



MARK THE CALENDAR:

- * WBF CANADA
PARIVAR MILAN
(MARCH, 2009)
- * PARSHURAM
JAYANTI (TBA)
- * WBF CANADA
CONVENTION (TBA)
- * SHRAVANI (AUGUST,
2009)
- * DEEPAWALI MILAN
(OCTOBER, 2009)

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2009 Thought

THE HINDU SCRIPTURE – THE GITA

By Sri Sitansu Sekhar Chakravarti

If one thinks of a Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita first comes to mind. It contains deliberation conducted by Sri Krishna with Arjuna, his friend and devotee, who has temporarily lost his balance of mind in the prospect of taking part in a fight where his kith and kin comprise the opposing force in the battlefield. The dialogue has a philosophical mooring, which is why it is quite difficult to make sense as a whole, needing detailed explanations. And yet, the small book has provided a shield against religious fanaticism with its universal, non-sectarian message to the humankind based on an analytically rational approach it consistently holds. The approach is quite unique for a scripture, keeping in view the world religions. Before we start out talk on the Gita, however, some stage setting is needed.

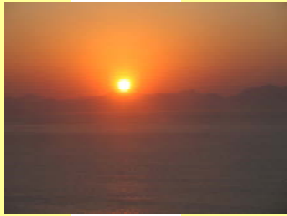
The Gita claims, and we Hindus believe, that Sri Krishna is nothing but God himself. This position of accepting one in human form as God may appear to be blasphemy to the Abrahamic religions, with the exception of Christianity that believes in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Extending the way of approach of the Catholic academic Dr. Koenraad Elst, a free Belgian thinker in his own right, who holds that Christianity shaped its ideas in the early formative days under a creative influence from Hinduism and Buddhism, we might trace the mark of the Gita on the faith here. Being God, Krishna is deemed omnipotent, that is, able to do impossible things that an ordinary being is not capable of doing. To win a battle for God is no big deal; he doesn't need the help of his friend Arjuna in this. However, he certainly is involved in the long deliberation in the Gita trying to convince the latter that taking part in the fight is the right step for the latter, for it is aimed at establishing justice as the last resort.

Continued page 3

Brahmans celebrate Deepawali at Oakville temple

The World Brahman Federation Canada (WBFC) organized Deepawali celebrations at Vaishno Devi temple at Oakville on November 1, 2008, where Brahmans introduced their traditions of worship and heritage to children. Pandit Vishnu Sharma explained the process and meaning of worship of 'Laxmi and Saraswati to children at the occasion of 'Deepawali pooja'. Thirty Brahman families actively contributed to the 'Deepawali' celebrations that were rich in flavor and traditions. The President, WBF Canada, Dr. Azad Kaushik in his Deepawali message to Brahmans emphasized the importance of imbibing 'Sanskar' (brahmanical values) in children at an early age for a blissful life. The occasion was remarkable for an educational and entertaining program by children that included chanting 'Shlokas' and 'Mantras' to a musical evening full of fun and laughter. Akansha and Piyush added to joyful evening with thought-provoking quiz on 'Ramayana' that kept children and parents captivated. Mr. Gyanesh Paliwal, Secretary, WBF Canada enthralled the audience with snippets full of wisdom. The program was followed by 'satvik' meals and sweets specially prepared for the occasion. The Vice-President, WBF Canada, Shri Govind Sharma thanked Brahman community for their overwhelming response and contributions to Deepawali celebrations. Among those who attended the function were Shri Syam Tripathi, Shri Surinder Sharma, Shri Ramesh Shukla and Shri Yogesh Sharma active on the social scene in greater Toronto area.

Glimpses of Deepawali Celebrations (November 1, 2008)



“The ‘Taittiriya Upanishad’ states, “Out of Brahma, which is the higher self, came space; out of space, air; out of air, fire; out of fire, water; out of water, earth; out of earth, vegetation; out of vegetation, food; out of food, the body of all humanity.”



From page 1...

