

October – December 2014 – Yugaabd 5114

Sangh Sandesh

संघ सदेश



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तत् कर्म यत् न बन्धाय,
सा विद्या या विमुक्तये।
आयासाय अपरं कर्म,
विद्या अन्याशिल्पनैपुणम्॥-
विष्णुपुराण

*Tat karma yat na bandhay, Sa vidya ya vimuktaye !
Aayasay aparam karma, Vidya anyashilpanaipunam !!*

वह कर्म है जो बंधन में न डाले,
वह विद्या है जो मुक्त कर दे।
अन्य कर्म श्रम मात्र हैं
और अन्य विद्याएँ यांत्रिक निपुणता मात्र हैं॥

*That is action which does not bind. That is knowledge
which liberates. Other actions are hardship only and other
knowledge are just mechanical skills*

Editorial

I am the change...

On 5th October 2014 Sewa Day completed 5 years of its noble movement of international volunteering. With the inspiration of HSS, some swayamsevaks conceived, planned and executed this unique movement, based on Hindu tradition of service (sewa). This year over 100,000 people in over 25 countries participated, right across from Hong Kong to Middle East to USA. Hundreds of projects were undertaken to bring joy and happiness to the needy and protecting the environment.

From the start of this movement, the message of bringing change in the mindset of the people has been constant, with slogans like "Make a Difference", "Be the Change" and "I am the Change". This year thousands wore the t-shirt proclaiming, "I am the Change". Hopefully many will bring enduring change in their lives with the inspiration from Sewa Day.

What sort of change would one want in their lives? Is the pursuit of peace, prosperity and material comforts the only goal of one's life? Today while the world has progressed tremendously materially and become a global village, there is more inequality and poverty than ever before. Greed and individualism has dominated the human mind. As Gandhiji had once said, 'there is sufficient in the world for everyone's needs but not for everyone's greed'. It is this mindset of greed and individualism that needs to be changed for a better, peaceful and equal world. And where best to start but ourselves.

We must develop ourselves from individual to collective thinking; from acquisition to sharing; from selfishness to selflessness. Sangh has always emphasised these qualities and therefore in our Shakhas, all our activities are directed towards developing them. When a Swayamsevak/Sevika attends Shakha regularly, he/she inculcates these qualities organically. While he/she may not notice the change in him/her, others do. They stand out in the community and become the catalyst for social change. Shakha is the crucible for this individual and social change.

So next time when you wear the tea-shirt with the slogan "I am the change" think what change you want in yourself. And to bring change in the habits, mindset or lifestyle, one needs conviction, commitment and discipline. Sewa Day has become a movement for this change.

Dhiraj D Shah, HSS Sanghchalak, UK



Ma. Dattaji's Pravaas in Europe

Shri Dattatreya ji Hosabale, Joint General secretary of RSS visited Europe from 24 September and 5 October 2014. The main focus of the Pravaas was to visit the countries where we have active presence. He visited Ireland, France, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Netherlands.

Addressing a small gathering of Hindus in Dublin, he emphasised the need for Hindu Unity in the western world.

In the Rajayog centre in Paris he emphasised the relevance of Hindu Dharma and the need for coming together in spite of all language and sectarian differences. The youth participation was particularly remarkable in Paris.

Oslo experienced a good shakha and bauddhik by Shri Dattatreya ji. He explained the meaning of the three words 'Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh' in a very simple and effective manner. Every swayamsevak experienced the thoughtful interlink between these above words.

In Denmark, Copenhagen Shakha celebrated Vijaya Dashami Utsav with over 100 participants. The highlight was swayamsevaks presenting Ramleela, whilst Shri Dattatreya ji explained the real spirit behind the Vijay Dashami - Victorious Will Power.

Finland is another beautiful country in Scandinavia. We felt very serene in the plethora of bountiful nature. We have a young shakha in the city of Tampere with the hope holding regular Shakha. Finland shakha also celebrated Vijaya Dashami Utsav.

In Germany, Sangh work is flourishing after the European Shibhir in April 2014. We have four activity centres (Shakha or Balagokulam) in Munich, Frankfurt, Berlin and Hamburg. They organised a Karyakarta Varg (volunteer retreat) in Hamburg during the visit of Shri Dattatreya ji. His presence was very inspirational to all 35 Karyakartas coming from various parts of the country.

In the final leg of his Pravaas, Shri Dattatreya ji visited Netherlands for one day where he attended a couple of informal meetings with swayamsevaks.

Overall this Pravaas was insightful and inspirational for all karyakartas. Shri Dattateya ji emphasised the need in keeping one's identity and role of value contribution within the respective countries we live in.

Dattaji's UK Pravaas

RSS Saha Sarkaryawaha, Ma.Dattatreya Hosabale, recently completed a very successful visit to the UK, consisting of Shakha visits, one-to-one interactions, seminars and public events. Highlighted are but a few of his many inspiring interactions:

Dispelling Doubts - Being a UK-Centric Hindu

The recent visit of Ma.Dattatreya Hosabale was indeed a unique experience. One of the focuses of the pravaas was on the interaction with swayamsevaks, sevikas and karyakartas.

A number of Vibhaag-level Milan evenings were held across the country, consisting of a short Bauddhik by Ma.Dattatreyaji, followed by some great question and answer sessions.

This is where I found it to be an inspiring and interesting experience.

