

September 2022

Established 1985

Issue 9/2022

September is dedicated to heritage in South Africa. This is an opportunity to make cultural diversity and inclusion a pillar of our non-racial integrated society. In developing and reshaping individual and collective heritage we seek values to build inner resilience, community unity and a patriotic and caring nation.

Values strengthen individuals to cope with the social, economic, environmental, and political matters impacting on our lives. Values provide direction. Individuals build resilience through understanding and implementing values. It is the compass when change must be faced. This issue assembles a few articles to provide you with material and views on **Values and Resilience**.

Our feature article is on "The Light of Truth" by Suriyaprakash Singh, who delivered this paper to the Back to the Vedas lecture series in July 2022. This is indeed a value-based guideline for life.

The Arya Samaj South Africa is a signatory to the Climate Justice Charter. Our second feature article is a press release from the Climate Justice Charter Movement covering a critique of the framework for Just Transition released by the Presidential Climate Commission.

The third article is "Building Values and Resilience: Views from our Priests." This article collates views from four Priests to provide material from the Vedas useful for daily interactions.

- "Whose Wealth" by Pt Ressa Rambaros covers the mantra Isha Vasyam Idam.
- "Stand for and with the Truth" by Pt Bhagirathi Basdhw presents a view on Om Asato Maa.
- "Being Resilient" by Pt Prathna Dudhraj covers a mantra in the last rites.
- "Values Shape Reputation" by Pt Shoba Singh discusses a mantra from the Rig Veda.

We are keen to publish the views of our learned purohitas and invite further submissions for future editions.

The issue ends with the monthly message from the President of the Arya Samaj South Africa.

*Veda Jyoti Editorial Committee:*

*Arthi Shanand, Karuna Mohan, Kirun Satgoor, Ressa Rambaros, Shoba Singh, Sudhira Sham, Usha Debipersad.*



**तमिदं निगतं सहः स एष एक एकवृदेक एव**

Tamidam nigatam sahah sa esa eka ekavṛdeka eva  
Atharva Veda 13.4.12 and 20

God is one and one alone; believe it. There is no duality in God.

In the modern western world the popular view is that Hinduism is based on polytheism and dualism. However in the Vedas this mantra clarifies that there is only one God and there is no duality in God.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati started a revolution when he declared that there was one God with many names. He shifted Hinduism back to the eternal view of the Vedas of a monotheistic religion.

We make sense of the world, ourselves, and others using duality. We understand the world and every aspect of life as a balance of competing forces of opposite interests: war and peace; love and hate; black and white.

From an epistemological perspective this is about being and thought, subject and object, and sense datum and thing. This is how we make a distinction between justified belief and opinion.

From a metaphysical perspective dualism is about God and the world; matter and spirit; body and mind; good

and evil, and illusion and reality. To understand and comprehend the mantra some of verses contained in the Atharva Veda 13. 4 are presented hereunder.

It is God who oversees beings who breathe and those who do not. God is the divine fire - the sun, giving light. God provides sacred knowledge and fervour, glory and fame, water and rain, intellectual brilliance and food and edibles. He thunders (as cloud); he shines bright (as lightning); he also hurls the hail stone. For the evil or for the good, for man and other living beings he is there.

He, indeed, is born of the day; the day is born of him. He, indeed, is born of the night; the night is born of him. He, indeed, is born of the midspace; the midspace is born of him. He, indeed, is born of the elemental wind; the elemental wind is born of him. He, indeed, is born of the heaven; the heaven is born of him. He, indeed, is born of the earth; the earth is born of him. He, indeed, is born of the elemental fire; the elemental fire is born of him. He, indeed, is born of the elemental waters; the elemental waters are born of him.

He, indeed, is born of Rk verses; Rk verses are born of him. He, indeed, is born of the sacrifice; the sacrifice is born of him. He is the sacrifice; the sacrifice is his; he has been made the head of the sacrifice.

He is the past, the present and the future, faith, beauty, and heaven. He is death. He is immortality. He is the horror, and He is the saviour. He is the vital breath and the bestower of wealth.

All the causes of pain and torments strictly obey His command. All the stars along with the moon are under His control. Such is the power of God. He is this one, the only acceptable one, the one alone.

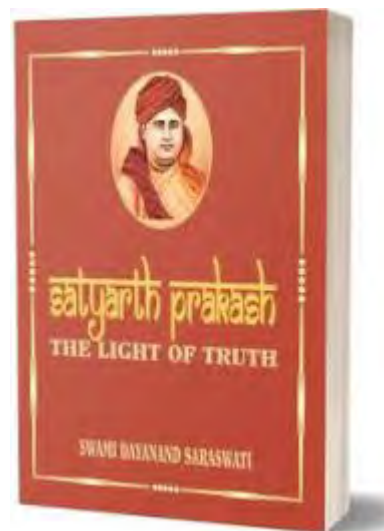
You form the herbs and send beneficial rains to make the people and other living beings grow. O bountiful Lord, that much is your grandeur; all these are your hundred manifestations. All these are tied to your ten million forms, for you yourself are a hundred million.

God is one and one alone; believe it. There is no duality in God.

Author: Karuna Mohan

## The Light of Truth

Swami Dayanand Saraswati's book "Sathyarth Prakash" is a masterpiece and a great literary undertaking. Swami Dayanandji very wittingly and consciously entitled the book to be an exposition on enlightenment and truth. *Sathya* is the truth, *arth* is exposition and *prakash* is light. This paper covers an overview of the book.



### The first chapter is an exposition of Aum and 100 names of God

The value of 1 Aum is one complete cycle of creation, preservation, and dissolution of the world. In time this is 311 040 000 000 000 (three hundred and eleven trillion and forty billion) years. Can you fathom the amount of energy and power that is required to sustain the world for such a long time?

In reciting Aum, we are mindful that God is omnipresent (everywhere), omnipotent (all powerful) and omniscient (all knowing). We worship and adore His greatness therefore Aum is the primary and most supreme name of God.

God is called *Swaraat* – self-effulgent, something that does not require an external power source. God generates infinite power from within Himself not depending on any external power source.

God is called *Mitra* – friend. A human who is friend to one is an enemy of another and indifferent to a third person. Hence *Mitra* cannot be taken to signify an ordinary friend. It means God, because He is One who is an absolute Friend of all and unfriendly or indifferent to none. No human can ever be like Him. While this is the primary meaning of the word, the secondary meaning is an

ordinary friend. *Mitra* means God because He loves all and is worthy of being loved by all.

