of others. Jinnah's "greatness" lay in capitalising on this rich legacy of hatred for the polytheists and the host community. The Muslim "alienation" has roots in primordial theological roots and not contemporary Indian polity as Jaswant Singh mischievously asserts.

Hence, India would have been partitioned even without Jinnah, sooner or later. The British did not invent the "Divide and Rule", they merely took advantage of the divide, while often deepening it further.

So to ascribe the partition to Gandhian ideas of Ram-Rajya, Nehru's refusal to accommodate the Muslim League in 1937 in the UP cabinet, or the harmless "Hindu Right" is weak in logic and poor in history. It is true that the Gandhian Congress which had its "baptism by fire" in the substantial Khilafat-Moplah achievements was pursuing a policy of Muslim appeasement, further bolstered by its rationalization of the assassination of Swami Shradhanand by a fanatic. Their bonhomie with the "nationalist" Deobandis, whose eyes were set on the capture of whole of India after the British exit, strengthened this deadly mindset - the primary fault of both Gandhi and Nehru was in their tacit approval of this line. The British never jailed Jaswant's hero too.

As for Jinnah's "secularism", amateur historians smother the well known facts- that he was first elected to the Central Legislative council as the Muslim member from Bombay. Secondly, his opposition to Khilafat stemmed not only from his "secularism", but also his being a Shia while the Ottomans were Sunnis. Thirdly, he embraced Asna Ashari Shia sect, having been a Ismaili Khoja when flaunting of his Islamic identity became imperative. Fourthly, he got away with giving his estranged Parsi wife a Muslim burial. Fifthly, in his "secular" phase-1920s, Jinnah wanted the creation of a Muslim province in Sind, a distinct position for Muslim majority states in Baluchistan and NWFP, and a higher representation for the Muslims in the two other Muslim states of Bengal and Punjab.

His role in unleashing the barbaric fanatical attack through "Direct Action", non-interference with the

pogrom in Noakahali and abetment of the brutal assault, forced conversion and the forced nikah of Hindu/Sikh women in Pakistan and the merciless armed attack in Kashmir in late 1947 are too well known.

One must admit that Nehru's rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan was one of those rare correct decisions that he ever took. It was a plan for balkanization of India and favoured by the Muslim league and Jaswant Singh's favourite Pakistani historian

Jaswant Singh has as much liberty to paint his latest hero in the whitest of white hue, as Bam Stoker has in rehabilitating his hero-Dracula as an apostle of peace. Jaswant who dispatched the coal supplies to Bangladesh in time just after 16 of our Jawans were killed by the Bangladeshis has done it again- he has offered a priori justification for the next Jihadi attack on India.
Can't we see in him the shades of those Hindu chieftains of Rajputana who helped the Muslim rulers in their Jihad against the Hindus.

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Partners in crime

Yuvraj Krishan,
India Today 31/8/09

The biggest piece of evidence being cited by those out to defend Jinnah and sell him as a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity and secularism is his August 11, 1947 speech before the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in which he said: "Everyone of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what is his colour, caste or creed is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make. You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques. Your caste, creed and religion has nothing to do with the business of the State."

To come to a firm conclusion one has to closely observe and match Jinnah's actions and statements before and after this speech and its content. Jinnah repeatedly stressed on various occasions before and after his August 11 speech that Pakistan was a Muslim state, even going to the extent of saying that a Muslim state has to be based on Islamic Sharia.

All this is recorded in the form of his speeches and letters. In November 1945, he wrote to the Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif in NWFP: "The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan would be able to enact laws for Muslims which won't be inconsistent with the Sharia laws and Muslims will no longer be obliged to abide by un-Islamic laws."

Addressing the students of Edwardes College, Peshawar on April 18, 1948, he said: "What more can one expect that this mighty land has now been brought under a rule which is Islamic, Muslim rule, as a sovereign independent state."

At the Muslim League Council in Karachi on December 14, 1947 he said: "Let it be clear that Pakistan is going to be a Muslim State based on Islamic ideals. It was not going to be an ecclesiastical state." Addressing the Karachi Bar Association on January 25, 1948, he said that the people who were rejecting the idea of an Islamic state were indulging in mischief and reiterated that the constitution of Pakistan would be based on the Sharia.

