



# YUVA BHARATI

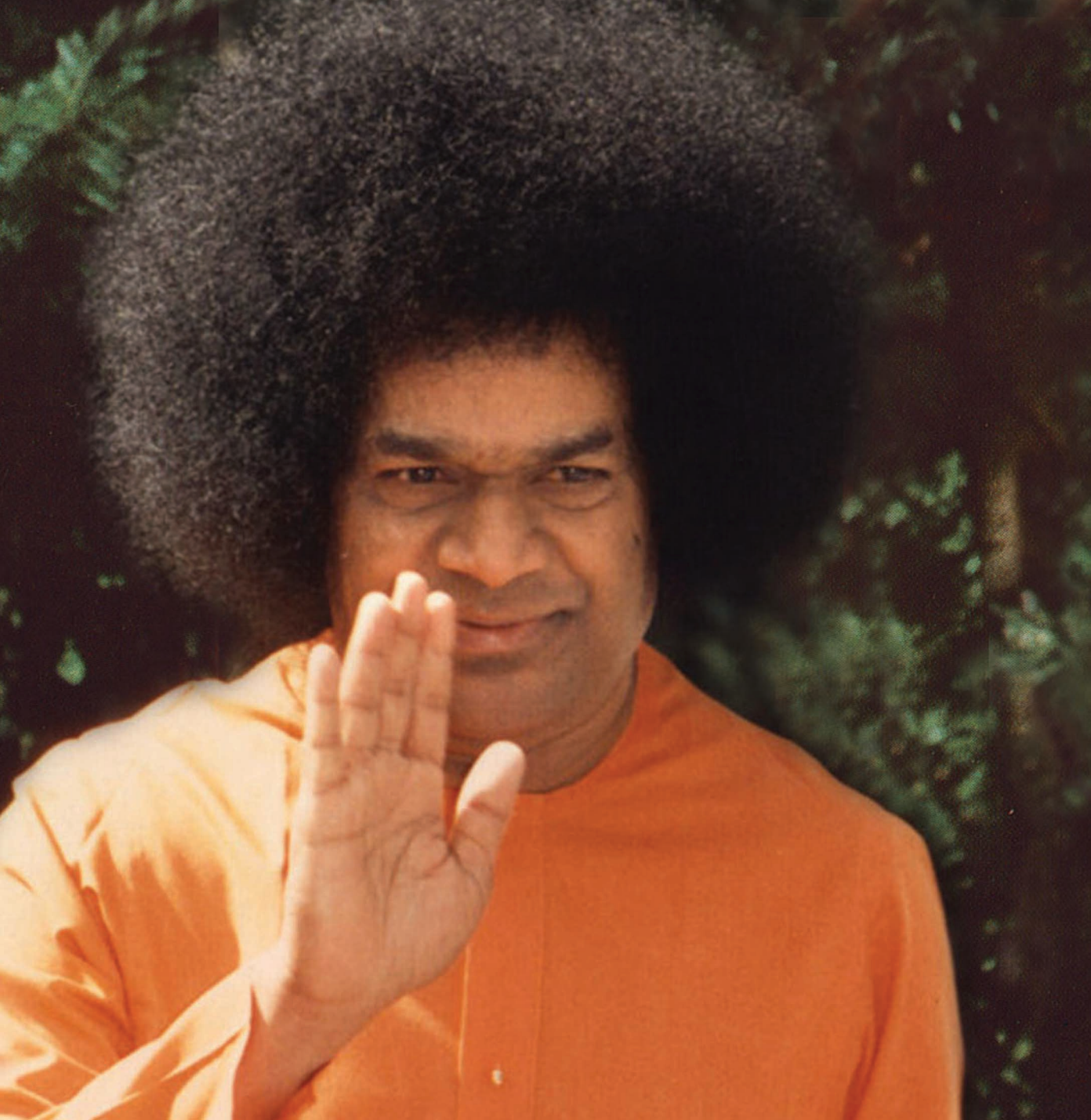
Voice of Youth

Vol.38 No.11

Vaishakh-Aashad 5113

June 2011

Rs.15/-





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|---------------|-----------|
| Single Copy   | Rs.15/-   |
| Annual        | Rs.160/-  |
| For 3 Yrs     | Rs.460/-  |
| Life (10 Yrs) | Rs.1400/- |

|                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Foreign Subscription:                 |                  |
| Annual                                | - \$40 US Dollar |
| Life (10 years)                       | - \$400US Dollar |
| (Plus Rs.50/- for Outstation Cheques) |                  |

Published and Printed by L.Madhavan on behalf of Vivekananda Kendra from 5, Singarachari Street, Triplicane, Chennai - 600 005. at M/s.RNR Printers and Publishers, 8, Thandavarayan Street, Triplicane, Chennai - 600 005.

Editor : P.Parameswaran.

# Invocation



हिरण्यवर्णां हरिणीं सुवर्णरजतस्रजाम् ।  
चन्द्रां हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आवह ॥  
तां म आवह जातवेदो लक्ष्मीमनपगामिनीम् ।  
यस्यां हिरण्यं विन्देयं गामश्वं पुरुषानहम् ॥

hiraṇyavarṇāṃ hariṇīm suvarṇarajatasrajām ।  
candrām hiraṇmayīm lakṣmīm jātavedo ma āvaha । ।  
tām ma āvaha jātavedo lakṣmīmanapagāminīm ।  
yasyām hiraṇyam vindeyam gāmaśvaṃ puruṣānaham । ।

Invoke for me, O Agni, the Goddess Lakshmi, who shines like gold, yellow in hue, wearing gold and silver garlands, blooming like the moon, the embodiment of (spiritual) wealth. O Agni! Invoke for me that unfailing Lakshmi, being blessed by whom I shall win (spiritual) wealth, knowledge, vitality and the Purusha.

## Editorial



This May was among the hottest in recent times - not only in terms of temperature, but also in the number of important happenings and revelations. The month started off with the killing of Osama bin Laden by a special team of navy SEALs. It is said he was shot in the head - justice served for a man who inspired, planned and oversaw the killing and maiming of thousands upon thousands of innocents. Ignoring the rather curious claim that in just a 40 minute special operation, the SEALs had managed to eliminate bin Laden, do a DNA analysis and verify his identity and ship the body out of the compound, while simultaneously burning a stealth helicopter that was damaged/downed in the mission (presumably to prevent any identification of technology or reverse engineering), this incident has signaled it is time that the emperor be told the truth about the new clothes he is wearing. Pakistan's bluff to the world has been called and how! The Pakistani establishment would have predicted a media frenzy for a few weeks and would be hoping that then things will return to normal, which is not too very far from what has been going on in every earlier case. But whether this issue will polarize the American public enough to force the American establishment to choke off the billions of "aid" to Pakistan will be a crucial factor to watch for.

Back home, the road-roller of democracy claimed its set of winners and flattened more victims in this round. Of course, that might end up meaning hardly anything more than a fleeting sense of hope that keeps the spirits of the masses high for a while. But time will put everybody back through the same grind again – more corruption, more scams of an ever increasing scale and much more of the same disappointment until the next round is in, when the cycle is repeated with different winners and victims. That said, there are some things that deserve note and might even merit a cautious celebration. The first is the conduct of the elections itself. The elections were conducted peacefully, also recording among the highest voter turn-outs in recent history. Even in a state as tricky as West Bengal, there were no serious incidents of violence until the poll was over. It is indeed heartening to see how efficient the process can be if the agencies decide to focus on getting things done, put their foot down against vested interests and malpractices. All in all, irrespective of who won – for the difference among political parties many times is only in who becomes the beneficiary of corruption – it comes as a great relief that the electronic voting machines (EVM) system worked as expected. There were some serious allegations of how vulnerable these machines were, how easy it is to tamper and misuse them and for the record, most if not all of these allegations still stand unanswered. However, going by the results of the elections, one can only say that any such tampering did not occur in this round of elections. Until the allegations about the EVMs are categorically refuted or answered, we can only go on a case by case basis and decide if there is cause for suspicion or not. All in all, the incidents in May surely will have an impact on our lives in the near and distant future. We must be alert enough to spot the changes that will impact us most and respond appropriately, for ultimately in a democracy, it is the people who rule and the rulers cannot afford to be unaware, ignorant or lazy.

**P.Vasanth**  
**YB-ET**

## From Joy to the Task Ahead

Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

Swami Vivekananda was given a rousing, unprecedented welcome by the people of India. But the one who was welcomed had a great task ahead. Swamiji saw the accomplishments in the West as the beginning of the work in the East. Even the people who welcomed him knew to some extent that it was not just the triumphant return of Swami Vivekananda but it was also the beginning of the great task ahead.

To India, the whole episode of expedition of Swami Vivekananda in the West was like an insight, a realization about the relevance of Hindu Dharma. It appeared to them like this: Swami Vivekananda when he went to America, he was a penniless unknown sanyasi unaware of the ways of the Western world. There was no one there in USA who knew him or would take care of him. When he took the plunge to go to a country 8000 miles away, what was with him other than his firm conviction and deep understanding of the Hindu Dharma and his great love for the toiling masses of his country? Was that adequate to survive in those unknown and strange lands? Why to talk of survival Swami Vivekananda? To their utter joy, the people of India found that when Swami Vivekananda returned from West, he was the world-renowned person who had a mission for the survival of humanity! How this must have impacted the people of India then we can imagine. They realized that the right understanding of Hindu Dharma is the key for the greatness of India as well as development



of human being.

In addition to the triumphant return of Swami Vivekananda, there was also a great visual impact on the people of India when they saw Swami Vivekananda returning with his foreign disciples who had adopted Hindu Dharma. Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, Mr. Goodwin and other disciples had come not just as admirers of Swami Vivekananda but had accepted Hindu Dharma. For the people enslaved for centuries it was no less than a wonder to see that the persons from the conquerors' race had accepted the Dharma of the conquered. At Jaffna the people were so thrilled to see these foreign disciples that

following the lecture of Swami Vivekananda, Mr. Sevier was urged by the audience to address the assembly explaining why he had accepted Hinduism and why he had come to India with Swamiji. Mr. Sevier obliged the audience and they were delighted to listen to him and we are sure that their hearts must have swelled with pride. At Madras, the people were stunned to see Mr. Goodwin who was clothed in purely Indian and that too in a Brahmin costume and was taking dutifully the notes of lectures of Swami Vivekananda. We can imagine what a great visual impact it must have made on those simple people who were again and again told by their rulers as well as the educationists (the missionaries) that their Hindu Dharma was a bundle of superstition and their god and goddesses as devils.

