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Words of Eternal Wisdom



“No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive. I claim to represent all the cultures, for my religion, whatever it may be called, demands the fulfilment of all cultures.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

“I am confident that there truly is such a thing as living again, that the living spring from the dead, and that the souls of the dead are in existence.”

- Socrates

“The soul comes from without into the human body, as into a temporary abode, and it goes out of it anew... it passes into other habitations, for the soul is immortal”

- Jack London

A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.

- Mahatma Gandhi

“Where humanity sowed faith, hope, and unity, joy's garden blossomed.”

— Aberjhani, *The River of Winged Dreams*

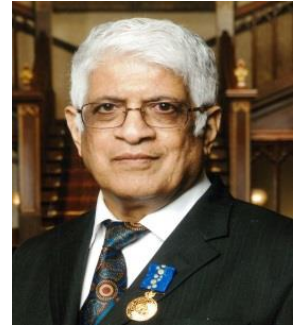
If there were only one religion in England there would be danger of despotism, if there were two, they would cut each other's throats, but there are thirty, and they live in peace and happiness.

- Voltaire

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Gambhir Watts OAM,
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia
Ambassador of Multicultural Relations



"Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilisation." — **Mahatma Gandhi**

Our commitment to fostering Multiculturalism Multiculturalism demands integration NOT assimilation.

In common discourse and contemporary written works, multiculturalism has diverse, contested, and changing meanings and implications. Because of the variety of meanings attached to the concept, participants in debates about multiculturalism often speak past each other and do not always address issues and concerns raised by others.

One reason for the multiple meanings of multiculturalism is that the concept can refer to population structure, cultural diversity, institutional policy or program, societal practice, ideology, value, ideal, symbol, educational approach, management style, business strategy, or sociological or political concept or theory. Multiculturalism may be praised as a practice or ideal or it may be viewed as misguided and a source of confusion and problem for society. Different nation-states, cultural or ethnic groups, academics and members of the public take different approaches to multiculturalism.

A further difficulty relates to how multiculturalism is studied. In many studies, multiculturalism is contrasted with assimilation, and the two are presented as opposite approaches. Further, multiculturalism is often taken to mean an emphasis on retention of some original culture by certain ethnic or minority groups. Some even argue that multiculturalism encourages such retention. These approaches may overemphasize the difference between multiculturalism and other approaches to cultural diversity as well as focussing on only some aspects of multiculturalism – and not necessarily the distinguishing features of a multiculturalist approach (Taylor and Lambert, 1996; Hjem).

While multiculturalism may be "a muddled concept" (Li, p. 149), given the variety of ways it is used, the muddling may emerge because the concept is overloaded with multiple meanings and expected to serve diverse or even contradictory purposes. Researchers have found several dimensions associated with attitudes to multiculturalism (Berry et al., Ch. 7; Angus Reid, pp. 53-60) and it may be that these reflect different meanings and interpretations of the concept and practice of multiculturalism as much or more than attitudes themselves.

There are many polemics about and theoretical analyses of multiculturalism, but there are relatively few detailed explorations of attitudes to and interpretations of multiculturalism. In a short paper, reporting on a specific group of responses, the disagreements concerning multiculturalism cannot be resolved. But by exploring the meanings of multiculturalism for a group of undergraduate students, I hope to make a modest

contribution to unravelling the multiple meanings and interpretations of multiculturalism. It is my hope that other researchers will continue to explore what multiculturalism involves in practice, and study how people respond to it in their experiences, rather than pontificate about it in the abstract or from a predetermined perspective.

Multiculturalism as a public policy framework depends on states identifying cultural differences among their citizens as salient for resource allocation, political participation and human rights. The adoption of multiculturalism as a term and a framework signifies the recognition of a politics of difference within a liberal democratic framework of identities and aspirations. Yet the national government in Australia unlike any other country with espoused policies of multiculturalism has chosen to have neither human rights nor multicultural, legislation.

Themes in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act

Diversity

- Cultural and racial diversity of Canada. 3: 1 (a) (h) 3:2 (c) 5:1 (c)
- Preserve, enhance and share cultural heritage. 3: 1 (a) 5:1 (e) (h)
- Recognize and enhance development of communities of common origin. 3:1 (d)
- Respecting and valuing diversity. 3: 1 (e)
- Interaction between individuals and communities of different origin. 3:1 (g)
- Promote reflection and evolving expressions of culture. 3:1 (h)
- Languages: preserve and enhance; acquire, retain, use 3:1 (i) 5:1 (f)
- Multicultural reality 3:2 (d) (f)

Equality

- Equal treatment and equal protection under law for all individuals. 3: 1 (e)
- Full and equitable participation of individuals and communities. 3: 1 (c) 5:1 (d)
- Equal opportunity for employment and advancement in federal institutions. 3:2 (a)

Overcoming Barriers

- Elimination of any barriers to participation. 3: 1 (c)
- Overcoming discriminatory barriers, including race, national, or ethnic origin. 5:1 (g)
- Encourage institutions to be inclusive. 3:1 (f)

Harmony

- Respect, recognition and appreciation. 3:1 (f) (h) 3:2 (c) 5:1 (d)
- Understanding. 3:1 (a) (g) 3:2 (c)
- Harmony. 3:1 (j)
- Sensitive and responsive. 3:2 (f)
- Exchanges and cooperation, sharing. 5:1 (c) (e)

Resource

- Fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity. 3: 1 (b)
- Resource in shaping of Canada's future. 3: 1 (b)
- Participation in and contribution to evolution and shaping of Canadian society. 3:1 (c) 3:2 (b)
- Creativity. 3:1 (g)
- Historic contribution to Canadian society. 3:1 (d)
- Make use of language skill and cultural understanding. 3:2 (e)
- Value diversity. 3:1 (e)



CONTENTS

Deepawali	6	All About the Life of Guru Nanak	30
Dussehra: When Durga Holds Sway	9	Culture and Civilization	33
Diwali: Hindu Festival of Lights in India has many ways to celebrate	12	7 Aussie Christmas traditions we all love	38
Multiculturalism and Australian Identity	15	The Many Flavors of the Hindu New Year	41
Multiculturalism Around the World	20	International Yoga & Music Festival	43
Attitude	22	Philosophy – Its Origin and Its Limitations	44
The teller of fairy tales	24	The Mystery of Consciousness	48
Diwali festival food: 23 things you must eat	27		

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DEEPAWALI



*Contributed by Acharya Satyam Sharma Shastri
Montagne-Blanche Village, Mauritius*

DEEPAWALI

Throughout the world all Hindus celebrate Deepawali with great pomp and enthusiasm. This is the great festival honouring Mother Lakshmi (goddess of wealth).

The historic origins of some of the various Hindu festivals revolve around their special significance for each of the four castes. Sraavan is primarily a festive month for the Brahmins (priests). Dassera (Vijay Dashmi) is a festival primarily for the Kshatriyas (warriors). Holi is a festival primarily for the Sudras and Deepawali is a festival primarily for the Vaisyas.

These distinctions are not rigid and generally all Hindus participate and celebrate all these festivals.

*Om asato ma sadgamaya,
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya,
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya.*

“Lead us from falsehood to truth; from Darkness to light; from Death to immortality and from Lethargy to Activity.”

The essential principle of Vedic culture is eternal, universal and is applicable to the past, present and the future. The alternate for the Vedic culture is Human culture or Universal culture. Where the aspects of human personality are fourfold: there are four goals of life (dharma, artha, kama & moksha); four Yogas (karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja-yoga and gnana yoga); four Vedas (Rig Veda, Sam Veda, Yajur Veda & Atharva Veda); four ashramas (Brahmacharyashrama, Grahasthashrama, Vanprasthashrama & Sanyasashrama); four Varnas (Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya & Sudra); four yugas (Krata yuga, Treta yuga, Dwapar yuga and Kali yuga).

There are also four universally observed parvas (festivals) namely Shravani Upakarma, Vijaydashami, Deepawali and Holi. Parva means a link that joins two things. It is that link on which the skeleton stands. The joints of a man's skeleton are, therefore, called parvas. It is with the help of these that an individual can stand,

can sit, can bend and can lunge. Without these joints man would be stiff and not be able to make any movements. Likewise is the state of nations and societies, the framework of which is based on parvas (festivals). Without these parvas society would have collapsed a long time ago.

These four festivals commence with Upakarma (Raksha-bandhan) and end with Holi. The four festivals are associated with four different goddesses. Raksha-bandhan is associated with Goddess Saraswati (the goddess of education); Vijaydashami with Shakti (goddess of power); Holi with Prasannata (goddess of joy) and Deepawali is associated with Lakshmi (goddess of wealth).

Raksha-bandhan or Shravani is directed at spiritual education, Vijaydashami at military education, Deepawali at economic education and Holi at cultural education of the masses. As long as humanity is not moved with inner satisfaction and joy so long there would exist defects in the imparting of spiritual, economic and cultural education.

According to Vedic culture the message of Asato ma sad gamaya (lead us from falsehood to Truth) through the parva of Shravani; of Mrityorma amritam gamaya (from death to immortality) through the parva of Vijaydashami; of Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya (from darkness to light) through the parva of Deepawali; and of Alasyatma shrama gamaya (from lethargy to activity) through the parva of Holi, is conveyed to the masses.

THE MESSAGE OF DEEPAWALI

According to the Vedic culture, the message of Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya (from darkness unto light) is given through the festival of Deepawali to all peoples of the world. During the night of Deepawali the myriads of little clay lamps (dias) seem to silently send forth Deepawali messages: Come let us remove darkness from the face of the earth. This is not the work to be done by one dia or by one individual. It requires collective effort. In the diffusion of light the question of high and low is forgotten. This is the lesson taught by both small and big dias.

The second message of the burning dias is to destroy the difference between rich and poor- the destruction of discrimination based on poverty and wealth. The burning dia, whether in

a palatial bungalow or in a grass hut, is a symbol of this unity. The wall of separation based on economic status cannot prevent the penetration and spread of the light of the dia.

The third message of the burning dias of Deepawali is to kindle the extinguished lights of our neighbours. Let us find out what is needed- whether there is a shortage of wick or oil- and just by a little help the neighbour's lamps can be lit. One dia can light several others. A little charity can bring joy to countless others.



The row of lamps teach yet another lesson and that is of unity as exemplified in Satyam, Shivam Sundaram- Truth, Joy and Beauty.

The lights of Deepawali are displayed at the entrance doors, by the walls of houses, in the streets and lanes. This means that the inner spiritual light of the individual must be reflected outside. Passersby may thereby be prevented from stumbling on their way to reach their destination.

The lights of the dias on earth beckon the lights in the firmaments to descend upon earth and establish the heavenly kingdom of God for the welfare of the human race.

Feeding empty stomachs, lighting blown-out dias and providing cheer and joy amongst the downtrodden is to enter the true spirit of Deepawali. This is the true prayer to Lakshmi Devi.

Deepawali is a festival of lights celebrated with fanfare to fill the hearts with joy. Traditionally, the week of the deepawali celebrations coincides with other religious days. It commences with:

1. Dhanteras, 2. Kali Chaudas, 3. Deepavali,
4. Navu-Varsha (new year), 5. Bhai-beej.

The significance of all these five religious days, in short, is as follows:

DHAN TERAS

DHAN TERAS- This is a day on which Lakshmi-poojan (worship of the goddess of wealth) is performed. Sages gave to wealth the status of a holy mother. Wealth is popularly regarded as fickle. A person may well be wealthy today and could be dispossessed tomorrow. However, Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth is not fickle. The fickleness lies in the human mind. The mental attitude of a wealthy person undergoes tremendous change. Wealth gives a feeling of power. When used properly, it can benefit humanity. If misused, it could become a means of exploitation and a cause of misery. If one regards wealth only as a means of personal enjoyment, human morality will deteriorate due to unbridled indulgence.

Rishis teach us to regard wealth as a pious gift from God and as such must be utilised with the utmost respect and discrimination.

The Rishis have further elaborated wealth into four categories:

1. A-LAKSHMI = misused wealth.
2. VITTA-LAKSHMI = selfishly used wealth.
3. LAKSHMI = charitably used wealth.
- +4. MAHA-LAKSHMI = wealth used for God's work.



KALI CHAUDAS

This day is allotted to the worship of MAHA-KALI or SHAKTI. Shakti is categorised as:

- A-SHAKTI = power misused for persecution.
 SHAKTI = power used for selfish purpose.

KALI = power used for protection.

MAHA-KALI = power used for God's work.

Kali chaudas is also referred to as Narak-Chaturdashi.

There is legend about a king of Prag-Jyotishpur, named Narkasur. A powerful king who misused power to harass his subjects. Sri Krishna destroyed this devilish and oppressive king on this day. Unjustly imprisoned people celebrated their freedom with friends and family. The citizens celebrated deliverance from Narkasur's reign by lighting lamps.

NAVU VARSH (Vikram New Year)

This being the first day of a new calendar year (Vikram New Year). On this day new-year resolutions are made. Traditionally, people greet friends and relatives either personally or at the temples where a havan is ceremoniously performed. In these modern times, greetings and well-wishing about health, prosperity and happiness, are exchanged by e-mails, telephonically and by means of attractive and colourful Diwali-cards.

BHAI-BEEJ

BHAI BEEJ is a day on which all married sisters will invite their brothers for meals. The sisters will wish their brothers longevity, health, prosperity and happiness, thereby also renewing their affection.

Thus Deepavali must be understood in its wider context. The festival of lights does not simply mean lighting lamps. Hearts must be enlightened with goodwill for peaceful co-existence with fellow human beings and the rest of creation. Enlightenment (light of knowledge) leads to the dispelling of spiritual ignorance

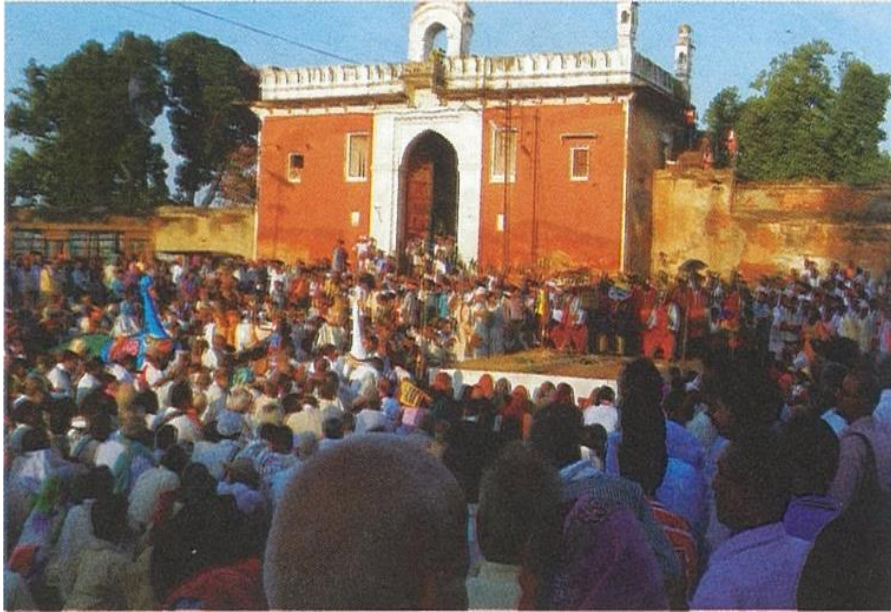
"The self is self luminous being pure Consciousness. The cognition of all objects arises from the light of pure Consciousness." - Brhadaranyaka Upanishad

May we attain perfect inner illumination. May the Supreme light of lights enlighten our understanding. May we attain the inexhaustible spiritual wealth of the eternal, all pervading Self. May we all prosper gloriously on the material as well as on the spiritual planes.

DUSSEHRA: WHEN DURGA HOLDS SWAY

By Sadasivan Pillai

Festivals are forever, multicultural, spiritual, ethnic...such as the festival of Dussehra which can be called a truly multicultural festival of India, being celebrated all over the country, at the same time but in different ways and with different



stories and traditions attached to it. People of all religions participate in the celebration of this age-old festival.

In the North it is celebrated as Ramlila; Durga Pooja in the East, Navratri, in the West and Vijaya Dashami in the South.

Ramlila is the folk reenactment of the life of Sri Ram as described in the Ramayana or other literature based on it such as Tulsidas' Ramacharitramanas. Ramlila is accepted as a devotional way of celebrating

Dussehra in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Uttar Pradesh stages many variants of Ramlila, one of the most famous of them being the one staged at Ramnagar in Varanasi, where Ramlila is held over a period of 31 days instead of the usual 10. The entire town becomes one vast stage during this period. In other places, various episodes of the Ramayana are staged during nine successive nights with effigies of Ravana, his brother Kumbhakarna and son, Meghnad being burnt on the tenth day to commemorate the victory of Sri Ram over Ravana or Lankeshwar — sometimes interpreted as victory of Good over Evil.

Ramlila is staged all over the world wherever a sizeable number of Hindus have settled. In 2008, Ramlila festivities were declared an 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'. In this context it is pertinent to note that there is another popular performance art that is sometimes used to present scenes from the life of Sri Ram, namely, Shadow Puppetry, a theatre

tradition believed to be a thousand years old, In India. In Odisha, leather puppets are used in Ravan Chayya performances in which shadows of leather puppets are projected on a screen. In

Indonesia, shadow puppetry is called Wayang Kulit and is used to tell stories not only from the Ramayana but also from the Mahabharata.

Coming back to Dussehra, in West Bengal, the festival is celebrated as Durga Pooja during which religious rituals blend with the visual arts to present the devotee or celebrant with a joyous experience. The large idols of Durga are worshipped for nine days at elaborately decorated pandals and taken for immersion on the 10th day.

Durga Pooja is an integral part of Bengali culture being both a social and religious event. Believers throng paja pandals at every village and cultural troupes perform at multiple venues. The exuberance with which the festivities are conducted attract a large number of tourists to West Bengal during this time. But besides West Bengal, the festival is also popular in Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Assam and also Bangladesh and Nepal, where it is called Dashain.

“Durga Pooja is an integral part of Bengali culture being both a social and religious event.”

Durga Pooja commemorates the victory of Goddess Durga over the forces of evil,



represented by the buffalo demon, Mahishasura.

