



**World Vedic Conference,
Durban, South Africa 2013**



ARYA SAMAJ (SA)
**World Vedic
Conference 2013**

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**BRINGING THE WISDOM OF THE VEDAS TO YOU !
JOIN US FOR A 4 DAY CONFERENCE**

THURS 28 NOV – SUNDAY 1 DEC 2013

PROGRAMME

THURS 28 NOV DURBAN CITY HALL 4.00PM – 9.30PM

Registration

Welcome & Opening Dinner (By Invitation Only)

FRIDAY 29 NOV DURBAN CITY HALL 8.00AM – 9.30PM

Registration

Conference Sessions : (9h00 sharp)

- *Sexual Orientation, Alcohol & Drug Abuse,, Gambling & Social Cohesion,*
- *Science, Spirituality & Religion*
- *God Particle, Vedic Mathematics, Astrology & Astronomy*

Evening Dinner & Entertainment (Local & Overseas artistes)

SAT 30 NOV RYDALVALE GROUNDS PHOENIX - 8.00AM – 9.30PM

09h00: March against Domestic Violence

11h00: Discussions on Hindu Unity

Display of Hindu Literature

14h00: Communal Havan (Agnihotra) for Peace & Wellbeing with Swamis from India

18h00: Dinner and Entertainment

All welcome!

SUNDAY 1 DEC DURBAN CITY HALL 8AM – 9.30PM

Conference Sessions Continued (9h00 sharp)

Resolutions

Closing Dinner (By Invitation Only)

**DONT DELAY ! REGISTER ON-LINE NOW!
VISIT apssa.co.za. or PHONE 031 3096064**

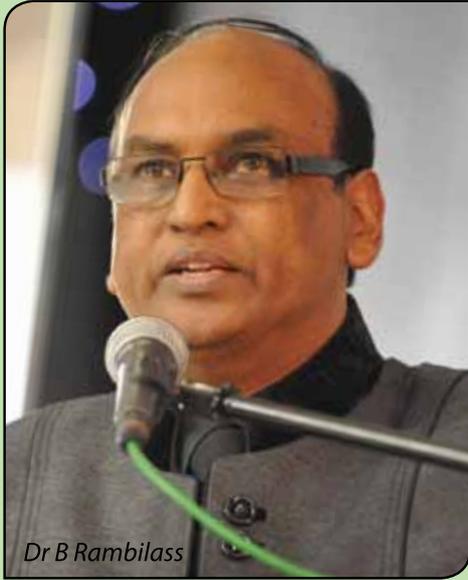
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message from **President EMERITUS AND CONFERENCE DIRECTOR**



New Horizons

The idea of an International Conference of the Arya Samaj is not a new one, but it is the infusion of a new spirit into these annual Conferences that marks a new and exciting prospect in the lifeline of the global Arya Samaj community. Therefore the Conference last year in Rohini, New Delhi, and the decision to hold a series of such international conferences, the first being in South Africa; marks a bold step taken by the Arya Samaj in accepting the challenge of taking it to new heights and broadening the Aryan horizon. This step heralds the dawn of a new Surya and the kindling of a new Agni or Yajña with Indra (Lord of the Indriyas – our senses of perception) presiding over this soul-searching exercise.

Rise to the Challenge

It is difficult for some of us to resist the temptation to engage in a surgical dissection of the Arya Samaj and to offer a clinical analysis of the ulcers and cancers that plague the Samaj both in India and abroad. This is self-destructive and is not positive or constructive. It does little for motivating the members of the Samaj, disillusioning our youth and destroys in each of us the dynamism, daring and pioneering selfless spirit that has defined the Arya Samaj and its members from its inception. All religious organisations have to be aware of the current trends and challenges in their fields, viz. declining numbers at satsangs, youth who are more questioning of existing religious practices, the demands of the 'rat race' with little time for 'other pursuits', rampant consumerism, increasing conversions to other faiths, the erosion of time-honoured family values etc. The history of the Arya Samaj shows that it is equal to the challenges of the day and always rises to the occasion.

new **MISSION**

Let us look at how we rise to the challenges at hand and realise this new global vision that we have set for ourselves:

- **DATA BASE**

Launched at the International Conference in India last year, VISHWAM ARYAM, is a website that aims to gather information on every Arya Samaj in India and abroad, and include every family in the world that is committed to a Vedic vision. VISHWAM ARYAM has as another ambitious objective; viz. creating access to the VEDAS, Vedic Literature and any such information that will give the world access to the eternal knowledge contained the VEDAS and all its supplementary texts. Every Arya Samaj and Arya Samaji needs to contribute to this data pool and exploit this modern and effective means of disseminating information.

- **SANSKARS and SATSANGS**

We need to display foresight to undertake a critical assessment of Sanskars, Satsangs and the Hawan, making them concise and meaningful. Structured training programmes for priests and lay preachers and a proper curriculum with modules have to be designed with assessment and accreditation standards, based on sound academic principles. Much of this work has already been undertaken in South Africa and we will be very willing to make this material available for the development of an international accreditation programme.

- **SOCIAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE**

The current crisis of abuse in all aspects of life demands that we recommit ourselves to the Arya Samaj programme of social equity and justice. The fearlessness that made our forefathers confront these issues has to be rekindled for us to be at the forefront of the struggle against abuse of women and children, the violation of human rights, gambling and substance abuse. We have to rigorously fight these social evils that destroy the sacred institution of family and family values. We need to save our families and thereby society at large.

- **EXISTING INSTITUTIONS**

The Arya Samaj is well known for its Gurukuls, Dayanand Anglo Vedic Colleges (DAVs), Gaushalas,

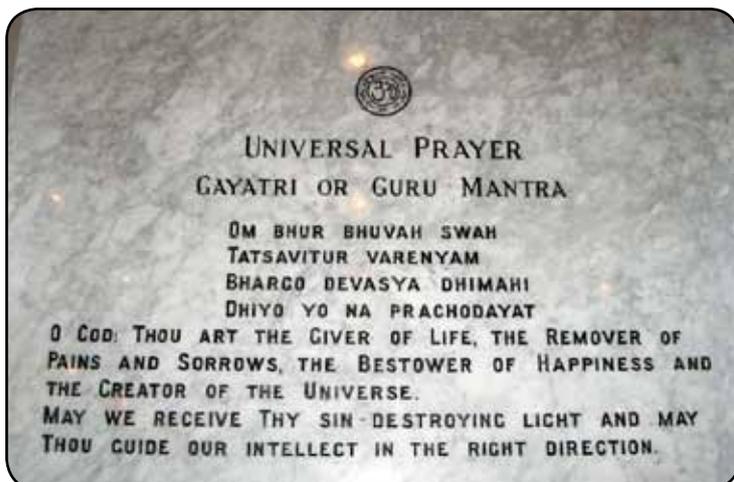
Anath Ashrams, Ayurvedic Clinics and Yoga Shivirs. We must maintain these institutions and ensure they continue as beacons of our humanity.

• ENVIRONMENT

The Vedas are a nature-based value and belief system. We have to produce simple translations that are user friendly. We have a tremendous repository of knowledge not just on spirituality, but the arts, sciences and economics. Modern technology has to be used to disseminate these systems of knowledge. We have to infuse our ethos with a new dynamism. This will then take us to the ultimate realisation that we are an integral part of a wonderful creation. The Vedas teach a love and respect for the earth, every drop of water, every grain of sand, the leaf, herb and tree, the bird and beast and the realisation that we are a vital part of a beautiful world and ensure that we live in harmony with it. We need to declare the Vedic injunction of 'satyam _tam' – we are all subject to the laws of the universe and any violation of it will lead to our own self-destruction.

This three-day conference – Vishwa Veda Sammelan – has as its theme - Vishwa ke liye Veda – the Universal Message of the Vedas. We are being ambitious in trying to address the issues listed. The Conference sessions include a number of topical issues like sexual orientation, organ donations vis-a-vis organ and human trafficking etc. We don't have any misgivings about the sensitivities around these issues and therefore give no assurances that these issues will be resolved during this Conference. What we are doing is facilitating the start of a dialogue, which will help us arrive at solutions collectively.

May we be blessed in all we have undertaken. May the Arya Samaj grow in strength, commitment and a renewed dedication. May this Conference rekindle in us the spirit that our founding father, Swami Dayanand, sought to instill in every human being, KRNVANTO VIS WAM ARYAM.



note from the EDITORIAL COMMITTEE



The legacy of the Arya Samaj movement in South Africa is an inspiring and heroic one. To adequately capture all the achievements and contributions of the movement and give a sense of its history in a single publication is an almost impossible task and one that presented many challenges – what should the balance between text and pictures be, what should the theme be, which personalities should be featured etc? The Committee decided the theme should be - 'From Adversity to Prosperity' and we hope the material in this book conveys this adequately.

Obtaining early historical photographs and newspaper clippings were particularly challenging, but the book you hold in your hands now attempts to give one a sense of the kind of selfless work done by the pioneers of the Arya Samaj movement.

“A picture is worth a thousand words.”

For every photo of an achievement included in this Book there are scores of individuals who have made this possible. Whilst it is not practical to acknowledge all these countless pioneers in this book, they have not been forgotten or treated as unsung heroes. Many affiliates have produced their own brochures honouring their stalwarts, which tell stories of trial, tribulation and triumph of the human spirit.

This electronic brochure is the genesis of a broader initiative to capture the rich and proud heritage of the Arya Samaj in South Africa in the main, whilst also touching on the Indian and global Arya Samaj diaspora that will eventually result in a comprehensive coffee table book.

We hope this book will give readers a sense of the soul of the Arya Samaj movement, its illustrious history and legacy and inspire the present generation and those to come to build on the solid foundations left by our forebears.

Jay Balwanth
Convenor – Coffee Table Book Committee



message from the president, **ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA SOUTH AFRICA**

The Arya Samaj movement has been in South Africa for more than a century and the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha is nearly 90-years-old. The Ten Principles of the Arya Samaj, which comprise the solid foundations of the movement, have been widely acclaimed for their human value, universal appeal and practical usefulness in every field of life – religious, moral, social, economic and political. The word 'Arya' does not refer to any particular race, religion, sect or group and aims only at character building. The Vedic injunction is 'Manubhav' – be a good human being, and the Ten Principles aim to help man achieve just

that. As you page through this brochure, you will read brief stories, pen portraits of key luminaries of the movement and see photos of how humble people whose forebears came to this new land as indentured labourers became these good human beings by their keen sense of public spiritedness, commitment and determination to raise their lot both spiritually and materially.

The Arya Samaj has played its part in keeping those who had left their motherland connected to their cultural roots and heritage. This brochure shows many examples of the establishment of vernacular classes and religious study groups in a number of different areas as well as the historic setting up of the hugely successful English medium Veda Niketan graded course of study in Hinduism Programme which attracted thousands of entrants, not only locally, but from around the world since its inception in 1962. The Arya Samaj movement has played a pioneering role primarily in the cultural, educational and religious aspects of community life but the question is – what now? The main challenge is for the Arya Samaj movement is to remain relevant in a fast changing world.

The Arya Samaj has gained wisdom over the past nine decades and knows that what worked yesterday may not necessarily work today. A modern day challenge, which is one of the themes of the World Vedic Conference 2013, is the erosion of family and community values. Daily we read of and witness family discord, neglected and abused children, the scourge of gambling and other social evils. So how do we in the Samaj, with a proud legacy of being pro-active, address these challenges? Principle Nine of the Ten Principles urges us not to be blind to the problems of our less fortunate and disadvantaged brethren. No man or group can be happy if all around people are in want or miserable as this would bring down the whole social structure. To do good to others is therefore no favour but enlightened self interest. Each affiliate of the Samaj has a number of social programmes and projects. The question is – how many of us are devoting time and energy, like our forebears did, to being life and passion to these programmes?

Hindus in South Africa are a minority grouping and there are further differences in modes of worship and belief systems within this religious grouping. The Arya Samaj has taken the bold step of inviting all these different organisations to participate in a gathering where each will have the opportunity to promote the theme of unity in diversity as part of the World Vedic Conference 2013 in Phoenix. This session is aptly named "Hindu Unity".

It is another sad reality that many of the youth today cannot perform a simple havan or recite the mantras that accompany this ceremony. The Arya Samaj continues to be at the forefront of teaching the community, regardless of religious affiliation, the performance of this ancient ceremony and its symbolic meaning. Bahukund Yajnas have become a key grassroots initiative of the Arya Samaj SA. The Samaj is keenly aware of the huge benefits of using modern technology to 'mass communicate' with people around the globe and aims to use this resource to the fullest, to propagate its message. The Atharva Veda says it is the duty and responsibility of those who know the Vedic wisdom to share and teach it to others because it can become a mighty and uplifting force in the way it affects society. This is the ongoing challenge of the Arya Samaj movement!

Arya Samaj amar rahe!

Professor Usha Desai



historical PERSPECTIVE

From 1860 to the turn of the century, Hindus in South Africa were kept in a state of religious limbo. Being separated from his linguistic, cultural and religious roots in India, the early pioneer felt orphaned and severed from his maternal links. The indentured labourer was no scholar of Indian culture. His primary concern was earning a livelihood. His culture was thus left to grow on very impoverished resources, challenged by more pressing imperatives such as survival. There were no religious institutions that disseminated any religious literature and none of the temples were known to

“The early pioneer felt orphaned and severed from his maternal links.”

propound a specific doctrine except those preached through ritual and sacrificial worship.

When Hindu society in South Africa was slowly losing its identity, the Arya Samaj was flourishing in India and its swamis and pracharaks (lay preachers) were visiting countries abroad where Indians had settled. These pracharaks vigorously set about fostering a Hindu awareness amongst the indentured Indian labourers settled in countries such as Mauritius, Trinidad, British Guiana, Fiji, Suriname and South Africa. Thus through the good work they undertook, the pioneer pracharaks left a lasting impression on this community and paved the way for the future growth of the Arya Samaj in South Africa.



Our humble forebears, rich in fortitude



Bhai Parmanand and the Seeds of Reform

The Samaj's aim was to redefine Hinduism by abolishing rituals and social practices such as enforced widowhood, child marriage, idolatry and the caste system. Forty-five years after the arrival of the Indians, the first Hindu scholar to come to South Africa was Bhai Parmanand. His command of both English and Hindi was good and his public discourses created the desired impact.

He started the Hindu Reform Movement and established the Hindu Young Men's Association

(HYMA) in 1906. It became known throughout Natal and its adherence to the study of Vedic literature had wide repercussions for the community as a whole. He was extremely popular in Pietermaritzburg, where he was honoured for his work. A Hindu Crematorium Committee was formed to pressure the Union government to allow cremation.

“Key features of Samaj discourse were to establish a ‘purified, respectable, modern, scientific, and self-sufficient Hinduism, and an intense commitment to social and political action’.”

Key features of Samaj discourse were to establish a ‘purified, respectable, modern, scientific, and self-sufficient Hinduism,’ and an intense ‘commitment to social and political action.’ He also went to Johannesburg where the reception committee for his entourage was chaired by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi's political journey was greatly influenced by this early encounter with Bhai Parmanand. His stay in South Africa was very influential and paved the way for the later visit by Swami Shankaranand to consolidate the movement for Hindu unity.

Swami Shankaranand

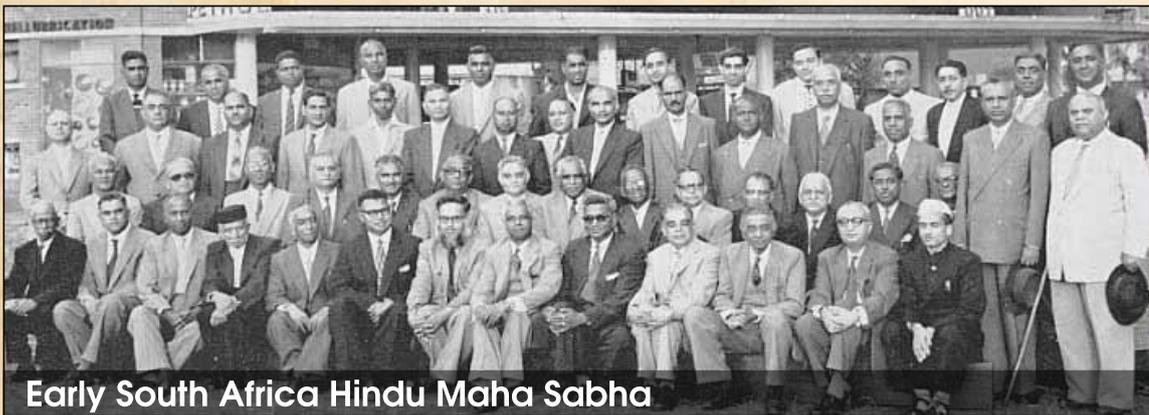
Sri Swami Shankaranandaji Maharaj arrived in South Africa on 4th October 1908. Described as “an ambassador for Hinduism”, he proved to be a worthy missionary who preached not only Arya Samaj, principles but the message of Hinduism in its broadest form. The Swami’s perceptiveness led to his gentle attack against much of the superstition, casteism, meaningless ritualism and other illogical practices so common in Hindu modes of worship.

Shortly after his arrival, the Swami found to his consternation, that the most widely-celebrated festival of Hindus was during the month of Muharram in the Muslim lunar calendar, marked with mourning for deceased and carrying of floats for submersion into rivers; in which Hindus played a prominent part. He immediately raised the issue that employers should give Hindus the day off to celebrate Deepavali. As a substitute to Muharram, Swamiji organised a chariot procession through the streets of Durban to celebrate the birth of Rama. The Ramnaumi Festival was first held in April 1910. Hindus met at the Umgeni Road Temple, where the Swami explained the significance of the occasion. The interventions of Swamiji were decisive in making a ritual shift that would eventually see Deepavali emerging as the primary holiday of the Hindus.



In November 1908, a chapter of HYMA was formed in Overport. Addressing members, the Swami explained that “society” implied union for a common purpose. Hindus had too many “different ideals and ways of realising their God; they had to set aside their differences and work for the common good”.

“Hindus had to set aside their differences and work for the common good.”



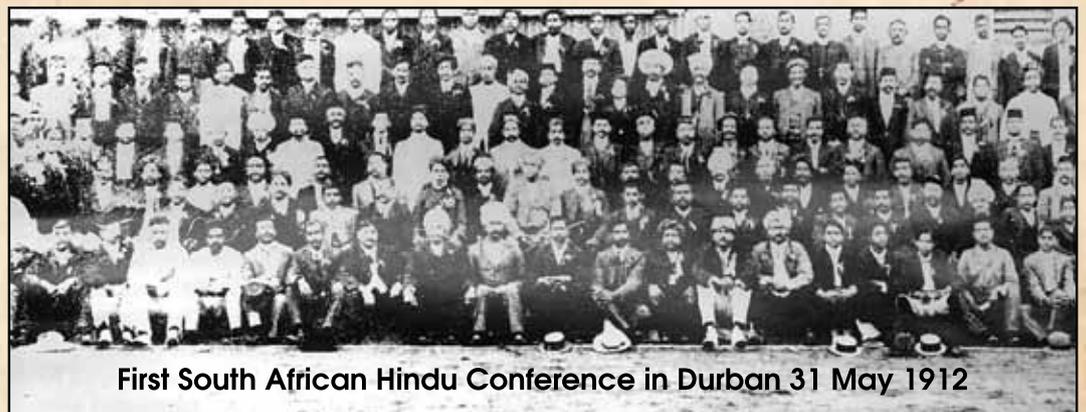
Early South Africa Hindu Maha Sabha

FRONT ROW (Sitting) : Messrs: R. Ramtharosa, A. J. Naidoo, S. A. Pather, D. P. Desai, R. D. Lalla, S. Chutai, H. S. Nowbath, K. R. Pillay, R. Baglanath, V. P. Desai, R. Gopalsingh, H. H. Dimpeta, Pandit Nardev Vedalankar.
SECOND ROW (Sitting) : Messrs: T. M. Naicker, Narandas Dayal, K. Laloo, H. N. Naran, V. S. Naidu, H. Kisanasingh, Dr. N. P. Desai, P. B. Pather, S. B. Pather, M. Ramaswar, L. Kris Naidoo, S. L. Singh, M. A. Nyden, T. S. Pillay.
THIRD ROW (Standing) : Messrs: K. L. Maharaj, Baboolal Maharaj, P. B. Naidoo, V. Rajendra, D. Pranjivan, Daya Bhikha, M. Lalith, V. G. Patel, L. B. Patel, V. M. Naidu, D. V. Naidoo, S. Hoopsingh, M. C. Naidoo, G. Doorgapershad, I. K. Maharaj.
FOURTH ROW (Standing) : Messrs: N. Ganga, Y. B. Venketasun, F. S. Bannaiidoo, S. K. Naidoo, R. Mahabeer, D. Seeban, S. Ramtharosa, Daya Manthan, H. H. Pillai, M. B. Juggernath, B. M. Valjee, Ramlal Maharaj, R. Ransikson.

Swami Shankaranand was a catalyst for increasing religious awareness among Hindus, and brilliantly exploited opportunities to do so. In 1909, when the authorities wanted to put down two cows afflicted by tick fever, he organised a mass meeting in Mayville which was attended by two thousand Hindus, highlighting the veneration for

the cow, and moral prohibition of its killing. The Swami’s politicisation of the issue was as masterstroke in raising Hindu consciousness and union of purpose.

