

The Renaissance of Hindu Dharma In the New Millennium

**A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS
(2002-2005)**

**Highlighting the efforts for a
Renaissance of Hindu Dharma
in India and in the U.S.A.**

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September 17, 2006.

BENEDICTION

Sri Swami Jyotirmayananda is giving in this booklet a brief account of certain significant events in the past few years in the annals of Hindu religion. He sincerely feels that there is a revival of its intrinsic strength to assert itself as a tradition of great heart and content. May the Swami's thinking that there is a swing towards a real renaissance of Hindu Dharma prove to be a reality. May we all work for it.

[Swami Dayananda Saraswati is a distinguished, traditional teacher of Vedanta who has been teaching in India for more than four decades and around the world since 1976. He designed and taught six resident in-depth Vedanta courses, of which four were conducted in India, and two in the United States. Each course graduated about 60 qualified Acharya who are now teaching around the world. More than one hundred are now Sannyasins and are highly respected as teachers throughout India and abroad. Under Pujya Swamiji's guidance, numerous centers for Vedic teaching have been founded around the world. The two main centers in India are the Arsha Vidya Ashram in Rishikesh and the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Coimbatore. In the U.S., the main center is the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam at Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania. Swamiji has spoken at many of the most prestigious American universities, and has addressed several international conventions. Under the auspices of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, an Apex Hindu Body, which he convened in 2000, Swami Dayanandaji launched a Movement for Seva, an NGO solely devoted to a comprehensive program of CARING in India, under the banner of 'All India Movement (AIM) for Seva', which has been accorded a Special Consultative Status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The 'Acharya Sabha' and the 'Dharma Samstha Pramukh Sabha' in India, beside the 'Dharma Summit'/Hindu Collective Initiative of North America' convened by Swami Dayanandaji, are gradually paving the way for the much needed Resurgence of Hindu Dharma in the New Millennium.]

PREFACE

This brochure seeks to highlight the recent efforts for a renaissance of the Dharma in the New Millennium, in India and the U.S.A. The theme of the brochure has been prefixed with a prologue pointing out the special relevance of the Hindu Dharma in the modern world.

Presented here is a brief chronology of events since 2002, so that one can appreciate the energy, enthusiasm and expectations of the efforts so far expended by the eminent Acharyas of various Sampradayas, in furthering the resurgence of the Hindu Dharma, in India and among the Hindu community in North America. For more details one can refer to the online and other references provided at the end.

A special mention has been made of the services being rendered for bringing about co-operation among all the Hindu Sampradayas under the leadership of **Swami Dayananda Saraswati** (*an erudite scholar, an eminent teacher of Vedanta, and the Founder of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, in India and in the U.S.A.*), which have their growing impact in India and abroad.

Accordingly, this brochure comprises of a brief description of the first conference of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha at Chennai, India; the Dharma Samstha Pramukh Sabha Conference at Hyderabad; the Dharma Summit in New Jersey culminating in the Hindu Collective Initiative of North America; and the second conference of the Acharya Sabha at Mumbai.

Appended to this brochure are a few select portions of the proceedings of the Mumbai Conference of the Acharya Sabha (held from the 16th to 18th October, 2005), that is, the transcript of Swami Dayanandaji's inaugural address before the Acharyas, highlighting the "Vision and the Mission" of the Sabha; the draft resolutions presented by Sri R. Venkatanarayanan (Secretary, Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha) before the Acharyas, for their consideration, suggestions and approval; and Swami Dayanandaji's Address at the Press conference (on the eve of the Sabha Conference at Mumbai) highlighting the "Plan of Action and the various Seva Activities" under the auspices of the Sabha.

As pointed out elsewhere in this brochure, we realize that there may be movements in other parts of the world where Hindus live and work. We know for certain that in the United

Kingdom, Hindus are well organized. Hopefully, in the years to come, the followers of the Hindu Dharma everywhere will come together globally at regular intervals much as other religionists do to protect diverse modes of worship in the preservation of their respective cultures and heritages. As the followers of the Hindu Dharma we applaud all such conclaves of other religions but often neglect to recognize the wisdom in uniting ourselves to highlight our innately pluralistic approach to Godhead and faith without ever having to belittle or nullify the faith of others.

Apart from the U.S.A., in U.K also efforts are made to establish the Hindu Dharma, in the form of Hindu Council in U.K. We have to search for the possibilities and opportunities for the Hindu Diasporas in Canada, Fiji, South Africa, West Indies, Guyana, Surinam, Mauritius, etc.

There are so many hurdles in unifying the Dharmic efforts in the light of the political and social misrepresentation of so-called secularists and the fundamentalists of other faiths. We have to create opportunities for the Hindu Diaspora to use the media for popularizing the message of the universality and love for all mankind and all living beings, highlighting them as the diverse manifestation of the One Supreme Truth.

It is time for wide-scale campaigns to be launched worldwide to promote a deeper intellectual understanding about this unique culture that has survived millennium. It is mainly through promoting an intellectual understanding about Hindu heritage that we can defeat the efforts of vested interests to denigrate the Hindu Dharma and to convert its followers to the lesser religions. We should never be complacent about this as the effort of the present generation of the Hindus alone can fulfill the great culture for the future generation. Towards that glorious end we all have work vigorously, in unison. Hence the clarion call: *“Arise, Awake, and be vigilant to safeguard Dharma.”*

Invoking the Divine Blessings on the devotees of Pujya Swamiji who sponsored this brochure for distribution during the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Asha Vidya Gurukulam (www.arshavidya.org), Saylorsburg, on September 17, 2006,

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Prologue:

THE RELEVANCE OF HINDU DHARMA FOR THE MODERN WORLD

'Dharma' is a unique Sanskrit word. A correct understanding of its meaning is a must for right living. The consequences of our wrong living are already evident on this planet. It is therefore imperative that we try to understand clearly what 'Dharma' means.

"In Sanskrit an ethical value can be defined as Dharma", says Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Dharma, as he puts it, is a standard or norm of conduct derived from the way in which we wish others to view or treat us, and the '*dharmic*' mandates for behavior and attitude trace their source to pragmatic commonsense ethics. "In other words, my norm for what is 'proper' behavior or a 'good' attitude is based on the way I wish others treat or view me. What I expect or want from others becomes my standard or Dharma, right behavior; what I do not want others to do is *adharma*, wrong behavior. Other behavior norms, such as truth-speaking, non-injury, humility, charitableness, are all based upon the same consideration of how I would like others to treat me. Thus, ethical norms are not just arbitrary, man-made rules but stem from an inherent, common regard for one's own interest and comfort. Ethical standards are natural and universal. There may be cultural variations in degree or emphasis but the basic standards have certain universality and have a universal content. There is a similarity in everyone's reaction to being hurt, cheated, lied to and bullied. For the person with assimilated ethical values, life becomes very simple. No conflicts cloud his mind. The expression of his life is just the expression of his well assimilated value structure.

