

In June 2021 we bid farewell to a father of African Independence, Kenneth Kaunda. A generation of African leaders who secured freedom for their people have moved on. There is not a single African country that can work alone to trade its way out of poverty. Increased intra-African trade will drive economic development post-COVID-19. On 1 January 2021, free trading officially commenced under the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement.

The United Nations Development Programme has committed support for strengthening the capacities of national customs authorities, digitizing intra-African trade, and enhancing export readiness of women and youth-led SMEs. Thus far three countries—Ghana, South Africa, and Egypt have established the necessary customs infrastructure for trading. Indeed, Africa’s time has come.

In this issue we cover “Leadership and Governance Values”. Millions across the world celebrate Mandela Day on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July with 67 minutes of selfless service.

Nelson Mandela practiced forgiveness and empathy and showed that hatred cannot be overcome by hatred but by empathy. This alone made him a great leader, a unifier and a large-hearted person who embraced all. The teaching of Vedas, Ramayana and Bhagavat Gita are gems of knowledge that we all can strive for.

On 16 June 2021, Arya Samaj Gauteng hosted a commemoration of National Youth Day with young people sharing their views. An extract of one of the views is presented in this issue.

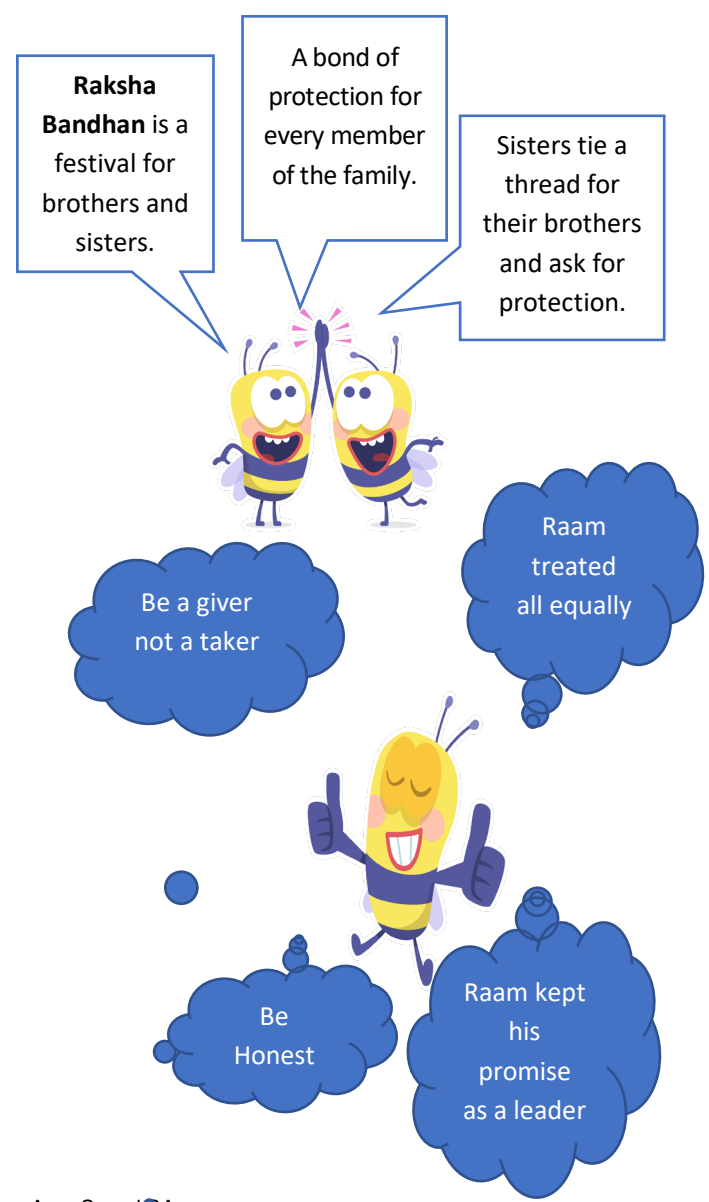
On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August we will celebrate National Women’s Day in South Africa. The role of women in shaping society from Vedic times to now is covered in a short article.

In August, a Hindu festival Raksha Bandhan will be celebrated. We also share with you the significance of Shravani - a period to renew, recommit and strengthen bonds and relationships.

