

Brahma-Bharati

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An affair to remember



If you have seen the famous Cary Grant movie of that name, the best way to describe Convention'96 is to borrow that phrase. It was an example of organizational excellence, efficiency, dedication, hard work, and that love for the BSNA that raised the convention from the level of a community meeting to 'An affair to remember.'

The credit for the expert organization goes to Satish Tripathi, the director of the convention, Mahendra Pal Misra, the local organizer, and other members of the organizing team. They were everywhere—supervising all the arrangements. The registration process went smoothly, the delegates got their rooms without any confusion, and all the sessions took place in a professional manner. Considering that the number of delegates was above 600, it was an achievement to be proud of. Prof Tripathi lived up to and possibly exceeded his reputation of organizational excellence. In the general body meeting on the last day, he was awarded the Brahma-Gaurava Puraskaar, one of the highest recognitions of the BSNA. Mr. Mahendra Misra was honored with the Brahma-Deep Puruskaar. The youth program was organized with equal efficiency by Madhuri Tiwari, Raju Tripathi, and Rajiv Misra.

The prime mover behind the whole thing, as ever, was Nirmalendu Choubey. He kept a relatively low profile on the first day but came to his own on the last day. He gave a grand speech and conveyed his conviction about the BSNA with his supreme oratorical skills. BSNA is his greatest gift to the community. He has brought the BSNA to this state through a considerable personal sacrifice. His whole family have worked hard for the BSNA without attempting to come to lime-light. Mrs. Choubey is largely responsible for computerization of the President—I mean Presidential work. We thank

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They did it—Bravo

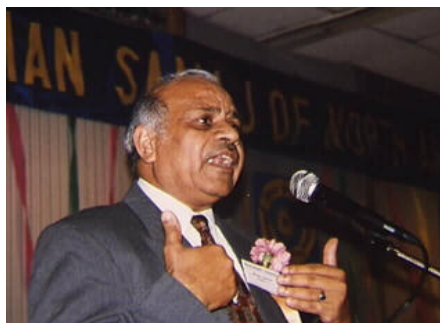


The organizers of Convention'96. (From L to R) Mahendra Misra, Anita Dubey, Satish Tripathi, and Nirmalendu Choubey.

Confronting Change and Crises

by Bhudev Sharma

(From the editor: The full text of the marvelous keynote address was published in the Convention'96 Souvenir magazine and is available on the BSNA home page. This is a short summary.)



The theme -- 'Brahmans of the Twenty-first Century' -- of the Second Convention of BSNA, is indeed very challenging and appropriate. Perhaps, there is a short

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Two Brahmins of the 21st century Shiva Pandey (9m) and Juhi Pandey



A Brahmin of all centuries Prof Ramanath Sharma (below)



Abv: Prof Bhudev Sharma lighting up the diya to initiate the cultural program. Blw: Ramesh Pandey and Chandra Pandey- introducing the delegates.



Is Brahman Samaj of North America Valueless?

by Nirmalendu Choubey
(President, BSNA)

(Editor's note: This is the full text of the speech that the President gave at Convention '96.)

The answer is "that it is not." The word Brahman itself indicates a value as does the word Samaj. The former stands for the best in any endeavor humanly possible and the latter signifies a culture and civilization that exists within an advanced state. However, if one asks whether we impose a set of values on our membership, once again the answer is in the negative. The imposition of beliefs according to John Locke in his Letter on Tolerance, is not legitimate simply because one cannot believe in something that has been forced upon him or her. Following from this undeniable logic, we, as a community within an advanced society, would like to foster an environment where people may decide for themselves the values by which they will live and abide.

There is no denying that the world in which we live is complex and interdependent. Part of the complexity of our society and lives is due to a myriad of beliefs held by the people with whom we interact. In order to be productive and proactive members of society, the lesson we learn from our interdependence with other cultures and peoples is that an open mind and a desire to learn and understand are the most important tools we have within our grasps as humans. To this extent, forced beliefs and values are antithetical to the nature of our organization and our goals. We are a living, breathing organization. As such, we, meaning you and I, have and should exercise our open minds and our ability to comprehend. This conference is a forum for us to discuss and share our thoughts on issues related to being a Brahman. We all come with values--some are similar, some dissimilar. Almost every action we undertake as humans is flavored by what believe and the values we hold. The BSNA can not escape this facet of human nature. Because of this, sometimes our programs reflect the values of the people instrumental in creating them. **Your responsibility, as a member of this organization and equipped with the tools of a mind and a heart, is to attempt to understand what you encounter, here or anywhere, question what you encounter, and then freely decide what you wish to take with you into your heart and mind.**

Sometimes, though, all of our differing values create divisions; our society is di-



vided enough. The divisions based on the language we speak or the place we were born or the families we were born into, are very well known. The politics of division has made us a minority in a land that at one time we considered our own. The time now is to look into what brings us together and not what separates us. Our children are facing a situation very different from what we faced when we were their age. The problem is that they do not even realize it and I certainly do not blame them for that. When we first arrived in North America not many of us anticipated the problems that we face today. Why should our children be any different? The problem actually is not them, but us, myself included. We are the ones who put our heads in the sand like an ostrich thinking that problems will go away. Why blame them? If all Brahmans realize the problem that many of us here do, I am sure there would have been 60,000 Brahmans at this convention, not just 600.

This brings me to the theme of this convention, the Brahmans of the 21st century. Will they be Brahmans or something else? We would not be a Brahman today had our parents not been a Brahman. We should

.....If you want your Samskar to stay intact, a belief in family values is necessary....

also note that we would not be a Brahman had we also not been a Hindu. We hope that as long as our children belong to the Hindu faith they will remain Brahman and no one can take that away from them.

The question arises if their idea of being Brahman is consistent with the idea of being a Brahman in the past. This will depend on the set of values they decide to adopt. There are a set of universal values such as honesty and decency that every community has at its core. A distinction among communities can be made, though, when discussing the importance a community gives to the concepts of family. As immigrants in a new land, I believe that we have learned well the lesson regarding the

necessity of compromise. No civilization can survive unless it is willing to adopt new ideas and make these necessary compromises. We have made compromises in this adopted land of ours and so have our children. The one compromise that should not be made is the importance and primacy of the family.

One value that I would like my children to have is this family value. As you already know, Hinduism does not have a Pope nor does it have a Vatican. Hindus have passed on their values to the next generation through their families and the way in which they lived their lives. This system is what has allowed Hinduism to exist for so many millennia and this same system of values will help us meet the challenge here in America as well. In the land where individual freedom is revered over any thing else, our children may have difficulty accepting the supremacy of family values. It is also tougher to live with. Therefore, they will very often do things that may seem expedient in action and not deliberate in thought.

Our children are going to face many of the same problems that this society faces by and large. We will face issue of premarital sex and AIDS. As family structures change, we will face increasing rates of divorce and placement of parents into elderly homes. The question is how we cope with these changes. My answer is family values. I believe Samskar, that Prof. Ramanath Sharma talked about last year, is another name of family values. If you want your Samskar to stay intact, a belief in family values is necessary.

The Brahmans of the twenty first century are very fortunate indeed. They have parents who are very distinguished in their professional career and at the same time they are also strong believers in family values. They have acquainted you with a way of growing up which will allow you not only to excel in whatever field you choose, but also be examples to your own communities and families.

In North America and in other societies, as they get more Westernized such as our very own India, the supremacy of the individual seems to negate the value of the family unit. Yet as our long history and tradition has shown, individual accomplishment rarely can take place without a strong, supportive family context enriched by the values of selflessness, dedication, respect, service, education, love and affection for humanity. Our challenge is to emphasize the importance of that critical relationship between individual and family and to persuade the next generation of the value of both.

They came and liked it!!

by Satish K. Tripathi
(Director of Convention'96)



The Convention '96 exceeded all expectations. Over 150 families (more than 600 people) attended convention in Reading, PA. The weather was excellent and everyone had a great time (see the results of the survey below). The program was packed and we tried to keep it on schedule. Details of various sessions/activities appear elsewhere in this issue.

This year we had a special program for young adults a day before (July 4) the general convention. More than 70 young adults participated in this program.

July 5 started with an excellent panel discussion on "Brahman's of the 21st Century." Various views were presented from different segment of our Brahman community. In a nut shell, it seems we are ready for the next century and should play a major role in the "technology century."

The days were filled with talks/discussions/social gatherings and at the end of the second day we all had more friends than we started with. (I met an old classmate of mine after 26 years!). The formal part of the program ended by recognizing fellow Brahmans; several awards were given.

Rather than giving my own impression about the Convention, I'll use the survey forms to evaluate the organization. Approximately 70 survey forms were received from the attendees. **Two-third of the respondents rated the program, facilities, location and entertainment as excellent. Approximately sixty percent of the respondents gave excellent scores to souvenir magazine and duration of the program; The Food had a lower excellent rating (35%).** For almost all of the categories, the unsatisfactory rating was less than 7%; food was unsatisfactory in 16% of the responses.

Most of the people came to the Convention to meet new people/Networking, to promote/develop cultural values, to meet relatives and friends, and to promote the goals and objectives of BSNA.

I thank the organizing committee for all the work and support they provided. In addition, without continuous help from Nir-

malendu Choubey, Vinod Tewary, and the BSNA Executive Committee the convention would not have been a success. Thank you all. See you in Michigan.

Reflections

by Satish C. Misra
(Editor, Convention'96 Souvenir)

It was a great privilege for me to edit the first BSNA souvenir book. I learned a lot and had my share of joys and hardships. I would like to thank all the authors, advertisers and sponsors for their help and support. Some of the things that I like to emphasize are:



I do not think we reached even a fraction of the potential funds we could have raised due to various reasons, including the skepticism about the final product. Now, we have some experience and a product, we must do better next year and we will with your help. Please plan ahead for getting greetings and advertisements. If we individually make a commitment to sponsor at least a quarter page, we would reach a milestone. Ads with family photographs have been much more appreciated and we plan to continue this. **If we have dreams of establishing a Brahmanic Chair at a Prestigious University, give scholarships to the needy and deserving Brahman students, we have to find innovative ways to raise funds.** We need you, your help and involvement.

We must avoid the last minute rush for both the ads and articles. This time I kept on continuously revising and updating all the estimates. This puts undue pressure on everybody (management, members of the editorial board, printer, etc.).