First time a concrete realization came to people of India that Hindu Dharma is the need of the humanity, India has a purpose to her existence, and she has a mission to accomplish and a message to deliver. But for that, she would have to prepare herself, and Swami Vivekananda was the right person to do this work for India and for humanity. They from the bottom of their heart wished well to Swamiji in his future task. At Jaffna, the welcome address mentioned, "May God, who has hitherto crowned your noble work with conspicuous success, spare you long, giving you vigour and strength to continue your noble Mission." At Pamban, people expressed their feelings through the welcome address as, "We truly rejoice to see that the efforts of Your Holiness in sowing the seeds of Hindu philosophy in the cultured minds of the great Western nations are being crowned with so much success that we already see all around the bright and cheerful aspect of the bearing of excellent fruits in great abundance, and most humbly pray that Your Holiness will, during your sojourn in Aryavarta, be graciously pleased to exert yourself even a little more than you did in the West to awaken the minds of your brethren in this our motherland from their dreary lifelong slumber and make them recall to their minds the long - forgotten gospel

of truth."

In spite of the eagerness to listen to him, the slavery of all these years also had taken its toll and thus though all were clear that the great task of regeneration of India was ahead, some just wished Swami Vivekananda well for it, clearly giving indication that they themselves were incapable of doing anything and only persons like swami Vivekananda alone could do such work. Swami Vivekananda had also the task of instilling confidence in the people and to organize them for work.

Gradually as people listened to and read about the addresses of Swami Vivekananda since he landed in Colombo they realized that Swami Vivekananda was having great plans for the regeneration of India and they cannot simply wish him well but should be part of the that great task ahead. Their desire to work for nation got aroused and the tone of the welcome addresses changed from fervent well-wishing to concrete assurances.

Thus first time the welcome address at Madras made reference to associating with the work of Swami Vivekananda in these words, "...Had you contented yourself with simply discharging this high and holy duty entrusted to your care, even then, your Hindu co - religionists would have been glad to recognize with joy and thankfulness the inestimable value of your work. But in making your way into Western countries you have also been the bearer of a message of light and peace to the whole of mankind, based on the old teachings of India's "Religion Eternal". In thanking you for all that you have done in the way of upholding the profound rationality of the religion of the Vedanta, it gives us great pleasure to allude to the great task you have in view, of establishing an active mission with permanent centres for the propagation of our religion and philosophy. The undertaking to which you propose to devote your energies is worthy of the holy traditions you represent and worthy, too, of the spirit of the great Guru who has inspired your life and its aims. We hope and trust that it may be given to us also to

associate ourselves with you in this noble work.”

Further at Calcutta, in the welcome address given by the citizens of Calcutta the same feelings were reflected, “You have begun the work in a spirit which commands our admiration, and have already achieved a success to which many lands bear witness. But a great deal yet remains to be done; and our own country, or rather we should say your own country, waits on you. The truths of the Hindu religion have to be expounded to large numbers of Hindus themselves. Brace yourself then for the grand exertion. We have confidence in you and in the righteousness of our cause. Our national religion seeks to win no material triumphs. Its purposes are spiritual; its weapon is a truth which is hidden away from material eyes and yields only to the reflective reason. Call on the world, and where necessary, on Hindus themselves, to open the inner eye, to transcend the senses, to read rightly the sacred books, to face the supreme reality, and realise their position and destiny as men. No one is better fitted than yourself to give the awakening or make the call, and we can only assure you of our hearty sympathy and loyal co-operation in that work which is apparently your mission ordained by Heaven.”

Gradually it was not just the assurances but

youth came forward dedicating, offering themselves for the work envisaged by Swami Vivekananda. On the very day, Swamiji reached Calcutta, some young men offered themselves among them were Sudhir and Khagen who later became Swami Shuddhananda and Vimalananda respectively. Many more young men including his own brother Bhupendranath Dutta were inspired by him to work for the freedom of India.

Thus people at first applauded Swamiji, then wished him well, then assured their help and ultimately realized that it is they who have a mission to translate into reality the vision of Swami Vivekananda of establishing Bharat as Jagatguru for good of the humanity. Swami Vivekananda had said even before starting for his journey to India, “India must listen to me! I shall shake India to her foundations! I shall send an electric thrill through her national veins! Wait! You shall see how India would receive me. It is India, my own India, that knows truly how to appreciate that which I have given so freely here with my life's blood, as the spirit of Vedanta. India will receive me in triumph.” Truly, Swami Vivekananda saw India in front of him, overjoyed in his triumph, wishing him to raise the people of India, pledging their support and even beginning to offer herself for the great task ahead. India was ready for the message of swami Vivekananda and that he gave it boldly.

to be continued...



**If there is sin, this is the only sin —to say that you are weak, or others are weak.**

**Go from village to village, do good to humanity and to the world at large.**

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

# The New York Times

Late Edition  
New York: Today, sunny, a few afternoon clouds. High 77. Tonight, slightly more humid. Low 63. Tomorrow, sun. High 81. Yesterday, high 81, low 63. Weather map, page C13.

VOL. CL. . . No. 51,874 Copyright © 2001 The New York Times NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2001 \$1 beyond the greater New York metropolitan area 75 CENTS

## U.S. ATTACKED

### HIJACKED JETS DESTROY TWIN TOWERS AND HIT PENTAGON IN DAY OF TERROR

#### A CREEPING HORROR

Buildings Burn and Fall as Onlookers Search for Elusive Safety

By N. R. KLEINFELD  
It kept getting worse. The horror arrived in episodic bursts of chilling disbelief, signified first by trembling floors, sharp eruptions, cracked windows. There was the actual unfathomable realization of a gaping flame hole in first one of the tall towers, and then the same thing all over again in its twin. There was the merciless sight of bodies helplessly tumbling out, some of them in flames.  
Finally, the mighty towers themselves were reduced to nothing. Dense plumes of smoke raced through the dimly lit avenues, coursing between the buildings, shaped like tornadoes on their sides.  
Every sound was cause for alarm. A plane appeared overhead. Was another one coming? No, it was a fighter jet. But was it friend or enemy? People scrambled for their lives, but they didn't know where to go. Should they go north, south, east, west? They outside, go indoors? People hid beneath cars and each other. Some contemplated jumping into the river.  
For those trying to flee the very epicenter of the collapsing World Trade Center towers, the most horrific thought of all finally dawned as they fled: nowhere was safe.  
For several panic-stricken hours yesterday morning, people in Lower Manhattan witnessed the indescribable, the incomprehensible, the unthinkable. "I don't know what the gates of hell look like, but it's got to be like this," said John Maloney, a security director for an insurance company in the trade center. "I'm a combat veteran, Vietnam, and I never saw anything like this."  
The first warnings were small ones. Blinks away, Jim Farmer, a film composer, was having breakfast at a small restaurant on West Broadway. He heard the sound of a jet. An odd sound — too loud, it seemed, to be



#### President Vows to Exact Punishment for 'Evil'

By SERGE SCHMEMMANN  
Hijackers rammed jetliners into each of New York's World Trade Center towers yesterday, toppling both in a hellish storm of ash, glass, smoke and leaping victims, while a third jetliner crashed into the Pentagon in Virginia. There was no official count, but President Bush said thousands had perished, and in the immediate aftermath the calamity was already being ranked the worst and most audacious terror attack in American history.  
The attacks seemed carefully coordinated. The hijacked planes were all en route to California, and therefore geared with fuel, and their departures were spaced within an hour and 40 minutes. The first, American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767 out of Boston for Los Angeles, crashed into the north tower at 8:48 a.m. Eighteen minutes later, United Airlines Flight 175, also headed from Boston to Los Angeles, plowed into the south tower.  
Then an American Airlines Boeing 757, Flight 77, left Washington's Dulles International Airport bound for Los Angeles, but instead hit the western part of the Pentagon — the military headquarters where 24,000 people work, at 9:49 a.m. Finally, United Airlines Flight 93, a Boeing 737 flying from Newark to San Francisco, crashed near Pittsburgh, raising the possibility that its hijackers had failed in whatever their mission was.  
There were indications that the hijackers had at least two of the planes were armed with knives. Attorney General John Ashcroft told reporters in the evening that the suspects on Flight 11 were armed that way. And Barbara Olson, a television commentator who was traveling on American Flight 77, managed to reach her husband, Solicitor General Theodore Olson, by cell phone and to tell him that the hijackers were armed with knives and a box cutter.  
"In all, 268 people perished in the four planes and several scores more were known dead elsewhere. Numerous firefighters, police officers and other rescue workers who responded to the initial disaster in Lower Manhattan were killed or injured when the buildings collapsed. Hundreds were treated for cuts, broken bones, burns and smoke inhalation.  
But the real carnage was concealed for now by the twisted, smoking, ash-choked carcasses of the twin towers, in which thousands of people used to work on a weekday. The collapse of the towers caused another World Trade Center building to fall 7 hours later, and several

Continued on Page A11

#### A Somber Bush Says Terrorism Cannot Preval

By ELIZABETH BUMILLER with DAVID E. SANGER  
WASHINGTON, Sept. 11 — President Bush vowed tonight to retaliate against those responsible for today's attacks on New York and Washington, declaring that he would "make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."  
"These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat, but they have failed," the president said in his first speech to the nation from the Oval Office. "Our country is strong. Terrorist acts can shake the foundation of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America."  
His speech came after a day of trauma that seems destined to define his presidency. Seeking to at once calm the nation and declare his determination to exact retribution, he told a country reeling by repeated scenes of carnage that "these acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the soul of American resolve."  
Mr. Bush spoke only hours after returning from a zigzag course across the country, as his Secret Service and military security teams moved him from Florida, where he woke up this morning expecting to press for his education bill, to command posts in Louisiana and Indiana before it was determined the attacks had probably ended and he could safely return to the capital.  
It was a sign of the catastrophe.