We have started a new feature that caters for the young readers. We encourage you to share this with children.

Veda Jyoti Editorial Committee

**"Krinvanto Vishwam Aryam"** - Make the world noble (Rig Veda 9.63.6)  
**"Mitrasya Chakshusha samikshamahe"** - May we Look at All with an Equal and Friendly Eye (Yajur Veda 36.18)



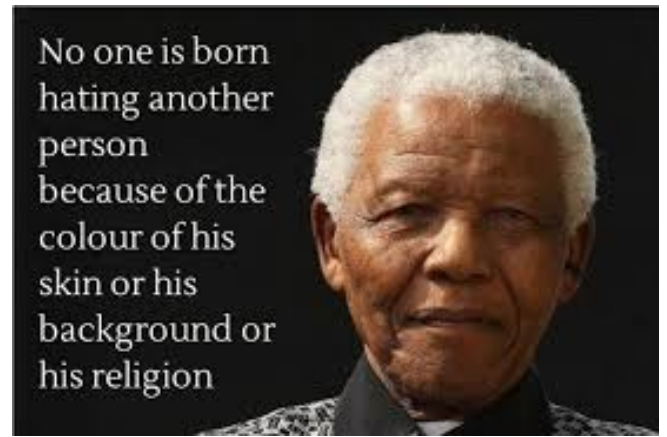
# Leadership and Governance Values

In 2008 at his 90th birthday celebrations in London's Hyde Park, Nelson Mandela said: "Where human beings are being oppressed, there is more work to be done..." Then 18 July was officially declared in honour of Nelson Mandela by the United Nations in 2009. Thus, Nelson Mandela International Day came about, the 67 minutes of selfless service represents 67 years that Mandela and other leaders of his generation spent in the quest to liberate South Africa.

They lived the expression "SWA, SWAH and SWAAHAA," and made sacrifices willingly for the happiness of others. Their sacrifices were the practice of unselfishness or "IDAN NA MAMA," not expecting anything in return. They were givers and not takers.



What qualities should a leader possess? If we look at Raam Rajya (the rule of Raam) and *Maryada Purushottam Raam* (a symbol of courtesy and virtue, a man of values and morals) we see in Raam a leader who gave direction, was focused, led by example and who followed a code of ethics. Raam gave a clear vision and a mission to his army to defeat Raavan and rescue Sita. In the Ramayana we learn about plans and strategies. Raam sent search parties, assembled materials, and built a bridge. It was the clarity of goals that enabled the army to put its heart and soul in the mission of rescuing Sita. This mission was coupled with nobleness of the cause – freeing people from the atrocities of Raavan. This was social responsibility. Although Raam was a king, he treated everyone equally. He developed relations with the ordinary people.



## Vedic mantras on governance

**Atharva Veda 3.24.5: *Aum shatahasta samaahara sahasrahasta sam kira. Kritasya kaaryasya cheha sphaatim samaavahah.***

This is a directive from God on the principle of conducting our work and business truthfully with success: As we earn with a 'hundred hands' by working hard, so must we share with a 'thousand hands' our wealth and profits with the needy and less fortunate.

**Rig Veda 10.191.2... *Aum sangacchadwam ...***

Citizens must live in unity, harmony, and accord, be organised and co-operative. Like our ancient forebears performed their duties righteously, so should we not falter in performing our duties.

**Yajur Veda 22.22: *Aum aa brahman braahmano brahmavarchasi jaayataam, aa raashtre raajanyah soorashavyotivyaadhee mahaaratho jaayataam.***

O Omniscient Lord may noble persons of learning and wisdom take birth in our country. For the destruction of all forms of evil, may there be born fearless, valiant administrators and soldiers, proficient in the art of diplomacy and warfare.

Rishi Manu, the first ancient lawmaker, detailed the duties and qualifications of Heads of State and members of assembly and gave directions on revenue and tax collection, the administration of justice at religious, legislative, and educational institutions. He said: "The law alone is the true authority," and, "let him (the leader) never do anything without approval of the Assembly." These values and principles form the basis of modern constitutional democracies throughout the world.

There are examples of people leading righteous lives of dharma in Hindu scriptures, which remain an inspiration for all times. These are leadership lessons.

## Leaders Serve their People

A well-known verse in the Ramayana, *Praan jaaye par vachan na jaaye*: I may give up my life, but I shall never give up on my word. This applies to the oath of office that elected leaders take today.