The questions from the more senior swayamsevaks and karyakartas ranged from Sangh work in Bharat to India's current political status. Ma. Dattatryaji answered these in short and concise manner, not really expanding too much on the issues (which may detract the focus to India). He instead focused on the probing questions posed by the large number of youths that were present.

The questions from the younger swayamsevaks and sevikas seemed to pull towards issues relating to Hindus and Sangh work in the UK.

One such question was, 'If one were to take out the India from our cultural heritage, what do we have left?' was one question.

Ma. Dattatreyaji answered in the simplest logic, "Regardless of India, we have the Eternal Truth as defined in the Vedas and Puranas. After all the nature of Truth as defined therein bears no relation to time, person or place. So practice your Dharma in the UK for the goodwill of UK as one would in India".

Another question arose, "We have many difficulties in running shakhas here in the UK, using the model of India's Shakha - how can we overcome these?". Ma.Dattatreyaji replied, "Why adopt the India model here, develop your own! As long as you have basic aachar padhati such the Bhagwa Dhvaj and Prarthanaa, other innovations would be healthy for your Shakhas".

Many social issues were also brought up, and these were discussed and answered to the satisfaction of our younger members. In the past, our youths had gone away more confused and dissatisfied with the outcomes of such meetings. But on this occasion our youths went away inspired and with a renewed enthusiasm.

Amrat Chandegra, HSS(UK) Saha-karyawaha

RSS: Shaping a Saffron Future? Vichaar Manthan, Leicester



175 people came from all over the country to hear a public Q&A with Mr Dattatreya Hosabale. We had a unique opportunity to ask direct questions about the controversial history of the organisation, its vision and upcoming challenges facing the global society. The following key themes were covered:

1) The history of the RSS, 2) RSS and religious minorities, 3) RSS in the 21st century

Datta ji, as he is liked to be called, answered most questions candidly and managed to dodge a few questions too. He categorically denied any involvement from the RSS in Gandhi's assassination and quoted Supreme Court statements as evidence. He went on to suggest that the RSS has been a progressive force for Indian society and has been the inspiration for the BJP, as well as two Indian prime ministers and many social reformers.

When it came to minorities, Datta ji suggested that the term minorities for Muslims in India should be removed – they are nearly 15% of the population – they are the mainstream and so should be classed in the same light as Hindu population. The RSS are adamant that “India first” is what is expected of every citizen of India, regardless of religion. When pushed on the theological aspects of Islam and Christianity in that they cannot see India as Bharat Mata as they would see it as a form of idolatry, Dattaji candidly responded with “their theology is a matter for them to deal with, as far as the RSS is concerned it is about putting the interest of the whole first.”

Datta ji described the RSS as a forward-looking, progressive social movement. Through its activities, the RSS build men of a distinct character who work throughout society in order to uplift the whole country.



Interaction with Hindu Organisations

Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK hosted an interactive event on 21st Sept 2014 at the



Swaminarayan Temple, Stanmore. Shri Dattatreya Hosabale highlighted the circumstances in which the RSS started in 1925 and what its core principles and vision for the new dawn looked like for India today.

Attended by all major Hindu organisations of UK, the 150 strong audience, asked questions ranging from Kashmir, BJP, the North East province to Hindu values. Leaders from over 40 organisations, such as ISKCON, VHP, OFBJP, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, HFB, HFE, MPHA, Hindu Council, FISU, Jainology, NHSF UK, Oshwal Association UK, HLA, Navnat Vanik Association, NCGO, Brent Indian Associations and many others, attended.

The RSS has over 40,000 local branches (shakhas) across India, with an average attendance of 10, which equates to 400,000 daily attendance as its core activity. RSS has also inspired and created many other organisations and initiated various service projects in all fields, with a reach of over a 100m people.

Shri Dattatreya explained the four major factors which have contributed to the success and strength of RSS:

- Ideology of Hindutva, which encompasses universal humanitarian values
- Leadership from the start of the organisation has been strong with visionaries
- Technique of daily gathering and concern for the nation and society
- Volunteer sacrifice, strength and dedication has allowed India to progress in so many ways, not to mention building a stalwart like the Indian Prime Minister (a Pracharak of RSS) to take centre stage in the world.



He spoke – 'The national culture of India is the Hindu culture which embraces all', 'we should not be ashamed to call ourselves Hindus', 'Nowhere in history have Hindu colonised, created a slave, destroyed other countries or converted people.' RSS continues to spread the message of Universal oneness – 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam – The whole world is one family'.

Nilesh Solanki, Sampark Pramukh (Head of PR), UK

Labour of Love: London Sammilit Shakha



The London Sammilit Shakha was held on 21st September at Kingsbury High School in the presence of Ma.Dattatreyaji Hosabale, which brought together swayamsevaks and sevikas from all over London, with a total of Sankhya of 334 (92 from Samiti and 242 from Sangh). It was great to see all the Swayamsevaks and Sevikas in purna ganvesh come together.

'Swayamsevakatva' was the watchword of the London Sammilit Shakha. This was my first Sammalit Shakha that I attended and any measure of self-conscious doubt I carried, soon disappeared as I was quickly jumping, pushing and propelling the opponent Swayamsevaks off in various directions during a khel of Guru-Chala!