The occasion is used to worship other deities, Lakshmi and Saraswati.

Dussehra in Western India is celebrated as Navratri and centred around the spectacular dance called Garba when rings of dancers in colourful Ghagra cholis revolve and move in perfectly synchronized circles around the Garbo Deep. The Garbo Deep symbolizes the Almighty (in his feminine aspect, in this case), who remains unchanged in the constantly changing universe symbolized by the dancers.

Garba is performed only by women. After the Garba both men and women participate in the Dandiya Raas. The Dandiya Raas, originally performed only by men is a stylization of a mock-fight between the goddess and Mahishasura. The sticks (dandiya) used in the dance represent the sword used by Durga in the battle.

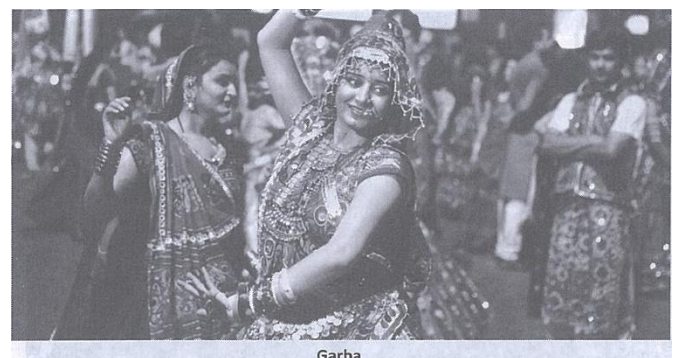
Each of the nine forms of Durga are invoked during the nine days of celebration of Navratri. In Maharashtra, the celebration includes exchange of leaves of the sacred and auspicious Shami and Apta trees. Apta leaves have an association with gold, and therefore, prosperity. Shami leaves are associated with victory as the Pandavas are said to have hidden their weapons, with which they later won a resounding victory over the Kauravas, in a Shami tree during their exile.

The Ayudhpooja or worship of tools is a ritual followed throughout India during Dussehra.

In Andhra and Telengana, the installation of Durga idols for nine days, followed by Lalita Sahashraparayana, is an important part of the festival.

In Tamil Nadu, the festival includes exhibition of dolls in houses. The dolls made out of clay and wood are neatly arranged and exhibited during the nine days. And afterwards, safely stored for the following year. Women who are invited to witness this exhibition of dolls (bommakolu) are honoured with haldikumkum.

Mysuru and Kollur in Karnataka are famous centres of Dussehra festival. Mysuru celebrates it as Dassera, and Kollur as Navarathri and Vijaya Dashami.



Garba

Mysuru, the second largest city of Karnataka and one of the top tourist destinations, attracts large crowds during the Dassera procession.



Goddess Chamundeshwari on Vijaya Dashami.

The Karnataka government makes special arrangements for this important festival of the state which began as a royal affair in the heyday of the Vijayanagar Empire and continued till its downfall in the 16th century. Maharaja Wodiyar revived the festival in 1610, and it continues to be celebrated in pomp and splendour year after year, along with the commercial exhibition at the Mysuru Dasara Ground.

***In Maharashtra,
the celebration
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and Apta trees.***



The royal elephant of the Mysore Palace with the Golden Howdah

Specially trained caparisoned elephants carrying a large gold idol weighing 750 kg of the Goddess Chamundeswari through the streets of Mysuru is the highlight of the festival here

(Goddess Chamundeswari is the family deity of the Wodiyar kings).

Sri Sankara ordained religious rituals associated with Navaratri festival at the Sri Mookambika Temple, Kollur (Udipi district, South Kanara). The ten-day festival culminates on Vijaya Dashmi, attracting large crowds, particularly from Kerala as Goddess Durga bestowed Brahmanjyanam to Sri Sankara at the Koodchadri Hills at the foot of which the Mookambika temple is built. At Kollur, Goddess Durga is worshipped as Kali in the morning, Mahalakshmi at noon and as Saraswati in the evening. It is here that children are initiated into learning, on Vijaya Dashmi day, by Keralites.

In Kerala the celebration is confined to only one day, Vijaya Dashmi, when young children are initiated into the world of letters through a ceremony known as Vidyarambham. Two days prior to Vidyarambham, all books are kept for pooja and thereafter usually no one reads till the pooja is over on Vijaya Dashmi day. The books are opened only on Vijaya Dashmi day, after performing Saraswati pooja.



Festivals are forever. They contribute to our economy. They are occasions for enhanced economic activity. Artisans, artistes, labourers and petty contractors earn the maximum during festivals. Traders offer discounts on consumer durables to attract buyers since the festivals are occasions to buy everything in sight — from clothes to cars.

The Happiness Quotient (HQ) of people increases during festivals. They are occasions, where people meet and mingle, momentarily forget their differences and come together in a shared spirit of celebration.

Let us have more and more occasions of this sort to foster unity and brotherhood.

Source: Bhavan's Journal October 15, 2018

DIWALI: HINDU FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS IN INDIA HAS MANY WAYS TO CELEBRATE



By Naomi Canton (CNN Australia)

Diwali is a five-day Hindu festival, known as the Festival of Lights. It is a contraction of the word Deepavali, which means row of lights in Sanskrit.

Diwali is one of the most important Hindu festivals in India, but the colorful customs and meanings associated with it can vary depending on where you travel in the country.

In the north, Diwali is often a raucous affair, marked by a cacophony of firecrackers on the streets and a flourish of ceremonial gambling in the home.

The wealthier urban dwellers splurge on gold, jewelry, clothes and expensive gifts such as electronics, which they buy for themselves and their loved ones.

In the quiet villages, such as those dotted around the vast state of Maharashtra in the west of India, the Festival of Lights celebration is generally a simpler affair, defined by humble offerings and wholesome feasts.

Few, if any, firecrackers are burst and many follow their own particular tribal traditions. Most villagers try to buy new clothes, but few can afford gold, jewelry or elaborate gifts.

The annual dates of Diwali are as fluid as types of revelry you'll find. It's generally celebrated for five days, with the biggest day being the third one.

In 2018, northern India marks that day on Wednesday, November 7. However, it falls on Tuesday, November 6, in southern India, where it's called Deepavali.

Here's a look at some of the most popular ways to celebrate.

Some Diwali rituals are common across most of the subcontinent. In both city and countryside, small oil lamps made of clay (diyas) are placed at the thresholds of homes, shops and offices throughout the five-day affair to celebrate the legend of the return of the Hindu god, Lord Rama, to his kingdom after 14 years in exile. According to mythology, his people lit diyas to welcome his return.

DIWALI BANGALORE

In villages, the rangolis are sometimes drawn on top of fresh cow dung.

Hindus in cities and villages also believe that during Diwali the Hindu goddess of wealth, Lakshmi, will visit their homes if they are lit, clean and beautifully decorated.

Windows and doors are left open to let the goddess in, and homes are cleaned from top to bottom.

Brightly colored rangolis are drawn using fingers on the ground at the entrances to homes and offices. These geometric designs are usually symbols of nature. Their purpose is to welcome guests and to encourage Lakshmi inside.

6 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DIWALI

Gambling card games are often played in villages and cities, as it is generally considered auspicious to gamble during Diwali.

This springs from a legend that a Hindu deity played a dice game with his consort on the fourth day of Diwali and she won. Some Hindus believe Lakshmi can be invoked through gambling.

Place your bets
Gambling parties are an especially popular pastime during Diwali in Mumbai. The parties typically start at 10 p.m. in bungalows and farmhouses and continue until 5 a.m.

"People don't mind losing -- it's part of the ambiance and people are having fun," says Vikram Mehta, founder of Red Om

Entertainment in Mumbai. "Everyone dresses up, everyone is on holiday, everyone is inviting each other to their homes, there is a lot of warmth."

Various games are played. The most popular is Teen Patti (three-card brag), and blackjack and poker are also favorites.

"People sit on mattresses on the floor. There are rooms where the kids play for fun and then other rooms with the higher stakes," Mehta says. The houses are decorated with diyas, people dress in traditional Indian dress, servants wander around with platters of kebabs, biryani and Indian sweets, he adds.

Across the country, Indian sweets -- known as mithai -- are exchanged and people have large family gatherings in their homes.

DIWALI CELEBRATES LAPTOP

Diwali marks the start of the new Hindu financial year and many businesses open new accounts books.

Diwali also marks the start of the new Hindu financial year, and many businessmen, traders and shopkeepers open new account books. Business people in certain states, particularly Gujarat, worship their account books.

There are various other rituals celebrated in towns and villages on each of the five days. For

example, on the last day of Diwali in many parts of India, a sister cooks for her brother and he bestows gifts on her in celebration of the love between siblings.

"The modern world is changing, and festivals are the only way to keep our culture and traditions alive. For us, Diwali is the victory of good over evil, the returning of good back into our lives and starting a new year with a positive approach and forgetting all the

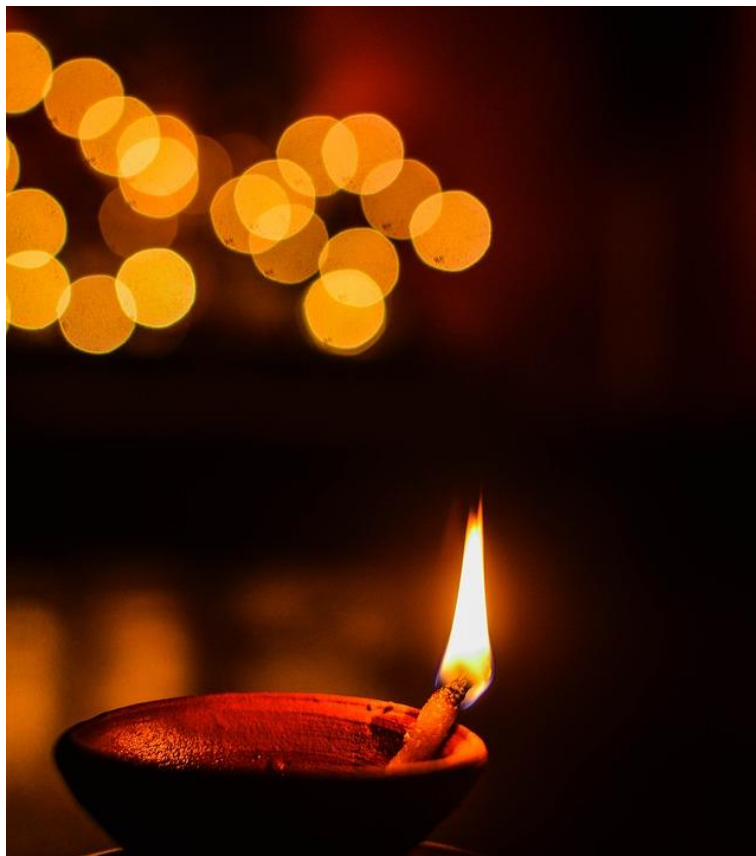
bad that has happened," says Mumbai housewife Heena Damle.

"You have tables ready with sweets to offer if someone comes to your home," adds her nephew Pranav Damle.

LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT

Typically firecrackers are set off from dusk, often throughout the night. The noise is believed to herald the defeat of evil and catch the attention of the gods.

Rag picker Santosh, whose family migrated from a Maharashtrian village to Mumbai, says:



"People in the villages have limited means, so it's not very spectacular. In Mumbai, the rich celebrate it with a lot of pomp. We witness huge fireworks and can get such fancy crackers."

Some, however, are concerned that the original traditions of Diwali are being lost in cities.

Inir Pinheiro is managing director of Grassroutes, which promotes responsible village tourism, and takes urban Indians on trips to tribal villages. He says many of them want to "see an unadulterated way of celebrating Diwali, a less noisy place and to reconnect with the people."

"I think people in the cities are beginning to realize there is a lot of show in the way it is celebrated and a large materialistic aspect to it. People want to see if there is something more to the celebration," Pinheiro says.

HOPES FOR THE HARVEST

In the 500-person village of Purushwadi in Maharashtra, families of five typically live in stone houses of two bedrooms. Dutta Kondar, a farmer from the Mahadeo Koli tribe, says that Diwali is a "celebration of the end of the harvest of kharif (rain-fed crops)."

Since harvest is when the villagers make money, villagers carry out Lakshmi puja (prayer ritual) on their assets at Diwali, giving thanks and praying for a good harvest to come.

"We conduct a small puja of our cattle, grain and cash," Kondar says. Family members hold a

plate of offerings to the gods and chant prayers while rotating the plate around the assets, he explains.

"To make sure our bodies are prepared for the winter, we eat lots of oil and sweets," Kondar adds.

"Whenever anyone enters their house, the villagers offer each other sweets. But they don't buy presents for each other -- money being a big constraint," Pinheiro says.

VILLAGE VALUES

Like many rural villages across India, Purushwadi has its own particular rituals. Pinheiro says one of the most popular is the local singing ceremony.

"This is when children go round the houses holding hand-made lanterns made of sticks and twigs and they sing Marathi songs for the benefit of residents of the homes. In return they are given oil and grain," Pinheiro says.

"The difference in how Diwali is celebrated in the villages is that it is done with more simplicity. It is the rare occasion when they buy clothes and eat nice food and they are celebrating after many months of hard work. In the cities, it is less community-oriented, noisier and more about spending money and showing off," Pinheiro adds.

Source: <https://edition.cnn.com>



MULTICULTURALISM AND AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY



MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

United, Strong, Successful

— Australia's multicultural statement —



*By Senator Jim Short
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Ethnic
Affairs and Assisting the Leader on Multicultural
Affairs, Australia*

16 May 2018 - 12:57pm

“Before getting into the subject matter of my remarks, let me say how much I regret that the Australian Government has chosen to play domestic party politics in its choice of Australian-speaking participants at this important conference attended by so many distinguished visitors from overseas. Even before the recent defeat of the Coalition State Government in NSW I was one of, I think, only three non-Labour politicians invited to participate in the deliberations of the conference in a speaking or chairing capacity.

Now I think I may be the only one. That contrasts with a minimum of 15 such appearances by Labour Party politicians or ex-politicians. It is ironic, and sad, that this has occurred with a conference that is billed as the Australian Government's centrepiece contribution to the UN International Year of Tolerance, a word that, in Australian idiom, is roughly translated as a fair and equal go for all. The irony becomes even greater when I remind you that it was a non-Labour Government, the Coalition Government of 1975, 1983, that introduced most of the post-arrival, or

settlement programs that still today underpin Australia's multicultural policies, programs, that have made the actual operation of Australia's cultural diversity the envy of most other nations.

Such partisan actions by government run the considerable risk of causing a backlash in the Australian community against the very cultural diversity within the framework of a cohesive, unified Australia, that the existing government professes to espouse and which has always been at the heart of the policies of the Liberal Party.

This conference is being held at a time which many Australians feel is one of uncertainty and confusion about where Australia is heading as a nation.

Many commentators take this one step further and assert that Australia has a national identity crisis, and that somehow that is the result of what is called multiculturalism, which in turn they equate with what we call cultural diversity. Many Australians feel this means a loss of what they have seen traditionally as a recognisable Australian identity. For example, in his last public speech that great Australian the late Sir Paul Hasluck said, "Personally, I can scarcely recognise in Australia today the characteristics which I thought were native to Australia in 1950".

I want to test some of these assertions today and put forward a couple of my own. To do so we need to define some of the terms we use, in particular "multiculturalism", "cultural diversity", and "national identity".

This is a very sensitive area of public policy. It rouses the passions, and widely-differing views. I think part of the reason for this is that these terms mean different things to different people. Some people don't think that matters. I do, because discussions on these matters frequently get derailed through the participants being on different definitional trains.

No more so is this the case than with the word multiculturalism. Professor John Hirst has talked about soft multiculturalism and hard multiculturalism.

By "soft" multiculturalism he means a word descriptive of the attitudes long displayed in Australia towards migrants, tolerance, and a satisfaction and acceptance in seeing migrants participate fully in Australian life.

By "hard" multiculturalism he means a view which insists there are grave shortcomings in Australian society which can only be corrected by government support for migrant cultures. Former NSW Premier Nick Greiner defines multiculturalism as "the capacity to accept difference, to tolerate difference and uncertainty."

I note also the view of the distinguished scholar John Gray in his Latham Memorial Lecture that "multiculturalism is in truth the negation of cultural diversity because it aims to embalm the dead or dying vestiges of overwhelmed or occluded traditions and preserve their remains as public spectacles."

Depending on which of these descriptions of multiculturalism you choose, your attitude towards the concept will be very different

indeed. And to confuse the issue even more, no less a person than Professor Zubrzycki, arguably the father of multiculturalism in Australia, has told us the word "multiculturalism" has passed its use-by date.

Similarly, confusion can exist with the term "cultural diversity". It is becoming increasingly common to equate, almost automatically, "cultural diversity" with "ethnic diversity". The Australian Minister for Ethnic Affairs did so consciously, publicly, at a function I attended just the other evening. He is by no means alone in so doing. But again, of course, there can be a world of difference between the two, depending on your definition.

And so too does the term "national identity" provoke differing interpretations.

Indeed, is there such a thing as national identity, or are we so different in so many ways that the concept is meaningless? I guess we would all have different views, some widely different, on what goes to make up our national identity. The noted Australian author,



David Malouf, for example, believes "we should for a time suspend the attempt to define our Australianness in terms of qualities or national characteristics, which are notoriously difficult to identify....and try describing it instead in terms of experience: that part of our experience that as Australians we hold in common.", that it is community of experience that holds us together. That "we are capable of living with multiple and contradictory views, which does not limit our capacity to speak of our experiences as communal and shared."

I mention these different views because we can all too easily assume that we are all on the same wavelength on concepts such as this when in fact not always is this the case by any means.

Having said that, I would like now to put forward how I interpret and understand these terms and concepts. Let me start with "national identity".

I think there are certain characteristics about Australia, and certain institutions which, taken together, do enable us to discern an Australianness, an identity if you like, that distinguishes Australia as a nation and its inhabitants as Australians, despite our different backgrounds, including ethnic racial or religious backgrounds, different tastes and beliefs. It is the combination, the mix, that is the distinguishing feature, rather than the existence of any of the particular components of the mix.