The Gita

The question that naturally comes to mind is: Why did Sri Krishna involve himself in the process of convincing his friend while the result of winning the battle was completely within his own means given his divine nature? The answer is that the Lord wanted to involve his friend in the process to bring about the latter's own spiritual growth. Hinduism does not believe in tamasic or slavish surrender. It promotes surrender of the satvic or creative kind. That is why the faith is not based on commandments. At the very end of the Gita, after having advised Arjuna through the long seventeen chapters, he asks his friend to deliberate in all attention to all that has been minutely presented so far during the dialogue, and do ultimately 'what he chooses' (The Bhagavad-Gita, 18/63.) It is through meaningful participation in life that we take part in the divine way, not forcing ourselves in conformity with laid down rules. In the Western ethics, the position of taking to the rule unconditionally, as Immanuel Kant would have it, is called 'duly ethics'. The Gita has consistently been misunderstood by the Western scholars, whom we follow for our own understanding of things, as duty ethics. Amartya Sen, who is a famous Western scholar of ethics of our times (he may be an Indian by birth, but his scholarship is certainly Western in spirit), has recently highlighted this interpretation of the Gita in a Western journal of philosophy, and has attempted to show the insignificance and defect of the scripture based on the wrong understanding imputed, without going into detailed academic study on the matter. The Gita should be taken

instead as incorporating the theory of ethics known as consequentialism that Sen himself promotes, which believes in the worth of an action in promoting the consequences it generates. One of the consequences that Sri Krishna intends to generate from the fight is the spiritual uplift of his friend, in the wake of the establishment of a Bharat as a balanced and well-knit country based on spiritual principles. The message of Sri Krishna is not only relevant to today's Bharat, but also to the whole world suffering from the spell of widespread greed imbedded in a wrong system at work all over, including Bharat today. The rational thoughts in the Gita need to be analyzed in all details in today's world while the economy is taking a nose-dive due ultimately to our own systemic ethical and spiritual shortcomings.

More on this later. Please give me your feedbacks and let me know if I succeeded in bring the points home to you so far. Also, please don't shy away from raising critical notes, in conformity with the spirit of the Gita where Sri Krishna encourages raising questions from all directions ('**pari-prashnena**'). The Hindu tradition, which we are fast in forgetting, never discourages indulging in opposite academic points of view in the process of arriving at a rational conclusion. This is why we never burnt books in history, nor did we take to the sword to establish our way. Om Shivam astu (May auspicious consequences follow).

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 "SOUL OR 'ATMAN' IS A MATERIAL AND IMMORTAL, BUT THIS BODY WILL BE REDUCED TO ASHES. O MAN, DOER OF ACTIONS, MEDITATE AND UNIVERSAL SOUL, THE PROTECTOR OF ALL, REMEMBER YOUR DEEDS, REMEMBER YOUR DEEDS!"

FROM YAJURVEDA



Importance of 108

By Hari Kak

The no 108 is significant in Hindu worship and ancient scriptures and culture. It also shows the genius of the Mathematicians of Vedic times.

So does it tell you something? If this figure 108 is disturbed at the time of eclipse the Earth will either be too cool (away from sun) or too hot (near to sun) for the habitation.

We have 108 beads in a "Mala" and our ancestors told us that we have to recite a mantra at least for 108 times. We don't know why this constant is chosen and not any other? Is there a reason to it ?? We do not know that, but there are some eye catching phenomena/ formulas/ events that may enlighten us to think that our saints had some reasons to choose 108 and it was not something that was picked out of thin air. Here are some examples:

2) Astrological:

We have 12 "Rashis" and 9 Grahas, $12 \times 9 = 108$ different combination of radiations on our selves at the time of birth decides our entire future and what type of human nature we will develop during the course of our lives. Based on which Hindus make their horoscopes. Based on these radiations we can, at any time, possess one of those 108 characters. The psychological science has so far invented 5-7 different personalities that can co-exist in a man at a given time. But they are still researching if there is more. If they look into Indian sciences, and take them as true, they would easily find 108 different personalities of a man at a given time.

1) Astronomical:

Solar Eclipse:

a) During Solar eclipse the distance between Earth and Sun divided by Diameter of Sun = 108

b) During Solar eclipse distance between Earth and Moon divided by diameter of Earth is equal to 108
Lunar Eclipse:

c) During Lunar eclipse distance between Moon and Sun divided by the diameter of Sun is 108

d) During Lunar eclipse distance between Earth and Moon divided by the diameter of Moon is 108

3) Mathematical:

There is a symmetrical formula in math that sums up to 108. Whether that means anything to human life or not we do not know. But if we calculate (1 to the power of 1) times (2 to the power of 2) times (3 to the power of 3) = 108

May be $108 * (4 \text{ to the power of } 4)$ would be some other great figure.