After the few high-intensity khels we entered the Bauddhik Hall and was very much interested in what Dattaji had to say. The attraction of the bauddhik was not in its eloquence, or the way it was articulated but more so in its simple yet profound message. No matter what our 'Sangh ayu' (number of years in Sangh) is, what we need is a constant, fresh learning attitude to work. Sangh work, to put simply is a labour of love and if we do not carry that love within our hearts and in our every interaction then it will just be confined to a labour and neither the individual nor the people they are trying to serve will benefit. We can sit on the fence and debate the Sangh idea, theory and ideology till the cows come home (to put it colloquially) but as a great man once put it "knowledge is not enough, we must apply, willing is not enough, we must do."

Jitesh Sevani (Woolwich) and Pranav Shukla (Croydon)



Bowled over in Belfast



I was invited to attend the first ever Balgokulam Shibhir of Ireland in Belfast. A pretty unusual situation for me given I was visiting a place where I knew nobody. Few karyakartas that I had any acquaintance with were through a couple of skype conversations regarding shibhir organisation and arrangements. So here starts my Belfast sojourn!

An early morning start from England aiming to reach airport by 5:30 am and taxi didn't arrive. Great start! Arunji Tailor provided lifeline and gave a lift. At the Europa coach station, Belfast, Satyen ji came to pick me up with his car full of shibhir paraphernalia. England's Falguni ji and Jeel ji who came a night before, were also present. On arrival, the enthusiasm was the key milieu, a good omen, for a successful shibhir. The real test, however, was maintaining this passion for next 24 hours!

People started arriving by 10:00 am and within next one hour almost everyone was there. In total 64 participants attended the shibhir including 38 adults, 20 children of aged over 5 years, and 8 under the age of 5. Shibhir was inaugurated diya lighting ceremony followed by a brief introduction of key karyakartas. Jeel ji and Hinesh ji conducted some ice breakers, followed by outdoors games for nearly an hour.

"Tea! we need you, do we? Not really!" – but satisfying our cravings was nonetheless an important action. After bauddhik we had some tasty lunch waiting



for us, prepared by Dublin-imported expatriate chef, Navin ji and team Belfast. A talent show with children performing a number of acts was a key event of the late afternoon.

Enters dusk heralding 'ratri karyakarm'. There were some healthy discussions between parents and children whether to do a Raas-garba or a campfire. Of course, the new generation won the battle and we were all ready to play 'antakshri' sitting around the fire. The beauty of this competition was never ending songs starting with any alphabet in Tamil. The moment a Hindi song ended with a letter and other Hindi song was being searched, our Tamil singers would have started their song – no chance to anyone else. Well we all thought they were singing only one song just changing the first letter :))

After all the day's activities, norm would suggest it was time for sleep but parents would not budge from their demand of having raas-garba before Agni dev calmed down in the camp fire!

Next morning's sunrise took us with a huge surprise. Our Karyawah, Satyen ji was unfortunately taken to hospital after suffering severe renal colic.

After Maha-Khel we had the final bauddhik session. Parents were involved in a broader discussion about Balgokulam during bauddhik. After Samarop the shibhir was officially concluded but no one was in the mood for leaving the venue.

I came, hardly knowing anyone but left Belfast with an upsurge with my all encompassing family. This shibhir was a necessary event like any other, perhaps. The enthusiasm, energy, eagerness and emotions shown by the karyakartas are beyond words found in any dictionary. The hospitality, humility, gratitude – hallmarks of our sanskruti – that were slowly disappearing in cold English weather just got rejuvenated. Deepeshji's hospitality and spiritual quest was an amazing. Gratitude shown by Raj ji was hard to forget. Team Dublin was the life line of this shibhir. I must admit that it was a humbling experience. This is what Sangh is all about and this is why we are here!



Cycle 4 Sewa London - The Adventure Spirit

On 7th September on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, Cycle4Sewa made its third annual appearance at the Redbridge Cycling Centre with the aim to raise money for SEWA UK. With the success achieved over the past 2 years, Swayamsevaks and Sevikas from Newham Nagar were aiming to raise money, to make the event larger and to ensure participants, their families, sponsors and volunteers had a great time.

Sunday afternoon arrived and over 120 budding cyclists took to the 1 kilometre track, determined to set a new personal best in the 2 hours.

A new element was added to the event this year in the form of a team challenge. With 4 teams battling against each other, 5 cyclists from each team tried to complete as many laps as they could collectively. After an hour of cycling, the laps had been counted up and the winner was announced: Team Elite Visions, who completed an enormous 93 laps between the 5 cyclists!

We'd like to congratulate all of the cyclists that took part for all their hard work, as well as all the families, sponsors and volunteers who donated their time and resources for this event. We look forward to seeing each and every one of you once again for a bigger and better Cycle4Sewa next year!

Quick Stats:

C4S London: 120 Cyclists – approx., 350 total attendance with additional 19 cyclists in Team Challenge, £14,069 collected. Booked again for **Sunday 6th Sept. 2015.**

C4S Manchester: 87 Cyclists – approx. 120 total attendance. Awaiting final report on funds collected.

Additional venues for 2015 being looked at – Birmingham & Leicester

Report by Kishan Mehta.

For more information on Cycle4Sewa, contact Harish Bhudia: hari_bhudia@yahoo.co.uk



sewa day I am the Change

This year marks the 5th Anniversary of Sewa Day and many more projects were undertaken

across the country. Below are accounts from Bradford's Harkrishanji on the success of Bradford nagar's sewa day, and from Borehmwood's Simran Solanki on the concept of Sewa itself.