Raam's duty was to serve his people and not himself. He did this even at the cost of his marriage. When Raam was King of Ayodhya, the rule was that havan was done every day in every home.

It is common practice today when a head of state is inaugurated, or on any special occasion, some convicted criminals are pardoned and released. However, in ancient times, leaders would share their wealth in the form of gifts to their family and subjects. (Perhaps this is the spirit in which gifts and sweets are exchanged at times like Deepavali).

## Detachment

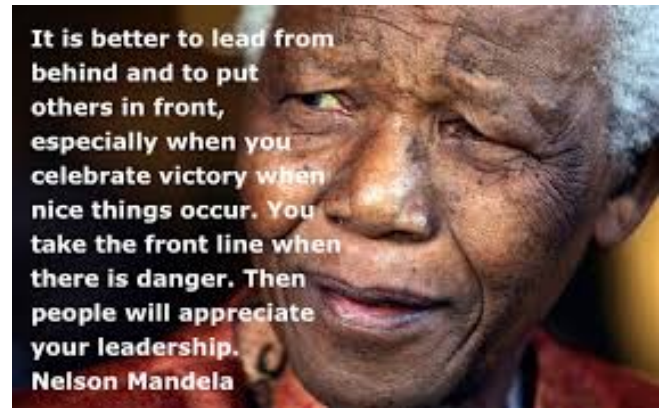
In the Ramayana King Dasrath governed with guidance from spiritual advisors such as great Rishis (enlightened Vedic sages and seers) Vasisht and Vishwamitra. In Mithila, whilst he was himself spiritually enlightened, Sita's father, King Janak also ruled very wisely, with guidance from rishis and ministers, often engaging in scriptural discussions and debates.

When Dasrath was ready to hand over the kingdom of Ayodhya to his son Raam he planned to retire to the forest. This is a big lesson in voluntary detachment and letting go of power and materialism which is the third ashram of life – *Vanprastha* or retirement.

Raam himself not only relinquished the throne without hesitation to honour his father's promise (*Vachan*) to Kaikeyi but did so by going into exile for 14 years.

Sita and Lakshman also sacrificed the comforts of life to support Raam. Sita's great sacrifice was a promise to Raam that she shall remain celibate (*Brahmachari*) so that he was not distracted for the duration of the exile.

Lakshman insisted that his wife Urmila remain in the kingdom to take care of their parents. Bharat's detachment to the throne remains unparalleled, whilst his wife Mandavi gave her full support. Shatrughan and his wife Shrutakirti (Shruti) are also to be hailed for not usurping the kingdom. They are said to have seen to the administration of the palace, without claiming kingship.



**Yajur Veda 40.1; Isha Up. 1: *Aum Eeshaavaasyam idam sarvam... maa grdhah kasya swiddhanam.***

All that exists is pervaded by, and belongs ultimately to, God. Therefore, we must not be greedy for that which does not belong to us.

**Yajur Veda 40.2; Isha Up. 2: *Aum kurvannaveh karmaani... na karma lipyate nare.***

Our duty is to perform our work virtuously for the greater good (of the world) unselfishly, without attachment and desire for any form of reward.

**Yajur Veda 40.17; Isha Up. 15: *Aum hiranmayena paatrena satyasya pihitam...***

Realise the truth that God is omnipresent, and do not be allured by external, material attractions and distractions.

Raam, his siblings, and their wives all lead by example of unselfishness, not attracted by material wealth and power. Leadership values are about carrying out duty and not being attached to power and comfort.

## War of Dharma

### Bhagavad Gita

**2.47: Your right (freedom) is to work only, never to the fruit (result/reward/punishment).**

**2.48: Perform your duties established in Yoga, renouncing attachment.**

**2.49: Actions with a selfish motive are far inferior.**

Raam tried to negotiate a settlement for peace. Raavan failed to understand and accept his folly of greed and arrogance for wealth and power, which ultimately led to his downfall. Like Raavan, the Kauravas, led by Duryodhan, in the Mahabharat also failed to understand, and accept the

folly of their arrogance and greed. Innocent lives were lost in the process.

In the preparation for war, Raam was asked: “What would you do if *Raavan* surrendered and apologised for his misdeeds?” Raam replied: “I will restore Raavan to the throne in Lanka, and in my place, crown *Vibhishan* (Raavan’s brother) in *Ayodhya*.”

