

FOSTERING VEDIC VALUES



Fostering Vedic Values

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PREFACE

The Vedas are widely recognized as humanity's oldest known scriptures—timeless guides provided by Ishvar to help human beings navigate daily life. These sacred texts are essentially a set of 'operating manuals' that cover a wide spectrum of knowledge including Spirituality, Mathematics, Material Science, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, and more.

The Vedas proclaim Ishvar to be One and Formless—like air, invisible yet present everywhere. This very nature enables the Divine to exist in every particle, ensuring that justice is delivered to all living beings with absolute impartiality.

Today, we find ourselves in a paradoxical world. Places of worship—temples, mosques, churches—have multiplied, yet violence in the name of religion has escalated. At the same time, many in the younger generation feel disillusioned by religious divisions and are increasingly drawn toward atheism. We believe that a true understanding of the Vedas can help young minds reconnect with spirituality in a way that is both meaningful and rational—rooted in scientific thought and timeless wisdom.

The Vedas are universal and secular. Interestingly, they make no mention of any of the world's religions as we know them today—Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism—because these identities did not exist at the dawn of humanity. Instead, the Vedas offer a holistic way of life: one that promotes harmony with nature, respect for all living beings, and a balanced approach to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Their teachings are egalitarian, empowering, and liberating—laying the foundation not only for individual inner peace but also for collective harmony in families, communities, nations, and the world at large.

It is unfortunate that, over the past few centuries, the Vedas have been misinterpreted, leading to misconceptions and false beliefs. In 1875, Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati initiated the Arya Samaj movement with a clarion call: "Back to the Vedas." This call revived global attention toward the depth and richness of Vedic knowledge and culture.



'Fostering Vedic Values' is a carefully designed series of 10 books for students from Classes I to X, each containing 12 to 17 chapters. About half the chapters aim to provide students with a reasonably good understanding of key spiritual principles as highlighted in the Vedas. The remaining chapters focus on values such as patriotism, compassion for all living beings (including animals), social responsibility, and moral integrity. Through this holistic approach, we hope to nurture children into responsible global citizens—grounded in values, yet forward-thinking in their actions.

We envision these children not only as members of a united global family but also as proud patriots ready to stand for their nation in times of need. Our hope is for them to grow into strong, resilient individuals who, guided by spiritual wisdom, can lead their families and communities toward happiness and peace.

Many of the chapters are written in a conversational style between a child and an elder—such as a grandparent or relative. This reflects the essence of our cultural heritage, where children traditionally learned through storytelling and life lessons shared by their elders. To celebrate India's rich linguistic diversity, we've used familial terms from various Indian languages instead of generic English ones like "grandpa" or "aunt," helping children appreciate the vibrant unity in our cultural fabric.

The heart of this book lies in the wisdom of the Vedas, and we humbly acknowledge the eternal contribution of the Rishis who preserved and passed on this knowledge through generations. As a tribute to that tradition, the content of this book is not copyrighted. One can seek permission and print all or only certain chapters of the book. However, no unauthorized modification is permitted in any chapter.

This is the sixth edition of the book, and while great care has been taken, there may still be omissions or areas for improvement. We ask for your understanding and welcome your feedback to help us refine future versions. Your support and insights will always be valued.

Lastly, before we conclude, we offer our heartfelt gratitude to Ishvar—for His constant guidance, blessings, and encouragement in this humble endeavor.

ACHARYA VIKAS ARYA
Chief Editor

Chennai | May 2025

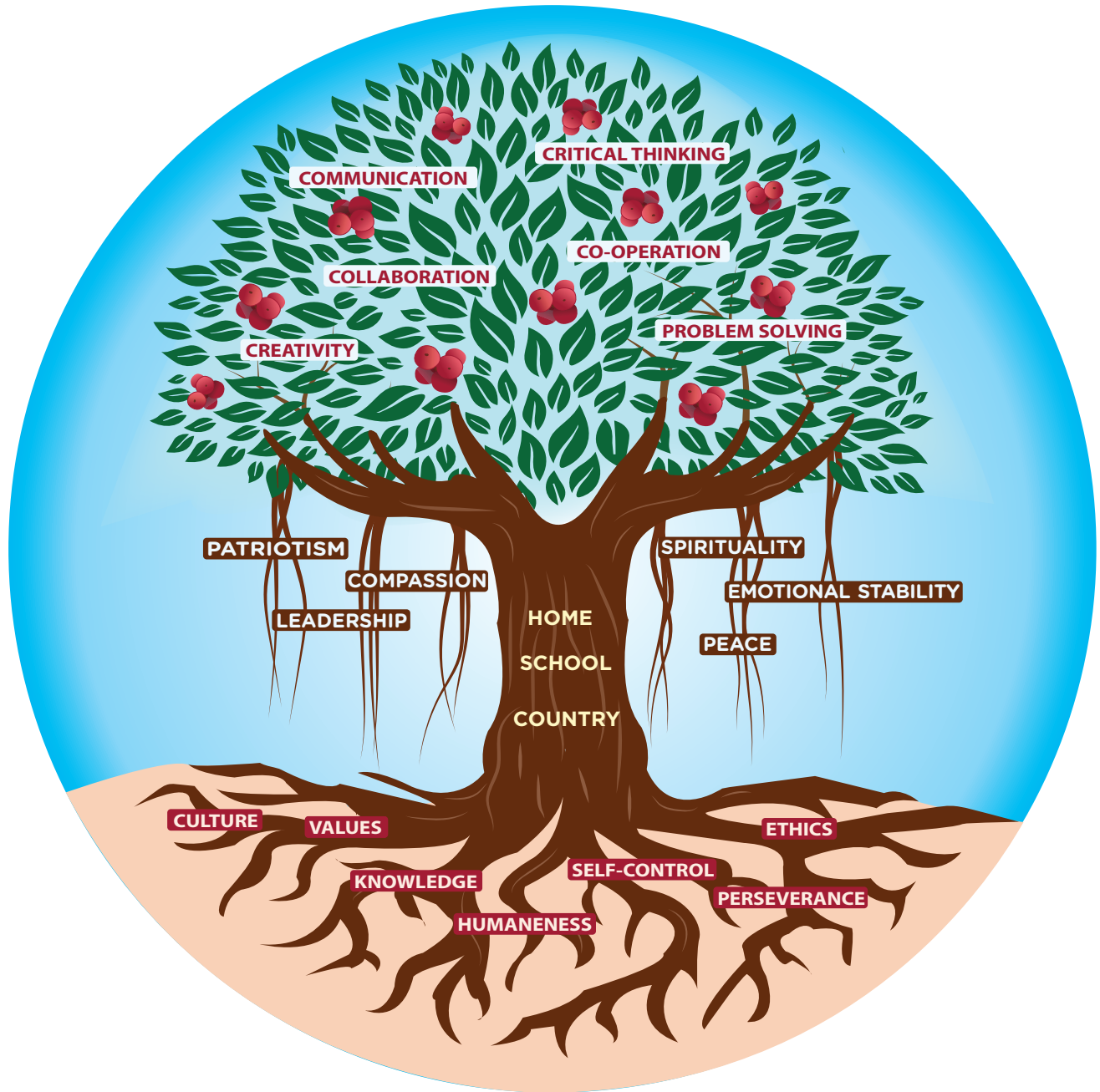


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Inspirational Poster	



The Learning Tree





SWAMI SHRADDHANAND

Expected learning outcome

Students draw inspiration from the life of Swami Shraddhanand - a Vedic scholar, social reformer and a true patriot

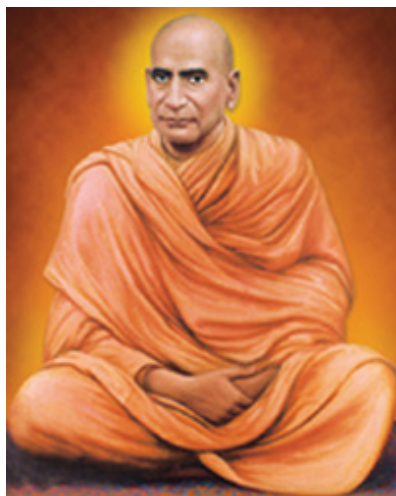
*It was December 23rd—the birthday of Surabi's **aajoba (grandfather in Marathi)**. It was a festive atmosphere with many relatives coming home to meet aajoba and seeking his blessings. It was wonderful.*

Surabi – Aajoba, you are 91 today. How does it feel, looking back at your journey?

Aajoba – I am happy to see so many members of my extended family. However, on every birthday I also feel quite sad.

Surabi – Why aajoba?

Aajoba – I was born on December 23rd, 1926 which was indeed a sad day for India. It was on this fateful day that a great reformer, patriot, educationist and a true Vedic scholar was assassinated. December 23rd is since then remembered as 'Swami Shraddhanand Balidaan Diwas'.



Surabi – Who was Swami Shraddhanand? Will you tell me more about him aajoba?

Aajoba – He was born on February 22, 1856, in Jalandhar district. He was named Munshiram. His father was a top ranking police officer, who worked for the British.

Munshiram was a pampered child and unfortunately became a spoilt youth, who was heavily into drinking and gambling. After coming across castetism practiced in temples he became an atheist too.



Those were the days when Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati was reforming the country by educating people about the true knowledge in the Vedas, through the Arya Samaj movement. Dayanand Saraswati was scheduled to visit Bareilly to give a series of lectures. Munshiram's father was handling security arrangements because a few British officers were also expected to attend the event. Munshiram's father felt that Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati could probably influence his son positively. He asked Munshiram to attend the lectures. Munshiram unwillingly went there to satisfy his pestering father. However, he found the lecture quite logical and sensible on the first day. He was strongly influenced by Dayanand's courage, skill, and strong personality. From the next day onwards, he, voluntarily started coming for the daily lectures. He had detailed discussions with Swamiji about Ishvar.

But, on the last day, he told Swamiji, that while he could not find fault in his arguments, he still could not get himself to believe in Ishvar. Swamiji smiled and answered,

"Look, you asked questions, I gave answers that were a matter of logic. When did I promise that I would make you believe in Ishvar? Your faith in Ishvar will only come when Ishvar himself makes you a believer."

Munshiram was forced to introspect. He was also gradually realizing the harmful effect his disorderly life had on his wife and children. Swamiji's words kept ringing in his ears.

The next day, when an enormous bill arrived from the liquor shop, his wife simply offered her bridal ornaments, in payment. Munshiram was utterly ashamed. He looked at himself in utter disgust and broke the last bottle in front of him, never to touch alcohol again in his life.

His other key decision was to stop eating meat. From childhood, meat had been part of his diet, as was the case with many of his friends. Munshiram was deeply influenced by Maharshi Dayanand's logical reasoning on the subject, in his book 'Satyarth Prakash.' That evening Munshiram stunned his dinner companions by throwing his plate of food, which included some meat, against the wall in a typical gesture of opposition and finality.

He felt he did not have the strength of character to say farewell to meat in a quiet and composed fashion. Having taken such a strong stance in front of his friends, he would be reminded of his resolve every time he got attracted towards meat.

Ishvar was making him now a believer.

Munshiram became a successful lawyer practising in Punjab while simultaneously initiating various social reforms, deeply influenced by the Vedic philosophy.



Education for Girls – Those were the days when girls were denied education. Various religious leaders in the society strongly believed that it would create havoc if the girls studied. But Munshiram, along with a few others opposed this belief and opened *Kanya Mahavidyalaya High School* for Girls in 1896. It was a great success with admission requests from all over the country.

Widow Remarriage – Child marriage was prevalent in our country and often girls would become child widows. Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati had however strongly advocated remarriage of widows. In 1895, Munishram openly supported Diwan Sant Ramdas, who arranged the remarriage of his daughter, who was married in early childhood but was widowed soon after. He bravely stood his ground and ensured that Diwan Sant Ramdas was not declared as an outcast by the orthodox Hindus.

Aajoba – Disturbed by so many superstitious beliefs and practices in the society in the name of religion, Munshiramji felt the acute need to develop Vedic scholars who can guide people on to the right path.

Post Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati's demise in 1883, D.A.V schools had been set up by the Arya Samaj. Munshiramji decided to also simultaneously establish Vedic Gurukuls; focusing on the study of Vedas and Sanskrit. These Gurukuls were proposed to be established away from cities, in concurrence with our ancient culture with a guru-shishya method and practice of teaching. The key challenge was money. A sum of Rs. 30,000/- was required to launch the project. . After taking his sons into confidence, he gave away his entire family property to the Gurukul!

Surabi – He was indeed a man of firm determination.

Aajoba – He finally succeeded in collecting Rs 40,000/- in eight months. He founded the Gurukul at Kangri (near Haridwar) in March 1902, in the midst of a dense jungle, on the banks of the river Ganga. Among the initial students were the two sons of Munshiramji- Harichandra & Indra. Very soon the gurukul became the proud alma mater to many men who made a main in the national scene as patriots, teachers, writers etc., By now Lala Munshiram was known as Mahatma Munshiram. He personally ran the Gurukul for more than 17 years at a stretch. Today this Gurukul is a full-fledged university.

Gandhiji's Visit: In 1915, upon his return from South Africa, Gandhiji visited the Gurukul and stayed at the campus. Over there, Mahatma Munshiramji addressed Gandhiji as



Mahatma, appreciating his contribution to public life. It was after this incident, Gandhiji was called “Mahatma Gandhi” in public life.

Surabi – Hmm...so it was Mahatma Munshiram who conferred the title ‘Mahatma’ on M.K. Gandhi.

Aajoba – Mahatma Munshiram entered a new phase of life in 1917, when he voluntarily took ‘Sanyaas’.

Surabi – What is the implication of ‘Sanyaas’?

Aajoba – As per Vedas, this is the fourth and final stage of life wherein you sever all ties with your family, professional career, personal property etc. The entire world is your family, and your sole objective in life is to ‘Live for Others.’

Moreover, you assume a completely new external identity with a change of name and change of clothes. You typically wear only ochre (dark orange) robes thereafter.

Surabi – So what name did Mahatma Munshiramji change his name to?

Aajoba – It was Swami Shraddhanand. ‘Shraddha’ means Faith and Devotion, ‘Anand’ means Bliss. Mahatma Munshiramji recalled the words of Swami Dayanand when he was a misguided youth: “Your faith in Ishvar will only come when Ishvar himself makes you a believer.” Munshiramji felt that it was this faith (shraddha) which was the inspiration of the life he had led so far and decided to name himself ‘Shraddhanand.’

He then got deeply involved in the freedom struggle, leading protests organized against the oppressive British Government. On March 30, 1919, a protest in Delhi had turned violent leading to the death of five people. Swami Shraddhanand arrived at the venue immediately, addressed the crowd and calmed them down, a group of British soldiers approached the crowd. Swami Shraddhanand signalled the crowd to wait. He alone moved forward, bared his chest, inviting the soldiers to fire on him first. The soldiers got nervous at this brave act of the Sanyaasi. The British officer asked his troops to withdraw.

Surabi – What a daring person!

Aajoba – Yes. He symbolised courage. Swami Shraddhanand was also a great symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. On April 4, 1919,



Swami Shraddhanand was invited to address a large gathering of muslims at Jama Masjid, Delhi to protest against the oppressive policies of the British. Swamiji started by reciting a Ved Mantra from the Rig Veda invoking blessings of the Almighty and praying for the success of the freedom struggle. His address ended with the words, Om Shanti Shanti Shanti. The crowd responded with the word Aameen. It was a perfect scene of the unity of purpose, friendship and peace among major sections of the Indian society.

As a true Arya Samaji, Swami Shraddhanand was completely against casteism by birth. He believed that all were born equal. He repeatedly defended the rights of the lower-castes and worked ceaselessly for the well-being of the much-ignored untouchables including lower caste people.

Swami Shraddhanand also got involved in the Shuddhi (Re-conversion) movement. The Malkana Rajputs in the Mathura-Agra belt had been previously forced by the Moghuls to convert to Islam. Swami Shraddhanand encouraged them to return to the religious fold of their forefathers. The mission of Shuddhi the Malkana Rajputs was a great success. This initiative was however misinterpreted, and rumours were spread about Swami Shraddhanand.

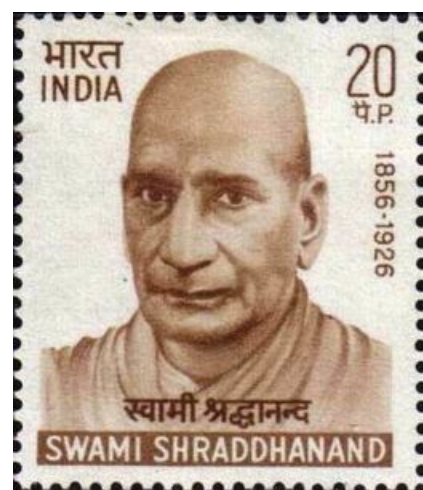
It was December 23, 1926- Swami Shraddhanand was at his residence in Delhi, recovering after an attack of bronchial pneumonia. At 4 p.m., a misguided youth, Abdul Rashid, came on the pretext of discussing something with Swamiji. However, when Swamiji's attendant, Dharam Singh, had gone to bring a glass of water, he shot point blank at Swami Shraddhanand. Swamiji collapsed and passed away. He attained veergati.

Indra Vidyavachaspati, Swamiji's son, recalled the words that Swamiji had uttered not long ago: ***"Yes, it is a source of contentment to me that I am singled out as the one worthy of wearing the crown of martyrdom."***

Surabi – Wow! What a life!

Aajoba – The saying "Good persons are generally born good" applies almost to all of the great personalities of the world.

His life teaches us that if you have the will to change, you can. Even if we have got misled onto the wrong path, there is still a spark of greatness within each one of us. We only need to awaken it and move from Darkness to Light. He is indeed a great example for the younger generation to follow.



Let's talk about these



1. What kind of life did Munshiram lead before getting influenced by Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati's preachings? Why did Maharishi's preachings influence Munshiram so much?
2. What incident turned out to be the turning point in Munshiram's life, that made him a believer in Ishvar?
3. How did Munshiram contribute to the upliftment of women in the society during his days?
4. How did Munshiram help Diwan Sant Ramdas? What does it show about the character of Munishram?
5. What was the key challenge in establishing the Vedic Gurukuls?
6. What was the extent of personal sacrifice that Swami Shraddhanand had to make to establish the Gurukuls in reality?
7. There were many instances in the life of Swami Shraddhanand that proved that he was 'courage personified'. Explain in detail any one such instance.
8. Discuss the life of Swami Shraddhanand with reference to his patriotism.

Think about it



Great people like Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Shraddhanand fought against 'discrimination against women' in the 19th century. Do you think, even in the 21st century, the Indian society is still handicapped with discrimination of various kinds? Name a few that you can identify in the society around you (school, home, play areas, theatres, religious places, public places like restaurants or railway stations etc.). Discuss this with your partners and teacher in the class.

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Munshiram was greatly influenced by Swami (**Dayanand** / **Vivekananda**).
2. Swami Shraddhanand Balidaan Diwas is observed on (**December 23rd** / **February 22nd**).
3. He opened Kanya Mahavidyalaya High School for (**Girls** / **Boys**).



4. Munshiram met Dayananda during the (**Ajmer / Bareilly**) discourse.
5. The title 'Mahatma' was conferred to M.K. Gandhi by (**Mahatma Munshiram / Malkana Rajputs**).
6. Swamiji was invited by the Muslim leaders to (**Nagina Masjid / Jama Masjid**) to encourage people participate in the mission for (**freedom / spreading Islam**).
7. The fourth stage of the life of a person is (**Brahmacharya / Sanyaas**).
8. A sum of (**Rs. 30,000 / Rs. 50,000**) was required to launch the project of establishing Vedic Gurukuls.
9. Gandhiji returned from (**South Africa / USA**) in the year (**1915 / 1919**).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. The two major social reforms initiated by Munshiram were _____ and _____.
2. Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati's words forced Munishram to _____ due to which he gradually realized the harmful effects of his disorderly life.
3. Swamiji was against _____ and he worked for the welfare of _____ and _____.
4. The final stage of life symbolizes the final severance of _____ and one cuts off all ties with _____ with the idea that the entire world is _____.
5. Swamiji started his speech in the Mosque with a mantra from _____ and ended with _____.
6. Mahatma Munshiramji changed his name to _____ which means _____.
7. Munshiram founded the Gurukul at _____ in March 1902, in the midst of a dense jungle, on the banks of the river _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. Harishchandra and Indra were the initial students of the Gurukul.
2. Swami Shraddhanand was a great symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity.
3. The objective of Sanyaas is to "Live for oneself."
4. The mission of Shuddhi of the Malkana Rajputs was not successful.



5. Swamiji was shot by Abdul Rashid who had come on the pretext of discussing something with him but shot him in the absence of his attendant.

Let's discuss

The 'Gurukul' system is the Indian way of learning and has been in our culture since ages. However, the current European system of education is not in any way related (ambience and the way of teaching) to the ancient Gurukul system. List the differences between the Gurukul system of education and the modern method of education. Also, state which method you like and why.



A Guru with his disciples

Gurukul System of Education	European [current] System of Education

Let's have fun



Write a story for a movie based on Swami Shraddhanand's life. Who would you cast in the movie?



Expected learning outcome

Students imbibe the value of Gratitude

*Adya loved spending time with her **muthachan** (grandfather in Malayalam) after coming back from school. muthachan would often discuss with her interesting aspects of life...*

Muthachan – Let us discuss today a key human value – Gratitude.

Adya – Sure muthachan. I have heard the term often. But what does it exactly mean?

Muthachan – Gratitude is a strong feeling of appreciation for what someone has done, to help you.

Adya – So, it is about saying ‘Thank you’.