"Why should I not hurt other beings? Because I do not want to be hurt. Commonsense ethics dictate that I cannot do to another what I do not want to be done to me. So *ahimsa*, non-injury, becomes a value for me. Ahimsa is simple commonsense Dharma, confirmed by all scriptures. The value for *ahimsa* requires daily alertness and sensitivity in all areas of my life. It is a value that finds expression in my attitude toward plants as well as toward human beings and animals. Ahimsa is a value for not

destroying or damaging any part of creation -- a creation of which I, too, am a part. With regard to my fellow human beings, I watch for those words or acts or even thoughts which may be hurtful. I develop a finer appreciation for the feelings of others. I come to see beyond my own needs to the needs of those around me. I treat all things and beings with sensitivity and appreciation of their common existence with me.”

What are the consequences of our wrong living? “Our modern civilization has all the negative black spots on it. Anyone who reflects seriously would realize that it is a barbaric and dehumanizing civilization with all its ugly heads. Relentless and greedy exploitation of mother nature, consumerism, abuse of audio-visual media for the detriment of society, economic agenda without any altruistic motive, political philosophy with sinister hidden designs, progress without the noble intention to help every being on earth, unprecedented torture of animals, a military technology to annihilate each other, corruption in every walk of life, vulgar exploitation of women, pornography, skyrocketing violence and crime, uncontrolled spread of AIDs, uneven economical prosperity which concentrates power in the hands of a few malicious nations or individuals, ferociously indulgent life style, callous disregard to the downtrodden and the miserable, extreme self-centeredness, competitive rat-race, lack of complementarity with a ‘live and let live’ ideal, morbid interpersonal relationship based on mutual exploitation etc., are the examples. At this crucial juncture, revival and regeneration of our innate spiritual instinct is the need of the hour. Whatever nation or religion we may belong to, our final spiritual goal is the same: love and compassion to every being on earth and a reverence to our Mother Nature and peaceful co-existence with each other.”

Dharma means that which upholds and elevates. Dharma signifies the knowledge of the great truth which upholds all things. From the light of this knowledge alone can the life of a human being be harmoniously adjusted in all its various aspects. Therefore a right understanding and knowledge of Dharmic laws in nature and its earnest and effective application in our day-to-day life is the need of the hour. It is the inability of this so-called modern civilization to enable man to adjust harmoniously with

the various aspects of life, -- that has posed a great threat to existence of beings on our planet.

Dharma is the central core of spirituality and being universal in message, it won't antagonize any religion. Dharma is inherent in all religions, as sweetness is there in all sweet drinks, but Dharma itself can't be equated with religion. Dharma is not 'religion', not 'moral codes', not 'teachings of personalities', not 'a bundle of opinions', and it has nothing to do with doctrines and dogmas. To put it in a nutshell, Dharma is the art and science of harmonious living and peaceful coexistence. Dharma is the right way of living, with a 'live and let live' attitude. Only Dharma can save our planet, which seems to be on the brink of a disaster.

The universal and all-embracing principles of the Sanatana Dharma, popularly known as Hinduism, are the most effective means to combat the ills of war and religious fanaticism that affect the humanity today, causing untold suffering and wanton bloodshed. The world needs today the solace of the Vedic dictum, "*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*" -- "The whole world of life is verily a family." The modern world has to imbibe the Hindu model that recognizes and accepts the plurality of religious approaches.

It is the perfect scientific approach of the Vedantic wisdom to human development, that is highlighted in the motto of Hinduism, "*bahujana hithaya, bahujana sukhaaya*", which aspires for the welfare and happiness of all people. It advocates and aims at the human expansion to universality. Never indulging in parochialism or pessimism, it always has a universal outlook with optimistic thoughts and presents a noble world-view for the advancement of mankind.

It declares the highest goal of humanity as "*asato maa sadgamaya*" -- "lead me from untruth to Reality", "*tamaso maa jyotirgamaya*" -- "lead me from darkness to Light", "*mrityor maa amritangamaya*" -- "lead me from death to immortality." It looks forward for a world free from wars and degrading religious conflicts.

It is this universality of Hinduism that inspired the Western thinker, Lord Morley, to observe: "What is found in the Vedas can not be found anywhere else", and Manning to emphatically highlight the fact that "the philosophy of the Hindus is another proof of their superiority in civilization and intellect to the

moderns. The Hindus had the widest range of mind of which man is capable.”

“India is culturally the Mother of Japan”, says Prof. Nakamura of Japan. “For centuries she has in her own characteristic way been exercising her influence on the thought and culture of Japan.”

“The Vedas exalt our life. All philosophies and science of Europe appear insignificant before the Vedas,” says Prof. Emerson. Certainly, Hinduism is universal enough to influence the culture and the thought of the modern world.

It is the ever relevant concept of Dharma that had dawned in the consciousness of the Seekers of Truth of India thousands of years ago which can lead humanity to greater dimensions of cultural progress and expansion. “Dharma means that which upholds and elevates. Hence the basic principle underlying all manifestation of life is, in the real sense, Dharma. This principle is what we call God or Truth. Dharma therefore signifies the knowledge of the great Truth which upholds all things. From the light of this knowledge alone can the life of a human being be harmoniously adjusted in all its various aspects. So the aim of Dharma is to infuse into all activities of life the splendor, bliss and peace of the Divine Reality”.

In our modern times, mankind is passing through a kind of mindless skepticism and destructive despair. No sensible person in this scientific age can accept and adore the out-dated dogmas and theories of salvation propagated by some fanatic theologians. As the very basis of Hindu Dharma is founded on logic and reason, mankind is today naturally looking towards the rational spirituality of Sanatana Dharma for a greater vision of life. It is right time for the Hindu Dharma to take the initiative to promote its principles as it can bestow a greater destiny to mankind. “*tamaso maa jyotirgamaya*”, the clarion call of Vedas which means, “Lead me from darkness to Light”, should inspire the whole humanity.

