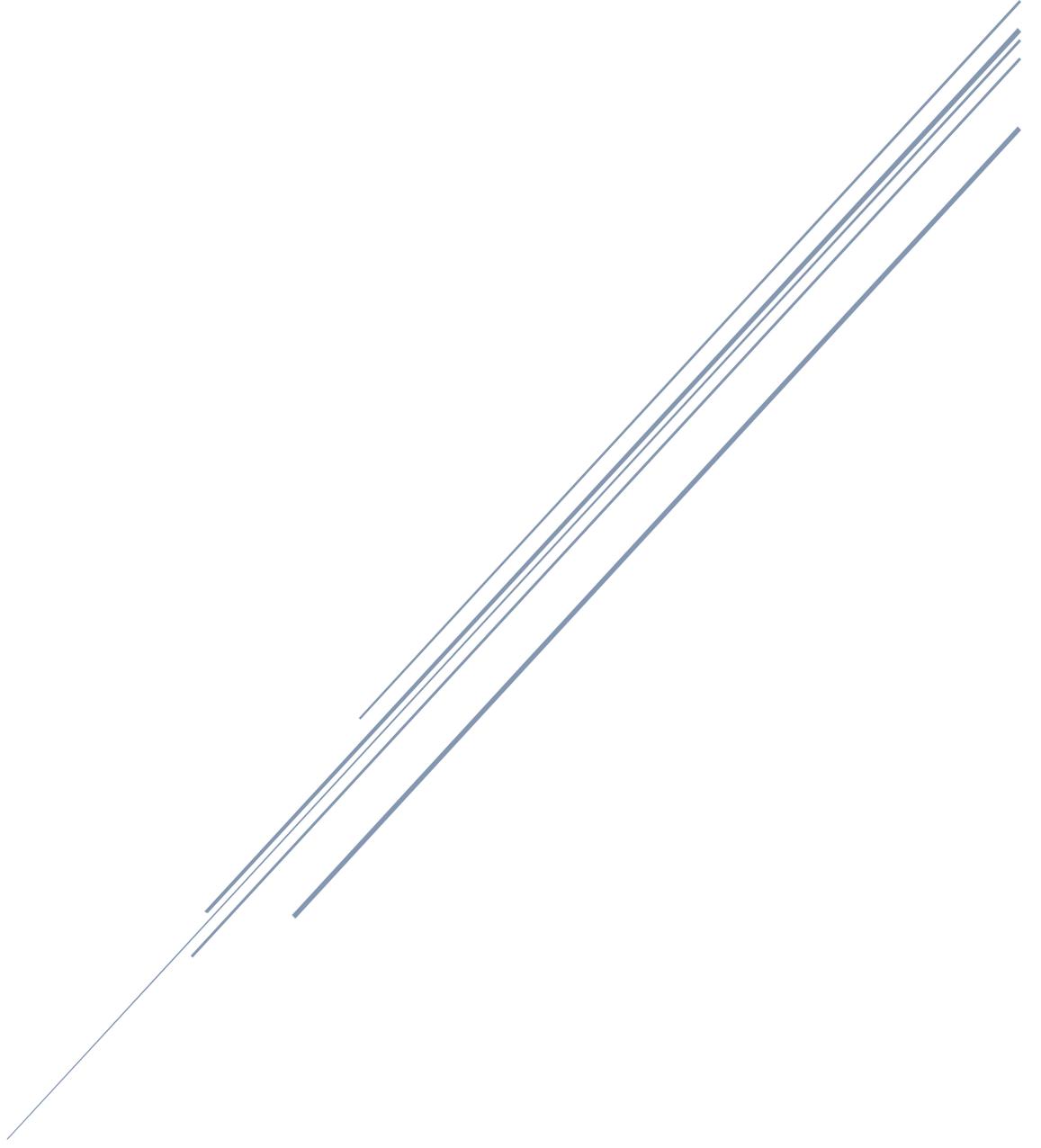


A View from the other side

Collection of Articles on Hindu Dharma and Sanskriti by an Indo-American



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[Seed The World]

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About 'Seed the world':

Seed the World is a U.S. based nonprofit organization established in October 1996 in the state of Michigan. It was founded on the belief that individuals can make a difference in the global village by helping others help themselves to obtain essentials such as food, shelter and education. We believe that by helping others help themselves, we can learn something about the human Spirit and, ultimately, ourselves. In this information age when everything around us is changing too fast, there is a need to see what never changes...we need to focus on values and ways of thinking that can benefit everyone...and our work is ongoing.



Please visit our website to know more about our work: www.seedtheworld.org.

(This e-book is compilation of articles published in The Hindu Renaissance from 2003 onwards.)



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A View From The Other Side

शुभम् करोति कल्याणम् आरोग्यम् धन संपदः
शत्रुबुद्धि विनाशाय दीप ज्योतिर्नमोस्तुते!

*śubham karōti kalyāṇam ārōgyam dhana saṃpadah,
śatrubuddhi vināśāya dīpa jyōtir namōstutē!*

(**Meaning:** I pay my salutation (*namaskara*) to the light / lamp which brings auspiciousness; prosperity, good health, abundance of money and wealth, and the destruction of the intellect's enemy.)

I begin this very first column for the new, Hindu Renaissance quarterly in the tradition of our *Sanskriti* (culture). All beginnings must be auspicious, so *Shubham* is just the word I needed. A prayer done for eons by Hindus as they light a lamp in their home or *Mandir* altars each morning. To me this is one of the wisest prayers -- as it asks for all that Humans usually hold important like, wealth and health, but it goes on to include the one thing which is the base of all our emotions and desires including the feeling of happiness – The Mind. This we are made to understand is the *Aadhaar* (foundation) of all feeling! So very beautifully, this *Praarthana* asks for a mind that can be a friend and not an enemy! A mind that turns into an enemy creates a world vision that is disruptive to our own Peace and often destructive to everything around us.

It is true that without a proper frame of mind nothing can be enjoyed. Even when everything seems to be in order we are left with a feeling of agitation. Then there are those moments when all seems to be well in spite of something obviously amiss.

Having come from such a culture my arrival in the USA can certainly be called a culture shock, though I was not really aware of such words then. Over the last thirty-six years of living here in Mid-Western USA, gradually my mind learnt many words and the complications that go with such learning. A word and its meaning go together, in time the words become thoughts that remain in the mind -- then they have the ability to manifest into actions. Knowing this power of words we were advised to use good words so we may have good thoughts and hence good actions. For a twenty one year old *Bhaaratiya* girl from small town India, that too in the late sixties, such words had a powerful effect, which slowly took her from a happy simple mind set to a complicated one -- at times even an angry mind set. Perhaps this was an unfolding of my Karma and a way to reconnect with my own Spiritual Tradition that was to bring me back -- full circle to my own roots – a kind of homecoming. The path has consisted of all the ups and down that paths are made of -- but has deposited me now at a deeper, more contented level – not simple like the beginning, but surely wiser.

USA has of course changed over these past decades, like every other place changes, but then, some things stay the same – it is the collective *Svabhaava* of a Nation much like the *Svabhaava* of a person that can only be modified, to an extent, if one realizes the changes will be beneficial. In other words it is a very long and slow process especially when it involves a whole society - - that too, made up of races that thought themselves superior and discriminated on the bases of color, creed, religion and various other things both within their own lands and later the world over. This attitude of superiority, though somewhat modified, has not come to an end yet, in spite of all the talk about Human rights, women's equality and a host of other objections. Jokingly I have said a few times that Humans must live in other places since we rarely hear of such violations in our country here -USA!

As one from the East, I am to this day surprised that present day USA is called a new country, even though people have lived here since the times of the last Glacial age when the Berrien

straights became a land bridge from Asia to the North American continent, leading to a large migration of Asian people. Only after coming here and being mistaken for a Native American, then known as Red Indian or American Indian, did I begin to read American history and learnt how sad is the story of these people who once freely roamed this land and who were kind to the foreign white man from Europe, helping them survive through happily sharing all resources then at their disposal.. Here too, we of Bhaarat see similarities; *Atithi Devo Bhava* was perhaps the norm! Second thing I found was the fact of slavery of the Black races that had been ended by President Lincoln but not gone out of the minds of people yet. My very first summer, I was witness to Civil Rights riots in Milwaukee Wisconsin where we lived then. Next year saw the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, a Black follower of Mahatma Gandhi fighting for his people's right to dignity just like us of India who had to fight against the British even in our own country. This was followed by the murder of Senator Bobby Kennedy for his liberal views. Much too much for a, homesick Bhaaratiya youth, who was a reluctant immigrant at best and carried a Disneyland syndrome (fun and frolic) about this country in her mind! When young, we are able to put much out of our mind, as I did to make a life here. This endeavor of making a life where ever you find yourself has been aided by the wise teaching of my beloved land of birth which insisted that you find what is good and connect to that while letting go of the bad – a great asset in a world where lives are often disconnected with the comfort of familiar surroundings for so many now.

The *Svabhaava* of present day USA is European in nature, which thinks in linear terms as opposed to the Indian way that thinks in cyclical ways. This type of thinking must be why an ancient land and its inhabitants have been ignored rather than included in the history of the land. How very strange? A natural assimilation was not allowed to take place as it has done a thousand times in the land called Bhaarat. This has today created guilt and fear among one side while permanently alienating the other. Such thinking is rooted in our respective religious systems – one is exclusive, static and historical in its characteristics; whereas the other (Indian) is inclusive, adaptive and sees an unending cycle as well as complete interconnectedness within this Universe. **Individual well-being rests in the well-being of the Whole.** Perhaps this difference in thinking is the greatest culture shock for an Indian – a limited, narrow worldview in the most advanced nation of the current world! This permeates every phase and facet of life here, in mainstream America, causing the people to have lives that are in constant disarray and full of fear --- fear of the end of the World, fear of World Wars, fear of Hell, fear of impending diseases, even fear of flying and driving. Imagine fear of flying in a country that flies a lot and driving where cars are prized more than owning a house. Culture shock? You bet! And this is just the tip of the glacial shocks that keep me amazed even now after more than three decades -- some bring sadness others are outright funny. What is even stranger is, that hardly anyone here thinks about the culture shock that others receive on arrival in the USA. Then there is the fact that very few in Bhaarat or it seems, anywhere realize the unpleasant aspect of life in the Western World, especially the USA. But the pleasant must necessarily be accompanied by the unpleasant -- that is how it is in this world made up of opposites!

