

Vol 51: 2*December, 2018***In this issue...**

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Festive Greetings

The months of November and December saw the celebration of the Festival of Lights - Deepavali and Christmas.

The Dharma Editorial team wishes all our Hindu and Christian readers a very happy, safe, peaceful and fulfilling time with your family and friends .

A very Happy New Year 2019

DHARMA

*Rise Dharma, like the sun to end communal strife.
Unite all in ONE and to give us New Life
- Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati*



INTRODUCTION OF RELIGIOUS TEACHING IN SCHOOLS

Despite the current trends of scientific and technological progress and rising standards of materialistic living that we see developing around us, man has not yet learnt to live together in real understanding and genuine friendship. Doubt, prejudice, fear and suspicion, all the more, unfortunately reign supreme. It is time we all make a sincere effort to bring about an inner change in us, for the better, as we are closer today to one another than ever before.

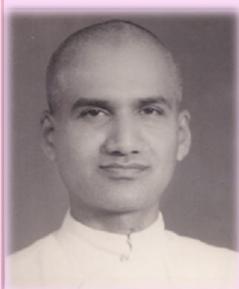
Introspection on the several problems confronting us today is a step made in the right direction. This is to be done individually and collectively by people of various races and religions getting together more often, not only to make merry, but to give more serious thought to the problems confronting us today especially the deficiency in spiritual upliftment and spiritual consciousness.

Centuries ago certain advanced nations used to have enlightened spiritual leaders, who were usually men of deep introspection and wisdom advising the kings as to the steps they should take in order to govern the nations in peace and prosperity. Today, we have politicians taking their place. Much is expected from politicians in whose hands our destinies lie. The idea of religious leaders serving as observers and advisers at Ministerial levels may not be such a bad idea today.

The next point is that as our future lies in our younger generation - nay, the future of the world lies in them. This idea of inter-religious and inter-racial harmony, co-operation and service must be sown in schools.

Continued on page 04

Cover page photo: Significant decorations found in the homes of Hindus and Christians celebrating Deepavali and Christmas.



From The Founder

‘True Education should train us to recognise the ‘ideal of unity in variety’ in all the different stages and dealings of our social life’.

- Dr Swami Satyananda, JP, 1958



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THE GREAT INVOCATION

*From the point of Light
within the Mind of God Let
light stream forth into the
minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.*

*From the point of Love
within the Heart of God Let
love stream forth into the
hearts of men.
Let Love descend onto
Earth.*

*From the centre where the
Will of God is known Let
purpose guide the little
wills of men -
The purpose which the
Masters know and serve.*

*From the centre which we
call the race of men Let the
Plan of Love and Light
work out
And may it seal the door
where evil dwells.*

*Let Light and Love and
Power restore the Plan on
Earth.*

- Adopted from Maitreya

**MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON
EARTH**



EDITOR'S NOTE

There's a new mood, a new reality that's come with change in government. There was racism and religious issues that appeared to take centre stage in alarming fashion, not just in the run-up to the polls, but in the years following the 2013 General Election, when the previous Barisan government lost its two-thirds majority.

But all that is past with Pakatan Harapan taking over, reversing the alarming trend. The people spoke. They wanted change and the single-minded way they went about it produced the desired result.

Governing is never easy, especially in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious setting that is Malaysia. We had seen better days and knew that setbacks to what made the country a beacon of harmonious co-existence had to be countered with return to good governance and restoration of the fundamentals that worked beautifully before.

Religion becomes sensitive when the norms of respect and tolerance are trampled by those desperately clinging to power. Race and religions are dangerous games to play. All is lost when individuals singly or collectively chose to play with fire for no rhyme or reason, other than destruction to serve some dastardly motive.

It certainly doesn't help when the Muslim cleric Zakir Naik espoused Islam by attacking other faiths and seems to get away with it. But now we have the Minister in charge of Islamic affairs, Mujahid Yusof Rawa, weighing in against him. Putting other faiths down is a big no-no and him saying it makes for a collective sigh of relief.

The Minister wants more intellectual and composed means of Islamic propagation that stands it in good stead. He feels, and rightly so, he is obliged to defend the rights of other religions. Compassion is a cornerstone of all religions and this isn't promoted by insulting other religions.

The fact the cleric has been given permanent residence in this country makes it even more imperative that he abides by the rules of his now adopted country. He obviously needs monitoring and the Minister is morally and even duty bound to see it's done.

The country now has the opportunity to push the reset button. Fanaticism has no place in this country. Open mindedness must prevail and, if and when issues do arise, they ought to be discussed in a frank and rational manner that requires conscious effort, as matters of faith tend to be emotive.

Rational solutions require rational minds and the Minister is showing he's willing to say and do the right things. Kudos to him!



INTRODUCTION OF RELIGIOUS TEACHING IN SCHOOLS

Continued from front cover page

To evolve a system of multi- religious education as well as a syllabus to educate children in the fundamental religious and spiritual values, than merely teaching religion in segregated compartments is something that the MIRO (Malaysia Inter-Faith Organisation - now IN-SaF) can do within its aims and objects.

It must be remembered that the age of blind acceptance is fast fading away, and this is an intellectual era, where things that do not appeal to the intellect often prove a failure amongst modern youth. Therefore, an intellectual or scientific approach to the knowledge and practice of religion is needed. □

To be continued.....

- Mother A Mangalam

Children's Corner

Sand and Stone

John and James were best friends. They fought for many reasons, but never gave up their friendship. They went in search of a job and visited many places to earn some money. They passed through various places, villages, towns, forests, and beaches. They supported each other throughout their journey.



One day, they reached a desert. They had very little food and water. John said that they should save the food and water for later use. However, James disagreed. He wanted to drink water, as he was very thirsty.

They quarrelled with each other for water. John slapped James, and they walked in silence. James wrote on the sand, "My best friend slapped me!"