The Swami organized Ved Dharma Sabhas in Clare Estate, Sydenham, Mayville and Overport. These were formed to improve the general knowledge of Indians through reading, cultivating the art of speaking, reading the Hindi language and “national” script (Devanagri) and rendering assistance to all Hindus. The Swami also presided over the “reconversion” of Christian Indians back to Hinduism.



First South African Hindu Conference in Durban 31 May 1912

Aside from his religious compulsions, the Swami also had an economic agenda. He urged indentured and ex-indentured

Hindus to circulate money among fellow religionists and establish co-operative movements, educational institutions and political bodies. He organised an Indian Farmers' Association (IFA) to unite market gardeners, who were mainly Hindu. The IFA held a meeting on 30 May 1909 to discuss how to set up a Hindu controlled market.

One of his major accomplishments locally was the forging of broader Hindu unity when he founded the South African Hindu Maha Sabha on 31st May 1912. His lasting legacy was thus the provision of a common platform for all Hindus, which celebrated its Centenary last year.



Swami Bhawani Dayal

Swami Bhawani Dayal was the first and best-known Arya Samajist born in South Africa. He was born in Johannesburg on 10 September 1892. Although his contribution to Indian life and thought is remembered in political circles, it is as an Aryan missionary that he is mostly appreciated. Deeply committed to the Arya Samaj cause, he worked as tirelessly for it when the opportunity came, as he did for the political emancipation of the peoples of India and South Africa.

Swami Bhawani Dayal, as a political activist, courted arrest for several offences committed under the numerous racist Acts promulgated by the Government to oppress the Black people of South Africa. It was during these political defiance campaigns that Mahatma Gandhi forged his peaceful civil disobedience doctrines, which was later used to good effect in liberating India from British rule. Swami

Bhawani Dayal and his wife, Jagrani Devi, involved themselves in Gandhiji's famous Satyagraha Movement. They were both imprisoned on 10 October 1913. For his fearless political campaigning and his inherent leadership qualities, he was elected as President of the Natal Indian Congress.

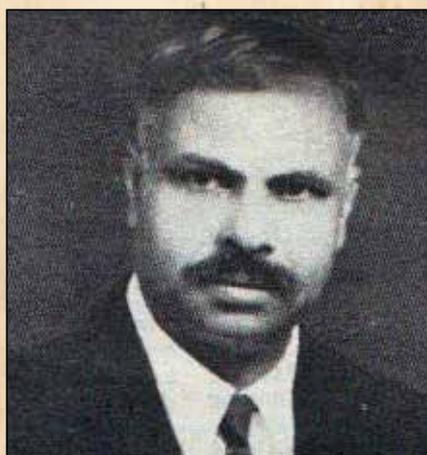
“His ideal was the emancipation of his people from political oppression and immature thinking on religious matters.”

Being a staunch Samaji, he ardently preached the Vedic religion. He pioneered the propagation of Hindi and his contributions to Hindi during this early phase were unparalleled. He delivered many lectures and performed many ceremonies including the well-known Suddhi Samskara, whereby converts from Hinduism were reconverted to their original faith. His life thus became a constant dedication to the cause and wherever he went, it was either as a religious missionary or as a political leader. His abiding ideal was however the emancipation of his people, firstly from political oppression and secondly from immature thinking on religious matters which he saw as rife in the Hindi community in Natal.

Thus the Swami's interest in the life and work of Swami Dayananda Saraswati earned for him in 1925 the position of Chairman of the Centenary Celebration Committee, formed to mark the birth of the leader of the Arya Samaj in India. This position was followed by a more lasting and honoured one, as President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha when it came into existence in South Africa.

Pandit Ishwardutt Vedalankar

On 22 October 1921, Pt. Ishwardutt Vedalankar, the first graduate of Gurukul Kangadi, came to Natal, under the auspices of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha. As an eloquent speaker, Panditji attracted large audiences of all faiths. He concentrated on the correct performance of Sanskaras and Havan. As an exponent of the Ramayan he drew large gatherings at his Ramayan Kathas.



Pandit V. C. Nayanah Raj

Being inspired by Swami Shankaranand, Pandit Nayanah Raj learnt the Sanskaras (sacraments) to perform the wedding and other ceremonies according to the Vedic Rites as stipulated in the Sanskar-Vidhi of Maharishi Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

As a key member of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha, his activities primarily focused on the propagation of Vedic dharma, education and welfare. His office was close to the bus rank and staff members, residents and well-wishers called on him for advice,

guidance and the delegation and execution of duties relating to the welfare work of the Aryan Benevolent Home, which he co-founded. The growth in the Home's quality of services kept pace with the needs of the community. Whilst tree planting and the preservation of the flora have come to be seen as important issues these days because of the damage done to the ozone layers, to the Hindus it has been as age-old tradition to plant and take care of trees and other vegetation. Panditji will be remembered for his active promotion of planting a tree and vegetables and looking a food security and a sustainable way of living. Panditji pointed out in the Shanti Paath (Hymn of Peace) there is reference to "Vanaspatayah Shanti" meaning "may the plants be peace-giving", thus emphasising the importance of flora in the Vedas.

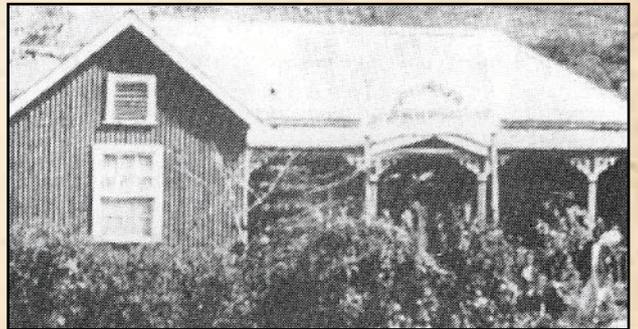
Panditji also conducted spiritual ministration to Indian prisoners at Durban Central Prison to help them desist from wrong habits that had landed them in prison; to make them realise the real purpose of life and live the righteous way of life according to our Dharma and the Vedas.



D. G. Satyadeva

On a cold night in May 1918, Shri D. G. Satyadeva, President of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha (A.Y.S.), witnessed a pitiful scene where a homeless person was being thrashed by a policeman for sleeping on a pavement in Brook Street, Durban. The next morning, at dawn, Satyadeva went as usual to the toilet and was shocked to see the same beggar come out of the toilet, as he had no home. With the cruel scene of the beggar being assaulted still fresh in his memory, Satyadeva presented a challenging memorandum for the establishment of a

"HOME", to cater for the homeless and downtrodden of society. His vision and dream became a reality with the establishment of the Aryan Benevolent Home on 1st May 1921.



The First Aryan Benevolent Home

Although D. G. Satyadeva was a staunch Arya Samajist, he gave his full support in matters of concern to the broader Hindu society, by working with the SA Hindu Maha Sabha. He also worked actively as a member of the Natal Indian Congress and the Durban Indian Municipal Employees Society.





S. L. Singh

Together with the late V. C. Nayanah Raj and with D. G. Satyadeva, S. L. Singh was regarded as one of the founders of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha, which in turn founded the Aryan Benevolent Home. He became a Trustee of the Home one year after its inception and was the Secretary / Treasurer of the Home for over 40 years, playing a vital role in its development and administration. He was also the Grantee of the A.Y.S. Government Aided Indian School which was attached to the Home in Mayville, but which served the general community of Cato Manor.

His outstanding leadership qualities also found expression in sports administration. Mr. Singh used his considerable ability and outstanding personality to establish a national non-racial football body which replaced the previously racially-based organisations. He became the first President of the S.A. Soccer Federation, and guided South African sportsmen into a new era of non-racialism.

Under his leadership, the Durban Indian Sports Ground Association administered various sports fields including the famous Curries Fountain in Durban. This venue, for many decades, was the main centre for non-racial sport in South Africa.

His other contribution was in the field of labour. He spent considerable time in organising the municipal workers residing at the Magazine Barracks in Durban, who did not belong to any trade union. Mr. S. L. Singh together with his nephew, Durban attorney George Singh and Advocate A. Christopher, organised these workers into a Trade Union – the Durban Indian Municipal Employees Society (D.I.M.E.S). For many decades and directly as a result of his efforts and fearless leadership, the conditions of service of Durban's Municipal Workers improved dramatically. In all his work, he was guided by his deep religious beliefs and inspired by the teachings of Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj movement.



Sukhraj Chotai

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha S. A. provided Shri S Chotai with a religious and philosophical home. Along with his progress in English education, his earnestness, fervor and zeal in the tenets of Vedic Religion and Vedic Culture also grew. He served the Sabha for many years as Jt. Honorary Secretary and was President for 13 years from 1968 until his death.

As an official of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, he spearheaded a campaign for the introduction of Hindu religious instruction in Indian schools. As an official of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh S. A., he successfully campaigned for the teaching of Hindi in Indian schools.

He translated the book, Religious Awakening in South Africa, (published in 1950) from Hindi to English and was co-compiler of Arya Prayer, (1953); Editor of An Historical Account of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha South Africa, (published in 1973); Editor

of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha's Golden Jubilee Brochure (1975) and co-editor of Hindu Heritage in South Africa, published in 1960 by South African Hindu Maha Sabha. His paper on Religious Instruction in Indian Schools was published in 1955.

Pandita Prabhawathi Nanackchand

Pandita Nanackchand's life symbolises the struggle against hypocrisy and prejudice surrounding women. Determined to challenge the double standards and bigotry regarding women's rights, she defied the authority of her male elders by attending education tutorials at night. This underscored her persistence to compensate for the setbacks resulting from her curtailed formal academic programme.

If a lasting impression lies in the combination of character, intellect and service; if it is to be measured by the lasting value of solid work done in the fields of thought and action, then Pandita Nanackchand has excelled. She struggled hard for the emancipation of women; for justice and engaged in a range of activities to ameliorate the conditions of the poor and downtrodden. She provided comfort and companionship to the ladies at the Narain Jeawon Vedic Centre for several years. Pandita exhorted the gatherings she presided over to seek inspiration and rejuvenation in Vedic culture. Her membership of the Natal Indian Congress indicated she was unafraid of involvement in politics as she aligned herself with a progressive democratic movement. She served the Women's League of the Congress as its secretary. Her acts of courage and fortitude were recognised by President Mandela who appointed her to be one of the priests at his multi faith wedding ceremony to Graca Machel in August 1998.



Shishupal Rambharos

After the death of his father, who was a farm labourer, Shishupal together with his mother and brother were admitted to the Aryan Benevolent Home in 1927. Through perseverance, a sense of duty and love, Bhai Rambharos became fully involved in the service of his alma mater. Those who knew him described him as eager to learn, kind, gentle, obliging, courteous, quick to grasp things and never idle.

He also taught Hindi at the Arya Yuvuk Sabha Hindi School. He played an active role in planning, giving direction, motivating fund-raising drives. He worked at grassroots level in the development of the Aryan Benevolent Children's Home and Aged Home from its original premises Bellair Road, Cato Manor, to the Salvation Army building, to Clayton Gardens in Sydenham and to its present headquarters

at 80 Arena Park Drive in Chatsworth. More recently he had initiated the establishment of welfare branches in Umzinto and Glencoe in Natal, Lenasia in Gauteng and Woodstock in Cape Town.

Bhai Rambharos also served as President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha for several years during which time he raised the profile of the Arya Samaj movement as the first 'organised' belief system of Hinduism in South Africa.

For his contributions to more than fifteen organisations, the Durban City Council conferred Civic Honours on him on 29 July 1982.

“He raised the profile of the Arya Samaj movement as the first ‘organised’ belief system of Hinduism in South Africa.”

Durga Bundhoo

Following the example set by her parents who were steeped in Vedic traditions and values, Durga Bundhoo of Pietermaritzburg dedicated her life to the upliftment of the underprivileged. Mrs Bundhoo trained as a teacher of infants at the Methodist Indian School and then became Principal of the Baijoo and Maharaj Platoon School at Raisethorpe. In 1935 the Indian Women's Association was instrumental in establishing the Indian Girls High School of which Durga was a foundation scholar. From 1950 to 1956 was Chairlady of the Woodlands Girls' Social Club at the School, Vice –President of the Aryan Benevolent Home Council, Board member of the Sunlit Garden Orphanage, member of the Mental Health Society and Vice -President for two years of the National Council of Women, making history as the first person of colour to hold this position. In 1948 she became the president of the Plessislaer Arya Stree Samaj which has the primary role of developing women to assume leadership positions. She also served as Vice President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha SA for a number of years. Mrs Bundhoo has educated many people of other race groups about Indian culture, the Vedic religion, cookery, the wearing of the sari etc. She has contributed immensely to the cultural, social and religious lives of those with whom she interacted.

the establishment of **ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA**

By the end of 1925 a number of Arya Samajs were well established in Natal. There was no central organisation to co-ordinate and give the work done by the different early pioneers any kind of unity. At a meeting of Vedic bodies, it was Mr. D.G. Satyadeva who mooted the idea of a central organisation, which readily met with strong approval from the delegates. He considered it well-timed to use the occasion of the birth Centenary Celebration of Swami Dayanand to establish the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Thus Shivaratri day, 22 February 1925, heralded the establishment of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in Natal. Pt. Bhawani Dayal moved the following resolution: “The delegates attending the Rishi Dayanand Centenary Celebration resolved to establish an Arya Pratinidhi Sabha through which medium the cause of Vedic Religion be advanced.”



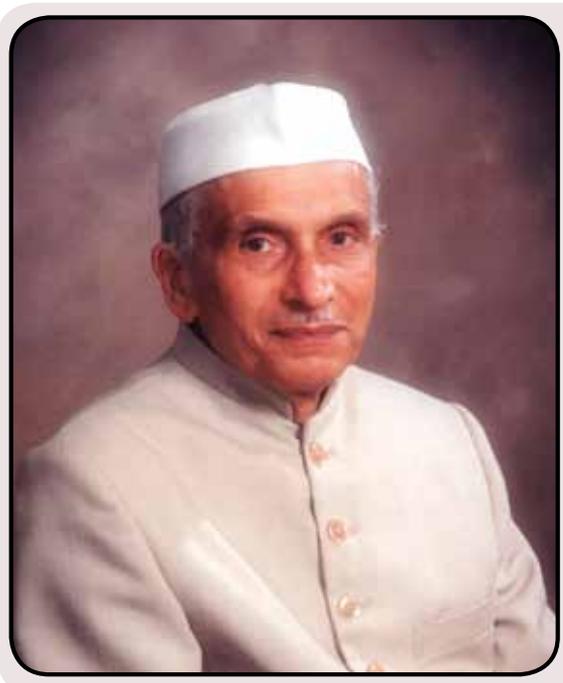
First Officials and Delegates (1925)

The first officials elected were Pt. Bhawani Dayal (President), B.A. Mahrajh (Secretary), P.R. Pather (Assistant Secretary),

and R.K. Kapitan (Treasurer), with Durban as the headquarters. Two years later on 23 October 1927, the officials of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha agreed to affiliate to the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha or the International Arya League. India had been a long-standing supporter of the anti-apartheid struggle. In South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi established the Natal Indian Congress even before the African National Congress came into being. To exert the utmost pressure on the apartheid regime in South Africa and to give full effect to the liberation struggle, India employed a total boycott of South Africa and imposed the strictest of sanctions. While the oppressed South Africans would applaud this strategic role played by India, the price paid by Hindus locally was a great one.

Isolated from any contact with the motherland, the community had to rely on its own resources to keep the spirit of Hinduism and culture alive.

OFFICIALS OF ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA			During the past 50 years		
PRESIDENT			HONORARY ASSISTANT SECRETARY		
NAME	YEAR				
Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi	1925 and 1933 - 1934		Mr N. Lalbahadur	1925 - 1928	
Mr R. M. Naidoo	1925 - 1926		Mr J. Maganlal	1928 - 1929	
Mr S. L. Singh	1926 - 1929		Mr S. Mudray	1929 - 1930	
Pandit R. B. Maharaj	1929 - 1930		Mr Hans Maghrajh	1930 - 1935 : 1937 - 1940	
Mr R. K. Kapitan	1930 - 1932 : 1934 - 1937		Mr S. K. Maharaj	1935 - 1937	
Mr B. A. Maghrajh	1932 - 1933 : 1937 - 1938		Mr S. Chotai	1940 - 1944 : 1947 To Date	
Mr B. Bodasing	1938 - 1939		Mr K. Nepal	1944 - 1947	
Mr B. M. Patel	1939 - 1940				
Mr R. Bodasing	1940 - 1952		HONORARY TREASURER (Jt. Hon. Treasurer)		
Mr B. Purmasir	1954 - 1958		Mr R. Kapitan	1925 - 1929	
Mr J. Maganlal	1953		Mr V. D. Pillay	1929 - 1930	
Mr S. L. Singh	1959 - 1960		Mr M. Moonoo	1930 - 1957	
Mr H. Bodasing	1961 - 1967		Mr H. J. Maghrajh	1954 - 1958	
Mr S. Chotai	1968 - To Date		Mr G. Doorgapersadh	1958 - 1960	
			Mr M. Ramawtar	1959 - 1966	
CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OR VICE CHAIRMAN			Mr S. Batohi	1968 - 1970	
Mr M. Ramawatar	1952 - 1958		Mr D. Bramdaw	1961 - 1974	
Mr N. Jeawan	1959 - 1960		Mr R. N. Jeawon	1971 - To Date	
Mr P. B. Singh	1961 - 1963 V. P.		Mr G. Baijnath	1975 -	
Mr R. Mahabeer	1964 V. P.		Mr R. Baboolall	1967	
Mr P. Seebran	1965 - To Date V. P.				
			HONORARY AUDITOR		
HONORARY SECRETARY (Joint Hon. Secretary)			Pandit R. Bunwari	1925 - 1929	
Mr B. Woodeeth	1925		Mr S. L. Singh	1930 - To Date	
Mr F. Satyapal	1929 - 1930				
Mr D. G. Satyadeva	1926 - 1929 : 1930 - 1960				
Mr S. Chotai	1954 - 1967 Jt.				
Mr S. Rambharos	1961 - To Date Jt.				
Mr R. Boodhay	1969 - To Date Jt.				
Mr M. R. Dayal	1968				



pandit **NARDEV VEDALANKAR**

Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, a graduate of Gurukul Kangadi, arrived in South Africa on 24 November 1947 to teach Gujarati. He chose to remain in the country and successfully spread the tenets of the Vedic Religion. He founded and organised the religious examination of the Veda Niketan. His literature and fame as a luminary in the Arya Samaj movement have reached many countries where Indians have settled abroad.

His academic excellence in Hinduism has been established by his writings which have been published by the Veda Niketan, and the foremost among them is Shastra Navanitam - A Concise History of Hindu Scriptures. He authored numerous books which are prescribed literature for the Veda Niketan graded course of study in Hinduism. The course of study was ground-breaking as it came at a time when there was a dearth of material in an understandable format and in the English language on the Hindu scriptures.

veda NIKETAN

The Veda Niketan, founded by luminary and stalwart Pt. Nardev Vedalankar, was established with the objective of upholding the third principle of the Arya Samaj which reads, 'His word, the Veda: The Veda is the Scripture of true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of every Arya to learn and teach the Veda, to hear it read and to recite it to others.'

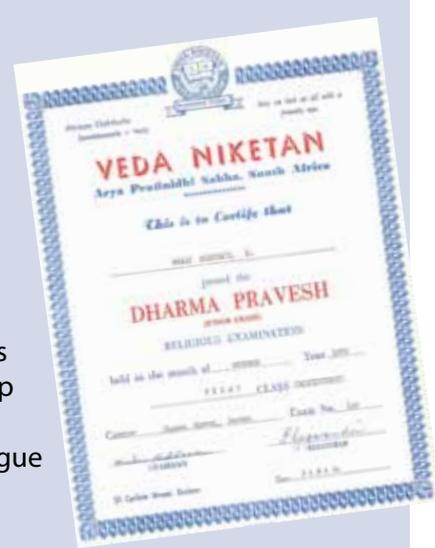
The Veda Niketan disseminates Vedic religion and philosophy by engaging in two broad activities, viz. conducting of religious examinations and publishing Vedic literature, both in the English language.



"The Veda is the Scripture of true knowledge."

veda NIKETAN EXAMINATIONS

The course enables a seeker to gain an understanding / knowledge of mankind's oldest religion and equip him to enter into any cultural / religious dialogue with members of other faiths.



To date more than 45000 candidates from Canada, USA, UK, Fiji, Mauritius, Suriname, Trinidad, New Zealand and Holland have passed some stage of the exams.

A booklet containing details of the five different grades of examinations, prescribed books, syllabus, etc. is available to organisations and individuals interested in preparing candidates to write the examinations.

study group and SWADHYAYA MANDAL

To educate the general public in the principles of Hindu dharma, the Veda Niketan formed study groups in different areas. Such groups were formed in Durban Central, Reservoir Hills, Pietermaritzburg and Stanger in the eighties.

Swadhyaya should form a very important part of the activities of the affiliated institutions of the Sabha. The publications of Veda Niketan form a useful part of the library of religious books of every Arya Samaj. Today the most active Swadhyaya or Study Group is the Vedic Study Circle which offers a graded study on the more philosophical and abstract aspects of Sanathan Dharma.

hindi SHIKSHA SANGH

Swami Bhawani Dayal travelled from town to town setting up satsang groups and Hindi Paatshalas, Hindi Pracharni Sabhas and bodies with like names. With the arrival of Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, the Hindi Shiksha Sangh was established in 1948 at a conference of the APS. Panditji served as its chairperson for a number of years. He served the Sangh for a total of 27 years.