Muthachan – It is not merely a formality to be completed by verbally saying ‘Thanks’ or ‘Thank you’. It is about the feeling that you carry internally, recognizing the other person’s contribution.

Muthachan – Who do you think is the most important person to whom you should first have a feeling of gratitude for?

Adya – My parents and teachers?

Muthachan – Yes - definitely towards them. But even more important is towards Ishvar. He is the ultimate Giver.

Muthachan – Let me narrate to you a small story. One day there was a man who was very poor. He had no money and was finding it extremely difficult to feed his family. He went to a Guru and was lamenting over his very poor condition.



The Guru told him – “You are actually very rich”. This poor man was very surprised. The Guru repeated the same sentence and added – “I will prove it to you, here and now.” This man just could not understand what his guru meant. Can you guess, Adya?

Adya – No muthachan. He was a poor man, unable to even feed his own family. How can he be termed as rich?

Muthachan – The Guru told him – “I will give you Rs. 1 lakh now, on the spot. Can you give me your left eye?” The man was taken aback.

Muthachan – The Guru continued – “I will offer you Rs. 2 lakhs if you decide to give me your right arm”.

Adya – Obviously, the man must have said ‘No’.

Muthachan – Yes. His Guru then remarked – “Think about the amount of wealth you are carrying with you all the time. You are not prepared to give it away even if I am offering you a large sum of money”. The man realized that his good health was his biggest source of wealth and he needed to thank Ishvar for it. The Guru then motivated him to start working hard to earn wealth.

Adya – Very interesting .

Muthachan – Also, remember that our lives are highly interdependent. For instance, if you think deeply, you will realize that numerous people contribute in different ways to ensure that you are able to go to school and study. Can you make a list of all such people, apart from your parents and teachers?

Adya – May be, the van driver who dropped me to school?

Muthachan – Good. There are many others as well.

You had breakfast in the morning and got your lunch box too. Your mother cooked the food, but then there are multiple farmers spread across locations, who grew the wheat, rice, vegetables etc. Other unknown persons helped in transportation of food grains to wholesaler who in turn sold it to the retailer from where your parents possibly bought the foodgrains, vegetables, oils etc.

Similarly, think about the number of people who helped in ensuring you have a nice uniform to wear to school. The cloth was produced in a particular factory and the tailor stitched it in his small workshop.



Adya – This also then applies to my notebooks and textbooks that were possibly produced by workers in small industrial units.

Muthachan – Yes. That's true. There are also the support and housekeeping staff members at school who ensure a clean and neat campus; what about the carpenter who toiled hard to make the desk you sit on – the list is endless. We need to have a sense of gratitude towards all of them.

Adya – But don't we pay them money for all these services?

Muthachan – Very good observation. Yes, we do pay for the services. But money can never fully compensate for the cooperation and support that others extend in our lives. Money cannot buy us everything, all the time.

For a moment, let us assume that all farmers from the villages move to cities and get into various other jobs. If no one is engaged in farming, there will be no agricultural produce. Then, will any amount of money be able to buy you food? We will all literally starve, isn't it? Therefore, just because you have paid money for something, do not assume that you need not have a feeling of gratitude.

Adya – Now, I understand the concept muthachan.

Muthachan - Many privileged people, especially children around your age, take basic human necessities-food, water, shelter, education-for granted, and sometimes become blind to how lucky they are to count these things on their lists of blessings.

Muthachan – When we express our gratefulness towards other people, we tend to feel happier and calmer, and as a result, it opens up more channels for goodness to enter into our lives. We begin to appreciate simple pleasures of life. There is this shloka –

प्रथमवयसि दत्तं तोयमल्पं स्मरन्तः
शिरसि निहितभारा नारिकेला नराणाम् ।
सलिलममृतकल्पं दद्युराजीवनान्तं
न हि कृतमुपकारं साधवो विस्मरन्ति ।

Prathamavayasi dattam toyamalpam smarantaha
Shirasi nihitabhaaraa naarikelaa naraanaam |
Salilamamritakalpam dadyuraajeevanaantam
na hi kritamupakaaram saadhavo vismaranti ||



Remembering the small amount of water which it was given in its early age, the coconut trees carry nectar like water on their head throughout their life. In the same manner, noble people do not forget the goodness they enjoyed.

Adya – Muthachan, I have observed that every function at school typically begins with a prayer expressing our gratitude towards Ishvar and ends with a ‘vote of thanks’, wherein we formally thank each person who helped in the smooth conduct of the program.

Muthachan – Yes Adya. It is the right thing to do.

We otherwise tend to take all the credit for our success and blame others for our failure. If you don’t do well in our exams, we tend to find fault with everyone else around, except ourselves. If we do well, we are proud of the fact that we worked very hard and it is our own achievement.

Adya – This does happen with me many a time.

Muthachan – I understand Adya. Therefore, remember that inculcating the feeling of gratitude also helps us have a sense of humility. We then tend to genuinely appreciate the role of all – this is Dharma.

Let’s talk about these

1. ‘Gratitude creates abundance.’ Do you agree? Justify your view.

Let’s do these exercises

a. Answer the following:

1. Define gratitude in your own words.
2. Which is the greatest wealth that one can have? Justify your choice.
3. ‘Our lives are highly inter-dependent.’ - justify with any one example from the lesson.
4. Compare the coconut tree with noble people with relevance to the shloka प्रथमवयसि...
5. How is gratitude related to humility?

b. Tick the correct answers:

1. Gratitude is a strong feeling of (**ignorance** / **appreciation**) for what someone has done for you.
2. The poor man realised that his (**family** / **health**) is his biggest source of wealth.
3. Man (**can** / **cannot**) buy everything with money.
4. Every function at school typically begins with a (**prayer** / **vote of thanks**).
5. Gratitude helps us to have a sense of (**oneness** / **humility**).

c. Fill in the blanks:

1. Coconut trees carry _____ like water on their head throughout their lives.
2. When we express our gratitude we feel _____ and _____.
3. We are ultimately provided with health, wealth and spiritual well being by _____
4. Gratitude is not merely a _____ to be completed by verbally saying 'thank you' but the _____ you carry internally appreciating others' help.

Think about

-
- (i) What you are grateful for (at least 5)
 - (ii) Who showered the above blessing on you?
 - (iii) Write a thank you note to each of them.
-
-
-
-
-

Expected learning outcomes

Students:

- know the importance of Ayurveda and its effects.
- understand the key principles of Ayurveda - Vata, Pitta, Kapha

*Varun had a very interesting conversation with his **dadi (paternal grandmother in Hindi)** on the various aspects of Ayurveda – a mild fever being a favourable condition to ward off infection, focusing on the elimination of waste from our body, developing a strong digestive system and the existence of natural herbs which have various medicinal properties. He was keen to know more....*

Varun – Dadi, it is quite surprising as to how animals remain healthy. They do not drink filtered water, nor is their food cooked in a hygienic place. They just eat whatever is available, anywhere.

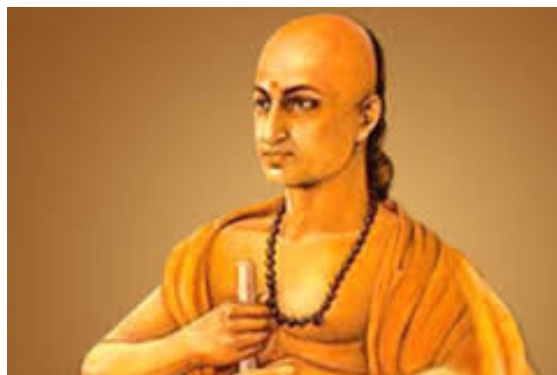
Dadi – True Varun. And we human beings, who consider ourselves far more intelligent, are falling sick all the time. Doctors' clinics and hospitals are forever swarming with people!

The key reason is that animals intrinsically follow the principles of Ayurveda. It is the natural instinct bestowed upon them by Ishvar!

Varun – When did Ayurveda, as a concept, come into existence?

Dadi – Ayurveda has historically been an oral tradition, taught and passed directly from a teacher to an apprentice, both of whom would learn and work side by side. The oldest written codification of Ayurvedic principles is however in the Vedas, particularly the Atharva Veda. The fundamentals have since then been laid out in several major treatises, including the texts by Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata, considered to be '**The Trinity**' of Ayurvedic knowledge.

Dadi – Rishi Charaka, a medical genius, was one of the principal contributors to Ayurveda and was



also the author of the medical treatise, the **Charaka Samhita**. He is well known as the '**Father of Indian Medicine**'.

Dadi – Rishi Sushruta, also known as the '**Father of Surgery**', authored '**Sushruta Samhita**', which details different kinds of surgery.

Varun – Were our Rishis so educated in a field like medicine? I thought they were only involved in religious rituals.

Dadi – That is an incorrect impression, my child! Our Rishis were great scholars in diverse fields. They extensively studied the Vedas, which provide insights into various subjects required for human beings to lead a fulfilling life.

Varun – What is the fundamental principle of Ayurveda?

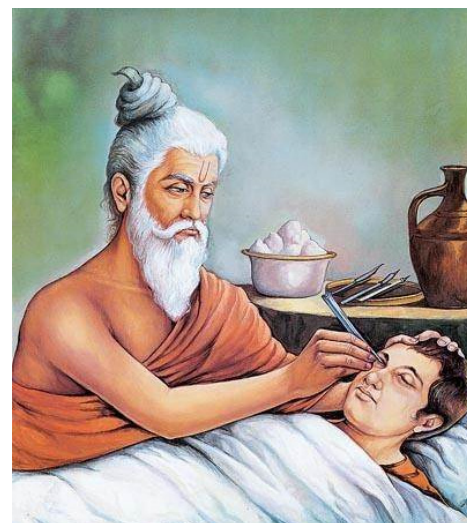
Dadi – According to Ayurveda, our body is comprised of five elements (Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth), also known as '**Pancha Mahabhoot**'. They are further categorized into 'Vata' (Space + Air), 'Pitta' (Fire + Water) and 'Kapha' (Water + Earth).

Varun – Can you further elaborate on this concept?

Dadi – Sure. Let me explain further.

Vata - Composed of Space and Air, 'vata' implies dry, light, cold, rough, subtle/pervasive, mobile, and clear. 'Vata' regulates the principle of movement. Any bodily motion—chewing, swallowing, nerve impulses, breathing, muscle movements, thinking, bowel movements, urination—require a balanced 'vata'.

Pitta - Pitta brings forth the qualities of Fire and Water. It is sharp, penetrating, hot, and liquid. Pitta's domain is the principle of transformation. Just as fire transforms anything it touches, 'pitta' is in play any time the body converts or processes something. So, 'pitta' oversees digestion, metabolism, temperature maintenance, sensory perception, and comprehension.



Rishi performing an eye Surgery



Imbalanced 'pitta' can lead to an impaired functioning of the body in the above aspects, due to inflammation.

Kapha - Kapha, composed of Earth and Water, is heavy, dull, oily, smooth, dense, soft, static, cloudy, hard, and gross (in a sense, dense or thick). As 'kapha' governs stability and structure, it forms the substance of the human body, from the skeleton to various organs to the fatty molecules (lipids) that support the body. An excess of 'kapha' leads to an increase in weight and accumulation of wastes in the body.

Dadi – To summarize, 'vata' is Movement; 'pitta' is Transformation; 'kapha' is lubrication and stability. A person falls sick whenever there is an imbalance among the three.

Varun – I get a broad sense of the concept. I will try to lead a healthy life following some of the basic principles of Ayurveda.

Dadi – Yes, also do remember to reduce your intake of both salt and sugar. I know you have a sweet tooth. You can replace sugar with jaggery, honey, dates and raisins.

Varun – Dadi, how did you learn all these concepts?

Dadi – Well, as I mentioned earlier, a fair bit of Vedic knowledge has been passed orally from one generation to another. I learnt it from my parents and grandparents. I am now teaching you.

Varun – Dadi, can I become an Ayurvedic doctor when I grow up?

Dadi – Yes, of course. There are formal courses offered by various Ayurvedic institutes, both in India and abroad. You can further specialize in this field and serve humanity. There is far greater focus in this field nowadays. Indeed, in 2014, the Indian government set up the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (abbreviated as AYUSH) with the objective of developing education, research and propagation of indigenous alternative medicine systems in India. Even during the COVID-19, the Indian government actively advised everyone to adopt guidelines outlined in Ayurveda to promote immunity and enhance body's natural defense system.

Varun hugged his dadi and remarked with joy – "Thank you, dadi!"

Let's talk about these

1. Who lives a healthier life- human beings or animals? Discuss the reason in your class.



Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Animals have (**natural instinct** / **intellect**) bestowed upon them by Ishvar.
2. Rishi Charaka, a medical genius, authored the treatise the (**Sushruta Samhita** / **Charaka Samhita**).
3. According to Ayurveda our body comprises of (**five** / **three**) elements which are also known as 'Pancha Mahabhoot'.
4. Imbalanced (**Kapha** / **Pitta**) can lead to sharpness and inflammation in those places where metabolic activities take place.
5. In ancient times, Vedic knowledge was passed (**orally** / **in written form**) from one generation to another.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. The fundamentals of Ayurveda have been laid out in several major treatises, including the texts written by _____, _____ and _____, considered to be 'The Trinity' of _____ knowledge.
2. Rishi Sushruta is also known as the _____.
3. Pitta brings forth the qualities of _____ and _____, and its domain is the principle of _____.
4. Kapha governs _____ and _____, and excess of Kapha leads to _____, _____ and _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

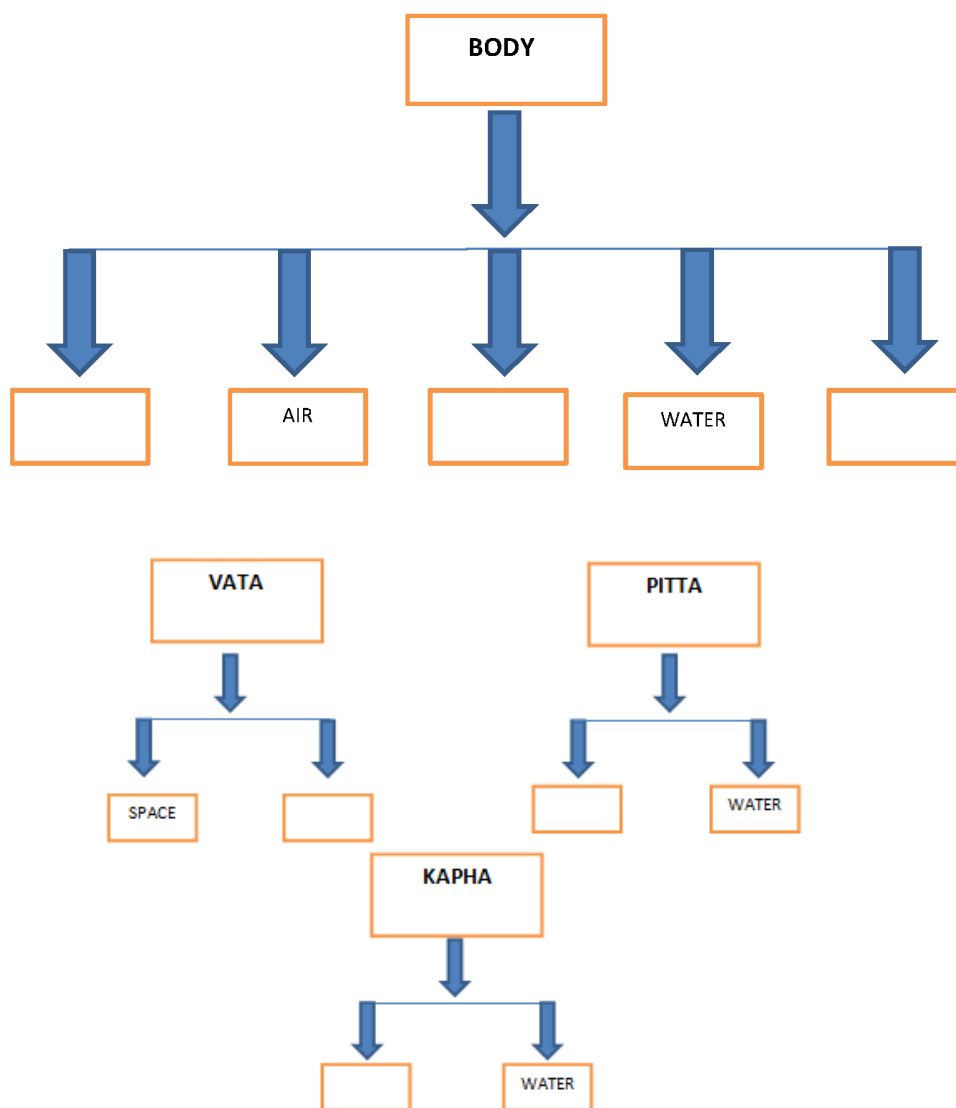
1. The oldest written codification of Ayurvedic principles is found in Yajur Veda.
2. Vata is composed of space and any bodily motion like chewing, swallowing, nerve impulses, breathing, muscle movements etc.
3. Jaggery, honey, dates and raisins are good alternatives to replace sugar in our diet.
4. Kapha brings forth the qualities Fire and Air, and regulates movement.

Activity

Find out about various indigenous systems of medicine. Try to understand the similarities and differences between them.

Let's have fun

Complete the flowchart:



4

EVALUATING RELIGIOUS RITUALS – 2

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the concept of ‘Simplicity’ and ‘Conflict of Interest’, when evaluating various rituals

Nani (grandmother in Hindi) was giving a 4-step framework to Agasti to evaluate all religious beliefs and rituals. The first two were: ‘Universal Applicability’ and ‘Equality between people.’ Agasti was keen to learn further...

Nani – Agasti, the third litmus test is ‘**Simplicity**,’ i.e. whether the religious practice being followed is simple or not. Praying to Ishvar should be as simple as approaching our parents. You do not need an appointment with them. They are easily accessible. Ishvar would never specify anything complicated for us humans.

Agasti – Can you give me an example?

Nani – Many of the rituals require elaborate arrangements. You need many different ingredients, and the devotee ends up spending quite a bit of money. It requires substantial time wherein one just sits and mechanically does something as directed without understanding the meaning. This is possibly not the optimal approach.

Agasti – Yes. I do find these rituals very complicated and boring as well.

Nani – The challenge is that we do not cultivate a relationship with Ishvar. We necessarily depend on someone to help us perform various rituals. Remember, the priest can be considered as someone who guides the thirsty horse to the water source but it is the horse’s responsibility to drink the water. Priests can essentially be teachers who can help us learn various scriptures along with their meaning and right interpretation. However, no matter how much guidance we may get from them, realising Ishvar is a personal experience that one must go through at his own pace. It depends on one’s dedication and maturity.



While we spend almost 20 years of our lives to study various subjects like Science, Mathematics, etc. right from kindergarten up to the Post Graduate level, we hardly invest any time to seriously examine Ishvar. We falsely believe that this is not something meant for us, at least till we reach our old age. We do not realize that our relationship with Ishvar is indeed the most important and the only true relationship for us and it begins the moment we step into this world. We need to necessarily make efforts to understand various Vedic scriptures and mantras along with their meaning. Once we understand the conceptual framework, we will truly start appreciating our relationship with Ishvar.

Agasti – Is the relationship with Ishvar more important than that with our parents?

Nani – Yes, philosophically, this is the truth. Your relationship with your biological parents is somewhat temporary. One day this relationship will definitely cease to exist. However, your soul's relationship with Ishvar is permanent. Ishvar will be with you across multiple births.

Nani – The fourth litmus test is to gauge whether there is a '**Conflict of Interest**' in the prescribed religious practice or ritual.

Agasti – What does that mean, nani?

Nani – Unfortunately, this world is highly commercialized. People are chasing money as their sole purpose in life. Many of our religious leaders have also joined this rat race. Many of our religious rituals involve necessarily paying a large sum of money in cash or by way of articles, valuables etc. Here there is an apparent conflict of interest.

For example, there is this ritual called, 'Shraadh' which is often performed to pay homage to one's 'ancestors' (grandparents, parents) who are no more. This involves fair bit of financial expense.

The word 'Shraadh' emanates from the Sanskrit word 'Shraddha' (श्रद्धा), which means to have respect. It is logical to advocate that people should serve their 'living' elders with immense respect and dedication. But performing elaborate ceremonies after they are no more and spending huge amounts of money, may not be required.

The best way to pay respect to our aging elders is by spending quality time with them, taking care of their needs and not hurting them by using harsh words. What's the point of hurting someone when they are alive and trying to perform rituals for them after their demise?

Agasti – I agree, nani.



Nani – Our relationship with Ishvar should be built on a foundation of deep respect and love. We should respect Him for all that He has given us. It is not that He does not punish us. He will do so if we perform wrong deeds. It is very similar to our relationship with our parents. It is love based, though there are times when they will punish us as well.



Nani – We all like to be logical. We want to believe only if there is concrete evidence. But as far as our religious beliefs are concerned, we refuse to take a step back and think. We believe it is a matter of faith and we should follow what has been prescribed. Questioning is not encouraged.

Agasti – So should we not have faith in anything?

Nani – Agasti, you should have faith. But, you should definitely take a step back and broadly evaluate the path you are treading before deeply believing in it. Blind faith can be dangerous.

Indeed, let me tell you about an incident that happened in India in 1995. You should also check it with your parents.

On September 21, 1995, a worshipper at a temple in New Delhi made an offering of milk to an idol of Ganesha. When a spoonful of milk from the bowl was held up to the trunk of the statue, the liquid was seen to disappear, apparently taken in by the idol. Word of the event spread quickly, and by noon it was found that statues of Ganesha in temples all over India were taking in milk. The news further spread beyond India, and many people across the world started claiming that Ganesha was indeed taking in the milk. The scientific community soon stepped in to study the marvel. They wondered how it was possible that an idol made of stone could start drinking milk. They immediately offered a logical explanation. The phenomenon was happening due to capillary action – the surface tension of the milk was pulling the liquid up and out of the spoon before gravity caused it to run down the front of the statue.



