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Bi-Monthly

- **Hope: Reason to Smile**
- **Goal of Reason**
- **Rationality**



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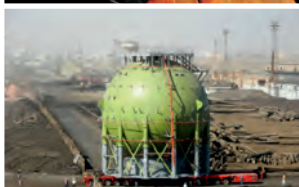
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THEMES FOR THE NEXT ISSUES OF THE JOURNAL

Month	Theme	Deadline for articles
October 2025	Mind and heart	August 1
December 2025	Strength & Compassion	October 1

BRIEF GUIDELINES FOR THE ARTICLES

1. Write up may include original articles / short stories. In case of extracts / excerpts / photographs, due credit by way of acknowledgment is to be given.
2. About 900-1400 words. 3. Not political and / or religious.
4. Student(s) are encouraged to send through their school(s).
5. Brief profile of about 70 words and a photograph along with the write up may be sent to frnv@valuefoundation.in and / or frnvindia@gmail.com
6. Honorarium, if any, may be considered by FRNV Editorial Board for articles published.
7. The decision of the FRNV Editorial Board shall be final and binding.

Purity of the Mind

Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha



Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru!

All this was more than forty years ago (*Ed: this article was written in 1999*) – when I had left Calcutta and had come to Kerala. I lived in Jñānāśrama, in its unfinished building, with a single room, a main-hall, that was also meant to be the satsang hall. Throughout the day I would stay in this hall, which had no doors or window shutters, except a few pleated coconut leaves improvised as cover. There was a bare cot for resting. I would not leave the room except for food and answering the calls of nature.

Samādhi and the fruition that samādhi would bring was the summum-bonum of spiritual life to me, then. This is by and large indicated by the śāstras and the prakaraṇa granthas also. That the real Jñāna transcends samādhi, has also been explicitly mentioned in many places – but this truth does not

come to the seekers' notice. Even if it strikes one's attention, he will not usually be able to give it the due importance.

At about this time, I received from Swami Poornananda Tirtha in Calcutta, a letter containing a number of beautiful verses from the Yogavāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa. He came across these in Calcutta for the first time. Among the ślokas, one, describing the mukta, caught my eye. I started remembering it from then on:

नैष्कर्म्येण न तस्यार्थो
न तस्यार्थोऽस्ति कर्मभिः ।
न समाधिजपाभ्यां वा
यस्य निर्वसनं मनः ॥
naiṣkarmyeṇa na tasyārtho
na tasyārtho'sti karmabhiḥ ।
na samādhi-japābhyāṃ vā
yasya nirvāsanam manaḥ ॥
(Laghu Yogavāsiṣṭha 4.5.28)

For him, the mukta, there is nothing to gain by ' naiṣkarmya '. ' Naiṣkarmya ' is that state wherein you feel you have nothing to do, nothing to be benefited by action; you are given to actionlessness, action-freeness. ' Na tasyartho'sti karmabhiḥ ' – he has nothing to gain from involving in karma also. 'Na samādhi-japābhyām vā ' – nor by meditation or japa will he be benefited. Who? – ' Yasya nirvāsanam manaḥ ' — he whose mind is free from vāsanās, latent desires. For such a person samādhi is useless, karma also is useless.

This śloka held my attention from then onwards. Here is a statement which declares that when the mind becomes 'mukta', free from vāsanās, then that vāsanā-mukta mind is far superior to the absorption or samādhi! I already had thoughts about samādhi and its limitation, and this verse stood out significantly.

Why am I saying this today? Ever since I perceived this truth, I have mentioned this verse in many satsangs and in conversation with devotees, repeatedly explaining its meaning. The word vāsanā generally means latent desire. Desire in any

form. Expectations, ego, possessiveness — all these are forms of desire. Even the desire for mokṣa is a desire! Any expectation, any desire, any kind of an ego, any note of possessiveness — all are results of vāsanā. When the mind is freed of vāsanās, that mind becomes absolutely free.

Acceptance of the world is acceptance of plurality. Acceptance of plurality means being influenced by it. And to be influenced by dvandvas (pairs of opposites) means to be afflicted by desires, ego and possessiveness.

These notes alone and nothing but these very notes of your own mind are the source of your afflictions. Their disappearance contributes to spirituality. When these notes begin to fall one by one, the worldliness dissolves and godliness shines forth.

I have been emphasizing this for decades. Whenever I see a truth I give expression to it. Whether it is put in the form of vāsanā-tyāga or ego-tyāga or cultivating dispossessiveness, or dropping expectations, I was always exposing the same truth. ' Anapekṣā ', '

anapekṣā', 'anapekṣā' – I used to say several times repeatedly – anapekṣā, non-expectation, anapekṣā, non-expectation

A vāsanā-free mind, is a free mind. It is a pure mind. So the purity we are talking about is not a one-faceted development. Purity means, the mind becomes vāsanā-mukta, expectation-mukta, ego-mukta, possessiveness-mukta and also mukta from any other traits.

The purity of the mind itself is Self-realization! Purity represents, manifests and reveals Self-realization. It is not that the Self is realized as something different – on the other hand, it is that the Self manifests itself in the mind and in the internal functions. In the conscious level a new radiance is felt giving rise to these pronounced changes or purification.

So, it is not that I have not been focusing on these. It is that the focus has not been perceived by the seekers – the maturity, frankness and fitness had not yet come perhaps. The manana (rumination) had not been done after hearing me. But now you say that these points have been

driven home! It has been only because of repeated exposures and not because of your own effort. If the points were to be driven home and imbibed earlier, on your own, then you should have done manana years ago! But at least now, after your Swamiji repeatedly stresses and insists on these points, you feel touched by them. Very good! I am happy.

Mind's purity is very important. You have to attempt at this purity by and through all your actions and interactions. Instead of allowing your mind to be diverted by various interactions, the activities should be channelized in such a manner that they go on purifying the mind.

Self-realization is realization of the very Self. The Self is not a second or another product; it is yourself. You remain yourself throughout, whether you sleep, dream or wake up. Whether you are miserable or peaceful, joyous or dejected, you remain yourself. It is realization of this Self, which constantly is there, that you should aim at. It is not that the seeker produces a Self and then realizes it.

Your body produces heat. Just as you say, “I feel heat; I am hot”, you must be able to say, “I feel the Self, I am the Self”. The power or presence within you that causes radiation of heat from your body and also that from which spring forth knowledge and doubt, thoughts and emotions – that power or that presence is the Consciousness, the Self. It is to be felt.

By virtue of watchfulness, attention, relaxation and quietitude, the whole body will be engulfed in gentle warmth, in the warmth of joy. This warmth of joy felt is of the Self. It doesn't emerge from a process of a long concentration or through

contemplation of this or that; it comes from watchfulness towards mind's functions, by remaining poised and silent.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru!

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**All that we are
is the result
of
what we have
thought.**

- Buddha

SUBHASHITAM

युक्तियुक्तं वचो ग्राह्यं बालादपि शुकादपि ।
अयुक्तमपि न ग्राह्यं साक्षादपि बृहस्पतेः ॥

यदि कोई युक्तियुक्त बात आपसे कही जाती है, चाहे वह एक बालक या एक बोलने वाले तोते द्वारा कही गयी हो, तो उसे ग्राह्य करना श्रेयस्कर है । परन्तु कोई अयुक्तियुक्त बात यदि साक्षात् देवगुरु बृहस्पति भी आपसे कहें तो उसे नहीं मानना चाहिये ।

If some rational and proper advice is given even by a child or a talking parrot, it should be taken seriously and heeded, whereas anything, not supported by reason, should not be accepted, even if such advice is given personally by Brihaspati, the Guru of Gods.

From the President's Desk



The monsoons have marked the Indian psyche in many ways. Apart from the intoxicating smell of wet earth and the marvel of raindrops, despite learning about the water cycle, this has also been the period when ascetics observe what is called the chaturmas or the period of stay in one place; also a period of deep study and reflection.

The pleasure from the above thoughts was rudely disturbed with news of streets being flooded, gutters overflowing and all the havoc the rains are causing in our cities. Not only does this reflect on poor administration it also shows that the jobs executed have been of such poor quality that they are unable, to withstand the slashing rain. And thus, I come back to the relevance of FRNV, for it is nothing but the lack of a value system that makes people perform their responsibility dishonestly. To keep quiet and watch is like abetting the crime. Please rouse yourself and rise in protest.

In fact, I feel that even with respect to the magazine. It is meant to be an interactive forum where readers respond, both to the articles and to the mission of FRNV. I keep waiting for a mail, a letter or even a message...is it that you are not inspired or motivated by the magazine?

Or is it that you are all very busy? Or is it just lethargy?

Let me make a request... why do you not send us suggestions on what topics you would like addressed in the future issues...may I expect some response please?

S. Regunathan
President (FRNV)

The Goal of Reason *Reflecting Infinite Possibilities*

Sudhamahi Regunathan finds that while reason is a great tool for learning; expanding reason is the key to true understanding.