But the role of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who allowed Jinnah to succeed in his mission by their blunders and Muslim appeasement is also sought to be pushed under the carpet. There is ample evidence now to prove that nationalist Muslims like Abul Kalam Azad and the then Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind president Mehmood Hussain Madani opposed Pakistan only because they felt that partition would affect Muslim domination in the subcontinent and Muslims would heavily lose.

Plus they tried to extract a heavy price from the Congress for their patriotism in the name of minority protection. Congress leaders have tried to hide the fact that as Congress president in 1945, Azad even went to the extent of floating a proposal of rotating Indian headship. It meant India would have a Hindu and then a Muslim head of state and army chief by turns. So, eventually Gandhi and Nehru made Congress a hostage to 'Hindu-Muslim unity at any cost' which Jinnah skilfully exploited and got more concessions from the Congress to establish parity in numbers between Hindu and Muslim representation.

The Swami of Accra

The West African nation of Ghana is an unlikely place to encounter a Hindu monastery. Photographer **Smruthi Gargi Eswar** *meets the eclectic cult*

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AS AN Indian in Ghana, I soon became aware of the country's Indian community. It was while working on a photo-essay about crosscultural interactions, especially interracial marriages, that I learnt of the African Hindu Monastery. Now, Ghana is by no means homogenous when it comes to religion. Though predominantly Christian, with Islam being prominent in the north, most Ghanaians still maintain their connections to older traditions of ancestor worship and belief in the spirit world. Hinduism, though, is a foreign and recent entrant, associated with the Sindhi business families who dominate the immigrant Indian population. The presence of an African Hindu community, therefore, came as a surprise. I decided to go and see the place for myself.

The African Hindu Monastery (AHM) is a simple white structure in Odorkor, a suburb of the Ghanaian capital city of Accra. Started in 1975, it is headed by Swami Ghanananda Saraswati. The gentle-voiced Saraswati was born into the traditional African faith. Although he converted to Christianity when both his parents became Christian priests, he continued his search for truth. Attracted by Hindu beliefs and the practice of yoga, he travelled to India. While staying at Swami Sivananda's ashram in Rishikesh, he decided to embrace Hinduism. At 35, he returned to Ghana and acquired his first disciples, holding lectures to educate Ghanaians about this ancient and foreign religion. Initially, his teachings attracted the literate and the academic – university lecturers

and lawyers. Soon, some Indian families started to come. Later, a meeting with one Swami Krishnananda (who was visiting from India) inspired him to set up a monastery "where he could tell people about all that he had learnt in India".

TODAY, GHANA'S population of 23 million includes 12,500 Hindus, of which 10,000, like their Swami Ghanananda Saraswati, are indigenous Africans. While an older Sindhi temple still exists in Accra (and the Sathya Sais, the Ananda Margis, ISKCON and the Brahma Kumaris are also active), the African Hindu Monastery (AHM) is now Ghana's largest centre of Hindu worship.

Ghana now has a Hindu population of 12,500, of which as many as 10,000 are indigenous Africans

The AHM's iconography and practices provide clues to its hybrid origins. Its nonexclusionist attitude is apparent from the picture of Jesus alongside the Hindu gods on the main mantelpiece, as well as images of spiritual leaders from other religions. There are even images of secular leaders from India. The monastery's members also believe that the Supreme God is known by other names, such as Yahweh and Allah.

While it identifies itself with Vedic philosophy, with Vishnu as the primary deity, there is an adjoining temple for Shiva. In fact, the day starts with a *Shiva Abhishek,* followed by an aarti, conducted by the Swami or one of his disciples. This is followed by a *havan* (fire sacrifice) and the reciting of the *Hanuman Chalisa.* In contrast to the specially commissioned *havans* in most Indian temples, all those present can pour a spoonful of oil into the sacred fire. Bhajans in Hindi — sung

exquisitely in a Ghanaian accent — might follow. Later, a Vedic text might be discussed, either in English or in a Ghanaian dialect.