There is a lot to share in this area, which can lead to better understanding between two major Democracies of our world. As we go along we can explore more. For now I want to end with this thought -- that it is not the people of a country or race or religion who are at fault, rather it is the systems and the culture that are a result of certain beliefs and practices which either help refine or unrefined the basic person. In that respect those of us who are given the name of Non Resident Indians, have gained a lot from living away from our country of origin. Many of us have realized what the Vedic Sanatana Hindu Dharma gave us and continues to give in terms of abilities to deal with life and its constant upheavals. So many of us are able to act rather than react, stay calm in situations that cause panic in many. The goal of this Genius culture has been

to make us fearless and let us be spiritually free. I feel blessed every moment for the privilege of being born into this wisdom tradition!

We must stand up against the Adharma of Conversions

Conversions are a hot subject everywhere now. September 11, 2001 is going to remain in the psyche of all Americans, especially the white - European American, for a very long time. I make this reference to the European Americans in particular as they have been shaken up more by the incidents of recent terrorist acts on the soil of this country. Americans of other origins and hues have faced so much unjust behavior from dominant groups that their reaction is more of sadness and less of panic.

For the fundamentalists within the Christian faith, this is an opportunity to further enflame the fear of the fearful! Apart from being able to shred all other traditions to pieces, they can convince their flock that it is all because of the infidels, pagans, heathens and all who do not accept their religious beliefs. Hindus are the worst -- but others are included. Muslims are at least people of THE BOOK so a bit more tolerable than, Hindu Jain, Boudha, Sikh and a host of other traditions, which deserve no respect. In fact the fundamentalists would like to see all of us blended into a creamed soup of one religion or simply eradicated. We are called Devil worshippers, Godless and people of darkness often on Evangelizing Television channels in this secular and powerful country. Did you know that? Of course, with the presence of not one, but two true religions, (neither recognizes the legitimacy of the other) there is a bit of a problem as you can tell!! They will not, cannot agree either in the name of God or in the name of Allah. Freedom in Religion? They do not believe in that at all! However each does preach PEACE - how can human beings with free will ever agree about a certain prescribed, narrow definition of the Almighty?

There is also a raging controversy whether the Christians should convert the Muslims. One whole Billion strong potential market -- they provide. (See Time Magazine 30 June 2003) Sadly, enough this conversion issue is simply marketing God as a product in our consumer society. We hear lectures here and there which tell how the money is assigned to various people in the proselytizing battalion – Asia with an emphasis on India gets top dollars, as many souls can be harvested there as opposed to more intelligent nations who watch for their survival. There are many within the Christian fold who are also appalled by the conversion mania, but unfortunately too few here or anywhere seem to understand the real danger of this kind of thinking. So there is no critical mass to bring about a change. Converting by every means known to humanity has become a habit for these people over the past couple thousand years. The Christian crusades followed by Islamic crusades are well known and very well recorded throughout the literature of the world but it continues in one form or another. Even today if we look at conflicts around the world, and more are added every day, there is a strong religious component to all most all. These include both inter and intra (within the same religion) religious conflicts. While non-religious disagreements can be solved with effort, ones based in religion seem very nigh insurmountable. So what about the Hindus with our *Sarva Dharma Sambhaava*? I am reminded of: *दो पाटन के बीच में साबुत बचा न कोय!* (nothing remains intact between the two grinding stones).

Concept of *Sarva Dharma Sambhaava* (religion cannot be same, Dharma cannot be different) is meaningless to all those who have no understanding of the Law of Dharma. It applies to only the Dharma based traditions of Bhaarat, that too on the basis of mutual respect. I see no reason to go on accommodating those who have become a menace to all Humanity. Hindu population and its Government are seen as the softest target for conversion! India allows anyone to come in and desiccate the Hindu society thru various ways – multiple marriages for Muslims which

most of the Islamic world does not allow anymore, restrictions on Hindu pilgrimage but subsidies for others, control of media by not only unpatriotic but downright hostile forces, no understanding of Kashmir as the Shaarda Peetha (home of Sarasvaati) and its importance to Hindu tradition of learning, no teaching of anything Hindu anywhere while the Muslims increase Madrasas and the Christians teach us ALL -- thru the CONVENTS left by our white masters, which even today hold a place of importance in the Hindu psyche. Many other countries with no English are doing quite well. However, our problems do not stem from familiarity with one more language, rather it is our tendency to forget what is ours. All our regional languages contain words for our own indigenous thought processes, which help us stay connected to each other and to our *Sanskriti*. It is well known that a foreign language will create a chasm -- between those seen as educated and those not knowing the imposed outside language as being uneducated. A book I recommend reading is --The Clash of civilizations by Samuel Huntington. It has a lot of information; Exposes the reader to a certain thinking process, perceptions and planning abilities of the Western World.

Living outside India, both non-Indians and those with Indian roots are stunned that we Hindus have survived for so long. No one knows the cost, the tragedy or the pain, let alone the death toll of Hindus. Yet, it is the only country to which people of Indian origins run when they are thrown out from other countries, because of the same ignorance that has caused a host of problems and our present troubles. In fact, the persecuted people of this Planet continue to seek Bhaarat just as they always have done. Whether humanity dishes out religious discrimination or political -- India is a sure sanctuary for all. The Jews, the Parsi (Only ones who contributed to Nation Building), the Buddhist including the Dalai Lama sought and found safety on the *Punaya Bhoomi* of Bhaarat. As a child I used to wonder, why the Dalai Lama did not go to a Buddhist country like Japan or Myanmar or Thailand? Then someone pointed out that for that matter China too was Buddhist, certainly more than India! Difficult for a fourteen year to comprehend, the complex way religion and politics come together and then apart at the whim of some leader who is usually just another person with power. In Democracies this power should rest with the people. In reality the only place where it may be so, is in the *Panchaayata Raaj* of Indian villages.

Survival of Bhaarat is critical for Hindus, that is obvious but also it is important for Humanity. India alone offers another way of looking at life and sees this manifestation called the *Jagat* or Universe as inter linked. In the world of science, Quantum Physics has come to the same conclusion, but the knowledge sits in the academic World. Our *Sanskriti* on the other hand disseminated complex ideas much like the discoveries of Quantum Physics, in easy ways and language to most citizens. In fact, such a thorough job was done that even now a common Indian is a very intelligent person -- who can think independently in new situations. This is the secret behind the success of people of Indian Diaspora as well as the citizens of the country -- this ability to interpret, while retaining the core strength of the original VEDIC RISHI culture bothers the opposing cultures of the world. A certain group simply wants to see us gone; while the other wants to claim our ideas as theirs. The second group is doing just that in various ways. They have immense money power and often invite people of Hindu origins or even fake Hindus (ones who take up Hindu names). This shows us in a bad light and also makes our own youth want to move away from our ways. This has been successfully done among people of the Native American groups as well as many other indigenous groups.

However, I see a ray of hope among the very intelligent youth of the world and in the use of the word Universe, rather than -- Twinverse or Multiverse. This ray, this knowledge of a Universe, must be made dominant again. The task of making this possible is the real duty of the Hindus. It must be seen as something that is our destiny, our purpose of still being here

-- while so many ancient traditions have been destroyed or nearly destroyed by the aggressive religions.

*Him apa shabdam dushyati khandayati –iti Hindu
(Swaami Dayananda Sarswati ji)*

This is my favorite definition of a Hindu, for the present *Kaala* (time period). It describes us Hindus, as people who stand up against unrighteousness or *Adharma*. Each individual is born with a certain *Svabhaava* or temperament which is her/his core *Guna* (quality). I believe this to be true also of nations, societies and groups as well. This struggle for the sake of establishing Dharma is our natural *Svabhava*. In this we find our greatest strength our highest joy. Once we are able to bring the understanding of what is Dharma and how it relates to Karma into the larger world community, a change will begin to take place -- the signs are already here. I believe the youth of this world are quite tired of the conflicts imposed on them – the ancestral burden of slavery, colonization, manipulations of history and now outright lies in the media and financial markets as well as the deceit of the Multi-National Corporations. So the youth in India and to certain extent outside, I think, are ready for things to change and they will usher in a new era -- a *Yuga Parivartan*.

The present world focus on religious terrorism which is a huge cost to society, both in terms of security of life and financial instability of world markets is an ideal time for the peaceful Dharmas of Bhaarat to focus the attention of the world on the solutions that can be offered thru the wisdom of the Vedic Dharma based societies.

Conversion is an idea based in control of the weaker parts of society. Peace and religious conversion are mutually exclusive. We cannot have both. Even within these fundamentalist religions there is a lot of discord. A fundamentalist is one who will not change her/his stand in the face of reason, so disharmony is the rule not the exception.

Inter-relatedness and interconnectedness of the Universe is a fact to be learnt. That is why **Vedanta is a teaching tradition; not a preaching system!** The mathematician, the Quantum Physicist loves the ideas of the Upanishads but so far, *Kalayuga* is continuing because very powerful people allow no free flow of information in the aggressive religions! For a better future of the Human race the intelligence, the elite must come together or live in a world always torn by religious conflict, which forms the foundation of other conflicts.

Frontier Arjunas of Northeast India

I am just back from the *Maatri Bhoomi* and this time from an exceptional trip, the experience of which I want to share with you. I had the privilege of being invited by two prestigious organizations of Bhaarat, the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla (happens to be my *Janma Sthaana* (Birth place—confirming Karmic connections!) and Vivekananda Kendra (VK), a monumental organization in itself. On my own I included Kashmir in my travels.

I am told some call VK workers, Frontier Arjunas—and very appropriately so! It is often said that India is Eternal but very few think why it is so? Its eternity is owed to the Vision of the Rishikaa/Rishi culture of this amazing land, which continuously produces people who are a tribute to these ancestors in every sense. In the three weeks that I spent with the Vice President of Vivekananda Kendra, Su Shree Nivedita Bhide and her team of *Jeevanvrati Kaaryakartas* (Lifelong workers) numbering only—one hundred and seventy four—but equal in determination to a thousand, I was reassured of the continuity of our land and its culture. The unique thing about the dedication of these people is their understanding of the present needs of the country, their devotion to her and the determined way they work. In a world where money seems to override all morality, all ethics, these volunteers have given their lives to make things better for the present and future citizens of their country—majority of whom seem unaware of the danger that Bhaarat Bhoomi faces on so many fronts. Also most remain oblivious to the sacrifice and the hard work these volunteers do every single day to secure the land for posterity—children of the uncaring and unconcerned. How unfathomable is our Human existence!

