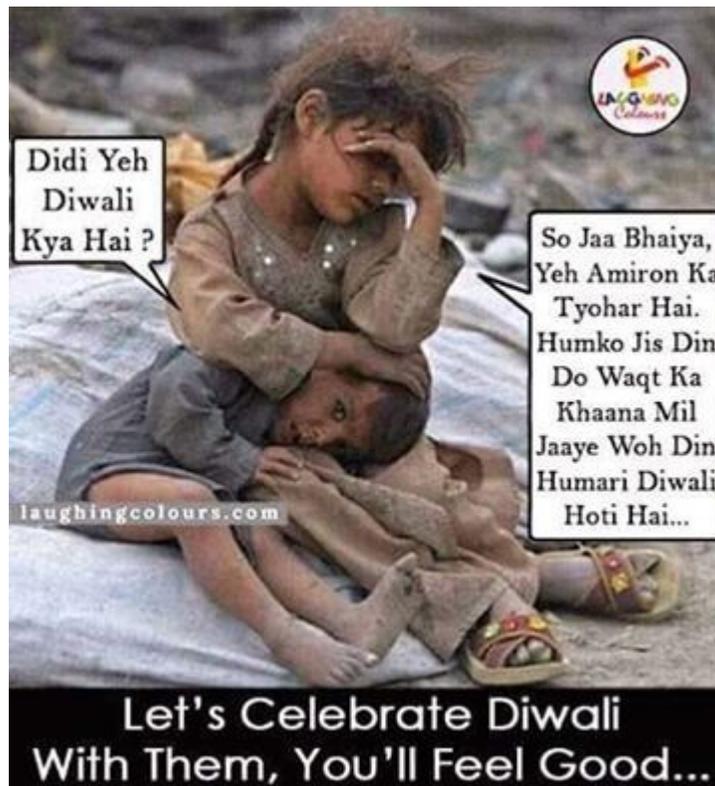


Diwali and the act of kindness via charity

Some Hindu's may point out that www.dipika.org.za mainly addresses charity during the year and not just enjoying oneself. This cannot be further from the truth as everything as a time and place. All the major religions of the world heavily expounds on helping/assisting those that are less fortunate. And Hinduism is nondifferent. Charity is performed in variegated forms viz, the charity of free knowledge (hence we created DIPIKA), the charity of food, the charity of financial aid, the charity of clothes, the charity of having a caring nature to all creatures, et al.

This Diwali let us awesome Hindu's make a difference to those that are in a less fortunate situation by performing acts of good will. So a significant part of your cash which is normally set aside for purchasing goodies (like sweets and gifts) and fireworks, I would humbly suggest you spend most of that cash of the less fortunate. Let's feed the abused, needy, underprivileged and the like.



Loosely translated the above Hindi means as follows...

Didi yeh diwali kya hai? Sister when is diwali?

So jaa Bhaiya Sleep brother.

Yeh Amiron ka tyohar hai. "It is the festival of the rich"

Humko jis din do waqt ka khaana mil jaaye On this day we get a meal twice.

Who din humari diwali hoti hai? When is our Diwali day?

Vedic shastras esp Garuda Purana expounds liberally on the acts of charity especially on New moon day (Amavasya) which falls on Diwali day 27th / 28th October 2019.

***** VERSES FROM THE GARUDA PURANA ON CHARITY *****

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 33. 12 “The various gifts that people make in the world stand in good stead in the region of Yama. They go ahead (and make everything comfortable.)”

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 13.19 “Whatever gifts are made by one during one’s life time, becomes beneficial later”

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 14 verses 45 “Anything given to a deserving person flourishes day by day. A gift wipes off the sin of the giver and the acceptance of the same by a person of good wisdom does not affect him.”

verse 6 “Every day something must be given to deserving persons, particularly so on special occasions. If one wishes for one’s own wealth, one shall be sane enough not to give anything to the undeserving.”

verse 8 “I affirm that just as seeds and other valuable things invested or sown in the ground offer fruitful results so also things by one’s own hands yield fruitful results.”

verse 12 “Therefore, life being unsteady it is incumbent on everyone to do every thing beforehand. With the food for the journey in the form of gifts offered to the deserving, one is able to travel with comfort in the Great Highway in the journey after death. Otherwise, the wretch undergoes great hardships without food to subsist on, on the way.”

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda chapter 20 verse 8 “Those who have offered gifts in their lifetime should not entertain any fear from Dharmaraja.”

verse 9 “Yamaraj moves from his seat as soon as he sees a holy man.”

verse 10 “Virtue can easily be procured by offering gifts. The path to Yama’s region can easily be traversed by acts of charity. This highway cannot be easily covered otherwise.”

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 47.23. “Whenever gifts are made with faith the riches become everlasting.”

Garuda Purana Preta Khanda 36.33 “Wealth is acquired with strain and stress. It is naturally unsteady. The only solution is it being gifted to others. Otherwise there awaits only disaster.”

ELSEWHERE...

In the **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 5:2:2** states that once the Creator, Prajapati, spoke a single syllable, “Da,” to His human disciples. “Then He said: ‘Have you understood?’ They answered, ‘Yes, we have understood. You said to us, “‘Datta—Be charitable.’” ‘Yes,’ agreed Prajapati, ‘you have understood.’” So Dana, which means: giving, gift, charity, alms giving, selfsacrifice, donation, and generosity, is both an action and an attitude. The Supreme Lord Krishna considers this an important factor in spiritual life as the Lord expounds in the Bhagavad Gita that one which we will profit from understanding. Once more He analyses a subject from the aspect of its gunaquality.