The elements I would identify include:

an egalitarianism, with no discernible class structure;

an essentially non-discriminatory attitude towards one another so far as racial, ethnic, national or religious differences are concerned;

a strong belief in fair play and a fair go;

a basic friendliness and outward-goingness (not to be confused with extroversion, which is not a characteristic.)

tolerance;

a dislike of pretence and arrogance;

a healthy scepticism of authority;

a self-deprecating sense of humour;

despite our appearance of political apathy, a strong belief in liberal democratic political traditions (ours is, after all, one of the longest unbroken democratically elected parliaments in the world.);

a basic stability and security in our major institutions;

a concern for a total quality of life rather than measuring standard of living solely in material terms.

We often forget that the Australia of 100 years ago was a world leader in several important respects. Australians then enjoyed the highest material living standards in the world. We had adult suffrage. Our concept of democratic governance and the elected parliamentary process was already deeply ingrained.

It is because of this commonality of underpinning, characteristics that virtually all Australians exhibit, whatever their racial, ethnic or other backgrounds may be, that we are able to sustain the extraordinary degree of cultural diversity we enjoy.

Some of these characteristics have endured throughout our history. Others have developed over time. Some of this has occurred as a result of a natural evolution. Nothing remains static and totally unchanged in life. Some of the development has been the inevitable result of successive waves of immigrants throughout our history, including in particular the last 50 years. We have seen an inevitable, and very beneficial, interaction between newcomers to Australia and the more established Australians. The newcomers have impacted on the Australia they have joined, whilst they have in turn been influenced by those existing Australians with their institutions, values, and practices.

John F. Kennedy, in his book *A Nation of Immigrants*, said "The interaction of disparate cultures, the vehemence of the ideals that lead the immigrants here, the opportunity offered by a new life, all gave America a flavour and a character that made it unmistakable. There is no part of our nation that has not been touched by our immigrant background. Each wave of immigrants has left its own distinctive contribution to the building of the nation and the evolution of American life." I think Kennedy's words have real relevance to Australia.

The bottom line of this interaction and reaction is the progressive development of a way of life, a set of values, and an institutional base that are uniquely Australian. They are not static. They will continue to change, to develop, to evolve, to be shaped, as circumstances change, as time goes by, as the new communities become older established communities, as still newer communities emerge.

This is the essence of cultural diversity in the fullest meaning of the term. Cultural diversity goes beyond ethnic diversity, important though the latter is. The overall culture of any nation, or community, is shaped by more than its ethnic composition. Other factors play profound roles too. I refer in particular to the enormous changes in family structures, in the role of women in society and, in particular, in the workplace in the nature of work and job security, in attitudes towards sexuality and the stability of marriage, to name just a few of the more obvious.

Over the past 20 to 30 years these factors arguably have had a more significant impact on

the nature and character of Australia than has the immigrant intake, important though that intake undoubtedly has been.

These are the main reasons the noted Australian social researcher Hugh McKay, has identified what he calls our existing Age of Anxiety. McKay adds another factor, and that is multiculturalism. As he correctly says, Australia has always been a multiracial nation, and Australians have seen and understood Australia as multiracial. The term "multicultural Australia" has developed only in the last 20 years or so, even though governments in the 1950s and 1960s pursued many policies which in today's terminology unquestionably would be considered to be multicultural policies.

McKay says many Australians have difficulty in coming to grips with multiculturalism. They are confused about what it actually means. They are concerned that it will lead to the loss of values, institutions, processes that are the pillars on which their lives are built. The heading of an article contributed recently to one of our newspapers summed up this concern succinctly. The article was entitled "Feeling Strange in a Familiar Land".

If we do not understand such feelings and address them squarely, we risk a backlash against further immigration, which could have profound and damaging long-term consequences.

The overwhelming majority of new Australians who chose to come here to live did so because they felt that Australia would allow them the opportunity to be free, to fulfil their potential as individuals, as families, as members of society, devoid of the oppression, prejudice, bigotry, constraints, lack of opportunity and hope that beset many of their home countries and that caused them to take the huge step of uprooting themselves and moving to a new life on the other side of the world.

These people want an Australia that glories in the freedom and diversity it affords its residents, but which at the same time respects the core values and the basic institutions that attracted them to Australia in the first place.

We must ensure that the practice of multiculturalism in Australia is directed to the

pursuit of the maintenance of those values that have made Australia the envy of most other nations and people: tolerance; a fair go; non-discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion; the opportunity to fulfil one's potential; freedom from oppressive or undue government interference; and to provide security and hope for a better future for our families and their families.

The truly endearing quality of Australia to all Australians, but especially to immigrants, is our liberal political traditions which enable individuals to live their lives in freedom and with choice, without fear or government interference.



So, in conclusion, what of multiculturalism and the Australian identity.

Surely there can be no doubt that Australia is a richly culturally diverse nation, and that a major contribution to this has been the encouragement by successive governments over the past half century to newcomers to Australia to participate fully in the life of their new nation, respecting the values and the institutions of their new nation whilst at the same time leavening those values and institutions with some of the attitudes and practices of their countries of origin, and by preserving, celebrating, and disseminating the values and traditions of their homelands.

Unquestionably, therefore, multiculturalism in this sense has had a defining impact on the Australian identity. Thus this has not been just since the term multiculturalism became the vogue word in the 1970s. It has been the case ever since European settlement commenced in 1788.

The former Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, established by the Coalition

Government of Malcolm Fraser in 1979, but regrettably abolished by the existing Government in the mid-1980s, defined multiculturalism as follows:

Multiculturalism recognises the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of Australian society and actively pursues equality of opportunity for all Australians to participate in the life of the nation and the right to maintain ethnic and cultural heritages within the law and the political framework.

It is clear from this concept of multiculturalism, with which I agree, that multiculturalism and an evolving national identity, I stress the word "evolving", can go hand in hand. It not only recognises the legitimacy of cultural diversity. It also welcomes the enriching role it can play within an overall unifying commitment to Australia and to shared common values. One Australia, many cultures. At the same time, it encompasses the "cement" or "glue" of our basic institutional framework, including in particular our common language.

It is perhaps more difficult to be definitive as to whether, in Australia, with its history of progressive social policy and egalitarianism, multiculturalism is, to use Stepan

Kerkyasharian's phrase, "an expression or an agent of social change".

It is certainly true that we live in a world of often bewildering change, and of change at a bewildering pace. Sometimes the rate of change is too much for us, and we get confused and concerned and insecure. In recent years we have seen a major resurgence in support for Anzac Day and its national significance for a growing number of Australians, particularly the young, and regardless of their origins. It may well be that this resurgence owes much to our fear of losing our national identity in the face of such rapid, and often unpredictable, cultural and other changes that so impact on all our lives.

The challenge for us is to build on the past, to nurture and cherish the best elements of the past, evolved, heritages and to use them as a base for incorporation in a new emerging identity that has equal regard and relevance for all Australians. In doing so we must take care to ensure that our encouragement of cultural diversity, in its full sense, is not achieved at the expense of shared values."

Source: <https://www.dss.gov.au>



MULTICULTURALISM AROUND THE WORLD



As the European Union is struggling to deal with the migrant crisis (hundreds of migrants drowned in the Mediterranean), German Chancellor Angela Merkel is on record as saying “you can’t all come,” following her 2010 comments that “multiculturalism has failed” in Germany. Negative attitudes and backlash against multiculturalism is not surprising given poor immigrant integration, parallel societies, and a threat to national identity. However, multiculturalism can be a source of competitive advantage, for countries such as Australia and Canada, which are confronted with a demographic challenge.

BACKGROUND

Multiculturalism can be viewed in four distinct ways. First, it is a demographic reality as a result of globalization, talent flow, forced migration, and family reunification. Multiculturalism is slowly occurring even in countries that have not historically been receiving a large number of immigrants, such as South Korea. Second, multiculturalism is also a political philosophy related to immigrant integration and acceptance. The presence of ethnocultural diversity necessitates that host country nationals deal with those who are different from

themselves. Third, multiculturalism is a vehicle for government (and organizations) to formulate policies based on their views and attitudes on multiculturalism. Fourth, multiculturalism is a discourse for governments to signal their directions on multiculturalism. Politicians frequently craft narratives to influence views on a country’s approaches to multiculturalism.

According to social psychologist John Berry, the success of multiculturalism is dependent on both the “cultural maintenance” by immigrants and “cultural acceptance” by host societies. Strong cultural maintenance by immigrants and weak cultural acceptance by host society lead to separation and marginalization. Conversely, weak cultural maintenance by immigrants lead to assimilation into host society culture. When host society is more accepting of ethnic minority culture, cultural maintenance can lead to positive outcomes such as better immigrant integration and economic advantages for the host country.

Different countries have implemented multiculturalism in different ways, and with varying degrees of success. Ng and Bloemraad use SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to delineate the

advantages and disadvantages associated with multiculturalism across different countries.

STRENGTHS – in Canada, multiculturalism is a source of national identity (and a tool to unite French and English-speaking Canadians), so much so that multiculturalism is cited as the second greatest source of pride among Canadians (after democracy and freedom). In South Korea, which is a largely homogeneous country, multiculturalism is used to symbolize modernization (where minority rights and equality are cherished) as it aspires to be perceived as on par with Western liberal democracies such as Canada, the US, and Europe.

WEAKNESSES – multiculturalism can create faultlines by reinforcing separateness and differences based on ethnicity or religion, through the allocation of group rights (i.e., certain groups are entitled to more rights than others) as in the case of Mauritius. In many European countries, such as Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, multiculturalism can also promote separate and parallel lives when ethnic minorities retreat to their ethnic enclaves and fail to interact and integrate with their host country citizens. When immigrants fail to integrate, they experience poorer labour market outcomes and have lower civic engagement.

OPPORTUNITIES – Australia and Canada have successfully promoted multiculturalism to convey a climate of tolerance and inclusion to attract skilled workers. As a result, both countries saw an influx of talents, foreign

capital, and international students helpful in bolstering their economies. Immigrants also retain transnational ties with their countries of origin which are conducive to promoting trade and international business between their countries of origin and new countries of residence. As an example, Canadian export is projected to grow by 10% annually simply by matching exports to countries represented by its immigrants' countries of origin.

THREATS – multiculturalism is sometimes seen as an obstacle to equality in Western societies that value human rights and fair treatment. For example, the maintenance of cultural practices (such as wearing the hijab or niqab), often associated with multiculturalism, is seen as an affront to gender equality. The tendency to view cultural preservation as a rejection of (and a threat to) host country values and culture has resulted in hostility towards immigrants, particularly for Muslims.

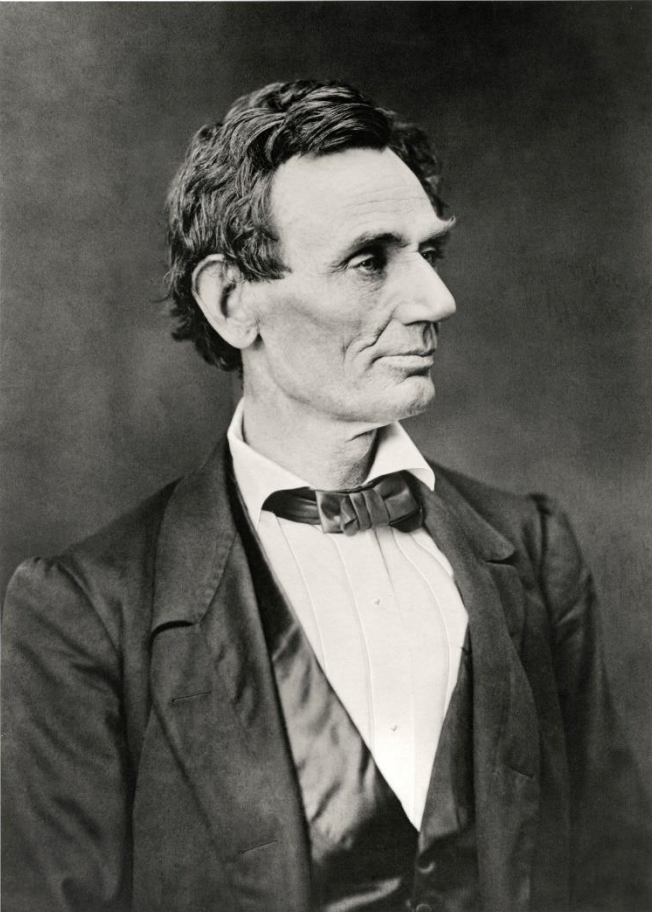
In general, countries that embrace multiculturalism report more positive outcomes in the form of better integration of ethnic minority immigrants. Conversely, societies that demand immigrants to assimilate report poorer ethnic minority integration and experience backlash from its citizens. For multiculturalism to be effective, assimilationist societies must be prepared to change elite and public attitudes and implement policies that do not produce backlash among the native-born majority population.

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/>



ATTITUDE

Attitude means opinion or way of thinking. Swami Vivekananda said, "It is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful, our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our own minds. Learn to see things in the proper light."



Abraham Lincoln

Proper mental attitude makes one large-hearted. The American President Abraham Lincoln was once going to Senate House. On his way, he saw a pig in the marshes. The more the pig tried to extricate itself, the deeper it went inside. The President immediately ran to save the pig. In his soiled clothes he, thereafter, went to the Senate House. The senators were taken aback. The President narrated the entire incident to set their doubts at rest. They started praising the President for his kind attitude. He was pained to see the pig thus suffering. He told them not to do so, because he had not, in fact, shown any mercy on the pig. By helping the pig out of the marsh, he had only relieved himself of his affliction. He said that he was helping himself and not the pig. The real attitude is to consider the miseries of others as your own. If

you relieve others of their miseries, you will get the desired relief. By showing a kind attitude to others you are doing kindness to your own self. This is the proper attitude which you have to adopt in your actual life. Would a rich king or minister have done likewise? No, never. Please recall that your religions teach you to be kind to all but you have drifted away from this tenet. All sorts of punishments have consequently been inflicted on you. Unless you follow the path of right attitude and doing good to others, you cannot escape your miseries.



Lord Buddha

A striking outcome of kind attitude: Once Lord Buddha saw a king aiming at a deer. On seeing the frightened deer and the arrow, he prostrated and pleaded with the king. "You can surely shoot me with your arrow, if you so like but kindly spare this deer with beautiful eyes. I will gladly sacrifice myself to save the life of this innocent animal."

Dear readers, you can imagine the magical effect of Buddha's humble pleading on the king. His request stopped the king from his cruel designs against the helpless deer. Thousands of years have passed, but even today Lord Buddha is reigning in the hearts of millions of people. Why? Because of his attitude and feeling of oneness with all.

An example of malevolence upshot of attitude: Once Badshah Akbar's army was engaged in a

prolonged war. As a result, his royal wealth (shahs khazana) was nearly exhausted.

He asked Birbal, "How can I replenish my wealth?"

Birbal replied, "You can get it from Dhanna Seth the merchant."

Akbar was amazed how a trader/merchant could have so much money. Still he went to Dhanna Seth.

Dhanna Seth said, "Badshah Akbar, I have plenty of wealth. Take as much as you want."

Akbar asked, "Dhanna Seth, how did you accumulate so much wealth? Tell me without any fear of punishment."

Dhanna said, "I earned it by adultrating grains and spices." Akbar got angry. He took all of Dhanna's wealth and ordered him from then on to collect the horse dung in his royal stable. Dhanna agreed.

Years passed by. Once again Akbar had to fight a long drawn battle.

Again his royal wealth got exhausted and once again Birbal advised him to go to Dhanna Seth for help.

Akbar wondered how Dhanna Seth could have acquired wealth. "Birbal, I had ordered him to work in the royal stable to collect horse dung, How on Earth can he have so much wealth?"

Birbal replied, "Badshah, you can ask him but only he can help you."

Akbar went to Dhanna. Dhanna gave Akbar lot of money.

Akbar asked, "Dhanna Seth, I had earlier taken all your wealth. How did you accumulate it again?"

Dhanna replied, "From the stable-in-charge and the horse attendants. They used to underfeed the horses. I threatened them that I would complain to Badshah that they did not feed horses enough and hence the horse dung quantity was less. So they bribed me to keep silent."

Akbar got very angry again and ordered Dhanna to start counting the waves at sea and returned to his palace with the money Dhanna gave him. As luck would have it, Akbar fought another war, and his royal wealth got emptied out. And once again, Birbal advised Akbar to go to Dhanna Seth for help.

Akbar was surprised to see that Dhanna Seth had once again acquired wealth. He could not

believe that Dhanna could earn so much by counting waves at sea.

"The real attitude is to consider the miseries of others as your own. If you relieve others of their miseries, you will get the desired relief. By showing a kind attitude to others you are doing kindness to your own self. This is the proper attitude which you have to adopt in your actual life."

When he asked Dhanna for help, Dhanna replied, "Badshah, take as much as you want but this time around I will not change my profession."

Akbar said, "Okay, but tell me how you earned money by counting waves at sea?"

Dhanna replied, "Very simple. I used to stop merchant's ships and boats far away from the seashore. I showed them your orders and told them that I was counting waves and told them that their ships and boats would disturb or break the waves and hence their ships or boats should stay away. Badshah, these merchants then used to bribe me to let them reach the shore and unload their merchandise."

So Badshah understood that Dhanna Seth could earn through manipulations and bribery from any profession.

Conclusion: If we have a noble attitude like Abraham Lincoln or Lord Buddha, our society will change within no time. But if our attitude is evil, then demonetisation or no demonetisation, the Dhanna Seths of our society will always find a way to earn and accumulate black money.

Source: Bhavan's Journal, 15 October, 2018

THE TELLER OF FAIRY TALES

By Balkrishna Pawar

As a teller of fairy-tales, Hans Christian Andersen wrote a fable called *The Cripple*. It was the story of a boy, the son of a poor gardener, who was confined to bed. The little boy received a story-book as a Christmas gift from his father's master. The father regarded it as a useless gift but it became the cause of little Hans recovering the use of legs. One day, Hans threw the book at the cat to frighten it away from his bird. He missed his target and jumped out of bed miraculously to avoid disaster. The bird died but Hans was saved and he went on to live happily.

Andersen was more a writer of tracts and moral tales than a folklorist.