Finally, they reached an oasis. They were very happy, and had a lot of fun in the water. While they both were bathing, James was a bit careless and began to drown. John rushed to him and saved him.

James hugged his friend and thanked him. They had a little nap and decided to leave the place. When they were about to leave, James carved something on the rock. It was "My best friend saved my life!"

He said to John, "When you slapped me, I recorded it on sand. The wind would have blown it away by now. However, when you saved my life, I recorded it on rock. It will remain there forever." □

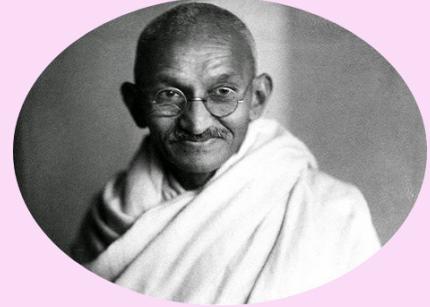
Moral: We have to forget the bad things and cherish the good things done to us.

- Web Source

MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE DIALOGAL METHOD

(On the occasion on the 149th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi declared as 'United Nations International Day of Non-Violence')

Few men have succeeded in living and teaching the dialogal method as Mahatma Gandhi. He publicly professed that he was a loyal Hindu; yet he was seeking eagerly and cherishing warmly the truth-value-content of other religions in his passionate desire for possessing THE TRUTH.



To the question by a Christian whether his religion was the synthesis of all religions he answered:

‘Yes. But I would call that synthesis Hinduism and for you that synthesis will be Christianity. If I did not do so, you will always be patronizing me, as many Christians do now, saying, "How nice it would be if Gandhiji accepted Christianity!" And Muslims would be doing the same . . .

He took seriously into account the differences among various religions. He says:

‘For me the different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden, or they are branches of the same majestic tree. Therefore they are equally true, though being received and interpreted through human instruments equally imperfect.’

He advises us to study the sacred books of different religions from the stand-point of the respective religions.

"And I believe that if only we could all of us read the scriptures of different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of those faiths we should find that they were at bottom all one and were all helpful to one another."

Gandhiji's love and respect for other religions spring from his deep commitment to truth and non-violence and to his deeply rooted conviction that mankind as a whole makes up one family in the spirit of the ancient Sanskrit saying "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*".

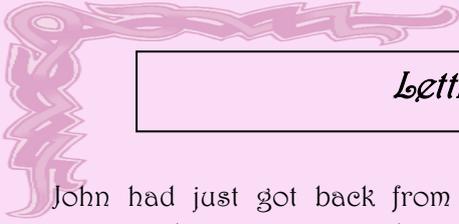
He said in the spirit of a Prophet:

But I can see clearly the time is coming when people belonging to different faiths will have the same regard for other faiths that they have for their own . . . We are all children of one and the same God and, therefore, absolutely equal.

**- Dr Ishanand, 'Religions and the methods of approaching them',
Krsna and Christ**

"The various religions are like different roads converging on the same point. What difference does it make if we follow different routes, provided we arrive at the same destination?"

- Mahatma Gandhi



Letting Go: Doing it with a Smile!

John had just got back from his football game and was resting in the couch in front of the TV when he was asked by his mother to put the garbage out as that is his duty in the house. John grumbles, frowns and complains that he can't even get a breather in his own home; Chitra goes to office and her boss asks her to retype the document they had worked on all week with yet more corrections. Chitra is frustrated that she had already worked on it for five days and the boss was nit-picking and being pedantic, although that is her duty as the boss's secretary; Leo had a bad day in office and was driving back home when the traffic jam was causing delays. His already irritable state was triggering him to honk the horn incessantly although the traffic was clearly not moving any faster; Chandran is back home on his vacation from his outstation work after a month and the moment he arrives, his wife Prema has a list of things to be fixed in the house. Chandran shouts back in anger and scolds Prema as to why she has no empathy for him and blurts out he was more peaceful at work than to be returning home to only do chores; Cynthia had just finished cooking dinner and was about to take a shower when Jennifer, her mother, who is having a chest cold requests Cynthia to go out and get her some cough syrup. Despite knowing her mother is in discomfort and that there is no one else to help her, she frowns and yells out as to why Jennifer did not tell in advance so that she could have bought the medicines when she had gone earlier to buy groceries.....

These are not uncommon scenarios and every household goes through these situations almost on a daily basis. Invariably in all these circumstances, the "jobs" that were

to be done, had to be done and could not be avoided and in many instances not even delayed. Yet we are irritated and feel unappreciated for. We feel that our state of mind is not appreciated or understood by the other. This sense of "unloved" can easily flare up into a situation where the son leaves home, staff quitting the job, couples divorcing, irritated driver causing an accident or the sick mother becoming serious. So, why is it that we go through these frustrations? Why is it that there is a universal sense of "lack of understanding"? Why do we go through the sense of "why me"?

From what I have observed, these feelings are universal - despite country, colour, age, race, religion, caste or creed. Whether there are many individuals involved or just the self, the feeling of frustration mostly stems from thinking that "I am the victim", "I am being targeted" and that someone other than me is inflicting the pain on me unjustly.

There are two aspects involved in this situation; one is the hurt felt by the "victim" and the other is the hurt inflicted by the apparent "perpetrator". First, let us look at the hurt of victim. Different people hurt differently. Let's say there is a delay in the waiter serving you at a restaurant. One person will react by calling the waiter and explaining that he is in a hurry to keep an appointment and request faster service without getting worked up. Another will be patient and smile and enjoy the atmosphere of the restaurant and perhaps even start up a light conversation with the person seated on the next table. Another more impatient person may get agitated that he is not being attended to and start getting abusive and change the entire atmosphere of the restaurant affecting not only himself but also the others. And yet

another may feel so affected that he will start blaming himself for the delay in service and feel that he is not worthy of respect and it is his fate that he is neglected. These are all possible reactions to the same circumstance. It is the individual who hurts differently and reacts differently.