Sattwic (pure, mode of goodness) Dana: “The gift which is given only with the thought ‘it is to be given,’ to a worthy person who has done no prior favor, at the proper place and time: that gift is held to be sattwic” (Bhagavad Gita 17:20). This is extremely relevant to us, since at the present time “good works” and social action are becoming the refuge of the morally and spiritually bankrupt as a cover for their inner deficiency. As is to be expected, ignorant people who think that outer action equals inner quality, are enthusiastically embracing and applauding this fraud.

Donating to a worthy person. Patre means someone who is worthy or competent, a person who is deserving and capable of benefiting from the gift or assistance. Sattwic charity itself must be worthy and competent. That is, it must be intelligent and effective, helping people not just for the moment, but for the future. Sattwic charity is not just “need driven” on the surface, but must take into account the entire situation and be very focused on the quality of the recipients and the ultimate results. For example, it is silly to provide roller skates for poor children when they do not have any shoes. Recently on a radio station there was a story about many teenagers working hard to provide cosmetic surgery for poor people. While people are starving and wandering the streets homeless, this is absurd—not innately, but from the present conditions. This is like dropping candy bars to people in the desert that are dying of thirst. Get them out and give them water. This is the sattwic way. Of course, sattwic charity requires personal contact and care, something that many are not unfortunately willing to provide.

At a proper/appropriate place. The environment of the recipient must be taken into careful consideration. It would be silly to give aid to someone living on an island where atomic testing is scheduled, and not help them to relocate. Sattwic charity gives much more than the equivalent of impulse buying that is the vogue right now.

Rajasic (mode of passion) dana: “That gift which is given grudgingly [or unwillingly], with the aim of recompense [reward] or gain, with regard to the fruit, is considered rajasic” (Bhagavad Gita 17:21). One of the major determinants in religion is disposition of heart. The Lord told the prophet Samuel: “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (I Samuel 17:21). Therefore the Supreme Lord Krishna points this out and the next verse that the inner attitude of the giver reveals the predominant quality (guna) of the act. To give grudgingly or unwillingly is a rajasic attitude. A great deal of religion is not done willingly, but out of fear, greed, or other egoistic motives. Since rajas is the guna of action for gain of some kind, He then says that any gift that is made with the purpose of getting some personal benefit, looking for the final result, is of rajas.

Tamasic (mode of ignorance) dana: “That gift which is given at the wrong place and time to the unworthy, without paying respect, or with contempt, is declared to be tamasic” (17:22).

An unworthy person is someone who will not benefit from the gift or assistance, either because of innate incapacity or perverse attitude, or who will deny being benefited, or who demands something different or more. We all have seen this to some extent. An unworthy person is also one who does not even need the gift, but pretends to. So is one who is quite capable of helping himself, but sees no need if someone will do it for him. It is virtually impossible to expand on what is meant by “the wrong place” and “the wrong time,” since each individual situation determines – and often reveals – that. “Without paying respect, or with contempt” can be either hidden or obvious. Some who are involved in welfare programs thoroughly despised the people they distribute charity to – and as a result being adored by them as their personal “great white saviour.”



Karna – The half Brother of the Pandavas.

In the Puranas there's a katha of an account of how important charity is especially on New Moon like Diwali new moon which falls on the 27th - 28th October. The renowned hero of the Mahabharata, Karna (the Pandavas half brother), when he passed on, he ascended to the heavenly planets and the great charity he had performed in his lifetime was returned to him hundredfold. But, it was all gold and silver; there was no food, as he had not done any food - charity! He prayed to the Deity of death (Lord Yamaraja). So, he was sent back to earth for fourteen days, to make up for this deficiency. For fourteen days, he fed Brahmins and the poor, and offered oblations of water. On his return to the heavenly planets, he had food in plenty. Due to the grace of Shree Yamaraja, it has been ordained that offerings made during this period benefit all the departed souls, whether they are connected to you or not. The offerings reach the ancestors very quickly like an express delivery. This is the boon of Lord Yamaraja.

You may donate to your favourite charity like an animal shelter, kids and old aged homes, the many many other charity organizations are crying out for financial aid in South Africa and around the world.

Dipika's humble advise is to purchase 1 loaf of bread, 1 can bakedbeans, 1 tomato, and 1 onion. Place these 4 items in a packet and donate these items to a needy person. This is a simple yet effective method since if you donate uncooked rice to a poor person that person may not have a stove to cook the rice etc. This is an instant ready made meal that can feed up to six people.

An alternative to the above would be to prepare a few food hampers in which each hamper would consist of 5kg rice, 2kg dal, 1kg flour, 1kg beans, 1kg sugar, 500g rough salt, tea bags, 2 kg tomatoes, a few can beans, and you may add more to this list.

*** Kindly note these are just the amounts I am suggesting. You may vary the amounts according to your availability of finance you may possess.

Importantly to note is that due to Diwali always falling precisely in the middle of Kartik (Damodara) Maas (month) anything that is performed has a 1000 fold effect. Amazing isn't it. So donating one loaf of bread equates to donating 1000 loaves of bread.

A final word of thought: When performing these acts of charity kindly refrain from posting your acts of charity on social media like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and the like. Some would argue that they are merely highlighting the plight of these less fortunate and that would inspire others to do the same for Diwali next year. But really now??? I would suggestedly advise to restrain from showing off your good deeds and make this act of charity between the person you helped, God and yourself – PERIOD. Then it is regarded as charity in the mode of goodness.

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