Bradford Sewa day



From the start of Sewa Day, Bradford has been actively promoting this fantastic event. As a community we feel strongly that it has great benefits for both the Bradford residents and hold to promote sampark programme in the nagar. This year, the aim was to engage with the community and try to use various members and associations within the community for this event. This also gave an opportunity to get in touch with former Swayamsevaks and Sevikas to give them the chance to become project leaders. Over the years, Bradford has built excellent relationships with various organisations such as, Sai Mandir, NHSF (Bradford, Leeds and Huddersfield), local Mandirs, local voluntary groups (Curry Project, Friends of Harold Park) and this year in particular, during Navratri, reaching out to the wider Hindu Community. Contacts were also made with the local Muslim community and create a platform for shared projects in the future.

This year, Bradford had over 120 volunteers with 10 projects. Sewa Day turned out to be a very successful event, which also received great coverage in the press via The Asian Express.

We have an excellent Sewa Day core team which we intend to build on next year and start working earlier especially prioritising to engage with the Muslim and Sikh community and to involve volunteers from our work places.



 Est. **100,000** volunteers

Over **25** countries 
 More than **350** projects

 **sewa day**

 #IAmTheChange #SewaDay

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True Happiness Lies In The Service of Others

So, what do the following people have in common:- people in the army, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Charities, My Parents and My Teachers....? Apart from all of them being taller than me!

These people or groups are doing Sewa :))

But what does this all mean?

Is it about making yourself feel better? I think it's about going through life helping and improving people's lives. It is also about imparting knowledge to the betterment of their life. Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." The smallest change can have the biggest impact. He also said, "What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead". The Bible quotes "Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interests of others".

There are many examples of Sewa around us - the thousands of volunteers who helped during the Olympic Games and also the hundreds of volunteers helping during the Diwali celebrations. These are all selfless acts of Sewa.

Just imagine a world where we all naturally helped each other, whether that is countries helping each other or people around us helping each other. The world would be a better place, with no need for charities, volunteers and care homes.

I am a long way from becoming famous, but I can start with my own environment, my family, serving my parents, siblings and extended family and friends. We are one big family; we depend on each other for our existence - we cannot exist alone. Therefore, we should work for the good of all.

In Sanskrit we say 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum' - the whole world is one big family.

Sewa can be carried out in many different ways such as helping people, giving food, clothes, blood but most importantly your time. Sewa is not always about giving money. By recycling our waste, planting trees, not polluting rivers, not wasting energy and water, and showing care for plants and animals we can extend Sewa to the whole world.

I get pocket money but have been taught to save and give half to charity. When doing Sewa, I have learnt not to expect anything in return.

One of the deliverables from this talk should be how we can help someone. It's all in our hands to create a humble environment for everyone and everything.

Be the change! I am the change

I wish a Shubh Diwali and Nutan Varsh Abinandan to all

Simran Solanki - Age 7, Speech given by her at her school

SĀDHANĀ

Strive for Excellence

Sadhana is an ego transcending practice which works towards the achievement of an intended goal. It is described as a spiritual journey and involves a great deal of introspection and self analysis. It is leading us to become the ideal swayamsevaks and develop a consciousness within every action we take in our lives towards our Sangh mission.

This is done through Abhyasa (a practice which is regularly and constantly practised over a long period of time) in our daily lives and our series of vargs. The camps have pushed our limits mentally and physically. Here are some of our experiences so far.

SURAJ TAILOR (RUGBY): The first workshops and activities during the varg taught us skills and techniques to achieve our personal goals. I found some of the activities very demanding. A simple fishbowl exercise, where we were asked to create a shelter out of resources found in a local park, proved to have a greater significance than a team building exercise. This took our self analysis to new levels. We created an amazing shelter but I was left very confused afterwards. During the second varg we went in depth into Sangh methodology including sessions on Karyakarta nirman. My favourite activities included a spontaneous enactment of Swayamsevaks convincing parents to send their kids to Shaka, which put me on the spot and left me unsettled. In fact some of the arguments from the 'parents' were so convincing I almost joined their side. After these vargs, lots of unknowns became known to me; although being imparted with tonnes of knowledge. The journey has inspired me and is also changing my mentality to think broader in each of my actions.

NIKHIL MERCHANT (ASHTON): The first two abhyas vargs have been thought provoking and an enlightening experience. Activities such as cooking for seven people with a £10 budget, reevaluating our daily routine and commencing our day with an intense cardio session triggered our minds to think about our real purpose in life. Confusion was the general theme of the abhyas vargs, which surprisingly was a good thing. The most difficult part is staying motivated for these 4-5 months, especially when being surrounded by distractions. Whilst we get our heads down on our individual projects we hope to make a change and become hard-working individuals that can apply our skills to developing a cohesive society.

Vishal Shah

Relief work in Jammu & Kashmir by Sewa International

The unrelenting rain which resulted into another phase of heavy floods that was started on 2nd of September and continued till 6th of September in Jammu & Kashmir, has just changed the beauty of the city into a implausible disaster. The beautiful homes, farms and everything around has been just destroyed badly. According to the reports, the city suffered from the loss of around 1 Hundred crore. Even today, after more than a month of the disaster, thousands of people are living still without the roof on their heads.