Among the 100 names of God in the Light of Truth are:

<b>Agni</b>	• the Embodiment of all true knowledge.
<b>Indra</b>	• All-powerful and Protector of all.
<b>Praana</b>	• the source of all-life.
<b>Brahma</b>	• the Greatest of all beings and creator of the universe.
<b>Vishnu</b>	• All-pervading.
<b>Rudra</b>	• Punisher of the wicked, whom he causes to weep.
<b>Shiva</b>	• Blissful and Benefactor of all.
<b>Akshara</b>	• Immortal, Omnipresent.
<b>Kaalaagni</b>	• Cause of the dissolution of the world and Regulator of time.
<b>Chandramaa</b>	• the true Source of Happiness.
<b>Budha (budha – know)</b>	• One who is All-knowledge and endows souls with Knowledge.
<b>Ganapati - (Gana -host, pati – Lord)</b>	• One who is the Lord of host, i.e., of all the Material and Spiritual world, which He also protects.
<b>Ganesha - (Gana – host, Isha – Lord)</b>	• Lord of Hosts.
<b>Saraswati - (sri – to achieve and know)</b>	• One who is possessed of infinite knowledge of the universe, of words, their objects and their relations.
<b>Hiranyagarbha - (Hiranya – light and garbha – source)</b>	• One who is the source and support of all light and luminous bodies such as the sun.

**“In the beginning was Hiranyagarbha – the One Lord of the creation. He sustains the sun and the earth. We adore Him – the All Blissful Being” Yajur Veda 13.4**

The Sathyarth Prakash explains the meanings of one hundred names. There are infinite number of names of God. His names are without number, because His nature, attributes and activities are infinite. In the Veda and Shastras, the infinite attributes, powers, characteristics of God, are described. From this, we learn

that God is known by the variety of attributes hence, His names are infinite.

**The second chapter deals with the upbringing of children**

**Maatrimaan Pitrimaan A’charyavaan Purusho Veda – Shatapatha Brahmana**



In the text the word *mata*, mother precedes the word *pita*, father. It is an invariable practice to use the word *mata* before the word *pita* whenever they happen to come together. Not only this but the word “wife” comes before the word “husband” and the name of the wife before that of the husband. We speak of *Sitaram* which demonstrates the veneration the female gender was held by the ancients.

Verily, that man alone can become a great scholar who has had the advantage of three good teachers, father, mother, and preceptor. “Blessed is the family, most fortunate is the child whose parents are godly and learned. The mother’s healthy influence on her children surpasses that of everyone else. No other person can equal a mother in her love for her children, or in her anxiety for their welfare...He alone is said to have a mother whose mother is devout and learned. Blessed is the mother who never ceases to impart religious tone to the mind of her child from the time of conception till his knowledge is perfected.”<sup>1</sup>

It behoves both parents before, during, and after conception to avoid the use of such foods and drinks as are intoxicating, decomposed, non-nutritious, and prejudicial to the growth of the intellect and use those articles that are productive of mental tranquillity, health,

<sup>1</sup> Swami Dayanand: The Light of Truth: An English Translation of Satyarthprakash, Editors Acharya Vaidyanath Published by Veda Niketan, Arya Samaj SA

Shastri and Acharya Jagdish Vidyarthi, Jan Gyan Prakashan, New Delhi, first edition May 1908, second edition Dec 1970.

strength, intellect, energy, and good temper – qualities that go to make a man refined.

In this chapter, precise and acute advice is provided regarding the best time of conception, types of foods to consume, mental and physical health of the couple as they prepare for a child.

After the child is born. A mother should so instruct her children as to make them refined in character and manners, and they should never be allowed to misconduct themselves in any way. When the child begins to speak, his mother should see that he uses his tongue properly to pronounce letters distinctly in the right place and with the right amount of effort.

He should be taught how to address and conduct himself in the presence of his superiors and peers, mother, father, servants, leaders and learned men, so that he may never be slight in company, but be always treated with respect. Parents should endeavour to inculcate in the minds of their children intense desire for the love of knowledge, elevating company, and control of the senses. Jealousy and malice they should not harbour.

Children should avoid useless playing, crying, laughing, and wrangling. They should not give way to excess of pleasures and sorrows, nor become completely engrossed in a thing. This discipline is of great importance as the youth of today are engrossed in mobile devices and social media apps. We see how disjointed they are from reality, and they become unsociable and withdrawn.

They should be advised to preserve their reproductive element. We should speak to our children about sex education at the appropriate time. Parents should try, in every possible way, to develop in their children such sterling qualities as truthfulness, heroism, patience and cheerfulness.

They should also counsel them against all things that lead to superstition and are opposed to true religion and science. When a child is born, people are often asked to pay large sums of money get the horoscope read by a priest or an astrologer and then to remove any obstacles which the child may face. This practise is of no use as an inanimate planet could never influence the health or progress of a child. Parents should also be guarded against trying to seek the help of fortune tellers and unqualified persons to treat their sick children. Rather, visit a suitably qualified professional.

Parents who neglect the education of their children are their absolute enemies.

To give their children the highest education possible, to instruct them in the ways of truth, to make them refined in character and manners is the paramount duty, the highest virtue, and the glory of parents.

**This leads to the third chapter on Education.**

It is the highest duty of parents, preceptors, and relatives to adorn children with good sound education, nobility of character, refinement of manners, and amiability of temper. In this chapter Rishi Dayanand explains the Gurukula system of education, the disciplines that both student and teacher should follow.

Boys and girls, when they attain the age of eight years, should be sent to their respective (boys only and girls only) schools. In no instance, should they be placed under the tuition of teachers of low character. Only those persons are qualified to teach are masters of their art.

Students should be taught the Gayatri Mantra, the teachings of the Vedas and the essential stages of divine meditation.

A student should practise the 10 disciplines of Yoga, 5 yamas and 5 niyamas. One of them is Pranayama or control of the breath.

Patanjali in Yoga II.28 says: “The practice of Praanaayaama gradually burns off all impurities and exalts the soul. The light of knowledge in the soul goes on continually increasing till the soul is emancipated.”

The Manusmriti in VI.71 gives this explanation “Just as a goldsmith, by blowing strongly against a piece of impure gold, removes its impurities by oxidation, so does Praanaayaama burn off all impurities of the mind and senses.”

One hour a day, at least, should be devoted to Divine Contemplation or meditation, which should be practised with perfect concentration of mind.

Students should also practise the five great daily duties:

- Worship of God
- havan and duty towards the learned,
- Service to one’s parents and other learned and righteous persons,
- Duty towards animals and the poor and helpless, and
- Duty towards the altruistic teachers of humanity and ordinary guests, i.e., to show them proper respect and serving them to the utmost of one’s power and means.