Hindu Dharma is the science of human harmony and all-round development. It not only aims at the development of the mind and body of the individual, but also strives for the collective welfare of the entire family, the society, the nation and, ultimately, of the whole world, in perfect harmony.

While the Abrahamic religions follow the dictum of “the survival of the fittest”, which is the root cause of all sorts of exploitation and violence on the weak and poor nations, Sanatana Dharma very much believes in the policy of “live and let live” i.e. “*jeevastha jeevyasam*” (*Atharva Veda*). According to the historical accounts, India never invaded any country in the past.

And again, while the Abrahamic faiths consider man as a born sinner, and divide the humanity into two hostile camps of ‘believers’ and ‘non-believers’ wherein the latter need to be converted to be saved from perdition and eternal hellfire, the principles of Sanathana Dharma are designed to unite the people of the world into one international family. It declares: “*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*”, the whole world is one family. While the materialistic viewpoints of the West consider the world as an accidentally emerged stage of meaningless life forms and man as a mere toy of a blind Nature, Hindu Dharma emphasizes the fact that all beings are the expressions of the One Supreme Reality and that man is equipped with the innate spiritual strength and freedom of discovering, realizing and manifesting his true divine nature. And consequently, Nature is not something meant for human exploitation, consumption and self-aggrandizement but for adoration as the veritable manifestation of the Divine, by extending universal love and service to one and all.

Because of its universality, Hindu Dharma is inherently equipped to proclaim itself to be the finest way of life for the whole mankind, i.e. *Maanava Dharma*. It is a fact that all modern, liberal and noble thoughts like democracy, universalism and religious tolerance, etc., have their origin in Sanatana Dharma. The *Rig-Veda* emphasizes the spirit of this culture in the following words: “Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions” (*aa no bhadraah kratavo yantu vishvathah*).

Of course, Sanatana Dharma and India have ever been supporting the natural principle of “unity in diversity” and it respects the noble values of all religions, thereby generating universal peace and harmony. Since Sanatana Dharma is the mother of all ancient cultures, it stands for the co-existence and peaceful evolution of all religious, social, and economic systems of the world.

Sanatana Dharma has never established its colonies or forced people to become slaves as done by many western religionists. Sanatana Dharma has never committed inhuman atrocities like inquisition -- burning people alive for refusing to get converted or committing fraud and tempting with allurements for changing the faith of the masses. Religious conversions have resulted in tension and hatred among different communities and races. The Sanatana Dharma never indulges in the inhuman act of converting others and destroying their places of worship. "*ahimsa paramodharmah*", non-violence is the prime Dharma -- man's foremost obligation -- is the watchword of Sanatana Dharma, and it is the sheet anchor of all the saints and sages of India, who invariably exemplified in their life the teachings of *ahimsa*.

"May all be safe in this world" is the Vedic concept of safety and World Peace. The Vedic dictum is: "*sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu niramayaah, sarve bhadrani pashyant, maa kashchit dukha bhaagbhavet,*" and "*loka samasta sukhino bhavantu, sarve janaa sukhino bhavantu, Om shanthih, shanthih, shanthih*", meaning, "may all be happy, may none suffer, may all be free from afflictions, may all be endowed with resources and necessities of life, may all behold what is good and auspicious, may all be wedded to the vow of commonweal, and may none suffer from sorrow. May the world be happy and peaceful, may all people be happy and peaceful, and may peace be unto all".

The twin tenets of Hindu Dharma -- *Satya* and *Ahimsa* (truth and non-violence) -- adopted by Gandhiji throughout his political career have changed the course of history and prompted many countries of the world to get their freedom in that way. Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the greatest disciple of Mahatma Gandhi says, "If science and violence are allowed to exist together they are bound to destroy the world sooner or later."

Non-violence should be the motto of the whole world. Therein lies the salvation of the mankind. In fact that is the 'sacred gift' of Sanatana Dharma to the whole of mankind.

War in this atomic age can lead mankind to extinction. Such a disaster should be averted at any cost, and Sanatana Dharma can play an important role today in this regard. "Prevent the disaster before it strikes you" is the significant saying of the Vedas.

Arnold Toynbee and other learned people have repeatedly stressed that the non-violence of Sanatana Dharma should take the initiative to lead the world so that the world can progress peacefully and prosperously. The 'Atom for Peace' and the foreign policy of India is one of the modern outcomes of the ancient philosophy of Sanatana Dharma.

Schilling has rightly pointed out: "Through the Upanishads the wisdom of mankind matured. Today that wisdom is essential not only for the rebirth of the Indian nation but also for the re-education of the human race."

Sanatana Dharma seeks to make specific contribution to the proper and powerful advancement of science without any kind of destructive motives and degenerating methods. In fact the Sanatana Dharma is a science for the betterment of humanity. Hence it could produce great scientists, mathematicians, artists, poets, musicians, statesmen, businessmen, philosophers, warriors and persons distinguishing themselves in all walks of life, those who could enrich humanity through development of spiritual powers. This is the reason why the followers of Sanatana Dharma are intelligent, generous and hardworking.

The dire need of this space age are universality of outlook, recognition and appreciation of 'unity in diversity', yogic tranquillity of mind, non-violence and the philosophy of 'live and let live', respect for womanhood, a mastery over the developing modern science to lead it in the right direction, preservation of ecology and natural environment.

The vested interests spread many misconceptions about this unique human culture that is Hinduism. One of their cherished indulgences to derogate Hinduism is their overemphasis of caste differences in the Hindu society. The ancient law-makers devised an efficient, welfare society by organizing it on a professional basis. Even some of the western social scientists have held that it was an efficient social and vocational system. Later it got degenerated into casteism with its attendant social evils. However, there have been always sincere efforts at social reformation, from time to time, to end this social evil and social inequality based on caste. We should also remember that there have never been in India such bloodshed and sufferings caused to millions through religious wars known as crusades, the cruelest incidents of inquisition that took place in the West

dominated by Christianity and the havoc played by jihadi movements of the Islamic countries.

Caste system was not at all an intrinsic/inevitable part of Sanatana Dharma since saints have emerged from all castes and strata of life and they are worshipped even to this day by one and all, irrespective of their caste. Inter-caste marriages took place even during Mahabharata times, and it has been a continuous process in the history of Hindus ever. All right thinking people have always condemned casteism or narrowness of any kind. Saints have always proclaimed the equality of castes and exhorted the people to unite and live a harmonious life.