Actually, he was a teller of fairy-tales, which he domesticated but gave them a townsman's home. He found kings and queens bothersome. He would write about royal families in a charming way with gentle satires. For e.g., in

The Princess and the Pea and *The Emperor's New Clothes*. But what he liked to write about was about the lives of children who were poor like him. He loved the poor, the ill-treated and the miserable, and tried to illuminate their lives by presenting various fancies. In all his books, miracles always occurred to the poor. His characters, like the cinder-girl, seldom married

a prince but to some honest person, who had to work for his living. Even Hans the cripple had to be contented being a school-teacher. He would give a happy ending to his fairy-tales.

His own life was a combination of sadness and the silly pride of success. *The Ugly Duckling* is a fable of his autobiography. He was born in Odense, Denmark, on April 2, 1805. The son of a poor shoemaker, he lived in a one room apartment with his laundress mother. He was shy and ugly and was treated by other children like the duckling which 'was bitten and pushed and jeered at' in the farmyard. His father died when Hans was 11 years old. He stopped going to the City School for the poor. He amused himself by acting in plays and with puppets in a toy theatre which he had built. At the age of eighteen, he thought he should do something for a living. He left his home and went to Copenhagen to seek a career.

The theatre there led him to choose acting, singing and dancing as his career.

He met his wife Collin, who helped him get a Royal Scholarship and continue with his education. He tried writing poetry, farce fantasy, travel-books and fiction and finally, decided to write fairy tales. In 1835, when Hans was thirty, he got a volume of his fairy tales



published. He continued to write and get books published until 1872, three years before he died. Hans enjoyed the enthusiastic reception popularity brought him during his frequent travels in many countries of Europe, UK and Turkey. He didn't mind turning himself into a teller of fairy tales at children's parties. Author Henry James, in one of his books, described a party in Rome, where Andersen read *The Ugly Duckling*, and Browning, *The Piped Piper of Hamelin*. He said it was followed by a grand march through the spacious Barberini apartment, 'playing on a flute in the absence of bagpipers'.



In his fairy tales, Andersen always appealed to men and women. Children could not always appreciate them because of his incurable habit of pitiful pathos. A child easily reads a fairy-tale like *The Sleeping Beauty* but cannot read *The Marsh King's Daughter*, the pathetic adventures of the frog-girl, the same way.

Andersen was a great English writer of all times. He wrote fairy-tales in the era of Louis XIV & XV. He was like Charles Dickens, not only in his genius, empathy, wisdom and compassion but also in his inventiveness, his grotesque details and his light enjoyable humour. He was never recklessly cheerful like Dickens about eating and drinking. E.g. in *Oliver Twist*, Dickens writes about a poor orphan boy asking for "One More" helping.

Andersen makes us smile rather than laugh aloud. It is delightful, amusing and enjoyable at the end of *Soup on a Sausage Peg*, when the Mouse King learns that 'the only way in which the soup can be made is by stirring a pot of boiling water with his own tail'.

Andersen was a moralist and used fairy tales as a way of teaching. In one of his fairy tales, he makes the storks decide how to punish an ugly boy who had been cruel and harsh to them. 'There is a little dead child in the pond, one that has dreamed itself to death; we have brought him a little dead brother'.



The statue of Hans Christian Andersen at Odense Andersen, like Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), in his *Peer Gynt*, believed in redemption through the love of others, and even the girl who trod on the loaf is ultimately saved. 'Love begets life' is his maxim throughout *The Marsh King's Daughter*. Andersen's genius, empathy and wisdom as a narrator saves his gospel from commonness. He was a creator of a thousand fancies. His fancy never became lyrical or swept us off our feet, like Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does. His poetry was full of the flights of birds. He was like a lovely child watching a flight of swans or storks till it is extinguished from his

view. It seems to express a lot of his maximized vision of the world.

Bookstores in Copenhagen have a complete collection of his works, which is in the form of single story edition, illustrated volumes, compendiums, etc. The Andersen Museum at Odense, which came up after his death, houses several of his personal effects. In a corner, his one room childhood home has been recreated. There's a small workplace in recognition of his father's profession of making shoes. The museum also screens a biographical film of the famous, prolific and productive author, who had splashed about in theatre before immersing himself in writing fairy tales. Harbour scenes in Nyhaven, where the author lived, have been recreated and you can spot Thumbelina amidst giant flowers, butterflies and buzzing bees. Andersen wrote with deliberate simplicity and lucidity, with humility and sly humour. His fairy tales can be considered both as children's and adult's literature. Many of Andersen's fairy tales give serious moral certainty intended for adults. His tales basically inculcate love, peace and harmony.

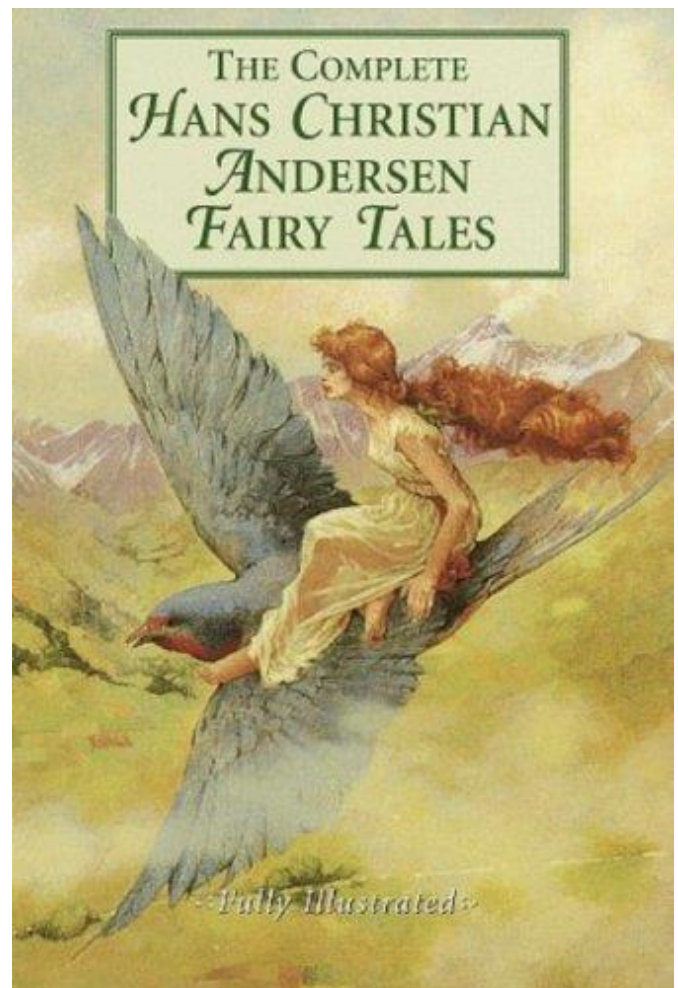
***“He was a creator
of a thousand fancies.
His fancy never
became lyrical or
swept us off our feet,
like Shakespeare's
A Midsummer Light's
Dreams.”***

Andersen gave each of his tales its own category of style, but his stories can be approximately and generally classified into many diverse groups; folk tales (The Tinder Box, Little Clans and Big Clans and The Travelling Companion); tales based on Andersen's Life (The Ugly Duckling and She was Good for Nothing); tales about Denmark (The Wind Tells About Veldemar Daae and His Daughters and Holger Danske); tales that make fun of human faults (The Emperor's New Clothes and The Rags) and philosophical tales (The Story of a Mother and The Shadow).

***“Andersen gave
each tale its own
category of style, but
his stories can be
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groups.”***

The statue of Hans Christian Andersen at Odense.

In recognition of his services and as a tribute to the author of fairy-tales, a charming, beautiful and imposing statue was erected at Odense, surrounded by two children, who are listening to him with rapt attention. Apart from tourists and visitors, it's generally children who gather around and sit at the foot of the statue, reading, discussing and enjoying his fairy-tales.



Source: Bhavan's Journal, 15 October, 2018

DIWALI FESTIVAL FOOD: 23 THINGS YOU MUST EAT

Diwali is one of the most beautiful festivals but it's also a time to eat! With so many options discover the Diwali festival foods you can't miss. I've only been to India once but I already want to go back, there's so much to eat – especially Diwali festival food. Here's what you need to eat for Diwali 2018.

Diwali is a five day celebration that occurs in autumn each year, following the cycle of the moon, in either October or November. In 2018, Diwali is celebrated in south India in November 7th and in other areas in the world on November 6, 2018.

India's Diwali is one of the most interesting and beautiful festivals in the world. The 'Festival of Lights' was traditionally a Hindu celebration but is now one that is also celebrated by Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains, particularly celebrated in India and Nepal.

This festival is celebrated in late October and into November so we've missed the boat this year but it could be a plan in 2018. It is known for the amazing range of candles and lamps, illuminating cities during the festival. Along with the wonderful festivities, there are delicious traditional Diwali festival food. If you are lucky enough to participate in Diwali you can't miss these eats.

MITHAI

This is a name for all of the Indian sweets and desserts. While sweets are an important part of the culture all year round there are a number of specialty Diwali mithai for the festival.

Samosas are a fried pastry in India and one of the Diwali festival foods you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.



SAMOSA

These traditional Indian snacks are common around the region during Diwali. Samosas are small pockets of pastry, usually shaped into a triangle, stuffed with minced meat, peas, lentils and other vegetables.

CHIROTE

This Diwali festival food is a light and flaky dessert pastries. Chirote are stuffed with a sugary filling, deep fried, and usually served drizzled with syrup. You can't go wrong with fried and sweet!



BARFI are Indian sweet white squares made with condensed milk and one of the Diwali festival foods you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.

Creamy sweets that can be served by themselves or with a selection of other

mithai. Barfi are a white creamy square made with condensed milk, sugar and nuts. They are cooked together until they solidify then cut into squares.

KARANJI

Small pastry pockets that are stuffed with poppy seeds, grated coconut, sugar, nuts and cardamom. Crescent shaped similar to empanadas, karanji take quite a bit of time to prepare, which is why they are often reserved for special occasions such as Diwali.



ALOO TIKKI are fried Indian potato cakes and one of the Diwali festival foods you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.

Made with potatoes that are shredded and formed into small patties before being fried, these snacks

can also be served as a side to a main meal. But do not skip the condiments as will usually find the aloo tikki patties served hot with mint sauce, yogurt and tamarind sauce, or other regional sauces.



MAWA KACHORI

Mawa is a thick dried milk product common in the area of Rajasthan where these desserts originate. These small pastries are stuffed with a combination of mawa, nuts, cardamom sugar and often drizzled with syrup to serve.

MAKE IT AT HOME: Instant Pot Chicken Curry Laddoos are Indian chickpea flour snack balls and one of the Diwali festival foods you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.

LADDOOS

Another Diwali festival food prepared in the Indian subcontinent are laddoos. These are ball shaped sweets made with chickpea flour, wheat semolina and coconut. Laddoos are cooked with ghee, while some variants will stuff these balls with pistachios or almonds.



ANARSA

These pasty treats are labor-intensive to make, which is why they tend to be associated with the special occasion of the festival, with rice being soaked for three days before being dried and ground into powder. This is then combined with jaggery and poppy seeds before

being shaped into discs and fried in ghee.

PAKORAS are deep fried snacks in India and one of the Diwali festival foods you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.

These savory snacks are deep fried vegetables or minced meat, with egg to bind it together. They are dipped in batter before it is cooked and one of my favourite things to eat.

CHODDO SHAK

This tasty Diwali festival food originates in Bengal. Choddo shak are made with fourteen different types of leafy green stir fried with chilies and herbs. It is usually reserved for special occasions like Diwali as it's so time consuming to make.

LAPSI

A common fruit in Nepal, this is often candied and shared with friends and family during the Diwali festival, particularly in its native Nepal, with the fruits themselves being around an inch in diameter with a tart, sour flesh which is white, with a green and brown skin.



KAJU KATLI are diamond shaped cashew sweets from India and one of the Diwali festival foods you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.

A sweet that is often cut into diamond shapes and decorated with

edible silver coloring. Kaju Katli translates as cashew slice. It is made with cream, sugar and ground cashews, which are made into a smooth paste and then cooked on a flat tray or dish.

GATHIYA

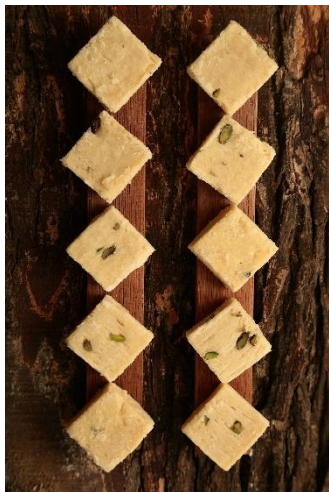
These small and light brown sticks look similar to a hardened spaghetti cut into strips of around an inch each. However, gathiya are actually very light and tasty snacks, that are nicely spiced with black pepper and carom seeds, and make for great nibbles during the festival.

MULLU MURUKKU

Looking like a knot of knobby rope, mullu murukku may not be the most attractive food, but it is a tasty one that is spicy and made with rice flour and cumin seeds, before they are fried while a special piece of equipment is usually required to make these distinctive snacks.

CHIVDA

Snacks that are quite similar to a Bombay Mix, these nibbles are shared with friends and family and include raisins, peanuts, mustard seeds and a type of flattened rice known as poha, which are cooked and flavored with turmeric powder and green chili.



SOAN PAPDI is a flakey dessert from India made with chickpea flour and one of the Diwali festival foods you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.

A dessert that is most commonly found in the northern states of India, sohan papdi is made with chickpea

flour, sugar and milk, and although it looks quite dense has a more flaky texture when eaten, and is often served with other sweets.

DAHI BHALLA

Often found as a street food in India, these light fried dumplings are given an extra kick of flavor with green chilies and raisins. Dahi Bhalla are usually served smothered with yogurt and tamarind chutney.

MATHIYA

Light and crispy snacks that are flavored with chili powder, mathiya are common in the Gujarat region of India, and are made by kneading a light dough with water and ghee along with the chili powder before frying, and are sometimes sprinkled with more chili after cooking.

PURAN POLI

Most commonly found in the south of India, puran poli is a flatbread made with jaggery, cardamom and nutmeg and has a nice sweet flavor. While in some areas the jaggery can be combined with sugar to add extra sweetness.



GULAB JAMUN are fried dough drizzled with syrup in India and one of the Diwali festival foods you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.

Records of this sweet have actually been found in medieval India.

Gulab Jamun is

made with curdled milk and a little flour which are kneaded into a dough. This Diwali festival food is then dropped into hot oil for frying and drizzled with a scented syrup made with rose water and cardamom.

CHIRONGI NUTS

These nuts are cultivated in many areas of India. They can be eaten raw or toasted before they are eaten, with a flavor that is similar to an almond, with the toasted nuts having a slightly stronger flavor.



GAJAR HALWA is a dessert in India made with grated carrot and one of the Diwali festival food you must try. Discover the other 22 foods.

A dessert that is often found in northern India, gajar halwa is made with grated

carrots. They are combined with sugar, milk and water before they are cooked in ghee. The dessert is also sometimes garnished with almonds or other chopped nuts.

Source:

<https://www.baconismagic.ca/india/diwali-festival-food/>

ALL ABOUT THE LIFE OF GURU NANAK

Sikhism originated with Guru Nanak five centuries ago. Nanak came from a Hindu family. He grew up surrounded by Muslim neighbours. From an early age he showed a deeply spiritual character. He broke away from his family's traditions and belief systems, refusing to participate in empty rituals. Nanak married and entered business, but remained focused on God and meditation. Eventually Nanak became a wandering minstrel. He composed poetry in praise of one God, and set it to music. He rejected idolatry, and the worship of demigods. He spoke out against the caste system, teaching instead the equality of all humanity.

THE BIRTH OF GURU NANAK



The Infant Guru Nanak. Artistic Impression © Angel Originals licensed to About.com

Early one morning before the light of dawn, Tripta, the wife of Kalu Bedi, gave birth to a baby boy. The baby charmed the midwife who attended his delivery. The parents called an astrologer to predict his fortune. They named their son Nanak, after his older sister Nanaki. The family lived in the town of Nankana, which is now a part of Pakistan.

NANAK, THE HERDBOY



Guru Nanak the Herdboy. Artistic Impression © Angel Originals licensed to About.com

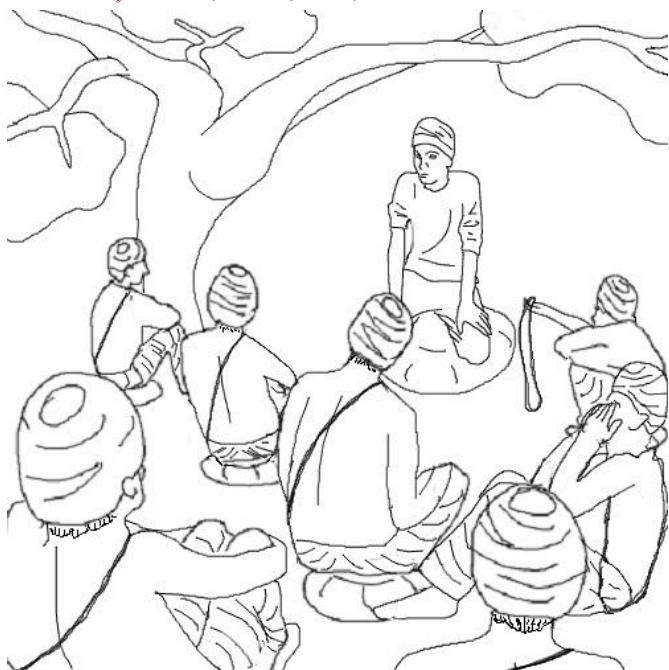
When Nanak became old enough, his father gave him the job of watching cattle. Nanak would slip into deep meditative trances while the cattle grazed. He got into a lot of trouble couple of times when the cattle wandered into the neighbors fields and ate up their crops. Nanak's father often became very upset with him, and scolded him severely for his laziness. Some villagers noticed very unusual things happening when Nanak meditated. They became convinced that Nanak must be a mystic or saint.



NANAK, THE SCHOLAR

One of the villagers, named Rai Bullar, noticed that Nanak tended to meditate at every opportunity. He became convinced that Nanak had devout disposition. He persuaded Nanak's father to put him in a class where he could receive an education in religious studies. Nanak learned very quickly astounding his teacher with the spiritual nature of his school work. The teacher believed that Nanak wrote divinely inspired compositions.

