

Hindu Religion in Australia — Its Roots and Growth

Book of Abstracts



Sun 5 September 2021

Plenary Sessions

10:00 - 10:30 Dr Raja Ram Mohan Roy Discovery of the Original Boundaries of Nakshatras
Indian astronomical texts give the coordinates of the yogatārās or junction stars of nakshatras. These coordinates have been interpreted as polar coordinates, which depend on the position of the north celestial pole. Polar coordinates of a star should change with time due to precession. However, different astronomical texts written over many centuries give same coordinates for most yogatārās. This has resulted in Indian astronomers being called incompetent, who did not observe the positions of the stars with accuracy. When I read this, I knew that something is seriously wrong. I refused to believe that Indian astronomers were incompetent. I knew that there is much more to this than meets the eye. Could it be possible that the data was really in ecliptic coordinates that do not change with time and that is why Indian astronomers were not updating the coordinates of the stars? The fundamental investigation went deep into the origins of Indian astronomy and involved a reassessment of the boundaries of the nakshatras and the identity of the yogatārās. It resulted in the discovery of the original boundaries of nakshatras and zero points of Vedic astronomy. In this presentation, different coordinate systems used in astronomy will be discussed. Currently accepted and the original boundaries of nakshatras will be described. The identifications of the yogatārās of Aśvinī and Revatī and their importance on ancient Indian chronology will be examined.

10:30 - 11:00 Himanshu Pota īsopaniṣad – Religion and the Laws of Nature

Abstract: In eighteen short verses īsopaniṣad captures vast wisdom. Verses nine, ten, and eleven, in this upaniṣad provide a unique insight into the complete human being. Verse eleven is very direct in declaring that avidyā is the means to attaining immortality. The great masters, śaṅkarācārya and rāmānujācārya, take avidyā to mean karmakāṇḍa; Sri Aurobindo takes it as plain ignorance. In the language of today, avidyā can be taken to mean religion. This at once places within the embrace of religion the different faiths and opinions, made possible by avdiyā, that go by the label religion or otherwise. The great upaniṣad takes it further and emphatically declares that this avidyā or religion is the only way to immortality. This talk takes the view that the plain meaning of the upaniṣad leads to a transformation in thinking and expands the ability to comprehend diverse ideas like, Eastern and Western philosophy, culture and science, in one frame work. This wisdom from the upaniṣad may be the most potent seed to plant in the rugged Australian soil to grow the Hindu religion.

Parallel Session

Four parallel sessions have been organised with the the themes: Education, Ritual & Social Order, Philosophy, and Practical Hinduism in Australia. As one can expect, due to the diversity of submissions, every paper is not an exact fit but the general area is right.

Education

McComas Taylor 11:10:00 AM Education

Title: Sanskrit Studies in the Australian Education System: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Levels

Abstract: This paper will offer a brief overview of the current state of Sanskrit studies in the Australian formal education system (as opposed to community-based teaching). It will touch briefly on programs in the primary and secondary systems, but will focus largely on Sanskrit programs currently available at University level. It will also offer a snapshot of research being undertaken in Australia by scholars associated with universities and also by a number of independent researchers outside the formal tertiary system. The challenges and opportunities for the future of Sanskrit studies will also be adumbrated.

Padmanabhan Krishnan 11:30:00 AM Education

Title: Mainstreaming Hindu Philosophy in Australian Universities

Abstract: Every philosophy department in Australia teaches topics such as ethics, knowledge, and logic. While there may be aspects of ideas from Hinduism in these courses, there is no denying that the main focus is western thought (e.g., Greeks to modern philosophers). The question is how to increase the content from ancient Hindu thought in these curricula. Given the demand-driven nature of such courses, it is not easy to add a major on Hindu philosophy to the existing degree structure. As the general populace is not aware of deep Hindu philosophy, it is unlikely there will be a demand for it. Even Indian students at university may not be interested in studying such topics. The way forward is to add Hindu philosophy in existing subjects by intertwining the Hindu ideas in what is already taught. While this will also require effort, I feel this is the easiest option to increase the content of Hindu philosophy in Australian universities. In this talk I will present some ideas that may get traction in the curriculum. While the influence of the Upanishads on people like Huxley and Schopenhauer is well understood, there are other ideas that can be leveraged. These include Wittgenstein's unsayable or limits of language which is very similar to the ideas by the 5th century CE philosopher Bhrtshari, Nagarjuna's Chatushkoti logic, Whitehead's process theology which aligns very well ideas like Ishvara's lila and Karma and Advaitic ethics as everyone is ultimately one.

Lakshmi Narasimhan 11:50:00 AM Education

Title: Challenges in Teaching Samskritam in Australia

Abstract: In this presentation I will touch up a number of topics based on my experience in teaching Samskritam to both children and adults over the past few years. These topics relate to the aims and purpose of teaching Samskritam and how to structure a curriculum and pedagogy to meet these aims in an informal setting. I will also relate the above to some of the existing curricula that are used to teach Samskritam in Australia including its strengths and weakness. Those interested in a formal setting are better directed to relevant university courses. The presentation will focus on two dimensions, namely, goals of the teaching and the way to teach. For instance, if the aim is to teach the meaning of the shlokas or the scriptures, one need not focus on speaking. Similarly, if the aim is to get a critical mass of speakers, the focus should be on spoken Samskritam and relate it to modern situations. Another important discussion that is necessary is how to align the pedagogy to what people in Australia are used to. For instance, asking students to memorise grammar rules is not going to work. If the goal is teach people to chant the various shlokas, then memorisation is acceptable. One needs to invest

in techniques that are visual, perhaps games based, picture books, songs etc. to make the subject interesting. Because studying Samskritam is optional, it is absolutely vital to make it interesting.

Bhuvan Unhelkar 12:10:00 PM Education

Title: Universities (Vishwa Vidyalaya) of Ancient India: Their contribution to humanity and their relevance to today's world

Abstract: Ancient India (Bharat) is substantially more than a physical, geographic location. The entire culture, education, governance and economy of Bharat was based on the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" - universality of home. This paper presents a study of the educational institutions and the educational system of Bharat based on the aforementioned principle. Education (Gyan) was never considered a commodity to be paid for or traded - but, rather, a way of life that was transmitted through the gentle process of "osmosis" from the Guru to the Shishya (Teacher to Student). A clear distinction between the dimensions of Vigyan (Science) and Gyan (Spiritual knowledge) existed although both dimensions co-existed. The balance between science and spiritual quest formed the fundamentals of education system of Bharat. This paper presents the systems of the past and aims to correlate those systems with what exists today. By presenting a comparative study of the two systems, this paper aims to make a contribution in improved understanding of the lacuna existing in today's education system (especially at University level) and an approach to bridging that gap.

Meenakshi Srinivasan 01:00:00 PM Education

Title: Designing universal syllabus for Indian Languages.

Abstract: The need for a Universal Common Syllabus is long overdue. Language is one of the most important of tools for a flourishing healthy society. It is the mirror that reflects all the cultural, traditional and also the scientific knowledge of our society. Sanskrit is the vast, widest and deepest of all languages especially known for its grammar. We propose a common platform covering all teaching tools and features which includes Dharmic, linguistic, philosophical, cultural beliefs and practices of all regional languages that can be customized language wise across all directions of Bharata. These can further be extrapolated to the cultures that have been embraced by the followers of Sanatana Dharma migrated out of Bharatadesha. Most of the ancient Indian languages hold similar grammar components that can be taken from this syllabus thereby we skip reinventing the wheel again for every language. We as followers of Sanatana Dharma are fortunate to have our mother language as Samskritam and therefore should be in the forefront to help create this Universal Common Syllabus.

