

# Bhavan Australia

*Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides* – Rigveda 1-89-1 [www.bhavanaustralia.org](http://www.bhavanaustralia.org)



THE VICTORY  
OF GOOD OVER EVIL



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LIFE ... LITERATURE ... CULTURE

# Words of Eternal Wisdom



You must not lose faith in humanity.  
Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the  
ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become  
dirty.

*Mahatma Gandhi*

“Every man is a creature of the age in  
which he lives and few are able to raise  
themselves above the ideas of the time.”

— Voltaire

When one has the feeling of dislike for evil,  
when one feels tranquil, one finds pleasure  
in listening to good teachings; when one  
has these feelings and appreciates them,  
one is free of fear.

*Buddha*

*“I hope that real love and truth are  
stronger in the end than any evil or  
misfortune in the world.”*

— Charles Dickens

“The greatest error of a man is to think  
that he is weak by nature, evil by nature.  
Every man is divine and strong in his real  
nature. What are weak and evil are his  
habits, his desires and thoughts, but not  
himself.”

— Ramana Maharshi

“Freedom of mind is the real freedom.  
A person whose mind is not free though  
he may not be in chains, is a slave, not a  
free man.

One whose mind is not free, though he  
may not be in prison, is a prisoner and not  
a free man.

One whose mind is not free though alive,  
is no better than dead.

Freedom of mind is the proof of one's  
existence.”

— B.R. Ambedkar

## **VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL**

*Lest we forget.* 30 January happens to be Mahatma Gandhi's Martyrdom day. Let us pay our tribute and reverence to this noblest soul on this planet who initiated Satyagraha the nonviolence action and sacrificed his life for that. This day we pay our tribute to all those nonviolence heroes who gave their life for the cause of justice for everyone.

The 'Victory of the Good over the Evil' Principle is universal and is found at the root of all religions and cultures: oriental and occidental, ancient and contemporary.

There is nothing good in men. Each of them all but hates his neighbor, seeks to set himself above those who surround him, and is full of envy, ill-will and other devilish vices. *Homo hominis nicht deus, sondern diabolus'*

The moral danger to which he is constantly exposed is to be located, however, not in his own 'gross nature' as an individual but in human society itself. Simply as an individual his needs are comparatively few and he has no great difficulty.

In satisfying them: it is not his being poor that a man minds so much as in fearing to be despised by others for his poverty. In other words, his passions are aroused as soon as he finds himself among his fellow-men.

'Moral' man can resist evil successfully, otherwise his struggle would be pointless, but that he does so, as he soon learns, only to deliver himself from the sovereignty of evil. He will always be at risk from its actual power, and if he is to assert his freedom against perpetual attack he must 'ever remain armed for the fray'. But this continuing state of peril is really his own fault, and the question is how he is to extricate himself from it.

And this is not because they are necessarily very wicked. It suffices that they are at hand, that they surround him, and that they are men, for them mutually to corrupt each other's dispositions and make one another evil.

Hence a condition of things that must be being socially caused can be overcome only by social means: a society will have to be created the express purpose of which would be the upholding of ethical ideals and of countering evil with united forces. A union of mankind so orientated may be called an 'ethical society'.

We do not have to only celebrate the ancient stories or events like Indian Dussehra (killing of demons by Lord Rama or Goddess Durga) or Holi (killing of Demoness Holika by the magical environmental twists by Lord Vishnu).

We have umpteen real people examples from the recent past two centuries like: Chief Joseph (a Tribal leader of United States) Mahatma Gandhi; Oskar Schindler; Martin Luther King Jr; Rosa Parks; Bayard Rustin; Jimmy Carter; Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela; Dalai Lama; Mother Theresa; Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar; Eddie Mabo; Aung San Suu Kyi; Patrick Dodson and the list goes on. And there is an unending list of contemporary nonviolence heroes like: Cesar Chavez; Malalai; 'Black Lives Matter'; Petra Kelly; Vincent Lingiari; Rachel Corrie; and so on....

Bravery is about overcoming fear. And you will be scared when you venture out unarmed into the "Mean Streets"—into tent cities, homeless shelters, prisons; to places where people are fighting or starving; to places where you know you don't belong. In fact, you will be scared out of all proportion to the dangers you face, because you have been pre-scared, courtesy of both the media and Mother Nature.

If you grew up in a home where you watched several hours of TV each day, you have probably been infected with what social scientists call "Mean World Syndrome"—the more television you watch, the more likely you are to believe that the world is a mean and dangerous place and that you will become a victim of violence. If you watch a lot more TV than your neighbour, you are more likely to have bought a weapon or gun for self-protection and a guard dog to protect yourself and installed new locks on your door, and you are more afraid to walk in your own neighbourhood.

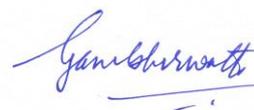
We are particularly receptive to these messages about a dangerous world because Mother Nature has provided us with an information-processing system that magnifies our fears. Social psychologists call it social categorization. It is a survival mechanism—a sort of mental filing system designed to help us quickly sort through the flood of information about other people that pours into our consciousness and file it into usable categories.

The trouble is, we seem to have been issued a mental filing cabinet with only two drawers—a tidy, attractive drawer with just a few files in it labelled "Us," and an overstuffed, nasty-looking drawer labelled "Them." So, we categorize people as "those who are like us" and "those who are not," particularly when our vital interests are involved.

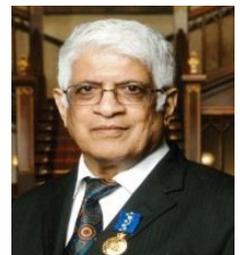
To overcome evil does not need violent actions like wars or blackmailing "sanctions". Violence is not only physical; it is more powerful when inflicted with tongue or in words or threat of physical violence.

Mahatma Gandhi often said and believed in "hate the sin, not the sinner". Perhaps that thought, and belief was one of the key pillars of his wonderful Satyagraha – the strategy of nonviolent action. And those heroes of nonviolence mentioned above could only be successful in their 'winning good over evil' actions by following these strategies of nonviolence.

Gambhir Watts OAM



*President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia  
Organiser of Holi Mahotsav*





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### Publisher & General Editor:

Gambhir Watts OAM  
[president@bhavanaaustralia.org](mailto:president@bhavanaaustralia.org)

### Editorial Committee:

Anna Andriiashina, Shanker Dhar, Sridhar Kumar Kondepudi, [editors@bhavanaaustralia.org](mailto:editors@bhavanaaustralia.org)

### Advertising:

[pr@bhavanaaustralia.org](mailto:pr@bhavanaaustralia.org)  
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia  
Suite 102 Level L1 (Lower Ground)  
515 Kent Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000

T: +61 2 9283 6088,

E: [pr@bhavanaaustralia.org](mailto:pr@bhavanaaustralia.org)

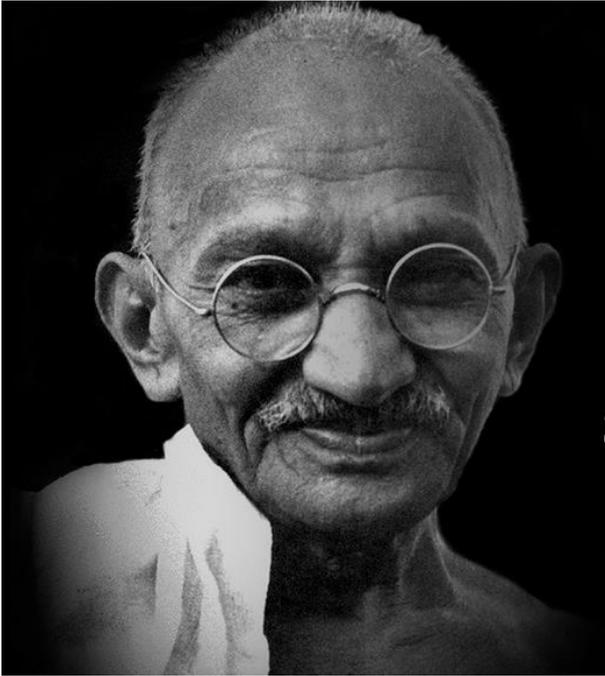
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# MARTYRDOM DAY



**Happiness is when  
what you think, what you say,  
and what you do are in harmony.**

*- Mahatma Gandhi*

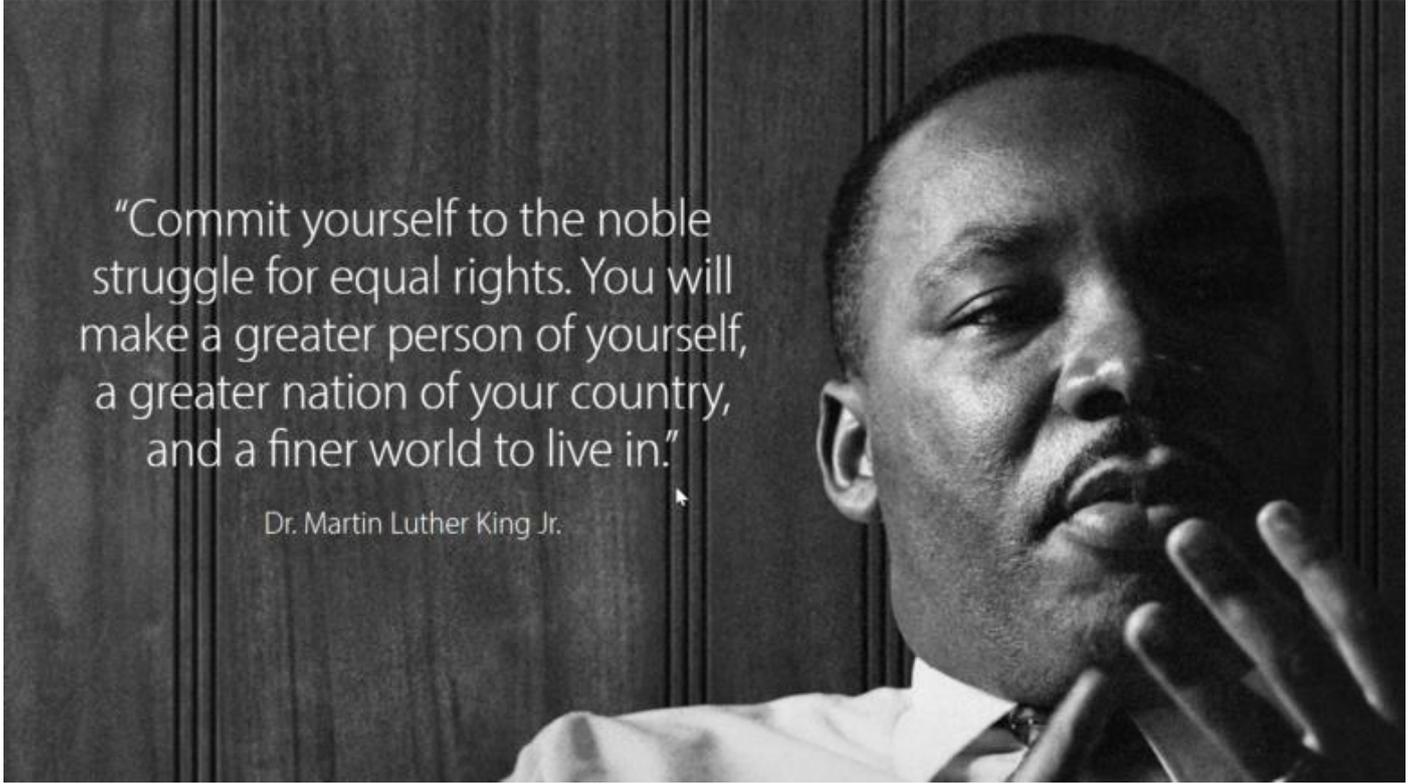
## **MAHATMA GANDHI**

Martyrs Day marks the death anniversary of the father of nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who was assassinated on Jan 30, 1948, by Nathuram Godse. Martyrs' Day marks the death anniversary of the father of nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who was assassinated on Jan 30, 1948, by Nathuram Godse. Godse held Gandhi responsible for the partition of India thus he shot Gandhiji. For this evil deed Godse was hanged on November 15, 1949. Originally the martyrdom of the soldiers while defending the sovereignty of the country during the freedom struggle was remembered on Republic Day, January 26, and this gave way to January 30. On this day not only Prime Minister and chiefs of the armed forces salute the martyrs at India Gate but also common men show their gratitude towards them by giving up their normal activities for some time and observing silence for 2 minutes. Sirens are blown at every government establishment around 11 am. At that time everyone, be it in industrial units or government offices even the commoners stop their work and observe silence for two minutes as a remembrance of the martyred souls. The siren again blows after two minutes, i.e. around 11.02 am allowing resuming work. The day sees the triumphant celebrations, showcasing the latest weapon achievement and advertising military might. The followers of

Mahatma Gandhi worship him and quote- He is the greatest human being so far appeared on this earth. Bapu is a symbol of virtues and greatness. This man lived the life of a saint. His status of Father of the Nation cannot be challenged as the political party led by him enjoyed full monopoly after independence. He believed in anti violent ideologies. Gandhi and his followers played a significant role in ousting British. January, 30 is a Martyrs' day to remember the freedom fighters of our country, where as January 25, is considered as a Martyrs' day to remember those who lost their lives in the Anti-Hindi agitations during 1937-38 and 1965.

## **MARTIN LUTHER KING**

The United States became a world power after the second world war. The Americans condemned racism abroad but practiced segregation at home. In the U.S.A. the Black community was neglected completely by the Whites even from civil rights. In such a strange situation there was born a man with a dream, a dream which had shaken the whole world. A man with the conviction to put an end to such dehumanizing factors. M.L.King Jr. had even paid his own life and blood for this cause, the cause of the people. Luther King Jr. had a dream for the future and that dream had a historical background. Hundreds of years after the Emancipation



“Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

proclamation, still Blacks were not free. The life of the Blacks was still sadly crippled by the menaces of segregation and the chains of discrimination. The Blacks lived on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. Blacks were considered only in the corners of American Society and found themselves exiles in their own land. In this background King addressed his colleagues: "So I say to you, my friends. that even though we must face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. it is a dream deeply rooted in American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal". (Nissim Ezekiel (ed), A Martin Luther King Reader," [Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1969], p. 107.)

He continued to speak about his dream on all occasions. "One day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

M.L.King Jr. says that war could never be a positive or absolute good. It could serve as a negative good in the sense of preventing the spread of evil force. Then, very interestingly, his interest went into the study of Gandhi. He went to hear a sermon from Mordesi Johnson, President of Howard University, who spoke

about the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He was highly impressed by Gandhi's campaign of non-violent resistance. "I was particularly moved by the salt march to tie Sea and his numerous fasts. The whole concept of Satyagraha profoundly became significant to me." (Ibid., p. 8) It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and non-violence that he discovered the method for social reform that he had been seeking for so many months.

The Martyrdom of M.L.King Jr challenges Indian Christianity today. The Black community in the U.S. can be considered as equal to the Indian Dalit community. How long would upper castes exploit and prevent justice to the dalits? In India we need to have two kinds of liberation struggles : first, to liberate. dalits from upper castes domination; second, to mobilize the minority strength to fight against injustice, oppression and discrimination by the majority.

Source: <https://www.religion-online.org/book-chapter/chapter-11-the-martyrdom-of-martin-luther-king-jr-by-sunny-p/>

## HOLI LEGENDS

**ALL THIS IN THIS WORLD IS PERVADED BY GOD.**

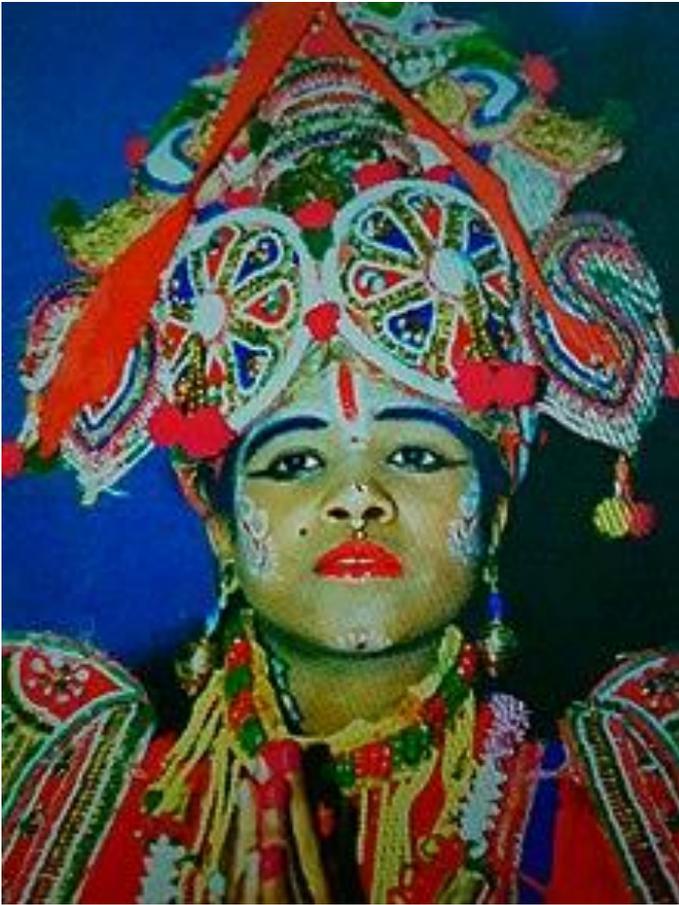
*Aum Isha Vasyam Idam Sarvam, Yat Kincha Jagatyam Jagat  
Ten Tyaktena Bhunjitha, Ma Gridhah Kasyasvid Dhanam.*

*Meaning:*

*All this, whatsoever moves in this moving world is pervaded by God. Through such renunciation you may enjoy. Do not covet anybody's wealth for whose indeed is wealth?*

*-The first mantra of the Isa Upanishad*

### THE STORY OF PRAHLADA



Hiranyakashyap was the king of the asuras (demons). Hiranyakashyap's brother had been slain by Vishnu for terrorising gods and goddesses. So Hiranyakashyap wanted to destroy Vishnu and keep other Gods in heaven subdued. He told his soldiers to crush all those who worship Vishnu, but the Gods protected the Devotees of Vishnu.

Hiranyakashyap thought to himself "I will have to match my powers to Vishnu's to rule over the three worlds".

So he began to perform severe penances and tapasya. While he was so occupied the Gods ransacked his city and destroyed his palace. Hiranyakashyap's Queen, who was expecting a child was sent by the gods to Sage Narada's hermitage. She lived in the Ashram of the great sage and learned about religion and the glory of Vishnu from him. The child within her, Prahlad, too, absorbed all this knowledge.

Narada taught the Queen that Vishnu is the soul of all created things and is present everywhere. Meanwhile, Hiranyakashyap's austerities pleased Brahma and said: "Arise Hiranyakashyap. Any boon that you ask of me shall be yours".

Hiranyakashyap said I wish that my death be not caused by man or beast, with a weapon or without a weapon, during day or night, indoors or outdoors, on earth or in the sky. Grant me the undisputed lordship over the material world.

Hiranyakashyap brought his wife back to his city where Prahlad was born. Hiranyakashyap, with his new powers renewed his hostilities against Vishnu and Vishnu's followers. He declared "There is none stronger than I. I am the lord of the three worlds. I shall be worshipped as such".

Prahlad in the meanwhile was growing up and was Hiranyakashyap's delight. He asked Prahlad: "Son, tell me what do you think is the best thing in life"?

Prahlad replied: "To renounce the world and seek refuge in Vishnu".

Hiranyakashyap laughed. Then he called his Son's teacher to him, saying: "Guard him closely. I think that the followers of Vishnu are secretly influencing him. Don't let him out of your sight! After many months, his teacher said: "Prahlad, I think you are now ready to meet your father."

His father asked him: "You have been with your Guru a long time! What have you learnt?"

Prahlad said: "I have learnt that the most worthwhile occupation for anyone is the worship of Lord Vishnu".

Hiranyakashyap was very angry: "O cursed child! Who taught you such perverse things?"

Prahlad remained calm and said: "Vishnu. He reveals himself to all who are devoted to him."

Hiranyakashyap shouted angrily: "This boy must not live! Take him away and kill him! Kill this vilest enemy disguised as my son. Poison him or attack him when he sleeps but kill him!"

The soldiers started attacking Prahlad when Prahlad was meditating on Lord Vishnu, but their weapons could not touch Prahlad. Most deadly snakes were let loose on Prahlad, but their fangs turned impotent. Mighty elephants could not trample him. Something kept them back. He was pushed off a cliff but Prahlad was unharmed. Holika, the wicked aunt of Prahlad Holika who had a boon to brave fire without hurt, sat with Prahlad in fire but Prahlad was unharmed. In desperation Hiranyakashyapu had him fed with deadly poison but it turned into nectar in Prahlad's mouth.

Prahlad was sent to his teacher to try again. This time the teacher tried to get Prahlad interested in means for acquiring wealth and physical pleasures. But Prahlad thought to himself: "How

can the pursuit of physical pleasures and wealth bring happiness? It will only lead to envy and anger?" The teacher eventually gave up, when Prahlad told his father that Vishnu is the soul of all created beings and is present everywhere. Hiranyakashyapu roared: "Where is Vishnu? If he is everywhere why is he not in this Pillar? If he is not there then I shall cut off your head with my sword. Let Vishnu, your Lord protect you." As Hiranyakashyapu was striking the pillar with his sword, Lord Vishnu, in the form of Narasimha (nara=man, simha=lion) emerged from the Pillar. His look was neither beast nor man. Narsinha caught Hiranyakashyapu and it was the twilight hour, carried him to the threshold of the court- room which was neither indoors nor outdoors and while holding him on his lap, killed him. Prahlad was installed on the throne and he ruled wisely and well for many years.

The religious significance of the festival of Holi is to mark the burning of self-conceit, selfishness, greed, lust, hatred, in fact all the undesirable demoniac tendencies, propensities, thoughts and behaviours. The victory of righteous forces over demoniacal forces.

### HOLI OR HOLIKA

Holi or Holika, also called holikotsava, is an extremely popular festival observed throughout the country (India). It is especially marked by unmixed gaiety and frolics and is common to all sections of the people.

