

## [Global Dharma: A Monthly News Digest](#)

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## Hindus Win UK Job Discrimination Suits

Three Hindus in the UK who were discriminated against during job hirings were recently awarded damages. Ms. Gangani who has a perfect English accent was told an import clerk job was taken after she gave her Hindu name on the phone. Her sister phoned immediately with a fictitious English name and was told the job was open. Ms. Gangani filed suit. The Manchester Industrial Tribunal awarded her \$1,000 in injury to feelings. Mrs. Deb-Gupta was passed over for deputy school head post given to a less qualified white colleague. She was awarded \$10,000. Mr. Nagarajan who made several unsuccessful job applications to the London Underground filed suit and was awarded \$4,000. All these cases were successfully taken up by the Commission for Racial Equality, CRE, in London. CRE's chief executive, Dev Sharma, said "We look forward to further cases which we can present to the British Home Secretary in recommending new legislation against religious discrimination in the UK. The problem is that not many people are coming forward with sound and legal evidence."

## UK Hindu Visits Perth Australia

Raja Khurrana, Chairman of the Hindu Link, UK, went on a long visit to Australia and shares these interesting observations: "At the airport in Perth, the customs officer expressed interest in my religious books, and I gladly gave him one. I was surprised to learn of the dearth of information on Hinduism in Australia. After some searching, I found a mandir and an ISKCON center where 150 people from all parts of the world gathered for Ramnavami celebrations. I was told that there were many Sai Baba centers throughout Australia. The one in Perth has a devout Chinese Malaysian for president. It was encouraging also to discover the dynamic Perth Mandir Youth group with teenagers holding regular satsang, picnics and other functions. The Australian Hindu community is spread far apart and needs to be networked together. Also we all should help Australia by sending information, books, anything we can to fill up the information gap on Hinduism in that country."  
UK Reports by Rakesh Mathur

## Russians' Religious Rights Survive Attack

The liberal, 1990, post-USSR Russian religion laws are being challenged-so far unsuccessfully-by the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian nationalists who want to restrict foreign missionary activity in Russia. In early 1995, an investigative parliamentary committee reported: "Christian denominations participating in the May `94 Moscow international Christian conference on `Totalitarian Sects in Russia,' declared that such institutions as White Brotherhood, Our Lady Centre, Aum Shinrikyo, Krishna Consciousness, Christ Church, etc. were anti-human and anti-Christian in character." Without talking to young members of such groups, the committee analyzed 56 letters from parents, concluding that techniques such as yoga, initiations, early morning meditation, rituals, chanting and prayers were directed at altering the consciousness of the individual and turning them away from real life. So-called "damage" cited included "excessively held ideals." Brahmacharya was characterized as "artificial celibacy, destruction of libido, stoppage of menses, mental castration, etc."

The controversy flared in March after the Aum Shinrikyo sect was charged for the Tokyo nerve gas attack. Aum Shinrikyo had many Russian members and a weekly prime-time Moscow TV show. The Russian Orthodox Church Council of Bishops prepared a list of organisations that "destroy the traditional way of life formed under the influence of the Orthodox Church, our common spiritual moral ideal [and] threaten the integrity of national and cultural identity."

Proposed April amendments to the Law on Freedom of Consciousness gave the state more latitude to interfere in religious activities. Minority groups including Catholics, Baptists, Buddhist, Jews and ISKCON reacted to the new law as regressive, giving official license to such tactics as recent police beatings of Roman Catholic priests and nuns in Moscow.

But, at an April 25th press conference in New York, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said, "The Russian government does not want any further legal restrictions on religious groups entering Russia. President Boris Yeltsin already vetoed a law to restrict the activities of foreign religious bodies in Russia, which has been passed by the Supreme Soviet in 1993." So Hindus with ministerial connections outside of Russia can rest in peace, for now. But things could change after the coming December `95 and June `96 elections.

## 20th Century Genius Fights for Religion

In 1962, Brian D. Josephson, Nobel laureate, discovered, at age 22, magical quantum properties of superconducting circuits. He received tenure at Cambridge in 1972 and the Nobel Prize a year later for his advances and original contributions to physics. The May 1995 issue of Scientific American(SA) reports on Josephson's subsequent "renunciation of conventional physics." He has "dedicated himself to the study of psychic and mystical phenomena and other forbidden matters" in the field of consciousness "that scientific swamp into which many venture and few return." In the early 60s he focused on "apparent" analogies between quantum mechanics and Eastern mysticism. In the 70s he opened up his inner life and began transcendental meditation which he continues to this day. "Now he writes articles

such as 'Physics and Spirituality: The Next Grand Unification?' SA says "His contributions to mainstream journals consist mostly of letters denouncing science's narrow-minded attitude toward extra-sensory perception and religion. In 1993, in a letter to Nature, he argued that religion can help societies function more harmoniously and efficiently."

