

BRAHMA BHARATI

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Brahman Samaj of North America

June 2003

Volume 5

Number 2

Editor: Surendra Nath Pandey, Ph.D.



**%aRiYat baair ibanau jaao tnau %yaagaa.
maue^ kr[ka sauQaa tD,agaa ..
ka barYaa saba kRYal sau#aanao . samaya
cauko puina ka piCtanao ..**

If a thirsty man dies for want of water, of what avail is a lake of nectar to him once he is dead?

President

Dr. Shyam Narayan Shukla

Executive Vice President

Mr. Purushottam Sharma

Vice President (Education)

Dr. Ramesh Paliwal

Vice President (Canada)

Mr. Vishva Sharma

General Secretary

Mr. Abhaya Nand Maharaj

Treasurer

Dr. Tej Narayan Pandey

Assistant Treasurer &

Editor, Brhmakulum

Dr. Arvind Sharma

Editor, Brahma-Vani

Dr. Satish Misra

Editor, Brahma Bharati

Dr. Surendra N. Pandey

Editor, Homepage

Mrs. Ranjana Sharma

President, Youth Group

Mrs. Sema Sharma

Director, Convention 2003

Dr. Chandra Mohan Dwivedi

Board of Trustees

Dr. Shri Kant Mishra,

Chairman

Dr. Lakshmi Shanker Dubey

Dr. Satchidanand Mishra

Dr. Ghanshyam N. Pandey

Dr. Ramanath Sharma

Dr. Ramesh C. Tiwari

Dr. Janeshwar Upadhyay

Nominations & Election

Committee

Dr. Surendra N. Pandey,

Chairman

Dr. Satchidanand Mishra

Mr. Nitin Purohit

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Fellow Brahmans,

This year on July 4, 5 and 6, 2003 we will have the ninth annual convention of the BSNA at San Jose, CA. Also, it is going to be the third convention in the west coast. This convention will create history in that the BSNA will recognize the past and present women who have contributed to the Hindu culture. We have invited a young lady from Georgia, Ms. Pratibha Tripathi, to deliver the keynote address at this convention.

Dr. Chandra Dwivedi, this year's Convention Director, has left no stone unturned to make this convention one of the best. Since I belong to his Chapter, the San Francisco Bay Area chapter, I am also deeply involved in every detail of the planning and, therefore, I have seen closely the hard work that was required in organizing this convention. In the past years also I have observed that a lot of energy of the BSNA President was spent during most of the year for the conventions.

So far, to make the conventions affordable and to encourage as many member families as possible to participate in the conventions, the BSNA has been subsidizing the registration fee. To take care of the deficit, funds are raised every year through advertisements in our souvenir annual magazine, 'Brahma-Vani'. Many generous members of the BSNA and many sympathizing business firms have been contributing to the BSNA in the form of Brahma-Vani ads. This has helped us maintain the same registration fee every year, irrespective of location and increasing cost of living. However, year after year we approach the same people for funds. Therefore, many members of the BSNA, including the Convention Committee headed by Mr. Nitin Purohit, have advised us to change the frequency of the conventions from every year to every other year. I too believe that a year without a convention will give the EC more time for organizational matters and for projects to enhance the image of the BSNA.

In the past we have asked for the opinions of our members on this issue a couple of times, at the P-meetings, and each time the impression we got was that

Continued to page 2, col. 1

President's message, continued from page 1

we should hold the conventions every year. However, it is the Convention Director, and to some extent the President, who spend sleepless nights when the registration is slow and the convention dates draw closer. Therefore, I tend to think that we should change the frequency of the conventions as an experiment to see its effect.

Another issue is the format of the convention. So far we have been getting free convention space in a high-class hotel, by reserving a certain number of rooms at the same hotel. Because of this we have to make it mandatory even for local members to stay at the hotel. Many local members do not like this arrangement even though they realize that staying under the same roof for two-three days brings them closer to many families from outside the area. Dr. Satish Misra of Washington D.C. Area, who will be one of the organizers of the next convention, recommends that we should experiment with the new format, in which we will only rent the convention space and provide food to the participants. The convention attendees should make their own arrangements of lodging in the area. We may, however, request the nearby hotels to block certain number of rooms for them at a discount rate. This will spare the organizers from taking care of individual room requirements and at the same time reduce the registration fee.

I am, therefore, seeking your opinion on these issues. If you strongly believe that we must keep the conventions every year and that you will have no problem attending most of them, then please do let me know about it by a phone call or by e-mail. If you also feel that the convention participants should make their own arrangements for their stay, please advise me on that too.

