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Singing Cops Aid and Abet Religious Harmony

Policemen can do more than arrest those who break the law. Recently, in US, Europe and elsewhere, they are getting involved in positive activities that help reduce crime in their communities. The Mauritius Police Cultural Group (PCG) held their 3rd annual Great Sacrifice (Maha Yajna) on July 21, 1990, at the Swastika Mandir, Forest Side in Mauritius. The 90-minute function featured members of the force in a Kirtan-bhajan session and a message from the Prime Minister, Mr. Anerood Jugnauth, on "religious and cultural pursuits for spiritual upliftment, peace and harmony." Mauritius is a small island nation off the East coast of Africa that is majority Hindu.

Since its creation on July 16, 1988, under the leadership of Inspector Shri Hurrynundon, the PCG has actively participated in several religious festivals, prayer sessions, yajnas, nagar sankirtans, funeral nights and various social functions throughout Mauritius, spreading and cultivating the ideals of prayer and nonviolence. Most recently, the PCG was an important part of the 6th International Ramayana conference held this fall in Vacoas, Mauritius.

Mauritius Police Commissioner, 58-year-old Shri Bhimsen Kowlessur, recipient of the Queen's Police Medal and Mauritius' Police Medal, is the senior commanding officer of the Mauritius police force and the sponsor of the PCG. His belief that the problems of society are based on a general lack of spiritual development led him to support the PCG. The group stresses prayer, meditation, satsang (literally "true and good company"), kirtans, bhajans and selfless service as the weapons to fight the forces so common in the world today that lead to violations of basic human rights and civil liberties, campaigns of intimidation extrajudicial execution and "disappearings," drugs, torture and other evils.

According to Vinai Ramkissoon, PCG secretary, "The celebration of the mahayajna once a year, exerts common aspirations, collective ideas and promotes the idea of universal brotherhood among the members of the Mauritius Police Force as well as the public. The mahayajna reminds every individual of his ultimate goal in life - to be achieved by performing our duty to ourselves, our duty to others and our duty to God."

Armed with weapons of worship, the officers are propagating the great philosophical truths and scriptural wisdom of the Vedas and the Upanishads. One of their messages is that "unity for peace and happiness in the world can really be implemented through prayer."

In the mahayajna program, they remember Mahatma Gandhi's words on the power of group prayer: "The purpose of prayer is to purify life. Prayer without faith and sincerity does not result in strength and peace. Many more times than the strength and peace realized by and single devotee is that attained by collective prayer."

The PCG has put this lofty ideal into practice in their own lives and the lives of the Mauritian people. A half-hour prayer session is held by the policemen every Thursday for the members of the Civil Servants at the Vishnu Kchetra Mandir in Port Louis, the capital city of Mauritius. The number of people attending this event has gradually increased, and now there are large "crowds of the faithful," according to Ramkissoon.

Knowledge, devotion, fulfillment of social responsibilities, discipline, respect for cultural values of a all ethnicities, promotion of spiritual development for the establishment of peace and the spirit of brotherhood in the fatherhood of God are among the member's main ideals.

This verse from the Rig Veda (10-1913) was included in this year's program and the same; May we belong to one fraternity; May our minds move in accord; May our hearts work in union; For one Supreme goal; Let us be inspired by a common ideal, Let us sing Your praises in congregation."

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