Naveen Sharma 01:20:00 PM Education

Title: Hindu Contribution to Science & Medicine

Abstract: Hindus have contributed significantly in all sphere of life, covering science, medicine, Biology, Chemistry, Architecture, Astronomy, Geography and many other fields. However, due to colonial educational policy in India, Hindus have been deprived of their contribution in various areas. In my presentation, I would highlight the Hindu contribution to Science and Medicine. In this journey, I will cover Hindu contribution to geometry, arithmetic, time & space concepts, preventative medicine, i.e., Yoga, the science of Ayurveda, surgery in Ayurveda, and impact on the world.

Surinder Jain 01:40:00 PM Education

Title: Teaching Religion as a part of a regular curriculum in Australia

Abstract: Australia's federal government has guidelines for school curriculum. These guidelines have been developed by ACARA and the federal government has called for submissions from faith organisations to help improve it. Hindu Council of Australia along with other Hindu organisations under the guidance of Swami Shrikharananda has made a submission to bring the syllabus in line with Australian Hindu values and teachings. This paper presents the philosophy behind the submission and its overview.

Suvarna Variyar 02:00:00 PM Education**Title:** An Examination of the Decline in South Asian Studies Options in Australian Tertiary Education**Abstract:** India is the world's most populous democracy, the world's sixth-largest economy, and also one of the world's fastest-growing economies. With efforts to reduce or shift reliance away from China, the Australian tertiary education sector in particular has been attempting to appeal more and more to the region that provides Australia with its fastest-growing community. Despite these factors, and the obviously increasing need for greater understanding and literacy of South Asia and its culture – including Hinduism – the study of India and South Asia has in recent years waned considerably in Australian universities. With the potential proposed closure of the Studies of Religion department in Sydney University, and its outsourcing of a number of its Sanskrit units to the Australian National University, avenues for the study of this vitally important region and Hinduism – one of the major world religions – have been further limited. In this presentation, I explore the reasons for the decline in South Asian studies in Australia, reflect on its importance, and highlight ways in which the study of Hinduism and the South Asian region could be better integrated or reintroduced into the tertiary system.**Hon. Emma Hurst MP 02:20:00 PM Education****Title:** The Animal Justice Party's approach to non-violence**Abstract:** The Animal Justice Party (AJP) is an Australian political party founded to promote the interests of non-human animals in parliament, and to create legislative change to improve their lives. The AJP was created with four key values; kindness, equality, rationality and non-violence (KERN). In this presentation, we will discuss the principle of non-violence and how it is being promoted through the work of the AJP throughout Australia, both at the social and the political level. We will discuss the importance of including non-violence as a key aspect in our work, and look at some successes we have had over the years.**Naveen Shukla 02:40:00 PM Education****Title:** History of Development of Ayurveda in Australia**Abstract:** The History of the AAA is linked with the history of the development of Ayurveda in Australia. It all began in 1979 with the 1st International Congress on Traditional Asian Medicine, known as ICTAM. This was the largest gathering of like-minded scholars, physicians, and practitioners of Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tibetan Medicine, Korean Traditional Medicine, Japanese Traditional Medicine and other forms of traditional medicine that ever took place on the subject on an international level. The Congress was an astounding success, which led to the establishment of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine, also known as IASTAM. As the community of Ayurveda practitioners yoga and meditation teachers grew over time, along with the astounding success of seminars on Ayurveda, the Australian School of Ayurveda (ASA) was registered as an educational institution. The ASA developed courses that led to first two years study for the Certificate of Proficiency In Ayurveda and a further two years studies for the Diploma of Ayurveda. A Five member Ad-Hoc Committee was formed to establish the Constitution of the AAA. The AAA was first registered in South Australia on 9th February 1988 under the Association Incorporation Act 1985.**Gavina Cossa 03:10:00 PM Education****Title:** My experiences with Sathya Sai Baba: an intersection of faiths.**Abstract:** Gavina Cossa comes from an Italian-Catholic background, but in 1982 she met Sathya Sai Baba for the first time. In this talk she shares her experiences and how she came to appreciate the underlying unity behind all faiths and how this could be put in practice in her day to day life.**Bharti Kundal 03:30:00 AM Education****Title:** The Saga Of Silencing Tolerant Indic Voices

Abstract: The effort to relate Hindus with neo-Nazis is on a rise, be it academia, media, or politics and even death hasn't been granted any concession where photographs of burning pyres of Covid victims were on SALE. The Hinduphobic discourse is characterized by a persistent refusal to see Hindus as positive, active agents in the development of Hindu traditions—or, for that matter in determining their destinies, and also denying the atrocities against Hindus around the world. This paper focuses on how Hindus are being ostracized globally (from Oxford to Rutgers) and being accused as agents or pawns of violent political agenda. We will look at few events from politics, academics, and media to shed more light on how Hindus are being targeted globally for their faith or even standing up against Hinduphobia. When there is so much happening around us and our faith is being used as the battleground for freedom of expression, there arises an urge on what can I do as an individual, this paper also highlights how young Hindus can counter these narratives.

Sowmya Sundar 03:50:00 PM **Education**

Title: Contribution of Language in upholding practices of Sanatana Dharma

Abstract: Language is one of the prime cultural identities of any person. Its usage reflects a lot of information about their way of living. As people immigrate to different countries outside Bharatadesha, they have different levels of association to their cultural and ethnic identity ranging from extremely proud to be a Sanatana Dharmi (Hindu) to complete dissociation from the same, with various levels in between. The first effect of this is seen in language. The strength of the Maatrubhasha amongst children slowly reduces with each passing generation. With language waning, cultural identity solely stands on languages such as English, that is alien to the culture and hence cannot do real justice to preserving our identity. We all understand Sanatana dharma and Samskrutam are two sides of the same coin. Every regional Indian language has its roots in Samskrutam. We get a great shot in the arm at sustaining our cultural identity when we strengthen our knowledge in this language. Our inability to translate our historical wealth to our future generations should not become a reason for them to defect from this very identity of being Sanatana Dharmi. The first effect of this is seen in language. The strength of the Maatrubhasha amongst children slowly reduces with each passing generation. With language waning, cultural identity solely stands on languages such as English, that is alien to the culture and hence cannot do real justice to preserving our identity. We all understand Sanatana dharma and Samskrutam are two sides of the same coin. Every regional Indian language has its roots in Samskrutam. We get a great shot in the arm at sustaining our cultural identity when we strengthen our knowledge in this language. Our inability to translate our historical wealth to our future generations should not become a reason for them to defect from this very identity of being Sanatana Dharmi.

Suresh Gurumoorthy 04:10:00 PM **Education**

Title: My Challenges/Experience in raising children with Dharmic values in Australia

Abstract: Australia is multicultural in its population. It is quite receptive to all cultures encouraging people to reflect the positivity of their religions and yet be Australians. We are amid embracing a new home which is already a home to our kids; whilst our roots always tug us back to India. My kids are growing up in a socio-cultural ambience different from mine, hence I realise I should not overburden them in teaching my values. As the saying goes, PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH, I strongly believe that I can create the pride in my practices for my kids to emulate me. Our success lies in teaching the best practices and the core Sanatana Dharma which by itself will teach the kids to accept the cultural diversity of the land-Australia.