Now I have access to a good color scanner. The photographs of the BSNA organization submitted earlier were cut and pasted. The resolution of the some of the photographs was poor and some photographs submitted were in Black and White. I urge you to plan ahead and submit good photographs now so that we can build-up a library of photographs for inclusion both in the souvenir book and Brahma Bharati. If you are planning to give an ad in the next year's souvenir book (especially photographs) do it now. You can always change your mind up to the dead line.

I personally would prefer to see more articles related to reflection type, first person type and those that make popular reading, especially from our youths. Please

encourage our youths to write about their relevant experiences. This could include experiences at our conventions, visit to Bharat, meeting a unique Brahman (like Ramanath Sharma), or their or their parent's marriage, etc. Literary type articles should relate to Brahmanic values.

I would like to see increased sponsoring of the youth section, providing scholarships to our youth in order to motivate them to write. Sponsorship of other articles related to a desired theme is also encouraged.

The souvenir book has been financially rewarding for the BSNA and would bring back memories of Convention'96. It has also been useful in other ways. Dr Surendra Pandey writes that he discovered a long-lost friend through the souvenir book.

Thank you

The BSNA thanks the following individuals, families, and businesses for their financial contributions/ donations to the Convention'96 souvenir book.

Ontario- Canada: Joshi, Hira; Sharda, Arvind.

CA- Shukla, Shyam Narayan.

DC/MD- Dixit, Rajiv & Madhuri, Dubey, Jitender P. & Niti R., Dwivedi, Parmesh; Mishra, Lalji; Misra, Satish C.; Misra, Prabhakar; Sharma, Awadhesh; Sharma, Gopal; Tiwari, Prabhat; Tripathi, Satish; Pathak, Bhama & Arvind; Sharma, Gopesh. IL- Pandey, Ghanshyam & Leela; Prashar, Kanwal.

IN- Bajpai, Anil & Sarita; P a t h a k , Gupteshwar.

LA- Sharma, Bhu Dev.

MA- Tripathi, Alok/Call India; Tripathi, Alok.

MI- Sharma, Gopal; Mishra, Jitendra; Aysola, Rao; Purohit, Nitin; Sharma, Purushottam; Sharma, Niru/Childhood Center; Sahore, Vijay; Tyagi, Narendra.

MS- Tiwari, Suresh C.

NC- Sharma, Deva.

NJ- Pandey, Ramendra; Shukla, Umesh; Tiwari, Manoj; Rice & Spices; Haderer, Rober; Surya Carpet/Tiwari, Chandra Mani.

NY- Awasthi, Jagdish; Chaudhari, Ram; Sharma, Jagar N; Agarwal, Rakesh; Bank of India; Bank of Baroda; Choubey, Sudhendu; Shukla, Bhaw; State Bank of India.

OH- Chaturvedi, Laxmi Narayana; Oza, Sudhir; Tripathi, Raj.

PA- ABC Travel Agency/NorthEast Newsstand; Misra, Mahendra P.; Sharma, Hans Raj/Sharma Associate; Sheraton Berkshire Hotel; Misra, Mahendra P.; Tripathi, Raju -- KD Cannery, Inc.

(Continued from page 1)

all of them for their contributions, but the best way to thank Mr. Choubey would be for all of us to resolve that we will make our association even stronger.

The biggest attraction of the convention was, as expected, the excellent keynote speech by Prof Bhudev Sharma. He spoke with mathematical precision without rhetoric. His speech about 'change' was informative and thought provoking. He commanded the attention of the whole audience. It was a great pleasure to be exposed to such scintillating intellectual thoughts.

A very appealing invited lecture was given by Ram Chaudhari during the youth program on "The need and importance of Hindi." Prof Chaudhari talked with the self-consistent and factually supported logic of a physicist and his usual Gandhian simplicity and conviction.

The people

The shining star of the convention was, you guessed it, Ramanath Sharma. He has now become a living symbol of the BSNA. Prof. Sharma, to state the obvious, is a genius. His charismatic personality has made him a darling of the crowd of all ages. In addition to his inspiring speeches and poetry on the platform, people are eager to grab his words of wisdom wherever they can catch him—in the hotel lobby, corridors, picnic grounds, and possibly even in rest-rooms. He was awarded the Alankaar puraskaar, the top recognition for professional excellence.

Then there was the star of Hollywood, Ramesh Pandey. In addition to his hilarious comedy programs, he gave a session on his famous Power Yoga. He was given the Shrestha puraskaar. Incidentally, his new film 'I love you but don't touch me', a Ryon production, directed by Julia Davis, is due to be released this month.

Another stellar presence was of Anita Dubey. She organized marvelous cultural programs and the children's programs. She was also awarded the Brahma-Gaurava Puraskaar. An indicator of her popularity was the standing ovation that she received from the audience when her award was announced. Talking of standing ovations, this honor was also bestowed upon, yours faithfully, the Editor of BB, who was given the top organizational award, the Shiromani Puraskaar.

A major new step was the publication of the BSNA souvenir magazine. It was a grand production with scholarly articles and useful information along with personal and commercial messages. The superb editing job was done by Satish Misra who was given the Brahma-Deep Puraskaar. Other

heroes present at the convention were Nitin Purohit, the new Vice-President, and Bhaw Shukla, the treasurer. Mr. Purohit has made great strides towards the expansion of the BSNA and was awarded the Brahma-Gaurava Puraskaar. Mr. Shukla has been instrumental in getting the tax-exempt status to BSNA. He was awarded the Karmanishtha Puraskaar.

The convention was held at the luxurious Sheraton Berkshire hotel in Reading, PA. July 4 was the day of the youth. In addition to dance and entertainment, they were exposed to cultural talks and discussions. The organizational meetings of the BSNA Executive and Board of Trustees were held in parallel. Among others, Ramesh Pandey and Neetu Sharma charmed the audience with their dance in the cultural program.

The programs

The general session started on July 5 with the Ganesh Vandana rendered by L.N. Chaturvedi and his talented children-Anand Mohan and Preti. The first session was chaired by S.K. Mishra. Other participants were L.S. Dubey, J.P. Dubey, Ramanath Sharma, Vivek Shukla, and Rekha Tripathi. The family introduction at lunch time was coordinated by Chandra Pandey, Ramesh Pandey, Gopal Pandey, and Madhu Pandey. Several breakout sessions were held after lunch: Children's groups-Anita Dubey, Ramendra Pandey, and Priti Ojha; newly married couples and those with children under 2 yrs—Vandana Sharma and Prabhakar Misra; age group 13-14—Ram Rudra Shukla, Juhi Dubey, Arjita Shukla, and Juhi Shukla; age group 15-17—Mamta Tewari, Kavita Misra, Anshu Shukla, Priti Tewari, and Aashish Tripathi; age group 18-21—Lalji Mishra, Vivek Dwivedi, Deepti Choubey, Ruchi Misra, Savita Misra, Chetna Tewari, and Manish Tripathi; age group >22—Natasha Chaturvedi, Neeraj Choubey, Meenu Sharma, Ashok Tripathi, and Poonam Tripathi; parents with teen-age children—R.P. Tewari, Anita Pandey, Shashi Pandey, Meenakshi Prashar, Suresh Tewari, and Vinod Tewari.

The cultural program, entitled "Sagar ke is paar" was emceed with well-planned humor and entertainment by Rashmi Pandey, Atul Prashar, Vivek Shukla, and Anuranjita Tewari. It started with an effective audio-visual production "Bharat Ma ki kahani" by Meenakshi and Kanwal Prashar. There were lovely dances by Priti Ojha; Ranjana Pathak; Ajita Shukla; Sarika Sharma; Juhi Shukla; Arti Pandey and Juhi Pandey; Neetu and Sonia Sharma; Sonali and Sukirti Sharma; and Simi Dubey, Juhi Dubey, Priya Sharma, Vikas Mishra, Vikash Sharma, and Manish Sharma. Preti

Chaturvedi excelled in the rendering of Rag Bhimpalasi on Violin. Beautiful songs were presented by Smrita and Durga Choubey; Sharad Tewary, Anita Dubey, and Anuranjita Tewary; Anubha Tripathi with Amol Tripathi on Tabla; and Atul Prashar. The Hollywood yogi, Ramesh Pandey gave his excellent comedy masaala that provoked big laughs. However, the darling of the crowd was the child prodigy Vedanta Misra who charmed the audience with his beautiful "Thumuki chalat Ramchandra.."

The keynote session was chaired by Satish Tripathi. Nirmalendu Choubey's brief speech was followed by the keynote address of Prof. Bhudev Sharma. The day ended with two parallel programs—dance and kavi-sammelan. The dance had a live DJ who put additional life into the rocking music. The kavi-sammelan was lyrically chaired by Jagar Sharma who enlivened the program with his beautiful qataas and rubaiyats. Amongst others, Anoop Bhargava, and two brilliant youngsters, Ashish Mishra and Ajay Malaviya, recited some beautiful poems. A hilarious poetic treat was provided by Ramanath Sharma who described his coming to terms with computers and his interactions with the editor of the BB and the president of the BSNA.

Next morning started early for some with parallel sessions on Aerobics by Uma Shukla, Meditation by Prabhat Tewari, Power yoga by Ramesh Pandey, Ayurveda by S.K. Mishra. Then there was a session coordinated by Mahendra Misra on educational programs: L.N. Chaturvedi on Gita and Ramanath Sharma on Mantrayoga.

The last formal session was Nirmalendu Choubey's show. A general body meeting, the first ever, was held in which Mr. Choubey gave a memorable speech. The meeting started with the BSNA vandana 'Dev Brahma...' sung with feelings by Sharad Tewary, Anita Dubey, and Anuranjita Tewary. There were brief speeches by Shyam Shukla, Suresh Tiwari, Brij Pandey, Bhaw Shukla, S. Anand Mishra, Ramanath Sharma, and Vinod Tewari. Another first of the Convention '97 was the award ceremony in which several members were honored for their contributions to BSNA and professional excellence. A special commemorative plaque was awarded to Prof Bhudev Sharma, the keynote speaker.

Finally, there was a picnic in a very picturesque park. The hottest selling item there was the BSNA tee-shirt, beautifully designed by Vivek Shukla. After the picnic, many people rushed to Reading outlet stores, the largest in the USA.