Relief work by Jammu Kashmir Sahayata Samiti

Since 5th Sep till now, our sister Organization Jammu Kashmir Sahayata Samiti has distributed more than 5000 blankets, 5200 kg rice, 16 bundle Maggi, 20 quintals of flour, 280 tarpaulins, 6 bundles of medicines, thousands of

bottles of mineral water, Milk & Juice in 8 districts of Jammu region, Anantnag, Vidhi, Srinagar, Baramula, Naagdandi etc and reaching out to 143 places & among more than 2500 families.

Relief work by Sewa Bharti

Our active partner in the state of Jammu & Kashmir, Sewa Bharti J & K initiated the relief activity earnestly in Kashmir valley and conducted 128 medical camps covering 84 villages of the Kashmir zone. Sewa Bharti conducted medical check of more than 20000 flood affected people providing them with required medicine. Till this date 5000 blankets, 250 Solar lamps have been distributed apart from providing food through community langars for flood affected through 8 districts. Distribution of more solar lamps is being planned by Sewa Bharti.



Relief work by J & K Peace Foundation

J & K peace foundation, another sister organization of Sewa international, is working in Srinagar & Kashmir valley. This organization promotes Indian national values among the majority community in Kashmir valley. Till now they have distributed 20000 food packets, 2000 tarpaulins, 3000 blankets & 1200 utensils and have organized 3 medical camps in three different places in Anantanag district. They provided Rs. 3100 per family as monetary help for rebuilding their houses to 200 families.

Yoga for Life - My experience at SVYASA



Since childhood I have been attending shakha and amongst all the activities we do, Yogasana was one of my favourite sessions. The more I practiced yoga the more

eager I became. In the month of September I went to Bangalore to complete a Yoga Instructors course (YIC) at Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusadhana Sanstha (SVYASA), and university that teaches yoga and other therapies. The experience and knowledge gained at SVYASA was truly amazing.

We always ask ourselves, "What is Yoga? How does it benefit us and the wider Samaj?" After completing the course I started to find answers. The main concept behind yoga is to gain mastery over the mind or as Patanjali puts it – Yoga Chitta, Vritti Nirodha. In society, people are suffering from depression, stress, diabetes and much more – the end of this suffering can be answered by Yoga. As it is mentioned in the Gita, Yoga is skill in action. To understand its full benefits one ought to implement it into their daily lives alongside regular meditation. The unhappiness and miseries we have is due to the overload of thoughts we create in our own mind and to overcome these constant thoughts which create stress, taking control over the mind is the key.

Now that I have completed the course I am able to teach yoga with confidence and better understanding. This experience has strengthened my own self-development and has also made me realise that I can contribute further to our Sangh and Samiti Karya. I believe that everyone has a field in which they are very talented and if we can devote some time in training and developing ourselves in that specific field of interest, we can make a huge impact on ourselves and people around us.



Sarasvati Rabadia

My Experience of India

For many years I have been hearing the problems which the less fortunate people face and what type of conditions they live in. I have always felt like I should be doing something to help them. A year goes past and I say the same line the following year. I make any excuse not to go, either be work related or family related. This year I decided that I need to jump of that imaginary fence and just go. I got in contact with a swayamsevak from Pune and he arranged for me to go there.

In Pune, swayamsevaks run an organisation called Seva Sahayog which run study centres in the slums to teach the core subjects. I visited one of the teacher's home who also lived in the slums. I walked through a small alleyway and into their home. It was equivalent to a small corridor in London. It must have been about 5m by 3m. In this house there was 2 parents and 3 teenage kids living there. I couldn't believe it. I have no idea how they managed. Within this house they had their kitchen. This made me realise how lucky we are in the UK. We are always complaining about the lack of space and lack of privacy in our home. We want our own room, we want our house and we are never happy. They don't even complain and manage with what they have. We should always appreciate what we have.

During my time in Pune I was teaching maths in one of the study centres. In one of my classes there was a child who use just use to sit there, not listen to the main teacher and actually disturb the other class. As soon I saw his attitude, I thought that he was a lost cause and that he would study for a while and drop out of school sometime in the near future. He was equivalent to a year 7. On the day before last I thought let me see how much he knows, so I asked him what he is like in school. He said he was average. So I decided to test him to see how much he knows. I gave him some basic multiplications. He answered them without any problem. Next I thought let me give him some basic division. He didn't know any of it. He was behind but I felt I should work with him for the next 2 days and teach him as much as I can before I go. Within half an hour he learnt the whole of the division syllabus. Something that was taking other children 3 or 4 hours, he mastered it within half an hour. This is when I realised that this child is actually very intelligent. If he focusses on his education and continues to pay attention in school, he could get a senior position in a good company in the future. He needs to be pushed and guided otherwise he could end up in a mediocre job when he could have been so much more. Had I had been there for a lot longer, I may have been able to work with him and maybe changed his perception about education. Hopefully I made a difference for the 2 days I was working with him.

Hitendra Rabadia, Woolwich Shakha Karyawaha



American Pravaas

America is America. In certain aspect quite unparalleled. It has its own parameters of big and small, far and near, tall and short.

This year I was asked to visit USA and Canada for Karyakarta shibhirs and Sangh Shiksha Varg respectively. It was my first time to Canada visit was first time.

