

Value Insight

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Bi-Monthly

- **Is Restraint Charming?**
- **Brakes for Freedom**
- **In Step with Restraint**



A bi-monthly magazine of
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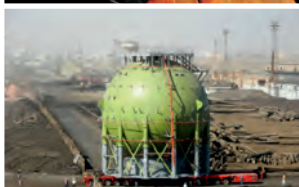
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Value Insight

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Readers Write



'Value Insight' is a remarkable venture to restore values through articles written from different perspectives on various topics. The Children's Corner highlights values and is an interesting way to reach out to children and teach them values of love, gratitude, empathy... I wish I had my mum to read them to me.

Rohini Suri

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THEMES FOR THE NEXT ISSUES OF THE JOURNAL

Month	Theme	Deadline for articles
June 2025	Responsibility	April 1
August 2025	Reason	June 1
October 2025	Mind and heart	August 1
December 2025	Non-Violence, Charity	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.

Damah

Sensory Modulation and Regulation

Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru!



Yesterday I spoke about *śamaḥ*, the art, the process and the pursuit of dealing with desires and avoiding them, forestalling them, eliminating them.

Now the next one, in the series of six is called *damah*. One is *śamaḥ*, another is *damah*. *Śamaḥ* is an internal practice. It relates only to your mind and the tool employed for dealing with the mind is the intelligence. So it is an exclusively inner pursuit. Now the second one is *damah*. What does it mean: - sensory regulation, sensory moderation and sensory refinement.

We have got five knowledge organs and five action organs – *jñānendriyas* and *karmendriyas*.

The *jñānendriyas* are used to glimpse, perceive and understand the objects. As soon as you glimpse or perceive the objects – that glimpsing itself is when the mind takes an imprint of the object by itself in itself, to remain in itself. It becomes a memory, a store of the mind. When the mind makes such an imprint, it not merely makes an imprint, it also responds to and reacts to the imprint. This response and reaction are natural, irresistible, spontaneous and even

ceaseless. That is where we develop our likes and dislikes, desire, hatred, fear and their permutations and combinations. So the senses come only as a media, as a medium.

What wants to see is the mind. What sees is the mind. What takes an imprint is the mind. And what employs or uses the imprint is again the mind. Unfortunately we feel, in the whole process, the senses are more dominant than the mind. It is actually a kind of a delusion or a sudden understanding of the whole process. This suddenness, we should always safeguard against.

Let us make use of the mind and intelligence to observe, to understand, to evaluate and assess matters properly. Desire is sprouting in the mind and that desire is what makes the mind itself employ the senses and perform an action. And it is in the same mind the action concludes and terminates. So, in reality, it is all a mind's handiwork or a witchcraft. But in this witchcraft, you will find, the mind wants to experience. That experience is brought about by the instrumentality of the senses.

We have five senses. So whenever we

perceive objects with the senses, we also want to interact with them in the way of an enjoyment or indulgence or otherwise. Every sense has got objects in this world and upon every object, there is a cap of attraction and **repulsion**. Krishna puts it in a very nice manner.

इयये ययाथ रागेषौ यवथतौ ।

तयोन वशमागच्छेतय परप थनौ ।।

Indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau | tayor-na vaśam-āgacchet tau hy-asya paripanthinau ||
(Bhagavad Gita 3.34)

Upon every sensory object, two are always capped, रागेषौ, **rāgadveṣau** – attraction and repulsion. तयोः *Harīh Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru* वशं न आगच्छेत्, **tayoh vaśam na āgacchet** – Do not come under their sway. Whose sway? Attraction and repulsion, their sway. Upon every sensory object are attraction and repulsion. Do not come under their sway. Why? तौ य परप थनौ, *tau hyasya paripanthinau* - They are the stark enemies in your path of life. I don't know whether you understand it. This is a very great summary and analysis of human life.

What a great daughter was Janaki, Sita, and what a great wife she was! When Rama decided to go to the forest for fourteen years, she instantly said, “There is no Rama without Sita and there is no Sita without Rama. If forest is your wont, that is my choice and delight,” she said. “Without you, the golden palace of Ayodhya will be a

cremation ground and with you, the forest will be Ayodhya for me.” Such a great fidelity, exclusiveness and resoluteness she had! But alas!

In the fourteenth year, when Sri Rama wanted to have a little austere sojourn for a year, before returning back to palace, Sita made a garden around the hermitage. One day suddenly, a golden deer came, and started looking at her and waving its tail. Sita started lingeringly looking on, looking on. Who knows what exchanged between the eyes of the deer and those of Sita? She fell in love with it. Everybody knows that golden deer can never be true, but Sita did not mind to think about it, even when Lakshmana reminded that it is a witchcraft, a **māya** of rakshasas. So she asked Rama to bring the deer for her. “Bring it! Bring it alive. If not, at least bring the skin. When we go back, both of us can sit together on the skin in our garden.”

Rama was setting out, that is when Lakshmana intercepted with a timely reminder. Then Rama said, “If it is a witchcraft, I will punish the rakshasa, otherwise Janaki never asks me for anything, I will go and get hold of him.” Within fifteen minutes, wonderful Janaki became a slave of Ravana. What was the reason?

Indriyasya indriyasya arthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau. And this raga for the deer made Sita utter words to Lakshmana, which no woman on earth should have said and she was also repentant. So from **rāga** arises **dveṣa**.

When attraction is hindered, it gives rise to repulsion, hatred. So don't come under their sway! So there is something called sensory regulation and sensory moderation. It is not like dealing with the desires which are subtle and inner and related only to the mind. So this *damah* is a second of the six requisites of a seeker.

In Bhagavad Gita, you will find, sensory control has been given a very special treatment. **Every śāstra must have an *apūrvatā*, an exclusiveness of its own and for the Bhagavad Gita, sensory control or sensory regulation is the very special exclusive subject it deals with.** It also provides something called *samatva*. That is also exclusive, but more important is the sensory control.

We have five senses. Each of them is independently powerful. So Sri Krishna says in the second chapter, I will take that verse during the course of the discussion;

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः॥

yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ | indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhan manaḥ ||

(Bhagavad Gita 2.60)

My dear souls, why don't you understand this very, very clearly! Every one of you is carrying a mind and that mind is absolutely different from the senses. Senses are biological, made of matter and energy. Mind is supra-material and supra-energetic. That is far more powerful, potent, sublime! In spite of it, because of the relationship with the

body, this mind is pulled and pushed by the senses.

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः।
yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ - Even when a seeker is very discreet and discriminating and he is given to *sādhana*, striving...

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि, *i n d r i y ā ṇ i p r a m ā t h ī n i* - the senses are very powerful and turbulent! हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः,

haranti prasabhan manaḥ - they forcefully draw and dislodge the mind!

Are you hearing? Your senses are capable of dislodging the mind from its present position, as it happened in the case of Sita! It is a transaction that takes place between your body and the senses, but the consequences can be very widespread and colossal.

yatato hyapi kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ | indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabhan manaḥ ||

Another verse he says, what does he say?

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि॥

indriyāṇāṃ hi caratām yan-mano'nuvidhīyate | tadasya harati prajñāṃ vāyur-nāvam-ivāmbhasi ||

(Bhagavad Gita 2.67)

How the senses, or one sense even is able to draw irresistibly the mind and what kind of a danger or calamity can result, is best illustrated by Krishna by saying,

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां, *indriyāṇāṃ hi caratām* - of the five sensory organs, which are always open and constantly interacting with the surroundings, objects; यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते, *yan-*

mano'nuvidhīyate - even if a single sensory organ the mind follows, not necessary that all of them. In the case of the golden deer, it was sight. In something else, it can be music, it can be a smell. So, of all the moving and interacting senses, even if one the mind follows;

तदस्य हरति , *tadasya harati prajñām* - that addiction to that sensory organ and the object involved can be so powerful, that your whole wisdom and discrimination stand robbed by it. वायनाविमवा भ सु , *vāyur-nāvam-ivāmbhasi* - see, generally in the sea, the country boats go and they tie a mat so that the wind will come and strike the mat and the boat will go by itself and a good boatman, he will be able to turn around the mat in such a manner that he reaches the direction he wants. Suppose, suddenly a cyclone comes and the boatman is not able to maneuver the mat properly; that cyclone will suddenly take the boat in any direction and he will sometimes completely be destroyed. Far away from the shore, he may not even know where he is and which direction he has to go to. One sensory organ is

sufficient to draw the mind and take you adrift and then reach you in a very great calamity. *tadasya harati prajñām vāyur-nāvam-ivāmbhasi*

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

||tasmādyasya mahābāho nigrhītāni sarvaśaḥ | indriyāṇ īndriyārthe bhyastasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā ||

(*Bhagavad Gita* 2.68)

When the senses are regulated, controlled and stabilized, that is the time a man becomes a *sthitaprajna*. So to become a person of stable wisdom, the sensory moderation, the sensory regulation, the sensory refinement and the sensory stability are very, very important. Now, this is what is called *damah*, the second quality.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru!

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*You may not be able to control what happens to you
but you can control what happens within you.*

SUBHASHITAM

धैर्यं यस्य पिता क्षमा च जननी शान्तिश्चिरं गेहिनी सत्यं सूनुरयं दया च भगिनी भ्राता मनःसंयमः ।
शय्या भूमितलं दिशोऽपि वसनं ज्ञानामृतं भोजनं एते यस्य कुटुम्बिनो वद सखे कस्माद् भयं योगिनः ॥

- सुभाषितम्

जिस योगी के लिए धैर्य पिता है, क्षमा माता है, मन की शांति ही पत्नी है, सत्य पुत्र है, दया उसकी बहन है, मन का संयम ही भाई है, और यह पृथ्वी ही शय्या है, दिशाएँ, वेश-भूषा और ज्ञान का अमृत उसके लिए भोजन हैं - ये सब जिसके परिवार के सदस्य हैं, हे मित्र, ऐसे योगी को किससे भय होगा?

A Yogi for whom composure is his father, forbearance his mother, calmness of mind his wife, truth his son, compassion his sister, restraint of mind his brother, and for whom this earth is the bed, the directions, the attire and the nectarine knowledge the food – for whom all these are members of his family, tell me O friend, from what would such a Yogi fear?

From the President's Desk



As a former government servant, I am ever alert to the many challenges of governance. The recent management of Khumb mela where 660 million or 66 crores of people visited the sacred waters of the Ganga to take a dip, is an example of how well it was managed. I read with interest about all the steps taken by the government to support the visitors. There is always criticism, but that is not worthy of attention when you see the numbers and the percentage of mishaps/bad administration/ incidents. This came at the right time for me for I have been getting steadily disillusioned at the rampant spread of corruption in almost every sphere of life. How can one expect an iota of good governance if the senior bureaucrat himself is placing self-interest over the nation's?