Philanthropist K. Pattundeen



The Hindi Shiksha Sangh was housed at the APS headquarters until the present edifice was built, the major donor being Mr. K. Pattundeen. The Hindi Shiksha Sangh remains the national body in South Africa for the promotion and propagation of Hindi and has grown to such an extent that

it has now become an institution in its own right and functions independently. An increasingly popular community Radio Station, Hindvani, operated by the Sangh, provides a much needed service to the community.

vedic PUROHIT MANDAL

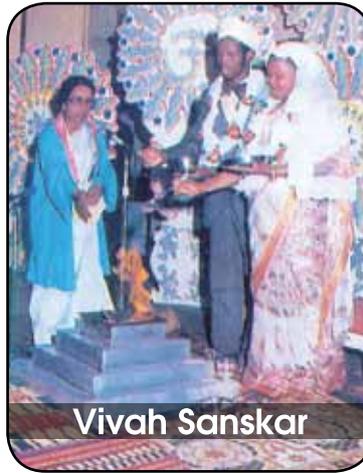


The Vedic Purohit Mandal attends to the religious needs of the community and was also started by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar. The emphasis is on the Vedic Principles and philosophy, and the rituals are performed in accordance with the vidhis of the sixteen Vedic Sanskaras ceremonies.

The Vedic Purohit Mandal has its own code of conduct, which is adhered to by the Priests. Examinations of the Purohit Mandal are open to males and females over the age of twenty-one.

Performance of SANSKARAS

The main function of the Purohit Mandal is to bring about uniformity in the performance of the sixteen sanskars, especially in the marriage ceremony. Vedic priests undergo a rigorous system of training over a period of three years. Oral and written examinations are held annually.



Vivah Sanskar



Janeu / Yajnopavit

propagation of Vedic Teachings

In addition to the performance of sanskars, the priests of the Mandal render voluntary service in propagating the Vedic teachings. They make their contribution by delivering discourses on religious and philosophical topics at gatherings, meetings and festivals. They are at the vanguard of spreading the Vedic religion. Prayers in hospitals and ministrations in prisons are additional services that are rendered with humble dedication by many priests.

Gowns

The sky blue gowns worn by Pundits and Panditas have become a trademark of the Arya Samaj movement.

Any person adorning this gown is bound by the Code of Conduct of the Arya Samaj South Africa and has to always display the highest standards of ethical behaviour.

Duties of a Vedic Priest. A Purohit (priest) is qualified to perform any of the sanskaras (ceremonies) and fulfill other religious requirements. The expression of compassion in times of tragedy, counseling and advising members of the community experiencing some societal challenge such as suicide, domestic violence, alcoholism, substance abuse, dissemination of Veda Niketan books and literature, training of Yajaks / Yajikas, etc. are some of the duties performed by a purohit.

PANDIT NARDEV HINDU DHARMA PRACHAR TRUST (PNHDPT)

The Trust was created by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar on the night of the 23 November 1988 when he was honoured by the Hindu community for his contributions in the field of Hindu culture and religion.

Pandit Nardev had outlined a plan for the publication of a series of five books in isiZulu, in simple language, on Hinduism. UbuHindu Book 1 and Book 2 have been published.

UBUHINDU 1 (ZULU)

First part of the UbuHindu series by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar which deals with simple rites and ceremonies of Hinduism.

UBUHINDU 2 (ZULU)



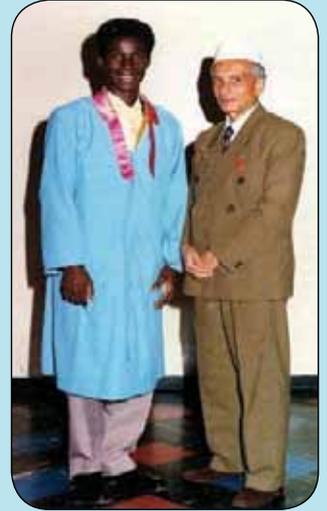
Book Launch with Prince M. Buthelezi and E. Malinga

Second part of the UbuHindu series which deals with spiritual teachings of Hinduism. The Trust also conducted classes on Hinduism for African students. At the beginning, 12 students had enrolled for these classes and the students were reimbursed their taxi fares. The late Edward Malinga conducted these classes on Saturdays. Two students graduated from these classes at the University where they pursued a degree with courses in Hindu studies and Sanskrit.



an african VEDIC PRIEST

In 1985 a study grant was made available to Wreston Charles Ankoh, a Ghanaian youth, to enable him to travel to Durban to further his Vedic studies. He lived in Durban for a year and learnt the main principles of Hinduism, the performance of Hawan and other sanskars. He pursued further studies through the Vedic Priests Academy and was successful in his studies. He was inducted as a Vedic priest and was robed with the official gown of the Academy. Pundit Ankoh is the only known Vedic priest of African origin on the entire continent of Africa. He is involved in propagating the Vedic Dharma under the auspices of the Vedic Mission in Accra.



arya samaj

A 'SELF HELP' SOCIETY

Satsangs, Hindi classes, training of priests, music classes, theatre, building of schools, social welfare, politics - each of these endeavours fell within the active programmes undertaken by the Arya Samaj. Through these Samajs, the people were able to address their needs and save the community from being demoralised and deculturalised.



Vernacular Class

ART AND DRAMA

The Arya Samaj has left its stamp in the field of art and music. Many of the early dramatists, playwrights, conductors and masters of Sangeet and Bhajan mandals were members of the Arya Samaj, the Arya Sangeet Mandal and the Arya Bhajan Mandal. These bodies helped to create a genuine love for Indian music, drama and poetry. Pandit Pravin Singh who arrived in South Africa in 1922, popularised the singing of Vedic hymns and kirtans.



stree SAMAJ

*“Where women are honoured, there dwell the devatas,
where they are dishonoured, all deeds become fruitless”
- Manusmriti Vs 3*

Among the first batch of female priests who graduated were two members of the Arya Stree Samaj, viz. Pta. P. Nanackchand and Pta. Chandrawathie Debipersad. Pta. Saroj Ramawtar and Pta. P. Nanackchand were the first Hindu women marriage officers. The Stree Samaj is also proud that its long-standing President, Swami Vidyawathi Saraswati took the order of Sanyasin.

The Arya Samaj has been an ardent advocate of the emancipation of women. It has given encouragement to the education of women and equality in religious matters. It has also encourages the establishment of Stree Samajs run solely by women but which still subscribe to the Ten Principles of the Arya Samaj. The intention is to allow women to play a meaningful role in the furtherance of the cause of the Arya Samaj and also enable them to develop their organisational and leadership skills. Over the decades, the Samaj has boasted many Stree Samajs with much charitable work being done by these ladies organisations, such as distribution of food hampers to the poor, feeding of the indigent, preparation of candidates for the Veda Niketan examinations, handling the catering for the major Arya Samaj functions, holding cottage services etc.



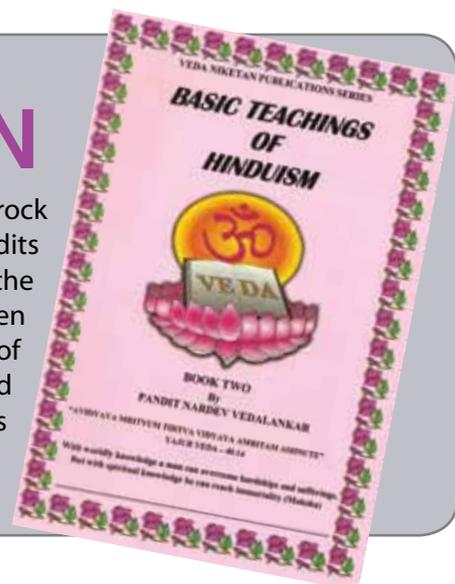
conferences ‘SPREADING THE KNOWLEDGE’

Since its inception, the Sabha has arranged many conferences and has upheld its first objective by inviting many notable pracharaks and speakers of note to further

the ideas of the Vedic religion. The Centenary Celebration of the Birth of Swami Dayanand Saraswati culminated in the hosting of the first Vedic Conference held on 21 February 1925. Since then, numerous Vedic Conferences have been held every five years on average. The Conferences address issues of the day and also attract members from other religious bodies under the banner of Hinduism. A number of international visitors and dignitaries have attended the Conferences organised by the Sabha.

hindu ACTIVE CAMPAIGN

Although the Vedas are seldom read or understood today, they form the bedrock of the universal religion or “Sanathan Dharma” that all Hindus follow. The Pundits and Panditas of the Arya Samaj are trained to carry forth this knowledge to the community at large. They are tasked with teaching one to discriminate between truth and untruth and returning their chelas back to the original “ocean of knowledge”, the Vedas. Although Hinduism is not a religion where you would find adherents knocking on doors to “sell” the faith, this is what Pundits and Panditas did during the Hindu Active Campaign in an effort to kindle an interest in the values and ethos of Sanathan Dharma.



the arya samaj TODAY



Today, almost nine decades since its formation, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, popularly referred to as the Arya Samaj, remains a mature organisation which continues to offer direction and leadership to the community in the religious, social, cultural and educational fields. It has helped to interpret and present Hinduism in a manner to give it an exalted place in South Africa. Taking its stand on the slogan, Back to the Vedas the Arya Samaj has dissociated itself from superstitious

“The Arya Samaj takes its stand on the slogan, “Back to the Vedas!”

beliefs, meaningless rituals, heinous animal sacrifices and the ugly caste system. It has lent its full support to vegetarianism and cremation and advocates a way of life which is rational, scientific, modern, enlightened and progressive. The Principles of the Samaj provide the fullest scope and opportunity for the development of the full potential of an individual to reach

the highest status in society in a responsible way.

To give practical expression to its ‘Principles’ and being a strong advocacy movement of women’s’ emancipation, the Arya Samaj SA has scored a first by electing a woman President, Professor Usha Desai, to lead the organisation at this critical juncture in its history. The example set by the South African branch ought to inspire others throughout the world to follow suit, as the gender imbalance is something we face globally.



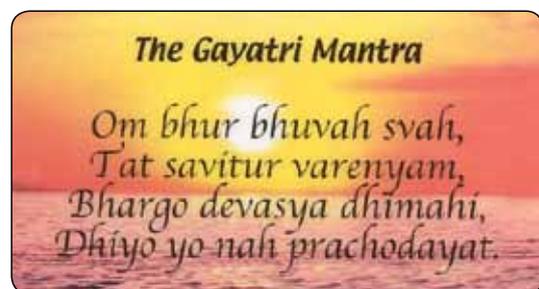
veda JYOTI

Published as an A3 insert in community newspapers once every three months, the Veda Jyoti contains articles which aim to inform, educate and stimulate thought. The intention is to reach as wide an audience as possible which is not necessarily Hindu or comprise adherents of the Arya Samaj way of thinking. The material is an ideal resource which can be used to conduct Kathas by the pundits and panditas. The Sixteen Sanskaras, published in pictorial form, proved to be a highly successful issue.



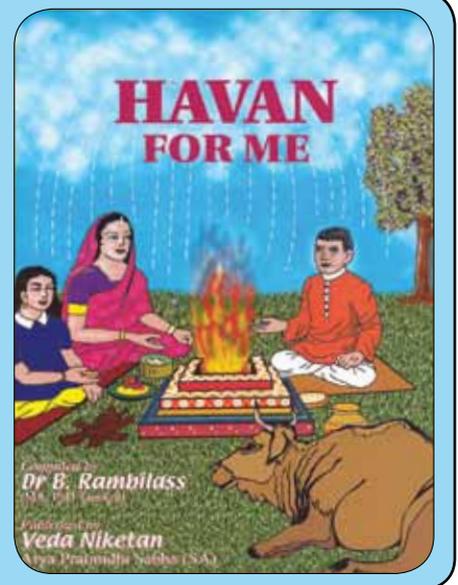
gayatri mantra WALLET CARD

A beautiful laminated wallet card which can be used whenever one has a need to offer prayer or spend a few minutes in quiet contemplation. The English meaning appears overleaf.



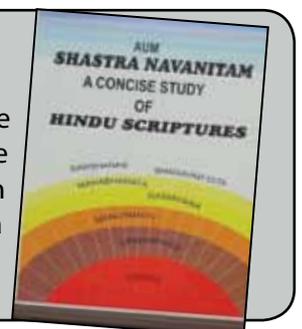
havan for ME

This is a booklet which brings the Havan right into your home in its simplest form. Guided by this booklet, a family can perform the simple Havan on any family occasion. The performance of Havan / Agnihotra as a means of healing the world is gaining popularity amongst different nations worldwide. A highly popular CD on the Havan mantras is also available at nominal cost to the community to guide them in the performance of the ceremony.



popular PUBLICATIONS

The APS has produced numerous books on Hinduism in both Hindi and the English language to educate the community on the principles, philosophy and practice of the religion. The Sabha was the foremost Hindu organisation to address the need to produce literature in the English language. Pandit Nardev’s seminal work, Shastra Navanitam, was produced at a time when there was a lack of suitable material on our scriptures and the book went a long way to address this gap.



tracts and PAMPHLETS

These ever-popular tracts covering a wide range of issues on Hinduism have been published to wide acclaim from the public. Popular tracts include The World and its Purpose, Wealth: A Balanced Outlook and The Sixteen Sanskaras etc.



pandita performs WEDDING CEREMONY IN INDIA

The Arya Samaj South Africa scored a first when one of its Panditas, Pta. T. D. Sirkisson performed a Vivah Sanskar (Marriage Ceremony) in India in November 2009. Orthodox Hinduism in India still frowns upon women priests and this marriage ceremony performed with a Puranic priest in attendance, displays the reformist and progressive nature of the Arya Samaj movement. The priest commended Pandita on her performance of the ceremony which had been conducted with decorum and recital of the appropriate mantras.



dharmic SHRENI

(Religious Class)

The task of training Vedic Priests presently is presently undertaken by Dr. B. Rambilass and a team of senior priests and academics who have passed the six module examinations. The syllabus covers Vedic principles based on the Vedic fundamentals, performance of yajnas with Prarthna as one aspect, and correct pronunciation of the Vedic Mantras. The examination has three sections, viz. Vedic principles, chanting of Vedic mantras and practical knowledge of the performance of the yajnas and sanskaras.

Website

The website www.apssa.co.za carries issues of the Veda Jyoti and other Vedic Literature. Information on Hindu Dharma is now available right in one's home, for one's education and enlightenment.

Yajaks and Yajikas

A novel plan to train lay preachers who are not yet fully fledged priests led to the establishment of the Yajak / Yajika programme. To date, some 154 people from all walks of life have passed the prescribed exams for this programme and are entitled to wear the saffron sash and propagate our Dharma. An important duty of every Priest / Yajak is to set the torch of Hinduism alight and check the unscrupulous acts of conversion to other faiths. The Purohits and Yajaks of the Mandal are looked upon as custodians of the Vedic Culture.



continuous PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Workshops and meetings where pandits and panditas meet to discuss matters / issues related to their fields of work take place quarterly. Workshops are also arranged to assist priests, especially to establish uniformity in the performance of various sanskaras. The birth, marriage and funeral rites are the most popular ceremonies performed.

bahukund **YAJNAS**

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has embarked on a grassroots initiative to teach the performance of the Havan Ceremony in its simplest form to the communities at large. "Bahu" means many and "Kund" means vessel. The idea is to have Yajnas where many people can participate. Highly successful Bahukunds have been held in Pietermaritzburg, Chatsworth, Shallcross, Phoenix, and Asherville, Greytown, Howick, Ladysmith and Port Shepstone.

Friday Feeding Scheme

Basic to religion is the spirit of service and commitment to life. Concern for others born out of this enjoins us to give rather than exploit others and amass wealth. The Arya Samaj, recognising this basic principle of Sanathan Dharma, strives to overcome hunger with limited resources by providing a nutritious vegetarian meal to the homeless and destitute every Friday. Meals are served in the dining hall to more than one hundred people in a dignified manner with a Pundit or Pandita and other volunteers in attendance.



commemoration of **150 YEARS OF ARRIVAL OF INDIANS IN S.A.**

The Arya Samaj held a grand Bahukund Ceremony to observe the 150th anniversary of the arrival of indentured Indian labourers to South Africa and celebrate the legacy of the Arya Samaj in this country.

Senior government dignitaries, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan and Provincial Premier, Dr. Zweli Mkhize graced the function and acknowledged the contributions of the Arya Samaj, which played a key role in the positive shaping of the religious, cultural, social and political landscapes of this country.



Bahukund Yajna at Exhibition Centre

social **ACTIVISM**

The Arya Samaj S.A. recognises it has to counteract the perception that many in society hold which is that it is just 'another religious organisation' but instead has a key role to play in confronting and addressing the many social issues that plague all sections of the community. The Arya Samaj SA was recognized as the first 'religious organisation' that marshaled support of the many other faith based organizations and NGO's to march against drugs (MAD) in Chatsworth and Phoenix. The marches caused the authorities to intensify their efforts, resulting in many positive developments in this area. A successful march against domestic violence also yielded positive results. Issues such as gambling were highlighted in the Veda Jyoti, which has a free circulation of 70 000.



The Mad about Drugs (MAD) march and campaign against drug abuse in Chatsworth in July 2012 had far reaching positive consequences. It became the catalyst for a number a arrests of drug dealers and increased awareness about the drug problem. A detailed memorandum was handed to Brigadier Marais at the Chatsworth police station.



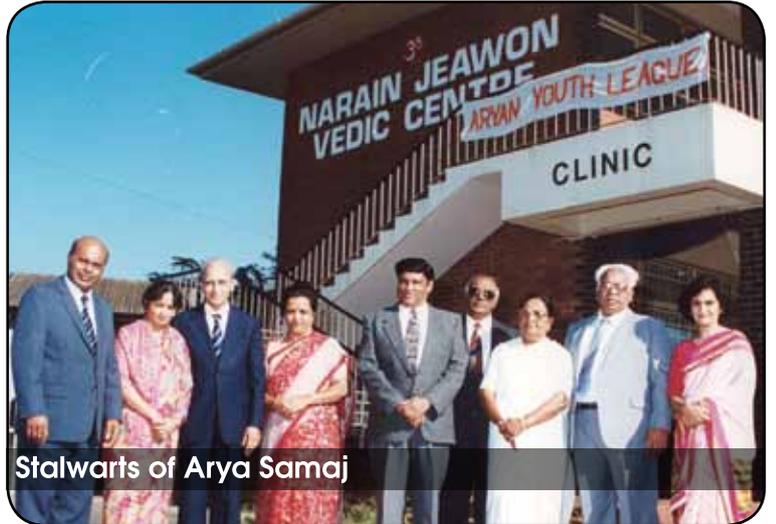
Women Power! Members of the PhoenixStri Samaj participating in an Anti Drugs & Domestic Violence March in Phoenix

narain jeawon VEDIC CENTRE



The late Narain Jeawon of Sea Cow Lake had visualised the establishment of what is today known as the Narain Jeawon Vedic Centre. The primary goal of the Narain Jeawon Vedic Centre is the promotion of the Vedic religion, and the educational and health needs of the community. There is a

shelter destitute for women. The doors of the Narain Jeawon Vedic Medical Clinic were opened to the underprivileged community on 28 May 1993. The Clinic has partnered with the City of Durban to offer primary health care services to the indigent communities of Kenville and surrounds.



Stalwarts of Arya Samaj



Pandita Nanackchand with residents of the Home



Waiting room at NJVC Clinic

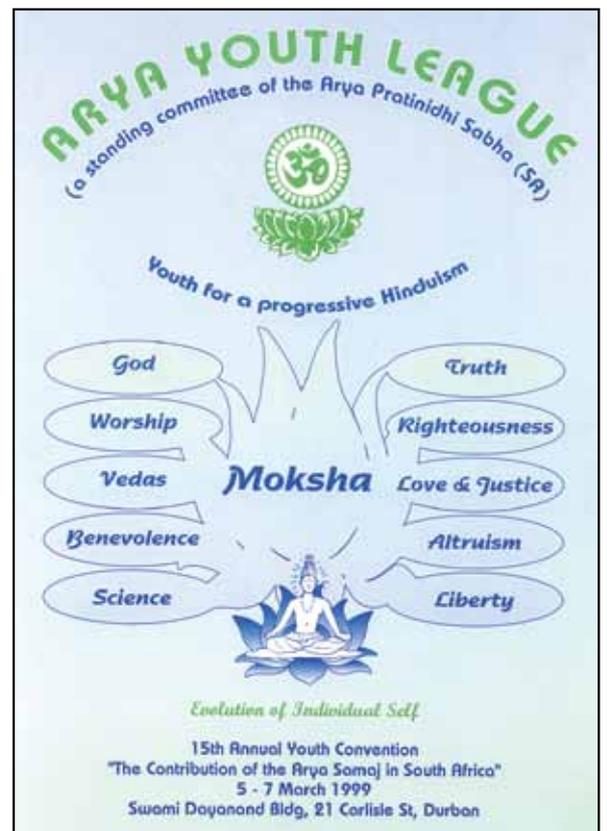
arya YOUTH LEAGUE

Established in 1984, the Arya Youth League (AYL) is a youth body, promoting the education of youth on Hindu religion and culture, without isolating them from very important contemporary issues they also face. The AYL aims to kindle and sustain an interest in Hindu Dharma and related issues amongst its young members and is using social media and technology to spread its message.