This festival is very ancient. Known originally as 'Holika' it has been mentioned in very early religious works such as Jaimini's

Purvamimamsa-sutras and Kathaka-grhya-

sutras. It must have therefore existed several centuries before Christ. It was at first actually a special rite performed by married women for the happiness and well-being of their families and the full moon (Raka) was the deity worshipped by them.

There are two ways of reckoning a lunar month: purnimanta and amanta. In the former, the first day starts after the full moon; and in the latter, after the new moon. Though the latter reckoning is more common now, the former was very much in vogue in the earlier days. According to this purnimanta reckoning, Phalguna purnima was the last day of the year and the new year heralding the Vasanta-rtu (with spring starting from next day). Thus the full moon festival of Holika gradually became a festival of merrymaking, announcing the commencement of the spring season. This perhaps explains the

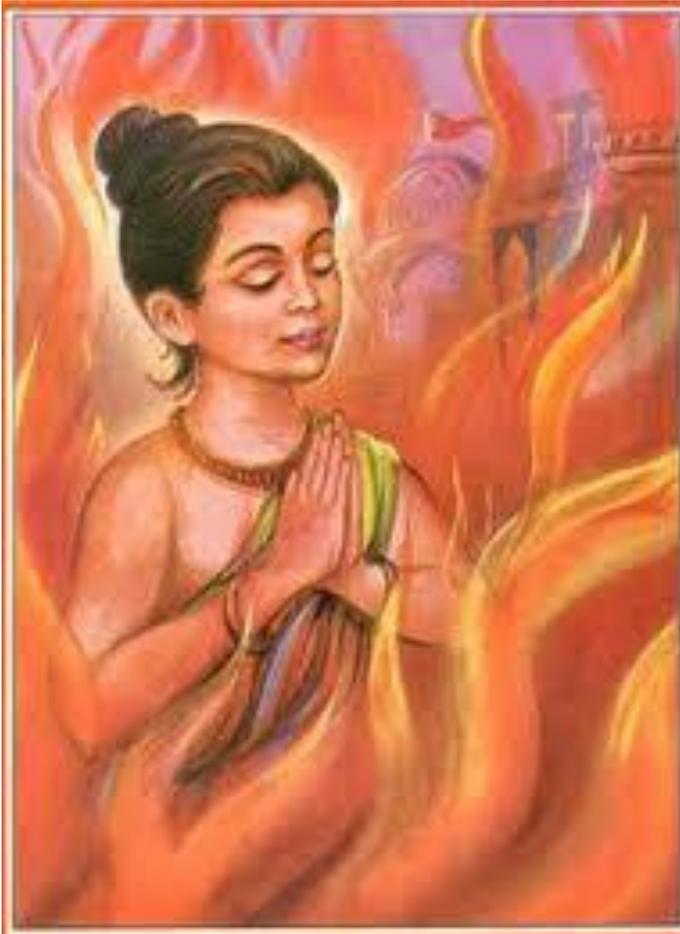


other names of this festival: Vasanta-Mahotsava and Kama-Mahotsava.

According to the stories in the Puranas and various local legends, this day is important for three reasons.

It was on this day that Lord Siva opened his third eye and reduced Kamadeva (the god of love, Cupid or Eros) to ashes.

It was on this day that Holika, the sister of the demon king Hiranyakasyapu, who tried to kill the child devotee Prahlad by taking him on her lap and sitting on a pyre of wood which was set ablaze. Holika was burnt to ashes while Prahlad remained unscathed!



It was again on this day that an ogress called Dhundhi, who was troubling the children in the kingdom of Prthu (or Raghu) was made to run away for life, by the shouts and pranks of the mischievous boys. Though she had secured several boons that made her almost invincible, this – noise, shouts, abuses and pranks of boys – was a chink in her armour due to a curse of Lord Siva. The day itself came to be called ‘Adada’ or ‘Holika’ since then.

There are practically no religious observances for this day like fasting or worship. Generally a log of wood will be kept in a prominent public place on

the Vasantapanchami day (Magha Sukla Panchami), almost 40 days before the Holi Festival. An image of Holika with child Prahlada in her lap is also kept on the log. Holika’s image is made of combustible materials whereas Prahlada’s image is made of non-combustible ones. People go on throwing twigs of trees and any combustible material they can spare, on to that log which gradually grows into a sizable heap. On the night of Phalguna Purnima, it is set alight in a simple ceremony with the Raksoghna Mantras of the Rgveda (4.4.1-15; 10.87.1-25 and so on) being sometimes chanted to ward off all evil spirits. (Coconuts and coins are thrown into this bonfire). The next morning the ashes from the bonfire are collected as prasad (consecrated material) and smeared on the limbs of the body. Singed coconuts, if any are also collected and eaten.

In some houses the image of Kamadeva is kept in the yard and a simple worship is offered. A mixture of mango blossoms and sandalwood paste is partaken as the prasad.

The day- Phalgun krsna pratipad – is observed as a day of revelry especially by throwing on one another gulal or coloured water or perfumed coloured powder. Throwing of mud or earth dust was prevalent in the earlier days also, but among the low culture groups.

Instead of the gay and frenzied celebrations that are witnessed elsewhere in the country, Bengal observes this festival in a quiet and dignified manner as Dolapurnima or Dolayatra (the festival of the swing). The festival, said to have been initiated by the king Indradyumna in Vrndavana, is spread over 3 or 5 days, starting from the sukla Chaturdasi of Phalguna. A celebration in honour of Agni and worship of Govinda (Krsna) in image on a swing are the important features. The fire kindled on the first day is to be preserved till the last day. The swing is to be rocked 21 times at the end of the festival.

The day is also celebrated as the birthday of Sri Krsna Chaitanya (A.D. 1486-1533), mostly in Bengal, as also in Puri (Orissa), Mathura and Vrndavan (in Uttar Pradesh).

*By Swami Harshananda Ramakrishna Math,  
Bangalore*

Source: <http://www.hinduism.co.za/holi-.htm>

# HOLI IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF INDIA AND WORLD



## **BARSA NA HOLI, UTTAR PRADESH**

On this particular day, the men of Nandgaon come to Barsana. Their intention is to take over the temple of Shri Radhikaji. But the women of Barsana are reluctant to allow them to do so. They resist them with bamboo sticks. This is why here Holi is also popularly known as Lathmaar Holi.

The men are unable to strike back. All they can do is to splash colors on the women. The men who are caught are rather unfortunate. The men are forced to clad themselves in women's clothes, apply cosmetics and dance like ladies in front of everyday.

This is embarrassing to them but others have their fair share of laughter. However everything is done in the right spirit. It is a mock battle and both the victors and the vanquished enjoy everything thoroughly. According to legend, Lord Krishna met with similar kind of treatment from the gopis.

Just the reverse happens on the next day. The men of Barsana drench the women of Nandgaon. The air reverberates with holy songs on the occasion of Holi. These songs known as Hori are based on the conversations between Krishna and Radha.

It is indeed a delight to watch all the people participate in this unrestrained merry making. It is pleasantly entertaining and provides everyone with a lot of joy.

Time for celebrating the Barsana Holi, Uttar Pradesh

Barsana Holi is celebrated on the ninth day of the month of Phalgun according to the Hindu calendar. It corresponds to the month of February or March.

It is best to plan a visit to Barsana when Holi is celebrated. The State Tourism Board has arranged a special viewing of the celebrations in a ground on the outskirts of the town. You can witness the brilliance and splendor that marks Barsana Holi easily.

**LATH MAR HOLI** (Hindi: लठमार होली, IAST: *laṭhmār holi*, IPA: *laʈˈmaːr hoːliː*) is a local celebration of the Hindu festival of Holi. It takes place days before the actual Holi in the neighbouring towns of Barsana and Nandgaon near Mathura in the state of Uttar Pradesh, where thousands of Hindus and tourists congregate, each year.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> The name means "that Holi in which [people] hit with sticks" (*laṭh* is a thick traditional staff).

Legend has it that Lord Krishna visited his beloved Radha's village on this day and playfully teased her and her friends. Taking offence at this, the women of Barsana chased him away. Keeping in sync with the story, the men from Nandgaon visit the town of Barsana every year, only to be greeted by sticks (aka lathis) of the women there. The ladies hurl sticks at the men, who try to shield themselves as much as they can. The unlucky ones are captured by the enthusiastic women who then, make the men wear female clothing and dance in public.

In the sprawling compound of the Radha Rani temple in Barsana, which is said to be the only temple in the country that is dedicated to Radha. Thousands gather to witness the Lath Mar holi when women beat up men with sticks (lath or lāthī) as those on the sidelines become hysterical, sing Holi Songs and shout Sri Radhey or Sri Krishna. The Holi songs of Braj mandal are sung in pure Braj Bhasha.

On the first day of Lath Mar Holi, gops (shepherds) from Nandgaon come to Barsana to play Holi with the gopis (shepherdesses) of Barsana. The festival begins with a ceremony at the Radha Rani temple. After this ceremony gops then march out of the temple on the Rang Rangeeli Gali where they stop to play holi with the gopis, who stand in groups along the street. The second day gops from Barsana go to Nandgaon to play holi with gopis at Nandgaon.

The next day, it is the turn of men of Barsana. They reciprocate by invading Nandgaon and drench the womenfolk of Nandgaon in colours of kesudo, and palash. This day, women of Nadagow beat the invaders from Barsana. Holi played at Barsana is unique in the sense that here women chase men away with sticks. Males also sing provocative songs in a bid to invite the attention of women. Women then go on the offensive and use long staves called "lathis" to beat men folk who protect themselves with shields.

During intervals, participants sip 'thandai', a cold drink that is sometime intoxicating because it is laced with a paste called bhang, made of cannabis. Bhang and Holi go together. After drinking bhang, people react in different ways, some crave for sweets, others cry or laugh. It is an ecstatic experience, which is heightened by the revelry. It is a great way to de-stress and bond.

The women of Barsana start preparing a month in advance. The mothers-in-law feed their daughters-in-law rich food so that they show off their prowess on the Holi battle zone. It is a show of love, fun and equality.

## GUJARAT

"Celebration of Spring by Krishna and Radha", 18th-century miniature; in the Guimet Museum, Paris

In Gujarat, Holi is a two-day festival. On the evening of the first day people light the bonfire. People offer raw coconut and corn to the fire. The second day is the festival of colour or "Dhuleti", celebrated by sprinkling coloured water and applying colours to each other. Dwarka, a coastal city of Gujarat, celebrates Holi at the Dwarkadheesh temple and with citywide comedy and music festivities. Falling in the Hindu month of Phalgun, Holi marks the agricultural season of the rabi crop.

In Ahmedabad in Gujarat, in western India, a pot of buttermilk is hung high over the streets and young boys try to reach it and break it by making human pyramids. The girls try to stop them by throwing coloured water on them to commemorate the pranks of Krishna and the cowherd boys to steal butter and "gopis" while trying to stop the girls. The boy who finally manages to break the pot is crowned the Holi King. Afterwards, the men, who are now very colourful, go out in a large procession to "alert" people of Krishna's possible appearance to steal butter from their homes.

In some places there is a custom in undivided Hindu families that the woman beats her brother-in-law with a sari rolled up into a rope in a mock rage and tries to drench him with colours, and in turn, the brother-in-law brings sweets (Indian desserts) to her in the evening.

## UTTARAKHAND: KUMAONI HOLI

Kumaoni Holi in Uttarakhand includes a musical affair. It takes different forms such as the Baithki Holi, the Khari Holi and the Mahila Holi. In Baithki Holi and Khari Holi, people sing songs with a touch of melody, fun and spiritualism. These songs are essentially based on classical ragas. Baithki Holi (बैठकी होली), also known as Nirvan Ki Holi, begins from the premises of temples, where Holiyars (होल्यार) sing Holi songs

and people gather to participate, along with playing classical music. The songs are sung in a particular sequence depending on the time of day; for instance, at noon the songs are based on Peelu, Bhimpalasi and Sarang ragas, while evening songs are based on the ragas such as Kalyan, Shyamkalyan and Yaman. The Khari Holi (खड़ी होली) is mostly celebrated in the rural areas of Kumaon. The songs of the Khari Holi are sung by the people, who, sporting traditional white churidar payajama and kurta, dance in groups to the tune of ethnic musical instruments such as the dhol and hurka.

### **HOLI CELEBRATIONS, PUSHKAR, RAJASTHAN**

In the Kumaon region, the Holika pyre, known as Cheer (चैर), is ceremonially built in a ceremony known as Cheer Bandhan (चैर बंधन) fifteen days before Dulhendi. The Cheer is a bonfire with a green Paiya tree branch in the middle. The Cheer of every village and neighborhood is rigorously guarded as rival mohallas try to playfully steal each other's cheer.

The colours used on Holi are derived from natural sources. Dulhendi, known as Charadi (छरड़ी) (from Chharad (छरड़)), is made from flower extracts, ash and water. Holi is celebrated with great gusto much in the same way all across North India.



### **BIHAR**

Holi is known as Phaguwa in the local Bhojpuri dialect. In this region as well, the legend of Holika is prevalent. On the eve of Phalgun Poornima, people light bonfires. They put dried cow dung cakes, wood of the Araad or Redi tree and Holika tree, grains from the fresh harvest and unwanted wood leaves in the bonfire. At the time of Holika

people assemble near the pyre. The eldest member of the gathering or a purohit initiates the lighting. He then smears others with colour as a mark of greeting. Next day the festival is celebrated with colours and a lot of frolic. Traditionally, people also clean their houses to mark the festival.

Holi Milan is also observed in Bihar, where family members and well wishers visit each other's family, apply colours (abeer) on each other's faces, and on feet, if elderly. Usually this takes place on the evening of Holi day after Holi with wet colours is played in the morning through afternoon. Due to large-scale internal migration issues faced by the people, recently this tradition has slowly begun to transform, and it is common to have Holi Milan on an entirely different day either before or after the actual day of Holi.

Children and youths take extreme delight in the festival. Though the festival is usually celebrated with colours, in some places people also enjoy celebrating Holi with water solutions of mud or clay. Folk songs are sung at high pitch and people dance to the sound of the dholak (a two-headed hand-drum) and the spirit of Holi. Intoxicating bhang, made from cannabis, milk and spices, is consumed with a variety of mouth-watering delicacies, such as pakoras and thandai, to enhance the mood of the festival.

### **WEST BENGAL**

In West Bengal, Holi is known by the name of "Dol Jatra", "Dol Purnima" or the "Swing Festival". The festival is celebrated in a dignified manner by placing the icons of Krishna and Radha on a picturesquely decorated palanquin which is then taken round the main streets of the city or the village. On the Dol Purnima day in the early morning, students dress up in saffron-coloured or pure white clothes and wear garlands of fragrant flowers. They sing and dance to the accompaniment of musical instruments, such as the ektara, dubri, and veena. The devotees take turns to swing them while women dance around the swing and sing devotional songs. During these activities, the men keep spraying coloured water and coloured powder, abir, at them.

Basanta Utsab at Jorasanko Thakur Bari in 2015  
The head of the family observes a fast and prays to Lord Krishna and Agnidev. After all the traditional rituals are over, he smears Krishna's

icon with gulal and offers "bhog" to both Krishna and Agnidev. In Shantiniketan, Holi has a special musical flavour. Visitors on Holi are offered traditional dishes that include malpoa, kheer sandesh, basanti sandesh (saffron), saffron milk, payash, and related foods.

### ODISHA

An 1822 drawing showing elevation of a black stone arch in Puri, Odisha. It carried Vaishnavite gods and goddess, the ritual noted to be a part of the Holi festival.

The people of Odisha celebrate "Dola" on the day of Holi where the icons of Jagannath replace the icons of Krishna and Radha. Dola Melana, processions of the deities are celebrated in villages and bhoga is offered to the deities. "Dola yatra" was prevalent even before 1560 much before Holi was started where the idols of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra used to be taken to the "Dolamandapa" (podium in Jagannath temple). People used to offer natural colours known as "abira" to the deities and apply on each other's feats.

### ANDHRA PRADESH

In Andhra Pradesh, Holi is celebrated on the full moon day of the month of Phaalgunamu. Holi announces the arrival of spring and the passing of winter. People indulge in merry-making, and playing with coloured waters is a common sight. Peasants visit homes singing folklore and asking for small tips. The Puranas give different version of the destruction of the she-demon, called as Holika. On the morning of Holi, people have fun with coloured water. Men, women and children all participate in this merry making. A bonfire is lit in the evenings, with an effigy of Holika. This is otherwise known as burning of Kamudu. The religious orthodox circle the fire seven times, reciting religious verses. Folklore and dances are performed around the fire to welcome the new season. In the evening, youngsters play with dry colours and seek elders' blessings.

### ASSAM

Holi, also called Phakuwa (ফাকুৱা) in Assamese, is celebrated all over Assam. Locally called Dol Jatra, associated with Satras of Barpeta, Holi is celebrated over two days. On the first day, the burning of clay huts are seen in Barpeta and lower

Assam which signifies the legends of Holika. On the second day of it, Holi is celebrated with colour powders. The Holi songs in chorus devoted to Lord Krishna are also sung in the regions of Barpeta.

### GOA

Main article: Shigmo

Holi is a part of the Goan or Konkani spring festival known as Śigmo or शिगमो in Koṅkaṇī or Śiśirotsava, which lasts for about a month. The colour festival or Holi is a part of longer, more extensive spring festival celebrations.[65] Holi festivities (but not Śigmo festivities) include: Holika Puja and Dahan, Dhulvad or Dhuli vandan, Haldune or offering yellow and saffron colour or Gulal to the deity.

### MAHARASHTRA

In Maharashtra, Holi Purnima is also celebrated as Shimga, festivities that last 5 to 7 days. A week before the festival, youngsters go around the community, collecting firewood and money. On the day of Shimga, the firewood is heaped into a huge pile in each neighborhood. In the evening, the fire is lit. Every household brings a meal and dessert, in the honour of the fire god. Puran Poli is the main delicacy and children shout "Holi re Holi puranachi poli". Shimga celebrates the elimination of all evil. The colour celebrations here take place on the day of Rangapanchami, five days after Shimga. During this festival, people are supposed to forget and forgive any rivalries and start new healthy relations with all. Children celebrating Holi at Pune city in Maharashtra

### MANIPUR

Manipuris celebrate Holi for 6 days. Here, this holiday merges with the festival of Yaosang. Traditionally, the festival commences with the burning of a thatched hut of hay and twigs. Young children go from house to house to collect money, locally known as nakadeng (or nakatheng), as gifts on the first two days. The youths at night perform a group folk dance called Thabal chongba on the full moon night of Lamta (Phalgun), traditionally accompanied by folk songs and rhythmic beats of the indigenous drum, but nowadays by modern bands and

fluorescent lamps. In Krishna temples, devotees sing devotional songs, perform dances and celebrate with aber (gulal) wearing traditional white and yellow turbans. On the last day of the festival, large processions are taken out to the main Krishna temple near Imphal where several cultural activities are held. In recent decades, Yaosang, a type of Indian sport, has become common in many places of the valley, where people of all ages come out to participate in a number of sports that are somewhat altered for the holiday.

### KERALA

Holi is locally called Ukkuli in Konkani or Manjal Kuli in Malayalam. It is celebrated around the Konkani temple called Gosripuram Thirumala temple.

### KARNATAKA

Traditionally, in rural Karnataka children collect money and wood in the weeks prior to Holi, and on "Kamadahana" night all the wood is put together and lit. The festival is celebrated for two days. People in north Karnataka prepare special food on this day.

In Sirsi, Karnataka, Holi is celebrated with a unique folk dance called "Bedara Vesha", which is performed during the nights beginning five days before the actual festival day. The festival is celebrated every alternate year in the town, which attracts a large number of tourists from different parts of the India.

### TELANGANA

As in other parts of India, in rural Telangana, children celebrate kamuda and collect money, rice, Mokkajonna and wood for weeks prior to Holi, and on Kamudha night all the wood is put together and set on fire.

### TAMIL NADU

Tamil Hindus celebrate Holi as it relates to the legend of Kama Deva. Holi is known by three names: Kamavilas, Kaman Pandigai and Kama-Dahanam.

### JAMMU & KASHMIR

In Jammu & Kashmir, Holi celebrations are much in line with the general definition of Holi celebrations: a high-spirited festival to mark the

beginning of the harvesting of the summer crop, with the throwing of coloured water and powder and singing and dancing.

### PUNJAB & HIMACHAL PRADESH

In Punjab, Holi is preceded by Holika Dahan the night before. On the day of Holi, people engage in throwing colours on each other.

During Holi in Punjab, walls and courtyards of rural houses are enhanced with drawings and paintings similar to rangoli in South India, mandana in Rajasthan, and rural arts in other parts of India. This art is known as chowk-poorana or chowkpurana in Punjab and is given shape by the peasant women of the state. In courtyards, this art is drawn on cloth. The art includes drawing tree motifs, flowers, ferns, creepers, plants, peacocks, palanquins, geometric patterns along with vertical, horizontal and oblique lines. These arts add to the festive atmosphere.

### NEPAL



Locals Celebrating Holi In Kathmandu, Nepal  
Holi, along with many other Hindu festivals, is celebrated in Nepal as a national festival. It is an important major Nepal-wide festival along with Dashain and Tihar (Dipawali).[74] It is celebrated in the Nepali month of Phagun (same date as Indian Holi), and signifies the legends of the Hindu god Krishna.[74] Newar Buddhists and others worship Saraswati shrine in Vajrayogini temples and celebrate the festival with their Hindu friends.[75] Traditional concerts are held in most cities in Nepal, including Kathmandu, Narayangarh, Pokhara, Hetauda, and Dharan, and are broadcast on television with various celebrity guests.

People walk through their neighbourhoods to celebrate Holi by exchanging colours and spraying coloured water on one another. A popular activity is the throwing of water balloons at one another, sometimes called lola (meaning water balloon).[76] Many people mix bhang in their drinks and food, as is also done during Shivaratri. It is believed that the combination of different colours at this festival takes all sorrow away and makes life itself more colourful.

### INDIAN DIASPORA

Over the years, Holi has become an important festival in many regions wherever Indian diaspora were either taken as indentured labourers during colonial era, or where they emigrated on their own, and are now present in large numbers such as in Africa, North America, Europe, Latin America, and parts of Asia such as Fiji.

### THE UNITED STATES

Holi is a national holiday in Suriname. It is called Phagwa festival, and is celebrated to mark the beginning of spring and Hindu mythology. In Suriname, Holi Phagwa is a festival of colour. It is customary to wear old white clothes on this day, be prepared to get them dirty and join in the colour throwing excitement and party.



### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Phagwa is normally celebrated in Trinidad and Tobago on the Sunday closest to the actual date of Phagwah. It is celebrated with a lot of colour and splendour, along with the singing on traditional Phagwah songs or Chowtal (gana).

### GUYANA

Phagwah is a national holiday in Guyana, and peoples of all races and religions participate in the celebrations. The main celebration in

**Bhavan Australia | January – February 2018**

Georgetown is held at the Mandir in Prashad Nagar.

### FIJI

Indo-Fijians celebrate Holi as festival of colours, folksongs and dances. The folksongs sung in Fiji during Holi season are called phaag gaaian. Phagan, also written as Phalgan, is the last month of the Hindu calendar. Holi is celebrated at the end of Phagan. Holi marks the advent of spring and ripening of crops in Northern India. Not only it is a season of romance and excitement, folk songs and dances, it is also an occasion of playing with powder, perfumes and colours. Many of the Holi songs in Fiji are around the theme of love-relationship between Radha and Krishna.

### MAURITIUS

Holi in Mauritius comes close on the heels of Shivaratri. It celebrates the beginning of spring, commemorating good harvests and the fertile land. Hindus believe it is a time of enjoying spring's abundant colours and saying farewell to winter. It is considered one of the most exhilarating religious holidays in existence. During this event, participants hold a bonfire, throw coloured powder at each other, and celebrate wildly.

### PAKISTAN

Holi is celebrated by Pakistani Hindus, in various cities in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, such as Karachi, Hazara, Rawalpindi, Sindh, Hyderabad, Multan and Lahore. Locals in Multan associate Holi and Prahlada with the Prahlada-Puri Temple.

Holi was not a public holiday in Pakistan from 1947 to 2016. Holi along with Diwali for Hindus, and Easter for Christians, was adopted as public holiday resolution by Pakistan's parliament in 2016, giving the local governments and public institutions the right to declare Holi as a holiday and grant leave for its minority communities, for the first time.[91] This decision has been controversial, with some Pakistanis welcoming the decision, while others criticising it, with the concern that declaring Holi a public holiday advertises a Hindu festival to Pakistan.

Source: <http://www.holifestival.org/holi-around-the-world.htm>

# HOMEMADE ECO-FRIENDLY HOLI POWDER

Legends talk about the immortal love between Radha and Krishna. In his youth, Lord Krishna was concerned about the colour of his skin and whether Radha and the other girls would like him anyway, even if he was different. One day his mother suggested him to go to Radha and colour her face with any colour he wanted, suggesting him that their differences were only superficial. Fascinated by the idea Lord Krishna playfully coloured Radha with different colours, giving birth to their love.

This is why, on the second day of Holi, people play with coloured powders, promoting tolerance, togetherness, and peace for all.

One easy way of creating Holi powder is mixing any flour (wheat or Maida) with food colours but even food colours have chemicals these days, so it's better go natural... and here are some suggestions:

## RED COLOUR



Red colour signifies both sensuality and purity. In India, red colour has the utmost significance and it is the most preferred colour for marriages and birth of child. All

married women wear a red tilak on the forehead during ceremonies and festivals

The dry red colour powder can be made in the following ways:

1. Dry the petals of Red Rose in sun and after they become crisp, they can be powdered in a mixer and a little flour can be added to increase the volume.
2. Now this is a little costly venture, but nonetheless can be used for children as it is perfectly safe and even healthy for the skin. Use Red Sandal Wood Powder or Raktachandan as a red holi color powder.
3. Red Hibiscus flower can be dried in shade and blended in a mixie to a powder consistency.

Wet Red colour Holi Powder:

1. Mix the sandalwood powder in water to get a uniform solution.

2. Mix a teaspoon of limestone powder or chuna or sunnambu in a cup of water with a teaspoon of turmeric and dilute it with water as required.

2. Saffron or Orange colour Homemade Holi Powder Recipe

saffron orange homemade holi powder recipe

Saffron represents Fire and as impurities are destroyed by fire, it also symbolizes purity.

## ORANGE COLOUR



Dry Saffron or Orange colour Holi powder:

The Tesu Flower or the Flame of Forest can be dried and powdered and mixed with flour for more volume.

Wet Saffron or Orange colour Holi Powder:

1. The Tesu flowers can be either soaked in water or boiled overnight for a yellow orange colour water.
2. Henna can be mixed with water to yield a orange colour water, if you are using it for kids, make sure you get a good quality Henna powder.
3. A few strands of Kesar or Saffron can be soaked in water overnight and can be diluted with water.

## YELLOW COLOUR



Yellow signifies Knowledge and Learning. Yellow symbolizes happiness, peace and meditation.

Dry Yellow Color Holi Powder:

This is the easiest of all the

recipes, just mix 2 parts good quality turmeric powder with 4 parts of Besan flour.

Wet Yellow Color Holi Powder:

Mix turmeric in water or boil chrysanthemum or marigold flowers in water.

## GREEN COLOUR



Green is a festive colour and signifies life and happiness.

Dry Green Colour Holi Powder:

Mix equal quantity of good quality henna powder with

flour to form a green colour homemade holi powder. Make sure it is pure henna powder with no additional ingredients.

Wet Green Colour Holi Powder:

Pluck fresh neem leaves and boil them in water. Allow the mixture to cool, remove the superficial water and dilute as needed.

## BLUE COLOUR



Blue symbolizes bravery and determination.

The Hindu Gods Lord Rama and Krishna are blue colored as they fought against evil.

Dry Blue colour Holi powder:

The Neeli Gulmohar which blooms in summer has a bright coloured flower which can be dried and powdered.

## PURPLE COLOUR



Wet purple colour homemade holi powder:

Chop 1 to 2 kg of Beetroot and boil them in a cooker with water. Leave 5 to 6 whistles. After it cools, remove

the water and dilute it as required. Please Note – Either use fresh color or preserve it in fridge if using later.

## BROWN COLOUR



Brown colour can be substituted for black, as many consider black inauspicious.

Dry Brown colour holi powder:

Mix 1 part of Henna powder

with 4 parts of Amla powder for Brown colour or dissolve them in water for a brown colour water.

For holi colours that cannot be made naturally, the following recipe can be followed using food colours or icing colours:

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cornstarch
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup of water
- 1 ounce food colour

### METHOD

In a mixing bowl, mix corn starch and water to form a consistency that doesn't ooze off

Wear protective gloves and mix the food colour with the cornstarch mix.

Allow the mixture to dry for 2 days in a bowl.

After 2 days place the dried powder in a baking tray in a preheated oven for 30 mins at 350 Degree.

This will dry up the mixture more and cracks will appear in the powder.

Blend this mixture in a blender to form powder

Store in a airtight container.

### Notes of Caution

1. Please note each child is different and always do a patch test if you are going to use the colours for your baby or kid.
2. If your baby or kid has ingested the colours by mistake, immediately rush to the hospital.
3. Since most of the natural colours are derived from vegetables and flowers, they get spoiled soon, so either use them fresh or store them in a refrigerator.

Source: <https://www.mylittlemoppet.com/7-eco-friendly-homemade-holi-color-powder-recipe/>

# 5 STORIES OF VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL

On Vijayadashami, people celebrate the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasur. This day signifies the victory of Good over Evil. Here evil can be anything like negative thoughts, bad behavior, cheap mentality, physical or mental violence, bad old rituals etc. Today we have brought together stories of 5 personalities who fought with such kind of evils and became victorious.

## MALALA YOUSAFZAI



She is the youngest ever Nobel Prize laureate. She is known mainly for human rights advocacy for education and for women in her native Swat Valley in the Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa province of northwest Pakistan, where the local Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. Yousafzai's advocacy has since grown into an international movement. Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Taliban aged 15, was given the award for her campaigning for universal education.



## SONITA ALIZADEH

An Afghan teenager, who has experienced horrifying reality of child bride sale at the age of 10 and 16,

is taking a stand and protesting her country's practice of selling child brides by resorting to music. In an emotional conversation she said, "When my mother made a decision to sell me, I didn't give up because I had designed a shiny future in my mind for myself." Her story tells that if you've set your mind on something you will be able to achieve it.



## YEONMI PARK

Yeonmi Park is a human rights activist who was born in North Korea. A North Korean defector faced the repressive North Korean regime in her early life. After her epic escape by bike, Yeonmi Park devoted herself to revealing the brutal truth about North Korea.

## KANGNA RANAUT



A small town girl, who was ignored by everyone and whose accent made everyone snigger, is now Bollywood's genuine star. Despite of the

struggle, opposition from family, people's daunting comments, she had made her mark in film industry. She is real "Queen". She has been the recipient of two National Film Awards: Best Supporting Actress for Fashion (2008) and Best Actress for Queen (2014).



## LIZZIE VELASQUEZ

She has a rare neonatal progeroid syndrome due to which it's impossible for her to gain weight. She had faced abuse on social media where some people called

her "world's ugliest person". When she was born, doctors told Velasquez's parents that she would never speak or walk, but she proved doctors wrong. She is able to speak and talk properly. She is a motivational speaker now and she had given a TEDx talk called "How do you define yourself?" Her story help us to understand it's not what other thinks of us but it's what we think of ourselves that matters.

Source: <http://www.deewaneaam.com/5-stories-of-victory-of-good-over-evil/>

## IN GOD WE TRUST:

### RELIGIONS ARE BUT PATHS THAT LEAD TO THE OMNIPOTENT

With terrorism having become a constant global threat, the Prime Minister's earnest appeal to nations to join hands and unitedly fight the scourge if we are to have world peace assumes significance in the backdrop of Hafiz Saeed's release from 'House arrest' in Pakistan.

That the mastermind of the 'war on Mumbai' could walk out a free man on the very eve of the anniversary of the dastardly act, observed so very religiously by the nation, speaks volumes for Pakistan's sincerity in addressing the issue of terrorism from which even it cannot claim immunity.

Torn asunder by the ravages by separatist groups, Pakistan is today paying the price for endorsing terrorism and allowing it to breed unchecked on its soil. Yet, the country seems to show no remorse, at least when it comes to relations with India!

Seen as a threat which could obliterate its presence on the global map, Pakistan's 'anti-India obsession' keeps it so busy plotting mayhem across the border that it hardly pays any heed to the conflicts within that's already sounding doomsday warnings for Pakistan.

The manner in which audacious terror operations are planned and executed by state players within Indian limits gives indications of Pakistan being preoccupied with anything else but its proxy-war with India.

For a country that is in the throes of anarchy, the arms-race and the haste to pile up its nuclear arsenal comes as a huge surprise especially considering that it has so far been incapable of extending protection to its own people against the aggression by insurgents and splinter terror groups within its territory.

Having been on the global radar for its infamy as a breeding ground for Islamic fundamentalism for so long, empty rhetoric and lip-syncing has been characterizing Pakistan's response to global conferences on anti-terror initiatives.

For us Indians the heinous carnage of 25/11 has as much relevance as the 9/11 tragedy for the Americans in that it showed the world that no country is absolutely secure against terror perpetrations orchestrated by lunatics who

justify their vile acts as adherence to religious tenets that assures them spiritual salvation.

It is however, a shame that chaos and destruction which remain the sole intention of those spreading a reign of terror across the globe is always attributed to the call of their God. As if the Supreme Being sanctions the unnecessary bloodshed being carried out in its name!

Somehow, globally, religions have found favour as the most appropriate medium to be exploited to incite the public. It comes as a huge surprise though that people have not been able to see through the thin fabric of lies which give a colour of sincerity to the deception purportedly carried out in the guise of crusades that discredit religions more than they honour them.

While staunchly believing that all religions preach the gospel of truth and love, it is sad to note that the concept of universal brotherhood has never been understood in its true sense and continues to be flaunted as a term only meant to garner applause wherever used.

It is however,  
a shame that chaos and  
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intention of those  
spreading a reign of  
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of their God. As if the  
Supreme Being  
sanctions the  
unnecessary bloodshed  
being carried out in  
its name!

For, if we are to believe in the teaching that all human beings are brothers and sisters, whose parent is God, religions merely become the spiritual path which teach us veneration of that single entity. So Ishwar, Allah and Isa Messiah are

all one and the same! But we have learnt to symbolize the Supreme Being by different names.

In spite of the avenues that have opened up for knowledge seekers, there are many who still prefer living in ages where religion had an enigma about it and could be understood by only those who were entitled to decipher the holy texts.

Probably those dabbling in religious affairs wanted to maintain their superiority over the commoners and pursuit of this common goal pushed them further into the dark pits of religious ignorance. But religion is no more taboo and is easily 'accessible' to laymen. Even then, people getting easily stirred by religious emotions and instigated into assuming hostile postures is not a rare occurrence these days.

Yet in the haste to establish religious superiority, fundamentalists forget that the various sets of belief that differentiate mankind in today's world are but different paths leading to that lone supreme being whom we call by different names. However, it is really a matter of concern that as against the violent acts that were typical to the uprisings that were attributive of the struggles against tyrannical rules across the world in the past ages, modern day rebellions have religious ideologies featuring as a major source of motivation.

But nothing could be more sinister than the realization that politics as that art of governance which is all about resolving provincial differences or conflicts between nations through negotiations, conciliations and compromises may at times also entail the infusion of the 'religion factor' into these exercises to exploit the situation.

It becomes all the more bewildering to have religions being thought of as a convenient tool to bolster sagging images of political parties and to further political agendas of ruling factions. It wouldn't be wrong to say that almost all the communal clashes that happen in the country today have their genesis in the exploitation of the religious sentiments of the masses. But then that is politics!

This fear has manifested itself in so many forms that at times certain communities appear apologetic over the actions of a few from their brethren who bring the whole community to

disrepute with their vile deeds. Besides, are we morally justified in condemning a whole

community for the actions of a few estranged members!

**"Fear, a despotic state's most potent weapon, keeps a population compliant. It will be lavishly supplied as we are thrust into a new dark age."**

How apt is the observation under current circumstances!

Extreme reactions have typified responses to terrorist acts with that tinge of religious connotation in India. Otherwise there is nothing called 'saffron' or 'green' terrorism. The 'red' colour however, remains reserved for the Maoist insurgency that has been taking its toll in the tribal belts of the country.

Fearing threats to their religion, retaliatory moves by members to safeguard their system of belief from being overwhelmed by other faiths can only be seen as a scenario that has all evidences of political maneuvering written all over it. It is a sad state of affairs that politics has aggravated the unsavory situation vis-a-vis terror perceptions the nation is trying hard to come to terms with.

When will realization dawn upon us that religions are but paths leading to the omnipotent!

*Pachu Menon*  
*Source: Bhavan Journal,*  
*December 31, 2017*

## GOD CAN BE SEEN

From The Bhagavad Gita Ch.11, verse 50

Sanjaya said:

*Having thus spoken to Arjuna, the Lord again showed his own form, and the Lord, assuming His gentle human form, consoled Arjuna, who was terrified (at seeing the Lord's Cosmic form).*

From The Bhagavad Gita Ch. 11, verse 54.

The Blessed Lord said:

*By single-minded devotion I can be known in this form and seen in reality and also entered into, O Arjuna.*

From Mundaka Upanishad III-(1)-4

*The man who realizes 'It is the Supreme Life that shines through all life' does not waste words. His pleasures and his love are then all in the soul. He becomes the most enlightened among the philosophers.*

Visit to Vidyasagar August 5, 1882)

Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was born in the village of Beer Singh, not far from Kamarpukur, Sri Ramakrishna's birth place. Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was known as a great scholar, educator, writer, and philanthropist. One of the creators of modern Bengali, he was also well-versed in Sanskrit grammar and poetry. His generosity made his name a household word with his countrymen, most of his income being given in charity to widows, orphans, indigent students, and other needy people. Nor was his compassion limited to human beings: he stopped drinking milk for years so that the calves should not be deprived of it, and he would not drive in a carriage for fear of causing discomfort to the horses.

He was a man of indomitable spirit, which he showed when he gave up the lucrative position of principal of the Sanskrit College of Calcutta because of a disagreement with the authorities. His affection for his mother was especially deep. One day, in the absence of a ferry, he swam a raging river at the risk of his life to fulfil her wish that he should be present at his brother's wedding. His whole life was one of utter

simplicity. The title 'Vidyasagar', meaning 'Ocean of Learning', was given to him in recognition of his vast erudition.

Sri Ramakrishna had long wanted to visit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Learning from M. that he was a teacher at Vidyasagar's school, the Master asked: "Can you take me to Vidyasagar? I should like very much to see him."

M. told Iswar Chandra of Sri Ramakrishna's wish, and the pundit gladly agreed that M. should bring the Master, some Saturday afternoon at four o'clock. He only asked M. what kind of Paramhansa the Master was, saying, "Does he wear an ochre cloth?" M. answered: "No sir. He is an unusual person. He wears a red bordered cloth and polished slippers. He lives in a room in Rani Rasmani's temple garden. In his room there is a couch with a mattress and a mosquito net. He has no outer indication of holiness. But he doesn't know anything except God. Day and night he thinks of God alone."

On the afternoon of August 5, 1882, the Master left Dakshineswar in a hackney carriage accompanied by Bhavanath, M., and Hazra. Vidyasagar lived in Badurbagan, in central Calcutta, about six miles from Dakshineswar. On the way Sri Ramakrishna talked with his companion; but as the carriage neared Vidyasagar's house his mood suddenly changed. He was overpowered with divine ecstasy. Not noticing this, M. pointed out the garden house where Raja Rammohan Roy had lived. The Master was annoyed and said, "I don't care about such things now." He was going into an ecstatic state. The carriage stopped in front of Vidyasagar's house. The Master alighted, supported by M., who then led the way. In the courtyard were many flowering plants. As the Master walked to the house he said to M. like a child, pointing to his shirt button: "My shirt is unbuttoned. Will that offend Vidyasagar?"

"Oh no!" said M. "Don't be anxious about it. Nothing about you will be offensive. You don't have to button your shirt." He accepted the assurance simply, like a child.

Vidyasagar was about sixty-two years old, sixteen or seventeen years older than the Master. He lived in a two-story house built in the English fashion, with lawns on all sides and surrounded by a high wall. After climbing the stairs to the

second floor, Sri Ramakrishna and his devotees entered a room at the far end of which Vidyasagar was seated facing them, with a table in front of him. To the right of the table was a bench. Some friends of their host occupied chairs on the other two sides.

Vidyasagar rose to receive the Master. Sri Ramakrishna stood in front of the bench, with one hand resting on the table. He gazed at Vidyasagar, as if they had known each other before, and smiled in an ecstatic mood. In that mood he remained standing a few minutes. Now and then, to bring his mind back to normal consciousness, he said, "I shall have a drink of water."

In the mean time the young members of the household and a few friends and relatives of Vidyasagar had gathered around. Sri Ramakrishna, still in an ecstatic mood, sat on the bench. A young man, seventeen or eighteen years old, who had come to



Vidyasagar to seek financial help for his education, was seated there. The Master sat down at a little distance from the boy, saying in an abstract mood: "Mother, this boy is very much attached to the world. He belongs to Thy realm of ignorance."

Vidyasagar told someone to bring water and asked M. whether the Master would like some sweetmeats also. Since M. did not object, Vidyasagar himself went eagerly to the inner apartments and brought the sweets. They were placed before the Master. Bhavanath and Hazra also received their share. When they were offered to M., Vidyasagar said: "Oh, he is like one of the family. We needn't worry about him." Referring to a young devotee, the Master said to Vidyasagar: "He is a nice young man and is sound at the core. He is like the river Phalgu. The surface is covered with sand; but if you dig a little you will find water flowing underneath."

After taking some of the sweets, the Master, with a smile, began to speak to Vidyasagar. Meanwhile the room had become filled with people, some were standing and others were seated.

Master: "Ah! Today, at last, I have come to the ocean. Up till now I have seen only canals, marshes, or a river at the most. But today I am face to face with sagar, the ocean." (All laugh).

Vidyasagar (smiling): "Then please take home some salt water." (Laughter).

Master: "On no! Why salt water? You aren't the ocean of ignorance. You are the ocean of vidya, knowledge. You are the ocean of condensed milk." (All laugh).

Vidyasagar: "Well, you may put it that way."

The pundit became silent.

Sri Ramakrishna said: "Your activities are inspired by sattva. Though they are rajasic, they are influenced by sattva.

Compassion springs from sattva. Though work for the

good of others belongs to rajas, yet this rajas has sattva for its basis and is not harmful. Suka and other sages cherished compassion in their minds to give people religious instruction, to teach them about God. You are distributing food and learning. That is good too. If these activities are done in a selfless spirit they lead to God. But most people work for fame or to acquire merit. Their activities are not selfless. Besides, you are already a siddha."

Vidyasagar: "How is that, sir?"

Master (laughing): "When potatoes and other vegetables are well cooked, they become soft and tender. And you possess such a tender nature! You are so compassionate!" (Laughter).

Vidyasagar (laughing): "But when the paste of kalai pulse is boiled it becomes all the harder."

Master: "But you don't belong to that class. Mere pundits are like diseased fruit that becomes hard and will not ripen at all. Such fruit has neither the

freshness of green fruit nor the flavour of ripe. Vultures soar very high in the sky, but their eyes are fixed on rotten carrion on the ground. The book-learned are reputed to be wise, but they are attached to 'woman and gold' (lust and gold). Like the vultures, they are in search of carrion. They are attached to the world of ignorance. Compassion, love of God, and renunciation are the glories of true knowledge."

Vidyasagar listened to these words in silence. The others, too, gazed at the Master and were attentive to every word he said.

Vidyasagar was very reticent about giving religious instruction to others. He had studied Hindu philosophy. Once, when M. had asked him his opinion of it, Vidyasagar had said, "I think the philosophers have failed to explain what was in their minds." But in his daily life he followed all the rituals of Hindu religion and wore the sacred thread of a brahmin. About God he had once declared: "It is indeed impossible to know Him. What, then, should be our duty? It seems to me that we should live in such a way that, if others followed our example, this very earth would be heaven. Everyone should try to do good to the world."

Sri Ramakrishna's conversation now turned to the Knowledge of Brahman (Supreme Reality).

Master: "Brahman is beyond vidya and avidya, knowledge and ignorance. It is beyond maya, the illusion of duality. The world consists of the illusory duality of knowledge and ignorance. It contains knowledge and devotion, and also attachment to 'woman and gold' (lust and gold); righteousness and unrighteousness; good and evil. But Brahman is unattached to these. Good and evil apply to the jiva, the individual soul, as do righteousness and unrighteousness; but Brahman is not at all affected by them.

