

## [Diaspora](#)

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# Diaspora

## INDIA

### Balayogi Music

Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani, son of the late yoga master, Swami Gitananda and his wife Meenakshi Devi, and spiritual head of his father's Ashram in Pondicherry, hopes to create "a bridge between the East and West" with his new tape, "The Yoga of Sound." It features English spiritual poetry written by his parents--long-time friends of Hinduism Today--set to classical Carnatic melody and rhythm. It "enables those proficient in English to enjoy a deep insight into the meditative mode of classical Carnatic music" which they might miss if not able to understand Tamil or Sanskrit. Dr. Ananda is a medical graduate and an accomplished musician in voice and drum who performs at least two major concerts a month.

## USA

### Meditation as Medicine

Alternative therapy is becoming hot health news in the US. The current remedy of choice is meditation. According to research conducted by Harvard Medical School, mind/body medicine--mental, emotional and spiritual practices intended to heal the body--is now the most widely used alternative. And it's little wonder, when you look at the medical evidence piling up. Such practices, all of which fall under one branch of yoga or another, but especially regular meditation, reduce heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate, oxygen consumption,

blood flow to skeletal muscles, perspiration and muscle tension. They also improve natural immunity. Women were able to reduce premenstrual syndrome symptoms by 58 percent, ease pain during menopause, help fertility, milk production, even slow the spreading of cancer. This works even with as simple a form of meditation as sitting or lying comfortably and focusing one's attention on a prayer or sound or your breath for 20 minutes a day, diligently returning awareness to the breath, should it wander momentarily, as it is wont to do.

## INDIA

### Remembering God in Battle

There are no atheists in foxholes, nor upon the forbidding slopes of the Kargil mountains. Makeshift temples such as that above were active places of worship for Hindu soldiers of the Indian Army about to enter action. Newly commissioned weapons were brought for blessing in these canvas temples. Two months of intense battle which left hundreds of Indians dead finally rid the vital Kashmir mountain peaks and posts of Pakistani regular army invaders and Islamic guerrillas. When Pakistan refused to claim the bodies of seven soldiers killed at "Point 7875," Muslim clerics of the Indian army were called in to bury them in Islamic fashion. When the Imam chanted "Allah akbar," ("God is great"), six Hindu soldiers properly answered "Allah akbar." Following India's victory, a team of Hindu saints and intellectuals carried Ganga water from Hardwar to Kargil to purify and bless the reclaimed land.

## MAURITIUS

### Racial Riots

Three days of violence in the capital of Mauritius, Port

Louis, left four dead and many more injured. The riots, rare in this island country, broke out at the end of February, after a popular Black reggae singer known as Kaya died in police custody. An autopsy revealed multiple wounds and a fractured skull. He had been arrested two days after publicly smoking marijuana at a rally to legalize the drug. The riot quickly developed along racial lines, with the Creoles--descendants of Black Africans--attacking Hindus. They attacked police stations where the largely Hindu force had fled for safety. Thirty officers were reported injured. A few months later, in May, a second riot broke out after a disputed soccer match. Seven died in the melee. The unrest is a shocking setback to this economic marvel which prides itself on racial harmony.

## USA

### 'Eyes Wide Shut' Shocks Hindus

Recitation of a verse from the Bhagavad Gita during a sexual orgy in Stanley Kubrik's last film "Eyes Wide Shut" has sparked off complaints from many Hindus. In the movie, Tom Cruise becomes distraught when his wife, played by Nicole Kidman, tells him about her sexual fantasy with a sailor. Cruise then goes on his own prurient adventure which takes him to a rich Manhattan mansion where all are engaged in an orgy. Part of the background music, by Jocelyn Pook, is a famous passage from the Bhagavad Gita in which Krishna tells Arjuna that whenever there is a decline of Dharma on earth, He incarnates to protect the good, transform the wicked and establish divine order. American Hindus Against Defamation ( [www.hindunet.org/anti\\_defamation/](http://www.hindunet.org/anti_defamation/)) demanded that Warner Brothers, the producers, apologize to Hindus for this callous use of Hindu scripture and remove the shloka from the movie, CD, video and the TV/Cable version.

## INDIA

### Calcutta's Name Change

India's most populated city and the capital of the old British Empire, Calcutta, is changing its name. And so, too, will the state of West Bengal. The state assembly has decided unanimously to rename Calcutta as Kolkata and West Bengal as Bangla, the way the Bengalis like to say it. Sunil Gangopadhyay, one of the most popular writers in the state, says the "renaming of Calcutta and West Bengal is necessary to preserve the distinct Bengali identity of the city and state, and to protect the Bengali language from the growing preponderance of Hindi."

## SOUTH AFRICA

### Sorry, Mahatma

After several failed attempts, a South African law society has unconditionally--if belatedly--apologized to Gandhi. He was rejected for membership in 1894 because of his skin color. "Our intention was to make it unequivocal, unambiguous and a sincere apology," said David Randels, president of the Natal Law Society, the equivalent of the bar association in the US. The country's Chief Justice of 1894 overruled the

society's rejection and allowed Gandhi to practice. But the experience, along with racist rules that kept Gandhi from riding in first-class train compartments, helped politicize the young commercial lawyer. The South African law society became increasingly multiracial even before the end of apartheid in 1994. Still, initial efforts to formulate an apology failed. Ismail Meer, chairman of the Liberation History Foundation, who studied law with former President Nelson Mandela, said he accepts the apology as adequate. "The importance is to distance ourselves from the past where mistakes have been made," he said.