With warmest regards,

Shyam Narayan Shukla,
Ph.D.; P.E.; Fellow, ASCE
President, Brahman Samaj of North America
Phone: 510-770-1218, E-mail: Shuklas@attbi.com
Address: 44949 Cougar Circle, Fremont, CA 94539

For BSNA contact information, latest news,
downloading membership form or convention
registration form, visit BSNA home page
[Hhttp://www.bsna.org](http://www.bsna.org)

CONVENTION DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The 2003 BSNA Convention will be held at the Hyatt Hotel at San Jose Airport, San Jose, CA, from July 4-6, 2003. We are very excited about the proposed theme of the convention "Contributions of Women to Hindu Culture". It's crucial for us to recognize contributions of our women to Hinduism, world's richest culture and religion. We are also pleased to announce that Ms. Patti (Pratibha) Tripathi (formerly Anchorwomen at CNN, currently News Director and Anchorwomen at ANN) has accepted our invitation as a Keynote Speaker. Ms. Tripathi is expected to motivate and invigorate everyone, specially our youth, into our culture and heritage. Additionally, a number of scholars, academicians, artists, leaders, entrepreneurs, doctors, lawyers, musicians, and celebrities are expected to attend this great event.

Besides the excellent theme for the Convention, a three-day fun-filled extravaganza for the whole family awaits your arrival in the Bay Area. The engaging and exciting program includes: Youth Programs, Family Introductions, Cultural Program, Sangeet Gosthi/ Kavi Sammelan, Sham-e-Gazal/Mushaira, Dancing-DJ, Yoga/Meditation, Bhajan/Kirtan, Panel Discussions, Keynote Address, Breakout Sessions, EC-BOT Meetings, General Body Meeting, Awards & Recognition, Picnic/Sports, and Antakshari. Interactive sessions to be covered in this year's convention include: Education, Healthcare, Stress Management, Entrepreneurship, Community Service, and Career Counseling. The extensive program being planned is expected to keep children of all ages spellbound and mesmerized, yet provide opportunities to contribute in all aspects of the convention.

To summarize, I would say that the 2003 BSNA Convention must not be missed by anyone, specially our youth who have the responsibility of continuing our great culture, heritage, traditions, and customs. Today, the whole world is focused on Hindu Culture and our youth are the best ambassadors of our heritage. We have the opportunity to educate and train our children to take this important responsibility with pride, great care, and humility. The BSNA Conventions provide the best platform to prepare our youth to embark on this responsibility with confidence. BSNA Conventions also provide an opportunity to make new friends, renew alliances, network, share common goals, and help our community in all aspects.

Continued to page 3, col. 1

Another reason to come to the 2003 BSNA Convention is that the State of California is known to be one of the most popular tourist destinations on earth. The San Francisco Bay Area offers innumerable places for vacation for the entire family. The famous sites in the Bay Area include: Golden Gate Bridge, Golden Gate Park, Bay Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf, the San Francisco Trolleys, Lombard (or crooked) street, other famous San Francisco streets, and Muir Woods (Tall Trees). Nearby attractions include: UC Berkeley, Stanford University, Carmel, Monterey, Wine Country (Napa/Sonoma), Lake Tahoe, Reno, Yosemite, and Sequoia/Redwood National Parks. The summer is the best season to visit and to vacation at these beautiful and amazing California wonders. To accommodate extended travel plans, we have arranged a special rate of \$70/Night at Hyatt Hotel, San Jose, three days before (July 1-3) or three days after (July 7-9) the convention.

I am very pleased to announce that the BSNA has introduced a registration fee with one night's hotel accommodation also to new registrants through June 30, 2003. The rates with one night's hotel accommodation are: Family \$399.00, Single (shared room) \$249.00, and Single (private room) \$299.00. This is a substantial savings for our members and I encourage everyone who has not registered yet to take advantage of the discounted rates and register immediately. Please note that the discounted rate is a subsidized rate, where the deficit incurred is covered by donations or advertisement revenue from Brahma-Vani.

I humbly welcome all BSNA members to the 2003 BSNA Convention in the San Francisco Bay Area. I urge each and every one of you to register immediately for this great event. You simply can't afford to miss this memorable and great event of the BSNA.

Chandra M. Dwivedi, Ph.D.
Convention Director

Shiv and Sudha Agarwal extend an invitation to all to attend Bhagavat Katha by Swami Ram Kamal Das Vedanti ji to be held at their residence on June 7 – 13.
Saturday and Sunday, June 7 & 8: 5 to 8:30 PM
Monday to Friday, June 9 –13: 7 to 9 PM
Dinner will be served everyday after Arti.
Place: 21 Muirhead Court, Belle Mead, NJ 08502
Phone: (908) 359 – 8352, Cell: (732) 829 - 6803

ARIZONA CHAPTER

The Arizona Chapter held its meeting on April 25, 2003 at the residence of Rajni and Munnu Bajpai. The following families attended the meeting: Prem and Kailash Bharadwaja, Rajni and Munnu Bajpai, Nirmal and Kulbhushan Chhibber, Ram Dwivedi, Mukta and Yashvant Kulkarni, Jahnvi and Sudeep Mehta, Santosh and Ashutosh Sharma, Renu Sharma, and Prahlad Thakur, Jahnvi and Sudeep Mehta, and Prahlad Thakur. The attendees were treated with a delicious meal by our host family of Rajni and Munnu Bajpai.