One man may read the Bhagavata by the light of a lamp, and another may commit a forgery by that very light; but the lamp is unaffected. The sun sheds its light on the wicked as well as on the virtuous.

You may ask, 'How, then, can one explain misery and sin and unhappiness?' The answer is that these apply only to the jiva (the individual soul). Brahman is unaffected by them. There is poison in a snake; but though others may die if bitten by it, the snake itself is not affected by the poison.

What Brahman is cannot be described. All things in the world – the Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantras, the six systems of philosophy – have been defiled, like food that has been touched by the tongue, for they have been read or uttered by the tongue. Only one thing has not been defiled in this way, and that is Brahman. No one has ever been able to say what Brahman is."

Vidyasagar (to his friends): "Oh! That is a remarkable

statement. I have learnt something new today."

Master: "A man had two sons. The father sent them to a preceptor to learn the knowledge of Brahman. After a few years they returned from their preceptor's house and bowed low before their father. Wanting to measure the depth of their knowledge of Brahman, he first questioned the older of the two boys. 'My child,' he said, 'you have studied all the scriptures. Now tell me, what is the nature of Brahman?' The boy began to explain Brahman by reciting various texts from the Vedas. The father did not say anything. Then he asked the younger son the same question. But the boy remained silent and stood with eyes cast down. No word escaped his lips. The father was pleased and said to him: 'My child, you have understood a little of Brahman. What It is cannot be expressed in words.'

Men often think they have understood Brahman fully. Once an ant went to a hill of sugar. One grain filled its stomach. Taking another grain in its mouth it started homeward. On its way it thought, 'Next time I shall carry home the whole hill.' That is the way shallow minds think. They don't know that Brahman is beyond one's words and thought. However great a man may be, how much can he know of Brahman? Sukadeva and sages like him may have been big ants; but even they could carry at the utmost eight or ten grains of sugar!

As for what has been said in the Vedas and the Puranas, do you know what it is like? Suppose a man has seen the ocean, and somebody asks him, 'Well, what is the ocean like?' The first man opens his mouth as wide as he can and says: 'What a sight! What tremendous waves and sounds!' The description of Brahman in the sacred books is like that. It is said in the Vedas that Brahman is of the nature of Bliss – It is Satchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute).

Suka and other sages stood on the shore of this Ocean of Brahman and saw and touched the water. According to one school of thought they never plunged into it. Those who do, cannot come back to the world again.

In samadhi (the state of super-consciousness where Absoluteness is experienced attended with all knowledge and joy) one attains the Knowledge of Brahman – one realizes Brahman. In that state reasoning stops altogether, and man becomes mute. He has no power to describe the nature of Brahman.

Once a salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. (All laugh). It wanted to tell others how deep the water was. But this it could never do, for no sooner did it get into the water than it melted. Now who was there to report the ocean's depth?" A devotee: "Suppose a man has obtained the Knowledge of Brahman in samadhi. Doesn't he speak any more?"

Master: "Sankaracharya (one of the greatest philosophers of India) retained the 'ego of Knowledge' in order to teach others. After the vision of Brahman a man becomes silent. He reasons about It as long as he has not realized It. If you heat butter in a pan on the stove, it makes a sizzling sound as long as the water it contains has not dried up. But when no trace of water is left the clarified butter makes no sound. If you put an uncooked cake of flour in that butter it sizzles again. But after the cake is cooked all sound stops. Just so, a man established in samadhi comes down to the relative plane of consciousness in order to teach others, and then he talks about God.

The bee buzzes as long as it is not sitting on a flower. It becomes silent when it begins to sip the nectar. But sometimes, intoxicated with nectar, it buzzes again.

An empty pitcher makes a gurgling sound when it is dipped in water. When it fills up it becomes silent. (All laugh). But if the water is poured from it into another pitcher, then you will hear the sound again. (Laughter).

The rishis (sages; seers of Truth) of old attained the Knowledge of Brahman. One cannot have this so long as there is the slightest trace of worldliness. How hard the rishis laboured! Early in the morning they would go away from the hermitage, and would spend the whole day in solitude, meditating on Brahman. At night they

would return to the hermitage and eat a little fruit or roots. They kept their minds aloof from the objects of sight, hearing, touch, and other things of worldly nature. Only thus did they realize Brahman as their own inner consciousness.

But in the Kaliyuga, man, being totally dependent on food for life, cannot altogether shake off the idea that he is the body. In this state of mind it is not proper for him to say, 'I am He.' When a man does all sorts of worldly things, he should not say, 'I am Brahman.' Those who cannot give up attachment to worldly things, and who find no means to shake off the feeling of 'I', should rather cherish the idea, 'I am God's servant; I am His devotee.' One can also realize God by following the path of devotion.

The jnani (self-realized) gives up his identification with worldly things, discriminating, 'Not this, not this'. Only then can he realize Brahman. It is like reaching the roof of a house by leaving the steps behind, one by one. But the vijnani, who is more intimately acquainted with Brahman, realizes something more. He realizes that the steps are made of the same materials as the roof: bricks, lime, and brick-dust. That which is realized intuitively as Brahman, through the eliminating process of 'Not this, not this', is then found to have become the universe and all its living beings. The vijnani sees that the Reality which is nirguna, without attributes, is also sagua, with attributes.

A man cannot live on the roof a long time. He comes down again. Those who realize Brahman in samadhi come down also and find that it is Brahman that has become the universe and its living beings. In the musical scale there are notes sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, and ni; but one cannot keep one's voice on 'ni' a long time. The ego does not vanish altogether. The man coming down from samadhi perceives that it is Brahman that has become the ego, the universe, and all living beings. This is known as vijnana.

The path of knowledge leads to Truth, as does the path that combines knowledge and love.

The path of love, too, leads to this goal. The way of love is as true as the way of knowledge. All paths ultimately lead to the same Truth. But as long as God keeps the feeling of ego in us, it is easier to follow the path of love.

The vijnani sees that Brahman is immovable and actionless, like Mount Sumeru. This universe

consists of the three gunas – sattva, rajas, and tamas. They are in Brahman. But Brahman is unattached.

The vijnani further sees that what is Brahman is the Bhagavan, the Personal God. He who is beyond the three gunas is the Bhagavan, with His six supernatural powers. Living beings, the universe, mind, intelligence, love, renunciation, knowledge – all these are the manifestations of His power. (With a laugh) If an aristocrat has neither house nor property, or if he has been forced to sell them, one doesn't call him an aristocrat any more. (All laugh). God is endowed with the six supernatural powers. If He were not, who would obey Him? (All laugh).

Just see how picturesque this universe is! How many things there are! The sun, moon, and stars; and how many varieties of living beings! – big and small, good and bad, strong and weak- some endowed with more power, some with less."

Vidyasagar: "Has He endowed some with more power and others with less?"

Master: "As the All-pervading Spirit He exists in all beings, even in the ant. But the manifestations of His power are different in different beings; otherwise, how can one person put ten to flight, while another can't face even one? And why do all people respect you? Have you grown a pair of horns? (Laughter). You have more compassion and learning. Therefore people honour you and come to pay you their respects. Don't you agree with me?"

Vidyasagar smiled.

The Master continued: "There is nothing in mere scholarship. The object of study is to find means of knowing God and realizing Him. A holy man had a book. When asked what it contained, he opened it and showed that on all the pages were written the words 'Om Rama', and nothing else.

What is the significance of the Gita? It is what you find by repeating the word ten times. It is then reversed into 'tagi', which means a person who has renounced everything for God. And the lesson of the Gita is: 'O man, renounce everything and seek God alone.' Whether a man is a monk or a householder, he has to shake off all attachment from his mind.

Chaitanyadeva set out on a pilgrimage to southern India. One day he saw a man reading the Gita. Another man, seated at a distance, was listening and weeping. His eyes were swimming

in tears. Chaitanyadeva asked him, 'Do you understand all this?' The man said: 'No, revered sir, I don't understand a word of the text.' 'Then why are you crying?' asked Chaitanya. The devotee said: 'I see Arjuna's chariot before me. I see Lord Krishna and Arjuna seated in front of it, talking. I see this and I weep.'

Why does a vijnani keep an attitude of love toward God? The answer is that 'I-consciousness' persists. It disappears in the state of samadhi, no doubt, but it comes back. In the case of ordinary people the 'I' never disappears. You may cut down the Aswattha tree, but the next day sprouts shoot up. (All laugh).

Even after the attainment of Knowledge this 'I-consciousness' comes up, nobody knows from where. You dream of a tiger. Then you awake; but your heart keeps on palpitating! All our suffering is due to this 'I'. The cow cries, 'Hamba!' which means 'I'. That is why it suffers so much. It is yoked to the plough and made to work in rain and sun. Then it may be killed by the butcher. From its hide shoes are made, and also drums, which are mercilessly beaten. (Laughter). Still it does not escape suffering. At last strings are made out of its entrails for the bows used in carding cotton. Then it no longer says, 'Hamba! Hamba!', 'I 'I', but 'Tuhu!' 'Tuhu!', 'Thou!' 'Thou!' Only then are its troubles over. O Lord, I am the servant; Thou art the Master. I am the child; Thou art the Mother.

Once Rama asked Hanuman, 'How do you look on Me?' And Hanuman replied: 'O Rama, as long as I have the feeling of 'I', I see that Thou art the whole and I am a part; Thou art the Master and I am Thy servant. But when, O Rama, I have the knowledge of Truth, then I realize that Thou art I, and I am Thou.'

The relationship of master and servant is the proper one.

Since this 'I' must remain, let the rascal be God's servant.

'I' and 'mine' – these constitute ignorance. 'My house', 'my wealth', 'my learning', 'my possessions' – the attitude that prompts one to say such things comes of ignorance. On the contrary, the attitude born of Knowledge is: 'O God, Thou art the Master, and all these things belong to Thee. House, family, children, attendants, friends, are Thine.'

One should constantly remember death. Nothing will survive death. We are born into this world to perform certain duties, like the people who come from the countryside to Calcutta on business. 'This is our garden', 'This is our lake', and so forth. But if the superintendent is dismissed for some misdeed, he can't carry away even his mango-wood chest. He sends it secretly by the gatekeeper. (Laughter).

God laughs on two occasions. He laughs when the physician says to the patient's mother, 'Don't be afraid, mother, I shall certainly cure your boy.' God laughs, saying to Himself, 'I am going to take his life, and this man says he will save it!' The physician thinks he is the master, forgetting that God is the Master. God laughs again when two brothers divide their land with a string, saying to each other, 'This side is mine and that side is yours.' God laughs and says to Himself, 'The whole universe belongs to Me, but they say they own this portion or that portion.'



Can one know God through reasoning? Be His servant, surrender yourself to Him, and then pray to Him."

(To vidyasagar, with a smile) "Well, what is your attitude?"

Vidyasagar (smiling): "Some day I shall confide it to you."

(All laugh).

Master (laughing): "God cannot be realized through mere scholarly reasoning."

Intoxicated with divine love, the Master sang:

Who is there that can understand what Mother Kali is?

Even the six darsanas are powerless to reveal Her. It is She, the scriptures say, that is the Inner Self Of the yogi, who in Self discovers all his joy.

She that, of Her own sweet will, inhabits every living thing.

The macrocosm and microcosm rest in the mother's womb;

Now do you see how vast it is? In the Muladhara The yogi mediates on Her, and in the Sahasrara:

Who but Siva has beheld Her as She really is?

Within the lotus wilderness She sports beside Her Mate,

the Swan (Siva, the Absolute).

When man aspires to understand Her, Ramprasad must smile; To think of knowing Her, he says, is quite as laughable

As to imagine one can swim across the boundless sea.

But while my mind has understood, alas! My heart has not;

Though but a dwarf, it still would strive to make a captive of the moon.

Continuing, the Master said: "Did you notice?"

The macrocosm and microcosm rest in the Mother's womb;

Now do you see how vast it is?

Again the poet says:

Even the six darsanas are powerless to reveal Her. She cannot be realized by means of mere scholarship.

One must have faith and love.

If a man has faith in God, then he need not be afraid though

he may have committed sin – nay, the vilest sin.

Then Sri Ramakrishna sang a song glorifying the power of faith:

If only I can pass away repeating Durga's name,

How canst Thou then, O Blessed One,

Withhold from me deliverance,

Wretched though I may be? ....

The Master continued: "Faith and devotion. One realizes God

easily through devotion. He is grasped through ecstasy of love.

While singing, the Master went into samadhi. He was seated on the bench, facing west, the palms of his hands joined together, his body erect and motionless. Everyone watched him expectantly. Vidyasagar, too, was speechless and could not take his eyes from the Master.

After a time Sri Ramakrishna showed signs of regaining the normal state. He drew a deep breath and said with a smile: "The means of realizing God are ecstasy of love and devotion – that is, one must love God. He who is Brahman is addressed as the Mother.

He it is, says Ramprasad, that I approach as Mother;

But must I give away the secret, here in the market place?

From the hints I have given, O mind, guess what that Being is!

"Ramprasad asks the mind only to guess the nature of God.

He wishes it to understand that what is called Brahman in the Vedas is addressed by him as the Mother. He who is attributeless also has attributes. He who is Brahman is also Shakti. When thought of as inactive, He is called Brahman, and when thought of as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, He is called the Primordial Energy, Kali.

Brahman and Shakti are identical, like fire and its power to burn. When we talk of fire we automatically mean also its power to burn. Again, the fire's power to burn implies the fire itself. If you accept the one you must accept the other.

Brahman alone is addressed as the Mother. This is because a mother is an object of great love. One is able to realize God just through love. Ecstasy of feeling, devotion, love, and faith – these are the means. Listen to a song:

As is a man's meditation, so is his feeling of love;

As is a man's feeling of love, so is his gain;

And faith is the root of all. If in the Nectar Lake of Mother Kali's

feet My mind remains immersed, Of little use are worship,

oblations, or sacrifice.

"What is needed is absorption in God – loving Him intensely.

The 'Nectar Lake' is the Lake of Immortality. A man sinking in it does not die, but becomes immortal. Some people believe that by thinking of God too much the mind becomes deranged;

but that is not true. God is the Lake of Nectar, the Ocean of Immortality.

He is called the 'Immortal' in the Vedas. Sinking in It, one does not die, but verily transcends death.

Of little use are worship, oblations, or sacrifice.

If a man comes to love God, he need not trouble himself much about these activities. One needs a fan only as long as there is no breeze. The fan may be laid aside if the southern breeze blows. Then what need is there of a fan?"

(To Vidyasagar) "The activities that you are engaged in are good. It is very good if you can perform them in a selfless spirit, renouncing egotism. Giving up the idea that you are the doer. Through such action one develops love and devotion to God, and ultimately realizes Him.

The more you come to love God, the less you will be inclined to perform action. When the daughter-in-law is with child, her mother-in-law gives her less work to do. As time goes by she is given less and less work. When the time of delivery nears, she is not allowed to do any work at all, lest it should hurt the child or cause difficulty at the time of birth.

By these philanthropic activities you are really doing good to yourself. If you can do them disinterestedly, your mind will become pure and you will develop love of God. As soon as you have that love you will realize Him.

Man cannot really help the world. God alone does that – He who has created the sun and the moon, who has put love for their children in parents hearts, endowed noble souls with compassion, and holy men and devotees with divine love. The man who works for others, without any selfish motive, really does good to himself.

There is gold buried in your heart, but you are not yet aware of it. It is covered with a thin layer of clay. Once you are aware of it, all these activities of yours will lessen. After the birth of her child, the daughter-in-law in the family busies herself with it alone. Everything she does is only for the child. Her mother-in-law doesn't let her do any household duties.

Go forward. A woodcutter once entered a forest to gather wood. A brahmachari said to him, 'Go forward.' He obeyed the injunction and discovered some sandalwood trees. After a few days he reflected, 'The holy man asked me to go forward. He didn't tell me to stop here.' So he

went forward and found a silver mine. After a few days he went still farther and discovered a gold mine, and next, mines of diamonds and precious stones. With these he became immensely rich.

Through selfless work, love of God grows in the heart. Then, through His grace, one realizes Him in course of time. God can be seen. One can talk to Him as I am talking to you."

In silent wonder they all sat listening to the Master's words. It seemed to them that the Goddess of Wisdom Herself, seated on Sri Ramakrishna's tongue, was addressing these words not merely to Vidyasagar, but to all humanity for its good.

It was nearly nine o'clock in the evening. The Master was about to leave.

Master (to Vidyasagar, with a smile): "The words I have spoken are really superfluous. You know all this; you simply aren't conscious of it. There are countless gems in the coffer of Varuna (lord of waters). But he himself isn't aware of them."

Vidyasagar (with a smile): "You may say as you like."

Master: "Oh yes. There are many wealthy people who don't know the names of all their servants, and are even unaware of many of the precious things in their houses." (All laugh).

Everybody was delighted with the Master's conversation.

Again addressing Vidyasagar, he said with a smile: "Please visit the temple garden some time- I mean the garden of Rasmani. It's a charming place."

Vidyasagar: "Oh, of course I shall go. You have so kindly come here to see me, and shall I not return your visit?"

Master: "Visit me? Oh, never think of such a thing!"

Vidyasagar: "Why, sir? Why do you say that? May I ask you to explain?"

Master (smiling): "You see, we are like small fishing-boats.

(All smile). We can ply in small canals and shallow waters and also in big rivers. But you are a ship. You may run aground on the way!" (All laugh).

Vidyasagar remained silent. Sri Ramakrishna said with a laugh: "But even a ship can go there at this season."

Vidyasagar: "Yes, this is the monsoon season." (All laugh).

M. said to himself: "This is indeed the monsoon season of newly awakened love. At such times one doesn't care for prestige or formalities."

Sri Ramakrishna then took leave of Vidyasagar, who with his

friends escorted the master to the main gate, leading the way

with a lighted candle in his hand. Before leaving the room, the Master prayed for the family's welfare, going into an ecstatic mood as he did so.

As soon as the Master and the devotees reached the gate, they saw an unexpected sight and stood still. In front of them was a bearded gentleman of fair complexion, aged about thirty-six. He wore his clothes like a Bengali, but on his head was a white turban tied after the fashion of the Sikhs. No sooner did he see the Master than he fell prostrate before him, turban and all.

When he stood up the Master said: "Who is this? Balaram?"

Why so late in the evening?"

Balaram: "I have been waiting here a long time, sir."

Master: "Why didn't you come in?"

Balaram: "All were listening to you. I didn't like to disturb you."

The Master got into the carriage with his companions.

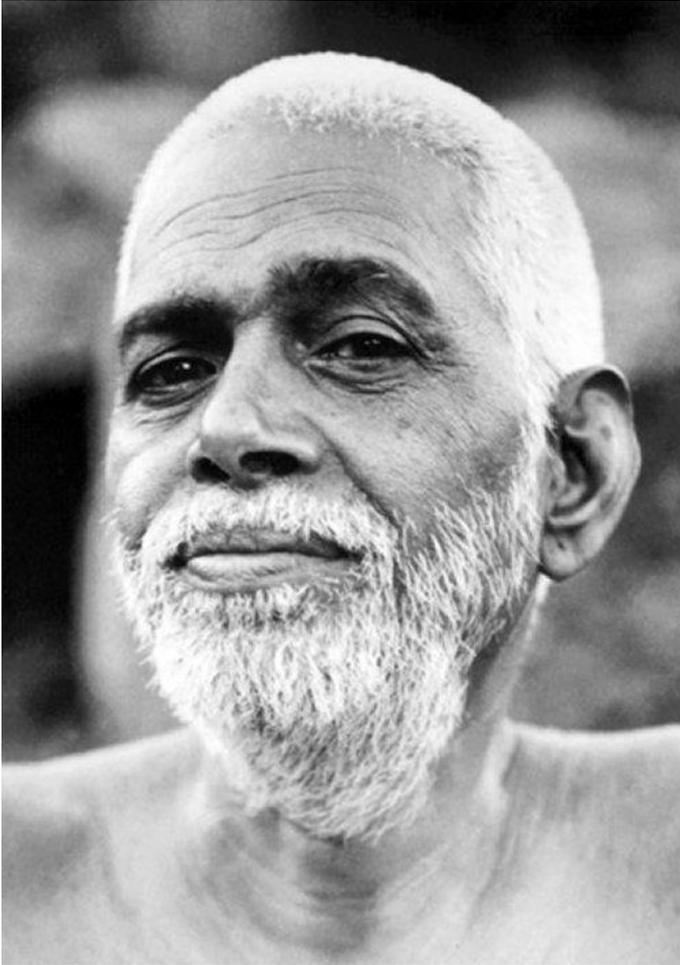
Vidyasagar (to M softly): "Shall I pay the carriage hire?"

M.: "Oh, don't bother, please. It is taken care of."

Vidyasagar and his friends bowed to Sri Ramakrishna, and the carriage started for Dakshineswar. But the little group with the venerable Vidyasagar at their head holding the lighted candle stood at the gate and gazed after the master until he was out of sight.

Source: <http://www.hinduism.co.za/godcanbe.htm>

## WHO AM I?



*Sri Ramana Maharshi  
Sri Ramanasramam  
Tiruvannamalai, South India.*

Every living being longs always to be happy untainted by sorrow; and everyone has the greatest love for himself, which is solely due to the fact that happiness is his real nature. Hence, in order to realize that inherent and untainted happiness, which indeed he daily experiences when the mind is subdued in deep sleep, it is essential that he should know himself. For obtaining such knowledge the enquiry, 'Who am I?' in quest of the Self is the means par excellence. 'Who am I?' I am not this physical body, nor am I the five organs of sense perception.

[The five organs of sense-perception are the eye, ear, nose, tongue and the skin, with their respective corresponding functions of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.]

I am not the five organs of external activity.

[The five organs of external activity are the vocal organs that articulate speech and produce sound,

hands and feet that govern the movements of the physical body, anus that excretes fecal matter, and the genital organ for procreation and which yields pleasure.]

I am not the five vital forces.

[These vital forces control respiration, digestion and assimilation, circulation of blood, perspiration and excretion.]

I am not even the thinking mind. Neither am I that unconscious state of nescience, which retains merely the subtle Vasanas (latent impressions or mental tendencies), being then free from the functional activity of the sense organs and of the mind, and being unaware of the existence of the objects of sense perception.