Sanatana Dharma is the one common ground for the whole humanity to unite irrespective of religious and national differences. It is a common ground upon which we shall have to build the modern world. 'Unity' is in fact a synonym for 'Sanatana Dharma'. Therefore it is a necessary condition for the harmonious progress of India as well as the world. There should be recognition of Dharma throughout the length and breadth of the world.

The world has witnessed the most terrible human tragedy of the present century on the 11th September, 2001, brought about by the religious fanaticism of the worst kind. It highlighted the terrible fact how man became a veritable barbarian in the name of the "All Merciful God" of the "Religion of Peace."

As Arnold Toynbee has rightly pointed out: "It is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race.... At this supremely dangerous moment of human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way... and in the Atomic age this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves."

Today, the world is passing through a critical period. Forces of disruption supported by the fundamentalist nations are hell-bent upon destroying the social fabric of human brotherhood and unity. Some of these forces have access to nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Mankind is passing through a phase of skepticism and despair. How can it accept in the present scientific age the imposition of outdated dogmas and theologies of salvation? At this critical juncture, mankind needs the help of Hindu Dharma because it is a culture which believes in logic and

reason. It is the most scientific and modern religion in the world. Now the time has come for Hindu Dharma to take its proper place in the world because it can change and ennoble the destiny of mankind and can lead it from darkness unto light, because Hindu Dharma is the science for the development of the mind and body of the individual, the family, the society and ultimately of the entire world, in perfect harmony.

The important factor for the relevance of our Dharma today is that war in this atomic age will lead to the extinction of mankind, but Sanatana Dharma can help avert this disaster because it believes in '*ahimsa parmardharma*', and has produced apostles of peace like Shankaracharya, Buddha, Mahavira, Vivekananda and others who have not only preached but also practiced non-violence to perfection, in thought, word and deed.

Sanatana Dharma embraces all the noble ideas that have emerged in the whole world. What is needed today is to bring out its life-giving principles, and let every man, woman, and child, throughout the world understand them, know them, and try to apply and practise them in their lives. This is the most necessary, important step which has to be taken.

THE RENAISSANCE OF HINDUDHARMA IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

In this context, I would like to make a special mention of the services being rendered for bringing about co-operation among all the Dharmic paths under the leadership of **Swami Dayananda Saraswati** (*the Founder of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in India and the U.S.A.*), which have their growing impact in India and abroad, and also of the ongoing efforts of such organizations as the Hindu Council in UK.

The First Conference of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha at Chennai

In the Fall of 2003, history was made in Chennai, India, when for the first time in the annals of modern Hinduism, over fifty of the spiritual leaders from different parts of India met and discussed for three days the future of Sanatana Dharma and the many issues facing those who are born and raised in the Dharmic traditions of India. The conclave took place under the banner of "Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha" since it brought together many

Peethadipathis, Matadhipathis, and Mahamandaleshwars to deliberate and garner their energies for addressing the many issues confronting Hindus in India. Swami Dayananda Saraswati was the principal spirit and coordinator for this Acharya Sabha Conference.

It was an exceedingly well-organized meeting. It was heart-warming for all to see for the first time the emergence of a collective realization of the urgent need to seek solutions for the problems confronting Hindus both in India and overseas. Several issues, such as, deregulating the Hindu Religious and Endowment Act in conformity with the freedom and autonomy that the Government of India accords to non-Hindu places of worship, the abusive practices of Christian evangelists promoting religious conversions as essential to their faiths, governmental use of funds from Hindu temples to defray the costs of Hajj pilgrimages, denigration of beliefs and deities of Hindus by preachers of both Christianity and Islam, the absence of a uniform civil code for all Indian citizens, the perpetration abroad of unsavory images of India's Hindu traditions etc., were the topics discussed by scholars and reacted to by the Acharyas who offered their wisdom and guidance to deal with them.

The Dharma Samstha Pramukh Sabha Conference at Hyderabad

It should be noted that earlier there was another conference of all Dharma Samsthas of India, which took place in Hyderabad during December 4th and 5th, in 2002, under the banner of "Dharma Samstha Pramukh Sabha". Representatives of 13 Dharma Samsthas participated in the Conference and at its concluding session, 19 Dharma Samsthas had given consent to become members of a Federation of the Dharma Samsthas in India. In a historical context, one could say that the Acharya Sabha conference in Chennai was a sequel to the Hyderabad Conference. For both the Hyderabad conference as well as the Chennai Sabha conference, Swami Dayanandaji was the catalyst.

The Dharma Summit at New Jersey

The Acharya Sabha's success in Chennai and its radiating effects reached the shores of the United States to kindle a similar move for the Indian diaspora there to come together as a united community to safeguard the interests of Sanatana Dharma

through the fostering of solidarity among the leaders of Hindu Organizations and representatives of the Hindu temples there. For the first time in North America, 400 participants representing more than 80 Hindu temples and religious organizations came together for a Dharma Summit from August 13-15, 2005. The conference included Hindus, Jains and Sikhs.

The theme of the Summit was: "The Future of Dharmic Traditions in North America." The concern that many young generation Hindus in U.S.A. are not learning and maintaining Hindu traditions was clearly evident throughout the conference that brought together presidents and boards of trustees of many temples, spiritual institutions, and organizations, together with many intellectuals and committed volunteer leaders from throughout the U.S.A. The rich mix of Swamis, intellectuals, temple trustees and youth leaders provided a unique opportunity to exchange different viewpoints, thoughts and ideas and share experiences on how to impart spiritual and cultural education to future generations. They also discussed the serious problem of distortion and misinformation about Hinduism and India prevalent in schools, colleges, and in the media.

The Hindu Collective Initiative of North America

The positive experience of this conference resulted in overwhelming demand for a "Hindu Collective Initiative" that will allow all Hindu religious organizations to work together to shape the future of Hinduism in North America, raise awareness of issues, and provide a platform for a united Hindu voice. Together they will address issues such as promoting changes to enhance the participation of the new generation, correcting biased and distorted views of Hindu traditions in educational institutions and the media, improving temple management, developing resources, enhancing the role of the temple, and helping the temples and religious organizations to reach out to the larger community with voluntary services (*Seva*) and education.