The meeting was started with the Vandana, followed by family introductions. As suggested by Mr. Bajpai and as has been the practice at some BSNA Chapters, each attendee also identified his/her "gotra" during the introductions. As a follow up, every one was asked to research the origin of his/her "gotra" and make a brief report at the next meeting. Nirmal Chhibber gave a handout and a web address (Brahminworld.com) that may be helpful in learning about "gotra."

Munnu Bajpai provided more information about the upcoming BSNA annual convention to be held at Hyatt Hotel near San Jose Airport on 4th - 6th July. Then the Bajpais led a discussion on volunteerism. Since, the BSNA Arizona Chapter is just beginning to take shape and is relatively a small chapter, the idea of volunteering on an individual basis found most support. The two areas identified where one can offer his/her services, are:

1. Local Hospitals, where one can provide physical, emotional, and spiritual services to patients of Indian origin.
2. Language Bank, where one can offer his/her language skills other than English to communicate with someone who has difficulty communicating in English. To get started one should call Nasser Ashraf of the International Committee at 602-433-2440.

Participants also discussed on efforts in contacting new families in the area and try to enroll new members. These meetings provide everyone a forum for socializing and networking with people from similar backgrounds. Regarding the leadership, the consensus was to let Mr. Bajpai continue as the President of BSNA Arizona Chapter in the foreseeable future in recognition of his past and present efforts aimed at growing the chapter. BSNA membership forms were distributed to the attendees, and non-members were encouraged to

Continued to page 4, col. 1

Arizona Chapter, Continued from page 3

complete the forms and send it to Dr. Tej Pandey, BSNA Treasurer. Participants thanked the Bajpais for hosting the meeting and delicious meals.

It was decided to hold the next meeting on June 27, 2003 at Kulbhushan and Nirmal Chhibbers' residence in the evening. Details will be provided later.

MONTREAL CHAPTER

Twelve families met at the residence of the chapter president, Dr. Yogendra P. Chaubey to celebrate Holi festival on April 5, 2003. After enjoying the potluck dinner, members engaged in various cultural activities including songs by Dr. M. P. Chaubey, Dr. Lakshmi S. Dube and Mrs. T.D. Dwivedi, who delighted the members with Holi Songs and Bhajans.

Dr. Chaubey shared information about the upcoming 9th Annual Convention to be held in San Francisco and encouraged the members to renew their membership. Dr. Lakshmi Dubey encouraged annual members to become life-members. Dr. Chaubey informed members of the great humanitarian effort of Dr. T.D. Dwivedi to build a charitable Hospital in Ayodhya (U.P.) India. This was applauded by the members and in light of BSNA's commitment towards supporting humanitarian efforts; the following motion proposed by Dr. Dube and seconded by Dr. Tiwari was unanimously adopted:

"Be it resolved that the Montreal Chapter of BSNA endorses it's full support to the charitable organization, 'Freedom from Poverty Foundation, Montreal' in its efforts to build Ram Janaki Charitable Hospital in Ayodhya, India (under construction) and requests BSNA to lend its full support to the same."

PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER

Eleven families with 12 children attended the meeting of Pennsylvania chapter held on March 15th at the residence of Hans and Suman Sharma in Conshohocken, PA. Following is a summary of activities conducted at the meeting:

- Discussion pertaining to chapter meetings and conventions.
- Mahesh and Meena Sharma shared their thoughts and experience of Yr-2002 convention held in Toronto, Canada.
- Hans Sharma provided information for Yr-2003 convention to be held in San Jose, California.

- Dr. Ramesh Paliwal made a slide presentation, "The Cultural History of India" as a part of the educational program activity.
- There was a Q&A session for children.
- After the program, everybody enjoyed the Potluck dinner.
- It was resolved that next meeting will be in the fall, in the month of September.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The SC Chapter of BSNA elected the following officers at its May meeting: Chapter President -Ajay Dube, Vice President -Ashok Sarswat, Secretary -Rajeev Paliwal, and Treasurer - Subha Tiwari. At least 10 families from the SC Chapter plan to attend the Convention.

VIRGINIA CHAPTER

The chapter held its meeting and Holi celebration on 22nd March at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Upendra Pandey in Richmond, VA. Present at the occasion were the families of Mr. Upendra Pandey, Dr. Ram Tripathy, Dr. Rajendra Dubey, Dr. D.K. Pandey, Mr. Dinesh Tiwari, Mr. Ravi Sharma, Mrs. Shalini Upadhyaya, Mr. Suman Singha, Mr. Prakash Singh, Dr. Janeshwar Upadhyay, and Dr. Mohinder Tewari.

After greeting everyone with red and blue color *Tilak*, the meeting started with prayer, snacks and general discussion. The children shared Holi stories, each child covering a different section of the story, dividing rather impromptu: Holika by Angili Upadhyaya 9 yr, Prahalad by Niket Pandey 13 yr; Hirankashyap by Subhendu Singha 11 yr; and Narsingha Autaar by Sudhanshu Singha 13 yr., Anjali, Sudhanshu, Niket and Subhendu together completed the story. Adults described how Holi is celebrated in different parts of India.