Even the best things must come to an end—so did the grand Convention '96.

The need and the importance of Hindi

by Ram Chaudhari

(Editor's note: This is the summary of the invited talk delivered by the author at Convention '96 during the youth session)

Hindi is the third largest spoken language in the world. It has been described as the life line of Indian culture. Indians, particularly the ones from the Hindi belt, have



not done a good job to promote Hindi. We can learn a lot from our compatriots from India, as well as from persons from countries like Korea and China. On economic front, we have started learning from them; sooner we learn in cultural matters, better it will be.

The reason for choosing Hindi as the official language of India can be stated as follows. The persons from Hindi states constitute the single biggest linguistic group in India; it is forty percent of India, in terms of both, area and population. The persons who can understand Hindi, constitute about 70 percent of the Indian population. From an-

...take responsibility to develop Hindi ... capable of serving as the medium for the highest scholarship ...

cient times up to the thirteenth century, Sanskrit was the language of the courts and discourse among the scholars. Starting in the eighth century, Hindi became the medium of discourse for the saints who traveled all over India to spread their message.

For more than a millennium, Hindi, in one form or another, has been the language of cultural and religious discourse all over India. It was this factor, that virtually all national leaders, including Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak from Maharashtra advocated Hindi for the official language of India. It may be pointed out that after the collapse of Muslim empire and the emergence of British rule, Persian was replaced by English. For lower echelons of administration, in spite of vehement protests, Urdu in Arabic script was imposed on the majority community. Those familiar with the development of Hindi, know of the struggle for introducing Hindi in Devanagiri script in the school curriculum. When India became free, Hindi found acceptance in the lower courts, but still cannot (next col.)

Conventional wisdom

What is conventional wisdom? According to a recent newspaper usage with reference to the convention of a political party, conventional wisdom is the wisdom or the lack of it displayed at a convention. We had plenty of both kinds at Convention '96. Here is a sample. But, remember, any thing written in this column may be wrong. It is meant to be a joke. So, please, take it seriously, and laugh with a grim face.

*The BSNA convention is aimed at match making—particularly the youth program. Well, if you say so. The President pointed out that more people brought their daughters than sons in the youth program. Heard the famous saying attributed to Tolstoy? "All women should marry but no man."

be used in the Supreme Court of India.

The Indian constitution, in 1950, stipulated that Hindi shall be the official language of India. After a lapse of 46 years English still continues to be the de facto official language of India. It may be useful to recall the effort made by South Korea in promoting their language. KOREAN LANGUAGE The National Association for Korean Schools (NAKS) has 607 member schools. America is divided into twelve regional chapters. To qualify for membership, a school must hold Korean language and history classes for four hours a week, for thirty-six weeks a year. Each student pays \$240 tuition per year, and each school pays a membership fee of \$500/year to NAKS. The teachers are paid for their time. Korean would become the ninth language for SAT II, the NAKS has raised \$500,000 for the College Board.

What Can We do? The group from Hindi states, has to take responsibility to develop Hindi into a modern language, capable of serving as the medium for the highest scholarship in all branches of knowledge, administration and justice. A language can only be developed by using it. If this group picks up the challenge, I am confident that our friends from non-Hindi states will join them and support Hindi. Like Rammohan Rai, Dayanand, Tilak and Gandhi, they would love to see Hindi become the de facto official language of India. To be effective we have to work under a single organization. A strong Hindi will be source of strength for other Indian languages. This movement can help Hindi to become a language of United Nations. If we come together and work unitedly, I am confident that the momentum generated in this effort could play a significant role in securing a place for India in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Tickle-Tickle-Tickle



*Film songs should not be played at the BSNA convention, being a gathering of Brahmans. Next time try rock-n-rolling at 'Twameva maata cha pita twameva..'

*High calorie and spicy food should not be served at the convention- it is non-brahmanical. Did not appear to be so from the way the food vanished. Next time no non-brahmanical food. Be prepared to get kand-mool-phal. Better still, find them yourself from a forest nearby-if there is any.

*If you think brahmans should eat to live rather than live to eat, you should have seen the mob-attacks on the dining tables. Why such mad rush? Somebody explained, "Vubhukshitah kim na karoti papam.."

*Most of the speakers were men. Why? A lady explained, "That is because the poor darlings don't get a chance to speak at home."

*Two yoga-sessions were held early morning. I heard this conversation.

"Which yoga session did you go to in the morning?"

"Nidra-yoga."

*Somebody had a list of things/acts to avoid to ensure long life. Heard this one?

Man: Doctor, I want to live for a hundred years. Can you advice me about what to do?

Doctor: Do you avoid exercise and enjoy TV most of the evening?

Man: No, sir. I exercise two hours a day.

Doctor: Do you drink wine?

Man: Definitely not. Water is the only liquid that I drink.

Doctor: Do you go to late-night shows, dances, and clubs?

Man: Never. I always go to bed at 9 PM.

Doctor: Then, why the hell do you want to live for hundred years?

The poetry corner

From Ramcharitmaanas

by Goswamy Tulsidas

In Hindi:

Mangal bhavan, amangal haari,
dravahu so Dashrath ajar-vihaari.

Approx. translation

One who does good, and gets rid of what is not, worship that son of Dashrath.

(Continued from page 1)

sanatana answer: *Take care of the present.* Thus the question is -- *what* is the present and *how* to take care of it?

To examine things we must proceed intellectually. However, according to Gita, there are three different views based on intellect -- the correct, the distorted or the perverted. Western intellectuals have purposely presented a distorted or perverted view. Sir W. M. Williams, easily the greatest Western Sanskritist, wrote,

"When the walls of the mighty fortress of Brahminism are encircled, undermined and finally stormed by the soldiers of the Cross, the victory of Christianity must be signal and complete."

Therefore Western influence is a serious problem in understanding Hinduism.

Brahman society is a part of the Hindu society. It has existed from Vedic times. Qualities of the brahmins are found in Gita, Brahma Purana, Purushasukta hymn of the Rigveda, Mahabharat, Ramayan, Gita, Brahma Puran, Bhagwat Puran. Conduct has been an important characteristic of brahmins. There is no evidence, before arrivals of Europeans on the world scene, that foreigners found anything bad with this system. Magasthenes, Albaruni, a Persian scholar, in 10th century have paid glowing tributes to the Hindu system.

According to an estimate, there are around 64 million brahmins in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bali, Sindh part of Pakistan, Surinam, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, and Fiji. With migration, after India's independence to so many countries, there are brahmins now in many countries of the world.

At present, members of brahman society are basically linked by heredity, marriage and custom. Members of this group are no longer in specific professions, and there are no specific professions, except to the large extent that of priesthood, to which brahmins alone qualify. **I have, during my nine years stay in Caribbean, discovered that Hinduism, amongst immigrant Hindus, did not survive at places where there were no brahmins left or available to meet the religious needs of the community.**

Hinduism is highly philosophical. Actions and their infallibility is at the hub of the Hindu system.. There is hardly any question that a serious seeker may have and the same has not been raised by Arjuna and not most profoundly answered by Lord Krishna in Gita. I may mention that one good thing about Gita is that wherever there is difficulty in understanding it, invariably that can be resolved by closely reading

Mahabharat of which it is a part.

Some call Hinduism 'a way of life'. I consider that '**Hinduism is a view of life**'. Life is thus a basic notion in Hinduism. Another important concept is that of consciousness that measures degree of perfection, what Gita calls '*braahmee-stithi-h*', for attaining it, three things are considered essential; *Suraksha*, meaning security; *Pavitrataa*, purity, and *Parishkaar*, continuous refinement.

These characteristics can be identified with seven states of consciousness, namely *Bhu* (earthly) *Bhuv* (aspirations) *Swah* (comforts), *Mhah* (self actualization), *Janah* (public service), *Tapah* (sacrifice/suffering), *Satyam* (Reality).

Change which is emphasised in the present times is accepted as a natural process in Hinduism. Changes can be of different kinds. In particular there can be a change

..Performance of meritorious actions needs sustained efforts.

with continuity or one with a break. Change for better should therefore mean right or meritorious actions, the maxim is '*prayaas saadhayam su-kritam*, i. e., 'Performance of meritorious actions needs sustained efforts'. Hindu concept of change is that of a *dynamic change with continuity in a constructive framework*.

We are today facing the paradox of speedy scientific advancement with speedy decay in human values. The resolution of paradoxes is done, as I mentioned before, through philosophies, and is exemplified by the lives of illustrious people. Hinduism has both in abundance.

Revivalism and reform are other issues. There have been reformatory movements in India at different times. All the successful ones have reinforced the age old system glorifying role and place of brahmins. As regards Hindu value system and ethics, ours is a rigorous system. It has to be so because the aim is 'total perfection'. Hindu values are not mere sermons; their basis is fully explained in our books. While smritis and other sources list values in several ways, Gita (Chap 16), gives the most comprehensive list of twenty-six of them.

Our next generation, except those who decide to reallocate themselves to India, should experience not much change.

A society should carefully avoid crises. This, to my mind, **is a much bigger and much serious a problem than change. While a change can be orchestrated, perhaps none of the crises.**

As you can see these broadly belong to

two categories -- family related and work related. Fortunately, half of these can be amicably handled by properly building the family bonds depending on brahmanic traditions. By showing strong character and by resolving family problems, the work related problems are also bound to reduce as a consequence of improved support and performance.

Marriage is an important institution and needs to be taken as such. Marriage of brahman boys and girls amongst themselves is a sensitive issue. It certainly cannot be imposed on unwilling persons. However, its merits should be made known. Sometimes it is argued that, in USA, marriages of brahmins among brahmins may not be feasible because of numbers. This situation may be resolved by relaxing geographical constraints, as some are doing. After all this model has successfully worked in India, where population is more than three times that of the USA, and where movement in the past, between various regions was much more problematic than what it is between India and USA today. There is need to have in-depth analysis and guidance to the younger generation, at an appropriate time. No one will undermine importance of right advice, particularly in a situation that needs objective analysis.

The Hindu and brahman traditions are rich in examples for all situations even of the present times. In fact, in my opinion, one important reason for the Hinduism to have shown resilience and having sprung up with new vigor is that it has created examples like that of Ram and Sita for its followers.