The AHM is not just accommodating of multiple religious traditions but also open to people of all races, classes and communities. Indian worshippers are not only members of the dominant Sindhi community, but also recent immigrants: managers and contract labour alike. But most worshippers are Africans, again from different professions and backgrounds. When I asked a disciple about the group's opinion of the caste system, he pointed out that there is no society in the world that does not break its people up into the privileged and the unprivileged, be it through profession, ancestry or race. Ghanaian Hindus like him, however, are clear that people have an equal right to education, the means to a good life and most importantly, religion.

Some have given their children Hindu names like Rama or Krishna after a naming ceremony

CONTRARY TO its name, the monastery has only one monk. Saraswati explains, "Hinduism is a new thing [in West Africa], and I do not want to make somebody a monk who later on abandons monkhood. It would bring a bad name to me and to Hinduism." Believers who want to become disciples enroll in a six-week residential course, after which they are initiated. The transition to Hinduism is a gradual one. For instance, an African Hindu would continue to have a Christian or Muslim first name and a traditional African last name – for example, Daniele Otchere. But there are disciples who have given their children Hindu first names like Rama or Krishna after a Hindu naming ceremony. Hindu rituals at

marriage and cremation (rather than burial) at death are also beginning to be adopted, though not obligatory.

The monastery likes disciples to pray and perform *pujas* at home. In fact, the performance of rituals is seen as essential to being Hindu. Sometimes, new believers' desire to perform Hindu-ness is so great that it feels like they are play-acting – like the time when several people fell at the feet of a visiting dignitary to show respect 'in the traditional Hindu manner'. But then, ritual is often the embodied route to faith.
(As told to **Trisha Gupta***)*

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No human rights for Hindus even in Hindustan!

By Dr Pravin Togadia

A bizarre visual made waves on most TV channels 2-3 years back. It was shown for some time and then suddenly it was taken off from almost all TV channels as if was managed to be taken off. That was a visual of a robe clad tall hefty man wielding guns in both hands and with knives arranged in the calf length stockings. He was sloganeering and cheering the mobs that were burning Hindu houses / shops and directing few mobs to go to particular lanes. That man was a minority MLA from Mau, U.P. What transpired there was a broad daylight genocide and many Hindus were killed, burnt alive and their lady family members were raped. India watched it on TV with a shock. But no human

rights activist or not even national human rights commission ever visited there. No government took note of Hindu plight there. No political party bothered to care for Hindus there. Just because any community is a majority in a particular country, do social raggers and bullies from minority get a right to hurt it? Aren't there any human rights for Hindus even in Hindustan?

When I wrote in my last column about the appalling Human Rights situations of Hindus living abroad, many asked me if I had forgotten of the more tragic Human Rights situation of Hindus in India. No. Nobody can ever forget it. Not one, not two, but umpteen number of incidents show and prove that the tragic Human Rights situation of Hindus is not indifference and ignorance of the authorities but it is a well-planned conspiracy against Hindus for the dirty vote bank politics.

When any of us speaks of how the Kashmiri Pundits were hoarded out of their houses, farms, lands and businesses by jehadis and how it was written on their ladies' breasts to leave Hindu and Sikh women back for the jehadis, some show-case pseudo secularists tell us to stop speaking of history. Kashmiri Pundits' plight is as recent as in 1990 and it is not history. Jammu Kashmir border Hindus, Hindu labourers from U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan working there are still facing the same jehadi religious cleansing there, everyday our army/policemen die there.

Same fate is being faced by over 100,000 Assamese

Hindus. They have been forced to live in the rehabilitation centers after losing their loved ones, losing their land and businesses to the invader Muslims from Bangladesh. These Bangladeshi Muslims have captured India's vast lands chasing out native Hindus and tribals there like Karbi Anglong and others. But vote bank greedy political parties are wooing those same invading Muslims for bunch of votes and almost all parties are trying to give them even citizen's rights!