“Mom can I go out to play?”
“No, it is raining now.”
“Why can't I go when it is raining?”
“You will get wet.”
“Why can't I get wet?”
“You will catch a cold.”
“Why will I catch a cold?”
“Because you will fall ill.”
“Why will I fall ill?”
“I have told you, you cannot go out and play, that's it.”
Gradually the why of childhood changes to what is the reason/cause/need.... Google is the

only one which answers with certitude and patience to as many



questions as possible, even if it is repetitive or off the mark. AI often reaches a point when it says, “I am sorry I do not seem to be able to help.”

The human mind is always looking for reasons. Reasons to explain the world we live in, to explain the neighbour's bad behaviour, our own good fortune, why someone said something and so on. Reason has instant appeal. When someone says I love you because you are kind or beautiful or with any specific reason, we feel flattered and the love starts sounding genuine. When you are told it is going to rain since dark clouds have gathered in the sky, it



sounds convincing. Reason helps us to relate to the world around us. Therefore, it has been used extensively as a tool to teach. No wonder then that the question-

answer format is the nature of most Upanishadic teachings.

The Nyaya system, one of the six orthodox systems in India, is based on reason. It accepts the Vedic concept of *Rhta* which implies a world that is structured, intelligible, and meaningful - a world in which truth, correct action, and natural law are interwoven. On this premise they argue that to align ourselves with that order or *Rhta*, we must develop clear methods for knowing what is true and what is false. The system of logic they developed is more elaborate than Aristotle's three-part syllogism. The five steps to logical reasoning in Nyaya philosophy are: Proposition, Reason, Example, Application and Conclusion.

However, the Upanishads also recognize that one encounters a wall when reason is pushed as far as you can. Interesting stories are told to illustrate it. One story is from what is considered the longest Upanishad, the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. The story is told as follows.

The court of Janaka was in progress. Janaka had announced that he would give a hundred cows each carrying 10 grams of gold to the best philosopher/scholar in his assembly. A silence had fallen over the assembly. The hundred cows were mooing outside, the bells around their necks making a racket while

they were flicking off the errant fly. Inside the court, the scholars were wondering how was one to rise up and say, “I am the best,” particularly when great sages like Yajnavalkya were in the assembly. Finally, it was Yajnavalkya himself who broke the silence with a command to his student. “Samasrava,” called Yajnavalkya, his voice resounding across King Janaka’s court, “Drive the cows home!” The silent assembly, now gathered courage to rise in protest. The scholars could not accept this. They each asked questions, challenging Yajnavalkya’s knowledge. The significant one to do so was Gargi, the only woman scholar in the assembly.

She asked Yajnavalkya to describe the nature of reality, which he did by saying that the world was woven on water, water on air, air on space, and so on, until he reached *Aksara*, the Imperishable. Gārgī then asked what *Akṣara* itself was woven upon.

At this point, Yājñavalkya said to her: “Do not, O Gārgī, question too much, or your head will fall off.”

This was not a threat. Gargi had reached the limits of thought and causal reasoning. To ask what the *Akṣara* is woven upon is to make a category error - for the *Akṣara* is the unconditioned, the groundless ground. Reason cannot penetrate

beyond it. Reason has reached its limits.

The beauty of the story is still unfolding... With this caution from Yajnavalkya, Gargi fell silent. She returned after some time to ask two more questions. This time she did not ask for the reason. She asked for elaboration of the belief, belief is the basis for reason. She asked what is it that encompasses all—the heavens, the earth, and all of time. Now, Yājñavalkya gave a full and subtle reply describing Brahman.

Does belief or faith form the bedrock of reason? In this unreasonable word, do we make assumptions which we take as the absolute truth and therefore derive our thinking and opinions? Can reason lead us beyond what the mind knows? How can it when it is based only on that which the mind knows?

Gargi and Yajnavalkya believed in the *Brahman*. What about the one who does not? Interestingly many routes led to the same end, for example the path taken to improve our understanding of reality and the limits of human reason that comes from quantum physics. At the heart of classical science lies the expectation that the universe behaves in a deterministic and rational manner - that with sufficient information, one can predict outcomes with certainty, much like

Newtonian mechanics permits the calculation of planetary motions. However, quantum physics defies



this expectation, revealing a world in which certainty gives way to probability and determinism dissolves into ambiguity.

An interesting story needs to be told here. In the archipelago of Helegoland, a youngster called Heisenberg was sitting alone grappling with a problem given to him by scientist Neil Bohr. Neil Bohr had predicted properties of chemical elements even before measuring them, like the frequency of light emitted by elements when they were heated, the colour they assume and so on. But he could not predict the intensity. He could not explain why electrons in atoms orbited only on certain precise orbits. Why did they leap from one orbit to another? What force was responsible for this behaviour?

Heisenberg came up with the Uncertainty Principle, according to which it is impossible to simultaneously know both the position and momentum of a particle with arbitrary precision, not because of experimental limitations, but because such precision is fundamentally excluded by the nature of quantum systems. This challenges the very framework of classical reasoning, which assumes that the more precisely we measure, the more accurately we understand. Similarly, quantum superposition - the phenomenon whereby a particle exists in multiple states simultaneously until observed - confronts us with a reality that defies the binary logic on which much of traditional reason is based. When Schrödinger proposed his famous cat thought experiment, he wasn't suggesting that cats can actually be alive and dead at the same time, but rather illustrating how quantum mechanics leads to conclusions that appear absurd when forced into classical logical categories. Furthermore, quantum entanglement - a phenomenon in which particles become so deeply correlated that the state of one instantaneously influences the state of another, regardless of the distance separating them - upends our understanding of causality and locality, two pillars of rational scientific thought.

Quantum mechanics marks a turning point in the philosophy of science: where once reason was taken to be synonymous with empirical certainty, quantum physics reveals a more complex picture in which rational models must account for inherent uncertainty, observer-dependent outcomes, and a probabilistic interpretation of events. This does not mean abandoning reason, but rather expanding its boundaries to include new modes of inference.

The fascinating lesson that can perhaps be gleaned from this is that rationality is not a static ideal but a



dynamic process, evolving alongside our growing understanding of nature.

Interestingly, when I visited Le Syndrome de l'Orangerie in Paris which houses Monet's Water Lilies, the reaction of art to the promote the understanding of life around us was

described thus; '...the principle of discernment, which had long prevailed in art, now appeared profoundly redundant (after the WW II). Faced with the erosion of the certainties of the visible and the field of possibilities open to them, artists offered new approaches, making transience, disorder, incompleteness and doubt their focus...Their works free themselves from any injunction to be clear-cut, leaving greater room for the viewer's interpretation. Inherently elusive, blurring invites us to step to one side, to pause our constant attempts to focus, and to explore reality in new ways.'

Gregoire Bouillier's quote which was also displayed in the museum read, "In reality, we know nothing. Nothing precise. Nothing solid. We need to keep shifting viewpoints."

Vedic philosophy, science and the arts had zeroed in on the same conclusion. My mind harked back to the Jaina concept of *anekanta* which says opposites co-exist and truth is relative, thereby lending that flexibility to the mind as well as building a perspective that is always fresh and open to a greater and deeper understanding, which we had identified as the lofty goal of reason.

Rationality *The Essence of Our Humanity*



*What sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom is our ability to reason says **Valson Thampu**. To be human is to engage in thought, reflection and self-restraint.*

Why should we be rational? Well, the simple and short answer is: because we are human. And to be human is to be rational and to act reasonably. We are defined as 'rational *animals*'. If so, to be less than rational is to be animal-like. A necessary implication of the above

is that reason, vis-a-vis being human, has a direct bearing on our being social. Our social instincts, if developed, bridle our selfish inclinations. So, to be reasonable is also to be able to act selflessly. The rationality that promotes only the interests of the self, by hook or crook, is vulpine. It suppresses our

social development and makes us either a-social or anti-social.

This specious, sub-human rationality - or, reductive intelligence instinctively developed and expertly applied to promoting advocacies of individual or sectarian scope, gains prestige in proportion to the decline of a society's ethical sense. Those with even minimal humaneness and common sense recognize this to be a worrisome sign of social pathology.

Animals, so far as we know, act as impelled by instincts. A developed capacity for being rational and reasonable, on the contrary, enables human beings to act in moral freedom from the tyranny of instincts. That is the point of distinction between the animal and the human; and it also marks the origin of the idea of 'character,' which is a purely human category.

Maybe, at this point, I should take my readers into confidence regarding a problem of much cultural and historical significance as basic to the theme we are here trying to outline. We are the inheritors of the Enlightenment, with its legacy of the over-all supremacy of reason. Yet, we find the members of our species acting, ever and anon, in brutal irrationality. Our is not an age, as Nietzsche pointed out, of philosophers, but of demagogues

and the masses they manipulate. The spirit of this age is infected with violence. That is true not only of situations of individual distress and political hysteria, but also of religious frenzy. How come the legacy of the Enlightenment does not make us more humane and reasonable?