When I had visited a small village recently a girl in a grocery shop was attending to us. We asked her what she had studied. She told us she was doing her graduation. Supremely happy to hear that, we asked her what her subject was. She shrugged her shoulders and said she wrote what they told her to. Who were the 'they' we asked her. She could not answer. We asked her the name of her college. She did not know. University? The term was new to her. After probing a little more, we found there were some touts who gave her some answers to copy for a fee. Her elder sister had become a graduate by copying those answers. Now she was looking forward to doing the same.

My heart sank. But, why should it? Some forms of corruption have also started being looked at as permissible. "At least work gets done," say some of those who defend. What do we do? Be silent spectators? Are we not duty bound to raise a voice? The question remains how? Who will bell the cat, or rather the cats...

In every issue I look for the Readers Write column hoping to find someone who will write in with his or her views, in agreement or disagreement, in debate or in insight, but so far have met with disappointment. I wonder if the reason lies in disinterest or indifference...Do write.

Communication is important if we have to be of one mind...

Sangachadvam samvadadvam sam vo manansi

Let us walk together, speak in one voice and be of one mind...

S. Regunathan
President (FRNV)

Is Restraint Charming?

*An unrestrained journey into the world of restraint. Can it be colorful, can it be charming? Asks **Sudhamahi Regunathan.***



The idea of restraint comes with images of renunciation, simplicity bordering on deprivation, cake without icing, life without that extra frolic, joy without abandon and so on. The colloquial understanding of restraint has contributed to its unpopularity. The unshaded variety of brown that weighs

down the images of restraint seems to be too distant from the vibrant colors of life. And so restraint gathered moss while “impulsiveness”, “natural” and other adjectives of the post modernism era occupied central space. Or so it appears. A little reflection, however, threw open an unrestrained journey into the world of restraint. Can restraint be colorful? Is restraint charming?

Like a child who had learnt a new word, all that I saw on all sides of me was restraint. Caught in a traffic jam one evening, I wondered what it was all about only to find the traffic lights not working. Was the chaos because the restraining lights were not working?

That night I partook of a wonderful meal. The dishes were elaborately prepared, delicately flavored. Nawabi cuisine, they told me. A legacy of the Mughals who had ruled India. The chef



accepted our compliments modestly and said, “Do not ask me what the ingredients are; ask me what should not be added. This cuisine is marked by the fact that one gives only a suggestion. One tickles the palate, entices it; a pinch of saffron adds magic to it. A little more than a pinch and its subtlety is lost.”

That evening when I cuddled up with a book of poems, I encountered some restraint in Basho's Haaiku:



*Do I dare depend
Upon you for
Firm friendship
Dear Morning Glory?*

The mind quickly turned to Sanskrit poets who also used but suggestions to tell long stories.

Here is an example:



*O Hunter! Aim
but one arrow
The male and
female
Are one in
spirit*

Is it not restraint that made Margaret Mitchell leave you wondering what Scarlett O'Hara meant when she said “*Tomorrow is another day...*” Or when Charlie Chaplin gave up words to communicate?

Opening the door to mystery, restraint is that potion that becomes the reason for phrases like, “Heard melodies are sweet, those unheard are sweeter by far.” For that which is restrained has the urge to burst forth. The sheer energy held within is exciting, is magical. In an orchestra it is that moment of silence after a crescendo that sets your heart beating faster. When to time that restraint, where to set it, is the lesson of wisdom, the essence of discrimination: knowing when to stop.

In Indian literature the tortoise is often mentioned as one knowing restraint. It draws its limbs within its shell in crisis and lives happily there. It knows when to give the senses a break and seek knowledge beyond the senses. However small the restraint exercised is, it gives tremendous power at the ability to do so. It raises self-confidence.

I often feel relationships are nothing but restraint. Most often it is explained in terms of love. Undoubtedly love is what makes the world tick and yet it is love with a sharp sense of discrimination. But then again, what is love? Love brings within its fold, as Eric Fromm says, concern, responsibility, caring etc., and these are but other manifestations of restraint.

Every specialist is advising restraint in

his or her sphere. A doctor says stop eating when you want one more helping. A diabetologist says stop eating certain foods that create sugar, a cardiologist has some others on his/her list. The traffic policeman is restraining your speed. An administrator is restraining individual freedom to provide equal social freedom to all. A monk is restraining his senses to gain true freedom.

An interesting conversation occurs between Mahavira and his first disciple, Gautama. Gautama was seeking some clarification. All of us may draw comfort from the fact that the same questions that plague us today had plagued even Gautama, Mahavira's foremost disciple. When Mahavira was imparting his teachings, they reached appoint when Mahavira said action led to the accumulation of karma (which in turn leads to unhappiness, suffering etc.). To that Gautama is said to have wondered, as we all would, *"How then can we live without activity?"* Mahavira has said *activity is essential to life but when you have to act; speak only when you have to, walk only when you have to, even think only when you have to.* One finds a similar idea with the Buddha who describes mindfulness as being aware

and on the present and doing that which is required of the moment, not more, not less. Acharya Mahaprajna says everything is good as long as it does not get attached to the prefix *ati* or too much. *To draw that line between that which is needed and that which is extra is the discrimination of restraint.*

Here is an interesting story from the Markandeya Purana. The Sun married Sanjna. They were happy to be married to each other. Every time the sun stole a glance at his wife, she closed her eyes. Sanjna could not bear to see the bright and brilliant sun. Much as she loved him, her eyes closed automatically due to the unimaginable effulgence of Sun's brightness. But Sun was getting annoyed. Here he was trying to catch her eye and she was closing them! He told her several times, but she was unable to keep them open nevertheless. Finally, one day Sun got angry and said, "Because you restrain your vision every time I try to look at you, you will give birth to a son who restrains the world."

Guess who was born? None other than Yama, the God of Death himself. In death lies the definition of mortal life. In restraint lies the definition of sustained pleasures.



Brakes for Freedom

*Why should I not fly off the handle, if I do not want to reach anywhere? Restraint, writes **Rev. Valson Thampu** is, in a real sense, the matrix of true freedom.*



Reliable brakes are not indispensable for a car meant to be parked perpetually. But the need for brakes is obvious, if a car is meant to help you reach somewhere. Dynamism of any kind without restraint is a dangerous. Restraint enables purposive actions and facilitates the pursuit of goals by avoiding wasteful expenditure of energies.

It is a widespread misconception, especially among young people that restraint, by holding them back, puts them at a disadvantage. To see this assumption for what it is, consider an

illustration: that of trying to play tennis without a court. The court comprises base lines, side lines, service lines and the net. These are to a game of tennis what restraint is to the game of life. To a simplistic mind unused to the art of playing tennis they might seem irritant inconveniences. You would have been free to hit the ball at will, but for these limiting markers. But whacking the ball aimlessly does not amount to playing tennis. It is the sidelines, baselines, service lines and the net that together facilitate a game of tennis. They irritate novices but inspire great masters to

weave the magic of their skills. Restraint is, in a real sense, the matrix of true freedom, provided it is understood in positive terms. Indulgence, which is the opposite of restraint, results in addiction, which compromises freedom.

Restraint or self-control involves at least three factors. First and foremost, it involves our understanding of who or what we are. If we subscribe to a mechanistic and materialistic understanding of human nature as driven by the chemistry of the body and the calisthenics of the mind, we shall fail to understand aright the case for restraint. Freud saw human nature on the analogy of a pressure cooker wherein the steam of impulses and instincts builds up, compelling periodic "impulse releases" to safeguard mental health. The mentally healthy Freudian man, however, turns out to be a moral weakling, a pathetic prey to his own instincts and impulses. For all the celebration of the self and self-assertion that the liberal-individualistic culture heralded, the stature of the human being has only dwindled in its wake. The utter helplessness of the individual, on account of this presumed autonomy of impulses, has proved a bane rather than a benediction, a loss rather than a gain. And it is fraught with sinister consequences for oneself and others. The inability to control oneself and the need to control others are inversely proportionate to each other.

It is those who lack restraint that are obsessed with their right to rule and

restrain everyone else. At a macro-level this pattern underlay the colonial adventure. And the same is at work in the contemporary American presumption in respect of the rest of the world. The conduct of those who respect themselves and intuit their inner and metaphysical worth is marked by restraint. The stark contrast to this is the spectacle of a neo-rich young man tearing through the streets on motorcycles the silencers of which are removed in order to maximize the effect on others.

The second factor that shapes restraint is the pursuit or otherwise of a solemn purpose in life. As a matter of fact, steadiness in any area of life or endeavor is impossible without self-control. Those who are deficient in restraint are as quick to quit a cause as they are ready to queue up for it.

They seldom take root in anything. And it is only natural that those who have no roots fail to produce fruits. In a practical sense, it is with reference to a goal that we decide whether or not we should endure or flee the emerging challenge. Those who drift aimlessly through life tend to be unbridled in their words and ways. More often than not, worthwhile pursuits in life involve partnerships and teamwork, both of which call for restraint. To those who drift through life, however, the need to cultivate and maintain self-control and to be purposively restrained in one's responses and reactions may not be apparent at all.

The third determinant in restraint is our

attitude to others. We are perfectly in our responses towards those we respect or fear. Even those who turn their vicious temper into an alibi for unseemly conduct, are seen to be commendably well-behaved towards the high and mighty. Conversely, they tend to be unrestrained in how they treat those they deem powerless in relation to them. The restraint we practice is a statement both on the mettle of our personality and the worth we ascribe to others. Those who treat others who, in a worldly sense, are inferior in an arbitrary or arrogant fashion, betray their spiritual shallowness. It is only in a state of proactive restraint that we can get to know the true worth of our fellow being. Also, those who are unmindful of the worth of others will perforce be deficient in restraint.

The discipline of practising restraint does not exist by itself. It is part of one's overall outlook. What we need to do is to cultivate a reverential attitude to life in all its forms. Restraint then becomes its natural outworking towards all that we encounter and respond to. Respect or reverence for life, which is mandated by all spiritual traditions, works within us as the modulating principle in relation to whatever is external to us. In a culture bereft of this basic strength, the need for restraint is neither understood nor its discipline adhered to.

In respect of our attitude to others, the distinction between restraint and respect is wafer-thin. Both presuppose love. It is in the nature of love, as St. Paul says, to

want to build up others. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Corinthians 8:1). Love does so by limiting the claims and clamour of the self in order to create the space for others to grow. Restraint of this kind is inseparable from a caring and compassionate attitude. Where love is absent, or the place of love is usurped by the mindset of power, people of means and muscles treat others with discourtesy and unconcern. They deceive themselves into believing that the right to such unrestrained conduct is a proof of their freedom or a mark of their entitlement. In a spiritual sense though, it is an advertisement of their unfreedom.