If we can understand that how we react to a hurtful situation is entirely determined by ourselves and our outlook, and not by another, life becomes a lot more easier to handle. We also are then in a position to choose to either accept the chore with self dignity or pity. Self dignity is to accept the situation as something that may be beyond our control, but be willing to accept and be ready to handle it with poise and determination - to bring the situation within our control. We can then confront the situation with a smile and not with a frown.

When we have agreed to certain conditions or accepted certain "norms" or negotiated a role, the actions associated become our responsibility. In such a situation, it is better to carry that out with the least of fuss and enjoy it as a duty of choice. Once we know that a particular work is our responsibility, we might as well accept that as our choice and do it with a smile. This makes everyone happy.

Now let's look at the perpetrator. Whether the perpetrator is ourselves or another, we do things according to an understanding that is within our reach at that particular point in time. Often people don't intend to cause harm or inflict pain on another person (unless of course the person has a pathological problem to cause harm on others). A boy striking a football does not intend to break the window of the neighbour. It so happens that the trajectory intended by the boy was miscalculated and the ball went wayward and struck the window, breaking it. If we can accept the rationality in the sce-

nario, we can deal with the boy without getting overly sensitive and advise him to play carefully in another location, least likely to cause damage. Even murders, if not premeditated, happen at the spur of the moment when emotional stress is so high that all rational thinking goes out. The perpetrator is often remorseful for the disastrous reaction and begins self incriminating for the rest of his life.

However much a person is in self denial, once a wrong is committed, the act has a profound impact on the person committing the act, as much as that on the victim. The huge number of cases of people affected by post traumatic syndrome around the world, is reported amongst soldiers who have caused grievous harm on innocent victims during conflict. Although the act may have been committed in a trigger happy mindless moment, the impact remains and causes extreme trauma to that person. In this case the perpetrator becomes the victim of his own act.

In this whole discussion on victims and perpetrators, there remains a fundamental question of what is right and what is wrong. **How does one know what is the right thing to do and what should not be done? Does right and wrong change according to circumstances? Does it change according to culture and traditions? Is it determined by religious or legislative codes?**

Human beings inherently know what is right and what is wrong. Regardless of culture, tradition or country, humans have known to naturally discern right from wrong. Every human being knows what they don't like to experience. No one likes to be cheated or hurt or treated unfairly. If I don't like someone else doing something bad to me, I also know that the same should not be inflicted on another.

- Continued on page 16

WOMEN, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY - WRATH OR BLISS

Continued from previous issue.....

Mental Pollution

I don't have to speak much about mental pollution which is rampant in society. The misuse of all these electronic devices portraying vulgarity, violence, viciousness through its visual presentations and also those holding responsible positions in the family and offices, who are far from being role-models have done enough damage to humankind. How do we set the clock back? Is this possible? It behooves on the users of such electronic devices to be sensible in the use of them. Humankind needs to fortify itself against such negative influences. How do we fortify ourselves?

Spiritual Upliftment

The only way, as I can see it, is through the spirit or soul which lies enmeshed in dirt and filth. We have to free it. How?

It is here that religious or spiritual values come in. We need to spend some time in the early morning hours before dawn listening to God's message — listening to what He has to say so that we can sail through the day finding peaceful solutions to our problems and also be guided by our intuition. Animals are guided by their instinct, but human beings will have to develop their intuition. Can each one of us do that? Unfortunately, we Malaysians have the habit of sleeping late and getting up late. Even corporate bodies encourage that. How are we going to remedy this irresistible longing to remain in bed till noon on a non-working day?

Women's Role

Woman is the queen of the home. Nobody can dispute that. It is a great responsibility. And for the home to be at peace she must radiate thoughts of peace. She needs to set an example to her chil-

dren for the maintenance of peace and progress. It is her guidance that is most required in the home.

Unfortunately the work-a-day life of a person today is so complicated a thing that it is carried deep into the night under the name of social contacts and business contacts. Sometimes the wife has to play a part in her husband's social cum business



life. The words 'home' and 'homeliness' have become a myth today - all because of the hectic speed with which life moves. We cannot ask 'why this speed today?'. It has become a part of life, which pattern has been created by man himself because of his unquenchable desires. Yet, amidst all this rush of life the woman in the home has to keep her composure.

No doubt, a hectic life like this will not and does not satisfy a woman's natural craving for a happy home unit. Dissatisfaction builds up in the woman over a period and explodes into a quandary of hot words which disturbs man's equilibrium. This, disturbance, in turn, extends to his place of work. Result - a confused man, confused in his work, confused in his relationship with other men and confused in his decisions. What will happen if his office happens to be a war-office with him at its helm? What will happen if he is at the head of a government in whose hand

the fate of the people rests?

This is the reason why a woman needs religion all the more to maintain that calm composure at all times, so that she can radiate a peace amidst all the turmoil with a perfect understanding of human nature that is born out of leading a meditative life. From the spiritual depths of inner silence she will develop the capacity and wisdom to handle matters without giving in to nervous outbursts.

Marriage

Today, talking of marriage, it means not only the meeting of two sexes, but of two races, two cultures and two religions. This sort of marital union is happening all over the world. There are bound to be conflicting values. But who thinks about values when one is in love. 'Love is blind' they say, but love also has to be blind to the faults of each other which is not the case. It is here that scriptural texts help not only in theory but in the practice of those words of wisdom contained therein -

There is an age-old adage which says "A family that prays together stays together" Perhaps a resolution based on this adage could be added to the vows made during a marriage contract! Is this a practical suggestion?

To make a marriage succeed it may

need the co-operation of the government, the private sector, the educationist, the politicians, the economists utilising their operational systems and values. The tempo in life has to be made moderate by not giving vent to erratic desires at all levels.