The course for 'Brahmins of the Twenty-first Century' seems to be clear. It is *right thinking and right action*, not based on debates and disputations, but on the path followed by illustrious persons.

So friends! fellow brahmins!! let us resolve to follow illustrious examples and try to become one. Combine the strong values and spiritual ideals of a Brahman and the professionalism of the West.

Convention'96 souvenir books are available to members at a nominal cost of \$5/copy plus \$3 S&H. Please make out a check to BSNA and send to P.O.B. 4962, Troy, MI 48099-4962.

A 4-hr video of Convention' 96, made by Neetu and Sonia Sharma, is available for \$15. Call Neetu or Sonia at 516-292-7633 or e-mail Sharma007@aol.com.

Not too early to start planning for Convention'97. It will be held at the Marriott in Troy, MI, on July 4, 5, and 6, 1997. Call Purushottam Sharma at 810-853-4076; e-mail psharma@beaumont.edu.

The BSNA youth

Creating a place for the future

by Deepthi Choubey

The BSNA had its second annual convention this year in Reading, PA. My task was to present the youth perspective of the conference. Charged with this task, I used the convenience of technology and e-mailed many of my fellow participants and asked for their thoughts and perspective on their experiences in early July. Two important outcomes have resulted from this mass e-mail: a backbone for a future e-mail list for young people within the BSNA and a consensus on some issues regarding the way in which the conference is structured. I thank all the people who responded with their thoughts and suggestions. Your ideas will hopefully influence the decisions for the next convention. If you would like to be on the e-mail list, please e-mail me your address at dchoubey@fas.harvard.edu.

One of the over-arching themes of the convention has been the need to preserve our Indian and Brahman heritage. An effective way in which to accomplish this goal is for everyone to realize the emphasis that should be placed on the younger generation. We recognized and appreciated the attempt to create this emphasis and we hope that it will continue.

Convention'96 had many additional features when compared to Convention'95. One of the most important and beneficial was the Youth Program the day before the regular convention. As someone who has been to both conventions, I was pleasantly surprised by people's responses to the question of why they came to the convention. A substantial number of people said that they had such a good time the previous year, that they wanted to repeat the experience. By the end of the convention, as friendships were renewed and new acquaintances made, it became apparent that the positive experience had been repeated. The additional emphasis on programs for youth was appreciated by the younger members of the BSNA. It was extremely beneficial to have time to bond with other people our own age and almost everyone agreed that the program had been repeated.

By no means is it possible to say that the conference was perfect. Instead, one should understand that as a new organization, the BSNA has manifested its vision rather well, although there are still a few kinks that need to be dealt with. Most of the youth comments had to do with the formatting

and substance of programs.

Top among concerns voiced is the need for more time at the conference. Many have suggested an additional day making the conference three, instead of two days long (not including the picnic). One of the main reasons cited for the additional time was a desire for more in-depth discussions on the important topics up for debate. Simply put, an hour and a half is not enough time for 60 people in one age group to get to know each other-- much less discuss the importance of being a Brahman in the context of the western culture.

This year, with the help of Manish Tripathi, Chetana Tiwari, Ruchi Mishra, and Vivek Dwivedi, the 18-21 age group discussed whether one could reasonably find some kind of compromise between the two cultures. Everyone agreed that there are conflicts to be found on many different levels, but at the same time, most seemed willing to try to find a compromise. A common theme amongst the adult speakers this year was the need for re-inventing traditions and rituals to fit our lives here in the west. The youth perspective on this seemed to be a fairly logical one, in that we would prefer knowing about rituals before they are some how reinvented by some

...we would prefer knowing about rituals before they are some how reinvented by some other source.

other source. This perspective is indicative of the youth dynamism in many ways. It reveals an active concern for our culture as well as a desire to preserve parts that we feel are pertinent to the very different lives that we live here in North America.

In the light of the adults' message of understanding why they feel the need to preserve their culture came the corresponding message from the youth that the older generation must understand our position and the difficulty of having been immersed in a different society and yet still struggling to preserve important aspects of our Indian, much less Hindu or Brahman heritage.

In terms of format, the suggestions for the next convention range for more time for younger people to repeatedly interact with one another, including social as well as discussion settings to greater substance to the Youth Program Agenda. Organization seems to be the key to the success of each event in the conference. I hope that the BSNA realizes the importance of the youth perspective and continue to incorporate it in its plans for the next year and the future.

Convention'96 -- my perspective

by Natasha Chaturvedi

I tried to put my perspective in terms of the "Brahman" idea but I'm still in the "what it means to be Indian" mode. Dealing with the "Brahman" part might not happen for me until the third or fourth convention.

For me, personally, the conference has been an interesting and beneficial experience. I didn't grow up with that many Indian kids (let alone the few Brahman families in my community) who I really hit it off with and, looking back on things, the friendships that did develop were primarily a product of my parents' social life. We were friends because our parents were. On our own, we simply did not have that much common. And, when the time came to go move on in our separate lives, there wasn't much there to sustain the friendships.

As I went on to college and graduate school, I ran into the same problem. I couldn't find much in common with the Indian people I met. Having grown up in a really liberal Indian (Brahman) home, I was almost "too American" for many of the Indian people I met but yet "different" than my American friends here because I had an "Indian part."

The differences didn't concern me so much when I was younger but now that I'm starting to really think of my future, I have started to realize that I am truly at crossroads in my own identity. For the first time, I recognize how hard it is to be caught between 2 very different worlds and I often question how much of India I am going to be able to hold onto (or want to hold onto). I don't know (and still don't know) what Indian customs and traditions I am going to keep and what aspects will be lost along the way. It's a very scary prospect and being the eldest in my family, it makes it even scarier since NO ONE has gone before me with these "born into one culture and raised in another" issues.

...I am truly at crossroads in my own identity ... how hard it is to be caught between 2 very different worlds

But, I must admit that going to the BSNA conference this year really helped me think about all of these things in a different way. The event not only enabled me to meet a lot of people who I really enjoyed hanging out with and talking to (there are "normal"

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Indian kids after all) but the conference also opened my eyes to the fact I'm not so alone in debating all of these issues. Being in company with so many fellow Brahmans, it was really nice to not have to explain the background on every little thing (as I often do when I try to explain a problem [ie the issues of dating Indian vs non-Indian] with my non-Indian friends), but to simply jump right into the heart of the matter and talk about it openly.

In the numerous break-out sessions we had, I was struck by the fact that every single person had thought about these issues (to varying degrees) and I could see that we are all grappling with what it means to be Indian-American and/or Brahman (whether our concerns center around parental expectations, dating issues, cultural concerns, etc.).

Personally, I found it very comforting to know that few of us were simply accepting our parents' views as the absolute right way to handle things but, instead, were looking to make our own paths and come to our own conclusions.

In listening to everyone's perspectives, I came away with many ideas and perspectives I had never thought of before (things which I still find myself thinking about even weeks after our convention). It's given me a lot to think about and I learned a lot from other attendees.

So, based on that, I think the conference was really successful for me. I still don't have all the answers but it's so nice knowing that others (of my generation and not of my parents) are also dealing with these issues as well.

Breakout Sessions for children 1 - 12 years

Coordinator - Anita Dubey

The break-out sessions for children under 13 years were divided into 3 groups:

1. 6 years and under - led by Nutan Mishra and Sharad Tewari
2. 7 - 9 years - led by Rajni Malaviya & Mridula Sharma
3. 10 - 12 years - led by Rajni Bhargava

The first group were supplied art paper, coloring books and coloring material and they drew pictures. They also sang songs and told stories.

The second group was given a topic to draw. The theme was - India as you see it. The third group was given to write an essay on the theme - "What would you like to be when you grow up? Why?"

The 7-9 years and 10-12 years were drawing and writing competitions. The prizes were awarded for each age. The proud

winners received medals on the Picnic day:

Drawing Competition: India as I see it:

Juhi Goswami, Amit Sharma - 7 years

Vedant Mishra, Smrita Choubey - 8 years

Vimish Shukla, Amit Mehta - 9 years

Writing Competition: What would you like to be when you grow up? Why?

Shalu Sahore, Priya Sharma - 10 years

Kavita Shukla, Priti Ojha, Sudha Dubey - 11 years

Priya Pandey, Neil Vatsyayan - 12 years

Overall, the children participated in the break-out sessions with great enthusiasm. We tried to combine fun with educational activity. Each one of them looked occupied in some activity or the other. Mothers who were helping out did a great job in an interesting way, coordinating the most difficult age groups i.e. children.

Congratulations to all the winners. Their entries will be published in *Brahma Bharati*.

Age Group 13-14

Coordinator: Dr. Ram Rudra Shukla; Reported by Ajita Shukla

The breakout session of 13-14 year olds was attended by ten boys and girls coming from various places in the USA including Kansas, Texas, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Massachusetts. The moderator of the group was Dr. Ram Rudra Shukla. Even though the people in the group came from different places in the country everyone could relate to each other. The topics discussed included origin and responsibilities of Brahmans and growing up in America.

Juhi Shukla and Juhi Dube talked about transition between the two cultures and how teenagers have to live by Indian traditions at home and be "American" at school or with friends. Ajita Shukla pointed out how hard it was to try to blend in America when it is so obvious that you are different. Alka Tripathi said that it was not that hard for her because her parents were very supportive and open minded. Mahesh Dwivedi talked about his family being very religious, how living close to a temple affected his daily life, and of how it was so hard to be a vegetarian in America.

The rest of the session was spent talking about the origin of the Brahmans and the Caste system. Vidhi Misra said that may be since there is not apprenticeship in India, the men passed their trade onto their sons, and this is why the last names are used to differentiate the castes. Ajita Shukla told the myth that Brahma created all humans and different castes came from different parts of his body. Mahesh Dwivedi talked about the jobs that the different castes did.

Brahmans were teachers, priests, and sages. Dr. Shukla added to the discussions and talked about different roles of prominent Brahmans, their jobs and the cast system as described in Vedas.

On some topics there were obvious disagreements among participants. Occasionally an argument broke out, although at 3:30 PM when it was time to end the session everyone was happy to make new friends. All agreed that the Brahman Samaj of North America was a good idea.

