

Discover the light within

# Vihangam Light

Jan 2020 | Volume 3 | Issue 1

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## The Inner Battle of the MIND

Understanding the eternal questions in the human mind and solutions are offered in the bhagavad gita.

liberal or conservative  
Where are we headed?



# NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

Be more awesome  
than last year

20 

HAPPY NEW YEAR

# Vihangam Light

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# Editorial


**A**t the onset of 2020, I on behalf of the entire Vihangam Light team wish you all a very Happy New Year and a wonderful New Decade. As we all transition into the New decade, there is so much to look forward to and we all have several resolutions that will enhance the quality of our lives. Our January 2020 edition contains the secret to making long term resolutions and sustaining them. Read on to find out how by shifting your focus from the resolution itself to the energy behind it, you can witness a big difference in the way your resolutions become a living reality and a part of life eventually.

Our spiritual section again focuses on the teachings from the Bhagavad Gita as we elaborate on the tendencies of the human mind and the solution to self created confusions and conflicts as offered in the Gita. Our wellness section talks about natural foods and recipes to keep you warm for the winters and ways to feed your body the best food available - Sun food. We hope you take benefit from these articles and enhance your health and life.

Lastly, we would love to draw your attention to the most pressing issue this Nation is currently facing - the issue of meaningless opposition to the ruling authority. We have tried to break the ice and go deeper into the issue and understand identification with a particular thought process or group has become more of an identity need rather than a conscious intellectual decision. What is the solution? we have shared our thoughts and would invite the opinions of our readers as well.

Again, wishing you a great 2020!  
Happy reading!

Much Love  
Naam Deo



"One should respect his  
motherland, his culture and his  
mother tongue because they are  
givers of happiness."

~ गेह्ले वडवे

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The time  
to fuel your  
RESOLUTIONS  
with HOPE

Come January and it is again that time of the year when everything feels fresh and new. We are amidst the same family members, in the same job, with the same people, doing what we have always done. Yet, there is an air of fresh energy and enthusiasm. The same old things feel nice and new. We are excited and happy about them – have you ever wondered why? It is because we have the flame of HOPE in our hearts burning again!

It is that phase of the year when we strategize to free ourselves from a twisted state and initiate changes to usher a happy and prosperous life. We tell ourselves that this will be the year we will

quit smoking, eat healthier food, go running every morning and renew our long dead gym-membership. We deactivate our social networking accounts to break this addiction and re-set our emotional connection with the people around us. Come 2020 and it is again time for us to do all these wonderful things that seem to charge us and also time to ask ourselves – 'How do I keep the flame of HOPE burning'?

We have seen in the past that the strength of our resolutions and their sustainability depends on how strong that flame of HOPE is in our hearts. If we lose hope early on in the year then our resolutions tumble down just crashing one after the other and within a few weeks, we find ourselves again in the same rut. This further causes us to lose hope and very soon, ironically enough, we end up feeling quite the opposite of what we started off with – we end up feeling sad and depressed and demotivated. Even the good things in life do not seem to matter anymore and there is the feeling of 'nothing new' that sets in.

Interestingly, the one thing we should stop and notice at this juncture while most of us are busy making resolutions for 2020, is that it is the flame of hope that keeps our resolutions alive and gives meaning to our lives. The quality of our lives and how we feel is not really a function of what we do BUT a function of how much hope we have. This year, let us try something different – while we plan our resolutions, let us put our focus not so much on the resolution or action itself but on the thing that acts as fuel for that resolution. And that is the energy of hope.

Just as we understand that even the best car in the world will not function if there is no fuel, the best resolutions will die away without the fuel of hope. There are millions of people around the world who need this energy of hope to survive. At this very moment that you are reading this, there are several people who are pained by the loss of a loved one, are heartbroken because their love relationship failed miserably, are upset because their children refused to take care of them, are anxious because they fear that their disease will kill them soon, are contemplating suicide because they feel there is no hope left for them. The only one thing that will help all of these fellow human beings is the energy of HOPE.

So, let us focus on rekindling and awakening hope in our hearts this year and see the world of difference that makes to our resolutions. Here are a few pointers and reflection questions we can ask ourselves in order to keep hope alive in our hearts and consciously focus our energy in that direction.

- **DON'T LET PAST FAILURES DISHEARTEN YOU** \_\_\_\_\_

This is one of the primary reasons why resolutions are not kept – failure and the fear of failure. You probably made up your mind to start your own business last year, did everything to get it off the ground and failed miserably – i.e. it did not take off despite your best efforts. As a result, you assumed that this was not your cup of tea and are now thinking what is the alternative. Instead of asking yourself what is the alternative so soon, ask yourself – How can I keep going despite not getting the results I desire. Not having achieved success in your business could be due to many reasons – Maybe you did not try enough, or maybe you withdrew just when things were about to take off, maybe the timing was wrong or the method was wrong. It can mean many things, however, it surely does not indicate your lack of capability. When we look at failure as a lack of our ability to do something well, we lose hope and that is the death of that resolution. Instead of looking for an alternate resolution this year, let us rekindle hope again in our hearts and see how we could relook at the same dream, the same resolution and act out of a place of positivity, hope and joy. Similarly, you may have failed in a relationship or in maintaining the discipline of exercising every day. This does not mean that you are not good enough. It only means that you need more hope in your hearts to keep you going. So, let us embrace failure as a blessing in disguise, use it as an opportunity to understand what can be done differently and restart what we had left half done with greater hope and joy in our hearts.

## • ENGAGE IN DEEP SELF- REFLECTION —————

Happiness, positivity, joy and contentment are breeding grounds for hope. So, ask yourself honestly – ‘What things did I enjoy the most last year OR what is it that makes me really happy?’ Try to answer this question with all honesty and sincerity. Ideally, we should be doing more of the things that bring us joy and happiness. Put a plan together to accommodate those things in your daily life this year. The more happy and content we are, the better we will be in nurturing hope and hence fuelling our dreams and resolutions. Many times however, we answer this question on happiness based on what should be the ideal answer, which is dependent on expectations of others from us or our own unrealistic expectations from ourselves which is again based on what society wants us to do rather than what we want to do.

Also, many times, we fail to acknowledge that doing something actually makes us very happy just because it does not feel right to us. Happiness here is far beyond sensory pleasure. While pleasure is an aspect of happiness, it is far from the actual feeling of happiness. Happiness is like a feeling of deep contentment where the heart knows that it is right. There is no guilt associated with real happiness. For Eg: - Let us say that pursuing a hobby made you very happy. However, it did compromise on the amount of hours you would spend at work and did compromise on your overall earnings as all the time you would be working, you were probably busy clicking photographs or maybe planting trees or whatever is your hobby. This probably resulted in a situation where your family was really unhappy and complained that you were irresponsible. Because of the social pressure you also started feeling that you should be more focused and disciplined towards your work even If you do not like it because that is what makes your family happy. Many of us unconsciously make our new - year resolutions based on other people's ideals and end up feeling terrible. Since you do not really like your work, it would be impossible to sustain this resolution that you just made.

The honest answer to the above question in a situation like this would be – Pursuing my hobby even while I should have been at work actually really made me happy. However, I now have to see how do I convince my family members and work on an alternative for the income. So, the questions could possibly be – “Can I convince my family to adjust their lifestyles to a lower income for a while”? OR “Can I see how I can turn my hobby into a commercial venture”? OR “Is there a way I can pursue my hobby even whilst working fulltime? Like can I wake up a few hours early every morning or can I go to bed a little later so that I make space for what I really love doing”? The answer to these questions will kindle the flame of hope in your heart and will fuel your resolution.

So, as we can see – our resolution itself could be anything but how we plan to fuel it is crucial and is based on a foundation of hope which stems from authenticity, honest personal reflection and accountability. These are also the very attributes required for any long – term sustainable action that can bring benefit to us and those around us.