In conclusion, I leave you to meditate

upon the word 'sacrifice', the missing factor in marriages in general - sacrifice of money, food, time, energy - because you would agree that sacrifice is the best expression of true love. I conclude here with two verses from the Bhagavad Gita which says:-

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the best expression of true love. I conclude here with two verses from the Bhagavad Gita which says:-

Chapter 4 Verse 20-21

"Having abandoned attachment to the fruit of works, ever content, without any kind of dependence, he does nothing though he is ever engaged in work"

"Having no desires, with his heart and self under control, giving up all possessions, performing action by the body alone, he commits no wrong" □

*- Speech by Mother A Mangalam
Organised by Wanita Pertubuhan Jamaah
Islah Malaysia (JIM) on 4th December
2004*

Neither man nor woman is perfect or complete without the other. Thus, no marriage or family, no ward or stake is likely to reach its full potential until husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, men and women work together in unity of purpose, respecting and relying upon each other's strengths.

- Sheri L. Dew

THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION

From the Founder of the Pure Life Society, Dr Swami Satyananda, JP

The outlook and values of life of a community or nation depend upon its ideal of education. If its ideal of education is materialistic, then its outlook on life is bound to be the same. On the other hand, if its ideal of education is altruistic and moral and spiritual, then its sense of the values of life is bound to be noble and such a community or nation can best realise its true Good, 'can best do what it is meant to do and be what it is meant to be', in the words of Plato. "As we think so we become" is the law.

Modern education despite its wonderfully good points, has one tremendous shortcoming which is so great that the good things are all weighed out. It is tremendously materialistic. It lays too much stress on the physical affairs of things and provides man the ways and means 'to gain the whole world' and at the same time allows him 'to suffer the loss of his own soul'. It makes him think more about his rights and privileges than about his duties and obligations. It opens the way to man for self-indulgence, but fails to show him the path to self-control and self-culture.

These are the reasons for the existing chaos and disorder all over the world today. Modern education is only an intellectual pursuit. It is an intellectual gymnastic and, in the vast majority of cases, a parrot-like cramming and a gramophone-like repetition of ideas or information that are poured into the brain of the individuals in whom they run riot. It is a feat of getting passports for servility. It does nothing or very little to develop the higher side of man's life, namely, 'character and true insight', according to Plato.

The English word 'education' comes from the Latin root 'educare' which means to lead or draw out.' The Malay word 'ajar' meaning to teach or 'educate' is derived, in a mutilated form, from the Sanskrit root 'char' which means 'to bring out or to reflect'. The Tamil word 'kal' meaning 'to learn' literally means 'to dig out'. So education in its true sense should bring out the perfection already latent in the soul which is potentially Divine and which, therefore, possesses infinite possibilities of Good.

"Education is the training for the completeness life" says Herbert Spencer. Education should be the expansion of the knowledge-self. It is the simultaneous training of the body, vital, mind, heart and the soul, leading to perfect manhood and womanhood. Knowledge, strength, industry, character and aesthetics are the five component parts of perfect education.

Education is not passing examinations not is it mere book learning. Most of the great men and women who have made a landmark in the history of humanity did not possess education as we nowadays understand it to be. Their lives, consciously or unconsciously, were a living art of the Spirit.

Ancient Indian educationists speak of two kinds of wisdom (*Vidya*), namely *Aparavidya* and *Paravidya*. *Aparavidya* is the knowledge of Nature and the laws which govern our physical life. *Paravidya* is the highest wisdom, the knowledge of the Infinite Truth. They say that *Aparavidya* should aim to lead man to *Paravidya*. Secular knowledge must find fulfilment in spiritual wisdom. "Of what avail is one's vast learning, if one adores not the holy feet of Him

Education should be the expansion of the knowledge-self. It is the simultaneous training of the body, vital, mind, heart and the soul, leading to perfect manhood and womanhood.

Who is pure light and wisdom?" asks the Thirukkural.

Any education that separates man from man, brother from brother, that either directly or indirectly is the cause for discord, intolerance, domination, persecution and butchery, cannot bring happiness or peace to man.

The aim of education should not be merely dry intellectual development with commercial and economical ideas, to trample over the weak, to gain our livelihood in the struggle of competition. On the contrary, the ideal of education should be such as would elevate man from his ordinary selfish animal state to that of the unselfish universal idea of Godhood.

True education should make man live a pure and unselfish life, to be loving, kind and compassionate to all, to conquer avarice by generosity and hatred by love. It

should train man to realise his true nature which is spiritual and his oneness with the Universal Life, so that he might live for the ideal of Universal Brotherhood. "He is a pundit, a true philosopher and a scholar who can see the same Universal Spirit in a well-cultured Brahmin, in a pariah, in a cow, in an elephant and in a dog.", says the Bhagavad Gita in speaking about the outlook on life of a really educated man.

True education should be based upon universal principles and not upon any kind of sectarian idea, for otherwise it would be degrading humanity. It should train us to recognize the 'ideal of unity in variety' in all the different stages and dealings of our social life.

A system of education that is based upon the above ideals alone can fulfil the mandates of a full-blown culture and civilization. □

- Literary Works of Dr Swami Satyananda, JP, published in Dharma Essays (1956)



Timeless Frames



HH Dr Swami Satyananda, JP, with Mother Mangalam and Lady Templer in 1957. To the extreme left is Mr Damu, Architect for the Dharma Institute.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

22nd September



International Day of Peace 2018 known as IDP 2018, was successful and smoothly activated with all the 25 sub-events to make this overall UN IDP event meaningful, fun, memorable and relevant for the celebration and commemoration of the World Peace Day officially known as UN International Day for Peace.