The modern age, as Samuel Huntington pointed out, is the age par excellence of the self-sufficient, autonomous individual. The aggregation of such discreet, unconnected individuals constitutes only an atomized society. In literature, Dostoevsky (ref. *Crime and Punishment*) was the first to address this problem in depth and detail.

Since Dostoevsky, a galaxy of authors, including sociologists, cultural anthropologies, psychologists, and

theologians of diverse hues, have highlighted this issue from diverse perspectives.

We need not go into the details here. For our instant purpose it suffices to note that this atomized society starves our rational equipment. A person who lives

To be rational is to be tolerant. It stands to logic, therefore, that irrationality breeds intolerance, and vice versa.

entirely by himself and for himself cannot develop his rational faculty or act in a socially coherent mode.

The duty to develop the ability to act rationally rests with the individual who, at the same time, stands only an outside chance, if at all, of becoming aware of the need

for it.

A person who lives entirely by himself and for himself cannot develop his rational faculty or act in a socially coherent mode.

An under-developed person, an *alpathman*, cannot be rational, or act reasonably, no matter to what extent you

go to persuade him. A *mahathman* is distinguished by his highly developed capacity for reason. He is, in fact, one in whom reason grows to the extent of being only a handshake away from Supreme Reason.

This affords clarity regarding an irony that lurks in the sphere of religion. There is no religion that doesn't acknowledge God as Supreme Reason. By acknowledging God as Light we imply that in God reason attains luminous perfection. Yet, religions tend to be distrustful of reason! Rationality tends to be assumed as

inimical to faith. 'Faith-above-facts' is only one of its manifold expressions. There are many who insist that the intellectual development of a human being will cripple his spiritual vitality!

The crucial difference between humanly-enriching and socially integrating reason and mere manipulative intelligence is *faith reposed in violence*. Reason does not condone, much less advocate, violence. Violence is sub-rational.

But, a great deal of intelligence is invested in promoting sectarian distrust and hostilities. Every one of such instances involves a free-play of vulpine intelligence. The confusion between true reason and this perverted apparition of it works to the denigration of reason.

The above distinction can help us to see in perspective what appears to be a clash of reasons in the public domain. When two interest-groups are in conflict, both advocate their 'reasons' for the stands they take. To the members of the groups involved, the arguments that their protagonists proffer seem persuasive, even conclusive. Correspondingly, the standpoint of the opposite party, seems obstinate and unreasonable. Such a situation can be resolved only by appealing to a higher reason; a reason valid equally for both groups. In the normal course, that reason

pertains to the idea of justice as mediated by law. But the animators of secular law feel ill-at-ease when called upon to adjudicate emotive religious disputes. The only solution for this dilemma is for the society as a whole to cultivate a scientific temper, the discipline of objective thinking, and respect for the rule of law, as prescribed in Article 51A of the Indian constitution.

The other solution is spiritual. While religious fervour or piety makes us more and more partial and parochial, spiritual consciousness urges us to be just, and to do justice to all. What this involves, as Soren Kierkegaard pointed out, is being less subjective about oneself and more objective about others than we habitually are. This, in essence, is the spiritual intent that informs teachings like: 'Love your neighbour as yourself,' and 'Treat others as you want to be treated'.

Seen in light of the above, it becomes evident that to be rational is to be *tolerant*. It stands to logic, therefore, that irrationality breeds intolerance, and vice versa. One's rational development is most authentically proved by one's capacity to not only tolerate, but also to enjoy and deal creatively with, differences. All allergies indicate ill-health; including allergy to differences.

I must conclude with a word on the

necessary mutuality between reason and patriotism. Reason is as much the cause as it is the outcome of the all-round, wholesome development of humankind. The irrational individual too develops; but develops in a wonky, harmful fashion. Loving one's country in an irrational way -my country: right or wrong- can do no enduring good to the country. It is specious patriotism. Reason alone safeguards the long-term good of a country. Abiding by the citizenship duties laid down in Article 51A of the Constitution must be deemed basic to meaningful patriotism. In comparison, the patriotism of negativity that subsists on hate-objects may electrify the masses for the time being, but proves injurious to nation-building in the long run. Gurudev Tagore knew this. Hence his prayer for India articulated in Hymn 35 of the

Gitanjali:

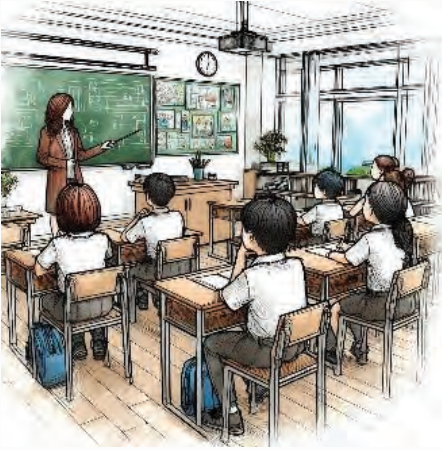
*Where the clear stream of reason has
not lost its way into the dreary desert
sand of dead habit;*

*Where the mind is led forward by
thee into ever-widening thought and
action*

*Into that heaven of freedom, my
Father, let my country awake.*

Reasoning

In the Twenty-first Century Classroom



As educators, we must ensure that students have the necessary reasoning tools to navigate the areas of academic learning, moral development and social interactions, writes

Rekha Venkataraman

“The function of reason is to promote happiness,” reflected Aristotle, approximately 2,347 years ago! He considered reasoning to be a defining trait of humanity. The ability to reason is a fundamental element of human intelligence; it sets us apart from every other species. This development of reasoning skills begins in childhood, and it influences how children learn and grow: socially, emotionally, and intellectually. As a schoolteacher, I found it both challenging and rewarding to foster the growth of reasoning in school-aged children.

Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist known for his work in the field of

child development, believed that by the time children enter school, especially from the age of six onward, they begin to develop the capacity for reason. Schools play a vital role in providing the structure and stimulation necessary for nurturing this faculty. The classroom then becomes the ideal environment to help children to think, and to think well. As educators, we must ensure that students have the necessary reasoning tools to navigate the areas of academic learning, moral development and social interactions.

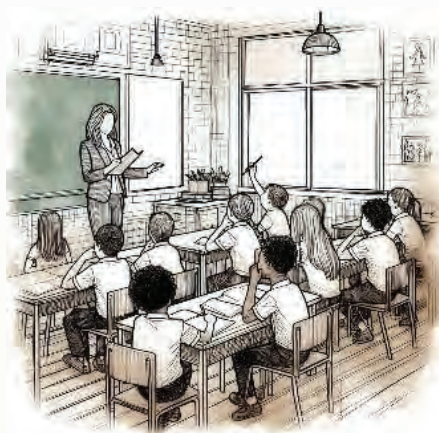
In the classroom, the learning of core academic subjects like Language, Mathematics, Science and Social

Studies must move beyond merely memorizing facts. The development of reason helps children evolve from passive receivers of information into active participants in their own education. After presenting the requisite facts and figures to a class, teachers can model reasoning by following up with questions: "... If I move this plant away from the window, what happens? Why do plants lean towards sunlight?" This invites students to develop observation skills and scientific reasoning. The principal of our school gave us broad freedom to hold mini science projects throughout the year. In the field of Literature, I enjoyed using the Socratic method with students across grade levels. I would ask them to follow up any reading with questions of their own, including proposing alternative endings to plots or imagining what they might do differently if they were characters in a literary work or even in a history chapter. Would these alternate ideas work in actuality?

Debates and persuasive writing projects were assigned frequently. In Mathematics, I would start with an answer and ask the students to work backwards and provide a problem requiring that answer. The variety of

answers in each subject would be as varied as the colours of a rainbow! All this helped students to develop sound logic and to recognize fallacies. By the end of the academic year, it was extremely interesting to observe the immense growth in their independent thinking and reasoning abilities.

The ability to reason is key to moral development and healthy social interaction. Children, and indeed all human beings, tend to react



impulsively or emotionally in social situations. As teachers, we are called upon to help them make fair and ethical decisions. Fairness in the school playgrounds, honesty in the classroom when taking tests, sharing with others, standing up against

bullies, are issues that need patient guidance on the part of adults in the school system. I used a technique called 'mirroring' to help students work out their interpersonal problems. The children involved in any given conflict would sit facing each other, and I would sit between the two. As each student stated his or her grievance, I would repeat that grievance verbatim. For example, if Johnny and Peter were involved in an argument or a fight, Johnny might complain, "Peter insulted me, so I shoved him." Now I would repeat Johnny's words to Peter: "Johnny says you insulted him, and that is why he shoved you." Peter would then give his response, which I would repeat to Johnny, using exactly the same words. After listening to each other's words being 'mirrored' by an adult, the students involved would often have time to de-escalate their initial emotions of anger and aggression. This would help them to express themselves, understand the other's point of view, seek compromise and develop reasoning skills.

Another strategy I used was to request a student to write a letter to his or her parents, acknowledging and explaining his or her offence,

such as cheating on a test. Instead of being punished or sent to the principal, the child would now have an opportunity to accept responsibility for his or her mistake by verbalizing it in a letter. Over time, children would reason out the consequences of their actions, plan and regulate their behaviour.