NANAK, THE REFORMER



Guru Nanak the Reformer. Artistic Impression © Angel Originals licensed to About.com

When Nanak came of age, his father arranged for him to participate in the Hindu thread tying ceremony symbolizing man's connection with God. Nanak refused, objecting that the thread

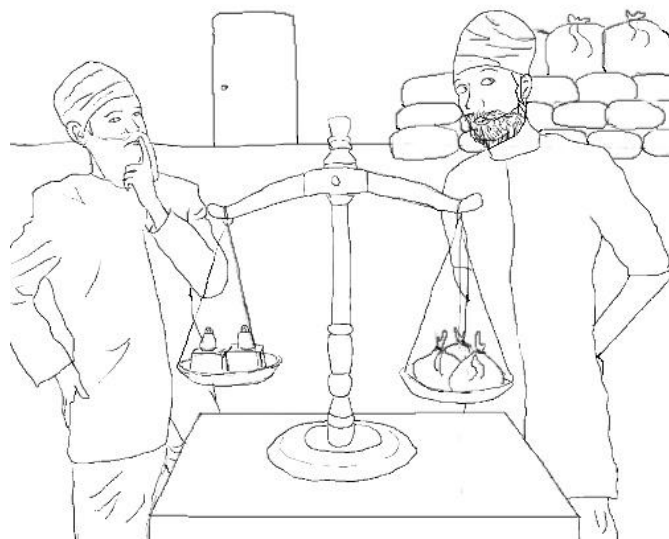


had no value because it would eventually wear out. He also rejected the Hindu caste system of Brahman hierarchy. Nanak denounced idolatry, and the worship of demi-gods.

NANAK, THE MERCHANT

Guru Nanak the Merchant

Guru Nanak the Merchant. Artistic Impression © Angel Originals licensed to About.com
As Nanak matured, his family arranged a marriage for him with a girl named Sulakhani. She bore him two sons. Nanak's father attempted to set him up in business as a merchant, so that he could support his family. He gave Nanak money and sent him to make purchases. Nanak spent all the money feeding homeless, and hungry, holy men that he met on the way. When he returned empty handed, his father became very angry and scolded him



severely. Nanak insisted that doing good deeds for others had earned an excellent profit.

NANAK, THE HOUSEHOLDER

Guru Nanak The Householder. Artistic Impression © Angel Originals licensed to About.com

Nanak's father became increasingly frustrated with him. His sister, Nanaki, lived with her husband in a town called Sultanpur. They found Nanak a job working in a granary. Nanak left his wife and sons with his parents promising to send for them as soon as he could support them. Nanak did well in his new position. He treated everyone generously, and dealt with them fairly. Before long his family joined him, and they moved into a house of their own. Nanak became

acquainted with a Muslim minstrel, named Mardana. They met every morning at a local river, where they meditated before going to work. The entire community expressed astonishment that men of different faiths could worship together.

NANAK, THE ENLIGHTENED ONE

Journey With the Gurus Into the New Year

Journey With the Gurus Into the New Year.
Photo © [Courtesy Inni Kaur and Pardeep Singh]

One morning, Nanak went to meditate and bathe beside the Kali Bein, or Black River, with Mardana. Nanak walked into the river and disappeared beneath the water. When he did not show up for work, his employer discovered that he had never come back out from under the water. Everyone assumed that he had drowned except for his sister Nanaki. Three days passed and then, astounding everyone, Nanak emerged from the river alive saying, "Na koe Hindu, na koe Musalman - There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim." The amazed town's people agreed that Nanak must be a completely enlightened being and began to call him "Guru."

GURU NANAK, THE TRAVELER

Nanak immersed himself fully in meditation. He seldom spoke to anyone and quit his job. He gave away all of his personal belongings to the poor. He made living arrangements for his wife and sons, and then left town with his spiritual companion Mardana. They became wandering minstrels. Mardana played a stringed instrument called a rabab and accompanied Nanak, when he sang his poetic compositions. They embarked on a series of Udasi mission tours and traveled together preaching, and teaching, that there is only one God. There is no Hindu. There is no Muslim. There is only one brotherhood of humanity.

DEATH OF GURU NANAK

Home Coming

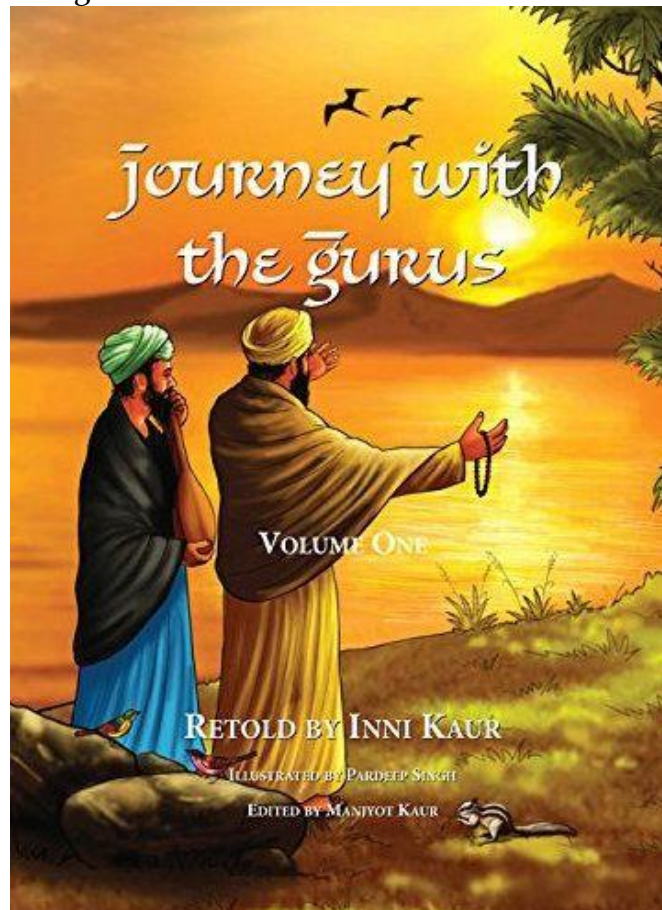
Guru Nanak returned home from his travels after five separate mission tours spanning 25 years. He settled and continued his ministry in Kartarpur where eventually he breathed his last, designating his disciple Lehna to receive the jot

of his spiritual light, and succeed him as Second Guru Angad Dev.

Guru Nanak, the First Sikh Guru by Sikh comics spans the life, ministry and mission tours of Guru Nanak Dev in an entrancing series of five graphic novels. Colorful illustrations, English narration and

Gurbani

quotes bring to life the illustrious history of the first guru.



Guru Nanak Storybook Series "Journey With The Gurus"

"Journey With the Guru's" Volume Three Cover Art. Photo ©

Journey With the Gurus authored by Inni Kaur and illustrated by Partdeep Singh is a rich tapestry woven in the finest story telling tradition. gorgeous illustrations depict the childhood, ministry, and travels of First Guru Nanak and his companion Mardana in a must have hardcover collection beautifully narrated in the English language.

Source: <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-life-of-guru-nanak-2993568>

CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION



*By Swami Smaranananda Maharaj
[Swami Smaranananda is a senior monk of the
Ramakrishna Order and the Vice President of
Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission]*

The words 'culture' and 'civilization' have been often used synonymously, though they have clearly defined meanings differentiating them. 'Civilization' means the betterment of ways of living, making Nature bend to fulfil the needs of humankind. It includes also organizing societies into politically well-defined groups working collectively for improved conditions of life in matters of food, dress, communication, and so on. Thus a group considers itself as civilized, while others were looked down upon as barbarians. This has led to wars and holocausts, resulting in mass destruction of human beings. Therefore civilization by itself cannot be the goal of life.

On the other hand 'culture' refers to the inner man, a refinement of head and heart. One who may be poor and wearing cheap apparel may be considered 'uncivilized', but still he or she may be the most cultured person. For 'culture' concerns itself with the inner refinement of a person. This includes arts and sciences, music and dance and various higher pursuits of human life which are also classified as cultural activities. One possessing ostentatious wealth may be considered as 'civilized' but he may not be cultured. Therefore when we deal with cultural yardsticks, we have to make clear our definition of 'culture'.

We would prefer to call it the 'higher levels of inner refinement' of a human being. Man is not merely a physical being. He lives and acts in

three levels: physical, mental and spiritual. While better ways of living socially and politically and better utilisation of nature around us may be termed civilization, they are not enough to be a cultured individual. Only when the deeper levels of human intellect and consciousness are brought into expression can we call a person 'cultured'.

Looked at in this perspective, modern man may at once be called civilized, but not cultured, though cultural expressions in art, music and literature are there. But if culture in a deeper sense had penetrated the human psyche, the modern world would not have had to witness two world wars besides innumerable smaller ones. To add to this, whole communities have been wiped out in vast genocides. All this destruction cannot be called expressions of culture, though they are, to be sure, characteristics of modern civilization. More efficient methods of destruction do not take man far away from his animalism. If anything, they make him more brutish. Only such qualities which raise the human being from the animal level to the human level, and thence to the divine level could be called culture. From this point of view we may say that humankind will have to travel a long way before being culturally transformed.

Throughout history while humankind is all the time getting more and more 'civilized', we also find this struggle to transcend one's animalism. Simultaneously there have been cultural transformations at the micro level. Great intellectuals and poets, composers of profound music and various art forms and, above all, spiritually transformed saints and prophets, have transcended the limitations of societal living and have become world citizens, for they represent the highest pinnacle of human transformation. Such persons have been described by Acharya Shankara as 'There are good souls, calm and magnanimous, who do good to others as does the spring, who having crossed this dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others to cross the same without any selfish motive whatsoever!'

*Shanta mahanto nivasanti santo
vasantavllokahitam charantah
Tirna swayam bhima bhavarnavam
janan ahetunanyanapi tarayantah*

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S CONTRIBUTION TO CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

When we consider the question of Ramakrishna Mission's contribution to cultural transformation, we will have to understand, first of all, the contribution of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda to world thought. For they belong to the last class mentioned above--the saints and prophets who represent eternal values and who refurbish the image of the emancipated man, in every age. For them the whole world is their home and their only aim is to awaken the Reality within all human beings.

In an age of scepticism and agnosticism, keen on throwing overboard religion and all that were associated with it, Sri Ramakrishna appeared in a remote village. He had no modern education worth the name. But he was absorbed in the Divine. He followed almost all the known paths to God and proved to the modern world that God is true and He can be realized. In fact, that is the supreme Goal of life. He further taught that all religions are like so many paths leading to the same destination. Quarrels in the name

of religion were not only irrational, but a bar to spiritual progress. These words were not mere intellectual convictions, but were expressions coming from the depth of his spiritual experiences. Though these ideas were uttered only before some intellectuals and young men of Calcutta, the then capital of the British empire, they penetrated deep into the psyche of the human race within a few decades of the Master's passing away.

Some excerpts reproduced below from the writings of some of the great men of the twentieth century, will bear testimony to this:2

'The man whose image I here evoke was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years, his soul animates modern India.' --Romain Rolland

'Not only the everlasting value of the teaching of Good affirmed by Ramakrishna, but precisely the necessity of these words especially for our time is unquestionable. When spirituality, as such, is being so often refuted through wrongly interpreted formulae, then the radiant constructive affirmation as a beacon becomes especially precious. One has but to know the



colossal number of editions of the Ramakrishna Mission.' --Nicholas De Roerich



'Sri Ramakrishna made his appearance and delivered his message at the time and the place at which he and his message were needed. This message could hardly have been delivered by anyone who had not been brought up in the Hindu religious tradition. Sri Ramakrishna was born in Bengal in 1836. He was born into a world that, in his lifetime, was, for the first time, being united on a literally world-wide scale.' --Arnold J. Toynbee

'I pay tribute to Sri Ramakrishna's device to attain intimacy with Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian life. He demonstrated his own kind of desires and overtures, as against other possible ways of going about the enrichment and broadening of experience. He went about it in a certain mystical way. It is valid, interesting, and meaningful because its motivation was pure.' -- Muhammad Daud Rahbar

Two opposite forces have been always at work in history: one trying to unite all humanity and the other trying to divide it into narrow domestic fragments. The greatest minds have always worked for the unity and synthesis of humanity so as to make it one family--'Yatra

viswam bhavati ekanidam', as the Vedic rishi put it. As against it, the divisive forces work for bringing about dissensions bringing misery to humanity. In the twentieth century, apparently it seems that the latter forces succeeded in a great measure. Two world wars and innumerable smaller ones bear testimony to it. But, nevertheless, these very wars and the advance of science and technology seem to have brought nations nearer to each other. Faith--faith in God, faith in higher values, faith in humanity--which seemed to be evaporating before the fire of scepticism and so called



rationality, appears to have returned. The voice of reason itself is hearkening to the call of the Spirit. It is in this respect that we find Sri Ramakrishna's message being heard by more and more thinkers in the East and the West. It is therefore that Romain Rolland, the French savant, rightly called Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the 'prophets of New India'.

Many of the values taught by Sri Rama-krishna are necessary in today's world, if a certain amount of sanity and freedom from hatred and violence is to prevail. These values are:

renunciation of lust and lucre, tolerance and acceptance of all pathways to the Divine, service to humanity as service to God and also truth, love, broad-mindedness etc.

Swami Vivekananda, his chief disciple, who had been commissioned by the Master to teach the world, traversed the world East and West and broadcast his Guru's message in modern terms. Though his ministry was only for 10 years, it was so intense that it left its imprint on the minds of thinkers everywhere. Thus the seeds of Vedanta, the main thrust of his teaching, were sown wide and deep, and we find today a universal interest in Vedanta and other similar creeds of the East. Swamiji described his life's work in these words: 'To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology a religion which shall be easy, simple and popular and then meet the requirement of the highest minds--is a task only those can understand who have attempted it. The abstract Advaita must become living--poetic--in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogism must come the most scientific and practical psychology and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work!'

Over and above that, Swamiji, on his return from the West in 1897, started and set in motion the 'Ramakrishna Mission'. He set before its members the ideal, 'Atmano mokshartham jagad- hitaya ca'--for one's own salvation, and for the welfare of the world. Since then the Ramakrishna Mission has been growing and has been intensely active in the field of human service in various forms--anna-dana--services at the physical level, vidya-dana--educational and cultural work, Jnana-dana--work in religious and spiritual field. Its branches in India and in many other countries have been propagating the message of Vedanta, harmony and peace through publications, lectures, classes and other kinds of preaching, besides the three types of services mentioned above. The work of the Mission is silent, unostentatious. Its influence in cultural transformation is imperceptible, like the dew that falls silently, yet brings into blossom the best of roses. It is difficult to assess it quantitatively, for the influence of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda has penetrated

into so many minds in different walks of life. Even critics could not be indifferent to their life and message--they are perforce compelled to take notice of them and then accept or reject it. . However, we may point out some areas where cultural transformation in Indian society has been directly influenced by the Ramakrishna Mission. The much maligned caste system is one such. The evils of malpractices based on caste and also untouchability have been denounced in no uncertain terms by Swami Vivekananda. But his Master whose approach to everything was positive said that caste can be removed only by one method: that of Bhakti, devotion to God. He cited the examples of some of the great saints of India who were born in the lowest classes, but ultimately earned the reverence even of those belonging to higher castes.

The Ramakrishna Mission, in its activities applied this principle in a broad way and the results were remarkable. In many centres of the Ramakrishna Mission during community lunch or dinner on festive occasions, people belonging to all castes sat together. They were devotees. Nobody asked who belonged to which caste. Again, admission to monastic life is not determined by caste. In fact, the candidates have not to mention to which caste they belonged. All this proves Swami Vivekananda's assertion that all healthy changes in Indian society have to come through religion. He told the social reformers of his time not to criticize, not to destroy, but to bring about transformation imperceptibly.

Similarly, the creed Siva-jnane jiva-seva-- 'service to man is service to God', enunciated by Sri Ramakrishna and given a working shape by Swamiji, has caught the attention of the Indian society. This explains why so many social service organizations have sprung up all over the country. Whenever any natural calamity happens, the country as a whole comes forward to help. Even orthodox orders of monks have recognized the importance of this ideal, and are trying to introduce service activities, in some way or other.

One more area where the influence of the Ramakrishna Mission can be felt is that of religious harmony. Though, due to political reasons, communal clashes and hatred have

erupted in various parts of India from time to time, the voice of reason advocating religious harmony is also heard prominently above the noise of communal turmoil. This is particularly so with regard to intellectual classes.

Abroad, it has been the policy of the Ramakrishna Order to bring into focus the broad and universal teachings of Vedanta, as exemplified in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. Here too these teachings have imperceptibly penetrated into the intellectual elite of western society during the last century. Mention of Vedanta, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda finds place in most of the books on religion, spirituality and mysticism that are being published in various countries.

While the twin organization--Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission--spearhead the Ramakrishna Movement, there are other organizations which play a supportive role. Prominent among them is Sri Sarada Math started in 1954 and its service wing Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, which came into existence in 1960. These twin organizations are entirely managed by nuns. Though independent and

separate, they are run on the same lines as the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, and they serve the cause of women and children in various parts of India.

Another aspect of the Movement also needs mention. All over the country and even in some foreign countries, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda associations are organized and run by devotees. There are hundreds of them, small and big, silently propagating the message of the Master and working with the same ideal, *Atmano mokshartham jagad hitaya ca*.

Thus as the Ramakrishna Movement grows slowly and steadily, but surely, this process of cultural transformation, bringing the loftiest of ideas to the world at large and to India in particular, is bound to capture the imagination of the people all over the world. We have to remember, as mentioned earlier, that cultural transformation is a slow process and only after a considerably long time its deeper impact would manifest itself in tangible form.

Source: <http://hinduism.co.za/culture.htm>



7 AUSSIE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS WE ALL LOVE

By Carly Jacobs
22 DEC 2016

FROM BACKYARD CRICKET TO BEACH-SIDE LUNCHESES CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA CAN BE UNIQUELY SPECIAL COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

For anyone who has spent the silly season in the northern hemisphere, it's clear that we do things differently here. With the lack of snow and a quirky take on the holiday, it's more likely you'll see Santa surfing than a group of carolers wandering the neighbourhood.