A lesson in truth and unselfishness. This is an example of his high thinking by which he is known as *Maryaada Purushottam*.

## Unity and Duty

At the time of his coronation, Raam did not impose his will, He first sought the opinion and permission of his mother, Kaushalya, and asked her to make the announcement that he will give to his brothers and sisters-in-law anything they asked of him. This is how they responded:<sup>1</sup>

- Bharat: *Janam janam rati Raam pad*: In every birth, may I be able to serve Raam at his feet.
- Raam addressed his sisters-in-law as “Daughter:” Bharat’s wife Mandavi asked they be blessed with continued strength of will, firm resolve and peaceful attitude to be able to face life’s trials and difficulties as they did earlier.
- Lakshman asked to be never separated from Raam.
- Urmilla (Lakshman’s wife) responded that she was already fortunate and blessed to be accepted as a daughter-in-law in the family and wanted nothing more. This is a powerful lesson for us today.
- Shatrughan, who was as close to Bharat as Lakshman was to Raam, wished for nothing but to be able to serve at the feet of Bharat.
- Shatrughan’s wife Shruti (means to listen), listened and did not respond until Raam insisted, then she spoke: In order to remember such sacrifice and suffering, Shruti asked Raam for his *Valkal* – the covering (outfit) made of bark, which he used in the forest, and discarded on his return.

Nobody asked for anything material for themselves. These lessons in unity in thought, intentions, and unselfish actions are most important today in any family, organisation, business, or government.

## Noble Selfless Leaders

***Aum samraajo ye suvrtho yajna maayayur aparivirta dadhire divi kshayam. Taam aavivaasa namasaa suvrktibhirmaho aadityaam aditim swastaye.***

We pay our respects to the brave people of the past and present who shine for their noble and virtuous work in desiring progress for others. We revere those distinguished people who are living, and those who have passed on, as their deeds continue to inspire us.

2500 years ago, a young Prince Siddarth left the comforts and attachment of palace and family and rose spiritually to become Lord Buddha.

Maharishi Dayanand Sarasvati (1824 – 1883) wrote at length on the *Science of Government, or Raj Dharma*: Governance based on Dharma: truth, righteousness, love, equality of and for all people. He refused to be addressed by terms like Guru or His Holiness, for that would reduce the Holiness of God. On establishing the Arya Samaj, the movement for religious, social, and economic reform of society based on scriptural truths, he did not occupy any position of authority, but remained an ordinary member. The management and administration of the organisation is not in the hands of any one person, but a duly democratically elected committee.

The 10 Principles of the Arya Samaj, formulated by Maharshi Dayanand Sarasvati, each have their authority and basis in the Vedas:

1. Rig Veda 10.82.3: The source of Truth.
2. Rig Veda 6.45.16: Truth of One, Formless, Adorable God.
3. Rig Veda 10.134.7: Scripture of Truth: Veda.
4. Yajur Veda 19. 77: Belief in Truth.
5. Rig Veda 10.124.5: Practice of Truth.
6. Yajur Veda 12.54: Truth of universal good.
7. Atharva Veda 19.62.1: Truth of love.
8. Yajur Veda 29.37: Truth of knowledge and ignorance.
9. Yajur Veda 40.7: Truth of individual and social welfare.
10. Atharva Veda 4.3.7: Truth of freedom and duty.

Vedas teach us to live by principles and not principals or leaders, to adopt ideals not idols and not be idle.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948): Having led the struggle for India’s freedom (it had started many decades earlier), did not take up any position in the new Government but remained a guide and advisor. Gandhi said: “...The poor must enjoy the same power as the rich, who must understand that

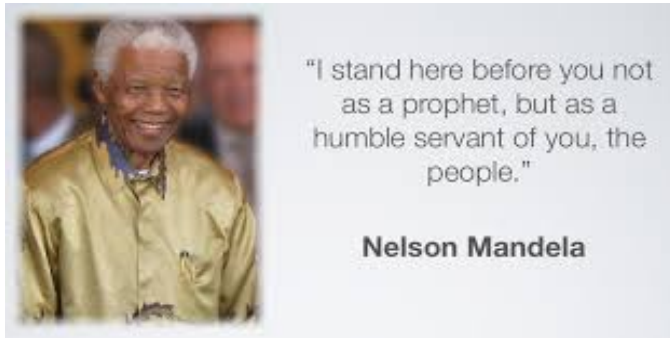
<sup>1</sup> “Rama Katha:” article by Sant Sri Morari Babu – Bhavan’s Journal, April 30, 2002; Vol. 48 No 18).



their desires above and beyond the bare necessities were to be accommodated only after the essential needs of the poor were satisfied... decentralized and democratic political system is the only means to resolve the worldly problems.”