Ritual and Social Order

Srinivasakrishnan L 11:10:00 AM **Ritual and Social Order**

Title: Murukan, the Tamil deity, as an aspect of Kumāra

Abstract: Murukan is one of the most important deities of the Tamil Hindu pantheon. The myths and traditions of this deity, as attested in the old Tamil literature, largely conform to the descriptions of

the deity Kārttikeya, Skanda and Kumāra in Sanskrit sources. Certain additional features and legends of Murukan, seen in Tamil sources, coupled with the Tamil name of this deity have led some scholars to the belief that this is a uniquely Tamil god which does not bear any relationship to Kārttikeya-Skanda-Kumāra of the Sanskrit sources. In this article, the name of this deity and its forms of worship are examined closely to establish that in its fundamental form the worship of this deity celebrates that of a boy divinity. Further analysis presented here brings Murukan in clear relief as a regional variant, albeit an early one, of the Kārttikeya-Skanda-Kumāra theism.

Milind Sathye 11:30:00 AM **Ritual and Social Order**

Title: Resolving the dilemma of right and wrong: Krishna's way

Abstract: One of the questions that all of us face and has also been deliberated by philosophers the world over is what is wrong and what is right and who decides it? In this paper, I provide a rebuttal of Prof Cooper's interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita. Prof Cooper contends that Krishna's advice to Arjuna creates an "agency" problem. Krishna tells Arjuna that he is not actually killing since everything is done by Krishna himself. The author contends that Prof Cooper's confusion arises because he does not consider the various types of karma as enunciated in the Hindu scriptures. The objective is basically to prompt Arjuna to do his duty. The stress is thus on deontological ethics at the empirical level. When Arjuna raises the issue of consequentialism, Krishna exhorts him to consider it from a philosophical perspective and asserts that he is not doing anything since I do everything.

Christopher Humphrey Hartney 11:50:00 AM **Ritual and Social Order**

Title: Fighting Xenophobia and Unreason: The Mukti-Gupteshwar Temple, Minto, Its Long-Term Struggle Against Campbelltown Council and What 'Religious Freedom' Should Mean in Australia.

Abstract: This presentation addresses a small part of a larger question 'how is Hinduism developing in Australia and what can we learn from its struggles and successes?' In this research, I examine a small part of this history as it concentrates on planning issues and development procedures that concern the Mukti-Gupteswar Temple in Minto. Although this temple's location on Eagleview Road in Minto seems an ideal place to locate a Hindu place of worship, I cover here some of the extensive battles this small community has had to make against a local council that has actively worked for many decades to close this sacred space. I conclude by linking this struggle to other experiences of Indian Australians in their temple building and include a brief examination of what 'religious freedom' in Australia entails as it plays out at a local council, rather than at the national level.

Bharathi Rengarajan 12:10:00 PM **Ritual and Social Order**

Title: WOMEN AND HINDUISM

Abstract: We have diverse and conflicting views on the position of women. Women are respected in all countries and all religion. Root: One of the most profound attributes of Hinduism is the recognition and worship of God as feminine. In fact, Hinduism is the only major religion that has always worshiped God in female form and continues to do so till today. Religious beliefs and practices should be differentiated from Social (Societal) ones, though a few of them may be based on religion. Religious practices are based on theories born out of Maharishis' introspection, intuition, God's will, etc. Social practices are based on History, Geography, the current level of development, and a host of similar criteria. To ease and ensure adherence, the elders have painted these with some religious sanction. Over a period of time, some people have rebelled against, generally leading to changes in these customs and rituals. The concept of Hindu dharma is highly appealing and resonates with humanism. Humanism is not a "set of rules" but rather "a starting point," a set of beliefs and values which constitutes our worldview and life stance, starting points for our shared belief in humanism and a humanistic way of life. Growth: Hinduism does not recognize conversion; you have to be born as a Hindu to understand, appreciate and recognize the greatness of this religion. Principles of modern humanism, the core principles discussed above, and additional commonalities that you find Women and Hinduism are inbuilt with Humanism and its greatness remain forever in any nation.

Pallavi Sinha 01:00:00 PM Ritual and Social Order**Title:** The sacred and significant role of Women in Hinduism**Abstract:** Gods and Goddesses in Hinduism are referred to as Hindu deities. The feminine Deity is usually referred to as Devi. The feminine energy or Devi has a sacred and significant role in Hinduism. This presentation will examine the ways in which Hinduism: describes these important roles, emphasises the importance of respecting women, and sets the pathway for the manifestation of feminine energy to reach Self-realization.**Sanket San 01:20:00 PM Ritual and Social Order****Title:** Mantra Shastra and its scientific evidence**Abstract:** TRADITION OF MANTRAS Vaidik Dharma or Hindu religion as it is popularly known, has focused on Mantras for millennia. A mantra in Vedic tradition is a sacred utterance denoted by syllables and words (often in Sanskrit) and recited with attention to details to its meter and tone. Mantra Shastra is methodology of reciting these mantras and how to syndicate them with other tangential aspects such as rituals, attire, posture, location, diet and thoughts. It also encompasses principles of propagation of the mantras across generations and time. From the beginning of Vedic period, Hindu scholars were fascinated by the inspirational power of mantras and found them effective in meditation, medicine, dealing with uncertainties and exploring spiritual connection. For centuries, they have deemed this so important that they protected and proliferated this knowledge at the cost of time, efforts and their lives. Although other faiths and languages also have mantras, Vedic schools went rather overboard with research on different aspects of sounds, part of which also led to development of Sanskrit as a refined and controlled language, Indian classical music and several aspects of yoga.**Praveen Jain 01:40:00 PM Ritual and Social Order****Title:** JAINISM - A Way of Sustainable Living for Humans**Abstract:** Jainism is one of the oldest religions in the world, originating about 5000 years ago in the Indus Valley. It was established by 24 Tirthankars (Noble souls), the first being Lord Rishabhanath and the last Lord Mahaveer. I believe the need to understand and practice Ahinsa (Non-violence), one of the Jain doctrines, is more imperative in the modern world than any time in the world history, as we humans are far crueller and more brutal to our environment. Though humans account for only 0.01 percent of the planet biomass, we are trying to establish ourselves as a sole proprietor with unfathomable power and in a rampage to destroy all other inhabitants. Among mammals, as per an estimate, planet comprises 36 percent humans, 60 percent livestock and only 4 percent all other mammals. Among birds, the biomass of poultry comprises about 75 percent and wild birds only 25 percent. Jain religion advocates the principle of Ahinsa (Non-violence) not only to other humans, but also to all other living species of earth. The current pandemic is a timely reminder to all of us that we are only one of the billions living organisms on earth and hence we must learn how to share it with others. Jain religion provides a framework to live in harmony and peace with the environment as a visitor.**Jayanti Gupta 02:00:00 PM Ritual and Social Order****Title:** Varnashrama Dharma**Abstract:** In Sanatana Dharma, each Varna and Ashram has its own specified Dharma. In Varnashrama dharma, the duties are performed according to the system of four varnas (social divisions) and four ashrams (stages in life). The focus is on responsibilities. The four varnas are prescribed in the Vedas – brahmanas (priests, teachers, and intellectuals), kshatriyas (police, army, and administration), vaishyas (farmers, merchants, and business people), and the fourth varna (shudras) who may be artisans and workers. It is a division not a hierarchy or a method to obstruct any human being from obtaining God. There are fundamental differences between Varnashrama Dharma and the flawed, misguided caste system prevalent in current times. What is based on Guna (Satva, Rajas, and Tamas) and Karma has been eroded to something based on birth and biology/genetics. Individuals have different innate tendencies for work and exhibit a variety of personal qualities[1]. In this presentation I aim to bring forth

