

THE SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST

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Indians! Discover Your Glory!

Once a poverty-stricken descendent of a once-prosperous clan went to a foreign land in search of better prospects in life. He struggled hard to succeed there. Meanwhile a resident of that foreign land heard about this person's ancestral wealth, came to his family estate, found a vast treasure buried there and became a millionaire.

This allegory illustrates the state of modern Indians vis-a-vis Westerners. Indians are going to the West in search of greener pastures and are struggling to make it big amidst cut-throat competition in the corporate jungles there. But Westerners are coming to India to understand the Vedic philosophy and culture. And by studying, assimilating and adopting the Vedic principles, they are finding complete fulfillment in their lives. In this series of articles entitled 'Indians, Discover Your Glory', we will examine Western culture and its shallowness, Western science and its limitations, Vedic science and its coherence and Vedic culture and its sagacity. This knowledge will pave the way for all intelligent Indians to discover their own glory and thus help India lead the world through spiritual culture.

The first article in this series discusses the evidence that testifies to the glory of India.

LET THE EVIDENCE SPEAK

The June 1 issue of *The Week* carried the cover story 'The Legend of Dwarka'. The eleven-page article reported the archaeological discovery of a submerged city under the seabed off the coast of Dwarka in Gujarat. The team led by Dr S R Rao, one of India's most respected archaeologist, discovered a well-fortified and planned township that extended for over half a mile from the shore. The harbor found in the submerged city is the earliest clear example throughout the world of natural rock being modified to serve the needs of a harbor. The findings of stone moulds, ancient pottery with inscriptions and especially a seal with the images of a bull, unicorn and goat engraved in an anticlockwise direction, as well as the general layout of the submerged city, constitute strong evidence that this city is indeed the Dwarka described in the ancient Vedic texts. **Dr Rao**, an emeritus scientist at the marine archaeology unit of the National Institute of Oceanography, writes in his book, *The Lost City of Dwarka*, about his undersea finds: "**The discovery is an important landmark in the history of India.** It has set to rest the doubts expressed by historians about the historicity of Mahabharata and the very existence of Dwarka city."

BIASED SCHOLARSHIP

Till recently, most scholars considered the Vedic texts to be mythological writings of superstitious aborigines. Indology, though a popular and respected subject in universities today, has a lamentable history of prejudiced scholarship. The modern study of Indian literature and culture started in the eighteenth century during the

early days of the British rule in India. The first Indologists - Sir William Jones, H H Wilson and F Max Muller among others - are generally considered to be brilliant scholars who made the glory of Vedic literature known to the world. However the covert agenda that they all shared is mostly unknown. They all conceived of themselves as "bearers of Christian light to ignorant and superstitious Indians". Their religious convictions impelled them to study the Vedic literature, not open-mindedly to understand those texts on their own merit, but with the express objective of proving their inferiority to Christian theology. Although they superficially appreciated the Vedic literature, their overall presentation was intended to discredit those literature as incoherent and mythological. For example, Theodore Goldstucker, in his deceptively-named book *Inspired Writings of Hinduism*, assailed the validity of Vedic literature. His aim was to demonstrate to Indians that he had scholastically annihilated their scripture and that they should show their appreciation by adopting European values and "improving their character."

This biased scholarship was motivated not just by religious zeal, but also by political expediency. It was an essential part of the overall British political strategy to consolidate their hold of India. Since the Indians far outnumbered them, the shrewd British knew that they could rule India only with the cooperation of the Indians. And the easiest way to get that cooperation was by proving intellectually to the Indians that their own culture was pathetically inferior to what the British were offering them.

"The theories we like we call them facts and the facts we don't like we call them theories." This succinct remark of Felix Cohen summarizes the British approach to the study of India's history and heritage.

THE TRAGEDY OF MODERN INDIA

The British no longer rule India politically, but the worldview they taught continues to rule the Indian intellect. Almost all Indians suffer from feelings of national inferiority resulting from prolonged foreign subjugation and the consequent economic under-development. As a knee-jerk reaction to this inferiority complex, most modern Indians tend to reject everything Indian as primitive and irrelevant. The deep-rooted Vedic culture is treated at best as an embarrassing anachronism and at worst as a serious impediment to progress. Many Indians proudly say, "*Mera Bharat Mahan*" (My India is great), but they do precious little to even inquire what it is that is great about India. With their words they declare the greatness of India, but through their actions they denigrate everything that is essentially Indian by adopting wholesale Western dress, lifestyle, culture, values and goals. Of course some Indians still appreciate the greatness of traditional India, but even they feel that ancient Indian culture and philosophy can do little to help modern India. "Give up traditional religious and spiritual values, advance in science and technology, develop economically and then India will be glorious." Ideas like these have gained an unquestioning acceptance that can be compared only to what religious revelations commanded in times of yore. In the blind pursuit of materialism, the fact that citizens of nations with technological advancement and economic prosperity are battered by stress, depression, marital rupture, childhood delinquency, addiction and criminality just does not matter. The fact that **the Vedic literatures contain astoundingly accurate information on subjects as intricate and wide-ranging as embryology, medicine, psychology, architecture, cosmology, atomic physics, art, politics and warfare** fails to prompt Indians to seriously examine their own inheritance.