The proactive restraint that that we need to exercise in our dealings with others expresses the vitality and positivity of our personality. Those who lack restraint of this kind tend to be agents of negativity. Resorting to violence as a strategy for solving problems or for self-assertion indicates that the individual or group concerned has lost the strength of restraint. Ahimsa, for instance, is not merely the reluctance to kill; it mandates a profound respect for the sanctity and inviolability of life. In respect of our fellow human beings, it proves no merit that we do not kill. The spiritual mandate is to value them as value ourselves. To do so is to do all we can to facilitate their optimum development and empowerment. The outlines of the restraint we practise in relation to them is determined by this sense of worth. Why

would anyone mind the need to be restrained in relation to what he or she values not?

The strength of restraint should not be taken for granted. It does not come naturally to human beings. Those of us who have grappled with the protean genius of the self know how difficult it is to master its recalcitrance so as to be able to practise restraint consistently. It is not easy for the self to master itself. We need to be helped in this core spiritual battle by a force higher than ourselves. And the only agency we know as adequate for the purpose is God. In the words of Tagore, to be in communication with God is to “surrender our will to His will in love”.

Out of this self-surrender results a state in which the will of the individual is purified and made harmonious with the best interests of the rest of creation. It is only when we emerge from the cave, to use an image from Plato, of our limited understanding and unlimited illusions, and by becoming one with God, that proactive restraint becomes characteristic of us. Restraint is natural only to a spiritually oriented person. And the capacity for proactive restraint, rather than adherence to some external religious paraphernalia, must be deemed the authentic insignia of spiritual personality.



As We Move Fast...

In today's fast-paced life driven by gross consumerism, where instant gratification is fuelled by social media, the need of moderation and restraint are often overlooked writes Prof. C.S. Krishna Das.

Restraint is not merely a virtue but socially a stabilising force in an individual's life. Restraint in what and where are the questions one faces in challenging situations in life journey.

Restraint can indeed be likened to applying brakes while driving. Just as brakes help slow down or stop the vehicle to avoid accidents, restraint helps avoid reactions in difficult situations and stop impulsive thoughts, emotions or actions. Restraint helps avoid crashing into critical juncture and steer ourselves to reach better decisions; it is a balancing act between two extreme situations, a middle path between excessive indulgence and extreme restriction. Both are harmful: the former leads to impulsive behaviour without consideration for consequences and the latter by suppressing thoughts and feelings lead to imbalance and unhappiness. Exercising restraint in various aspects of life is essential or promoting well-being and fostering self-awareness.

We need to prioritize the essential tasks and activities by setting boundaries. Self-control and consistent exercise in self-reflection and a commitment to



observe self-imposed restraint are essential to recognise what is truly needed and what can be done without. Socrates, the great thinker is believed to have commented on window shopping, "I make it a rule to go every day to the windows of the merchants and look at things which I should not buy even if I had the money". The wisdom of Socrates is more relevant at the present trend of shopping sprees being indulged in by many families; impulsive buying to gratify the surging wants by swiping credit cards invariably results in overspending and debts apart from accumulating unnecessary goods leading to clutter, disuse and waste.

Anything in excess does no good. In matters of communication, most of misunderstanding and misinformation are caused by unrestrained interactions - gossiping and spreading rumours that have their own negative social impact. Extravagance in the matter of speaking and eating can also hinder personality development. The Bhagavad Gita indicates, “He who is temperate in his habits of eating, sleeping, working and recreation can mitigate all material pains by practising Yoga” (B G. Chapter 6.

Restraint is a balancing act between two extreme situations, a middle path between excessive indulgence and extreme restriction.

Verse 17) Gita gives clear direction as to how to avoid victimization of ourselves by the work that we undertake. The holy scripture speaks about “austerity of speech”, the need to be being temperate and alert in choosing words with moderation. Speech should be pleasant, truthful and beneficial to the listeners. Speech is a mirror that would reflect the intellectual and mental aspects of the speaker. Since speaking is a constant activity of all, it has an invisible outlet through which physical and mental energies are likely to be wasted; hence everything should be well-measured and completely defined. Instances are many where relationships remain strained with friends and relatives just because of the bitterness of tongue. Utterances should not cause pain

and annoyance to the listeners. The Bhagavad Gita says that the words which are altogether free from violence, envy, jealousy, a *Thirukkural* in verse 127 as, “Whatever besides you leave unguarded, guard your tongue, else errors of speech and misery will follow”. It is of absolute relevance and practical tips that the Bhagavad Gita enjoins to regulate diet, (*yukta aahara*), moderate eating, avoiding excessive or inadequate consumption of food. A healthy life of integration is not possible for one who eats too much nor for one who does not eat at all. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra gives practical suggestions as how to consume food. “Half the stomach for food and condiments, the third quarter for water and the fourth should be reserved for the free movement of air”. Besides diet, the Gita emphasises “regulated recreation” (*yukta viharasya*), of moderation in sleeping and sense enjoyments. The Gita emphasises restraint and moderation for that would encourage individuals to strive for balance and harmony in their daily lives. Restraint is a by-product of self-control that helps to regulate our thoughts, emotions and action.; it is the ability to hold back from impulsive actions, the capacity to choose the best response and not suppression of emotions and feelings. There is no short-cut to self-control, as it requires awareness and motivation; moment to moment vigil is needed to respond to emerging situations by making conscious choices.

The Power of Restraint

*The extraordinary power of restraint can at once set us on the path of liberation or enlightenment writes **Radhika Srinivasan**.*



All the traditions born of Indic faith stress on the value of self-control or restraint as the basis of emotional growth and spiritual maturity. The Sanskrit language has a litany of words to define this intrinsic quality. Control of senses is *Dama*, mental quietness is *Shama*, practice of external ethics is *Yama*, discipline and observance of internal restraint is *Niyama*, control of the entire body-mind-sense is *Atma-Vinigraha*, abstinence of sense pleasures is *Viramana*, complete self-control is *Atma-Samyama*, and cessation of mental modifications is *Nirodha*. Ours is clearly

an inward-looking worldview, the outer world of objects and pleasures simply pointing to the ephemeral; at times suggesting even their nonexistence! It is a fascinating journey into the soul of that Indic ethos to unravel the extraordinary power of restraint that can at once set us on the path of liberation or enlightenment.

When a child cries uncontrollably for that extra toy or chocolate, the mother pacifies the baby by distracting it with something else. Slowly, the child begins to learn that not all things can be had through bawling. The first step in restraint is established. Thereafter, all of

one's student life is meant to cultivate our discipline or Yama, which consists of five basic precepts; not harming or taking anyone's life, *Ahimsa*, which includes refraining from hurting verbally or wishing ill-will; not speaking lies or speaking the truth, *Satya*; not stealing, *Asteya*, practicing restraint in sense pleasures, *Brhmacharya*; and not accumulating things or grabbing what is not one's own, *Aparigraha*. Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh scriptures point us towards such an ethical path to clean up our habits.

Measured eating must complement measured speech. As the third of the noble eight-fold path, The Buddha talks of Right Speech, *Samma Vacha* in the *Tripitaka* as the ethics of avoiding lies, slanderous speech, harsh or hateful speech, and idle chatter or gossip. Inherent in the impurity of speech is the impure thought, the intent of which could be to deceive, hurt, hate, impress or exhibit power over someone or something. In the *Dandavaggo* of *Dhammapada*, the Buddha says, "Speak not harshly to anyone; they are bound to react or retort. Painful indeed is vindictive speech that will hurt both the giver and the receiver." With deliberation, one develops discretion and sensitivity in speech, which then becomes delightfully discerning. Integrity of the spoken word brings about subtlety, clarity and felicity to *Vak*, the goddess of speech.

A thought in the mind is the forerunner to both speech and actions, unless one is

impelled by pure impulse, which can be disastrous. Our Vedic sages declared that man is an aggregate of body, sense, mind, intellect, ego and in and through it all, Consciousness, referred to as *Atma*. The mind is the sense of all senses, shaping man's actions. And so, channeling the flow of thought is essential for our inward journey, subtle and sublime. Both the Dhammapada and the Bhagavad Gita talk of a steady and disciplined mind as the most important requisite for spiritual growth.

An untrained mind is fickle and difficult to control, but by practice and dispassion, it can become sharp and our greatest asset. Krishna tells Arjuna, "Having given up all binding desires, the one who goes about without longings, such a person has control over his mind and is without the sense of the limited "I, me, mine"; he indeed gains lasting peace."

In fact, Arjuna asks Sri Krishna, "No man wants to commit sin. Even so, he is drawn inexorably to doing the same old mistakes, again and again. What is it that drives him to do so?" (Curiously enough, Arjuna and his rival Duryodhana, both seem to have had similar problems. One sought advice in all humility and the other let his impulses lead him to destruction!)

Krishna affirms it is desire alone that makes us overlook dharma-adharma (sense of right and wrong) and commit acts of omission. Kama is thus referred to as man's greatest enemy to spiritual growth. "O Arjuna, this insatiable fire of

desire for wealth, name, fame and sensual pleasures envelops wisdom deep within. Kama is indeed the constant foe even of the wise. In fact, desire is seated in the senses, mind, intellect and ego and hence, unless one roots out desire, wisdom veiled by these gross and subtle bodies would delude the embodied soul”.

Sustained practice of meditation and detachment can help in working on the self. For, in yoga we gradually move from *Asanas* or postures to *Pranayama* or breath control, purifying both the outer and the inner space. *Pratyahara* refers to withdrawal of senses; *Dharana* is paying attention to one's thought and staying with it for a while; *Dhyana* or meditation is stilling the mental modifications and finally, *Samadhi* refers to absorption with the Self or God, the penultimate state of Consciousness, (Void in the Buddhist tradition). This state transcends all thought, time and space.

Devotion or faith in God can be the corner stone for subduing the vagaries of the mind. Prayer, chanting, rituals are all ways we can engage the mind in order to purify our inner heart and mind space. Bhakti essentially involves reaching out to those around us with an attitude of service or *seva* to God, known in the *Vaishnawa* tradition as *Kainkarya*.

The practice of restraint is meant for the self, not for us to expect it of others; that would make us judgmental. In *Attavaggo*, the Buddha says, “By oneself is evil done; by oneself defiled.