In South Africa, a gentle, humble man with great vision: Pandit Nardev Vedalankar (1918 – 1994), guided the Arya Samaj for many years, without taking on the position of President.

After many decades of unjust, discriminatory laws and practices against its citizens, the suffering and loss of innumerable lives, the former Government of South Africa eventually realised their folly and entered a negotiated settlement, in this way nationwide uprisings and outright civil war was avoided. The late former President Nelson Mandela accepted the position at the overwhelming will of the people and stayed in office for one term only. He also had a special advisor – the late Ahmed Kathrada also was jailed for 27 years for his political activity. Mandela was elevated in the world as an Elder Statesman.



Learning from their lessons, guidance, and example, we must honour noble people who make sacrifices of truth for the greater good. Peace in all its forms can be achieved when selfish satisfaction and happiness, greed for wealth, power of positions, ego, arrogance, and the need for fame, are discarded.

#### Excerpts from a few well-known hymns

- **Yaj Geet:** *Dharma maryaada chalaakar, laabh de sansaar ko:*  
If we all follow the path of dharma – righteousness, then the world will benefit.
- **Aarti:** *Mai sevak, Tum swami:*  
I am but Your humble servant O God, You are our Divine Master.
- **Shaanti keejiye:** *Shaanti raashtr nirmaan... nagar gram aur bhavan me...:*  
let there be peace in every country, in every district, village and home.
- **Vaidik dharam ki jay:** *Dharma arth kaam moksha... Jeevan ho shaantimai:*  
We must acquire wealth and material pleasures within the bounds of righteousness for the emancipation of our soul. Life will then indeed be peaceful.

As we celebrate Mandela Day across the world, let us practice the leadership values we learn from Vedic literature.

With an abundance of lessons in the Vedas, this is a selection of some mantras and their meanings that we recite daily.

**Rig Veda 5.82.5; Yajur Veda 30.3: Aum vishwaani deva savitar duritaani paraasuva. Yad bhadran tanna aasuva.**

O Lord, grant us the strength to remove all forms of weaknesses, vices, and sorrows from ourselves, so that we live noble and respectful lives.

**Yajur Veda 40.16; Isha Upanishad 18: Aum agne naya supathaa raaye asmaan vishwaani deva vayuyaani vidwaan. Yuyodhyasmajjuhu raanameno bhuyishtaante nama uktim vidhema.**

O Omniscient God, kindly lead us on the path of Thy devotion and grace. You know our thoughts and deeds, O God. Help us remove our vices and sins. In all sincerity we offer our homage and salutations to You.

**Rig Veda 7.34.3; Atharva Veda 19.10.3: Aum ...shanno devaanaam suhavaani santu.**

May the sermons and words of wisdom of learned persons be of joy and benefit to us.

**Rig Veda 7.34.4; Atharva Veda 19.10.4: Aum Shannah sukrtam sukrtani santu...**

May Paramathama bless those who perform good, noble deeds and distinguished service for our benefit.

**Rig Veda 7.34.11; Atharva Veda 19.11.2: Aum shanno deva vishwadevaa bhavantu sham sarasvati saha dheebhirastu. Shamabhishaachah shamu raatishaachah shanno divyaah paartivaah shanno apyaah.**

May those who are learned and blessed with divine qualities and good habits guide and inspire us with wisdom for our benefit. Let us maintain good relations, be sociable and helpful.

**Rig Veda 7.34.12; Atharva Veda 19.11.1: Aum shannah satyasya patayo bhavantu shanno arvantah shamu santu gaavah. Shanna rbavah sukrtah suhastah shanno bhavantu pitaro haveshu.**

May the custodians of truth bring peace. May our elders give us such advice and guidance that will bring peace to our minds.