Age Group (15-17)

Coordinator: Mrs. Mamta Tewari; Reported by Aashish Tripathi

The moderators for this discussion were Kavita Mishra, Priti Tiwari and Aashish Tripathi. The adult supervisor was Mrs. Mamta Tiwari. The discussions were lively with many of the 30 plus people participating in talking about topics that ranged from inter-racial marriages to Indian movies. Each topic found people with feelings on both sides of the issue. Some argued that inter-racial marriages were wrong, while others said they felt it was acceptable. Dating was also discussed. Some felt that their parents would not let them date because they were too traditional while others said they had no time to date. Some people were surprised to find that there were parents at the Convention that let their kids date. Also, the pressure to get into a good college felt by the participants was addressed. Those who attended the convention in 1995 felt the 1996 convention was a major step in the right direction. A few people did not like the idea of BSNA, but as a whole the group felt BSNA is good not for its educational aspects, but for the social interaction. Most people said they will attend next year's convention in Michigan.

Youthful suggestions

During the session moderated by Dr. R.P. Tewari, Ms. Sonali Sharma made the following excellent suggestions. The BSNA leadership should consider these seriously.

Since we are Brahmans, we should have prayers before each session and meal during the convention.

Please arrange for teachings on different rituals and ceremonies during the breakfast sessions. (Sonali also offered to help organize this activity in Convention '97-Editor.)

Please include youth (teenagers to 20's) in the BSNA executive, and other organization committees and panels. We want to play a more active role in the BSNA.

An overwhelming experience

It all started with an innocuous sounding phone call in 1994. The caller identified himself as Nirmalendu Choubey, someone I had never heard of. Little did I realize that I am going to hear plenty of that name from that time on. It was not what the caller said but the conviction with which he talked was contagious. I found myself saying that I will do whatever I can. As Mr. Choubey talked about a distant looking project about the formation of an organization of Brahmans of North America, I wondered about the magnitude of the task. My natural reaction was to ask, "Who is going to do it?"

To cut a long story short, Mr. Choubey did it. I still wonder how so much has been achieved so soon. Sitting in the last session of the Convention'96, listening to Mr. Choubey, I watched the audience in the hall and Mr. Choubey on the dais. It has been just over two years but look at the multitude of the human presence. There were people of all ages, people from various regions of North America, people from different walks of life—learned professors, scientists, businessmen, doctors, computer scientists, housewives, and (presumably) even house-husbands.

I expect most people were thinking on the same lines as I was. No body could fail to grasp the immense organizational achievements and strides made by the BSNA. The last session was emotional as well as inspiring. Mr. Choubey excelled in his speech not just because of his oratorical excellence but because of the natural uninhibited emotions in his voice. His voice, occasionally choked and fluctuating through several decibels, simply penetrated the attentive audience. Some people have had complaints against various things but at that moment all anger and all bitterness melted away. What mattered was the BSNA and an all pervading community feeling. Any differences between us appeared to be secondary issues.

The session culminated with the first award ceremony of the BSNA. A large number of people were recognized for their contributions. As Mr. Choubey read the prize-winners' names and listed their contributions, the atmosphere became charged with a strong sentiment of mutual bonding and respect. Personally, I felt as though I am in the seventh heaven. With exceptionally high-sounding compliments, Mr. Choubey announced my name for the Shiromani award. I felt a sense of pride and humility at the same time. Everybody stood up and gave me a standing ovation in an

unprecedented demonstration of love and friendship. It was, to say the least, an overwhelming experience. This is the community to which I am proud to belong.

It did not really matter who got which award, or even who got an award and who did not. At that moment, each one of us felt to be an integral part of the BSNA. Everybody shared the glory of everybody else because the glory belonged to the BSNA. It was apparent that no contribution is too small and no contribution is too great. The greatness of the BSNA is that it is greater than the sum total of its parts. It forms the perfect link between the individual and the community. We reinforce each other. Together, we march into the 21st century. That is the message that the President conveyed. That is the message that came home.

Convention'96—a statistical under-view

There is an excellent article in this issue giving an overview of the convention. In contrast, this one is an underview—whatever that means. If it does not mean anything, call it statistics.

There are three kind of lies—black lie, white lie, and statistics. Come to think of it, I should not have said that, since the director of the convention, who is my very good friend, is an expert statistician. Having been inspired by him, I thought I will also conduct a statistical survey and find out about people's underviews by direct interviews

I knew that the first statistical thing to do would be to choose a random sample. So I stood in the middle of the hall, spun my head around (possibly overdid that), and then stopped in a random direction. I walked a few paces and selected the first person I found for my interview.

I asked him about his impressions of the convention. He first looked at me with suspicion and then with apprehension. Finally, he shrieked, burst into tears, and hid his face into the aanchal of his lady-escort. His response, though discouraging, was hardly surprising, considering that he was only nine months old.

After this unsuccessful attempt, I decided to leave statistics to statisticians and forget about random sampling. Here is an amalgam of views, overviews and underviews which I gathered from some people—not chosen statistically:

*We should add an extra day without adding extra cost.

*The direction from Baltimore-Washington Airport to Reading was rather confusing.

*There was always a chaos at the food

line. Donuts have eggs and are loaded with calories. I would have preferred idli, dhokla, or upma from Indian restaurants.

*New film songs were played loudly and are not very pleasant. We should play some Sanskrit stotras sung by Pankaj Malik.

*There should have been a plaque for Choubeyji and also for Mrs. Choubey.

*The announcements of the names of recipients of different awards should have been made either by the Convention Director or the General Secretary. The awards should be given by the President.

*I was glad to see youth participating in the panel discussions. We should also have women participants or women's forum.

*A Convention in the west coast is needed once in five years. *In order to control food-lines, there should be volunteers for serving food.

*I am impressed by the timeliness and punctuality of the organizers. On July 4th I encountered Mr. Mahendra Pal Misra and Sacchit Pandey lugging cartons to the registration at an early hour of 7.0 am. On July 5th and 6th I saw Satish Tripathi and Nitin Purohit all dressed ready to tackle the tasks for the day. The persons leading the aerobics, meditation, power yoga, and Ayurvedic talk were in their designated rooms at the appointed time. I was surprised to see people getting up at 5.30 am to attend the sessions.

*On 4th July I really enjoyed 'dandia raas' as a group activity. Adults, teenagers, and youngsters - all took part in it. Anil Dubey and Awadh Pandey seemed to have tons of fun doing the raas.

*On 5th morning, I found it heart warming to see somebody touching the floor in reverence to all the Brahman attendees. On the picnic day I noticed the same gentleman serving rice to groups of people.

*The afternoon session on 5th for the parents of young adult was interesting. I enjoyed Shashi Pandey's talk on rituals, and Suresh Tiwari's candid and courageous presentation of how he was able to resolve the problems of his children. I enjoyed Vinod Tewary's speech on how our children should carve a niche for themselves in science and math. His emphasis on the importance of writing was very appropriate. I wish he himself had taken that advice.

*On 5th July, the Presidential and keynote speeches were just about the right length. If the speeches were any longer the "Janata" would have been up in arms. The cultural show was great. May I suggest that we should commend Anil Dubey for all his behind the scene activities. He was as fast as a whirl wind, laying and removing the props from the stage. It was hard work!

BSNA Awards

The BSNA will give following awards each year to its members at the annual convention provided suitable person(s) have been identified. The level of each award and the general criteria for each award are given below. Level 1 is the highest award. Level 3a is between Level 2 and Level 3. Level 4 awards are meant for encouraging the participation of the younger members of the association in various activities of the convention.

A. Organizational awards

i. Shiromani Puraskaar; Level 1, 0-1 awards each year for distinguished contributions over an extended period of exceptional value to the BSNA.

ii. Karmanishtha Puraskaar: Level 2, 0-5 awards each year: for distinguished contributions over an extended period of very significant value to the BSNA.

iii. Shreshtha Puraskaar; Level 3; 0-25 awards each year: For important services to BSNA resulting into a substantial expansion and/or substantially improved operation of the association.

B. Recognition awards:

(The number of awards to be determined by the President each year)

President's recognition:

Brahma-Gaurava Puraskaar; Level 1; recognizing members for their excellent single or multiple contributions to the association and the community.

Vice President's recognition:

Brahma-Deep Puraskaar; Level 2; recognizing members for their very significant single or multiple contributions to the association and the community.

Editor's recognition:

Brahma-Bharati Puraskaar; Level 3a; recognizing members for their excellent literary or journalistic contributions to Brahma-Bharati and/or other publications of the BSNA.

C. Participation awards:

Navasuman Puraskaar; Level 4; to provide encouragement to younger members for participating in the cultural and other activities at the annual convention. To be given at the discretion of the cultural coordinator with the approval of the President.

D. Community award:

Alankaar Puraskaar: Level 1; 0-1 award each year: honoring members for such exceptional achievements in their professional fields which makes the community proud of them.

E. Keynote speaker : Level 1

An invitation to give the keynote speech is the biggest honor given by the BSNA. A plaque will be presented to the keynote speaker as a token of our appreciation.