Shaily Pandey (15) and Niket (13) played cultural and national songs on piano following which an impromptu debate started among the youths on Hinduism, meat eating, coming of Aryans, cow worship, marriage, etc. All youths participated in the lively discussion, which was followed by comments from adults.

Dr. Upadhyay informed that the three-year term of the chapter president ends in December hence a new president should be elected. There was a unanimous consent that Dr. Upadhyay should continue as Virginia Chapter President. Also elected were, Mrs. Shalini Upadhyay as the Children's Program Director, Mr. Upendra Pandey as Vice President, Mrs. Manju Singha as Secretary,

Continued to page 5

Virginia Chapter, continued from page 4

Mrs. Seema Shukla as Treasurer, and Mrs. Sneha Pandey as Youth Program Coordinator.

Dr. Upadhyay encouraged nonmembers to become life members soon because annual membership is increasing from \$25 to \$35 and life membership from \$250 to \$350 from January 2004. He also encouraged everyone to register for the 2003 BSNA Convention to be held in San Jose, CA. He also announced and invited all to support and participate in 2004 Convention to be held in D.C. or in Northern Virginia area. Dr. Rjendra Dubey suggested holding the convention in an inexpensive venue charging about \$150.00 registration fee and making staying at the convention hotel optional.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the ladies who prepared the delicious food with special thanks to Siddhi Pandey, Purnima Upadhya, Manju Singha, Punam Singh and Sudha Dubey, and to Upendra Ji for the "Thandhai".

YOUR FINANCES

Hans Raj Sharma, MBA, CFP



One lesson we all have learned over the last three years is that Investing is not easy. That is why it is so important to develop strategies to be proactive during all market environments. There has been five major bear market in the last one hundred years, when S&P 500 (broad index) dropped around 50%. After each and every drop, stock market went up more than one could imagine. During the last recession of 2000 –2002, S&P 500 also dropped around 50%. At the present time the risk has shifted to upside and there is potential for the market to go up much more than one can imagine. Economy appears to be on the mend and this is the time to get into the market. Most of the gains generally happen in the first twelve months of the bull market.

Following three steps plan provides everything one needs to be proactive during all market environments.

Asset allocation: The proper asset allocation is determined by age, investment time horizon, risk tolerance and financial responsibilities.

Diversification: Best approach to diversification within asset classes is to carve up the asset class into various styles.

For stocks: Historically, growth and value investments have often moved in different cycles, but have had similar returns. Since we never know which investment style will perform better at any given time, combining both growth and value investments can be an efficient way to enhance long term investment returns. Like any investment combining these two styles does not guarantee a profit or eliminate risk altogether but only minimizes the risk. To further minimize the risk, it is important to diversify growth and value into large cap, mid cap and small cap mutual funds. This is a simple strategy to minimize risk and to be used for long-term capital appreciation.

For sectors are: International and real estate.

For Income, Bonds: Short term bonds, Intermediate term bonds, long-term bonds, government bonds, corporate bonds, Municipal bonds, mortgage backed bonds and high yield bonds.

Periodically rebalance the portfolio:

If a portion of growth, value or fixed income (bonds), exceeds the required percentage of the total portfolio, it is important to rebalanced half way back to selected target. This type of rebalancing seeks to "let the winners run" by allowing the leading assets class to have a marginal overweight without exposing the portfolio to undue style risk.

During the period of market volatility, it is important to stay focused on long-term financial goals. And while history shows us that the market does recover following wars and other major events, it does not tell us which sector of the economy will perform best during a crisis and in the months to follow. A well-diversified portfolio and proper asset allocation plays a major role in fighting the effects of market volatility. Just to remind that investing is a long-term process. Do not let the emotions and volatility of the moment sway you from your long-term financial goals.

Comprehensive Financial Plan

We all must look at our financial goals. It is important to review the comprehensive financial plan at least once a year. Are we on track to achieve our financial goals, such as retirement or college education for your kids or any other financial goal we may have in mind? A comprehensive financial plan will help us prioritize and quantify our financial goals; it will give us a snap shot of our financial picture (health) today and how far are we

Continued to page 6

from achieving our financial goals and what we need to do to achieve each of them.

Estate Planning

There are only three beneficiaries to any estate: Family or Heirs, Government (Taxes), and Charity. But the irony of the situation is that you cannot leave your assets to any one beneficiary, we have to choose two and if you do not then second one is chosen for you and guess, who is that?

By choosing Charity as a second beneficiary, you can keep the control of your wealth; how your money is spent. If it goes to government in the form of estate taxes then government decides how your wealth is distributed. One can avoid estate taxes by proper estate planning. Private Family Foundations, Charitable Remainder Trusts and Charitable Lead Trusts are the main instruments to keep control of your wealth and avoid any estate taxes.

The Basic documents for estate planning:

It is important for all of us to have these basic estate planning documents in place and, if already have them then it is a good idea to review them at least once a year to see that all the information is still current.