The event was graced by YB Senator Waytha Moorthy, Minister for National Unity and Social Service, HE Mr Stefan Preisner, UN Resident Coordinator, YB Maria Chin, Heads of Religious Organisations and various NGOs attending this memorable event of the year. The event started at 4.45 pm with the main event ending at 6.58 pm as planned.

Events included: Peace Convoy for Johore and Taiping, Peace Treasure Hunt at PLS, Band with Bagpipes music, Peace 'Kolam', Peace Walk along Display of Participating NGOs' Banners and Buntings, Signing of UN Proclamation for Peace, Prayers for Peace by 8 religious heads, Peace Art and Competition for Children, Singing of the National Anthem, Universal Prayers, UN Secretary-General speech read by the UN Resident Coordinator, IDP Address by the Minister

advising people to avoid hate speech, releasing of the Pigeon Balloon and a bouquet of 20 balloons, getting students, volunteers and public to sign and hang 1000 paper doves, Unveiling the 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' on Marble Plaque in 8 Asian Languages by 8 representatives, Presentation of the 8 foot Peace Pole engraved with 8 Asian Languages to the Minister by the children, Group singing of the song 'One God, One World, One Race' led by Mother Mangalam. Planting of an Asoka tree,



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE 2018

September 2018

Presentation of Prizes to the winning Artists, visiting the site of 1000 Peace Paper Doves, delicious Vegetarian Buffet Dinner for 500 people,



lighting of 70 Lanterns to celebrate the Lantern Festival plus commemorating UN 70 years on its Proclamation of Human Rights, Group photo at candle lighted Peace Logo and PEACE cut-out. On the whole, it was truly an amazing event. The weather was miraculously fine, having rained the days before and elsewhere.

A Peace Memorandum was delivered by the President of PfPM, Mr Joseph Lau, on behalf of over 30 supporting NGOs to recognise Sept 21 as National Designated Day for Peace, promoting the Lake Titiwangsa as a Peace Park, and on that day too, to recognise deserving Peace Activists, NGOs for their contribution to Peace. The event received wide coverage in the Press and the National TV coverage. We are thankful to JPNIN, PLS, DBKL, and our many generous donors for sponsoring the cost of various items to make the event colorful, interesting, exciting, fun and memorable. We are grateful to Datin Paduka Mother A. Mangalam, President of the PLS, its Management Committee and Staff and children as hosts for the site and with INSaF as the Coordinating Partners with PfPM for the event. A special thanks to all the participating NGOs as well.

-Mr Stephen Nah, Organising Chairman, IDP 2018

Remedies for Common Maladies-My Experience

By Mother A Mangalam

I suffered from a **dry** cough which kept me wake the whole night. My sister, who visited me, saw the plight I was in and reminded me of my grandmother's home remedy, at the time when there were no antibiotics. It is as follows:

Remedy for Dry Cough

Ingredients:

Small onions	-	1kg
Black pepper seeds	-	1 tsp
Cumin	-	2 tsp
Pure Ghee	-	2 tbsp
Salt	-	A pinch
Jaggery (coarse dark brown sugar)	-	To taste



Preparation:

- Peel onions whole
- Pound coarse black pepper seeds & cumin (separate)

Method:

- Heat ghee in a wok on slow fire
- Add the whole onions
- Once the outer layer turns golden brown, add the pounded pepper and cumin
- Add the salt & jaggery
- Keep stirring and smash until it becomes a paste
- Make into tiny balls of 1 inch diameter
- Take 3 balls first thing in the morning and another 3 at 630pm in the evening

Benefit:

Loosens dry phlegm set deep into the lungs and releases the phlegm at intervals when coughing.

IDLY

According to world-wide research by dieticians, it has been declared that having IDLIs for breakfast is the healthiest.

The Idly recipe that I had recently given to the PLS kitchen has gained popularity by all the consumers.

See next page for the recipe:



IDLY with FILLING - MASALA IDLY

Ingredients for the filling:

Potatoes	-	5 (medium-sized)	Curry Leaves	-	3 sprigs
Tomato	-	1	Cumin powder	-	1 level tsp
Peas	-	1/2 cup	Fennel powder	-	3 heaped tsp
Small Onions	-	5/6	Coriander powder	-	4 heaped tsp
Ginger	-	5 slices	Pepper	-	1/2 tsp
Garlic	-	5 pips			

Preparation:

- Onions, garlic & ginger to be mashed coarse
- Pare potatoes and cook until soft (to be mashed)
- Mince tomato and add with the mashed potatoes

Filling:

- Add 2 tsps. of ghee in a wok
- Put in onions, garlic, ginger and stir for 1 minute
- Mix a little water to spice powders listed under ingredients and add to the contents in wok
- Add coarsely mashed potatoes, peas and blend into contents in a wok until you get the aroma.
- Place idly container with sufficient water on fire to boil.
- Pour 1 tbsp. of idly batter, add 1/2 tbsp of filling and cover filling with 1 tbsp of idly mixture
- Cover well and steam for 15 minutes. Put off fire. Allow idly to settle for 5 minutes
- Open cover and scoop idly and place in a *dry* pot
- Can be consumed with home-made ghee, butter, *chutney* or savoury powders



*Feed your body with what it needs.
Don't feed the body with what you like.*

CELEBRATION OF FESTIVALS

When you check the calendar, are you counting the days to the next joyous festival? Most of us do wait in keen anticipation — not because we want to get away from work, of course. Rather, we look forward to a grand family reunion and to the splendour of celebrating a mass-participation event.

The roots of our cultural and religious festivals go back to the misty origins of each civilisation, or rejuvenation of that civilisation. Such festivals never decay although centuries may pass, and they are celebrated year after year. The final quarter of year 2018 is a time of great rejoicing: we have had Navarathri and Nine Emperor Gods Festival in October, Deepavali and Maulidur Rasul in November, and Christmas Day in December. It's a wondrous end to 2018, with every community having a reason to celebrate.