Agasti (laughing): So much milk must have been wasted that day, isn't it? Thank God, there was no Whatsapp during those days. The news would have otherwise spread even faster, resulting in further waste of milk.

Nani – Oh! Absolutely. Lakhs of litres of milk just flowed into the drains. It was blind faith in the name of religion.

Agasti – So it is clear that, we need to put on our thinking caps to evaluate religious practices and rituals.

Let's discuss

1. List a few rituals you have seen your parents do. Discuss your understanding of them in detail.
2. List the two tests in this chapter under the four-step framework to evaluate every religious belief or ritual.
3. What kind of relationship do we have with Ishvar? How important is it to realise the same?
4. What does the word 'Shraadh' mean? Why does one perform it?
5. What is the true way by which we can show our love towards our parents?

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. The relationship with our parents is (**permanent** / **temporary**) whereas with Ishvar it is (**permanent** / **temporary**).
2. Our relationship with Ishvar should be (**fear-based** / **love-based**).
3. Today people are chasing (**money** / **spirituality**) as the sole purpose in life.
4. Ishvar (**will** / **will not**) punish us for our wrong deeds.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. You should have _____ in your religion but, you should take a step back and _____ before deeply believing in it.
2. Praying to Ishvar should be _____.

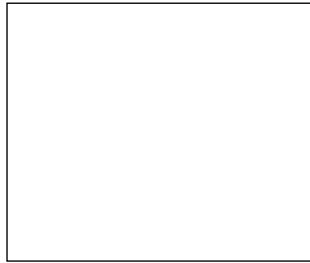
3. If we look inwards, with _____ and _____, we will soon realise our unadulterated relation with Ishvar.
4. Paying a large sum of money in cash or by way of articles, valuables etc. for any religious act is a clear case of _____.
5. Our relationship with Ishvar should be built on the foundation of _____ and _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

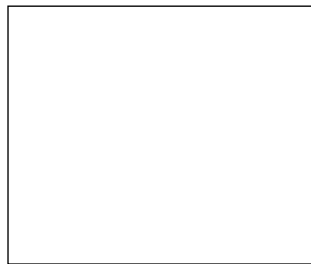
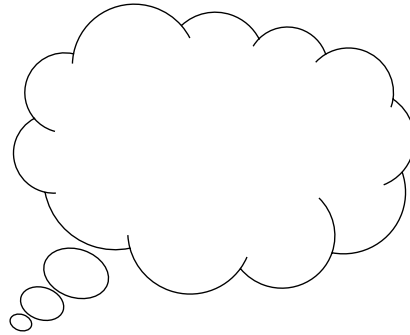
1. The word Shraadh emanates from the Sanskrit word Shraddha.
2. In matters related to faith, we should follow what has been prescribed by our ancestors, without raising questions.
3. The relationship of the soul with Ishvar is permanent.

Let's have fun

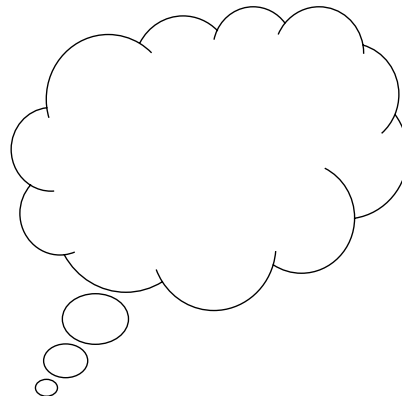
Paste the picture of your mother and father in the given boxes. Write a message for each, showing your love and affection towards them.



MOTHER



FATHER



5

WHY VEGETARIANISM? - 2

Expected learning outcome

Students realise the advantages of adopting vegetarianism.

Note: In Part-1, we had learnt about four key reasons – (i) Unimaginable Animal Cruelty; (ii) Disproportionate Use of Natural Resources; (iii) Higher Carbon emission; (iv) Cause for numerous Diseases. We will now learn about a few additional aspects.

V. A myth - Meat is required for ‘strength’

Until very recently, the idea that meat alone can provide adequate protein, which equates to strength, was still a part of mainstream thinking. However, this is now changing with numerous sports persons claiming to have immensely benefited from a plant-based diet.

One of the most well-known names is Virat Kohli, who turned vegetarian in 2018. Back in 2020, Virat Kohli explained why he turned vegetarian. He opined, “Left eating meat just before the England Test series. In 2018, when we went to South Africa, I had a cervical spine issue while playing a test match. It compressed a nerve that was running straight to the little finger of my right hand. It gave me a tingling sensation and I could barely feel my little finger. I could not sleep at night and it was hurting like mad.”



“Then I got my tests done and my stomach was too acidic and my body was too acidic, creating too much uric acid. Even though I was taking calcium and magnesium, everything, but one tablet was not sufficient for my body to function properly. So, my stomach started pulling calcium from my bones and my bones got weaker. That is why I stopped eating meat completely in the middle of England tour to cut down the uric acid and I have never felt better in my life, to be honest,” he further mentioned.

“I felt amazing, it is almost two years now and it is the best decision I have taken - it made me feel why I didn’t do it before,” Kohli added.

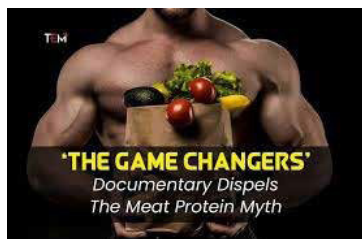


Legendary track and field athlete Carl Lewis announced that he has been fueled by a mostly plant-based diet. The Olympic gold medalist claimed that his plant-based diet helped his superlative performance for 25 years, providing him with enough protein to keep up a rigorous athletic lifestyle. In his epic track career, Lewis was a nine-time Olympic gold medalist and won 10 World Championships, ranking him as one of the top athletes of the century. Anyone who watched him run was left in awe.



Lewis Hamilton, the famous British Formula One racing driver who has won a joint-record seven World Drivers’ Championship titles, is on plant-based diet. In addition, he regularly uses social media to raise awareness about animal issues. He posted “Every bit of meat, chicken, or fish you eat, every bit of leather or fur you wear, has come from an animal that has been tortured, pulled away from their families and brutally killed.”

Novak Djokovic, ranked world # 1, is recognized one of the greatest men’s players in the history of Tennis. His 24 Grand Slam Singles titles, which includes an unprecedented 10 Australian Open championships, is a record for men. He is also on a plant-based diet.



Indeed, Lewis Hamilton and Novak Djokovic, along with other reputed filmmakers and actors have produced a very interesting documentary, titled “Game Changers” which highlights the benefits of plant-based diet for sportspersons.

Some of the other famous Indian sportspersons who have been vegetarians, include Anil Kumble (Cricket), Viswanathan Anand (Chess) and Sushil Kumar (Wrestling).





Finally, it is interesting to note that the strongest animal on the planet is not the lion, a carnivore. It is rather the elephant, an herbivore, further dispelling the myth that consuming meat is essential for 'strength'. A balanced plant-based diet can rather provide us comparatively more strength with overall better health.

VI. Role models who adopted Vegetarianism

Numerous famous personalities, who are role models for many of us, consciously adopted vegetarianism. The list includes Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, George Bernard Shaw,



APJ Abdul Kalam, Steve Jobs and Narendra Modi.

Mahatma Gandhi had indeed remarked - "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated". This is a very profound statement from a person who stood for the universal value of 'Non-violence'. It is indeed true that if we as a society have compassion towards animals who are otherwise mute and helpless, our compassion is bound to extend towards our fellow human beings as well.

Albert Einstein, the German-born theoretical physicist who is widely held to be one of the greatest and most influential scientists of all times, had remarked - "It is my view that the vegetarian manner of living, by its purely physical effect on the human temperament, would most beneficially influence the lot of mankind"

George Bernard Shaw, the Irish playwright, critic and political activist, posed an interesting question for mankind - “If a group of beings from another planet were to land on Earth- beings who considered themselves as superior to you as you feel yourself to be to other animals - would you concede them the rights over you that you assume over other animals?”

VII. Vedas prohibit killing of animals

Due to lack of adequate Sanskrit knowledge and relying on incorrect interpretations, few people believe that Vedas permit killing of animals and consuming their meat. This is grossly incorrect. Vedas and other Shaastras clearly advise humans to not kill animals & birds. Indeed, an extract of the very first mantra of the Yajur Veda clearly highlights

अघ्न्या यजमानस्य पशून्पाहि |

Aghnyaa yajamaanasya pashoonpaahi |

(Yajur Veda | Chapter 1 | Mantra 1)

“O human! animals are Aghnya – not to be killed. Protect the animals”

Atharva Veda (Kaanda 6 | Sukta 140 | Mantra 2) advises us

व्रीहिमत्तं यवमत्तमथो माषमथो तिलम् ।

एष वां भागो निहितो रत्नधेयाय दन्तौ मा हिसिष्टं पितरं मातरं च ॥

Vreehimattam yavamattamatho maashamatho tilam |

Esha vaam bhaago nihito ratnadheyaaya dantau maa hinsishtam pitaram
maataram cha |

“You eat rice, you eat barley, you eat gram and you eat sesame. These cereals are specifically meant for you. Do not kill those who are capable of being fathers and mothers.”

Manusmriti (Chapter 5 | Mantra 51) also clearly says

अनुमन्ता विशसिता निहन्ता क्रयविक्रयी ।
संस्कर्ता चोपहर्ता च खादकः चेति घातकाः ॥

Anumantaa vishasitaa nihantaa kraya-vikrayee |
Sanskartaa chopahartaa cha khaadakaha cheti ghaatakaaha ||

“One who gives the order to kill; One who cuts the flesh; One who kills the animal; One who engages in a business derived from killing of animals; One who cooks; One who serves; One who eats is committing a sin.”

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

There are often many FAQs related to vegetarianism. Here, we cover some of the common ones.

1. Are we human beings designed to eat meat?

Let's analyze and compare the anatomy and physiology of humans with that of a carnivorous animal to understand whether humans are designed to eat meat or not.

Arrangement of teeth: Humans, like herbivores, have small canine teeth & flat molars to chew the food whereas carnivores have sharp canines to tear the flesh. Their jaws move only up and down, requiring them to tear chunks of flesh from their prey and swallow them whole. Herbivores can move their jaws both up and down and from side to side, allowing them to grind up fruit and vegetables with their back teeth.



Drinking Water: Humans, like herbivores suck water and drink. Carnivores instead lick the water and drink.

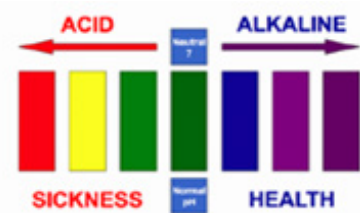
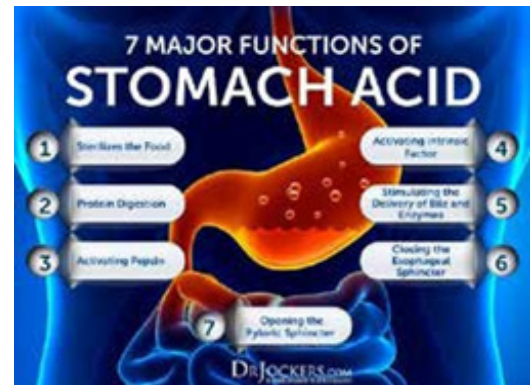
Fingernails: The nails of humans, like the herbivores are flat and not sharp. Carnivores have lengthy and sharp nails.



Digestive system: Carnivores have short intestinal tracts, about 3x the body length, that allows meat to pass through their bodies relatively quickly, before it can rot and cause illness. Humans, like herbivores, have much longer intestinal tracts, about 9x the body length. Longer intestines allow the body more time to break down fiber and absorb the nutrients from plant-based foods, but they make it dangerous for eating meat. The bacteria in meat have extra time to multiply during the long trip through the digestive system, increasing the risk of food poisoning. Meat actually begins to rot while it makes its way through the long intestines, which increases the risk of developing various diseases including colon cancer.



Stomach acid: Stomach acid, consisting mainly of Hydrochloric acid (HCl), is extremely important for digesting food – herbivores have much weaker stomach acid compared to carnivores. Carnivorous animals swallow their food whole, relying on extremely acidic stomach juices to break down flesh and kill the dangerous bacteria in it, which would otherwise sicken or kill them. Human stomach acids are much weaker in comparison, because strong acids aren't needed to digest pre-chewed fruits and vegetables. Meat is less fibrous and needs strong digestive enzymes. Also, meat has much higher cholesterol leading to fat deposits in various organs.



Conclusion – It is undoubtedly clear that human beings are not designed to eat raw meat unlike other carnivores and omnivores. However, cooked meat definitely makes it comparatively safer to eat as the process kills the harmful bacteria and parasites that may be present in raw meat. Cooking also breaks down tough fibers in meat, making it easier to chew and digest. However, the fact that we can have many fruits and vegetables as raw but not meat, does prove that we humans are intrinsically designed as Herbivores.

2. Will the food chain be broken if we stop eating meat? Will the population of chickens, goats etc. not explode?

Absolutely 'No'. The population of hens, goats, cattle, pigs and fish will not explode.

Let us for example take cats. They are routinely killed for food in countries like China and South Korea. However, we in India do not consume cat meat. Has the population of cat exploded in India? Have they taken over space and natural resources meant for us humans? The answer is 'No'. While we do see cats around, their population has not exploded.



Remember, Nature has a way to take care of balance in the environment. The animals and birds are being specifically reared for food - not allowed by us humans to adopt the natural process of birth and death. Life is rather infused into them in artificial ways thus leading to their large-scale production. If we indeed stop tinkering with Mother Nature, the population of chicken, goat, sheep, fish, cows etc. will not explode on Earth.

3. If all of us turn vegetarians, what about the numerous people who are employed in the meat industry? Will they not get unemployed and lose their jobs?

Yes, they will possibly lose their jobs in the short term. However, they will find alternate sources of employment. For instance, there are numerous people involved in production and distribution of liquor and narcotic drugs. We cannot justify continuance of an unethical industry on grounds of employment. Indeed, we will be indirectly helping the poor by ensuring that enough food is available for everyone.

4. What about milk? Does it not involve animal cruelty?

In the Shaastras, 'Cow' holds a very reverential place for all humans. Cow is treated as a source of wealth and is indeed considered an extended part of the family of every household.

As designed by Mother Earth, cow produces milk for both its calf and the humans. The cow's udder has four teats. Milk from 1-2 teats is enough to feed the calf. Therefore, the milk from the remaining two teats can be consumed.

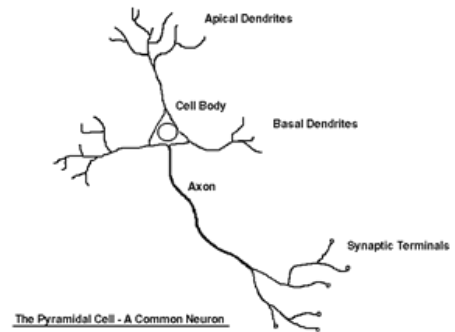


Cow is the Nature's pharmacy for us since the milk and its derived products like ghee have immense medicinal value. However, if the cow is exploited - given hormonal injections to increase milk production or the calf is not given enough milk, then consuming that milk is not 'Dharmic.'

5. Don't plants have life? Are we not killing them as well?

Yes, plants do have life. To a small extent, there is Himsa (Violence) in killing them. However, having plants as food is absolutely required for our survival.

A key aspect however is that plants don't have a nervous system. Also, they don't have a brain to process the sensations. Animals instead show pleasure and cry out in pain. They nurse wounded body parts, and seek to avoid those who have hurt them in the past.



Also, if you eat meat, you need to anyways kill many more plants apart from the animal to get your food. As discussed earlier, for 1 kg of chicken meat, we need 4.5 kgs of foodgrains, thus necessitating much higher level of 'Himsa'.

The last litmus test is to listen to our inner conscience that helps us decide the right approach. We will be intrinsically comfortable in planting a sapling, nurturing it to grow into a large tree and have the fruits from it or pluck a leaf from an Aloe Vera or a Tulsi plant and consume it. However, most of us will cringe if we are asked to hold a chicken, kill it as it screams and suffers from pain, remove the feathers, cook and consume it. We will find it extremely disgusting.



**“Unseen they suffer, unheard they cry,
In Agony they linger, in loneliness, they die,
Does it mean anything to you or anyone who passes by?”**

Let's talk about these

1. List out the points which suggests that human body is not designed to eat raw meat.
2. If all humans turn vegetarians, won't the food chain be disrupted with population explosion of chicken, goats, pigs etc.? Substantiate your answer.
3. Discuss the famous quote by Mahatma Gandhi, related to animals.
4. There is 'Himsa' in killing animals for food. But then don't we kill plants as well for food? Analyze.

Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks:

1. The documentary which highlights the benefits of plant-based diet for sportspersons is titled _____.
2. अघ्न्या यजमानस्य पशूनपाहि (Aghnyaa yajamaanasya pashoonpaahi) means _____.
3. Two famous Indian sportspersons who have adopted vegetarianism include _____ & _____.
4. Two famous non-Indian sportspersons who have adopted vegetarianism include _____ & _____.
5. Two famous universal role-models who have adopted vegetarianism include _____ & _____.

B. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False:

1. Humans have a short digestive tract which allows meat to be digested easily.
2. Vedas and other Shaastras clearly advise humans to not kill animals & birds.
3. Herbivores have much stronger stomach acid compared to carnivores.
4. Plants have a nervous system.
5. Lion, a carnivore, is the strongest animal on Earth.

6

PANCHA MAHA YAJNYA MEDITATION – 1

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the nuances of Meditation

Nani (grandmother in Hindi) offered a 4-step framework to Agasti to evaluate various religious practices and rituals. He was keen to know more and so he sat down with nani.

Agasti – Nani, which rituals or practices would you recommend, based on the four parameters outlined by you earlier?

Nani – I would go back to the Vedas to answer this question. As you know, the Vedas are the oldest books in the human library. As per the Vedas, there are five types of Yajnyas or rituals that you should perform on a daily basis. They are commonly known as ‘**Pancha Maha Yajnya.**’



S No.	Yajnya (Ritual)	Remarks
1	Brahma Yajnya	<i>Meditation. (Includes Pranayama)</i>
2	Deva Yajnya	<i>Agnihotra</i>
3	Pitra Yajnya	<i>Respecting elders and serving them</i>
4	Atithi Yajnya	<i>Respecting guests and serving them</i>
5	Bali Vaishvadev Yajnya	<i>Taking care of animals around us</i>

Nani – The first and the most important one is **Brahma Yajnya**, i.e. Meditation.

We should meditate every day. Identify a quiet place where there is no disturbance; sit down straight; make sure your head, neck and chest are in a straight line, keep the spine stretched and be relaxed. Close your eyes gently; take a deep resolve that you will focus your mind to pray to Ishvar without letting any other thought arise in your mind.



Agasti – How long should we meditate daily?

Nani – Spiritually inclined Yogis meditate for many hours a day. However, if you can meditate for at least 10 minutes, twice a day, i.e. both morning and evening, you will find the experience meaningful and very satisfying.

Agasti – But whenever I try to meditate, my mind keeps wandering.

Nani – I understand. To control the mind, let us first understand the theoretical framework. There are three distinct aspects:

1	आत्मा	Aatma	<i>Soul</i>	<i>Has consciousness. Is the key decision maker and the owner of both Intellect and Mind.</i>
2	मन / चित्त	Maan / Chitta	<i>Mind</i>	<i>Is a tool with the help of which we are able to think and recall old memories. It facilitates constant communication with the soul. Mind lacks consciousness of its own.</i>
3	बुद्धि	Buddhi	<i>Intellect</i>	<i>Is a tool that helps us make decisions. It is the discriminatory ability that helps us decide – right and wrong, good and bad, etc. Intellect also lacks consciousness of its own.</i>

The Soul has consciousness. Both the Mind and Intellect are merely tools that the Soul has at its disposal.

Nani – The Mind does wander. But if we (soul) decide that we will control it, we clearly can. We need to sincerely resolve that we will not let any other thought arise in our minds during the meditation session. If the mind still does wander, we need to bring it back! With practice over a period of time, we will become its master.

Agasti – Nani, is the mind really in our control? I feel that it acts on its own without me (soul) being even aware of it.

Nani – Ok...let me ask you a question. Do you control your breathing?

Agasti – Hmm... I can control it for a few seconds probably. But otherwise we keep inhaling and exhaling; it happens all the time by itself, a background process.

Nani – That's right. But the fact that we (soul) can stop our breathing for a few seconds implies that we are in control of it. The same analogy can be applied to the mind. As such, various thoughts keep coming up throughout the day. However, we, during meditation can stop it from raising unwanted thoughts and focus only on the Ishvar.

Agasti – What should I meditate on nani?

Nani – You should meditate upon Ishvar. There are three distinct phases in a meditation session.

Phase	Name	Remarks
I	स्तुति (Stuti)	<i>Recalling the various qualities of the Almighty. He is All-Powerful, Just, Protector, Exists everywhere in each minute particle, Knows everything etc.</i>
II	प्रार्थना (Praarthanaa)	<i>Praying to Him to bestow us with good intellect, happiness and bliss.</i>
III	उपासना (Upaasanaa)	<i>Internalizing our close relationship with the Almighty. We reiterate that He is our mother, father, relative, friend and is above all worldly possessions.</i>

You can chant a few mantras slowly, internalizing their meaning. The key is to deeply think about the meaning of the mantra. Only then you will be able to increase your level of concentration. If you only mechanically chant the mantra without simultaneously thinking about the meaning, the mind is more likely to wander. You essentially need to strike a conversation with the Almighty, feeling that He is with you.