1. Will or pour over will.
2. Regular or springing power of attorney.
3. Advance medical directive or Living will.
4. Revocable (living) trust.
5. Irrevocable life insurance trust (ILIT)

In today's busy lifestyle, one can simplify life by consolidating all investments with one advisor. The main advantage of having one advisor is that all investments are on one statement and you will have to deal with just one advisor for all your financial information needs, this will also help to reduce your management fee. But it is also very important that you feel comfortable and trust your advisor.

Should you have a question or need additional information, please email Hans R. Sharma, MBA, CFP
hans@sharmah.com or call at 610-828-8253

FOREHEAD MARKS

By Jagar Sharma

To the several explanations offered on the reasons of forehead marks, let me add some more from a different dimensional point of view.

The first and foremost reason for forehead marks is that it is a sacrament. After puja, the priests hand out these sacraments to the gathered devotees. These sacraments, consisting of vibhuthi, kumkumam, sandanam, flames, flowers, and teertham were placed before the deity and blessed. These sacraments 'convey' the deity's blessings to the devotees. The sacraments are meant to be adorned or consumed to 'receive' the deity's blessings, which works in mysterious ways in untangling our karmas, removing certain karmas and concerns, smoothening and ordering certain karmas, readjusts the idea, pingala and sushumna currents, and in the process grants our wishes, for this is the reason we go to temple - to get our wishes and concerns fulfilled, as long as it is within the overall prarabda karma of our lifetime.

The second reason for forehead marks is that after puja we usually return home, visit the home altar, and leave some of the excess sacraments and flowers there. This action serves to 'tie' the home altar to the temple we have just visited. The sacraments 'blesses' and serves to 'consecrate' the home altar and thereby making the home altar like a subsidiary to the main temple. For our home altar has no power or presence of a deity on its own. It 'draws' its power and the presence of a deity by its connection to the main temple in the village, and that this connection is established and reestablished countless times by our regular visits to the main temple, and the sacraments that we place at the home altar as well as adorning the sacraments from the temple serves to 'tie'.

The third reason for sacraments/forehead marks is this. We live in the bhuloka, and our physical world is far removed from the astral and spiritual plane. Those planes are not visible or 'sense able' to us due to 'a thick fog' that layers between the three worlds. The fog is produced by kala (time), a natural phenomenon of the Kaliyuga, and further compounded by our personal karmas as well as our group/community/national karmas. These karmas 'envelop us', envelop our soul body thereby producing ignorance of our true self as well as the existence of other worlds and gods. It is for this reason that temples came to be.

Continued to page 7, col. 2

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

On behalf of BSNA and his own behalf, President Shukla congratulates the following members of BSNA for their accomplishments, and the honors and recognition they have received:

DR. BHUDEV SHARMA. The Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan has honored Dr. Sharma with the 'Hindi Videsh Prasar Samman' for promoting Hindi outside India. Dr. Sharma received this prestigious award from Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on May 21 at Lucknow. The award, which also carries a cash prize of Rs. 25,000, is for his work of promoting Hindi in Trinidad and publishing an excellent International Hindi journal "Vishva-Vivek". Dr. Bhudev Sharma is a BSNA life member since its inception and one of the founders of BSNA and a past BOT member.

SHRI K. MISHRA, M.D. The Association of Indian Neurologist in America (AINA) honored Dr. Shri K. Mishra as the distinguished Neurologist of the year at their annual meeting held in Honolulu, Hawaii. At the meeting, Dr. Mishra presented two papers on Biological toxins in war and terrorism that has become a hot topic these days. One can find more details at www.USC.Edu. Dr. Mishra is the chairman of the BSNA Board of Trustees. His full bio appeared in the last issue of BB.

DR. SURENDRA NATH PANDEY was elected as a Fellow of the Georgia Academy of Science. This honor is conferred on members in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the Academy and the scientific community. Dr. Pandey has held several positions in the past with the Academy including that of the President of the Academy in 1999-2000. Currently he chairs the Nominating Committee. Dr. Pandey is a life member of BSNA and the editor of Brahma Bharati.

MR. VISHVA NATH SHARMA of St. Catherines, Ontario (Canada), who is one of the two Vice Presidents of BSNA, was recently honored by his Alma Mater, DAV College, Amritsar. His Excellency Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India awarded a 'Certificate of Appreciation' to Mr. Sharma at the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the college. Mr. Sharma has contributed thousands of dollars for the construction of a portion of the college in memory of his parents Shri Ram Saran Dass Sharma and Smt. Tara Wati Sharma. He has also established a few scholarships for deserving students at the college.

MATRIMONIAL

North Indian Brahmin parents invite correspondence for their professional daughter 29, 5'2" US citizen, smart, slim and a homely girl from MD and other professionals.
Email: Husha151@aol.comH

Forehead marks, continued from page 6

In the temples during pujas, the chanting, the icons of gods, the flames, the sacraments, the presence of a congregation of believing devotees, the ringing of bells and music, all serve to lift the veil of fog just for a moment. For a split second, the fog thins out, and a blurred glass plane becomes transparent, and all of a sudden we in the bhuloka, in the temple, become visible to the gods. They are able to see us, read our minds and concerns, read our lifetime karmas, and then reply to our prayers, concerns and wishes appropriately. By consuming and adorning the sacraments, we assist the gods and devas in 'remaining connected' to us, and assist them to assist us.