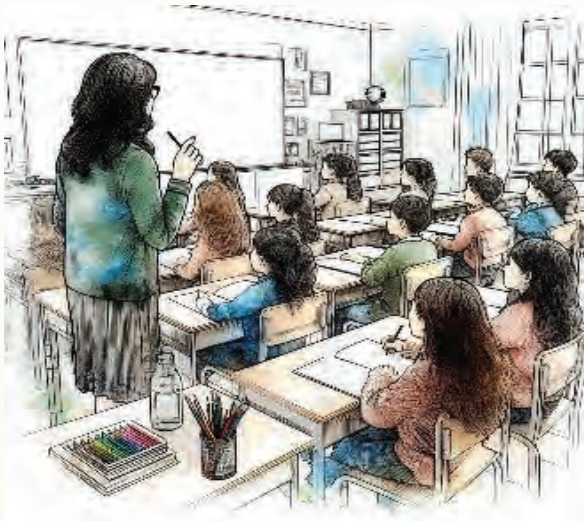
It is important to recognize the role of parents and the community in the development of reasoning prowess. Children benefit at home from exposure to adult reasoning during conversation. During parent-teacher meetings, I encouraged parents and extended family members to regularly question their children and have them explain their thoughts. Families could include their children in decision making, thereby helping them to practice weighing options and consequences. Community organizations and institutions, such as libraries, museums, theatres and places of worship support reasoning by providing experiences that stimulate curiosity and reflection. I would frequently organize class trips to these places during the course of the year, specifically to reinforce these concepts.

The need for reasoned thinking is

urgent today. We live in a digital age, flooded by misinformation and disinformation from social media. Children, from primary school through high school, are vulnerable to these influences. Institutions of learning have the responsibility for cultivating thinking citizens. For example, in the United States, where the voting age is eighteen and above, I have tried to counsel teenagers to engage thoughtfully in their civic duty. Very often, they are disenchanted by the candidates of both political parties and want to abstain from voting. I reason with them that inevitably the candidate from one of those parties will be elected to office. It is therefore in the voters' interest, as informed citizens, to engage in thoughtful research and make a well-reasoned decision.

School curriculums should therefore embed reasoning, from early childhood through secondary education.

In conclusion, thoughtful engagement and critical guidance from educators can be invaluable in raising well rounded, logical children who can reason well. Reasoning enables them to learn and live fully in the twenty-first century. Of course, this demands that educators be patient, well trained and convinced of their objectives. Today's students will be tomorrow's compassionate, discerning, and capable members of society. As Margaret Mead, a renowned anthropologist, has commented, "Children must be taught *how* to think, not *what* to think."





Rhyme or Reason

In a world flooded with flashing screens and punchy taglines, what is it that truly lingers in our minds – an image, a tune or a rhyme?

asks Sujatha Padmanabhan

Picture this!

A commercial appears on the screen with dancers, music and cartoons - simultaneous images – centuries of history compressed into mere seconds! What makes the picture stay in your mind? The dancers? music? Or the snappy punchlines? A Steady stream of images fractures your attention while condensing time, blurring boundaries between reality, non-reality and something in-between? Ever wonder what the magic is?

Now, cut to a time sans television sets, sans technology, sans books with graphic pics! And yet, words could still conjure vivid images in the mind! Hard to imagine? Music activates multiple areas of the brain, and rhyme in particular, made oral traditions memorable and compelling. Think of the catchy slogans that in advertising, repeated

until they bypass analysis and embed themselves deep into our psyche. That's the power of words and the pivotal role of aesthetics in shaping our perceptions and choices. By understanding the 'Rhyme as Reason' effect we can better appreciate how language influences thought and behaviour in certain contexts. What were the first things we learnt in any language the fun way? The fun, sing-song rhymes our parents and grandparents proudly prompted us to recite before delighted guests. Merrily did we lisp

Twinkle, twinkle little star!

How I wonder what you are!

And earlier, as infants, we were cradled by lullabies –

Hush-a bye- don't you cry!

Go to sleep, li'l baby...

soothing melodies that lulled us to sleep. Did we care about meaning or origin? What mattered was the



rhythm – the pleasure in sound, the joy of repetition. These patterns are etched so deeply in our memory that we can recite them decades later, unbidden. Why? Because sound patterns - rhyme and meter – create musicality in verse. Even when meter is subtle, the ear catches cadence. Rhyming aphorisms become not just memorable, but persuasive – heuristics that influence our choices.

Rhymes not only create a sense of unity and coherence but also enhance lexical access! They are mnemonic marvels that spark neural pathways. Hymns, too, are rhythmic rituals:

*Hark, the loud celestial hymn
Angel choirs above are raising
Cherubim and Seraphim*

In unceasing chorus praising...

Shlokas, in Sanskrit use meter and rhyme to express devotion and universal truths – jewels of ancient Indian wisdom. Jayadeva's appeal to Hari is both lyrical and reverent. Jayadeva appeals to Hari, Lord of the

Universe, thus:

*Sri Jayadeva kaveridam udam
uditam udaram
Shrunu sukhadam, subhadam
bhava saram...*

The Tamil Divya Prabandham offers another striking example – rhymes reverberate right from the first line:

*Pachai mamalai pol meni,
pavazha vaikamal chengun
Achuda amarere, ayartham
kozhunde ennum Icchuvai tavira
yan poi indiralogum alum
Achuvai perineum venden,
arangama nagarulane*

Across continents and cultures, rhyme bridges memory, beauty, and meaning. In Hindi poetry, too, rhyme is cherished as 'alankar' – ornamental and uplifting.

*Aao poochen ek savaala
Mere sir mein kitne baal
Kitne aasmaan mein tare
Batlaao ya kehdo hare!*

There's no disputing that there's more to rhyme than mere embellishment; yet many writers have, from time to time, argued against rhyme, saying its just a rhetorical technique and a superficial adornment! Some have even gone to the extent of writing entire poetry in lyrical prose, rejecting rhyme altogether. And true, poorly executed rhyme can falter.

Shelley, the Romantic poet, argued in his 'Defense of Poesy,' that the invention of language reveals a human impulse to reproduce the

rhythmic and the ordered so that harmony and unity are delightful wherever they are found and incorporated instinctively into creative activities. Not for no rhyme nor reason did Shelley posit that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world! They are not mere entertainers but influencers and moral philosophers who shape public opinion and inspire social change. Rhyming has always been and will be a significant artistic choice that promotes accessibility. The core of Hip-hop and Rap music - some of the most popular genres around today - lies in the structure of each piece's lyrical content. So whether it's your cup of tea or not, there's no disputing its value and has been used for centuries with its origins in songs that were sung aloud, marking important occasions and chronicling historical events.

Thus, it is that the rhymes hold hidden depths and are nearly not so nonsensical as you think.

Queen Elizabeth played the fiddle, the little dog referred to Earl of Leicester who ran away with the 'spoon', or the lady-in-waiting Lady

Catherine Gray. "Georgie Porgie" may nod to King George and "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary", was indeed Mary, Queen of Scots. None of these rhymes that we are familiar with, would have been heard but for Thomas Fleet who transcribed these verses, each concealing some sharp barbs aimed at royalty. Credit goes to those who made a rhyme like:

' i ' before ' e ' except after "c" - to remember the spelling or to those that made

*Thirty days hath September, April,
June and November*

All the rest have thirty one.....

Some studies have even explored the benefits that rhyming does in helping people with specific attention and memory challenges like those diagnosed with ADHD. So rhyme is not distraction from reason but a complement to it, enhancing the beauty of the ephemeral, capturing fleeting thoughts and giving them form. The nay-sayers then only need to understand this -

*Beauty is truth, truth beauty and that
is all Ye know on earth and all ye
need to know!*



Rhymes and nursery rhymes form the lyrical heartbeat of early childhood. With their rhythmic flow and melodic structure, they enchant young ears while subtly teaching language patterns, memory and emotion. Passed down through generations, these simple verses carry cultural echoes and imaginative play, making learning feel like play

Is there Reason in the Occult?

Mysticism isn't necessarily the negation of reason – it's often its expansion.

Lippi Parida invites us to consider that reason may have more than one mode: analytic, symbolic, contemplative and intuitive.



The occult is a search for a deeper, more profound knowledge of the Universe and human existence. Generally, occult practices involve symbolism and allegory - a form of reasoning or understanding beyond the literal. In fact, these symbols can represent universal traits or psychological insight. People are drawn to the occult for its potential to facilitate personal growth, self-discovery and spiritual exploration.

Now let us take up the topic of tarot card readings. It is not simply fortune telling or predicting the future. Tarot is a tool for self-reflection, introspection and gaining a deeper understanding of oneself and life's challenges. Tarot cards act as a mirror, reflecting our inner thoughts, emotions and potential. The deck of tarot cards is 78 in number and represent fundamental aspects of human life and can offer insights into various life situations.