Over the years, the Arya Youth League, has developed and implemented programmes and activities that have contributed not only to the spiritual, but also the physical, mental and emotional upliftment of its members.

The programmes of the AYL include the Summer and Winter Shivirs (youth camps during the two major school holidays), Surila Sangeet (an entertainment programme presented to the public, providing a platform for youth to expose their musical talent), and youth conventions (allowing youth to voice and discuss issues pertaining to the younger generation).

Some of these recent activities include Hawan workshops, talks by professionals and experts in the field of health and nutrition, drug addiction and rehabilitation, Vedanta – the science of life, meditation practices and sport. The real highlight of these camps and workshops is the mix of religious groups and their fervent participation in all





AYL activities. Youth from the Islamic and Christian faiths are also in attendance at these youth camps and enjoy every bit of interaction with members of the AYL. It is very encouraging to witness this unity and it just reiterates that Hinduism is certainly a universal religion that is not threatened by other faiths.

Over the past few years, members of the Arya Youth League were approached to present talks based on Hindu Dharma for broadcast on SABC TV's programme, AUM. African Lotus Productions (the producing company of this programme) still continue their relationship with the Arya Youth League as they have found our presentations and material, based on the

principles of the Arya Samaj, very informative and beneficial to their viewers.

affiliates of **THE ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA**

Arya Mitra Mandal

The absence of a Temple Hall was no hindrance for learners who attend satsang services conducted by the Arya Mitra Mandal, in classrooms and sometimes in the shade of a tree at the Durwest Primary School in Reservoir Hills. The photo shows a proud moment for an aspiring group of dedicated learners who had just won a Hindi eisteddfod.





arya samaj GAUTENG

The Arya Samaj – Gauteng (AS-G) is a new affiliate of the APS, having been officially launched on 24th September 2004. AS-G aims to address the religious needs of the many individuals and families who migrated to Gauteng.

Some of the key activities have been the successful Bahukund Yajna held in commemoration of the 150- year celebration of the arrival of the Indians in SA in Midrand, the providing of comfort and support to a home for the aged and

frail care center, assistance to the homes at the ABH Gauteng branch through distribution of toys, food and clothing hampers during Diwali and Christmas time. Seva also extends to the animal world, where support and service has been provided to an animal shelter. Satsangs are held fortnightly for the general public at the Marlboro Mandir.

arya samaj LADYSMITH



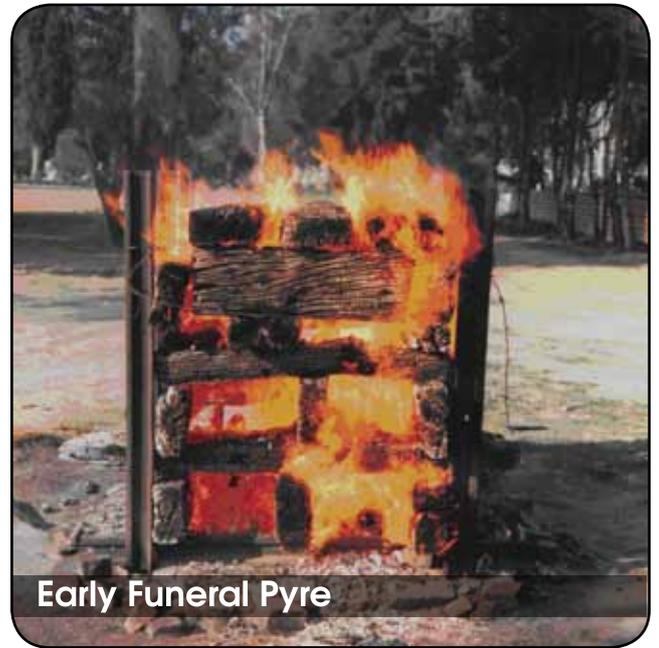
Modern Crematorium

The Arya Samaj Ladysmith initiated the open pyre system in 1916. The Shila Nyas ceremony at the new building site was held on the 5 June 1988, invoking God's blessings in the successful completion of the project, and also the laying of the Foundation Stone. The open pyre system was used until the modern crematorium was in operation. The further provision of these amenities and services to the greater community of Ladysmith and surrounding towns Estcourt, Dundee, Glencoe, Bergville and as far as Bethlehem in the Free State is undertaken on a non-profit basis.

The Hindu Yuvuk Sabha built a multi-purpose hall in 1939. Satsanghs were held at this hall from 1952. These premises were used by the Klip River Government School up to 1967 when a new school was built. The M.C. Varman Primary School still uses these premises in providing the much needed education to the learners of the broader community. The Arya Bhavan donated by the late Pandit Laljee Sewgolam is currently used for meetings, weekly satsangs, including religious functions.



Arya Bhavan



Early Funeral Pyre

INCEPTION:

It was at the residence of Pt. O. Shivrathan on the 3rd December, 1934 that the late Mr. F. Ramlagan together with the late Mr. Gunga Bishoon discussed with other prominent members of the locality the need for a society to impart Hindi and also to propagate the Vedic religion.

The idea caught up with the residents and another meeting was called the following day at the residence of Mr. S. Baiju where it was unanimously resolved to form a society to be known as the Arya Samaj, Mount Partridge and Districts.

Those present at the inaugural meeting which was presided by Mr. F. Ramlagan were : Messrs. G Bishoon, O. Shivrathan, G. Seetharam, O. Rathipal, J. Thulsie, D. Boodhay, G. Mohan, S. Bachlall, S. Baiju, N. Darsan, S. Sookhai, B. Chatterpaul and J. Patchoo

The first officials of the Samaj were : - Chairman -- Mr. G. Bishoon, Secretary -- Mr. O. Shivrathan, Treasurer -- Mr. J. Thulsie.



OFFICIALS 1955

STANDING: (left to right):

H. JADOO, R. RAMJEAWON, J. B. MAHARAJ, I. B. SANGHAM, O. RATTIPAUL, N. JAGARNATH.

SITTING:

S. BACHLALL, O. SHIVRATHAN, G. SEETHARAM, S. BAIJU, G. BISHOON.

CHALLENGE AND EXPANSION

After the establishment of the Samaj a Hindi School was established and a disused stable belonging to Mr. Thulsie Bania was used for the purpose.

Gradually the activities of the Samaj expanded and the need for bigger premises was keenly felt. It was at this stage and towards the end of December, 1937 that three of the founder members namely Messrs. G. Seetharam, S. Bachlall and S. Baiju donated a piece of valuable land for the erection of a Hall. Later an additional half acre of land was donated by Mr. S. Bachlall. The first building was 20' by 40' in size and building operations were carried out by Messrs. Thulsie Bros.

The foundation stone was laid by Mr. Gunga Bishoon on the 29th January, 1939. The members of the Building Committee who made great sacrifices to raise funds were : - Messrs. G. Seetharam, S. Bachlall, S. Baiju, G. Bishoon, B. Chatterpaul, S. Pooran, O. Peetham, O. Shivrathan, O. Rathipal, Baldeo Maharaj, Ramchub Maharaj, J. Thulsie, Thulsie Bania, and N. Jaggernath. The hall was officially opened by Mr. G. Seetharam on the 7th April, 1940.



**RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF PROF. SATYAPRAKASH - 20TH AUGUST, 1969.
(NOW SWAMI SATYAPRAKASH)**

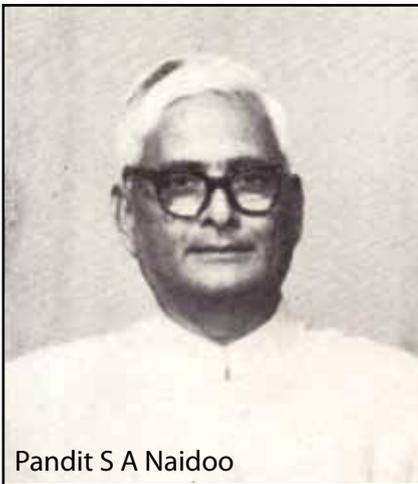
arya samaj MT. PARTRIDGE

arya samaj PHOENIX

Most of the residents in Phoenix are third, fourth and fifth generation South Africans of Indian descent who are the descendants of indentured labourers. Unfortunately, the numbers in Hinduism's fold are decreasing due to conversions and the influence of other religious organisations. On 19 February 2007, a few community members met their objective of establishing an Arya Samaj in Phoenix to give residents the opportunity to be exposed to Vedic teachings and ideals. Apart from regular Sunday satsangs, the Samaj has propagated Hindu studies, training of Yajaks and Yajikas, and held music classes.



Diwali Hampers are distributed to needy families in the area, and this programme is growing and is ably organised by the Phoenix Stree Samaj members. An awareness walk was also held in 2012 and was well attended by the public at large, and in 2013 another MAD (March Against Drugs) was also well received by the South African Police Services and various other participating organisations.

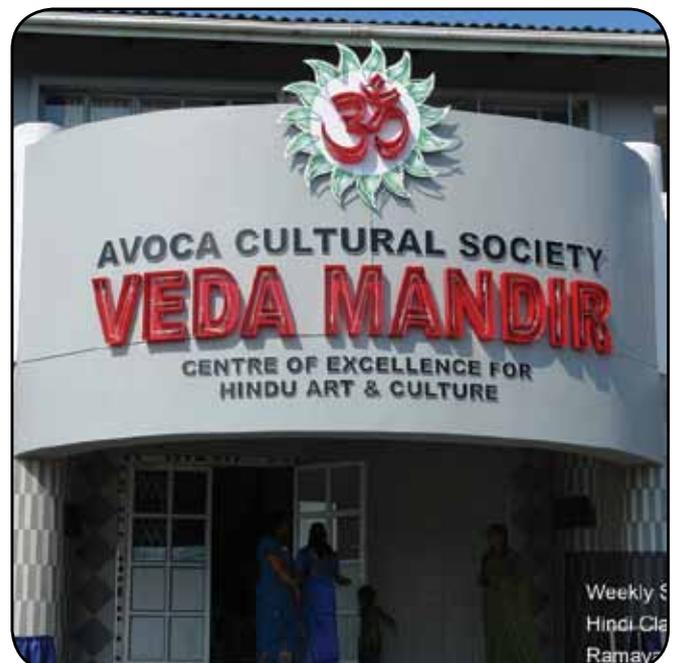


Pandit S A Naidoo

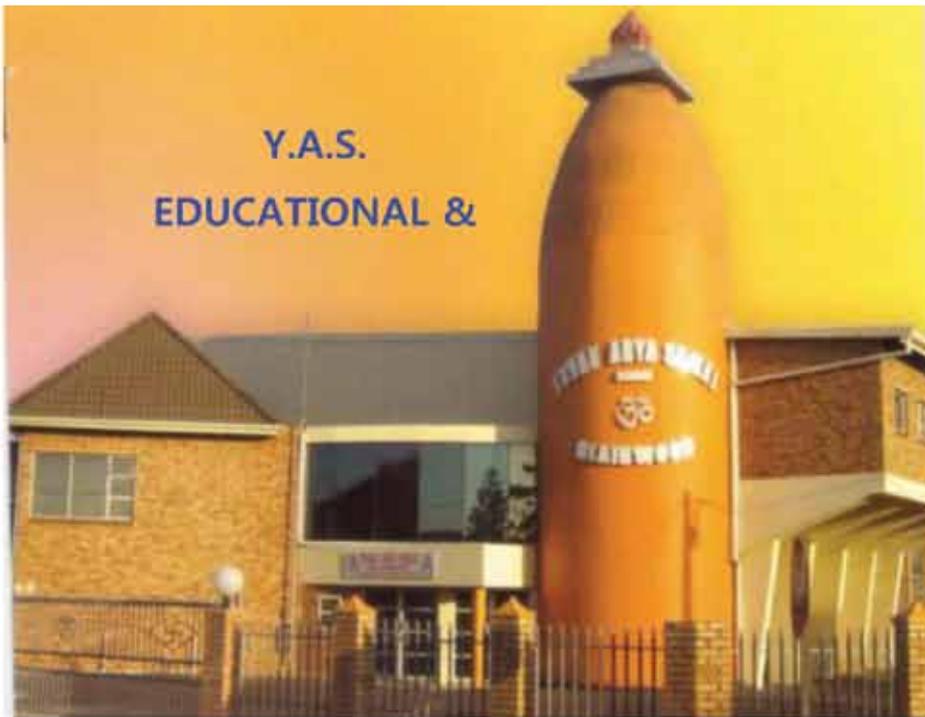
Pandit Durga Somaroo was an ambitious and energetic young man who took a leadership role in the arrairs of the community. He taught Hindi, scripted many Hindi plays and composed songs which were rendered by the children and youth of the paatshala. The India Independence Day Celebrations were celebrated in true military style precision. Dr B Rambilass hails from Avoca. He has been involved in religious and cultural activities from a very young age. He has studied Sanskrit abroad and has obtained his PhD at Meerut in India. He is often approached by the media to comment on topical matters and has given evidence as an expert witness in court cases. Dr B Rambilass has several articles and publications to his credit. He renders service in many capacities (Vedic studies, Ramayan recital, Hindi classes etc.) at the Avoca Cultural Society.

arya samaj AVOCA CULTURAL SOCIETY

Pandit S A Naidoo was involved in the teaching of Hindi and started stasangs in the Avoca area. He rendered sterling service at the Aryan Benevolent Home and a plaque dedicated to his work marks the entrance of the Datanand Gardens in Chatsworth.



arya samaj CLAIRWOOD



The contemporary styled Y.A.S. Educational & Cultural Centre built in 2002.



The room at the residence of the late Mr. R.B. Bhooshun where the Yuvak Arya Samaj was established.



The first building of the Yuvak Arya Samaj at 144 Cherry Rd, Clairwood, built in 1929.



The Y.A.S. Hall & Hindi School built in 1929.

The Yuvak Arya Samaj Clairwood was established on 3rd April 1932, with the primary aim of fostering the Hindi Language and propagating Hindu Culture and Vaidik Dharma. The Samaj has provided invaluable service to the community for over eight decades in the field of education, culture, religion, and social welfare. Clairwood has been home to the founding fathers of the Arya Samaj in South Africa. The teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit, conducting satsangs, building of schools enjoyed true pride of place in the community.

HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL WORK

Health care services are provided on a weekly basis at the Samaj premises by the city council for the residence of Clairwood and surrounding areas. The Samaj provides lunch to indigent pupils, once a week, to two schools in the area. At our annual Diwali celebration, food hampers are distributed to the underprivileged and deserving families.

HINDI SCHOOL



WINNERS – HINDI DEBATE – 1960

P.N.R.Das & P. R.M.Singh receiving the Swami Bhawan Day Satsang Memorial Trophy as winners of the 1960 Hindi Debate. Making the presentation is Pt. Swami Vaidyanath (President - Hindi Shiksha Sangh SA) and Swami Nishaladas.

The Samaj has an illustrious history of over eighty years of unbroken service in propagating Hindi education. The Y.A.S. also records the largest Hindi school in South Africa in the mid 1940's & early 1950's with an enrolment of 482 pupils, under the principalship of the late Pt.R.M.Singh.

The Late Mr R.B. Bhooshun



**Visionary
and
Founder
of
Yuvak Arya
Samaj
Clairwood**



The two **STALWARTS** of the Yuvak Arya Samaj, Mr K.Pattundeen and Mr G.Bajjnath, unveiling the foundation stone plaque on 10 July 2005, at the official opening of the Y.A.S. Educational and Cultural Centre. Jointly, they served the Samaj for 136 years.

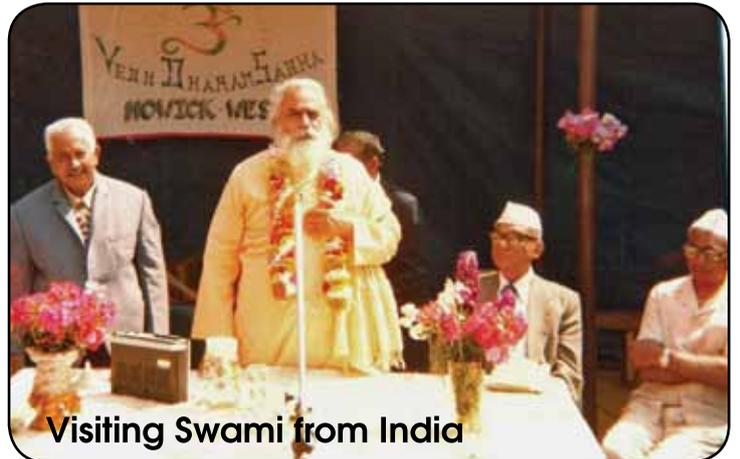
In July 1999 these two distinguished personalities were awarded the "SHASTRA AJEEV RATNA" by the Samaj, in recognition of a lifetime of dedicated service.

arya samaj HOWICK WEST VEDA DHARMA SABHA

Over the years, the Sabha has hosted many international religious leaders. During these sessions the public is invited with the intention of creating awareness to develop a well-disciplined life.

Members have also been instrumental in bringing the different Hindu religious groups together to celebrate the Festival of Lights over many years. The Sabha has, to date, hosted no less than thirteen dignitaries from abroad, and whose discourses have richly enriched the community.

In this world of globalisation, the members humbly endeavor to practice and promote the thoughts of Swami Dayanand in advocating - "the extirpation of evils, introduction of truth in thought, speech and deed, the preservation of the unity of religion, the expulsion of hatred and the extension of a friendly hand to all so that peace and happiness may ever reign in the world."



arya samaj PLESSISLAER

Arya Samaj Hall in Plessislaer a National Monument

On 25 March 1961 the All-In Africa Conference was held at the Samaj Hall in Plessislaer. At the conference, Nelson Mandela called for a National Convention to create a new constitution for South Africa. A few months later Nelson Mandela was arrested and jailed. Many years later, with the ushering in of our new democracy, Nelson Mandela was given the Freedom of the City by the Pietermaritzburg Council. These words appeared in the citation:



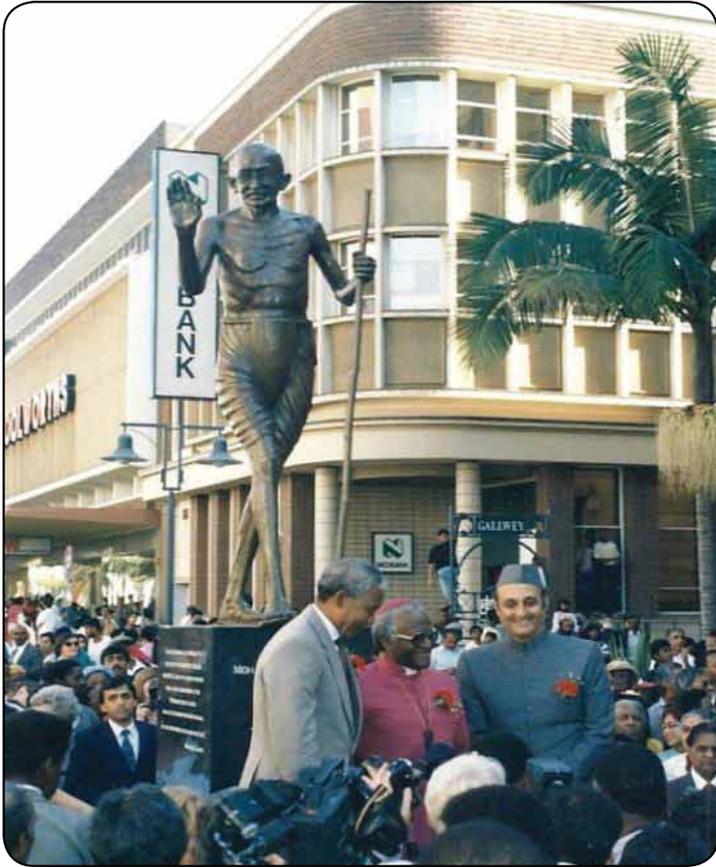
"In March 1961 the "All-In-Africa" conference to protest the coming Republic of South Africa was scheduled to be held in Edendale but because of suspicions that the premises were bugged, delegates walked from Edendale to the Plessislaer Arya Samaj Hall where they were warmly received by none other than Mr. D. Bundhoo."

The Evil Group Areas Act – Relocation !

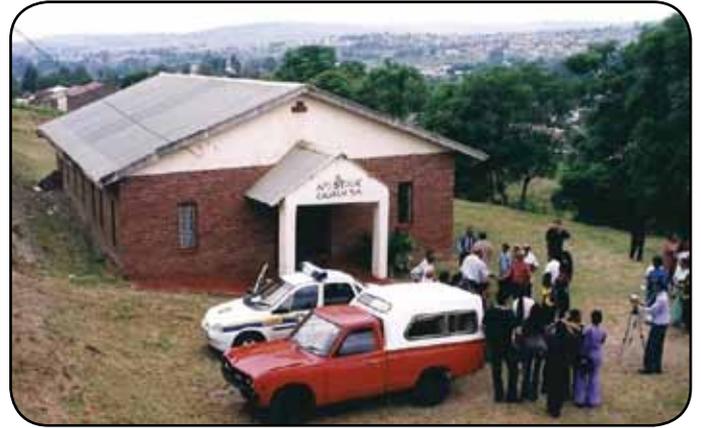
The smooth running of the Samaj in Plessislaer was abruptly disrupted by the Group Areas Act. This cruel Act saw the uprooting of the entire community of Plessislaer who had to move to the new Indian area of Northdale in the 1960's. The Samaj's property was sold and a new building plot purchased in Northdale, which is the present home of the Samaj.