#### Awaiting the Aftershocks

Washington and Nation Plunge Into Fight With Enemy Hard to Identify and Punish

By R. W. APPLE JR.  
WASHINGTON, Sept. 11 — Today's devastating and astonishingly well-coordinated attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York and on the Pentagon outside of Washington plunged the nation into a struggle against an enemy that will be hard to identify with certainty and hard to punish with precision.  
The shock nation — to a degree the whole world — shook as hijacked jetliners plunged into buildings that symbolize the financial and military might of the United States. The sense of security and self-confidence that Americans take as their birthright suffered a grievous blow, from which recovery will be slow. The aftershocks will be nearly as bad, as hundreds and possibly thousands of people discover that friends or relatives died awful, fiery deaths.  
Scores of chaos and destruction evocative of the nightmare world of Hurricane Bambi, with smoke and debris blasting out the sun, were carried by television into homes and workplaces across the nation. Echoing Franklin D. Roosevelt's description of the attack on Pearl Harbor as an event "which will live in infamy," Gov. George E. Pataki of New York, a Republican, spoke of "an incredible outrage" and Senator Charles E. Schumer of New York, a Democrat, spoke of "a dastardly attack."  
But more words were inadequate vessels to contain the sense of shock and horror that people felt.  
As Washington struggled to regain



AMERICAN TARGETS A ball of fire exploded outward after the second of two jetliners slammed into the World Trade Center; less than two hours later, both of the 110-story towers were gone. Hijackers crashed a third airliner into the Pentagon, setting off a huge explosion and fire.

Saved from future

"remembrances"

Rajesh Pathak

'Instead of deep into the sea had Osama been buried on the open ground what would have happened then!'

a thought raised in my mind; and then, I began to think- Though not soon, but after a few days or years there where Osama would be buried a tomb would have come up, where Jehadisits would reach to pay their tribute, glorifying him as a martyr, and taking the oath of wiping America off the earth, and of bringing jihad in entire world. Then, as normally what happens, after 25- 50 years the tomb would have transformed into a religious shrine, the name Osama being got to be 'divine'- so divine as supposed to be capable of having any wish





Unsurprisingly, there is no dearth of such instances in the world, and least of all in India. One of them is most interesting of the case:

First ever Arab invasion on Indian soil was made by Mir Qasim; next to him were the invaders Subuktgin, Mehmood Gaznavi, and Masood Gazni respectively. Learning the lesson from the earlier defeats, and to end the recurrent invasions by them [Arabs], the then Hindu Kings came united to fight against yet another fanatic and truculent invading Masood Gazni in the battle of Bheraich, a town in U.P. presently, in 1033A.D. They fought for the first time with the Arabs like Arabs, adopting all the tactics so far being adopted by the wily adversaries, coming out of the folds of the ethics of Dharmayudha, which had been proved to be self-suicidal to them in the previous battles. This yielded the desirable result in their favor, and Arabs led by the Masood Gazni suffered a crushing defeat for the first time, with Masood Gazni killed in the battle. Then, what happened that somebody built a tomb where Masood was buried. Still today this tomb is standing in Behraich, where every year a Urs[Islamic gathering] is organized in which the people come in droves to pay their tribute to 'Ghazi' Masood mia. Surprisingly, those coming here composed of more Hindus than the others. Forgetful of the sacrifice their ancestors made, they go there to have their wish 'fulfilled', taking no pain of knowing how staunch a Jihadist, how sworn an enemy of Kafirs[Hindus] had been the one lying inside the tomb

Hence, in view of above facts, America should be thankful for not only freeing the world from the devil like Osama, but also for preventing him to be glorified as a 'Ghazi' or 'Pir'.

# Disguised Hinduphobia

Swaminathan Venkataraman

In Continuation with the article appeared in the April issue of YB titled "Audacity of Ignorance" this is the second rebuttal given to the Pseudo secularists who try to delink yoga from Hinduism

**M**eera Nanda should learn to get her facts about the Hindu tradition straight, and from original sources.

Meera Nanda was offered an opportunity to rebut my article, "The Audacity of Ignorance", and Goebbels would be delighted that his spirit is alive and well after all—repeat a lie a hundred times and render it true. Nanda does not attempt countering the plethora of scriptural evidence I offered that definitively place yoga within the Hindu tradition and trace the growth of asanas over the centuries, but she is generous in heaping scorn on Hindu Americans and pretending that makes for another argument. Fortunately, in the era of blogs, Facebook and X-Tape exposes, Nanda's tactics can only go so far.

Obfuscate, Confuse and create a Strawman

Nanda repeatedly fails to acknowledge that "Take Back Yoga" (TBY) is all about the willful blindness in the West to the Hindu roots of Yoga, even the spiritual side of it. When I started writing my previous article on February 12, I casually looked up the website of the Yoga Journal given their role in sparking the HAF's campaign. The 'Daily Insight' on their website said (all parentheses are Yoga Journal's):

"At its core, Sivananda Yoga is geared toward helping students answer the age-old question, "Who am I?" This yoga practice is based on the philosophy of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, India....In 1957, his disciple Swami Vishnudevananda introduced these teachings to an American audience.... summarising Sivananda's system into five main principles: proper exercise (asanas); proper breathing (pranayama); proper relaxation (Savasana, or Corpse Pose); proper diet (vegetarian); positive thinking (Vedanta) and meditation (dhyana)..."

And the Yoga Journal refuses to label this Hindu, even as issue after issue pays copious respects to meditation-like practices in mystical Christianity or Sufi Islam. Is it any wonder that Hindus find it disingenuous? Does Nanda believe that Vedanta is also non-Hindu? It is stunning that HAF even needs to make such an obvious point but here we are. HAF also started TBY for Hindu children in the U.S. When they go to school and say they are Hindu, nobody says, 'Oh, yeah, Hindus gave the world yoga.' They say, 'What caste are you?', 'Do you pray to a monkey god?', 'Does the Red mark on your forehead represent blood?' etc. Because that's all Americans know about Hinduism. It is not that we are embarrassed by our respect for cows, curry or karma, it is that HAF's advocacy informs the

American dialogue that we are so much more.

“But this is an American problem, why bother me with it?”, Indians can rightfully ask. Absolutely, which is why we launched the campaign in the US. It was Nanda who chose to write in India. Note that TBY talks not just about asanas, but rather about Yoga in its entirety as a spiritual practice, including asanas. This is what Aseem Shukla meant by Yoga being rooted in the Vedic tradition.

This would have been clear if only Nanda had perused HAF's original paper on Yoga, but then the problem with some 'scholars' is that they ignore original sources, cherry-pick secondary or tertiary renditions, and selectively quote or misrepresent translations. For example, had Nanda consulted the Hatha Yoga scriptures, she would not preposterously continue to characterise Natha Yogis as “sorcerers, jogis and fakirs” who did not care for moksha. She says Natha Yogis only wanted to make their bodies strong. But how could they Ms. Nanda, if asanas came only in the 20th century? You cannot have it both ways.

#### Hiding a Pumpkin in a Plate of Rice

Nanda says she finds a “tiny sliver of agreement” in my contention that requiring everything Hindu to be traceable back to Vedic times is ludicrous. Thank God for small mercies. But she wrongly claims this supports her position. Making an ostensibly magnanimous concession of her error in claiming Vedas have no mention of pranayama, Nanda claims to stand by everything else she said. What exactly does she stand by? That European gymnastics is central to modern yoga? Then why did she fail to respond to the central thesis of my rebuttal that lays this claim to rest? I provided detailed references tracing the evolution of asanas

within Hindu tradition over the centuries, from the Upanishads to 6th to 7th century commentaries on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, to hatha yoga scriptures of the 14th to 17th centuries and the Sritattvanidhi of the early 1800s.

She also does not respond to many other facts that I presented, such as Shiva's 108 dance poses containing many vinyasas (perhaps European sculptors descended into India in the Middle Ages or Bharatanatyam was inspired by Native American foot stomping?). What about the fact that Krishnamacharya learnt vinyasas from his Guru who lived near Mount Kailash? Hinduism's guru-sishya tradition has always had numerous teachings not found in any text (the Vedas themselves were an oral tradition). Or the fact that the Indian Government has recorded nearly 1300 asanas by consulting Hindu scriptures and yoga institutions to preclude foreign patents? Are there any counter-claims from the Swedish Government? Perhaps Nanda won't allow Hindus to claim anything post-Vedic as their own. What next? Shankaracharya as Buddhist and Bhakti saints as Christians?

Nanda is also quiet when I point out that Norman Sjoman, who first studied Krishnamacharya's work in the Mysore palace, acknowledges that the 200 asanas and vinyasas of BKS Iyengar and Pattabhi Jois are independently found in other traditional Yoga schools. Mark Singleton also names Swami K u v a l a y a n a n d a , w i t h w h o m Krishnamacharya spent time, as having influenced Krishnamacharya's work. All said, Singleton finds 28 asanas out of 200 taught by Krishnamacharya's school (which itself is only one among numerous schools of Yoga) as having “similarities” with European Gymnastics. Nanda wants to use this to pull

the entire Hatha Yoga tradition out of Hinduism. Nauseating vulgarity seems to pass for scholarship these days.

The Hindu origins of Yoga asanas are so obvious that Meera Nanda's arguments only remind me of a popular Tamil saying which roughly means "Don't attempt to hide a whole pumpkin inside just a plate of rice".

#### Disguised Hinduphobia

'Scholars' of Nanda's ilk have always disliked Swami Vivekananda. Being profoundly alienated from their heritage and considering anything traditional as mere superstition, they are no doubt discomfited that a Sanyasi who proudly called himself Hindu was able to convey Vedanta in a manner that the West loved, and in immaculate English to boot. Nanda claims that "His (Vivekananda) interpretation of Yoga Sutras by no means reflected the mainstream of Hindu thought in India at that time". Huh? Has Ms Nanda read commentaries on the Yoga Sutras by Shankara and Vyasa? Maybe she believes that Shankara and Vyasa are not mainstream? Or perhaps again, they were European transplants?

Yes, Vivekananda did consider moksha a higher goal than

physical fitness. So what? Why does that imply Hatha Yogis are not Hindu? The same Vivekananda also once told Indian youths, who lacked a culture of physical fitness, that they can be closer to God through football than the Gita ! It is a time-honored Hindu tradition that teachings are always tailored to the needs of the student.

Finding her argument in tatters on substantive grounds, Nanda, like a true demagogue, takes refuge in criticising HAF. After all, why bother arguing when you can just shoot the messenger? One senses that Nanda's real problem is simply the emergence of an articulate, credible, and professional Hindu voice that is bringing authentic, apolitical Hindu perspectives into the public sphere.



Why would Nanda feel that way? Since she quotes Koenrad Elst, here is Elst himself shedding light on her motives while critiquing one of her works: "I will conclude with an observation on what seems to be her sincere declaration of interest. Among the points that 'worry' her, she mentions this as the final one: 'The more prominence Hinduism gets abroad, even for wrong reasons like

the new age and paganism, the more prestige it

gains in India'. Here, she really lays her cards on the table. It is very good that...she does not try to be clever and claim to speak for 'true Hinduism' against a 'distorted Hinduism'... Instead, she clearly targets Hinduism itself, deploring any development which might make Hinduism 'gain prestige'. Let us see if I can translate that correctly: wanting something or someone to suffer rather than to prosper is what we call 'hate'. She hates Hinduism, and her academic work is written in the service of that hate." Ita vero!