The images, symbols and colours of

the tarot cards hold symbolic meaning, representing different emotions, situations and potential outcomes. These symbols can be interpreted to provide guidance and understanding.

Tarot is a framework for exploring the inner self - gaining insights into life's challenges and making more conscious choices. It helps us to understand ourselves better and navigate life's complexities.

Tarot cards are divided into two main sections - the Major Arcana



(22cards) and the Minor Arcana (56 cards). Each card carries a specific meaning and symbolism which can be interpreted in different ways.

Since I read the tarot to a select clientele I am answering from my experience of about 20 years of reading. When I use the cards, something happens that I call the science of coincidence. I was once reading the cards for a friend. I thoroughly sifted my deck and pulled out a card. and saw the death card come up. While her husband was hale and hearty in a couple of months, he succumbed to a heart attack and passed away.

Since it was the death card, I replaced it and thoroughly sifted again and pulled out exactly the same card. These things are not coincidental.

We live in an intelligent and loving universe. It speaks to us all the time through coincidence and synchronicity. When we use tarot cards we are signaling to the universe

that we are ready and willing to accept its information. (This is also how other forms of divination work - tea leaves, runes, 03I Ching, throwing bones etc.)

When the cards are shuffled only the right cards will come out and in the right order. So if you are a person who doesn't believe in a loving and intelligent universe and believes in a strictly scientific cause and effect universe, then those tarot cards are going to come out without meaningful information.

Every time I use the tarot cards, I am reminded of the intelligence that lives and supports us all. Every reading is a validation that the Universe is not an accident. Our lives are part of a great pattern. We are spirits living a human existence. And the Great Spirit of all is constantly reminding us that we are his/her children. Contrary to popular belief Tarot cards is not magic or fortune telling. They are actually a sacred mirror and use a process known as synchronicity! So let us explore the concept of synchronicity. Synchronicity is basically meaningful coincidences. According to the great psychologist - Jung - probably tools of divination like tarot work on the basis of synchronicity. For example, when we choose a card, it is definitely not mere chance. It is actually our higher self in conversation with the cosmos.



There is something called the collective consciousness in the universe. The concept of oneness and interconnectedness in the Universe. When an individual's personal unconsciousness aligns with the collective consciousness a meaningful connection is created. Collective consciousness is the shared reservoir of archetypes that are present in all human beings. Synchronicity is a sign from the divine or a way for the Universe to communicate with us. Synchronicity takes place in our lives whenever we need of guidance or reassurance. To give an example, imagine you are contemplating a major life decision and feeling uncertain about which path to take. Suddenly you come across a book that addresses the exact issue you are grappling with or you receive a phone call from a friend who offers you advice that directly relates to your solution. These synchronic events can provide the clarity and confirmation we were lacking when attempting to make important choices.

The fact of the matter is that we are connected to something greater than ourselves. It can indeed be a sense of comfort and reassurance that we are not alone in our journey and that we are being guided by the Universe.

At the heart of synchronicity is the concept of oneness and inter-

connectedness. It suggests that everything in the Universe is connected in some way and that these connections can manifest in our lives through synchronistic events and when we begin to see the world through this lens of interconnectedness and connections that we may have previously overlooked.

In the universe there are no coincidences or accidents, but rather a series of meaningful connections that are constantly unfolding. The 78 cards in the tarot deck represent different aspects of the human experience. When we ask a question and pick cards, we would be attracted to only those which would be offering us a solution. In life there are no coincidences, only connections that are constantly unfolding. A growing body of scientific research that supports the concept of synchronicity is Quantum Physics which suggests that at the most fundamental level, everything in the Universe is entangled and inter-connected! This means that events happening in one part of the Universe can have an instant effect on events that are happening in another part regardless of the distance between them! Quantum physics also suggests that our thoughts and intentions can influence outcomes! But above all

intuition plays a crucial role in recognizing and interpreting synchronicities. It is our inner knowing, our gut feeling that guides us towards these meaningful coincidences and helps us make sense of them.

Developing our intuition requires cultivating a deep sense of self awareness and learning to trust our inner guidance. It involves quietening the mind and tuning into our inner wisdom, allowing us to tap into subtle signals and messages that are constantly being communicated to us. But are coincidence and synchronicity different? While both involve seemingly unrelated events occurring simultaneously, synchronicity implies a deeper meaning or connection.

Coincidences are random occurrences that happen by chance, with no underlying significance or

reason. For example, running into a friend unexpectedly in a large city would be considered a coincidence.

On the other hand, synchronicity involves events that are not just random, but have a deeper meaning, purpose or reason. These often convey a sense of significance or resonance soon to be orchestrated by a Divine Intelligence. The science behind tarot cards is therefore the concept of cosmic consciousness. The idea that there is a consciousness out there that permeates all of existence suggests that we are not separate individuals but rather interconnected beings, who are part of a larger whole. When we experience synchronic events, we are also reminded of our place within the cosmic web.

And there lies the reason behind the occult.

Philosophical Perspectives

The intersection of reason and mysticism has intrigued philosophers across centuries and the perspectives are as diverse as they are profound:

Aristotle saw contemplation as the highest form of human activity where reason aligns with the divine intellect.

Thomas Aquinas argued that while reason can grasp many truths about God, mystical experience (*via contemplativa*) transcends reason – it completes it.

Meister Eckhart emphasized the “spark of the soul” that seeks union with God beyond images and concepts, but he still used rigorous scholastic reasoning to articulate his mystical theology.

Immanuel Kant was skeptical of mystical claims that bypass reason, but he acknowledged the limits of pure reason and the role of moral faith in accessing the noumenal.

Whose reason? And by whose light do we judge the hidden as?

Hope : Reasons to Smile

*Never give up, prepare for the worst, and hope for the best,
writes **Prema Raghavan***

Most of us face a time when life seems shattered by a crisis - a death in the family, terminal illness, divorce, loss of a job, loss of money... Such experiences produce shock, fear, anxiety, confusion, anger, and hopelessness, any of which could paralyze our normal coping skills. The first thing to recognize at such points in time is that in a universal context, such situations are normal, temporary, and will change in due course. Change is the only permanent factor in life. Though difficulties are universal, how we handle them makes all the difference. Moreover, to face life on an even keel, the most fundamental requirement is to remain alive to the moment and imbued in a sense of positive energy. While hope may be conventionally understood as relating to the future, the act of hope is in fact entirely related to the moment. It is eventually a sense of benevolent hope that provides us with the energy to walk through the trials and tribulations of life with a sense of abiding peace.



Even if all our familiar goals are snatched away, the last human freedom always remains – which is the ability to choose one's attitude under a given set of circumstances. What is attitude? Attitude depends on our spiritual/social worldview, value structures, family conditioning, culture, traditions, life circumstances, life experiences, and a whole lot of other variables.

If our past was filled with disappointment, unrealized potential, or unsatisfying relationships, then we tend to continue to do what we know, as we are conditioned to internalize our

While hope may be conventionally understood as relating to the future, the act of hope is in fact entirely related to the moment.

behavior in a cycle of habit. We must understand the roots of our mindsets to be able to change our attitudes. Understanding is a quest and a journey. Whatever it is man's capacity to transcend his predicament and discover meaning in life is very powerful. It is beyond the effects of genetics or environment on personality. This is a hopeful view of humanity.

The Foundation of Hope

Faith

Faith is not 'belief without proof' but 'trust without reservations. If our faith is strong and does not wane, we feel the beautiful experiences of warmth, love, comfort, healing, and inner strength to help us through our crisis with hope. Denial of faith is hopelessness.

As Robert Louis Stevenson put it, “Who has seen the wind? neither you nor I / But when the trees bow down their heads / the wind is passing by”

In the same way, if we survive tough times like the wind, hope touches our lives. Our faith does not make us immune from suffering. It teaches us that no loss is the final tragedy. Faith is the ultimate support that provides hope.

Trust in oneself and faith in a higher power – this conviction makes one struggle with courage and hope. It is like being trapped in a dark tunnel

and uncertain of which direction to head in to find the light.

Love

Hope is like a phoenix that grows out of the ashes. Ashes have the connotation of individual despair. Self-interest is only one aspect of our life. When the bottom seems to fall out in our individual life, we tend to forget the other facet of our role in life. Our roles in intellectual, social, and spiritual realms continue to exist. We can also rise beyond the limited perspectives of our lives to help the less privileged like a Good Samaritan. It implies giving with grace with no strings attached to it. India offers us many opportunities to show our compassion, give hope and touch someone's life – slums, municipal hospitals, orphanages, and victims of natural disasters. The Divine is not a judge sitting up in the sky but living amongst you and me. The divine presence is powerfully present in our loving actions that give hope to people.

The Perspective of Hope

- Hope looks for the good in people and situations
- It considers problems as opportunities
- It makes you move forward when it is easier to quit
- It does not escape and finds temporary relief in drugs, alcohol & gambling, which tend to

aggravate the problem

- It focuses on the “difficulties” and not on the person.
- It accepts the reality of things and is determined to face the problem.
- It finds the best in us & others and makes us more humane, touching the core within us
- It learns from the mistakes of the past.