**The fourth chapter deals with Marriage and married life:** the correct age of marriage, a suitable partner and the conduct of both husband and wife during marriage.

**The fifth chapter covers the Vanprastha and Sanayas Ashramas.** These ashrams begin at the age of 50 and 75 years respectively. In these ashrams the individual renounces worldly belongings and dedicates life to the welfare of not only his family but to the community and world.

**Chapter six deals with the Science of Government,** how a country should be run, the calibre and character of government officials. The patriotism one should show towards one country is also covered. An interesting point was that the punishment for a king or president should be 10 times more than that of an ordinary citizen for the same offence committed.

**Chapter seven covers God and the Veda.**

God is formless. A finite object has finite qualities, actions, and nature. If God is endowed with form, then another formless entity is required to create and assemble that form. If God made his body voluntarily then it proves that before making the body, he was formless.

God is omnipresent - If God is only at one place, then no action can be performed in inaccessible places. God cannot perform the act of creation, sustenance, and destruction nor can he be All-pervading, All-knowing, and Just.

God pervades inside all living and non-living things. How is this possible? Electricity can travel through metal, but metal cannot pervade electricity. This means that electricity is less dense or subtler than metal. Similarly, light pervades a room but does not occupy space, light is subtler than air. God is the subtlest in the universe therefore he pervades everything, and nothing can pervade Him.

God is All Powerful - He does not require any assistance in carrying out any of his work. If God is all powerful, can he do anything? If God can do anything then, can he create another God? If so, then He would no longer be the ultimate. There cannot be two ultimates! God is also governed by his eternal physical laws. He cannot break his own laws.

God is just and merciful. God cannot punish someone who has not committed a sin or forgive someone for his wrongdoings by listening to praise and prayer.

The 4 Vedas were revealed by God for the benefit of humanity. The Vedas are revealed knowledge to all human beings at the beginning of creation. Humans having superior intellect, were given a duty. Humans are the custodians of the earth, and they have responsibilities set out in the Vedas. All human beings have the right to study the Vedas. The Vedas are the source of Dharma that makes one Manurbhava - "Be a human being".

**Chapter eight is about Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution of the Universe**

The Rig Veda 10.129.3 explains: "In the beginning the whole universe was enveloped in utter darkness. Nothing was discernible. It was like a dark night. Matter was in its very elementary form. It was like ether. The whole universe, completely overspread by darkness, was insignificantly small compared with the Infinite God who, by His power, evolved this cosmic world, out of the elementary matter"

And Rig Veda 10.121.1 also states: "He who has created this multiform universe, and is the cause of its sustenance as well as dissolution, the Lord of the universe in whom the whole world exists, is sustained, and then resolved into elementary condition, is the Supreme Spirit. Know Him, O man, to be your God and believe in no other as the Creator of the Universe."

There are 3 eternal or beginningless entities in this world, God, the soul, and the prakriti (matter), all of them, are uncreated. The eternal soul enjoys the eternal matter and is wrapped up in it whilst God neither enjoys it, nor is He wrapped up in it.

The material cause is the prakriti which is the material used in the making of the universe. Being devoid of intelligence it can neither make nor unmake itself but is always made or unmade by a conscious intelligent being, therefore planets can never be angry, nor can they influence the happiness and misery of a particular person.

**In chapter 9 Knowledge and Ignorance, Emancipation and Bondage is covered.**

The main aim of human life is to get rid of sufferings and bondage and to get attainment of Supreme bliss-*Mokṣa*.

The Yajur Veda 40.14 explains: "He who realizes knowledge and ignorance together, overcomes death by performing works and obtains salvation by attaining true knowledge."

Characteristics of *Avidyaa* - ignorance is the false notion that the transient world and worldly things (such as

bodies) are eternal or in other words that the world of effects, that we see and feel, has always been existing and will continue to exist for ever, and that by virtue of the power of yoga, the physical bodies of godly men become imperishable, is the first kind of ignorance (*Avidyaa*).

Virtuous life and contemplation of God are called *vidyaa* because they are only bodily acts and mental processes. They are not knowledge. Without pure life and contemplation of God no one can ever conquer death. Virtuous acts, the worship of one true God and correct knowledge leads to Emancipation, whilst an immoral life, the worship of other things or persons in place of God, and false knowledge are the cause of the Bondage of the soul. No man can ever, for a single moment be, free from actions, thoughts, and knowledge. Performance or righteous acts, as truthfulness in speech, and the renunciation of sinful acts, as untruthfulness, alone are the means of Salvation.

In *Samādhi*, the soul gets immersed and enjoys bliss In *Paramātman*.

*Mukti* (emancipation) is not possible for infinite time because the capacity of the embodied soul (*Jīva*) is limited, and limited means cannot yield endless outcome. God will cease to be All-just should the limited actions result in endless results. Embodied souls do not have capacity, means and aptitude to enjoy endless bliss, so it cannot enjoy endless happiness.

While *Moksha* is limited in time, God rewards man very dearly giving him 311 trillion and forty billion years of pure bliss free from any form of suffering. This is also the time of one cycle of creation to dissolution. This shows the benevolence, generosity, and magnanimity of our creator.

#### **Chapter ten deals with lifestyle and is entitled conduct and diet.**

The Manusmriti II.1-3 says: “Let a man regulate his conduct according to what is sanctioned by the Vedas taught by Smritis and other books of the Rishis, practiced by all men – good and true and approved by his own soul.” And “It is impossible for any man to be altogether free from desire, because all our actions –humanitarian works, truthfulness in speech, the practice of Yamas and Niyamas, and other duties – proceed from desire for the same.”

Devotion to whatever promotes the good of the world as well as abstinence from all harmful acts are the chief duties of man. Let a man never associate with those who

are atheists, and liars, nor with those who are lazy, disloyal to their faith, hypocritical, selfish, and deceitful. Let him always move in the society of men who are learned, truthful, pious and have public good at heart. This, in truth, constitutes good conduct.

Some disciplines discussed in this chapter are:

Yamas the five moral disciplines:

- Non-Violence,
- truthfulness in word, deed and thought,
- non stealing,
- chastity,
- non greed.

Niyamas are the five moral observances:

- Purity of mind and body,
- mental tranquillity,
- strict devotion to duty,
- study of the Vedas and other true Shaastraas and contemplation of God,
- Resignation to the Will of God.

Diet is an integral part of mans’ survival. Today we realise how important diet is after over 6 400 000 people lost their lives to the corona virus - which originated due to consumption of animals - contrary to Vedic teachings.

Humans should eat a pure *saattvic* vegetarian diet. When a lion enters the forest, birds warn other creatures, but do not do so when a human being enters. This shows that humans ought to be harmless and vegetarian by nature.