#### Admitting Defeat?

Meera Nanda finally acknowledges HAF's point even if she wont admit it, "...hatha yoga's interest in the body has captured the global imagination—thanks largely to Indian yoga masters and swamis who set up ashrams and schools in the West".

These swamis did not come to the US as physical fitness instructors. They taught asanas as part of a spiritual practice aimed at realising one's true nature, call it self-realisation, brahman, nirvana, moksha or yes, even the 'kingdom of heaven within'. Many Americans who turned away from institutional Christianity found solace in these teachings and in the pluralistic, non-proselytising outlook of Hinduism that is able

to see Jesus as a saint and interpret his teachings in a Vedantic light. That is why Yoga studios are full of Hindu symbols, chants, kirtans, and quotes from scriptures.

But what does TBY ask of non-Hindus who practice asanas but eschew meditation, chanting, kirtan etc. and who don't read Yoga Sutras, the Gita, or other Hindu scriptures? TBY asks for recognition that the concept of asanas arose as, and remains, an integral part of Hindu spiritual practice. Strictly speaking, even when Yoga is practiced solely as exercise, it cannot be completely delinked from its Hindu roots. As BKS Iyengar says in a foreword to an English translation of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, "Hatha yoga...is commonly misunderstood and misrepresented as being simply a physical culture, divorced from spiritual goals...Asanas are not just physical exercises: they have biochemical, psycho-physiological and psycho-spiritual effects."

Nanda gratuitously advises Hindu Americans to, "take a deep breath and get over it." So, in the same spirit, here is mine: Nanda should learn to get her facts about the Hindu tradition straight, and from original sources. And learn to accord the same respect to Hinduism as to other religions. The days of the Hindu community cowering before self-appointed pseudo-scholars are over.



**Whatever you think, that you become. If you have to think, think good thoughts, great thoughts.**

**The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, to develop their lost individuality.**

# STRENGTH AND VALOUR IN INDIAN WOMANHOOD

**N. Krishnamoorthi**

**Sumati:** Mother! Indian women are always portrayed as weak. Is this picture true?

**Mother:** Not always. The Hindu Goddess of power is Shakti. India had its fair share of heroic, strong women, who made their mark in all walks of life, war, public administration, spirituality, arts and literature. In addition, they have been excellent householders nurturing their children. The effect of a mother's upbringing on the son's character is so much, that our epics, puranas and history

address their great sons as sons of their mothers. Sri Rama is often described as Kousalyanandavardhana, Kousalyasupraja etc. Sri Rama himself addresses Lakshmana as Sumitranandavardhana and as Soumitri. Sri Krishna in the Gita calls Arjuna, - Partha – son of Pritha (Kunti), Kounteya etc. We all know how Jija Bhai shaped Shivaji, Bhuvaneshwari

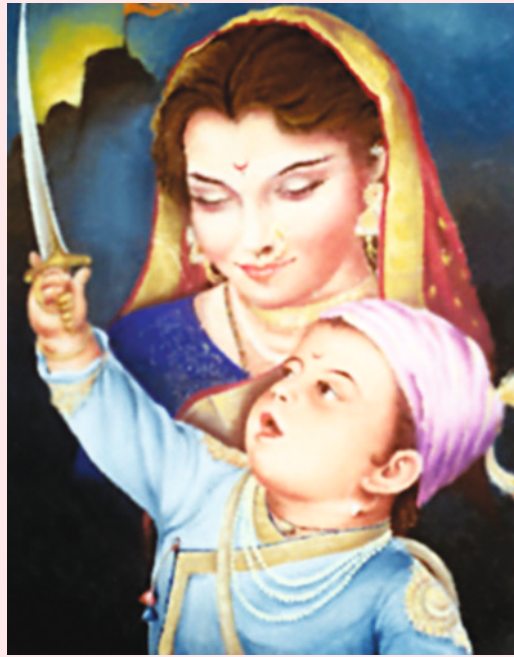
Mata's role in bringing up Narendra Nath and Gandhiji's three vows given to his mother when he was leaving India for England.

**Sumati:** Then how did this mental picture of women as weaklings rise in our literature and history?

**Mother:** You know that after the eighth century, the foreigners invaded India. The Western and Middle Eastern cultures do not have the concept of Mother Goddess. In fact for these cultures, God is a male and men alone are eligible for salvation. This lack of reverence for the female has distorted their lives, their social

relations, their religion and their relation with Nature. When these alien rulers invaded India, Indian women lost their right place in the society. Sri Ramakrishna came to restore to our women their right place in the society.

**Sumati:** We were talking about the strength of Indian women! Its strength includes not



**Jija Bhai with Young Shivaji**

merely brutal physical strength.

**Mother:** It includes all strength giving social and personal forces, true! That is why Hindus portray Lakshmi as the power of wealth, Saraswati as the power of Knowledge and Parvati as the power of destruction as a prelude to recreation. Sri Lalita Sahasranama describes Devi as

- 1) Maharajni (the great empress)
- 2) Simhasaneshwari
- 3) One Equipped with all weapons
- 4) The destroyer of Bhandasura
- 5) She is one who is the leader of a great army each of its group leaders being capable of destroying great Asuras. In our culture, physical strength and valour are connected as a part of the forces that help Dharma to come out Victorious. That is why we find these forces to be often gentle, beautiful, loving, and compassionate. In fact the word **Lalita** means gentle and soft, strong one but that Lalita rides a lion! Devi is a union of all persuasive forces of creation. She is (1) Durga (2) Lakshmi (3) Saraswati (4) Savitri (5) Radha (6) Thirty seven amsa rupas (1) Ganga (2) Tulasi (3) Manasa (4) Devasena (5) Mangala Chandika (6) Bhumi (7) Svaha (8) Dakshina (9) Svadha (10) Svasti (11) Pushti (12) Tushti (13) Sampatti (14) Dhriti (15) Sati (16) Daya (17) Pratishtha (18) Siddha (19) Kirti (20) Kriya (21) Mithya (22) Santi (23) Lajja (24) Buddhi (25) Medha (26) Dhriti (27) Murti (28) Nidra (29) Ratri (30) Sandhya (31) Divasa (32) Hunger (33) Thirst (34) Prabha (35) Dahika (36) Mrityu (37) Jara (38) Tandra (39) Priti (40) Sraddha and (41) Bhakti.

**Sumati:** Parashakti appears to be every expression of Prajna (consciousness!)

**Mother:** Exactly. Her forces can be classified as

(1) Active and Aggressive forces and (2) Passive and with - drawing forces that go inward. (Aavrutta Chakshu).

**Sumati:** How do we relate Shakti worship with Vedanta?

**Mother:** The ultimate source of all creation and existence is one – PARABRAHMAN. The Tantra Sastras and many Agamas say that THAT ONE BECAME –Two – The male and female principles. According to Vedanta texts, the one becomes many. In Tantra, the two parts constantly search for each other so that they can attain a state of equilibrium – stability. In Vedanta, the many always try to come back and merge with the ONE. But you should remember that the division of one into two or one into many is only an illusion. In reality they are never separated; that is why in our puranas we find that Brahma carries Saraswati on his tongue. Vishnu has on his Vakshasthala-Chest-Lakshmi enshrined. Shiva has as His Ardhangini, Parvati. In Shaiva Siddhanta, Dakshinamoorti is the male form in whom Parvati Devi has merged. Kamakshi is the female form in which Shiva has merged. Ardha Narishwara is the form that has half – as Shiva and half – as Parvati.

**Sumati:** How do the Upanisads view this?

**Mother:** in the Kena Upanisad Goddess Uma reveals the glory of Brahman to Indra. In the Taittirika Aranyaka, Uma is portrayed as the knowledge of Brahman. The Shvetashvatara Upanisad describes Brahman. Tvam stree, tvam Pumanasi tvam kumara utava Kumari tvam jeerno dandena vanchasi tvam jato bhavasi Vishvatomukha: In the Shrivaisnava philosophy Mahalakshmi is the creator of the world, with Vishnu as a silent passive witness.

In Shakta Philosophy Kali, Bhavatarini is the creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe with Shiva as the passive witness.

**Sumati:** Yes I remember in the Dakshineswar temple where Sri Ramakrishna worshipped, Bhavatarini is standing in her fierce form, on the body of Shiva lying down.

**Mother:** Yes, Vedantic texts such as Panchadasi liken this activity to a Lamp on a Drama stage. In the presence of the lamp, the actors on the stage perform all kinds of roles. But the lamp itself does not play any role! And without the lamp, to light up the stage, the actors cannot perform the drama!

**Sumati:** From what you say the concept of womanhood in Bharatavarsha emerges as the active, intelligent, creative and productive principle. This female principle may manifest itself in any field of human activity, arts, science, literature, philosophy, religion, education, spirituality and if there is any need even on the warfront.

**Mother:** Exactly! You remember that Sanskrit has a common word Dhee both for (1) Valour / Courage as well as (2) Wisdom. We find Rik Vedic hymns composed by women, Lopamudra, Apala, Vishwavara, Sikata, Nivavari, and Ghosha. Two classes of educated women (1) Sadyodwahas who studied up to this marriageable age and (2) Brahma Vadinis who did not marry but pursued their studies all their life. While performing Brahmajna we pay homage to Gargi, Vachaknavi, Vadava pratiteyi, Sulabha, Maitreyi. In the early Vedic period and later up to 500 BC upanayana was done for girls also. Kousalya performed various sacrifices to get good luck to Rama. Valmiki describes Sita as daily offering her

evening Vedic prayers. Vedic sacrifices continued to be offered daily to fire by wives during the absence of their husbands. Queens and dowager – queens like Gandhari, Draupadi, Kausalya and Kunti exercised considerable influence in the family council of kings. After the great Bharata war Bhishma advised Yudhishtira to sanction the coronation of the daughters of the diseased kings in case they left no sons. Later too, Vanaprasthins went to the forest along with their wives.

**Sumati:** How about intellectual pursuits?

**Mother:** Before the tenth century, woman teachers were well known. Vijayanka, Shita bhattarika and Devi were famous. The Eighth century saw a book on women's diseases written by a lady doctor!