“The last step of reason is to acknowledge that there are infinitely many things which surpass it”

-Pascal

Viktor E. Frankl and Logo therapy

V. Frankl, a psychiatrist who had many profound personal experiences in a concentration camp, is the founder of logotherapy. Logotherapy literally means, “Therapy through meaning”. It is an active directive therapy aimed at helping people who have lost hope. Frankl says we have a 'will to meaning'. It emphasizes the freedom of the will and the consequent responsibility. He says, other things being equal, those apt to survive the camps were those oriented towards the future – towards a person or task, towards a meaning to be fulfilled by them in the future.

The basic assumptions are:

- Life has meaning under all circumstances

- people have a will to meaning
- people have freedom under all circumstances to activate the will to meaning and find the meaning

For instance, in India, many old people live dynamically, looking forward to the marriage of a grandchild, or the birth of a great-grandchild. This traced back arises basically from a natural instinct for continuity.

Ultimately, meaning does exist and is unique to each person and each situation. Each moment offers a sequence of unrepeatable situations, each of which offers a specific meaning to be recognized and fulfilled. The mind has the power to will the body to extraordinary feats. No matter what the state of the world is, our attitude can always help us. We can turn any situation into a supremely meaningful one.

Logo therapy optimistically looks at life and into the healthy spiritual core



of man for resources of healing.

Tailoring hope

On accepting that our life as it stands today is a consequence of our choices made in the past, it follows that our future will consequently be shaped by the choices of today. Regardless of who we are and where we come from, we can rise above the odds against us. All one needs to have is a different attitude and spirit. Each day, we have many possibilities from which to choose within our areas of freedom. We must choose the most responsible option and make the best choices for ourselves and the people around us. Then happiness and fulfillment will be ensured. Sometimes the choices of action are limited. If so, never give up, prepare for the worst, and hope for the best. Healing comes when an individual knows that she/he has done everything possible about the problem and finds a way out with hope.

Ralph Waldo Emerson advises, "Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in. Forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. Begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with our old nonsense".z

The element of hope has its seed in the individual. But it need not remain

only with the individual. Once stimulated, hope can spread out a much wider circle - from the individual to the family and then into society. Widening your hope circles ensures the principle that in the survival and health of the society around us lies the survival of the individual. For instance, when a partner of a company promotes his individual interest at the cost of the company, the returns can only be temporary. In the long run, the company will fall, bringing down the partner too. His individual hopes should therefore be realized within the larger context of the company's interest. This is true in all areas of our life. Hope, trust, faith, and hard work play a key role in transforming people. There is no limit to what we can do once we break out of the limitations, which are in our minds.

Let hope
brighten
the days
to come.
The best
may be
yet to
come.



"We must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope."

- Martin Luther King

The Queen who went too high

*Looking for reasons, Annapoorna finds that the mystery around the
Himalayan lake of Roopkund, which lies at
16,000 feet is only getting deeper.*

*“Chali rani dhoom
machaake,
Nanda ke paar, baajey
baaje...”*

(As the queen flamboyantly
went.

Beyond Nanda's peak
The drums continued to
beat...)



The old women of Chamoli still hum the tune under their breath, as if afraid to draw the attention of the mountains. The song is old - no one remembers who composed it, but every child knows how it ends: a storm from nowhere, ice like fists from the sky, and silence.

That silence still lives, high in the Himalayas, by a lonely glacial lake called Roopkund.

Long ago, they say, a queen from a distant land sought the blessings of Goddess Nanda Devi, the beloved daughter of the mountains. The pilgrimage, sacred and treacherous, was never meant for celebration. It was a path walked in humility -

silence and reverence were its companions. But the queen, resplendent in jewels and guarded by a hundred courtiers, came not in penance but in pomp. Her retinue sang, danced, and laughed, their footsteps loud on the sacred soil.

Some say she brought dancers and musicians. Others say even a cookfire was lit under the shadow of the goddess's peak.

The skies grew still.

*“Barsa gagan se aag ke daane,
sab bikhre dhoon mein, rani ke
saath...”*

(Hail of fire rained from the heavens
In merriment, everyone got
dismembered

So too with the queen...)



No one survived.

The lake swallowed them - men, women, horses. And then, for centuries, nothing stirred there but wind.

That would have been the end of the tale, just another mountain myth, if not for the year 1942. A British forest ranger, surveying the area near Roopkund, stumbled upon a macabre sight: human bones, dozens of them, some still wrapped in tattered clothes. Skulls and femurs lay scattered like the relics of a battlefield, preserved by snow and silence.

The British feared the worst - a secret Japanese incursion? A war party lost

in the high passes? Investigations began, and quickly confounded everyone. The skeletons were not from any recent war. They were ancient - and they were many.

Over the years, scientists returned. In 2004, an Indo-European team conducted detailed tests. Carbon dating showed that not all the bodies were from the same time. One group had died around 850 CE, another in the 19th century. Stranger still, some of the victims had South Asian ancestry, as expected - but a few carried Mediterranean DNA, particularly from Crete and Greece.

Who were these foreigners? What business did they have at 16,000 feet in a forgotten corner of India? There are no records of Greek travelers venturing this high into the Himalayas in the 9th century. There are no artifacts, no documentation - only their bones.

And there was more: most of the skulls bore identical injuries - deep circular fractures, not from weapons, but from something blunt falling from above. Hailstones the size of cricket balls? That's what the science suggested.

That matched the old song.

*"Na teer chala, na talwar kati,
sir phoota badalon ki chhaya
mein..."*

(No arrow flew, no blade swung,
Yet skulls cracked beneath the

shadow of clouds...)

What was once folklore was now forensics.

Could it be, after all, that the song of the queen was more than metaphor? A royal pilgrimage gone astray, caught in a sudden and deadly hailstorm - not uncommon in the high mountains, where clouds brew disaster in minutes. And if such a tragedy happened once, could it have happened again, to a different group, centuries later?

Roopkund offers no answers. Only more questions.

Why did people from vastly different cultures and eras gather at this remote glacial lake? Were they all pilgrims? Or traders using forgotten passes?

How did the legend survive for over a thousand years, sung from grandmother to granddaughter?

Today, Roopkund is a coveted trekking destination. Every summer, when the snow melts and the lake gleams turquoise under the sun, the bones surface again - white against dark rock, some curled as if still protecting themselves from the skies.

The government has now restricted access to the remains, but trekkers still speak of the strange energy at Roopkund. A stillness too heavy. A wind that whispers through the ribs of the dead.

The mountains remember.

Back in the villages of Uttarakhand, as the dusk deepens and children gather around the hearth, an elder might still murmur:

*“Chali rani, leher ke sang,
par Nanda ne roka rang...”*

(The queen danced with the breeze, But Nanda halted the song with storm...)

And the children fall silent, listening to the shadows. They never ask, “Why?”





Wisdom Waves: *Navigating Spiritual Realms*

Everything Begins with Your Thoughts

*Our lives are shaped by not what happens to us but how we think about what happens. **Swami Avdeshananda Giri** explores the transformative power of thought. From ancient sages to modern seekers, the message is clear: our thoughts are the architects of our destiny.*

The human being is considered to be the most superior of births because of his or her ability to think. It is said that even after death, thoughts remain indelible.

Among the many situations that change a person's life, the foremost is thought. It is often said that a certain person changed due to this or that circumstances or incident. The truth, however, is that the changes come from his or her thoughts, not because of any external happening. It has been proven that people under similar circumstances behave/respond very differently because of the differences in their thinking; one may make himself or herself miserable while the other may still remain joyous. Indeed all the ups and downs and joys and sorrows in a human being's life begins with the person's thoughts.

Thoughts are the kind of fire that can burn as well as illumine. They can, like a needle and thread bring diverse people together. They can divide too. Even though man does not possess sharp claws or canine teeth, he is considered the most dangerous and violent being on the planet today because of his thoughts. He thinks up rules which he uses for his own aggrandisement. He could well live a life of peace, nonviolence, compassion and service on the basis of his thoughts.

All great sages and spiritual people have identified thought as the most significant strength of the human being. Just as fire heats up the environs, so too do thoughts have the power to transform the personality of the person who comes into contact with them. They are thoughts which transformed Arjun. Thoughts turned

the robber Ratnakar into Valmiki.
The brain is the source of all thoughts.

The brain is by itself a great device, endowed as it is, with seven hundred billion neurons. Just as the sun scatters its rays in all four directions so too does the

Man could well live a life of peace, nonviolence, compassion and service on the basis of his thoughts.

mind emit a special kind of energy, every minute. It is manifest through one's thoughts, resolves, sentiments, aspirations or their combination.

Very subtle waves are emitted by thoughts. These waves distinguish one person from another. Those who are obsessed with the body find their thought waves are weak. Thought waves become strong and powerful

when they are centred around some intense ideas that are engaged in the quest for truth and moral rectitude. Such thinkers are able to influence innumerable people over time.