Only the vision of oneness of all Creation, expounded by Vedanta, told to us in a thousand different ways, over millennia can produce a workforce of such dedication; here we see the true expression of the expanded SELF permeating all of Creation. Such a volunteer force can exist only where a subtle perception of the Truth behind the obvious duality of our everyday experience is understood. Hindus have that understanding of the oneness of the whole manifest *Jagat*—both at the intellectual level and at the intuitive level. This is why we are able to see the pristine and noble soul of Bhaaratvarsha and love her more—that landmass from the Himalayas to the Hindu Mahaasaagar, in fact the whole of Akhand Bhaarat is *poojniya* to us, her memory kept alive through the Akhanda Bhaarat Smriti Utsav. This unique love is because of what the human mind achieved on this landmass making it sacred forever. “*Krinvanto Vishvam Aryam*” (make the whole world noble), is Bhaarat Maataa’s vision alone and for that goal any sacrifice is worthwhile. Those who understand Bhaarat and its culture would die a million times to preserve her vision for the Human race. This intense love is seen by a few in the West for they often wonder, what makes people love a land so very much? You and I know it is not the land but the Vision that gave birth to a uniquely compassionate Samskriti (culture)—a humane culture that all aspire to—but have failed to produce even with all the materialism and other “isms” put together.

The *prerna* (inspiration) for the VK came as usual, from a *Sangh pracharak*—Shree Eknath Ranade ji. (I often wonder what would have happened to Hindus without the Sangh?) In a short period of less than thirty years, the Kendra has opened many schools in very difficult areas of the country. Arunachal is a large, sparsely populated, most Northeastern state of Bhaarat. Here the life-giving rays of Suraya Deva bless Humanity before all others. China covets this land for its beauty and abundance of nature. The population though small, less than ten lakh, contains Twenty-six different Jan Jaatis with almost as many languages. Undaunted by such obstacles the VK people have opened Twenty-one schools. In Assam with its lush green tea gardens but as of now, inconvenient roads, VK schools have a strong presence too. All in all forty-one schools including one in Nagaland are run very efficiently—so much so that in Mebo, a place across the Siang River I was beseeched by people to please open a VK school right

away. My repeated protests that I was only an invited speaker and had no authority to open schools did nothing to cool their enthusiasm. In fact some of the audience kept up the request all the way to the waiting vehicle and I ended up promising that surely there will be a school soon—a VK School at that—not just any school! One gentleman claimed that after sending his one son to a convent school run by the missionaries and another to a VK School he sees a world of difference in their attitudes. He preferred the values his son had learnt at the VK School—a great compliment for the Kendra and its workers for sure!

Now the readers may wonder why so much fuss over schools, as in Bhaarat schools are being opened every day? There are schools run by the Government that work and those that do not work, schools by charitable organizations some of which work very well. There are spectacular and lavish schools with facilities way beyond any student's needs. However, the unique thing about the N.E. is that it is an area full of insurgencies engineered by constant pressure from the missionaries. In the guise of education and health care they are robbing families of mental health and family happiness. The interesting thing is they are funded by foreign money but run by our own converted lot. Many of our bright Kerelites have been convinced to increase the flock for a proselytizing religion. Destabilization of the Nation seems to be acceptable even though it means cutting the very tree that they are sitting on. Most Bhaaratiyas seem oblivious to the ground realities of this area, as the News Papers do not say much. In fact many do not know about these seven N.E. states, their history or the Jana Jaatis that live there and their struggle against anti National elements that surround them. I had ample opportunity to interact with various groups and felt their pain. Living here in the West many times the Asian immigrant has experiences similar to the Jan Jaatis who have been disturbed by foreign religions totally unsuited to a country of unparalleled diversity, which was effectively and peacefully managed for the longest time in history. The religion of the people here is much like the Vedic (Hindus) who worshipped nature and did not have Mandirs. Over time, as the need to organize arose - a more formalized way to worship evolved. However, to disturb other faiths and ancestral customs has never been the Hindu way, so as long as possible people have been allowed to maintain their life styles. Now because of very destructive activities of the missionaries, efforts are underway to help the Jana Jaatis to protect themselves, while maintaining their culture. It is important to know, that people are converted at gunpoint—what kind of a religion does such a thing? So very often the workers of VK and others face danger to their lives. I know of youth that have been ambushed or killed simply for working in this area. The insurgencies are in every way a danger to India as destabilization of the country is the larger goal—engineered under the guise of bringing various kinds of help to these areas. Unchecked it can enable and facilitate a reoccupation of Bhaarat. If we read the writing of Europeans, Arabs, Turks and many others of the medieval period it will become clear how much India has been the desired destination for nearly all nations of the world. It is amazingly rich in so many ways even today. It is an astounding land that has been producing, for the whole world, both wealth and wisdom. Even at the present time India's ideas and systems of Ayurveda, Yoga, Science, Music, Dance etc. are influencing the World, especially the Western world towards gentleness and refinement. The citizens of India seem to know the value of their own nation far less than the outsiders. Many inimical powers await an opportunity for any weak links as we witnessed in case of the Kargil war recently. An ordinary person in the World may be ignorant about India but the interested groups have always kept a close eye on how much can be gained from Bhaarat. In fact all over Europe and USA there is great efforts underway to learn Samskrit and to fund research in ancient Hindu and Jain texts to find what they think of as secrets of India's survival and its long growth and prosperity, destroyed only after very cruel Jihads for nearly seven hundred years by Islam and two hundred years of robbing by the *Maayaavi* activities of Europeans! Of course we were not alone in this terrible and inhuman destruction—much of the ancient world met the same fate—only we Bhaaratiyaas, an indigenious people survived! Today

there is a palpable fear as to what will happen if India and China become as prosperous and friendly as they once were? Somehow it never occurs to the leaders of these nations to consider how we can come together to prosper as a Planet.

I also spent one week in Kashmir. I wanted to go to the Shankaracharya Mandir—for a culture that values Sarasvati more than even Lakshmi (in my opinion all Hindu homes and schools should add daily Lakshmi Poojan—so far we have never forgotten Sarasvati and she has blessed us throughout) it must be remembered that Kashmir is our Shaaradaa Peetha;

नमस्ते शारदा देवी, काश्मीरपुर वासिनी,
त्वामहं प्रार्थये नित्यं, विद्या दानं च दे ही मे

*namastē śāradādēvi kāśmīrapuravāsini
tvāmahaṁ prārthayē nityaṁ vidyādānaṅca dēhīmē*

(**Meaning:** Salutations to you, O Sharada, O Goddess, O one who resides in Kashmir. I pray to you every day, please give me the charity of knowledge.)

Visiting the two border areas of Bhaarat Maataa my thought was that, we are Raahu Grasta on one end and Ketu Grasta on the other end. One side is the result of Raakshasa buddhi while the other Maayaavi buddhi. Please think about our stories and see if you do not see the similarity? The stories of a Genius culture like ours, are not simply meaningless ideas put together to earn money—rather they are tools to teach about life skills, how to handle situations and people with a million different Svabhaavas (temperaments). The present day Hindu youth must know that they too will have to sacrifice like our ancestors who bequeathed us a free and proud Bhaarat!! There is no land more sacred or more compassionate than this Motherland or more deserving of our devotion.

The days I spent at the Indian Institute of advanced Study, Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla were a delight. The structure that houses this Institute is the old Vice Regal Lodge—reminded me of the somber buildings of Europe which to me always seem imposingly depressing. Fortunately, the Institute will be moving I was informed to a different location. My hope is it will be a building that reflects our happy attitude towards life—may be they will have some Bhaaratiya artwork like Pattchitra, Madhubani or any of our own kalaa decorating the walls while providing lively hoods for our traditional artists! Even the thought is enticing—is it not? This particular building is ideal for a museum that should tell our people about how we got the Colonizers out of our land. Many meetings between the British and the famous Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardaar Patel and scores of other patriots were held here. The grounds are gorgeous all 331 acres of it. Nearby there is Dufferinpur named by Lord and lady Dufferin, which has come to be known as Dufferpur (Fool town) now. Karma is also humorous at times. The conference was very enlightening and some of the younger speakers' showed great command on their subject matters. A truly learning and enriching experience.

For the first time in my life, I feel the energy of India resurfacing—it is to be seen in the eyes of the youth, in the smile of the ordinary folk (who are the backbone of any society) and of course in the confidence of the young entrepreneurs who have made us proud the world over. It is also visible in the comments and writing of those who plundered us—let us take this ENERGY and transform it into the life changing force that Bhaarat and Bhaarat alone can unleash in our world—for she alone understands the concept of *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*. To protect a family that infinite—much that is unpleasant will have to be dealt with and we better

be ready. In the thousand years past we lost huge areas to greedy and self-centered, non-Spiritual elements; now it is time to start gaining it back and establish Dharma once again.

Identities in a Multicultural World

In a world where ever larger populations are on the move from country to country identity becomes a very complex issue. Just fifty years ago it would have been unthinkable for people to be born in a small village in Europe and live in a large and fast changing metropolis like Bangalore, Bhaarat or the vice versa. In the present era this is commonplace, facilitated by easier and faster means of communication, travel, as well as global job opportunities. So the **issue of identity is a crisis for all that live away from countries of origin**; it seems in a different way the offsprings of the uprooted (many willingly) have identity issues too, which varies by ethnic groups.

It is well known that when moving, we take not only a few bags of things with us but also many habits, in fact this is how humans cross-fertilize cultures. Identities are tied to these habits that seem to form rather early in our lives and become ingrained; in one form or another these stay with us - all through the complicated journey of our existence on Earth. That must be the reason why Mom's food is the best tasting! Another significant add-on to this learning in early years is our religious ideas and concepts of *Bhagavaan* (God). These then become our core values forming our identities; when threatened they cause great disturbances to both the individual and to the world at large. In fact, two most sustaining habits from our beginnings seem to be food and God!

In the USA I have seen each religious identity become less tolerant, moving towards fundamentalism as opposed to India where each group moves towards less staunchness and more acceptance. I attribute this to a feeling of threat that comes from being in the presence of a strongly converting religion here in the West. Hindu Dharma on the other hand, has attempted to accommodate all traditions and thus is less threatening.

A Hindu-American living in North America, at first thinks that blending in a land of immigrants should be easy, especially one that also claims to be secular. Very soon though, one finds this to be not at all the case. Secularism to most Hindus means to be able to practice the religion of one's choice –often the one we were born into. We have no single Hindu authority controlling our religious life; nor are we told to accept anything unless it makes sense to us. In other words we are used to great freedom in the area of our relationship with our Maker, which is not the case for the people of aggressive traditions. So a world of religious fatwas, ex-communications and a host of other restrictions shock us. At the same time it creates a sense of awe towards the Hindu Tradition, which is so very open. Some of us feel very privileged to be born into such a system, where restrictions are social not religious! We just are not used to constant interference into our spiritual lives, nor are we used to seeing people denigrating other religions in the most uncivilized way. This is something Hindus rarely do and have very little tolerance for. Hearing highly ignorant, hurting and downright impolite comments about Hindu Dharma has made our Hindu identity become stronger, especially for those of us living abroad.