**Sumathi:** I would like to listen to some names of queens and women administrators.

**Mother:** Oh! They were aplenty (1) Vijaya bhattarika the Chalukya Queen (650AD) (2) Sugandha and Didda of Kashmir (10<sup>th</sup> Century) (3) Akkadevi, Mailadevi, Lakshmi Devi of Chalukyas (4) Rajasthan - Princesses took active part both in war and in administration (5) Kurma Devi widow of king Samarsi took active part in organizing resistance to the invasion of Qutbuddin (in 1195 AD) (6) Karnavati, widow of Rana Sanga rekindled Patriotism through her fiery speeches and was responsible for the resistance shown to Sultan Bahadurshah of Gujarat at Chitor (7) Jawahirbai, widow of Rana Sanga fought at the head of the army and died in the battle field. (9) Tarabai of Kolhapur and Ahalyabai of Indore were well known administrators. (10) An Anglo Indian officer



has observed that if a Hindu principality was vigilantly and economically governed, if order was preserved without oppression, if cultivation was extending and people were prosperous, in three cases out of four, he found it to be under a women's rule.

**Sumati:** I remember that Kalidasa wrote Shakuntalam around the 8<sup>th</sup> century and Swami Vivekananda, remarked that a country that could produce a character like Shakuntala has nothing to learn on women's up - bringing from alien cultures.

**Mother:** Then listen to some more names from the culture that could envisage Shakuntala (1) The Vakataka Queen Prabhavati Gupta (4<sup>th</sup> Century) (2) Queen Tribhuvana Mahadevi of Orissa (3) Queen Gauri - Dandi Mahadevi of Orissa (4) Bakula and Dharma of the same state (5) Queen Ashwaka who confronted


Alexander (6) Queen Rani Bai Wife of Dadhiraja of Sind – the Queen waged a valiant war against Arab invaders (8<sup>th</sup> century) (7) Queen Mangayarkarasi of Pandya Kingdom who changed the course of Madurai history (8) Queen Rudramba of the Kakatiya dynasty (9) Rani Dugravati of Gondvana (10) Queen Chennamma of Nayaka lineage (11) Rani Umayammal of Trivancore (12) Rani Mangamma of Madurai - show that the great valorous Jhansi Rani Lakshmi Bai had brilliant predecessors, Rani Lakshmi Bai fought with her adopted son on her back. Indian womanhood showed heroism and the fighting spirit when the family values were threatened - Dharma was endangered – The Nation was in peril.

**Sumati:** Blessed is that Nation which could produce such women. These are the true inheritors of the spirit of CHANDI.

**Mother:** Yes!

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## UNFOLDING THE MINDFIELD

**Author :** Madhav Kamat

**Publisher :** Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd., 0-22, Lajpat Nagar II, New Delhi 110024

**Pages :** 234

**Price :** Rs.195/-

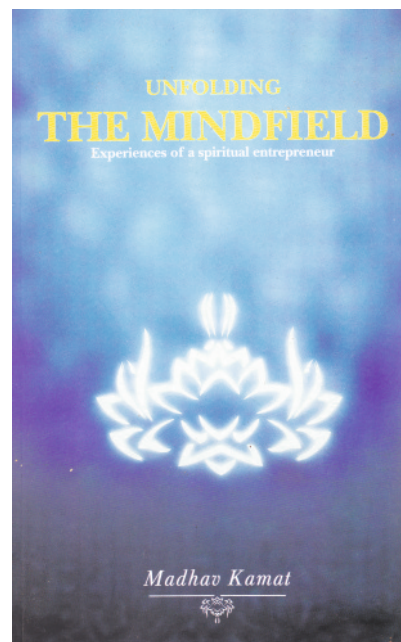
Living with riches, yet keeping one's own sensitivity, creativity and marching on the spiritual path-this combination is not everyone's cup of tea. Sooner or later one chooses either of these alternatives and ditches the other. Individuals and countries, when they become rich and strong become threats to others, threats to their own flexibility.

India is an exception and this country can rightly be expected to keep both spiritual as well as temporal aspects of life intact. Janaka and Ashvapati are often cited in our scriptures as being Shrimat as well as Atmavit, rich as well as spiritual.

Madhav Kamat's well crafted, well produced, highly readable book, shows that Janaka's trail is not lost, that there still are people who make an honest attempt to combine the worldly success with spiritual efforts.

Shri Kamat is fortunate to have found himself amidst very sensitive people, whose worldly success did not prevent them from being very fine human beings. He mentions his father, Dr.Homi Bhabha and Dr.Vikram Sarabhai as his mentors.

He has taken creative risks in his profession as a manufacturer of electronic goods and often had to start from the scratch. He had more



than his fair quota of rough edges, discourteous treatment, failures and challenges. But his firm faith in God and Dharma saw him through this book is a record of his feelings, experiences. Sincerity and faith shine through every page of this book. Mercifully each article is short and self-contained.

A couple of extracts will showcase the tenor of this book.

If in our day-to-day lives, we can create an atmosphere of goodwill and purity, we can

transmit these waves to those around us, radiating positive energy and making the environment conducive to good work (page 184).

“Swamiji” I said trying to start a conversation. “How can one stop the chatter of the mind?”

Hariji again let out his Ha Ha and then said “Why do you want to stop the inner chattering. That is the normal nature of the mind. Just a ignore it! Ha ha”.

I caught the point. As I understood it, waves

and ripples are always on the surface of the ocean. One has to learn to dive deeper to experience calmness (page 168).

Autobiographical writing is a risky business. One tends either to glorify one-self or cramped by being over cautious, turns unfair to oneself. The author has struck the right balance – the razor's edge.

The world will do with more entrepreneurs like Shri Madhav Kamat. The world of writing too.

**N.Krishnamoorti**

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## Relationships facilitate easy mobilization of funds for businesses

Prof.P.Kanagasabapathi

**F**inance is the life-blood of any business, however small it may be. Hence mobilization of the required funds for investment is the foremost duty of an entrepreneur. Generally the entrepreneurs themselves would have a portion of the money needed for investment in the form of personal savings or family assets. But that may not be sufficient for the promotion of a business or industry. In most cases, the total amount required for the venture would be more. So there is a need for the entrepreneur to mobilize the additional funds from other sources.



**A Textile Unit in Tiruppur**

Indians are very careful when it comes to funds for investments. Usually they try to invest as much money as possible from their own sources. Personal savings is their first priority as it belongs to them and hence they need not go to anybody to get it, except that they may have to inform their family members. Next to personal savings, the most immediate source is the family savings. In this respect the role of ladies in the family is very significant. One has

to specially appreciate the role of mothers and wives in contributing their savings for the promotion of new initiatives. So in most of the cases, the personal and family savings forms a compulsory part of the investments.

After exhausting the savings, people plan for pledging of the assets of the family and even disposal of a part of it to mobilize funds. The

main idea is to mobilize funds from family resources to the maximum extent possible, before looking outside for help. A study conducted among the businessmen belonging to the Sozhiya Chetty community in the Ghee and Butter

industry of Kangayam in Tamil Nadu showed that all their enterprises were funded by the families without any support whatsoever from any other outside sources.

Invariably in most of the cases, financial support from relatives and friends form a sizable share of the investments. Studies reveal that brothers, sisters, in-laws, grandparents, relatives, community men and friends play their part to support people who

promote ventures. A study conducted among the Reddiar community businessmen in Tamil Nadu showed that about one-fifth of them received support from their married sisters towards initial investments. It is interesting to see that the sisters had nudged their husbands to give funds to their brothers for promoting businesses.



**Diamond Industry, Surat**

In many cases, the relatives play an important role in mobilizing funds for investments. A study conducted among the diamond exporters belonging to the Patel community in Ahmedabad and Surat revealed that the relatives had played an important role in the setting up of businesses. The study showed that about 46 per cent of the respondents received more than 30 per cent of the initial capital from their relatives, while another 43 per cent received funds varying between 20 to 30 per cent of the amount required. The community men and friends also play a role by giving funds for business.

It is not that the people mobilize funds from own and family sources only for initial investments. Even for working capital and subsequent investments, they prefer approaching the personal sources before contacting outside agencies such as banks. Almost all the businessmen of Sankagiri in Tamil Nadu, the well known transport centre with the largest lorry traffic in the country, use funds from their own and close sources even for working capital. In the power loom textile export centre of Palladam in Tamil Nadu, all

the businessmen ploughed back their profits into the business as additional investments. It is interesting to note that 80 per cent of them were investing all their surpluses back in to their businesses.

World Development Report 2001, published by the World Bank, reveals as to how funds are mobilized by the

businessmen through their net work of relationships in Tirupur, the internationally known textile export centre. It says that the businessmen belonging to the Gounder community, who dominate the industry, mobilize funds through their community relationships without going to banks and paying interest at the market rates. For this purpose, they employ the "credit rotation" system and get funds. Ultimately this practice results in reducing their cost of capital which in turn reduces the cost of production, helping them to fix lower rates for their products.

In many of the industrial and business centres of Gujarat, the entrepreneurs revealed that they received financial support from their community men and villagers, when they expressed their desire to promote their own ventures. They noted that the contributions came spontaneously without hesitation as people wanted to see their own men in business and prosperity. Such kind of helping tendencies could be noticed in other parts of the country also.

When people find that the help from near and



Women coming out of a Textile Unit, Karur, Tamil Nadu

dear ones are not sufficient, they try to go for loans. Here also the informal mechanisms play an important role. People prefer to get loans from their acquaintances, as they are more personal and less cumbersome. There are many instances in which friends and relatives also provide loans for interest, either at market rates or even lesser. Then there are local

financiers, who are almost everywhere to provide finance to the needy.

People prefer the local financiers over institutions for reasons such as personal acquaintance, convenience, approachability, quick response in times of urgency and lack of rigid formalities. These reasons outweigh

difficulties such as higher rates of interest. As a result the local financiers play an important role in the promotion of businesses. Karur, the famous textile exporting centre in Tamil Nadu known for home made textiles, was also known for its finance entities operated by the local people as partnership firms.



Diamond Inspection

A study revealed that two third of the total funds required by the Karur industry was mobilized from the local finance entities. That was in spite of the presence of more than fifty branches of banks in the centre. Incidentally Karur was the birth place of two banks namely Karur Vysya Bank and Lakshmi Vilas Bank, both promoted by the local people decades earlier. The study showed that almost the entire financial transactions were taking place on the basis of faith and goodwill. Financiers were not worried about getting documents from the borrowers as they believed the people. The businessmen also reciprocated and as a result the bad debts were almost not there.