It is only because of revolutionary thinking that changes have been brought about in the field of religion, tradition, politics, society etc. If wisdom and clarity are not associated with thoughts then major problems get created. Misunderstanding and distrust are born. In one minute all relationships change character. They run so deep that they get carried over from generation to generation. Not only do misunderstandings crop up but the tight knot of hatred and anger that can never be unravelled gets formed. So think wisely. Thoughts make words meaningful; in fact all human actions meaningful.

Excerpted from the writings of Swami Avdeshanand Giri

**Everything begins inside your mind.
with the right mindset, you will succeed**



Book Review

R Dasarathy

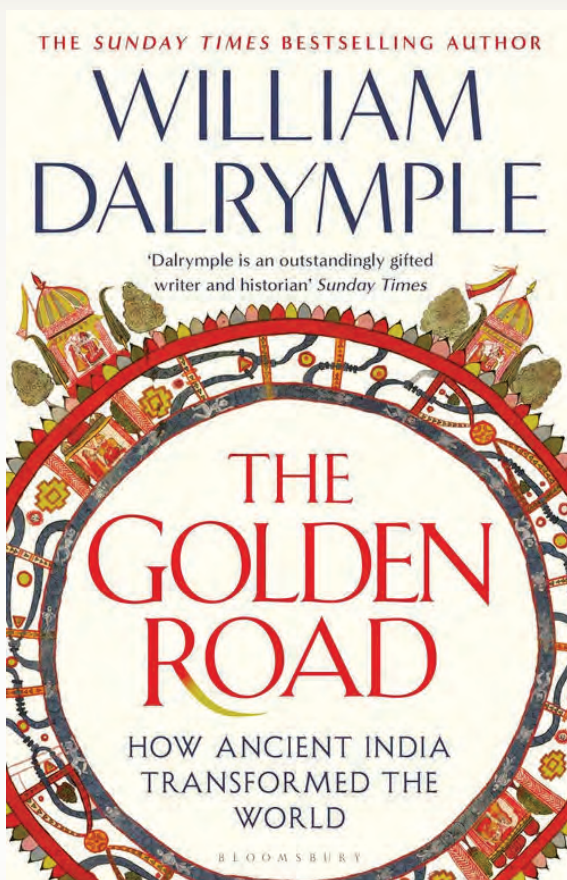
THE GOLDEN ROAD

by William Dalrymple

How Ancient India transformed the World

Most of us have heard a mention of the 'Silk Routes', originating in China passing through several 'caravan-serai's' in Central Asia and ending in Turkey (some of them travelling further West into Europe). These mysterious silk roads have provided the romantic background for the oft-told stories across the world. These famed stories also included a reference to the fortunes made by the traders. The people of India lapped up these mythic stories, which were passed on generation after generation.

On the other hand, for about 1500 years, important ideas originated in



India. India dominated the field of study of art, science, Mathematics, Astronomy, Linguistics, Medicine, religion, technology, starting from about 250 BC. The author of the book, William Dalrymple adds an important dimension to this history – ancient India “came up with profound answers to the big questions”, which became the foundation for Indian thought.

Besides co-opting half the world in its world-view, India also gained economically. Conquests and political power were less important in the Indian scheme of things, than the exchange of ideas and trade.

The author asserts that the trade and commerce relationship between India and the West was far more, in value than Sino-West relationship. This assertion is new and very significant, however difficult to verify – even in contemporary times, let alone ancient times.

William Dalrymple is a Scotsman based in Delhi. Dalrymple started off as a travel-writer and now regarded as a historian. Dalrymple is also the author of a few books on 19th century India, but this is his first book on Ancient India.

In politics (and particularly in international politics), soft power is the ability to co-opt rather than coerce (in contrast with hard power). The best example of this would be 'Buddhist' India under Emperor Ashoka. Emperor Ashok is said to have sent his son and daughter to Sri Lanka, to propagate and strengthen the faith, and nothing to do with consolidating political power. The Ancient Library at Nalanda was another example – scholars from all over the world would visit the

library, where they could access manuscripts, copy them, translate them, ... Scholars and travellers have acknowledged with gratitude, the infrastructure and facilities provided by the authorities.

In contemporary history, USA is an example of immigrants coming from all over the world and turning their dreams into reality, for the last 75 years, at least. The exclusionary vision of the current powers-that-be is causing this sheen to wither away.

The author, William Dalrymple provides us a 'thriller' like experience of intellectual interactions across continents and the wide trade networks. Both, intellectual progress and trade, prospered under peaceful conditions. The discovery of the sea routes based on monsoon winds, in different times of the year provided cheaper, faster and safer routes to get around the world. The introduction of 'zero' and the decimal was the greatest invention of this period.

The author also mentions how the strong Sanskrit language (in terms of grammar) found acceptance amongst all the South East Asian populations. The author also explains the building the myth of 'Silk Road' in the 19th and 20th century by the Europeans including the

mystique surrounding every Chinese product.

Overall the book, provides a context for understanding ancient India and it's contribution to the world. As Indians, we are justifiably proud of the accomplishments of ancient Indians. We should know more about these forgotten chapters in our

history and draw inspiration from them. Else there is a danger that we can keep wallowing in the past and miss the bus of 21st century.

The Golden road: *How Ancient India Transformed the World*

Author: William Dalrymple

Publisher: Bloomsbury

Pages: 496

**"You are today where your thoughts
have brought you;
you will be tomorrow where your
thoughts take you."**

Jas Allen



Swami Vivekananda

Are We All Not Brothers?

S. Regunathan

Thus far: The story is of an ardent disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, who, institutionalized his master's legacy by setting up a Mutt while continuing his own spiritual quest. He could feel the presence and guidance of his master or the divine, close to him, always. When he decided to head for the Himalayas, two of the Mutt's benefactors passed away and his sister committed suicide. The three tragic events were a setback, but still his steps did not falter. Enroute, he met many interesting people. Now read on...



Vivekananda Swamiji was very eager to reach the Himalayas as early as possible, however he had to stop at many places including Ayodhya, Nainital and Almora. On the way to Almora Swamiji stopped at a place called Kakrighat. Two rivers meet at this place. Swamiji was so charmed by that place that he started meditating on the banks of the confluence of the rivers. When he returned from his meditation, he mentioned to swami Akhandananda that he had found the oneness of the microcosm with the macrocosm, and the whole universe in an atom.

Swamiji was in an exalted mood throughout the day. He jotted down in Bengali in his notebook as follows:

“The microcosm and the macrocosm are built on the same plan. Just as the individual soul is encased in the living body, so is the universal Soul in the Living Prakriti [Nature] — the objective universe. Shivâ (kali) is embracing Shiva: this is not a fancy. This covering of the one [Soul] by the other [Nature] is analogous to the relation between an idea and the word expressing it: they are one and the same; and it is only by a mental abstraction that one can distinguish

them. Thought is impossible without words. Therefore, in the beginning was the Word etc.

This dual aspect of the Universal Soul is eternal. So what we perceive or feel is this combination of the Eternally Formed and the Eternally Formless.”

This was such a powerful experience that Swami Vivekananda was to, later in life, refer and reflect on it in several of his talks and writings.

He had another experience in the same region, near Almora. This experience was directly derived from the training he had undergone under his guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Vivekananda was walking for long hours and this time he had not been able to get any food for quite some time. He almost fainted of hunger in front of a Muslim graveyard. On seeing him in this condition, the caretaker, a faqir, brought a cucumber and offered it to him. Swamiji barely managed to say, “Please put it in my mouth, I am too weak to even to raise my hands.”

The faqir was shocked. He took a step back, so that Vivekananda could see that he was not a Hindu. Then he explained, “I am a Muslim and you a Hindu monk...how can feed you?”

Despite being so weak, Vivekananda managed a smile and asked, “Are we

not brothers and from the same source?” He gestured to him to feed him. Then the faqir fed him the cucumber, which Vivekananda was to say later, saved his life. The beauty of the experience is that when he returned as a famous monk and was given a rousing reception at Almora he identified the faqir and ensured some money was given to him, even though the faqir had forgotten him.

So, his experience in Almora was in many ways very impactful. He had mentioned that he had never found the peace and quietness of heart and mind anywhere else as in this place and the air and pure atmosphere also helped him to regain his vitality and health. It was also here that Vivekananda demonstrated a miracle. He was never keen to exhibit miracles and as Buddha has said that once you show your miracle people would always expect miracles. Therefore, Buddha advised his disciples never to exhibit miracles. Swamiji also believed in the dictum, however this time there was acute pressure. The people of that place were demanding/ entreating/pleading with him to cure a man who was ailing from some serious illness. Vivekananda cured him. The miracle left people gaping in wonder.

Children's Corner

The Old Boots and the Reason Within

Story by Gayatri K .Diggi

Through the eyes of a young boy and the voice of a village leader, this heartfelt tale explores the meaning behind the work we do, the memories we hold close, and the powerful reasons that carry us forward.