the principle that reaching God or Para Brahma is not dependent on Varna system or classification. There are several examples in scriptures from which the conclusion can be drawn that Varnas did not distinguish between human beings and their abilities to show devotion to God. I will not get into any controversy about the prevalent caste system and its interpretation. Rather this presentation will try to address the need for all followers of Sanatana Dharma to follow their innate nature to worship and attain God.

Akhilesh Arora 02:20:00 PM Ritual and Social Order

Title: Implementation of Robotic Process Automation (Web Scraping and OCR) for the creation of Ayurvedic Indian Medicinal Plants Database. (A traditional knowledge database curated out of publicly available information on the web, texts and publications like Vedas and Samhitas in Sanskrit and other translated publications)

Abstract: The practise of Ayurvedic medicine and ethno pharmacology in India dates to 5000 years. Ayurvedic formulations and their therapeutic use is based on the traditional knowledge of the mixture rather than a mechanistic understanding of the ingredients in the formulation. This traditional knowledge of the Indian Ayurveda medicine including the important medicinal plants and formulations are buried in the old scriptures, Vedas and books. These are usually available in hardcopy texts and are difficult to search on. This is limiting their effective uses toward new drug discovery. The digitisation of the information using Robotics Process Automation (RPA) into a comprehensive searchable database on the Indian medicinal plants and association of these plants, the formulations and mixtures, modern medicine name equivalents, phytochemistry and ethnopharmacology will enable researchers to apply computational approaches towards drug discovery.

Skanda Jagadesh 02:40:00 PM Ritual and Social Order

Title: Understanding the Challenges in Introducing Sanatana Dharma to Contemporary Audiences

Abstract: Arguably the oldest sociocultural construct uniting its people, Sanatana Dharma has long served as a vehicle for humanity's progress. However, in today's world, perceptions around Sanatana Dharma's enduring relevance have been drastically shifted by the frivolous Western narratives whose open denunciation of Sanatana Dharma and its sources of authority have trivialised and defiled Sanatana Dharma's credibility. This in turn, has left the Sanatana Dharmic community to be faced with a very unique set of challenges as to the appropriate methods in overcoming this narrative and restoring the authenticity of Sanatana Dharma. This paper aims to address the following issues by dispelling the misconceptions propagated by the Western narratives on Sanatana Dharma and propose novel approaches to correctly educating contemporary audiences on Sanatana Dharma's significance in the present world.

Jagdish Chawla 03:10:00 PM Ritual and Social Order

Title: Contributions of the Hindus to the Physical Sciences

Abstract: Hindu scriptures and ancient texts dating back to thousands of years stand as lighthouses of an enlightened civilization – a beacon of spiritual and eternal wisdom, science, technology, and culture. They mention various items and concepts that prove our ancestors, akin to modern scientists were well advanced in their knowledge and applications in science and technology. This paper describes the achievements, and contributions of the Hindus to Physical Sciences – Physics, Mathematics, and Astronomy, from the Vedic to modern times. We provide evidence that our enlightened ancestors – akin to modern scientists, had theoretical understanding, conceptual knowledge, and applications of atoms, nature, and speed of the light, elaborate time and distance measurements system, planetary movements, gravitation, eclipses, sidereal charts, force and energy, electricity, and magnetism – just to name a few. These achievements could not have been possible without the invention of the foundation of Physical Sciences – mathematics. They invented zero, pi, algebra, differential, and integral calculus. Their contribution is supported by the slokas and other evidence from the scriptures, and texts. Their achievements form the basis of many of the advances in modern science.

Raghbendra Jha 03:30:00 PM Ritual and Social Order**Title:** On some Misconceptions about Ramavatar**Abstract:** There are several misconceptions about Ramavatar (incarnation of Lord Rama). These misconceptions have been around for generations and have caused unspeakable damage to the Sanatan narrative. Therefore, they need to be cleared post haste. This essay will try to address four of these misconceptions. The first misconception is thinking of Lord Rama as having been born – in the sense that us ordinary mortals are born according to our karmas. Second, the Ramayana and Mahabharata are itihaas and therefore carry a strong element of truth. These are not mythology. Third, Goddess Sita was never banished by Lord Ram. Fourth, I want to talk a little bit about one unjustly infamous doha from the Ramcharitmanas. **ढोल गंवार शूद्र पशु नारी ये सब हैं ताडन के अधिकारी।** Many people construe this doha to mean that the Ramcharitmanas or Saint Tulsidasa permits such behaviour on the part of men. It has to be strongly emphasized that neither do any such thing.**Karthi Keyan 03:50:00 PM Ritual and Social Order****Title:** Karma and Yama: The Impartial Lord**Abstract:** Karma is often always misunderstood as a fatalistic dogma serving no other purpose than advocating passive acceptance. Hinduism is perhaps the only practicing faith where there is a God of Death. How does this jell with the popular monotheistic belief that God is always good, doesn't inflict pain on others, at least on believers? This presentation/paper with brief examples hopes to kindle the thought process for better understanding of the concept of Karma.**Jagdish Trivedi 04:10:00 PM Ritual and Social Order****Title:** Karma Yoga**Abstract:** ॥ ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयां देवाः ॥ (Oh Gods !! May we hear auspicious words) In the discourse of Shrimad Bhagvad Geeta, Lord Krishna has explained four main Yoga to Arjuna: Gyanyoga, Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Rajyoga. Everyone has different aptitude and tendency towards life experiences. Major tendency of persons can be categorized as Introvert and extrovert. For a person who is introvert, Gyanyoga is more suitable, while person who is extrovert, Karmayoga is more suitable. Both the ways can take a person to self-realisation, but one should choose the path which is suitable to their nature. For a family person, running around in the world of happiness, sadness, business life, looking after family, friends, community, Karmayoga works out better as Karma minus attachment can lead to Karmayoga. Through Karmayoga, one can achieve the highest spiritual goal, even while living normal life. Normally, any work is not possible without any motivation or passion, but Lord Krishna says that work without any motive or attachment can lead to a better success and achievements in life.**Philosophy****Gopesh Sharma 11:10:00 AM Philosophy****Title:** A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF HAPPINESS AS EXPERIENCED BY THE SADHUS**Abstract:** Human happiness has been a widely debated topic for the past 2,500 years within the various philosophical and religious traditions. However, happiness itself remained an elusive concept within the context of recent empirical happiness research. This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to understand the phenomenon of happiness from the perspective of sadhus, holy ascetics of India, who renounce all their material possessions and worldly desires for the discovery of true happiness or moksha(Sanskrit: freedom from all sufferings). Using Husserl's transcendental phenomenological method, the study selected 20 sadhus for in-depth interviews. The sadhus reported their happiness as ananda (Sanskrit: happiness), far higher than normal levels of happiness that ordinary people experience. Inductive thematic data analysis found that happiness is every human being's most fundamental unchanging true nature, and one must discover it within, not in the external world. According to the sadhus, happiness has an animate nature, meaning it is a living construct with no shape, form, size, or

other qualities, but happiness is conscious or “the knower.” The sadhus also described human happiness as infinite, all-pervasive, beyond, and distinct from the human mind. They described happiness as none other than Divine, their source of continuous care and protection. The study found sadhus are very happy people and have no sense of fear. They attributed their happiness to five critical factors: (a) Guru, a spiritual teacher, (b) self-knowledge, (c) serving others, (d) practicing yoga and meditation, and (e) renunciation and living a simple life. From the perspective of sadhus, this study found everyone has access to immense happiness which can be discovered within through virtuous actions and secular practices like yoga and meditations or mindfulness-based meditations.

