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Community Condemns



Attacks

Strongly condemning the bomb attacks in Mumbai, Hindus of Greater Houston, a group representing Hindus of all backgrounds, called for justice to be done in this case and in all others where innocent people suffer from the actions of terrorists. Representatives of several local and national organizations attended a prayer service at the Keshav Smruti for the souls of the innocent people killed, for the speedy recovery of those injured, and for strength of the affected families. *Story on page 28*

An international panel of erudite Hindu scholars and enlightened masters from all over the globe presented their ideology on the Vedic message of promoting world peace at *Vedic Ideas for Global Harmony and Peace*, hosted by World Association for Vedic Studies WAVES.
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WAVES

Ripple Effect

Community Cover Story

The Ripple Effect — WAVES Roll Wisdom onto Texan Shores

By KALYANI GIRI

HOUSTON – With a comprehensive nine-point plan, respected savant Swami Vidyadhisnananda Giri clearly outlined his vision of the roles and responsibilities of India and the US in ensuring the preservation of the Sanskrit language which he hailed as the 'blueprint of the consciousness of the whole cosmos, and the epitome of perfection'. In his rousing keynote address to a capacity audience at the inaugural session of the Sixth Biennial World Association of Vedic Studies (WAVES) conference, he exhorted gatherers to support the establishment of Chairs of Sanskrit at universities in this country. Sanskrit, he added, would resonate as the mother language that birthed all world languages, and that the institution of such a chair would draw diverse participation regardless of race or religion.

The swami's theories and research, along with those of Hindu thinkers in the exalted ilk of Dr. David Frawley, Dr. S. Kalyanaraman, and Professor Hal. W. French, to name a few, were presented at the WAVES conference held at the Univer-



Above: Members of the Hindu Students Council with panelists (seated in middle row, from left) Surendra Dwivedi, David Frawley, Swami Vidyadhisnananda Giri and Janak Dave at a down-to-earth youth forum that gave young people the platform to express their concerns and speak candidly to the panel of scholars. Photos: Vijay Pallod
 Photo on page 25: From left, Swami Vidyadhisnananda Giri, Swami Jyotirmayananda, David Frawley, Jugai Malani, Surendra Dwivedi, Subhash Gupta, Janak Dave, Bal Ram Singh and Satish Misra

sity of Houston (UoH) on July 8-10. The event, themed *Vedic Ideas for Global Harmony and Peace in the Modern Context* drew an international delegation from India, Nepal, the Caribbean Islands, Canada, Europe, and from several cities within the USA.

In his welcome address, Chairman of WAVES Board of Directors, Dr. Surendra Nath Dwivedi, told attendees that the theme for the conference was more timelier than ever.

"Many conflicts arise from

differences in religion, race, political opinion, or other beliefs. The greatest impediment to peace is ignorance," said Dr. Dwivedi.

Over 150 scholars participated in the three day study on the various fields of archeology, Ayurveda, Vedanta, Sanskrit, Hindu history and heritage, science and astrology, Hindu scriptures and epics, and yoga. The aim of WAVES is to foster greater understanding of Vedic and Indian studies.

In a series of parallel ses-

sions scholars expounded their strategies on specific subjects. The biases and distortions demeaning the identity and ancestry of Hindus in 6th grade social science textbooks in the US were addressed, and reform initiatives discussed.

The ongoing violence against Hindus, and the forced exportation of Hindu minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the persecution of Kashmiri Pandits were described in a paper presented by the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) executive council member Sheetal Shah. She told of HAF's 2005 report on Hindu Human Rights. Attendees were informed on HAF's ongoing dialogue with congressional leaders on Capitol Hill on issues facing Hindus here and in the diaspora. The unsubstantiated theory that the Aryans brought Hinduism to India, the stereotypical depiction of the Hindu social order, the myth that Hinduism taught that women were inferior to men, were also subjects for panel discussions.

Years of indepth research and the discovery of over 2000 archeological sites along the banks of the long-extinct Vedic

river Sarasvati preceded the scholarly Dr. S. Kalyanaraman's presentation of his report, *Vedic River Sarasvati for a National Water Grid*. With the aid of pictures and a map released by NASA, he charted the route the revived river will take in three years time. Averaging 6 kilometers in width, Sarasvati will wind her way through Ahmedabad. Continuing on the theme of water, Swami Vidyadhisnananda, a graduate of Cal Tech and India's famed Indian Institute of Technology, in his talk on *The Environmental Synergy of Natural Altars* showed how all naturally manifested altars in India are linked through a complex underground cave system. He augmented his speech with compelling photographs and said he hoped NASA would undertake research on the phenomenon. Yoga as a tool for treating patients with breast cancer was another informative paper of modern relevance delivered by Houston-based Dr. Kavita Chandwani. Yoga's stress-relieving techniques could improve the quality of life, build the immune system, and lengthen the chance of sur-

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Community-Cover Story

The Ripple Effect — WAVES Roll Wisdom onto Texan Shores

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vival. Dr. Narayanan Kome-rath of the School of Aerospace Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, reported on his findings on micro-electrical power generation using economic variable wind turbines in every village in India. Dr. Howard Beckman, founder of the Vedic Cultural Fellowship in New Mexico, told of the healing power of light waves and color spectrum vibrations in his paper *The Divine Vedic Science of Healing with Light*.