The Second Conference of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha at Mumbai

In the second Conference of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha (held at Mumbai, from October 16 to 18, 2005, at the initiative and under the convenorship of Swami Dayananda

Saraswati), Heads of ancient Sampradayas, which collectively constitute Sanatana Dharma (Hindu Dharma) deliberated on various issues of importance to Hindu Society. Sixty-four members comprising Acharyas and *Mahamandaleswars* of several *Peethas* and *Akharas*, from different parts of the country representing seventeen Sampradayas participated in the Conference. Three major issues relating to the sense of self-esteem and health of the Hindu Society were discussed: The control of temples by the governments treating them as merely charitable institutions and not as places of worship and cultural values to Hindus world-wide; the rampant religious conversion in the country, that is taking place unabated, without let or hindrance from governments; and the unjust reverse discrimination to which Hindus are subjected by organs of State in the country under a wholly untenable pretext of 'secularism'. The three day conference concluded after passing unanimously several resolutions for future action.

The above chronology of events are presented here, so that one can appreciate the energy, enthusiasm and expectations of the efforts so far expended by the Acharyas of various Sampradayas, in furthering the renaissance of Sanatana Dharma, in India and among the Hindu community in North America. We realize that there may be movements in other parts of the world where Hindus live and work. We know for certain that in the United Kingdom, Hindus are well organized. Hopefully, in the years to come, Sanatana Dharmis everywhere will come together globally at regular intervals much as other religionists do to protect diverse modes of worship in the preservation of their respective cultures and heritages. As the followers of Sanatana Dharma we applaud all such conclaves of other religions but often neglect to recognize the wisdom in uniting ourselves to highlight our innately pluralistic approach to Godhead and faith without ever having to belittle or nullify the faith of others.

As already mentioned, apart from USA, in U.K also efforts are made to establish Sanatana Dharma, in the form of Hindu Council in U.K. We have to search for the possibilities and opportunities for the Hindu diasporas in Canada, Fiji, South Africa, West Indies, Guyana, Surinam, Mauritius, etc.,

There are so many hurdles in unifying the Dharmic efforts in the light of the political and social misrepresentation of so-called

secularists and the fundamentalists of the Abrahamic faiths. We have to create opportunities for the Hindu diaspora to use the media for popularizing the message of the universality and love for all mankind and all living beings, highlighting them as the diverse manifestation of the One Supreme Truth.

It is time for wide-scale campaigns to be launched worldwide to promote a deeper intellectual understanding about this unique culture that has survived millennium. It is mainly through promoting an intellectual understanding about Hindu heritage that we can defeat the efforts of vested interests to denigrate Hinduism and to convert its followers to the lesser religions. We should never be complacent about this as the effort of the present generation of the Hindus alone can fulfill the great culture for the future generation.

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Appendix:

(Select portions of the proceedings of the Second Conference of the Acharya Sabha held from the 16th to 18th October, 2005, at Mumbai)

THE VISION AND THE MISSION OF THE ACHARYA SABHA

Swami Dayananda Saraswati's inaugural address before the Acharyas:

This Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha conference is crucial to every Acharya. The members of the Acharya Sabha are meeting for the second time. The Sabha first came into being on paper. I had visualized that this Sabha would be an Apex Body for the Hindus. My thinking was that these *Mathadhipatis* and *Mandaleshwars* should provide the leadership and they should be looked up to by the Hindu Samaj. Often, I used to hear from people whenever there was a discussion about proselytization, conversion: "What your *Mathadhipatis* and *Mandaleshwars* are doing? They are not doing anything. The missionaries are starting schools, hospitals and so on. They are having a lot of service programs. Therefore they convert. You people don't do anything". This is not true. Each *Mathadhipathi* and *Mandaleshwar* is doing in his own way. But I thought they need to do more. There should be support from the people.

Hence, under the auspices of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha in the year 1999, we launched a Movement, the All India Movement for Seva, AIM for Seva, a Movement for Service. I wanted to bring all the *Mathadhipatis* and the *Mandaleshwars* together under a canopy and I visualized how this could be done. I expected a lot of problems of protocol. Every Acharya is very important for his community. Often the Acharya is called a Jagadguru. Each one is worshipped by the community. Therefore, each one must have a certain protocol which should not belittle anyone else.

When I visualised this Sabha I knew that we have a number of Sampradayas. As I went about knowing these Sampradayas, I did discover more and more Sampradayas. All these Sampradayas

form a very colourful mosaic. Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha has the Heads of all these Sampradayas as members. The members of the Sabha are only the Heads of these Sampradayas. We are not members.

There are a lot of other organisations in this country that are doing tremendous work in the field of religious and spiritual promotion. The heads of these institutions are big people. Each one of them is a stalwart. But we chose only those Maths and Institutions that have got certain track record in terms of time; which have existed at least for two centuries and led the community. The *Mathadhipatis* of those Maths alone would be the members of this Sabha. We had decided this and we talked about this to the Acharyas. I went around the country for this purpose. The Acharyas were convinced and each one of them signed a form; only then they became members of this Sabha. It is not by word of mouth. Therefore, they are the most authentic members of this Body that represents Hinduism, that is, Hindu Dharma.

These members are not the members of the given Sampradayas, but they are the Heads of the Sampradayas. We have the Sankaracharyas of the Sringeri, Puri, Dwaraka and Jyotirmath. There are so many other ancient Advaita Maths, such as Kudali, Hariharpura and so on. There are many ancient Lingayat Maths in Karnataka. In Tamilnadu there are Saiva Adhinams. In the North different Akhadas are there like Nirmal Akhada, Nirvani Akhada, Juna Akhada, Niranjan Akhada, Awahan Akhada, Nirmal Panchayati Akhada and Digambar Akhada. All these Sankaracharyas, *Mathadhipatis* and *Maha Mandaleshwars* are members of the Sabha. A number of Vaishnava Mathas are also there in the South having different recensions like Ahobila Math, Vanamamalai Math etc. The Vaishnava Acharyas of these Mathas are also the members of this Sabha. The Vaishnava Sampradaya in the North is also highly represented in this Sabha. All the *Mathadhipatis* of the Ashta Mathas from Udipi are members of this Sabha. We have Varkari Sampradaya here in Maharashtra such as Namdeva etc. Heads of these Sampradayas have also come for the Meeting. In this Sabha there is representation of Kabir Panth Sampradaya, the Sena Sampradaya of Ugrasen Math, Vallabhacharya Sampradaya,

Nimbarkacharya Sampradaya, Ramanujacharya Sampradaya, Karshni Udasina Sampradaya and Swami Narayan Sampradaya (having different groups) and many more. In other words, the members of this Sabha form the Apex Body of the Hindu Dharma.