I have often wondered how our adopted country the USA will handle the future of a multicultural nation. Will we assimilate the non - European, non- White, legal immigrants and their US born children, belonging to various traditions - wisely into the larger mainstream? The present majority is Eurocentric in nature and the question of white superiority remains in the minds of some, though less obviously than before. On this process of assimilation depends the future of USA. Without creating a sense of security for the minorities we also will become a battleground like the Middle East and other parts where differences have not been harmonized well. Naturally, my mind thinks about Bhaarat, the other country and society I know equally well; how India has kept her even more diverse people together-- even during times of unbelievable stress seems marvelous. **We here in the West, must learn or eventually suffer greatly.**

My observations of the past thirty-seven years, is that in the USA this attempt at harmonizing will be more challenging. Whereas in India, the Vedic Sanaatan Hindu Dharma is itself an accommodating tradition; the religion of the majority in the USA belongs to the aggressive system -- making conflict resolution far more difficult. Now the conflict with Islam is on the rise making it even more complex.

Samuel P. Huntington in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations* writes about conflicts of the two religions of expansion:

“The causes of this ongoing pattern of conflict lie not in transitory phenomena such as twelfth-century Christian passion or twentieth-century Muslim fundamentalism. They flow from the nature of the two religions and the civilizations based on them”.

Further he says, *“From its origins Islam expanded by conquest and when the opportunity existed Christianity did also. The parallel concepts of “jihad” and “crusade” not only resemble each other but distinguish these two faiths from other major world religions. Islam and Christianity, along with Judaism, also have teleological views of history in contrast to the cyclical or static views prevalent in other civilizations”.*

Faced and threatened by such unaccommodating religious systems, plus the usual adjustment problems the first generation immigrant faces living in a different society -- the Hindu-American identity is trying to become stronger. Aggression begets fear, which leads to insecurity and a strong desire to protect. These repeated assaults by evangelical groups with in the USA and by missionaries in Bhaarat (reasons for insurgencies in many areas) has done much to offend the Hindu psyche. Hence, the tradition of accommodation among the Hindus is weakening both outside and inside Bhaarat. There is, however, a very positive effect too – the desire to learn about the tradition of birth by the young and the old. This is particularly good for **Hindu Dharma as we are a teaching tradition with a great regard for debate on ontological (nature of being) issues.** Superiority is to be won by debate among the Knowledgeable as it did for centuries in the past. Can that be revived in today’s world?

Even so, the Hindus everywhere are faced with a great dilemma. First and foremost, we have been brought up to respect other faiths and see them as equal in importance to the respective communities. We like several other traditions, are not a proselytizing religion. We also tend to confuse Dharma with Religion, which is incorrect. Only the faiths born on Bhaarat Bhoomi are Dharma based, the others have no word equivalent to Dharma and we have nothing comparable to the word RELIGION; **incorrectly we use Dharma for religion!** So we must correct our understanding through study and then refer to the traditions of the world appropriately. We are the Dharmas of Bhaarat (namely Sanaatan Vedic Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Bhouddha Dharmas). **Religions were born on the soil of the Middle East.** The confusion about the terminology stems from ignorance of Hindus about their own tradition. This - the greatest learning tradition in Human History, was forced to stop the teaching for nearly Eight Hundred years! How else would those who wanted control of lands and riches belonging to others achieve their motives of domination? Fortunately, this Spiritual tradition has been maintained well through immense sacrifice by those who understood its value and now is reemerging to ennoble the human mind, once again.

In the United States of America until the last couple of years, India was usually mentioned only for bride burnings, holy cows and Caste system. Mid- nineties saw people of Indian origins flooding the Information Technology revolution in Silicon Valley first, and then other parts of the world. This and the new booming economy of Bhaarat have changed this attitude

somewhat. Even so, neglect of India and its great contributions to the world as well as to the North American life continue. The ridicule of Hindu Dharma now is coming out of even prestigious institutions like Harvard and University of Chicago. The term South Asian is part of this move by the conservatives who fear the Hindus most as they are losing their “Flock” to the simple and benefiting Aarsha Vidya (Knowledge given by the seers and sages) of Yoga, Meditation, classical dance and music.

India is the country of greatest influences on almost all major nations of the world-- without ever colonizing destructively – this bothers many a Westerner to no end. To any keen observer of the Western world, who also is well versed in the Hindu Tradition, these influences are obviously taking hold of people’s imaginations here as of now. **Regrettably, the attitudes of plunder and possess, which has prevailed in these societies, rather than learn and share continues to exist.** However, ordinary folk are willing to explore anything and everything and in time noble ideas will come to hold their own. An obstacle to be overcome is that-Hindu Dharma is seen as having ethnic connections to India only, so people that follow its teachings distance themselves from it outwardly. Little is known about the influence of India all over what is referred to as South Asia by a culture that stops at Rome and Greece as its roots --- but there was a vibrant world, perhaps much nicer to live in before the advent of religions of war!

The Hindu identity is unique because the Dharma is based on a non-commercial Spirituality, having concepts of Karma to make an individual responsible, not fatalistic – the foundations of Hindu Samskriti are strong and designed to perpetuate unity and harmony within societies. Hindu identity is a privilege that stabilizes us through the worst of times and we must claim it. South Asian we may be, for those that do not want to give us credit for our immense contributions since ancient times. In bringing up children outside India, the best thing to do is to give them a strong Hindu value system, a sense of family and wisdom to handle situations by having a Prasaad Buddhi(an attitude of acceptance after all effort has been made) that stays balanced no matter what life brings. The achievements of the Bhaaratiya Diaspora owe much to these ingrained qualities that have stayed with immigrants and so far with the children. I pray that it will hold for many generations to come and also impact the adopted land and its other citizens positively. Bringing up children in the present day USA is super difficult as most families are not structured for stability –a much needed attribute for healthy humanity! **Children of Indian origins are bright because of a value system that teaches to accommodate.** Bhaarat is stable, giving sanctuary to displaced and persecuted people from all over because of a Hindu identity not simply South Asian. In Bhaarat a *Jaagriti* has begun and our Spiritual Heritage will help all Humankind as it always has been doing.

Shubhamastu!

The Spiritual Context of Human Rights

This time I want to share a very unique experience that I had recently, which relates to the issue of human rights to a certain extent. All over the US, institutes for healing racism have sprung up in the past few years. The one in our town of Grand Rapids, Michigan, invited me to attend two full days of a workshop on the subject. Generally schools, corporations and other organizations pay to send their employees so they are better equipped to handle the increasing diversity in the population of the USA. Arguably, India may be the only country more diverse than this nation on planet Earth as of now!

It is very interesting to study how India has dealt with its diversity as compared to what we are doing in the USA now. Whereas in Bhaarat diversity was accepted in a spiritual context as a natural phenomenon—part of Bhagavaan’s creation, in the West it has not been so. The United States feels a heavy burden of its history of discrimination during the past couple of centuries. First, the Native American was killed in large numbers, and many treaties were broken to usurp the land that for thousands of years had been home to these groups. The natives had even helped the Europeans to survive in early years. Ownership of land was not a well-entrenched idea in much of the indigenous cultures of the world in pre-Christian/Islamic days. In fact, the study of the manner in which the West (the western part of the present-day USA) was conquered reveals the extreme suffering of the native population, which continues to this day. There is complete segregation among these people living on reservations and the mainstream. The other, and perhaps more pressing issue, is the fact of slavery of the black people who were bought, sold, beaten and literally treated in the most inhumane way for a very long time. These blacks are ten to fifteen percent of the total population and have contributed heavily to the construction of the new country, i.e. in its European Avataara. So while the natives got totally marginalized to the point of being called the invisible minority today, the blacks were plucked from their native lands against their wishes and then treated cruelly within the new land. Then there is the question of the Mexicans. Unlike North America, South and Central America saw the Spanish conquistador vanquish the land from the original owners. It seems the white Spaniard males took many native women as they wished, producing a race called Hispanic, that then was discriminated against and still is to this day! How can a white father not accept his own child who is less white, because of the father’s action is mind-boggling? All children of European and non-European mixture were unacceptable to the white Europeans. Even today in deciding who is a minority those rules apply—if there is any non-white blood then they can be a minority! Amazingly, they were accepted among the non-white communities with far less objections. The more one knows about the human race the less humane it seems!

Discrimination on the basis of color seems to be a particularly European and even more strongly a northern European problem. It seems that after the colonies (USA) gained freedom from the British, every group of immigrants coming in faced some discrimination, namely the Irish, Italian, Japanese, Indian and Chinese. The strange thing is that the whites themselves brought each of these groups in to work the tobacco fields, cotton fields, to lay the railroad and generally build a country with a good infrastructure. The **superior** white race was not able to do the hard and dangerous work that was necessary to build the country that we have today. As I have learned more and more, I am stunned at our (human race) ability to be cruel. All along we have been told and even now are told by many, that people of Africa, India, and many of the islands that Europeans took over, are basically lazy people and fell to bad times because of this trait. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Even today in this so-called enlightened age very few realize this fact. I think in India there is even less awareness of such facts among the

general population than here in the USA. It is always the immigrant, usually also a minority, that worked hard to make a nation along with the majority, who gets faulted for being lazy.

The two-day workshop which involved some thirty persons of mixed backgrounds talked of all this and also emphasized the facts through three movies, one of which was so painful I had to leave for a while to get hold of myself. We were also asked to do some exercises to look into our own biases and to experience the truth via answers to certain questions. In one exercise all of us lined up holding hands and then were asked to take one step forward each time our answer was a “yes.” At the conclusion, the whites were way ahead; I was ahead of the blacks but well behind the whites and by myself. This was a way to have the white community realize how privileged they have been and continue to be, and how the other non-whites are still struggling to catch up. One fact of great importance to naturalized citizens, completely unknown to me, was that there is a precedent of stripping people of citizenship. A person of Japanese origins tried to get US citizenship and denied even though he was white or whiter than many of the Europeans. The Supreme Court declared that only white and Caucasians could be given citizenship. Then a person of Indian origins who rightly claimed his Caucasian-ness was given citizenship that was later rescinded. This was Shree Bhagat Singh Thind. He had a wife and two children but committed suicide after losing citizenship. In this two day workshop I learned how the Supreme Court of this land systematically and over and over again ruled to favor the white Europeans preferably from northern Europe. Very disillusioning, as I myself am a naturalized citizen of the USA and have generally tried to be proud of and fair towards my adopted country.