Appended is a step-by-step guide for a sample 10-minute meditation session. However, this is not the only way. You can alter it suitably as well based on advice from other scholars. Use a timer or alarm so that mind doesn't worry about the time spent on meditation.

Preparation

1. Sit straight and close your eyes gently.
2. Chant 'Om' three times.
3. Take a deep breath... Om ... Om ... Om.
4. I, the soul, that is the 'आत्मा', now take a vow that I will concentrate only on the 'Ishvar' and will not raise any other thought in my mind for the next few minutes.

Phase I: 'Stuti'

1. Oh, Ishvar!
2. Oh, You are भूः (Bhu), | the Giver of life, the giver of 'प्राणः' (Praana).
3. You are भुवः (Bhuva), | You remove all my sorrows, all my obstacles.
4. You are स्वः (Svah), | Giver of happiness and bliss.
5. Oh, Ishvar! You are सर्व शक्तिमान (Sarva Saktimaan) | You are all-powerful.
6. You are सर्वरक्षक (Sarva Rakshaka) | You protect me at all times.
7. You are सर्वव्यापक (Sarva Vyaapaka) | You exist everywhere, in each minute particle. It is like soaking cotton in water. Water exists in every particle of cotton.
8. You are सर्वज्ञ (Sarvajnya) | You know every aspect about me and everyone else | You constantly know what I think, speak and do.
9. Oh, Ishvar! You are न्यायकारी (Nyayakari) | You are the best judge. You sooner or later ensure justice for all. You are also compassionate.
10. You are सर्वाधार (Sarvaadhaar) | You create and maintain this Earth, Sun, Moon and other celestial bodies. You have also scientifically created my complex body with over 1 lakh (100,000) km long blood vessels.

Phase II: 'Praarthanaa'

In the next phase, we will now pray to the Ishvar to shower us with happiness and bliss

1. Om (आनन्दः) 'Aanandah.' You are the source of all happiness and bliss. Please bestow me with the same – Repeat the above 3 times.

We can also slowly chant the Gayatri mantra, praying to Ishvar to bestow good intellect upon us.

Phase III: 'Upaasanaa'

We will now chant a shloka slowly with its meaning. Remember the vow we have taken – We will not raise any other thought in our minds but will concentrate only on Ishvar.

त्वमेव माता | You are my Mother | च पिता त्वमेव | You are my Father
त्वमेव बन्धुः | You are my Relative | च सखा त्वमेव | You are my Friend
त्वमेव विद्या | Knowing you is true Knowledge
द्रविणं त्वमेव | Acquiring You is true Wealth
त्वमेव सर्वं मम देव देव | You are Everything for me!

We will once again chant the shloka with immense dedication, respect and true love for Ishvar. Please concentrate and internalize the meaning.

त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव । त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव ।
त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणम् त्वमेव । त्वमेव सर्वम् मम देव देव ॥

Conclusion:

Om 'Shanti,' 'Shanti,' 'Shanti.'

Rub your palms together. Place them gently on closed eye-lids, so that the cups of the hand cover the eye-lids. Then slowly open your eye-lids before gently removing your palm.

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. A child should meditate for at least (**an hour** / **10 minutes**) twice a day to experience a sense of inner joy.
2. As per the Vedas, the five types of rituals that should be performed daily are called (**Pancha Maha Yajnya** / **Pancha Mahabhoot**).
3. In the course of meditation, if the (**soul** / **intellect**) is focused on Ishvar, then the (**mind** / **intellect**) will not wander.
4. Praying to Him to bestow us with good intellect, happiness and bliss upon us is a part of (**Praarthanaa** / **Upaasanaa**).

5. Gayatri mantra is chanted praying to Ishvar to bestow us with (**good intellect / material wealth**).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. The Pancha Maha Yajnya includes _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____.
2. The mind is a tool that raises _____ and keeps communicating with _____, and it lacks _____.
3. When we say that Ishvar is सर्वव्यापक (sarvavyaapak) it literally means _____.
4. त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणम् त्वमेव means _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. Through Upaasanaa, we internalize our close relationship with Ishvar.
2. While meditating, one should take a deep resolve that one will focus one's mind to pray to Ishvar without raising any other thought.
3. Ishvar created Sun, the Moon and other celestial bodies and also sustains them.
4. The soul helps in final evaluation and decision making but lacks consciousness of its own.
5. Mechanical chanting of mantras during meditation helps our mind to focus on Ishvar.

d. Match the following:

1	Pitra Yajnya	Source of all happiness and bliss
2	Aanandah	Taking care of animals around us
3	न्यायकारी (Nyaayakari)	Has consciousness and decision maker
4	Soul	Respecting elders
5	Bali VaishvadevYajnya	Best judge

e. Think and pen down your experience of meditation.

Expected learning outcomes

Students understand the conditions under which one's speech and action can be termed as 'Satya'.

'Satya' is universally acknowledged as a key value to be practiced by all. While it can be simply defined as 'Speaking the Truth', there are finer aspects to it. Let us take a quick example – On a hot summer afternoon, you are driving down on a relatively empty highway. You see something far away on the road and realize that it is 'water'. You exclaim to your friend – "Hey, there is water out there". As you drive closer to it, you realize that it was only a mirage. There was no water out there. Did you say a lie?



Let us look at another situation. In a crowded bus, a thief (X) removes the purse of a person (Y) standing in the front. He immediately gives it to his partner (Z). Y, on realizing that his wallet is missing, immediately turns around and asks X – "Do you have my purse?" X says 'No'. Y notices Z also standing nearby and asks him – "Did you take the purse from my pocket?" Z says 'No'. In this case, can we conclude that both Y and Z spoke the truth?

'Satya' is defined in Shaastras as "सत्यम् यथार्थे वान्मनसे" (Satyam Yataarth Vaanga-manase) which means - 'When you speak what is there in your mind; what you genuinely believe to be the case, it is Satya'.

In the case of mirage, if you believed there is water out there on the road at a certain distance and therefore mentioned it to your friend, then it cannot be considered as 'Asatya'. Yes, you ought to acquire the right knowledge and be aware of key aspects which are considered reasonable in the society around you. We cannot always claim ignorance. However, mentioning something based on genuinely wrong knowledge without any malintent, will still be considered as 'Satya'.

The Shaastras indeed further clarify - "यथा दृष्टम् यथा अनुमितम् यथा श्रुतम् तथा वाङ्मनः च इति" Yathaa Drishtam Yathaa Anumitam Yathaa Shrutam, Tathaa Vaang Manaha Cha Iti). Satya is when you speak based on what you have seen (Drishtam), Estimated or Understood (Anumitam), or Heard (Shrutam). There is also this very apt Shloka on 'Satya'

मनस्यन्यत् वचस्यन्यत् कर्मण्यन्यत् दुरात्मनाम् ।
मनस्येकं वचस्येकं कर्मण्येकं महात्मनाम् ॥

Manasyanyat vachasyanyat karmanyanyat duraatmanaam |

Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahaatmanaam ||

An evil person has certain thoughts in mind; but speaks something else; and acts differently. However, a noble person is one whose mind, words and actions are in sync.

Intent – An overriding litmus test

The Intent is extremely important to determine whether the person is speaking 'Satya'. The following shloka is etched on the walls of the Indian Parliament.

न सा सभा यत्र न सन्ति वृद्धाः, न ते वृद्धाः ये न वदन्ति धर्मम् ।

धर्मो न वै यत्र च नास्ति सत्यम्, न तत् सत्यम् यच्छलेनाभ्युपेतम् ॥

Na saa sabhaa yatra na santi vriddhaaha, na te vriddhaaha ye na vadanti dharmam |

Dharmo na vai yatra cha naasti satyam, na tat satyam yacchalenaanubhyupetam ||

A panel is incomplete without elders and scholars. However, those who do not speak based on 'Dharma' cannot be referred to as elders and scholars. There is no Dharma without 'Satya'; there is no 'Satya' if blended with 'Chala' (deceit or cheating)

Example - Ornamental language is often used in poetry or literature. For example, a poet may pen the words – 'Water is life' or 'I wandered lonely as a cloud'. While the literal meaning of these words is not 'Satya', it is commonly understood by the audience that they are reading an

exaggerated or hyperbolic statement. Hyperboles are not meant to be taken literally and are used for emphasis.

Also, it is clear that the author has no malintent over here – he is only trying to convey his feelings in a poetic way.

Example - Teacher expected the student to complete the project work herself, without taking any external support.

She asked the student on the due date – “Have you completed your project?” The student, who had got the entire project done by her elder brother, replied – “Yes Ma’am – it is done”. There is an element of deceit over here since the student was fully aware of the teacher’s expectations.



‘Satya’ should be communicated appropriately

It is also important to recognize that ‘Satya’ should not be communicated in a harsh way (‘Apriya’). For example, one cannot cite the definition of ‘Satya’ (सत्यम् यथार्थे वान्मनसे), and rudely tell a blind man – “Oh! You are blind!”

The Shaastras advise us

सत्यम् ब्रूयात् प्रियम् ब्रूयात् न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् ।
प्रियम् च नानृतं ब्रूयात् एष धर्मः सनातनः ॥

Satyam bruyaat priyam bruyaat na bruyaat satyamapriyam |
Priyam cha naanritam bruyaat esha dharmaha sanaatanaha ||

Always speak ‘Satya’. However, it should be spoken in a pleasant way. Never speak ‘Satya’ in a way which is unpleasant or insulting to the other person. Also, never speak ‘Asatya’ only because it pleases the other person (sycophancy). This is the eternal path of Dharma.



Indulging in sycophancy, only to please, is not Dharma. However, we should definitely praise and encourage the other person when we have genuine internal appreciation for them. Giving sincere compliments has numerous advantages for both the giver and the receiver – Increases level of happiness, makes us grateful, strengthens interpersonal relationships and creates a ripple of positivity.

‘Satya’ should be beneficial

‘Satya’ should be spoken for overall benefit – not to cause harm. At times, we may be speaking the truth – but the way and the context in which it is said – is not appropriate. For example, you meet a foreign tourist and start criticizing and ranting about Bharat. Yes, like many other countries, we do have serious challenges and we need to work towards implementing solutions. However, simply criticizing over a casual conversation does not benefit anyone.



However, it is ‘Dharma’ to point out deficiencies or shortcomings in an appropriate way, where it is truly beneficial. The Mahabharata war was about to start. Dhritarashtra, the blind King, was getting anxious. He wanted his advisor Vidur to narrate to him the entire sequence of events as they were unfolding on the battlefield.



Along with narration of events, Vidur also gave his ‘Dhaarmic’ perspective on what Dhritarashtra could possibly do to still avoid the war, overcoming the blind love (‘Moha’) for his son Duryodhan. Dhritarashtra however got impatient and agitated. Annoyed at Vidur, he asked him to stop giving him advise. At that point, Vidur mentioned this very meaningful shloka to Dhritarashtra. He said -

पुरुषो बहवो राजनसततं प्रियवादिनः ।
अप्रियस्य तु पथ्यस्य वक्ता श्रोता च दुर्लभः ॥

Purusho bahavo raajan-satatam priyavaadinaha |
Apriyasya tu pathyasya vaktaa shrotaa cha durlabaha ||

Oh King! There will be many people in this world who will keep praising us (sycophancy). However, that which is unpleasant to hear, but is the Truth for our own long-term benefit – it is rare to find both, i.e. someone who is willing to speak, and someone who is willing to listen.

To summarize, the Shaastras highlight the 'Gunas' & 'Doshas' of our speech.

'GUNA'

- Speak the Truth
- Speak softly
- Sincerely praising (not sycophancy)
- Speak what is beneficial & necessary

'DOSHA'

- Speak lies
- Speak harshly / rudely
- Criticizing or backbiting
- Gossiping, speaking without any relevance

Why do we lie?

People lie for a very variety of reasons. However, irrespective of why people choose to lie, the psychological burden of being deceptive weighs heavy on the conscience. Even if the lie goes undetected, the process of lying itself can be an inherently stressful activity. You speak a lie – need to further lie to cover up your previous lie, leading to a knot.



There are various ways to classify different types of lies. One way to do so is to look at the 'Objective' of lying. It could be due to – (i) 'Protecting' ourselves & others; (ii) 'Promoting' ourselves & others; (iii) Harming others out of hatred and jealousy.

'Protecting' Self & Others

- Avoid being scolded or physically punished
- Avoid financial loss
- Avoid tarnishing of reputation by hiding shortcomings

'Promoting' Self & Others

- Make exaggerated claims (boasting) about any aspect
- Earn undue wealth through cheating and other false claims

'Harming' Others

- Systematically create misunderstandings, such that it will harm the other person
- Spoil someone's reputation

The other way to classify lies is by its 'Impact.' Life is quite complex with varying situations arising on an everyday basis. Lies are indeed even color coded accordingly – the coding though could differ across cultures.

1. White Lies - These are apparently harmless, often well-intentioned lies told to spare someone's feelings or avoid unnecessary conflict or discomfort. They usually have minimal consequences.

Example - You go to a person's house for a discussion at noon. The discussion extends and it is lunch time. The other person courteously invites you to join for lunch. However, you do not want to put the family to inconvenience, as you were not scheduled to have lunch there. You therefore politely decline the invite mentioning that you have a prior appointment and need to meet another friend over lunch.

Example - We often scare a child, saying – “Ok, if you do not behave yourself, the police will come, take you away and keep you in a dark room.”

Example - You appreciate your friend's haircut even though you just do not like it.

2. Black Lies – Also known as 'Real' lies or 'Bold-faced' lies, these are more deceptive and deliberate falsehoods intended to gain advantage for self and others or conceal a wrongdoing. They could be spontaneous when we find ourselves under pressure or fear of an adverse consequence. They could also be planned and executed for particular reasons, and can have negative social and legal consequences.

Example - Falsely claiming that you have a particular qualification or achievement in your resume.

Example – Denying the fact that you broke a costly piece of equipment due to carelessness, to avoid punishment or fine or may be loss of reputation.

3. Grey Lies – They do not fit neatly into the categories of white lies or real lies. They are not necessarily as malicious as real lies, but they are more serious than white lies. Grey lies can be used to avoid unnecessary conflict or discomfort but may not always have the pure intentions of white lies. There is an element of deceit or cheating embedded therein.

This includes lies of omission—leaving out important facts when communicating—which can be as deceptive as direct lying. Another category of Grey lies is those of exaggeration, which inflate or embellish the truth to make a story more interesting or to impress others. Companies routinely adopt Grey lies to work around regulations.

Example – While casually talking to friends, boasting about the academic credentials, overstating marks secured in a competitive exam.

Example - A Mutual Fund company runs a long advertisement on television, but ends the commercial with a disclaimer mentioned very quickly which can hardly be understood by the audience – ‘Mutual funds are subject to market risk. Read all scheme-related documents carefully.’



Example - Companies routinely print large newspaper advertisements offering attractive discounts to the customers. However, there will be a disclaimer in very small font, that is hardly visible - *Conditions apply*.

Example - Tobacco companies printed the regulatory disclaimer warning that ‘Smoking is injurious to health’ in extremely small font, which did not serve the intended purpose of warning the potential consumers. The government had to therefore intervene and specify that the tobacco product packaging is required to display graphic health warnings covering 85% of the principal display area of the package.



4. Red Lies - Red lies are about spite and revenge. They are driven by the motive to harm others even at the possible expense of harming oneself. When we are angry at others, perhaps because of a long feud or where we feel they have wronged us in some way, we feel a sense of betrayal and therefore seek to harm them without thought of consequence. For instance, we may meticulously plan and lie only to spoil someone’s reputation or cause him significant financial loss or any other serious inconvenience.

Understanding the different types of lies can thus help us recognize when we or others are being deceptive and make more informed choices about honesty and integrity in our interactions.

Dhaarmic Dilemma

Having understood different types of lies, let us evaluate certain circumstances in life wherein we may face a serious ‘Dhaarmic’ dilemma. Let us look at two such situations.

Situation 1 - Imagine you are standing at a road junction. You see a goat running in a certain direction out of desperation and fear. You see two men far behind trying to chase the goat – they have a butcher knife in their hands. They come towards you and inquire about the goat. If you say the truth, they are bound to find the goat and kill it.



In such a case, should you point towards the opposite direction? Should you just keep quiet and feign ignorance? Would your response change if the two people were chasing a young girl with the objective of kidnapping her?

Situation 2 - During the great war of Mahabharatha, after Bheeshma's death, Dronacharya became the Commander-in-Chief of the Kaurava army. Dronacharya was a formidable warrior who had to be removed from the battlefield to secure victory for the Pandavas. The following events unfolded on the battlefield.



Sri Krishna - It is impossible to get rid of Drona, so long he is armed. The only way to remove Drona is to convince him that his son, Aswathama is dead. Acharya Drona has only one weakness – his son. If he believes that his son is dead, he will drop his weapons and then we can get rid of him.

Arjuna - I beg your pardon. But I cannot use unfair means to kill my teacher and I do not want to win this war at the cost of incurring a sin.

Sri Krishna – Arjuna, you are unable to think through the broader objective which is to ensure that 'Dharma' prevails.

Krishna to Yudhisthir – If there is anyone who can help Dharma today, it is you. You are the epitome of Dharma and righteousness and hence Dharma is looking up to you for an answer. Ironically, you will have to tweak Dharma to restore it. Will you help?

Yudhisthir - If no other way to restore Dharma is open, I will carry the weight of this sin on my shoulders.

Final Thoughts



Krishna to Bheema (pointing towards an elephant) - Do you know the name of that Elephant?

Bheema - I do. His name is Ashwatthama.

Bheema goes ahead and kills the elephant. Then he moves to the center of battlefield and announces that he had killed "Ashwatthama." A distressed Drona, refused to believe him. He turned towards Yudhisthir.

Drona to Yudhisthir - I have not come here to seek your blessings, O Yudhisthir. I have come here for the truth.

Is it true that my son, Ashwatthama is no more?

Yudhisthir - अश्वत्थामा हतः! (and then he murmured) नरोवा कुंजरोवा! [Ashwatthama is dead (and then he murmured) I don't know if it is a 'Man' or an 'Elephant']

A shaken Drona lost the will to fight. He listened only with half ear and lost the will to live. He dropped his weapons and sat down. On the instructions of Sri Krishna, Dronacharya was then easily killed.

It is best to not speak any kind of lie – White, Black, Grey or Red.

It is rather easy to avoid White lies only by being conscious about it and choosing our words appropriately. If you would not like to join for lunch you can still excuse yourself politely mentioning that it is getting late and you will join possibly next time, rather than speaking a straight lie, even though it may be harmless.

Avoiding Black and Grey lies greatly builds your credibility. It is a great accomplishment in life to be able to generate the 'Trust' wherein your words are seamlessly accepted by others. This happens only by consistent track record over a long period of time. Yudhistir had built it!

Unfortunately, some of us develop the tendency to keep lying almost unnecessarily without a clear motive or reason – it becomes an intrinsic part of our nature. We should absolutely avoid developing such habit which compromises our credibility.

The Shaastras also advise that it is best to speak less. The more we speak, greater the chances of we explicitly or subtly lying. However, at times, mere silence amounts to lying when the circumstances of the case are such that the individual has a duty to speak and inform the other party of the facts.

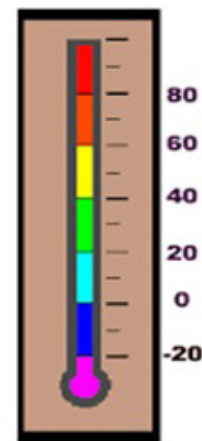
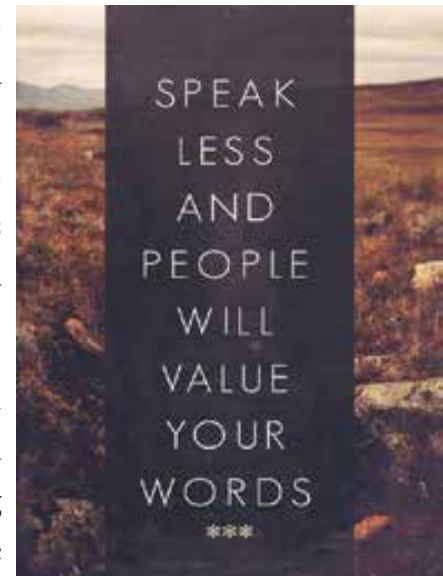
Speaking the truth is applicable in all circumstances across all our relationships. It is best to avoid saying a lie even to a young child which may otherwise seem absolutely harmless. Lying to children can erode their trust. Kids whose parents frequently lie to them are more likely to lie to their parents later in life. One can still warn the child without speaking a lie.

At times, we find ourselves in stressful situations wherein we almost inadvertently say a lie. It is important to avoid doing so. One can rather be diplomatic without saying a straight lie. For example, on arriving late to office, the Manager asks the employee – “Why did you report late to office?” Rather than fabricating a straight lie that he was trying to help an accident victim on the road, the employee can rather give a vague answer - “Sir, I started late from my house”, as it is obligatory for him to give a response the question.

We need to develop the internal resolve to always speak the ‘Truth’ and consistently follow it. Research shows that people with a tendency to conceal the truth are more preoccupied with their lie and experience higher levels of negative emotions and lower life and relationship satisfaction. Being truthful is something appreciated by everyone, and when others know we are honest towards them, we build a trusting relationship where others know they can look to us for honesty. In the long term, sooner or later, truth does triumph. It is rightly said - सत्यमेव जयते (Satyameva Jayate), that is Truth always prevails (wins).