# Youth Act to Shape the Future

Over the centuries young persons have always been a lot more questioning about the world and more vocal about what they feel and think. Today youth are a lot more inclined to share what they believe in, what they think is right, what their concerns are, and what they think adults should be doing to correct the negative behaviours of the past. Youth make some interesting things happen. Many of the current politicians and leaders were themselves student activists in their time.

In 2018 youth in 200 countries across the globe engaged in strikes calling for adults to act and stop ruining the planet's future. This was the youth's collective response to worldwide alarm about global warming. The protests by students in India against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) in 2019 sparked an interest in youth activism and student politics, and their role in postcolonial Indian history.

In South Africa, it is especially significant to remember June 16 as it was the youth who began turning apartheid on its head and conscientized not only South Africans but people all over the world. This at tremendous cost to their schooling and even their lives. The 1976 youth uprising on June 16<sup>th</sup> in Soweto – which spread across the country – set in motion the tsunami of passionate action that ultimately brought freedom to all the people of South Africa.



## Some Vedic Mantras relevant to youth actions:

**Rig Veda 5.25.5: *Putram dadaati daashushe*** - Children must bring honour and glory to their parents, family, and society, as children of today will be adults and elders of tomorrow.

**Rig Veda 10.63.4: *Brihad devaaso amritatwa maanashu, jyotiratha ahimaaya...*** Rise to greatness, lead pure, peaceful lives, and bring enlightenment to the world.

**Rig Veda 3.17.5: *Aum yastvadhota poorvo agne yajeeyaan... Tasyaanu dharmam pra yajaa:*** Perform your duties efficiently, following the example of your predecessors – with wisdom and philanthropy – noble work.

**Atharva Veda 3.12.6: *Vanshogro viraajannapa vrinshwa shatroom:*** be a strong and brave member of your lineage / dynasty.

2018 Fridays for Future (also called School Strike for Climate)

1976 Soweto Uprisings



We need to act !  
Our mothers and fathers did!



## 9th August – National Women’s Day

The writings on women in the Vedic era suggest that they were accorded full status in society. They conducted themselves as full and equal citizens. In the Upanishads and other scriptures there are shining examples of women philosophers who were skilful debaters and deep thinkers. Two such examples are Gargi and Maiteryi who were renowned academics in the court of King Janaka. Other names that come up are Lopamudra, Urvashi, Yami, Ghosha.

Women had the choice to be householders or study scripture - follow a philosophical path. There is scriptural justification for remaining unmarried, or a non-childbearing woman.

The Laws of Manu set out dictates for women to take their rightful place in society. Education for women was seen as important. It was through educating women that the laws of society as set out by Manu could operate. Hindu scripture place the woman in high esteem, the mother role is seen as important given that mothers are the first educator.

**Rig Veda (1.79.1) says: *Hiranya kesho rajaso visaare, ahir dhunir vaata iva dhrajeeman.*** “May the women of the world shine like the dawn, and come out of the darkness of ignoble thought, thundering like a cloud on an evil thought, keeping her character as a spotless dawn.”

Rishi Manu rightly declared: ***Yatr naari astu poojyante ramante, tatra devataah.*** “Where women are respected, there the gods reside.”

As early as 1913, African women in South Africa began to focus on their role in society. Following the creation of the African National Congress Women’s League in 1948 and the formation of the Federation of South African Women in 1954, the issues of passes, Bantu education and beer halls dominated the activities of South African women.

Women are equal partners.

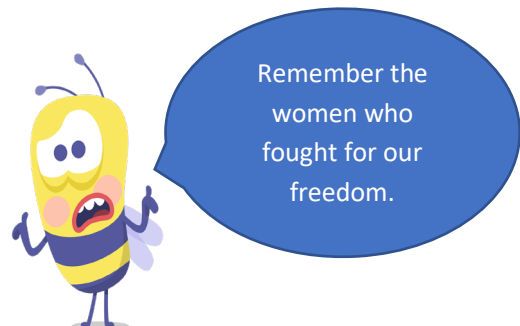


Among the key activities organised by women was the mass demonstrations of August 9 in 1956 (which became National Women's Day in South Africa).



65 years ago, women from all parts of our country marched to the Union Buildings to tell the then President Strydom, that they the women of South Africa will not accept the pass. They said Strydom you have stuck a rock. Indeed, women are rocks, stable and secure, the center of families and society, yet women have not been accorded equal space in society.