Mahatma Gandhi Statue of Hope

Dasarath Bundhoo was instrumental in the erection of the Gandhi Statue in Pietermaritzburg. Plessislaer Arya Samaj played a major role at the unveiling of the statue held on the 6 June 1993. The Mahatma Gandhi statue is now a tourist attraction. It was unveiled by then President Mandela and Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu.



Church in Ashdown near Edendale

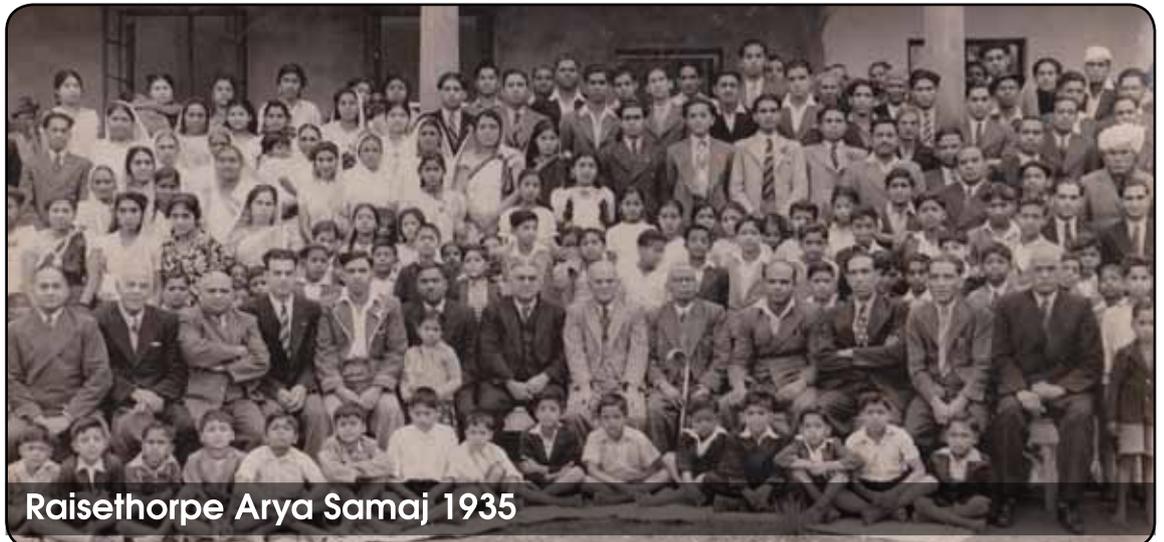


In Ashdown a church rose out of the turbulence of the late eighties. In 1988, in the midst of the violence in the Edendale area, Shri Dasarath Bundhoo heard that a group of youths was marching to one of the trouble spots. A follower of Mahatma Gandhi, he felt compelled to try to defuse the situation. He stopped in front of the marching angry youth and spoke to them about Mahatma's philosophy of non-violence and suggested a Church be built, which caused the youth to pause and think. Members of the Samaj helped build this church together with the youth. Today, the Church stands as a monument to the triumph of goodness over evil.

arya samaj RAISETHORPE

At a historic meeting in 1935, the Raisethorpe Vedic Society, precursor to the Raisethorpe Arya Samaj, was established with the aim of promoting the Hindi language, Vedic religion and culture.

As the more urgent need was that of an English medium school, a wattle and daub structure was built on a donated parcel of land in 1940. 8 April 1943 will always be a memorable day for the Samaj as one of the community's outstanding benefactors, T. Baijoo, announced he would build Raisethorpe's first school at his expense. The T. Baijoo Government Aided School opened its doors in July 1945. The influx of people into the area and increase in the population placed a strain on the limited number of classrooms. Again Messrs T. Baijoo and K. P. Maharaj came to the aid of the school and more classrooms were built. The equipment was donated by Messrs T. Baijoo and A. E. Maney. The story of the building of the school and additions is an inspirational one and an example of philanthropy of the noblest kind.



Raisethorpe Arya Samaj 1935

Pundit O. Shivrathan, of Arya Samaj Mount Partridge and Districts, was the first Priest to be ordained in Natal on 23 February 1941. Pundit R.B. Maharaj performed the ceremony at his residence, admitting Shivrathan into the order of a Purohit in the presence of a large gathering of prominent persons of Natal.

Pundith Jaikaran Chutterpaul of the Raisethorpe Arya Samaj, visits and performs satsangs weekly with the inmates at Fort Napier facility in Pietermaritzburg.

FOUNDER MEMBERS



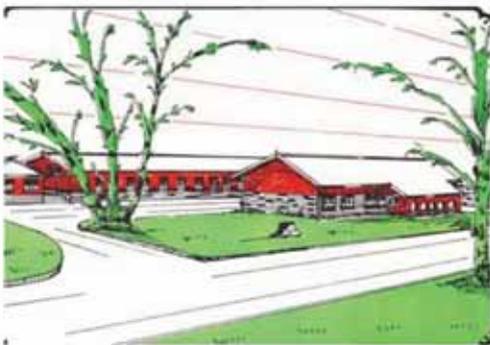
OFFICIAL OPENING OF T. BAIJOO SCHOOL 1945



1935-RAISETHORPE VEDIC SOCIETY
 1938-RAISETHORPE HINDI SOCIETY
 1944-RAISETHORPE ARYA NAUW YUVAK SABHA
 1954-TO DATE-RAISETHORPE ARYA SAMAJ



OFFICIAL OF THE SAMAJ AT A TREE PLANTING CEREMONY.
 SCHOOL IN THE BACKGROUND



1977 FIFTH BLOCK OF THE SCHOOL WAS CONVERTED TO A VEDA MANDIR
 1985 SCHOOL AND PART OF THE LAND WAS SOLD TO HOUSE OF DELEGATES-
 MONEY WISELY INVESTED



4 PRIESTS NAMELY Pta SHOODA SEETH Pta URMILLA HANUMAN ORDAINED IN 1989
 UNDER TUTORSHIP OF THE LATE PUNDIT R. CHEDIA, Pta KANTHEE BEEKARUN, Pta SUMINTHRA SUKKHU



arya samaj ORIENT HEIGHTS

Formed in 1995 by Mrs Pana Cheddie, the Samaj motivates especially the youth to learn Hindi, participate in cultural activities, eisteddfods and community functions. The Samaj jointly celebrates Hindu religious festivals with the Raisethorpe Arya Samaj.

SHREE RAMAYAN SABHA

The Sabha played a small, though significant role in condemning the injustices committed against the masses during the apartheid era.

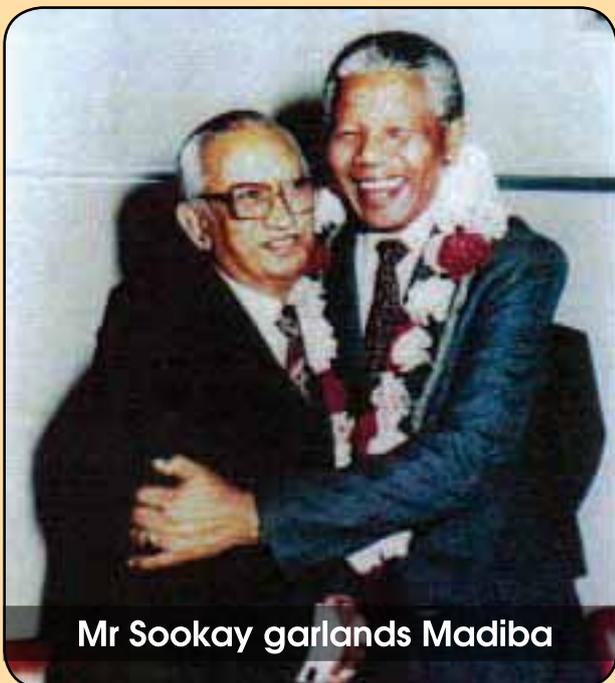
In the 1960's when Chief Albert Lutuli was invited to address the youth of the Overport Social Club, the Security Police came to learn of this meeting which had to be called off at the last minute. However, the youth that had gathered drew the wrath of the Security Police who baton charged them.

When the former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela was released from prison, a member, the late Rabbi Bhagwandin, a political activist and ANC stalwart was able to broker the rare opportunity for the members of the Sabha to welcome Nelson Mandela in the traditional Hindu way at the airport.

The Sabha continues to fulfill its obligations to the community of Overport by the promotion of Hindu culture, tradition and language Hindi classes, satsangs and celebration of all Hindu festivals are held and observed.

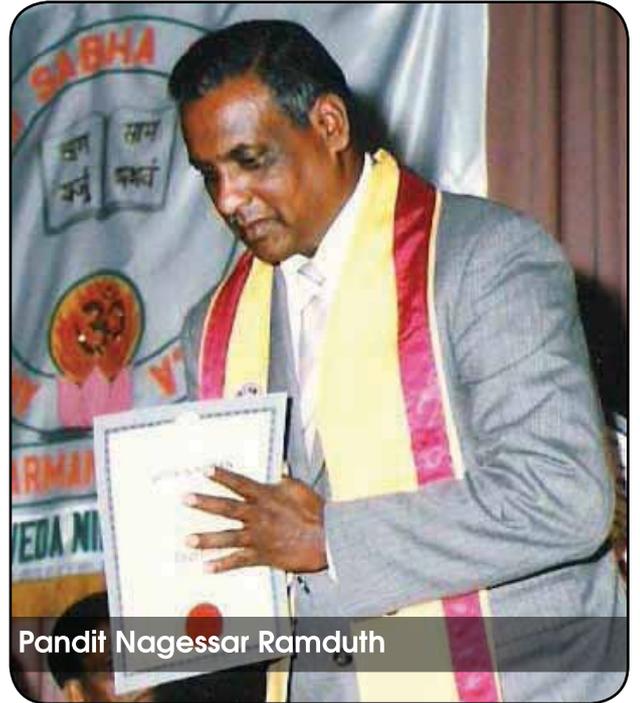


Pta Nanackchand, Nelson Mandela, Ismail Meer



Mr Sookay garlands Madiba

arya samaj
SILVERGLEN

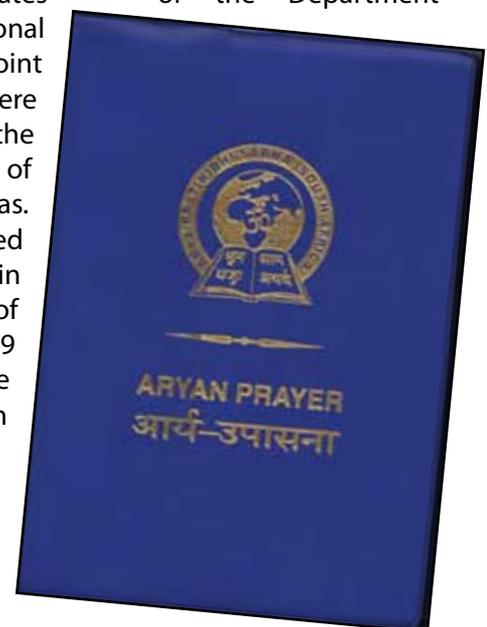


Pandit Nagessar Ramduth

Yajur Veda Parayan Maha Yajna

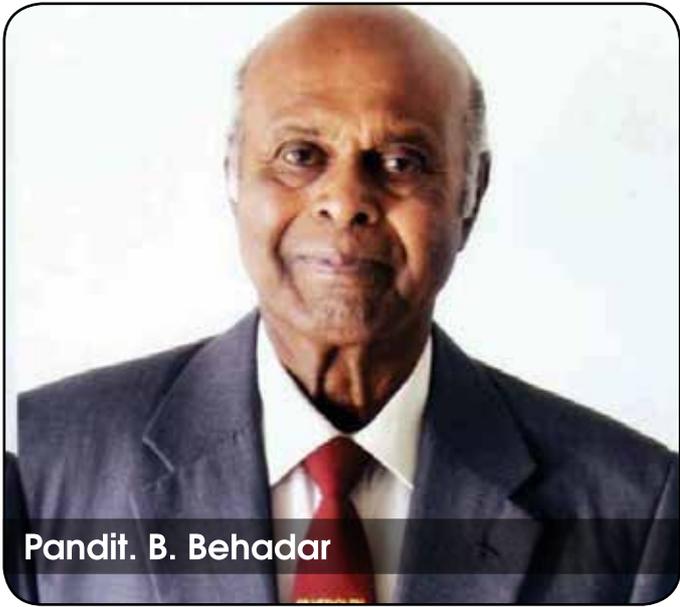
In 1978 Arya Pratinidhi Sabha South Africa invited his Holiness Swami Deekshanand Saraswati from Delhi to carry out a Vedic ideals propagation drive. In November, an extensive campaign was launched in the Chatsworth area up to Mariannhill from Mobeni Heights to popularise the recital of the lofty Vedic mantras.

Pandit Nagessar Ramduth, who graduated as a Vedic priest in 1956, played a key role in the training of priests and under his tutelage 61 priests graduated. Panditji also rendered sterling service to the inmates of the Department of Correctional Services at Point Road where he taught the message of the Vedas. He received a citation in recognition of rendering 39 years of service to prison inmates.



Westville Prison Service

In 1995 Pt. B. Behadar commenced religious service at the Westville Prison succeeding the late Pt. N. Ramduth. He worked very closely with Reverend Joe Kruger, the Chaplain of the Prison at that time. Efforts were concentrated at Medium B which had the largest concentration of Hindu offenders. The Veda Niketan booklets, viz. Elementary Teachings of Hinduism and Basic Teachings were used. Many inmates successfully passed both stages of the examination with distinction. Some progressed to write the third stage of the examination based on the Essential Teachings of Hinduism, Book III. Reverend J. Kruger expressed his gratitude to the Samaj and Pt Behadar, for offering religious teaching, with a Hindu ethos, to offenders who had passed the exams successfully.



Pandit. B. Behadar

Meanwhile recital of the havan mantras without igniting the fire continued and lectures from Shastra Navanitam – Hindu Scriptures made the subject matter easier to follow. The meaning and rationale for most of the popular festivals like Shivaratri, Krishna Astamee, Ram Naumee, Deepavali and Pongol were also explained.

Workshops and a programme known as CHATSEC (Combatting HIV/AIDS through spiritual & Ethical Conduct) and Heartlines are being conducted on an ongoing basis. Together with the newly-appointed chaplain, several papers on various topics dealing with rehabilitation were presented to staff responsible for correctional services.

Pt. B. Behadar also tutors aspiring Vedic priests and also taught Sanskrit at the Hindi Shiksha Sangh for several years together with Hindi up to Kovid Level.

VEDA DHARAM SABHA – PORT ELIZABETH

In 1913 Shri Jeevanji Govindjee received his "Upvit Janoi" In India from Swami Omkar Satchidananda. On his return he became Chairperson of the Veda Dharma Sabha and propagated Vedic teachings to the community with much vigour. The community became proficient in the chanting of the Gayatri and other mantras and the performance of Yajnas. The succeeding generations continued to propagate Vedic teachings and culture based on the solid foundations established.

The Port Elizabeth Mahila Mandal was established in 1942 under the guidance of Shree Ranchodji Varma Govindjee who taught the ladies the recital of various mantras and performance of hawan.

In 1983 at Ajmer the honour of Arya Ratna was bestowed upon Shri Brijlal Govindjee by Swami Satyaprakash for his dedicated service to the cause of the Arya Samaj. Shri Govindjee was ordained as a Vedic priest by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar and thereafter continued attending to the religious needs (performing wedding ceremonies, yajnas and various other sanskars) of the communities in the Eastern Cape. Today, the Sabha offers satsangs for the benefit of the community.



Pandit Govindjee performing a Vivah Sanskar

VEDIC YUVUK SABHA WILGEFONTEIN

The Sabha was founded on 10 October 1943 by the late R S Sewbrath, S Algoo, A S Poorun, K Sugreem, C B Maharaj and others, many of whom were indentured labourers. The Sabha is engaged in distributing hampers during Deepavali and promoting Vedic culture through activities such as running Hindi classes.

Use Pic Wilgefontein



westville HINDU SCHOOL

The Eighth Principle of the Arya Samaj exhorts us to promote vidya (knowledge) both spiritual and physical. The then President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Dr. B. Rambilass, had given expression to this principle by establishing a school which has an ethos of promoting sound cultural

and moral values. The Westville Hindi School is a new concept where Indian cultural studies, yoga and music are taught as subjects in the normal school curriculum. The school is a 'one stop shop' where a child's cultural needs, based on the solid foundations of sanathan dharma, are catered for. The School caters for all linguistic groups.



The colonialists seemed interested in our people so long as they were able to provide cheap labour. What happened when these faithful people became infirm was not a priority for the colonialists. The violation of human rights was common in most colonies. This obviously gave rise to social activism. In the South African context the injustices were ventilated through the formation of organised labour. And since organised labour concerned itself with the dignity of living it was not surprising that philanthropy and humanitarian work was a natural consequence.

It was in early 1918 that an incident of abuse in an Indian area of Durban sparked a moving scene that gave birth to a home for the homeless.

The Arya Yuvuk Sabha's D. G. Satyadeva reported the matter to the members of the A.Y.S. The ninth principle of the Arya Samaj - 'No person shall be content in his own welfare but must find his welfare in the welfare of others' was strongly pronounced. A decision was taken to build a home for the homeless.

Dramas were staged to raise funds. By the end of 1920, with the very generous contribution of 200 pounds by Mr. B.M. Singh, a building was purchased in Cato Manor. This led to a home for the homeless being established on 1st May 1921 with three homeless beggars who were picked up from the city with the help of the police.

Over the years the Aryan Benevolent Home Council has grown to include branches in Gauteng, Western Cape, Northern Natal (Glencoe), and the south of Durban. Today while pastoral and development care still remains a core area focus, much of our work also includes empowerment and education. The Home offers, as part of its bouquet, services such as aged and disabled (including the mentally ill) care, services for youth and children in need of care, service centres, family violence, early education facilities, crèches, a fully-fledged accredited nursing school, services for destitute and a range of other services for various pathologies.

sweetness in harmony with Robert Greene:

*"Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep,
such bliss".*

Thousands settled happily with this natural wealth, the

A CENTURY . . .

It is difficult to clothe our feelings with words. What words - there are no words - language is too poor to express feelings that are intense; perhaps it is best that for the moment, we leave our convulsing feelings and

shape and form and animation and it was animation that the birth and growth of the Benevolent Home.

Among those who pioneered the work of the Home since inception, three names are



'THE DEDICATED THREE' - D. G. Satyadeva, S. L. Singh & V. C. Nayanah Rajh

crown of their heart, not of the head; and thousands of hearts suffered - the defeat of Waterloo. 1958! The proclamation - precise, to the point and finite - for White occupation and settlement - the exodus that was to follow catches once more the strains of "The eve of Waterloo"

*"Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and trembling of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but "a year ago"
(Blushed) at the praise of their own loveliness,
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out "all" hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes
Since upon night so sweet such awful morning
could rise".*

return to it at another appropriate stage in our history. Our thoughts with its anguish however, can never be completely mollified, no matter in what philosophy we seek to hide our heads; they, like dark shadows pursue our foot-steps everywhere. There is an interim of course, the time of grace allowed for diversion before we say farewell, a long farewell to all that was dear and precious in Cato Manor.

In 1960 we sought such a merciful diversion. The year was historically significant. It registered the Centenary of our settlement in our Fatherland. We were deeply rooted in South African soil, the soil that our forefathers had first come to till, and it was soil again that solved the decision where to settle after the expiry of the indenture. Cato Manor was settled in this needful way by our forefathers. And that is why we were there. We gave it

recognised remembrance a year of our Centenary. They the Dedicated Triad who gave their best to the Home and ved it to the last days of earthly sojourn.

We thought how best perpetuate the names of D. G. Satyadeva, Mr S. L. Singh Mr V. C. Nayanah Rajh. In marble or granite which time pending rapidly on the wind bull-dozers would raze to be equally made.

a story of **TRUE GRIT**

a recollection by Rabbi Jeawon

The story of the building of the Aryan Hall, flats and Vedic Temple in Carlisle Street is a tale of true grit. Rabbi Jeawon recalls with pride how cement pockets were transported in the boot of a car, volunteers would sleep, cook on site and arise at the crack of dawn to the yelling of the 'foreman' Harry Bodasing calling his 'brickies' and the 'daga boys' to get cracking. The air was filled with excitement, noise and good cheer, and history was being made.

The marble plaques, bearing Vedic inscriptions and fundamentals of our beliefs, adorning the walls of the Vedic Temple today were procured from Birla Brothers in India. "We had quite a battle getting permission to bring these plaques to South Africa. Finally, we got the consent of the Minister", says Rabbi Jeawon. The giant hawan kund in the Temple, made of pearl granite, and the purpose-made long spoons for the offering of hawan samagri were donated by Rabbi Jeawon. The octagonal design was done in consultation with Swami Deekshanand whilst on a visit to SA.