However, similar to other aspects of Dharma, Satya also cannot be viewed with a binary lens. None is at 0% and none at 100%. As discussed, each lie can also vary in its Impact (White / Grey / Black / Red) thus resulting in varying shades of Adharma. A White lie is definitely at a lower level of Adharma than a Red lie. The two dharmic dilemmas outlined are also interesting case studies on how we should view the ‘Right’ and ‘Wrong’ in a given complex circumstance. The purity of ‘Intent’, devoid of any conflict of interest plays a pivotal role in determining the same.

In the scale of 0-100% it should thus be our endeavor to constantly keep moving up, adopting ‘Satya’ or ‘Truth’ in our everyday lives.



Let's talk about these



1. Differentiate between 'Gunas' & 'Doshas' of one's speech.
2. How are lies classified based on the 'Objective'? Elaborate.
3. How are lies classified based on the 'Impact'? Elaborate.
4. Quote the shloka along with its significance which advises us to avoid speaking truth harshly.
5. Quote the shloka along with its significance that has been etched on the walls of the Indian Parliament regarding Satya.
6. You speak a lie – need to further lie to cover up your previous lie, leading to a knot. Develop a short story based on your own life experience.
7. Do you think 'Yudhishtra' spoke 'Satya', when he said – "Aswaththama is dead (and then murmured) I don't know if it is a Man or an Elephant".

Let's do these exercises



a. Fill in the blanks:

1. सत्यम् यथार्थे वान्मनसे(Satyam Yataarth Vaanga-manase) means _____.
2. It is easy to find sycophants around us but difficult to find both – one who is willing to _____ and one who is willing to _____ constructive criticism.
3. Shaastras advises us to speak Satya based on what we have _____, _____ & _____.
4. सत्यमेव जयते(Satyameva Jayate) means _____.
5. _____ lies are driven by the motive of spite & revenge.

b. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. White lie is more deceptive than Black lie as it has an intention to conceal a wrongdoing.
2. Lying is a vicious cycle and speaking the truth helps to break it.




3. Mere silence amounts to lying when the circumstances are such that one ought to speak up and put forth the facts.
4. Usage of ornamental language by poets is considered Asatya.
5. It is easy to follow 'Satya' at all times in our everyday life.

Let's have fun



Honesty vs. Dishonesty

	Others will feel:	Others will think I am:	The outcome will be:
If I am honest 			
If I am NOT honest			

8

PANCHA MAHA YAJNYA MEDITATION – 2

Expected learning outcome

Students practise the art of controlling the mind through meditation

Nani was explaining to Agasti about Meditation– the first Pancha Maha Yajnya. Agasti had numerous queries on how to control the Mind.

Agasti – Theoretically, I agree that our soul controls the mind. During meditation, we should ensure that our mind focuses only on Ishvar. But, still, I am just not able to do it.

Nani – I can understand what you are going through. This is definitely a tough process and requires a lot of practice to achieve the desired state. But, do you realize that on many occasions you are able to completely control your mind and ensure high levels of concentration on a single activity, without thinking about anything else?

Agasti – Can you give a hint?

Nani – Think about exams!

Agasti – Oh yes! When I prepare well for an exam, I get completely engrossed in answering the question paper. I neither look here nor there. I do not even realize how the three hours pass by, as I am so involved in the process.

Nani – Exactly, this is akin to meditation, which is a high level of concentration on a particular aspect as decided by the soul.



Nani – Let us look at another example. What would be your state of mind, if you had the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister of India for 10 minutes?

Agasti – I will obviously be very excited.

Nani – During the 10-minute meeting with him, your mind will not wander anywhere. You will be completely living those 10-minutes in that room, intensely looking at the PM, hearing him speak or asking him anything that you wish to. You will definitely not be thinking about the movie that you are planning to watch the next day!

Agasti – I agree. It will be like a dream come true for me.

Nani – Now, Ishvar is far more powerful than the Prime Minister of any country, isn't it?

Agasti – Yes. Ishvar is all-powerful.

Nani – So, when you meet Ishvar during the meditation sessions, you need to internalize the thought that you are meeting the most valuable force—Ishvar Himself. You need to generate an internal sense of respect and love for Him.

Nani – One more apt way to increase your concentration is to set aside your own existence. For a few moments, go back in your life. Visualize that you were a young child of primary school. Before that, you were a tiny tot at kindergarten. Going back further, you were a small baby who crawled, and before that, you were a newborn baby in your mother's arms. Prior to that, you were in your mother's womb, and before that, your body did not exist at all. But your soul was always present.

If there is no body, there are no worldly relationships—father, mother, teacher, brother, sister etc. Our relationship exists with this world only because our body is physically present. In a way, you completely detach yourselves from this world. When you build such a scenario mentally, you will see only one relationship which always existed—in the past, present and future, which is the relationship of your soul with Ishvar.

Agasti – This is very interesting. But isn't this scary?

Nani – Absolutely not. This is just recognizing the truth. You are only going back and realizing that at a point in time, your body never existed. There is yet another practical way to control your mind. Imagine that you are in a deep space and there is darkness all around. The moment your mind wanders away to any worldly object, remind yourself you are in the deep space with nothing around.

Nani – Also, before you meditate, you should practise Pranayama a few times. This also helps control the mind. Pranayama is a Sanskrit word which literally translates into “extension of the prana or breath.” The physical manifestation of ‘Prana’ is breath and ‘Ayama’ means to extend or draw out the breath. Prana is the link between mind and the soul.

Agasti – I am quite confused about Pranayama as well. There are so many different types.

Nani – That is true. But there are different types of Pranayama prescribed under ‘Yog Darshan’, which helps in meditation.

बाह्याभ्यन्तरस्तम्भवृत्तिः देशकालसंख्याभिः परिदृष्टो दीर्घसूक्ष्मः

Yog Darshan | Chapter 2 | Sutra 50

“Baahya Aabhyantar Stambhavritti Desh-kaala-
sankhyaabhihi paridrishto deergha-sookshamaha”

Of them, the first three can be learnt and practised rather easily. They are

‘Baahya’ (बाह्य) Pranayama	<i>You exhale completely through your nostrils and hold your breath in that position until you feel uncomfortable. Then inhale gradually. After breathing normally a few times, repeat the Pranayama.</i>
‘Aabhyantar’ (आभ्यन्तर) Pranayama	<i>Fill your lungs with as much air as you can possibly take in. Retain it internally, till you feel uncomfortable and then exhale gradually. After breathing normally a few times, repeat the Pranayama.</i>
‘Stambhavritti’ (स्तम्भवृत्तिः) Pranayama	<i>During your natural breathing process, just stop all of a sudden and hold your breath in the same position. Neither inhale nor exhale. Once you feel uncomfortable, start the normal breathing process again. After breathing normally a few times, repeat the Pranayama.</i>

Note: Breathe through your nostrils, with minimal sound while inhaling or exhaling. It should be very subtle. The person sitting next to you should also not be able to hear the sound. Your body, especially your shoulder and neck should be absolutely stationary.

When the breath wanders, the mind is unsteady, but when the breath is still, so is the mind.

Nani – Meditation is like a multivitamin for your mind. It reduces stress and anxiety. It improves focus, attention, and ability to work under pressure. Meditation provides mental strength, resilience and emotional intelligence. It also improves learning, memory and self-awareness.

Agasti – Wow, so many benefits!

Agasti – Let me also compare this to the 4 parameters that you laid out

1. It is **‘Universally applicable’** – Anyone sitting in any part of the world can identify a quiet place and meditate. 7.5 billion people on Earth can practise it every day.
2. It is **‘Simple’** – One is not required to spend any money and it is not complicated. It however, requires enormous effort in terms of controlling our mind.
3. **‘Equality’** – There is no differentiation between people based on gender, caste or economic wealth. All can practise it.
4. **‘Conflict of interest’** – There is no conflict of interest. The practice of meditation immensely benefits our own lives.

Nani – Absolutely, it passes all the four tests. This is the first and the foremost MahaYajnya that we should all follow every day.

Let's talk about these

1. Think about how you could benefit from Meditation. Discuss with your classmates about it.
2. List the points one should keep in mind while practicing Pranayama.

Let's do these exercises



a. Tick the correct answers:

1. During meditation, we need to (**internalize** / **externalize**) the thought that we are meeting the most valuable force-Ishvar.
2. The Pranayama that involves filling the lungs with as much air as possible and then retaining it internally till you feel uncomfortable and then exhaling gradually is (**Stambhavritti** / **Aabhyantar**) .
3. Meditation (**does not** / **does help**) to reduce stress and anxiety.
4. Meditation (**requires** / **does not require**) spending money and is (**simple** / **complicated**).

v. Fill in the blanks:

1. One practical way to control our mind is to imagine that you are in _____ and there is _____ all around.
2. If there is no body, there are no _____. In such situation only the relationship of the _____ with Ishvar exists.
3. Pranayama means to _____.
4. During natural breathing when we _____ all of a sudden and neither _____ nor _____ and hold our breath in the same position, it is called Stambhavritti Pranayama.
5. Meditation is especially beneficial for a student as it improves _____, _____ and _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. One of the ways to increase our concentration during meditation is to nullify our existence through which we completely detach ourselves from the world.
2. Baahya pranayama involves exhaling completely and then holding the breath until you feel uncomfortable.
3. Everyone is not entitled to meditate, and it is possible only by the learned people.
4. During the practice of pranayama, we should breathe with minimal sound while inhaling or exhaling.

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the importance of cows in the human eco-system

Paatti (grandmother in Tamil) was explaining to Atharva, various ways in which cows are useful for humans. Apart from dairy products, the cow dung is also a rich source of manure, enabling farmers to return to 'organic farming.'

Paatti – We are now trying to come back to our roots. The Indian Government has also recently announced the launch of the 'Gobar Dhan' (Wealth from Cow Dung) scheme to manage and convert cattle dung into compost and bio-fuel.

Paatti – You will also be surprised to know that cow dung is an effective disinfectant. Many village homes are plastered with cow dung mixture, which keeps away insects, mosquitoes etc.



Atharva – Even mosquitoes?

Paatti – Yes. It is a natural mosquito repellent. Cow dung also acts as an insulator. When applied on the outside walls of a house, cow dung keeps heat out in the summer and holds it inside during winter.

Atharva (hesitatingly) – Is cow urine also useful?

Paatti (laughingly) – Yes it is. I know the young generation may find it difficult to believe or may even consider it disgusting. This is because you have never really lived with the cows in villages. You just get your readymade milk in packets delivered at your doorstep every morning.

Paatti – As per Vedas, cow urine has many medicinal properties, especially useful for immuno deficiency diseases. It has anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and antioxidant properties. Many people have used it as medicine and confirmed its effectiveness, though modern science has not yet researched this extensively. Research papers have not yet been published in the sophisticated journals emanating from the west.

Paatti – But I must add that modern science looked down upon Ayurveda as well, until a decade ago as something that is superstitious. But today, every major Multi National Company (MNC) is trying to sell soaps, detergents, hair oil, toothpaste etc. to us claiming that the ingredients are based on Ayurveda. Even in the case of ghee, modern science took a very negative view initially but now its advantages are being recognized. Yet another example is ‘Yoga’ which was initially written off, but has now become a fashion statement worldwide.

Paatti – Having said that, many people who believe in the effectiveness of cow urine are making a serious effort to document its medicinal properties, within the research framework prevalent globally. Indeed, two patents have already been registered in the US for cow urine distillate. (Patent numbers 6410059 and 6896907)

Paatti – A cow is thus immensely beneficial to humans, even after she stops giving us milk. Indeed, she is also useful to us after death.

Atharva – How is the cow useful to us after death?

Paatti – In many villages, once the cow dies, its hide is peeled off to make various products like shoes, jackets etc. This is ‘Ahimsa’ leather as the animal is not tortured and killed, but rather dies a natural death. Indeed, even the bones of dead cows are used by various industries, including pharmaceuticals. For instance, gelatin, a key element in capsules, is manufactured by processing the bones, skin and tissue of cattle.

Atharva – Is it fine to use some of these by-products after the death of a cow?

Paatti – If the cow dies naturally, then it is fine to use its by-products.

Atharva – What about milk? Isn't there cruelty involved in it? Isn't the milk meant for her calf?

Paatti – Designed by the Almighty, a cow produces far more milk than what can be consumed by her own calf. The calf on an average requires approximately 25% of the milk produced, along with other supplementary diet. We human beings should ensure that the calf gets adequate milk and only the remaining should be consumed by us. Also, we should not inject any hormones or cause any harm to the cow only to increase the yield of milk.

Atharva – Wow, paatti! I now understand why many people consider cow to be a maternal figure, a caretaker of her people.

Paatti – Yes. The Vedic literature refers to her as, ‘Gaumata’ (Mother cow) as she nourishes us in different ways. In the ancient days, the cow indeed was a symbol of wealth. She was considered an extended member of the family. She was not dumped, once she stopped giving milk.



Paatti – It is sad that today we have become very money-minded. We are just not bothered about the comfort of the cow. We only seek to extract the maximum possible milk from her. Once she stops giving milk, she is transported to the slaughter houses and brutally killed.

Atharva – Yes, paatti. I have seen cattle being carried in trucks. I have observed that they are tied together standing in cramped condition.

Paatti – This cruelty should definitely cease. Indeed, not just cows – no animal should be subjected to cruelty and pain. Non-violence towards all living beings is the highest virtue.

Atharva – Many people worship the cow during harvest festivals and on special occasions, like the house warming ceremony. Does Ishvar reside in a cow?

Paatti – Cow should be respected and treated well, but she is not Ishvar. Like the sun, moon, trees, wind, water etc., the cow is also a Devataa, i.e. one who ‘Gives’ us. But to elevate the cow to the status of Ishvar is questionable. Ishvar is as such present everywhere, in each minute particle, including the cow. Ishvar is the ultimate Supreme Force, who needs no protection from humans.

I only regret that many times we cause much inconvenience to the cow, in our enthusiasm to worship her. On special occasions, she is decked up and made to physically go from house to house. I am not sure if this is really helping the cow. On such occasions, We should instead strengthen our resolve to help cows lead a secure and comfortable life.

Atharva – How can we do that?

Paatti – You can decide to pay for the fodder for a cow. Also, you can be an activist trying to stop cruelty towards cows and all other animals.

You can also aim towards creating an eco-system, an age-old practice, wherein every village has a community grazing land (known as ‘Gauchar’) allotted by the government, for grazing of cattle. This ensures availability of green fodder for the cows and also brings down the maintenance cost. For instance, a group of citizens, led by Brij Narayan Kiradoo, a retired employee of the electricity department, secured nearly 10,000 acres of grazing land in Bikaner city (Rajasthan) in 2017, to establish a sustainable model for cow protection.

Let's talk about these

1. Apart from giving us milk, how is the ‘gaumata’ useful to us?
2. Write the uses of (a) cow dung (b) cow urine (c) bones of a cow.
3. Is it right to consume milk which the cow produces naturally for her calf? Give reasons.
4. What is Ahimsa leather?

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. In ancient days, the cow was a symbol of (**wealth** / **knowledge**).
2. A calf requires approximately (**50%** / **25%**) of the milk produced by the mother along with supplementary diet.
3. When cow dung is applied on the walls of a house, it keeps the heat out in the (**summer** / **winter**) and keeps the house warm during (**summer** / **winter**).
4. Non-violence towards all living beings is the highest (**virtue** / **vice**).
5. Today's world has become (**money** / **value**) oriented that we seek to extract the (**minimum** / **maximum**) milk from cows without bothering about their comforts.

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. A group of citizens led by Brij Narayan Kiradoo secured nearly 10,000 acres of grazing land in _____ to establish a _____.
2. Gelatin which is a key element in capsules is manufactured by processing the _____.
3. The Indian government has launched the 'Gobar Dhan' scheme to manage and convert _____ into _____.
4. The cow should be _____ as she is a _____, i.e., one who gives us.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. A community grazing land allotted by the government is called Gauchar.
2. 'Ahimsa' leather is not obtained by killing or torturing animals but from animals that have had a natural death.
3. As per Vedas, cow urine has many medicinal properties, especially useful for skin diseases.
4. Cow dung acts as an effective disinfectant and a natural mosquito repellent.

SWAMI DAYANAND SARASWATI - 3

Expected learning outcome

Students get inspired learning about the best personality traits of Swami Dayanand Saraswati

Swami Dayanand Saraswati left his home and wandered all over the country in search of Knowledge. He wanted to know about Ishvar, life, death and life after death. He visited temples, shrines and holy places. He met with Yogis living in the mountains or forests, asked them his questions about life and death, but nobody could provide him with convincing answers.

At last, Swamiji arrived at Mathura. He was 36 years old, and it was almost 14 years since he had left home in search of the Truth. He was advised to meet Swami Virjananda, the most learned Vedic scholar, even though he was blind. Swami Dayanand was extremely impressed by Swami Virjanand's profound knowledge. He became his disciple. Swami Virjananda directed him to learn directly from the Vedas so that he could interpret them the right way. Swami Dayanand found all his questions regarding life, death and after life answered during his study. Within a short span of time, Swami Dayanand Saraswati completed his education under the great guru, who then entrusted him with the task of spreading Vedic knowledge throughout the society.



Swamiji immersed himself in the mission, by visiting various cities and speaking on diverse platforms highlighting the true interpretation of the Vedas.

He was a social reformer who patiently kept following the path of dharma, opposing various social evils, such as idol worship, caste by birth, Sati, the expulsion of widows, and the

exclusion of females from the study of the Vedas. He preached that we should worship One Formless, Just, Ishvar. He opposed polytheism by telling people the true meaning of the names of Ishvar and established how all of them pointed at one and the same Ishvar - the Supreme Self.

One of Swami Dayanand's major arguments for 'Going back to the Vedas' was that they are repositories of Knowledge and Truth, given by Ishvar to human beings. They are absolutely free of error, and have Supreme and Ultimate authority.

Further, Swamiji was deeply patriotic and was against foreign rule. He was the first to give the call for Swarajya "India for Indians" in 1876, later taken up by Lokamanya Tilak.

Swamiji was open to feedback. Before his tour of Bengal, Swamiji had always held his discourses and debates in Sanskrit. While this gained him respect among the learned, it prevented him from spreading his message to the masses. Swamiji (mother tongue was Gujarati) changed to Hindi, and as a result, his ideas of reform began to circulate among all sections of the society.

On 7 April 1875, Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj, meaning "society of the nobles". He wrote the book '**Satyarth Prakash,**' meaning '**The Light of Truth**' which is considered one of his major scholarly works for the masses. The book mainly deals with the reformist policies he advocated on a range of topics including Ishvar, Dharma, the Soul, Philosophy, Education, Government and indeed also has a comparative study of different faiths.

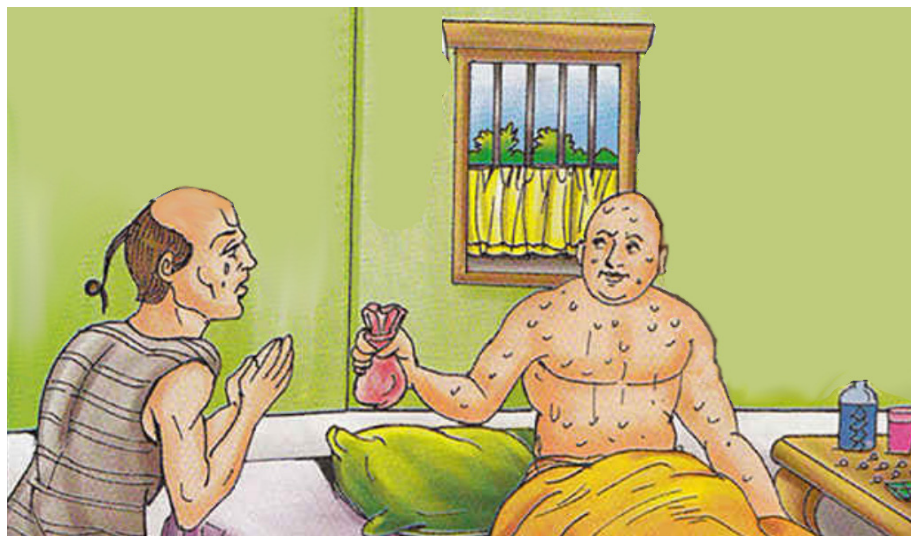
Swamiji was vocal in his criticism of meaningless religious practices. He argued that Ishvar has no shape, and therefore, idols should not be worshipped. The temples instead should be centres of spiritual learning wherein people should learn about the Vedas. This was not acceptable to some people. But none of them could logically oppose his arguments either. Some of them secretly began to plan his murder.

He was poisoned 17 times during his life! Once, he was poisoned in the city of Anoop-Shahar, Uttar Pradesh. A priest gave him poison mixed with betel leaves. Swamiji realized that he has been poisoned. He removed the poison by cleansing his body through various yogic practices. The Tehsildar of the city, also a devotee of Swamiji, arrested the priest. He asked Swamiji to punish him. To everyone's utter surprise, Swamiji said: "Oh Tehsildar! Please release him. My mission is to help people attain freedom from various vices and superstitions that exist in society; instead, how can I be instrumental in getting him into shackles?"

However, the killers, gained an upper hand. Swamiji went to Jodhpur on invitation from the Maharaja. It was the night of 20th September 1883. Swamiji drank some milk and went to bed. At about midnight he felt a severe pain in the stomach. When he woke up, Swamiji realised that he had been poisoned. Immediately he vomitted a couple of times, but it was of no avail. The poison had already entered the blood and spread throughout his body and caused a severe burning sensation. Doctors were called in, but his condition did not improve. Days passed by.