Festivals bind masses of people together in hallowed gatherings where all feel that they are imbibed with one heart and one mind. The central focus is God or the gods, and the effect is like that of a gravitational net over society, pulling a faith community together in a directional move towards the central focal point. These festivals have enabled communities to stay robust by focusing the energies and emotions of people into cooperative endeavours.

The primary objective of a cultural or religious festival is mammoth team building and human bonding. God is a convenient reason for believers to pray together, mingle together, and feast together to build social cohesion, and tales are told of how the festival was celebrated many centuries ago. You can see the lasting effects of such team building in that,

not long after a celebration ends, the planning begins for next year.

These celebrations have developed such grassroots spontaneity that they no longer require a central authority to bring out the crowd; participation is self-generating and shows the extent of mass cooperation amongst people who belong to and identify with their community. In fact, it has become an integral part of our business DNA that at the approach of any of the major festivals all our shopping malls are gaily decorated in the appropriate theme accompanied by the appropriate piped music.

When two festivals belonging to different cultures or religions fall on the same day or week, should participants hold joint celebrations? It is a practice that has not been explored in Malaysia despite our multiculturalism. It is actually an opportunity to bring together diverse groups who hadn't previously rejoiced together. It opens the door to broader forms of human cooperation. Such inter-communal effort involves radical inclusivity whose time should have arrived by now - yet we are hesitant.

But we know from discoveries by archaeologists that hunter-gatherer forest tribes were doing it more than 10,000 years ago. Tribes that didn't normally mix as they had different cultures would sometimes come together for joint festivities. These peaceful cultural interactions paved the way for the merger of tribes into kingdoms. Tribal cultures intermingled and became subsets of an emerging larger culture that formed the bedrock of civilisation. This is how we got to be civilised — by forming larger and larger circles of cooperation with diverse human groups raised in different cultures.

Festivals bind masses of people together in hallowed gatherings where all feel that they are imbibed with one heart and one mind.

Continued on page 20

This way of co-operation also shows how Malaysia can emerge as a more integrated nation — by jointly celebrating some festivals that happen to fall within the same time period.

If you look closely at the festivals, there are common elements. Navarathri and Nine Emperor Gods Festival (Kow Wong Yeh in Cantonese language) occurred last October: Navarathri is a nine-day fasting ritual, and Kow Wong Yeh is also celebrated for nine days. Both festivals require their devotees to be vegetarian throughout the nine-day period.

This is it... a grand double occasion and an excuse to promote healthier eating throughout Malaysian society. While meat consumption gives you more protein, it also loads you with more toxins. Hence, it is wise to go vegetarian occasionally. A popular routine is to do it on full moon and new moon days. Why on these days? It's a convenient marker as these days are shown in the calendar. You can also look up at the night sky. Consuming egg yolks should be okay. It's not a form of life but only of potential life.

Let's pray that in year 2019 we will begin to celebrate joint festivals whenever two or more of them fall within the same period of time. □

- Joachim Ng

Letting Go: Doing it with a Smile!

- Continued from page 7

This is basic inherent knowledge. One does not need to be educated, be religious or righteous.

This is the foundation. "Do unto other as you would have them do unto you" (Luke 6:31) was the commandment Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount. These words are repeated in every religious teachings whether it be Hindu, Islam, Buddhist or Jewish. Religious orders have only collated these natural orders and compiled them as basic tenets to give uniformity of conduct within societies. Governments later legislated these to provide, not only guidance, but also to impose conformity.

No one living in this world can escape these values. But these values are reciprocal. What applies to someone else also applies to me. Once we learn to accept this, living in a society full of expectations becomes a lot more pleasant and easier. In a society we live inter-dependently. However much we are taught to identify, secure and preserve our individuality, the reality remains that we

cannot live a life of seclusion. Even if we try to reduce the interaction we have with other humans, the inter-dependency still exists with other living and non-living things in this universe. If we can extend ourselves beyond the confines of our physical body and embrace everything that exists in the universe as an extension of ourselves, we can begin to enjoy the beauty and presence of all things and to let go our prejudices and afflictions.

As we have to learn to "let Go" to achieve the ultimate freedom, it is also time for me to "let Go" of this series of articles that I have shared with you through Dharma. This is the last of the articles that will appear in this quarterly publication. I thank the Pure Life Society and the editorial team of Dharma for the opportunity that was afforded for me to indulge with my musings.... □

- Dr M Jeyarajan

ISLAMIC FESTIVALS

Muslims in Malaysia celebrate many Islamic festivals, more so than even in some Islamic countries. Since Islam is our official religion (or “the religion of the Federation”), many of these festivals are public holidays, benefiting even non-Muslims!

As with other religions, the Islamic festivals in Malaysia have their own local versions and contents which may be totally different to those in other Muslim communities, in Islamic countries or otherwise. In fact there is controversy that some of our practices are un-Islamic!

So let us discover some of the Islamic festivals we celebrate in Malaysia. Muslims here are mostly Sunnis, from the Shafie *Madzhab* (school of Jurisprudence). Most Indian Muslims here are Sunnis from the Hanafi *Madzhab*. Shi’a-only festivals are not described as these are not celebrated here.

MA’AL HIJRAH (ISLAMIC NEW YEAR)

This marks the beginning of the Islamic year. It is celebrated on the 1st day of the 1st month (*Muharram*). In Malaysia, it is celebrated in a big way, but not in other countries. We have processions and various events. At the national and state level, the Tokoh (icon) Ma’al Hijrah award is given to deserving Muslims for their contributions to the Muslim society.

The lunar months as used in the Islamic calendar did not start with the advent of Islam, but were in use by the Arabs for centuries before. The Islamic calendar was decided only by the 3rd Caliph Umar, and the first Islamic calendar year was decided retrospectively to start on the first new moon after the migration of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Mecca to Medina (at that time it was called Yathrib). The migration is called the *Hijrah*. Hence Muslims start the New Year with intention to migrate from bad to good, from good to better, in

their religious, spiritual and other spheres of life.

