

AUM

THANK GOD IT IS SATURDAY

By Brigadier Chitranjan Sawant,VSM

A baby boy is born in a remote village.

Indeed, it is a time for rejoicing. But the celebration is rather subdued. He is born on a Saturday. Saturday is not regarded as a good day in that remote part of the universe. No one can tell for sure what his life span is likely to be. The boy grows up a healthy adolescent and receives good education in a neighbouring town. He recites Ved mantras and shuns superstitions. To be a Centenarian and lead a happy and healthy life for self and society is his cherished goal. At the turn of the present century, he has lived three quarters of the desired dream. He thanks God that he was born on a Saturday and has succeeded in dispelling doubts about his doomsday.

The word *Shani* should not frighten any human being. It is sheer ignorance of men and women and the resultant weak mind that generates the feeling of fear among them. When the truth prevails, the darkness of ignorance is dispelled by the rays of knowledge. In other words, it is *Vidya* that drives away *Avidya*. The Vedic word *Shanaishchara* means " One who reaches or gives access to all with ease and possesses great fortitude". The word denotes *Param Pita Parmatma*, the Almighty who preserves and protects us with great fortitude. He is benign and benevolent. *Shanaishchara* loves us, the humans, and there is nothing to be afraid of.

The Arya Samaj was founded on a Saturday in 1875 in Mumbai by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Why on a Saturday? To disabuse the minds of common folks of ill effects of a Saturday. A century and three decades later, a down to earth woman of great fortitude, Pratibha Patil, chose to file her nomination papers for the Presidential election on a Saturday. The flower of *Vedic Vidya* is indeed blooming.

There are two major military academies in India, viz, The National Defence Academy at Kharakvasla, Maharashtra and the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun in Uttarakhand. The Passing Out Parade, a graduation ceremony military style, is always held on a Saturday. The day has always augured well for the Cadets and Gentlemen Cadets who fought and won many battles in their long career. By the way, the famous battle for Tololing in Kargil in 1999 was launched with booming of Bofors guns on a big scale on a Saturday. The laurels of victory graced the bravehearts who went into battle with *Shanaishchara* on their right side. Of course, many an enlightened officer prefers to take charge of his or her new and difficult assignment on a Saturday. It is success and not failure that courts diehards.

A highly educated gentleman preferred not to buy shoes on a Saturday because shoes contained nails of iron. Under a mistaken belief, he thought that iron should not be handled on the day in question. A question was posed to him. How would he handle a weapon made of iron if an enemy of the nation chose to launch an attack on a Saturday? He was quick to perceive the logic in the given scenario and started buying shoes whenever it was required, irrespective of what day of the week it was. A lady friend who for decades had not applied oil to her long and silky hair on the sixth day of the week started doing so after coming under the influence of the *Vedic Vidya*.

Sometimes I wish that it was not a Saturday. Driving through the chaotic traffic of Delhi, where the lane system is observed more in breach than in obedience, one heaves a sigh of relief at the crossroads when the traffic light is red. Ah! That relief is so short-lived. The street urchins flock to the stopped cars with a begging bowl that displays an ugly tin cutout of the so called Shani god. In the name of *Dharma*, the profession of begging is practised. Children maimed by mafia to make money are put on the job of instilling the fear of *Shani Dev* in the hearts of car drivers so that he or she parts with some money to propitiate a false god. If the husband is a braveheart and defies the illogical demand of the urchin for alms, it is the God-fearing wife who prods him to do so to remain in one piece on the Delhi roads. Sometimes, vice-versa. One wonders when the administration would put a stop to the illegal act of begging in the name of false gods. Or are they equally timid?

It is absolutely important for an all round development of personality that men and women understand correct import of a word or thought and not let false beliefs and myths cloud their judgement. Strong individuals with robust minds, shorn of induced false fears, will indeed make a nation strong.