Complete list of award winners at Convention'96

SHIROMANI :

Vinod K. Tewary (edited Brahma Bharati, wrote articles dealing with difficult issues, author of the adhoc constitution, wrote BSNA anthem, created home page on the Internet)

KARMANISHTHA :

Bhaw Dutt Shukla (contributed to getting tax exempt status, negotiation of contracts, provided support at crucial moments)

Jagar Sharma (contributed to membership, fund raising, host to public meetings)

Pooran Tripathi (a very early supporter and host to meetings, contributed to directory update campaign, creation of Texas Chapter, membership and a very successful convention campaign)

Purushottam Sharma (contributed in membership drive, fund raising, creation of Michigan chapter)

Ramendra Pandey (contributed to membership, fund raising and convention campaign, host to public meetings)

SHRESHTHA :

Anoop Bhargava (coordinator of Convention'95)

Arvind and Bhama Pathak (inauguration of first chapter in their house)

Awadh Pandey (early support, provided list of names)

Daya Nand Sharma (hosting chapter inauguration meeting)

Gupteshwar and Shanti Pathak (very supportive and host to public meetings)

Kedar Sharma (for broadcasting the first BSNA convent. in VOA)

Lakshmi Shanker Dube (starting the Quebec Chapter)

Lila Dhar Mishra (early support with list of names)

Neetu and Sonia Sharma (very helpful, video taped first convention)

Prabhakar Misra (early supporter and host to public meeting)

Raga Misra (coordinator cultural program first convention)

Ram Behari Misra (hosting a public meeting)

Ram Das Choudhary (early support through providing list of Brahmins)

Ram P. Tewari (host to public meeting)

Rama Kant Chaturvedi (provided support in holding both conventions)

Ramesh Pandey (spreading the name of the of BSNA at public places)

Shambhu Nath Tripathi (early supporter, provided list of names)

Sonia Sharma (very helpful, video taped first convention)

Suresh Tiwari (early support and host to

public meeting)

Trayambak Nath Bajpayee (hosting public mtgs and willingness to help)

Umesh Shukla(hosting public meeting)

BRAHMA GAURAV:

Anita Dubey (hosting the meeting in which BSNA was founded, managing the New England Chapter, organizing the cultural programs at the convention'96, celebrating the first anniversary of the founding of BSNA with fanfare)

Jitender P. Dubey (for being awarded a very prestigious WAAVP/Pfizer Award and being an early supporter of BSNA, opening the first chapter, hosting public meeting)

Nitin D. Purohit (starting the Michigan Chapter, excellent results in membership, fund raising and convention campaign)

Satish K. Tripathi (for managing a very professional convention and energizing the Washington area folks, hosting a very well attended public meeting)

Shyam N. Shukla (early supporter, increased membership, editor of first directory, created N. Cal. chapter, contributed to Brahma Bharati and home page)

BRAHMA DEEP:

S. Anand Mishra (edited the second directory, created a relational database)

Satish Mishra (edited the first souvenir magazine which was intellectually stimulating and financially rewarding)

Ghan Shyam Pandey (early supporter, created ILL. Chapter, contributed immensely in the constitution committee)

Mahendra Misra (host to public meeting, created Pennsylvania chapter, campaigned successfully to raise funds for the convention and increase participation)

Uday Shukla (developed the relational database for the second directory)

Vivek Shukla (designed the BSNA logo when he was only 18 years old and strong supporter of BSNA)

BRAHMA BHARATI:

Anuranjita Tewary (contributed to Brahma Bharati and home page)

NAVASUMAN:

Given to all the young participants.

ALANKAAR:

Ramanath Sharma (author of a five volume study on Panini's grammar of the Sanskrit language, a man of international fame and an authority in Sanskrit language, a very strong supporter of BSNA, the first keynote speaker)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Bhudev Sharma (the keynote speaker at the Convention'96).

Details of the BSNA awards and their selection criteria are given in a white paper. Awards committee: Gupteshwar Pathak (Chair), Bimal Malaviya, Bhama Pathak.

Convention 1996: an overview

by Ramanath Sharma

This article is divided in two sections:

(i) **The first section highlights accomplishments and problems of Convention'96 within the perspective of the BSNA's establishment and its first convention.**

(ii) **The second section reports on the young adult session of Convention'96 with the hope that planners of Convention'97 will organize sessions devoted to our younger generation.**

Convention'95 first heralded the establishment of BSNA amid outside criticisms and apprehensions. It was not unnatural then to organize lectures and discussions on themes such as: What is a Brahman? Why a Brahman Samaj? What are the goals and objectives of such a Samaj? The outcome of the first convention left more questions than there were answers. Convention 1995 established three sets of realizations: (a) that the BSNA is not only established, but can also function as a vibrant organization for preserving the Brahman heritage; (b) that the North American Brahmans can greatly benefit from this organization, and (c) the samskaaras constitute the single most important legacy for the Brahmans of North America. The Brahmans went home convinced that we must preserve our heritage and that we must preserve and nurture our samskaaras. Above all, they went home convinced about the need of an organization such as BSNA. Nirmalendu Choubey's selfless efforts toward establishing BSNA got a well deserved reinforcement. The issues of Brahma Bharati with its copious reports and articles are proofs that this assessment is generally correct.

Convention'96 organized sessions and lectures on a specific theme: Brahmans of the 21st century. Lectures and discussions were organized not so much on whether we need the BSNA, or what does it mean to be a Brahman, but mostly on what the Brahmans must do to ensure the security of our heritage in the 21st century. The Brahmanical values and samskaar constituted the primary focus of lectures and discussions.

The keynote address of Prof Bhudev Sharma had "Change" as its theme. He presented his ideas systematically, dwelling upon basic constructs of his theme through the history of the Brahmanical heritage. He had some very illuminating thoughts on how to perceive our value system through changes brought upon by changes in time and space. Education about our Brahman heritage and perception of ideals through

change, which, in turn, may be conducive towards preserving our heritage through the 21st century became the main stay. Prof Sharma did a splendid job in talking to us, rather than reading his pre-published lecture. The BSNA reinforced the audience's understanding of Prof. Sharma's thoughts by publishing his lecture in toto in the souvenir volume.

The souvenir volume, though without a name or a pre-designated theme, in my estimate, can be called the biggest single achievement of Convention'96. This was a much more systematic way of educating our membership about different aspects of the Brahman heritage in general, and the convention in particular. The star attraction of this volume must be the series of FAQ questions. These questions are very important, and, in many ways I hope, clear up a lot of misunderstanding about the establishment of the BSNA. Members must ponder these questions and answers so that they could be better informed about our heritage within the perspective of Hinduism in general, and its caste structure in particular.

Prof Bhudev Sharma's article on change, L.N. Chaturvedi's article on Krishna as supreme godhead, S.N. Shukla's article on Yajna and Ashrama, S.P. Saraswat's article on Modern Science and Ancient Spirituality, and articles on ritual samskaaras like the yajnopavita and vivaaha, must also be commended for their clear and informative rendition. I wish L.N. Chaturvedi had not made his article as controversial. He should have focused more on the pursuit of the Supreme (not godhead) and His characterization, and least on defending Avtaravada against Mayavada. For, everything depends on faith and the route one takes. Consider Physics, poetry and laws of god. Are you still with me? If yes, you must have read Vinod Tewary's article. I appreciate this article more for its focus on identity with faith, through diverse routes. I appreciate S.N. Shukla's article for its succinctness and clarity. Consider, in this connection, Prabhat Tewari's article on meditation, a brief linkage with Time of D.S. Nagda and Surendra Pandey's Matsya Purana.

A general comment must also be made about the use of language(s). The magazine is published in English with quotations from Sanskrit and Hindi. BSNA must function in English, especially because our younger generation is the focus of our endeavors. It will be a lot easier for most of us to speak or write Hindi but that cannot serve the younger audiences. It is for this reason that whenever Sanskrit or Hindi is used we must use it briefly, and with English translation and explanation.

Vasudhaiva kuTumbakam "this entire earth is a family", was one of the logos printed on top of the souvenir cover. A lady's remark at the general keynote session perhaps struck a very sensitive chord. She realized that this session of the BSNA felt more like a gathering of Kutumba 'clan, family'. Sometimes we express certain sentiments which, when pondered, become guiding light for many a goals one may aspire to accomplish. Ramanath Sharma's answer to the young girl about transference of heritage (Convention 1995), dubbed as "samskaaras", Vinod Tewary's one sentence remark about the need of transferring the samskaaras to the younger generation (BBharati) are two examples. Here we have a third one in the notion of "kuTumba". These brief sentiments must be recognized, developed into some concrete programs, and be valued. The BSNA must not only educate about the samskaaras as part of the Brahman heritage, but must focus on how to reinforce, nurture and pass them on to the 21st century Brahmans. This effort can find a great deal of success if BSNA develops and functions as a "kuTumba (family)", away from the "KuTumba (India)", gradually turning itself into a real "KuTumba (USA)". This sense of belonging to a KuTumba will go far beyond. It will also enhance a sense of familial relation within members, and thus will serve as a base for nurturing and reinforcing the Brahman samskaaras. The pundits of the BSNA will find it a lot easier to increase membership and thus enhance their endeavors toward educating the 21st century Brahmans.

Now a little note about discussions: **we need to structure panels more systematically around themes, carefully selecting discussants and panelists.** We must allow more time to questions and answers, not necessarily criticisms. Meditation, fitness and yoga sessions must be planned with more structure and anticipated participation. I shall fail in my duty if I did not comment on entertainment. It is amazing how Anita Dubey can do what she did. BSNA must appreciate, and ensure enough assistance to, Anita for organizing such a fabulous entertainment program. Jagar Sharma and Vinod Tewary will be happy to see that a baby named kavi sammelan of the 1995 convention is fast becoming an icon. It is an unique endeavor, and shall be continued unstructured, if possible. BSNA should make it a practice of keeping their eyes and ears open through program presentations. For, this is where they can find talents for organizing future panels, discussions, activities and entertainment.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Food for thought must be translated into real food. We had plenty of delicious food. The Brahmans are famous for fasting; they are also famous for being hungry. I wish we had some discipline and compassion for those who were following in the lines. I saw a lot of wasted food and drinks. Organizers and vendors must learn a lesson from this. This criticism does not apply to snacks.

My way, your way; Highway, bye way

One of the most important sessions at the 1996 convention was, at least in my perception, and certainly not because of my own involvement with it, the young adult session. This was planned as a way of communicating with our young adults on family and familial values. I had not forgotten our young adults' rumblings against BSNA as a marriage bureau (convention'95). Since Convention'96 was devoted to the theme of the 21st century Brahmans, this young adult session was perceived as a must. I was asked by Nirmalendu Choubey to speak at this session on family and familial values.

I made it very clear at the outset that I was not going to lecture. I chose to converse, instead. I informed my audience that familial relations in Hinduism covered a very broad spectrum of relations. I chose this format so that our young adults could react back and converse concurrently. They did not thus have to wait for a question-answer period at the end of what could have been my lecture. I briefly talked about the notion of family at large: the most immediate family, the extended family and the whole world as yet another extended family. I switched to relations between parents and children. In this connection I talked first about, "let your mother be god"; "let your father be god"; and "let your guru be god". I then moved on to parenting within the perspective of samskaaras and family values. I then explained the much widely accepted view on parenting:

**laalayet panchvarSaaNi dasha
varSaaNi taaDayet/ praapte tu ShoDaSe
varSe putram mitravad aacaret//**

**'love them for 5 years; discipline them
for the next ten; when they approach
sixteen, treat them as your friend'**

I elaborated my points with illustrations focusing on my own relation with my parents and son. I pulled additional illustrations from families of my friends. Till this point the conversation remained one sided. There was practically no response, reaction or comment. To provoke them to speak, I emphasized that our young adults were perceptive yet they lacked proper understanding of our value system. That they were rebellious but, unfortunately, they did not

have the patience for understanding where we were coming from. This provocation worked and our conversation focused basically on the following topics: (i) that our values are out of date and out of place; (ii) parents are over protective; (iii) they (parents) believe that their way is the best way; and (iv) parents are dictators.