In a small village wrapped in the gentle charm of monsoon rains and the songs of peacocks, a humble cobbler sits under a neem tree with a cheerful spirit and hands that carry the wisdom of time.

His skilled hands move with ease, and the deep lines on his forehead speak of a life filled with stories - both of success and failure. Yet, he remains calm, wise, and ever-smiling.

The villagers fondly call him Moji Chacha - "Moji" meaning happy. People often stop by to have their shoes and chappals fixed, enjoying a friendly chat with the cheerful cobbler.

Children pass him on their way to school, often stopping for a quick word. One day, a curious 12-year-old boy named Mitu lingered longer.



Studying the old man's hands at work, he asked, "Moji Chacha, why do you do this work?"

Moji Chacha smiled. "So people can get their shoes repaired and carry on their way."

"But this shoe is so old and dirty! Why not just buy a new one?" Mitu said.

Moji Chacha chuckled. "Well, there's always a reason, Mitu. Maybe

they can't afford new shoes, or maybe this old pair is their favorite.”

Just then, the village *Sarpanch* (village headman) approached.

“Moji Chacha, would you repair my old boots?” he asked.

Moji Chacha picked them up and examined them. “These look very old, Sarpanchji.”

Still nearby, Mitu blurted out, “You're the Sarpanch! Why would you wear such dirty old boots? You should have new ones!”

The Sarpanch smiled. “Ah, but there's a reason, Mitu. I can't let go of these boots.”

Mitu looked puzzled. “Why? What's the reason?” he insisted. Even Moji Chacha raised an eyebrow curiously. The Sarpanch held the boots and began, “Many years ago, when I was a young man, my father and I were poor. I needed boots to travel to the city for work, but we couldn't afford new ones. So he gave me his own old pair and said, “These boots will change your life someday.” “I didn't understand then, but I wore them anyway. Later, when I earned enough to buy new boots, I kept this old pair aside. Over time, I bought many - fancy ones, expensive ones - until I lost count. Eventually, I was appointed Sarpanch for my service to the village.

“Today, as the Minister visits to declare our village a model for others, I want to

wear these boots. They remind me of my roots, of how far I've come - tattered soles to polished ones. They represent my journey, my gratitude, and the reason behind all my hard work.”

Mitu stood silent, nodding slowly. And he walked off toward school with a new awareness in his step.

Smiling warmly, Moji Chacha said, “Sarpanch ji, come back in an hour. I'll make these boots good as new.”

That afternoon, when the Minister arrived, the Sarpanch welcomed him - wearing his old boots with pride. As he spoke into the microphone, he pointed to his shoes and told their story. Then he turned to Moji Chacha.

“It's because of people like him - sitting under a neem tree through all seasons, quietly helping others on their way - that journeys like mine are possible.”

The Minister was deeply moved.

“Let this be a lesson to all,” he said.

“Respect and appreciate everyone -rich or poor - who lives with purpose and reason. Their work matters.”

He added, “We will build a small shop under this very tree for Moji Chacha, so he can work in comfort. And we'll grant him a pension for his dedication to this village.”

The crowd erupted in applause. Mitu cheered and threw his arms around Moji Chacha, who just smiled—happier than ever.

Children's Corner

Sowing Seeds of Responsibility

Story: Surabhi Chawla

Rohan loved basketball more than anything. At twelve years old, he was the tallest player on his middle school team and their star scorer. Every game, the crowd chanted his name, and his coach often relied on him to lead the team.

This Friday's game was different. It was the semi-finals of the regional tournament, and the stakes were higher than ever. If they won, they'd make it to the finals, a feat their school hadn't achieved in years.

The game started with energy and intensity. Both teams were neck and neck, trading baskets with every possession. Rohan played well, sinking shots from the free-throw line and making quick passes to his teammates. But the other team was just as determined, and as the fourth quarter ticked down, the score was 48 to 47 in favour of the opposing team.

The Sports Coach called a timeout with thirty seconds left on the clock. The players huddled around him, their breaths heavy and their faces glistening with sweat. "Alright, listen up," Coach said, drawing a quick play on his clipboard. "Rohan, we're going to get the ball to you.



Take the shot if you see an opening. If not, look for a pass. We've got this, boys."

The team nodded, their eyes on Rohan. He could feel their trust and hope, and it both motivated and burdened him. The whistle blew, and they returned to the court. The court was electric with the sound of cheering fans, stomping feet, and the squeak of sneakers on the polished floor.

The ball was inbounded, and Rohan caught it just beyond the three-point line. He dribbled quickly, scanning the court. The other team's defense was tight, but Rohan saw a possible



opening. He drove toward the basket, his heart pounding. The crowd roared as he approached the hoop. This was it. This was his moment to shine.

But as Rohan drove toward the basket, he spotted Anmol, the team's newest player, wide open beyond the arc. Rohan remembered how Anmol had stayed late after practice, honing his three-pointers. Then, out of the corner of his eye, Rohan spotted Anmol standing wide open near the three-point line, his hands up, ready to catch the ball. Anmol was the newest player on the team. But Rohan remembered something: Anmol had been practicing his three-pointers for weeks, staying late after practice to work on his shot.

Rohan hesitated. He could take the shot himself - it was expected of him, after all. The crowd was chanting his name, and his teammates were counting on him. But in that split second, Rohan didn't just act on

instinct or pressure - he thought. He weighed the odds. Anmol was wide open. The defenders were closing in on Rohan fast. The smarter play, the one that gave them a better chance to win, was the pass.

In a split-second decision, Rohan passed the ball. The ball sailed through the air and landed in Anmol's hands. The audience seemed to hold its breath as Anmol squared up and shot. Anmol's shot soared - and swished through the net at the buzzer. Victory! The crowd erupted. Three points. The audience exploded in cheers and shouts as Rohan's team won, 50 to 48.

Rohan sprinted to Anmol, throwing his arms around him. Anmol's face was glowing with pride and disbelief. "Thanks for trusting me," Anmol said, his voice barely audible over the noise. As the team lifted Anmol on their shoulders, Rohan felt a deep sense of pride - not for the shot, but for the decision he had made. He had used reason when it mattered most, and it had paid off in a way he hadn't expected.

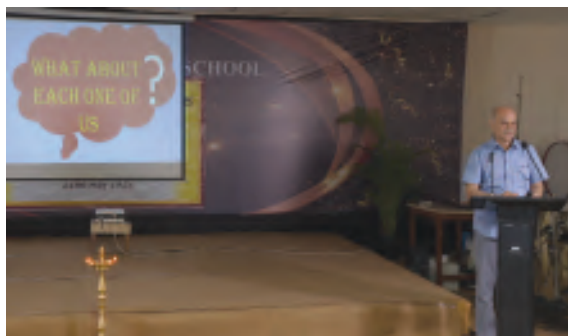
After the game, the coach pulled Rohan aside. "That was a smart play," he said, clapping a hand on Rohan's shoulder. "You could've taken that shot, and no one would've blamed you. But you saw the bigger picture. That's what being a leader is all about."

FRNV NEWS AND EVENTS

VALUES BASED EDUCATION WORKSHOP ON 22ND MAY 2025

FRNV Organized a Values Based Education Workshop on 22nd May 2025 at Ashok Memorial Public School, Faridabad. About 135 teachers attended the workshop.

The workshop was addressed by Shri S Regunathan, President/FRNV, Shri Ashwani Kumar, General Secretary, Dr. Sharda Kumari, Head, Values Based Education Task Force, FRNV and Resource Person, CBSE and Dr. Pushpa Jindal, Philanthropist and Social Activist. Smt. Mamta Singh, Principal, Ashok Memorial Public School welcomed the guests and Director Smt. Geeta Sachdeva, Ashok Memorial Public School graced the occasion.







The “Value Insight”- June 2025 issue was released and presented to retired senior members of All India Services and Central Services by Dr. Arun Kumar Rath, Chairman, FRNV Odisha Chapter at Bhubaneswar. The issue was highly appreciated.

Life Members joined since 21st April 2025

Name	Membership No.	From
Shri Amba D Bhatt	FRNV/LM/105	22.05.2025
Shri Debashis Prasad Pattnaik Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/106	14.07.2025

FRNV SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

Subsequent to National Seminar held on 12th April 2025, FRNV has begun its social media outreach. All are requested to visit the following sites, subscribe and offer your comments/suggestions to frnvindia@gmail.com

In view of his new assignment in the North East, Shri Ashis Panda ji requested to be relieved of his responsibilities as Member, FRNV Governing Body as of 19th July 2025 and this was accepted in the meeting held on 19th July 2025. Members of the Governing Body wished him all success and continued to be associated with FRNV activities.



Your unwavering support will motivate us to strive harder.

Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals emerges as Delhi's No.1 Private Multi-specialty Hospital in The Week-Hansa Research Survey 2022. It's a testimony of the trust placed in us by you, the people of Delhi. Thank you for your faith and support. We reaffirm our commitment to provide you the best medical care, along with our tender, loving care.

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