## • LOOK AT YOURSELF THROUGH THE PRISM OF SELF – GROWTH —————

‘Growth’ is relative and while it is difficult to zero in on one single universal





definition of growth, it definitely is the engine that allows us to stay hopeful and stay on the course. Instead of making resolutions that stem from competition, let us focus on what growth means to us. This will help us dive deeper into our own hearts and understand what we really want from life. Many people decide to join a gym just because they saw their relatives or friends joining a gym and getting back into shape pretty soon. But before we make these hasty resolutions that are purely based on competition and comparison, let us ask ourselves, "Is losing weight important for me to look good and feel good about myself"?, "Do I feel motivated enough to be exercising on a





treadmill every day for 2 hours? Is that what I want to do"? "Why is this so important for me"? and so on. Answering some of these deeper questions will allow us to evaluate ourselves through a prism of self – growth rather than a lens of comparison and will thus, give space to more meaningful and fulfilling resolutions that are bound to stay because they are created by us and are 100% original. They are the things that matter to us the most and hence have the power to self-sustain even without any external motivation.

- **HOPE ALWAYS SPRINGS IN THE PRESENT MOMENT**

While an imagined ideal future seems to motivate us, it is not strong enough to kindle the flame of hope to drive necessary actions to make that future happen. And many times, we do not feel as joyful even after achieving the goals that we set ourselves to achieve. This is because hope always springs in the present moment. If I am not motivated and hopeful today, at this moment, there is little chance that I shall feel hopeful, positive and joyful tomorrow – whether or not I achieve my goal. Hope and happiness are always in the journey and not in the destination. So let us make the journey beautiful by being very present even as we plan our resolutions.

The answer to being present and not letting ourselves become blinded by our future ambitious goals is to start engaging in daily goal setting. According to Dr. Roberta Anding, a registered dietician at Baylor College of Medicine, it is better to spend one whole day without eating sugar instead of resolving that you will quit sugar for the whole year. When you actually quit sugar for a whole day, you are already a changed person – a much stronger and motivated person. Let this “changed person” take decisions on your behalf. This changed person will now be in a much better position to decide if he wants to make this resolution and live like this for one more day and then eventually decide if he would like to continue for another day, week, month and so on.

Living in the present just requires us to ask ourselves the question, “How do I want to be today”? This way we also ensure that we are biased to action and are not procrastinating our goals and resolutions. When we start living one day at a time, we will be in a better position to take fuller responsibility for the change that we want to see in ourselves.

Thus, when we dedicate 2020 to lighting the flame of hope and nurturing it in our hearts, we will be prepared to welcome a truly New year which is different and totally New as compared to all our previous years of failed resolutions. Wishing you a truly Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Contributed by Ranjana Balyan. The author is a soft skills trainer, spiritual mentor, travel blogger and writer based out of Gurgaon, India





# The Inner Battle of the MIND

Understanding the *eternal* questions in the Human Mind & **solutions** as offered in the **Bhagavad Gita**

In continuation to our previous article (from Dec edition of Vihangam Light), this article focuses on what is referred to as 'Arjuna Vishada Yoga', the first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. This chapter deals with the never ending questions and confusions of the human mind and the solutions to it as provided in the Gita.

To begin with, let us ask ourselves a question –

**What is it that makes the human mind restless?**

There could be many reasons but one basic reason is one is unable to achieve or get what he wants or what he aspires for. Bhagavad Gita is a one stop solution to all these problems.

Why one is unable to achieve what he aspires for? Again, there could be many reasons but a common person would put the reasons as insufficient resource (resource in any form – monetary or knowledge or skill), or unforeseen obstacles or of course insufficient efforts. On a deeper introspection one can realize that all these reasons mentioned above, other than insufficient efforts, are not real impediments. History has brought to light great achievers who have been successful even though they had no resource at all or they had to face the most unpredictable obstacles. If efforts are put in the right direction then achieving what one aspires for should be not be impossible.

The question hence is what is “the right direction”? The Indian scriptures and epics bring out two fundamental postulates –

**“Dharma” & “Surrender”.**

## **Dharma:**

It is the inherent nature of an object which is the underlying force for its behavior. All living beings both in the animal kingdom as well as in the plant kingdom are made up of the five great elements – Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Each element has its own “Dharma” and all creations which are made up of these five elements in different permutations and combinations have their own dharma. Normally it is observed that the members of the plant kingdom act as per their “Dharma” – there are plants which need more water and there are those which need very little water. Similarly, there are plants which need too much of sun light and there are those which need very little sunlight. If grown against these conditions they do not survive. Coming to animal kingdom – there is a distinction – the human beings and the birds and animals. Birds and animals also follow their “Dharma” and rarely do they act against it. A tiger will not eat vegetables nor a cow would eat meat. However human species is seen to perform actions against their “Dharma”. In a broader sense “Dharma” is not just the inherent property or inherent character, it also denotes a person's natural disposition or his aptitude. One of the biggest “Dharma” accredited to the human species is protection of others. Unfortunately mankind has been seen to have a destructive tendency, in the name of development or in the name of exotic living, resulting in all the sufferings seen today. The Indian scriptures have always advocated that all actions be in accordance to ones “Dharma”.

“Dharma” is interpreted as righteousness also. Basically the inherent trait of every creation is righteousness – when one acts in an unrighteous manner, somewhere his inner conscious pricks him. Hence righteousness is also “Dharma”.

## **Surrender:**

The biggest drawback of Human species is its ego. Every action is guided by “I”, “ME” and “MINE”. This ego, resulting in over confidence of one's strength is one of the biggest reasons for ones failure. Overcoming the ego and performing all the actions with a sense of surrender has been brought out as a formula for success in all the Indian scriptures. In Book 7, chapter 8 of Srimad Bhagavata mahapuran, which deals with the Narasimha avatar, the demon king Hiranyakashyap asks his son Prahalad, who is devoted to the lord, “I am the most powerful person and all the three worlds including their guardians shiver with fear when I am angry, then who is your lord (Narayan)”. To this Prahalad says that the lord is the strength in you ... you may be the most powerful person in this world but the strength that you have to announce that you are the

most powerful person is unquestionably the Lord. It has been made amply clear by our vedic masters that the self or what one boasts as “Me” is nothing but the energy of the all mighty. Thus ego has no place in success and this is what the Indian scriptures have always advocated. It is immaterial whether one surrenders to the Supreme or to a guru. The scriptures are full of stories of achievers – who have totally surrendered - like Dhruva to the Supreme or Markhandeya to a deity or Ekalavya who surrendered to Guru Dhronacharya.

It is also observed most of the actions performed by human beings are for self gain. Hence, there is always a fear of losing something if one fails. This fear of failure is also an impediment to achieving what one aspires for. The Indian scriptures have always advocated action for a higher cause rather than just for self gain. When one does something with a higher ideology in mind there is no fear of losing and hence his chances of success are higher.

As already discussed in the introductory article, though Bhagavad Gita is considered as a divine knowledge given by Krishna the cowherd boy of Gokul to his cousin and best friend Arjun in the battle fields of Kurukshetra, in reality it is a celestial knowledge given by the self illuminating supreme lord who is unbound by the cycle of birth and death. This knowledge, thus, is not limited to the battle field but is universal and timeless. Thus to grasp this knowledge, outside the limits of the battle field of Kurukshetra, a proper understanding of the same is required. In the first chapter not much spiritual knowledge is imparted but Vyasa enumerates various negativities and positivities of human being. The negative qualities are indicated in the behavior of Duryodhan and the positive qualities in Krishna.