Deepa Singhal 11:30:00 AM Philosophy

Title: Jainism—from eyes of a Vaishnav married to a Jain

Abstract: Inter religion marriages (including arrange marriages) are not very uncommon in India , especially between a Vaishnav and Jain religion. Coming from a house of moorti pooja for so many gods and going to a house with mainly one god was a learning curve. I had multiple aartis for different occasions and different days of the week depending on which god day (eg Tuesday for Hanumanji), but his family mainly chanted Namokar Mantras for all days and occasions. Vaishnav fasting days involved eating atleast one decent meal, but the Jain fast involved drinking at most warm water for multiple days. There are a lot more differences I learnt over the years. however, gradually I also learnt the basic similarities in the values and teaching , not hurting others, be truthful, be honest and live a simple life. I learnt both the religion have the same basic teachings/values despite different expressions or rituals. I hope, as a first generation immigrant, in the modern world of global desi, I can give the basic ””ahimsa parmo dharma”” and ””live and let live”” to my next generation. I hope, I am not too bogged down with the rituals and instill the true principals of both the religions, which are fundamentally the same. this is how I see my religion roots grow in my children.

Kadbami Srinivasan 11:50:00 AM Philosophy

Title: Temple Architecture (Devalaya Vastu)

Abstract: Hinduism (Sanathana Dharma as it was called) is the oldest religion in the world. During this long period it has faced many challenges - perhaps, more than any other religion. However, it is still there. It is still relevant. The misconceptions about Hinduism are endless. Time and again Hinduism has been accused of polytheism - that is worshipping of many Gods. The Vedas do not talk about many Gods. They talk about only ONE Supreme Being - Para Brahman; Eshvara. They all say “Sarvam Kalvidam Brahma.”(All that we see is Brahman). Thus - we are not talking of many Gods; we are also not talking of one God; we are saying there is only God. There is nothing outside of God. And that God is both formless and attribute-less. Worshipping a formless and attribute less God is not easy for a common man. Agama Shastras say that if God is everywhere, then He is there in the Murthy/ Vighraha / picture in front of us. Thus all worship these days, both at temples and at homes, is Agamicin nature. And Agama regards God as a personal deity with recognizable forms and attributes. The Agama Shastra is concerned with the attitudes, procedure and rituals of deity worship in the temples. It says that if an image has to be worshipped, it has to be worship-worthy and it has to be contained in a shrine worthy to house it. This is how Agama Shastra makes its presence in the Shilpa-Shastra. The basic idea is that a temple must be built for the icon (deity) and not an icon got ready for the temples. The Shilpa Shastras of the Agamas describe the requirements of a temple site, building materials, dimensions, directions, and orientations of temple structures, the image and its specifications. The Agama literature includes Shilpa Shastra which covers both temple architecture (Devalaya Vastu) and iconography (Pratima). In this proposed article I intend to briefly cover the aspects of Shilpa Shastra. Mainly I hope to highlight activities involved in –Organizational structure, Bhū pariksha, Shilā pariksha, Karshana, Vastu puja, Salyodhara, Adyestaka, Nirmana, Murdhestaka sthapana, Garbhanyasa, Sthapana, Pratistha. Agamasalso cover the rituals to be followed in worship services every day. However, that is not being covered in this paper.

Khimji Vaghajiani 12:10:00 PM Philosophy**Title:** Vidurniti**Abstract:** Vidurniti - the ancient hindu text that still lives to provide direction to people and businesses in the modern world. East meets West, with principles and practices that are true even today based on management and philosophical discussion and debate. Surely a scripture that needs taking out from the closet.**Dev Babu 01:00:00 PM Philosophy****Title:** FOLLOWING THE DIVINE STEPS OF ADI SANKARACHARYA**Abstract:** I wish to project Sri Adi Sankara's Superhuman Achievements during His Three Major Vijaya Yatra or Victorious Journeys, undertook covering from Kashmir to Kanyakumari in N-S and Dwaraka to Assam (W - S). His contribution during these journeys for resurrection of Sanatana Dharma, historical importance and practices he had established and prevalent even today to observe will be covered in this powerpoint.**Milind Sathye 01:20:00 PM Philosophy****Title:** Language and religious experience: an exploration**Abstract:** How does language influence the faith and religious experience of people? This is the question the paper investigates. Three languages that the author uses – Sanskrit, Marathi, and Hindi – are explored with examples. It was found that language that one uses greatly influences the faith and religious experience one goes through. Language establishes a unique spiritual connection. Translation into other languages cannot carry the full import of the meaning and the sentimental linkage. The author explains this with examples.**Vivek Apte 01:40:00 PM Philosophy****Title:** Gurudev Ranade's Philosophy of Rational Mysticism**Abstract:** Professor R. D. Ranade (1886-1957), known popularly as Gurudev amongst his disciples was a great devotee of God, philosopher, saint and a mystic who occupies a status on par with the Upanishadic rishis; philosophers and commentators such as Shri Shankaracharya; and great saints such as Shri Dnyaneshwara and Kabir. Gurudev's philosophy revolves around "rational mysticism" – a direct, first-hand experience of the ultimate reality/ Ishwar/ Atman/ Brahman/Param atman, using the faculty of intuition which can be aroused through a life-long Naam-Sadhana practised as per the instructions of a self-realised spiritual teacher/ Sadguru. We will discuss the salient features of Gurudev Ranade's philosophy which is founded on the Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita and his own mystical experiences. Pure self-consciousness or Atman is the root cause of the universe and pervades every nook and cranny of the entire nature and the human body. Knowing this Atman/ self-realisation is the highest, noblest, ultimate objective of human life. We will discuss practical aspects of self-realisation as advocated by Shri Gurudev – particularly methods of meditation – ideological, moral and mystical (Naam-Sadhana).**Sachin Chaudhari 02:00:00 PM Philosophy****Title:** Significance of Hindu Sant/Saint literature – key takeaways for the 21st Century**Abstract:** In the 21st Century we have seen explosive growth in the field of technology. We are busy developing new innovative ideas, trying to bring them into reality, and are continuously working towards making our lives happier and more comfortable. In today's internet world, the rate of change has become a lot faster. Countries, Organizations, Leaders, and People are busy finding better ways to enrich our lives. People have bigger dreams and aspirations, when these are not met within the satisfactory limits, it has led to people feeling the daily stress, pressure, and depression, impacting their ability to focus on the important things in life. Today the most important skills to survive in this highly competitive world are Critical thinking, Creativity/innovation, Communication, Collaboration and Teamwork, Social Skills and Problem Solving. If one looks at the mission statements of the top

global organizations, they want to be customer centric, connect people, give more power in the hands of people, make life more convenient, enrich people's lives through meaning innovation, and so on. Over the many hundreds and thousands of years, Hindu saints have enlightened themselves, and based on their experiences and as well as after the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagwad Gita, etc they have created literature such as texts, translations, commentaries, Abhangas (poetries). Does our traditional saint literature throw any light on how to develop the much-needed skills for this century and can it act like a lighthouse to guide today's students, workforce, leaders and entrepreneurs? Is literature written hundreds and thousands of years back still relevant in the 21st Century? I will be referring to some of the known saint literature, and in this white paper, try to explore further on this subject and try to assess the relevance of our religious texts in solving the problems we face today.