## TRENDS to Watch

### Rebirth Goes Mainstream

Reincarnation is steadily becoming part of the general Western consensus reality-not just an exotic belief studied in world religions classes. Now, western movie and TV characters often voice concepts of karma and reincarnation with open affirmation. This trend was highlighted on May 7th, 8th and 9th, when the Association for Past Life Research and Therapies held its 15th annual conference in Washington, D.C., under the theme: "Past-Life Regression Therapy: Into the Mainstream." Speakers and panelists came from a broad range of professions in the mental health field. Dr. Brian Weiss, who gave the keynote address, "Into the Mainstream," graduated magna cum laude from Columbia University, received his medical degree at Yale and was the former chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at Florida's Mount Sinai Center. He, like other traditional therapists, has discovered that regressing patients under hypnosis to release repressed traumas may uncover experiences not encountered by the patient in this life. Many western trained doctors ascribe the phenomenon to other causative factors such as "genetic memory" or "readings from the collective unconscious." But, Rick Levy, a psychologist said: "Over time, more and more traditional therapists like myself are seeing the effectiveness of this work." After recall of traumatic past life events, many patients experience a reversal of symptoms.

While there is a careful effort to sanitize the field of all religious content, the idea of karma is often integral to the therapy. One conference workshop focusing on mental and emotional problems caused by incest in a previous life "emphasized a healing modality which enables survivors to go back to the karmic roots of their abuse." A workshop by Margaret Haas focuses on "Perspectives from the East: Reincarnation as Everyday Reality. What are the implications of Buddhist perspectives on past-life work in the West. Understanding more about Eastern perspectives can inform and deepen our understanding about our own lives and our past life counseling experiences." With hundreds of therapists discussing past lives with thousands of patients in the USA, it appears reincarnation is enjoying a new nascence in the Occident.

### Living Proof: Vegetarians With Brains, Brawn, Fame and Glory

Despite Vedic teachings, a great majority of Hindus are not vegetarians. They rationalize meat and egg eating with the West's dietary myths about nutritional deficiencies. But they might also consider these famous western adherents of

ahimsa, a small selection from a list of hundreds of meatless celebrities listed in Vegetarian Times:

Wise Westerners of Yore: Albert Einstein, Count Leo Tolstoy, Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato and Leonardo da Vinci, who said: "The time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals as they now look upon the murder of men."

Brains and Professionals: Steve Jobs, inventor of the Apple computer; Herbert Blomstedt, conductor of the San Francisco Symphony; Anthony Robbins, author and motivational speaker; Laura Huxley, author; Rose Bird, former Chief Justice of California; Harvey and Marilyn Diamond, cookbook authors; Berke Breathed, cartoonist. Neal Bernard, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

Athletes: Carl Lewis, Olympic gold-medal sprinter; Bill Pearl four-time Mr. Universe, body-builder and author; Ridgely Abele, world champion in karate; Joy Bush, powerlifting champion; Andreas Cahling, champion bodybuilder; Ruth Heidrick, Ironman triathlete, age-group record holder; Billie Jean King, tennis champion; Paavo Nurmi, long-distance runner with 20 world records; Meghan O'Leary, body-builder; Dave Scott, six-time Ironman triathlon winner, Ashrita Furman, holder of the most Guinness world records.

Glamour and Talent: Ravi Shankar, Indian classical musician, L. Shankar, world-class violinist, Stevie Wonder, rock musician (along with 100's of other rock star vegetarians); Actors: Eliot Gould, Steve Martin, Dustin Hoffman, Peter Falk, Paul Newman. Actresses: Kim Basinger, Christie Brinkley, Sherry Ramsey, Phylicia Rashad.

### Electric Cremation Solution

India's Organisers says more than 83 people die globally every minute. If all were buried, 50 acres of land would be taken up daily. Eastern sages introduced a purifying solution over 4,000 years ago-cremation. Due to Christian resurrection beliefs, cremation was illegal in UK until 1884 when a Druid was acquitted for the "crime" of cremating his deceased son and the court legalized cremation. With land pressures increasing, cremation is now being actively promoted. Moscow has the largest crematorium in the world with seven twin furnaces. In India cremation is still culturally mandated, but wood is in great shortage, To save land and trees electric crematoriums (left) are coming into vogue. It's a global need and an easy one for Hindus to meet.

### Singapore's Spirit of Cooperation

Singapore's inter-religious harmony is more than propaganda. In March, Malays, Eurasians, Chinese and Indians put on a cooperative fund raiser variety show for the 81-year-old Ruthra Kaliyamman Temple (above). It needs \$150,000 for renovations prior to its next kumbhabhishekam. Catholic artist and educator Brother Joseph McNally, who works across the street from the temple, donated a sculpture (left) worth \$15,000 to be auctioned. The month before the Chinese Taoist Kwan Im

Thong Hood Cho Temple donated \$50,000 toward the Singapore Indian Education Trust. All living examples of a spirit the whole world needs.

#### Royal Torch for a Day of Peace

The Peace Run `95 is the longest relay in the world. Organized by Sri Chinmoy's Marathon Team, the first torch was lit on April 15th in New York at the United Nations and is still passing from hand to hand through 80 different countries. This year's run took on special significance when it coincided with VE Day celebrations in the UK, marking the end of World War II in Europe. Torches were lit by runners in four capitals, Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. On May 8th, the Queen (above) received the flame and used it to light a giant beacon in the closing ceremonies. Her peace torch and others were then relayed 1,000 miles through the UK, by runners, children and public until June 27th when it went to Prague.

Bangalore's Siva