From the point of view of the gods in the spiritual and astral plane, these sacraments appear to be glowing or effervescent with the grace/shakti of the gods, thereby making us visible sufficiently long enough for them to perform their job of assisting us with our karmas. Without the sacraments, we lose connection with the gods within seconds or minutes.

Now these matters are set out in the Agamas, specifically the original 28 Saiva Agamas, where the rules of constructing temples, consecrating deities, serving of offerings, pujas, order of sacraments, etc are set out in detail. But no reasons are given, just injunctions to follow. It is the same in the Vedas too, where no reasons are given for the methods. We intuit the reasons with our worship and meditation, which appear as flashes of inner knowledge during times when we are inwardly drawn, as well as knowledge given by gurus.

Of course the forehead marks serve other reasons too; badge of affiliation, status in society (married), use of acupressure points to stimulate the outer and inner nervous system, beauty, etc.

From the Editor's Desk

The recent publication of a letter from a Brahman youth elicited a couple of letters from readers. I am not sure if they address the concerns that the youth had expressed, however, I am publishing those letters with the hope that they may shed some light on the concerns that our youths have.

After reading the Arizona chapter report, I visited the Brahmin World web site and found it very informative and fascinating. I would recommend to our youths, and adults as well, to visit the site to learn more about Hinduism and Brahmanism. [Hhttp://www.brahminworld.com](http://www.brahminworld.com)H. You may also want to visit a related link shown on the above site: [Hhttp://www.vipra.net](http://www.vipra.net)H The latter contains information on accomplishments of Brahmans during the ancient period in India as well in the modern era around the world.

June is the month when you hear most talks about the upcoming annual convention. While there are many activities that one can enjoy—something for everyone—I find the convention the best venue for making new friends with common values, and renewing old friendships. It's the best way to build a network that strengthens the group and brings enrichment to its members.

Through my membership in BSNA and its annual conventions, I met many leaned Brahmans who have made their homes in USA, their adopted country, yet have not forgotten their rich heritage. Many have undertaken the task of translating our scriptures from Sanskrit to English, and publishing significant portions and interpretations of Hindu scriptures. This will help our youths, and adults, learn more about Hinduism. Furthermore, they have successfully maintained their inherited culture while meeting the demands of this society. Their pursuit of knowledge has not lost its vigor with the "...life, liberty and pursuit of happiness." That's why they have excelled in this society like many Brahmans in other parts of the world.

On the front page I have inserted a piece from Ramayan (Shri Ram Charitmanas) to remind us the significance of timely action.

Looking forward to seeing you at the convention.

Surendra Nath Pandey
spandey@asurams.edu

2303 West Alberson Dr.
Albany, GA 31721-2043 U.S.A.
Telephone: (229) 883-1687

LETTERS TO EDITOR

These letters were received in response to Ms. Sheffali Trivedi's letter in the last issue of BB. The letters have been edited slightly for space without losing the essence, and they reflect the opinions of the writers –Editor.

This is regarding the comments from, a young Brahmin girl from Chicago, who asked, "Why are our youth struggling with their Brahmin identity?"

The individual self which has intelligence etc. as its limiting adjuncts due which it appears to possess their characteristics and becomes identified with them the five organs of knowledge (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin) and the five organs of action (hands, feet, speech, organ of excretion and that of generation, the mind and the intellect.

Bhagavad-Gita 18.42

The natural duties of Brahmans are the control of the internal and external organs, Austerity, Purity, Forgiveness, Straight forwardness, Knowledge (understanding of subjects presented by scriptures), Wisdom (making them matters of ones own experience) and Faith.

Bhagavad-Gita 18.14

The duties of Brahmans, the Ksatriyas and the Vaisyas, as well as the Sudras have been divided according to their inborn qualities, i.e. Gunas –Sattva Rajas, and Tamas (born of nature). The Bhagavad-Gita contains divine words emanating from the lips of God Himself. As a scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita embodies the supreme spiritual mystery and secret. It contains the essence of all four Vedas.

Sincerely,
Asha Sharma
Texas

This is regarding the age old and highly debated question, "Brahman by birth or by Karma." It is said that "Janma Jaat Shudra Sarve, Karmenu Brahman Bhavati." The truth is that we are all humans and some of us become enlightened to the extent that we are called Brahmanas. Gandhi once said, "Na Tu Hindu Banegaa, Na Musalmaan Banegaa; Insaan Kee Aulaad Hai, Insaan Banega." The truth is that in every sects -may it be Sufis, Hindus, Moslems, Christians, etc. there have been saints of the highest order -call them Brahamrishis. A true Brahman is one who knows Braham, who has no anger, lust, greed, pride, jealousy, sense-gratification, and ignorance, and who knows the

Continued to page 9

Letters, continued from page 8

truth, speaks the truth, and spreads the truth. It is said, "Jo Jaanat So Dehi Janaai, Jaanat Tumhin Tumhin Hoi Jaaee."