Aksharam Umamahesh 02:20:00 PM Philosophy

Title: Science of the aksharams, their importance to HINDU community and practicing them in Australian setup

Abstract: "akshara" is arich phonetical framework based on vĕdānga śikṣā śāstra which is the linguistic foundation of vedAs. The akṣara framework is logically and scientifically defined based on the origin of the speech in the vocal system and mouth. There are profound phonetical principles defined as part of this. As a matter of fact, 5000 years old akshara system is still practiced by more than a billion people. Many languages of South Asia and South-East Asia preserved in their original form by the grace of akshara system. The sound and utterance is very important aspect in protecting languages in relation with hindu dharma. So protecting and practicing aksharams is very important. English is widely used official language of Australia. Many hindu elders and students use the ASCII/English keyboard/Alphabets for writing the proper nouns and traditional vocabulary. Unfortunately, English Alphabets are defective. A defective orthography is one that is not capable of representing all the phonemes or phonemic distinctions in a language. It is impossible to fit/reproduce all the sounds of akshara based vocabulary in to existing 26 limited English Alphabet. Example- स श = s, ट त = t, ठ थ = th, ड द = d, ढ ध = dh, ण न = n, र र = r, ल ल ल = l. English Alphabets have no separate vowels for short and long, example English 'rama' can be understood either 'raama' or 'rama'. So writing aksharams in alphabet is similar to fitting a big elephant in a small tiny box. In the paper, I'll be discussing various solutions and methods in protecting and practicing the aksharams in present Australian setup.

Shyam Gohil 02:40:00 PM Philosophy

Title: Introduction to AksharPurushottam Darshan

Abstract: Hinduism has been blessed with magnificent scholars over the centuries who have written commentaries on the Prastha natrayi and established or consolidated their respective schools of Vedanta. Among these, some of the most notable exponents and the distinct darshan they each propounded include the following: Shankara's Advaita Darshan, Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Darshan, Madhva's Dvaita Darshan, Nimbarka's Dvait advaita Darshan, Vallabha's Shuddhadvaita Darshan, and Chaitanya Mahapra bhu's Achintyabhedabheda Darshan. Akshar-Purushottam Darshan, as revealed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan, is positioned within this rich tradition of Vedanta darshans. In this presentation will be looking at AksharPurushottam Darshan and what makes it unique and special based on the massive work compiled by Mahamahopadhyay Sadhu Bhadreshdas Swami who is one of the learned scholar of BAPS Organization.

Practical Hinduism

Shashi Holla 11:10:00 AM Practical Hinduism

Title: 'Swastika' — Inexorable journey from Divinity to Impiety

Abstract: The Dharmic symbol of 'Swastika' is losing its narrative war in Australia like elsewhere in Western nations. The 'Swastika' is synonymous with antisemitism in a multicultural Australia where

Indic identity groups like Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs are model minorities. The misappropriation of ‘Swastika’ in Australia is represented by two extreme threads. The first thread is the fringe White Supremacists inspired by their American and European counterparts. The second thread is the deliberate ignorance maintained by the ecosystem of media and academia to maintain Western Universalism. This paper examines how the journey of ‘Swastika’ from British India took place to Germany with the help of colonial Indologists when Indians were enslaved by the Empire. The Germanic people are desperate to build a narrative of their history and race identity by stealing the exotic part of Hindu culture like Sanskrit, symbols like ‘Swastika’ by fabricating Aryan Invasion Theory. The Hitlerism occurred later based on Master Race Theory. In 1788 the colony of Australia was established based on Master Faith and Master Race theory of Christianity and White Race respectively. But even after the ‘White only policy’ was abolished during the 70s Master Race Syndrome remained intact in Australia. It is important to examine how the current Indian ruling party and Hindu institutions are perceived as Fascist, authoritarian and majoritarian by the Australian media and academia to demoralize Hindus in Australia and India. The abusers of ‘Swastika’ are Christians with Master Race syndrome, attributed to the evil dispensation of colonialists.

Jayant Bapat 11:30:00 AM Practical Hinduism

Title: Hindus in Australia: An Uphill Journey. Are We up to Climbing and Crossing the Hill?

Abstract: In terms of Hindu presence on this land, our history is almost as old as that of the white settlers. However, statistically, Hindus are still a very minor community. Therefore, if we wish to make a positive impact on this land, and if we wish our religion and culture to take deep roots, we have a long way to go. I came to Australia on a Monash University scholarship in 1965, being the first person from Maharashtra and perhaps the 4th or 5th Indian in Victoria. ‘White Australia Policy’ was still in vogue then. Australia was very much a white Christian land. Their religion, culture and cuisine were totally alien to a Marathi young man raised to strict Brahminic norms. Thankfully, things have slowly changed. Indians now have a small but noteworthy presence in Australia. Over the years, I have seen a large number of changes in Indian migrant population. I have myself changed from an Organic Chemist to a Hindu academic and a priest. In Australia, we Indians now represent a well-off, young, aspiring and enthusiastic force. My paper examines our journey so far and the obstacles that we need to overcome to reach our goal. I provide some suggestions as to how we can be an integral part of the melting pot, but still maintain our values, our heritage, our Sanskaras.

Karthik Arasu 11:50:00 AM Practical Hinduism

Title: Swastika – A Faith Symbol Demonised as Hate Symbol!

Abstract: The Victorian Parliament recently tabled a report urging the government to legislate tougher laws against hate speech and racist insignia, including banning the Hindu Holy symbol of Swastika. To label the Swastika as a symbol of hate would be a grave insult to over two billion Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists worldwide. The symbol Nazis used is not the ‘Swastika’ but the ‘Hooked Cross’, and the name they used for it and called by was “Hakenkreuz”. It is rotated at an angle of 45 degrees oriented in the “S” letter direction representing Nazi “socialism”. Hitler never used the word “Swastika”, neither the Nazis referred their symbol anywhere as Swastika. The first mention of Swastika as Hitler’s symbol of hate comes when Hakenkreuz, instead of proper translation of ‘Hooked Cross’ has been maliciously translated as Swastika by the translator of Hitler’s autobiography in English, and since then, Hindus have been left to bear the cross of this distortion. Swastika means “well-being” or “auspicious”, a symbol that was considered sacred for thousands of years, was desecrated by the monstrous Nazis and those who translated it wrongly. It continues to remain a vilified and maligned symbol to date. The Nazi emblem, the Hakenkreuz is a symbol of hatred and trauma, and its use should not be permitted in any form or place. But identifying it as a separate and different symbol to that of the Swastika is important to take the right steps forward for every community.