Seeing the sores with blood oozing out of Swamiji's body, his cook, Dhaul Mishra could not control his grief. One day he approached Swamiji and said, "I listened to traitors and mixed powdered glass with your milk. I have committed a heinous sin! Please forgive me." He said this and broke down. Dayanand consoled him with the words, "What was to happen has happened?" He then placed two hundred rupees in his hands and said, "If the Maharaja comes to know of this, you will be in trouble. So go away to distant Nepal. Let this money be with you for your journey." He sent away the cook to a place of safety.



Swamiji was moved to Mount Abu for further treatment, and from there to Ajmer. But no effort could save him. On 30th October 1883, Deepavali day, he had a shave and bath and lay down on his bed. He called his disciples to his bedside and took a last look all of them with a benevolent smile. He then recited the Gayatri Mantra and closed his eyes. It was six in the evening. He recited the word 'Om', and then breathed his last.

Dayanand was a great philosopher, a logician, a magnificent speaker, social reformer, patriot, a sage; he was the embodiment of pure and noble conduct. He taught people to think independently and fearlessly. Swami Dayanand Saraswati was a great Rishi. He chose a very difficult life for the well-being of mankind.

Let's talk about these

1. "Dayanand's life was a battle between truth and untruth almost all the time." Share your thoughts on this statement.
2. Talk about an incident in Dayanand's life that inspired you. Why?
3. Share your plan as to how you would like to take forward the "Vedic values".
4. List a few social evils that Swami Dayanand opposed.
5. Name a few topics covered in 'Satyarth Prakash'.

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answer:

1. (Dayanand Saraswati / Lokamanya Tilak) was the first to give the call for Swaraj.
2. Dayanand (punished / pardoned) the cook who had poisoned him.
3. At the age of (36 / 18), he met (Swami Poornananda / Swami Virjanand) who was the most learned scholar.
4. The last word uttered by him was (Om / Brahma).
5. The most famous book written by Dayanand was (Experiments with Truth / The Light of Truth).

b. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. Dayanand preached that we should worship One Formless, Just, Ishvar and he strongly opposed polytheism.
2. Dayanand held his discourses and debates in Sanskrit which was widely understandable by the masses.
3. Dayanand died on the 30th of October 1883 which was a Deepavali day.

4. Dayanand advocated that temples should be centres of spiritual learning where people should learn Vedas.
5. Dayanand gave Rs. 1000 to the cook so that he could run away to Nepal and escape the repercussions of poisoning him.

Let's have fun



Imagine, if Swamiji came to meet you today, what would you talk to him about? Write down your thoughts.

Expected learning outcome

Students understand the best way to be hopeful is to do something to change the situation.

One fine day, Biren was walking down the lane in Tezpur (Assam). He noticed a blind man trying to cross a road. He felt pity and promptly helped him. Back home...

Biren – **Koka** (*grandfather in Assamese*), I helped a blind man cross the road today.

Koka – That is good karma.

Biren – I feel so sad for the blind.. They have no future.

Koka – Yes. They do have a very tough life. However, some of them are still able to fight all odds and come up in life. They may indeed end up doing much better than those who are blessed with a healthy body, with all the organs working properly.

Biren – Well, how can they ever be able to do so?

Koka – Let me tell you about Srikanth Bolla who was born blind in the year 1992, into a family of agriculturists in Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Biren – Oh my God! So, he never had the opportunity to see the world at all.

Koka – Yes. That's true. His parents were poor financially, but rich at heart. They did not heed to any of the 'advice' they received and raised him with love and affection. As he grew, his parents admitted him in a local school in Machilipatnam. The school was five kms away and he had to make his way on foot. He did this for two years.

However, he was not happy there - "No one acknowledged my presence. I was put in the last bench. I could not participate in the PT class. That was the time in my life I thought

I was the poorest child in the world. It was not because of lack of money but because of loneliness.”

Koka – His father therefore shifted him to Hyderabad’s Devnar School for the Blind. The Young Srikanth thrived in the compassion he was shown there. He not only learnt to play chess and cricket, but excelled in them. He was guided and mentored by his special needs teacher, Swarnalatha. Srikanth soon cleared the Andhra Pradesh class X state board exams with over 90 percent marks, but the board said he could only take Arts subjects in Class XI because of his disability. He was denied admission to the Science stream.

Biren – How can they do that?

Koka – Exactly! Srikanth decided to fight for it. He sued the Government and fought for six months. In the end, he got a Government Order stating that he could take the science subjects but at his ‘own risk’. A determined Srikanth worked day and night and managed to secure 98 percent in the XII board exams.

Biren – Fantastic. What did he decide to do after Class XII?

Koka – Srikanth applied for IIT and other top engineering colleges in India. However, he could not secure admission in any of them, because he was blind. He then tried exploring options to study in the US. He was fortunately selected by the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He went on to become the first international blind student to be admitted to MIT in the school’s history.

Biren – It is sad that he was not accepted by the top Indian universities.

Koka – Yes, that is right. The top Indian universities have comparatively limited resources with a very high number of applicants. They were not able to accommodate the needs of differently-abled people. Hopefully, we as a country can soon do that.

Biren – So, what happened once he went to study at MIT?

Koka – It wasn’t easy adjusting to life there initially, but he soon started to do well. Towards the end of his course when the ‘what next’ question came up, he was in a dilemma. He could have easily taken a job in corporate America and settled down there. However, the love for his country and the strong urge to ‘give back’ brought him to India.

Koka – In 2013, pooling together a few lakh rupees, Bolla embarked on his entrepreneurial journey and set up Bollant Industries Ltd to manufacture eco-friendly disposable products like plates and cups made out of natural leaf (eg: Areca palm leaves) and recycled paper.

Biren – So, it is an environment friendly alternative to plastic plates and cups.

Koka – Absolutely. Srikanth thought to himself -

“Many questions bothered me. Why should a disabled child be pushed to the back row in the class? Why should the 10 percent of the disabled population of India be left out of the Indian economy? Why can't they make a living, like everyone else, with dignity?”



Today, Srikanth runs Bollant Industries Limited as its CEO, with seven factories and a turnover of over Rs. 100 crores, employing over 650 people. Bollant's larger mission is to generate employment opportunities for millions of differently-abled people, who are mostly uneducated and unskilled. Nearly half of Bollant's own workforce is differently-abled men and women.

Biren – Wow! That is truly great.

Koka - Born blind, entrepreneur Srikanth Bolla has opened the world's eyes by triumphing against all the odds. His entire life is a testimony to the manner in which he has defied considerable odds and driven change — in his own life and in those of others.

Koka – In his critical journey, Srikanth found one unflinching support, an anchor to keep him afloat—Swarnalatha – his special needs teacher in school. She has been his mentor and guide through all these years. When Srikanth started Bollant Industries, she became the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the company. She now trains all the employees with disabilities at Bollant, thereby creating a strong community where they feel valued.

Biren – This is amazing.

Koka – Yes – a beautiful relationship of mutual respect between the Guru and the shishya. Swarnalatha often remarks – *“Srikanth is a true source of my inspiration.”*



BOLLANT
where everyone counts

He is not only my young friend and protégé but is also my mentor who teaches me daily that anything is possible, if you set your mind to it.”

Koka - The boy who was born blind, is today showing many, the path to real happiness. Srikanth also co-founded ‘**Samanvai**’, a centre for children with multiple disabilities, helping them get over their many challenges. “Isolation of differently abled persons starts from childhood and continues all through life,” says Srikanth Bolla, perhaps remembering his own experiences.



**Swarnalatha - Srikanth Bolla's
compassionate guru**

Koka – The story of Srikanth teaches us that we do not need eyes to see the visions of our future but only courage and patience. We sometimes feel that whatever Ishvar has bestowed on us is not good enough. We have a number of complaints like “life is not fair”, “we are not getting what we want”, “no one is supporting us”, “we do not have feasible opportunities” etc. These are only excuses. But, when you have a strong determination, you can see only opportunities and not problems. Anything is possible if you set your mind to it. We have to change our mindset.

Biren – Did he always dream big since childhood?

Koka – Yes Biren. Once, when Srikanth was in Class IX, he had a chance to briefly interact with the then President of our country, APJ Abdul Kalam who was visiting Andhra Pradesh. He remarked to him - “I want to be the first visually impaired President of India”.

Srikanth Bolla is standing tall today living by his conviction that if the “world looks at me and says, ‘Srikanth, you can do nothing,’ I look back at the world and say I can do anything.”

Srikanth Bolla's life can best be summed up in the tagline of his company, Bollant Industries – ‘**Where everyone counts**’.

(Acknowledgement – Various articles available electronically on yourstory.com; hindubusinessline.com; thinkmust.com)

Let's talk about these

1. Srikanth is the epitome of firm determination and strong will. Elucidate.
2. What made Srikanth work against all odds in his life?
3. How can a Guru impact the life of his / her Shisya and help in bringing about a change in the society?
4. Interpret the tagline, "Where everyone counts".

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Srikanth hails from a family of (**agriculturists** / **craftsmen**).
2. After completing his studies, Srikanth decided to (**take up a job in Corporate America** / **become an entrepreneur in India**).
3. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Bollant Industries Ltd (**Swarnalatha** / **Srikanth**) was his (**teacher/aunt**).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Srikanth was selected by _____ for pursuing his higher studies.
2. Bollant Industries Ltd manufactures _____ made out of _____ and _____.
3. The main mission of the Bollant's Industries is to _____.
4. We don't require eyes to see visions for our future; we need only _____ and _____.
5. Srikanth co-founded _____ which is a centre for _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. The top Indian universities could not admit Srikanth due to limited resources which were not sufficient to meet the needs of differently-abled people.
2. Srikanth's financial condition made him feel that he was the poorest child in the world.
3. Srikanth expressed his desire to become the first visually challenged President of India to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.
4. Srikanth studied in the Hyderabad's Devnar School for the Blind where he got the opportunity to learn and excel in chess and cricket.

Let's think



Sahana happened to visit a school for special children. She was quite sad on seeing their lives surrounded by darkness and desolation. She immediately decided to do something to impact their lives and make them feel happy and cheerful. Put yourself in Sahana's shoes and pen down your thoughts and ideas on how you can help these differently-abled children.

Expected learning outcome

Students know the importance of understanding the rationale behind beliefs

In their previous class, the students had an interesting conversation with the teacher on various beliefs in society – not cutting hair or nails on particular days of the week, black cats crossing the path, certain numbers being lucky. Children had many more questions....

Rohit – Ma'am, I recently overheard my grandfather fixing the marriage date for my uncle. He was very particular about it being on certain auspicious dates. Is there any logic behind this?

Teacher – Rohit, this is a very tricky topic. There are indeed many beliefs around holding functions including marriages on specific dates. But, I must add that different cultures have different ways of determining auspicious dates. These cultures - Hindu, Chinese, Catholic, Scottish, Irish, English, Ancient Roman, Moroccan culture, etc., both favour and avoid particular months and dates for functions.

Rohit – This is interesting. So there is no uniformity on this front between different cultures?

Teacher – No. For instance, some cultures deem January 1st to be very auspicious as it is the start of the new calendar year; a few others consider Dec 31st as very auspicious since it is the last day of the year!

Teacher – Now, clearly, given that different cultures around the world consider different days as auspicious, it does create a doubt as to what is the truth. Every belief cannot be true, since Ishvar will not distinguish auspicious or inauspicious days, between people with different religious beliefs. Also, there are some people who believe that all days are equal, as each day is designed by Ishvar. They indeed schedule functions on so called 'inauspicious'

days so that they are able to get various services – marriage halls, caterers, decorators etc. at cheaper rates, due to comparatively lower demand on those days.

Teacher – Thus, there is great uncertainty on this front. You will need to decide for yourself and arrive at a conclusion.

Teacher – Travel is yet another aspect wherein people have different kinds of beliefs. Once again there is no uniformity. Many believe that they should never start traveling on Friday. But then there are so many people around the world who travel on Fridays for a short weekend break. It is generally difficult to get train or flight tickets on Fridays.

Mukesh – Also, my uncle, never concludes his journey on a Tuesday. He will plan his trip such that he does not return to the city on a Tuesday. Also, he believes that it is not considered good, when someone who goes on a journey return for something that he/she has forgotten.

Shekar – Ma'am, I have another question. My mother sometimes breaks a coconut just in front of our house. She says that it is for my well-being. Is this logical?

Teacher – What eventually happens to the coconut after she breaks it?

Shekar – It rots out there and is finally thrown in the dustbin. Rag pickers also do not collect them fearing consumption of such coconuts could lead to ill-health.

Rohit – Ma'am, but I know of an old uncle who is my neighbour. He often picks up these coconuts from the road and uses it to make delicious chutney. He says that he has been picking up such coconuts for the past 30 years! He feels that he can avoid these coconuts from being thrown into the dustbin. He donates the money he saves from these 'free' coconuts to buy fruits for children in a nearby orphanage.

Teacher – It is indeed a very different perspective!

Shekar – Ma'am, is there any specific reason why only coconuts are broken after the pooja?

Teacher – A coconut is considered a pure thing that can be offered. The water and the white kernel inside the coconut are unadulterated, as it is covered by the hard outer shell. Also, the breaking of coconut apparently symbolizes the breaking of our ego. It also symbolizes the overcoming of obstacles.



Mukesh – Ma'am, I have also seen coconut being offered in Agnihotra.

Teacher – Yes, that's right. Some people do so as its essence spreads in the atmosphere in gaseous form and is beneficial for all living beings when they inhale the purified air.

Sohin – Ma'am, is there an auspicious time during the day to begin a specific activity?

Teacher – Once again, people across the world have different beliefs with no uniformity. However, some believe that all times of the day are good, as it is created by Ishvar.

But almost all cultures do consider early mornings to be better. This is also true scientifically. Studying in the morning is the best as the fresh mind can absorb better than a tired one. Our brain is programmed in such a way that when we wake up in the morning our stress level is at its least compared to the rest of the day. Also, the pollution level is the least in the morning; the percentage of ozone is the highest in this time span (i.e. – early morning) which is considered good for our health.

Teacher – To conclude, my dear students, closely observe various rituals and beliefs that we follow. Do discuss the rationale with your parents. I am sure some of them have a compelling logic and you should always follow them in your lives. However, always be ready to accept the truth and renounce the untruth.

Think and answer

1. What do you think is the best part of the day to begin your activities? Justify
2. Shruthi considers breaking Coconuts/Pumpkins on the roads a risk to other people, but her grandmother insists on performing the ritual. Help Shruthi to put across her case to her grandma.
3. You have to report at the Airport at 10 a.m, to take a flight. If you leave home at 8 a.m, you will reach the airport on time and will also not waste time waiting at the airport. But your Grandfather insists that you leave home before 9 a.m or after 9 p.m as he feels the time is not auspicious between 9 a.m and 9 p.m What would be your stance on this? Justify.

SIACHEN: THE WORLD'S HIGHEST BATTLEFIELD

Expected learning outcomes

Students:

- understand that perseverance is necessary to achieve success.
- understand the challenges and hardships of a soldier's life.

*It was February 2016. Surya had to read the news in the morning assembly at school. He eagerly picked up the morning newspaper and read the main headline aloud: "Siachen survivor Lance Naik Hanumanthappa passes away." What is this about? he wondered. He asked his **jejema** (grandmother in Odia).*

Surya – Where is this Siachen, jejema? What exactly happened there?

Jejema – Siachen is a massive glacier located in the eastern Karakoram Range in the Himalayas, near the Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan. It is a triangular region at the height of 20,000 ft above sea level.



Surya – What is this Line of Control?

Jejema – Line of Control (LoC) refers to the military control line between the Indian and Pakistani controlled parts of Jammu and Kashmir—a line which does not constitute a legally recognized international boundary, but is the de facto border. Pakistan illegally occupies the PoK- Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

Surya – So, Pakistan militarily controls a specific part of Jammu and Kashmir.

Jejema – That is true Surya. Also, the Line of Control is now practically the border. India has been building fences on its own side of LoC to ensure that no one is able to cross into India from Pakistan.

Surya – You mentioned that Siachen is at a height of 20,000 ft. Must be a great hill station.

Jejema – Surya, 20,000 ft is about 6000 metres, i.e. 6 km above the sea level! The highest hill stations in the world do not exceed a height of 4,000 metres. Siachen is indeed considered the highest battlefield in the world. Temperature falls to 60 degrees below zero there. Only 10 percent of oxygen is available there, compared to what is available to us on the plains.

Surya – But then why are we human beings fighting with each other in such a remote area?

Jejema – This is indeed very sad. The conflict in Siachen stems from the incomplete demarcated territory on the map of this region. After the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971, an agreement was signed between the two countries, which came to be known as the Shimla Agreement, but it failed to clearly mention who controlled the glacier.

It was presumed there would be no dispute between India and Pakistan over such a cold and barren region. They were wrong. In the early 1980s, on the pretext of climbing the high peaks on this glacier, Pakistan sent expeditions with permits issued by the Government of Pakistan. The idea was to reinforce claim on the area, as these expeditions arrived with a formal permit obtained from the Government of Pakistan. In 1984, when the Pakistan army attempted to move into the region, India launched a successful military operation and has since maintained control over all of Siachen Glacier. India now has thousands of soldiers who are stationed in Siachen to protect our control over this region. Over the years, control over Siachen has assumed strategic importance from multiple perspectives.



While we lead a comfortable life in cities, our soldiers there struggle every day. They are at the risk of getting frostbite if their bare skin touches any metal object for more than 15 seconds. Fainting spells and pounding headaches are frequent. Soldiers who stay at that altitude for long suffer from weight loss, loss of appetite, sleep disorders and memory loss. Speech blurring is obvious. At Siachen, rations come out of tin cans. An orange or an apple can freeze to the hardness of a cricket ball in no time.

Surya – Oh my God! Life is so difficult there. And, what exactly happened there recently? (referring to the news article).

Jejema – The area is prone to avalanches (sliding of a mass of snow or ice rapidly down mountainside). Snowstorms can last for three weeks at a time. Winds can touch speeds of 100 mph in no time. On this fateful day, February 3, 2016, at about 5:00 A.M. there was a massive snow avalanche. A massive wall of ice came crashing down on ‘Sonam Post,’ manned by 10 soldiers of the Indian army. It all happened so quickly that none of them had time to react. All of them were buried under 35 feet of snow!

Surya – 35 feet means the height of a 3-storey building, isn’t it?

Jejema – Yes Surya, that was the quantum of ice that fell on the 10 soldiers at Sonam Post.

Surya – What happened next?

Jejema – One of the 10 soldiers, Lance Naik Hanumanthappa, managed to send a radio message to another Post, stating that they were buried under an avalanche. Search operations began in full swing. More than 200 soldiers dug, looking for survivors. Day after day, they carried on with the faint hope of finding their fellow army men. Finally, on the sixth day of what seemed like a hopeless task, they picked up a signal of body heat and a radio set. Drilling began with renewed vigour. Around 7.30 P.M. Hanumanthappa was found, severely dehydrated and in shock. He was immediately airlifted to New Delhi and admitted to the Military hospital. Though he was given the best possible medical treatment, he could not survive. After a few days of struggle, he passed away.



**Lance Naik
Hanumanthappa**

Surya – What about the other nine soldiers?

Jejema – They were also found dead in Siachen.

Jejema became emotional as she narrated the incident.

Jejema – There is a scroll of honour at the Siachen base camp remembering the supreme sacrifice of the Indian soldiers. It aptly reads: *“Quartered in snow, silent to remain, when the bugle calls, they shall rise and march again.”*

Surya went to school. As he read the headline in the assembly, *“Siachen survivor Lance Naik Hanumanthappa passes away,”* tears rolled down his cheek. Vande Mataram!

Fact search

Find out about 3 other difficult places where soldiers are posted.

Let's discuss

1. Go through the newspaper every day for a week and look for news about soldiers.
2. Explain the quote - *‘Quartered in snow, silent to remain, when the bugle calls, they shall rise and march again.’*

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. Soldiers at Siachen are at the risk of getting (**frostbite** / **hypothermia**) if their bare skin touches any metal object for more than (**15** / **30**) seconds.
2. In the Siachen region, only (**10%** / **40%**) of oxygen is available as compared to the plains.
3. A large glacier located in the eastern Karakoram Range in the Himalayas is (**Siachen** / **Lambert**).
4. Indo-Pakistan war was fought in (**1962** / **1971**) after which an agreement was signed which came to be known as (**Karachi Agreement** / **Shimla Agreement**).

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. Lance Naik Hanumanthappa sent a _____ to another Post stating that they were buried under an _____.
2. Line of Control (LoC) refers to the _____ between the Indian and Pakistani controlled parts of _____.
3. Soldiers staying at high altitudes frequently suffer from _____, _____, _____ and _____.
4. On February 3, 2016 there was a massive avalanche which came crashing down on _____.

c. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. India has been building fences on its own side of LoC to ensure that no one is able to cross into India from Pakistan.
2. The presumption that there would be no dispute between India and Pakistan over Siachen was proved wrong when Pakistan sent expeditions with permit from their Government.
3. Hanumanthappa was found severely dehydrated and in shock under an avalanche.
4. In 1984, when the Pakistan army attempted to move into Siachen, India launched a military operation which was unsuccessful.

Expected learning outcome

Students understand how the Almighty renders justice

Pitamaha (grandfather in Sanskrit) was explaining to Akash the theory around Karma – Result (Award), Consequence and Effect of Actions. Ishvar is Just. He gives results of our Actions and also compensates for any injustice meted out to us in our everyday lives. Akash had a few more questions....

Akash – How exactly does Ishvar give the result of our Actions?

Pitamaha – Our Actions keep getting accumulated. The result is given in three different ways – (i) Species (जाति); (ii) Age (आयु); (iii) Prosperity (भोग). The result of actions is also loosely referred to as ‘Fate’ in everyday parlance (Praarabdh | प्रारब्ध).

Akash – What does species mean?