Thus relationships play a dominant part in mobilizing funds for businesses. This is one of the major reasons why the economy has been growing steadily, in spite of lesser penetration of banks and financial institutions among different sections of the society. Relationship is an important factor for much of the initiatives in the Indian economy, particularly those that belong to the family based non-corporate sector, as they facilitate easy mobilization of funds. Hence we have to realize that the relationship base of the society has been helping the economy to grow.

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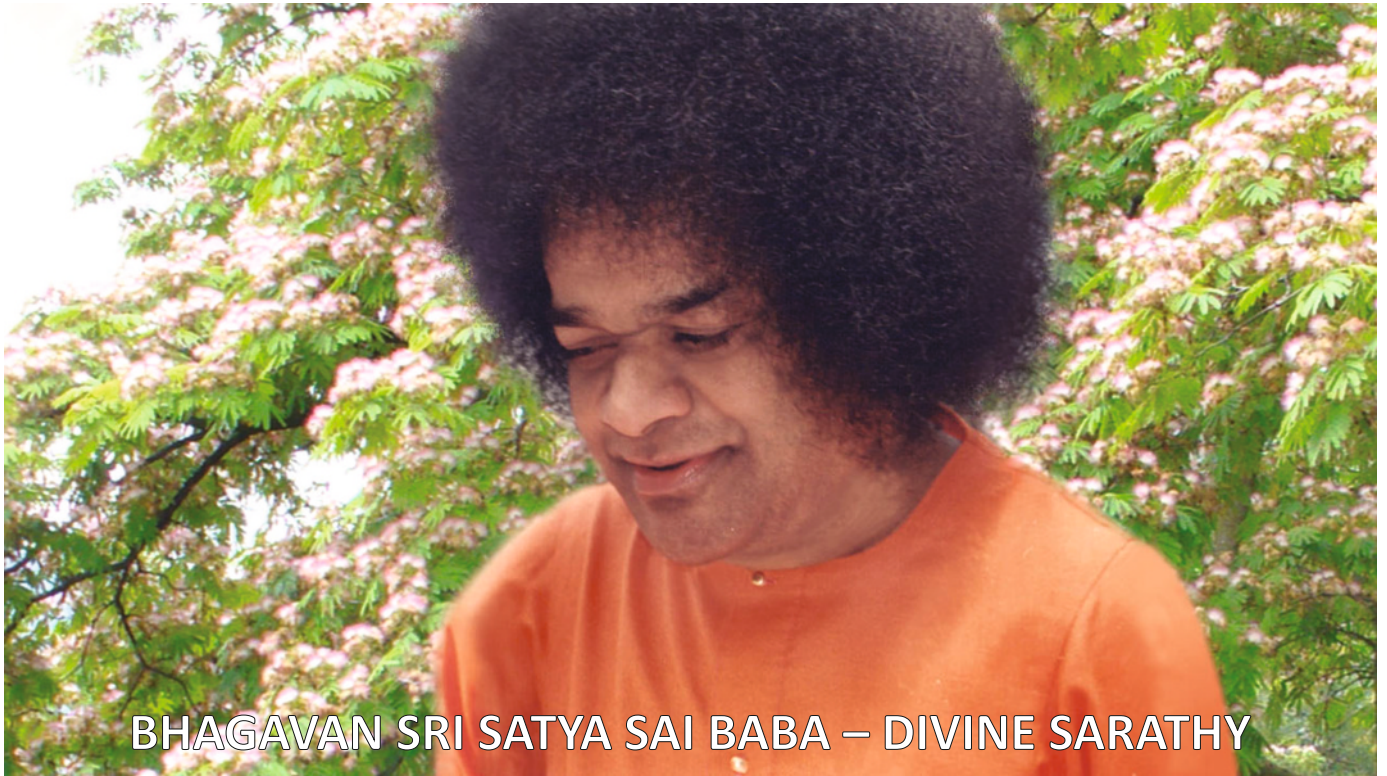
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**If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed  
Punya Bhumi,.... The land where humanity has attained its highest  
towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards  
calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality –it is  
India.**



## BHAGAVAN SRI SATYA SAI BABA – DIVINE SARATHY

by a Devotee

*“The vibuthi is symbolic of the Cosmic Immortal. It is what is left when everything worldly, transient and changeable has burnt away. It is symbolic of the life-death cycle in which everything ultimately reduces itself to ash” – Baba*

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave up this mortal body at 7:40 a.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2011, thereby showing His devotees that the body is worldly, transient and changeable and hence reduces itself to ash. Let us look, with a rational view, at the life, teachings and legacy of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a saga of love and service to mankind, and what it means today, in short, “What is left when everything... has burnt away”.

Born in a remote village called Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh on November 23, 1926, young Sathya was an epitome of love, compassion and selfless service. When He was about 14 years old He declared that He was Saibaba. He told his family, “I am leaving; the work I have come here for has to be initiated”. Thus He embarked upon an endless Mission that has touched and changed the lives of many not just in His remote village but across the globe.

In the early years Sri Sathya Sai baba would travel the length and breadth of the country giving discourses and carrying out the activities that entailed His Mission. His discourses were suffused with the highest Vedanta, imparted in the most simplified manner that could be understood even by an illiterate villager. In later years, though He didn't travel much He still carried on the activities of His Mission with the same fervour and enthusiasm from His ashram He built in Puttaparthi, called Prashanti Nilayam.



Prashanti Nilayam, or the Abode of Peace, in itself is something to be marveled at. Tucked away on the banks of the Chitravathi River, Prashanti Nilayam has changed the face of the once forlorn village of Puttaparthi. It is at Prashanti Nilayam that people of all religions from all over the world gather to have darshan of Baba, to celebrate their festivals and to seek answers to their various problems and ailments. Yes, Sathya Sai Baba's Mission has broken all barriers of religion, caste, creed, colour, gender, economic status, education, and so on. All His devotees, irrespective of their varied backgrounds, came under one roof "as one family, through the bond of brotherhood;... to recognize the common Divine Heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise to the divine which is his goal."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba first attracted his devotees with his miracles which he used as a sugar coated pill to administer the highest knowledge of the Self and to bring out the inherent divinity in Man. He himself never attached any importance to the so-called miracles. He says, "You will understand Me only through My work, that is why sometimes in order to reveal who I am, I myself show you my 'Visiting Card' something that you call a miracle".

By these astonishing miracles he first made people believe in him. Experiencing these miracles helped to build a strong faith in him. Once a person comes into SAI fold, the great vedantin that he was, he gives the highest knowledge in simplest form – Practical Vedanta for transformation of the Self.

\*

It is from Prashanti Nilayam that Sri Sathya Sai Baba initiated His devotees onto a path of unconditional Love and Selfless Service. "Service," He told them, "is the highest form of worship and the best penance". He gave them mottos such as "Love all, Serve all" and "Help ever, Hurt never". But He did not stop with just preaching. He instituted projects and service institutions of such magnitude that even governments have not been able to execute.

*The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences:* The Super Speciality Hospital at Prashantigram, Puttaparthi is a 300 bed hospital with 11 operation theatres. It has the departments of Cardiology, Cardio Thoracic and Vascular Surgery, Urology, Plastic Surgery, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics and gastroenterology (endoscopy). The Super Speciality Hospital at Whitefield, Bangalore is a 333 bed hospital with eight operation theatres performing more than 6 cardiac surgeries, 8 Neuro surgeries and 18 cardiac catheterizations per day. The hospital also provides undergraduate B.Sc courses in Nursing, Imaging Technology, Perfusion Technology, Anesthesia Technology, Medical Laboratory Technology and Cardiac Technology. The Sathya Sai Mobile Hospital is a unique holistic health service catering to Rural Medicare. It reaches out to over 1.5 lakh villagers from about 72 villages of 6 mandals. Over 500 doctors from various medical fields come together in this project on a voluntary basis. Besides these, there are also the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospitals at Puttaparthi and Whitefield. These hospitals, which are a part of the Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust, offer state of the art medical and surgical care to

patients totally free of cost.

*The Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust* has a Publications Division, Media Division, Bhaktha Sahayak Division and Mahila Division. The Bhaktha Sahayak Division comprises of a Prashanti general store and three canteens that cater to the food and other requirements of the devotees visiting Prashanti Nilayam, at easily affordable prices. It also maintains a Gokulam housing 450 cows and calves. The milk is supplied to the Hospitals, Students' Hostel and South Indian Canteen. All old dry cows are taken care of till their natural end. The Mahila Division makes village women self-reliant by training them in preparing large scale orders of food items, direct food service, tailoring and marketing these items.

*The Easwaramma Women's Welfare Trust* conducts mother and child medical camps and is involved in charitable programmes such as donating water filters, hygiene kits, baby kits, sarees, food packets, medicines, solar lamps, cookers and blankets.

*The Sri Sathya Sai Orissa Housing Project:* When tragedy struck Orissa in September 2008 in the form of a deluge of flood waters that submerged large areas of land over four districts, volunteers of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation rushed to the affected areas with supplies of food, medicines and clothes to provide relief to the flood-affected people. Sri Sathya Sai Baba then directed a rehabilitation programme for the affected villagers by constructing permanent houses for those whose huts had been washed away. It was a massive project of over 700 houses and some primary schools as well. These houses were of

permanent type with electrical connections, water supply arrangements and approach roads. They were also built on an elevated plinth in order to protect them from being damaged during any further floods.

*Sri Sathya Sai University* established under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956 and accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) at A++ level offers free education for all in its three campuses at Puttaparthi, Whitefield, Anantapur (exclusively for women), irrespective of caste, creed, status, religion, and so on. The methodology followed is Educare, a concept conceived by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, by which value-based integral education is imparted with the sole aim of character building. The University conducts courses in undergraduate programmes in Arts, Science and Commerce; post graduate programmes in Arts and Science; professional programmes like MBA (Finance), B.Ed, M.Tech (Computer Science), M.Tech (Applied Optics); and Research and Doctoral programmes like M.Phil and Ph.D.

*Drinking Water Projects:* These projects include supply of drinking water to (1) 731 villages of Anantpur Districts by laying 2500 kms length of pipelines (2) 320 villages of Medak and Mehboobnagar districts in Telangana region (3) 10 million people in Chennai daily through Sri Sathya Sai Ganga Canal (4) 230 villages in East Godavari district and 220 villages in West Godavari district. Each of these mammoth projects were envisaged and completed in less than a year.

*Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation:* It comprises of the Seva Dal, Sai Youth and Bal Vikas. The Seva Dal is a band of volunteers from all walks of

life ever ready to offer their services in times of need. The Sai Youth, as the name denotes, consists of young people who are endowed with a healthy body, strong mind and a sharp intellect. Sri Sathya Sai Baba's advice to the youth is that, "the education you have received from the society must be dedicated to it by way of service". In accordance with this dictum, the Sai Youth involves itself in selfless service to fellow human beings. The Bal Vikas is a programme charted out for children in the school-going age group which includes Educare as part of the Sai Spiritual Education.

Besides these projects of monumental proportions Sri Sathya Sai Baba has also given to His devotees two other legacies Sai Bhajans and Narayana Seva.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba always stressed upon the importance of Nama Smarana as a sadhana to redeem oneself in the Kali Yuga. Be it singing of bhajans and other devotional hymns, chanting of the Vedas or merely repeating the Name of the Lord, Nama Smarana is an activity that Sai devotees indulge in, on a regular basis. The huge body of Sai bhajans that Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given His devotees are quite simple in content, style and tune that anyone from any part of the world could sing it, irrespective of the language they spoke. Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself has composed bhajans, has taught them to others and would often sing them too. He has also laid down guidelines for devotees to follow while singing bhajans.

*Narayana Seva and Gram Seva:* Narayana Seva or feeding the poor is an activity that Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave His devotees to redeem them of their pride, ego and sense of superiority. Gram Seva, as the name suggests, took volunteers

into villages to do humanitarian service to the people there. Sri Sathya Sai Baba advocated a 'caring and sharing' policy and set an example by Himself serving food, clothes and other necessities to the needy.

It did not matter if the person was in the physical presence of Baba or not, just association with Sri Sathya Sai Baba, His name, form or even any one of the varied spiritual activities He prescribed was enough to bring about the change. We hear of devotees relating their experiences of how they were saved from a calamity, how their problem was solved, how they overcame bad habits, how He gave them the fortitude to face life with courage and conviction... the list is endless.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba said, "You must be heroes in practice, not merely in platform speeches". A true hero He was because He put into practice, all that He preached. He not only set up the various service institutions but also showed the ideal way to run them, with unconditional love and selfless service. His legacy, "What is left when everything... has burnt away", is monumental, unmatched, of massive proportions and will remain so in the history of humankind. Each of His service projects and each and every one of His devotees stand testimony to His life's Mission, to his unfailing and unflinching efforts at making humanity realize its inherent Divinity.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba continues to live through his devotees and through the various service activities initiated by him. The Sai Vibuthi that once flowed from out of His palms now flows in the name of selfless service and unconditional love.

SAIRAM



## FROM KAZAKH WITH LOVE

**Akmaral Kainazarova, Bharatanatyam dance performer, conducted colourful program on Bharatnatyam and Kazakh folk dances in Music Academy, Chennai. She is running the Centre of Indian classical dance in Almaty, Kazakhstan. At present she is doing MA Bharatnatyam at University of Madras. YB met her to know her views on Indian Culture and Arts.**

**YB : Tell us about what pulled you towards India**

Akmaral : From my childhood I have been very interested in Indian culture. I don't know why or how, but even when I was very young, my grandmother had huge shelves of Indian books - some grandmothers are always into cooking and housework, but my grandmother was always reading - I remember very well. She used to tell us stories from India, Sri Lanka. At that age, we felt like these were miraculous countries. Then when I was growing up, my father was a Colonel with the Ministry of

Internal Affairs. Every Friday there was a movie at the Ministry - very often an Indian movie, those were Soviet times. So we used to have movies of Raj Kapoor and all of us and our grandparents used to like them - they were very sentimental, very warm, nice simple movies and it was very close to our people. And there was a movie starring Amitabh Bachchan - I was six years old. After watching that, I understood India was a very very different country: very colourful and bright. I wanted to do something in life which will help me be happy and also make others happy. But I did not know clearly what I had to do. I just knew that India was a bright country. I liked the dance sequences in the movies. Then I started learning about Indian dance, I came to know about Indian classical dance. I was 14 years old then. I came to know that there were seven classical dance styles (at that time) and that among these seven, Bharatanatyam was the most difficult. I wanted to learn it. But at that time I was in school - I didn't know how to learn it, because at that time Kazakhstan was

under Russia. It was a time when - we couldnt go out of our country for studies. I was very brave; I called the Indian Embassy in Moscow to see if they could send me to study dance to India. My sister said it was a stupid idea and laughed at me.

I also used to write. My father said "I dont know what you want to do, but you could join the journalism course in Kazakh National University." My father also used to write well, but then he had to join the army during World War II and his whole life was spent in the army. He wrote a lot of stories, dramas; he wrote a lot of books on history too, but he was not able to become a writer. But he didnt accept dance as a possibility. I completed my schooling with distinction and joined the classes for journalism at the university and started writing about India. I conducted a TV program called "Do you know India?" which became very famous. I met Mr. Anuar, who like me liked India very much, we got married latter and he joined me in all the India activities. At the university we started a Center for Indian Shanti Culture. At that time, there was no Embassy in Kazakhstan, only a Friendship Society. Since we had very little information about Indian Culture our work was not very professional. I wrote to the embassy in Moscow to get a tape of Indian classical dance. The first time I heard the music of Indian classical dance, tears just started flowing from my eyes. It was the music of Bharatnatyam. That's when I decided this is what I wanted to do. I completed my university and then got married. My husband said he didn't want me to be unhappy without learning Bharatnatyam and that if I could get a scholarship I could go to learn Bharatnatyam. My father was still unhappy - he said "you completed your MA with distinction, got married. What more are you looking to do now? You should look to get a family and settle down". I told him that this was something very special and really what I want to do. Journalism was fine, I can write and all that, but this is something that can give life, where my passion is. There has to be something in life that gives inspiration to you and to others. Otherwise life gets very boring.

Though my Papa was still not convinced, my mother was. I got a scholarship from ICCR - the first scholarship in Kazakhstan and the first one for dance as well. And in 1993 I joined Kalakshetra in culture field (in Chennai) and was a student there for 5 years. I completed the 4 year Bharatnatyam course and 1 year nattuvangam course. in 1998 I had my arangettram in Music Academy and went back to Kazakhstan. The moment I landed, I went straight to the embassy and asked the Indian Ambassador if I could join the Indian Cultural Center as a Bharatnatyam dance teacher, performer. He happily agreed and I joined one week later. So for 7 years I worked at the embassy. Then I started my dance centre. At that time, people would come in and ask me to teach the dance they saw in movies. "This is Indian dance, isnt it?" they will ask. Now after 13 years, nobody asks like that. Then the Kazakh capital was changed from our city to Astana. So the Indian Embassy also automatically shifted to Astana. My husband and I both decided that we didnt want to move to Astana. We continue the Centre of Indian classical dance at Almaty. Then I convinced my husband that I had to do my MA in Bharatnatyam in India. It was important because Bharatnatyam is an ocean and one cannot get enough inspiration from watching videos, one cannot give oneself. It was also important because in my country, qualification is important, especially if you are into training. My mother, father and sister had a PhD; I had to do at least an MA! So I came with Anyana, my daughter, and my son stayed with my husband in Almaty. I am also really very thankful to the ICCR for arranging the scholarship and the Government of India for being so supportive.

**Q: You mentioned that Indian movies were the only way to know about India.**

Yes, that was the case during Soviet times. Now, after independence it is open, more information, more opportunities - now people understand a lot about Yoga, Ayurveda and dance. The Indian embassy provides so much



information. We conduct so many conferences on Indian culture, general history, economics and such. There are a lot of people from India who come there for business and we interact. Maybe in some parts, people still only watch movies, but

general awareness about India is much more now. I must also say that Yoga is very popular in my country. There are many "varieties" of yoga being taught. There are many good teachers, but there are also some that are not so well versed. Of course these yoga teachers are all very flexible and all that, but that's it. For example, many ballet dancers suddenly become yoga teachers, because they are flexible and people think simply because they are flexible, they are yogis! This is really sad. People don't get to know about what yoga really is. That is unfortunate. I think that is a problem in all foreign countries and even in India. We also find that dance and yoga are very related to each other and cannot be separated. Especially with the age going up, you realize that you need something to support your dance - there is concentration and all that mind work associated. That is why we have come here for yoga classes.

**Q. Tell us about Kazakh culture. Similarity with Indian culture if there are any.**

First, India and Kazakhstan are very close geographically. From Delhi to Almaty is 3 hours by air. But if we were to go over the Himalayas instead of going around, it will only be 1.5 hours! There is also a historical connection. Kazakhstan was part of the Silk Route that connected India. It was only the

October Revolution in 1917 that completely broke that connection. There are so many common words between Hindi and Kazakh. There is a similarity in musical instruments. There was a great ruler of Kashmir Muhammad Haidan Dulati who was Kazakh. One more example - in 1955, when Jawaharlal Nehru was the Indian Prime Minister, he visited Almaty with Indira Gandhi. Our people were so impressed by her that many people named their children Indira after that visit. There are many many examples of closeness like these. And because of these, I have so much love for India. Maybe I was born here in my previous life! When I came here to Chennai the first time and I heard all the people here talk Tamil so fast, to me it sounded like Kazakh, I had that impression. From the moment I came here I felt so natural, at home. So that is why I have taken it as my modest mission - to spread Indian culture in Kazakhstan. It might sound very ambitious, but we want to contribute our part, do as much as we can to spread Indian culture. This is what we have been doing, this is what we will continue to do once we get back.

On Kazakh culture, just like in India, we have a rich musical tradition. We have Aitys, which is a vocal improvisation on dombra and some other Kazakh national instruments. It is so deep, so philosophical, just like the Carnatic music we have here musically, technically and content-wise too. And just like Carnatic is not understood by everybody, Aitys is also not understood by everybody - it is an elite, folk art. In dance, the techniques are very different. In our traditional dance forms, we have dances based on mythological stories, just like Bharatnatyam is full of Ramayana and Mahabharata stories. So I cannot say they are very different either. It is not very similar, but it is not too different either. I always feel this closeness - so we also created a fusion of Kazakh and Bharatnatyam styles. This has become very successful and popular among the audience as it makes them very happy. In that fusion, we used classical Carnatic and our Kazakh folklore and in dance too, we used

some Kazakh dance and Bharatnatyam. It makes us feel happy that it was accepted but it also shows that there is a closeness between our countries.