Decorative Aum in foyer of Vedic Temple

The shape of the decorative AUM at the entrance to the Vedic Temple was commissioned by the late S. Chotai who motivated students of architecture at the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of Natal to present suitable patterns. The drive for fundraising was perhaps the area that tested the commitment and staying power of many volunteers to the fullest. It was also an experience when many of life's lessons were learnt. From the tight fisted ones, to those who promised and didn't honour their word, to those who gave freely without too much coaxing, Rabbi Jeawon had met them all. The regulars in the 'Collection Team' were Pt Harishanker and Messrs G Baijnath, R Boodhay, S Gangadayaal and R N Jeawon. "We would meet at around 5pm to go on our fund raising drive and on a number of occasions I'd only

get back home around 2am, after leaving people in Isipingo. On one night I had R8 000 in cash with me yet on another, after a full night of canvassing, we ended up with only R50. We issued receipts for all donations the moment we took money and I would bank all the money promptly the next day. We did not take even a single cent for petrol or any other expense. This was the dedication of the team we had in those days", Rabbi Jeawon says with pride.

One 'problem' Rabbi Jeawon and the team faced was that when they arrived at a donor's home at dinnertime, they were not allowed to leave without sharing a meal with that family. "What tasty and wholesome vegetarian food we ate then. But that did slow us down and we couldn't finish our quota of visits for the night," recalls Rabbi Jeawon. "We even saw snow in Newcastle and were forced to spend the night there."

The team sold the idea to individuals becoming "Pillar Donors" where names will be inscribed on a Donations Board and displayed at the entrance. Seven donors (Mr B Gangaram of Clare Estate; Mr K Laloo of Merebank; the Doorgha family of Clairwood; B Purmasir family of Durban; Bodasingh family of New Guelderland; Mr G Baijnath of Durban and Mr D Badul of Glendale) who contributed the sum of R 5 000 each were classed as 'pillar donors'. This proved to be fairly successful and in 10 years R55 000 was paid back to the bondholders of the property.

Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (South Africa) (Aryan Representative Assembly, S.A.)					
£5,000 DONORS					
No.	Date	Name	Address	£	s. d.
1	25/11/11	Shumisir	56 Mons Road	5000	- -
2					
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (South Africa) (Aryan Representative Assembly, S.A.)					
£2,500 DONORS					
No.	Date	Name	Address	£	s. d.
1	17/11/11	R Boodhay	New Guelderland	5000	- -
2					
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (South Africa) (Aryan Representative Assembly, S.A.)					
£2,500 DONORS					
No.	Date	Name	Address	£	s. d.
1	14/11/11	Mrs R Bodasing	R.O. New Guelderland	2500	- -
2					
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (South Africa) (Aryan Representative Assembly, S.A.)					
No.	Date	Name	Address	£	s. d.
1	19-12-11	D. DOORGHIA FAMILY	1178 HOUGHTON Rd. CLARE	2500	- -
2	22/11/11	K. Laloo	140. CLARE ESTATE	2500	- -
3	26/11/11	B. Gangaram	131 Kennedy Rd	2500	- -
4	15/12/11	G. Baijnath	P.O. Box 514, Durban	2500	- -
5	14/12/11	R. Baijnath	61 Prince Edward St	2500	- -
6					
7					



“Sweat labour” and commitment to a higher cause led to building of many places of worship

As a result of the visionary thinking of the leadership and officials at the time to build a block of flats and Hall to generate revenue, the Sabha still enjoys these benefits today. “We’ve done our bit for the community. It’s up to the present set of officials to take the Sabha to greater heights”, says a satisfied Rabbi Jeawon.

the role of the **hindu** community in the **LIBERATION STRUGGLE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Swami Bhawani Dayal is one of the foremost contributors to the political emancipation of South Africa. As part of Gandhi’s Resistance Movement, he and a fellow activist, Thambi Naidoo, incited the coal miners in Newcastle to go on strike. The strikers were joined by the sugar and tea plantation workers as well as the factory workers. He was arrested and sentenced to 3 months hard labour.

The Swami and his wife Jagrani Devi took an active part in Mahatma Gandhi’s Passive Resistance Campaign in 1913. They served a 3-month jail sentence with Mahatma and Kasturba Gandhi. Swami Bhawani Dayal served the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), which was founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894 as its Vice-President in 1921, and as its President in 1938.

He led a delegation of the NIC to India to arouse public opinion against the policies of the South African government. He also met with Mahatma Gandhi (who had earlier left South Africa), Jawaharlal Nehru, Mrs. Sarojini Naidoo and Lord Reading, the Viceroy of India, to discuss the oppression of Black people in South Africa. These meetings resulted in an ambassadorial visit from India and a meeting with the Nationalist regime in 1926. In 1939, the Nationalist regime, reintroduced the segregation policy.

Swami Bhawani Dayal again proceeded to India to request the Indian Colonial government to put pressure on South Africa on the segregation issue. Fortunately, the Nationalist regime could not enact the segregation policy due to the outbreak of World War II. After its independence in 1947, India raised the issue of the ill treatment of Blacks in South Africa, at the United Nations. Swami Bhawani Dayal prepared the case of the Indian South African which was presented by Mrs. Vijayluxmi Pandit to the United Nations.

Realising that Indians in South Africa would never be treated with respect until India is free, the Swami left India in 1941, where he played an important role as a freedom fighter. He passed away in 1950.

Gopallal Hurbans

Hurbans served as the secretary of the South African Indian Congress . He chaired the Congress in 1954 at which the Freedom Charter was adopted. He was instrumental in organising secret political meetings at his home in Tongaat and in various rural areas. These meetings were attended and addressed by some of the greatest leaders of the resistance movement, viz. Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Monty Naicker, Yusuf Dadoo, I C Meer, Ahmed Kathrada and Alan Paton. He was arrested and banned on a number of occasions for his political activities and was among those tried for treason at the Rivonia Trial. Hurbans was responsible for arranging the disguises and hideouts for Mandela during his underground movements.

Hurbans was equally active in the field of education. He founded the Tongaat Schools Trust Board, which built and administers more than 8 schools in the North Coast. Hurbans was also responsible for establishing the Tongaat Child Welfare Society in 1937. He served as the Vice Chairperson of the Natal Indian Cane Growers Association. Like so many others who worked untiringly against the apartheid policies of the Nationalist regime, he never lived to see the free South Africa he had dreamed of. He died in July 1965.

Dharam Kissoon Singh

Singh practiced as an attorney for more than half a century. He served as an executive member of the Natal Indian Congress and was secretary of the Durban Citizens' Action Committee which was involved in investigating and exposing political detention without trial and deaths of political activists in detention. He was also actively involved in the Provincial and National Non-Racial Swimming Federation, Asherville Ratepayers' Association, Durban Housing Action Committee, Tin-Town Relief Committee, and various other civic structures.

Singh worked with various commissions either to oppose the Group Areas Act and forced removal or to claim compensation for victims of the Act. He was the Honorary Legal Advisor of the Aryan Benevolent Home for many decades.

Jaydew Nasib Singh

Singh, or JN, as he was more popularly known, practiced as an attorney and an anti-apartheid activist. He was secretary of both the Transvaal Indian Congress and Natal Indian Congress. Singh was imprisoned and banned for varying periods throughout his life.

Radhi Singh

Radhi Singh served as the secretary and programme planner of the Women's Literacy Group from 1943 to 1945. She was a member of the African National Congress and chaired the Indian Women's Congress from 1952 to 1954. Singh served as president of the Durban Women's Congress from 1994 to 1996. She was a member of the Natal Indian Teachers Society, Durban African Child Welfare Society, Natal Law Society and South African Law Association.

Dasarath Bundhoo

Dasarath Bundhoo was actively involved with the Natal Indian Congress from the mid 1940's and later helped to revive the Congress when most of its leaders were banned. He was an active member of the United Democratic Front. He was involved in political negotiations and settled violent disputes between factions in the Edendale area. In 1961 Bundhoo welcomed Mandela at the Arya Samaj Hall in Plessislaer where the historic All-In Africa Convention was held.

In 1997 Bundhoo once again welcomed Mandela at the very same Arya Samaj Hall when Mandela visited the City to unveil a statue of Mahatma Gandhi. Bundhoo was actively involved in the Trade Union movements and various civic bodies for almost half a century. He and his family defied the Group Areas Act and for almost 20 years and was harassed by the Security Branch. He initiated the Gandhi Memorial Committee in 1989. Bundhoo was the only South African to participate in the re-enactment of the Gandhi Salt March in 1988, where 14 countries took part. Bundhoo was the President of the Plessislaer Arya Samaj and a Trustee of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

The Dookran Family

The Dookrans have served as a pioneer family of the Arya Samaj in Pietermaritzburg. The family firmly believes that affiliation to the Arya Samaj presupposes a commitment to political freedom and it is in this spirit that even the late Mrs. Dookran was actively involved in the ANC branches, especially in issues involving women's rights.

Vishwaprea Supersad

Supersad served as a member of the Natal Indian Congress from 1978 and was a founding facilitator of the United Democratic Front working with the organisation from 1983 onwards. He spent the better part of his youth serving on high profile structures that were forced to go underground. He was a member of the ANC political underground and Umkhonto weSizwe and was also a member of Operation Vula.

Abanindranath Chanrakesh Badal

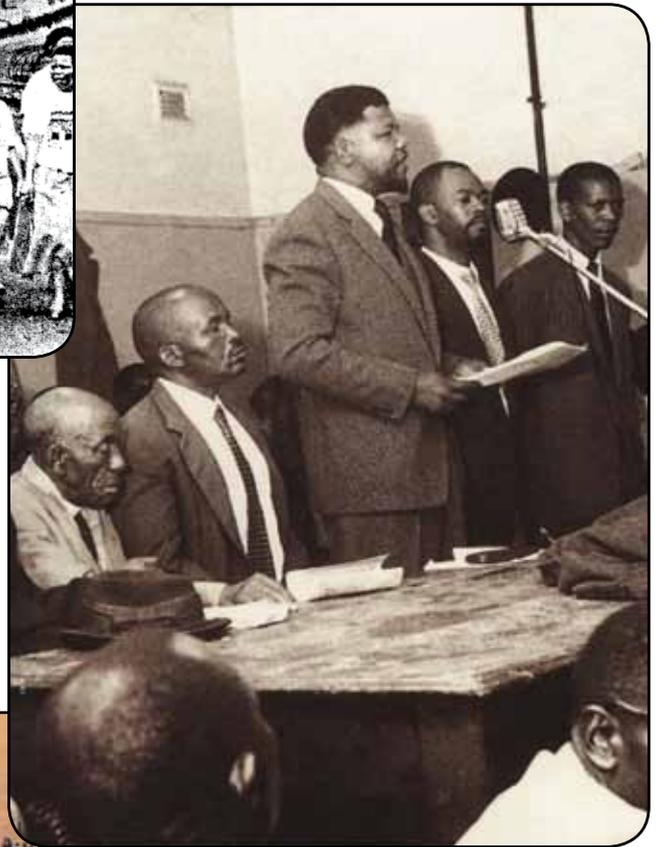
Coming from a politically active family (both his father, Mr. K. Badal, and sister, Dr Reshma Badal are activists), Mr. Abin Badal is a practicing attorney who also served on the United Democratic Front. He was a member of the student delegation of 1987 to the African National Congress in Zimbabwe. He has worked actively within the African National Congress as well as the various negotiating forums including Codesa.

Shishupal Rambharos

The Aryan Benevolent Home is the largest non-governmental institution catering for the destitute, aged and children. It's long serving life President Shishupal Rambharos often afforded activists refuge at the Home whilst they were on the run or underground. He also formed part of the delegation of prominent South Africans who went to Lusaka to negotiate the peaceful transition of power to the ANC. Under his leadership, the Arya Samaj participated in the pro-democracy marches through the streets of Durban which drew thousands of supporters from the oppressed communities. The sky blue gowns of the priests of the Vedic Purohit Mandal were strikingly conspicuous amidst the mass of protesters.



Pta. Nanackchand and Mrs Bathoi in protest march against police action in township



Nelson Mandela addresses the All-In Conference in 1961 at the Arya Samaj Hall in Plessislaer outside Pietermaritzburg. This is the last meeting he addressed before being captured in Howick.



The Struggle crowned with success - first democratic election

veda dharma sabha PIETERMARITZBURG

Socio-Cultural and Political Struggles for National Liberation.

The Veda Dharma Sabha (V.D.S.), established by Swami Shankaranand in Pietermaritzburg in 1909, provided the nucleus of religious, educational and social activities to the Hindu people residing there. The VDS is also noted for its strong socio political stand during the late seventies and early eighties under the presidency of the late S. Satgar.

political STRUGGLES

The Ten Principles of the Arya Samaj and the political thought of Swami Dayanand, viz. Swadeshi and Swaraj (self rule) were interpreted as a challenge to the injustice of apartheid. This call placed the VDS and the Arya Samaj in the mainstream of the national liberation struggle. VDS fully subscribed to the vision of a society contemplated by the Freedom Charter.

During the heightened resistance against apartheid in the 1980s, the VDS was the first Hindu organisation in South Africa to openly reject the Tri-Cameral parliament mooted by the government of the day. The temples of the VDS were made available to the Natal Indian Congress to hold mass meetings, prayer meetings and youth activists meetings. Moreover, the political activism and resistance to apartheid led to members such Pt. Kirun Satgoor, Vedprakash Dookran, Vishwas Satgar, Roshan Jainath, being detained and harassed by the security police.

The VDS rallied to provide food to the so called "16 Treason Trialists" at the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court. A VDS delegation gave active support to the six leaders of the staging a sit in at the British embassy in Durban to draw attention to the injustices and excesses of the apartheid government.

As state repression intensified and the state of emergency declared in the mid-1980's, the VDS sent a delegation of young activists to a youth conference in Pretoria who contributed to the creation of the National Hindu Youth Federation (NHYP) and tried to link it to the struggle for national liberation. In 1988, the year the UDF was banned.

Mr. S. Satgar was invited as part of a 52-person delegation to meet the ANC in exile in Lusaka, Zambia. At this meeting, he presented a paper to the ANC leadership titled: "Religious Freedom and the role of Hindus in South Africa, the role of the VDS in the struggle in South Africa." In 1989 he accompanied a Natal Indian Congress and Transvaal Indian Congress delegation to India to meet with the government of India to negotiate the cultural sanctions against South Africa.

On 21st September 1989 senior members of the VDS defied the apartheid regime by participating in a mass march in Pietermaritzburg to unban the UDF. They handed a memorandum to the police on behalf of the Hindu community calling for an end to racial oppression and persecution.

In 1994 VDS was honoured and received citations from the Natal Indian Congress for its outstanding contributions in the struggle for national liberation.

Socio-cultural

The VDS played a key role in initiating the Food for Life programme of the Hare Krishna movement in PMB since the 1990's by offering the use of the Veda Mandir in Nohar Road, to prepare and distribute meals to the poor and destitute.

In 1998 the VDS sponsored the building of a hospital ward for eleven beds for the aged in Glencoe, after being approached by the Aryan Benevolent Home. The VDS continues to make donations in cash and kind to the Home.

For many decades, the VDS had been involved in the maintenance and support of the Pietermaritzburg Crematorium. In the 1980s, donor support was obtained to erect the Assembly Hall, later the municipality was engaged to build a new crematorium and to take over maintenance of the crematorium.

The promotion of Hindi formed a key activity of the VDS for several decades. It offered classes through eleven schools and strengthened ties with scholars from India. It also worked closely with the Hindi Shiksha Sangh SA. The VDS financially contributed to the publication of two booklets: God and His Divine Love by Swami Satya Prakash and Know Your Religion by Pundit Satyapal Sharma.

glencoe abh ward **SPONSORED BY VDS**



food for life project **VDS AND HARE KRISHNA**

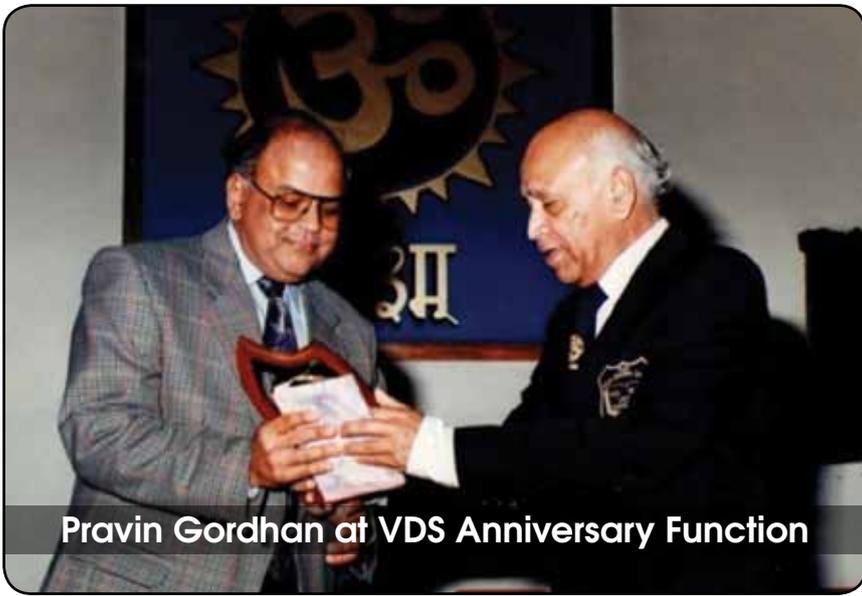


Feeding informal community with Swami Agnivesh

honouring stalwarts of the struggle at
CITY HALL PIETERMARITZBURG



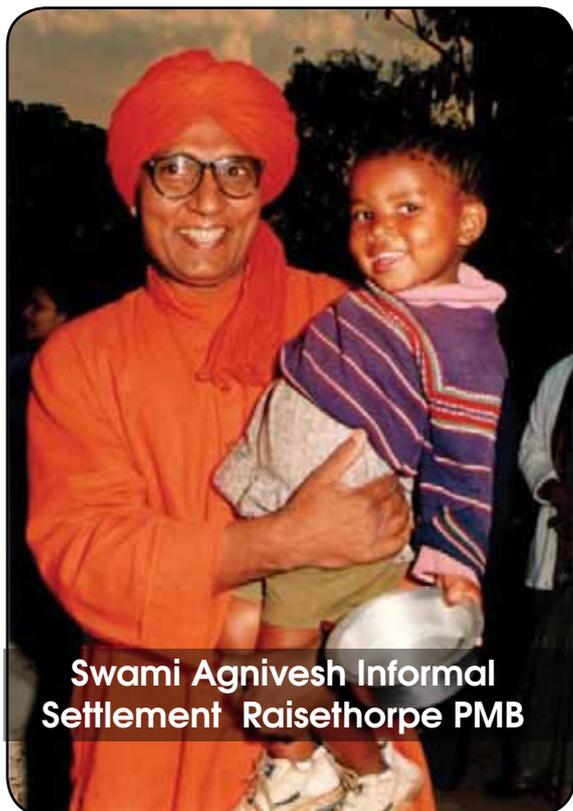
Archie Gumede, Billy Nair, M.J. Naidoo, Mewa Ramgobin, S. Satgar



Pravin Gordhan at VDS Anniversary Function



Meet with Nelson Mandela ANC HQ.- Religious Leaders



Swami Agnivesh Informal Settlement Raisethorpe PMB



Religious leaders leading UDF March.



UDF March Lead By Religious Leaders



SEWA

Members render regular cottage services at the homes of sick, needy and bereaved families. Destitute students are helped with fees for university. Once a week, sandwiches are prepared at Ved Mandir, Nohar Road for four Schools. In terms of the Prani Daya programme hampers are provided to fifteen indigent families. A night Soup Kitchen is also run together with the Midlands Hindu Society.

political OUTLOOK



The activities of the Sabha:

- In 1988 Mr S.Satgar was a delegate from the religious sector to meet the African National Congress in Lusaka.
- He presented a paper at the World Conference on Religion and Peace and the 5th Desmond Tutu Peace lecture.
- Protest prayer services were offered for political detainees.
- The Sabha openly lent its support to the six activists that took refuge in the British Embassy in September 1984. In 1996 they were honoured at a function hosted by the Sabha at the City Hall.