As an Indo-American Hindu I have been thinking about how all this fits into my own thinking. Is there a contribution to be made by us Hindus? Our own society has been blamed for treating certain sections badly too. After much study I find it very difficult to find the truth of why and when abuses began in a particular society. However, one thing does stand out from the pages of history after a great deal of reading between the lines. Europe was not a peaceful land ever and the cold northern areas had very harsh living conditions with constant shortages of food to contend with. The deserts of the Middle East too offered harsh and uncompromising conditions. In contrast, Bhaaratvarsha and much of what is called South Asia today, were (are) lush with abundant crops and flowing rivers. This geographical difference itself created a great disparity between the regions of the world. This combined with the spiritual Vedic culture, honestly looking to understand the Jagat (World) and the relationship of the Jiva (individual) within it, made for a land which charmed any and every person coming into contact with it. Perhaps the abundance of Mother Nature allowed our people to be compassionate and use their energy to explore deeply the meaning of life! India was the fabled land of wealth and wisdom and the “have-nots” wanted all she would have shared gladly. Alas! They knew only to plunder—no immigration policies were in place like we have in the modern world. With the help of aggressive religions these people gave themselves license to kill mercilessly and plunder in every way imaginable. Arabs, Turks, Central Asians followed by seemingly benign, but far craftier people of Europe, ground rich Asia to abject poverty. If we read carefully it is obvious that the world that existed before the two warring religions, almost came to an end. Certain parts like China and Russia responded with calling themselves atheists and opted for communism. India, ever a survivor and compassionate gave refuge to the persecuted people from all over, but in the process became very, very poor—both in monetary terms and in education of her people. The loss of education has been a greater loss to us—a culture that sees knowledge as the supreme “*lakshaya*” (goal) of a human being.

As of now Asia, especially India and China are still trying to undo those years of ravage. The West and much of the Arab lands became rich by unscrupulous plunder legitimized by a brand of religion that seems to go against the true teaching of their own prophets. ***The West has begun to feel the guilt that comes naturally to human beings. Humans are spiritual beings and have an innate sense of fairness. With our free will we can transgress but not eliminate our sense of connectedness and justice.*** In the workshop for Healing Racism this pain was obvious. The plundered hurts but so do those that plunder. The pain also continues for the future generations, long after the ancestors are gone!

As an Asian and a Hindu I see several things in this experience of pain. The play of the Law of Karma is obvious to those that understand the workings of the Kaarmik cycles. The only way to make some sense of all that goes on inside and outside the mind of the Homo sapiens. The mixture of races living all over the world is largely a work of the European colonizers; at least in the present times! ***It has to be a play of Karma that the world should become diverse by the actions of those that hated anyone different in color or religion or culture.*** The good deeds and the bad deeds both do get visited on the children and cause havoc with their mental states (obvious in the amount of Prozac prescribed in the USA). My Hindu mind wants to forgive all concerned, even though not only the evangelists but also Harvard professors are still denigrating the Hindus here, maybe more vehemently now, as traditional hold of their religions are collapsing. I am also fully convinced that only the thinking of Sanaatan Dharma can give any relief. ***They fear that Hindu Dharma can swallow all other religions; they do not understand that it does not swallow at all rather it gives everything and every tradition a place to live in harmony with a myriad differences within a healthy, harmonized whole.***

What Makes Us Unique?

Recently I received a book written by Shree Sandipan Deb entitled, *The IITians*, the story of a remarkable Indian institution and how its alumni are reshaping the world. My husband was among the third batch from IIT Kharagpur to graduate in civil engineering. Reading the book he seems to have done most of the typical things that IITians have done—coming for a Masters and PhD here to the USA, going back and working in Bhaarat for a few years and then returning to find more satisfying work conditions and eventually success here in the US.

In his case the subject of his PhD, environmental engineering, itself contributed to his return to the USA, as in India of the 1960s though badly needed, we did not have the luxury to think about the environment. Bhaaratvarsha had been left in shambles by the colonizing era preceded by the Islamic and Portuguese crusades; our immediate need was food, shelter and to secure our borders. Imagine the Indo-Gangtiatic plains not being able to provide food for a mere 350 million under the able governance of the Europeans, which under the so called mismanagement of the Hindus has been able to feed over a billion and even export food grains!

This story repeats itself in many fields; the IIT story is certainly one such important story. What is pertinent here is that these IITs were set up in the days of a terribly traumatized country—post partitioned India; not the best time to envision anything great, let alone such amazing educational institutions that one day would be instrumental in letting much pride return to us. Jawaharlal Nehru who is credited with much that seems disturbing in hindsight did help start these institutions back then ; that may allow us to forgive his other oversights towards the *Maatri-Bhoomi!*

Within India as well as outside, often persons of Indian origins are seen criticizing things Indian, including the educational system. ***Yet, in my three and a half decades of living in the USA I have never met a student who came from an ordinary school in India, some even from the notoriously neglected government schools, who did not do quite well here; many have done exceptionally well.*** However, no one in India ever knows or thinks about this—at least not to seriously look into what factors are responsible for this unusual success. It is my hope, nay ardent prayer, that Shree Deb's book prompts us to engage in such a study. We need to remind the Muslims, the Christians, as well as all Hindu-hating people that they benefit in various countries of the world because of their Indian-ness. ***Perhaps the term Hindutva needs to be replaced by words like Bhaaratiyapan or Bhartiyaata. That Bhartiyaata is very much a part of all who belong to the akhanda (undivided) Bhaarata; it spills over to much of Asia where Indian ideas reigned for millennia and continue to guide the common person's life even today.*** It is my belief that the ordinary citizens of the whole subcontinent of Bhaaratvarsha have a certain understanding of fairness and understanding akin to the concepts of Dharma. This innate understanding needs to be encouraged and allowed to manifest. Leaders who are largely power hungry and seeking to take advantage of people's ignorance are definitely an obstacle. Hence the constant and now growing struggle. Terrorism is entirely generated by the leadership and victimizes ordinary people; they suffer, lose children and property while the leaders escape to other countries after making the place left behind uninhabitable.

Another study I came across last year of Hindu and Muslim children in England, done by the British government, claims that Muslim children from Pakistan do not do anywhere near as well as Muslim children from Bangladesh, who in turn do not do as well as Muslim children from India, while Hindu children do outstandingly well in schools within England.

This phenomenon needs further study to understand the cause of this difference, so we can actually be helpful to more students! We need to begin to improve things for more persons and not simply gather some fleeting happiness from such reports while the study goes to the dustbin! Our problem has been in the past, is at the present and will continue to be until corrected, the total lack of self-respect among people of India specially the Hindus. Maybe the insistence on humility in the Indian, especially Hindu, culture has been misinterpreted. ***It is Ahamkaar (ego based pride) that need not be encouraged but Svaabhimaan (a benign self-respect) is a must to accomplish anything.*** We are too ready to take on blame and give up defending ourselves. The idea of Ahimsa has been carried too far—perhaps under the influence of Jaina and Bouddha dharma. No society can live without someone protecting it— So far Hindus, being somewhat more practical as compared to the absolute Ahimsa people have fulfilled the role of protecting. ***Not to fight for one's home and one's culture and let someone else do so is a kind of Himsa in fact.*** Protection means to protect not only life but ways of living, thinking, and a multitude of other cultural forms unique to a people who live together for very long time, thus forming a particular *Sabhyataa* (civilization). In the present information age it is the independent thinking that can be under attack because we are being bombarded by so much information which is not in any way wisdom. To detangle we need our own thinking unpolluted by the thinking of others - now a job harder than before. I am not against the present information age but like all else we need to adapt to it while keeping our individuality.

The recent demographic numbers show Hindus and Sikhs not growing nearly as fast as the Muslims and Christians in India. This on top of what has been lost earlier to forced and manipulated conversion through various types of atrocities that the Indians have been subject to often on their own soil. As I look at it we have lost a huge chunk of land as well as people who followed Sanaatan Dharma. These visionaries had built an enormous and sustaining culture; one that benefited all humans. Most Muslims in India are converted Hindus, like the Bhattas of Kashmir. Most of the Islamic population of Pakistan and Bangladesh is also mostly offsprings of Hindus. Of course, the Sikhs are directly related, the oldest son given by Hindus to protect Hindus against Aurangzeb and other butchers that the proselytizing religions keep producing steadily from time to time. ***In fact Sikh Dharma was an attempt by the gurus to return to the ancient and far more life affirming concepts of the Vedic times. Ignorance of our heritage means more harm keeps coming to us while Humanity loses the chance to know about a system, tried and true that can accommodate all the diversity that we know and some more.***

If we analyze the roots of our exceptional success in other countries, we find our value system, ability to hold our family together, our worldview and our understanding of Bhagavaan (GOD) as the foundations. The Almighty gives intelligence, beauty and many talents to the Maanava Jaati (Human species) along with free will. It is that one factor which is in our hands—the field of “human free will,” where a difference in cultures occurs. It is my conviction that there need not be a clash of civilizations; in fact in the hands of enlightened spiritual leadership, an impending clash can be altered to ***create a harmonious Maanava Dharma. This opportunity will have to come from Bhaarat alone, because only there the idea of harmony still survives. The ideas of Hindu Dharma have the ingredients of how to get along and why we need to get along in the greatest of diversity.*** The Western religions have produced a mindset that produces more and more conflict—within family, society and finally the world. This is obvious in the amount of litigation that occurs here, in the divorce rate that is crossing the 60% mark, in youth on drugs and adults on antidepressants which in turn make some suicidal. Not a good scenario for us here in the West. So even though the West has produced much material wealth we here are not to be emulated blindly. The IITs set up the institutes on the lines of

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) but made many changes. That model should be applied to whatever we do in India. Our needs, our worldview, our mental needs all differ from the people of the West—we are all of the human race but not all the same; like even birds are in the species of birds but a *koyal* is not the same as a bluebird or a crow or a swan. Adaptation must be in accordance to what is possible given the differences within a species.

For a true Hindu renaissance the small cultural forms matter as much as the bigger things. Take English for example, we do very well with it just as we have done with cricket, both an outside import but it must not replace our own languages or games. Even ways of greeting, thanking, dressing and showing respect matter. After all, any renaissance must be accompanied by pride in our own Samskriti and all that goes with it. In traveling to Japan I found they retain their language and demand that airports and other public places put signs in Japanese. This never happens to Hindi our national language because we manage well with English; truth is only a small percentage of us in India use this language comfortably; the rest no one worries about. Why so? India is the second largest in population, fourth largest economy and seventh largest country among 200 plus countries of the world. We have to let go of our own small regional bickering and go for our own culture. On my recent trip to London and Belgium, I noticed no signs in English in any city of Belgium, only a distance of 2-1/2 hours by Euro-star! We have accommodated others and continue to do so to the extent of our own annihilation. When we only know names of flowers and birds and trees in English, the less accommodating take control and tell us we did not even have a name for these things so they could not have existed. Then tell us how the Europeans brought everything to India! Usually we are stumped, because even though we have words, our ancestors studied much in detail, we do not know. Without our own language we will be finished. What language you ask? We have already functioned with fifteen or eighteen languages and innumerable dialects; through our worst times so I see no problem. *Shuddha* Hindi being very close to Samskritam should be our main language of communication within Bhaarat but all other languages must live on maintained by the communities of speakers -- 3 language formula is great for a great country (*Raashtra Bhaashaa*, Samskrit/Hindi, *Raajya Bhaashaa* of each state and one *Videshi Bhaashaa* which can stay as English for now). In fact it is so already. We need not put signs in all 17 languages!