Therefore, summarily rejecting all the above mentioned physical adjuncts and their functions, saying "I am not this; no, nor am I this, nor this," – that which then remains separate and alone by itself, that pure awareness verily am I. This awareness is by its very nature Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss).

If the mind, which is the instrument of knowledge and is the basis of all activity, subsides, the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases. Unless the illusory perception of the serpent in the rope ceases, the rope on which the illusion is formed is not perceived as such. Even so, unless the illusory nature of the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases, the vision of the true nature of the Self, on which the illusion is formed, is not obtained.

The mind is a unique power (sakti) in the Atman (Self), whereby thoughts occur to oneself. On scrutiny as to what remains after eliminating all thoughts, it will be found that there is no such thing as mind apart from thought. So then, thoughts themselves constitute the mind.

Nor is there any such thing as the physical world apart from and independent of thought. In deep sleep there are no thoughts: nor is there the world. In the wakeful and dream states thoughts are present, and there is also the world.

Just as the spider draws out the thread of the cobweb from within itself and withdraws it again

into itself, even so out of itself the mind projects the world and absorbs it back into itself.

The world is perceived as an apparent objective reality when the mind is externalized thereby forsaking its identity with the Self. When the world is thus perceived, the true nature of the Self is not revealed. Conversely, when the Self is realized, the world ceases to appear as an objective reality.

By a steady and continuous investigation into the nature of the mind, the mind is transformed into That to which the 'I' refers; and that is verily the Self. Mind has necessarily to depend for its existence on something gross; it never subsists by itself. It is this mind that is otherwise called the subtle body, the ego, the jiva or soul (individual soul).

That which arises in the physical body as 'I' is the mind. If one enquires whence the 'I'-thought in the body arises in the first instance, it will be found that it is Hridayam or the Heart.

[The word 'Hridayam' consists of two syllables, 'Hrt' and 'Ayam' which signify 'I am the Heart'.]

That (Hridayam or Heart) is the source and stay of the mind. Or again, even if one merely but continuously repeats inwardly 'I - I' with the entire mind fixed thereon, that also leads one to the same source.

The first and foremost of all the thoughts that arise in the mind is the primal 'I'-thought. It is only after the rise or origin of the 'I'-thought that innumerable other thoughts arise. In other words, only after the first personal pronoun, 'I', has arisen, do the second and third personal pronouns (you, he, etc.) occur to the mind; and they cannot subsist without the former.

Since every other thought can occur only after the rise of the 'I'-thought and since the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, it is only through the enquiry 'Who am I?' that the mind subsides. Moreover, the integral 'I'-thought, implicit in such enquiry, having destroyed all other thoughts, gets itself finally destroyed or consumed, even like the stick used for stirring the burning funeral pyre gets consumed.

Even when extraneous thoughts sprout up during such enquiry, do not seek to complete the rising thought, but instead, deeply enquire within, 'To whom has this thought occurred?' No matter how many thoughts thus occur to you, if you would with acute vigilance enquire immediately as and

when each individual thought arises as to whom it has occurred, you would find it is to 'me.' If then, you enquire 'Who am I?' the mind gets introverted and the rising thought also subsides. In this manner as you persevere more and more in the practice of Self-enquiry, the mind acquires increasing strength and power to abide in its source.

It is only when the subtle mind is externalized through the activity of the intellect and the sense-organs that gross name and form constituting the world appear. When, on the other hand, the mind stays and abides in the Heart, they (name and form) recede and disappear. Restraint of the outgoing mind and its absorption in the Heart is known as introversion (antarmukha -drishti). The release of the mind and its emergence from the Heart is known as Bahirmukha-drishti (objectiveness).

If in this manner the mind becomes absorbed in the Heart, the ego or the 'I', which is the centre of the multitude of thoughts, finally vanishes and pure Consciousness or Self, which subsists during all the states of the mind, alone remains resplendent. It is this state, where there is not the slightest trace of the 'I'-thought, that is the true Being of oneself. And that is called quiescence or Mouna.

This state of mere inherence in pure Being is known as the vision of wisdom. Such inherence means and implies the entire subsidence of the mind in the Self. Anything other than this and all psychic powers of the mind, such as thought-reading, telepathy and clairvoyance, cannot be wisdom.

Atma (atman) alone exists and is real. The world, the individual soul and God are, like the illusory appearance of silver in the mother of pearl, imaginary creations in the Atma. They appear and disappear simultaneously. Verily, the Self alone is the world, the 'I' and God. All that exists is but the manifestation of the Supreme.

For the subsidence of mind there is no other means more effective and adequate than self-enquiry. Even though by other means the mind subsides, that is only apparently so; it will rise again.

For instance, the mind subsides by the practice of pranayama (restraint and control of breath and vital forces); yet such subsidence lasts only as long as the control of breath and vital forces

continues; and when they are released, the mind also gets released, and immediately becoming externalized it wearily wanders through the force of its subtle tendencies.

The source of the mind on the one hand, and of breath and vital forces on the other, is one and the same. It is really the multitudes of thoughts that constitute the mind; and the 'I'-thought is the primal thought of the mind, and that itself is the ego. Now, breath too has its origin at the same place whence the ego rises. Therefore, when the mind subsides, breath and vital forces also subside; and conversely, when the latter subside, the former also subsides.

Breath and vital forces are also described as the gross manifestation of the mind. Till the hour of death the mind sustains and supports these forces in the physical body, and when life becomes extinct, the mind envelopes and carries them away. During sleep, however, the vital forces continue to function, although the mind is not manifest. This is according to the divine law and is intended to protect the body and to remove any possible doubt as to whether it is dead or alive while one is asleep. Without such arrangement by nature, sleeping bodies would often be cremated alive. The vitality apparent in breathing is left behind by the mind as a 'watchman'. But in the wakeful state and in samadhi, when the mind subsides, prana (Vital force) also subsides. For this reason (viz., that the mind has the sustaining and controlling power over breath and vital forces and is therefore ulterior to both of them), the practice of pranayama is merely helpful in subduing the mind but cannot bring about its final extinction. Even like pranayama, Murti-Dhyana (meditation on form), Mantra or Nama-Japa (repetition of sacred syllables or of names of deities), and the regulation of diet, are only aids to control the mind. Through the practice of Dhyana or Japa the mind becomes one-pointed. Just as the elephant's trunk, which is otherwise restless, will become steady if it is made to hold an iron chain- so that the elephant walks (goes) his way without reaching out any other object- even so the ever-restless mind, which is trained and accustomed to a name or form through Dhyana or Japa, will steadily hold on to that alone.

When the mind is split up and dissipated into countless and varying thoughts, each individual

thought becomes extremely weak and inefficient. When, on the contrary, such thoughts subside more and more till they finally get destroyed, the mind becomes one-pointed, and thereby acquiring strength and sustaining power, easily reaches perfection in the method of enquiry in quest of the Self.

Regulation of diet, restricting it to Satvic food (i.e. simple and nutritious food that sustains but does not stimulate the physical body), taken in moderate quantity, is of all the rules of conduct the best; and it is most conducive to the development of the satvic qualities of the mind.

[Satvic qualities: Purity, Self-restraint, evenness of temper, tenderness towards all beings, fortitude, freedom from desire, freedom from hatred and arrogance are the outstanding virtues of the satvic mind.]

These satvic qualities in their turn, assist one in the practice of Atmavichara or enquiry in quest of the Self.

Countless Vishaya-Vasanas (subtle tendencies of the mind in relation to objects of sense-gratification), that come one after the other in quick succession like the waves of the ocean, agitate the mind. Nevertheless, they too subside and finally get destroyed with progressive practice of Atmadhyana or meditation on the Self. Without giving room even to the thought which occurs in the form of doubt, whether it is possible to stay merely as the very Self, whether all the Vasanas can be destroyed, one should firmly and unceasingly carry on meditation on the Self.

However sinful a person may be, if he would stop wailing inconsolably, 'Alas! I am a sinner, how shall I attain salvation?' and casting away even the thought that he is a sinner, if he would zealously carry on meditation on the Self, he would most assuredly get reformed.

So long as Vishaya-Vasanas (subtle tendencies of the mind in relation to objects of sense-gratification) continue to inhere in the mind, it is necessary to carry on the enquiry, 'Who am I?' As and when thoughts occur, they should, one and all, be annihilated then and there, at the very place of their origin, by the method of enquiry in quest of the Self.

Not to desire anything extraneous to oneself constitutes Vairagya (dispassion) or Nirasa (desirelessness). Not to give up one's hold on the

Self constitutes Jnana (Knowledge). But really Vairagya and Jnana are one and the same. Just as the pearl-diver, tying stones to his waist, dives down into the depths, and gets the pearl from the sea bed, even so every aspirant, pledged to Vairagya can dive deep into himself and realise the precious Atman. If the earnest seeker would only cultivate the constant and deep contemplative 'remembrance' smrti) of the true nature of the Self till he has realised it, that alone would suffice. Distracting thoughts are like the enemy in the fortress. As long as they are in possession of it, they will certainly sally forth. But if you would, as and when they come out, put them to the sword, the fortress will finally be captured.

God and the Guru (Master or teacher) are not really different: they are identical. He that has earned the grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger's jaws will never be allowed to escape. But the disciple, for his part, should unswervingly follow the path shown by the Master.

Firm and disciplined inherence in the Atman (Atmanishtha), without giving the least scope for the rise of any thought other than the deep contemplative thought of the Self, does verily constitute self-surrender to the Supreme Lord. Let any amount of burden be laid on Him. He doth bear it all. It is, in fact, indefinable power of the Lord that ordains, sustains and controls everything that happens. Why then, should we languish tormented by vexatious thought, saying 'This wise (way) to act; but no, that way .....', instead of meekly but happily submitting ourselves to that power? Knowing full well that the train carries all the weight, why indeed should we, the passengers travelling in it, carry the small individual articles of luggage on our laps to our great discomfort, instead of putting them aside and sitting at perfect ease?

That which is Bliss is verily the Self. Bliss and the Self are not distinct and separate but are one and identical. And That alone is real. Not even in one of the countless objects of the mundane world is there anything that can be called happiness. It is through sheer ignorance and unwisdom we fancy that happiness is obtained from them. On the contrary, when the mind is externalized, it suffers pain and anguish. The truth is that every time our

desires get fulfilled, the mind turning to its source experiences only that happiness which is natural to the Self. Similarly, in deep sleep, in spiritual trance (samadhi), in a state of swoon etc., when the desired object is obtained or when evil befalls an object considered undesirable, the mind turns within and enjoys that Bliss of Atman. In this manner, wandering astray forsaking the Self and returning back again to it within, is the interminable and wearisome lot of the mind.

It is pleasant under the shade of a tree; scorching is the heat of the sun without. A person toiling in the sun seeks the cool shade of the tree and is happy under it. Staying there for a while, he moves about, but unable to bear the merciless heat of the sun, he seeks the shade again. In this way, he moves, going out from the shade into the sun, and coming into the shade from the sun without.

He that acts in this manner is the unwise one. Whereas the wise one never leaves the shade. Even so the mind of the enlightened sage (Jnani) never exists apart from Brahman, the Absolute. The mind of the ignorant one, on the other hand, entering into the phenomenal world, suffers pain and anguish, and then turning for a short while towards Brahman, it experiences happiness. Such is the mind of the ignorant one.

**“The greatest error  
of a man is to think that  
he is weak by nature,  
evil by nature.**

**Every man is divine and strong  
in his real nature.**

**What are weak and evil  
are his habits,  
his desires and thoughts,  
but not himself.”**

This phenomenal world, however, is nothing but thought. When the world recedes from one's view - that is when free from thought- the mind enjoys the Bliss of the Self. Conversely, when the world appears - that is when thought occurs- the mind experiences pain and anguish.

Not from any desire, resolve or effort on the part of the rising sun, but merely due to the presence of his rays, the lens emits heat, the lotus blossoms, water evaporates and the individuals in society take up their respective avocations in life. In the proximity of the magnet the needle moves. Even so, the soul or jiva (individual soul), subjected to the three-fold activity of creation, preservation and destruction that take place merely due to the unique presence of the Supreme Lord, performs acts in accordance with its Karma, and subsides to rest after such activity. [Karma i.e., the fruits of past actions which are being worked out in present life.]

But the Lord Himself has no resolve. No act or event touches even the fringe of His being. This state of immaculate aloofness is likened unto that of the sun who is untouched by the activities of life, or unto that of the all-pervasive space, which is not affected by the interaction of the complex qualities of the other four elements.

All scriptures without any exception proclaim that for attaining salvation mind should be subdued, and having known that control of mind is their final conclusion, it is futile to make an interminable study of the scriptures. What is required for such control is actual enquiry regarding oneself by self-interrogation 'Who am I?' How then can this enquiry in quest of the Self be made merely by means of a study of the scriptures?

One should realise the Self by the eye of wisdom. Does Rama need a mirror that he may recognise himself as Rama? That to which the 'I' refers is within the five sheaths, whereas the scriptures are outside them.

[The five sheaths are the physical, vital, mental, sheath of knowledge-experience and of Bliss.]

Therefore, to seek by means of the study of scriptures, the Self, that has to be realised by summarily rejecting even the five sheaths, would only be futile.

To enquire 'Who am I that is in bondage?' and to know one's real nature is alone liberation. To keep the mind constantly turned within and to abide thus in the Self, is alone Atma- Vichara (self-enquiry), whereas Dhyana (meditation) consists in fervent contemplation of the Self as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). Indeed, at sometime, one will have to forget everything that has been learnt.

Just as it is futile to examine the rubbish that has to be swept up only to be thrown away, even so it is futile for him who seeks to know the Self, if instead of casting away the Tattvas that envelope the Self, he sets himself to enumerate them or to examine their qualities.

[Tattvas are the elements into which phenomenal existence- from the subtle mind up to the gross matter-is classified.]

He should on the other hand, consider the phenomenal world with reference to himself as merely a dream.

Except that the wakeful state is long and the dream state is short, there is no other difference between the two. All the activities of the dream state appear, for the time being, just as real as the activities of the wakeful state seem to be while awake. Only, during the dream state the mind assumes another form or a different bodily sheath. For, thoughts on the one hand, and name and form on the other, occur simultaneously during both the wakeful and dream states.

There are not two minds, one good and the other evil. It is only the Vasanas or tendencies of the mind that are of two kinds, good and favourable, evil and unfavourable. When the mind is associated with the former, it is called good, and when associated with the latter, it is called evil. However evil-minded other people may appear to you, it is not proper to hate or despise them. Likes and dislikes, love and hatred are equally to be eschewed. It is also not proper to let the mind often rest on objects or affairs of mundane life. As far as possible one should not interfere in the affairs of others. Everything offered to others is really an offering to one self; and if only this truth is realised, who is there that would refuse anything to others?

If the ego rises, all else will also rise; if it subsides, all else will also subside. The deeper the humility with which we conduct ourselves, the better it is for us. If only the mind is kept under control, what does it matter where one may happen to be?

Source: <http://www.hinduism.co.za/whoami.htm>

## YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE EATING

Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you who you are. I had heard this statement when I was in my teens by an elderly relative of ours. At the time, I did not actively try and thoroughly understand what this exactly meant. But for some reason, it was stuck in my subconscious mind. I kept asking people who apparently were specialists of food and health, namely dietitians and nutritionists but none could offer me a satisfactory answer.

I believe in nature and what all nature has provided us and so I always gravitated toward pure sciences like ayurveda. And this pull towards this age-old natural medical science got me an answer. It is common for certain Indian communities to not eat onion and garlic. I have

It's not only that if you keep having sugary foods you will get insulin resistance and most probably end up with type 2 diabetes but in the process of getting diabetic and thereon too, your mindset will change; you will have mood swings; you will be irritable and intolerant; your perspective will change since you are constantly fighting your body just to stay alive in a healthy state.

It is a struggle for the brain to keep you happy and unhealthy at the same time. It possibly can't do that since too many hormonal changes are going on before and after every meal. Why do you think that many old people are intolerant and irritable most of the time, they become negative in the approach and are always complaining? What made them this way? Disease? Yes, partly correct



many such people in my extended family. I do understand being a vegetarian as it is not at all necessary to “kill” in order to feed yourself and survive. There is too much in nature to choose from. Hinduism has always promoted vegetarianism and so I could totally grasp that aspect. I've always asked them even as a child that why is it you don't eat onion and garlic, what is wrong with these two foods? Since 99.9% of people don't know the “why” behind it, they would get irritated at my questioning and as a result I never got an answer.

Most Indians reading this will also have at least one relative who doesn't eat onions and garlic. Why haven't you probed them about it; haven't you wondered why these two foods?

but what gave them the disease? Their food choices. All your life you have a freewill which you choose to abuse day in and day out in the name of taste, “good time”, happiness, life, fun and youth. Well disease at a later age or any age is a result of all this and not just because someone got old so he has to get sick . No.

It is because that someone was not careful about food choices all his life and when his body gave him warnings, did not bother to heed them. My mother's elder brother who passed away recently at the age of 91 was never diseased. He didn't have to take a single medication daily. No hypertension, no diabetes, no heart disease, no kidney or liver disease, no indigestion, no dementia, no stroke, no eye or ear issue, no osteoporosis, no arthritis, nothing at all.

He knew from the very beginning that only exercise and healthy foods will keep him healthy to his dying day. And they did. There is absolutely no excuse to eat unhealthy food, period!

Let me try and explain. I want to start with the Ayurvedic research and explanation and then go onto the modern scientific explanations since modern science is in its infancy stage when it comes to researching the body, mind and diet connection, its only just begun. So let us try and understand what these great masters and researchers knew thousands of years back which we now have only very slightly begun to understand because modern science has only now begun to tap upon this subject.

**“Foods affect our emotions,  
emotions affect our behaviour;  
behaviour affects personality. So  
that’s why we are what we eat.”**

According to Ayurveda there are three types of foods, Tamasic (pronounced : taa-ma-sic), Rajasic (raaj-a-sic) and Sattvic (saat-vic)

**Tamasic Foods:** Tamas means darkness, inertia. Prana, or energy, is withdrawn, powers of reasoning become clouded and a sense of inertia sets in. These foods neither benefit the body nor the mind. If you are interested in vital health and spiritual growth it is best to avoid these foods. Tamasic foods include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, alcohol and other intoxicants including drugs. Foods that are over-processed, no longer fresh, and/or difficult to digest are Tamasic. Foods that are prepared unconsciously or while the preparer is angry or in a negative mood are also considered Tamasic. Also tobacco, onions, garlic, fermented foods, such as vinegar, and stale leftover food, contaminated or overripe substances are considered tamasic.

Overeating is also regarded as tamasic. Tamasic is the unhealthiest food of all.

**Rajasic Foods:** rajas is the energy which we need to accomplish, create and achieve. It signifies worldly power and sex drive. The ancient Rishis (teachers) insisted that a combination of Sattvic and Rajasic foods for those who practice demanding disciplines such as endurance athletics, martial arts and yoga. They destroy the mind-body equilibrium, feeding the body at the

expense of the mind. Too much Rajasic food will over stimulate the body and excite strong emotional qualities and passions, making the mind restless and uncontrollable. Rajasic foods include hot substances, such as sharp spices or strong herbs, stimulants, like coffee and tea, meat of animals and fish, eggs, salt and chocolate. Many of the ground foods are Rajasic. Eating in a hurry is also considered Rajasic. Foods that are very hot, bitter, sour, dry, or salty are Rajasic. So by now you mustve realized that nearly all of us eat mostly or for some of us over abundantly only Rajas foods and that’s why you will find over excited, restless, emotionally unstable and uncontrolled individuals.

**Sattvic Foods:** Sattva means quality of goodness, virtuousness, positivity, truth, serenity etc. It is the essence of purity. A Sattvic diet is the purest diet for people who desire to be consciously spiritual and healthy. These foods nourish the body and maintain it in a calm and peaceful state. They have a cleansing affect on the body. A Sattvic diet calms and purifies the mind, enabling it to function at its maximum potential. A Sattvic diet thus leads to true health: a peaceful mind in control of a healthy and robust body, with a balanced flow of energy between them. These foods include nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables. So now after this very tiny understanding of the basic food groups, let us see how these foods affect your emotions, behavior and general outlook in life in a “scientific” way, since modern science is the only science people nowadays tend to believe in. What’s interesting is that thousands of years of Ayurvedic research and experience is rubbished and looked down upon and modern science which till only very recently has begun to acknowledge the co-relation between foods and emotions, is taken to be sacred and correct. So be it.

Like an expensive car, your brain functions best when it gets only premium fuel. Eating high-quality foods that contain lots of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants nourishes the brain and protects it from oxidative stress — the “waste” (free radicals) produced when the body uses oxygen, which can damage cells.

Unfortunately, just like an expensive car, your brain can be damaged if you ingest anything other than premium fuel. If substances from “low-premium” fuel (such as what you get from

processed or refined foods) get to the brain, it has little ability to get rid of them. Diets high in refined sugars, for example, are harmful to the brain. In addition to worsening your body's regulation of insulin, they also promote inflammation and oxidative stress. Multiple studies have found a correlation between a diet high in refined sugars and impaired brain function — and even a worsening of symptoms of mood disorders, such as depression.

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that helps regulate sleep and appetite, mediate moods, and inhibit pain. Since about 95% of your serotonin is produced in your gastrointestinal tract, and your gastrointestinal tract is lined with a hundred million nerve cells, or neurons, it makes sense that the inner workings of your digestive system don't just help you digest food, but also guide your emotions. What's more, the function of these neurons — and the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin — is highly influenced by the billions of “good” bacteria that make up your intestinal community of microorganisms. These bacteria play an essential role in your health. They protect the lining of your intestines and ensure they provide a strong barrier against toxins and “bad” bacteria; they limit inflammation; they improve how well you absorb nutrients from your food; and they activate neural pathways that travel directly between the gut and the brain.

Other studies have compared “traditional” diets, like the Mediterranean diet, Indian diet and the traditional Japanese diet, to a typical “Western” diet and have shown that the risk of depression is 25% to 35% lower in those who eat a traditional diet. Scientists account for this difference because these traditional diets tend to be high in vegetables, fruits, unprocessed grains, and fish and seafood, and to contain only modest amounts of lean meats and dairy. They are also void of processed and refined foods and sugars, which are staples of the “Western” dietary pattern. In addition, many of these unprocessed foods are fermented, and therefore act as natural probiotics. Fermentation uses bacteria and yeast to convert sugar in food to carbon dioxide, alcohol, and lactic acid. It is used to protect food from spoiling and can add a pleasant taste and texture.