Guruswamy Jayaraman 12:10:00 PM Practical Hinduism**Title:** Culture-Specific Aged Care

Abstract: Sri Om Care - Culture and Language-Specific Aged Care provided in NSW - includes Centre Based Respite care, In-home Care and Disability Care. Australia's population is ageing. According to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing, the number of people aged 65 years and over has increased from one in every seven people in 2011 (14.2%), to nearly one in every six people (16.5%) in 2016. There are approximately 1.2 million people aged 65 years and older living in NSW, that is, 16.5% of the population.

Ashit- Mohan Maitra 01:00:00 PM Practical Hinduism**Title:** Will Hinduism Grow into 'the Universal Religion' in Australia?

Abstract: Each religion appears so different from every other religion, yet on close scrutiny we find that they are in essence the same—the unchanging Reality, Brahman, the Spirit. Religions' differences are in the non-essentials. Each religion is characterised elementally by philosophy, rituals, mythology and tradition. Specially the last three elements are different for different peoples. Due to royal patronages, Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam have spread universally but are they really universal religion? For a religion to be a universal religion it must cater for every mind irrespective of their race or region. Despite Hinduism's rich tradition, elaborate rituals, extensive mythology, and deep & detailed philosophies, it has all the ingredients that constitute a universal religion. "Truth is one, sages call it by various names" proclaims the Rig Veda. The Bhagavad Geeta assures us, "In whatever manner humans approach Me, I favour them in that very manner. In all ways humans follow My path". "Whichever form (of a deity) the devotees want to worship with faith, that very firm faith of theirs I strengthen." Hinduism prescribes to all humanity to manifest their potential divinity by controlling nature—external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one or more, or all of these. This prescription applies to all and covers all types of human mind. Whether or not Hinduism will be the religion of choice to the Australians, depends on how the Hindus, and the Hindu institutions in Australia project themselves.

Maran Nandan 01:20:00 PM Practical Hinduism**Title:** HINDUISM IN ASIA PACIFIC REGION: PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE

Abstract: Hinduism has approximately 1.35 billion followers worldwide, which is about 16% of the current world population. As of present, Hindus are the largest religious group in the Asia-Pacific region, with about 1 billion followers. Ninety nine percent (99%) Hindus in the world are currently concentrated in Asia Pacific. The number of Hindus in Asia Pacific is expected to increase from 25% in the first decade of this century to 28% by 2050. However, the Hindus in the Asia Pacific, relatively, will be pushed into the second largest religious group by mid-century. Factors such as a drop in the fertility rate and migration are deemed to be the prime factors. The traditional four standard measurement of religious commitment such as affiliation, importance of religion, worship attendance and frequency of prayer may not be suitable to quantify future Hindu adherents in this region, however, the ever-increasing religious awareness among born Hindus and the growing interest on Hindu practices such as yoga, meditation, ayurvedic and advancement in education are expected to attract a more knowledgeable Hindu followers in the Asia Pacific region. The main objective of this paper is to collect and analyse the available data on past and present religious activities of Hinduism in the Asia Pacific region and thus recommend solutions for a better understanding and cooperation among the Hindus in Asia Pacific.

Mool Mantra 01:40:00 PM Practical Hinduism**Title:** Exposing façade of terming Hindu organizations as "fascists" by Communist - Islamic fundamentalist lobby.

Abstract: In its pure definition form, fascist states are still thriving even today in Islamic and communist countries, whether it is Arab monarchs or religious gurus of Iran, whether it is Xi Jinping of China or dictators of North Korea. And those who believe in different political views or religions, are

executed or jailed almost on regular basis. While these theocratic rulers commit such atrocities, their leftist friends in democracies either stay shut or water it down as “individual or isolated” cases. These are not done by an individual dictator rather it is fully justified according to written and declared ideology and literature in communism and Islam just like in Fascism. But these two forces join hands to create newer twisted definitions of fascism to justify their self-proclaimed label of “fascists” on other true democratic leaders. A leftist thinker, Stanley Payne, even went to the extent of directly defining every person who is anti-communist as “fascist”. Just as Islamic extremists call every non-Muslim a ””Kafir””. And in their written proclaimed policies, the ””fascist”” or ””Kafir”” declared by them, their family, children can be slaughtered in the interest of ””humanity”” like in case of Czar Nicholas or Guru Govind Singh.

Amruta Joshi 02:00:00 PM Practical Hinduism

Title: Grounding as a way of healing

Abstract: The panchatattva model describes that five elements make up the configuration for animate and inanimate parts of the Universe in different proportions. They are air, water, fire, space, and earth. The earth element is associated with the body which we use to experience life. The water element is associated with the mind that flows through us. It is less subtle than earth. The fire element is represented by intelligence that ignites or sparks it. Awareness is the quality of the air element which is even subtler than the mind. Finally, the space element is of consciousness wherein all things and beings reside. Of these, the earth element is the densest and felt every single moment as we stand on mother earth. For millenniums we have stood on the earth barefoot. This created a deep-rooted connection with the powers of her being. We all know that she is life itself; giving rise to all creatures, their food, and the eco-system we live in. Our continued dependence on her is the true cause of us thriving here. She is the first root mother of us all. The Atharva Veda says “Mata bhoomi putroham prithvivyah” which means - Earth is my mother and I am her son. Our ecological heritage has preserved this love. If we observe keenly everything is touching her directly, be it trees, animals, or even different marine creatures through the water. We were once upon a time in direct contact with her too. Today we wear shoes everywhere we go; made of insulated rubber that shields us from her powers. We are the only disconnected living creature. Is it any wonder that mankind faces some of the most terrible diseases today? Could these two be related perhaps? Grounding is a simple act of standing barefoot on mother earth and allowing her powers to flow through us freely. It is a profound sense of connection to life itself. Even though the barefoot movement kicked off with much enthusiasm, ancients knew the need to be with her one-on-one. Tribes danced together or swam together honoring her sacredness. Prithvi Sukta notes the importance of how everything that grows from the ground is critical to living. We can come back to this once more by understanding not just its science but also by restoring the reverence we have lost for her. Are we ready to come back online in the web of life?