Pivotal to the theme of the conference were the many dialogues and deliberations held to emphasize the age-old principles of Sanatana Dharma (eternal organizing principles) to promote global harmony. The talks invited wide audience participation.

“Dharma is a series of operating principles that cannot be confined to religion,” Dr. Kalyanaraman told gatherers.

Philosopher and exponent of Hindustani Classical music, Professor Guy Beck, told of Hindu sacred music’s role in promoting world peace.

“Music crosses cultural boundaries and helps overcome initial obstacles of language. This process would foster deeper appreciation of Vedic and Hindu ideals and cultural traditions,” said Professor Beck.

Understanding of the holy Vedas is rooted in the scientific Sanskrit language, realized master Swami Vidyadhishananda Giri.

“It’s usage even in simple form allows us to revisit our ancient roots,” he added, calling for propagation of the language. He urged gatherers to support research on the use of Sanskrit in artificial intelligence and as a computer-level language in the west.

For India, his mandate



Children enact a scene from Indian mythology during the cultural program segment of WAVES

called for the continued oral tradition of Sanskrit in Vedic schools and for the Sanskrit language curriculum to be reinstated at school and university levels. He asked that *acharyas* from esoteric lineages of the Vedas be given credibility and support. Sanskrit manuscripts should be preserved and translated. The swami also called for the support and institutionalization of the keeper of family lineage trees. He asked that official channels correct the historical timelines, which could be referenced in the Puranas. He had one more request of India.

“Revive ancient Puranic temples that have self-manifested altars, don’t build new temples. Nurture and protect the ones already in existence,” Swami Vidyadhishananda added.

With strong participation from the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, the youth forum gave young people the platform to express their concerns and speak candidly to a panel of scholars. Swami Vidyadhishananda Giri, Dr. David Frawley, BAPS’s Janak Dave, and Hindu University of Florida’s Professor Subhas Tiwari dispensed practical advice on the

Dharmic way of life and offered down-to-earth answers on preserving a hoary cultural heritage in the diaspora. Responding to a question on Hindu identity, Prof. Tiwari told youth that the teachings are bequeathed by parents to every generation.

“Upholding certain values starts at Self. You have to live dharmically and spiritually in tune, it has to be a direct experience. A house cannot be built on false premises, thoughts must be in tune with deeds,” said Prof. Tiwari. He added that studying the scriptures will help reclaim the past and generate pride in heritage.

“For reference points you have to understand who the wise ones are and seek their help,” he said.

Whether it is family, or a tough career that keeps one centred, whatever done the dharmic way will always produce better results, suggested Dr. David Frawley. Because being in harmony with the universe fulfills a greater purpose in uplifting society, he added.

Another question from youth was how to preserve India’s contribution to math, the sciences, etc, when one has no knowledge of her contribu-

tion. The simple answer was — it comes down to self-responsibility to educate ones self. Janak Dave suggested that parents make more effort to keep the vernacular language alive in the home.

Kirsten Jones and Ravi Pinjala, students at Rice University and the University of Texas respectively, found that the knowledge gained at the youth symposium was deep and inspiring.

“It was great as it addressed several burning issues relevant to us and made it easy to participate,” said Kirsten and Ravi in a joint statement.

Local attorney Jai Sharma can’t wait for the next conference.

“The keynote lectures were thought-provoking and I learnt a lot,” Sharma enthused.

Guest visiting from India, Balakrishna Surat, felt honored to be amidst knowledgeable Hindus.

“I feel an eagerness to be more involved in future. To be

more responsible to my heritage,” said Surat.

A speaker at the symposium Dr. Abhinav Dwivedi of the Hindu University was excited that so many voices spoke up against the false depiction of Hinduism in the California textbooks case.

“I am also glad that we spoke about the many misconceptions about Hinduism that even Hindus have,” Dr. Dwivedi added.

Young volunteer with Sewa International, Hemendra Pal, deemed the conference ‘enlightening’.

Prof. Subhas Tiwari commended the effort that went into planning the event.

“It was very positive. Of course there were too many changes made at the last minute in scheduling, and rooms were not assigned. But we have to recognize the sincere effort,” he said.

WAVES has developed projects promoting Hindu/Vedic studies involving community participation globally.

At the WAVES conference banquet and cultural program held on Sunday night, scholars were awarded plaques in recognition of their work. Houston Chapter President of WAVES, Subhash Gupta, thanked delegates and guests for attending the event. He also recognized volunteers who worked tirelessly to facilitate the conference in this city.

The WAVES 2008 conference will take place in Orlando, Florida.

For more information visit www.wavesinternational.net

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