While no two Christmas tables look the same in this country, a pretty typical Aussie Christmas is sure to have at least a few of these things.

1. SURFING SANTA

Traditional Santas wear bright red fleecy suits, lined with white fur and big black boots to fight off the northern winter.

In Australia, it's summer at Christmas time so you're much more likely to see a boardshort-wearing Santa on a surfboard.

Where you'll see a surfing Santa: It's not an official tradition by any means but if you find yourself on a beach on Christmas day, you'll probably catch an early morning surfer in a Santa hat.

2. EATING PRAWNS

While our British and American friends are feasting on roast turkey, baked potato and hot chocolate, us Aussies are packing up the Esky for a picnic or setting up folding tables to eat

outside. Most families in Australia will send someone to do a 'prawn run' in the morning.

Where to find the best prawns: Head down to the local markets to buy the freshest and biggest prawns for Christmas day.

Most seafood stores will be packed on Christmas morning with grumpy parents or bored teenagers who have been sent on the prawn run. It's such a special time of year.

How to cook prawns on the barbeque:

Wash prawns in cold water and split the back gently with a knife.

Remove black intestinal tract.

Coat prawns gently in oil and place on a hot barbeque.

Turn once and cook through until the shell has turned a pinkish red.

Serve on a plate with a squeeze lemon.



*Prawn lunch christmas Australia
Prawns are a popular item on any Australian Christmas lunch menu. Picture: Getty*

3. STREET PARTIES

It's summer in December in Australia so street parties are very popular. Sometimes in the evening on Christmas Day, impromptu street parties happen. Most people visit relatives on Christmas Day so the streets are full of families and kids.

Quiet roads on Christmas Day also usually mean impromptu games of cricket, with the wheelie bin as stumps of course.

4. BOXING DAY BBQS

Boxing day, the day after Christmas, is traditionally another day of celebration with family. It's another public holiday for most Australians so it's a great time to relax, soak up the festivities and, perhaps after a little too much indulgence the day before, start on the post-Christmas diet.

Once the family get together are done, people usually gather at friends' houses on Boxing Day to watch (or not watch) the Boxing Day Test. This event usually involves one group of people drinking beer with their eyes glued to the cricket and another group of people drinking beer and not watching the cricket.

The tradition of the Boxing Day Test is to either organise your entire day around the match, or completely ignore it.

The same goes for Boxing Day sales and battling the crowds to squeeze in just that little bit more shopping before the New Year.



*Boxing Day is great for a bit of backyard cricket.
Picture: Getty*

5. FESTIVE ROAD TRIPS

Depending on where your family lives, Christmas Day may involve a long road trip. It's an accidental tradition at best but lots of Aussie

families' Christmas celebrations include a drive with the kids jammed together in the back seat. Lots of Australian children spend many hours squished in back seats with piles of pillows, siblings, presents, the Esky and a basket of food around the Christmas holidays

Whether you're visiting loved-ones that live far away or you're solidly on vacation-mode and heading up some of Australia's favourite road trips, it's inevitable everyone in the family will be re-aquainted with each other after this!

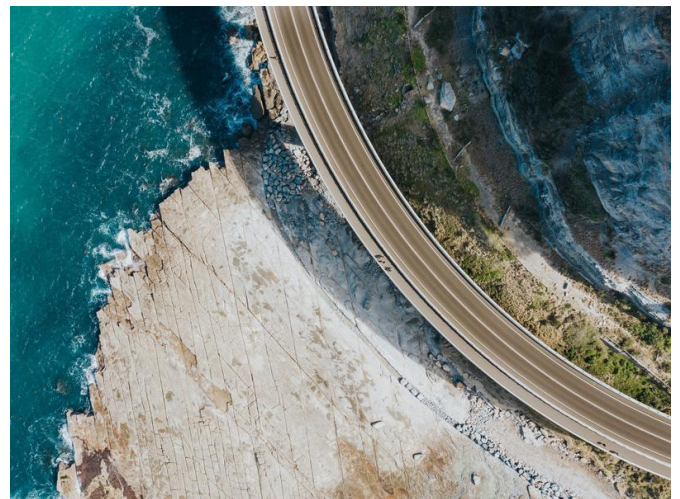
Australia's favourite road trips:

The Great Ocean Road, Vic

The Grand Pacific Drive, NSW

Flinders Ranges, SA

Great Barrier Reef Drive, QLD



*Driving is still one of the best ways to see Australia.
Picture: Tim Patch*

6. CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Most cities in Australia host their own Carols by Candlelight and there will usually be a few celebrity performers. Proceeds from the performance are usually donated to a charity. There's often a main Carols By Candlelight performed in a major city but other cities will often host their own events too. Families pack picnics, blankets and mosquito spray and spend the evening outdoors listening to music.

Sydney: Carols in the Domain Dec 22, 2018.

Melbourne: Carols By Candlelight Dec 24, 2018.

Brisbane: Carols By Twilight multiple dates from Dec 14 – 24

7. CHRISTMAS LUNCH

If we believe everything we see on TV, it would appear that most Christmas meals happen at dinner time. Not in Australia – we’re mostly Christmas lunch people.

Unless you have to spend Christmas with more than one family in which case you’re likely to have Christmas breakfast, lunch and dinner.



Christmas lunch and for some Christmas dinner. Picture: Getty

Christmas is all day affair in Australia with lots of eating.

Christmas lunches in Australia are relaxed, mostly casual affairs which can include breaks

for a spot of cricket or a splash in the backyard pool.

Christmas crackers are a must – as is the need to wear of colourful paper crowns and telling of bad-jokes from the goodies found within.

Hopefully, the table is heaving with too much food from everyone that’s brought a plate and mostly you’ll be full from the cheese and dips served pre-lunch but you’ll continue to eat regardless.

Many Aussies partake in a roast of some description, whether it’s cold ham and salads, traditional chook with all the trimmings, or (if you’re lucky) delights from all the multicultural regions of the world that Australians come from.

While it’s hard to define what exactly is the typical Aussie lunch on Christmas day you can bet it’ll be a mishmash of everyone’s favourite traditional dishes, whatever that means these days!

Source:

<https://www.realestate.com.au/lifestyle/7-aussie-christmas-traditions-love/>



THE MANY FLAVORS OF THE HINDU NEW YEAR



By Vasudha Narayanan

There are at least three popular new year days in the Hindu calendar which, for almost a billion people, is being quite economical. If one new year celebration is good, four is even better.

Nirmala woke up early on April 4 at her home in Barrington, a suburb of Chicago. It was Ugadi (from the Sanskrit yuga adi, literally “beginning of an eon”), the new year for Hindus from the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Having bathed, she wore new clothes and got ready to do the new year’s meal, carrying on generations of traditions in her Telugu-speaking Hindu family from the state of Andhra Pradesh in south India.

The meal, filled with auspicious items, included the ugadi pachadi, a dish made especially for new year’s day. This chutney-like dish is like life itself: a piquant combination of many flavors. The sweetness of jaggery, the sour taste of tamarind, the bitterness of neem, the fiery excitement of chili and the pungency of mango come together with salt to mimic the taste of life itself. The ugadi pachadi is like a hologram for the experiences the new year will bring.

A few houses away, Nirmala’s friend Ranjani, whose Tamil-speaking family came from a neighboring state in India, is not caught in the excitement of the Ugadi new year — the Tamil new year is on April 14. Right around the middle of April, people from many parts of south and southeast Asia celebrate the beginning of the new year. Many communities in this “monsoon” basin worked off shared cultural matrices in the first millennium of the Common Era. Thus, people from many regions of south Asia, including Tamilnadu, Punjab, Assam, Kerala, Bengal and Sindh, as well as residents of Cambodia, Thailand, Burma and Laos will be celebrating the beginning of the new year between April 14 and 15 this year.

Hindus all over the world do not have a common New Year’s Day. There are at least three popular new year days in the Hindu calendar which, for almost a billion people, is being quite economical. The celebration of the new year has more to do with community, language and region, than with religious affiliation. Apart from Ugadi, there are the mid-April new year celebrations for many Hindu communities. People from the region of Gujarat,

on the other hand, celebrate new year's day soon after Deepavali, the festival of lights which falls on the new moon day between mid-October and mid-November. Hindus generally follow a lunar calendar which is adjusted to the solar (hence their claim that they follow a luni-solar calendar), and so, while the dates of many festivals change every year, like those of Passover, they will come about the same time. Over the centuries, however, some communities have celebrated new year's day in conjunction with the solar calendar, and so while the Ugadi and the Festival of Lights may change by as much as three to four weeks, the mid-April new year's day, which is called the "solar new year" does not change except by a day or two.

There are, of course, many reasons given to the celebration of the new year's day at different times of the year. In some areas, it could mark the beginning of a new calendar era established by a monarch in the distant past. Others tie the new year day with seasons — Ugadi is celebrated on the day after the new moon, which comes close to the vernal equinox in March. Thus, the new year is connected with the new blossoms and fruits of spring. Others, like the people in Cambodia, tie their new year's day in the middle of April with agricultural calendars. Some understand Ugadi to be a time when Brahma (a relatively minor deity in the Hindu pantheon) begins to create the universe. Those who celebrate it in October or November, near the festival of Deepavali, connect the beginning of a new life, a new era, to the story of Rama, an incarnation (avatar) of Lord Vishnu, coming back to rule in the city of Ayodhya after defeating the forces of evil.

New year's day is a time for domestic and temple festivities. Houses are cleaned and decorated with rangolis — beautiful geometric designs made of rice flour and colored powders in mandala formations — in courtyards and thresholds. In temples, the almanac for the new year, along with the dates for major events, is read out loud; the audience is the deity and the devotees. People from Maharashtra and Konkan may erect a staff of righteousness (dharma dhvaj) outside their houses. This is a bamboo stick with an inverted jar at the end of it which is decorated with flowers and mango leaves. For

some, this is a banner of dharma or righteousness; for others, it could be symbolic of a human spine and head, the sensitive areas of yogic energy.

There was active trade and cultural exchanges between south and southeast Asia in the first millennium as well as common cultural fields shared by Hindus and Buddhists. Globalization past intersects with globalization present in the celebration of many festivals which go with common astrological and calendrical rubrics. Known as Maha Songran (from the Sanskrit maha sanakranti, a time when the sun transits from one sign to another) or Chol Chnam Thmey, new year's day in southeast Asia which is celebrated in mid-April over many days, marks the sun's movement into Aries. During this time, rulers, both earthly as well as spiritual and celestial, are honored. Dances, like the Trot, are performed during Khmer New Year to chase evil spirits; elders and the Buddha are bathed in fragrant water to receive blessings. In parts of Thailand, drenching people with water — in fun and to remove "impurities" — is part of the celebrations.

While new year days are celebrated with families and friends at different parts of the year by Hindus, they have now been eclipsed by the increasing significance of the Gregorian calendars. Even traditional temples in India and all over the world, say many Hindus, have their grandest days on Jan. 1, with some of the largest collections of donations happening on that day. Nevertheless, the traditional feasts and foods are to be found on the traditional new year day observed by Hindu communities, and when one has friends from different areas, one can celebrate with all of them. If one new year celebration is good, four is even better.

As families sit down to eat the large meal, which includes the pachadi with six flavors, they realize that it is only when one goes through grief or anxiety that one can enjoy the sweetness of life. And as one goes through the year, one tastes the flavors of the ugadi pachadi in the sweet, sour, bitter, spicy, salty and tangy events of everyday life and hopes that like the dish, the sweetness will be there even through the slight touches of all the other experiences.

Source: <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/>

INTERNATIONAL YOGA & MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Free International Yoga & Music Festival is organized every year since November 2008 by Nad Yoga Trust, a non-profit organization and sponsored by Nada Yoga School with an aim to give all people, regardless of socio-economic status, an opportunity to learn yoga and Indian classical music from the team of professional teachers from Rishikesh, India and abroad.

The festival takes place at Nada Yoga School in Swargashram, Rishikesh – the world capital of yoga, from November 1 – 7 every year with over 140 hours of yoga, lectures and music performances.

The various styles of yoga include ashtanga, hatha, Iyengar, kriya, power, nada – the Free Yoga & Music Festival enables people to experiment with different styles and share yogic learning.

Lectures from eminent yogis on yogic philosophy and ayurveda create a more holistic approach.

Every evening is a refreshing unwind with musicians from across the Indian and global spectrum. Featuring the best in class from a range of classical to contemporary music,

evening chanting of mantras and kirtans are an invigorating aspect of the festival.

In the Vedic tradition, the knowledge of the reality is passed down from teacher (Guru) to student (shishya, literally meaning “mirror”). The student has one of three ways to give thanks;

Dakshina, or some offering to the Guru Seva or service Vidhya daan, or teaching the knowledge Guru means “remover of darkness” and for this there is no price.

When we have developed a deep interconnection between mind and body and have dissolved all of our mental impurities resulting in the highest happiness of full liberation through the practice of Yoga, the mind becomes a balanced mind full of love and compassion.

We develop a strong feeling of gratitude and a wish to serve others without expecting anything. One gives within one’s ability, with a feeling of love and gratitude, so that others may benefit from future festivals.

Source: <https://www.rishikeshyogafestival.com/>

Yoga

HATHA FLOW/ VINYASA /IYENGAR/ ACROYOGA/
ASHTANGA/ KUNDALINI/ MANTRAS/ PRANANAYAMA/
YIN YOGA/ CHAIR YOGA

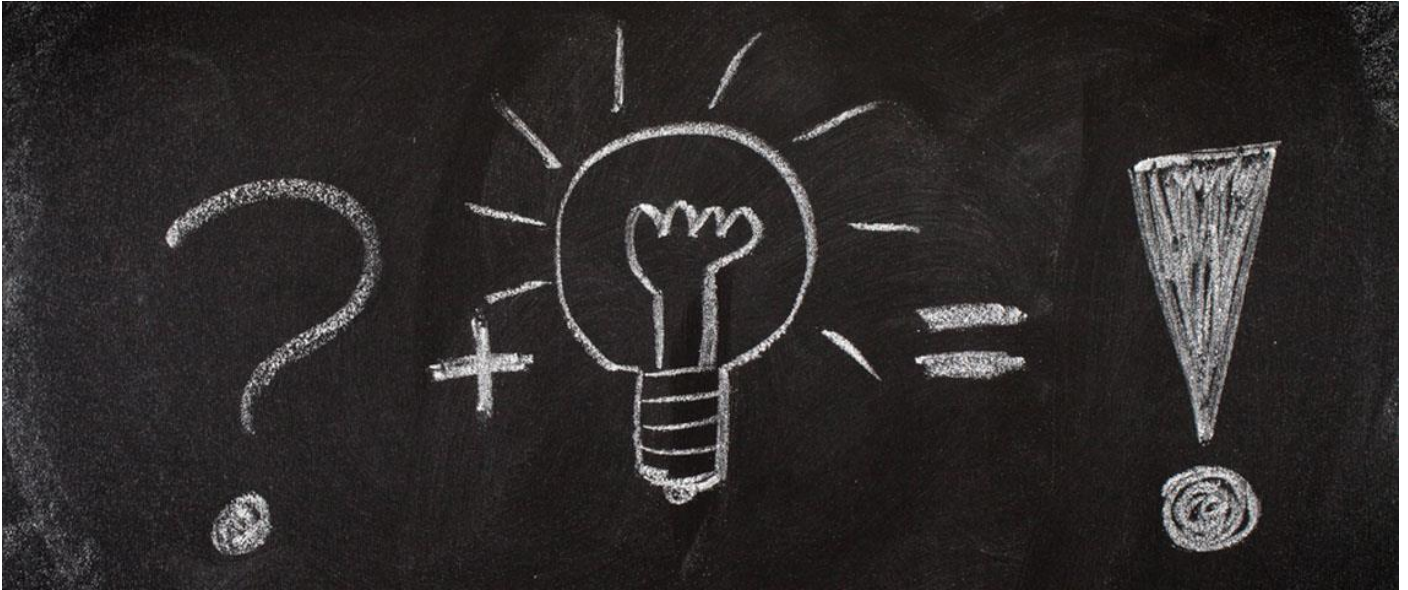
Music

SOUND OF HEALING- SITAR/ INDIAN DRUM TO OPEN THE
HEART CENTER /JUGAL BANDI MUSIC OF BATTLE TO
MERGE/ INDIAN VEENA FOR SILENCE /FOREST – MUSIC
OF NATURE /CLASSICAL MUSIC OF WELCOMING
DIVINITY/JUGAL BANDI MOTHER OF ALL MUSIC /KERALA
MUSIC TO UNBOUNDING LIFE /FLUTE – WAVES OF
OCEANIC BLISS /KERALA KALA MANDALAM /CLASSICAL
MUSIC OF SPIRIT – CLAY DRUM AND TABLA

Dance

SHIVA SHAKTI TRANSFORMING DANCE OF HEAVEN /
FUSION DANCE OF CLASSICAL BHARATANATYAM

PHILOSOPHY – ITS ORIGIN AND ITS LIMITATIONS



Philosophy is the rational aspect of religion. It is an integral part of religion in India. It is a rational enquiry into the nature of Truth or Reality. It gives clear solutions for the profound, subtle problems of life. It shows the way to get rid of pain and death and attain immortality and eternal bliss.

Philosophy has its roots in the practical needs of man. Man wants to know about transcendental matters when he is in a reflective state. There is an urge within him to know about the secret of death, the secret of immortality, the nature of the soul, the Creator and the world. Philosophy helps him to know all these things. Philosophy is the self-expression of the growing spirit of man. The philosophers are its voice. Great creative thinkers and philosophers appear in all ages. They elevate and inspire the people.

Certain philosophical questions arise in the mind of man. What is this Samsara? (Samsara = life through repeated births and deaths; the process of worldly life). Has it any purpose? Is the world real or mere appearance? Is there any Creator or Governor of this universe? If there is a Creator, what is His nature? What is the relation between man and the Creator? Is there any way to escape from the round of births and deaths? Is there any such thing as the Impersonal Absolute? If so, what is Its essential nature? How did man come into bondage? What is his essential nature? Is he a part of the Supreme Soul, or is he identical with It? What is the difference between Personal God and the Impersonal Absolute? What is the source for

this world? What is matter? What is mind? What is individual soul? What is the goal of life? The search for a solution of these problems is philosophy. Philosophy solves beautifully all these problems.