The Muslim/Islamic (or Hijri) calendar year is designated as AH (After Hijrah). The Muslim day actually begins at sunset. Thus although 1 Muharram 1 AH was on Friday 16 July 622 CE, it actually started on the evening of Thursday 15 July 622 CE.

DAY OF ASHURA (10TH MUHARRAM)

This commemorates the escape of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites from Pharaoh by crossing the parted Red Sea. It is equivalent to the Jewish *Yom Kippur*. It also marks the day Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) left his *Ark*, and the day Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) arrived in Medina during the *Hijrah*.

Although it is not a public holiday, this day is much celebrated especially in the East Coast states. Fasting, extra prayers and charity (especially to orphans) are encouraged. Special *Bubur Ashura* (Ashura porridge) is made on this day and distributed to the poor.

(For the Shi’a, this day marks the martyrdom of the Prophet’s grandson Imam Hussein ibn Ali, whom they especially revere, and huge celebrations, often with bloody self-flogging and self-mutilations, are held).

MAULIDUR RASUL (BIRTHDAY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD, PBUH)

The celebration of the birthday of the beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is done on 12 Rabi’ul Awwal (3rd month). It is celebrated grandly in most Islamic countries (but not all, especially the “Wahhabi/Salafis” countries and communities) and by most Muslim communities, wherever they are. This reflects the immense love and attachment the Muslims have for their beloved Prophet.

In Malaysia, we have processions, various events and special devotional gatherings in remembrance of the Prophet. Songs and

poetry praising the Prophet and recalling his life are often sung. Lectures and seminars on his life and teachings are widely held.

The Anugerah Maulidur Rasul (Maulidur Rasul Awards) are given at national and state levels to deserving individuals, not restricted to Muslims only, for their contributions to society.

The Wahhabis/Salafis do not celebrate the Prophet's birthday because the Prophet himself did not celebrate his birthday, and so they deem doing so is a forbidden innovation (*bida'ah*).

ISRAK MIKRAJ (NIGHT JOURNEY & ASCENSION OF THE PROPHET, PBUH)

This commemorates the night journey of the Prophet from Mecca to Jerusalem, and his ascension thereof to the Heavens, and back. It is celebrated on 27th Rajab (7th month).

The Prophet reported that he was transported on this journey on a special heavenly creature most commonly described as a winged steed (*buraq*). The distance between Mecca and Jerusalem is 1500km, but the entire journey only took a short time in an era when the only means of long-distance transport were with horses, camels and donkeys. He was back in Mecca before the sunrise.

In Jerusalem, he led the prayers with all the previous 24 Messengers of God (as mentioned in the Qur'an) behind him.

During his ascension to the Heavens, he met Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them).

Prophet Muhammad was given an audience with God. It was during this audience that the command for the 5 daily prayers was given.

The occasion is celebrated with special prayers, remembrance (*dzikr*), supplications, fasting, and giving charity.

1 RAMADHAN (FIRST DAY OF FASTING)

Ramadhan is the 9th month, the most holy month, and the month of fasting. It is not a holiday here, but is a holiday in the Philippines where 90% of the people are Christians!

The special *Solat Tarawih* (long nightly prayers) begin on the eve of 1st Ramadhan, and the first morning meal (*sahur*) begins on this day before dawn.

In Malaysia, Ramadhan is savoured by everyone because of the sumptuous food offered at the *Bazaar Ramadhan*. Every night is a festival, and the hotels are also packed with people of all races and religions enjoying the special *Ramadhan buffets*.

Unfortunately, although the spirit of Ramadhan is about austerity, local culture has turned it into a month of culinary excesses and wastage.

NUZUL QUR'AN (DAY OF REVELATION OF THE QUR'AN)

Celebrated on 17th Ramadhan in Malaysia and Indonesia, but on 27th Ramadhan in most other Muslim countries and communities.

The first 5 verses of the Qur'an (Chapter 96 verses 1-5) were revealed on this day when the Prophet was visited by Angel Gabriel during his regulation meditative seclusion in the Cave of Hira, on *Jabal al Noor* (Mountain of Light) just outside Mecca. It also marked his appointment as Prophet and Messenger of God. This was in the year 610 CE when he was 40 years old.

The night of the event is called the first **Night of Power** (*Lailatul Qadr*) because with the revelation came immense Divine blessings for humanity.

During Ramadhan each year, devout Muslims would do extra prayers, *dzikr* and supplications in the hope of coinciding with

that year's *Lailatul Qadr*. The promised spiritual reward for acts of worship done on this night is worth that of 1,000 months' worship. However, nobody knows which night is the *Lailatul Qadr* for each year, except that it is in Ramadhan. Some believe that it falls on a night in the last 10 days of Ramadhan, so they fully concentrate on worshipping on these days.

IDUL FITRI (HARI RAYA IDIL FITRI)

Idul Fitri is celebrated to mark the triumph of overcoming hunger and all the restrictions and discipline required during Ramadhan. It is celebrated after the end of Ramadhan, on 1st Syawwal (10th month). This is the biggest festival for Muslims in Malaysia, but not so for most Islamic countries.

On this day we ask special forgiveness from our parents, siblings, relatives and friends.

Special Idul Fitri prayers are held in the morning. Most would go to the mosques, just as for Friday prayers, but this time the women come out in full force too.

The tradition in Malaysia is to visit the graves of departed parents (and grandparents) after the Idul Fitri prayers. Then we visit relatives and friends to seek their forgiveness and renew bonds and friendship, and receive them at our homes. Malaysia is famous for the "open house" tradition where relatives and friends of all faiths are welcome.