Food which is not just pure and nutritious but also obtained by righteous and harmless means must be consumed. The person preparing the meal should also be of a pure nature.

Food obtained by killing others, by theft, dishonesty, decomposed, fermented, unclean or foul smelling, unhygienically prepared foods are all prohibited.

Eating together from the same plate, eating the leftover food of others, excessive eating is harmful to health.

Meat, alcoholic beverages, and drugs should never be consumed.

Man should never kill such useful animals as cows, nor let others do the same. One cow in one generation benefits, people through her milk, butter, and offspring. Putting milk and corn together a cow in one generation can supply 390,000 good meals, therefore the cow is regarded as sacred and a gift from God.

**Chapters Eleven to Fourteen:** the last four chapters deal with Swamiji's critical analysis of other major religions. He points out the inconsistencies and contradictions he found in their texts.

The teachings of the Vedas are relevant. The knowledge is cosmopolitan and applicable for any era and nation. While humans progress technologically and discover advances in science the world drifts away from virtues. Man is the architect of his own destruction. Countries who cannot resolve their issues through dialogue turn to arms. Leaders who incite violence and racial intolerance and mans' blatant disregard for nature has affected the world negatively. Practising the knowledge of the Vedas is our only hope in changing the world for the better.

Some salient teachings and guidelines of the Vedas that are applicable today.

- Eternity of God and brotherhood of man.
- Respect for women folk.
- Love for your motherland.
- Sixteen sanskaars to be performed.
- Marriage which is not a contract but a sacramental affair.
- Cooperative spirit of working together.
- Performance of five yajnas.
- There is no death since reincarnation is a rule.

Those who have a quest for truth and are in search of true knowledge should read this book. The knowledge and advice that is imparted is invaluable. The ultimate message of the book is clear - Back to the Vedas.

**Author: Suriyaprakash Singh**

## Towards a Climate Justice Charter Movement

### CRITIQUE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CLIMATE COMMISSION (PCC) - A FRAMEWORK FOR A JUST TRANSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA



Press Release: 2 August 2022

The Climate Justice Charter Movement places on record the following critique of the Presidential Climate Commission document titled: A Framework for a Just Transition in South Africa. We would like the public to note the following points:

1. While the introduction to the framework acknowledges the urgency in climate science, it fails to recognize that we are living through climate extremes and its deleterious impacts.

A more people centered document would have been less technocratic in tone and acknowledged we have had one of the worst droughts in the history of the country, an extreme flooding event in KZN in April, 2022 (amongst others) and even cyclonic impacts from extreme weather shifts in the Indian Ocean.

The 'Climate Emergency and Crisis' is here. Moreover, the document does not upfront mention we are one of ten climate hotspots in the world, with a doubling in our average temperatures compared to the global average.

When the world overshoots 1.5°C in coming years we will be at a 3°C increase in temperature, according to our leading climate scientists. This is a major cause for concern and should have been foregrounded to underline the climate emergency challenge we face and the need to place the country on a climate emergency footing.

In short, this framework does not recognize the climate emergency and assumes South Africa is like any other country on the planet, facing a gradual, even and linear process of climate change. We are not; the worse it gets

globally, the worse it will be for us in terms of shocks and risks to all socio-ecological systems that we need to survive!

2. The introduction to this document has a glaring omission which runs throughout the document; a failure to acknowledge our carbon emissions.



We are one of the most carbon intensive economies in the world and in the BRICS. South Africa has used coal for over a century and is considered the 12<sup>th</sup> highest carbon emitter in the world according to some studies.

Moreover, in a study done by Oxfam recently it is clear that the wealthy in countries have the largest carbon footprints and are largely responsible for the climate crisis.

South Africa is no exception. Our carbon footprint and intensity across different parts of the economy, including of the wealthy, should have been acknowledged in this document and what this means for the decarbonisation challenge.

3. While the document affirms a commitment to vulnerable groups it fails to recognize we are a country wracked by deep inequality, including poverty wages and precarity in the labour market.

Income distribution in South Africa is extremely skewed towards the wealthy with about 75% of national income in the hands of 10% of the population.

Post-apartheid South Africa's globalised economy is merely about a new form of apartheid and is a regime of class-based exclusion. A poor and precarious African, Coloured, Indian, and White working class (urban and rural), including women, have and are the current shock absorbers of an economy serving the interests of a minority.

They have been stretched to their limits in the midst of ongoing structural unemployment, Covid 19, increasing living costs and climate shocks; our desperate society is unravelling. In short the document does not accurately

situate those struggling to survive in an unjust South Africa. The use of the category 'the poor' does not capture the widespread suffering and desperation.

4. The document reads as though the just transition framework on offer is based on what the current ANC government is doing; in other words, a failing state with incoherent policies, a lack of serious political will to mainstream the climate emergency and which is meant to lead the just transition.

For 15 years the ANC government could not fix the Eskom crisis and has continued to make it worse. In essence this framework is not a South African framework, breaking new ground, but merely affirms the same political leadership crisis we face on many fronts, and which is being perpetuated by the ANC government.

5. The development of this framework reads like a top-down technocratic exercise rather than being informed by lived experience of the worsening climate crisis and emergency: how many droughts, floods, tornados, and wildfires impacted communities were consulted? How many lessons were drawn from these experiences?

6. The document claims there is a broad consensus on how to define a just transition. It is supported by a number of 'quotes'. When these quotes are read together they merely affirm 2050 (certainly not a scientifically determined target date, given what South Africa is facing in terms of heating trends and dynamics) as the critical date for 'net zero' (a very problematic concept that includes numerous techno-fixes like carbon capture and storage etc.) emissions, economic change within the existing globalised system and some concessions to the working class and poor to meet basic needs.

Read together with the 'green economy' and 'competitiveness' thrust and emphasis on the risks to the mainstream economy the conception of the just transition being advocated for is shallow. It is not about the deep just transition which ensures socio-ecological systems transformation, rethinking the entire economy to serve the needs of the country and the creation of a new ecological society. The liberal technocratic emphasis of this document is certainly not transformative enough and far from the pluri-vision, principles and systemic alternatives envisaged by the Climate Justice Charter.

7. The principles of this document are flawed in two major respects and are revealing in terms of the



liberal technocratic approach running through this entire text.

First, the rights of the constitution are considered as adequate and 'sufficiently green' to ensure we survive the ecological crises, including the worsening climate crisis. South Africa's constitution particularly section 24 is drafted from an Anthropocentric point of view; nature and the environment must merely serve the needs of human society. It must also be protected for that reason.