This is a gross violation of not just Human Rights of Hindus in Assam but also a breach of their fundamental constitutional rights to live in their homes, work / do business at their places and grow their crops in their own farms. Every family has lost at least one person to the jehadi attack there and for so many years they are staying in rehabilitation camps with no facilities / no education for children just like in Kashmir. They don't even get voting rights in spite of being Indian citizens as their belongings including their documents are lost in the mayhem of the attacks; but invading jehadis are not only given Indian ration cards but also voting cards. No Human Rights of these displaced Hindus of Assam?

Recently, there were cases of Sodomy by Church Fathers and almost all victims - little boys - were Hindus and Tribals. Only few of such cases are ever reported and go to court. But most of them go unnoticed and unreported. On the other hand, with not even an iota of truth big noise was made about the so-called rape on the nun in Kandhamal (who later did not

even come for identification of the so-called accused!). From Pope to media and from human rights activists to churches in India and the world shouted about it.

Whenever a police officer or Army officer, doing his utmost duty, kills a jehadi, there is always a big ho-hoopla by those so-called human rights people. But the same people suddenly vanish when any Hindu or Jain or Sikh or Bouddha is injusticed or attacked by jehadis or Church people. Even the governments and political parties turn purposeful blind eye to injustice to Hindus - be it rapes, riot attacks, juvenile crimes, loss of property / home / business / land.

So much so, recently when 6000 pilgrims were stuck in Mansarowar, even after media noise, government slept on it for days together. After many Hindus died and fell ill, 2 helicopters were sent which were obviously insufficient. For Haj, entire government machinery works overnight!

Over 75,000 Army, police and Para military men died in the attacks by jehadis in Kashmir, Assam, Tripura and by Naxals in many states. No human rights for them? Lakhs of temples, homes, farms yet occupied by jehadis, invaders and churches all over India. If any Hindu goes to pray there or claims his own home / land, he is either immediately attacked by those illegal occupiers or threatened by police with false cases - be it Kruttivaseshwar, Kashi Vishwanath in Kashi or be it Amarnath or be it Karbi Anglong land in Assam jungles

or Hindus' homes in Karimganj (Assam), Mysore temples broken by Muslims or be it sea fishing areas across the coastal India from Kerala to Rameshwar and from Konkan in Maharashtra to Tamil Nadu and from Gujarat to Bengal... But No Human rights of these Hindus are ever thought off.

Not one, not two; if we sit to list such incidents, the list will be unending and is the plight of Hindus in India. There is no point in expecting that such so-called human rights groups, international web-site mongers and human rights commissions, any government or any political party would ever do anything for protecting Hindu's human rights. Hindus themselves have to democratically stand up to protect their own human rights. In many places from Hyderabad to Meerut and from Mumbai to Ahmedabad, Hindus are being persecuted by Muslims, are threatened and made to abandon their property. Over 50,000 Hindu girls have been abducted in the past three years. No Human Rights protection against this larger conspiracy. It has become a fashion to abuse Hindus, laugh at Hindus after hurting their sentiments and after even killing them. It has become a planned conspiracy of jehadi groups and supporting political parties to first attack 3-4 Hindus or rape a Hindu girl or break a Hindu religious structure. When Hindus go to the police / government to complain, they are threatened. After tolerating too much when Hindus react, then suddenly these show-case pseudo-secularists and Human Rights people jump and first shout in media (who also is very

fond of same faces from this group) and then after doing media trial, governments lovingly act against Hindus and getting influenced by all this melo-dramatic ho-hoopla, sometimes even judiciary acts in a haste.

Hindus may be silent. Hindus may not look one. Governments, political parties, so-called human rights mongers and international / national pseudo-secularists think that because Hindu is divided in castes and other systems, Hindu would never come together as a formidable majority group to democratically fight this severe purposeful long continuing injustice, then they are in a dream world. Hindu may be silent. Hindu may not look one, but at core in the heart Hindu is one. And Hindu knows now is the time to democratically stand up against all such injustice he has been facing over generations. Irrespective of any political party affiliation, irrespective of any caste and community, Hindu can stand up democratically and Hindu would. It would not take much time for Hindus to democratically form their own national and international Hindu Rights Commission and other such systems. If the Caste Panchayats and Sharia are accepted in judiciary then the Hindus Human Rights Commission also must be accepted.