Pitamaha – We all constantly go through the cycle of birth and death. There are innumerable species (living beings) that we see around us. Modern scientists have broadly estimated the number as 87 lakhs (8.7 million), though we still are unable to determine the exact number of species. The human species is just one amongst them. Now, based on Karma, Ishvar decides as to which species the soul should take birth into.

Pitamaha – Which is the best species of all?

Akash – We, human beings!

Pitamaha – Why do you say so?

Akash – We, human beings are the most powerful. We can think and make decisions. We can act independently. We can accumulate many comforts in life, unlike other creatures.

Pitamaha – Absolutely true! Ishvar has given us this birth as human because of our past good deeds. We should indeed be thankful for this.

Akash – So, this implies that if we commit evil deeds, then we will be born as other species- dog, cat, hen, goat, pig, mosquito etc.

Pitamaha – Yes Akash. As per Vedas, this is the truth. Based on our Actions, Ishvar decides the species that we are born as.

Akash – The second aspect you mentioned is age. So, is our longevity determined by the Almighty as result of our Actions?

Pitamaha – You need to understand this carefully. The longevity of a species is based on the body system provided by Ishvar. For instance, a tortoise lives for 150-200 years; humans typically live for 80-100 years; cows live for 18-20 years.

Pitamaha – Now, considering that we are born as humans, we generally live between 80 – 100 years, though some of us may die earlier, or may also live beyond 100! One's life span generally depends on how healthy his / her genes are. We find that some children have physical defects from birth, not enabling them to lead a healthy life. Some children have a flexible body, while others have a tendency to put on a lot of weight, thus leading to a comparatively lower longevity (आयुः). Remember, that it also depends a lot on how we maintain our health, post birth. For instance, if a perfectly healthy person starts to have too much of junk food and does not exercise, he is likely to fall ill frequently and his life span may decrease. Over here, it is a direct consequence of his actions, rather than Ishvar's reward.

Akash – I understand. What is the third aspect – Prosperity (भोग)?

Pitamaha – Two children are born on the same day at exactly the same time. One child is born to very pious, spiritual parents who are engaged in good deeds. The other child is born to parents who are rude, use foul language and indulge in evil deeds. One is born to middle class parents and has basic comforts of life; the other is born to extremely poor parents who are unable to provide even two square meals a day. Thus, there is a clear difference in the level of prosperity between the two, just-born children.

Pitamaha – Also, note that the Result or Award of an action is modified based on (i) Motive or Intent behind an action and (ii) Actual consequence of the action. We shall try to understand this with the help of examples:

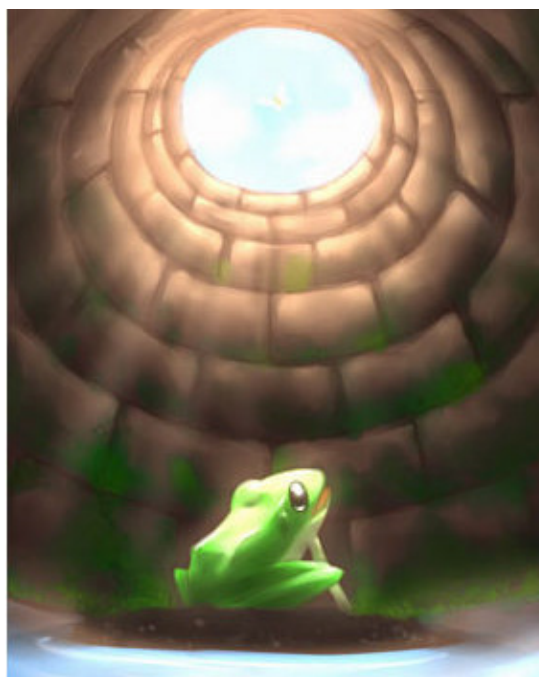
- When a soldier kills an enemy, he is rewarded by the nation. Here both the intent and the consequence of the act are favourable.

- When a terrorist kills a citizen, he is punished under the law. Here, both the intent and consequence of the act are evil.
- The doctor mistakenly gives a wrong medicine due to which a patient dies. In this case, his intent is good, that is to save the patient. However, due to unintentional ignorance, the consequence of his action which leads to the death, is unfavourable. Herein, Ishvar will punish him comparatively to a lesser extent.
- A doctor completely ignores the patient, due to non- receipt of his professional fees and the patient dies. The doctor will be liable for a much harsher punishment since both the motive and the consequence of the action are unpleasant in nature.
- X (a donor) gives Rs. 20,000/- as donation to an orphanage. Due to jealousy, Y (another donor) decides to give a donation of Rs. 30,000/- to prove his supremacy. Herein, the motive of Y is unpleasant though the consequence of this action, i.e. donation of money for a cause is good for the public.

Akash – It is quite fascinating to know how Ishvar renders justice. I have another question. So, let us assume that a child is born in an extremely poor family, which is the result of his past actions. In this case, why should we help the child? Are we not interfering in the Ishvar's process of administering justice?

Pitamaha – An interesting observation indeed! However, Ishvar has directed us to still go ahead and help the poor child. Doing so will enable us to accumulate good Karma providing us a sense of satisfaction and happiness .

The whole topic of Action-Award is very vast and complex. We are like frogs in a well. Our perspective about Karma-Result is limited only to our lifetime. We are unable to comprehend beyond that. Indeed, there are many other aspects in this universe, which we have not been able to fully understand. We still do not know how large this universe is? It still takes us several years to reach the nearest planets. The distance between the Earth and Sun alone is estimated at 150 million km (15~ crore kilometers). With our relatively lesser intellect, we can only understand the main issues as discussed above.



If a human being, having understood these broad principles, does noble acts and stays away from evil deeds, he will be able to lead a satisfying life. Ishvar, who is both just and compassionate will reward us accordingly.

Let's talk about these

1. Human beings are blessed with a life span of 80-100 years. But the quality of life decides our life span. Justify.
2. Our actions are accumulated in three different ways. What are they? Explain.
3. What should we do to live a satisfied life?
4. What is Fate (Praarabdh)?
5. Say if the intent and consequence of the actions given below are favourable or evil.
 - a. Helping your friend to copy in the exam.
 - b. Compelling a vegetarian friend to eat non-vegetarian food.
 - c. Punishing your brother for harming an animal.

Let's do these exercises

a. Fill in the blanks:

1. _____, _____ and _____ are the three different ways by which Ishvar gives us the Result of our Actions.
2. According to the Vedas, our _____ decide the form of our birth.
3. The result of an action is modified based on _____ and _____.

b. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false:

1. The level of prosperity is different between individuals.
2. Human beings are not special when compared to other species.
3. We should thank Ishvar for what he has given us.
4. The life span of a particular species is based on its physical structure.

DECODING CENTRAL CIVIL SERVICES OF INDIA

Expected learning outcome

Students become aware of various options available to serve the country by joining the Central Civil Services

The Civil Services of India runs the entire administration of the country. While the elected ministers lay down the broader policies in sync with aspirations of the people they represent, it is the officers of the Indian Civil Services who are in-charge of actual implementation. The civil service system is indeed the backbone of the administrative machinery of the country. The officers, also known as bureaucrats, remain politically neutral and guarantee administrative continuity to the ruling party that has been democratically voted into power during elections.

There are two broad types of Civil Services –

(a) **Civil Services (Central Govt.) –**

Appointed by the Central Government, these officers serve the Government of India in various capacities across the country. They are officially appointed by the President of India. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is responsible for recruitment to the various

Civil Services in the Government of India. UPSC conducts the Civil Services Examination (CSE), one of the toughest nationwide competitive examinations in India.



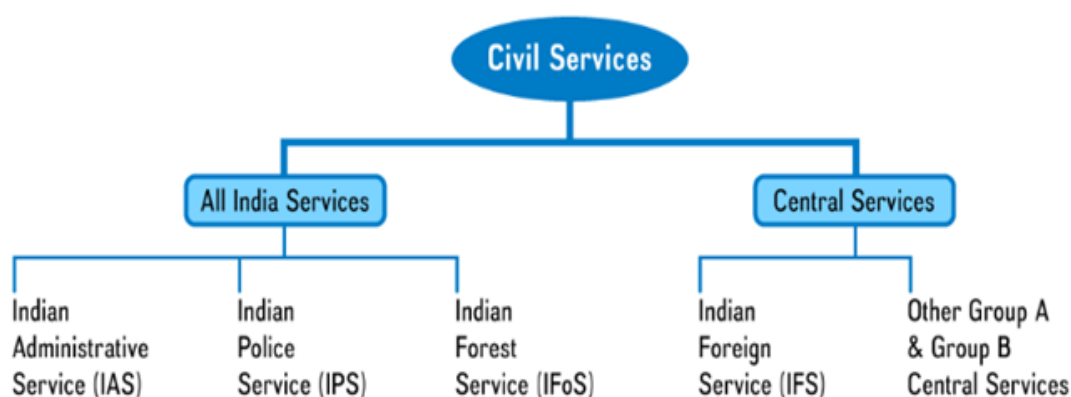
सत्यमेव जयते
Government of India

**Union Public Service
Commission**

- (b) **Civil Services (State Govt.)** - Appointed by the State Government, these officers generally serve only in the particular state. They are officially appointed by the Governor of the State. Every State has a separate 'Public Service Commission' which is responsible for conducting competitive examinations to recruit new candidates into a particular State's Civil Service. Eg: Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC); Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) etc.

In this chapter, we will study more about the Civil Services (Central Govt.) and the Civil Services Examination which is conducted every year by UPSC.

Civil Services (Central Govt.) can be further classified into following categories:



I. All India Civil Services

The officers in these services are recruited by the Centre, but are generally placed under various State cadres after being trained by the Centre. They are responsible to serve both the Centre and the State.

(i) Indian Administrative Service (IAS)

IAS is the administrative arm of the All India Services and is generally considered the most prestigious civil service of India. The new IAS recruits undergo intense training at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy for Administration, Mussoorie, Uttarakhand apart from a 'Bharat Darshan' wherein they visit a few states to learn how the administration functions in different parts of the country.



IAS officers handle various administrative affairs of the government. Their key roles include -

- Handling affairs of the government, including framing and implementing policies.
- Consulting with various departments & elected representatives for the above functions.
- Management and disbursement of various public funds allocated for different schemes.
- Supervising implementation of various schemes and policies of the government.
- Responding to emergencies such as natural disasters, major accidents and riots in their jurisdiction and coordinating relief activities.



At senior levels, IAS officers are posted at the Secretarial level of the Central / State government to deal with policy review, formulation and implementation for different ministries. They also get posted to PSU cadres on deputation and become part of the higher management of various Public Sector Undertakings such as power distribution companies, industrial units etc. Many IAS officers are also deputed to international bodies such as the United Nations and may represent the government in another country or in international forums. Senior IAS officers can even sign agreements on behalf of the government.

(ii) Indian Police Service (IPS)

IPS officers look after public safety and security, which includes prevention of crime and its detection, accident prevention, traffic control and management etc. The IPS is not a law enforcement agency, but all senior level police officers belong to IPS, irrespective of their agency of work.



Apart from the usual eligibility criteria, which are the same for other services, IPS officers need to clear special physical tests as well. The training of IPS officer recruits is conducted at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad.

Where do they work? Apart from State & Union Territories Police, an IPS officer can also serve in security and intelligence based national organisations such as the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Border Security Force (BSF), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) etc. They also get opportunities to work with international organisations such as the United Nations, Interpol, various embassies around the world etc.



(iii) Indian Forest Service (IFoS)

The Indian Forest Service (IFoS) is one of the three All India Services of the Government of India, other two being – IAS & IPS.

The main mandate of IFoS is the implementation of the National Forest Policy in order to ensure the ecological stability of the country through the protection and participatory sustainable management of natural resources. Efficiently managing forests is extremely important for the country considering that India's forest cover is estimated at about 8.07 lakh sq kilometres, i.e. approximately 25% of the country's total area of 32.8 lakh sq kilometers.

An IFoS officer is wholly independent of the district administration and exercises administrative, judicial and financial powers in his own domain. All top positions in the state forest department are held by IFoS officers.

The newly recruited IFoS officers are generally trained at the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Their services are then placed under various cadres at both the State and Central govt level.



Note: India launched its National Forest Policy in 1988. This led to a programme named Joint Forest Management, which proposed that specific villages in association with the forest department will manage specific forest blocks. The draft of a new National Forest Policy was proposed by the government in 2018, which is currently under discussion.

II. Central Civil Services (Group A)

The Central Civil Services is directly concerned with the administration and permanent bureaucracy of the Government of India. Following are some of the key Group A Central Civil Services.

<p>Indian Foreign Service</p> 	<p>IFS</p>	<p>Projects India's interests, both at home and abroad on a wide variety of issues including bilateral, political and economic cooperation, trade and investment promotion, cultural interaction, press and media liaison as well as a whole host of multilateral issues. IFS officers also represent India in its Embassies, Consulates, and Permanent Missions to multilateral organisations like UN. Refer 'Embassy vs Consulate – Spot the differences'</p>
<p>Indian Revenue Service</p> 	<p>IRS</p>	<p>Responsible for collecting and administering direct and indirect taxes accruing to the Government of India. It comprises of two branches, IRS (Income Tax) and IRS (Customs and Indirect Taxes)</p> <p>The duties of the IRS (IT) include providing tax assistance to taxpayers, pursuing and resolving instances of erroneous or fraudulent tax filings, and formulating and enforcing policy concerning Income Tax in India. The duties of the IRS (C&IT) include formulation and enforcement of policy concerning the Goods and Services Tax (GST), prevention of smuggling and administration of matters related to Customs and Narcotics.</p>
<p>Indian Trade Service</p> 	<p>ITS</p>	<p>Formulates policies in the area of International trade & implements them. Also, in-charge of export promotion through various initiatives. Also involved in International trade negotiations (World Trade Organization, Free Trade Agreements, Special Economic zones) and commercial diplomacy.</p>

Indian Corporate Law Service



Indian Information Service



Indian Defence Estates Service



Indian Ordnance Factories Service



Indian Postal Service



ICLS

IIS

IDES

IOFS

IPoS



Primarily responsible for regulating the corporate sector in India – Implementation of the Companies Act. The overall mandate is to empower and regulate the corporate sector for the country and protect the rights of the investors, particularly small investors.

As 'Media managers' of the Government of India, they typically work under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting such as DD News, All India Radio, Press Information Bureau, Directorate of Advertising & Visual Publicity (DAVP) etc. During their tenure in Press Information Bureau, they are posted with various Ministries as spokespersons to handle the Ministry's information and communication needs and help in policy formulation.

Responsible for civil administration and defence land management. The Defence ministry is the country's largest landowner with 17.3 lakh acres of land under its control. Also, in-charge of the 62 cantonments in India occupying an area of ~ 2 lakh acres.

Responsible for the management of the Indian Ordnance Factories (41 of them spread across the country), which represent the defence production capabilities of India

Responsible for managing the extensive postal network of the country (1.55 lakh post offices organized under 22 Postal Circles)

Indian Railway Personnel Service 	IRPS	Manages the Human Resources of the Indian Railways and welfare of railway employees and their families. Railways has a work force of about 1.4 million employees
Indian Railway Traffic Service 	IRTS	Responsible for administering the entire railway transport network (passenger & freight) in the country. Split into two main branches – Commercial and Operations

Indian P&T Accounts and Finance Service (**IP&TAFS**); Indian Audit and Accounts Service (**IA&AS**); Indian Civil Accounts Service (**ICAS**); Indian Defence Accounts Service (**IDAS**); Indian Railway Accounts Service (**IRAS**) - All these services are responsible for maintaining Accounts & Audit of - Union and State governments, Public sector organizations, Railways, Defence, Postal & Communication departments etc.

Note: In order to bring greater efficiency, the Indian government has very recently (January 2020) decided to merge some of the afore mentioned railway related posts into one integrated Indian Railway Management Service (**IRMS**).

III. Central Civil Services (Group B)

All India Civil Services and Group 'A' posts carry higher administrative and executive responsibilities and include senior management positions in the ministries/departments and field organisations. The middle and junior levels of Group 'A' along with Group 'B' typically constitute the middle management. Group B services primarily comprise the Union Territory Civil Services and Armed Forces Headquarters Civil Service.

Union Territory Civil Services - Officers of the service are responsible for the diverse administrative functions of the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Union territories – Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshwadeep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, & Daman and Diu.

Armed Forces Headquarters Civil Services – Officers of the service are responsible for providing civilian staff, secretarial, and other support services to the headquarters of Indian Armed Forces and Inter-Services Organizations (ISOs) under the Ministry of Defence.

Joining the Civil Services (Central Govt)

As mentioned earlier, the UPSC conducts the Civil Services Examination (CSE) every year to identify candidates who then join various Civil Services based on their final rank in the merit list. CSE is a fairly tough examination since it is highly competitive with over 500,000 candidates vying for about 1,000 vacancies (i.e. only 1 in 500 is finally selected). The exam pattern is also quite complicated and a typical examination cycle lasts for almost a year, with a three-stage process

- Stage I – Preliminary Exam (Prelims)
- Stage II – Mains Exam (Mains)
- Stage III – Personality Test (Interview)

Stage I – Preliminary Exam

The preliminary examination intends to focus on analytical abilities and understanding rather than the ability to memorize. The pattern includes two papers of two hours duration each. Both papers have multiple choice objective type questions focusing on various topics as outlined below:

- Paper I tests the candidate's knowledge on current events, history of India and Indian national movement, Indian and world geography, Indian polity, panchayati raj system and governance, economic and social development, environmental ecology, biodiversity, climate change and general science, art and culture.
- Paper II (also called CSAT or Civil Services Aptitude Test), tests the candidate's skills in comprehension, Interpersonal skills, communication, logical reasoning, analytical ability, decision making, problem solving, basic numeracy, data interpretation, English language, comprehension skills and mental ability.

Preliminary examinations are held in June every year and the results are announced in the month of August. Of the 500,000 candidates who write the Preliminary exam, approximately 15,000 are selected to appear for the next stage, i.e. the Mains exam.



TRY THIS

Here is the link to the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2024 | General Studies – Paper I & Paper II. Open the link and try to answer a few questions. You will definitely be able to answer some of them. Boost your confidence!

https://upsc.gov.in/sites/default/files/QP_CSM_2024_GenStud_I_03102024.pdf

https://upsc.gov.in/sites/default/files/QP_CSM_2024_GenStud_II_03102024.pdf

Stage II – Mains Exam

The UPSC exam pattern for the Mains stage consists of 9 papers. Unlike, the Preliminary stage, all the 9 papers here consist of descriptive answer type questions. Papers A & B are on any one Indian language and English respectively. The details of the remaining 7 papers in UPSC Mains Exam are given below:

Paper	Subjects Mains Stage II
Paper 1	<i>Essay Writing</i>
Paper 2	<i>General Studies I</i> - Indian Heritage and Culture; History and Geography of the World; Society
Paper 3	<i>General Studies II</i> – Governance; Constitution; Polity; Social Justice; International relations
Paper 4	<i>General Studies III</i> – Technology; Economic Development; Bio-diversity; Environment; Security and Disaster Management
Paper 5	<i>General Studies IV</i> – Ethics; Integrity; Aptitude
Paper 6 & 7	<i>Any two of the following subjects</i> - Agriculture, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science, Anthropology, Botany, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Commerce and Accountancy, Economics, Electrical Engineering, Geography, Geology, History, Law, Management, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Medical Science, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science & International Relations, Psychology, Public Administration, Sociology, Statistics, Zoology

Mains Exams are held in October every year and the results are announced in the month of January. Of the 15,000 who appear for the Mains exam, only 2,500 are selected for the final stage, i.e. Personality Test (Interview)

Stage III – Personality Test (Interview)

This stage consists of an interview by the UPSC board to assess the candidates' suitability for a civil services career and associated responsibilities. The board comprises of competent observers who judge the candidate's mental and social traits by asking questions of general interest. Some of the qualities that the board looks for include mental alertness, critical powers of assimilation, clear and logical exposition, a balance of judgement, variety and depth of interest, ability for social cohesion and leadership, intellectual and moral integrity.

The interviews are typically held in the month of March. The final results are usually announced in May. The training program for the selected candidates usually commences the following September.

Of the 2,500 who appear for the interview stage, approximately 1,000 are chosen based on the final number of vacancies available. Of the 1,000 around 180 are chosen as IAS; 150 as IPS; 30 as IFS and remaining for Group A & B services.

It is to be noted that despite being a very tough examination, hardworking candidates from diverse backgrounds are able to successfully clear the UPSC exams. Here is an interesting story of Sivaguru Prabakaran, who on his fourth attempt, finally became an IAS officer in 2018.

Dream big, work hard and make it happen!

Sivaguru Prabakaran had dreamt of joining the civil services since 2004. But with his father being an alcoholic and his mother and sister struggling to get through the day selling coconut fronds, becoming an IAS officer was a distant dream.

Prabakaran, the young man from Melaottankadu village in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, was forced to temporarily give up engineering after class XII to support his family. But he worked as a sawmill operator, managed his younger brother's education, got his older sister married and returned to complete his education.



Later, pursuing Civil engineering at a Government institute in Vellore, Prabakaran would attend college in Vellore on weekdays, work part-time at a mobile recharge outlet and travel to Chennai over the weekend for UPSC exam coaching. Often with no place to live there, he would sleep at the railway station. He cracked the UPSC civil services examination in 2017 and secured the 101st rank among the 990 who made the cut.

Embassy vs Consulate – Spot the differences

An embassy represents the Government of one country to the Government of another country. A consulate represents the Government of a country outside its territory in pretty much any way other than that.

Essentially, embassies are mechanisms that allow national governments to form relationships with each other. An embassy can, and typically does, also perform all the functions of a consulate. But its core role, is to negotiate and interact with the host government.