4) Chemistry:

There are 108 distinct elements that are found so far.

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 "OM or AUM – the eternal Word is all: What was, what is and what shall be, and what beyond is in eternity. All is OM. Brahman is all and 'Atman' is Brahman. This 'Atman' is the eternal word OM comprising four states of consciousness."

Mandukya Upanishad

5) Cultural:

Bharatnatyam is an Indian dancing system. Where each mudra represents a distinct expression of a man. There are 108 distinct mudras in Bharat Natyam - the combination of them creates the whole of dance drama.

6) Japa:

We have 108 names of Ganesh, Laxmi, Vishnu and other gods and goddesses. Incidentally or accidentally even Islam has 108 names of Allah.

7) The divine number.

$108 = 1 + 0 + 8 = 9$. Why? Since if you add 9 to any number the sum digit of the number remains the same. [e.g. $23 = 2+3 = 5$; $239 = 2+3+9 = 41 = 4+1 = 5$]

Similarly God is in everyone but everyone is still an individual self - and distinct in nature from each other.

The eight incarnations of Ganesha

by: "rangan_ta" Vakratunda

1. Vakratunda ("twisting trunk"), first in the series, represents the absolute as the aggregate of all bodies, an embodiment of the form of Brahman. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Matsaryasura (envy, jealousy). His mount (vahana) is a lion.

2. Ekadanta ("single tusk") represents the aggregate of all individual souls, an embodiment of the essential nature of Brahman. The purpose of this incarnation is

to overcome the demon Madasura (arrogance, conceit). His mount is a mouse.

3. Mahodara ("big belly") is a synthesis of both Vakratunda and Ekadanta. It is the absolute as it enters into the creative process. It is an embodiment of the wisdom of Brahman. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Mohasura (delusion, confusion). His mount is a mouse.

4. Gajavaktra (or Gajanana) ("elephant face") is a counterpart to Mahodara. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Lobhasura (greed). His mount is a mouse.

5. Lambodara ("pendulous belly") is the first of four incarnations that correspond to the stage where the Puranic gods are created. Lambodara corresponds to 'Sakti, the pure power of Brahman. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Krodhasura (anger). His mount is a mouse.

6. Vikata (Vikata) ("unusual form", "misshapen") corresponds to Surya. He is an embodiment of the illuminating nature of Brahman. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Kamasura (lust). His mount is a peacock.

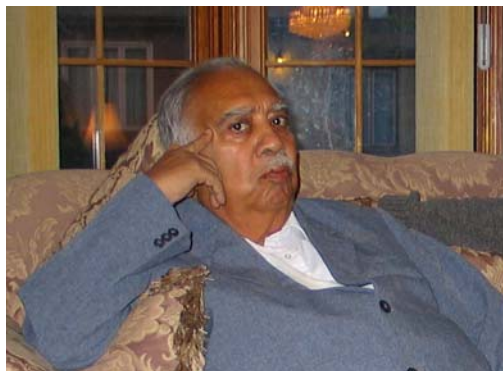
7. Vighnaraja (Vighnaraja) ("king of obstacles"), corresponds to Vishnu. He is an embodiment of the preserving nature of Brahman. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Mamasura (possessiveness). His mount is the celestial serpent 'Sesha.

8. Dhumravarna (Dhumravarna) ("grey color") corresponds to 'Siva. He is an embodiment of the destructive nature of Brahman. The purpose of this incarnation is to overcome the demon Abhimanasura (pride, attachment). His mount is a horse.