We do not accept this as the Climate Justice Charter Movement hence we approached parliament to adopt the CJC, as per section 234 of the South African constitution to ensure the South African constitution can be strengthened with an emancipatory ecology thrust which recognises humans are part of nature, we are one among many life forms, and nature also has intrinsic value which we must all respect.

Second, and strikingly, the principle of climate justice is absent from this document, yet this framework is meant to deal with the worsening climate crisis. The principles affirmed are derived from liberal theory and approaches to justice.

Even on these terms, in relation to restorative justice, the rich should be responsible for paying their ecological debt to society. Yet the PCC does not dare go there. Moreover, climate justice as understood as advocating systemic change through democratic systemic reforms to end carbon capitalism, ethically and politically ensure the needs of the most vulnerable who did not create the climate crisis come first, while the wealthy who caused the problem to carry the costs, is too-far a leap for the liberals of the Presidential Climate Commission.

8. While the "At Risk Value Chain" analysis of the framework provides some important insights it betrays the underlying logic of this framework: the economy comes first, not human, and non-human life.

The consistent argument is that the economy will lose if we do not take the climate crisis seriously. Merely taking current economic structures as a given, this framework fails to recognise how some of these economic sectors in themselves are contributing to the broader ecological and particular climate crisis we face.

Globalised, chemical fed and mono-industrial carbon agriculture is eco-cidal (contributing to the mass scale destruction of human and non-human life). The entire food system has to be transformed if we are to survive.

Tinkering and techno-fixes like 'climate smart agriculture' based on a narrow economic risk value analysis does not get us to think in terms of socio-ecological systems transformation.

This is elite risk analysis and reinforces an unjust and unviable status quo. Moreover, from the standpoint of the Climate Justice Charter it is humanity and non-human life that will lose from the worsening climate crisis. It is also unfortunate that instead of merely foregrounding the economy, this document could have foregrounded, based on climate science, communities, towns and cities that are facing climate risks, based on an increasing pattern of climate extremes. Lessons could have been drawn from the recent drought, the floods in KZN, tornadoes, wildfires and more.

9. The 'key policy areas' of the framework are silent on the issue of decarbonisation. Why is decarbonisation not featured as a key policy area in itself? Why is decarbonisation of Sasol, Eskom and other big polluters not given priority? This document is a farce for this reason alone. The Climate Justice Charter rejects the privatisation of our energy system and calls for community and socially owned renewable energy.



In this context Eskom has a crucial role to play. This is contrary to the current approach of the President and ANC government which seeks to privatise the energy system and essentially inaugurate an unjust private sector led energy transition. Moreover, in each of the 'key policy areas' there is an attempt to affirm existing ANC government policy shifts.

Let us be clear when it comes to skills development the SETA system has been a disaster.

Even in the midst of the Eskom crisis the Minister of Public Enterprises had to make an appeal to unions such as Solidarity to assist.

Even the unemployed working class have made no progress through the SETA system, overseen by the Communist Minister, Blade Nzimande.

Minister Ebrahim Patel has had to take notice of electric vehicles because the car manufacturers in South Africa have sent him a strong message.

Moreover, there is no conception of eco-centric industrialisation in Minister Patel's framework or in this framework document. Such an approach to industrialisation recognises our limited carbon budget, appreciates the imperative of clean energy production, zero waste and rethinking design to ensure products last longer.

Such an approach de-materialises industrialisation and is more ecologically sustainable. It can certainly be used to ensure eco-centric industrialisation of renewable energy technologies, mass clean energy public transport systems and transforming Denel to produce climate emergency technologies.

For almost three decades the ANC government failed to address the legacies of apartheid, we certainly do not expect it to rise to the challenge of ensuring a deep and transformative just transition, informed by climate justice.

10. The framework document relies on the existing state planning approach as the basis to move the just transition forward. It envisages the NDP, IDPs, budget etc. as the means to ensure the just transition moves forward.

For almost three decades these approaches have not been adequate to transform the economy and society. South Africa needs a more effective democratic planning approach, driven from below, not by technocrats sitting in the state.

With a failing state, with limited capacity, one of the crucial calls this document could have made, consistent with the constitution, was for a more democratised approach to the state and just transition practice. In this regard, the call should have been made to rectify the mistake of 'Africanising' the state through cadre deployment, crony capture and an exclusionary nationalist masculinity.

The PCC should have called for a truly non-racial and women led state to be built drawing on the talents of all South Africans. This is what the Climate Justice Charter also calls for.

11. This framework document provides an ideological equivalence between neo-corporatist bargaining, ILO style, and stakeholder capitalism of the World Economic Forum (made up of the most powerful transnational corporations in the world).

What these amounts to is the co-option of labour and progressive social forces for the continuity of a globalised, 'competitive' and 'green economy' that favours the sovereignty of transnational monopoly capital. This has not worked and will not work for South Africa's deep just transition.

We reject this with the contempt it deserves. South Africa needs a decolonised and delinking approach to its economy so we survive; the economy must be subordinated to the needs of society and nature.

Our international trade, financial and production relations must be guided by the imperatives of our climate justice project. The power of the people and the workers must prevail over the eco-cidal logic of capital, as we advance systems change. The era of deep globalisation is over, even its green version.

12. We will continue to champion a vision of the deep just transition by affirming the centrality of the Climate Justice Charter (CJC), its pluri-vision, goals, principles, systemic alternatives, commitment to a people driven climate justice state and a renewed radical Pan-Africanism.

The CJC is decolonial, eco-feminist, anti-capitalist, and anti-ecocide. It is the most transformative approach South African society has to the deep just transition and the worsening climate crisis.

**Let's build and accelerate the deep just transition from below now! We are running out of time!**

For more information and to be involved in the campaigns, please contact the authors:

**Awande Buthelezi**, COPAC organiser, SAFSC and CJCM activist, 079 613 8191

**Charles Simane**, COPAC researcher and organiser, SAFSC activist and CJCM activist, 073 284 1126

**Ferrial Adam**, COPAC associate, CJCM activist, 074 181 3197 (after hours)

**Jane Cherry**, COPAC Executive Manager, SAFSC activist and CJCM activist, 084 236 3649

**Vishwas Satgar**, COPAC board chairperson, SAFSC and CJCM activist, 082 775 3420

# Building Values and Resilience: Views from our Priests

## WHOSE WEALTH?

ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्। तेन त्यक्तेन  
भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम्॥

Íśa vāsyam idam sarvam, yat kiñca jagatyām jagat.

Tena tyaktena bhuñjithā, mā grdah kasya swiddhanam.

Yajur Veda 40.1

This mantra is relevant for all times and highly significant to all. It behoves one to think about possessions, especially money - its origin and the prudent use of it.