Career and marriage became two focal points in relation to which insensitivity and dictatorial attitude of parents were attacked. Why must a Brahman kid become a doctor? How does a Brahman daughter not encounter such a push? Why does she have

Love alone is not enough. Parenting with samskaras ... will prove to be beneficial.

to marry a Brahman? Why could a Brahman offspring not marry a non-Brahman, or anybody he or she loves? Little had I realized that I was in a lion's den. I have presented and defended my views, generally successfully, at scores of meetings and lectures. I have never felt so defensive as I did at this session. Thanks to Mahendra Pal Mishra who came to fetch me for another session.

I will rate this session as a failure, insofar as its basic purpose of effectively educating our young adults about our familial values is concerned. This failure was not caused as much because of the incompetence of speakers and discussants as it was caused by the general atmosphere of the session. I witnessed a lot of misunderstanding about, and intolerance for, our ways of life on part of the young adults. This was heightened by their unwillingness to communicate. I realized through my experiences at this session, and my conversations with many a parents, that the situation is precarious. Our youth are very perceptive and intelligent. Yet they are hostile towards many aspects of our value system. This seemingly paradoxical situation can be corrected by opening communication and establishing dialogs with our young adults. There is a situation of conflict which must be resolved. If we wish our kids to be what we wish them to be and do what we wish them to do, we have to do some basic homework in parenting. We have to raise them in consonance with our value system. We have to reinterpret our value system and make adjustments and compromises preserving the spirit of the value system. This has to be practiced right from the beginning of parenting.

Kids must be encouraged to excel in the area of their motivation. It is their drive which will be instrumental in accomplishing parental aspirations. Marriages must be

arranged, so what if not by parents. But compatibility must be taken into consideration before any marital arrangement. Compatibility is a broad and complex notion. It has got many facets: personality, physical, mental and behavioral traits, family, race, color, even blood. As I write this I am hearing a TV report on lab mice. They say they found a gene which, when removed, renders a mouse free from caring for its youth. I start wondering: are there genes determining our behavioral choices, incompatibility, divorces, and so on. Genetics is still in its infancy. But I believe that we are in for many surprises. That is, as the science develops and solves many mysteries for us, we may stop and think seriously about compatibility as a serious variable. Love alone is not enough. Parenting with samskaras, eventhough not literally but in its spirit, will prove to be beneficial.

Five to fifteen is the age when our samskaras can be reinforced and nurtured. This is the age when rituals, god(s), religion, culture and relations with (extended) family, can be introduced and developed. Kids can be encouraged to read stories about, and do school presentations on, India in general, her culture and familial relations in particular. All the parents have to do is to serve as a role model and encourage them to undertake such endeavors and guide them to understand them. How your kid will react to you largely depends on how you raise them. If you do not have patience to understand and listen to them, they will not have any patience for you. If parents presented themselves as role models and did their homework, kids will not treat you as the other party. They will not consider you as a dictator, and discuss things with you for the sake of winning an argument. They will know where you come from. Joys of parenting must be hard-earned.

The spirit of samskaaras and value system must play a central role in earning these joys. We must open communication and establish fruitful dialogs with our young adults. This demands creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. This is the only way of accomplishing fruitful dialogs. Perhaps a lot has been lost as far as our present young adults are concerned. But this must also serve as a warning for us for the benefit of those who may not be far behind. BSNA must seize this opportunity of establishing fruitful dialogs with young adults. Planners of convention 1997 must start planning sessions devoted to our younger generation.

From the editor: Your comments on this (as well as other) articles are invited for possible publication in BB or home page.

Full text of the

President's Address
delivered by Nirmalendu Choubey at
the General Body Meeting on July 6,
1996 (Convention'96)

Members of the Board of Trustees, Members of the Executive Committee, Chapter and Area coordinators, Editor of Brahma Bharati and the Home Page, Editor of the Souvenir Magazine, Members of Brahma Samaj of North America and their families:

This is indeed a historic occasion. When I started talking to fellow Brahmans about the idea of a directory many were skeptical. When I said we ought to form a Brahma Samaj, the division of Hindus was the charge. Many carried with them historical baggage that ranged from the Muslim and English rule of India to Nazi Germany. These are incendiary charges. I believe this conference as well as our organization as a whole has proven to be fireproof against these issues.

What I had envisioned, and like so many other people had already done, was a consolidation of a community in order to preserve and explore our common culture and values. Indians exist all over this world outside of India. This necessitates that we be able to hold onto our identity, but this does not mean that we dismiss everything else around us. Instead, **we must analyze, understand and respect the world in which we live and the people with whom we interact and share our lives. In order to stay true to the fundamental tenets of our philosophy, we have embraced the precepts of tolerance, respect, education and understanding. To this effect, we are a group of people who do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of caste, color, gender, national origin, political persuasion, race or religion. Most of us are professionals engaged in the field of education, medicine, art, science and technology. We believe in equality and justice for all. We have values similar to many advanced cultures existing anywhere in the world. Our ancestors have contributed immensely to the history and culture of India and that of the Hindu religion. We are known for humility, service and excellence in every endeavor we choose to undertake. We are justifiably very proud of our heritage.**

This is our second annual convention and first general body meeting. We hope to make this a tradition and hold this meeting every year during our annual convention.

Today, I want to tell you, the state of

Brahman Samaj of North America. In last twelve months we have achieved accomplishments of paramount importance. Many of our initiatives have been immensely successful, but like many new organizations some initiatives have met with, shall we say, not quite success.

The foundation for this convention was laid the same day we had the picnic last year on the second day of the convention. I met with Dr. Satish Tripathi, Dr. Jitendra Prakash Dubey and Mr. Kailash Sharma. We discussed the idea of finding a hotel between the Washington DC area and the New York city. Later, Dr. Rajender Kumar Sharma took upon the responsibility to search for a hotel in New Jersey. After a very careful analysis of all the options we had Reading was chosen to be the site of choice. At the same time we requested Professor Satish Tripathi to take upon the responsibility of the Convention Director. There are several people involved all over North America to make this convention a success, however, one of them does stand out. It was very clear to me from the very beginning that in this person we had a seasoned professional. We went through some very rough time but I never recall this person being anything but a gentleman. Today, I like to honor our convention direc-

..a consolidation of a community in order to preserve and explore our common culture and values..

tor Professor Satish Tripathi for his exemplary contribution.

Choosing a key note speaker was another hurdle that we had to clear. Professor Ramanath Sharma performed brilliantly last year. As a result he raised our consciousness of the issues that we all must deal. We searched all over and enlisted the help of several people including Professor Bhudev Sharma to look for a key note speaker for this convention. Then one day, thanks to Dr. Shyam Narayan Sharma, it dawned upon us that amongst us we already had a person who was eminently qualified to be our next Keynote speaker. I had met Professor Sharma and his wife who had invited me into their home for an exceptional meal in the initial phase of my journey two years ago. They were very receptive to the idea of a directory and offered their services in making it a reality. To this day, I wonder how I let this kind of dedication escape me for so long. I discussed the matter with Dr. Vinod Tewary who not only supported the idea enthusiastically but

agreed to make the request on our behalf. I want to thank Professor Sharma for accepting to become our second Keynote speaker. We are thankful to you for this important contribution.

The person who introduced me to Dr. Bhudev Sharma is a family friend of ours from more than one generation. He is also the person who invited all the Brahmans from the state of his residence to meet me. I recall, in the first listing of Brahmans that was issued in 1994 his state topped the list. That person is none other but the Chairman of our Board of Trustees Professor Suresh Tiwari. Thank you Professor Tiwari for being such a valuable member of this organization. Through this organization, I am sure, our friendship will also continue to the next generation.

I want our members to note that our Board of Trustees is made up of some very distinguished people from our community. Every one of them is fully qualified to be not only a Keynote speaker here, but anywhere. Let us salute our members of the Board of Trustees. Last year we formed a committee to study our adhoc constitution and recommend a revision. The ratification of a new constitution is my top most priority. I want to thank the members of that committee. I particularly want to thank Prof. Ghanshyam Narayan Pandey for his scholarly work in this committee.

We have now published two directories. The first one was edited by Dr. Shyam N. Shukla. The second one was edited by Dr. S. Anand Mishra. The second directory was based on a relational database developed by Mr. Uday Shukla. Mr. Shukla has continued to develop the database to meet our increasingly complicated needs. Dr. Shyam Narayan Shukla manifested an integral part of our vision of connecting all Brahmans through a comprehensive directory. Dr. Satchidanand Mishra stretched the horizons of communication even further. Many of us would not be here had it not been for the dedication of these great Brahmans. I want to recognize Dr. Shyam N. Shukla, Dr. S. Anand Mishra and Mr. Uday Shukla for their priceless contribution.

There are several families who are helping various initiatives of Brahma Samaj. However, there is one family which stands out. This family gave us our logo and the banner that you see here. I want to recognize Vivek Shukla for his logo design at a time he was not even 18 years old. I want to recognize the entire family of Dr. Shyam N. Shukla and his brother Mr. Devendra N. Shukla for their dedication to our cause.

We have amongst us a Pundit who is soft

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

spoken but made of steel. He is an original thinker. You can win an argument but only if he lets you. Even his detractors have learnt to admire him. Technologically he is as advanced as any body. He is dedicated to the cause and always willing to engage any one in a discussion on BSNA. He gave us the adhoc constitution which governs us even today. He gave us our anthem. He gave us Brahma Bharati. Earlier this year he propelled us into the twenty first century by giving us a home page on the internet. I feel privileged to know this person. The history of BSNA could not have been as illuminating as it is, without this great Brahman. Let us honor Dr. Vinod Tewary.