Bollywood has become many things for the Indians—a sort of unofficial ambassador for the cultural mores in many countries. The Diaspora living outside connects with the mother culture through the medium of movies and television. It is quite amazing what all the children pick up, more now than 30 years ago as much more is available. Hence entertainment programs based on our kind of fun and thinking hold great value for perpetuating the *Dharmik* point of views. So when Bollywood changes to copy Hollywood without Indianizing the themes, it causes damage to a very large section of people who may not go more than twice to the country of origins in their whole lifetime.

Let us never forget that the Hindu culture is of the greatest, most benevolent and lasting influence the world has ever seen and it is being adopted by many enlightened persons all over the world right now too. In the land of its origins it must get stronger and we must all work together to allow the Human race to benefit from it!

Recently I heard that according to UNESCO, out of 46 ancient cultures only one survives--- The Hindu culture. This makes it our responsibility to spread the understanding of *Dharma*.

What Went Wrong?

From across the oceans at times, I am baffled at what happens in Hindustaan! My heart loves that land to the utmost, my rational side wonders at what really went wrong and how long will it take to fix the Hindu psyche?

There are so many people all over this planet of ours, waiting for the great country of Bhaarat to rise once again. Major institutes within the USA are studying India to unravel her genius of staying alive through so much, for so long. The Cato Institute and the Brookings Institution are two that I know of, there are many others. Germans are studying Samskrit, British children and some in US too are learning to chant and sing Kirtans. They know the immense value of our culture whereas we, protected by it, know almost nothing and are thus happy in our oblivion.

Hindu saints like Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Amritaanandamayi maa, Swami Chinmayaanandaji, Swami Dayananda Saraswati ji, and so many more are revered by millions in the world. The West is flocking to Hindu traditions more and more every day; yet in India, somehow a most respected sanyaasi, His Holiness Shree Jayandra Saraswati ji of Kanchi Peetha has been arrested; Shocking beyond expression!

As a Hindu, as an American, I subscribe to the supremacy of the Law of the Land and its application equally to all citizens. However, nowhere in the whole world is this more skewed than in India at the present time. India is the only country in the world that does not seem to care for its majority. It is obsessed with the minority issues in a very sick and humiliating way. In the final analysis, the desire to keep everyone happy produces more unhappiness on all fronts. In any other decent country, if a need arose to arrest a person of Shree Jayandra Saraswati ji's stature, a certain decorum would have been maintained. It would be easy to request a house arrest during the time of the investigation. There is hardly any danger of a person of his fame of actually running away like a common criminal. Absolutely no sanctity should have been broken and he should have been allowed to continue the lifestyle of a Sannyasi, which is not possible in a common jail! This could have been done in accordance with the law—as in legality and in accordance with the law of decency—as in Humanity.

Now there is a tremendous controversy as to the truth of the matter. This is a great example of an adharmic society that has been fostered on us Hindus by religious competition of the last 2,000 years, which we have fallen prey to. Considering that only the religions of Bhaarat even know about Dharma—though weakly at present. Hindus must make a big deal of this incident and bring about a jaagriti of issues pertaining to Hindu society. Bhagavaan gives opportunities even in painful situations but a human being has free will to use or not use the opportunity!

Many also see the hidden hand of outside political and religious organizations in this most unfortunate incident. Sitting in this mighty country of the Western civilization (USA), my intuition says that such a possibility exists. As we well know that there have been many scandals in the Catholic Church regarding sexual harassment of young boys, which have resulted in several churches going bankrupt and causing great embarrassment for the authorities and followers. As in the days of Colonization of the world; many shortcomings of the European culture were seen to exist in other systems too because of frustration with their own countries.

Corporate America also has faced much financial scandals in the last couple of years that brought the country to the edge of a financial depression. They have disturbed the ordinary

citizen of this country quite badly. This when seen in connection with the Pope's stated desire to harvest more souls in Asia, especially India, makes a strong case for foreign interference. This announcement by the Pope was made on Deepaavali day while he was a state guest of the government of India (imagine a guest acting in this uncivilized a manner). Now the arrest of a Hindu holy person of great importance too was made right around Deepaavali. Having a Roman Catholic as a powerful force in the government of India surely does not help matters of this nature at all.

The question that arises is, are the Hindus, who are recognized as amazingly smart all over the world, too stupid to see what is happening? ***Can the Hindus not revolt big time? Change needs to come and often it brings much discomfort with it; so does living all the time as a victim.*** Hindus have lived worse than a victimized minority now for a very long time—in their own homeland. With demographic wars by the Muslims and conversion wars by Christians we simply will not survive in the coming years if we do not strongly begin to claim our land, our culture and finally our security. Has the muddled understanding of Advaita Vedanta made us so very weak? A recent article by Sri Ravi Shankar also refers to this improper understanding of the Shaastra (sacred literature) by Hindus. For those that are familiar with the teaching, the Shaastra itself cautions against giving the knowledge to the ones unable to handle the depth. Is our survival as well as our terrible and ongoing suffering both based on an inaccurate perception of our Hindu Dharma? Sanaatan Dharma is closer to quantum physics than other socio-political aggressive religions known to the world. Hence, a proper understanding can be cause for rising to the top as India was for thousands of years, or it can become a reason for the fall of a nation as seems to be the case in the last three centuries. **As teaching declined so did our grasp of the core values, reason for their existence!**

The revered Shankaracharya's arrest is not an isolated incident but a symptom of a far greater disease that is eating up the Hindu society. Vedic seers produced a wonderfully cohesive, relatively peaceful society through the proper understanding of human needs and differences and thus enveloped it all in spirituality. Our youth are brighter than ever before—and we also have more of them (India has the youngest population of all nations). It is our duty as Hindus to save ourselves and our precious Samskriti, so the world can learn to live with diversity harmoniously. ***The world is diverse and will remain diverse. Bhagavaan is infinite—infinite diversity is the true celebration of God, understanding the immense multiplicity emanating from one single source and finding our way to contribute, is the purpose of a human life.*** Only those who do not understand this fact keep forcing us to be uniform—it is anti-God if we look into it. We need our teachers of Vedanta to make this clear to all. Shree Jayendra Sarasvati ji is one such teacher!

Let us protect in every way this precious culture so it can enlighten the world where we must know how to enjoy the differences to live a peaceful life.

Ancient, yet young and vibrant!

In this infinite manifestation called Jagat (Universe), there are infinite opportunities coming our way at all times. Yet there are special times for an individual, a community even a Nation. For Hindusthaan such a time is this century. There are many signs if only we stop and look. So let us look and having looked, let us act together to usher in the best time yet for Humanity.

The Hindus are well qualified to lead the World into a more ethical and honest era. We, the Hindus, have been around continuously, maintaining the essence of our traditions, in spite of the cruelest invasions into our lands. While most of the other ancient traditions nearly vanished under the horrible advance of the two expanding socio political systems somehow called religions, the Hindus kept going. When Hindus act through conviction and a thorough understanding of Sanaatan Dharma, much help from all sides will pour in – the world is tired of Jihaads and Crusades, religious terrorism and constant destruction that only harm the ordinary citizen in each country. In other words it is the perfect time for Hindus to provide a ***Spiritual leadership that has been the destiny of Bhaarat Maataa forever. That is why we are still here!***

Bhaarat has a young population, i.e. the largest number of youth lives in India today! I have read that almost five hundred and fifty million Bhaaratiyas may fall into the group of under twenty-five years of age. This is no small advantage at a time when most Western countries are faced with less and less youth in their populations. Even China faces an aging populace as does Japan. No one can usher in a monumental change as well as the young. And that is not all; it has been proven beyond a doubt, that this Bhaartiya youth is super bright. Village youth seem to be equally intelligent and possess more practical experience of life. They have stayed closer to our original Vedic Samskriti; which as we know, produced a phenomenal country that was the envy of the whole world. I want to share two quotes with the readers that reflect why so many came to Hindusthaan ---- the land of the Hindus; and why most stayed on to become part of the larger fabric of the Hindu ethos. This assimilation was possible because of the Hindu understanding of the Almighty as an all pervading Energy. We know that this Energy can be invoked through prayers, with in this conscious, intelligent Creation and it can be called upon for help in innumerable ways.

The following quote demonstrates the level of honesty that was common in Hindu India and its effect upon India's prosperity. This is in sharp contrast to what we have been made to believe about ourselves.

“The Indians are naturally inclined to justice, and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are well known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side; hence the country is flourishing and their condition prosperous. Among other characteristic marks of their love of truth and horror of vice, the following is related: -When a man has a right to demand anything of another, and he happens to meet him, he has only to draw a circular line upon the ground and to make his debtor enter it, which the latter never fails to do, and the debtor cannot leave this circle without satisfying his creditor, or obtaining the remission of the debt.” (See NOTE at end of article).

This particular movement from honesty to dishonesty is repeated over and over again in the history of all colonized areas of the world! African tribes, Native Americans here in North America, in South America, Mexico and most others who were subjugated by the White Man were far more honest, compassionate and straightforward before contact with the Europeans

and Islam. So what do we gather from this? It would be wrong to conclude that all White Races or all Muslims are born that way. But certainly Christianity and Islam did something to these people! May be human greed and cruelty found a fertile ground when humanity learnt to bring God along in their expansionist goals! The abject poverty that these indigenous and easy going people were reduced to in the wake of the armies of those who wanted to spread their version of God was certainly a contributing factor too. We know how the best among humans can be made to break with their own traditions, often more compassionate and rational than the one being enforced, in order to survive. ***These so called superior races and religions taught the ones they wanted to subjugate to hate the cultures of their ancestors.*** The more I read the harder it became to connect to the good in everything as I had been taught—a rather painful conclusion for a Hindu. It became nearly impossible to think of the Human race as the crown of creation; while continuing to read the painful literature from around the world, increasingly written in English by those that were made to keep quiet during the times of subjugation of many races by aggression of centuries.

The second quote I want to share is one from a book that to this day is used in colleges and Universities here in the USA. It is available and should be read by all Indians. Some say that the book has been refuted but obviously that means nothing if people are still studying it as a text book! It has a section on India and China.