DEATH – THE STARTING POINT OF PHILOSOPHY

The idea of death has ever been the strongest motive-power of religion and religious life. Man is afraid of death. Man does not want to die. He wants to live for ever. This is the starting point of philosophy. Philosophy enquires and investigates. It boldly proclaims: "O man! Do not be afraid of death. There is an immortal abode. That is Brahman (the Supreme Reality). That is your own Atman (soul) which dwells in the chamber of your heart. Purify your heart and meditate on this pure, immortal, changeless Self. You will attain immortality". Death is the ultimate pointer to the transiency of all things and the existence of an ultimate reality.

VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY

A clear understanding of man's relation to God is a matter of momentous importance to students of philosophy and to all aspirants. Philosophers, prophets, saints, sages, thinkers, Acharyas and great religious leaders of the world have tried to explain the relation of man to God and the universe. Various schools of philosophy and different kinds of religious beliefs have come into existence, on account of

various explanations given by different philosophers.

PHILOSOPHY AND INTUITION

Philosophy will take you to the gates of the realm of eternal bliss, but it cannot allow you to enter that realm. Intuition or realisation is necessary for entering that holy land of everlasting joy and ineffable glory.

Hindu philosophy is not mere speculation or guesswork. It is lofty, sublime, unique, and systematic. It is based on mystic spiritual experience, or Aparoksha Anubhuti. The seers, sages and Rishis who had direct, intuitive perception of the Truth are the founders of the different philosophical systems in India. The different schools of philosophy are all based on the Srutis or the Vedas, directly or indirectly. Those who have studied carefully the Upanishads will find that the revelations of the Sruti (Vedas) are in harmony with the conclusions of philosophy.

The Sankhya

The Yoga

The Purva Mimamsa

The Uttara-Mimamsa or The Vedanta.

The orthodox systems of philosophy believe in the authority of the Vedas. The heterodox systems of philosophy do not believe in the authority of the Vedas. The six heterodox systems of philosophy are:

The Materialistic School of Charvaka

The System of the Jainas

The School of Presentationists or Vaibhashikas (Buddhistic)

The School of Representationists or Sautrantikas (Buddhistic)

The school of idealism or Yogacharas (Buddhistic)

The school of Nihilism of the Madhyamikas (Buddhistic)



THE ORTHODOX AND THE HETERODOX SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The six systems of Indian philosophy or the Shad-Darsanas are the six orthodox systems of philosophy. They are the six ways of looking at the Truth. These are:

The Nyaya

The Vaiseshika

The Shad-Darsanas or the Six Orthodox Schools

The Shad-Darsanas or the six orthodox systems grew directly out of the Vedas. Darsana means literally sight or vision. Darsana means a system of philosophy. The Darsana literature is philosophical. Each Darsana is a way of looking into the Truth; is a standpoint in respect of the Truth.

Gautama Rishi systematised the principles of Nyaya or the Indian logical system. Kanada composed the Vaiseshika Sutras. Kapila Muni founded the Sankhya system. Patanjali Maharshi is

the first systematiser of the Yoga school. He composed his Yoga Sutras. The Yoga-Darsana of Patanjali is a celebrated text-book on Raja-Yoga. Jaimini, a disciple of Vyasa, composed the Sutras of the Mimamsa school, which is based on the ritual sections of the Vedas. Badarayana composed his famous Vedanta Sutras or Brahma Sutras which expound the teachings of the Upanishads. The different schools of the

Vedanta have built their philosophy on the foundation of these Sutras.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF APPROACH TO THE SAME GOAL

The six schools of thought are like the six different roads which lead to one city. You may go to Bombay by train or airplane or motor bus or any other vehicle. Even so, you can reach the goal of life through Yoga, or Vedanta, or any other path. The methods or ways of approach to the Goal are different to suit people of different temperaments, capacities and mental calibre. But they all have one aim, viz., removal of ignorance and its effects of pain and sufferings and the attainment of freedom, perfection, immortality and eternal bliss by union of the individual soul (Jivatman) with the Supreme Soul (Paramatman).

No student of Hinduism ought to be satisfied without acquiring a clear and accurate knowledge of the principal distinguishing characteristics of the six philosophical schools. The more advanced scholar should study the original Sutras in which the doctrines of each school are enunciated. Study of the six schools of philosophy will sharpen the intellect and give you vast knowledge. You will have clear and comprehensive understanding of the Truth. Each system is a step or rung in the spiritual ladder.

INTERRELATION BETWEEN THE SIX SYSTEMS

The six schools are divided into three groups:

The Nyaya and the Vaiseshika

The Sankhya and the Yoga

The Mimamsa and the Vedanta

The Vaiseshika is a supplement of the Nyaya. The Yoga is a supplement of the Sankhya.

The Vedanta is an amplification and fulfillment of the Sankhya. The study of Vyakarana (grammar), Mimamsa, Nyaya and Sankhya is necessary to understand the Vedanta. The Nyaya sharpens the intellect and enables the aspirants to grasp the Vedanta. The Nyaya is considered as a prerequisite for all philosophical enquiry.

The Vaiseshika is not very much in honour now. The Nyaya is popular. The Sankhya is not a

living faith. The Yoga is practised by a few in its practical form. The Vedanta is the most popular of all the schools today.

The Nyaya and the Vaiseshika will give you an analysis of the world of experience. They arrange all the things of the world into certain kinds or categories (Padarthas). They explain how God has made all this material world out of atoms and molecules. They show the way to attain knowledge of God. The Sankhya will provide you with deep knowledge of Hindu psychology. Kapila Muni was the father of psychology. The Yoga deals with the control of Vrittis or thought-waves, and with meditation. The Yoga system shows the ways to discipline the mind and the senses. The Yoga will help you to cultivate concentration and one-pointedness of mind and enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi or the Superconscious State.

The Purva-Mimamsa deals with the Karma-Kanda (rituals- ceremonies) of the Vedas, and the Uttara-Mimamsa is also known as the Vedanta-Darsana. This is the corner stone of Hinduism. The Vedanta philosophy explains in detail the nature of Brahman or the Eternal Being, and shows that the individual soul is, in essence, identical with the Supreme Self. It gives methods to remove Avidya or the veil of ignorance and to merge oneself in the ocean of bliss or Brahman.

The Nyaya calls ignorance Mithya Jnana, false knowledge. The Sankhya styles it Aviveka, non-discrimination between the real and the unreal. The Vedanta names it Avidya, nescience. Each philosophy aims at its eradication by knowledge or Jnana. Then one attains eternal bliss or immortality.

By study of Nyaya and Vaiseshika, one learns to utilise his intellect to find out fallacies and to know the material constitution of the world. By study of Sankhya, one understands the course of evolution. By study and practice of Yoga, one gains self-restraint and obtains mastery over mind and senses. By practice of Vedanta, one reaches the highest rung of the ladder of spirituality or the pinnacle of divine glory, oneness with the Supreme Being, by the destruction of ignorance (Avidya).

VEDANTA - THE MOST SATISFACTORY SYSTEM OF PHILOSOPHY

Some of the doctrines of the Nyaya, the Vaisesika, the Sankhya and the Yoga are opposed to the teaching of the Vedas. These systems are only superficially based on the Vedas. The Nyaya and the Vaisesika schools rely too much on human reason, though they accept the Vedas as the supreme authority. Human intellect is frail and finite. It has got its limitations. It functions within time, space and causation. Its findings cannot be infallible. It cannot solve transcendental matters. Vedas only are infallible and authoritative. They contain the revelations or direct intuitional experiences of seers and Rishis. These experiences will tally with the experiences of those who have attained Knowledge of the Self (Brahma-Jnana).

The Vedanta is the most satisfactory system of philosophy. It has been evolved out of the Upanishads. It has superseded all other schools. The Mimamsa school has laid great stress on rituals, or Karma-Kanda.

According to Mimamsa school, Karma or ritual is all-in-all in the Veda. Upasana (worship) and Jnana (knowledge) are only accessories to Karma. This view is refuted by the Vedanta school. According to the Vedanta, Self-realisation (Jnana) is the foremost thing, and

ritual and worship are accessories. Karma will take one to heaven which is only an impermanent place of refined sensual enjoyment. Karma cannot destroy the cycle of births and deaths, and cannot give eternal bliss and immortality.

During the time of Sankaracharya, all the six schools of philosophy flourished. Therefore, he had to refute the other systems in order to establish his absolute monism (Kevala Advaita). But, nowadays, Sankhya, Vaisesika, etc., are in name only. Even now, some Hindu preachers, Sannyasins and Mandalesvars try to establish Advaita Vedanta by refuting these old systems. This is a mistake. They will have to refute at the present moment materialism, agnosticism, atheism and science, and then establish Advaita Vedanta.

Source: <http://hinduism.co.za/philosop.htm>



THE MYSTERY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Death. Man's most mysterious, relentless, and in-avoidable adversary. Does death mean the end of life, or does it merely open the door to another life, another dimension, or another world?

If man's consciousness survives the death experience, then what determines its transition to new realities?

In order to gain a clear understanding of these mysteries, man has traditionally turned to enlightened philosophers, accepting their teachings as representative of a higher truth.

Some criticize this method of acquiring knowledge from a higher authority, no matter how carefully the seeker may analyze it. Social philosopher E. F. Schumacher, author of *Small Is Beautiful*, notes that in our modern society, when people are out of touch with nature and traditional wisdom, they "consider it fashionable to ridicule . . . and only believe in what they see and touch and measure." Or, as the saying goes, "Seeing is believing."

But when man endeavors to understand something beyond the scope of the material senses, beyond instruments of measurement and the faculty of mental speculation, then there is no alternative but to approach a higher source of knowledge.

No scientist has successfully explained through laboratory investigations the mystery of consciousness or its destination after the destruction of the material body. Research in this field has produced many divergent theories, but their limitations must be recognized.

The systematic principles of reincarnation, on the other hand, comprehensively explain the subtle laws governing our past, present, and future lives.

If one is to understand reincarnation at all, he must acknowledge the fundamental concept of consciousness as an energy distinct from and superior to the matter composing the physical body. This principle is supported by examination of the unique thinking, feeling,

and willing capacities of the human being. Can DNA strands or other genetic components possibly induce the feelings of love and respect one person has for another? What atom or molecule is responsible for the subtle artistic nuances in Shakespeare's Hamlet or Bach's "Mass in B Minor"? Man and his infinite capabilities cannot be explained by mere atoms and molecules. Einstein, the father of modern physics, admitted that consciousness could not be adequately described in terms of physical phenomena. "I believe that the present fashion of applying the axioms of science to human life is not only entirely a mistake, but also has something reprehensible in it," the great scientist once said.

Indeed, scientists have failed to explain consciousness by means of the physical laws that govern everything else within their purview. Frustrated by this failing, Nobel laureate in physiology and medicine Albert Szent-Gyorgyi recently lamented, "In my search for the secret of life, I ended up with atoms and electrons, which have no life at all. Somewhere along the line, life has run out through my fingers. So, in my old age, I am now retracing my steps."

***"In my search for
the secret of life,
I ended up with
atoms and electrons,
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no life at all.
Somewhere along the line,
life has run out
through my fingers."***

- Nobel laureate Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Accepting the notion that consciousness arises from molecular interaction requires an enormous leap of faith, much greater than

that required for a metaphysical explanation. As Thomas Huxley, the well-known biologist, said, "It seems to me pretty plain that there is a third thing in the universe, to wit, consciousness, which ... I cannot see to be matter or force or any conceivable modification of either . . ."

Further recognition of the unique properties of consciousness was given by Nobel laureate

in physics Niels Bohr, who remarked, "We can admittedly find nothing in physics or chemistry that has even a remote bearing on consciousness.

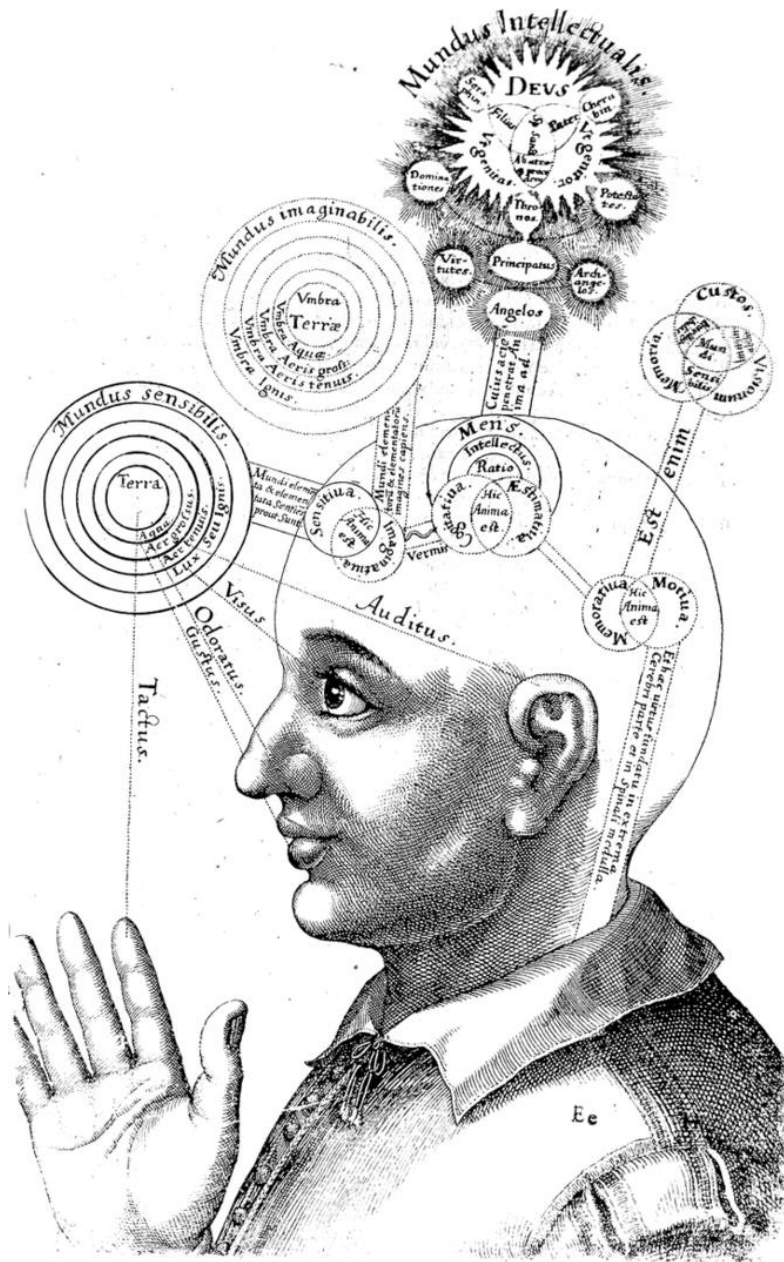
Yet all of us know there is such a thing as consciousness, simply because we have it ourselves.

Hence consciousness must be part of nature, or, more generally, of reality, which means that quite apart from the laws of physics and chemistry, as laid down in quantum theory, we must also consider laws of quite a different kind." Such laws might well include the laws of reincarnation, which govern the passage of consciousness from one physical body into another.

To begin understanding these laws, we may note that reincarnation is not an alien, antipodal event, but one that occurs with regularity in our own bodies during this very lifetime. In *The Human Brain*, Professor John

Bhavan Australia | September - October 2018

Pfeiffer notes, "Your body does not contain a single one of the molecules that it contained seven years ago." Every seven years one's old body is completely rejuvenated. The self, however, our real identity, remains unchanged. Our bodies grow from infancy, to youth, to middle age, and then to old age, yet the person within the body, the "I," always remains the same.



Reincarnation—based on the principle of a conscious self independent of its physical body—is part of a higher-order system governing the living being's transmigration from one material form to another. Since reincarnation deals with our most essential selves, it is a subject of the utmost relevance to everyone.

Coming Back explains the fundamentals of reincarnation presented in the timeless Vedic text *Bhagavad-gitii*. The *Gitii*, thousands of

years older than the Dead Sea Scrolls, provides the most complete explanation of reincarnation available anywhere. It has been studied for millennia by many of the world's greatest thinkers, and since spiritual knowledge is eternally true and does not change with each new scientific theory, it is still relevant today.

Harvard biophysicist D. P. Dupey writes, "We may lead ourselves down a blind alley by adhering dog-matically to the assumption that life can be explained entirely by what we know of the laws of nature. By re-maining open to the ideas embodied in the Vedic tradi-tion of India, modern scientists can see their own disciplines from a new perspective and further the aim of all scientific endeavor: the search for truth."

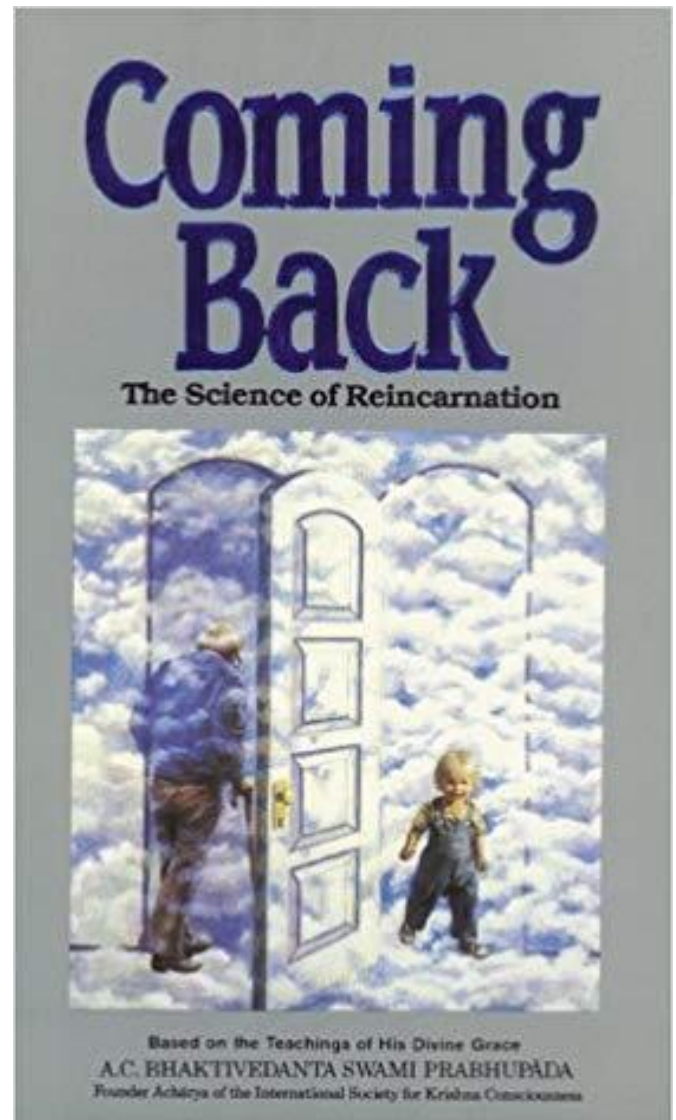
In this age of global uncertainty, it is imperative that we understand the real origin of our conscious selves, how we find ourselves in different bodies and condi-tions of life, and what our destinations will be at the time of death. This essential information is com-prehensively explained in *Coming Back*. Chapter One shows how reincarnation has pro-foundly influenced many of the world's greatest phi-losophers, poets, and artists, from Socrates to Salinger. Next, the process of reincarnation as expounded in *Bhagavad-gitd*, the oldest and most respected source-book on the subject of transmigration of the soul, is presented.