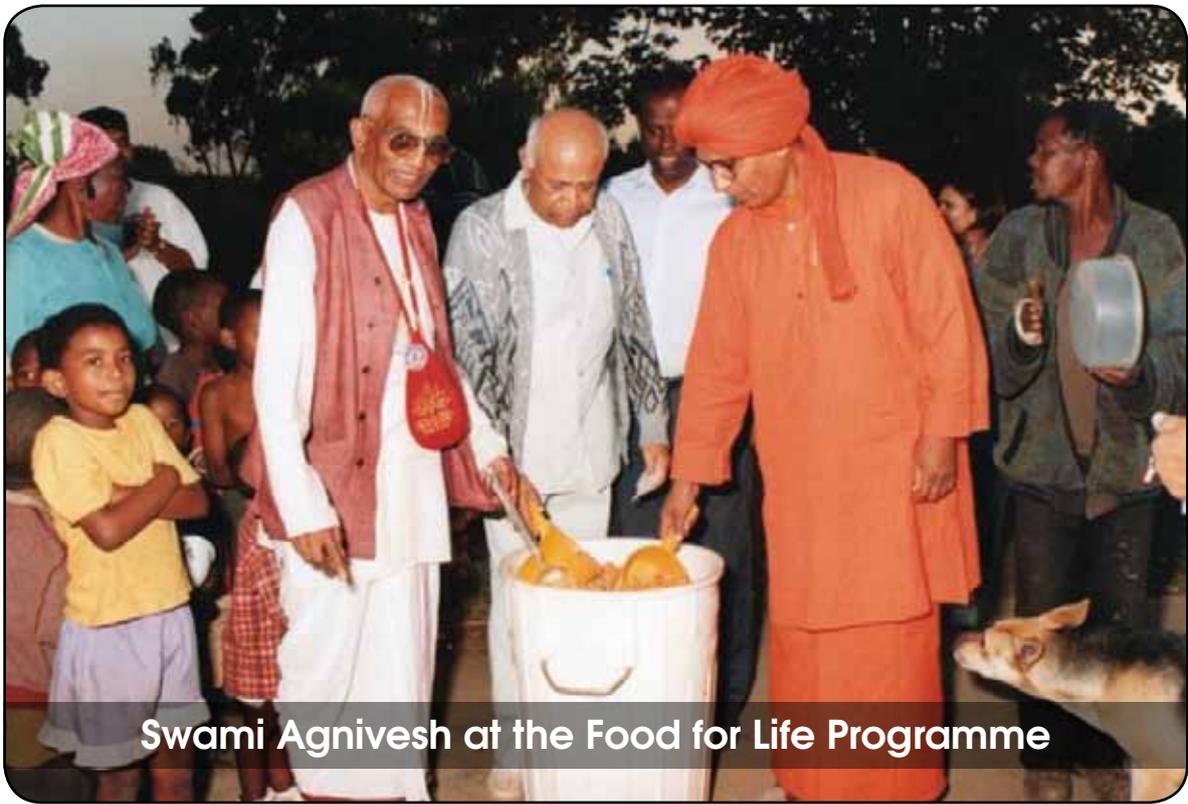


Some of the six activists who occupied the British Embassy

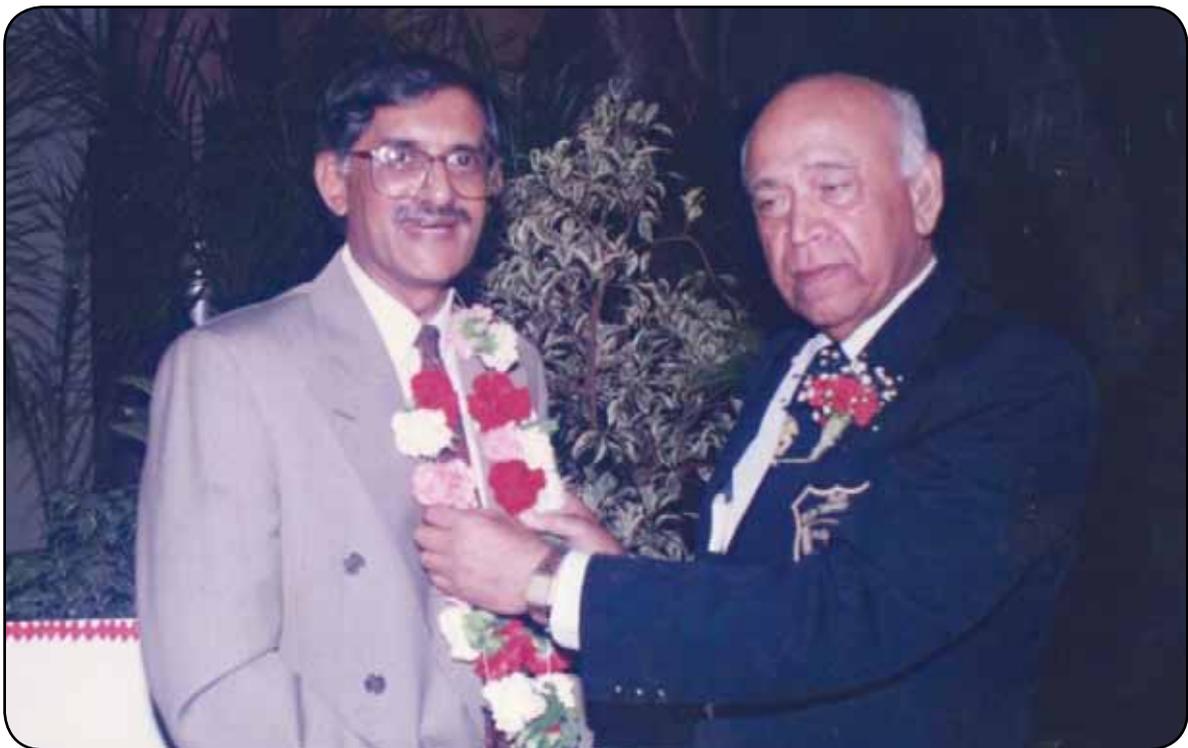
The Sabha defied the state by offering its platform to the Natal Indian Congress and United Democratic Front at the height of their political campaigns for the freedom of our country. Some of the comrades who graced our Mandir: Mr Mac Maharaj, Mr Pravin Gordhan, Mr Vish Suparsad, Mr Archie Gumede, Mr A.S. Chetty, Mr Yusuf Bhamjee and many others.



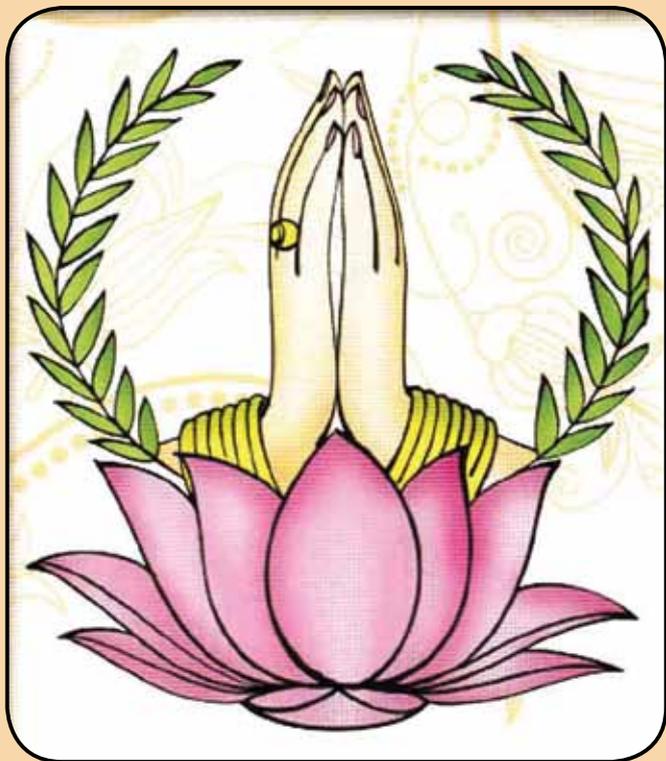
Housing protest march



Swami Agnivesh at the Food for Life Programme



VDS President S. Satgar honouring Mr. Sunil Bramdaw for his contribution to progressive media and the Leader as an outspoken voice of the oppressed people during apartheid.



lest WE FORGET

There are many practices for which the Arya Samaj can take a fair portion if not the whole credit. They are the popularisation of the word "AUM" as a symbol of God, the use of "Namaste" as a form of greeting, the singing of "Jai Jagdish Hare" as Arti, the commencement of meetings and functions with the recital of the Gayatri Mantra and the chanting of Shanti Paath (Hymn of Peace) at the end.

The Aryan Prayer book has presented mantras to be recited at different functions in a uniform and systematic way. Priests not affiliated to the Arya Samaj also use the Aryan Prayer book in their performance of ceremonies, especially the havan, vivah and antyeshti.

Today, these practices are regarded as standard with nobody pausing to reflect on how they became so well established and entrenched.

arya samaj around the world

greater atlanta **VEDIC TEMPLE SOCIETY**

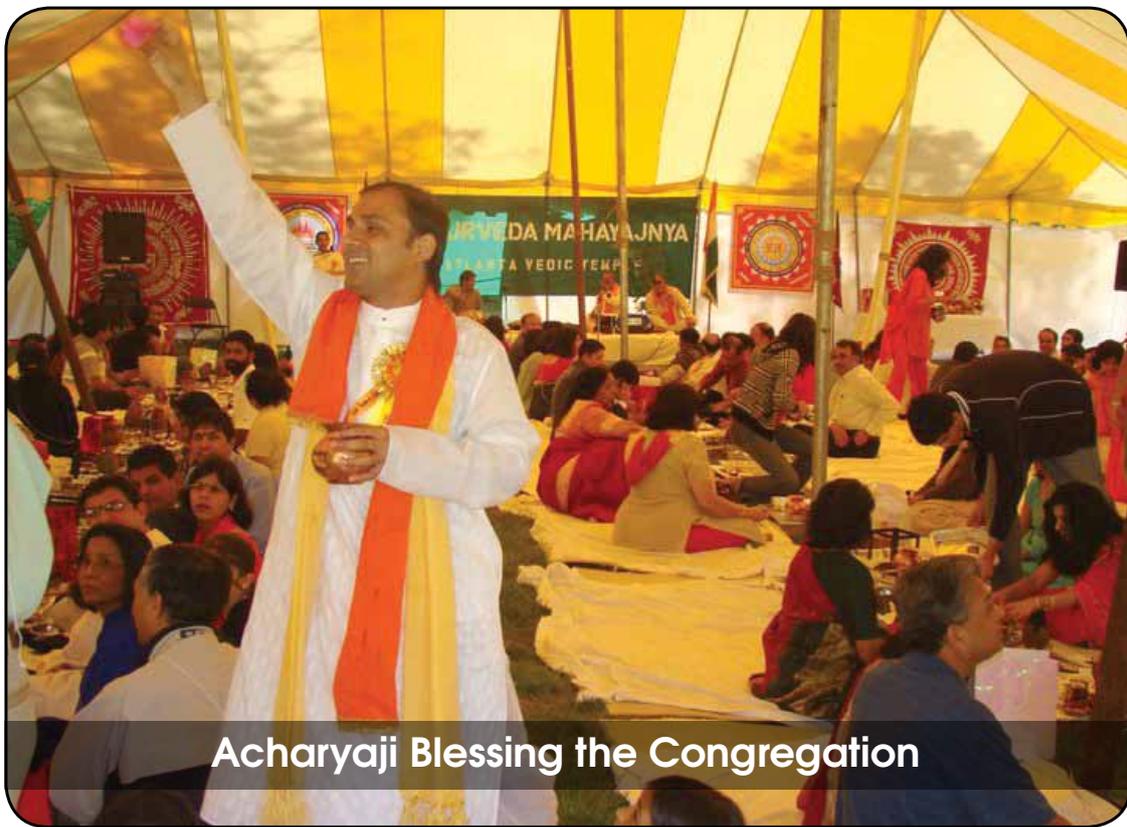
(Arya Samaj Atlanta)

Arya Samaj Atlanta was founded in 1986, in the name of Greater Atlanta Vedic Temple, commonly known as Vedic Temple. This organization follows the Ten Principles of Arya Samaj and believes in serving all humanity regardless of religion, caste, age, sex etc. Since its inception, the Vedic Temple has established itself not only as Center for Spirituality and Inner Peace but also as a means of keeping Indian culture alive, by celebrating all religious festivals with fervor.

Sunday sermons on Vedic teachings can be uploaded on our YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/atlantavedictemple>. The temple's biggest MahaYajnya was held in April 2013, where Hawan was performed around 50 hawan kunds for universal peace and prosperity and spiritual awakening. Classes to teach Hindi, Sanskrit, Yoga, Meditation and Vedic Dharma as propounded by Maharshi Dayanada Saraswati are held weekly.

The Arya Youth Group (Arya Veer Dal) is comprised of youth of 6 years and older. The mission is to provide the youth with an avenue to express their views and provide an opportunity to explore their talents and interests whilst interacting closely with their peers.





Acharyaji Blessing the Congregation

a history of arya samaj educational & cultural society of **BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**

by Hari Varshney, Trustee

In 1987 Mr. Ram Karan Cheta and late Mr. Kewal Khosla compiled a Havan book both in Hindi and English, as in those days they were not readily available. It was on April 9, 1989 that the Sthapana Divas of the Arya Samaj Society of British Columbia was celebrated in the presence of about 80 guests and the regular programme of weekly Havans took place every Sunday thereafter. As our membership increased, a Hindi school was opened. Hindi classes were held an hour before the Havan and the parents joined their children for the weekly Havans.

Once the Constitution was ready, the Arya Samaj Society of British Columbia was registered as a religious body on August 19, 1991 and the first Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on September 20, 1992. Mrs. Gita Cheta was elected by acclamation as the first President of Arya Samaj Society of British Columbia.

Under the leadership of Mr. Raghupal Singh, during his tenure as President for almost a decade, a considerable amount of money was raised towards the purchase of the property. In October, 2007, the Society purchased a property at 6884 Jubilee Avenue, in Burnaby, British Columbia, with a donation from Madhu and Hari Varshney who also serve as officials of the Society. Regular Havans are held at this centre every Sunday from 10am to 12 noon with Yoga and meditation classes also. The Society also celebrates heritage and cultural programs and various Hindi festivals including Arya Samaj Sthapna Divas.



The Society invites visitors from India and other countries to speak at functions. In 2011 and 2013, Swami Sampurna Nand Saraswati from India conducted meditation and yoga classes as well as Vedic preaching. In early, 2013, the name of the Society was changed to Arya Samaj Educational and Cultural Society of British Columbia.

arya pratinidhi sabha of **FIJI**



The Arya Samaj in Fiji was established on 25th of December 1904 by the Indentured labourers brought to the Colony of Fiji by the British Government to work on cane farms. Between 1879 and 1916, 60 553 Indians had been brought into Fiji, the largest number being Hindus. Amongst those were people subscribing to the principles of Arya Samaj and following the Vedic path. Arya Samaj in India had been established on 10th of April 1875.

From 1904 to 1917 Arya Samaj in Fiji held Arya Samaj conventions in the most populous central and western divisions. In 1917 the idea of forming a national body – the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha along with the establishment of the first Gurukul was mooted. In 1918 both the Gurukul and the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji were formally established and the Sabha was officially registered as a religious body under the Religious Bodies Registration Ordinance (Cap 68). This was made possible by the untiring efforts of Dr. Mani Lal, a Barrister and Solicitor who had been inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and came to Fiji in 1912.

There are around 40 local Arya Samajs in Fiji with the majority being affiliated to the Sabha.

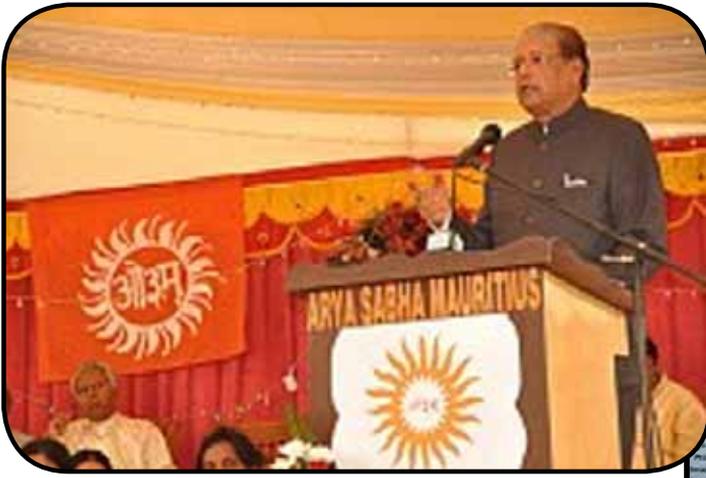
In the field of education Arya Samaj has established and manages 15 preschools, 19 primary schools, 7 secondary colleges and serves on the University of Fiji that is managed by secular Council comprising of representatives of the various faith based post primary education organisations. The Sabha also owns and manages Arya Baal Ashram (2006) and the Vedic Training Centre (2003) where Purohits and moral values educators are trained.

Pandit Vishnu Deo Memorial College is the largest of the seven secondary colleges of the Sabha and named after a very prominent Arya Samaji Honourable Pandit Vishnu Deo 'Jan Ratna', OBE, a Member of the Legislative Council in the Colonial Government. Of the Seven secondary colleges, three of them are named DAV, of which one is purely a Girls college.



arya sabha of **MAURITIUS**

Chemin Grenier Sewa Ashram.
Residential care Home for elderly women



H.E Rajkeswur Purryag GCSK, GOSK , President of the Republic of Mauritius, addressing the audience on the occasion of Rishi Bodh 2013



Dav college Morcellment st Andre



Launching of Projects 2011 by Minister of Gender Equality Hon. Mireille Martin and the Aryan Women Welfare Association



Arsh Gurukul at L'Avenir St. Pierre



Centenary Celebration of Port Louis Arya Samaj and unveiling a Stele to mark the arrival of Dr. Chiranjiv Bhardwaj in Mauritius



Dav college Port Louis

aryan community in the **NETHERLANDS**

First Arya Samaj Organisation in The Netherlands in The Hague:
Arya Samaj Nederland Den Haag (Asan-Den Haag)

The number of Hindus living in the Netherlands varies in the between 90 000 to 215 000. It is estimated that maybe 25% to 35% of this figure belong to the Arya Samaj community.

The association Arya Samaj Netherlands (rural) was established in the clubhouse "Hearth" of the Surinamese Youth Association "Manan" in The Hague on February 11, 1968. On this day, the board of Manan commemorated the birthday of Swami Dayanand and invited 200 guests, including members of Pauranische Sanatan Dharm, Arya Samajis and Muslims. The festive inauguration was done by Pandit R.D. Oedairaysingh Varma. The

first interim president was Mrs. Balabrega Sannyasin. Unfortunately she died during a short trip to India. Since 1968, ASAN has grown and is now planning to build his own Mandir. ASAN and the city council of The Hague have a basic agreement for the new construction. The stone laying ceremony is scheduled for 2014.



First successful outdoor Havan Melan in Zuiderpark Hague / Netherlands to observe the Vedarambha Sanskar

dutch aryan federation: **Pratinidhi Arya Sabha Netherlands (PRASNE)**

Established in 2007, PRASNE aims to be the voice to ministries, municipalities and other institutions. 16 organisations are presently affiliated to PRASNE. It desires to be the main organisation within the Hindu community and is committed to include the youth, women and the socially disadvantaged. PRASNE also encourages dialogue with the various other religions in the Netherlands. Justice, pragmatism and critical thinking characterise the identity of PRASNE.

The more Arya Samaj organisations become active, the easier it will be to promote its Vedic ideals. PRASNE's philosophy is to create the right conditions for its affiliated organisations to work together in harmony to achieve their common goals.

pioneering work **PRASNE**

PRASNE made history in August 2009 in the Netherlands, by organising the first successful outdoor Havan Melan in Zuiderpark Hague / Netherlands, to observe the Vedarambha Sanskar. In 2010 this Sanskar was performed again in Rotterdam. It is the intention to expand this event further in the Netherlands



Spreading Vedic culture in Netherlands

vedic pratinidhi sabha and arya samaj of **AUSTRALIA Inc (VPSASA)**

VPSASA was founded in March 1995 at 3 Samuel Street, Lidcombe, New South Wales, Australia by a group of enthusiastic followers of Swami Dayanand Saraswati's principles and with a view to spread the teachings of the Vedas and "Krinvanto Vishvam Aryam" - to make this world noble.

The Arya Samaj movement is noted for its practice of strongly empowering women in all fields of endeavour in society. In this regard, it is very pleasing to note that the top positions in the VPSASA executive council this year

are held by three very capable ladies. Very educational and thought provoking parvachans delivered by both children and adults at satsangs have been very enlightening and continue to be a source of learning and spiritual upliftment for the congregation.

The VPSASA has also upheld the tradition of helping those in need in time of disaster, both in Australia and overseas and have contributed in cash and kind to Tsunami disaster victims, Uttarakhand flood victims and others in need.



**Pandita
Prabha Sharma
presiding at
one of VPSASA's
regular Hawans.**

**Vedic Pratinidhi
Sabha and
Arya Samaj of
Australia's Patron
Shri Narayan
Singh Niranjn
addressing
guests during a
satsang.**

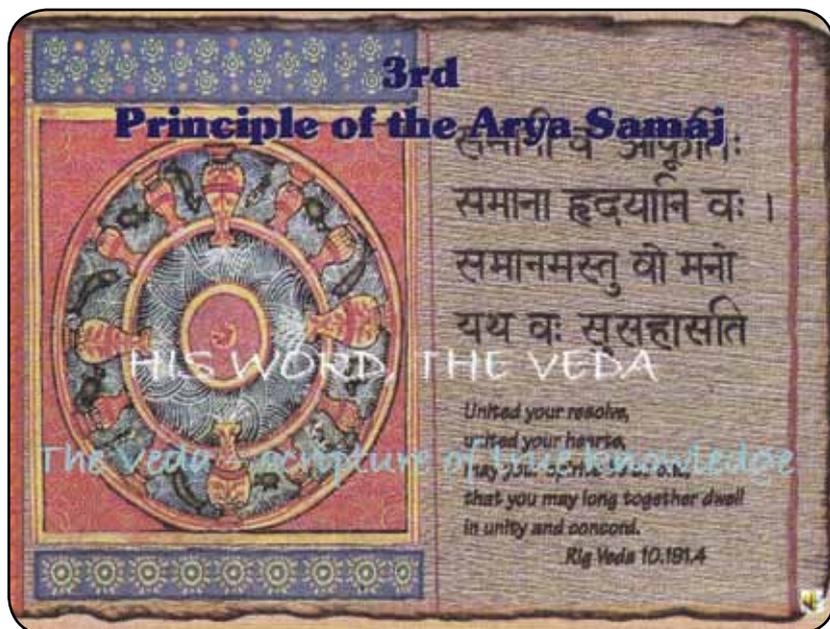


who is an **ARYA SAMAJI?**

An Arya Samaji is a noble individual who strives to live by the Ten Principles of the Arya Samaj. The Ten Principles of the Arya Samaj have been widely acclaimed for their human value, universal appeal and practical usefulness in every field of life – religious, moral, social, economic and political. The word 'Arya' does not refer to any particular race, sect or group and aims only at character building. The first five principles give teachings in respect of the source of true knowledge, attributes of God, the Vedas and following the path of righteousness. When an individual applies these Principles in life and starts to practice them, then he is capable of doing good to the world (Sixth Principle). Principles seven to ten propound a code of individual conduct and social justice.