I want the members of this Sabha realize this particular fact. This is not just a gathering of some Swamis. This is not a Kumbha Mela. This is a very serious Body. We are very serious in our approach. We want to have a voice, a collective Hindu Voice. The Government should negotiate with this Body. If they decide anything about Hindu Dharma, they should consult this Body. Other institutions should come to negotiate with this Body. This Body should nominate people to represent the Hindus. Any upstart should not represent the Hindu religion. This Body should nominate. All of you should nominate. Swami Dayananda is a non-entity. I am just a Swami, I am a Sadhu, but I become somebody when you nominate me. If this Body nominates somebody, and when that person talks, it is the Hinduism that talks, the Hindu Dharma that talks. Then that person must be a responsible person. Hence, this Body is not an august Body; it is 'The Body' that really has the authority to issue an edict for Hindus. This is a '*fatwa*' Body. Such an authority you all Acharyas have, you all must have. All of you should realize the importance of this Sabha. You should give us the leadership and you should give us the command, sometimes the permission; we will all work for this Body.

We have not invited much people from outside. My disciples are here. Some of my supporters for this kind of work are also here. We are all here to work for you, the Acharyas. Out there, there are a number of people. All of them will work. Your own community people are there to carry out the various decisions this Body makes.

When I thought of having this Second Meet, I remembered Swami Vishveshvaranandaji, Maha Mandaleshwarji of this Sannyasashram at Mumbai. He was the one who had encouraged and promised me all help. Similarly, Swami Avadheshananda Giriji, Swami Punyananda Giriji and others had also promised that they would come forward to organize this. When we decided

to have the Second Meet somewhere in the north, we thought, may be, it would be appropriate to have it in Mumbai. I approached Swami Vishveshvaranandaji. He said we could have it here in Mumbai. So, we came and checked up the facility here and then we decided to have a hall erected for this purpose and it is so very well done. Our Paramatmanandaji of Rajkot and a team of other Swamis went around for months. They came and met you at one time or the other. This is the outcome of months' hard work.

We have different topics in the agenda. We will go one by one. This time we will not have much of presentation from the floor and we have decided to have discussions and not talks. For a given topic, I will request someone to start, to say a few words on the topic and then others can pitch in, join the discussion. There can be a dialogue.

Before we start, I wish to introduce some guests who are here, who always support me in this kind of work. Our Sri Ramasubramaneya Rajah of RAMCO and Sri Venkateswarlu of Kakatiya Group are here. Then our Ashok Singhalji is here and Sri Somayya from Mumbai and others also are here. In all these works we need a lot of financial support. We also have some of those supporters here who may not like me to even mention their names. We also have here Sri Bawa Jain, the Secretary of the World Council of Religious Leaders, New York.

Before I go to the next item of the Agenda, I would like to say one more thing -- how this Body is very important. Last time when we met at Chennai, we had made a resolution that the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha will strive for releasing the Hindu Temples and other Religious Endowments from the stranglehold of State Governments. We really did a lot of work in that area. We approached the Madhya Pradesh Government. The Madhya Pradesh Government did talk to us only as the Acharya Sabha. They said, "We will talk to the representatives of the Acharya Sabha". On behalf of the Acharya Sabha, we sent a skeletal sketch of the proposal to all of you, the members of the Acharya Sabha. We gave the proposal to the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The Government appointed a Committee to look into our proposal with reference to the Ujjain Temple Management. Sri

Keshavanandaji of Digambar Akhada is a part of the Ujjain temple. The temple affairs have been managed by this Akhada for centuries. Sri Keshavanandaji knows a lot about this temple since he has looked into it all that. With his input we had prepared this proposal and it was looked into by this small Committee appointed by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

However, there was some change of leadership at Madhya Pradesh. Afterwards we again went and met the new Chief Minister, we requested him and there is some progress. We had similarly initiated a dialogue in Andhra Pradesh. I say this to point out how it is important we have a Body like this.

It is very important that this Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha has to gain strength, not from outside. It gains strength from inside as The Body. The Acharya Sabha members should realize, recognize and acknowledge that this is a very responsible Body and we should make it a very viable and a live entity to deal with issues affecting the Hindu Dharma in general.

We are not trying to create a melting pot of different schools of thought, Sampradayas etc., not at all. There is no threat for any Sampradaya from any other Sampradaya. We enjoy all Sampradayas and we respect all Sampradayas. We need to mutually respect all Sampradayas. Only then we can ask other religions to respect us. We are trying to get some mutual respect from other religions. They don't give. They don't accept. Their theologies do not accept that. But we are doing work towards that end. We can achieve this only when we have the inner strength coming from mutual respect among ourselves, respect for every Sampradaya in our Dharma.

The World Council of Religious Leaders, of which Sri Bawa Jain is the General Secretary, has initiated a dialogue with the Chief Rabbis of Judaism in Israel. Israel is a religious state and the Chief Rabbis are like the Chief Ministers. These Chief Rabbis, with other members of their Rabbinate, are coming to Delhi on the 2nd of November 2005, and we are going to have a dialogue, Hindu-Jewish dialogue. More of this, I will talk about later. So, you can see how important this Sabha is.

The Jewish delegation wants to engage the Hindu religious leaders in a dialogue. With whom will they talk? Who are the leaders? If they talk to Sankaracharyas, then other Acharyas are omitted. If they talk to some Mandaleshwars, other Sampradayas are omitted. With whom they will talk? They have to talk to a Body and that is the voice of all the Sampradayas. Hinduism consists of Sampradayas and Sampradayas are represented by the Heads of the Sampradayas. They are the ones who are sitting here in the conference; and we look up to every one of you, the Acharyas, for leadership.

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Swami Dayananda Saraswati:

We will request our Venkatanarayananji (Secretary, Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha) to read the draft resolutions and the Acharyas can make suggestions.

**DRAFT RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED
BEFORE THE ACHARYA SABHA AT MUMBAI**

R. Venkatanarayanan:

Releasing temples from the total control of government:

It is resolved that a coordinated and multi-pronged action shall be undertaken and continued till success is achieved in securing the release of temples from the present system of control by government. Vigorous efforts shall continue to seek modifications in the existing law governing individual temples and in the endowment law of some States so that the amended statute serves as model for other temple legislation. Grass root mechanisms and structures may be created by way of Devotees Committee to manage smaller temples that State Governments may be ready to release, gather and refine the experience acquired to help prepare standard models of temple governance free from government interference and undertake the required legal search by a competent and committed team to contest the constitutionality of the discrimination inherent in the control of only temples which are places of worship and cultural importance and value to Hindus.