Meanwhile a consulate serves lots of functions. A consulate can represent a government to the general population of its host country, or to the business community of its host country. A consulate can issue visas to citizens of its host country for travel to its own territory. A consulate can assist its citizens living abroad with any business they have with their government (getting new passports or other documents, paying taxes, voting, etc). It can assist its country's businesses trying to do business in the host country. A consulate can even help defend its citizens in the courts of its host country.

There is normally only one embassy in a country, because that country only has one government for the embassy to interact with. Meanwhile, because the mission of a consulate involves interacting with a wide variety of people in general, there may be a need for a consulate wherever there are enough people. If the host country is large enough, a country will establish multiple consulates in that host country.

For example, US has its Embassy only in New Delhi but has Consulates in Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Chennai. It also has a virtual Consulate in Bengaluru. Similarly, India has its Embassy only in Washington, DC but has Consulates in 5 other major US cities – New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Houston & Atlanta.



Embassy of India, Hanoi, Vietnam



Indian Consulate, Atlanta, USA

Did you know?

UPSC also conducts the **Indian Engineering Services** (IES) exams to select IES officers who cater to the technical and managerial functions of the government of India in the field of engineering. The examination process is very similar to the Civil Services Exam, and comprises of three stages - Prelims, Mains & Personality test.



Opportunities exist for bright young minds across - Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Electronics & Communication Engineering.

Let's do these exercises

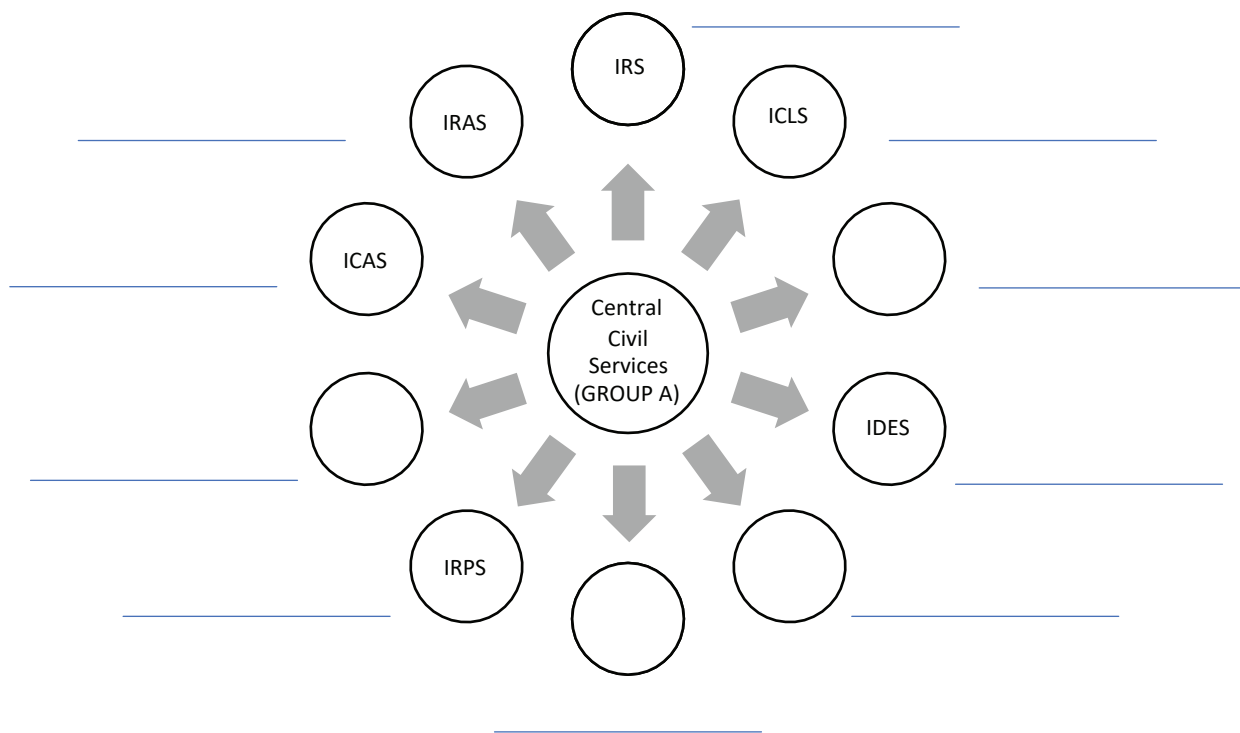
a. Fill in the blanks :

1. The Civil Services under the Central Government are further classified into _____, _____ and _____
2. The two branches of the Indian Revenue Services are _____ & _____
3. Indian Information Service works under the ministry of _____
4. The selected candidates of UPSC examinations are officially appointed by the _____
5. Central Civil Services (Group B) comprises of _____ & _____
6. The current Minister of External affairs of India is _____
7. To be a part of the Indian _____ service, we need to clear special physical tests in addition to the other eligibility criteria.

b. Match the following

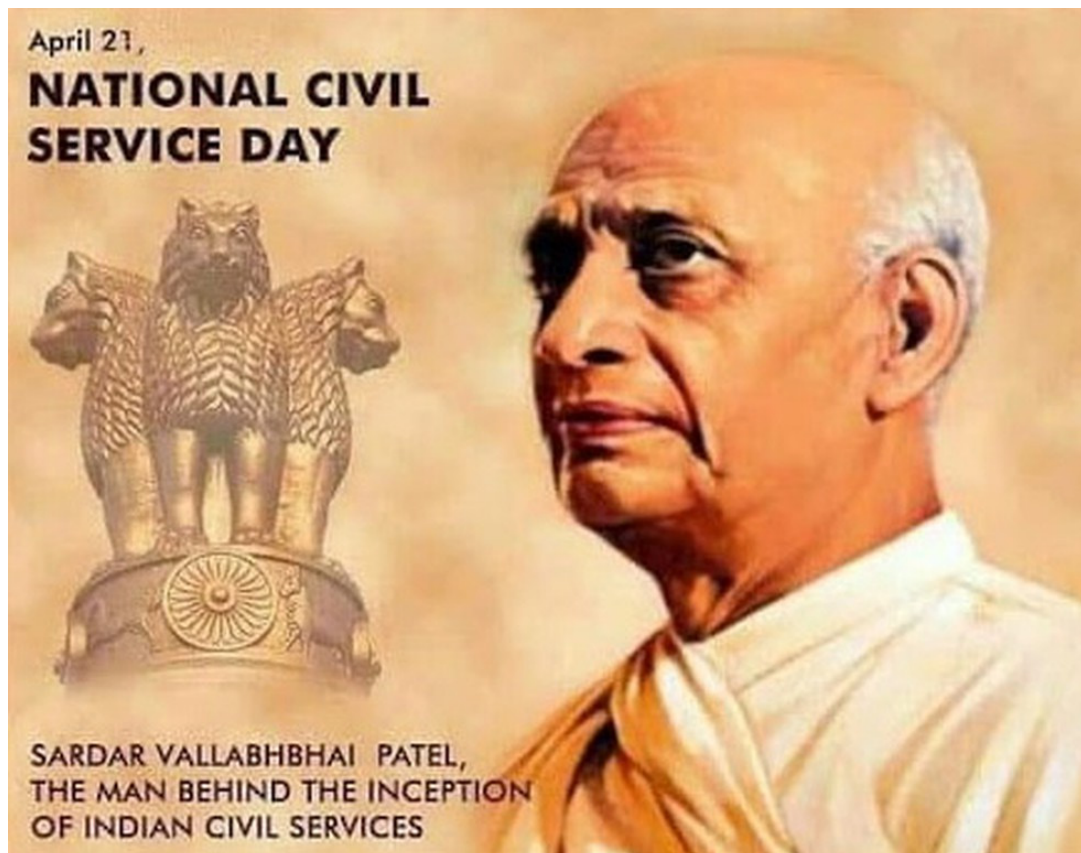
1.	IRS	Manages the Human Resources of the Indian Railway employees and their families
2.	IDES	Administering the entire railway transport network in the country
3.	IRTS	Extending consular facilities to foreigners and Indian nationals abroad
4.	IRPS	Responsible for collecting and administering direct and indirect taxes
5.	IOFS	Non Resident Indian
6.	IFS	Management of the Indian Ordinance Factories
7.	NRI	Responsible for civil administration and defence land management

c. Fill in the empty circles with corresponding with the left out Group A Central Civil Services and expand the abbreviation in the blanks provided.



d. Answer the following in brief :

1. Why is the Civil Service System considered the backbone of the administrative machinery of our country?
2. How do the IAS officers handle the government affairs?
3. What are the responsibilities of IPS officers?
4. How do IFS officers protect the nation's interest in foreign land?
5. What is the difference between an Embassy and Consulate?
6. Briefly describe the roles of ITS, ICLS & IIS officers
7. Discuss the three-stage process of the Central Government Civil Service examination.
8. Mention some qualities that are required in a civil service aspirant.
9. What do you infer from the life of Sivaguru Prabakaran?
10. Is joining the Civil Services of India, a good career option for bright young minds? Discuss.



VEDIC CALENDAR & FESTIVALS

The Vedic Calendar, also known as the Panchanga, is a scientifically advanced calendar system based on precise astronomical calculations, and has been in use since thousands of years. It uses both solar and lunar cycles, creating a lunisolar calendar that accounts for seasonal changes and ensures alignment with natural phenomena.

In contrast, the Gregorian calendar, the most widely used civil calendar in the world today, was introduced only 450 years ago, in October 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII. This calendar is primarily “solar” based and comprises of 365 days divided into 12 months with a leap year of 366 days occurring roughly every four years.

Key Features of the Vedic Calendar

Lunar Months: The Vedic calendar has lunar 12 months, each based on the Moon’s cycle, lasting about 29.5 days. This means a lunar year is about 354 days (29.5 x 12) which is shorter than the solar year of 365 days. To make up for this difference, an extra month called Adhik Maas is added approximately every three years.

Month Names: Each month is named after a constellation (nakshatra) where the full moon occurs during that month.

S No.	Vedic Month	Gregorian Equivalent (Approx.)
1	Chaitra	March-April
2	Vaishakha	April-May
3	Jyaishta	May-June
4	Ashadha	June-July
5	Shravana	July-August
6	Bhadrapada	August-September
7	Ashwin	September-October
8	Kartika	October-November
9	Margashirsha	November-December
10	Pausha	December-January
11	Magha	January-February
12	Phalguna	February-March

Days in a month: Days of the Lunar calendar are based on sunrise and are divided into tithis, which are lunar days. There are 30 tithis in a month.

Each month is split into two phases:

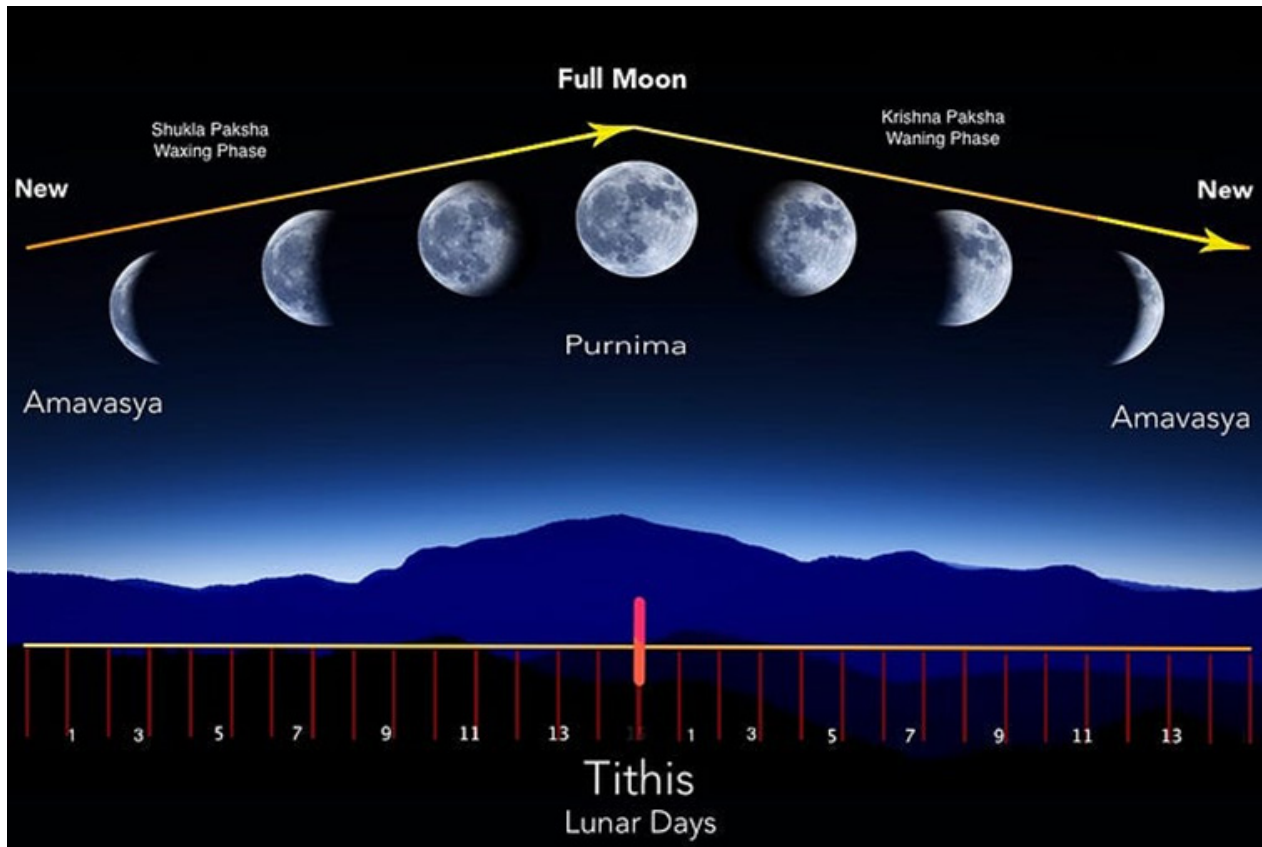
The Shukla Paksha and The Krishna Paksha.

Shukla Paksha (Waxing Moon): The term Shukla means “bright” or “white,” signifying the increasing brightness of the Moon as it moves from the new moon (Amavasya) towards the full moon (Purnima). Shukla Paksha begins on the day after Amavasya (new moon) and lasts for 15 lunar days (or tithis), culminating

Tithi (Moon Phases)			
KRISHNA PAKSHA Waning Phase		SHUKLA PAKSHA Waxing Phase	
Day	Tithi	Day	Tithi
1	Krishna Pratipada	16	Shukla Pratipada
2	Krishna Dvitiya	17	Shukla Dvitiya
3	Krishna Tritiya	18	Shukla Tritiya
4	Krishna Chaturthi	19	Shukla Chaturthi
5	Krishna Panchami	20	Shukla Panchami
6	Krishna Shashthi	21	Shukla Shashthi
7	Krishna Saptami	22	Shukla Saptami
8	Krishna Ashtami	23	Shukla Ashtami
9	Krishna Navami	24	Shukla Navami
10	Krishna Dasami	25	Shukla Dasami
11	Krishna Ekadasi	26	Shukla Ekadasi
12	Krishna Dwadasi	27	Shukla Dwadasi
13	Krishna Trayodasi	28	Shukla Trayodasi
14	Krishna Chaturdashi	29	Shukla Chaturdashi
15	Krishna Amavasya	30	Shukla Purnima

in Purnima (full moon). During Shukla Paksha, the Moon grows in size and luminosity each night, symbolizing growth, positivity, and enlightenment.

The Krishna Paksha (Waning Moon): The term Krishna means “dark” or “black,” symbolizing decreasing luminosity of the Moon as it moves from the full moon (Purnima) towards the new moon (Amavasya). Krishna Paksha begins the day after Purnima (full moon) and lasts for 15 lunar days (or tithis), ending in Amavasya (new moon). During Krishna Paksha, the Moon wanes, appearing smaller each night and is often associated with introspection, withdrawal, and letting go.



Seasons (Ritus)

The Vedic Calendar divides the year into six seasons, each lasting about two months:

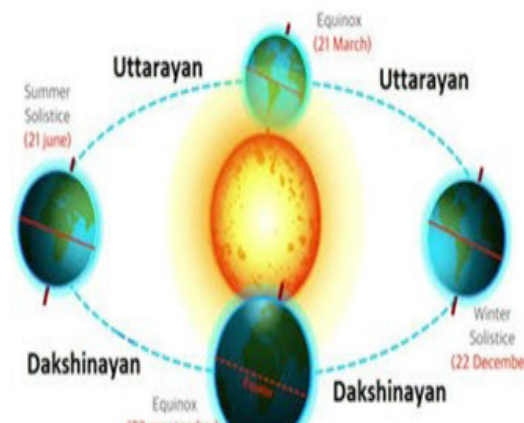
- Vasanta (Spring): March–April
- Grishma (Summer): May–June
- Varsha (Monsoon): July–August
- Sharada (Autumn): September–October
- Hemanta (Pre-Winter): November–December
- Shishira (Winter): January–February



The Vedic Calendar also recognises the importance of the movement of Sun in a Solar year, that determines the six seasons.

Solar Movements

1. **Dakshinayana (Southward movement):** From June 21 to December 21 – During which the day-length gets successively shorter.
2. **Uttarayan (Northward movement):** From December 21 to June 21 – During which the day-length gets successively longer.
3. **Equinoxes:** Twice a year, day and night are equal in length.



The Vedic calendar is thus deeply rooted in Science with applications across diverse aspects of human life including agriculture. Traditionally farmers follow the Moon's position to decide planting and harvesting times so as to enhance soil fertility, optimise planting and to align with the natural cycles for sustainable and productive farming.

Major Festivals in the Vedic Calendar

The key festivals like Dusshera or Diwali are also determined based on the Vedic calendar. They are generally aligned with the waxing (Shukla Paksha) or waning (Krishna Paksha) phases of the Moon. They therefore do not fall on the same day every year as per the Gregorian calendar

1. **Shravani Upakarma:** Celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Shravana (July–August). It's a day dedicated to learning and renewing one's commitment to education and pursuit of knowledge.
2. **Navaratri and Dusshera:** Navaratri begins on the new moon day of Ashwin (September–October) and lasts for nine nights, honoring the goddess Durga. The tenth day, known as Dusshera, celebrates Lord Rama's victory over Ravana, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil.
3. **Diwali:** Known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali is celebrated on the new moon day of Kartika (October–November). It symbolises light and prosperity. It also emphasizes the value of sharing wealth with others, embracing the principle of "collective happiness" **Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinaha**–"May everyone be happy".
4. **Holi, Makar Sankranti, Pongal** are festivals for farmers to rejoice and express gratitude to nature for a bountiful harvest. Celebrated on the full moon day of Phalguna (February–March), Holi is the Festival of Colors. The playful smearing of vibrant colors symbolize that we are all equal, emphasizing the values of brotherhood and harmony as taught in the Vedas

In Tamil Nadu, December is special for the **Margazhi Music Festival**, aligning with the Vedic month of Margashirsha. This festival showcases classical music and dance performances, celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the region.

To summarize, tabulated below are the key differences between the Vedic calendar and Gregorian calendar.

Aspect	Vedic Calendar	Gregorian Calendar
Basis	Lunar-Solar	Solar
Months	12 Lunar months (29.5 days each)	12 Solar months (30 or 31 days each)
Year Length	354 days (adjusted with Adhik Maas)	365 days (366 in a leap year)
Start of the Year	Chaitra (March - April)	January 1
Day Division	Based on sunrise and tithis	Midnight to midnight
Festivals and Events	Linked to lunar phases	Fixed dates (e.g., Christmas on Dec 25)

The Vedic calendar, with its intricate lunar-solar alignment, thus reflects the profound understanding of astronomy and its application in our daily lives.

Let's talk about these

1. Why is the Vedic calendar more useful for farmers than the Gregorian calendar?
2. How does the Vedic calendar's lunisolar structure align better with natural and agricultural cycles compared to the Gregorian calendar?
3. Why don't festivals like Diwali or Navaratri fall on the same date each year in the Gregorian calendar?
4. How is the naming of Vedic months related to astronomy?
5. How is the principle of "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinaha" reflected in the celebration of Diwali?

Let's do these exercises

a. Tick the correct answers:

1. The primary purpose of adding Adhik Maas in the Vedic calendar is to: (**Match the Moon's orbit exactly / Align the lunar months with the solar year**)
2. Which season in the Vedic calendar directly precedes Shishira? (**Hemanta/Grishma**)
3. The equinox is scientifically important because: (**Day and night are of equal duration/It occurs in winter only**)

b. Fill in the blanks:

1. The lunar year in the Vedic calendar is approximately _____ days long.
2. The difference of about 11 days between solar and lunar years is corrected using _____.
3. Krishna Paksha is associated with _____ and _____ in spiritual symbolism.

c. True or False:

1. The day of a festival in the Vedic calendar may vary in the Gregorian calendar due to differing lunar and solar cycles.
2. The Shukla Paksha always starts on the full moon day.

3. Dakshinayana results in gradually shorter days.
4. Tithis are longer than solar days.
5. In the Vedic calendar, agriculture and festivals are closely tied to the Moon's position.

Let's have fun



Draw the Festival Moon!

To help you connect Vedic festivals with the correct moon phase in a fun and creative way.

Take a sheet and write the names of festivals like:

1. Diwali
2. Holi
3. Shravani Upakarma
4. Navaratri

Draw the correct moon next to each festival

Color the moon and even add small festival symbols (like diyas for Diwali or colors for Holi) around it for fun!

FOSTERING VEDIC VALUES -8

INSPIRATIONAL POSTER



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____



Coin a caption _____