This may sound implausible to you, but the notion that good bacteria not only influence what your gut digests and absorbs, but that they also affect the degree of inflammation throughout your body, as well as your mood and energy level, is gaining traction among researchers. The results so far have been quite amazing.

The relationship between food and mood in individuals is complex and depends on the time of day, the type and macronutrient composition of food, the amount of food consumed, and the age and dietary history of the individual. The effects of a meal are different for males and females and for younger and older. Females feel greater sleepiness after a carbohydrate meal whereas males report greater calmness. Circadian rhythms are physical, mental and behavioral changes that follow a roughly 24 hour cycle, responding primarily to light and darkness in an organism's environment. Circadian rhythms influence our energy levels and performance throughout the day. “Early birds” feel most productive the first part of the day and their food choices become particularly important during lunch and throughout the afternoon. “Night owls” feel most energetic later in the day and should pay attention to their breakfast choices as they can increase or decrease energy levels and influence cognitive functioning. If you are an evening person and you skip breakfast, your cognitive performance might be impaired. A large breakfast rich in protein, however, could improve your recall performance but might impair your concentration. This illustrates the complexity of relationships between food and mood and the need to find a healthy balance of food choices.

Serotonin is an important neurotransmitter that the brain produces from tryptophan contained in foods such as “clams, oysters, escargots, octopus, squids, banana, pineapple, plum, nuts, milk, turkey”, spinach, and eggs. Functions of serotonin include the regulation of sleep, appetite, and impulse control. Increased serotonin levels are related to mood elevation. A diet rich in carbohydrates can relieve depression and elevate mood in disorders such as carbohydrate craving obesity, pre-menstrual syndrome, and seasonal affective disorder. A protein rich diet, in contrary, decreases brain serotonin levels.

In addition, “carbohydrate craving” is not an accurate description to describe the craving for foods such as chocolate, ice cream, and other sweets. Although people might think that these foods are high in carbohydrates because of their sweet taste, most of the calories come from fat and contain enough protein to undermine any effect of carbohydrates on serotonin levels. Omega-3 fatty acids(GHEE) can influence mood, behavior and personality.

Low blood levels of polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids are associated with depression, pessimism and impulsivity. So go ahead bathe your oatmeal, toast, roti, daal , sabzis with ghee.

In addition, they can play a role in major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, substance abuse and attention deficit disorder. In recent decades, people in developed countries have consumed greater amounts of omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids, contained in foods such as eggs, poultry, baked goods, whole wheat bread, nuts, and vegetable oils, that outcompete omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids. Especially Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), both members of the omega-3 fatty acid family, contribute to the fluidity of the cell membrane thereby playing an important role in brain development and functioning. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in ghee, fish, other seafood including algae and krill, some plants, meat, and nut oils. Many foods such as bread, yogurt, orange juice, milk, and eggs are oftentimes fortified with omega-3 fatty acids as well.

Insufficient amounts of thiamine or Vitamin B1 caused “introversion, inactivity, fatigue, decreased self-confidence and generally poorer mood” in participants. Improved thiamine status increased well-being, sociability, and overall energy levels. Thiamine is contained in foods such as cereal grains, pork, yeast, potatoes, cauliflower, oranges, and eggs and can influence mood states. Thiamine deficiency is very rare in the advanced countries.

Iron deficiency represents one of the most common nutritional problems in both developing and developed countries affecting over 2 billion people worldwide. Iron deficiency anemia can result in depressed mood, lethargy and problems with attention. A low iron status is most common among women, children,

vegetarians, and people who follow a diet. Iron deficiency also results in a decreased ability to exercise. Foods rich in iron include liver, vegetables such as broccoli, asparagus, and parsley, seafood, iron-fortified grains, greens, nuts, meat, and dried fruits.

Besides helping in the prevention of neural tube defects, Folic acid also plays an important role in the brain. Folic acid deficiency is associated with depressed mood. Foods rich in folic acid include dark, leafy green vegetables, liver and other organ meats, poultry, oranges and grapefruits, nuts, sprouts, and whole wheat breads.

Most people don't realise it, but gorging on processed foods that are usually rich in sugar and fat contributes to depositing excessive pounds on their tummy and increasing their stress hormones. When hormones turn wacky, it's normal to feel drained and exhausted.

What is more damaging is that processed foods give you a quick burst of energy, but bring you down fast. Do not consume processed foods and play with your health. This energy spike-crash cycle can have an adverse effect on your health.

This vicious cycle causes disturbed sleep patterns and stress. Your stressed body increases the levels of cortisol, which surges your cravings for processed and carbohydrate-rich foods while reducing your desire to consume healthy foods that are rich in proteins and vegetables.

Processed foods that are composed of sugar are known to cause instant mood swings. At first, sugar will alleviate your mood, but later make you feel sluggish and lethargic.

Individuals whose daily meal portions included 20 percent of processed foods were found to have more than 50 percent increased risk of becoming afflicted with depression.

Teenagers consume more sugary drinks (sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, and the like) than people in other age groups (though nowadays I'm seeing more and more people having these who are in their 30's , 40's and 50's).

“Sugar - especially in the form of high fructose corn syrup, which is now ubiquitous in everything from soda and salad dressing

to yogurt and bread — can increase levels of stress hormones in the brain.”

As adolescence is a crucial time for brain development, high sugar consumption and the subsequent increase in stress hormones during this time may trigger mental health problems, like anxiety and depression.

Even crime is related to your food choices.

Excessive sugar, vitamin deficiencies, lead pollution, food additives, and food allergies can convert a normal brain into a criminal mind. Numerous case histories illustrate the link between diet and such behavior problems as hyperactivity in children.



Recent prison experiences have shown that dietary change or nutrition education programs have successfully reduced disciplinary problems and improved morale. Studies of alcohol abusers and heroin addicts have shown a connection between poor eating habits and psychological problems. Diets of substance abusers, hyperactive children, and others are characterized by high intake of sugar, processed and refined foods, and junk foods. Exercise has also been shown to improve mental attitudes and behaviour. Moreover, light and colour affect nutrition and behaviour. Thus, a substantial body of evidence indicates that diet, toxic metals, food additives, insufficient nutrients, food allergy, lack of exercise, can all contribute to criminal behaviour. Evidence is mounting that a good diet makes a positive difference when working with some offenders.

A predilection for junk food causes hypoglycemia. That involves drastic fluctuations in blood glucose levels. High glucose levels trigger major insulin secretion to soak it up,

which then leads to a shortage of glucose. That, in turn, can lead to nervousness and irritability and provoke a full-blown aggressive outburst.

In 1980, Professor Stephen Schoenthaler began researching the relationship between nutrition and crime in 1980. He reported that institutional violence in Virginia had been cut in half after reducing the amount of sugar in the diet at no cost. By 1985, his research teams had successfully replicated such behavioral changes in 817 institutions in New York City, Los Angeles, and other locations within Virginia, Alabama, and California. These results included a 16 percentile improvement in English and Math scores among 1.1 million New York City schoolchildren and 48% reduction in juvenile violence among over 7,000 confined teenagers. Many of these childrens daily caloric intakes were over 25% sucrose, two and a half times above the World Health Organizations upper safety limit.

In 1985, Professor Schoenthaler's teams discovered a link between high sugar intake and low vitamin and intake in juvenile and adult correctional facilities in New York, Florida, Oklahoma, and California. It appeared that a high sugar diet was displacing essential nutrients for good health. Even more startling, Professor Schoenthaler reported that low vitamin and mineral intake was linked with institutional violence. In fact, low intake was a better predictor of institutional violence than violence before incarceration.

There are countless studies done across the globe which prove beyond any doubt that sugar and junk foods do in fact generate criminal tendencies in children, adolescents and adults.

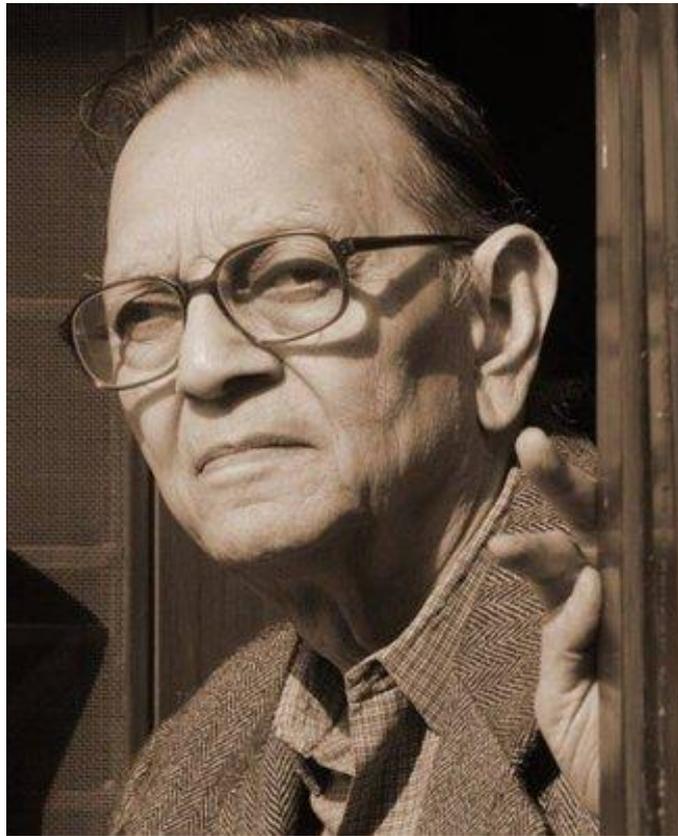
Our brains are literally sculpted by what we eat. If it's too much fat, too much sugar, or just too much, there may be permanent consequences for our brain function. Keeping our brains in shape is one more reason to clean up our diets. In my opinion it should be the only reason which compels you to clean your kitchen of the precious poisons that have been stored there and clean up your diet. If you don't feel compelled enough to have a healthy body then I sincerely hope you will to have a healthy brain.

Source:

<http://www.dnaindia.com/health/column-tell-me-what-you-eat-and-i-will-tell-you-who-you-are-2568283>

## HIS HOUSE WAS BIGGER THAN THE WORLD!

“Now I live in a very small house  
And a very big world  
Once I used to live in a very big house  
And a very small world  
It makes a lot of difference If walls are less  
If there is no wall  
The house becomes bigger than the world”  
This is a 'small' poem of a very 'big' poet. A small poem which says a lot. When a child is born, he is free, he is the king of all that he can see. The small house he lives in is his world. There are no restrictions and no boundaries. The boundaries are man's creation. He erects walls and divides his world. The walls of colours, castes and creeds, the walls of languages, religions and races... when all these walls are removed, the small house becomes bigger than the world. This is the meaning of the small poem quoted above.  
But is it the only meaning? Is it the correct meaning? Not necessarily. The small house can be the definition of the inner world of ours or the big world can be understood in terms of fertile imagination which take us around the universe. That is the beauty of a poem and that is the greatness of a poet. The above poem is the creation of Kunwar Narayan, who at the age of ninety left for his heavenly abode on Nov. 15th, 2017. Hindi poetry, nay, Indian poetry, has lost a great poet, literary giant and a wonderful human being in his death. Indian literature has become poor with the demise of this great writer of our times who wrote great poems like Atmjayi, Vajshrva Ke Bahane and Chakravayuh among others.



For Kunwar Narayan a poet was like a dissembler in the big carnival of life that comes in front of people in thousands of faces and whose every entertaining face is the experienced analysis of life on one or the other level. Behind his every form there is poet serious and real personality who understands the basic game of this variety. This is what he felt and this is what he wanted his readers to understand. He writes about a bird, but his poem is not about a bird, the poem itself is a flight. He says, "a bird cannot understand the flight of a poem."

Yes, sometimes his poetry seems to be complex, but the beauty is that one can feel it easily. It seems this feeling of a poem is to understand what the poet wants to say. To understand this great poet of our time one has to read the space between his words. It speaks more than the words say. And this is the beauty of the poetry. In his diary, published under the title Dishaon ka khula Aakash, he has described 'this deafening silence'. For him silence is not mere absence of noise, silence is the echo of all what goes in the mind of a poet when a poem is taking birth. Kunwar Narayan is the poet of this silence, which is 'like a blackhole capable of absorbing anything' as he said. This enables us to understand the mysticism of the creator of Atmjaye or Vajshrava ke Bahane which are based on the knowledge Upnishadas. These poems are not epics, but they certainly are full of epic qualities. When one reads how Nachiketa questions Yama about death and existence or when he questions his own father on renunciation, it gives an idea of life itself. Its purpose and meaning opens up in front of us. One feels enriched after reading the poetry of Kunwar Narayan. Is it not the purpose of

literature to make the lives richer of those who come in its contact?

His first collection of poetry, Chakravyuha was published in the year 1959. That was the time of Nai Kavita or new poetry in Hindi literature. Agyeya included him in the third part of the Saptaks. The editor of these Saptakas, Agyeya, saw the potential of all those who were included and he was right. Although the editor claimed that these poets were *Rahon ke Anveshi*, but all of them proved their worth in the coming years. But, at the same time this must be said that they were not necessarily of a camp. Every one of them had one's individuality and Kunwar Narayan consciously preserved his. He was a part and product of the society and the time in which he lived. He was not only aware of what was happening around, but was also influenced by it. Yet he could keep himself away from the culture of sloganeering and utilise his energies to understand the deeper meanings of culture. He believed that intellectuality does not mean to isolate oneself from the ordinary life. On the contrary he used his intellectual talent to enrich the ordinary life. We found the references of Vedas, Puranas and other religious texts in his works, but he was not devoid of contemporary thinking and literary traditions. He was a keen student of history, cinema and art and the influence of all this can easily be seen in his writings which ultimately became sensitive in its wider perspective. In fact he was a symbol of instinctive intellect.

“The small house can be the definition of the inner world of ours or the big world can be understood in terms of fertile imagination which take us around the universe.”

He always liked to live openly. On 4 Jan 2001, he had written in his diary, "I just don't like to play hide and seek in life. We may call it cleverness, but this is absolutely dishonesty. In fact, this shows the lack of self confidence, lest people know my truth. Why should be the truth so ugly that one wants to hide it?"

In his classic poem *Atmjayi* in which he has discussed the story of Nachiketa's struggle to know the meaning of death, he has made it abundantly clear that he wanted to describe the

complex mentality of the modern man. In the preface of the book he wrote, 'I was not much bothered about the religious or philosophical aspect of the story. To me Nachiketa is an Important symbol of the human experiences which today's man is also facing, therefore, I have given much importance to it'.

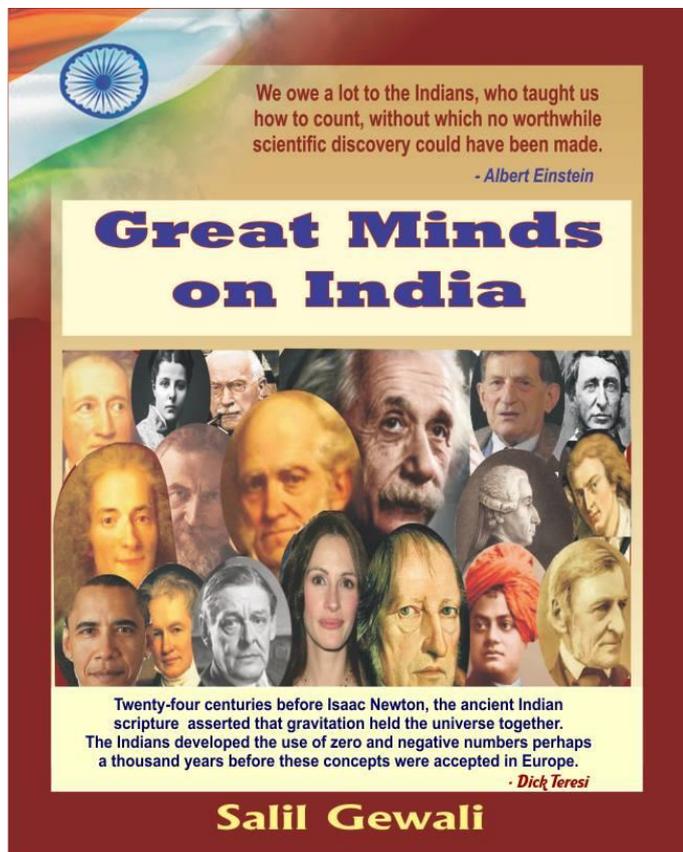
His poems, his stories, his diary and his critical analysis of literature, all present a unique personality. His was a different presence. In his writing and in his day to day behavior also, he always wanted to save words. This is the reason, perhaps, that although he was there on the literary scene for more than six decades, he did not write much. He was always conscious about this that whatever he wrote must be meaningful. And whatever he has left for posterity is there to be proud of. He was awarded the Gyanpeeth in the year 2005. This highest literary award of the country is certainly a prestigious achievement, but the love, affection, and recognition, which Kunwarji received from his contemporaries, is no less attainment. He was a great literary personality, but everyone who came into his contact, shall vouch that he was no less a great human being. He will also be remembered for humanity and humility. I remember, when I was with *Dharmayug*, one of the most prestigious Hindi magazines, I requested him to contribute something for the publication, and in his silky voice he said, "Vishwanath, it is an honour to be invited to write for *Dharmayug*." This was about four decades ago. Later, when I joined *Navneet*, a *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan* publication, I again requested him to write for one of its special issue. The Central theme of this special issue was *Purakathaon ka sach* (the truth of myths). He suggested that he won't be able to write a better piece than the preface of his well acclaimed book, *Atmjaye* for this special issue. He was right. His contribution to the issue was among the most read and much acclaimed article. I was grateful to him. I am grateful to him for the love and affection he gave to me. I just want to say, "Kunwarji, a personality like yours can never be a thing of past. You will always live in your writings. Hindi poetry shall always be grateful to you."

Vishwanath Sachdev  
Source: *Bhavan Journal*  
December 15, 2017

# IMPACT OF HINDUISM ON WESTERN INTELLECTUALS

Sitting on the beach, staring at the pale blue sea, I was wondering is the world really spherical? I could clearly see the flat, never-ending sea of water and thought to myself, how did we find out the world was actually a spherical shape?

Thanks to my Yoga teacher and my association with this ancient discipline that brought me to lay my hand on the amazing book called *Great Minds on India* by Salil Gewali, which answered my question and took my knowledge of the ancient Indians much further than I could have imagined. Indian sages asserted the Earth as spherical many centuries before the Greeks speculation over this idea. I quickly realised the science and the literature of the modern times is far behind compared to the ideas expounded by the ancient Indians. This book truly demonstrates that India affected the cutting edge world; these are cases of extraordinary individuals that helped society in different ways, who credited India's disclosures and speculations.



science, mathematics, philosophy, linguistics and others. The book initially eludes to a standout amongst the most eminent individuals ever — Albert Einstein.

Inside the book it mentions Einstein said that 'without Indians no advantageous logical revelation would have been made' on the grounds that without the 'numeric framework', that Indians made, it would not have been conceivable.

Dick Teresi recognised that Indians discovered that Earth circles the sun. He realised that a planet's path is elliptical. A great many centuries previously the thought was acknowledged inside Europe and the created areas. Dick Teresi is an exceptionally famous author and columnist, who was best known for authoring *Lost Discoveries*.

Archibald Wheeler trusts that the Indians knew 'everything' and in the event that it was conceivable to decipher their old dialect, we would have responses to every inquiry we put forward. He was the co-creator of The component of atomic splitting by Niels Bohr. Wheeler is the researcher and coined Black Hole, who is also instrumental in the development of the Hydrogen Bomb.

Erwin Schrodinger, a splendid physicist, trusted that blood transmutation from India is an unquestionable requirement as it spared otherworldly pallor.

Schrodinger was the designer of Wave Mechanics, which is one of the best logical creations of the twenty-first century.

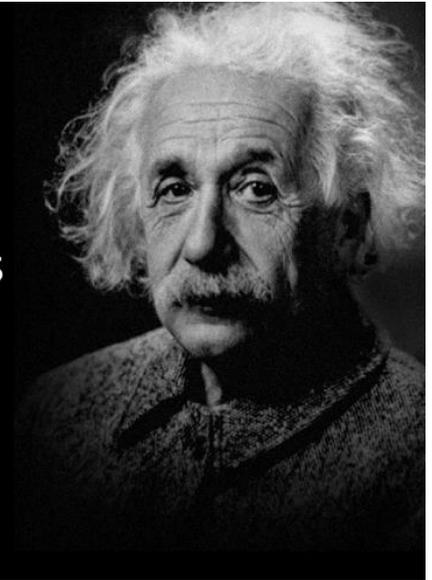
One of the best hypotheses, the Hypothesis of relativity is a hypothesis made by the old Indians, and so are 'light years'. Light years are utilised as a part of room terms right up till today and is educated in science ponders within school foundations. This was said by Alan Watts, who was a logician and a standout amongst the most productive scholars of the previous century.

Indians also investigated the importance of natural laws, (many yet to be discovered by the modern scientists and philosophers) the nature of the soul, the birth of the universe, and what is the past cycle of life, birth and demise, the

This fabulous book by Salil Gewali demonstrates to us how old Indians impacted present-day

“Without Indians no advantageous logical revelation would have been made on the grounds that without the numeric framework, that Indians made, it would not have been conceivable.”

- Albert Einstein



connection between body, mind, knowledge and soul. Their vision

“Archibald Wheeler trusts that the Indians knew “everything” and in the event that it was conceivable to decipher their old dialect, we would have responses to every inquiry we put forward.”

addressed the idea of holiness, the pre-eminent planning power that may underlie normal laws. To put it plainly, they tried to know everything that the psyche can appreciate — from the particle to unending, the making of the universe, and its significance. The source of different branches of science, craftsmanship, and theory ascribed to this human advancement are genuinely exceptional results of India's Jijnyasa, or urge to want to know with clear vision. An American-born British poet TS Eliot rightly proclaims in his book 'After strange Gods' — "Indian philosophers' subtleties make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys."