Amruta Joshi 02:20:00 PM Practical Hinduism

Title: Emotional mapping with Chakras

Abstract: In the new age world today the word chakra has become quite popular, the way the word karma did a few decades back. It is commonly used in yoga studios and philosophy to explain the internal workings of the body. By definition, a chakra (wheel) is a distribution centre of pulsating cosmic energies into the human body. If one can imagine a grid of energies flowing out of them and into them symmetrically as an orb of energies, the chakras are doing just that - playing the role of a power station for trillion of volts of electromagnetic energy. The chakras are a part of the subtle body, which is an invisible field superimposed and concentric to the human physical body. If our body is a wire, then the subtle body is the electricity flowing through it. There are a total of 112 chakras with 7 of them that work as major junction points. The neuro-endocrinology system of the body is mapped onto these 7 centres and have a remarkable and obvious connection to the conditions that manifest in those locations. The Muladhara (root) chakra located at the perineum governs the adrenal glands, the Swadishthana (sacral) located below the belly button governs the ovaries and testes, the Manipura (solar plexus) located above the belly button governs the pancreas, the Anahata (heart) located at

the physical heart governs the thymus gland, the Vishuddhi (throat) located at the throat governs the thyroid and parathyroid, the Ajna (third eye) located in between the eyebrows governs the pineal gland and finally the Sahasrar (crown) located few inches above the head governs the master gland called the pituitary. A map of the human structure helps reveal the cause of the health issue. If we take a vertical section, the ardhnanarineshwar image of Shiv and Shakti clearly states that the right side of the body is masculine energies and the left side is feminine. If we take a horizontal section, the lower three chakras govern the human experience and the top three govern the divine one. They intersect at the Anahata chakra to merge the human and divine experience. This map now helps us locate and understand health conditions. An experiment conducted with a friend who had a sore throat revealed the following. She described it as prickly and irritating. It had become hard to swallow solid foods and felt inflamed on the right side. By physical nature, its closest chakra centre is the Vishuddhi. It is in the upper half of the body indicating issues with processing divine guidance. Upon further deep-diving into recent events, she mentioned that her boss wrote a harsh email that she couldn't accept or swallow and it kept irritating her. The severity of the pain was more on the right side, in this case indicating energies related to a male boss. She meant to retaliate but the words got stuck in her throat. Her higher truth of wanting to be treated with respect was missing in this case. Through positive affirmations and soothing mantra chanting the throat experienced relief as the energy stuck was dissolved. The chakra system gives us a lot more information about our emotions, how they flow and where they get stuck. The body is always conveying messages to us based on the location of the pain. With practice this can help alongside medical treatments to overcome health issues.

Rajiv Ramakrishna 02:40:00 PM Practical Hinduism

Title: TOWARDS THE GOAL

Abstract: Hinduism is not a religion and the real name is Vedanta. It is a philosophy of religion and spirituality; a universal religion free of all discrimination. Swami Vivekananda introduced a brand of new practical vedanta as propounded by his Guru Sri Ramakrishna. His catch phrase of 'Arise and Awake and stop not till the Goal is reached', resonates well with most practical vedantists. "Atmano moksharthnam, Jagat hitayacha" which became the motto of the Ramakrishna Mission and serve the needy as Service to God dwelling in them. History of spread of Vedanta dates back to 1899 when Mrs Elsie Picket brought her experience after meeting Swami Shivananda in Ceylon. Sister Avabhamia a Swedish lady started a Vedanta Magazine Star of the East in 1908. Mr James Wales a bricklayer turned Vedantist, after inspired by Swami Vivekananda served the sick and the needy in Australia in the late 1920's. There after a steady growth has occurred, especially from the 1980's onwards. I was fortunate enough to be born into a family inspired by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami V. I have been incorporating "work is worship" or Karma yoga through service to the sick and needy. I am fortunate enough to be in a field where I can be of service to the community, thinking to serve God in them. Hopefully this may help me to be on the right path to reach my goal.

Sarah Gates 03:10:00 PM Practical Hinduism

Title: Hinduphobia and Social Justice for Hindus

Abstract: The importance of Hinduphobia as official terminology rests on a recent Oxford definition that is readily applicable to bias crime. Malini Math will demonstrate that academics are threatened by Hindus asserting Human Rights and why we can't be shut us down. Working with authorities to uphold Human Rights and Justice terminology is absolutely essential.

Sarah Gates 03:30:00 PM Practical Hinduism

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Jay Shah 03:50:00 PM Practical Hinduism

Title: Understanding the Kurukshetra down under and shaping the youth to become Arjunas in Australia.

Abstract: Australia is home to more than 700,000 Hindus majority of which have migrated in the last ten years, with the majority being for economic reasons. However, while population growth has been rapid, its representation and penetration in various fields like politics, legal, media, and mainstream activism have not been at the same pace. The impact of this has been that the community is misunderstood and is always in a reactive mode in battling the misinformation, correcting the false narratives, and reversing unacceptable behaviours and actions. One such example is that when Meat and Livestock Australia came up with the offensive advertisement, it took us weeks of legal research and hours of consultation before getting that advertisement banned. Even after the ban, very few knew about it, and hardly anyone thought about analyzing and fixing the root cause, which was the absence of a Hindu voice in the Ad Standards community panel, and hence they had no understanding of the impact on the Hindu community. An appropriate representation will proactively avoid any offensive behavior and help us project the community in a much better way. Australia is a multicultural country that has a long way to go in a more profound understanding of its diverse population, and hence it is upon the community to educate, assert and set the narratives on its needs. This has to be led by the youth(guided by everyone) with focus, dedication, courage, strength, commitment, and all other characteristics of Arjuna for creating a sustainable Australian Hindu society.

Mritunjay Kumar Singh 04:10:00 PM Practical Hinduism

Title: Absence of narrative about the human and cultural genocide of Hindus among expatriate Hindus and the need for a parallel structure to tell our story:

Abstract: Hindu way of life has been under constant attack not only in pre-Independence but even in post-Independence India. Most expatriate Hindus are either unaware of the genocide that happened to their ancestors or would rather prefer not to face it. "Rulers from all religions destroyed others' places of worship," is one of the greatest lies that most expatriate Hindus would easily like to believe in, either to hide their own ignorance or cowardice. Most Hindus show no interest in studying about the desecration and destruction of thousands of Hindu temples, libraries and places of cultural heritage during the last 1000 years. Both expatriate and non-expatriate Hindus would rather forget about the genocide of Hindu that happened during foreign invasions and barbaric times of the middle ages distant past having little to do with current times. Most Hindus find it convenient to treat even the tragedies of partition as a remote accident, which then helps them to turn their eyes away from the continuous suffering of Hindus in Pakistan, Bangladesh and many parts of India today as if they are incidents on a distant planet. Lack of respect for the hard facts from History among Hindus and unwillingness to take control of the narrative of Hindu genocides from the past is contributing to the continuous destruction of Hindu temples and ethnic cleansing of Hindus in India even today. Refusal of Hindus to take control of the narrative of their own suffering is preventing most fair-minded Australians from sympathising or helping the Hindu victims. We Hindus are largely responsible for the world turning their heads away from more than half a million still alive Hindu victims of ethnic cleansing from Kashmir Valley, who are still roaming the streets of India today. Constant attack on Hindus symbols, Hindu people and Hindu organisations based on fake stories and lies will continue in Australia if Hindus do not take care of their own narrative. We can't expect Australian education system, Australian media or Australian communities to help us if we are not ready to help ourselves. Both Jewish and Palestinian narrative is available in the Australian education system, media and community discourse because the two people care to tell their side of the story. Ethics of the majority of Australians are still rooted in exclusivist monotheism, which is very different from inclusive polytheistic Hindu culture. We need to work hard to teach the world the beauty of Sanatan Hindu philosophy that has helped India provide shelter to all persecuted people over 2000 years. For our own survival, we urgently need to accept ourselves in our hearts and also tell the rest of the world that despite being nearly 85% Hindu majority country, nearly every victim of ethnic cleansing in India in the last 70 years is a Hindu. We Hindus surely need a parallel structure to talk about our intellectual, spiritual, cultural and historical journey.