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Diaspora

BOVINE

Cow's This?

The cow is an extremely important part of human life. Hindus regard the cow, symbol of all nature, as sacred. According to the Vedas, the usefulness of a cow and a horse is equal to that of a man. Cows eat grass, straw, leaves, etc., and convert it into delicious and nourishing milk. Male offspring can plow the ground and pull carts. Even after death, its bones, horns and leather can be used profitably, writes Pundit Madan Lal. Around the 1500s, Columbus brought the first cows to America on his second visit. Today, milk forms the foundation of a \$75-billion-a-year industry in the US, with over 11 million milking cows. Even so, most cows are raised for slaughter. Three tons of meat is consumed around the world every second. In Greek times, the historian Magasthenese reported India to have 190 million people and 360 million cows. At the end of World War II, India had 400 million people and just 32.5 million cows--15 million having been slaughtered for the British army. A modern dairy cow can produce 19,223 pounds of milk in a year--16 times her weight as meat.

MALAYSIA

Fire up the Home Homa

The ancient science of homa, or "fire ceremony," now takes place in many modern homes in Malaysia, thanks to Dr. Paramasivam Govindasamy. The technique, which he calls

"Homatherapy," is a simplified version of the complex homa performed by trained priests in orthodox temples and homes. He has inspired over 20,000 families to perform this homa. In his book, Agni Hotra: Homatherapy, he describes in detail the hows and whys of homa. Govindasamy recommends performing Agni Hotra twice daily, once during sunrise and once at sunset, in an inverted copper pyramid. Cow dung is used for the fuel. Ghee, unpolished brown rice and "homa dust," or sacred herbs are offered as mantras are chanted. After the homa, he recommends people sit, meditate and "enjoy the energy with love." "By performing Agni Hotra during the specific time, the energy created can enliven and purify everything around it, giving a wonderful effect to the performer and the environment." Benefits mentioned in the book include everything from simply feeling more peaceful, to miraculous healings. For us\$50 plus shipping you can buy a kit with all the necessary specialized items.

DR. G. PARAMASIVAM, ABOORVASS, NO. 36 JALAN TENGGU KELANA, 41000 KLANG, SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA.
<http://www.aboorvass.com.my/aboorvass>

USA

Ekhnath Eswaran (1911-1999)

On October 26, respected meditation guru and philosopher Shri Ekhnath Eswaran passed away at age 88. He touched the hearts and souls of thousands of people of all races, nationalities and religions through his meditation retreats at Blue Mountain Center, books, tapes and lectures. His academic course on meditation at the

University of California at Berkeley was the first offered in any US university. He died of heart failure at his California ashram with his wife and close devotees at his side. Swami Chidananda of Chinmaya Mission said, "He has left behind a legacy of highly nourishing spiritual literature that is like a garden so fragrant with flowers of many hues. I pay homage to this master of our times."

THAILAND

Hanuman Feast

Scores of simians gobbled down mounds of fruit and vegetables graciously set on a vast round table in the city of Lopburi at Thailand's annual monkey banquet in late November, 1999. About 1,200 Thais and tourists watched the monkeys rush in from ancient temples in the area. The annual feast has been hosted since 1989 by a local businessman, Yongyuth Kitwatananuson. Good fortune came to Yongyuth's family when they moved to this central Thailand town where monkeys have long been accepted as respected citizens. In 1989 he started the feast as a gesture of thanks.

ENGLAND

Devi's New London Home

In November of 1999 yet another bright light shown in London, England. It was a double celebration as the new Maha Lakshmi Mandir and Community Center opened its doors just in time to celebrate Deepavali, according to a report by Ratna Devi. Over three hundred people attended. Shri Bankim Gossai, a Hindu missionary who spent seven years raising funds for the new temple, said, "The whole weekend was splendid. It was wonderful. This center is for the benefit of everybody, and it was good to see so many people turning out for these celebrations." Gossai and his team of dedicated voluntary workers hope to provide a research library as well as an area for communal prayers. Classes currently being held in the center include Hindi and Indian classical music and dance.

SHRI BANKIM GOSSAI, MAHA LAKSHMI
SATSANG, HONOR OAK PARK, FOREST HILL,
LONDON SE23 3LE, ENGLAND

USA

Sikh Parade

Over 40,000 Sikhs gathered in Yuba City,

California, to celebrate the 20th Annual Sikh Parade November 12, 1999. This was the largest crowd ever, said Dr. Jasbir Kang, a member of the Tierra Buena Sikh Temple, which organizes the parade. He said there were close to 100 parade floats. Most devotees came from California, but there were also floats from as far away as Canada. The parade was the culmination of festivities celebrating their receipt of their holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, five hundred years ago. Dedicated Sikhs continuously read all 1,430 pages of the book at the temple prior to the parade. Afterwards they returned to the temple to pray and eat. Extra food was donated to the Salvation Army. Sikhs originally arrived in California 100 years ago, and settled as farmers in the rich central valley area. A number of Indian Hindus came at the same time, some working on the railroads. This group married into Mexican Catholic families and is no longer found, while the Sikhs formed a tight-knit community, swelled recently by many new immigrants from India.