As a prologue to Gita, Krishna goes as a peace messenger to Hastinapur and asks Duryodhan to return Indraprastha to the Pandavas as they have completed their twelve years of exile and remaining one year incognito. Krishna knew very well that even if Pandavas would regained the kingdom, the kauravas will again create some issues and try to dethrone Yudishtir the eldest of the pandava brothers. He knew that there would be no end to this problem other than a war. At the same time Krishna did not want the Pandavas to declare a war. Here the Mahabharata comes out with some of the exciting negotiating skills of Krishna, who takes advantage of the false ego of Duryodhan. Krishna goes to Duryodhan and asks him to return Indraprastha to the Pandavas. When Duryodhan refuses, instead of entering into an argument, Krishna agrees for a reduced demand thus pretending to be a weak negotiator. He asks for five villages instead. When Duryodhan refuses to part with even five villages Krishna agrees for just five palaces. Thus Krishna goes on reducing the demand, knowing fully well that by reducing the demand Duryodhan's ego will get strengthened and that will lead to his downfall. The trick works and Duryodhan considers that Pandavas are helpless and declares that he will not part with even land equaling to the size of a pin head. The natural conclusion is to declare a war, Krishna thus achieves what he wanted but without taking the blame for the war either on himself or the pandavas. This is a technique used in modern day negotiations. It is particularly popular with lawyers and is known as leading the witness.

The incidents in the battlefield are described in the great epic Mahabharat as a narration of the events by Sajay to the blind king Dhritarashtra. The Bhagavad Gita starts with the verse “Dhritarashtra uvacha - Dharma kshetrey Kuru kshetrey samaveta yuyutsavah”. Understanding this verse out of the context of war, “Dharma kshetra” is the field of “Dharma”. As already explained, every creation in this earth has a “Dharma” or a natural trait. Kurukshetra is the field of action. All the problems arise when the field of action is at loggerheads with ones “Dharma”; hence the usage of the word “yuyutsavah – meaning eager to fight. When one acts against his “Dharma” which is the natural tendency or natural disposition of a person, success is just a remote chance. This advice to mankind by the Indian sages is a very important one, which even the modern day psychologists have adopted. Today there are aptitude tests to decide which career one should take up. A person who has an inherent quality to be an engineer will become a failure if he takes up medicine as his vocation.





The Gita which starts with the word “Dharma” ends with the word “mama” meaning mine. Thus the seven hundred verses of Gita is a detailed insight into “Mama Dharma”.

Going forward, in the second verse sanjay says that the “King Duryodhan then approached his Guru Drona”. Vyasa, the author of Mahabharatha has used these words “King Duryodhan approached his guru Drona” to highlight the ego in Duryodhan, to bring home the point that actions with over powering ego can never be successful. Anyone, however great or powerful, while approaching his Guru has to do so in reverence and not as a king, if any useful purpose has to be served. Duryodhan, in the next four verses, goes to describe the strong warriors in the Pandava camp to Drona, without even bothering to consider the fact the most of these valorous heroes in the Pandava camp has been trained by Drona himself, and hence Drona knows them better than Duryodhan himself. Hopefully he expected Drona to boost his confidence by enumerating the strengths of the Kaurava camp but as Duryodhan's approach itself was wrong Drona prefers to keep quite. This seemingly unnerves Duryodhan and just to console himself, in verse 7 he tells Drona that he would now enumerate the warriors on his side. Drona was the Guru of Duryodhan and a much senior person, who knew every person on the side of Kauravas and there was no reason for Duryodhan to give details of the warriors on their side. In the next two verses he names the main warriors on his side but at the end he adds that his side has many brave men who are ready to lay down their lives for “my sake”. This shows the extreme ego in Duryodhan. It is a well known fact that Bhishma, himself fought on the side of Kauravas, as he was under an oath to protect the king of the land and at that time Dritharashtra was the king. More over almost all the men who fought on the side of the Kauravas did so as they revered Bishma the grand seer.

Knowing well that all his actions are unrighteous, and that he is waging a war just for his own selfish gains without even bothering to realize that the Pandavas are jus immediate cousins, Duryodhan's consciousness was not only pricking but he also had that sense of fear of losing something. Hence in verse 10 he declares that “our army defended by Bhishma is inadequate where as the Pandava army defended by Bhima is adequate”. This in spite of the fact that the Kaurava army much larger than the Pandava army. Then he goes on to instruct all his men to take appropriate positions and defend Bhishma. At this juncture Bhishma, as if to put an end to Duryodhana's conversation, sounded a lion's roar loudly and blew his conch.

The learning points here are :

(1) Duryodhan approaches Drona as a king – he cannot get any guidance, help or cooperation with such an approach. Even when the owner of a business empire send his son to the company to learn the intricacies of the business, he has to approach the senior employees of the company with an attitude of “I want to learn” and not with an attitude of “I am the future chairman of the company”.

(2) Duryodhan explains to Drona the details of the men in his Army – Drona is much senior and has been a Guru to many in the Army including Duryodhan – one cannot expect any support from an experienced person when one tries to guide that person.

(3) Duryodhan announces that many in the army have joined the battle as they are ready to lay down their lives for his sake, where as the reality is many have joined just for the sake of Bhishma – a most de- motivating announcement which will de motive most members in a team – no team work is possible with such behavior. Senior members of a team should be given their due respect if cooperation from every member of a team is solicited.

(4) Duryodhan instructs his men to take positions and protect Bhishma – Duryodhan is not the commander in chief – Bhishma is the commander or in a sense the project manager – the man in charge of the project should be given the full authority to take control of the situation and instruct his men if the team has to perform successfully. Duryodhan is not even the king – he is just the son of the king Dhritarashtra – so he should have just remained as another warrior ready to support

his team rather than interfering with the strategies decided by the commander in chief.

(5) Duryodhan then makes the most demoralizing statement – he says that our army is inadequate – and while comparing the two armies he says our army defended by Bhishma and Pandava army defended by Bhima – The Kaurava army was much bigger than the Pandava army, Bhishma was much more senior to Bhima, Bhishma was commander in chief of Kaurava army but Bhima was just another warrior in Pandava army and not the commander in chief – by comparing his own commander with just another warrior in the opposite camp, he not only demoralized Bhishma but he demoralized his whole team. Even if the team is not strong the team needs morale boosting comments to perform.

(6) In spite of a larger army and many senior warriors on his side Duryodhan feels highly insecure. This sense of insecurity stems from two reasons – one Duryodhan knows that all through his endeavors with the Pandavas he has always followed unrighteous path and secondly the pain of having to lose his kingship if he loses the war – a strong feeling of “Me” and “Mine”. An insecure and confused person cannot perform well.

In the Swarved, another ancient Indian scripture, Sadguru Sadafal Deo Ji Maharaj, the Himalayan Yogi says,

अभिमानि अभिमान में, गुरु से चाहत मान ।  
चौरासी भटकत फिरै, जन्म कीट कुर श्वान ॥

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Abhimani abhiman main, guru se chahat maan  
Chauraasi bhatkat firae, janam keet kur shvaan

Meaning – The egoistic person when blinded by ego desires to get respect and command over his own Guru when he should ideally surrender to him. Such a person therefore cannot attain salvation and keeps taking rebirth in various species and keeps wandering in the continuous cycle of birth and death.

दिन अधीन ऊपर चढ़े, गिरत बुड़त अभिमान ।  
अभिमानि अति नीच है, सब अवगुण घट खान ॥

---

Din adheen upar chdhe, girat budhat abhiman  
Abhimani ati neech hai, sab avgun gat khan

Meaning - An egoistic person falls into the ocean of vices and goes on a downward spiral due to his own wrong actions. An egoistic person automatically attracts all vices and is never unable to rise beyond them.