But, I've found shockingly disturbing contrary facts in India and among Indians. Over 90% of Indian origin people do not subscribe to their own rich civilisation and spiritual culture. Just

going over the news media and acclaimed literary works published from India astonish us that how certain powerful people openly hate their own cultural values. Even the half-literate love to quote Milton, Eliot; and shake themselves in a musical beat of rock-n-roll. This country's government has found itself in the tangle of controversies while convincing its people about the practical benefits of yoga and meditation.

“Over 90% of Indian origin people do not subscribe to their own rich civilisation and spiritual culture.”

I believe the excellent book by Gewali will serve the purpose, since Indians will get to know about Indian wisdom and spiritual knowledge from their Western masters. The research-based book of over twenty-five years, which has been translated into eleven languages, has recently been prefaced by a world-famous NASA scientist — Dr. Kamlesh Lulla of Houston.

Finally, I choose to invoke a very profound quote from the book by a pioneering philosopher of German romanticism August Schlegel, 'Even the loftiest philosophy of the European appears like a feeble spark before the Vedanta'.

*By Bernie David Holt  
Source: Bhavan Journal  
December 15, 2017*

## **SUCCESS MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE**

### **MASTER IS THE STORY OF THE ZEN**

Master who considered a thief to be one of his teachers. He stayed with the thief for three months. Every night the thief would go out to steal and he would return empty handed. But he continued his efforts because he believed that one day he would be successful. It became clear that anyone who had the patience that the thief had was bound to succeed. There was a father who used to play with his son every day when he returned from

of life because the past is history, the future is a mystery and the present is a reality.

“Doctors say that eighty per cent of diseases are caused due to psychosomatic problems, which means that our problems are our own creations, not the creation of some germs or bacteria.”

**“Most of us spend our time spending all our energy in the past or in the future. Either we are wondering why someone was unjust to us or we are worried about tomorrow. Why not spend the present joyfully and get a grand feeling of life?”**



office. One day he was not in a mood to play with his son but the son pestered him and made the father to think of alternatives. The father took a world map and tore it to pieces. He told his son, "Today's game is that you should piece together the world map." The son took-up the call with determination and in 15 minutes he joined the map together. The father was astonished and asked his son how he could join the map so quickly? The boy replied, "Very simple, father. There was a portrait of a man behind the map. I fixed the portrait and the world map automatically became alright."

Take a conscious decision to live life in the present. Enjoy each moment in your own way. Make a habit to look at the brighter side

For example, a man consumes eatables which are not healthy and later in old age suffers from some attack or the other. He blames fate for his sufferings instead of blaming himself for leading an unhealthy life. He goes to a doctor who says that he should undergo surgery to maintain proper circulation of blood. There are blocks in his arteries and a bypass surgery is the only remedy. He gets admitted in a hospital and spends lakhs of rupees to recover and prolong his life. What is the point in living then after having lived an unhealthy life knowingly in the past?

Voltaire preferred monarchy to democracy because in the former it was necessary only to educate one person whereas in the latter one has to educate thousands to run a country

properly. A united minority against a divided majority wins in an election. All politics is the rivalry of organised minorities, who cheer the victors and jeer the defeated contributing nothing whatsoever to lift the fallen and give them a decent life. We all know that a good show window will sell anything shoddy to the customer.

Once a certain King left the throne and became a monk under Gautam Buddha. To show that he was disciplined and not lazy, he undertook long fasts and would sleep very little. One day, the Buddha asked him, "Suppose there is a sitar whose strings are too tight, will it produce music or suppose the strings are too loose, will it produce music?" The Monk replied: "In either case it will produce only noise and not melodious music."

“We all know that a  
good show  
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anything shoddy to  
the customer.”

Buddha continued that if the strings are not too tight or loose it will not produce music." The monk replied, "It would produce music instead of mere noise." Buddha said, "You have to strike a balance between the two; only then you can lead a good life."

The key to living a happy life is discipline, moderation, patience and tolerance. Live a simple life balanced and controlled in all manifestations. Treat everything as a game in which victory or defeat is certain. Therefore, keep in mind that nothing is permanent; everything is ephemeral or temporary. Why we like a movie is because there is something similar to what we are. When the plot has no similarity, we declare that the movie is boring. Happiness is such an elusive thing. If you chase after it, it is out of reach. It comes knocking at the door at unexpected moments, usually in a crisis which we solve using our talents.

“Treat everything  
as a game in which  
victory or defeat is  
certain. Therefore, keep  
in mind that nothing is  
permanent; everything  
is ephemeral or  
temporary.”

When you strip away all mystery and leave the truth naked, something sweet and attractive is lost. There will always be the unknown; there will always be the improbable. Faith confronts these frontiers with a thrilling leap. Then life becomes vibrant with adventure. My teacher used to say, "Be careful in what you want; you will get it. Wanting is believing and believing



produces results."

*By T.G.L. Iyer  
Source: Bhavan Journal  
December 15, 2017*

## JUSTICE

Well over trillions of life forms exist within the air bubble which surrounds the surface of Earth and the vast oceans, seas and other water bodies. Mankind is only one among them.

Each one of them has been endowed with instincts, feelings and all things which exist, animate or inanimate, are also endowed with a quantum of intelligence. Even an electron which exhibits simultaneously characteristics of both a wave and a particle possesses a quantum of intelligence, as repeatedly proved by the famous two-slit experiment. A stream of electrons is directed to hit a screen and it travels towards it through another screen with two slit on it. The electrons have the choice to travel through either of the two slits but when ninety percent of them travel through one of the slits, the balance of the electrons avoid that slit and travel only through the other slit. The point is, how do the electrons sense the fact that 9% percent of them have already travelled through one particular slit and then avoid that slit and stream to the other side only through the less travelled slit?

Thus, an atom which consists of electrons, neutrons and protons has a quantum of intelligence which guides its actions and behaviour. Molecules made up of atoms, cells made up of molecules, organs made up of cells and a living being made up of organs, all possess varying quanta of intelligence.

Instinct of self-preservation drives all of them. Animal, man or bird, all of them react alike when hungry, seek shelter from the fury of inclement weather, protect themselves or their young when confronted by life threatening situations, become angry, frustrated and helpless when the adversary is more dominant, stand their ground or chase if they are stronger than the adversary, protect themselves or defend themselves if they are a group, herd or tribe.

All of them are subjected to positive as well as negative emotions. They could become angry and aggressive or be filled with fear or terror and be cowardly in face of danger to themselves or their kind. They could be warm, tender and affectionate, especially to their own offspring or those of its own kind. They are capable of love, endearment and compassion and care for other life forms.

Having created and endowed all species of all living forms with instincts, emotions and feelings, the Creator has chosen the human being alone and has endowed it with the power to think, think in abstract terms, enquire, explore, analyse and be creative.

The purpose of the Creator to endow the humankind with the capacity to think and to have the other attributes of the mind is to enable each one of them to gradually elevate themselves to the state of divine beings, endowed with miraculous super powers, of distant vision and hearing, assume any shape at will, instantly transport themselves from place to place at the speed of thought. are invincible and are ageless. They were disease-less and were free from effects of ageing and hence their life terms were was incredibly long when compared with the current average of about 100 years.

People on Earth during Satya Yuga, according to our ancient scriptures and Puranas, had all such super-human capabilities and capacity mainly because all of them lived lives governed by Satya, Dharma and were in complete resonance with Rta or Nature.

The purpose of the Creator was not confined to help human beings to evolve and reach the levels of beings of Satya Yugo alone, but to let them soar still higher to the state of complete illumination or Sayujya by their souls, by merging themselves with Ultimate Reality.

Mankind, possessing instincts, emotions and intelligence with all beings for whom Earth was and is home, and specially chosen by the Creator and endowed with the power to think and possessing free will, has however chosen to direct all his capabilities and capacity away from the main purpose.

Focussing on the material level alone, he has established his control over Earth and all other beings which share it with him. He has destroyed the forests which are essential for the other life forms and has created cities, mega cities, towns and villages for his exclusive comfort and ease. He has learnt to travel through the sky at speeds greater than that of sound. Apart from producing grains he has appropriated for himself valuable yields of the forest. Anything that crawls, or moves on four legs, flies or swims is only food for

him. He is in instant communication with others, no matter where on earth they are located.

“Instead of resonating and blending with nature he controls nature. For the sake of his kind alone he plunders and destroys resources of nature which are essential for the welfare, growth and wellbeing of all the inhabitants of Earth.”

Most shocking, abominable and abhorrent is the fact that in spite of his supreme endowments, man has been most brutal, cruel and merciless towards his own kind. There are abjectly poor, helpless, destitute and hungry masses of people all over Earth only because they are exploited with merciless cruelty by the humankind itself and available and known history only reveals that since the remotest past, all suffering and pain and exploitation of people have existed and continues to exist, in its most virulent form now, at present. Intoxicated with the ease and comfort provided by his inventions and discoveries, arrogant with his power, authority and control over entire Earth and all that it contains, man has jettisoned all

inhibitions and has developed insatiable and ever magnifying greed and desire. In his search for gratification man has entirely abandoned all the qualities which make him human in the first place and has strewn his scruples in the wind, individually and collectively.

Nature never pardons or condones any aberration of any kind at any time and retribution is certain and swift. Eons after eons, civilization after civilization has emerged, reached a stage of growth and glory only to wither away and turn to dust which obliterates all evidence of its having ever existed and such decline has always happened and will continue to happen now and in future whenever Sharma, justice and Moral Law are not adhered to. Man forgets that everything in existence is firmly linked to everything else in existence and feels that he is above any or all the limitations imposed by Nature.

Drunk with power and authority, if anyone denies justice and fair-play, especially to those who are dependent upon him or her and have to look up to them for sustenance and succour, nature condemns such persons to be born countless number of times as any creature belonging to any of the trillions of life forms which exist together with him on Earth.

An inkling of this undeniable truth can be had when science has repeatedly established that everything in existence from a mere electron onwards, is linked to everything else which exists. An electron is linked with every other electron in the entire cosmic existence. That being the case, before one sits in judgement of another person or his act or behaviour, one has to take into account all the factors which, contribute in one form or another to the thoughts and acts of every other being anywhere in the entire cosmos. Atomic activities occurring in galaxies gyrating billions of lightyears away affect every activity on the surface of earth as well.



Yet in his intellectual arrogance and intoxication of his authority and power, man sits in judgement. When the judged happen to be helpless and or defenceless, God swiftly moves in and the inevitable punishment which follows is many times more than the quality and quantity of the pain and suffering which the person has inflicted upon other unfortunate beings.

*By P. N. Santhanagopal  
Source: Bhavan Journa  
December 15, 2017*

## BLOOD PRESSURE NORMAL LEVELS

Anybody who follows these frequent changes in these guidelines in the recent few months is bound to get confused.

The JNICVIII 2013 guidelines comes from some of the best brains on the committee which declared, after due consideration, that the normal pressure levels should be at least 159 systolic & 99 diastolic for adults and 140/90 for a diabetic. This looks very reasonable scientifically.

For reasons best known to them they withheld this revelation for good four years and released them for public consumption only in 2017; this secret will be revealed later. Immediately after this came a rebuttal from a group of super intelligent American hypertensologists that though the guideline committee had given that level it will be prudent to lower the blood pressure to 130/80 for all again, the reasons are not explained. I shall reveal that later.

Way back in 2005 when .11\10/had suggested simple diuretics as the first line of treatment for hypertension there was a huge hue and cry saying that, that is not the ideal drug and better drugs are alpha blockers and ACE inhibitors by a group of self-declared super specialists although the JNCV was headed by an eminent specialist who, in his own right, is one of the best in the world. Reason for this above noise again is not explained, and any thinking man will get confused. Coming back to the recent guidelines of 130/80 as an ideal blood pressure one wonders what on earth is the scientific basis for this recommendation? In the US, guidelines are mandatory as the so called modern medicine has got legal monopoly on sickness care. Let us now analyse the rationale for all these. There are no studies to support these varying claims at different times. Most, if not all, above assessment and declarations are subjective personal opinions based on some statistical data which do not apply to individual patients. While the MRFIT study did throw some indirect light on the subject by showing that the lower the blood pressure reading, the better are the mortality and morbidity rates, but without any cut of level, according to statistics zero blood pressure is better than even 10mm of mercury, obviously man will not be alive on 10mm of mercury. So this statistic is not reliable. Moreover there is no

evidence in MRFIT data to show the drug induced lowering of blood pressure is good for health. The data shows the normal blood pressure levels in the society and not drug induced blood pressure levels. So this data does not give credence to the claims that we should lower the blood pressure to 130/80 to get better results than keeping at 140/90. Now it is clear in retrospective that all these guidelines which keep changing frequently, are based on individual opinions which have no documented scientific basis.

All these efforts have come because of more and more drug companies have come out with expensive new BP lowering drugs without any long term experiential wisdom. Obviously reasons for various changes in BP guidelines that one gets to know from the above guidelines should have come because of drug company pressures. It is now known that many guidelines' writers are under the influence of drug companies. They are not Gods to know what is good and what is not for human beings. I, as a researcher in the area for last half a century fail to understand any scientific basis otherwise. May God help our hapless patients who swallow these drugs faithfully?

An anecdotal story will illustrate the situation. Two close friends who were classmates from school became doctors. One settled in America as a professor and the other in India as professor in medical college. At the age of 50 both had what is called elevated BP which some guidelines thought warranted drug therapy.

While the Indian friend opted for lifestyle change and yoga, the American friend opted for drugs as he believed in American system 100%, he was put on powerful ACE inhibitors and ARBs. Today, after nearly 40 years, the American friend is on daily dialysis as he developed CKD, while his counterpart is still not on anti-hypertensive drugs. Though this anecdote does not support any one view it gives us a better insight into the mystery of the plethora of data from statistics and how unreliable are these linear statistical data in real life situations.

*(Recent AHA Guidelines)*

*By B. M. Hegde*

*Source: Bhavan Journal*

*December 31, 2017*

## CAN OLD AGE BE CONQUERED?

Gerontology' is a science in which a study is made of the phenomena of aging, and Geriatrics is a study of the diseases of old age. The Bulgarian Centre of Gerontology and Geriatrics differs from similar western institutes in that it not only studies the phenomena of aging but has from the very beginning also set itself the task of finding out whether it is possible to counteract aging and to find methods and means of doing so.

What are the factors that influence the process of aging? What is old age, in fact? Why do women live longer than men?

Aging is a biological phenomenon and old age develops in accordance with irreversible biological laws. At the same time, however, it should be stressed that in some cases we observe a speeding up of the aging process, while in other cases we see considerable delay in the setting in of old age. In other words, there are factors, biological and social, which either counteract or speed up the setting in of old age. Now, which are these factors?

It has been proved that inaction, a life lacking movement, in a word, the lack of functional strain or even diminished functional strain, steps up the process of aging. On the other hand, work, locomotor activity and physical exercise, particularly sport and hiking, counteract aging and delay the setting in of old age.

The fact that in most countries women live longer than men, as they do in Bulgaria, is also a proof that functional strain counteracts aging. As a result of women's menses, pregnancy, childbirth and nurturing of their children, they are functionally much more heavily loaded than men are. In the second half of their lives, even in advanced old age, most of the women continue to perform all the household chores, which means physical work.

### COMBATING OLD AGE

Research work done at the Bulgarian Centre of Gerontology and Geriatrics has shown that diseases of the cardiovascular system account for the greatest number of deaths among people above 60 years of age. And the principal disease of the cardiovascular system is the so-called atheromatous degeneration of the artery walls, which causes such dangerous lesions as infarctions of the heart, strokes, etc. It has also

been proved that the atheromatous degeneration of the artery walls is a morbid condition and not necessarily a phenomenon accompanying old age.

If we can help in averting this disease of the arteries, we shall be in a position to save a large number of people from premature old age. If this disease is averted, they can hope for a long-life span. Scientific research has proved that degeneration of the artery walls can be overcome. A successful medical and social fight against this degeneration requires that three decisive factors should be borne in mind: functional strain through physical work and exercises, food and rest.

An active way of life with plenty of movement, combined with proper rest and scientific feeding which does not cause fats to collect and bring obesity, and the avoidance of such poisons as nicotine and alcohol are the main factors in effectively combating atheromatosis. Everyone can avoid obesity; everyone can do physical exercises every day; everyone can eat moderately; everyone can decrease the amount of bread he takes and avoid sweets and foods made of dough; everyone can avoid eating animal fats and everyone can be a tee-totaller. In other words, the key to longevity under socialism is in our own hands.

“If we had the possibility of functionally loading or, in other words, of exercising every cell in our organism, that would be the most effective way of combating old age.”

The contribution which our science has made is that it has put forward the problem that the phenomenon of aging has the character of an involution and atrophy due to inaction. Hence the conclusion that the only physiological and effective counteraction against old age is functional strain—both mental and physical.

If we had the possibility of functionally loading or, in other words, of exercising every cell in our organism, that would be the most effective way of combating old age. For the time being this is, unfortunately, impossible. We still do not know a great deal. What we do know, however, is that through functional strain due to physical work, physical exercises, sport, hiking and gardening, we are in a position to put all vitally important organs and systems into operation, including the principal nervous and muscular systems, and thus to improve them structurally and to keep them in a good condition.

For the present, this is quite sufficient to attain a longer capacity for work and a healthy and pleasant old age, both for the individual and for society.

rise in the average life span in such a short period has not been observed in any capitalist country. It is quite obvious that the revolutionary social change after September 9, 1944, which brought such rapid improvement in the people's living standards, are the real cause for this rise in the average life span, something which has not been observed elsewhere. And, indeed, as a result of much greater medical care, the high infant mortality from which Bulgaria suffered in the past, has been drastically cut down. Bulgaria is among the first countries in the world in its low child mortality. The general death-rate of the population as a whole has also fallen. Deaths due to such social scourges as tuberculosis have been reduced to a minimum, illness such as typhus, typhoid fever and diphtheria have been stamped



### **AVERAGE LIFE SPAN**

The rise in the average life span is a universal phenomenon, which has been observed in the economically more advanced countries. The average life span has marked a particularly sharp rise in the socialist nations. For instance, in 1939 the average life span in Bulgaria was 52 years, but in 1962 it had already risen to 70 years. In other words, in a period of 23 years, mainly in the years after our socialist revolution, the average life span in our country increased by 18 years! Such a sharp

out. Feeding and eating habits have improved. In Bulgaria there are no starving people. Public welfare undertakings such as physical education, sport and hiking are now on a mass scale and can be enjoyed by all the people. There can be no doubt that all this has contributed very much to lengthening the Bulgarian people's average life span.

*By Prof. Dragomir Mateyer  
Bhavan Journal  
December 31, 2017*

## NAGAPANCHAMI

**NAGAPANCHAMI** is a sacred Indian festival dedicated to the snake-God. The festival gets its name from the fact that it is celebrated on the fifth day (panchami) of the moonlit fortnight of the Hindu month of Shravan (July /August). According to the Gregorian calendar, the festival is observed sometime in August.

The exact origins of the Nagapanchami festival is uncertain. It is not known when the worship of snakes and the snake-god precisely began. The mere sight of the slithering reptile gives many of us a creepy feeling and hence, the worship of snakes in India appears strange to many people, especially those not familiar with Hindu customs. But then, snakes have been associated with many

Hindu Gods. Sheshnaga (Snake with Six hoods) is the vehicle of Vishnu. The world according to Hindu mythology and cosmogony, rests on the head of Sheshnaga, and when he shakes his head we have earthquakes.

The custom of snake-worship is believed to have come from the "Naga" clan, a highly developed tribe who lived in ancient India. The Indus Valley civilisation of 3000 B.C. gives ample proof of the popularity of snake-worship amongst the Nagas, whose culture was fairly wide-spread in India even before the Aryans came. Later, the Indo-Aryans began to worship many of the snake deities of the Nagas and some of them even found mention in the Hindu Puranas.

Many scholars have detected traces of existence of snake-worship contained in the 8th Ashtaka of the Rig Veda, wherein the earth is addressed as the Sarpa-rajni or "the queen of the serpents or the queen of all that moves". The Yajur-Veda

provides a more definite account of serpent-worship; the Samhita of this Veda contains prayers to the Sarpas(snakes) who are addressed as denizens of the heavens, the skies, the rays of the sun, the waters, the vegetables and the like. In the Brahmanas of the Samhita part of the Yajur-Veda, invocations are addressed to serpents and sweet sacrifices are offered for their acceptance. Manu, the ancient law-giver of the Hindus also makes mention of the Nagas and the Sarpas. Carved or painted figures of snakes can be found on the walls of many Hindu temples that exist from the medieval era. Images of snake worship rituals can also be spotted in the world famous Ajanta caves. Detailed description of the

cobra snakes can also be discerned in Arthasastra, the classic ancient Hindu political text by the great Hindu philosopher Chanakya (c.300 bc).

In medieval India figures of snakes were carved or painted on the walls of many Hindu

temples. In the carves at Ajanta images of the rituals of snake worship are found. Kautilya, in his "Arthashastra" has given .

The mention of the Nagas and the Sarpas is also found in the Mahabharata. In the sacred Hindu text BhagavadGita, one witnesses how Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that Vasuki and Ananta represent him amongst the Sarpas and the Nagas respectively.

The Hindu Puranas(Sanskrit encyclopedic texts) also mention the Nagas and the Sarpas. In the Bhagavata Purana, Vasuki and eleven other Nagas are mentioned as forming the string of the sun's chariot, one serpent being held to be sacred to each month. The Markandeya Purana embodies



the well-known story of the marriage of Madalasa, a Naga princess of superb beauty, with King Kulvalasva.

In the apologue of the gold-giving serpent, the fifth fable of the Panchatantra (famous Indian collection of fables and other morally instructive tales), authentic evidence is found of the prevalence of serpent-worship in the post-Vedic ages of Ancient India. As it has been established that the Panchatantra was composed sometime between the first and sixth centuries, it is believed that the tradition of snake-worship existed in India prior to the sixth century A.D. The celebrated French traveller Jean Baptiste Tavernier, in the course of his visit to India in the seventeenth century, saw the serpent worshipped in the form of an idol. Though Tavernier has neither mentioned the name of the festival nor given any further details, the description corresponds with the Nagapanchami festival as it is observed throughout India at the present day. To understand the history of the festival, the time of its observance should also be kept in mind. Nagapanchami is observed in the month of Shravana (July/August), the advent of the rainy season in many parts of India. It is the time when snakes leave their holes in the flooded fields and jungles and enter the habitations of men - thereby throwing them into great consternation. It is during this period that the greatest number of deaths from snake-bite occur in places like Lower Bengal. The people of the country-side labour under the impression that the only way of obtaining immunity from snakebite is by propitiating the snake-goddess Manasa. It is also the beginning of the harvest season, when crops attain their full growth and the harvest is ready to be reaped. In countries like India the reaping of the harvest is (still largely) a manual operation and farmers have to work in the fields all by themselves, thus exposing themselves to the bites of poisonous snakes lurking unseen among the dense crop. This fear seems to be the main cause for Nagapanchami celebrations. Propitiating the snake god provides some psychological succour to the poor rural folk whose main occupation remains agriculture.