### ***Kasya Swiddhanam***

The wealth is the abundance of nature. There is more than enough sunlight, air, water, and land for every single living creature. The natural elements are used as raw materials to manufacture the necessities as well as the luxuries.

When we occupy a home, an office, or a position in an organisation, we claim that space as ours - this is my car, that land is mine. Kingdoms have moved from great grandfather to grandfather, to father, to son, to grandson, to great grandson. It did not belong to anyone forever as it is continually passing from one hand to the next. A piece of earth that a person may lay claim to own, owns the person's bones or ashes after death. No one can say with conviction, that (anything) is mine. The question remains whose wealth, is it?

### ***Ma grdah***

Man uses that which is provided to satisfy all the needs and wants of his lifetime. When more than is required is taken this equates to greed. *Ma grdah* means do not be greedy. In South Africa, July 2021 we witnessed the wanton greed of the looters. Many businesses suffered great losses. While those who could not recover sought other means to earn living, many companies were able to rise from the ashes to rebuild and restart their businesses. Their resilience is admirable. This was no easy task. The emotional distress and additional costs of rebuilding is squarely as the result of greed.

### ***Tena tyaktena bhuñjita***

Permission is granted for man to use all the elements that are existing eternally. The excess fleece of the sheep is used to make wool. The variety of plants, fruit and nuts is for nutrition, the sun, the water, and air are all readily available without limitations or fear of favour. However there is a condition, *tyaktena* that is, to use all the provisions without holding on to them like holding onto dear life or to amass possessions for selfish use only.

Man is advised, especially during the grihast (Householder) stage of life to provide for children, parents, and society. Man is advised to earn and use earnings to contribute towards educational institutions, upliftment of the physically and mentally challenged, the ill and the destitute. We saw the "*tyaktena*" after the recent flooding in Kwazulu Natal when people rallied around to assist the many who lost everything. The provision of bottled water to the areas which were cut off from the supply points was like "manna from heaven." There were hundreds of people who sponsored food hampers after the devastating looting in July 2021. This was *Tyaktena* in its true form.

### ***Íśa vāsyam idam sarvam***

God is immanent in all the elements of the universe, in the earth, water, fire, air and space, hence God resides in the whole universe. He is omnipresent. The creator uses the elements in creation, rendering all creation as His. People are born with closed fists and depart from the earth with open empty palms. Nothing belongs to anybody.

### ***Yat kiñca jagatyam jagat***

God is present in everything that moves air, water, light and planets. God has been, is and will be.

If life must be comfortable people have to realise that God resides in *everything*, in all things that are in motion. People should make beneficial use of all the provisions, without attachment and with sharing with others who have much less. It must be kept in mind that no one owns anything eternally. Only God who has existed beyond times gone by, who is timeless, who has been the father of all answers the question: Whose wealth is it?

Author: Pt Ressma Rambaros

## Stand for and with the Truth

ओम् असतो मा सद्गमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय,  
मृत्योर्मांसमृतं गमय।

Om asato maa sad gamaya, tamaso maa jyotir gamaya,  
mrityor maa mritam gamaya.

O Supreme Spirit! Lead us from untruth to truth; from  
darkness to light; and from death to immortality.

This mantra from the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad is popular amongst spiritual students and is composed of three parts, the first of which says, "O Supreme Spirit! Lead us from untruth to truth".

To the average person such a statement would be a problem for they are conscious that truth hurts. Also, when considering the society that we live in, to many others truth would seem much stranger than fiction, and yet there would be some others who may even want to distort the truth to suit their own point of view.



But truth is truth. An especially important principle. It must be understood and accepted. It is scientific and most logical. It requires deep and serious thinking of one with a pure mind. Mahatma Gandhi, although criticised by many, stood firmly by the truth, like many leaders before him.

If we are afraid to accept the truth then it means that we are living a lie, and most of the world's population presently are. With this lie comes ignorance, superstition, and blind faith. All this leads to a life of negativity, clouding our life to spirituality and keeping us in darkness.

But truth purifies and enlightens our minds. It leads us to knowledge and wisdom. It creates peace and harmony. It makes us realise that the world is one. We begin to

appreciate the statement, "Vasudeva Kutumbakam", and the fact that we are divine in origin and in nature. This is when we begin to live in the light.

Enlightenment leads us to the realisation that we are not a body. Neither are we a name. Nor are we a number. We each are indeed a soul. An immortal soul. One that is never born and never dies. One that has lived in other bodies in the past, one that is living in its present body, and when it leaves its present body, it would take on another. This is one of the many ultimate truths.

For one who is serious about spiritual development realising the truth is an absolute necessity. He would chant the above mantra repeatedly. He would meditate on its meaning until it is realised. He would know that he would not die for he is both immortal and eternal.

Author: Pt Bhagirathi Basdhew

## Being Resilient

ओम् वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्। तमेव  
विदित्वाति मृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्धतेऽयनाय।।

Om vedāhametaṃ puruṣaṃ mahāntamādityavarṇaṃ  
tamaṣaḥ parastāt.

Tameva viditvāti mṛtyumeti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate'  
yanāya.

Yajur Veda 31.18

The meaning of this mantra is:

I have known that the great Puruṣa (Supreme Being), who is brilliant like the sun and who is beyond all darkness. One who knows Him thus becomes immortal (even) here. There is no other path for liberation than this.

The Supreme Entity transcends the dark and lifeless primordial matter. He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and dazzlingly brilliant, shining bright like the sun (*ādityavarṇaṃ*).



This mantra describes the Supreme Being as Puruṣha because He dwells in the body (*pura*) or because He fills the universe (*purnam*).

Only the knowledge of the Supreme Being who is also the Absolute, can destroy the darkness of ignorance (*tamasah parastāt*) and free men from the cycle of births and deaths (*tameva viditvāti mṛtyumeti*). *Viditwā* means through perception or by acquiring knowledge.

*Nānyaḥ panthā vidyate' yanāya* tells us that the only path man must take to escape this cycle of birth and death to obtain liberation, is through his intuitive perception of that absolute Supreme Being.

Through this realization one will overcome fear of death and realize the ultimate goal of *mokṣha*. The human being has been caught up in the illusions (*maya*) of this world where he/she constantly identifies with the mortal body which leads to suffering. We suffer from pleasures that satisfy the senses which never leads to lasting happiness.

From this mantra we can learn to be resilient. We can accept death. We need not fear death. With the losses from covid, the devastating floods this year and the unrest we experienced last July many loved ones went too soon. This loss need not be feared. The loss need not linger. If we understand the depth of this mantra, coping with loss of a loved one becomes easier.