Brahman Samaj of North America became a tax exempt corporation in USA this year. Many people think this to be automatic for any ethnic organization. This simply isn't so. It has taken us more than six months of hard work to gain this status. Let us recognize our Treasurer, Mr. Bhaw Dutt Shukla for his tireless efforts. Thanks to him now we have a legitimacy many thought we did not have.

As you are aware, BSNA is divided into eight regions administratively. These regions are vast lands stretching thousands of miles in every direction. It is not easy to communicate on a regular basis with coordinators as well as the membership. In a growing organization such as ours, recruiting people to be our foot soldiers where no one knows you is not an easy job. Communicating with so many people demands dedication and perseverance. I fully sympathize with their predicament. I take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of Mr. Mahendra Misra, Mr. Purushottam Sharma and Pooran Tripathi. Thank you.

One way to serve our membership is to have Chapters in areas with a large concentration of Brahmans. Seven chapters were formed prior to the last convention. Since then we have formed seven more. We expect to form the 15th chapter in Atlanta very soon. Based on the increase in general membership, attendance at this convention, the amount of donations received responsiveness to the needs of the membership as well as the organization I want to honor Mr. Nitin Purohit, the former chapter coordinator of the Michigan Chapter and currently our Vice President, for his outstanding performance. I also want to recognize Dr. Ramendra Pandey and Mr. Jagar Sharma for their distinguished performance.

Amongst us is an outstanding lady who has been our foot soldier from almost the beginning. It was at her home that the Brahman Samaj was founded. She is the

one who celebrated the first anniversary of the founding of BSNA with a great fanfare. She is also the one who has excited the younger generation about Brahman Samaj. She has performed brilliantly as our Program Coordinator. She has not slept for months and I am sure both she and her husband are anxious to catch on their sleep. I admire her energy, enthusiasm and talent as an artist. Let us recognize Dr. Anita Dubey. Anitaji, thank you.

There is no organization which can survive without the financial support of the membership as well as the community. We subsidize the cost of the convention through donations to allow more people than it would otherwise be to attend the convention. This year the deficit projected went beyond our wildest imagination. This happened at a time when we were running out of yearly membership funds, which are used to meet non-convention cash flow needs, due to a very poor performance of our membership campaign and membership renewal campaign. Thus in light of an impending financial debacle we searched for a solution. I want to recognize Dr. Satish Misra for his contribution and genius in bringing to you our first souvenir magazine which is not only educational, but also financially rewarding. Dr. Misra, I just want to say thank you and extend to you and your family my heartfelt gratitude. I also want to take this opportunity to thank those who contributed to the magazine financially and substantively. I particularly want to thank Mr. Gupteshwar and Shanti Pathak, Dr. Arvind and Bhama Pathak, Drs Raj Kishore and Prabha Tripathi.

You are all very familiar with Professor Ramanath Sharma. He mesmerized us last year so much that there are many of us still under the influence of that spell. Throughout the year, he has been an excellent resource to all of us. He has contributed to the souvenir magazine by responding to some very difficult questions. I commend him for his no nonsense approach to the matter. The responses are entirely his with no modification from any of the organizers of the BSNA. I thank him for his priceless contribution in this regard.

I thank Madhuri Tiwari, Raju Tripathi and Rajiv Misra for doing an excellent job in the youth program. This program will now become a regular feature for BSNA. I also thank all those young Brahmans who chaired various break out sessions.

My final debt of gratitude goes to you, the general membership; I thank you all for attending this convention and for heading toward the goals and vision that we set for ourselves.

BSNA on the media

The BSNA has had a substantial exposure on the media. The President was interviewed by Eagle Times, a local daily of Reading, PA. Detailed account of the Convention'96 and the list of award winners were published in many Indian-American journals. Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Aditya Shukla, an account of the BSNA was published in Kadambini, a leading Hindi magazine of India. Of course one of our own members, Mr. Kedar Sharma, is a leading radio journalist at the Voice of America. His interviews of Prof. Ramanath Sharma, Dr. Anita Dubey, and Mr. Nirmalendu Choubey were broadcast on the Voice of America.

The BSNA home page

Checked out our home page yet? It will soon have a new look with audio segments and other fun stuff. By soon, I mean within the next 10 years. OK, if you promise to visit, I will get it ready by the end of October, 96. It will have the convention pictures in color. The electronic edition of the BB is already available in color and can be sent to you on request.

<http://www.cs.umd.edu/~tripathi/bsna/bsnamain.htm>

The next issue

- *More photos from Convention'96.
- *The golden kids. Send us a description and picture of your golden kid by Oct. 15.
- *Children's prize-winning art-work and writings from Convention'96.
- *A feature on 'The better half.'
- *Newly weds. If you, or anyone you know, are newly weds, please send us a description and a picture by Oct. 15.
- *Some new regular columns are being considered for the BB. Please let us have your comments/suggestions about these.
- *Matrimonial advertisements from members: Since people are already calling us a matrimonial agency, so why not! We will have a box number service so that advertisers can remain anonymous if they want.
- *Recipes: Tell us the secrets of your gourmet cooking.
- *Films: We, at BSNA, seem to talk always about the ancient rishis. Someone like Madhuri Dixit may be a welcome alternative to talk about occasionally. There are rumors that many Brahmans watch movies and even enjoy them.

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Aurveda, the art and science of healthy living

by **Shri K. Mishra, M.D., M.S., Ayurvedacharya**

(Summary of a presentation given by the author at Convention'96)

Ayurveda is the oldest healthcare discipline in the world. It has originated from A t h r a r v a V e d a .



Ayurveda emphasizes on health protection, prevention and various other healthcare services. The perfect health is defined as balanced humor, (Vata Pitta Kapha), balanced digestive system, balanced tissues (Lymph, blood, muscle, etc.), and excretory systems. In addition there must be happiness of senses, mind, and spirit. Ayurveda has eight disciplines, kayam-chikitsa (internal medicine), shalya (surgery), shalkaya (ent and Ophthalmology), agad tantra (toxicology), komar bhritya (pediatrics), prasuti (obstetrics gynecology), bhoot vidya (psychiatry/ psychology), kamsutra (sexology) and rasayana (rejuvenation). The diagnosis of various illnesses can be diagnosed by pulse and physical exam. The treatment includes preventative and therapeutic by using various herbal and non herbal products with special emphasis on kaya-kalp (rejuvenation).

Brahmans of the 21st century

by **Dr. Shri Kant Misra**

Participants: Dr. L.S. Dube, Dr. J.P. Dubey, Prof. Ramanath Sharma, Mr. Vivek Shukla, and Ms. Rekha Tripathi.

Dr. L.S. Dube described nine qualities of Brahmans of ancient India. A Brahman was supposed to be simple and straight forward, austere, contented, forgiving, kind, self-disciplined, knowledgeable, charitable, and compassionate. Dr. J.P. Dubey spoke on his experiences. How he was able to achieve his distinguished status as a senior scientist. Brahmanic values enabled him to achieve this honor. He stressed the importance of hard work.

Professor Ramanath Sharma threw light upon the family values of our society. In this context he explained the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the whole world as a single family) - which is one of

very basic (or universal family-hood) characteristics of Hinduism, and the proper following of this principle can lead the whole world to the utmost peace and harmony. Ms. Rekha Tripathi was quite optimistic about the bright future of the Brahmans of 21st century. She jokingly noted that many ancient customs and outfits are repeating in the present era, such as piercing of ears, wearing of kundals (ear-rings), growing long hair, etc. by males. Mr. Vivek Shukla spoke about Brahmans growing into two cultures. The challenges forced by individuals at home, schools, and work place can be conflicting. The Brahmanical values learnt at home can enable individuals to succeed in the future.

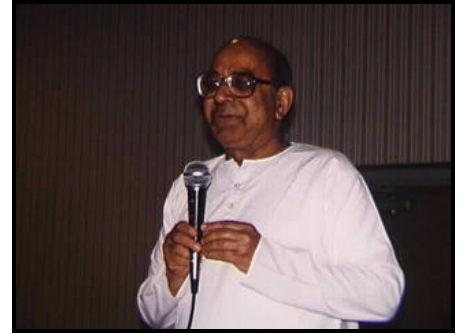
From your editor- closing comments

There were many more events and panel speeches which, unfortunately, we could not cover. There are some very nice articles in this issue. However, I am particularly pleased to present the excellent articles from our youth, Deepti Choubey and Natasha Chaturvedi. Look at their logical and scientific exposition of thoughts, refreshing frankness, and their forward looking attitudes. I hope other younger members of the BSNA will also contribute to BB.

The rest of the story is in pictures—on this page and two supplementary pages. If you want any of these pictures by e-mail, I will be pleased to send them to you.



Ram Tewari speaking at a panel.
Jagar Sharma chairing kavi-sammelan.



Rekha Tripathi speaking at a panel.
A.K. Sharma volunteered for distribution at the food line.



(Abv) Priti Ojha at the cultural program;
(Blw, L to R): Vivek Shukla speaking at a panel; Nitin Purohit, Vice President; and Bhaw Shukla, Treasurer of the BSNA.



CONVENTION'97

July 4-5-6, 1997

Troy Marriott Hotel, Troy, Michigan

a three-day fun-filled extravaganza

for the whole family

July 5&6 (Convention):

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*Register By 3/31/97.....\$150/Person; \$ 249/Family

*Register By 5/31/97\$175/Person; \$ 299/Family

Registration at the Hotel: \$25 Surcharge

July 4:

***Supplement A:** Youth Program Ages 20 to 34

***Supplement B:** Coordinators/Trustees/Convention Committee Meetings

**Fees include accommodation on July 5th, meals and entertainment on July 5th & 6th. For supplement A &/or B please add the prevailing convention rate at the time of the registration. A single or family discount of \$25.00 is available until May 31, 1997 to those who are registering for ALL three days. Singles' rates based on double occupancy.*

For Additional Information, please call Purushottam Sharma @ 810-853-4076 or Nitin Purohit @ 810-643-7643, or write to BSNA, P.O. Box 4962, Troy, MI 48099-4962.

Brahma-Bharati

From
BSNA
POB 371
Manlius, NY 13104-0371

****Convention'96****
Details and
pictures of the
grand event.