Hegel, a writer of German origins wrote the following, in his book—the Philosophy of History: ***“The people of India have achieved no foreign conquests, but have been on every occasion vanquished themselves. And as in this silent way, Northern India has been a center of emigration, productive of merely physical diffusion.”***

So our not occupying the land belonging to other people and instead, letting them settle in Bhaaratvarsha and assimilate is seen by Hegel’s European mind as a trait to be despised! Please note that we are continuing to let people into the country of Hindusthaan even today. Tibet is with China, many Tibetans are with us in India. The Dalai Lama has been a guest for more than fifty years. I will not mention Bangladeshis, Afghans, and Pakistanis who are not guests but infiltrators that no one seems to worry about; while they live freely and change the demographics of our noble land. Hegel goes on:

“India as a Land of Desire forms an essential element in General history.... From the most ancient times downwards, all nations have directed their wishes and longings to gain access to the treasures of this land of marvels, the most costly which the earth presents; treasures of nature –pearls, diamonds, perfumes, rose –essences, lions, etc. as also treasures of wisdom. The ways by which these treasures have passed to the West, has at all times been a matter of World-historical importance, bound up with the fate of nations. Those wishes have been realized; this Land of Desire has been attained; there is scarcely any great nation of the East, nor of the Modern European West, has that not gained for itself a smaller or a larger portion of it.”

When I first read this a few years ago I was stunned. It felt like Bhaarat Maataa was being taken piece by piece, right in front of us –her children. I knew my people and my land had been plundered but to what extent became clear only when I embarked on a study of literature that clearly tells all this. The plunder continues now in the form of Copyrights and Patents of Traditional Knowledge Systems of which India has the most. As I read and learnt more, I began to lose my ability to see only the good as Hindus are told to do! Since then I struggle to regain this ability to maintain a balanced view. Through much contemplation and rereading of our Shaastra, I have been able to regain at least some sense of objectivity. Perhaps the blame lies

squarely with the so called leaders and systems that we have allowed to grow to such an extent that no one remains to look after the welfare of the general public. In this scenario, everyone is a victim, either from within the system or from outside the system; the later seem to suffer the worst though the ones with in are not spared. ***In fact the majority of humanity does not even see how they are being deprived of peace and sanity while the leaders continue to plunder from others, thus producing a world that is divided and hurting.***

So what we are fighting is not the Christian or Muslim or any other religion per say; we are struggling against those who want to retain power structures for their own misguided and totally self-centered goals. Such people do not understand that true happiness is a collective issue. ***They have not heard of, “The Whole Universe is a Family” (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam).*** In the field of science once again (Bhaarat Knew it for a very long time) the Quantum Physicists know that every thought moves the whole Creation! Recently a movie called, “What the Bleep is it?” was shown in regular cinema theaters in the USA. Most of the cast is MDs and PhDs including the Indo –American author of “The Self- Aware Universe” Dr. Amit Goswami. It is Advait Vedanta presented in a movie form. ***They actually alluded to the fact that God is not what has been thought by the Judeo/Christian/Islamic traditions. A big step for a country that is over all trying to stay conservative.***

The only way this scenario in the world today will change is by ordinary citizens networking to create a viable opposition to aggression by one race or religion through self-centered leaders. The youth can accomplish this – ***Hindu youth will have to lead.*** We, the Hindus and other traditions arising out of the land mass called Hindusthaan along with the above mentioned Quantum physicists will have to pull the world out of the mess of the last two thousand years. This realization along with the anti -Hindu political situation in India at the present time makes me want to caution every citizen about the sweet talking manipulation of the power hungry both inside and outside of Bhaarat. More often than not Hindus get taken in by sweet talk and are ever ready to reconcile. However, a wise culture must give a lot of thought before accepting the word of those who by *Svabhaava* and actions have become “*vidrohis*”(against) of all Human values. Our work has to be to coordinate with all Hindus to have a common and clear goal. The Vedic Sanaatan Hindu Dharma has been the repository of human wisdom from time immemorial, so the role that Bhaarat has to play is, of a ***Jagat Guru.***

To achieve this goal Hindus need to become confident and outspoken as a group. Now we are not under any foreign power, we are militarily and economically much stronger, the Bhaartiya Diaspora in nearly 150 countries of this world, are proud of their culture and materially very successful. The only thing missing for the Hindus, especially in India is to become more proud and knowledgeable about them -selves. Since the aim of Hindu Dharma was not proselytizing but to help individuals attain peace in this ever changing world, the common person with in India is still very good and fair. (I am not talking of the politicians or the pseudo secular elite etc.). Many newer, top level Indian business houses reflect the concept of Dharma once again in their work ethics.

Surprisingly, this concept of Dharma can be found in many non-Hindus within India, but outside of Bhaarat the word Dharma is just beginning to be known. The increasing contact of the West with the East has been good for each side in some ways. The idea of Dharma/Karma/Duty/Family has been a strong contribution of the people of the East, especially Hindus to, all places where they live and work now. In turn certain organizational skills and work ethics have been learnt by the emigrating Easterners. People of Indian origins are also coming to be known as some of the best workers who are contributing towards the

economies of the countries of adoption. The next generation of these immigrants are bright and confident and well versed in both Eastern and Western systems.

Hindu society, with in India however continues to be still less aware of dangers to itself and has forgotten to react strongly to denigration of their own religion and culture. Herein, lies our greatest weakness! ***Our Samskriti has protected us so very well that we have come to feel too secure about our culture.*** Sanaatan Dharma cannot die is true because the laws enshrined in this tradition are natural laws like the law of gravitation. Natural laws continue to exist in a manifest world; but what about Hindu society? A society can be destroyed. Without Hindu society the foundation on which all this wisdom can be taught can be destroyed! So not only do Hindus need to continue to exist, we need to get stronger and far more outspoken about our views on life and society. ***The best way to get strong is to know our Samskriti –accepted by most of the world as the wisest yet produced. May be infusion of some Western strengths can make an already rich tradition richer. I must caution that in spiritual terms the West remains a third world,*** so we need not incorporate anything in this area; but in getting the world to acknowledge - what even the Western scientist have come to understand, we can use the marketing and organizing skills of the western people.

The resurgence of economic success of Bharat is giving us visibility and **our duty to be the Jagat Guru must be fulfilled. We are a duty bound culture after all.** Here we need a Hindu think tank that deliberates what steps should be taken to fill the Spiritual void created by the predominance of organized religion that has created a world of hate and violence. If we, Hindus do not fulfill our duty to bring in our wisdom that alone can keep a multi-cultural, multi –ethnic and multi –religious world going then who will be to blame?

As I said in the beginning, the time is right and an all our efforts to expand the sphere of our Dharmik influence must be made through our super intelligent youth.

Shubhamastu!

NOTES (found at www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala)

Nuzhatu-l Mushtak of Al-Idrisi (b. in Ceuta, Morocco at the end of the 11th century) In *The History of India as Told by its own Historians. The Posthumous Papers of the Late Sir H. M. Elliot.* John Dowson, ed. 1st ed. 1867. 2nd ed., Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1956, vol. 10, pp.104-129.

1. Overview

The full title of this work is *Nuzhatu-l Mushtak fi Ikhtiraku-l Afak*, “The Delight of those who seek to wander through the regions of the world”. It is an account of the known world as of the eleventh century. There are two manuscripts in the text in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. An abridged Arabic version of the text was published in Rome in 1592, and a Latin translation of the text was published in Paris in 1619, entitled *Geographia Nubiensis, id est accuratissima orbis in septem climata divisi descriptio continens, praesertim exactam universae Asiae et Africae, in Latinum versa a Gabriele Sionita et Joanne Hesronita.* A French translation of the entire work by Jaubert was published in 1836 and 1840; the extracts in English here are translated thence.

The full name of the author of this work is Abu ‘Abdullah Muhammad. He was born toward the end of the eleventh century in Ceuta, in Morocco. He is commonly known by the name Al ‘Idrisi, which is actually a family name, as the family descends from an ancestor names Idris. Members of his family served as princes in Morocco in the ninth and tenth centuries, and Al Idrisi’s branch of family governed the city of Malaga.

The text has a significant section on India, focusing on Sindh, the area with which the Arabs were most familiar. There is coverage of other portions of India not under Arab control, but these sections are less detailed, and probably less accurate, based as they are on hearsay.

2. **Excerpt** [p. 122]

The Indians are naturally inclined to justice, and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are well known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side; hence the country is flourishing and their condition prosperous. Among other characteristic marks of their love of truth and horror of vice, the following is related: -When a man has a right to demand anything of another, and he happens to meet him, he has only to draw a circular line upon the ground and to make his debtor enter it, which the latter never fails to do, and the debtor cannot leave this circle without satisfying his creditor, or obtaining the remission of the debt.

Absolute Truth

More than any other place on this Earth—HUMANITY living on the sacred land of Hindusthaan understands that Bhagavaan, Rab, God, Allah, called by a million names now and always—remains ONE. The source of all that we know or do not know can only be the one Almighty. In Bhaaratvarsha people knew this fact for as long as human memory is traceable. Hindus and many non-Hindus too within India, remain committed to upholding this obvious truth no matter what the consequences. Knowledge once gained cannot be overtaken by ignorance—never!

It must be because we know that the “Sat” (absolute truth which is God) permeates the manifestation, that we do not call Mohammad a terrorist, Christ a homosexual and certainly we do not print revered Hindu deities on toilet seats, underwear, shoes; nor do we flush other people’s holy books down the drain. **These acts are committed by the members of the so called, developed and civilized First world countries!**

Sitting here, on this side of the world (West), I cannot help wondering how such a mindset comes into existence. Ability to disrespect every Spiritual sentiment does not point to a civilized society. Then, I feel what a blessing it is to be born in Bhaarat Bhoomi and be a Hindu. A truly civilized Samskriti respects the spiritual sentiment of even the enemy and Bhaarat Maataa has been doing so by offering sanctuary to all persecuted people of this hurting planet of ours!! “The One Country that Always Protects, Preserves—Compassionately,” a book of such a name must be written by the publishers of The Hindu Renaissance—easy to read, clear and brief which can be given to all school children so they will not grow up being anti-India as many of their parents have done!

As I grow older and learn more and more about my land of birth and the perpetual religious strife caused by the monotheistic religions (a name they gave themselves, insinuating that all others are not monotheistic) my hands come together in a grateful Namaskaar and I feel a sense of awe at what I am able to understand. How can some claim, that there is *only God* along with a need to convert and tear people from their traditions of birth? Is this not an oxymoron? Something like calling one an orphan while the natural parents are alive? Anyway, if there is one God (we agree), then does that God not give everyone birth into different traditions? How do these people justify constantly making judgments when their own prophet said, “Judge not lest you be judged”? Why do they feel that they will reach a place called heaven, let alone take someone else with them, by telling lies constantly? Missionary lies are an amazing thing to study—that God-fearing people can talk this way is beyond comprehension of all non-proselytizing peoples. Also why do not these people go to Heaven right away and leave us to enjoy our Earth? That is a heavenly thought. Yes?