Coming to the Pandava side, Krishna was well aware that Arjun was there in the battle field just like Bhima and others, full of vengeance as they had suffered all the atrocities of Dhuryodhan and his brother. Arjun was also there to defeat the Kauravas and regain the lost kingdom and he was also there with all his bitterness towards the Kauravas. Krishna knows that Arjun with his state of mind then cannot perform. Performance requires clarity of mind which cannot come from bitterness. Victory is possible only when one works for a higher cause – in this case victory is possible only when Arjun fights to establish righteousness rather than to regain the kingdom. Krishna has his own plans to



change the mind set of Arjun.

It is when we forget our true nature, we get caught up in the game of victory and defeat like Arjuna. Hence all actions need to be performed by being stable in the remembrance of the true self. The same is also reiterated by Sadguru Sadafal Deo Ji Maharaj in the Swarved as,

निज स्वरूप को भूलि कर, करे देह अभिमान ।  
चेतनत्व विस्मरण में, जड़ वस बन्धन दुःख रूप ॥

Nij Swarop ko bholi kar, kare deh abhiman  
Chetanatav vismaran main, jad vas bandhan dukh roop

Meaning – When the being forgets its true nature and gets trapped in the consciousness of the body, it results in bondage.

In verse 22, Arjun requests Krishna , who is now his charioteer, to station his chariot in between the two armies so that he can see who all he has to fight with, who have assembled in support of the wicked and unrighteous sons of Dhritarashtra. Krishna plays a very significant role here to change the mind set of Arjun. He drives the chariot and stations it right in front of Bhishma the grand seer and Drona the Raja guru. Seeing these two revered souls Arjun's mind changes. He then sees brothers, cousins, friends, well wishers etc in the enemy army and he breaks down. Emotion now over takes his intellectual conviction and in the remaining twenty verses Arjun gives his reasons why it is not worthwhile waging a war. Confused, he gives unjustified reasons for staying away from the war. He tries to argue out to Krishna that he has no interest in regaining the kingdom by killing so many people, and even if he does so he is not going to enjoy the fruits of the same. To reiterate his stand he even says that the war will only result in decaying of family traditions resulting in lawlessness which will lead to women of the clans becoming corrupt.

Two interesting facts emerge here – In all his arguments he talks about not gaining anything from the war but he never talks of fighting for a higher cause. Secondly, throughout his arguments Krishna never intervenes – he quietly listens to all absurd arguments of put forth by Arjun.



He allows Arjun to empty out his heart and completely breakdown. This is an important lesson in the art of mentoring. When the mentee comes out with problems a good mentor needs to first listen to all the reasoning given however absurd it may be. Many times this itself solves most of the issues. Even in parenting, the problems escalate when parents don't fully listen to their children and they start advising the youngsters without giving them a fair chance to speak out.

Thus, the first chapter of the Gita is an insight into why the human mind becomes restless and in understanding the reasons, we are also better able to find solutions to it.

Contributed by Prof. R. Subramanian. The writer is trained in Bhagawad Gita recitals, a retd. senior corporate leader and a visiting faculty for Management studies in Mumbai.




DIVING

into



SILENCE

— THE POWER OF 'I AM'




**S**ee if you can catch the voice in your head, perhaps in the very moment it complains about something. Whenever you notice that voice, you will also realize that you are not the voice, but the one who is aware of it. In fact, you are the awareness that is aware of the voice. In the background, there is the awareness. In the foreground, there is the voice, the thinker. It is when we silence the chattering of our mind that we can truly hear what is in our heart and find the still, clear purity that lies within.

- ECKHART TOLLE -

As we all sail into yet another year and into the onset of a new decade, let us dive deep into the silence of our hearts that will allow us to anchor ourselves to the truth and make more conscious and responsible choices in the forthcoming year.

We have spent a lot of time in rationalizing and using the mind as the single most powerful tool in guiding our choices and actions. As a result, we have become victims of our own emotions that have deceived us, our random and irrational thoughts which appear to be 'right' when we are blinded by our ego and our incorrect choices in life. This has also landed us into a place of perpetual anxiety, stress and sometimes, just restlessness. As we approach a new decade filled with hope, let us change our mechanisms and bring about a shift in the way we are living life. We probably have done that several times – probably in the beginning of every New Year and soon have come back to our original habits and patterns rather unconsciously. This time around, let us try something different – let us consciously give our minds a little rest and rely on something deeper and much more powerful than the mind – our inner intelligence or our intellect.

It is impossible to assign a name to this immense power that we all have. For ease of understanding let us call it the power of our own inner silence. To tap into this inner reservoir of power, we need to quieten the mind and re – connect with ourselves by asking the question – 'who am I really' and NOT allowing the mind to answer it. While we will find our minds jumping to quick answers, let us become aware of all the answers and understand that we are not those answers but the one who is being aware of them in this moment. This is really the first step to connecting with ourselves, or what we call as self – awareness.




When we lose touch with our inner self, we lose touch with our inner silence and hence we lose ourselves into this world. There will always be situations in our lives where get easily carried away by the crazy stuff happening in the world but if we remain connected to our inner silence our actions would be more harmonious and in line with totality and will subsequently benefit us as well as the whole of humanity.

Usually, for most of us, we tend to ignore the power of our inner silence (or inner voice) and prefer losing ourselves into the ocean of emotions and mind chattering because this is the easier way. What happens as a result is that we completely lose sight of our higher purpose in life and are totally out of alignment with the flow of life. This, therefore, gives rise to many unsatisfied cravings and desires which in turn make us fearful and insecure. This is what the yogis of yesteryears termed as being trapped by 'maya' or the delusions of pleasure.

Sometimes, situations demand that we focus completely and become absorbed into the world – our roles, relationships and responsibilities. This is typical in case of a health emergency or a natural calamity etc. However, even at such times we have a choice - either to just let ourselves be carried away by the emotional roller coaster (that is always full of thoughts of self – pity, anger, resentment or sorrow) or to be connected to our inner most self and act from a place of deep knowing and wisdom – which is to act from the level of the consciousness. If we choose the later, our actions would be more meaningful, directed by a sense of purpose and clear intention. This will help us have a more fulfilling experience of life and help maintain our sense of inner peace and calm.

Life always presents us with opportunities to get back to be our true self, sometimes, in the form of so called happy situations that are in accordance to our imagined ideas about life or sometimes, with difficult circumstances that force us to stop and reflect. By surrendering to those moments and by not fighting nor trying to hold that moment for forever, we can dive deep into our true self and access the power of silence. This is really the stage of a detached observer or what is described as equanimity or 'sthithapragya' in our scriptures – which is essentially the ability to remain in equanimity in the face of joy as well as sorrow.





When we remain connected to our deep inner self, we bring a fresh and more alive energy to the world through our actions, which is the requirement of human beings at any point in time in life.

We as a human beings are reluctant to face the pain inside which is inside each of us due to conditioning of our minds & these conditions are the blockages to the free flow of ourselves i.e. free flow of the energy of the soul into this world. This is our natural state - flowing outward. We often tend to defend these blockages so that we don't feel that initial pain which is the inevitable residue because of the burning of the ego. This burning of the ego happens through the fire of yoga (meditation). In other words, meditation can be simply explained as the process of refusing all thoughts except one: the thought 'I am' - which is not even in the thought form but as pure awareness. The mind will rebel in the beginning, but with patience and perseverance it will yield and keep quiet. Once the mind is quiet, things will begin to happen spontaneously and quite naturally, without any interference on our part.

In the end to summarize - In the words of the famous Indian spiritual master, Nisargadatta Maharaj, **'To know the self as the only reality and all else as temporal and transient is freedom, peace and joy. It is all very simple. Instead of seeing things as imagined, learn to see them as they are. When you can see everything as it is, you will also see yourself as you are. It is like cleansing a mirror. The same mirror that shows you the world as it is will also show you your own face. The thought 'I am' is the polishing cloth'** but not in the form of thought but in the form of awareness or still alertness. It is a pointer so that it can point us towards our pure, powerful, blissful seat of stillness, which is in totality connected & aligned with the Universal Consciousness and with the flow of life. Let us use it.