**Q: How was times during the Russian occupation?**

Just like the British rule in India, we had good things and bad things during the Russian occupation. The worst thing that happened was that they started underground nuclear testing in a beautiful place in Kazakhstan called Semey. Just imagine, all the people died and it was a place where a lot of great philosophers, artists and poets were born. After independence all nuclear testing was stopped, but this is something that we cannot accept and remains a painful topic for us. Also in the 1930s all Kazakh intelligentsia were completely killed by the Soviets. They wanted us as slaves - to exploit our natural resources, we have oil, minerals and others in abundance. That is what they wanted to exploit. That is why the population of such a huge nation is only 15 million, only as much as one Calcutta. Of course, World War II, many people fought in and many people died there. Very less population is the problem of our country. In India, I hear often that one child is enough. In our country, having 3 children is like having one child - that is like our custom. Every family should have at least 3 children.

So coming back to Russian occupation - the occupation brought us education and it brought a lot of people from other countries. Just imagine - in Kazakhstan, we have over 140 nationalities - we have Germans, Koreans, Uzbeks, Tatars, Greeks many of whom came during the second world war. This is also something good, I think. We accepted everybody in our country. So now you dont see Kazakhstan as a typical Asian country or a European country or any other. It is a complete mix and after independence we have had a very stable politics, economy - thanks to our President for that.

**Q:What is the primary religion in Kazakhstan?**

We have so many religions! During the Soviet government, there was to be no religion. They wanted everybody to be communists. My father, when he was in the Government, he was communist too, of course. But my mother, she used to offer muslim prayers. But after independence, we have everything, we have the Catholic church, the Orthodox church, mosques, Buddhist temple, Krishna Consciousness Society temple, and everything. We have many religions and its open. For example, I am open - I celebrate christmas, if my mother says we can go to the mosque, I go and I also go to Hindu temples. Actually, I am a theosophist. I believe all religions are exactly the same, the branches of one big tree like the banyan. Some people come to me and tell me that Bharatnatyam is a religious dance. Nothing like it! It is a spiritual dance - there is a big difference between religion and spirituality.

**Q:What was the ancient religion of Kazakhs?**

The ancient Kazakhs were nomads. There were these huge steppes that they had to travel. They believed in the Sun, the Rain... I think its just like in the Vedas. They believed in a God of Rain, the Sun God, just like Surya and Indra. In the 7th century, the muslims came and started to spread their religion. So for a long time Kazakhs were muslims until the Russians occupied us. Then they said there was no religion.

**Q:Is there any movement to revive the ancient systems?**

There is no need to revive because it is still there. Nobody prohibited, nobody said dont do this or that. It is still available. Of course now, because in Kazakhstan everywhere there are cities, there is no need for a nomadic lifestyle. But in remote villages, yes, the ancient practices still continue - people still try to follow even the nomadic lifestyle. Its a very

traditional lifestyle - they have these traditional Kazakh tents, they drink camel milk, horse milk and stick to the traditions. In city of course, its modernised - people cook different food.

**Q:How is the response to your Indian Classical Dance initiative in Kazakhstan?**

I am happy with the response. First, the Indian Government is very appreciative of our work, which is very important. When the then Prime Minister Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee came there in 2002, I performed on his arrival. And in 2008, when the Vice-President of India, Mohammed Hamid Ansari visited our country with his family and a huge delegation, the embassy requested and my students and I performed for him. We are able to get a lot of articles published and get our message to a lot of people. What is our message? Our message is that Bharatnatyam has a lot of therapeutic benefits as well. These are not just words - these are things that we can see easily. Some of my students, they got better eyesight, some of them say my breathing became better and some others say they have improvements in their hearts. It is a friendship between our countries. It is a spiritual art. It is not just dance. In our country, we have so many dances, everything from ballet and ballroom dance but this Bharatnatyam is something of a gem. Because it is philosophical, it is spiritual. Other dance forms do not convey this. So this is the message that we are trying to convey through our articles, and we conduct all our programs free of charge. We dont sell any tickets. We believe that if one really wants to do something for the people, we have to just do it without looking for something. We conduct lecture-demonstrations in schools, in universities and colleges and we do that only to spread this culture, this message, this art. I think that is why the response is so good - because we come with an open heart and people can feel that. If our hearts are open, they open their hearts as well. The age of our students is between 6 and

60! Children are brought by parents because they want them to be physically fit. Teenagers come in for some reasons and once they see its not just dance and it has a deeper meaning, they become more



involved. Young mothers come in to get back into shape. Aged people come in and take it as a challenge because Bharatnatyam requires a lot of stamina and technique. For me its not important that everybody has to perform on stage. That is not the focus.

**Q: How many students are there?**

I had 70 students when I left to Chennai for MA in 2009. Now the classes are run by two of my students, very efficient and knowledgeable, but they are still students. Now we have a strength of 30 students. And even when I am here (in India), the work is going on, growing. ICCR is helping with a small financial aid because we have to rent a premises for the classes. And my future dream is set up a Theatre of Indian Culture. This is my crazy dream, just like the one I had when I was young to study dance in India. It is important because we are exactly in the center of the Asian continent. On one side is Europe and on the other is India and other countries so we are in between. In that theatre I want to have Dance, Yoga, I want to have dance, a vegetarian restaurant, nice Indian shops. There are so many things that people there want from India, like Ayurvedic medicines, Indian clothes and all that. So I learnt that through dance, we can reach so many other things, one can expand. I feel that every foreign country should have Yoga, dance and Ayurveda - you see its health and happiness.



## Our Heroes



## Birsa Munda

- the tribal warrior who waged a battle against British forces

S.Shivsankar

It has been the norm with historians – of all colours – to present

alternate terminologies if not entirely partisan versions of Indian history. We have people casually calling the **First War of Indian Independence** as the **Sepoy Mutiny**. And we don't even hear about the uprising by the sailors and officers of the Royal Indian Navy in February, 1946, against their British masters. With such bleak prospects for even widespread movements, the chances of hearing about Tribal uprisings deep in the heart of India against the British are almost non-existent.

One such tribal rebellion against the cruel British colonizers happened in the late 1890s. Spearheaded by the tribal leader Birsa Munda, this movement – hailed as the **Ulgulan** or the **Upheaval** – had slowly gathered great momentum among the tribal people of the Chhotanagpur region, requiring the army to be called in. The decisive point of this Ulgulan occurred in January 1900, when hundreds of men, women and children were massacred at Dombari Hill. This would be a precursor for the Jalian Wala Bagh massacre of Sikhs on Baisakhi. The British administration suppressed the information about this massacre of indigenous communities and there was almost a complete media whitewash, except for solitary mentions like in

the editorial of *the Statesman* of Calcutta on March 25, 1900.

When we look into the reason for the tribal uprising, we find the roots in two reasons – missionary activity and denial of traditional rights of the indigenous communities by the British. All the indigenous tribal communities lived in harmony with nature. The land and forest belonged to the community as a whole and though deeds and titles did not exist, the communities honoured their promises. All this was thrown into chaos by the entry of the British, who imposed their administrative jurisdiction, along with innumerable laws and regulations on these communities – with a singular purpose: to cheat the land off these communities. And they used zamindars, thikedars and jagirdars, who were natives, but still outsiders or *dikus* to the tribal communities, to achieve this end. The indigenous communities were forced down to the lowest level of manual labourers from being landowners. Whole villages were captured as bonded labourers by these new landlords with the help of the British establishment.

This effort of the British was also greatly aided by the proselytization of the tribals by Christian missionaries. The simple and naive indigenous communities were fraudulently converted by the missionaries. They established schools where the children from the tribal communities were taught to scorn their traditions and look down upon the customs. This is evident from Birsa Munda's encounters with missionaries at their schools.



He was keenly observant and sensitive as a child. By the time of his birth, the British and at



their behest the missionaries had already entrenched themselves in the Chhotanagpur region. The indigenous communities were already mired in poverty. Birsa's family was converted to Christianity before he was born and his father Sugana Munda also worked as a 'catechist' for the German Lutheran Mission.

Birsa Munda was born in Chalkad, in the year 1875 and had his early schooling there. Birsa's family kept moving in search of jobs and better prospects. By the time he was 20, Birsa had travelled from Chalkad to Ayubhatu, Salga, Khatanga, Kundi Bartoli, Burju and Chaibasa. He realized that the proprietary rights of the indigenous communities were lightly dismissed by the authorities and the landlords. Though Birsa was involved in his studies he was offended by the attacks by the Christian missionaries on the traditions and culture of his community. He observed that instead of increasing, Christianity only degraded their standard of life. He therefore, came to the conclusion that for any relief of his community, both the British and the missionaries should be driven out. He immediately reconverted and gave a call for his brethren to wake up.

By 1895, Birsa had gathered a large number of followers. He told them not to pay taxes to the British administration for their lands, since it belonged to them. Under his leadership, they also began to attack the British and missionary establishments. Not only the missionaries were unable to convert, their properties were also being destroyed. Once this became regular, the British administration panicked and captured Birsa Munda through a clandestine operation. He was jailed for two years under section 505 of the penal code.

Birsa Munda was released in 1897 and his power only began to grow. He was seen as a 'prophet' by his people and they flocked to him. He was only in his early twenties, but his followers had grown to become a cult and called him "*Dharti Aba*" or the *Father of the Earth*. Being clear on who committed atrocities against the indigenous communities, he declared that the British-missionary-moneylender-landlord nexus will be destroyed, but the common people who were converted to Christianity will be protected. The attacks started again and for more than two years, Birsa Munda could not be captured by the British, while the attacks on their establishments were happening.

This culminated in the Dombari Hill massacre in January 1900. So many people were killed that the locals named Dombari, *Topped Buru* or the *Mound of the Dead*. The British threw both the dead and wounded people into nearby ravines and gorges. Shortly thereafter, in February 1900 for the second time, Birsa was captured from the forests around Chakradharpur, while he was asleep. He died under mysterious circumstances while he was in jail on 9 June 1900. More than 400 people were captured, accused in 15 different cases and put to trial. One was sentenced to death, 39 were sentenced to transportation for life and 23 were sentenced for imprisonments of various periods. Along with Birsa Munda, five other people died under custody during the 10 month period when the trial was conducted.

Birsa, though alive only for 25 years, had entrenched himself into the psyche of the indigenous communities. Even after his death, his followers continued their agitation for their rights and ultimately joining the national freedom movement. Unfortunately, their rights have not been fully recognized even after independence. Since the Chhotanagpur region is rich in minerals, many communities have actually been displaced from their homes and their forests destroyed to give way for mines and industries.