On religious conversion:

The Acharya Sabha members may try to undertake systematic travel and tours to distant villages and tribal communities and reassure the people that the indigenous religious faith shall be preserved, their education, health, economic and social needs shall be attended to. Efforts shall be made to foster a strong sense of identity and self-esteem in poor and disadvantaged Hindu communities in far away localities. In their *kathas* and *pravachans* Acharya Sabha members may specifically discourage outdated, discriminatory practices still prevalent in society and strengthen the spirit of caring among their devotee population and lastly '*Hindu Dharma Rakshana Samitis*' shall be set up at district, taluka and village levels.

On the subject of flawed interpretation of secularism:

It is resolved that this faulty concept shall be contested at all possible forums. The public shall be educated on the issue by the Acharyas in their *pravachans*. Opportunities shall be explored to get legal redress.

Establishment of a Hindu Center of learning:

Considering the need for instilling Hindu cultural values in young students and for preparing them adequately to face the rapidly changing world and still retaining those values and considering the need for deep study of and research in our scriptures, cultural and religious literature, the literature of other religions and inter-religious matters so as to strengthen participation of Hindu scholars in interfaith dialogue and conferences, it is felt important to set up this Centre of learning.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati:

Here our Acharya Chunchungiri Swamiji can be of great help. He is a doyen in the field of education. He knows how to start, how to run a very successful educational institution and I request him to give us his input. I hope we will have his help and cooperation in this particular venture. This idea was suggested by one or two Acharyas, Hariharpura Acharya and other Acharyas. They can also give us some input, some draft which we can take to Chunchunagiri Acharya and discuss with him and

evolve a plan and then we will distribute the plan to all the Acharyas. So this is the step that we will take.

R. Venatanaryanan:

Today there was a considerable discussion on the most unfortunate treatment meted out to the Kanchi Sankaracharya, a member of our Sabha. The resolution has been drafted but it is still to be typed out, but with your permission I will read the draft resolution for your consideration:

The second conference of the Acharya Sabha hereby resolves that the arrest and the way in which the Head of the ancient Kanchi Math was treated has deeply pained all the Acharyas, Maha Mandaleshwars and Mandaleshwars present in this Acharya Sabha and also millions of devotees in our country. The Acharya Sabha prays that these cases come to an early end with complete vindication of the Kanchi Acharyas. This Sabha prays for the good health and spirit of the Kanchi Acharyas and wish them god speed.

On organisational matters:

It was resolved that regional coordinators may be nominated from among Acharya Sabha members for the Northeast, Orissa and Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, UP and Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamilnadu and for Madhya Pradesh and Uttaranchal. The Central Office of the Acharya Sabha shall be suitably strengthened. An emergency deliberation council shall be created and it shall be functional till the next conference of the Acharya Sabha.

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THE PLAN OF ACTION & THE SEVA ACTIVITIES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ACHARYA SABHA

Swami Dayananda Saraswati's address at the Press Conference on the last day of the Mumbai Conference:

This Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha is a Body that we created, that came into being in the year 2000, and it was on paper. Every member of this Acharya Sabha is either a Mathadhipati of a particular Matha or the head of a given Sampradaya like Sankara Maths, Maha Mandaleshwars in the North, Saiva Maths in the South, Vaishnava Maths, Udipi Ashta Mathas, Kabir Panth, Varkari Sampradaya, Swami Narayan Sampradaya and so on. Each one emphasizes one thing and thereby each one has its own unique feature. But all of them are based upon the Vedic wisdom. In the third page you have a number of Sampradayas and whose followers are headed by the various Acharyas. They form the members of this Body.

They met in Chennai two years ago. This is the Second Meet. Being the Heads of all Maths and Mandaleshwars, we can safely say they are the Apex Body of Hindu Dharma. Each one is leading, not one or two people, but a community.

So, these Acharyas deliberated these two days on various issues, like the Hindu religious endowments. A Hindu Religious Endowment is a Religious Endowment, a temple or a Math. These endowments were created by the devotees. If there is some kind of a public complaint, there is some misappropriation, misuse of money, whether it is true or not, then the government takes over. Why should it take over? There can be a judicial correction or some kind of a Body can be created who can work transparently. If you have a headache you should not remove the head. You have to take a corrective measure, not taking over. Even public undertakings are now denationalized. But Hindu religious endowments are taken over by the governments. They have better things to do. Any complaint can be addressed legally. There is judiciary. There are laws of the land and they should conform to those laws. The government need not take over. So this is a very important thing.

A temple, a Math is not just a trust under a Charity Commissioner, and it is not a Public Charitable Trust. It is, at the same time, a Religious Trust. Therefore, the Acharyas were very strong in condemning this attitude of governments towards the Hindu Religious Endowments. They cannot do this to other religious endowments, if there are some problems. Why this reverse discrimination? So the Acharyas expressed their concern and they want to correct this. They want to work with the government to find out methods by which these endowments are managed by public responsible bodies with absolute transparency.

They were also concerned about the alarming conversion in the name of religious freedom. India is the one country where nobody is unsafe in pursuing his or her religious beliefs. Parsis have been here, Jews have been here. These Jews openly declare that the only country where the Jews were never persecuted was India. So we invite people with open arms and allow people to pursue their own religions. Even among the Hindus there are so many Sampradayas. So we respect each other. But the problem is in the name of religious freedom, others' freedom to pursue their religions is trampled upon. It is one thing for me to choose my religion but it is quite another for you to criticize my religion. It is against human rights. This was also highly discussed and they made some resolutions.

Further, there was a discussion about how all the Acharyas can help people in the areas where people need help. Each Math is already doing some kind of Seva but they want to extend this Seva further. They have already created a Movement for Seva which is purely dedicated to Seva. The recipient of that help is one who deserves help, needs help; not any particular religion or language etc. Anyone who needs help is extended help. This Movement, 'All India Movement for Seva' was created in November 2000. This is under the auspices of Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha.