Contributed by Ranjana Balyan. The author is a soft skills trainer, spiritual mentor, travel blogger and writer based out of Gurgaon, India



*Stay*  
**Super Healthy**  
*with* **Sun Food**

**S**unlight is food for our cells and without it our body organs cannot function properly and yet the reality of modern day is that our bodies are starving for sunlight. This is mainly because of our lifestyle in which we spend almost all of our time indoors. From rising in the morning to getting into a car to drive to the gym to getting into the same car and driving to work and spending 8 hours in a closed office and then getting into the car again and driving back home and crashing into our beds – we spend all our day away from the sun! On the weekends again, many of us prefer to wake up late and spend time lazing around in our couches in front of the idiot box or on our mobiles and other gadgets. Even if we spend time with our kids, we prefer taking them to a mall or a game station where they are engaged while we can shop around or watch a movie. So, literally, everything from work to family life to entertainment for us is restricted within 4 walls of a room.





What we seldom realize is that sunlight is a physical and a biological need for us humans. Because we are not getting enough of it, many things are starting to malfunction. Lack of sunlight also affects our emotions and the way we experience them. Because the body is deprived of its much needed sun food, it does not function as we as it should, thus, affecting our emotional and mental states of mind. It is therefore no surprise that many of us end up feeling stressed and anxious at the end of a long working day.

So, while the problem is staring at our faces, the solution is simple. We just need to let sunlight back into our lives in the right way – at the right time and right quantity so that we can feed our bodies with the much needed Sun food. Sun has always been worshipped as a deity of health and happiness and has been regarded as the master sustainer of life on earth. We cannot even imagine what this planet would be without the sun. In our Vedic scriptures it is said that the Sun is a Master healer. The Gayatri Mantra is a salutation to the Sun and is known to have multifold benefits. All across the world, sunlight has been used for healing purposes at different points in time.

Just walking or travelling on the roads when there is sunlight is not enough. There are some prescribed ways of taking sunlight which are beneficial for our bodies and minds. They are as follows –

- **Sunbathing** – Sunbathing is the act of exposing the body to the rays of the sun for approximately 30 minutes. When the rays of the sun fall on to the body directly or come in contact with the skin, it detoxifies and disinfects the skin. Just as in India, there is a practice of drying foodgrains that are infected by worms in the sun or even spreading blankets and quilts in the sun before the onset of the winter season. This practice kills the worms and purifies the foodgrains or makes the blankets fresh and ready to use. Similarly, sunbathing is essential for cleaning our internal body. When sunlight penetrates the skin and reaches the arteries, it enhances the circulation of blood through which the toxins are also circulated and excreted through urine. Thus, sunlight is a natural disinfectant, a detoxifier and is also very useful to maintain a healthy skin and complexion. The impurities in the skin clog the skin pores making it difficult for the skin to breathe. Thus, resulting in skin diseases like acne, psoriasis etc. When sunlight falls on the skin, it opens up the pores as we begin to sweat. The impurities are then expelled through these pores.

In order to sunbathe – simply go out and lie down in the sun. You can choose any place where sunlight falls directly on your body like a balcony, roof top, terrace, verandah, a park or beach. While sunbathing preferably wear minimum clothing or if you choose to cover yourself, choose light coloured cotton clothes as cotton readily absorbs the light of the sun. The best time to sunbathe is morning or evening when the sun is not very sharp and strong. You can begin sunbathing by first exposing your entire front body to the sun and then your back to the sun totaling around 30 minutes. Once you start sweating, it is time to stop sunbathing and step indoors. Have a glass of water after you come indoors to keep yourself hydrated. Sun bathe everyday and make it a part of your daily routine. To make best use of your time while sunbathing, you can combine it with any other relaxing activity like listening to a podcast or reading a book or even meditation.

- **Sun gazing** – This is a very ancient practice of India also traditionally known as 'Sun thratak'. In order to sun gaze, you need to go out and stand in front of the sun and look at it with naked eyes. Make sure you are standing bare feet on the ground so that you are grounded during the process. The only time suitable for sun gazing is an hour after sunrise or an hour before sunset when the UV rays of the sun are not there and hence no harm is done to your body by sunrays at these times. As you look at the sun, the solar energy passes through your eyes to your brain and thus, activates the brain cells and also energises your body. Sun gazing

- is equivalent to feeding your system with sun food. As you continue to sun gaze for a few months you will feel that your energy levels naturally remain high and your hunger levels will also reduce proportionately. This is because your body begins to derive the energy directly from sun rather than being completely dependent on food for its energy. Sun gazing is also good for the eyes and corrects vision in the long run. It is ideal to sun gaze for about 15 minutes every day – in the morning and evening or at least once a day. Sun gazing as a practice is very meditative and you will find that as your gaze gets fixed on the sun, your thoughts begin to slow down and almost disappear. Hence practicing this ancient technique of meditation is very good to enhance memory and concentration levels. It is important that you practice sun gazing regularly and consistently to see results. Other benefits of sun gazing include –

- a.) Improved eyesight
- b.) Curing Insomnia
- c.) Better Mental Health
- d.) A more calm and balanced mind
- e.) Enhanced IQ and EQ
- f.) Increased focus, concentration and will power

- **Sun-charging drinking water** – When drinking water is exposed to sunlight it becomes charged with the energy of the sun. Exposing drinking water to the sun changes its molecular structure, in a way that is very beneficial to the body. Drinking sun charged water is known to have several health benefits ranging from physical to mental to emotional. Some of them are as below –

- a.) Helps get a clear skin
- b.) Acts as a great detoxifier
- c.) Is much more easy to digest
- d.) Helps control cholesterol and high blood pressure
- e.) Helps treat joint pains, arthritis and back aches etc.
- f.) Uplifts your mood and enhances your overall energy

In order to sun charge your water, place some clean drinking water in a clear glass container and expose it to direct sunlight. Let the container remain there for about 20 – 25 minutes. Once the water is charged in this way, keep sipping water from the bottle throughout the day. You can charge your water everyday and drink sun charged water for a few weeks to see visible health benefits.

There has been a lot of scientific research done on water and it has been proven that water is a living entity with memory. Everything that it comes in contact with, it remembers. Hence, when we look at water with a certain emotion, it immediately influences its molecular structure and when we drink that water, it affects our bodies accordingly. Hence, water should be treated with respect and reverence as it is also a great sustainer of life. Sun charging drinking water is one of the easiest and best ways to not just derive benefits of the solar energy but also ensure that our body gets complete benefits from water as well.





The **True**  
**Spiritual**  
*journey*

— In reality, **inner energy** exchange  
**shapes our personality.** It has very  
subtle affect on how we perceive a  
glass of water- half full or the other way.  
Those who can **control**, and **channelize**  
these complex energy exchanges can  
fetch **extraordinary accomplishments.**



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he mankind has always looked at the sky

in awe and fascination. It is therefore a natural instinct within us that help us wonder – What lies beyond the sky? The scientists claim that there are multiverses beyond our own universe. Not long ago this concept of multiverses was a mere speculation but now seems to be gaining popularity among scientific circles. The concern of a yogi however would be to know the complete truth. If the scientists already know of many such universes, where are they and what do they look like? And, if not, are these scientific speculations still in the primitive form? Can we actually see and explore the world that lies beyond our wildest imagination, intellectual faculties and their mathematical formulations?