By oneself is one's work undone; by oneself alone is one purified. No one can purify another.” Interesting is its Bhagavad Gita equivalent. “Let a man lift himself by the self, let him not degrade himself. For, the self alone is the friend of the self, the self indeed is also the enemy of the self”.

Two things determine how restrained or otherwise we are; Raga or attachment and *Dvesha* or hatred. Our preferences and prejudices make us self-absorbed and old imprints called *Vasanas* affect the way we think and react. Bereft of discretion, the mind is drawn towards temptations and with friends to egg us on, we may do the things not to be done and remiss on those that must be done (*Pravritti* and *Nivritti*). Without sense-control, disappointment, sorrow, regret, anxiety, despair, jealousy and a perpetual feeling of failure could turn into our constant companions.

The Gita elaborates this in an interesting cause-effect cycle, “When a man dwells on the sense objects, attachment creeps in. From attachment springs more craving, bordering on obsession, which leads to anger if it is not satisfied. From anger arises delusion, which then leads to memory being incapacitated, finally resulting in destruction of the intellect, thereby ruining the self.”

No one is suggesting that one can live without any desire at all! Nor is one pointing towards total renunciation, meant for the sages and saints. Wisdom lies in the fine balance between over indulgence and complete cessation, that

razor thin path of liberation called moksha, kaivalya or nirvana. The more the restraint the greater the transformation in one's attitude. Sattvic

quite literally, loses oneself to discover the Self. Long years of meditation where restraint becomes one's very nature may enable the votary to the rarefied universe



qualities of inner purification and doing good to humanity (*Antahkarana Shuddhi* and *Loka Sangraha*) lift us from the ordinary to the heightened state of awareness. But it still may not indicate complete sense control. *Nirodha* is a state where one goes beyond thought and

of complete equanimity, unaffected by life's dualities of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. And when that is combined with a life of dispassion, it enables us to acquire knowledge of the path to enlightenment.

In Step with Restraint

Shovana Narayan, the well-known Kathak dancer, finds restraint almost defines, dance, be it in terms of the movements, expressions, communications, costume and even lighting.

This existence, along with the rhythmic functioning of the human body and the celestial bodies in their respective orbits, serves as a testament to the principles of restraint, showcasing responsibility and disciplined conduct. Within the human body, veins facilitate the circulation of blood; however, when these vessels are compromised, the unregulated flow poses a significant threat to life. Similarly, in human conduct, restraint reflects a composed and measured demeanor. Conversely, succumbing to unchecked impulses - such as greed, vengeance, and the lust for power - can lead to rampant violence, jeopardizing the very fabric of civilization. As Chanakya wisely states, *"The prudent individual should exercise control over their senses, akin to the crane, and achieve their objectives with a clear understanding of their circumstances, timing, and capabilities."*

From the perspective of a dancer, the initial chapter of the Natyashastra emphasizes the significance of utilizing creative freedom to benefit humanity, a freedom that is inherently disciplined. This purposeful creative expression is encapsulated in the concept of '*natya veda*'. Within this framework, two distinct approaches emerge:



'*lokadharmi*', which is life-oriented, and '*natyadharmi*', which is stylized. The aspect of restraint is particularly pronounced in '*natyadharmi*', where every gaze, gesture, and expression must be meticulously balanced and aesthetically pleasing. The term '*margam*' ('*margi*') serves to provide direction and organizes the flow of presentation, ensuring that it appears structured and coherent.

Creativity is intertwined with accountability, suggesting an inherent

presence of restraint. This restraint allows for an understanding of its significance within the dimensions of space and time, symbolizing the Infinite and the Universe, which encompass all that exists physically, including matter, energy, and momentum. Bound by physical laws, margins are established that delineate finiteness. Within these margins, communication revolves around forms and symbols. The notion of space is crucial within artistic expressions. This space encompasses gestures, body movements, speech, props (such as costumes), and emotions; it also includes the elements of lighting and stage design, as well as the influence on society and its psychological landscape. Consequently, the movements within the 'margin' of dance and performing arts have historically shaped aesthetics and sensibilities.

Restraint in the use of hand and body movements generates spatial patterns such as lines and circles, which collectively give rise to forms and symbols. The line represents an ideal zero-width entity containing an infinite number of points and serves as the shortest distance between two points. Consequently, what is humanity in pursuit of? This intrinsic quest is for that briefest connection to the Ultimate. While recognizing that one's existence is nearly of zero-width within the vast cosmos, individuals are also conscious that each moment of life encompasses an infinity of existential suffering.

The interpretation of the term '*tandava*'

exemplifies the concept of restraint in the application of '*angika*' (body movements). Uncontrolled and violent movements are referred to as '*tandava*,' and poetically, a storm may be described as the '*tandava* of the waves,' or the tumult of emotions may be depicted as being caught in a '*tandava* of emotions.' Conversely, the '*tandava* dance of Lord Shiva' embodies the epitome of controlled, aesthetic, and virile masculine expression in dance.

In terms of restraint in verbal expression, the control of breath is particularly evident in the '*padhant*' of a Kathak dancer. The distinctive aspect of '*padhant*', which involves the recitation of rhythmic patterns immediately following the execution of complex rhythmic sequences with vigorous movements, necessitates an advanced level of breath control. The effective channeling of '*prana*' through the *Ida*, *Pingala*, and *Sushumna nadis* - often referred to as the "silver cord," which represents the central channel—is of utmost importance.

Restraint can be likened to punctuation or pauses that serve to clarify and highlight significant points, and at times, even modify their meaning. In Kathak, this dynamic of pauses is skillfully employed by the performer to subtly alter the interpretation. For instance, the phrase "*mohe chhedo mat, jaiyo Kanha*" translates to "do not tease me, go away Kanha." By adjusting the punctuation and the placement of the pause, it transforms into "*mohe chhedo,*

mat jaiyo Kanha,” which conveys the meaning “tease me, do not go away Kanha.”

Silence is a clear manifestation of restraint. A notable example in dance is the decision by the renowned American choreographer Paul Taylor to have two men remain motionless for over four minutes, a choice that sparked considerable discussion. Initially, this led to debates regarding whether it could be classified as dance. Ultimately, despite facing criticism, it gained acceptance as a form of dance due to its intrinsic aesthetic value.

Restraint also plays a crucial role in character portrayal. The level of restraint applied in depicting a character significantly shapes their personality. The demeanor and conduct of a 'nayika' (maiden) are categorized based on

karma (deed) into three types: *uttama* (dignified and refined), *madhyama* (ordinary), and *adhama* (uncouth, uncivilized, and uncultured). Male characters are similarly classified as *dhirodatta* (brave and noble-minded), *dhirodhatta* (brave yet haughty), *dhiraprashant* (brave but calm), and *dhiralalita* (firm yet clever with gentle words, sporty, and reckless).



An exploration of our classical dances leads us back to the origins of ritualistic performances, which were conducted in an environment rich with the fragrance of incense and the glow of small oil lamps. It is important to recognize that the expressions and nature of dance movements during a prayer differ significantly from those employed to connect the congregation with the individual. The former emphasizes sublimation through minimalist movements and expressions, necessitating subdued lighting to facilitate an inward journey. How can one achieve 'pratyahara' (withdrawal of the senses), 'dharana' (focused concentration), and 'dhyana' (meditative contemplation) when bright lights

engage the outwardly focused mind in a distracting manner? Conversely, storytelling and explanatory performances require more illumination, as actions and expressions become more vivid. The flickering flames of numerous oil lamps cast enigmatic shadows, with movements carefully contained to respond to the illuminated spaces, accentuating the use of 'upangas' (minor limbs). Every subtle detail, from a wrist flick to a raised brow, from rolling eyes to fluttering fingers, could be observed and appreciated. Consequently, the expression of 'thumri bhava' in Kathak could reach remarkable heights, creating an atmosphere of romanticism and allure. Subtlety and finesse emerged as essential elements. Similarly, a Kathakali performance conducted outdoors at night, beneath a starlit sky or in complete darkness, against the backdrop of shadows created by a central wick lamp, evoked a sense of extraordinary illusion. The flickering light from that single lamp could



magnify every nuance of the eye, producing a surreal effect.

It is important to highlight not only the gentle amber hue of the flickering flames that create a soft and ethereal atmosphere but also the colors of the dancers' costumes. To ensure that their movements were clearly visible, a significant focus was placed on utilizing white and pastel tones. The sense of secrecy, romance, and mystery dissipated, leaving the stage exposed to the audience. A performance conducted outdoors, whether in natural light or under a canopy, necessitated a different spatial approach compared to one illuminated by candlelight. Therefore, performers endeavored to recreate that elusive atmosphere through dynamic movements, more intense dramatizations, and vibrant costumes. For instance, in Kathak, there was a notable emphasis on the 'teyyari ang' ('nritta ang') and dramatic elements such as 'gat bhava' and 'kavitts'. The performer's skill was essential, as they needed to capture the audience's full attention in an environment rife with distractions..

“And if thought and emotion can persist in this way so long after the brain that sent them forth has crumpled into dust, how vitally important it must be to control their very birth in the heart, and guard them with the keenest possible restraint”.

(Algernon Blackwood)

The Icarus Syndrome

The saying “don't fly too close to the sun” is a reference to the Greek legend of Icarus and his unrestrained recklessness and defiance of limitations.



Once upon a time, in ancient Greece, there lived a brilliant inventor named Daedalus. Known for his extraordinary talents and ingenious creations, he found himself imprisoned on the island of Crete by King Minos. Alongside him was his young, spirited son, Icarus, who admired his father's intellect and dreamt of the same boundless freedom.

Daedalus, determined to escape their confinement, devised an audacious plan. Using feathers collected from the birds,

and wax procured through the sly means available, he fashioned two pairs of wings, one for himself and one for Icarus. Before they took flight, Daedalus imparted a crucial piece of wisdom to his son: *“Icarus, my dear boy, heed my words. Fly at a middle course. If you soar too close to the sun, the wax will melt; if you fly too low, the sea's dampness will weigh you down.”*

As the day dawned, father and son took to the skies. They left the island behind, reveling in the sensation of flight. But

for young Icarus, the thrill of soaring through the heavens soon became intoxicating. The sheer euphoria of defying gravity filled his heart with reckless abandon, and he began to ascend higher and higher, disregarding his father's warnings.

The sun, with its fierce and unyielding heat, melted the wax holding his wings together. Feathers began to scatter, and Icarus, in a moment of realization, found himself plummeting from the heights he

between aspiration and restraint, urging us to remain mindful of the wisdom of those who guide us. It teaches us that while ambition and desire for freedom are natural and commendable, they must be tempered with caution and humility. For in the balance between aspiration and restraint lies the path to true greatness, free from the perilous consequences of unbridled desire.

The Icarus syndrome is a pattern that every leader needs to be concerned

about. It has felled many leaders who planned grandly but failed miserably by overestimating their knowledge, foresight, and ability. These leaders often lose sight of the practicalities and limitations of their ambitions, leading to their downfall.

If leaders afflicted by the Icarus syndrome only sowed the seeds of their own downfall, it would be tragic enough. However, the greater tragedy lies in the fact that they often put their entire organization at risk. Their

overambitious projects can lead to financial losses, damaged reputations, and demoralized teams.

By balancing ambition with restraint, leaders can achieve sustainable success without falling victim to the perils of overconfidence.



had so eagerly sought. He tumbled into the sea which now bears his name, the Icarian Sea.

Daedalus, heartbroken by the loss of his beloved son, never forgot the fateful day when ambition and the intoxication of freedom led to Icarus's tragic downfall.

In the end, the story of Icarus serves as a timeless reminder of the delicate balance

A Canvas of Excesses

Pushkala Gopal looks back at her life reflecting on what restraint meant at different stages of it.



There are people who hate examinations. There are others who flex especially when there is an exam situation. And then there are those for whom an exam event is no different from a day in the school or college or workplace.

The process of living throws up many exam-like situations. Some minor and some major, even milestones or life-changing ones. Many of us breeze through the minor ones, seldom being aware that a challenge was overcome. The preparation for the smaller day-to-

day challenges, whether it is managing relationships, managing money, carrying out one's 'duties'... is usually achieved as a combination of one's expectation from life with personal influences from upbringing or values gained over childhood.

Swami Sivananda and his teachings were a significant influence on us from my grand-parents' generation. As children, 'Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little' and so on was chanted at home quite often. At that time, I did not know that this was a healthy expression of restraint nor did I really appreciate the value of restraint. I was perhaps too young to understand restraint as the fulcrum of balance. (On the aside, I must say that the 'eat a little' has caught up with me now, but the 'talk a little' still perplexes me!)

Yet, as I grew older and began to see glimpses of wisdom in that song, there came another problem; I met with so many situations, when too much is too little and very little is still too much...I met with a conundrum. To restrain myself in one dimension, I often had to abandon all restraint in another.

My vocation is that of a teacher- of Bharatanatyam- in the main. Circumstances have placed me in an environment, with pupils, whose cultural values at home are at variance with the ethos of the larger society they are exposed to. My vocation was such that no two working days were alike. Some working days would start as early as 04.30 and others would wind up

around midnight. (I was a performer, a Community Arts worker, an educator and a teacher apart from a few other functions, for a huge decade plus, in my most productive years.) I could not restrain my working hours, but I restrained my voice of protest. If something demanded I give so much time, I just had to do so. That was the only way I could balance my creative impulses and the demands on me as a professional.

From the different aspects of *Natya* related projects that I was opened out to, I was made to understand many things. That *Abhyāsa* or *Sadhana* in this particular discipline (or indeed any other Art form) is less about the outcome and more about the internal process. Reflecting, understanding and accepting and then translating what has been received, to internal process, finally leading to outward expression, takes the mind through a few phases before it culminates in action. The teaching of *Natya* is a shared experience which can be effectively achieved with oral, aural experience and some verbal communication... Inputs from a teacher are in the form of demonstration and instruction up to a point. When the teacher and the taught go to the level which is beyond the mere transmission of information, the pitch becomes very sensitive. For good *Abhinaya* (communication through expression) you have to stimulate as much exaggeration as possible. And then, to give it qualities of refinement or

suggestion as is the ideal of classicism, you have to shear all the excesses and let the final version emerge after layers of the distilling process. Here, I realized, restraint works on canvas of excess.

It is the Dharma of aesthetics that is at play when making artistic choices. Artistic practice encourages restraint. When restraint underpins life's choices, eventually, chaos resolves itself and effectiveness prevails.

Restraint in speech is a skill one develops as you grow out of childhood. A mode where privacy, diplomacy or reticence in opening up emotionally

takes over the need to talk and talk. Restraint in action comes into play through other skills acquired from sports or shared activity; Restraint in thoughts is the one that has to be worked at through life's passage.

Experience however, has taught me that restraint is the slow and sure antidote that enables one to see things from a rounded perspective, all encompassing, compared to the 'I feel, I need, I know, I must' one. Restraint also calls for faith in forces beyond oneself. Eventually, restraint cures, restraint wins!

*Eat a little, drink a little
Talk a little, sleep a little
Mix a little, move a little
Serve a little, rest a little
Study a little, worship a little
Do Asana a little, Pranayama a little
Reflect a little, meditate a little
Do japa a little, do kirtan a little
Write Mantra a little, have satsang a little
Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realize
Be good, do good; Be kind, Be compassionate
Enquire 'who am I?' Know the self and be Free*

- Swami Sivananda on the Yoga of Synthesis

Wisdom Waves Navigating Spiritual Realms...



The Balancing Act

*In this short piece **H.H. Acharya Mahaprajna** moulds
the world around the axis of restraint.*

The world would have been governed only by fear and terror had there been no restraint. If the river did not flow between two banks, it would cause more harm than benefit people. Our very being and our life in society are defined by the restraints within which we live.

Visualize this scene: Over the Sabarmati river (in Gujarat) runs a railway bridge. One track is for meter gauge trains and the other for broad gauge trains. Along the sides is the pavement for cyclists and

pedestrians. All commuters are following their respective paths. No one is hindering another. Had it not been for restraint enforced by organization, the trains would have had water running all across their path and the movement of people too would have been so affected. Since man has learnt to observe restraint, no activity is obstructed: the flow of the river, movement of trains or people.

In the Gita there is mention of the tortoise as an example of restraint. The tortoise knows how to practice restraint. It knows

how to withdraw itself under the protection of its shell. That is why it is able to protect itself from jackals. Both Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavira have said, “Restrain your hands, restrain your feet, restrain your speech, restrain your sense organs and restrain your mind.”

Every man seeks security. Restraint is the greatest security. Germs do not cause any illnesses as lack of restraint does. Arms do not wound as many people as lack of restraint does. The police force does not punish as many people behind bars as lack of restraint does. Death does not claim as many victims as lack of restraint does.

Physicians say, “Fifty percent of what you eat is for the body and the remaining for the doctor.” Food is not taken for nourishment but for the palate. Food would not be scarce if it were eaten only for nourishment. When all our attention is focused on our food, we are left without energy to attend to our basic needs. Such is the sad state of affairs today. Desire for luxury and aggrandizement of personal wealth has made some people go hungry. The problem of hunger in turn has made many secondary problems primary.

India is still a country of scarce resources. It is a pity that in this country there is a class of people who enjoy all luxuries and another class who are below the poverty line, suffering the pangs of hunger.

Once Acharya Tulsi was in Rajasthan. Some of his disciples were traveling by foot in some other states. Acharyashree was told that they were facing difficulties and not even getting adequate food. He reduced the quantity of his own food. News of this gesture reached the disciples. Their sense of hardship seemed to decrease! Problems become less bearable in the absence of sympathy, but with empathy, even though the problem does not get solved, it is mitigated to a considerable extent. If affluent people observe restraint, the hardship of the deprived automatically reduces. Even if it does not get reduced immediately, the division becomes less marked.

Abundance of earthly goods by itself does not solve problems. Many problems can be solved by restraint alone. Our economists talk merely of increased production of goods. At such a time is it not necessary for our religious leaders to present the need for restraint in a systematic manner to establish the fact that restraint solves not only mental problems but also physical?

When regulations (in worship) become primary and restraint secondary, the religious domain loses its luster and when restraint becomes primary and regulations secondary, the religious world becomes resplendent.

Telling Tales...

And then what happened...?



In the western part of Arunachal Pradesh is a city called Rupa. In the city of Rupa lived two brothers. The elder brother was a Buddhist Lama. The younger one was a hunter. Everyday the hunter would go out into the forest and bring back fresh meat. The lama would look at it longingly and more longingly...

“And then what happened?” I asked my storyteller. He smiled. He had a perfect round face. Even when he smiled it remained round. His eyes smiled with him, his ears smiled, his nose smiled, his whole face smiled. He walked ahead with his maroon robe following. And then he sat down on a boulder. We could see the *Gompa* from there. All along our way there were little prayer flags

fluttering in the air. The boulder next to where the monk sat had inscribed on it, *Om mani peme hun*, the sacred chant of the Buddhists. My storyteller, the lama, motioned me to sit on yet another boulder. A cold gust of wind made me draw my shawl closer.

And he would eat it and relish it too. But somewhere in his heart, he felt eating meat was not right for, in the process they were killing life. He would say this to his brother. His brother would look at him as though he had gone mad. “Look,” said the hunter to the lama, “You are not killing. I am. Just eat and be merry.” The lama would then keep quiet.

One day the hunter brought back very tasty meat. The lama enjoyed eating it.

But after he had eaten his full, he repented greatly. He decided he would never eat meat again. He would restrain his desires. He told his brother, "Not only have I decided never to eat meat again, I also feel you should not kill. We have taken somebody's life for our pleasure. It is very cruel of us to kill."

The lama smiled again. Smiling for him was a long act when the smile stretched and stretched till his whole body smiled. And he looked directly at me and smiled. I smiled back. I smiled more. And then I was stuck with my smile, no more no less. The lama had begun telling me a story saying he had a lesson to give me to take back to my children. Well, what was the lesson? That one should not eat meat? Unlikely. The Buddhists of that area ate meat. I was still smiling while thinking of the possible lesson. My same fixed smile. Somebody brought us salted tea. The lama took a long sip. And he said:

The lama and his brother discussed for a long time the possibility of alternative employment. Finally the lama meditated for a while and came up with this solution. He said, "I will turn into a red deer. If you are able to kill me, you will be a skilled hunter and to hunt is not a sin. But if you are not able to kill me, then it means that to kill is a sin and that you should stop it forthwith". The hunter agreed to this suggestion.

The lama went into the forest and turned in to a deer. He waited for his brother who sauntered in with hunting dog. The chase began. For many hours the dog

chased the deer and the hunter too followed. The sun was getting ready to set, but still the hunter was chasing the red deer. Through the forests, over the mountains, across rivers....After any hours, the hunter was totally tired out. He went to a nearby stream and sat by its bank. His throat was parched and he yearned for a mouthful of water. His dog had already begun lapping up water.

As the hunter was cupping some water into his palms, he saw the deer from the corner of his eye. With its large eyes looking hither and thither, the deer came out of the dense forest to take a sip of water. It seemed very thirsty and it seemed very tired too. Even before it could put its lips to the water, the hunting dog saw it and began chasing it. The deer withdrew quickly and began running back. But the hunter called back his dog, He could have cried to see his brother so tired and thirsty and yet not able to drink even a drop of water from fear of being killed. "Comeback," he shouted to his dog and, holding the dog with his hands, he said to the deer, "I cannot kill you brother."

The Hunter sat down with his head in his hands. "Please drink a sip of water," he begged of the deer. "You have won. I have lost. In every deer I now can see only you."

My lama now looked serious. Only his eyes smiled. He reached out for my hand and, holding them between his puffy ones whispered: "Exercise restraint on your desires. You may be able to even save lives by doing so."



The Great Password Hunt

*A household in digital disarray, **Brig. Suresh Chander (retd)** finds himself navigating a storm of wi-fi woes and password predicaments. Hilarity ensues in this uproarious tale of 'hidden' notes.*

Restraint was never her forte: the wife's. She was her usual aggressive self when she demanded to know if I had changed the wi-fi code. Without even giving me time to respond, she thundered, 'Why is it not working?' My slightly nervous reply was, 'Technical glitches of the service provider... perhaps.' By uttering the last word I thought I had covered my vulnerable rear flank. Just as well. She responded that the neighbor's wi-fi was working full speed and they had the same service provider. She instructed that I feed the password again. That is how the rest of the story unfolds.

She is not computer or iPhone savvy, but picks up adequate know-how from the grandkids to keep tormenting me. I had been blasted for storing all the codes, PINs, MPINs, etc. on the tablet. I was told that all this vital information would be on iCloud and thus easily accessible by intelligence agencies, or any smart operator on the prowl at call centers. Our bank balances could be easily cleaned out. The information could also be used by brain-mapping us to find out our political leanings. The last bit was provocative, but I let it pass.

Thereafter, I started noting down all PINs and codes in a note form and hiding

this classified document in the obscurest of places. The passwords were regularly changed and the 'note' amended diligently. Hiding places, too, were changed frequently—Army style.

It was all well for a few months. Then one day, she wanted her Paytm password. For once, my confident reply was, 'Just give me a minute, my darling!' I frequently say silly things that I do not mean.

I went to the secret cache, but to my horror found nothing! I went into panic mode. This state seriously affects my thinking ability and 'search the brain mode' goes into a slow hover. A faint thought flashed across my mind that I had recently changed the hiding place. But for the love of the Lord and fear of unthinkable consequences, I could not remember the new hiding place. We turned the house upside down, but could not locate the 'note'. Electronic, digital and part of the banking life came to a standstill. Strange, but my better half did not put me under excessive strain realizing that the ageing system may fall apart.

I have however learnt my lesson and starting keeping this precious document in a foolproof place: next to my will.



Pathways to Fitness

*Fasting is abstinence from either food and drink or food alone. But its value and significance lie beyond that simple definition writes **Prema Raghavan**. It is fundamentally a means to find inner strength through the body, mind and spirit.*

Fasting is a purifying and rejuvenating process while starvation is a destructive fatal process. The normal body provides itself with a reserve of nutritive materials that are put away in the form of fat, bone marrow, glycogen, lacteal fluids, minerals and vitamins. To fast is to abstain from food while one possesses adequate reserves to nourish one's vital tissues. To starve is to abstain from food after one's reserves have been exhausted whereby vital tissues are sacrificed. Hence starvation begins when fasting ends.

Another popular fallacy is caused by the belief that food and drink are the only source of health. It is not so - life force, or prana, is the real source of vitality.

The life force within our bodies is in fact the source of life. It is a conscious power that is continually reinforced by mind power and food. The whole physical universe, including man, is surrounded by cosmic energy. Scientists have discovered that all matter is a form of energy. We live in a sea of energy and draw on it indirectly through the food we eat, the air we breathe and the sunlight we are exposed to. This indirect use of

energy is akin to the water one puts into the battery of a car. When the battery runs down, no amount of water will make it work again. The batteries need to be recharged from another source. Similarly, our bodies gain energy indirectly from the food we eat but directly from the cosmic energy that flows into us through the medulla oblongata at the bottom of the brain.

Another interesting aspect is that the energy we draw is dependant on our mental attitude. When we are reluctant under any situation, it is often observed that the body does not have the energy to act even if we have eaten well and are otherwise nourished. On the other hand, intense resolve propels us to act beyond the boundaries of our physical resources. Paramhansa Yogananda has given us an axiom – “The greater the will, the greater the flow of energy.”

In India fasting is prompted by the seasons, the time of day and the solar and lunar cycles. In this regard, fasting encourages the maintenance of the body's equilibrium with that of the larger forces of life. It was during a 49 day fast that Siddhartha Gautama Buddha achieved enlightenment under the now

famous Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya, India.

SCIENCE OF FASTING

Nutrition of the body consists of the following process:

1. The process of eating and digesting food and the elimination of indigestible wastes.
2. The passage of the digested nutrients through the walls of the digestive tract into the blood stream which then carries them to all the tissues and cells of the body.
3. The absorption of these nutrients by the various cells, tissues and organs.
4. The final utilization of these nutrients in the various activities of life, whether muscular, glandular or nervous.

The first three of these processes go on only when food is being eaten or for a short period thereafter. But the fourth process is continuous as long as life exists. The wear and tear of the body and its repair and replenishment do not halt during a fast. The vital functions of life carry on.

While fasting, the process of autolysis takes place in the body. During autolysis, enzymes stored as reserves in the body are made available for use by the vital tissues.

The body is very selective in the order in which it uses its reserves, starting first with the fatty tissues. In doing so it also begins a thorough cleansing process during which it throws off all the accumulated poisons and toxins

gathered in the cells over a long period of time. Because of the extra energies used in digestion during the normal period of eating and since most foods continuously load the body with some amount of new toxins, the body is unable to do its detoxification program efficiently during the normal course.

Rest is a necessary adjunct of fasting. The body's energies are concentrated in cleaning and detoxifying the system. Through this process, the body's healing powers are greatly enhanced.

BENEFITS OF FASTING

- It provides the vital organs physiological rest since most of our energy is primarily used to facilitate the digestion process.
- Stops the absorption of foods that decay in the gut.
- Empties the digestive tract and facilitates the elimination of waste. It also clears the liver, kidney & colon and removes toxins and impurities from the blood.
- Increases appreciation of food.
- Promotes the breakdown and absorption of diseased tissues and deposits.
- Increases the power of digestion and assimilation.
- Re establishes normal body chemistry and secretions.
- Improves mental power by calming the mind, sharpening your senses and provides you with greater energy.



Book Review

Love the Timeless Truth: My Name is Red

R.Dasarathy revisits Orhan Pamuk's award winning book, My Name is Red

Orhan Pamuk tries to point out all these issues subtly in his novel “My Name is Red”: The conflicts experienced by the artists in Turkey in the 16th Century, when they come into contact with Western Art – not dissimilar to the current 'shrinking global village'. Islam, as a religion, prohibits idol-worship and consequently does not allow for human figures to be represented as they are, but as “Allah sees them”. This injunction can be and has been taken to the extreme. Therefore, as Islam forbids figurative art, Islamic manuscript illustration, which ushers figurative art in through the back door - opts for stylisation rather than the 'realism' of seeing.

The novel is written as a murder mystery, with suspense maintained till the end of the book on the identity of the murderer. To solve the mystery, we follow an inquiry into Islamic art, and how it began to be influenced by western, particularly Venetian, painting. Typical of historical mysteries, the reader is provided clues and invited to be a kind of art critic. Additionally in this novel you become a sociologist of sorts, analysing the strongly held beliefs and

Most people look to Religion for inspiration and imparting meaning to life. Religion can also be perceived as a search for Truth, which is eternal and universal. If that is the universal aspect, personally committing to it is the individualized aspect. Besides this, we note that some aspects of the belief system need to be updated in the context of social change, new knowledge – that is, certain teachings may not be applicable in the changed circumstances, for example, treatment of 'slaves', role of women, heliocentricity,...

insecurities. The murderer has killed because he has been unable to reconcile two ideals of painting - unable to belong to both east and west.

In the novel, the Ottoman Sultan commissions a project to illustrate a book, as a gift to a Western Sovereign. The objective to showcase both the Ottoman empire and its artists. The book includes a portraiture of the Sultan – which is a cause of much heart-burn and controversy. The novel is set in Istanbul at the end of the 16th century, and is concerned with the perceived clash between eastern and western - Islamic and Christian - ideas about art.

The historical novel is a lesson in 'Art History' and in some ways a difficult book to read. We however, understand the centrality of books – hand-written, illustrated and bound in preserving knowledge and providing entertainment to the elites. The book employs a literary device, with each chapter written in first-person by one of principal characters. It works most of the time, with the reader developing an understanding and empathy for the character (even the murderer!). The first-person account is interspersed by parables by a gold coin, a dog, Death, Satan, a horse, red colour, ... Orhan Pamuk, (born 1952) a winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature 2006 is a celebrated author with many books based on Istanbul (fiction and non-fiction) to his credit. Pamuk is also representative of his times in terms of secular and westernised Turkey, which Mustafa Kemal Ata-Turk envisioned.

Pamuk was born into a well-to-do family, as a consequence he could pursue writing full-time.

Nationalism and Islamic political parties are seeing a revival in current day Turkey. Therefore, this novel can also be seen as a tongue-in-cheek potshot at the Islamists' current politics. Within Turkey, Pamuk is seen as pandering to the West and hence the Nobel Prize too, though his books are very popular in Turkey. Pamuk also raised the issue of the 'genocide' of Armenians and the Kurdish freedom struggle – which also made him unpopular at home and attractive to the West.

The main character of 'My Name is Red', Black, attempts to solve the murders of a court painter and their master, who is also his own uncle. The novel is philosophically ambitious and the readers with artistic background may be able to relate to it more easily. Returning to Istanbul after 12 years, in the middle of a bleak winter, Black finds everything changed. His cousin and former love, Shekure, married and widowed in his absence. Meanwhile, her father, a wealthy and influential former ambassador to Venice, known to all and sundry as 'Uncle', has embarked on a long-cherished project, the compilation of an illuminated book for the sultan in which the world will be depicted 'realistically' and in perspective, in the manner of the Renaissance painters Uncle grew to admire in Italy.

This, though, is a dangerous enterprise, for Islamic fundamentalists hate all art

and Western art in particular. One of the illustrators working on the book being prepared for the sultan has already been found at the bottom of a well with his skull crushed and, before long, Uncle himself is brutally murdered.

As Black simultaneously tries to woo Shekure and identify the killer, now hanging about in coffee houses, now talking to illustrators, now poring over the priceless illuminated manuscripts in the sultan's treasury, Pamuk takes the reader into the strange and beautiful world of Islamic art, in which Western notions no longer make sense. Nothing, for instance, could be more fundamental to an understanding of Western art than the concept of style, for style is, after all, the true expression of an artist's 'point of view' and 'perspective'. The quintessentially Western idea that everyone is a unique individual with their own 'outlook' or perhaps even 'vision' calls for a style.

The illustrators Black consults, however, scoff at style, calling it a defect. For them, the perfect illustrator is not one who tries to express his unique vision of the world. Indeed, the perfect illustrator does not even see the world but, having long ago gone blind as a result of his labours, draws it without any contaminating random input from

his individuality, rendering it as it truly is 'in the memory of Allah'. Unfortunately for the killer, who is an illustrator himself, does have a style, and he is eventually unmasked through some drawings he has inadvertently left behind.

This darkness in the background, though, is counterbalanced by the charming, poignant love story in the foreground. Indeed, this is a book in which there is much emphasis on love, food and the simple pleasures of life. The love of children looms particularly large in 'My Name Is Red'. Shekure, who is named after the novelist's own mother, is absolutely devoted to her two young sons. (also named after the author and his brother). This bringing together of parents and progeny, past and present, fact and fiction, in much the same manner as Islamic art brings everything together on the same plane without the gradations of perspective, is, of course, deliberate.

Love, the author seems to be saying, is the timeless truth 'in the memory of Allah' that cuts across divisions and keeps everything whole, while time and the change and decay it brings are illusions we suffer from because we foolishly insist on trusting the 'evidence' of our eyes.

Book: My Name is Red
Translated by: Edrag Goknar
Publisher: Faber

Author: Orhan Pamuk
Price: Rs 399 (Paperback)
No. of Pages: 503

Swami Vivekananda

Headed to the Himalayas

S. Regunathan

Thus far: The story is of an ardent disciple of Sri Ramakrishna who, donning saffron, emerged as a leader after his master left his bodily abode. His name was Narendranath. He institutionalized his master's legacy by setting up a Mutt and developing the routine for spiritual seekers within that. Thereafter he started his own spiritual pursuit in earnest and to his pleasant surprise could feel the presences of his master or the divine close to him. Soon he met his first disciple, an assistant station master at Hathras railway station. Thereafter he went to learn hatha yoga from a sage named Pavhari baba. Now read on...



Swami Vivekananda was a great believer in the idea that only a healthy body can house a sound mind. That is why he sought out Pavhari baba, mainly to learn hatha yoga. Though he knew that he was not made of the body and the mind alone, he felt that along his quest for Truth, a sound mind would be an important asset. Both Pavhari baba and Swamiji liked each other and got along well. It was

very difficult to have a darshan of Pavhari baba, but when they met just once and he like Swami Vivekananda, their relationship developed. Again, the baba was not so willing to part with his knowledge and teach Swamiji hatha yoga.

He suggested that Vivekananda be initiated by him before he taught him. Swami Vivekananda did not see anything wrong in that and he agreed.

Once he decided to take initiation from him he saw his guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa standing near him and staring at him. What was he saying? Anyway for that moment the initiation was postponed. But when he decided again, after some time, to get initiated, he had the same experience. This time Swamiji realized what his guru was trying to convey to him; that there is no one above his guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and that there was no need for him to take initiation from anyone else. He also realized that though Pavhari baba was a man of extreme austerity and ritualistic discipline, he was not a fully realized soul. He also got the feeling that Pavhari baba wanted to learn from him (Vivekananda) rather than being keen on imparting knowledge to him. So, he left Pavhari baba and went back to the Mutt.

During this time, one of his guru bhais Swami Abhedananda had been touring Tibet and sending information to Swamiji. Swamiji had a great desire to go to Tibet but he could not do so, however the lure of the Himalayas was always a constant.

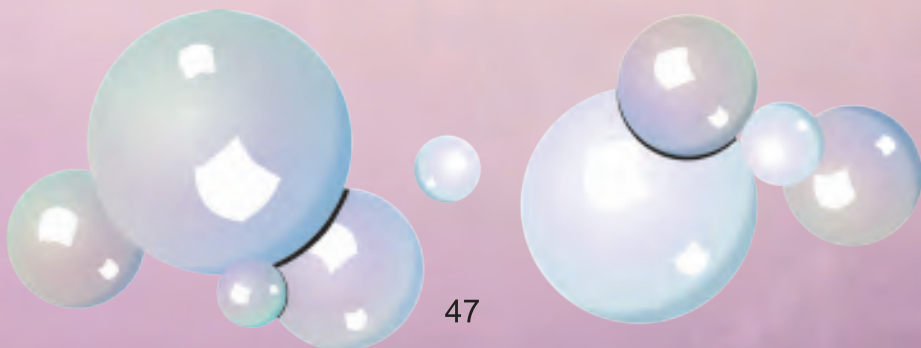
When he decided that he would go to the Himalayas three major tragic events took place in his life. The Mutt had two

major benefactors; Sri Surendra Misra and Sri Balaram Babu.

Unfortunately, they both passed away leaving the mutt in total penury. If that was not all, one of his dear sisters committed suicide. These setbacks did upset Swami Vivekananda emotionally. However, he decided his pursuit of Truth will still have to continue unfazed.

Fortunately, at that time, another lay disciple agreed to take care of the mutt by providing some financial help. Swamiji took this opportunity to leave for the Himalayas. He went to Sarada devi to take leave. He said to her that he would not return till he found Truth. Then, Sarada devi asked him if he would not like to meet his mother, bid her farewell and take her blessings. To that Vivekananda is said to have replied that she, Sarada Devi, was his mother and her blessings would stand him in good stead. At that time Sarada devi instructed Swami Abhedananda, who had returned from his travels of Tibet and was now with Swami Vivekananda, that he should ensure the well-being of the Swami Vivekananda and should not allow him to suffer for food or any other want.

With that Swami Vivekananda set on an exploration of the Himalayas.



The Weight of a Meme



*In the digital age, humour is only a click away. But what happens when unrestrained humour crosses the line? A short story by **Surabhi Chawla** reminds us of the importance of exercising restraint in our online actions.*

In the sun-dappled classrooms of Hilltop Public School, where chalk dust mingled with ambition and laughter, Mrs. Meera Sharma reigned with quiet grace. Her voice, warm and steady, softened the harshest edges of mathematics, turning formulas into melodies and equations into puzzles.

Born to a modest clerk and a homemaker in a sleepy town, she grew up amidst the scent of old books and the sound of her father's pen scratching across paper. Her parents, though often stretched thin, wove their dreams into her future, sacrificing comforts so she could nurture her love for numbers. When she solved equations under the dim light of their single lamp, her father would murmur, "You'll make them love math, Meera."

And so, she did.

Years later, as a young bride, she brought her passion for teaching to the bustling

city, supported by Ramesh, her husband. Their small family blossomed with the arrival of Nisha and Meera's world felt complete. But fate left her a widow one stormy night when an accident stole Ramesh away. Meera returned to her classroom where she poured herself into her work and soon she became anchor, guide and second mother to her students. But times were changing, and technology crept into her sanctuary. Smartboards replaced blackboards, and her steady hands faltered against the tide of progress. Meera's relationship with technology was fraught with unease, a daily struggle born of both generational gaps and a lack of exposure.

The training sessions held for the teachers felt rushed. Meera spent evenings in her modest apartment, poring over user manuals and watching online tutorials, hoping to master what came so naturally to her younger

colleagues. Her attempts were earnest but often punctuated by small failures: a screen she couldn't calibrate, a presentation that refused to load, or annotations she couldn't erase. Her classroom, once her domain, began to feel like unfamiliar terrain. She'd joke to her students, "This smartboard is smarter than me!"

The challenges Meera faced were well-known to her daughter, Nisha, a bright and empathetic teenager who saw her mother's efforts and struggles. Nisha, in turn, had found a confidant in Aarav, one of her classmates. They shared inside jokes about the quirks of their classmates and sometimes, the teachers - always in good humour and never with malice.

Born into affluence, Aarav's laughter often deflected his insecurities, and his phone became his canvas. His anonymous Instagram account, "Hilltop Chronicles", teemed with memes that dissected school life, harmless jabs that drew smiles from classmates.

Until one day, he crossed an invisible line.

It began innocently - or so Aarav thought. In Mrs. Sharma's class, the smartboard defied her every touch. "I think this board has a grudge against me," she said, and the room erupted in laughter. Aarav's phone, poised like a weapon, captured her frustration. That evening, as his desk lamp illuminated his mischievous grin, he edited the clip. Sound effects - buzzers, sarcastic applause - turned her effort into a

spectacle. The caption read: "When chalk meets 2024 tech. #BoomerVibes."

The video soared. Laughter echoed in the digital void, comments piling high:

"Classic Mrs. Sharma!"

"Retirement's calling!"

Aarav laughed too. But as the comments turned cruel, a seed of doubt took root. He dismissed it - what harm could a joke do?

Meanwhile, in a quiet corner of their home, Nisha Sharma scrolled through her phone. The laughter on the screen felt like an assault. She had always seen her mother as a fortress, but here was that fortress mocked, dissected. Her fingers trembled as she handed the phone to her mother that night. "Mom," she whispered, her voice quaking, "you need to see this." Meera watched in silence. The clip looped, each replay a dagger. She set the phone down, her face a study in quiet devastation. "Who would do this?" she murmured.

The next morning, in the Verma household, Aarav's parents, Vinay and Priya, had been hearing faint whispers about the viral meme. Priya decided to check social media herself. Her heart sank as the video came into focus. "Vinay," she called, her voice tight with anger, "come here." Together, they watched the clip, the sound effects and mocking caption cutting through the quiet of their kitchen.

"We need to find out who's behind this," Priya declared, her tone steely. She reached out to Aarav, her voice deceptively calm. "Do you know

anything about this account, Hilltop Chronicles?” Aarav, hesitated before shaking his head. “No, Mom. It's just some random account everyone follows. They post memes about school.” “Random? This isn't just some harmless joke. This is cruel.”

Vinay, always the quieter of the two, spoke with deliberate firmness. “Priya, let's involve the school. They'll know how to handle this.”

That afternoon, the principal's office buzzed with quiet tension as Priya and Vinay sat across from Mr. Desai, the school's head. The video played on a tablet between them, its mocking tone filling the room.

“This account has been a thorn in our side,” he admitted. “We've tried tracing the user, but they've remained anonymous. However, we'll escalate our efforts.”

Back at home, Aarav's nerves began to fray. That night, unable to sleep, he stared at his phone, scrolling through the comments on the video. The initial rush of pride had long faded, replaced by the gnawing realization of what he'd done.

The next day at school, rumours swirled as the administration launched their investigation. Hilltop Chronicles went silent, but the damage lingered in the whispers that followed Mrs. Sharma through the hallways. Aarav's guilt grew unbearable. Finally, he came to a decision.

As the school day ended, Aarav approached the principal's office, his heart pounding. He hesitated at the door,

rehearsing his confession in his mind. Before he could knock, it opened, and Mr. Desai stood before him, his expression stern.

“Can I help you, Aarav?” Aarav swallowed hard, his voice barely above a whisper. “I need to tell you something. It's about Hilltop Chronicles.”

Inside, under the principal's steady gaze, Aarav laid it all bare -the anonymous account, the video, his intentions, and his regret. As the weight of his confession lifted, he felt the sting of shame but also the faintest flicker of relief.

Mr. Desai's expression softened slightly. “It takes courage to admit what you've done. But there will be consequences.”

True to his word, Aarav faced the school assembly the next morning. His voice trembled as he admitted his actions, owning his mistake before peers and teachers alike. “I hurt someone who didn't deserve it. I'm sorry, Mrs. Sharma.”

The applause that followed wasn't sarcastic. It was genuine, an acknowledgment of the courage it took to admit fault.

For Meera, life didn't change overnight, but the air felt lighter. Aarav's apology was a lesson - for him, for the school, and for her. The world could be cruel, but it could also heal.

And as the days turned to weeks, the smartboard remained defiant, but Meera faced it with a steady hand and a smile, her fortress unbroken.

Children's Corner

Miko the Impatient Little Monkey

Story and Illustration by Gayatri K .Diggi

In a far away forest called Merryland lived all animals and birds in harmony. Miko, the little monkey, also lived there. He was naughty and impatient and always in a hurry. If he wanted something it had to be right away whether it was food, playing with his friends or asking questions - he just did not like to wait. One sunny morning Grandma monkey called everyone and said, "Now listen I have a nice treat waiting for you all but you have



to wait patiently." Then she pointed at the trees and added, "See all the fruits in the trees will be ripening soon and then you all can enjoy the juicy sweet fruits." Miko, being impatient said, "But for how long?" Grandma monkey said, "Patience little Miko, we have to wait for it to ripen first." And she went on her way. Just then, a tortoise passed by and Miko said "Hey! Slowey where are you going?" The tortoise, Slowey, looked at Miko and said, "Well by the time I reach the mango tree it will be ready and ripe to eat" "and kept walking slowly. Just then Chickick, the

squirrel, ran up a tree and said "I will wait here on this tree for the jamuns to ripe and then I can store them in the hollow of the tree trunk." But Miko was Miko after all and he climbed the jamun tree and started to jump about and then he plucked a jamun and took a bite "Blaaah!" He said spitting it out and added, "It's so sour!" Chickick, the squirrel, angrily scolded him and said "Stop! Don't waste the fruit; have some patience." And he made a chickick noise angrily. Miko climbed down the tree and went towards the mango tree. He saw many green mangoes and tried to pluck them but he slipped and, thud! He was on the ground.

One day while they were all resting under the tree they heard a noise. Plop! Plop! The mangoes had turned from green to golden yellow and the soft winds blowing helped the mangoes fall down and now they were all lying around the tree. One mango fell on sleepy Miko's head waking him up "Ouch!" he cried and then he saw the mangoes all around him. he happily picked one up and took a bite it was soft sweet and juicy. Grandma monkey came by smiling with other little monkeys saying, "Didn't I tell you all that waiting patiently for the right moment always brings good rewards?" "Sweet Rewards Grandma!" Miko shouted biting the juicy mango. All the birds and animals were happy to enjoy the sweet reward of patience and Miko learned a good lesson that sometimes one has to restrain oneself and wait patiently for things to work out for itself, to get good results, one has to restrain oneself and wait for the right moment to happen.

FRNV NEWS AND EVENTS

FRNV Chennai Regional Chapter Meeting – 02.03.2025

Shri S Regunathan, President/FRNV interacted with FRNV Chennai Chapter on 2nd March 2025 the modalities for conduct of the National Seminar in April at New Delhi.

FRNV Governing Body Meeting – 17.02.2025

A brainstorming meeting of the FRNV Governing Body members was held on 17th February 2025 at India International Centre Annexe, New Delhi. Shri S Regunathan, President/FRNV presided over the meeting. After detailed discussions, the Members decided the following:-

- (a) To organize a National Conference on preventing criminals being appointed as Ministers and also the rampant corruption. Earlier the seminar scheduled on 21-22 February 2025 at Aurovalley Ashram will now be held in New Delhi.
- (b) Focus on Values Based Education will continue
- (c) FRNV outreach through social media
- (d) Generate Corpus Funding for the organization
- (e) To Create Groups for Doctors, Lawyers, etc., on adhering values & ethics in professional life.
- (f) Membership outreach
- (g) Active Advisory Board

Meeting of FRNV Regional Chapters – 01.02.2025

A review meeting (google) of FRNV Regional Chapters was held on 1st February 2025. It was chaired by President/FRNV. The meeting was attended to by FRNV Regional Chapters – Chennai, Bhubaneswar and Delhi. Representatives from proposed Dehradun chapters were also attended. President/FRNV stressed the importance of commitments to FRNV objectives and activities by all Members of the FRNV. Regional Chapters should be active and take up the issues vigorously.

- (a) Poojya Swami Bhoomanda Tirtha ji wishes FRNV to be more active in inculcating values based education in the country and also electoral reforms. Swamiji desires FRNV to enlist the support and signature campaign of about 150-200 Members of Parliament for active values based education curriculum in the country.
- (b) Regional Chapters were also requested to encourage subscription for the FRNV bi-monthly journal “Value Insight” from educational institutions. Chennai and Odisha Chapters have already circulated two rounds of complimentary issues to the schools and educational institutions.
- (c) Regional Chapters were also requested to share their list of proposed activities for the financial year 2025-2026 and the estimated budget indicating internal resources and expected support required from FRNV HQ.





Martyrs' Day – Death Anniversary of Gandhiji – 30-1-2025 - Seminar on 'Empowering Youth for Social Service' organized by FRNV Odisha Chapter.

A Seminar was jointly organized by FRNV, Odisha Chapter and Citizens for Collective Action for Education and Social Change on 30-1-2025 at Buddha Mandir, Unit-9, Bhubaneswar. The event was presided over by Dr Arun Kumar Rath, Chairman, FRNV Odisha Chapter.

About 25 students from 5 schools participated in the debate on the topic, Empowering Youth for Social Service. The winners were awarded certificates and trophies. The event was well attended with 75 participants and also reported by the leading Odia daily newspaper, the Samaj on 31/1/2025.

SEMINAR ON NUTRI VALUE EDUCATION – ORGANISED ON 25-01-2025 BY FRNV ODISHA CHAPTER

A Seminar was jointly organized by FRNV, Odisha Chapter and DAV School, Kalinganagar, Bhubaneswar on 'Nutri Value Education'. Dr Arun Kumar Rath, IAS (Retd) and Chairman of Odisha Chapter presided over the Seminar. Sri Jagadish Chandra Adhikari, PGT and

Staff Secretary delivered the welcome speech. Samarendra Dash, Secretary, FRNV Odisha Chapter spoke about Value based education which is the core objective of FRNV. He called upon the Parents, teachers and students to be aware of the food choices and habits of the students, so that the students have good access to a balanced diet studied with the desired nutrition level. Dr Rath impressed upon the students and parents about good food habits and desist from junk food and soft sugary drinks which are detrimental to the health of the students. He also stressed upon the need for balanced and nutritious food for their physical, mental and cognitive growth. Sri Basant Kumar Kar, an internationally acclaimed nutrition expert and life member of FRNV, Odisha Chapter spoke about the virtues of nutrition and balance food for the adolescents and also mentioned that how severe is malnutrition among child which is the root causes of incommunicable diseases like obesity, cancer, diabetics and cardiac diseases among adolescents and women. Among others Dr Jibitesh Rath, Vice Chairman of Odisha Chapter spoke about the essentiality of wholesome food for the students. He also mentioned that how nutrition is linked to UNSDG -2, Zero hunger. Sri Ashok Sahu, Life Member administered the pledge of Nutrition to students, parents, teachers and dignitaries present in this Seminar. There was an open house wherein students, teachers and parents asked questions and Sri Basanta Kumar Kar, the nutrition expert and Chairman Dr Arun Kumar Rath answered these questions. Treasurer, Sri Bijay Kumar Nath and Life Member, Sri Ashok Kumar Sahu also spoke in the event. The Seminar concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Sri Bipin Kumar Sahu, Principal of DAV, Pokhariput. There were about 100 participants in this event including students, teachers, parents and the dignitaries. This event got media coverage too with the daily Odia newspaper, The Samaj reporting it on 26/1/2025.

Meeting of FRNV Delhi Chapter – 18.01.2025

A meeting of FRNV Delhi Chapter was held on 18th January 2025 at Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan, Greater Kailash, New Delhi. Shri S Regunathan, President/FRNV presided over the meeting.

1. President/FRNV recalled the words of Philosopher & Guide Shri Aurobindo that “Those who aspire to do His work, to be free from repulsion and desire, to do work for Him without the demand for fruit, to renounce self-will and become a passive and faithful instrument in His hands, to have an equal heart for high and low, friend and opponent, success and failure, yet not do His work negligently”. Members should always remember these words and get inspiration in all the activities of FRNV.
2. President/FRNV further informed that Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha ji exhorted FRNV to enlist the support of 100 Members of Parliament for inculcating Values Based Education in all schools in the country.
3. All the FRNV Regional Chapters will be requested to initiate action on the same.
4. Members were encouraged to induct more members, bring in subscription for the journal, advertisement for the Journal and organize activities for FRNV Delhi Chapter, including the workshops.



Life Members joined since 7th September 2024

Name	Membership No.	From
Shri Gurudutta Ray Odisha	FRNV/LM/097	25.11.2024
Dr. B.K.S. Sanjay Dehradun	FRNV/LM/098	13.01.2025
Adv. Rama Nath Jha New Delhi	FRNV/LM/099	15.01.2025
Adv. R Narayanan New Delhi	FRNV/LM/100	15.01.2025
Adv. NS Gopa kumar Kochi	FRNV/LM/101	05.02.2025

FRNV GOVERNING BODY

Shri Ashis Panda, Life Member has been inducted as Member, FRNV Governing Body since 27th February 2025. He is an IT professional and FRNV looks forward for his inputs in strengthening its objectives.



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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