*"Our actions reveal our feelings,
Our speech our ancestry,
Our children our integrity,
Our bodies that which we eat and
drink, Our expression our
thoughts...."*

*- Lizelle Reymond in her book My
life with a Brahmin family (1958)*

**Canadian Brahman Academician
Dr. Trayambakeshwar Dwivedi
Passes Away in India**



Unfortunately, Dr. Trayambakeshwar Dwivedi of Montreal, Quebec passed away due to heart failure on December 22, 2008 in Lucknow, India. He was to return to Montreal, but had to be hospitalized. Dr. Dwivedi hailed from Ayodhya where he was involved in community activities including establishment of a hospital. He had retired as a Professor of statistics at Concordia University, Montreal. He was a Life Member of Brahman Samaj of North America. His son, Dr. Shivendra Dwivedi is known for his philanthropic activities, the values his parents imbibed in him. Contact family friend Dr. Lakshmi Shankar Dube (Phone: 514-685-4278).

The World Brahman Federation Canada offers sincere condolence to the Dwivedi family who are in our thoughts and prayers. Dr. Shivendra Dwivedi is associated with WBF Canada Executive Board.

Know India Program (KIP)

There is a *Know India Program 2009* for which Indo-Canadian children are eligible. The fare going to and from Toronto to India will be 50% reimbursed. Also, expenses for the tour and stay of a period of 10 days will be borne through the sponsoring government. This is a great opportunity for the youth in cultural interaction. The tentative schedule for the 9th KIP is August-September 2008, for 10th KIP, it is December 2008 - January 2009, and 11th KIP it is March 2009. For additional information, contact Shri Yogesh Sharma (yks@rogers.com).

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Ganga Declared National River

As per December newsletter 'Brahmkalyan' edited by Pandit Ganga Sahay Pathak, we note with great pleasure that river Ganga has been declared National River by the Government of India. The purity of Ganga river water is legendary, scientifically now known to contain beneficial bacteriophage (virus that kills bacteria) that kept it clean. The bacteriophage is now sold via 'Gangagen' for environmental management of river waters. The WBF Canada supports and welcomes such a move with the hope that rivers like Yamuna and Ganga are restored to its legendary glory in 21st century.

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Brahman Volunteers Needed

If you would like to contribute to WBF Canada activities and make a difference, please contribute your talent and time in support of Brahman and Hindu community. Please e-mail: worldbrahmanfederation.canada@gmail.com

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Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit thanks Pandit Mange Ram Sharma

Mrs. Shiela Dikshit invited WBF India President Pandit Mange Ram Sharma on December 14 to thank him personally for the pivotal role played by WBF India in her win in the 2008 election as a Chief Minister for the Third Term. Mrs. Dikshit, a Brahman leader, has helped create Delhi, capital of India, a world-class city with modern infrastructure.

The WBF Canada congratulates the efforts of WBF India in supporting and ensuring electoral victory of Mrs. Dikshit whose leadership will greatly benefit overall development of Delhi region.

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Standing Together against terrorism

Nearly 200 people were killed and hundreds more wounded in terrorist attacks in Mumbai. Victims were from diverse backgrounds, various faiths and many countries – including Canadians. The WBF Canada supported the *community solidarity rally against terrorism held on December 7, 2008 (1:30 p.m. – 3:00 PM) at International Centre, Mississauga, A large gathering stood in silence to honor the memory of the victims.*

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Research Foundation to locate Brahnavart state

Sudhir Bhargava, related to the great Hemu family has established Brahnavart Research Foundation (BRF). The exploration and identification of the location of the Brahnavart state, the land of Vedas and the abode of saints, is essential for the restoration of the Hindu heritage sites of the Vedic period as well as revival of the sacred river Saraswati. While delving deep into ancient Hindu scriptures and making

frequent studies of the Dhosi region, near Narnaul, it is believed that the region around the Dhosi hill was an abode of the celebrated Chayvan Rishi, the son of the legendary Bhrgu Rishi. In times of yore this constituted the Brahnavart state where pre-historic Vedic culture and civilization flourished more than 8,500 years ago during Satyug or the ice age. Vedic scholar Shri L.N. Sharma, known as Swami Sharnananda, concurs with this analysis. The ancient state, described as “Dev Bhoomi”, has also been delineated as an abode of Manu, Bhrgu and Chayvan as well as the fountainhead of the Vedas, the Manu Smriti and the Upanishads. As per couplet 17 in chapter 2 of the Manu Smriti, Brahnavart was situated on a spacious piece of land between the sacred Saraswati and Drishadwati rivers. The Saraswati, which flowed from the Himalayas to the Rann of Kutch during the Vedic period more than 8,500 years ago, formed the western boundary of the state. The northern boundary was constituted by the Drishadwati. The Shatpath Brahmana states that the Drishadwati originated from the legendary Pushkar Lake and flowed north entering the plains near the present day Rajasthan-Haryana border. It then took a turn towards the west while meeting the Saraswati, which came from the north. This region of the confluence of the two great rivers formed the Brahnavart state, which is of paramount significance for the Hindus. The couplet 19 in chapter 2 of the Manu Smriti clearly states that during the Vedic Period, Kuru Pradesh, Matsya Desh, Panchal and Shoorsenak regions were the neighboring states, which palpably implied that Brahnavart was never part of Kuru Pradesh. (From *The Tribune*, November 25, 2008)