It may seem hard for us to comprehend that there is a world beyond our imagination because we have been trained to see the world through our scientific mind. But have we ever considered that besides the usual way of scientific reasoning and analysis, there indeed exists another way to explore the world beyond the reach of scientific instruments? This path is understood through the science of consciousness. In the manner physical science helps one achieve material objects, in exactly the same manner the science of consciousness helps one achieve the conscious entities – the Soul, the Akshar Brahm, the Eternal Sadguru and the Supreme Soul. The proponents of this science of consciousness are called Fakirs, Rishis, Munis and Maharshis.

The basis of this science is the soul, the energy of the soul and therefore it can not be explored through our sensory organs. It is beyond the reach of our mind, pranas and even the subtle intellect. The Rishis found out that there is a conscious entity that resides in our body, which can be known and experienced. Only this entity, the soul, can lead us to that world, which is beyond the physical boundaries of the Prakriti, the nature. How does it happen? The Swarveda (in the sixth canto) says –

खुले सुष्मना दशवन द्वारा ।  
गगन महल में भाइये पैठारा ॥

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Khule sushmana dashwan dwara |  
Gagan mahal mein bhaiye paithara ||

There are 101 major veins in our body, of which 100 of them run down in the body and only one flows upwards from the heart to the Brahmrandra, the 10th secret door. This vein is called Sushmana'. Near the heart within this vein, is where the soul resides. The 10th door or the end of this vein is closed by a power, called Kundalini, which lies dormant in our body. With the practice of Vihangam Yoga meditation, this power awakens and the 10th door opens up, and so does the Sushmana. The conscious ray of the soul, called Suratī now ascends higher up into a world that is conscious by holding on to the pure white thread called 'makar taar'. This world is beyond the physical realms of nature, which only a soul can experience.

This conscious world is called the 'Akshara Brahma', within which many spiritual events happen. The knowledge of both the prakriti, the natural world and of the conscious world descends down into the soul. The happiness and bliss is indescribable. Beyond his natural intellect, a pure divine intellect appears in this conscious world, and a yogi is able to comprehend and realize the truth. He gains secret knowledge of the world - its creation, sustenance and of its dissolution. Sadguru Sadafaldeo Ji Maharaj never went to a college, yet had all the hidden secret knowledge of the natural and the conscious world.

Sadguru Sadafaldeo Ji Maharaj says that the spiritual journey does not end here. The yogi continues the journey under the shelter of Sadguru's energy and finally realizes the Supreme Soul.

नवद्वारा संसार का, दशवां योगी तार ।  
एकादश खिड़की खुली, अगर पुरुष दरबार ॥

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Navdwara sansaar ka, dashwan yogi taar  
Ekaadash khidki khuli, agr purush darbaar

Beyond the eleventh gateway, the yogi experiences the Supreme Being, the Mukti dham, which is the final destination. The soul is liberated from all worldly sufferings.

Therefore, in the spiritual journey from Prakriti (the natural world) to Parmatma (the Supreme Being), the soul first experiences the Akshara Brahma. That which creates, sustains and dissolves the universe is Akshara Brahma. Scientifically, it is the supreme power of Akshara, which is responsible for the 'big bang', the process that creates the universe. The Akshara imparts the motion in inert particles of Prakriti. All activities in the universe are due to Akshara. When the Akshara Brahma withdraws its powers, all the motions cease and the universe collapses to its primordial inert state of existence. That is what we call dissolution. Like the Supreme Being, it is also eternal, unchangeable and pervades the whole universe. It is confined to one-fourth of the Parmatma, where the creation, regulation and dissolution of the universe take place.

अक्षर माहि कम्प है, माया योग विकाश ।  
सृष्टि के प्रदुर्भाव है, अक्षर जग परकाश ॥

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Akshara Mahi Kamp hai, maya yog vikash  
Shristi ke prdurbhav hai, akshara jag parkash

All the physical forces as well as mind and Pranas (the life forces) originate from this abode. The epitome of yoga is when a yogi finally leaves behind the pranas and the mind in this abode, becomes 'aman' (the one without the entity 'mind') and moves forward into the spiritual journey.





अक्षर मन का योनि है, अक्षर से मन होये ।  
पंचभूत से मन नहि, यह तत्व समझे कोई ॥

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Akshara mann ka yoni hai, Akshara se mann hoye  
panchbhut se mann nahi, yeh tatv samjhe koye

At the end of Akshara Mandal, lies the abode of the Eternal Sadguru, the Sukrit Dham. The Eternal Sadguru is the messenger of Paramatma. Brahma Vidya (the DivineWisdom) emanates from Him and He is the Lord of the spiritual domain. His mission is to awaken the suffering souls of the world from the state of ignorance by blessing upon them the divine knowledge of Brahma. He liberates the craving and deserving souls from the bondage of Prakriti and enables them to enjoy the nectarine bliss of the Supreme Being.

Yogi also experiences Parmanu Mandal and Mooladhaar. The Mooladhaar is the origin where the flow of Akshara Brahma first descends down into the universe (Brahmand). It is the place where world is being created every moment. It is at this abode a yogi can make changes to the world as desired with the Sankalp of Sadguru. The origin of our speech is also from this Mooladhaar. The soul gets its speech from this abode.

परा जो मूलाधार में, हृदय में पश्यन्ति ।  
कंठ में वहि मध्यमा, मुख वैखरी अन्ति ॥

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Para jo mooladhaar mein, hridya mein pasyanti  
kanth mein wahi madhyama, mookh vaikhari anti



The Para Vani (speech, voice) originates from this Mooladhaar, enters into the body through the tenth secret door, and comes to the heart where it is transformed into Pashyanti Vani. The voice moves to the throat where it is transformed into Madhyama Vani and finally it is spoken through the mouth in the form of Vaikhari Vani. There is yet another Vani, whose base is neither mouth nor the heart and not even the throat. What is that speech or Vani? That is Brahma Vani, that speech is embraced with Brahma Vidya, that speech is infallible. The founder of Vihangam Yoga, Sadguru Sadafal Deo Ji Maharaj, used this Brahma Vani while discarding his mortal frame. We discussed about the world of consciousness. How does it look like? Sadgurudeo says -

श्वेत श्वेत में श्वेत है, श्वेत श्वेत में श्वेत ।  
तीन पाद अमृत भरा, श्वेत महानद श्वेत ॥

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Shwet shwet mai shwet hai, shwet shwet mai shwet  
Teen paad amrit bhara, shwet mahanad shwet

The first shwet (or whiteness) signifies the brilliance effulgent white light of the soul, the second and the third signifies surati and nirati which is also pure and white. The remaining Shwet signifies the Akshara, the Paramakshara and the Sadguru, the pure nectar bliss in the remaining 3/4th of Parmatma and the makar taar. All these entities come to the experience of the soul in the conscious world beyond Prakriti.

One should understand that these experiences are achieved during the spiritual journey, and not after death. All these experiences are accomplished with the blessings of Sadguru, the eternal spiritual master. Our effort therefore should not be confined to the knowledge obtained with the help of scientific instruments, which only reveals part of the bigger picture, but to go beyond the Prakriti and explore the complete truth through the science of consciousness. It is the science of consciousness that reveals all the apparent and hidden knowledge of the natural and the conscious world and makes us realize our true conscious self.

Reproduced from the article "What lies between prakriti and paramaatma" from the NAIY (North America Institute of Vihangam Yoga) Newsletter. The author is Dr. Kumar Hemant Singh, Ex-Scientist, NASA, USA.



# LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE

Where are we  
headed?

**W**e as a nation are at a juncture where on one end we see an exponential rise in liberal views in the country while on the other end there is the argument to stay grounded and rooted in our culture and tradition, an approach that is termed as being 'right winged' as an opposition to the leftist views of the liberals.