In Malaysia the festivities go on for several days, and the "open house" feasts continue for the whole month of Syawwal.

IDUL ADHA (HARI RAYA HAJI)

This falls on the 10th of Dzulhijjah (12th month). It is the Feast of Sacrifice, commemorating the faith of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) in his willingness to sacrifice his own son upon God's command. But of course God only wanted to test his obedience, and a lamb was substituted instead of the son (Prophet Ishmael according to the Qur'an, Prophet Isaac according to the Bible).

Special prayers are done in the morning. Both men and women would pray in the mosques just as for Idul Fitri. The sacrifice of goats, cows and camels will commence soon after the prayers. The meats are to be distributed to the poor, and some for those who contributed towards the cost of those animals. This continues for three days.

The Hajj ritual starts on the days preceding this. The 9th of Dzulhijjah is The Day of Arafat, where all those doing the Hajj are gathered at the plains of Arafat, about 10km away from Mecca. It is to remind us that we will all be gathered in front of God in the Hereafter.

It is believed that after being expelled from Heaven to earth, Adam and Eve finally met at Mount Arafat.

For those doing the Hajj, the final rituals are done on the 10th of Dzulhijjah. □

*- Dr Amir Farid Isahak,
Chairman, INSaF*

“Be in this world with your body and in the Hereafter with your heart and your actions”

-Imam Ali (as) Ghorar-al-Hikam

***Saying it
in Pictures.....
Activities @
Pure Life***



1. Navarathri - Prayers of the Nine Nights at the Temple of the Universal Spirit.
2. Inner Journey of Spirituality with Father Sebastian.
3. Students from Wesley School, Singapore, interacting with our children.



Because Thou Art

*Because Thou art All-beauty and
All-bliss,
My soul blind and enamoured
yearns for Thee ;
It bears Thy mystic touch in all
that is
And thrills with the burden of
that ecstasy.*

*Behind all eyes I meet Thy secret
gaze
And in each voice I hear Thy
magic tune :
Thy sweetness haunts my heart
through Nature's ways;
Nowhere it beats now from Thy
snare immune.*

*It loves Thy body in all living
things;
Thy joy is there in every leaf and
stone:
The moments bring Thee on their
fiery wings ;
Sight's endless artistry is Thou
alone*

*Time voyages with Thee upon its
prow
And all the future's passionate
hope is Thou.*

- Sri Aurobindo



Reflections

Salient Thought for the Day

We must order our whole life so that we may live close to God.

Lines to Memorize

I walk before, thee and I watch over thee;
I dwell within thee
And I surround without thee;
In darkness I reveal thy path,
In sadness I lighten thy heart.
Fear not, nor be distressed;
I infill all space.
I am with thee always.

Lesson

We must rest our life on the fundamental facts of being. If our life is empty, we must fill it; and it can never be filled from outside. More we live in the material world, more we become bound and more easily we are overthrown. But when we live in Spirit, nothing can overthrow us. We should never fasten ourselves to the outer world.

Prayer

O Lord, I lift my thought and prayer to Thee.
Reveal unto me Thy protecting and all absorbing Presence.
Thou art the embodiment of all blessing. Fill my life with holiness and peace.
Make it fruitful and wholly dedicated to Thy service,
And may I never forget Thee or turn my face away from Thee.

- Swami Paramananda

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.”

- Bahá'u'lláh

The Malaysian Speaks

I would like to see Malaysia going forward as a secular nation that does not discriminate. Where we can go to places to seek religion, spirituality and meaning while having areas where we can delve in more liberal ideas and values, but most importantly where we all respect each other.

- Adi Izzudeen, Post-GE14, here's what Malaysians want to see from their elected leaders, The Star.

Now that everyone feels like they can practice freedom of speech, I just hope that we don't abuse it. Because people, especially online, can be cruel. Freedom of speech means we should speak intellectually, not abusively.

- Vinod Suppiah, Post-GE14, here's what Malaysians want to see from their elected leaders, The Star

I try not to focus or place my hope in Man. My constant pillar of strength has to be God, my faith is important and crucial to my work.

- YB Hannah Yeoh Tseow Suan, 'Being Hannah', Sunday Star, 16th September 2018

Our youths must have the ability and take initiatives to be "ethnic bridge builders" to improve ethnic relations in the country by neutralizing the politics of hatred, racial polarization and racial exclusiveness which seem to be on the rise now.

- Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye, 'Inculcating a sense of Unity', Your Views, The Star, 30th August 2018

Great minds of Yesteryears

He who controls others may be powerful but he who has mastered himself is mightier still.

- Lao Tzu

YOUR RIGHT

It is your right to speak your mind

BUT speak the truth

It is your right to live the life you want

BUT be responsible

You are born free

Use your freedom wisely

It is your right to give away your possessions

BUT only to those who deserve

It is your right to sleep if you want

BUT only to recharge your worn-out batteries

It is your right to be as you want

BUT remember, you're not alone

It is your right to eat what you want

BUT take care of your health.

- Mother A Mangalam

True Forgiveness

When you forgive, forgive out of the fullness of your heart.

Partial forgiveness is not forgiveness at all. It blesses neither him who forgives nor him who is forgiven.

- J.P. Vaswani

வீழ்நாள் படாஅமை நன்றாற்றின் அஃதொருவன்
வாழ்நாள் வழியடைக்கும் கல் - குறள் 38

If one allows no day to pass without some good being done, his conduct will be a stone to block up the passage to other births.

- Thirukkural

Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Be a part of Dharma....

Dharma Quarterly published by the Pure Life Society, to encourage inter-religious and inter-racial harmony. We would love to have your contributions, whether ideas or articles.

Come, be a part of us.....



Dharma QUARTERLY

Devoted to
UNIVERSAL RELIGION,
RIGHTEOUSNESS &
CULTURE

ONE GOD
ONE WORLD
ONE RACE

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