This type of thinking, which somehow has taken hold of many minds, is causing more and more havoc between cultures at a time when most nations have a very mixed citizenry. We, the common people of each nation, must take a serious look at how certain persons within the organized religions have usurped the Spirituality of their own traditions; in fact these persons, for narrow personal goals are holding a vast majority of human beings hostage to personal aggrandizement and pure selfish, greed based personal goals. *The ordinary individual is too good and too burdened with day-to-day competitive modern life to even think about what is being done to destroy world peace.*

It is obvious that no change will come from the establishment within the two proselytizing religions. Too much power and money are involved. Hence it has to be a grassroots movement involving many, many persons coming from all those who know the pain, the disturbance that

comes from interference into the most sacred relationship between an individual (Jiva) and Ishvara (God) Religions if they must exist, are to facilitate the maturation process for which a human being is born which is to learn about the connection between the Jiva (individual), Jagat (world), and Ishvara (God). Remember the following quote from the the famous poet Kaalidas:

शरीर मादयं खलु धर्म साधनं

(Shariram aadyam khalu Dharma saadhanam)

Meaning: *The human body is for Dharma (spiritual) development only. This is the one unique feature of our specie—that we can from a human birth, mature into a fully liberated being through KNOWING.*

For too long now we have looked at ourselves and the world through Western eyes, given to us by the European colonizers through the medium of intense and prolific writing and now other means of mass media. It surely is time that we reverse this process and look at the West through Eastern eyes. ***To begin with, I suggest establishing a school of Westology within a prestigious Vishva Vidyaalaya (University) in Hindusthaan.*** It will benefit the West by letting them know how they are perceived by outsiders; the world will be richer by getting another perspective which must be there to bring back a balance, sorely needed in a world out of control. Surely we the Hindus, in fact all Indians, owe it to them and establish Westology as a field of study as they have been studying us through the schools of Indology. An important part is the Indology generally stands for all that pertains to Hindusthaan/Bhaarat/India—obviously there must be much to study and learn from, as this is an ongoing process now for at least a couple centuries!

Is it not a stunning fact that out of the whole wide world the then tremendously powerful, chose to study only India under the name of Indology? Let me tell you they were so, so taken by the grace, the exuberance, the genius of Hindu samskriti that to this day the ideal in the mind of even an ordinary citizen in the West is to emulate the Hindu—in clothes, in jewelry, in skin color. All one has to do is walk around the USA today with a sharp eye and see how we Hindus are influencing everyone here. Earlier it used to be the young that copied but now many older people are seen with Bicchuas (toe rings) and Longs (nose rings), midriff exposed in a strange fashion and one Paayal on a mehendi (ed) ankle. ***If to be copied is a complement, then Hindus win hands down!*** Sure in Bhaarat too, the European influence is obvious, with a major difference—Hindus did not have to go through a devastating process of colonization and plunder that killed in millions to occupy other people's lands for the influence to spread. ***Ours has been a benevolent, gentle influence everywhere we have gone.***

The following quote expresses similar sentiments plus points out a crucial difference.
Nathan Katz, *Who are the Jews of India?* University of California Press, 2000)

“A crucial distinction between India and the rest of the Diaspora, however, is that in India acculturation is not paid for in the currency of assimilation. By acculturation I mean fitting comfortably into a society while retaining one's own identity, whereas by assimilation I mean that the loss of that identity is a perceived condition for acceptance. The study of Indian Jewish communities demonstrates that in Indian culture, an immigrant group gains status precisely by maintaining its own identity. Such is the experience not only of India's Jews, but also of local Christians, Zoroastrians, and recently Tibetan Buddhists. This striking feature of Indian civilization is reflected by each of these immigrant groups.”

The two aggressive religions, based on the premise—my faith the right faith, are forever at loggerheads with each other and consequentially all others. When outsiders are not available they continue to divide society by infighting (denominational—protestants have a few thousand denominations that convert from each other and of course from Catholicism their arch enemy). **Keeping quiet, under the pretext of non - violence, is causing a world of *Himsa* (violence).** Do we not owe it to posterity to come together and put a stop to at least this religious ridiculousness? Is staying quiet itself not against our cherished value of *Ahimsaa* (nonviolence)?

Shubhamastu!

Contribution of the People of Indian Origin

Just a month ago I went to the PanIIT meeting in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. For me it was a historic conference to attend. It is my husband who is an alumnus of IIT Kharagpur, but *Bhaagya* took me, a spouse to deliver a talk at Kharagpur and help fund the activities of Students Forum for India's Heritage (SFIH) that was in its initial stages then. So to me going to this conference meant much. Perhaps it is my deep appreciation of the Bhaartiya Samskriti and the fact of my being part Bengali that pulled me to that part of India. The conference was fabulous—it is the first time I was at a place where the Indo-American was being recognized for all the contributions made by our people towards our adopted country, USA!

If we read enough, we find that people of Indian origins have contributed to every country we have lived in. All who come in contact have benefited from the Aarsha Vidya (Rishi Knowledge) that is the inheritance of Bharatvarshis. More often than not, our contributions have not been recognized, particularly in the Western world, though they are first to open doors for Indian talents —of course only on an as-needed basis. India, however, has been able to supply whatever skill is needed to any country of the world—not a small achievement. Scientists, engineers, physicians, teachers, professors, medical personnel of every kind including physical therapists and much more. Our Spiritual gurus are providing the much needed mental stability, and Maharshi Patanjali of Yoga Sutra fame, is improving the much prized incomes and bodies of America too! *Is there another nation such as ours on the face of this earth? It is only appropriate that I give credit to the USA, followed by some European countries, that they have attracted the best of the best from Asia.* Is it a play of Karma that what is taken has to be given back in some way? Plunder of the ancient world may require that wealth return to them; that pride return to them and their ideas, at least some that were much better return to them for a better world.

But old habits die hard—the preferred immigration is still the white European races accepted in spite of lesser or no knowledge of English/Math/Sciences; subjects much needed by the country. **So, color blind we are not.** Not yet anyway. Maybe later—we must keep hoping to sustain and better the future.

Not long ago I came across the following from the old days of Colonial rule, spoken by Lord McCauley in his speech on February 2, 1835 to the British Parliament:

“I have traveled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and, therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native self-culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation.”

I have not had a chance to check the source of this quote yet. However, in its spirit it must be true as making people ashamed of themselves is a well-established fact of the Colonizing era the world over. And we of Indian origins are continuing to make Thomas Babington McCauley's dreams continue far beyond his imagination. The Colonizing of the Hindu mind was done with stunning success and needs to be thoroughly studied by our own scholars. I do know that only we Hindus have survived the extremely cruel and manipulative onslaught of the two organized religions that are continuing to tangle for supremacy even now. So maybe

we the Hindus seem to suffer the worst, because we did not perish; instead we made it through! So the following comment is refreshingly welcome, from a speech by Thomas Friedman of the New York Times:

“When we were young kids growing up in America, we were told to eat our vegetables at dinner and not leave them. Mothers said, “Think of the starving children in India and finish the dinner.” And now I tell my children, “Finish your math homework. Think of the children in India who would make you starve if you don’t.”

It seems even while starving we were helpful to the rich children of the West—they need to eat vegetables!

The Law of Karma at work again. The question for us of Indian origins and particularly Hindu background remains how do we undo the psychological harm done to the masses by the era of Colonizers and earlier Jihaads? Cultures when disturbed, take a long time to recoup from the trauma. In India it seems a harder task because of the **anti-Hindu Hindus!** Other nations show even their losses as gains while in Bhaarat we often show our gains as losses. Much discussion about improving the lot of the common person was on the agenda of the PanIIT conference. Rural development had a session exclusively devoted to it. Some stalwarts like Dr. Ashok Jhunjhunwalla ji were among the presenters. He already has done wonders and listening to him was magical, because he has done magical things already. ***We need people that are bundles of positive energy and are passionate about India.*** Satyan (Sam) Pitroda ji has this much needed passion; his work in the telecom area attests to that. In his speech he talked about the need of people like Ghandhi ji, who were spiritually aware and devoted to the cause.

The energy at this conference was forceful. I think there are several people who have broken the shackles of that old era of useless shame and in Dr. Arun Shouri ji’s word have made India believe in herself again. More than anything else this one thing called Self-Confidence is needed—it must spread to every child in every village, town and city; then we will have achieved what Swaami Vivekananda ji asked for: ***“Arise, awake and stop not until the goal is accomplished.”***

This waking up has been partially accomplished and now the information age is giving us a fresh opportunity to be the leaders of the world. Bhaarat Maataa has been the Jagat Guru for ever and ever. The world has more and more need of knowledge and concepts to take humanity to the next stage. In such an era the HINDU MIND must dominate once more. The IIT graduates are just the tip of the iceberg that has just begun the thaw! We in Bhaarat are always first and foremost Pujaaris of Maa Saraswati and she has not ever left us.

A famous Sanskrit Shloka tells us that whereas a king is respected in his kingdom, a scholar is respected in the whole world.

विद्वत्त्वं च नृपत्वं च नैव तुल्यं कदाचन ।

स्वदेशे पूज्यते राजा विद्वान् सर्वत्र पूज्यते ॥

(Vidwatwam cha nripatwam cha naiva tulyam kadaachana

Swadeshe poojyate raajaa vidwaan sarvatra poojyate)

Meaning: Scholarship and kingship can never be equated. A king is respected in his own kingdom whereas a scholar is respected everywhere.

Material wealth can be plundered but the wealth of a wise mind can never be taken away. The success of our IITs and the alumni that are now all over the world (in more than 150 countries) have proven to us the truth of these words. I would go further and say that given a proper opportunity millions upon millions of the Bhaartiya people are just as brilliant!

Jayatu Bhaarat!

This is the resolution as it appeared in papers and was presented to the Indo-Americans. This is the first ever compliment to a foreign educational institute.

**H. Res. 227
In the House of Representatives, U.S.,
April 26, 2005**

Whereas the United States is deeply enriched by its Indian American residents; Whereas the Indian American community and the graduates of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) in the United States have made valuable and significant contributions to society in every profession and discipline;

And

Whereas IIT graduates are highly committed and dedicated to research, innovation, and promotion of trade and international cooperation between India and the United States:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, that the House of Representatives—

- (1) recognizes the valuable and significant contributions of Indian Americans to American society;**
- (2) honors the economic innovation attributable to graduates of the Indian Institutes of Technology; and**
- (3) Urges all Americans to recognize the contributions of Indian Americans and have a greater appreciation of the role Indian Americans have played in helping to advance and enrich American society.**

**Attest:
Clerk**

References:

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