This mantra is therefore a reminder to us that there is no other path or way to free ourselves from this vicious cycle of birth and death other than by personal awareness of God realization brought about by acquiring true knowledge. This is what will bring us the soul, eternal bliss.

Author: Pt Prathna Dudhrajh

## Values Shape Reputation

Through experience we build values. Values are personal, they point out who you are. When a child learns to respect elders in his/her home, then he/she will respect all elders. Social values reflect on how we relate in society.

These include justice, freedom, respect, community relationships and responsibility.

- Values shape your reputation.
- Values serve as guide to human behaviour.
- Values direct our behaviour towards each other.
- Values are inert in each person.

With positive values we try to do good all the time. Some people though do adopt negative values.

Among the traits of positive values are respect, patience, tolerance, honesty, integrity, kindness, responsibility, and restraint. People who display positive values towards each other have good relationships. Human beings are social beings and enjoy being around people who have exceptional values.

The Rig Veda 2:41:16 mantra below as explained in the “Gems of the Rigveda” a commentary by Dr Satish Prakash gives us a glimpse of how the Vedas explains how values are shaped.

अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति। अप्रशस्ता इव स्मसि प्रशस्तिमम्ब नस्कृधि।।

*Ambi-tame nadee-tame devi-tame saraswati. Apra-shas-taa iva smasi prashastim amba nas kridhi.*

Saraswati means wisdom that flows from teacher to student. This wisdom is described as:

*Ambi-tamaa*: the dearest and greatest among mothers because she gives us a new birth. She makes us relinquish an old, unproductive lifestyle and causes us to be born with new values and new motivations.

In most instances a mother is the one who instils in her child positive values, as well as guiding the child towards making correct life choices. She inspires the child by modelling positive behaviour.

*Nade-tamaa*: The greatest among rivers because she flows on the desert, barren, sandy soil of my mind and causes it to be fertile, to produce healthy thoughts.

Young children absorb everything that happens around them, even when you think they are not watching, hence positive actions are remembered and copied by children. Positive behaviour among young children should be rewarded.

*Devi-tamaa*: the greatest of goddesses because she is filled with divine, Godly qualities and she imparts those qualities to anyone who worships her.

Ideally good role models live up to the expectation of their children. Young children would want to mimic such values.

This mantra encourages us to analyse what we do daily. We need to stop and take stock of our actions. We need to analyse the person we are and how we project ourselves to the outside world.

Several mantras in the Vedas state that we must always live in harmony with other beings. "May we look at all with a friendly eye." Humans are social beings. We need to know understand that not everyone is alike.

Self-questioning is important as it will allow you to gain insight into negative values. We need to constantly reflect on our actions. Some negative values and behaviours for reflection are:

1. Gossiping excessively and thoughtlessly vilifying people's character, or when one meets another person you both know. Gossiping should be always avoided.
2. Eating unhealthy food and consuming alcohol and drugs. This would be detrimental to your health.
3. Watching immoral internet sites and TV shows and listening to lewd music. What you listen to impacts on the brain and affects your cognitive levels. E.g., Learners who travel in kombi that plays loud banging music, upon entering school cannot concentrate on the lesson as the banging music is playing in his/her head.
4. Picking up things that don't belong to me, this amounts to stealing and could land a person in great trouble by being shamed or even jailed.

5. Harboring thoughts in your mind that lower your self-dignity. One's thoughts should be positive and not negative, as your thoughts sometimes can manifest in hurt speech or action towards another person.
6. Making decisions that will cause others pain. Always think carefully before deciding as you need to weigh out the pros and cons before you decide.

These are just a few examples negative qualities that impact on a persons' character, reputation and how values are shaped.

Through *saraswati* or wisdom people develop values that lead to them being selfless, caring, sharing, respectful, helping where needed, and performing positive actions that enhance the quality of people's lives.

By reciting the above mantra, we ask God to Bless us with a good life and a good reputation. This mantra says you are the greatest of mothers. O Mother! Give me a new birth, and in hugging me, nurture in me new values and new motivations.

As the greatest of all rivers, flow on the surface of my mind's soil and infuse new fertility to cause healthy, virtuous thoughts to germinate, grow and yield sweet fruits.

As the greatest of all goddesses, bless me with qualities, temperaments and natural inclinations that would create for me a personality that society would readily accept, someone whom people can depend on for leadership skills and for building strong foundations for current and future generations.

Author: Pt Shoba Singh

## Sanskrit words explained

आचार्य

āchārya

A spiritual guide, master, or teacher who imparts the wisdom of the Vedas.

From the verb root *char* (to go) and the prepositional prefix *ā* (towards), the term represents a teacher moving a student forward on the path of enlightenment.

Āchārya is a title given by a guru to a learned teacher who has achieved proficiency. The duties of an āchārya include initiating, guiding, and instructing others on a spiritual path.

Āchāra also refers to behaviour, traditions, and established rules of conduct. So an āchārya is someone who knows and whose life exemplifies the 'rules' of conduct.

### BACK TO THE VEDAS LECTURES



### Sanskaars relating to a child from Conception to Graduation

**Speaker: Pt Dharmanand Raghubir**

Wednesday 21 September 2022 7pm to 8pm (GMT+2)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81299888772?pwd=bnFhRTcxS0htWTBDWE5FYVgza2w2dz09>

Meeting ID: 812 9988 8772

Passcode: back2vedas

## Message from the President

My Dear Readers,

Prem Namaste

September heralds the beginning of Spring – bringing with it a feeling of joy, celebration of life and generating emotions of appreciation of nature and its beauty.

As discussed in this issue of the Veda Jyoti, nature can be appreciated by our commitment to ensure that we preserve this beautiful Earth and its bounties gifted to us by the Supreme Being.

September also brings with it Heritage Day and the religious observances of *Pitr Paksh* and *Navaratri*.

*Pitr Paksh* is a Hindu tradition that is observed during a 16-day period - this year from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of September preceding the *Navaratri* celebrations.

During this period, homage is paid to our forebears and ancestors. A strict, disciplined diet of *sattvik* food consisting of vegetarian meals, milk and fruit is followed, and abstinence from carnal and material pleasures.

The Vedas, however, speak of *Pitr Rinn/Yajna*, one of the five *Mahayajnas*, interpreted as one's obligation to one's parents and elders while they are still living, and to continue to honour them in our lives.

In *Puranic* practice during the festival of *Navaratri* reverence is paid to God as *Laxmi, Saraswati, and Durga*. Also known as *Durga Pooja*, the festival symbolises the victory of *Durga* over the demon *Mahishasura* – the victory of good over evil. The 10 days of the festival refer to the purification of the ten *Indriyas* or Senses – five *Karma Indriyas* (of action) and five *Jnana Indriyas* (of perception).