Sangh in Canada is not new. Shri Jagdish ji Shastry Sharda, currently residing in Toronto, was one of the initiators to start shakha in Vishwa Vibhag. He is 93 years young! Still quiet energetic and active in this age, Shastry ji is known for his humility and willingness to learn. He is currently learning a skill of Sanskrit Sambhashan (conversation) at this age. The Hindu population is mainly concentrated in Toronto, where Hindus are known for their their religiosity, work ethic and inclination towards education. Mandirs and Gurudwaras are focal points of the society. Sangh shakhas are growing gradually in Canada with the efforts of dedicated young karyakartas. In Sangh Shiksha Varg, the total sankhya was over 40. A novel experience for me indeed.

Let us fly to the USA. Last year, HSS USA had organised two major programmes successfully:- Dharma Bee contest and Dharma Yoga fest. As a follow up to last year's efforts, this year our karyakartas decided to organise Vibhag Karyakarta Shibhirs in over 20 places. I got the opportunity to attend four such shibhirs, in Dallas, Colorado, Bay Area and New Jersey.

Last year we spread our wings in masses and this year we decided to sharpen ourselves and get equipped for a higher leap. We discussed about the Fifth stanza of the Vishwa Prarthana 'Samutkarshostu No Nityam Nihshreyasa Samanvitah'

As a Hindu, the developmental model gets clubbed with spirituality. Sangh, although engaged in organising the entire society, never considers itself just an NGO, but a Divine enterprise. This was central theme of all discussions in the shibir. We had detailed discussions about the divine nature of our organisation and our work ethic. It was a sincere enquiry into the vast ocean of Sangh.

Alongside the shibhirs I attended various Nagars to understand local shakhas to better understand their challenges and opportunities. It is very heartening to note that HSS USA has expanded in a number of areas of social life, like Academia, Human Rights, social sectors etc. For example:

Sewa International and Ekal Foundation are engaged in various projects for Nepali refugees migrating from Bhutan, children from war-affected areas and educational projects in remote areas of Bharat.

Dharma Civilisation Foundation, Hindu University and Oberai Foundation are initiating dialogues in Academic areas with strong presence in institutions.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad is successfully continuing to bring all Temples and Dharmic organisations on one platform. Hindu American Foundation is raising several Human Rights issues. Hindu Yuva is prominent in California in providing initial help in their settlement in USA.

Though all efforts are independent, the Sangh Shakha network provides an able thought base to all organisations.

I also got an opportunity to visit Maharishi Vedic City in the state of Iowa. This city is established with the blessings by Maharishi Mahesh yogi. It is the small city with Saatvik atmosphere. Almost all residential premises are built according to Vaastu-Shastra. It seemed as though I was in Amarnath with a 7ft Ice Shiv-Lingam in the city. I also visited a Maharishi Vedic school where Vedic science is the foundation for personality building. The entire experience boosted my optimism for a better future.

As I mentioned earlier, the USA has its own parameters. Having known the world image of USA, its engagement in various wars, superiority in world politics, McDonald colonisation culture, I could experience little but strong fragrance of Dharmic enterprise in this Trans-Atlantic visit.

Ramji Vaidya, Pracharak, Vishwa Vibhag Sah-Sahyojak



www.hskonline.co.uk
www.hindubookshop.com

Hindu Sahitya Kendra (HSK) aims to provide books, charts, on Hindu religion, history, philosophy, culture, health, cookery, places of interest, and language learning for most age groups



Vedic Heritage Teaching Programme

Namaste.

It's almost 7:30pm and around the time my four year old usually gets ready for bed. However this evening something different is unfolding. Rather than having to ask him to get ready for bed, he brings me his new bedtime reading book by himself and says "it's bedtime now Papa". "Wow" my wife says in amazement "he's never done that before!". The book in question is entitled 'Panchatantra for the Young' and is part of the 'Purna Vidya – Vedic Heritage Teaching Programme' that we've recently started as a family at home (and it seems we are already reaping the benefits). My theory is that he enjoys it more because they are workbooks rather than just storybooks, they complement our Balagokulam Bauddhiks and we also do the exercises and activities together as a family.

SO WHY BOTHER?

Unfortunately not only our children but even we older ones can still struggle with clearly grasping and communicating the basic concepts of Hindu Dharma and Sanskruti. For many years now HSS UK has been either trying to create our own Dharma / Sanskruti based resource or have had to go down the Hinduism GCSE route – which is either far too academic for our purposes or too narrow. The great thing about Purna Vidya – Vedic Heritage Teaching Programme is that it's the perfect blend of being very wide reaching in its Hindu / Vedic outlook (same as

Sangh), is culturally orientated rather than just dry academia and is very simple to follow yet quite comprehensive.

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

Purna means 'Complete' and Vidya means 'knowledge'. It was developed by Swamini Paramanand Saraswati, disciple of Swami Dayananda Saraswati (an Acharya that is one of the closest to Sangh) and Sri Dhira Chaitanya, a Vedic scholar and New York based Child Psychiatrist. Purna Vidya is an activity book set consisting of:

- Fun Work books for children of all ages
- Teaching guidelines for Parents / Teachers
- A special book and audio CD on how to conduct Pujas & Prayers

The subject matter is organised into 13 parts, tailored to suit different age groups. Each part offers subject matters relevant to the child's age and level of comprehension and there are also Supplementary tools such as Exercises, Games and Plays which complement our Shakha / Balagokulam methods.

SO HOW SHOULD WE USE THIS GREAT RESOURCE?