Thus there is no difference in any human, those who become president are called president, they can be Moslem, Hindu, brahmin or a schedule cast person. India is a brilliant example of it. One of the saints said, "Ghat Ghat Me Mera Saainyaa, Suno Ghat Naa Koya; Balihaari Vo Ghat Kee, Jaame Pragat Hoy." The Lord, God dwells in everybody, no body is devoid of God, but the importance is of that person (Brahman) in whom the Lord manifests. He is a true Brahmin.

Sincerely,

Durgashanker Nagda

nagdads@yahoo.com

CLASSES ON HINDU RELIGION AND CULTURE

Dr. Shyam Narayan Shukla, President of BSNA has been delivering weekly lectures on Hinduism. The sessions are held every Sunday morning from 10:30 to 11:30 at the Fremont Hindu Temple starting March 30, 2003.

Topics

- ❖ Sanatan Dharma, its evolution and history, Aryan Invasion Theory, Sapta Sindhu culture.
- ❖ Uniqueness of Hinduism: Vedanta, Yoga, Theory of Rebirth, Vedic Math, Ayurveda, Astronomy, Astrology
- ❖ Religion and its importance, Four Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha), Four Yajnas
- ❖ Four Ashramas (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Vairagya) and their importance
- ❖ Hindu scriptures: Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmasutra & Bhagvadgita
- ❖ Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas and their teachings
- ❖ Satvik, Rajasika and Tamasika gunas, foods, etc., Soma rasa
- ❖ Practicing the religion: yajna, dana, tapa, idol worshipping, mantras, gods and goddesses, Nivritti and Pravritti margas
- ❖ The sixteen Sanskaras and their importance
- ❖ Sects (Shaiva, Shakta, Vaishnava, Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj)
- ❖ Four Varnas or caste system, its advantages and disadvantages, untouchability

For details, please contact: Dr. Shyam N. Shukla
Phone: 510-770-1218, E-mail: shuklas@attbi.com

President Shukla visited Louisiana and Mississippi Chapters and filed this brief report:

Last weekend (May 31-June 1) I visited Louisiana and Mississippi Chapters. I was hosted by Dr. Madhurendu Kumar at Baton Rouge, LA and Dr. Suresh Tiwari at Fayette, MS, very warmly. Dr. Tiwari came from his home town Fayette all the way to Baton Rouge to pick me up and dropped me off there the next day, a two-hour drive each way. I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Kumar and to Dr. Tiwari for their warm hospitality.

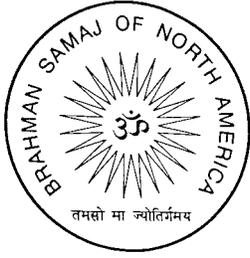
The Louisiana Chapter and the Mississippi Chapter meetings were held at the houses of Dr. Kumar and Dr. Tiwari, respectively. Both the meetings were lively and well attended. I congratulate the Presidents of both chapters for holding very good meetings.

Meeting details will be published in the next issue.

Festivals of India - Year 2003

| Date | Festival |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| January 14 | Makar Sankranti |
| January 14 | Pongal |
| January 26 | Republic Day (India) |
| February 6 | Vasant Panchami |
| March 1 | Maha Shivratri |
| March 17 | Holi |
| April 11 | Sri Ram Navami |
| April 15 | Mahavir Jayanti |
| April 16 | Hanuman Jayanti, Parasuram Jayanti |
| May 16 | Buddha Jayanti |
| July 13 | Guru Poornima Naag Panchami |
| August 12 | Rakshabandhan |
| August 15 | Independence Day (India) |
| August 19 | Shri Krishna Janmastami |
| August 31 | Ganesh Chaturthi |
| September 27 | Navaratri Begins |
| October 5 | Navaratri Ends |
| October 5 | Vijaya Dashami |
| October 24-25 | Diwali |
| October 26 | Vikram New Year 2060 Bhai Duj |

BSNA home page
<http://www.bsna.org/>



Ninth Annual BSNA Convention

July 4, 5, and 6, 2003
Hyatt Hotel, San Jose Airport
San Jose, California

A three-day fun-filled extravaganza for the whole family
(Visit www.BSNA.org for More Information and Updates)

July 4th: Youth Programs / Family Introductions/ EC-BOT Meetings/ Cultural Program/ Sangeet Gosthi/ Kavi Sammelan/ Dancing
July 5th: Yoga/Meditation/Bhajan-Keertan/Panel Discussions/ Keynote Address/ Breakout Sessions/ Cultural Program/ Dancing-DJ/ Sham-e-Gazal/ Mushaira
July 6th: Yoga/Meditation/Bhajan-Keertan/ General Body Meetings/Award & Recognition/ Picnic/ Sports/ Antakshari

Registration Fee (in US \$, Canadian Members should Multiply the Amount by 1.5):

| | <u>July 4, and 5</u> | <u>July 4, 5, and 6</u> |
|-----------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Single | \$249*/\$299** | \$299*/\$349** |
| Family*** | \$399 | \$499 |

* Based on two persons sharing a room.