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http://www.organiser.org/dynamic/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=305&page=11

KNOW YOUR HINDI

This is our thirty first article about Hindi language. In our previous issues, we had mentioned that the so-called Hindi language is not spoken and written at its entire purity by the masses but is a mixture of mainly Farsi (Persian), Arabic and Turkish words. In Hindi movies, over 80% dialogues spoken use Farsi and Arabic words. In this issue, we continue the series of listing 10 such foreign words very commonly used in Hindi and have mentioned the apt Hindi word for it. It is about time that we should make an attempt to speak and write our national language as purely as possible.

WORD	ORIGIN	CORRECT HINDI WORD	MEANING IN ENGLISH
Jazbaat	Farsi	Bhavna	Sentiments
Afsos	Farsi	Khed	Sorry
Khauf	Arabic	Bhay / Dar	Terror
Usool	Arabic	Siddhant	Principles
Shikayat	Arabic	Parivaad	Complaint
Parda	Farsi	Vyavdha / Oat / Chhipav / Aavaran	Curtain / Covering
Jawahar	Arabic	Ratan	Jewel
Jauhor	Arabic	Ratan / Pratibha	Jewel / Talent
Jashan	Farsi	Utsav	Celebration
Jazbaa	Farsi	Sahas	Courage / Aspiration

परिवर्तन का दौर
हैदराबाद की मुस्लिम लड़कियों में नई बयार, हिन्दू लड़कों से शादी

- मुजफ्फर हुसैन

भले ही यह बात चौंकाने वाली हो, लेकिन यह सच है। हैदराबाद का नाम आते ही किसी अमीना का चेहरा आंखों के सामने घूमने लगता है। अल्पायु लड़कियों के साथ बूढ़े खूसट अरबों का विवाह भले ही कल की बात हो, लेकिन यह सच आज का भी है। सानिया मिर्जा के स्कर्ट पर मौलाना अपना फतवा देना नहीं चूकते। लेकिन डेढ़ महीने पूर्व जून में एक चौंका देने वाला समाचार अखबारों में प्रकाशित हुआ।

यह समाचार केवल तेलुगू, अंग्रेजी अथवा हिन्दी के अखबारों में ही नहीं छपा, उर्दू अखबारों में भी प्रकाशित हुआ। हैदराबाद के उर्दू अखबार लिखते हैं कि यह कोई फिल्म का नहीं बल्कि वास्तविक दृश्य है जो हैदराबाद और सिकंदराबाद स्थित विवाह पंजीयक के कार्यालय में देखने को मिल रहा है। अखबार के अनुसार, 'जो मुस्लिम लड़की घर से बाहर पांव नहीं रखती थी और जो कुछ करती थी अपने मां-बाप की आज्ञा से किया करती थी। ऐसा क्या हुआ कि घर में बंद रहने वाली लड़की अचानक 'मैरिज रजिस्ट्रार' के दफ्तर में पहुंच गई और अपने मन के मीत से विवाह कर लिया। लड़की कहां चली गई जब इसका शोर मचा तो किसी ने सलाह दी कि 'मैरिज रजिस्ट्रार' के कार्यालय पर जाकर पूछताछ कीजिए। वहां गए तो उन्हें बाहर लगे 'नोटिस बोर्ड' को देखने के लिए कहा गया। 'नोटिस बोर्ड' पर जो कुछ देखा तो पांव के नीचे की धरती खिसक गई। उनकी लाड़ली ने अपने हिन्दू दूल्हे के साथ जाकर विवाह कर लिया और नाम बदल कर यह

भी बतला दिया कि अब उसने इस्लाम छोड़ दिया है। बात जब समाज के लोगों को पता लगी तो सबने अपना सर पकड़ लिया और कहा हाय यह क्या हो गया? मस्जिद के मौलाना को पता लगा तो बोलने लगे- हमने तो शादी के माध्यम से मुसलमानों की संख्या बढ़ाने का सपना देखा था लेकिन यहां तो मामला ही उल्टा हो गया।' पत्र ने लिखा है कि हम इन लड़कियों के नामों को बतलाना नहीं चाहते हैं लेकिन अन्य मुस्लिम माता-पिता को इससे खबरदार कर देना चाहते हैं।'

यह युगल केवल विवाह के शपथ पत्र पर हस्ताक्षर करके पति-पत्नी नहीं बने बल्कि हिन्दू रीति-रिवाज के अनुसार वे विवाह सूत्र में बंधे हैं। लड़कियों ने अपनी आस्था के अनुसार मतान्तरण कर हिन्दू धर्म स्वीकार किया। हैदराबाद में एक हिन्दू संगठन ने विशाल पंडाल में इस विधि को सम्पन्न कराया। विवाह समारोह हिन्दू पद्धति से आयोजित किया गया। नगर के गण्यमान्य नागरिकों ने इसमें भाग लिया और वर-वधु को अपनी शुभकामनाएं दीं। वर पक्ष के परिवार एवं रिश्तेदार बड़े उत्साह से इसमें शामिल हुए।

यहां जिन विवाहों की चर्चा की गई है उनमें से सभी हैदराबाद के विवाह पंजीयक के कार्यालयों में पंजीकृत हैं। हैदराबाद और सिकंदराबाद में कुल १३ विवाह पंजीयक के कार्यालय हैं। अन्य कार्यालयों की रपट अब तक प्राप्त नहीं हुई है। जब इन सात शादियों की हैदराबाद-सिकंदराबाद में गूंज उठी तब से पत्रकार एवं मुस्लिम समाज के नेता इन दफ्तरों के चक्कर लगाते हुए दिखलाई पड़ रहे हैं। हिन्दू लड़कों के साथ मुस्लिम लड़कियों के होने वाले विवाह के बारे में आंकड़े एकत्रित किए जा रहे हैं। यह शादियां तो केवल जून, २००९ की हैं। इससे पहले वाले महीनों और वर्षों के रिकार्ड मिलें तो सही

तस्वीर सामने आ सकती है। ऐसा समझा जाता है कि यह आंकड़ा बहुत बड़ा है। बहुत सारे परिवार जिनकी लड़कियों के बारे में कुछ पता नहीं चला है या गुमशुदा हैं, वे भी इस घटना के बाद चौकन्ने हो गए हैं और हैदराबाद-सिकंदराबाद के ही नहीं बल्कि आसपास के नगरों के 'मैरिज रजिस्ट्रार' कार्यालय के चक्कर लगाते हुए देखे जा सकते हैं।

इन सात विवाहों ने एक नए अध्याय की शुरुआत कर दी है। दरअसल मुस्लिम लड़कियां शिक्षा में मुस्लिम लड़कों की तुलना में बहुत आगे हैं। उन्हें विवाह योग्य पढ़ा-लिखा लड़का नहीं मिलता है। इसलिए या तो वे अविवाहित रहना पसंद करती हैं या फिर किसी अन्य समाज के उच्च शिक्षित लड़के को अपना जीवनसाथी चुन लेती हैं। मुस्लिम समाज में पर्दे को बहुत महत्व दिया जाता है। पढ़ी-लिखी लड़कियां इसे पसंद नहीं करतीं। मुम्बई के अनेक महाविद्यालयों में पढ़ने वाली मुस्लिम लड़कियां घरों से तो पर्दे में निकलती हैं लेकिन कालेज में प्रवेश करने से पूर्व अपने पर्दे को लपेटकर अपने पर्स में रख लेती हैं। इस प्रकार उन्हें दोहरा जीवन जीने पर मजबूर होना पड़ता है। मजहबी कट्टरता जब विद्यार्थी को एक विशेष प्रकार के कपड़े पहनने के लिए मजबूर करती है तो वह अपने साथियों के बीच मजाक और उलाहने का शिकार हो जाता है। अपना सहधर्मी विद्यार्थी उसे प्रभावित नहीं कर पाता है तब जो प्रभावित करता है उसके साथ उसका मेलजोल बढ़ जाता है। इसलिए मजहब की पहचान के नाम पर किसी को बंधन में नहीं बांधा जा सकता है। जब कोई ऐसा प्रयास करता है तो उसके परिणाम बुरे ही आते हैं।

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