The section of the society that is most affected by this so – called internal war of sorts is the youth. This is a section that is largely responsible for the country's future as India is a young nation and also is the most vulnerable section. Many young people have been falsely led to believe in the 'either – or' philosophy where they are forced to side with either the leftist ideology or the right winged way of thinking. Every thought or expression or sentence expressed by youth faces the potential danger of being termed or judged as left or right. This has affected



their sense of belongingness and identity and has resulted in the vast majority of our young population (future leaders of this nation) identifying with a philosophy/ thought process or value system that gives them a stronger identity and a sense of belonging to the larger 'group'.

Unfortunately, what has happened as a result of this is that more and more young people are losing their ability to think clearly, truly independent of external pressures and as a result are blindly partaking in the rat race. This has led to the destruction of the divine intellect that each of us has been blessed with and has given rise to ego – based conflicts like never before.



At the beginning of the New Year and the New Decade, it is a good question to ask ourselves – **'What is the future of this great Nation going to be?'** Instead of immediately rushing to answer it and unknowingly getting into the blame game, let us take a step back and understand how we as young leaders can change the future of this nation by just acting with more responsibility and care.

What really happens is that as children grow into young adults and enter from school into college or university, they transition into adulthood. For many this transition is characterized by a sudden rush of freedom – a sudden movement from a very closed, controlled and protected environment of the home and school into a more open, free and uncontrolled environment of the college and the world outside. Most young people feel lost in this new environment which is suddenly very open and does not care enough about 'YOU'. The focus has shifted from 'YOU' to the world. No one really cares about who you are and what you have to say or where you belong. Everyone only seems to care about a few people on the top who seem to influence and inspire and motivate and lead. There are always a few leaders and everyone else becomes a commoner. In order to thrive in a big and open world like this, youth feel the need to attract attention to themselves. Just as a

small child finds his way of attracting the attention of the mother by either good or bad behavior – the focus of the child is not really on his behavior but it is on attracting his mother's attention because he feels the need to be important. Similarly, youth tend to draw attention by expressing themselves in ways which are uncommon.

Soon, they are influenced to believe that opposing or disagreeing with the masses or with authority is the way to distinguish oneself from the rest and also the easiest way to get noticed and draw the attention of everyone. This is where the thought process of 'blindly opposing authority' begins to take shape and becomes very popular with many youth.

Protests, public cries, making and displaying provocative posters, using abusive language and expressing oneself not just in person but also through social media and other platforms become the norm because they very quickly seem to draw attention of everyone. Here, it does not really matter what is being expressed but what really matters to the person is how much momentum and popularity the movement has gained and as a result how much attention he/she has been able to attract.

In psychology, this behavior is described as excessive attention seeking or compulsive attention seeking behavior. This is not a character flaw but is seen increasingly in youth and adolescents today. Psychology attributes this behavior to brain wiring response to early developmental trauma caused by neglect. According to Psychology Today – a leading psychology journal, the developing brain observes its environment and wires itself accordingly to survive in a world that it presumes will be like its previous experiences. The more their needs are neglected during early development, the more a child equates getting attention with safety and survival as he grows up and develops a belief system that is necessary to go to whatever lengths to get attention.

Emerging evidence from literature related to psychology also suggests that – Adolescents & young adults, compared to adults, show relatively stronger stimulus – driven attention that favour stimulus – driven action, and conversely, present weaker goal – driven attention.

This is very evident from our Nation's present political and social landscape. There are only never ending conflicts with no possible agreement on the solution. Everything gets converted into a 'Me Vs. You' or a 'Left Vs. Right' rather than a 'Problem Vs. Solution' approach. Every government that seems to have noble intentions of enhancing the quality of life of the people by genuinely improving living conditions through good governance and sound policies are always faced with a stiff and meaningless opposition whose only aim is to rebel and protest against the ruling authority. Their only aim is to gain media attention and through it gain popularity rather than genuinely help to solve a persistent issue.

Now, what do we do as citizens of this great Nation to collectively address this issue? Firstly, let us get it right – it does not matter which political party we support or what school of thought we come from or which ideology/theory (leftist or right wing) we prescribe to. This is purely a matter of personal choice and our own inherent value systems. What really matters is how well we use our understanding of our individual theories and beliefs and then use our intellect to try and work out a solution or arrive on a common ground rather than just fuel the problem.

It matters that we take responsibility for the present and future of this nation individually and collectively. It matters that we have inherent faith in the ruling authority irrespective of their political association and help them in enhancing the quality of life in the state. We need to understand for ourselves and also educate our children about the real meaning of liberalization or liberalism. The terms 'liberal' and 'conservative' are very relative and subjective and cannot be defined universally. There is no single definition of what thought process qualifies as a liberal thought and which is a conservative thought. What seems conservative to one person may seem very liberal to the other and so on.



The lack of mature understanding about these terms is exactly why people have used these words as a tool to defend their selfish and completely irrational points of view and have started enforcing it on others. The recent violent protests that the country witnessed in revolt against a Government bill/act is neither conservative nor liberal. They were just examples of what happens when the human intellect is killed and when these terms become a tool for self identity rather than anything else.

As responsible citizens of this nation, we need to really work towards restoring the self – esteem of our children right from a young age. This can be done by giving them due attention, by showing genuine care and compassion and making them feel emotionally secure, thereby, encouraging them to think and choose independently. If we as parents teach our kids to think rather than force our opinions on them, if we encourage rational decision making that is based on detailed understanding, analysis and research rather than impulsive decision making that is only propelled by emotions, we will be in a much better place to save this nation from going to dogs. It is not a question of who is the ruling party. It is a question of how am I making decisions? Do I vote for an individual or a party based on their ideology and beliefs or do I consider their ability to lead the nation before I decide to elect them to a leadership position?

It is important to understand that while we may all have personal opinions and choices based on our cultural upbringing and past experiences, we also need to develop the maturity to break our silos and work for a larger common good when it is the need of the hour. Let us consciously be aware of people/ parties and forces that are enforcing their thoughts and beliefs on us under the pretext of them being the universal truth. Let us become aware of these forces that are actually a threat not just to the society but to the human intellect and its amazing decision making capacity. It is time we wake up and become aware, let go of titles and false identities and work towards the larger goal of benefit to mankind and progress of the nation. Our progress as individuals lies in the true progress of this nation. The time is NOW to make the change happen. Welcome 2020 – it is a new world! We are neither left nor right, we are only concerned about the development of this Nation and the happiness and prosperity of its people. That is all that matters and that is the real sense is being a true Nationalist.

# the vedic kitchen

## Natural foods to keep you warm in winter

You begin to layer yourself, getting up in the morning seems like a daunting task, you dread going out of the house, you are constantly hungry – any one or all of these symptoms and ahh! You know that winter is here.

There is a particular stillness that characterizes winter and with it comes a subtle invitation from nature herself to reprogram ourselves and redirect our own energies. According to Ayurveda, winter is a season of Kapha with strong Vata undertones. Keeping the Kapha and Vata doshas in the body balanced is the key to staying healthy during the winter months.