ENGLAND

Blair's Curry

The influence of India upon her former colony

ruler is reaching into the upper strata of society. Witness, for example, the occasional appearance of the Prime Minister's wife, Cherie, in a stunning sari ensemble. Even more indicative of the infiltration is the rumor that the House of Commons is about to employ its own expert Indian chef.

EGYPT

Pramukhswami Visits Sphinx

Just on the outskirts of Cairo, on September 1, 1999, H.H. Pramukhswami Maharaj and dozens of monks visited one of the seven wonders of the world, the Pyramids. He found a deep connection with the smallest of the three pyramids, built by Menkaure, but totally ignored the other more impressive ones. He touched and blessed the Pyramid of Menkaure with special prayers and mantras.

CANARY ISLANDS

Maya Store

On March 12, 1999, resident Hindu priest Maharaj Sharma opened the 43,000-square-foot Maya Department Store on Grand Canary Island,

Spain, off the northwest coast of Africa. The Bharwani family started the Maya Group 45 years ago, and with years of hard work, finally created the high-tech five-story department store we see today. "It is our wish that the new Maya Department Store will not only be our pride, but the pride of this precious and dear island, Grand Canary, and all whose abode it is, and for the whole Archipelago," said Naresh K. Bharwani, General Manager.

Briefly...

A new 24-hour child abuse prevention hotline is now available in the Malaysian state of Selangor. If you notice your neighbor or school teachers abusing children, call before it is too late: 03-800-3040.

Dr. Dean Ornish and his wife Molly stayed overnight in the White House visiting one of their favorite patients, President Bill Clinton. Ornish is his diet adviser and also presented a one-day seminar for members of Congress on diet and

yoga.

Sri Lankan forensic experts found fatal head and body wounds on at least eight of the 15 bodies exhumed from unmarked mass graves in Northern Sri Lanka. Two of the bodies had their hands tied and showed evidence of fatal blows with blunt instruments, suggesting they were tortured to death. These were found after an army soldier sentenced to death for the rape and murder of a girl said he helped bury hundreds of Tamils killed in military custody.

Only 67 percent of American women aged 35 to 44 were legally married as of 1998. A full 33% were single. In 1960, only 12% were single; 88% were married. The shift is related to higher divorce rates and a dramatic change in American attitudes toward marriage. A related statistic is that the percent of children born out of wedlock (to white women) rose from five percent in 1969 to 26 percent in 1998.

New land has been acquired for the Sri Ganesha

Hindu Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah. ^{us}\$165,000 has been raised, and an additional \$65,000 is needed to pay off the loan for the four-acre parcel.

THE VEDAS God's Word, Sages Voices

The Vedas are the divinely revealed and most revered scriptures, sruti, of Hinduism, likened to the Torah (1,200 bce), Bible New Testament (100 ce), Koran (630 ce) or Zend Avesta (600 bce). Four in number, Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva, the Vedas include over 100,000 verses. Oldest portions may date back as far as 6,000 bce.

As one not knowing that a golden treasure lies buried beneath his feet, may walk over it again and again, yet never

find it, so all beings live every moment in the city of Brahman, yet never find him, because of the veil of illusion by which he is concealed.

Sama Veda, Chandogya Upanishad
8.3.2

Sin of the mind, depart far away! Why do you utter improper suggestions? Depart from this place! I do not want you! Go to the trees and the forests! My mind will remain here along with our homes and our cattle.

Atharva Veda 6.45.1

The sleeping state is that in which only thought (functions). Even as a bird tired of flying about turns towards its nest, restraining its wings, even so the individual soul tired of functioning in the

worlds of waking and dream, entering on the state of ignorance, enjoys his own bliss.

Yajur Veda, Paingala Upanishad 2.9

Who Is a Hindu?

"Acceptance of the Vedas with reverence; recognition of the fact that the means or ways to salvation are diverse; and the realization of the truth that the number of gods to be worshiped is large, that indeed is the distinguishing feature of the Hindu religion." B.G. Tilak's definition of what makes one a basic Hindu, as quoted by India's Supreme Court. On July 2, 1995 the Court referred to it as an "adequate and satisfactory formula."