Women then were involved in limited spaces in the economy, as nurses, teachers, and domestic workers. Today we have a body of laws including the Maintenance Act, Domestic Violence Act and Choice on the Termination of Pregnancy Act. Other laws such as Employment Equity, Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination have positively impacted on the lives of women.



# Shravani: The Period of Strengthening Bonds and Developing Relationships

The period of Shravani relates to bonding between an individual and God and the special relationship that develops between a pupil and teacher.

The emphasis in general is on the role of the strong and more developed individual towards the weak and unprotected. God is almighty and thus represents strength. We are constantly seeking His protection. A teacher is more developed and wiser, while pupils are innocent and lacking in knowledge.

During Shravani the Yajnopavita is changed. The ancient Rishis developed the ritual of the yearly renewal of the Yajnopavita to recommit being one with God. It is a vow to become the seeker after the truth. Yajur Veda 1.5: To cherish and uphold truth and renounce untruth in any form.

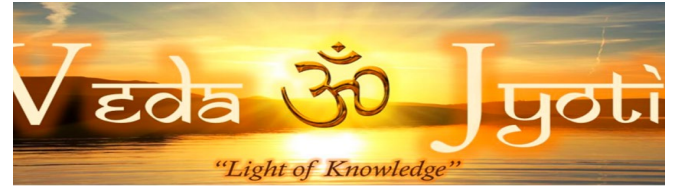
The Yajnopavita is not just a cord made up of three threads. Knitted together in it are the vows and aspirations of a student. The Yajnopavita is made up of three threads each of which is formed of three finer threads knitted together. The Yajnopavita thus consists of nine threads closely knit, which are collectively given the name "Brahma Sutra". All the threads are tied by a single knot called the "Brahma Granthi".

Associated with Yajnopavita are nine ideals and duties pertaining to life which we need to strive towards to live a full and balanced life.

1. To serve our parents, our educators and God.
2. To understand the trinity of AUM, that represents God manifested in the aspects of Creator, Preserver and Dissolver, that every object exists in the three states of birth, existence, and death.
3. To acquaint ourselves with knowledge, duty, and devotion.
4. To achieve perfection through physical, intellectual, and spiritual progress.
5. To unfold the secrets of the earth, sky, and space.
6. To know the attributes of God, soul, and matter.
7. To understand the three *Gunas*: *Saatvic*, *Raajasic* and *Taamasic* and to establish an equilibrium in ourselves among them.
8. To ensure the realisation of truth in thought, word, and deed.
9. To alleviate suffering and embrace peace.

The observance of Raksha Bandhan emanates from the Yajnopavita, has evolved in time to demonstrate the strong bond between a brother and sister. The Vedic edict for Raksha Bandhan is a bond of protection for every member of the family. Atharva Veda 3.30.2, 3 and 6: **Anuvratah pituh putro, maatra bhavatu samanaah; jaayaa patye madhumateem vaacham vadatu shaatvaam. Maa bhraataram dwikshan maa swasaaramuta swasaa; samyanchah savrataa bhootvaa vaacham vadata bhadrayaa. ...sah vo'annabhaagah samaane yoktre sah vo yunajmi...**: There must be a vow of peace, protection, unity, harmony, mutual love, and respect amongst every member of the family: husband and wife, parents and children, and amongst siblings – irrespective of age, achievements of position, qualifications, wealth. Mealtime must be a daily practice of uniting the family.

Once each year we can take stock of our lives and recommit ourselves to the ideals of correct action. During Shravani everyone can begin the process of developing a special relation with God and oneself. It is a time when we can commit ourselves to the ideals of improving society through individual actions. During Shravani the realisation of a balanced life, the enjoining of the strong and the weak, and the overall harmonious interaction of the all the different actors in society come into focus.



Send your memories of how Pandit Nardev Vedalankar (1913 – 1994) shaped your life

Send us one or two paragraphs (maximum of 150 words) to [admin@aryasamajsa.org](mailto:admin@aryasamajsa.org).

**Deadline for your contributions is 30 July 2021.**

**To contribute to projects of the Arya Samaj contact [admin@aryasamajsa.org](mailto:admin@aryasamajsa.org)**

**Please send your comments and suggestions to [admin@aryasamajsa.org](mailto:admin@aryasamajsa.org)**



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