We should use Purna Vidya along side the Varshik Bauddhik Yojna and VHP's Explaining Hindu Dharma Book to develop a sound foundation of Hindu Cultural knowledge at:

- Home – we advise families to progress through the workbooks together to strengthen our pariwaar – 'A family which learns together, bonds together'.
- Shakhas and Balagokulams – the stories and activities are a perfect fit for Bauddhiks at Shakha and Balagokulam
- Samaj – what a good opportunity to start Purna Vidya supplementary schools in our local communities

OUR ROLE

We are all obviously interested in preserving our great Hindu culture for the betterment of the world. So let's energize ourselves enough to commit to buying a set of these books for our own families and also discuss Purna Vidya Teaching with our Shakha / Balagokulam team.

If you'd like to order a set you can email uk@purnavidya.com or for any questions / queries please email me at nilkeshmehta@gmail.com

Pranaam

Nilkesh Mehta (HSS UK Bauddhik Pramukh)

Gita for Daily Life

Learning volumes of 'spiritual' literature may not even begin to achieve the level of transformation that happens from just deeply meditating on a single meaningful phrase. Here are some insights into the Bhagavad Gita that a few people have realised through their own experiences:

Friend or Foe? Chapter 6 Verse 6

For one who has controlled the mind, it is the best of friends, but for one who has failed to do so, it remains the greatest enemy.

Can we control our minds? The mind is quite hard to control. In this day and age we overwork our minds so much that we forget to think about the impact this has on our life and the actions we then take.

I think if you want something in life, you can put positive energy towards it and this will train your mind in a positive way in order to achieve that end goal. Our actions follow the way our minds work.

In a recent incident, I had an unfortunate turn of events when I seriously injured my leg. The consequences of this injury caused my mind to become uncontrollable and negative in not being able to see a quick recovery. I was not able to carry out my usual life routine it was extremely difficult to cope. I could not control my mind to think positively, and I thought I would never walk again.

During my recovery period, I spent time in self-reflection in order to control my thoughts and took the steps I needed in order to start walking again (pun intended!). After cultivating this positive mindset, and making 'my mind, my friend' I saw a complete recovery.

Priya Vadukar from Birmingham

Engage you mind on Me.. Chapter 9 Verse 24

"Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisance and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me."

A few years ago I was left to make some personal, important decisions and in such



times of such pressure, I was guided to this particular verse of the Gita (9.34). It was explained to me in such a way that allowed me to explore the meaning for myself. Here, I will summarise my interpretation.

This element of constant engagement and conscious thought is a form of meditation, thereby increasing ones ability to reach clarity through focus. It leads to realisation and the ability to see the bigger picture which will allow them to follow their intuition. I see this conscious state as a base point, a familiar place where I can recollect my thoughts, regain a state of calm if need be and from there, perform at my optimum.

In addition to this, I see this as a form of 'worship' that does not require one's physical presence to visit the mandir or carry out a ritual, but instead it represents the devotion carried out from ones inner self in their own time and space. He asks for just one thing from us - our mind- and this verse represents that perfectly.

The 'obeisance' I offer are in the form of my happiness, troubles, my successes and failures. This 'offloading' is a tactic I use to remain light-hearted, to put Him in control of all situations.

Lastly, this verse is a constant reminder that there is always someone above us, someone that guides us in both direct and indirect ways and therefore, nothing we achieve is achieved alone- a reminder to stay humble.

I have referred to this verse under many circumstances and it is through these various experiences that I have come to these interpretations. It is a verse that I relate to, and one which I hope will help guide me through the rest of my journey. Jai Sri Krishna.

By Tejal Pankhania, London

HinduCalendar

रविवार

SUNDAY

सोमवार

MONDAY

मंगलवार

TUESDAY

बुधवार

WEDNESDAY

गुरुवार

THURSDAY

शुक्रवार

FRIDAY

शनिवार

SATURDAY

Hindu Calendar or Din-Darshika

We all know the value of "TIME". We run according to our watch. But this valuable systems antiquity descends from vedic times and is known as Vedaang (called as Jyotish – celestial system). Further researchers were Aryabhata (5th century), Varahmitra (6th century) and Bhaskaracharya (12th century). Smallest time measurement, we can say Lipt = 0.4second.

We all know when is the new year -1st January.

Chinese have their New Year celebrations which does not coincide with 1st January. Ancient civilisations like China, Bharat have their calendars started long before the todays Julian or Gregarian calendar. It is mind blogging to know that our ancestors developed this scientific way of time counting system and relating it to Divinity as well.

Presently Shalivahan shak, Vikram savatsar and Yugaabd are commonly used calenders. These two valiant kings saved the subjects from enemies at those times. So the calendar started at that time Shalivahan calendar started 78 A.d. and Vikram samvat calendar 78 B.C. Yugaabd is the start of Kali yuga (Shree krushna left earth for His abode journey on 14th of January 3102_Gregarian calendar) As a proud Hindu we should at least try to use our days and months to start with.

Yuga system- Satya (Truth Era) yuga	- 1,728,000 solar years
Treta yuga—Shree Ram Avataar	- 1,296,000 solar years
Dwapar yuga—Shree Krishna Avataar	- 864,000 solar years
Kali yuga -(present era)- expecting Kali Avataar	- 432,000solar years

But first we will concentrate more on the day to day Din-darshika (calendar).