Here are a few natural foods that become superfoods during the winter months, doing our bodies a lot of good. They are –

- Jaggery – Eating a piece of jaggery after meals in the winter months helps us stay warm. Jaggery dilates the blood vessels and thus helps people with high blood pressure. Jaggery also detoxifies the liver and is a blood purifier too. Including Jaggery in your diet can help you fight cough and cold as well.
- Sesame seeds or til – Til is an indispensable part of Indian winters. It is an oilseed full of good fats and hence has the capacity to keep the body warm. Therefore it is excellent for consumption during winters. You can try the til jaggery ladoos, barfi, energy bars etc. that serve as a filling snack and a great source of energy in winters.
- Amla or Indian Gooseberry – Amla is a superfood which is known for several benefits like reducing inflammation and improving the quality of skin and hair. It is a rich source of Vitamin C and is great for improving heart health as well as a great immunity booster. In winters amla can be consumed in the form of jams (also known as murabbas), as chutneys, candies or juice. When consumed in combination with jaggery, it keeps the body warm as well.
- Sweet Potatoes – This nutritious root is a great winter snack not just for its versatility but also its numerous health benefits. Since it takes longer to digest and requires more energy, it raises the body temperature. It is high in Vitamin A, C, potassium and fiber and is thus, nutritious for both adults and kids. It can be consumed as a boiled and salted snack, in the form of fries or chips or even as a dessert.
- Ginger – A cup of hot steaming ginger tea can instantly warm you up on a cold day. Ginger has digestive properties and relieves inflammation. It is also a great natural medicine for common cold and flu which are very common during winters. It helps with throat issues like a sore throat



and cough. Combined with honey and warm water, it can serve as a tasty and digestive winter drink.

- Ghee – According to Ayurveda, ghee should be eaten in moderate amounts every day especially

during winters as it helps absorb the vitamins from the foods into the body. Ghee also helps increase body temperature due to its fat content. It helps in easing constipation and also boosts your energy levels. Hence it is a staple that can be included in all food preparations

during winter months.

- **Turmeric** – Turmeric is a spice originated in India with wonderful healing properties. A glass of warm turmeric milk at night before going to bed ensures that the body is warmed up and allows you to have good sleep. It is also good for back aches and joint pains. Turmeric can be added generously to curries and veggies as well as turned into a warm drink with tea, milk or water.
- **Dry fruits and Nuts** – Dry fruits are one of the healthiest alternative to junk food and a great way to satisfy food cravings during winter months. Packed with nutrients and vitamins, dry fruits and nuts are also known to improve hemoglobin levels, enhance blood circulation and are a natural cure for several ailments. They keep the body warm and can be had as snacks either plain, roasted or can be added to milk or desserts.

### *Vedic recipes for winter –*

Having stocked up your kitchen with all the above natural foods, here are some great recipes that you can try that will ensure that you stay fit, healthy, active and warm this winter.

***Healthy Carrot Pudding or Carrot Halwa*** – The traditional carrot halwa is a favourite in Indian kitchens during winters as it is the season for carrots. This is a healthier version of the carrot halwa and is equally suitable for both, adults and kids.

***Ingredients*** – Juicy red carrots, nuts – cashews, walnuts, pistachios, rasins, almonds, dates, powdered jaggery, milk, ghee, powdered cardamom, saffron.

***Method*** – Grate carrots and chop the dates. In a thick bottomed pan, Add 2 table spoons of ghee and saute the grated carrots and dates for a while. Now, slowly add milk and let the mixture cook. Lower the heat and allow the carrots and dates to cook slowly. When the milk reduces to half, add nuts and cardamom and stir again. After a few minutes add jaggery powder and allow the entire mixture to cook on low flame. Keep stirring continuously. When the milk has all evaporated, switch off the gas and garnish with rasins and saffron strands and serve hot.

**NOTE** – Jaggery is optional if you want your halwa sweet. Otherwise dates also renders a natural sweetness to the halwa and is a healthier option.

***Black Lentil and Vegetable Khichdi*** – The simple yet humble black lentil khichdi is a one pot recipe and is very commonly prepared in Northern India during winter months. It is a nutrient packed meal and great for both, adults and kids.

***Ingredients*** – Split black lentils or whole black lentils, peas, carrots, beans, potatoes (optional), tomatoes, asafoetida, chopped coriander, green chillies, garam masala, carom seeds, ghee & home – made butter.

***Method*** – Soak rice and lentils separately for 30 minutes. In a pressure cooker add some ghee and let it heat up. Add chopped green chillies, a pinch of asafoetida and carom seeds and stir till the carom seeds turn golden brown. Now, add tomatoes, salt and some garam masala. Let the tomatoes cook. Now, add lentils, chopped veggies (carrots, beans and potatoes), peas and some water and let it simmer for 5 - 7 minutes on low flame. Lastly, add the rice, some more salt and give a final stir. Add water which is 3 times that of the quantity of rice and close the cooker lid. Cook for 3 to 4 whistles. Garnish with chopped coriander and serve hot with curd.

Contributed by Vihangam Light Editorial Team

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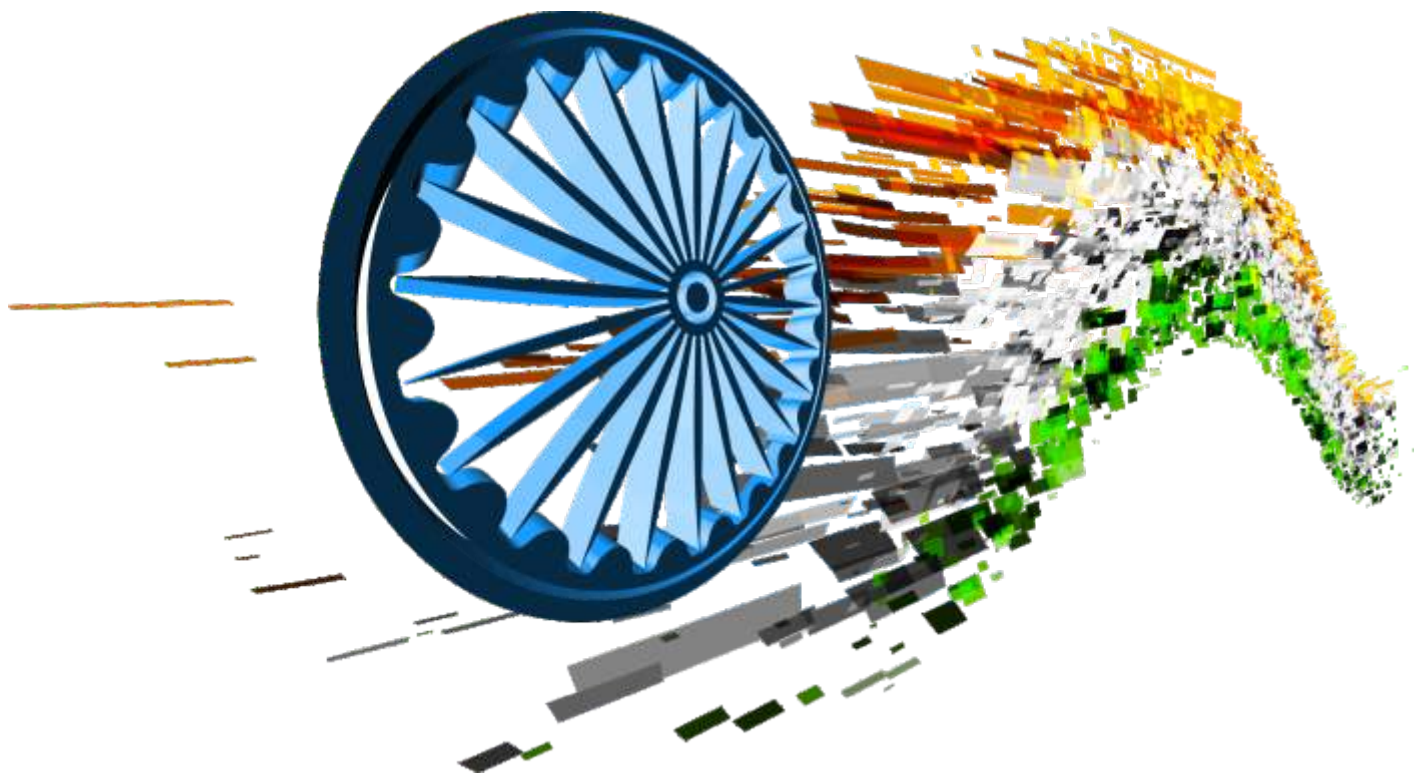
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