God is ONE but wise men call Him by many names. – *Ekam sad vīpraḥ bahudā vadanti*. Rig Veda 1.164.46.

Furthermore, the Yajur Veda 32.3 verse states *Na tasya pratima asti...* There can be no form, image, measurement of Him. Whose glory is the greatest. Who is unborn and Who alone deserves our worship.

While Yajur Veda 22.34 says *Ek asmai swaha* Worship ONE God.

The Shakti or Creative energies of these three names of God refer to His three principal attributes or functions – *Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh* – the Creator, the Sustainer, the Dissolver.

As the repository of supreme knowledge and wisdom, God is addressed as *Saraswati*, as the Provider of material and spiritual wealth, beauty, and uniqueness of creation - He is *Laxmi (Lakshmi)* and is *Durga* as the Remover of pains and sorrows and the Granter of bliss and peace.

These are the three essentials of life – without Knowledge we cannot progress from day to day. Wealth is essential for us to acquire the means to sustain ourselves.

Knowledge, wealth, and peace must be acquired within law and order, truth, and one’s own due effort (Rig Veda 10.190.1).

The Vedas Say: **“Akshair ma divyah krishimat krishashwa. Vitte ramaswa bahumanyan manah”**

Do not gamble. Earn your money by working hard, tilling the Earth, and producing crops. Be satisfied with whatever you get. Contentment is the basis of happiness. Greed, on the other hand, is the cause of misery and envy.

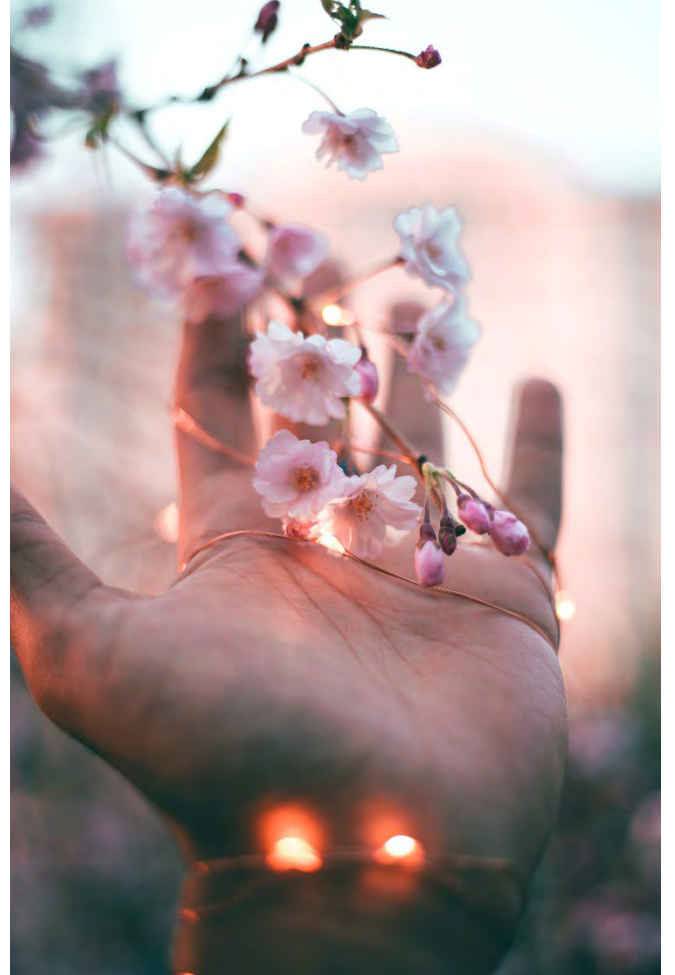
As man reaches the age of retirement, he only wants to experience bliss and to be peaceful, free from pains and sorrows, free from fear of old age and death.

Heritage Day is observed on the 24 September each year in South Africa. Our heritage defines who we are and includes our culture, traditions, languages, food, dress code etc peculiar to the indigenous people of a country.

Preserving one’s heritage and culture ensures that it is sustained from **generation** to generation, by understanding one’s heritage, the people begin to value it. Valuing it makes one want to care for and preserve it. By caring, a feeling of enjoyment of one’s heritage envelops the individual and in enjoying one’s heritage, a thirst to understand it better takes preference.

In as much as we are modern in our thinking and lifestyle, as Hindus, our culture - our *Sanskriti* instils in us the value systems that we have inherited over the generations.

Culture and heritage must not only be celebrated on a particular day but for every day of our lives here on Earth.



Pt Arthi Shanand



# Announcements

You are invited to send articles to the editorial committee for publication. Please email your submissions to [admin@aryasamajsa.org](mailto:admin@aryasamajsa.org)

## Acceptance conditions:

1. All submissions must be in word for the attention of the editorial committee.
2. All Sanskrit words must be in Italics.
3. Photographs submitted must be in high resolution.
4. All references must be cited.
5. The limits for articles will be as follows:
  - 5.1. Short articles & messages three hundred words,
  - 5.2. Current issues and social justice up to nine hundred words
  - 5.3. Feature articles 1500 to 3000 words,
  - 5.4. Secondary articles up to 1500 words.
6. The acceptance of articles will be considered based on the following criteria:
  - 6.1. Vedic teachings,
  - 6.2. Principles of the Arya Samaj,
  - 6.3. Social justice and social action,
  - 6.4. Relevance to current issues.

To contribute to projects of the Arya Samaj contact [admin@aryasamajsa.org](mailto:admin@aryasamajsa.org)  
Please send your comments and suggestions to [admin@aryasamajsa.org](mailto:admin@aryasamajsa.org)

Rig Veda 9.63.5

कृण्वन्तो विश्वामार्यम् "Krinvanto Vishwam Aryam" Make the World Noble

Yajur Veda 36.18

मित्रस्याहम् चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूताननि समीक्षे mitrasyāham chakṣuṣā sarvāṇi bhūtānani samīkṣe May we all live in friendly cooperation and mutual trust

मित्रस्याहम् चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे "mitrasyaaham chakshushaa sameekshaamahe" May we look at all with an Equal and Friendly Eye

*Veda Jyoti Founding Editors were Pt Nardev Vedalankar (1913-1994) and the late Manohar Somera*



Tel: 031 267 0544/0519

Arya Samaj South Africa, 87 Harbottle Road, Sydenham Durban, 4091, South Africa

[www.aryasamajsa.org](http://www.aryasamajsa.org) PBO No. 18/11/13/2971