The AIM for Seva has been doing lot of work among people in the mountains, in the rural areas, through Chatralaya, a home for children who go to school, who would otherwise not attend the school. So they are given shelter, food and tuition and then they are sent to the government school. Keeping that Chatralaya as a hub, other satellite service programs are also introduced, like a

small mobile healthcare unit, hygiene education, health education etc. AIM for Seva also extends help to the village people, mountain people in terms of information on what schemes are available for them and provide a small help that will bring them the governmental help. If you put in about 15% to 25% in schemes like water harvesting, digging a bore well or whatever, the government will finance the rest of it. These people don't have even this 15% or 25% funds or they don't have the information on these schemes. So we provide the funds, the information and all the know-how and facilitate all that is necessary, and also do all the paper work.

Women empowerment and self-help groups and cottage industry promotion are other areas of seva so that people can earn their livelihood. Really, this is a wonderful work and we have been doing it successfully. Within these three or four years we have about 35 Chatralayas. We want to be present in every district. India has 600 and odd districts. In every district we want to have a Chatralaya and we want to accomplish this within a period of ten years.

We go about doing things methodically. We work with the government, the governmental agencies, the local collector, the block development officer, and they are very helpful too. Once they know that there is a real NGO, they all come forward to help. We involve NRIs also to participate in programs in their villages. Suppose there is an NRI who has made it elsewhere like in Australia or in U.S.A., and who can afford to spare some money for his or her village, we connect him or her to the village, or carry out the work the person wants us to do. We give them the project. If there is no school and if the person wants that in his village in the name of his grand parents, we do that. So this program works very well.

We have been trying to tell and communicate our vision to the people even in cities. People come to Mumbai from the south or elsewhere. They never go back. Goddess Mahalakshmi has got a certain power to hold them back. They continue to live for lifetime in a flat but they can afford to give something for their villages. So we tell them that we will help doing that. Either we match their funds by raising funds all over or we get Governmental help for the project.

We are just evolving. The Movement is still in its infancy; it is only 4 years old. But we are doing this work and it is very successful. We have presented what we have done to the Acharya Sabha and they are going to do in their own areas similar works. So this will multiply. This Movement has presence in 18 States and we did a lot of work in tsunami, and we continue to do work. We have programs continuing. Our slogan is: *People care for people*. We want that to happen. *Caring is our AIM*. The UN has given the Consultative Status for AIM for Seva within the UN.

The Acharyas have also expressed that there should be a center for learning purely Hindu culture. The various Sampradayas, their literature, the mode of worship, certain cultural forms, religious culture and so on — all these must be taught along with the background behind them. We are planning to have it in some place that will become very popular for anybody. Short term courses — 3 months, 2 months — will be available wherein people from different Sampradaya will come and conduct short courses. Temple worship etc. is a little esoteric and that has to be taught properly from different Sampradaya's point of view. We will make that Centre popular, publicize the whole thing so that people can take those courses. We are definitely going to do that.

The Acharyas also discussed about how often they should meet and how it can work, how we should respond to issues etc. Suppose there is a certain emergency, some decision is to be made; this Apex Body of the Hindu Dharma has to make decision. Then the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha can nominate members to an Emergency Cell. These members can also have dialogues with other religions, religious leaders so that we can promote religious harmony. We also discussed about how to promote religious harmony by initiating dialogues with all the people. This Body can nominate some Acharyas for representing Hindu Dharma in international conferences. Presently anybody goes, whether the person is authentic or not, and he says things which do not really reflect the religious tradition that he stands for. Now this responsible Body will represent Acharyas. This is all about Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha.

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SWAMI JYOTIRMAVANANDA PURI hails from South Kanara, Karnataka, India; had his school and college studies at the Mangalore Ramakrishna Mission Students Home; got the *mantra diksha* in 1966 while serving in a firm in Madras, from Swami Vireswarananda, the Tenth President of the Ramakrishna Order; joined the Vivekananda Kendra, a Service Mission at Kanyakumari in 1973; and after service, took to monastic life independently in 1976.

His magnum opus chronicles the important events in the life and times of Swami Vivekananda, and highlights his mission and the message to the world. The first edition of this book (986 pages) was published in 1986, and its fifth edition, entitled “*Vivekananda -- His Gospel of Man-making*” was released at New York in the context of the UN Millennium World Peace Summit 2000. It is available as an e-book on CD-ROM, with an audio-visual presentation titled “Swami Vivekananda -- The Great Hindu Monk of India and His Lasting Spiritual Legacy to Humanity”.

S.J. has been visiting the U.S. since 1993 and has attended the ‘Parliament of Religions’, Chicago (1993), ‘Global Vision 2000’ Program in Washington (1993), ‘UN Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders’, New York (2000); ‘Vedanta in the Third Millennium’ conference organized by the Chicago Vedanta Society (2001), the ‘Vishwa Dharma Prasaar Yatra’ Program (2001) in Chicago, and the Fourth International Conference of the World Association of Vedic Studies (WAVES), at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, MA, (2002), where he presented a paper on “India’s Spirituality and its World-wide Impact”. In early July 2004, he participated in the ‘Konkani Sammelan’ at Los Angeles, and also in the fifth WAVES Conference at the University of Maryland, Shady Grove Campus, Maryland, where he presented a paper on “India’s Intellectual Traditions in Contemporary Global Context”.

He was one of the Program Coordinators of the Dharma Summit Conference (<http://www.hinduismtoday.com/hpi/2005/8/17.shtml>) convened by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and held at the Rutgers University, New Jersey (Aug. 13-15, 2005); and a Coordination Committee Member, Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha Second Convention, Mumbai (October 16, 17 & 18). Recently, he participated in the Sixth Biennial WAVES Conference on ‘Vedic Ideas for Global Harmony & Peace in Modern Context’, held from July 8-10, 2006, at the main campus of the University of Houston in Houston, Texas, where he chaired two sessions, and presented two papers, which are available online at <http://www.vivekanandagospel.org> -- the web page mainly dealing with his publication and other activities, while the blogspot <http://www.vivekajyoti.blogspot.com> is a resource on various issues concerning the Hindu society.

S.J. can be reached at swamijyoti@vivekanandagospel.org

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TIRUPATHI DECLARATION

July 15, 2006

We Hindus assembled here declare that we do not support, directly or indirectly, any group, institution, religion, media, or political force, which preaches, practices or works against Hindu Dharma in this country.

We appeal to all the Hindus in this country and elsewhere to subscribe to and support this declaration, the Tirupathi Declaration.

We want all the Hindu religious endowments to be managed by Hindu bodies, and not by the government.

We want the secular government to release all religious endowments from its hold.