Day counting is associated with different graha or celestial objects:

Ravi vaar	= Sun day
Som vaar	= Moon day
Mangal Vaar	= Mars day
Budh Vaar	= Mercury day
Guru Vaar or Brihspatee Vaar	= Jupiter day
Shukra Vaar	= Venus day
Shani Vaar	= Saturn day

Then comes the months which are named after different Nakshatras. Hindu months are of 29-30 days according to moon's completion of circle. But for simplification and mathematical correction all months are Of 30 days and what ever remaining days added in Purushottam or Adhik (extra)mas This occurs every 3rd year. There is also Kshay (less) mas (month) which happens between 19 to 141 years (last one in 1983)

Every Two months comprise one ritu (season)

1 } Chaitra	
2 } Vaishakh	} Vasanta ritu (spring)
3 } Jyeshtha	
4 } Ashadh	} Greeshm ritu (summer)
5 } SharavaN	
6 } Bhadrapad	} Varsha ritu (monsoon or rainy)
7 } Ashwin	
8 } Kartik	} Sharad ritu (autumn)
9 } Margshirsh	
10 } Poush	} Hemant ritu (winter)
11 } Magh	
12 } falgun	} Shishira ritu (dewer)

Another aspect of moon phase is also indicated in our month system namely Shukla paksh (bright days), Krishna paksh (dark days). The month starts with Shukla (bright) paksh except in Uttar Pradesh (one of the province in India).

BookReview

Being Different

Author: Rajiv Malhotra

Publisher: Harper Collins

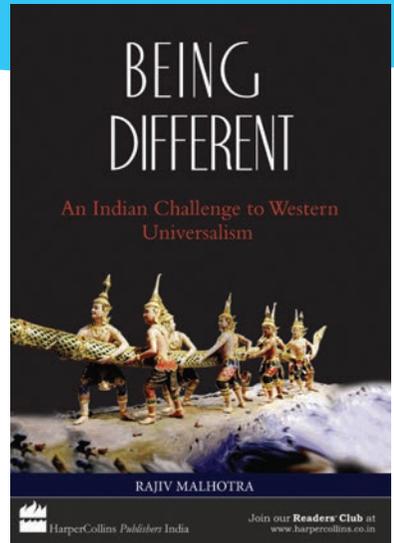
ISBN: 978 93 5116 D50 2

Do you find it difficult to understand why the West does not appreciate Hinduism? Do you feel inferior when others highlight 'deficiencies' in Hinduism? Would you like to understand the important differences between Dharmic traditions and Judeo-Christian religions? If your answer to these questions is yes then this is the book for you.

One of the reasons why Hinduism is shown in bad light in the West is that Western academia writes about Hinduism from the outside and by the same token the study of Hinduism is not a well-developed subject in Indian Universities. Those who are inside, like you and I, are not in academia and so our views are not taken seriously and are often considered as Hindu extremist views. With this book, the author has made a significant contribution to the debate by providing a well researched, insider view of Hinduism.

The book, *Being Different*, is about how India and the West are differ and that we should not only and that we should be proud of the differences. This is further discussed as four significant differences between Judeo-Christian religions and Dharma traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism). The author acknowledges that Judeo-Christian religions do not have a strong coupling but it is useful to discuss them together as they share important paradigms that become clear as you read the book. This is also true of the structure of the book as well which may appear strange at the beginning but becomes clear as you go on.

First, the author explains Dharmic traditions emphasise on 'Adhyatma Vidya'- a range of inner science and experiential technologies developed to know the divine. This is termed as 'embodied knowing'. Yog is the main concept covered in more detail, which does not rely on history. Judeo-Christian religions rely on an event in history



to know the divine and are called 'history centric' by the author. The historical event of the birth of Jesus created Christianity. God from without came to assist humans. Without this intervention there would be no Christianity, for example.

Secondly, the Dharmic traditions have similar concepts around 'integral unity', where parts making the whole only exist relative to it, like a smile on a face. The concept of integral unity has also been explained as 'indra-jaal' (Indra's Net, which happens to be another book by the same author). Whereas in Judeo-Christian religions the 'synthetic unity' is being maintained at a large cost because the parts exist separately, like an automobile made from parts. An example here is how Galileo was originally persecuted for his heliocentric views that were later accepted.

Thirdly, the Dharmic traditions are comfortable with chaos and have in-built mechanisms to deal with it. However Judeo-Christian religions are uncomfortable with complexity and ambiguity and try to control it by force and conversion etc. An example is how musicians in the Dharmic traditions improvise with variations, but always meet at some point, whereas in the west a musician has to precisely follow the music written down by the composer.

Fourthly, the book covers several examples of 'cultural digestion' where rituals or symbols of local culture are absorbed as part of the dominant culture (the west in this case) and the remaining rituals are defined as archaic and backward. The author has provided several examples where non-translatable Sanskrit words signifying complex concepts are replaced with simpler words and thus reducing the complex Dharmic concept to simpler Judeo-Christian concepts. This is then used to show that Dharma traditions have nothing new to offer (reductionism).

The author asks for more direct mutual engagement using the 'purva paksha' model explained in the book. This seems like a good idea, like 'Shastrarth', which used to take place in India where pundits used to debate to understand the truth of a statement or position.

Finally, I liked the simple model given at the end of the book that can be used to understand and explain Hinduism to others. The model is similar to the way personal computers are built or bought. For example, you can pick and choose components and make your own personal computer or you can buy off-the-shelf personal computers from a company. In the same manner, you can either read Vedas and other scriptures and define your own path or you can join an established Sampradaya.

A must read.



Sangh Sandesh

संघ संदेश



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