The Arya Samaji believes in God, who bears names like Aum, Parameshwar and Paramatma and is Omniscient, formless Omnipresent, unborn, Almighty, merciful, just and the creator, sustainer and dissolver of the universe. God also dispenses justice on the basis of the past deeds of the individual. His other attributes are existence, consciousness and bliss. There was no time when God did not exist. Consequently, He did not have a beginning and therefore is said to be anadi (without beginning). Similarly, He will never cease to exist because He has no end and is therefore called ananta. God is beyond place and time. Our sensory organs cannot help us to know God. The Upanishads say that our organs cannot help us to know about the atma that is present in all things. We can know Him through our inner sight and meditation. To Him alone is worship due.

The Arya Samaji believes in three eternal entities, viz. Matter, Soul and God. The entire universe is formed by a cohesion of atoms which are microscopic and cannot be seen with the naked eye. Matter cannot think for itself, or do anything by itself, nor does it have the capacity to desire anything. The human body is also made up of five substances which comprise matter, viz. earth, water, fire, air and ether. Living objects possess consciousness due to the presence of the soul which is called jiva or jivatma. The soul has three attributes, viz. the aptitude to create, the aptitude to enjoy and the aptitude to know. The soul performs good and bad acts and it is subjected to the fruits of its actions. Justice in the form of rewards and punishment is meted out by God. Swami Dayanand gives an illustration. He speaks about the existence of solid matter in space. The relationship existing between



“The word ‘Arya’ does not refer to any particular race, sect or group and aims only at character building.”

these two is that of a container and the thing contained in it. The relationship has always been there. It exists even today and shall do so for ever. But they are still two separate entities, never one. In a similar way, so is the relationship that exists between God, the universal soul and Jivatma, the personal soul. It is that of a pervader and the pervaded.

The Arya Samaji rejects the doctrine of the personality of God because to him this means earthly, material limitations. The Samaji believes God is infinite, bodyless and immortal and can never manifest Himself on earth as the doctrine of Avatara submits. Had God been material and with a definite form, another Being would have been necessary to supply Him with the physical qualities He would need to take birth in human form on earth.

The Arya Samaji believes in Sanatana Nitya Dharma which means an ancient, everlasting and continual Dharma. This Dharma is universal and a common legacy to all mankind. Truth is an integral part of Dharma and every right thinking person is expected to embrace this wholeheartedly in his/her life. The Mundakopanishad states :

It is Truth that triumphs finally; untruth never tastes success
Men and women of piety have always trodden the path of rectitude
It is this path that will lead the sages to the ultimate reality – God
There is no virtue higher than Truth
There is no sin worse than falsehood
There is no knowledge higher than Truth
Let a man therefore follow the path of Truth

According to Swami Dayanand, a person worthy of being called a human being is one who is never afraid

of speaking the Truth, who recognises and believes in what is Truth and acts in a manner that his actions are always in agreement with Truth. Swamiji further records how a human being should behave. "We call him truly human who is pensive, who is thoughtful and who thinks of the welfare of others as much dear to him as his own, who is not afraid of the most wicked and unjust, even though they may be physically very strong and imposing, while dealing with the righteous even though they may be physically very weak." The Arya Samaji's duty is to work to weaken the wicked and strengthen the hands of the righteous. Swamiji says, "In the discharge of this duty, let us be prepared to face anything that comes our way. Even death should not deter us from discharging this important duty."

The Arya Samaji's purpose in life is to render selfless service to his fellow man without any expectation of the fruits of his actions. His primary objective is to do good to the world, i.e. to promote the physical, spiritual and social good of everyone. Only the one who feeds the hungry, whether he is an intellectual saint, a poor beggar or a cripple, eats the sacred food. These generous people will always be blessed with the means for charity. This is exemplified in the Gita which speaks of nishkam karma (selfless actions). By engaging in such action the Arya Samaji accumulates good deeds which accompanies the soul even after death. Swamiji quotes from Manu and the Mahabharata:

There is only one friend, who follows us even after death

All others desert us, no sooner death overtakes us.

Let man not renounce Dharma (virtue)

Either under the influence of lust, fear or greed, or an intense desire to save his life.

Dharma is imperishable. Pleasure and pain have an end.

Only the soul is immortal. The body perishes.

"The Arya Samaji's purpose in life is to render selfless service to his fellow man without any expectation of the fruits of his actions."

The Arya Samaji believes that the Vedas are of divine origin that were revealed to man when he first sought to know the supreme or 'eternal truth'. The Samaji believes that by Vedas no books are meant, but they imply the entire repository of spiritual and natural laws which are discoverable by the earnest seeker. These spiritual truths are revealed from time to time in the hearts of men and women purified by the practice of self-control and

meditation. It stands to reason that if God is eternally perfect, then the knowledge that flows from Him must also be necessarily perfect. The Arya Samaji believes that the Vedic mantras have three meanings, viz. Adhibhautika (ie. social and materialistic) adhidaivika (relating to nature) and adhyatmika (relating to spiritual/metaphysical knowledge). The Arya Samaji believes that the puranas are taken too literally thus leading to widespread superstition and ignorance. They also do not stand the test of what constitutes a revelation. The Samaji believes that it is the Vedas which contain the highest truths in their purest form and are thus worthy of being heard, studied and shared with others.

From the very beginning of life to the end of its earthly existence the Sanskaras (sacraments) are performed to enable a person to follow the righteous path. The Arya Samaji observes the Sixteen Sanskaras in his life so that he can become virtuous, disciplined and pure. They help to change his life from the basic form to a higher level of morality. The ceremony that forms part of the sanskara leaves a lasting impression on the mind of the child and even those who are present at such a gathering. The sanskaras act as directions in life just as road signposts inform the travellers of the road they should be taking to reach their destination.

All religions have taught ethical precepts such as "Do not Kill", "Do not injure others", "love thy neighbour" etc. without providing proper explanations of the reasoning behind this. The basis of Hindu ethics is this – there is a common, pure consciousness that permeates everything.

The Arya Samaji realises that the atma is one which vibrates in the animals, birds, plants and human beings. Existence is common. The Arya Samaji strives to live in the knowledge that his neighbour is in truth his very self and what separates the two is mere illusion. Universal brotherhood has its basis in the unity of the self. The Samaji believes that if you injure another man, you injure yourself. If you help another man you, you help yourself. There is one life, one

HINDUISM

A True Perspective

This article is a response to Mr Deedat's criticisms of Hinduism prepared by Mr J. G. Desai, Mr H. Somaroo and Mr B. Rambilass. It is not the intentions of the writers to attack other religions but to merely defend the principles of Hinduism which they feel have been deliberately misrepresented.

An Aryan Samaji is unafraid to defend his Dharma

common consciousness in all beings which the Arya Samaji tries to live by.

The Arya Samaji observes the Pancha Mahayajnas or five great Duties which are a unique system that sublimes individual self interest in the interests of society. It is not easy for man to forsake his own interests and to work towards the interests of others or of society as a whole. However, only by being conscious of these five great duties and constantly practice them does the Arya Samaji become a transformed human being. It is generally recognised that 'yajna' refers to a religious rite where fire is ignited and clarified butter and other ingredients are offered into the fire. Offerings are made to the accompaniment of the word "Swaha", the symbolic meaning of which is to dedicate oneself to renounce personal interests and act for the welfare of others. At the same time the words, "Idam na Mama" are also chanted meaning : "whatever I am offering is not for my own self, it is all Yours". Thus it becomes clear that yajna means obligatory deeds, which are performed as a sacred duty for the well being of all people and without selfish interest to the performer.

Principle Ten gives the Arya Samaji sufficient latitude to pursue his own interests for his personal well being whilst promoting the good of society at large. Man is born as an individual in this world but the prevailing circumstances dictate that he remain within the society in which he was born. Man is a social creature.

"Whatever I am offering is not for my own self, it is all Yours".

Whilst he strives to enrich his personal life, at the same time he should not ignore the progress of society as a whole. Vedic mantras underline the progress of all in society rests on the synthesis of these two goals. One's conscience plays an important role here.



SWAMI DAYANAND

a man of the world

"The world is fettered by the chain forged by superstition and ignorance. I have come to snap asunder that chain and to set slaves at liberty. It is contrary to my mission to have people deprived of their freedom", were the words of Swami Dayanand that are still ringing in our ears. Dayanand was born at Arya Varta, but he is the property of the human race. He gave birth to a society called Arya Samaj, but he was not sectarian. These petty distinctions were not in his mind and in the principles of the Arya Samaj that he formulated the entire world was his scope. He was not satisfied with the development of a country or of a country, but of the entire race. And what is the Sixth principle? "It is the object of this society to do the good of the entire world i.e. physical, spiritual and social good". This is the principle which an Arya repeats so often.

Dayanand was a Messenger

Swamiji wanted to propagate the religion of Vedas. And what sort of religion is this? "I believe in a religion based on universal and all - embracing principle which have always been accepted as true by mankind, and will continue to command the allegiance of mankind, in the ages to come". Hence it is that this religion is called the primeval eternal religion, which means that it is above the hostility of all human creeds whatsoever. Whatever is believed in by those who are steeped in ignorance or have been led astray by sects is not worthy of being accepted by the wise. That faith alone is really true and worthy of acceptance which is followed by Aptas i.e. those who are true in word, deed and thought, promote public good and are impartial and learned; but all that is discarded by such men must be considered as unworthy of belief and false.

"This religion is called the primeval eternal religion, which means that it is above the hostility of all human creeds whatsoever."

European nations are pining for peace but every effort in this direction has proved fruitless. They have become materialistic people and materialism cannot bring any peace. Peace comes from within and not from without. And there is no other way of acquiring internal peace, but to look to the east. The east is poor, it is ugly and the worst thing that east is under the domination of the west. This is all true. We look to the outward decent

appearance but not to the black heart within. The west may take the east as it desires, but the east is still spiritually very great. Very soon the west would be tired of its materialism, it has already grown sick and when materialism is swept away, spiritualism will have its hold. Swami is no more but his aims and objects are before us. "The sole aim of my life, which I have also endeavoured to achieve, is to help, to put an end to this mutual wrangling, preach universal truths, bring all men into the fold of one religion whereby they may cease to hate each other and instead, may firmly love one another, live in peace and work for their common wealth. This alone is the chief object of my life."

The pious vision of the Rishi will not remain unfulfilled indefinitely and someday the entire world will rise up for prayer and chant the Vedic hymn –

**“Peace to all heavenly bodies;
Peace to space and water;
Peace to earth; peace to air.
Peace to animals and plants
Peace to all that is around me,
And may this peace be ours also.”**



the ten principles of the **ARYA SAMAJ.**

1. God, His Characteristics: The Primordial Root – the Eternal Unseen Sustainer – of all true knowledge – any of all these – is the Supreme God.

2. His Attributes and Worship: God is Personification of Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. He is Formless, Almighty, Just, Benevolent, Unborn, Endless and Infinite, Unchangeable, Beginningless, Incomparable, Support of All, Lord of All, All-pervading, Omniscient and Controller of all form within, Undecaying, Imperishable, Fearless, Eternal, Holy and Maker of the Universe. To Him alone is worship due.

3. His Word, the Veda: The Veda is the Scripture of true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of every Arya to learn and teach the Veda, to hear it, read and recite it to others.

- 4. Truth:** We should be ever ready to embrace truth and to forsake untruth.
- 5. Righteousness:** All acts should be done in accordance with Dharma after deliberating what is right and wrong.
- 6. Benevolence:** The prime object of the Arya Samaj – is to do good to the world, that is, to promote physical, spiritual and social good of every sentient being.
- 7. Love and Justice:** Our conduct towards all should be guided by love, righteousness and justice.
- 8. Nescience and Science:** We should dispel "avidya" – nescience, and promote "vidya" – science, spiritual and physical.
- 9. Individualism and Altruism:** No one should be content with promoting his good only; on the contrary, he should look for his good in promoting the good of all.
- 10. Subordination and Liberty:** All individuals should subordinate themselves to the laws of society calculated to promote the wellbeing of all; they should be free in regard to the laws promoting individual well-being.

list of **AFFILIATES**

NO.	NAME AND ADDRESS	CONTACT PERSON	E-MAIL
1.	Arya Mithra Mandal Reservoir Hills 201 Shannon Drive, Reservoir Hills	Mr. Shailendra Bhooshun	bhooshuns@telkomsa.net
2.	Arya Samaj Asherville P. O. Box 12282, Jacobs, 4026	Mr. Sam Rugbeer	furnituredezine@gmail.com
3.	Arya Samaj Estcourt P.O. Box 791, Escourt, 3110	Mr. S. Bandhu	mlscolenso@gmail.com
4.	Arya Samaj Gauteng P. O. Box 785647 Sandton City 2146	Mr. Rahul Sharma	sales@oilcentre.co.za
5.	Arya Samaj Isipingo Beach No. 6 Third Avenue, Isipingo Beach	Pta. Shardha Rani Philip	leslie@allelectrical.co.za
6.	Arya Samaj Mount Partridge 93 Helston Road, Allandale, Pmb	Pta. S. Behari	soonib@mweb.co.za
7.	Arya Samaj Phoenix P.O. Box 61032, Phoenix , 4080	Mr. R. Sukhraj	pdsukhraj@outlook.com
8.	Arya Samaj Port Shepstone P.O. Box 1287, Port Shepstone, 4240	Mr. G. H. Krishinchand	krish@telkomsa.net
9.	Arya Samaj Silverglen 84 Grassmere Rd, Silverglen	Pt. B. Behadar	dbehadar@yahoo.com
10.	Arya Stree Samaj Raisethorpe 25 Tulip Avenue, Dunveria, Pmb	Mrs. Anitha Singh (Judy)	Judy.Singh@msunduzi.gov.za
11.	Arya Stree Samaj Dayanand Gardens c/o ABH – P.O. Box 56199, Chatsworth	Mrs. G. Ramklass	aneshr@telkomsa.net
12.	Arya Stree Samaj Durban 3 Sobrun Rd, Overport	Ms. Arthi Shanand	arthi@ukuphepha.co.za
13.	Arya Yuvuk Sabha P.O. Box 56199, Chatsworth,	Mr. Anesh Ramklass	aneshr@telkomsa.net
14.	Avoca Cultural Society 183 Umhlangane Rd, Avoca	Pta. L. Benimadho	leela.benimadho@gmail.com
15.	Howick Veda Dharma Sabha 4 Solitaree Road, Howick West, 3290	Mr. V. Ramlal (Jay)	Roy.Beni@umgeni.co.za

list of **AFFILIATES**

NO.	NAME AND ADDRESS	CONTACT PERSON	E-MAIL
16.	Ladysmith Arya Samaj P. O. Box 1111, Ladysmith, 3370	Pt. S. Dookhi	anook@telkomsa.net
17.	Lorient Satsang Sabha 79 Erythrina Ave. Lotus Park, Isipingo 4133	Pta. Ressa Rambaros	ressmarambaros@gmail.com
18.	Orient Heights Arya Samaj 35 Gogas Rd, Raisethorpe, Pmb	Mrs. P. Chedie	caeta@telkomsa.net
19.	Plessislaer Arya Samaj 16 Jewerlall Rd, Northdale, Pmb 3210	Mr. Vijay Bandu	vijaybandu@gmail.com
20.	PMB Hindi Stree Samaj Flat 1, 472 Church Street, Pmb	Pta. V. Satgar	kirunsatgoor@gmail.com
21.	Raisethorpe Arya Samaj 28 A Tulip Avenue, Dunveria, Pmb	Mrs.Sabitha Harrichandparsad	sabitha272@gmail.com
22.	Saraswathie Mahila Mandal 171 Malvern Heights, 24 Coronation Rd, Malvern 4093	Mrs. Mira Singh	mira.singh@hotmail.com
23.	Shree Ramayan Sabha Overport 116 Silverpalm Rd, Overport	Mr. R. Sowki	rameshsowki@telkomsa.net
24.	Veda Dharma Sabha Isipingo 23 Marigold Rd, Isipingo	Pta. K. Singh	relianceinsurancebrokers@gmail.com
25.	Veda Dharma Sabha Pmb 48 Emam Rd, Raisethorpe	Pt. Kirun Satgoor	kirunsatgoor@gmail.com
26.	Veda Dharma Sabha Pretoria 338 Bart Joubert Street, Erasmia, Pretoria	Mr. Savaal Singh	vds.pta@gmail.com
27.	Veda Dharma Sabha Verulam P.O. Box 2311, Verulam, 4340	Mr. Pravin Patak	ppatakvdfcc@telkomsa.net
28.	Vedic Yuvak Sabha, Wilgefontein 4 Primrose Rd, Northdale, Pmb	Mr. Madan Sevprasad	Rahendra.Sevprasad@HULAMIN.CO.ZA
29.	Yuvak Arya Samaj Clairwood P.O. Box 33006, Montclair, 4061	Mr. K. R. Singh	sdms@intekom.co.za

thanks to donors

WORLD VEDIC CONFERENCE 2013

The Rig Veda (10.117.1-6) says there are three kinds of persons existing in the world: one is like a drought, one who rains locally, and one who pours down everywhere.

How is a person like a drought? He gives nothing to all alike, not giving food and drink, clothing and vehicle, flowers, scents, bed, lodging and light, neither to recluses and brahmins nor to wretched and needy beggars. In this way, a person is like a drought.

How is a person like a local rainfall? He is a giver to some, but to others he gives not. In this way, a person is like a local rain- fall.

How does a person rain down everywhere? He gives to all, be they recluses and brahmins or wretched, needy beggars; he is a giver of food and drink, clothing... lodging and light. In this way a person rains down everywhere.

The Rig Veda further says that one should strongly resent miserliness and indulge in charity because one can acquire the never-ending wealth of immortality by doing so.

The hosting of the World Vedic Conference was a huge challenge in terms of mobilising both financial and human resources. An event of this magnitude was made possible only by the organisers meeting people who poured down their loving contributions everywhere like the rains mentioned in the Rig Veda.

The organisers debated the issue of acknowledging everybody who contributed to the success of this historic event by name and realised that the list is endless. The organisers were also mindful that it runs the risk of omitting a person who has contributed in some way to the Conference and would not want to offend such a person. The Arya Samaj was humbled by the outpouring of support, both in terms of cash and kind and, most importantly, by the number of people who volunteered their time and expertise to make the event a huge success.

The President of the Arya Samaj South Africa, Professor Usha Desai, the President Emeritus, Dr Bisraam Rambilass and all the Officials express their heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation to the very many donors and well wishers who opened their hearts and purses to make the World Vedic Conference 2013 a resounding success.

May our donors continue to pour down everywhere like the rains of the Rig Veda and may Paramatama shower them all with His choicest blessings for their good health, peace and spiritual illumination!

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- The Arya Samaj Movement in South Africa, Thillayvel Naidoo, 1992

conference THEMES

TOPICAL ISSUES

- Gambling, drug abuse and domestic violence are seriously undermining the social fabric of Hindu society.
- As a reformist movement, the Arya Samaj boldly tackles contemporary issues and offers solutions based on the wisdom of the Vedas.

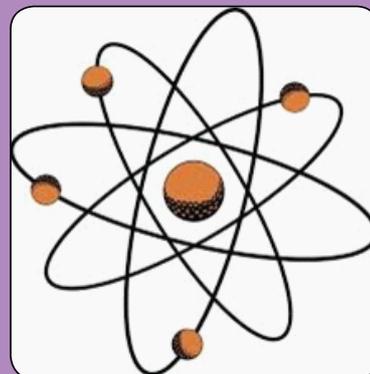


VEDIC MANTRAS

- Vedic chants and mantras have deep meanings which exert a psychological effect on the minds of the individuals reciting them.
- The Arya Samaj has been at the forefront of teaching the recital of selected mantras for the well being of the community at large.

SCIENCE & VEDAS

- The Vedas are not at odds with science. Many of the scientific discoveries have been validated by mantras in germ form in the Vedas.
- The Vedic concept of the creation of the universe is remarkably consistent with the scientific view.



AGNIHOTRA

Agnihotra or *havan* is rapidly gaining popularity around the world amongst many cultures as a means of healing the earth and atmosphere. Positive thinking and behaviour becomes much easier through performing *havan*. *Havan* brings about a very strong purification on the physical level as well as in the subtle regions. Scientific studies have shown that pathogenic germs were reduced by more than 90% in the vicinity of the *Havan* fire.



World Vedic Conference

Durban- South Africa 2013