Chapter Two, a lively dialogue between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and noted religious psychologist Professor Karlfried Graf von Durckheim, clearly shows how the material body and the antimaterial particle, the spirit soul, can never be the same. In Chapter Three, a famous heart surgeon urges systematic research into the soul, and Srila Prabhupada cites the Vedic version, thousands of years older and strikingly more informative than modern medical science. Three fascinating narratives from the Vedic text *Srimad-Bhdgavatam* constitute Chapter Four. These accounts stand as classic examples of how the soul transmigrates through different types of bodies under the control of the precise laws of nature and karma.

In Chapter Five, excerpts from the writings of Srila Prabhupada clearly demonstrate that the principles of reincarnation can be easily understood in terms of ordi-nary events and common observations that regularly occur in our daily lives. The next chapter describes how reincarnation embodies a universal and




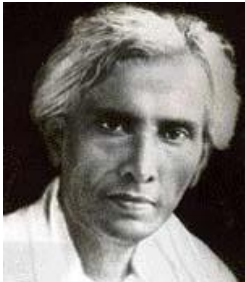
infallible system of justice, wherein the soul is never banished to eternal damnation but is constitutionally endowed with a permanent opportunity to escape the perpetual cycle of birth and death.

Common misconceptions and chic notions about reincarnation form the subject of Chapter Seven, and the concluding chapter, "Don't Come Back," presents the process through which the soul can transcend reincarnation and enter realms in which it is finally freed from the prison of the material body. Having once achieved this status, the soul never again returns to this endlessly mutable world of birth, disease, old age, and death.



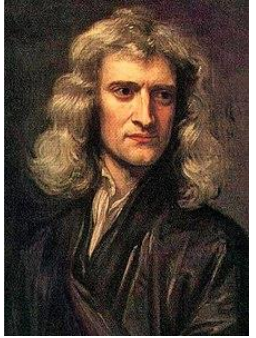

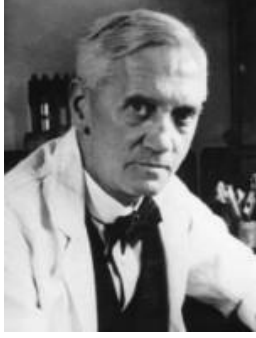


Source: "Coming back: the science of Reincarnation"
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

PERSONS OF THE MONTH: INDIA

<p>C. V. Raman (7 November 1888 - 21 November 1970)</p>		<p>Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman was an Indian physicist born in the former Madras Province in India presently the state of Tamil Nadu, who carried out ground-breaking work in the field of light scattering, which earned him the 1930 Nobel Prize for Physics.</p>
<p>Satyendra Nath Bose (1 January 1894 - 4 February 1974)</p>		<p>Satyendra Nath Bose, FRS was an Indian physicist specialising in theoretical physics. He is best known for his work on quantum mechanics in the early 1920s, providing the foundation for Bose–Einstein statistics and the theory of the Bose–Einstein condensate.</p>
<p>Prafulla Chandra Ray (2 August 1861 - 16 June 1944)</p>		<p>Acharya Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray also spelled Prafulla Chandra Rây was a Bengali chemist, educationist, historian, industrialist and philanthropist. A leading Bengali nationalist, he established the first Indian research school in chemistry and is regarded as the father of chemical science in India.</p>
<p>Raghunath Anant Mashelkar 1 January 1943 (age 75 years)</p>		<p>Raghunath Anant Mashelkar, also known as Ramesh Mashelkar, FRS FEng, FICHEM is an Indian chemical engineer and a former Director General of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, a chain of 38 publicly funded industrial research and development institutions in India.</p>
<p>R. K. Narayan (10 October 1906 - 13 May 2001)</p>		<p>R. K. Narayan, full name Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, was an Indian writer known for his works set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. He was a leading author of early Indian literature in English along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.</p>
<p>Saratchandra Chattopadhyay (15 September 1876 - 16 January 1938)</p>		<p>Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, alternatively spelt as Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, was a prominent Bengali novelist and short story writer from the Indian subcontinent. Most of his works deal with the lifestyle, tragedy and struggle of the village people and the contemporary social practices that prevailed in Bengal.</p>

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

PERSONS OF THE MONTH: WORLD

<p>Isaac Newton (4 January 1643 - 31 March 1727)</p>		<p>Sir Isaac Newton was an English mathematician, astronomer, theologian, author and physicist (described in his own day as a "natural philosopher") who is widely recognised as one of the most influential scientists of all time, and a key figure in the scientific revolution. His book <i>Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica</i> ("Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy"), first published in 1687, laid the foundations of classical mechanics.</p>
<p>Nicolaus Copernicus (19 February 1473 - 21 May 1543)</p>		<p>Nicolaus Copernicus was a Renaissance-era mathematician and astronomer who formulated a model of the universe that placed the Sun rather than the Earth at the center of the universe, likely independently of Aristarchus of Samos, who had formulated such a model some eighteen centuries earlier.</p>
<p>Alexander Fleming (6 August 1881 - 11 March 1955)</p>		<p>Sir Alexander Fleming was a Scottish physician, microbiologist, and pharmacologist. His best-known discoveries are the enzyme lysozyme in 1923 and the world's first antibiotic substance benzylpenicillin (Penicillin G) from the mould <i>Penicillium notatum</i> in 1928, for which he shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1945 with Howard Florey and Ernst Boris Chain. He wrote many articles on bacteriology, immunology, and chemotherapy.</p>
<p>Ernest Hemingway (July 21, 1899 - July 2, 1961)</p>		<p>Ernest Miller Hemingway was an American novelist, short story writer, and journalist. His economical and understated style—which he termed the iceberg theory—had a strong influence on 20th-century fiction, while his adventurous lifestyle and his public image brought him admiration from later generations.</p>
<p>Jane Austen (16 December 1775 - 18 July 1817)</p>		<p>Jane Austen was an English novelist known primarily for her six major novels, which interpret, critique and comment upon the British landed gentry at the end of the 18th century. Austen's plots often explore the dependence of women on marriage in the pursuit of favourable social standing and economic security.</p>

FESTIVALS OF THE MONTH: INDIA

<p>Mannarasala Ayilyam (1 November 2018)</p>		<p>This festival, celebrated at an ancient and secluded snake temple in Kerala, is sure to leave an impression. The unusual temple is a pilgrimage center for devotees of serpent gods and has Brahmin woman chief priestess.</p>
<p>International Yoga and Music Festival (1-7 November, 2018)</p>		<p>Organized by Nada Yoga School every year since 2008, the International Yoga and Music Festival features 50 of the best professional yoga teachers, Ayurvedic doctors, nad yogis, yoga lecturers, musicians, and philosophers from Rishikesh and abroad. Free classes and lectures are held with topics including yoga asanas, shatkarma, Ayurveda, philosophy, and Indian classical music.</p>
<p>Diwali (7 November, 2018)</p>		<p>Diwali, the biggest festival in India, honors the victory of good over evil and brightness over darkness. Lots of small clay lamps (called diyas) and candles are lit and placed in houses, and fireworks are let off everywhere, giving Diwali its name as "Festival of Lights".</p>
<p>Ganga Mahotsav and Dev Deepavali (20-23 November, 2018)</p>		<p>Held along the banks of the holy Ganges River, the Ganga Mahotsav features cultural programs of classical music and dance. A 10-day national craft fair is also organized. The highlight of the festival is on the last day, when more than a million clay lamps are floated down the river at dusk amidst chanting of Vedic hymns as part of Dev Deepavali on Kartik Purnima.</p>
<p>Karthigai Deepam (12 December, 2018)</p>		<p>Karthigai Deepam or the festival of lights is one of the most glamorous looking festivals of December. The cheerful & vibrant festival aims to welcome the positive things and eradicate the negativity & the evils. Temples and households are decorated with clay lamps and diyas. The ceremony starts by lighting a huge fire on the top of the hill. This is considered to be a sacred activity as many people gather to witness this.</p>
<p>Winter Festival (29-31 December, 2018)</p>		<p>Winter Festival is considered as one of the most mesmerizing festivals in December. A colorful festival of Rajasthan, it is celebrated with fun and frolic. Artisans from all over the country gather here to showcase their artwork and handicrafts. The festival celebrations also include music and dance performances like Daph, Ghoomar, and Gair.</p>

FESTIVALS OF THE MONTH: AUSTRALIA

<p>EMIRATES AUSTRALIAN OPEN</p> <p>15 to 18 Nov</p>		<p>The Australian Open, owned and run by Golf Australia, is the oldest and most prestigious golf tournament on the PGA Tour of Australasia. The Open was first played in 1904 and takes place toward the end of each year. The winner of the tournament receives the Stonehaven Cup.</p>
<p>SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL ART SERIES</p>		<p>The Sydney International Art Series brings the world's most outstanding exhibitions to Australia, exclusively to Sydney, every summer.</p>
<p>QUEENSLIFF MUSIC FESTIVAL</p> <p>23 to 25 Nov</p>		<p>Queenscliff Music Festival is a live music festival held in the town of Queenscliff, located on the Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria, Australia. The festival began in 1997 and is held annually on the last weekend of November.</p>
<p>FALLS FESTIVAL</p>		<p>Falls Music & Arts Festival (commonly known as Falls) is a multi-day music festival held annually in Lorne (Victoria), Marion Bay (Tasmania), Yelgun (New South Wales) and Fremantle (Western Australia), Australia over the New Year's Eve and January period.</p>
<p>LAVENDER FLOWERING BEGINS IN TAS</p>		<p>The lavender flowers are in full bloom and we harvest these throughout the summer. Bridestowe's bees pollinate the flowers and begin producing our signature lavender honey. The endless curved rows of lavender blooms will take your breath away and create a memory to last a lifetime.</p>
<p>Christmas</p> <p>25 December 2018</p>		<p>Christmas Day. ... A Sydney Christmas is a month of celebrations, beginning on November 25 in the city centre with Christmas on the Green in pretty Hyde Park and the Christmas tree lighting in Martin Place. Both are free family events from 6.30pm to 8.30pm and include concerts, fireworks and a visit by Santa Claus.</p>
<p>SYDNEY NEW YEAR'S EVE</p> <p>31 December 2018</p>		<p>New Year's Eve in Sydney. ... The intervals are timed for the 9pm fireworks and the World Heritage-listed building, with sweeping views of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, stays open for the midnight fireworks extravaganza. Darling Harbour is a popular family destination.</p>

SAGE SPEAKS



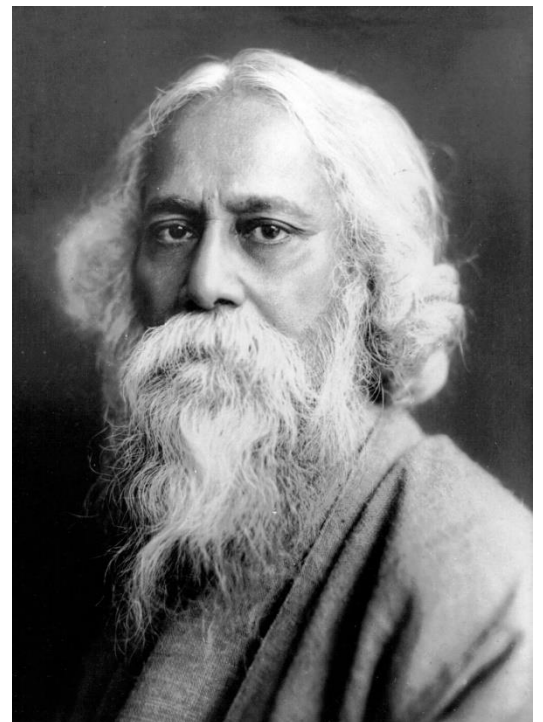
WE MUST MOVE FORWARD

The feeling should not be encouraged that no change can be brought about except by violent disorders. We make the prospect of revolution inescapable by acquiescing in such conduct. As dishonesty creeps into every side of public life, we should beware and bring about suitable alterations in our life. We should be the architects of peaceful changes and advocates of radical reforms. We must move forward with the times.

- *Dr. S. Radhakrishnan*

LET MY COUNTRY AWAKE

Where the mind is without fear and the head held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action;
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.



—*Rabindranath Tagore*

The sages of India designed the Gayatri and other mantras, so that man can win, through them, the intellectual clarity necessary to recognise God who is immanent in the Universe of which he is a part. Intelligence is gifted to man as an instrument for this high purpose.

But, through sheer weakness, man is content to analyse and master the material objective world, an achievement of which he is, sadly, very proud. The clarified intelligence should be set on a grander task: to contemplate and conceive the might and majesty of God, as revealed in the beauty, the grandeur, the terror, and the charm of Nature, or, in the love, wisdom, munificence, renunciation and service of Man, His manifestation. This task is called Namasmarana or Namajapa. By this, the intelligence is transmuted into divine awareness. Manava transforms himself into Madhava.



All Names are God's, just as all Forms are His. So, any Name is enough to consummate this

transformation, provided it can evoke reverence and awe and prompt love and detachment.

Any Name of God will open up the spring of joy in the human heart. The Name, Rama, has a special significance and value, however for the word means, "That which confers Joy", and it designates the Atma, the Reality in Man, for, that is the very fountainhead of all the Joy one has and is capable of.

The Atma fills all things with its own Joy and makes those things desirable. Hence, the word, Atmarama, meaning, the Indwelling Source of Joy.

Rama is Bliss; the Name is the key to everlasting Bliss.

The Rama of the Ramayana, was named so, because the name had already this spiritual content. Rama is Atma; and Dasaratha, the father, is the Body that enshrines the Atma, the Corpus with the Ten Chariots (the five Karmendriyas and the five Jnanendriyas).

The Atma, reflected in the Ego sets in motion the ten chariots towards the outer Prakriti.

Meditate on the Changeless Unaffected Atma or Rama; then you will be immersed in unalloyed Bliss.

The Rama-nama is, therefore, very precious. The sage Prachetas is said to have composed a mammoth poetical work, comprising 100 crores of verses! Iswara appreciated the poem so much that He desired all the Three Worlds to share in the joy of studying it. So He allotted a third of it to each world, and found that there was still one verse of 32 letters, left on His Hands! He gave the denizens of the Heaven, the Earth and the Nether Region, the ten letters each, and had two letters, still undistributed!

Iswara knew that these two (Ra and Ma) were the most precious of all the letters that Prachetas wrote; so, He gave them to all the three worlds, so that they could be released, through them, from the bondage of birth and death.

The name Rama has deeper mystical meanings too. It incorporates the Vishnu Principle (ra) and the Siva Principle (ma), as Thyagaraja realised. Again, it embodies the great Vedantic Truth, Tat

twam asi, 'That thou art'. The syllable 'Ra' indicates the 'Tat' principle; the syllable 'Ma' indicates the 'Twam' principle; and the intervening Jac' represents the verb to reveal the identity of that and this. So, Rama, when recited, makes man realise the One Absolute Universal Eternal Brahman.



Numerologists explain the Rama-nama as the sum of a number of values. Ra-aa-ma means for them, 0-2-5, totalling 7, which is a sacred number, denoting Earth, Fire, the Sun, Health etc. This is the reason behind the popular belief that Rama-nama recited un-interruptedly for seven consecutive days bears profuse fruit. Ra and Ma are also the most potent of the Saptaswaras, or the seven notes of music, which in India, are revered as emanations of the Primeval Nada.

Rama-nama is also related to the assertion, Soham, 'He is I', 'The Paramatma is Myself'. Ra is the Paramatma, Aa is the Maya principle that fogs the truth and Ma is the Individual Jivi. This is very subtly represented in the picture of Rama, moving through the jungle, with Sita close behind Him and Lakshmana coming up in the rear. Lakshmana (the Individual Jivatma) prays to Sita (Maya) to stand aside, so that he can contemplate on Rama (Paramatma) and experience the Bliss of Soham. Maya is pleased at his sincerity and she stands aside.

While reciting the Name, the sound should come from the Nabhi, the region of the navel; for, the

Yogis know that Krishna is born in Mathura (Nabhi); He spends His sportive childhood in the heart, Brindavan; and, in Gokula (the tongue), His exploits are extolled by the Kirtan of the Gopis. The recitation should not be mechanical, a routine tape-recorder affair.

Rama is Dharma, Rama is Love, Rama is Truth, Rama is Renunciation, Rama is Heroism, Rama is Munificence, Rama is Imperial Glory. When the Name is on the tongue, and in the ear, these qualities must echo in the heart and the mind must drink in these elevating ideals. and attributes. It is only then that you will acquire them and, slowly, steadily approximate to the Nami, the bearer of the Name. That is the gain which the discipline of Nama-smarana confers on those who practise it with determination.

[From the Discourse by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, at the World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Bombay, 16th May, 1968]

Flash Back

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.



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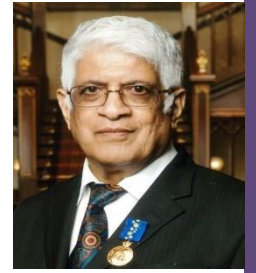
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