Nag-Panchami, the festival of snakes, is an important all-India festival and is celebrated on the fifth day of the moonlit fortnight in the month of Shravan (July /August). On the

auspicious occasion of Nagpanchami all across India, people celebrate the day of the snake in their very own way. Though the festival is celebrated throughout India, it is observed more in the southern regions than in the north, and even more in the rural areas.

The fact that it is celebrated more in the rural areas underlines the dread of snakes of the simple village folk who saw in the worship of the snake-god a way to propitiate the supernatural forces, that seem to control every aspect of human life including life and death, and thus keep death from the deadly and poisonous snakes at bay.

The grandest Nag Panchami celebrations can be beheld in Baltis Shirale, a village situated approximately 400 kilometers from Mumbai. About a week prior to the festival, the people of this village dig out live snakes from holes and keep those in covered earthen pots. The snakes are fed with rats and milk. The villagers do not remove the venomous fangs of their captives as they believe that it is unholy to hurt the snakes. It is surprising however, that the poisonous snakes never bite their captors. On the day of Nag Panchami, all the people of the village, young and old, dance to the tune of musical bands. Each of them carrying a snake-pot on his head, they walk in a long procession to the sacred-temple of goddess Amba where they offer a worship service to the deity. When the performance of all rituals are complete, the snakes are taken out from the pots and the temple priest sprinkles haldi-kumkum and flowers on their raised heads. The snakes are offered plenty of milk and honey and set free in the temple courtyard. During Nag Panchami, people from all over the world flock to Baltis Shirale to worship live snakes. Reportedly, the largest collection of snakes in the world can be found in Baltis Shirale.

In Bengal and parts of Assam and Orissa, Maa Mansa or the queen of serpents is worshipped. It is thought that it is only by appeasing the goddess that one can keep himself away from harmful snakes.

The famous poem "Mansamangal" describes Maa Mansa as the mother goddess who rules supreme over the entire clan of serpents. Snake-charmers rule the roost during the occasion as hundreds of them are hired to invoke the Snake Queen by playing melodious tunes on their flutes.

In Punjab Nag-Panchami is popularly known as "Guga-Navami". The occasion is observed by devout Punjabi women. In every village in Punjab, a huge snake is shaped from dough, which is kneaded from the contribution of flour and butter from every household. Thereupon, the dough-snake is placed on a sifting basket and carried round the village in a colourful procession. Everyone joins in the celebrations. The women and children sing and dance while onlookers shower flowers on the dough-deity. When the procession reaches the main square of the village, all the religious rites are performed to invoke the blessings of the snake god. The celebrations end with the ceremonious burial of the dough snake.

In Maharashtra, Hindu women take a bath early in the morning and dress up beautifully in "nav-vari" - nine yards-sarees and gold ornaments. Thereupon, they get ready for the "puja" of Nag-Devata. Here, unlike in the eastern states of Bengal and Assam, the ruler of the snakes is worshipped as a male deity instead of a female one. During Nag-Panchami, snake-charmers can be seen every now and then with their baskets filled with



dangerous snakes that they keep as their pets. They are seen sitting by the roadsides or moving about from place to place playing melodious notes on their flutes, and calling "Nagoba-la dudh de Mayi" (give milk to the Cobra Oh Mother!). This is meant for the women of the houses who come out on hearing the cry and sprinkle haldi-kumkum ( turmeric - vermilion) and flowers on the heads of the snakes. Then they

offer sweetened milk and pray to the snakes. The snake-charmers are also rewarded for their services with money and old clothes - the amount of which varies according to the status of the devotee. Another popular custom is to place bowls of milk at the places where snakes either live or haunt every now and then. Images of five-headed cobras are drawn on wooden planks by many elderly women who also recite mantras(sacred verses) and pray before these. During the occasion, many Maharashtrian daughters wash the eyes of their fathers with rose flowers dipped in milk. They are rewarded with nice gifts from their fathers.

In Kerala, Nag Panchami is celebrated with great devotion in the many snake temples that exist in

the state. On the festive morning, thousands of people throng these temples and worship stone or metal icons of the cosmic serpent AnantaNaga or SheshaNaga. They pray for the prosperity and happiness of the entire family and offer milk and other food items to the deities. The Nagaraja Temple in Kerala is one such place where elaborate worship of the snake-god can be seen complete with the performance of the rituals associated with the occasion.

Other popular areas of worship in South

India during the Nag Panchami include the Adiesha Temple in Andhra Pradesh, Nagathamman Temple in Chennai and Hardevja Temple in Jaipur.

In Malabar, the Nagarapanchimi day is observed on the fifth of Sravana when the star Aslesha is in the ascendant. On this day, the Nambutiris worship the snake-god by bathing the god (most

likely a stone or metal image of ophidian deity) in milk and paying obeisances to the divine being. Frying any food item on this day is forbidden by Hindu tradition. Conservative Hindu homes strictly keep any fried food away during Nag Panchami.

It is an age-old religious belief that serpents are loved and blessed by Lord Shiva. He wears them as ornamentation around his neck.

The most popular legend is about Lord Krishna and the snake called Kalia. Legend has it that the many-hooded Kalia and his brood settled in the eastern part of the Yamuna River next to the village of Brindavan. This had a negative impact on the surroundings as Kalia and his gang were venomous beings who poisoned the very ground they slithered on. Then one day, the little Lord Krishna arrived at the lakeside to play a ball game with his friends. While he was throwing the ball with his cowherd friends, it slipped into the waters and the little Lord jumped into the river waters to recover the ball. When Kalia tried to



devour him, Krishna vanquished Kalia Serpent and saved the people from drinking the poisonous water by forcing Kalia to go away.

Snakes have long been associated with many Hindu Gods. The thousand-headed Shesh Nag is the couch of Lord Vishnu. According to Hindu mythology, Lord Vishnu reclines on this couch to relax between the time of the dissolution of one Universe and creation of another. Devout Hindus believe earthquakes to be the reason of the shaking of Sheshnaga's head. Shesh Nag is also

held to be the symbol of Eternity. Hindus believe in the immortality of the snake because of its habit of sloughing its skin. This is the reason why Eternity in Hinduism is often represented by a serpent eating its own tail.

According to another legend, there once lived a Gavada Brahman in a city called Manikpura (or Maipura). He was ignorant of the Nagpanchami and did not know that no ploughing, digging, picking, burning or roasting should be done on this day. He therefore went to plough his field on the Nagpanchami day and accidentally killed the young ones of a female snake with his ploughshare. The female snake escaped death as she was absent during this time. When she returned and understood what had happened, she bit the Brahman and all his family-members to death. In her anger, she proceeded to kill the Brahman's sole surviving daughter who lived in another village. But when she found out that her intended victim was a devoted worshipper of the snake-goddess and had celebrated Nagpanchami that very day with great earnestness, she was greatly pleased. She not only spared her but on the daughter's insistence, gave her an ambrosia to sprinkle on the corpses of her recently deceased family members. The daughter did as she was directed and brought her family back to life. On her advice, the Gavada Brahman began to worship the Nagas (snakes) during Nagpanchami and vowed to refrain from ploughing or digging on the festive day. Following the Brahman, all men began to observe the Nagpanchami vrata(ceremony). This legend is believed to have set forth the origin of snake-worship in Western India.

Apart from this, the festival also owes its origin to myriad legends and myths many of which can be traced back to the ancient Hindu Puranas.

Source:  
[http://www.theholidayspot.com/nag\\_panchami/nag\\_panchami\\_history.htm](http://www.theholidayspot.com/nag_panchami/nag_panchami_history.htm)

## PERSONS OF THE MONTH: INDIA

<p>Kunwar Narain (19 September 1927 – 15 November 2017)</p>		<p>Kunwar Narain was a poet in Indian literature, often regarded as the leading poet in Hindi. He read and travelled widely and wrote for six decades. Linked to the New Poetry movement, he published selectively and was characteristically polite. Influences on him have been diverse, from the Indian epics and Upanishads to Kabir and Amir Khusro, history and mythology to Buddhism and Marxism, Kafka and Cavafy to Ghalib and Gandhi.</p>
<p>Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941)</p>		<p>Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali polymath who reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of Gitanjali and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.</p>
<p>Rajneesh (born Chandra Mohan Jain) 11 December 1931 – 19 January 1990)</p>		<p>Rajneesh, also known as Osho, Acharya Rajneesh, or simply Rajneesh, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh or simply Bhagwan, was an Indian Godman and leader of the Rajneesh movement. During his lifetime he was viewed as a controversial mystic, guru, and spiritual teacher. In the 1960s he travelled throughout India as a public speaker and was a vocal critic of socialism, Mahatma Gandhi and Hindu religious orthodoxy.</p>
<p>Akka Mahadevi (c.1130-1160)</p>		<p>Akka Mahadevi (c.1130-1160) was one of the early female poets of the Kannada language and a prominent personality in the Veerashaiva Bhakti movement of the 12th century. Her 430 extant Vachana poems (a form of spontaneous mystical poems), and the two short writings called Mantrogopya and the Yogangatrividhi are considered her most notable contribution to Kannada literature.</p>
<p>Vandana Shiva (born 5 November 1952)</p>		<p>Vandana Shiva is an Indian scholar, environmental activist, food sovereignty advocate, and anti-globalization author. Shiva, currently based in Delhi, has authored more than twenty books. She is one of the leaders and board members of the International Forum on Globalization and a figure of the global solidarity movement known as the alter-globalization movement. She received the Right Livelihood Award in 1993, an honor known as an "Alternative Nobel Prize".</p>

Detailed profiles of these personalities are available in Bhavan's Journals.

## PERSONS OF THE MONTH: WORLD

<p>Constantine the Great (27 February c. 272 AD[1] – 22 May 337 AD)</p>		<p>Constantine the Great (Latin: Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus Augustus, also known as Constantine I or Saint Constantine (in the Orthodox Church as Saint Constantine the Great, Equal-to-the-Apostles), was a Roman Emperor of Illyrian-Greek origin from 306 to 337 AD. Constantine was the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity. He played an influential role in the proclamation of the Edict of Milan in 313, which declared religious tolerance for Christianity in the Roman empire.</p>
<p>François-Marie Arouet 21 November 1694 – 30 May 1778)</p>		<p>François-Marie Arouet was a French Enlightenment writer, historian and philosopher famous for his wit, his attacks on the established Catholic Church and Christianity as a whole, and his advocacy of freedom of religion, freedom of speech and separation of church and state. Voltaire was a versatile and prolific writer, producing works in almost every literary form, including plays, poems, novels, essays, and historical and scientific works.</p>
<p>Dante Alighieri (c. 1265 – 1321)</p>		<p>Dante Alighieri, simply called Dante, was a major Italian poet of the Late Middle Ages/Early Renaissance. His Divine Comedy and later christened Divina by Boccaccio, is widely considered the most important poem of the Middle Ages and the greatest literary work in the Italian language. Dante has been called "the Father of the Italian language" and one of the most important writers of Western civilization.</p>
<p>Zoroaster 2 millennium BCE</p>		<p>Zoroaster also known as Zarathustra, Zarathushtra Spitama or Ashu Zarathushtra was an ancient Iranian-speaking prophet whose teachings and innovations on the religious traditions of ancient Iranian-speaking peoples developed into the religion of Zoroastrianism, which by some accounts was the first world religion.</p>
<p>Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino March 28 or April 6, 1483 – April 6, 1520</p>		<p>Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino known as Raphael, was an Italian painter and architect of the High Renaissance. His work is admired for its clarity of form, ease of composition, and visual achievement of the Neoplatonic ideal of human grandeur. Together with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, he forms the traditional trinity of great masters of that period.</p>

## FESTIVALS OF THE MONTH: INDIA

<p>Lohri (13 January 2018)</p>		<p>Lohri is a popular festival celebrated by Punjabi people of Sikh faith as well as Hindu faith. Lohri is mainly Sikh festival however the day of Lohri is decided based on Hindu calendar. Lohri is closely linked to Hindu festival Makara Sankranti and it is celebrated one day before of that.</p>
<p>Pongal (14 January 2018)</p>		<p>Pongal is a Hindu festival which is observed by people of Tamil Nadu. Pongal is a four days festival and the most important day of Pongal is known as Thai Pongal. Thai Pongal day is celebrated by boiling freshly harvested rice with fresh milk and jaggery in a new clay pot. While boiling the concoction, people let the milk spill over the pot as an auspicious sign of material abundance and prosperity.</p>
<p>Vasant Panchami (22 January 2018)</p>		<p>Vasant Panchami day is dedicated to Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, music, arts, science and technology. Goddess Saraswati is worshipped on Vasant Panchami day. Vasant Panchami is also known as Shri Panchami and Saraswati Panchami.</p>
<p>Republic Day (26 January 2018)</p>		<p>India commemorates the day of 26th January as Republic Day. In 1950 on the very same day Constitution of India came into force. It is the same day when Declaration of Independence was promulgated by the Indian National Congress and this day were chosen to honour that event.</p>
<p>Shivaratri (14 February 2018)</p>		<p>Shivaratri is great festival of convergence of Shiva and Shakti. Chaturdashi Tithi during Krishna Paksha in month of Magha is known as Maha Shivaratri according to South Indian calendar. On Shivaratri day devotees should take second bath in the evening before doing Shiva Puja or visiting temple. Shiva Puja should be done during night and devotees should break the fast next day after taking bath.</p>
<p>Ramakrishna Jayanti (18 February 2018)</p>		<p>Ramakrishna (1836-1886 C.E.) was a famous Saint in the 19th century India. He became a priest of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, dedicated to the goddess Kali. He is famously known as Ramakrishna Paramahansa among his devotees.</p>

## FESTIVALS OF THE MONTH: AUSTRALIA

<p>Sydney Festival (6 – 28 January 2018)</p>		<p>In January each year Sydney lights up with the Sydney Festival: three weeks of art, music, theatre, dance, circus, talks, workshops and other events. It has been running since 1977, with the general aim of celebrating everything that Sydney has to offer. Each year the festival has a theme but the programming schedule is always diverse, and may include anything from Russian ballet and circus performances to Detroit rap. The best news of all? Almost half of the calendar's 150 events will cost you nothing.</p>
<p>The Parkes Elvis Festival (1 - 14 January 2018)</p>		<p>The Parkes Elvis Festival is an annual event celebrating the music and the legend of Elvis Presley held in early January in the Australian New South Wales regional town of Parkes. The first festival in 1993 was simply a one night performance attracting 300 attendees. From then, it has grown to become a five-day-long festival of all things Elvis.</p>
<p>Byron Bay Film Festival (6 - 15 October 2017)</p>		<p>In 2018, Surfest Australia will celebrate its 33rd anniversary. The event is the largest surfing festival in the southern hemisphere with over 700 national and international competitors, from more than two-dozen countries, competing in the event.</p>
<p>White Night Melbourne (17 February 2018)</p>		<p>White Night Melbourne is a dusk-till-dawn event that brings the city's dark corners to life with over 100 events. Run from 7pm to 7am, celebrated cultural institutions shine with free and ticketed events from outdoor light displays and street performances to urban adventure and fashion experiences.</p>
<p>TROPFEST AUSTRALIA 24 February 2018</p>		<p>Since 1993 Tropfest's purpose has been simple: to create platforms for filmmakers to generate new content &amp; share their stories. Each year the Festival delivers a raft of programs that encourage emerging talent to participate in the film industry and has helped launch some of Australia's most notable film and TV careers. Events include Tropfest, Trop Jr, TropTalks and more, which form part of our multiday celebration of Australian film.</p>

## THE LIVING ETHIC OF LOVE IN KURAL!

That the idea of active love did arise in the popular ethics of India in fairly ancient times we know from many stories we meet in her literature and especially through the ethical maxims found in the Kural, a work which probably belongs to the 2nd century A. D.

The Kural is a collection of 1330 maxims in distich form, attributed to the weaver Tiruvalluvar.

In the matter of authorship it is probable that not all the maxims are Tiruvalluvar's own, but that he also versified some which were ancient possessions of the people.

Kural means short strophe. Tiruvalluvar is really not a name, but a title borne by the religious teachers who work among the lower castes in the south of India.

The work is written in the Tamil language. This, like Canarese, which also belongs to the south of India, is an indigenous Indian language (Dravidian), not Indo-Aryan.

We know nothing certain about the life of Tiruvalluvar.

Legend reports that he was married, and that when a man inquired of him which is the right thing to do, to live as father of a family or as a hermit, he demonstrated the answer.

He called his wife who happened to be at the spring. She left her water-jar hanging in the water and hurried to ask him what he wanted.

When, according to Tamil custom, she set before him at

breakfast cold rice left over from supper, he declared it was burning his tongue. She immediately blew on it to cool it.

At midday he let something fall and called for light to pick it up.

She straightway brought a lamp.

Thereupon the inquirer said, "I have the answer! If so excellent a woman falls to one's share, the practice of domestic virtue is more excellent; otherwise it is better to become a hermit."

In the Kural, world and life negation is only like a distant cloud in the sky.

In 250 maxims they form the concluding part of the

work — earthly love is lauded. Later times, because they cause offence, interpret them allegorically as concerning the love of the soul to God.

Christianity similarly interprets the Song of Solomon, a love-song probably originally sung at weddings and later absorbed into the Old Testament, as if it described the relations of the soul to its heavenly Redeemer.

Like the Buddha and the Bhagavad-Gita, the Kural desires

inner freedom from the world and a mind free from hatred. Like them it stands for the commandment not to kill and not to damage."

It has appropriated all the valuable ethical results of the thought of world and life-negation.

But in addition to this ethic of inwardness, there appears in the Kural/ the living ethic of love.

With sure strokes the Kural draws the ideal of simple ethical humanity.

On the most varied questions concerning the conduct of man to himself and to the world, its utterances are characterised by nobility and good sense.

There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom.

*From Bhavan's Journal, December 17, 1967  
Reprinted in Bhavan's Journal July – December 15,*

*2017*

# Kulapativani

## Students Bring Sunshine

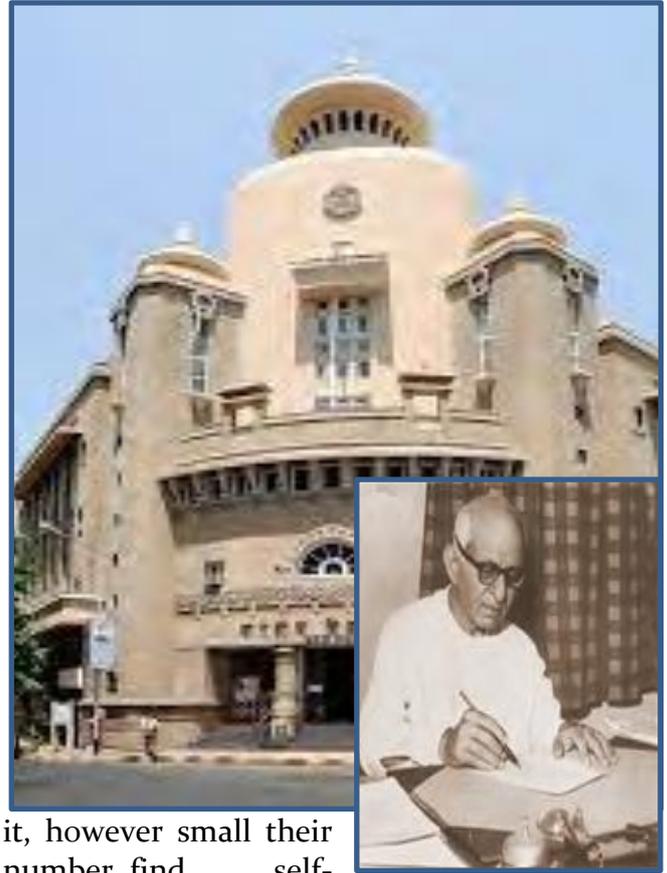
True service, apart from great national crisis where the student must render every assistance, is to bring sunshine in whatever sphere he moves in. It is as great a service as any man can render. An ailing sister in the house; a lonely mother who needs company; an unfortunate neighbour who needs aid; a passer-by who is in distress; a victim of crime as you go along the street; some unfortunate who is being sacrificed at the altar of a social, economic or communal evil; a riot where the innocent requires protection even at the cost of life; a city without sweepers which wants volunteers for scavenging; a great occasion to be organised which needs service; a village needing education for social welfare; a night class where the poor have to be taught; — these are spheres of service in which every student can bring not only help but sunshine.

**Dr K.M. Munshi**  
Founder, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

## The Test of Bhavan's Right to Exist

The test of Bhavan's right to exist is whether those who work for it in different spheres and in different places and those who study in its many institutions can develop a sense of mission as would enable them to translate the fundamental values, even in a small measure, into their individual life.

Creative vitality of a culture consists in this: whether the 'best' among those who belong to



it, however small their number, find self-fulfilment by living up to the fundamental values of our ageless culture.

It must be realized that the history of the world is a story of men who had faith in themselves and in their mission. When an age does not produce men of such faith, its culture is on its way to extinction. The real strength of the Bhavan, therefore, would lie not so much in the number of its buildings or institutions it conducts, nor in the volume of its assets and budgets, nor even in its growing publication, culture and educational activities. It would lie in the character, humility, selflessness and dedicated work of its devoted workers, honorary and stipendiary. They alone can release the regenerative influences, bringing into play the invisible pressure which alone can transform human nature.

*Reader.com*



## *We seek Support for Bhavan Australia's Building Project!*

Note: We invite frank opinion from our readers.

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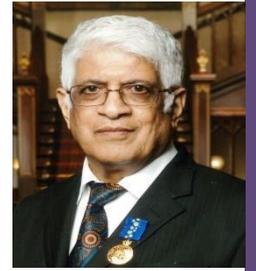
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