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Business Opportunity: Avin Energy Systems

Brahman Federation family members may look into business opportunity (www.avinsolar.com). Contact: Avinash Brahmbhatt (avinsolar@gmail.com).



“THE WBF CANADA THANKS MRS. ANSHU PALIWAL FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WEBSITE.”

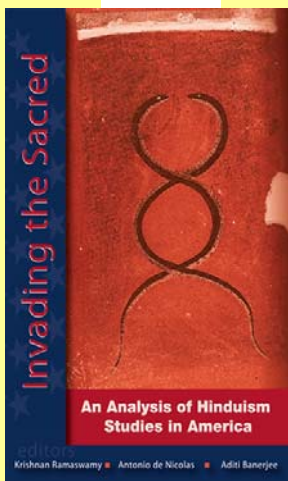
“THE SPIRITUALITY HAD ITS ORIGINS IN THE HOLY LAND OF INDIA FROM GREAT RISHIS, THE ENLIGHTENED ONES.”

Resource

- Satyakam (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VW3abjIUgQ>)
- Hindu Dharma (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_werLisPnQ&feature=related)
- Learning Veda in simple Hindi (<http://www.awgp.org/gamma/LiteratureHindi>)
- Learning Vedanta in English, the book, “The Essence of Vedanta” by Brian Hodgkinson (Arcturus Canada) is a useful resource.



YOUTH CORNER



READING ...

Invading the Sacred – Edited by Krishnan Ramaswamy, Antonio de Nicolas, Aditi Banerjee

India, once a major civilization and economic power that suffered centuries of decline, is now newly resurgent in business, geopolitics and culture. However, a powerful counterforce within the American Academy is systematically undermining core icons and ideals of Indic Culture and thought. For instance, scholars of this counterforce have disparaged the Bhagavad Gita as “a dishonest book”; declared Ganesha's trunk a “limp phallus”; classified Devi as the “mother with a penis” and Shiva as “a notorious womanizer” who incites violence in India; pronounced Sri Ramakrishna a pedophile who sexually molested the young Swami Vivekananda; condemned Indian mothers as being less loving of their children than white women; and interpreted the bindi as a drop of menstrual fluid and the “ha” in sacred mantras as a woman's sound during orgasm.

Are these isolated instances of ignorance or links in an institutionalized pattern of bias driven by certain civilizational worldviews? Are these academic pronouncements based on evidence, and how carefully is this evidence cross-examined? How do these images of India and Indians created in the American Academy influence public perceptions through the media, the education system, policymakers and popular culture?

Adopting a politically impartial stance, this book, the product of an intensive multi-year research project, uncovers the invisible networks behind this Hinduphobia, narrates the Indian Diaspora's challenges to such scholarship, and documents how those who dared to speak up have been branded as “dangerous”. The book hopes to provoke serious debate. For example:

- How do Hinduphobic works resemble earlier American literature depicting non-whites as dangerous savages needing to be civilized by the West?
- Are India's internal social problems going to be managed by foreign interventions in the name of human rights?
- How do power imbalances and systemic biases affect the objectivity and quality of scholarship?
- What are the rights of practitioner-experts in “talking back” to academicians?
- What is the role of India's intellectuals, policymakers and universities in fashioning an authentic and enduring response?

[<http://www.amazon.com/tag/invading%20the%20sacred>]

We invite articles, news, and interesting pictures for inclusion in your own newsletter, Eko'ham. Please send these at: worldbrahmanfederation.canada@gmail.com