** Based on a private room.

*** Family is defined as member, spouse, and up to four children under 25 years of age, or two unmarried children over 25 years of age. For every additional adult in the family add extra \$100/person.

- Registrations for July 4, and 5 include one night's accommodation (July 4 only) at the hotel, meals and entertainment.
- Registrations for July 4, 5 and 6 includes two night's accommodation (July 4 and 5) at the hotel, meals and entertainment.
- Each room has two double beds and can accommodate up to 4 family members (**member/spouse/unmarried children**). Parents, married children, brothers or sisters or in-laws can be accommodated in the same room with a limit of 4 persons/room. Additional rooms are available at \$70/Night (including taxes) from July 1-9, 2003.
- Registration fee without hotel accommodation is the same as the full convention fee.
- Only Indian vegetarian food and non-alcoholic beverages are served or allowed.
- On July 4th, the General Program starts at 1:30 PM; EC/BOT Meeting starts at 9:00 AM; Lunch starts at Noon.
- On July 5th and July 6th, the General Program starts at 9:00 AM.
- Cancellation Policy: Refund 50% if notified in writing at least 60 days in advance or Refund 25% if notified in writing at least 30 days in advance. Full credit will be given for the next convention to life members only.

A **General Body Meeting** will be held on **July 6th** at the Convention Center. It will be open to all members registered for the convention at **no cost**. However, there will be a **US \$50/person & US \$100/family** fee for those who are not registered for the convention, but wish to register for the General Body Meeting and Picnic.

For Additional Information Please Contact (Call or E-mail)

CONVENTION DIRECTOR: Dr. Chandra Dwivedi

Phone: 925-838-1649, E-mail: dvidi@aol.com

Dr. Umesh Shukla @908-431-9845; umeshandprabha@aol.com

Mr. Lila Dhar Mishra @ 905-828-6475; mishral@ipoline.com

Dr. Janeshwar Upadhyay @804-520-2043; drjupadhyay@yahoo.com

Mr. Janak Sidhra @916-689-4775; tramerica@hotmail.com

Dr. Yogendra Chaubey@514-486-6204; chaubey@vax2.concordia.ca

Mrs. Ranjana Pathak, pathak.ranjana@endo.com

Dr. Shyam Narayan Shukla @ 510-770-1218; shuklas@attbi.com

Mr. Jagar Sharma @ 516-292-7633; jagarsharma@hotmail.com

Dr. Tej Pandey @ 916-489-5916; tpandey@aol.com

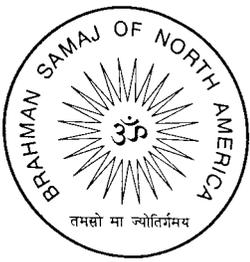
Mr. Abhay Maharaj @ 916-967-6276; amaharaj@lanset.com

Mr. Purushottam Sharma @ 248-853-4076; psharma@mail.com

Dr. Satish Misra @301-340-2983; misra@estart.com

Mr. Ajit Pant @630-455-5738, apant7785@aol.com

Mr. Hans Raj Sharma @610-828-5155; hansr@att.net



BSNA 9th ANNUAL CONVENTION
JULY 4, 5 and 6, 2003
Hyatt Hotel, San Jose Airport
San Jose, California

(Visit www.BSNA.org for More Information and Updates)

MEMBER'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Home Phone: _____ EMAIL: _____

RELATIONSHIP (H/W/S/D/IN-LAW/F/M etc.)

| NAME | Relationship to the member | Date of birth (month/yr) of single children or youth members | Programs attending 1. July 4 th - July 6 th 2. July 6 th GB meeting and picnic only. | Interested in performing in cultural programs | Interested in helping out at the convention |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| | Member | | | | |
| | Spouse | | | | |
| | Children | | | | |
| Additional person(s) | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

FEE: Family \$ _____
 Additional person(s), # _____ @ \$100/Person \$ _____
 Additional Room(s), # _____ Dates _____ @ \$70/Night) \$ _____
 Membership Dues (If Renewing Membership or a New Member)*** \$ _____
 Donation for the convention**** \$ _____
TOTAL \$ _____

Please enclose a check for the amount ABOVE or Charge it to your Credit Card
 Name on the Credit Card _____ Type of Credit Card _____

Credit Card Number _____ *Expiry Date* _____

***Membership Registration Rate in US Dollars: \$25 yearly; \$250 life; \$1000 Benefactor; \$5000 Patron; \$5 foreign student;
 Ass. Membership @ twice the regular rate, For Canada Residents Membership Rate in Can Dollars:
 CAN\$35 yearly; CAN\$350 life

**** The convention fee is subsidized. Voluntary donation is requested to offset the deficit.

PLEASE WRITE CHECKS TO BSNA, AND MAIL TO:
Dr. Chandra Dwivedi, 2054 Pebble Drive, Alamo, CA 94507-2016

COMMENT _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

(BSNA is a Not-For-Profit Corporation Registered in the State of New York, P.O. Box No. 660933, Sacramento, CA 95866-0933).

From:

BSNA

P.O. Box No. 660933

Sacramento, CA 95866-0933

TO: