

Akram Youth

June 2018 | English

Dada Bhagwan Parivar

Price per Copy - ₹20



indian
culture
वंशी



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Pg. 24 - June 2018.

Year: 6. Issue: 2.

Cont. Issue: 62.

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Printer & Published by

Dimple Mehta on behalf of
Mahavideh Foundation
Simandhar City, Adalaj -
382421. Taluka & Dist - Gandhinagar

Owned by

Mahavideh Foundation
Simandhar City, Adalaj -
382421. Taluka & Dist - Gandhinagar

Published at

Mahavideh Foundation
Simandhar City, Adalaj -
382421. Taluka & Dist - Gandhinagar

Printed at : Amba Offset

B-99, GIDC, Sector-25,
Gandhinagar – 382025.
Gujarat.

Total 24 Pages with Cover page

Subscription

Yearly Subscription

India :200 Rupees

USA: 15 Dollars

UK: 12 Pounds

5 Years Subscription

India : 800 Rupees

USA: 60 Dollars

UK: 50 Pounds

In India, D.D. / M.O. should be drawn
in favour of "Mahavideh Foundation"
payable at Ahmedabad.

Editorial

India is a glorious sub-continent famous for its natural resources, the rich diversity in people and, above all, the deep-rooted spirituality in its population. Dadashri has said that in the near future, people of foreign countries will look to India as the spiritual center of the world and will come here to learn about religion. India will be the epicenter for spiritual and cultural development of the world.

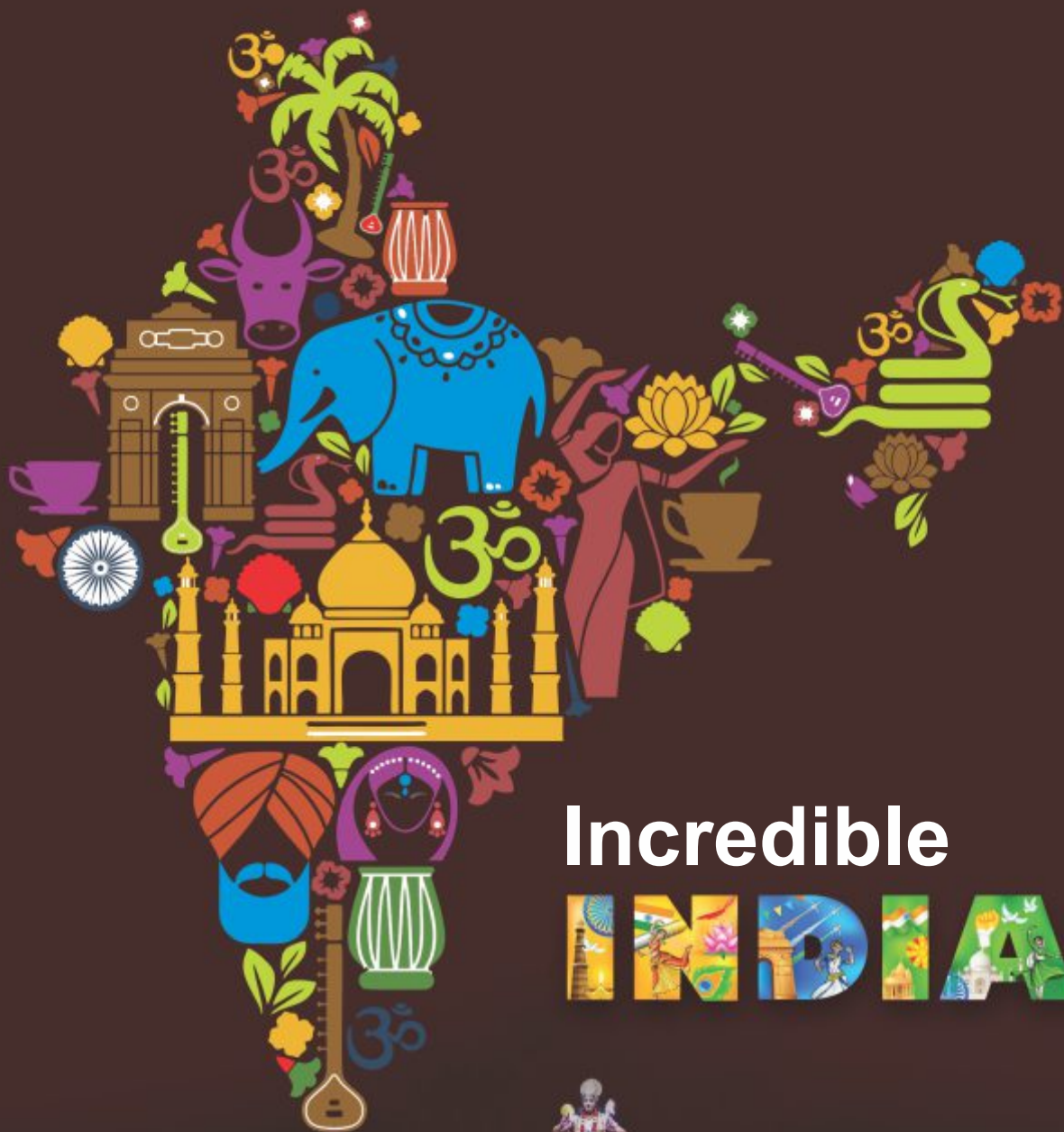
Dadashri also says, western countries are economically and materialistically developed but spiritually underdeveloped. Whereas, India is spiritually fully developed, but economically and materialistically under developed. So, spiritual and cultural development is India's forte.

Birth on the Indian sub-continent is for the spiritually developed. All people born here believe in rebirth, the science of karma and much more. People have a rich heritage of culture and a firm belief in the karmic account.

In this issue, let us understand India's spirituality and Indian culture which draws others to it. Let us take this spiritual dive and understand India better. It is impossible to cover Indian culture in a single issue hence we will have two issues on Indian culture. Enjoy reading...

- Dimple Mehta





Incredible

INDIA



When we say “India,” we feel a sense of togetherness. We don't love India just because it's our mother country. The people are wonderful upholding unique traditions. We are bound by spirituality that is heart-touching. India is a land of Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna, the dream of Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi, it is a garden of temples and mosques. India is a country where people of different castes, creed, religions and cultures speak different languages but still live together. It is the main reason why India is known as a country of “Unity in Diversity”.

India is well known for its spirituality, philosophy, science and technology. People in India from various religious backgrounds like Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jain, Sikh, Buddha and others live in harmony in every corner of the country. It is popular for farming and agriculture that is the backbone of the country. India is famous for its tourism as the beautiful sites of India attract people from all over the world.

It is rich in monuments, tombs, churches, historical as well as architectural places. India hosts exquisite sites like Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, Golden Temple, Qutab Minar, Red Fort, Ooty, Nilgiri, Kashmir, Khajuraho, Ajanta and Ellora caves amongst many other sites known as areas of wonder in the country. It is the country of great rivers, mountains, valleys, lakes and oceans. There are 29 states and 7 union territories in India. People possess different coloured skins, castes, religions and appearances but from within they are all Indians.

Indian people are like different beads joined together by an invisible string. The country's legacy, history and deep-rooted value system binds them as one.

It is a country of great leaders and freedom fighters like Chhatrapati Shivaji, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar; Great scientists like Dr. Jagdish Chandra Bose (Physicist), Dr Homi Bhabha (Father of Indian Nuclear Programme), Dr C.V Raman (Nobel Prize winner for Physics), Dr Narlikar (Astrophysicist); Great reformers like Mother Teresa, Panduranga Shastri Athavale, T N Sheshan, all of whom are Indians. India is a secular state. In the lap of Mother India, flowers from across the world representing many religions blossom. India holds a unique culture that has developed over the centuries.

There is great diversity amongst Indian people. They may speak different languages, worship many gods and yet all have the same spirit of India, running through all parts of the country binding individuals together. It is the country where diversity exists with strong unity and peace.

No matter where you are, but if you are an Indian, then in one corner of your heart, India will always remain alive.

Jai Hind!

Cultural Value



“Good culture simply develops by seeing other's behavior.”

Questioner: What are cultural values? Please explain about these.

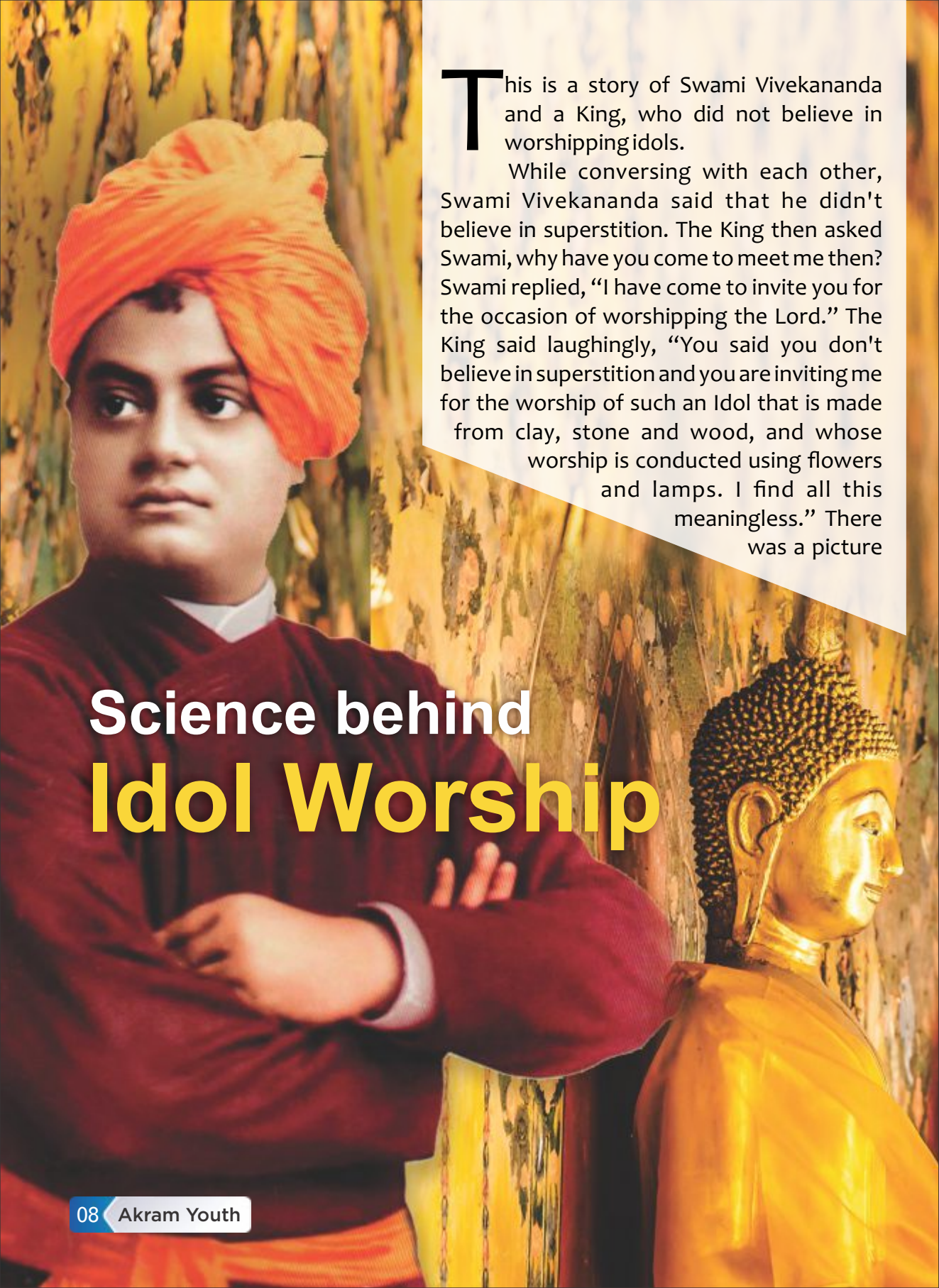
Pujyashree: If you stay in Satsang (the company of self- realized beings) then you would develop useful cultural values and if you keep bad company then you would develop harmful cultural values. In Satsang by just observing, good values evolve. Even a three-year-old child starts imitating chants of 'Asim Jai Jaikar' upon hearing others. No one needs to teach him. In the house if he observes his father killing mosquitoes or bugs, then he will do the same. Thus, cultural values play an important role. The soul learns through observing. Every soul has the potential to learn through observation. Learning is faster through watching than reading or contemplating. That's how one becomes highly cultured in a divine atmosphere and attracts evil thoughts if he gets into the company of bad people.

Questioner: During your travel's through foreign countries, you must have experienced the differences between Foreign and Indian Cultures. So how is Indian culture better?

Pujyashree: Foreign is the land of illusionary attachment and pleasures while India is the land for settling the cycle of cause and effect from life after life. In foreign, one seeks pleasures through their five senses thus becoming weaker

spiritually, losing their tolerance capacity. If we say, 'I don't like this,' the person becomes disturbed and can't find a solution, while here, even when the person is experiencing great difficulties, they will find a solution. There is that story, near the river front there was a tree and five ten miles away there was another tree. The tree near the water front would get water immediately so its roots never went deep and in the meantime a cyclone came and uprooted the tree near the river front while the far away tree stood upright because to source water its roots became long and wide penetrating the earth very deeply making its foundations so strong that the cyclone was not able to affect it. Easily available worldly pleasures weaken a man whereas difficulties and hard struggle bring about penance that makes him stronger here.

Over there with all the facilities of fulfilling their desires, they have learned that my life is in my hands. Even my father can't interfere in my life otherwise I will inform the police. That's why tolerance power doesn't develop. If we ask them to do something even slightly against their Prakruti (the inherent characteristic traits) they can't tolerate. Whereas here we resort to penance when father says, 'I don't like this' and take adjustments going against our own nature to please father. In this way I will break free from my Kashays (inner hidden enemies of anger, pride, deceit and greed) and when my father becomes happy the veils of ignorance over the Self will disappear enabling me to overcome the obstacles for happiness to emerge from within. In foreign country, people remain in Gnan in comfortable situations. But as soon as they land in India, they start feeling suffocation. It's very dirty here. What is this? The train is late by 1 hour, flight is delayed by 2 hours and remain very upset. However, in India we have spiritual science, such a unique scientist like Dadashri and we get this spiritual science that is the top most story. Dada used to say – “Express an intent to die on this land”. For himself he used to say, “Take me to India, I wish to die there.” He also used to say, “after 2005, India will become the center of attraction in the world”. So, now things are beginning to look bright. People have started adopting Indian culture. Now they have reached the stage of becoming vegetarians and vegans. Hunger for spiritual knowledge has increased. They have become ready to accept the truth. Injurious experiences from illusory attachments and pleasures is making them turn back and accept that their culture is coming to an end. Children are going into depression. So, things are straightening up now for better because of such bitter experiences.



This is a story of Swami Vivekananda and a King, who did not believe in worshipping idols.

While conversing with each other, Swami Vivekananda said that he didn't believe in superstition. The King then asked Swami, why have you come to meet me then? Swami replied, "I have come to invite you for the occasion of worshipping the Lord." The King said laughingly, "You said you don't believe in superstition and you are inviting me for the worship of such an Idol that is made from clay, stone and wood, and whose worship is conducted using flowers and lamps. I find all this meaningless." There was a picture

Science behind Idol Worship

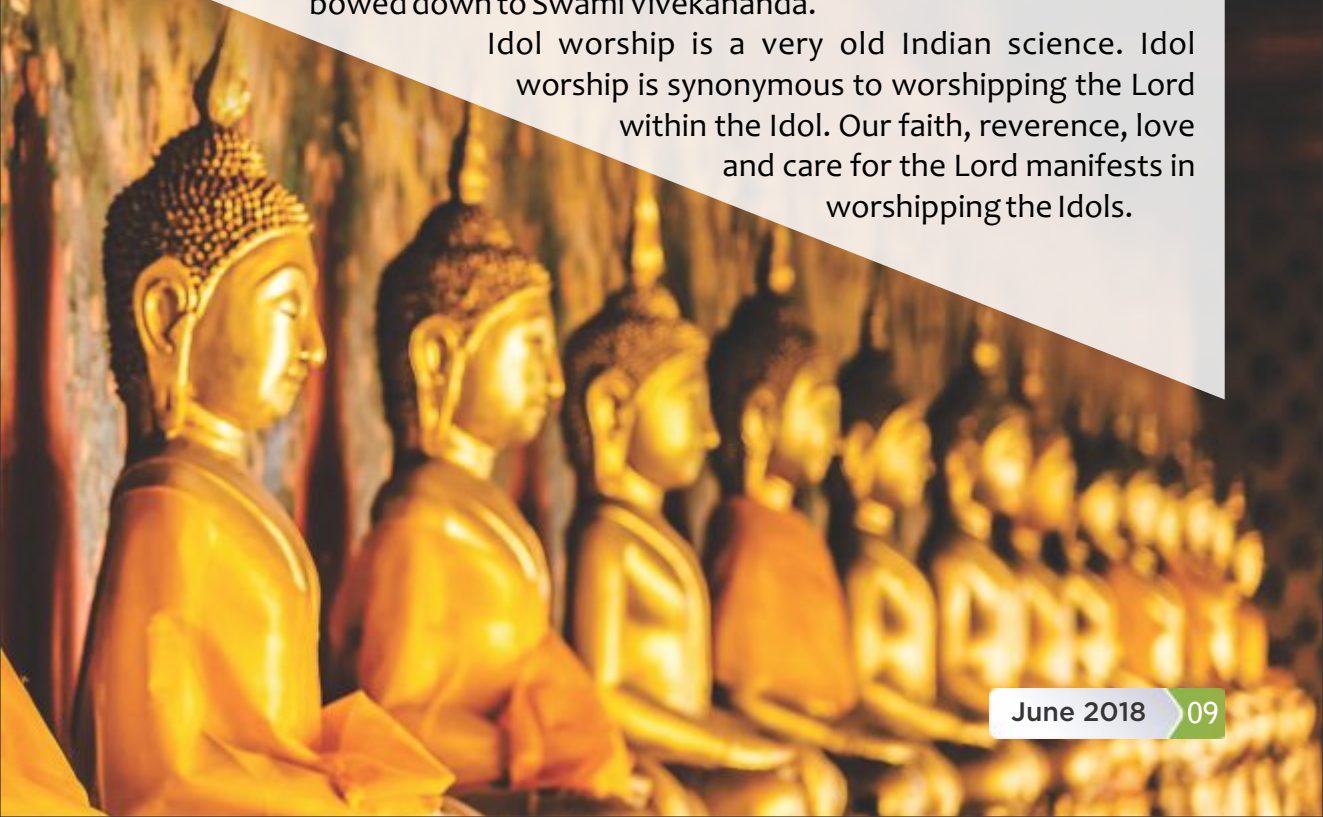
hanging on the wall, Swami asked whose picture was it and the servant replied it was the King's. Swami asked the servant to remove the picture from the wall and hold it in his hands. The servant looked at the King and removed the picture from the wall. Then Swami asked the servant to spit on the picture. Everyone got scared. Swami asked the servant to spit on the picture again and put pressure on him to spit.

The servant replied, "Swami, how can I do this. It is our King's picture. I can't be so disrespectful." Swami replied, "But this picture is made from a piece of paper only, it is not your King or King's flesh, blood, soul or bone. It can't stand up, speak or work like him. Then what is the problem spitting on the picture? The reason why you are refusing to spit is because you see the spirit of your King in the picture and are concerned about being disrespectful towards your King."

Swami said, "You see Maharaj (King), from one viewpoint you are in this picture and from another viewpoint you are not. Your workers and dear friends give the same respect to the picture as they give you. Similarly, Gods devotees pray and worship idols or pictures. Idols evoke faith and belief in their hearts and minds. This enables an individual to concentrate in God. Thus, they are not worshipping an Idol made of stone, wood or clay but through this medium they are worshipping God. Maharaj (King) and every single individual prays and worships the same Supreme Lord that is Pure Soul or 'Shuddhatma'."

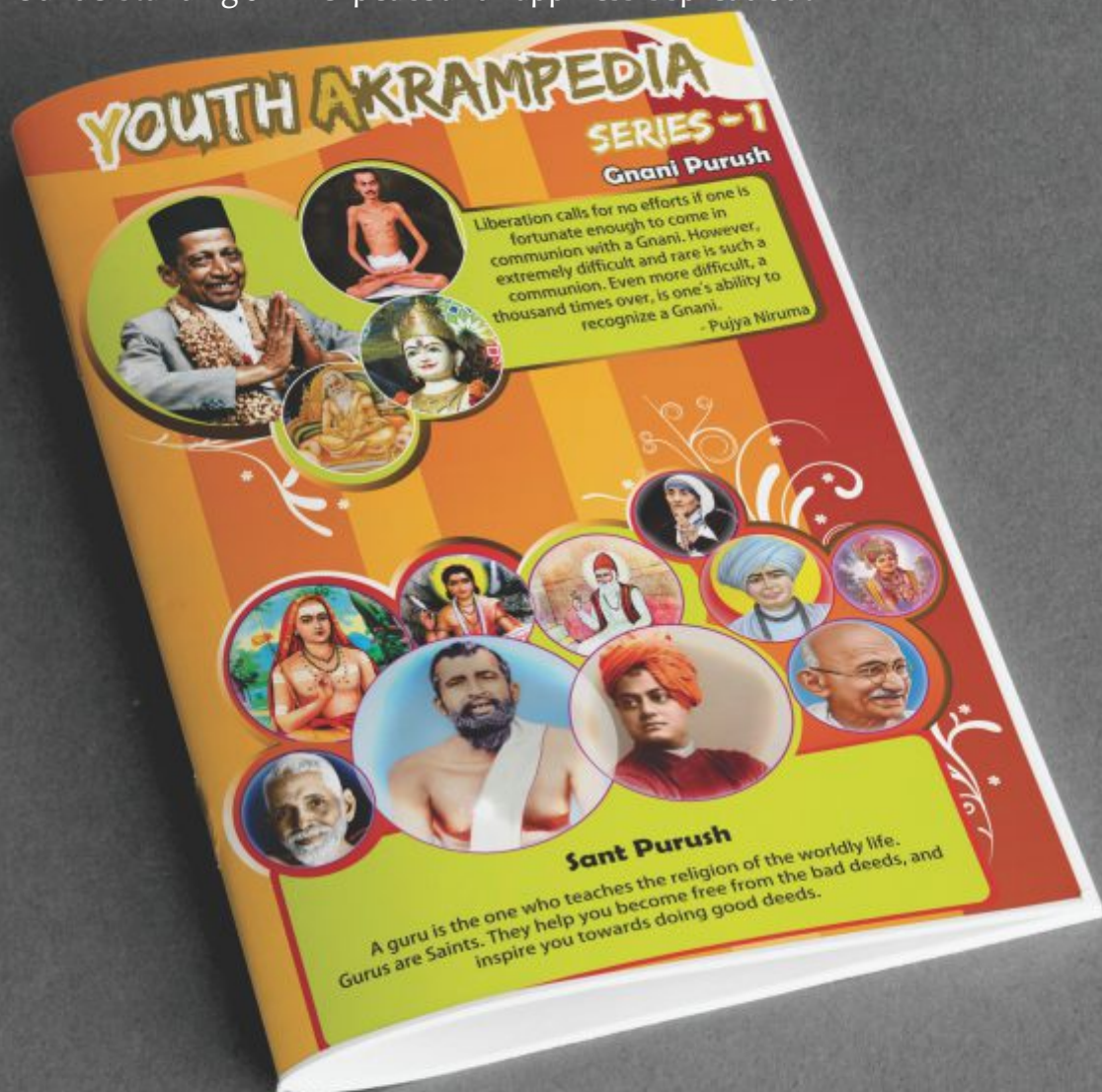
The King said, "Swami, you have opened my vision." He then bowed down to Swami Vivekananda.

Idol worship is a very old Indian science. Idol worship is synonymous to worshipping the Lord within the Idol. Our faith, reverence, love and care for the Lord manifests in worshipping the Idols.



To know more about Sant purush and Gnani purush download the free ebook...

To understand Indian culture and having a better perspective of where we stand in this diverse and colourful culture, it is critical to know more about some crucial pillars of this culture. Those pillars are the 'santpurush's' and 'gnanipurush's' through which the understanding of inner peace and happiness is spread out.



A young man with dark hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a blue polo shirt with a red collar. He is applying a red substance (likely tilak or vermilion) to his forehead with his right hand. In the foreground, a large, ornate silver plate (thali) is visible, containing various items including a small lit lamp, a bowl of red powder, a bowl of white powder, a small bowl of dark liquid, and a central decorative emblem featuring a Swastika and a temple gopuram. The background is plain white.

India is such a country where there is not just one but a variety of exceptionalities. These may be very vast like an intention of being one with others or regarding dignity, pride, respect and honour in relationships. Above this another custom exists in our country that has been going on for many eras and is even practiced today. This is the custom of perceiving a Guest as representative of God (Atithi Devo Bhavah)!!

All Indians have inherited this great custom of hospitality. Here, a guest is perceived as God. Our ancestors used to believe that those people who have guests are very lucky. Hence it is written in our culture, “Atithi Devo Bhavah”.

This welcome is not restricted to one's known guests only but is extended to anyone from the entire world who experience this warmth and welcome when visiting India leaving them amazed and fascinated by Indian hospitality.

An example of this hospitality is expressed through America's past President Barack Obama's words, "You can see the heart of Indians' through their eyes".

Once, Ambalalbai, Jhaverba and Heeraba were having lunch on a hot summer's day. Just then, four guests arrived at the doorstep. They were about to finish, so Jhaverba couldn't help uttering...

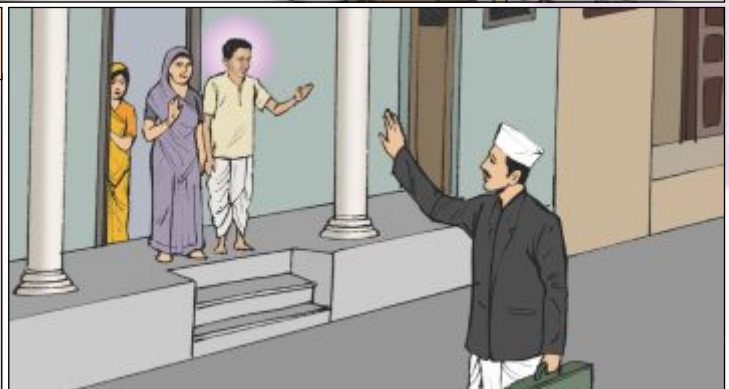


Jhaverba was very noble. However, the thought of preparing lunch all over again for the guests in the middle of the blazing summer heat, just when they had finished having lunch, made her utter such words.

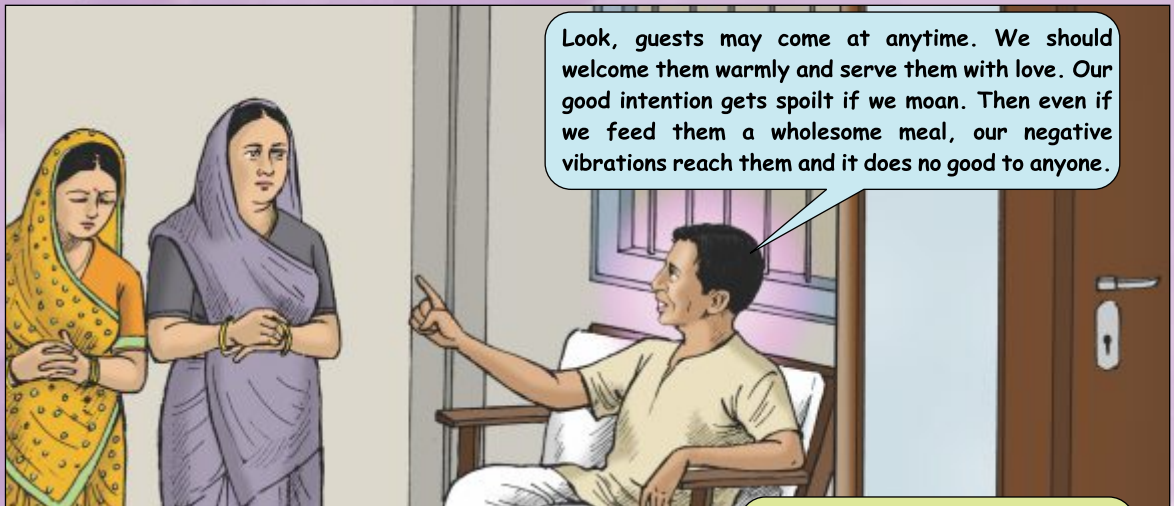
Guests used to come frequently to Ambalalbai's house and he would never let anyone go without having food if it was meal time. On that day also, Heeraba and Jhaverba boiled daal and rice at once and cooked a meal all over again and fed the guests.



Ambalalbai was not pleased with his mother, Jhaverba's remark.



After the guests had left, he called his mother Jhaverba and wife Heeraba and reprimanded them...

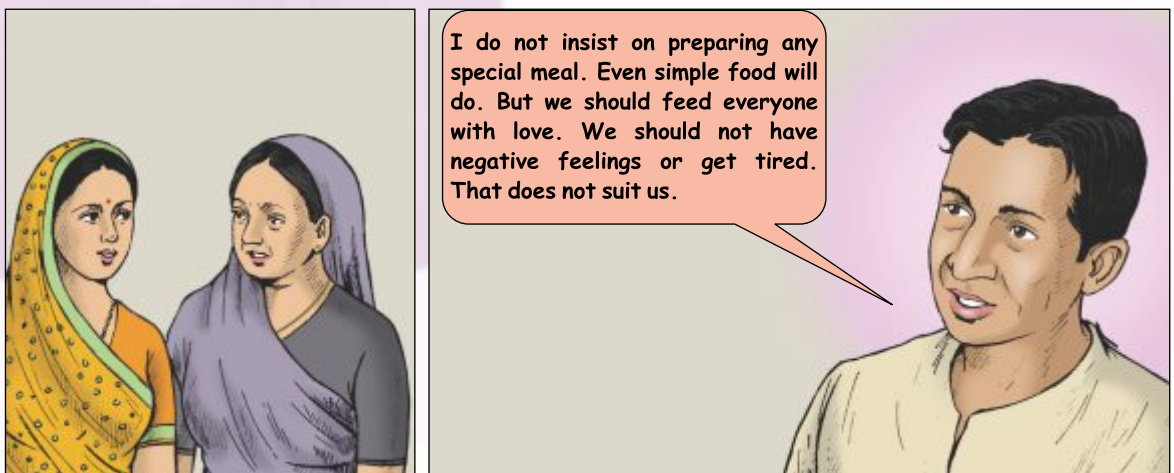


Look, guests may come at anytime. We should welcome them warmly and serve them with love. Our good intention gets spoilt if we moan. Then even if we feed them a wholesome meal, our negative vibrations reach them and it does no good to anyone.



Next time, tell me if you feel weary of cooking. I will cook and feed them. What is the point of feeding them with spoilt intentions? I will renounce this world if anything like this happens again.

Ambalalbhai's personality greatly impacted Jhaverba and Heeraba and their thoughts changed.



I do not insist on preparing any special meal. Even simple food will do. But we should feed everyone with love. We should not have negative feelings or get tired. That does not suit us.

There was immense clarity in Ambalalbhai's heart for fulfilling best 'Aatithya dharma'.

Food Rituals

The rich culture of India teaches us to perform different types of rituals before eating food. Our culture teaches us the importance of food and the necessity to pray before we eat. It is believed that the inner intent of the cook while preparing food affects the person who eats it. The inner intent of the cook creates vibrations around them, which on encountering food, enter it and get stored. Now, the person who digests this food comes under the influence of these vibrations because this energy is stored in the food grains when it is being made by the cook. In simpler words, you can say that food acts as a medium to carry on these vibes. So, our culture teaches us that in praying, we are actually trying to cut out any bad/negative vibes from the food so that we don't ingest them and don't let it harm us. We also pray before eating to thank the Almighty for providing us with food and not making us starve. It is a way of appreciation and also teaches us the importance of food.

DADA'S MAHATMAS: Tri-mantra followed by 7th kalam.

“Dearest Dada Bhagwan! Give me the infinite inner strength to control my excessive temptation towards food. Give me the strength to consume a well-balanced and wholesome food.

CHRISTIANITY: "God is great, God is good. Let us thank Him for our food. By his hands we all are fed. Thank you for our daily bread. Amen."

ISLAM- When meal is ready: “O Allah! Bless the food You have provided us and save us from the punishment of the hellfire.”

While starting to eat: "In the name of God and with God's blessing"

After eating: Praise to Allah who has fed us and given us drink, and made us Muslims.

HINDUISM: 'The act of offering is God (Brahma), the oblation is God, By God it is offered into the fire of God, God is that which is to be attained by him who sees God in all.'

BUDDHISM: To the teacher above all teachers, the Precious Buddha.

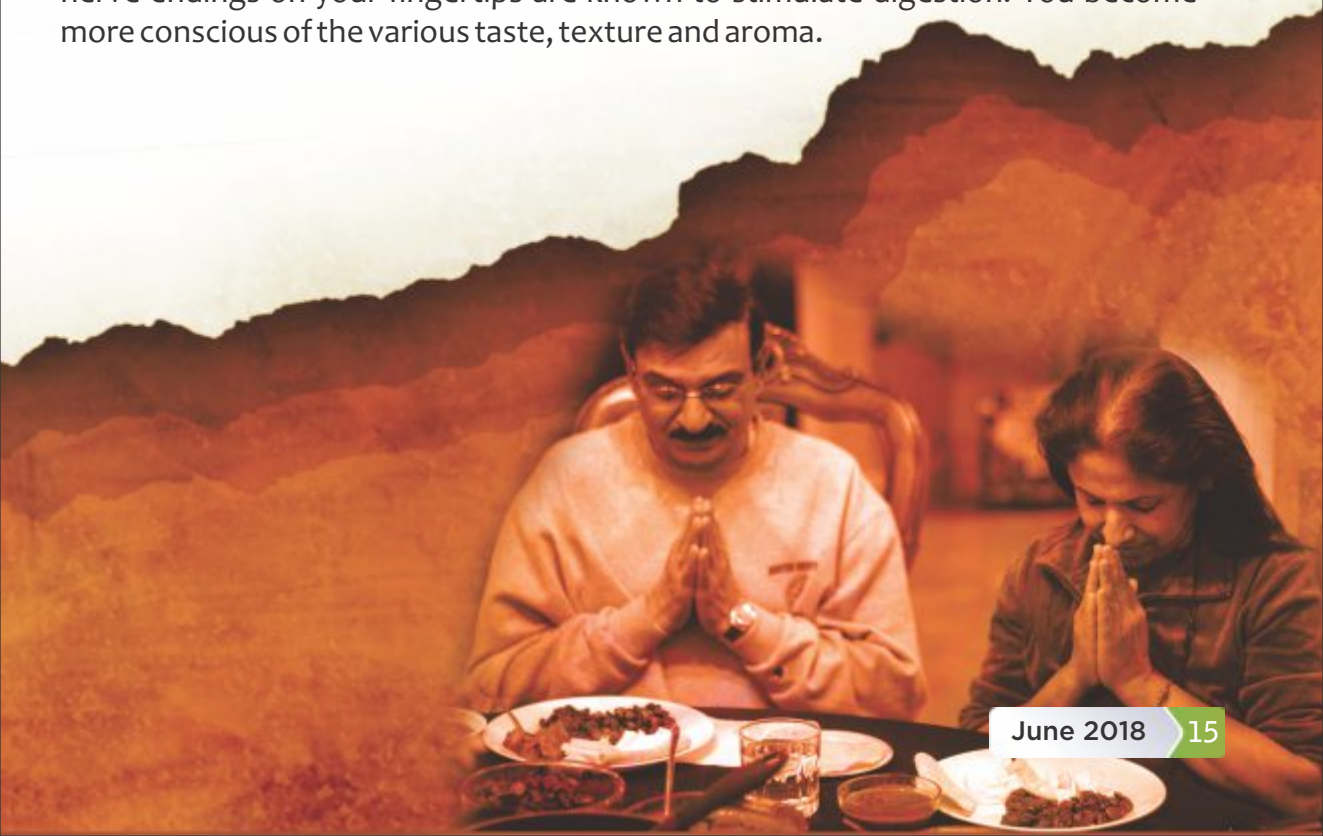
To the protection above all protections, the Precious Dharma.

To the guides above all guides, the Precious Sangha.

I offer this to the three jewels, the rare and supreme objects of refuge.

As you can see that different religions have different rituals and traditions they follow. All of these have some moral value or benefit and is the reason why it is continued today.

Eating with our hands has its roots in Ayurveda. According to Vedic wisdom, the hands are the most precious organs of action. One of the Ayurvedic texts reveals, every finger is an extension of the five elements. Through the thumb comes space, with the forefinger comes air, the middle finger is fire, the ring finger is water and the little finger represents earth. Eating with your fingers stimulates these five elements and helps in bringing forth digestive juices in the stomach. The nerve endings on your fingertips are known to stimulate digestion. You become more conscious of the various taste, texture and aroma.



वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम्

“Vasudha” means “Earth”

“Iva” means “is”

“Kutumbakam” means “family”

“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” is a Sanskrit phrase and means that the whole world is one family.

According to the Maha Upanishads, the whole humanity is made of one life energy. This is an integral part of Hindu philosophy. All worldwide relationships are captured within this web.

The food that we get on the table, does it not come from earth that is influenced by planets millions of miles away providing light and energy to our plants while nourishing our eco-system? Don't they facilitate our survival?

We are neither dependent nor independent beings. We are all inter-dependent. The whole universe is inter-woven and inter-twined. Quantum physics also states that all existence is an unbroken wholeness.

In ancient India, sages from Vedanta and Upanishads worked upon uniting the people of the world with the common thread of mutual love, trust and friendship. They called it “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”.

“All the differences in the world are in varying degrees but not because of inequality amongst races or their social status, as everyone thrives upon one life energy.” – Swami Vivekananda

At an event organised by Art of Living, Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi said that Indian Culture was very rich. It provides direction from 'I am everything (Brahma)' to 'the whole world is one family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam)'.

Although all world religions preach non-violence, peace and harmony amongst people; live and let live philosophies; it is an Indian tradition to uphold plants, animals and natural resources in respectful and worshipful state.

Whatever is inside our body, it is also present on the outside. The sun is like the main source of energy. Moon is like the mind, water is like blood and heart content, while rivers are like the blood vessels. The earth, sun, moon or whatever is in the solar system is also present in our bodies. In this way our scriptures have depicted that the 'whole world is one family'. And we originate from same elements.

krutulobakal



Now if we relate this to what Dadashri said:

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

All these talks are only about you. This is not my talk. And you feel that I am separate, but I do not feel that you are separate, because I see everybody as the Self, and I 'see' verily as my own Self. Whether you speak wrong or right even then I do not feel separation because I see as a 'one family'. And you do not consider your family as a family. I am sitting here leaving only my wife

Hiraba, so this whole big family became mine, otherwise what would have happened if I was just sitting taking care of only her family? The whole world became my family.

Questioner: But Dada, now after meeting you, I experience so much oneness with everybody else too.

Dadashri: That is not it. There is no give and take there. The oneness is with the Self only. And with others there is prem (love). It feels like one family only. In a way you will feel, what is the meaning of such oneness? It is the relation of the Self, relation with the Self, not the relation with pudgal (the non-Self complex of thoughts, speech and acts). The relation with the Self is oneness. Why do we have oneness? It is because of the relation of the Self.

Questioner: Now I can experience like that with mahatmas here. I experience continuously...

Dadashri: You will experience that! You will definitely experience with mahatmas. Relatives will even throw a taunt at you, these people will not do that, and on the contrary they will help you for sure.



The most extra-ordinary quality of Indian culture is 'to seek and give forgiveness' and this is not a concept emerging in present times but has been in vogue since thousands of years.

If you look back at India's history over thousands of years, you will find that every leading personality possessed this quality. Be it Lord Ram, Shri Krishna or Lord Mahavira. Let's look at Lord Mahavira's case where a shepherd used a cane stick, sharpened the ends and forced them into Lord Mahavira's ears. Despite suffering excruciating pain, Lord Mahavir naturally forgave the shepherd and didn't carry any negative feelings towards him. Similarly, Lord Krishna also forgave the archer who shot an arrow at him.

The Culture of Forgiveness



It is not easy to forgive. When a person is angry or is punishing someone, the person being punished needs to be persuaded to change. However, when seeking forgiveness, one's own ego needs to be persuaded to change and a person who can do this is indeed a brave one. A weak person cannot overcome his anger. Perhaps that's the reason why our scriptures quote, "Kshma Virasya Bhusanam," meaning 'forgiveness is an ornament of a brave person'. Using physical strength, a person's body can be won over. However, a person's mind cannot be won over by being angry or giving punishment. Only forgiveness is such a quality that it compels the other person to join your side with his heart and mind. The best way to deal with an enemy is to make them a friend.

Really, this is worth experiencing. Even you try and forgive someone for their mistake. You will experience a sense of relief and freedom. The forgiven person will also be inspired to rectify their mistake. Their ego will not be hurt and that's why Puja Niruma often used to say, "a person is valuable, not material things."

So, we have talked about giving forgiveness. Asking for forgiveness is even more difficult than giving forgiveness. The reason is, when asking for forgiveness we must overcome the ego, accept our mistake and then ask for forgiveness. Let's see an illustration.

When Lord Ram defeated Vali in battle, Vali complained about illegitimate means used to kill him. However, when Lord Ram explains, Vali understands his mistake and asks for forgiveness immediately. Not only that, Vali asks his son Angad to follow the principles of Lord Ram and become his disciple. Now in such a situation, will anyone accept to serve the person who has killed his own father? Isn't this just staggering? Yes, Indian cultural heritage is full of such incidents that display extraordinary values.

While reading such tales about forgiveness, be it giving or seeking, you might be thinking that those people cited in these cultural illustrations were great souls or super human type. Such incidents may never occur in my life. Then why bother with such stories? But we can apply these high standards in our daily life when encountering small incidents. If a friend makes a mistake you can say, "Hey buddy, no problems, such things do happen, no big deal". At times, when we commit a mistake, we can say to our parents, "Sorry Mom, sorry Dad, I will be more careful next time". These small instances can bring about a big change in your life.

We are really very lucky to be blessed with an Indian culture that enables us to observe qualities like forgiveness, generosity and compassion. Let us understand this ancient culture closely and adopt its values in our life as much as possible.

Power of humbleness

This is a story during the times when Raja Shrenik was ruling Rajgruhi Nagari where Chandal lived. His wife was pregnant, and she desired to eat mangoes. Hence, she asked her husband to get her some.

Chandal said, "This is not the season for mangoes. So, I can't do anything. Otherwise, no matter how high the mangoes are, I would get them using my special technique (vidya) and fulfill your desire."

His wife said, "In the queen's garden there is a mango tree that gives mangoes throughout the year. There might be some juicy ones on it now. Please go there and get me some."

To fulfill his wife's desire, Chandal secretly went to the mango tree in the garden and made the tree bend by chanting some mantras and took the mangoes. He then chanted other mantras and straightened the tree as it was. When he came home, his wife was very happy. Using his technique, Chandal kept on getting the mangoes to fulfill his wife's desire.

One day, the gardener while walking looked at the mango tree and realised that mangoes were being stolen and immediately informed Raja Shrenik.

Upon Raja Shrenik's instruction, Abhay Kumar a very intelligent minister, caught Chandal using his wit. Chandal pleaded, "Please forgive my crime."

Abhay Kumar asked, "Tell me, with so many people in this garden, how did you manage to climb the tree and take the mangoes?"

Shivering Chandal replied, "I know a technique with whose help I take these mangoes. Please forgive me."

Abhay Kumar said, "I cannot forgive you. But if you teach this technique to Raja Shrenik, then because of this obligation, I can ask him to forgive you for this crime!"

Chandal agreed to it. Abhay Kumar narrated the whole incident to Raja Shrenik who then agreed to the whole proposal.

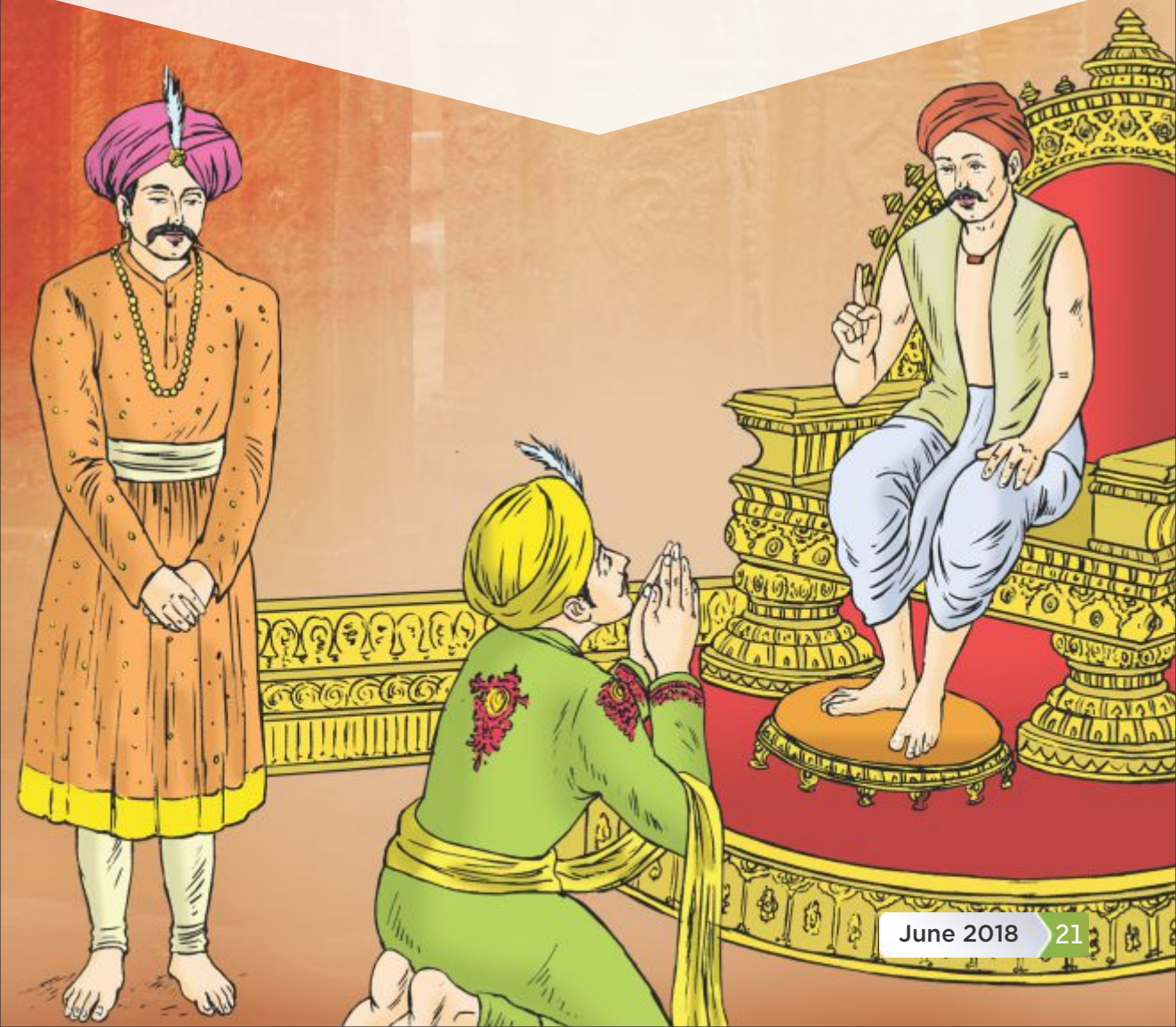
Chandal was brought to the King's courtyard. Raja Shrenik sat on the throne and Chandal stood right in front of him. Chandal standing nervously in

front of Raja Shrenik started teaching the technique, but the King could not grasp it.

Abhay Kumar stood up quickly and said, “Dear King, If, you want to learn this technique you will have to come and stand where Chandal is standing and give him the throne to sit.”

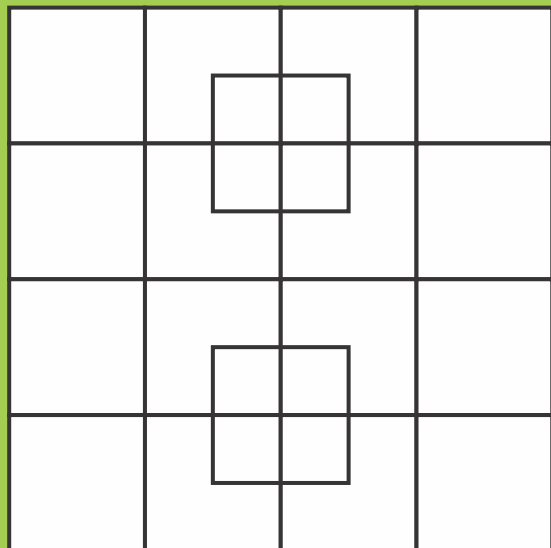
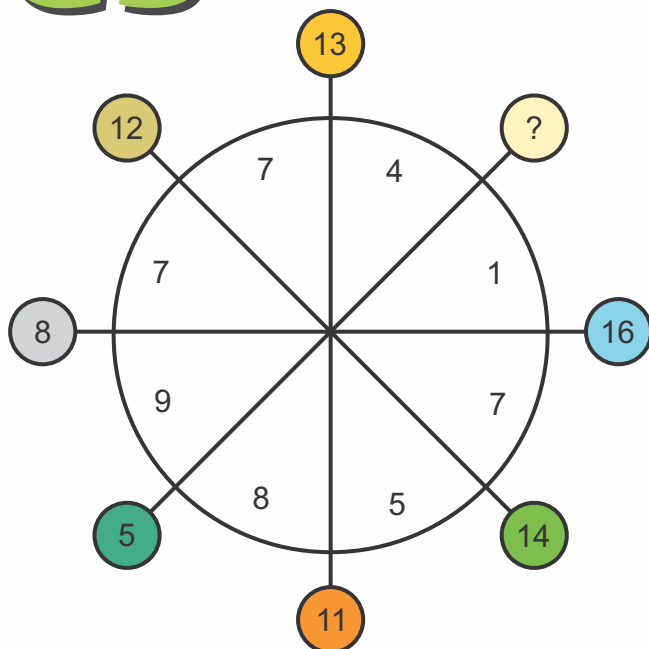
The King did this for the sake of learning the technique and in no time, he learnt it too.

Did you see friends, to learn a technique, even a King had to display modesty towards Chandal? Therefore, knowledge can only be acquired by being humble. Even God has stated that humility is the root of any religion. In India, from childhood beautiful manners are taught like showing respect towards mum, dad and teachers. To bow down to them and take their blessings. Speak respectfully with them. Never to forget their benevolence. Follow their instructions etc.



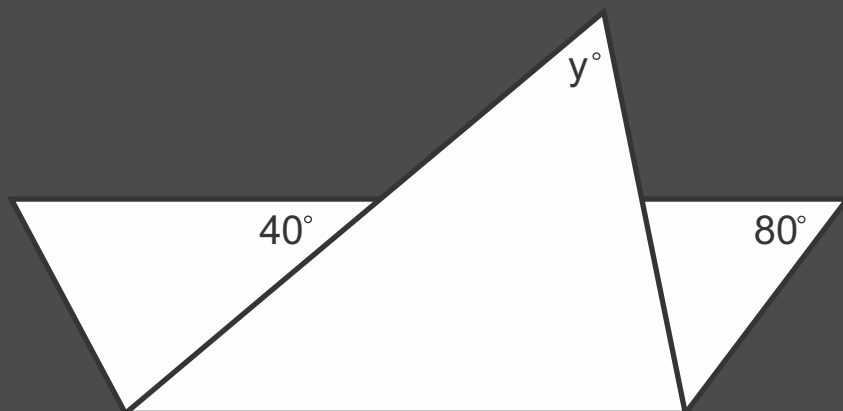
Puzzles

Which number should replace the question mark in the circle below?



How many
squares are there
in the following figure

In the picture below,
can you identify the value of angle 'y'?



Can you find the
CORRECT NUMBER
which should replace the
question mark
in the picture below?

4			
6	2		
9	?	1	
19	10	7	6

June 2018.
Year: 6. Issue: 2.
Cont. Issue: 62.

Akram Youth

Date of Publication: 22nd of Every Month
RNI No. GUJENG/2013/53112
Reg. No. G-GNR-311/2017-2019
Valid up to 31-12-2019
LPWP Licence No . PMG/HQ/080/2018
Valid up to 31-12-2019
Posted at Adalaj Post Office
on 22th of every month



Send your suggestions and feedback at: akramyouth@dadabhagwan.org

Printed and Published by Dimple Mehta on behalf of Mahavideh Foundation-Owner.

Printed at : Amba Offset, B-99, GIDC, Sector-25, Gandhinagar – 382025.