## WALES

### Klan Expands

Like ghosts coming back from the dead, the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan has risen in Wales, other parts of the UK and in Australia. The KKK was founded in the US in 1866, just after the American Civil War. It attracted mainly poor whites who believed their livelihood was threatened by the newly freed Black slaves. Within a couple of years, it had become a paramilitary organization, terrorizing Blacks and

infamous for setting burning crosses in front of people's houses at night as a threat. The Wales group has attacked Asians, Jews and Roman Catholics in its attempt to "purify the nation." Klan opponents, too, have been attacked, several quite viciously. In the past year alone there were 752 racial incidents reported in South Wales--up 100 percent from the year before and, police believe, one-sixteenth of the real number of attacks. Earlier this year, three KKK youths were convicted of assaulting a local doctor, Sudhir Sarnobat, simply because he was Asian. And another Asian local shopkeeper was attacked a few months ago by a gang of "skinheads."

## INDIA

### Seeing Beyond

On July 20, the first woman ever to command a space shuttle, Col. Eileen M. Collins, entered space hauling the heaviest, most expensive science payload of all time: the Chandra X-ray Observatory, named after Subramanyan Chandrasekhar (1910-1995). He was awarded the 1983 Nobel Prize in Physics for his theoretical studies on the structure and evolution of the stars. The <sup>us</sup>\$2.2 billion Chandra is the most sensitive

X-ray telescope yet. It can peer back 10 billion years into a young universe, and it can seek out such objects as quasars, exploding stars and black holes. On it's first look, it found a remarkable supernova.

(see

[http://chandra.harvard.edu/photo/first\\_images.html](http://chandra.harvard.edu/photo/first_images.html))

Briefly...

The earliest form of writing has been uncovered at the ancient Hindu site of Harappa. Harvard researchers date the primitive symbols, akin to the later Indus script, to 5,500 years ago and say it predates any Egyptian or Sumerian writing.

Dr. Karan Singh Rejoined Congress party after an absence of 18 years and has endorsed Sonia Gandhi's party

leadership. He resigned his Rajya Sabha seat, and stated, "It is necessary in the broader national interest to strengthen the Congress, which alone can cut across religious, caste, class and region."

England is exporting beef again, but only carcasses of animals born after August, 1996, when farmers stopped feeding their cattle the ground-up cattle remains, precipitating an epidemic of "mad cow disease."

On August 15, India's population clock broke the one-billion mark and is increasing at the rate of 29 babies a minute, according to the UN Population Division, as India celebrates their 52nd Independence Day.

Canada, for the sixth consecutive year, ranks first among the best places to live in the world, according to the UN.

Norway, USA, Japan and Belgium round out the top five. India ranked 133 out of 174. War-torn Ethiopia, Niger and Sierra Leone bring up the rear.

Smokers in America are busy suing the tobacco industry for billions of dollars--and winning. To offset their losses, the tobacco industry is hoping to develop huge markets in countries such as China and India, where already one million people a year die from tobacco-related diseases.

## THE VEDAS

### God's Word, Sages Voices

All this universe is in truth Brahman. He is

beginning and end of life of all. As such,  
in silence, give unto him adoration.

Sama Veda, Chandogya Upanishad  
3.14.1

Who is the God to whom we shall offer  
adoration? The God of gods, in whose  
glory the worlds are, and who rules this  
world of man and all living beings.

Krishna Yajur Veda, Svetasvatara  
Upanishad 4.13

The Self within the heart is like a  
boundary which divides the world from  
That. Day and night cross not that  
boundary, nor old age, nor death; neither  
grief nor pleasure, neither good nor evil  
deeds. All evil shuns That. For That is free  
from impurity; by impurity can it never be  
touched.

## Sama Veda, Chandogya Upanishad 8.4.1

We should consider that in the inner world, Brahman is consciousness; and we should consider that in the outer world Brahman is space. These are the two meditations.

## Sama Veda, Chandogya Upanishad 3.18.1

The Vedas are the divinely revealed and most revered scriptures, sruti, of Hinduism, likened to the Torah (1,200 bce), Bible New Testament (100 ce), Koran (630 ce) or Zend Avesta (600 bce). Four in number, Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva, the Vedas include over 100,000 verses. Oldest portions may date back as far as 6,000 bce.

## Who Is a Hindu?

"Acceptance of the Vedas with reverence; recognition of the fact that the means or ways to salvation are diverse; and the realization of the truth that the number of gods to be worshiped is large, that indeed is the distinguishing feature of the Hindu religion." B.G. Tilak's definition of what makes one a basic Hindu, as quoted by India's Supreme Court. On July 2, 1995, the Court referred to it as an "adequate and satisfactory formula."