The recent findings in Dwarka linking archeology and literature may mark the beginning of a new era in world history, an era of correcting the wrongs that have been perpetrated on India. If they lead to a systematic and unbiased study of India's heritage, we may still arrive at a coherent picture of "the wonder that was India". A proper understanding of her past glory will empower modern India to play her due role in the shaping of a future world. Or maybe the excitement over the findings will just fizzle out. India is too crippled by poverty to take up extensive archaeological explorations. The political unsteadiness ensures that nothing else occupies the national mind for long. The bureaucratic

delays throttle individual initiative. And most importantly few Indians have the courage to differ from the overwhelming superstition that economic development alone holds the key to India's future.

THE POWER OF ONE TRUE INDIAN

There was one Indian, however, who dared to differ - His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, founder-acharya of ISKCON. When Srila Prabhupada visited Britain during one of his worldwide preaching tours, a reporter inquired about the purpose of his visit. Srila Prabhupada replied that the British plundered India of all her wealth, but they forgot to take India's most precious jewel. Srila Prabhupada informed the nonplussed reporter that he had come to offer Britain that jewel - the timeless wisdom of the Vedic literature. Srila Prabhupada presented the essential Vedic conclusions with striking clarity and relevance. To a world striving for universal brotherhood, Srila Prabhupada poignantly pointed out that universal brotherhood was possible only when the people of the world accept the Universal Father, God. To individuals searching for inner fulfillment, Srila Prabhupada explained that the highest happiness can be experienced only when one lives in harmony with

the will of God. To a world infatuated by technological advancement, Srila Prabhupada warned that when humanity individually, socially and globally neglects or rejects God, it courts total disaster.

Along with this revolutionary philosophy, Srila Prabhupada brought to the West a unique gift - a practical and joyful way of life, centered on selfless spiritual service to God and all His children. He also presented easy and effective mantra meditation techniques, which constituted the distilled essence of all Vedic methods for self-realization. Thousands of people, when they adopted the Vedic way of life as taught by Srila Prabhupada, experienced their lives transformed from confused despair to enlightened fulfillment. Addicts, who had been wrecked by the perverted

pleasures offered by tobacco, alcohol and drugs, found themselves freed from the shackles of self-destructive behavior. Seekers, who had been disillusioned by the mindless pursuit of inane pleasures as espoused by modern society, found unlimited happiness streaming into their lives from the spiritual stratum. Intellectuals, searching for meaning and purpose to the cosmos and the life within it, discovered a body of knowledge that answered fully the deepest questions that humanity has ever pondered. Even scholars could not but appreciate

Srila Prabhupada's comprehensive, coherent, cogent and potent presentation of Vedic knowledge, especially his commentary on the Bhagavad-gita, entitled *Bhagavad Gita As It Is*. **"If truth is what works, as Pierce and the other pragmatists insist, there must be a kind of truth in the *Bhagavad Gita As It Is*, since those who follow its teaching display a joyful serenity usually missing in the bleak and strident lives of contemporary people."**

This remark of Dr Elwin H Powell, Professor of Sociology, State University of New York is typical of the critical acclaim that *Bhagavad Gita As It Is* has won among the world's leading scholars. Srila Prabhupada spearheaded a cultural and spiritual revolution that continues to bring meaning and joy to the lives of millions all over the world even today. Thus the evidence that Srila Prabhupada has provided to testify to the glory of Vedic India is not just a few

forms of dust dug out from some parts of the earth. His evidence is living and global: it is the vibrant lives of thousands of people, who have dedicated themselves to the selfless service of humanity and God.

In the next issue we will examine Western culture and see how it is decaying from within due to the lack of a spiritual foundation, which can be provided by the Vedic texts of India alone.

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Dedicated to

His Divine Grace A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada,

The Greatest Spiritual Scientist of the Modern Times

Founder-Acharya: International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

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