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➤ **From the MD's Desk:**

Dear Friends,

This last month has seen nice celebrations in Suvridha.

The Rajyothsava celebration was colourful and very well received.

Several other activities like Yoga classes have started.

I would like to thank the residents who have taken the initiative to undertake these programmes.

Phase 1a is nearing completion. The cottages are complete. The ramps and the road are being completed. We should be handing over the cottages to the SH in about a month.

The entrance gate and the security cabin have been completed. The soft launch of the entrance took place, in a manner, on Rajyothsava day when the procession went through the gate.

We had earlier reported that getting clearances from the RBI for inward remittances in foreign currency has been challenging. We are glad to report that we have received one clearance for refund of some payment we received in 2010! There are a few more issues to be regularised. We believe that this will be sorted out soon, now that we have made a beginning. It has been a major effort from Suvridha, lasting over 2 years!



Regards

Dr. K. Lakshman

**SNL Archives:** All back issues of Suvridha News Letter are available at: <http://suvridha.co.in/news-letters.html>

**Note:** Download the desired back issue for activating the hyperlinks in the document. Then read it at leisure.

Website: <http://www.suvridha.co.in> Phone: 91-080-26951000 / 212 Email : [contact@suvridha.co.in](mailto:contact@suvridha.co.in)

## ➤ Event Highlights:

### ✚ 15-10-2016: Solid Waste Management Solutions

Suvidha invited Mr. Vasuki Iyengar, Director and Advisor of **M/s Shudh Labh Solutions Pvt Ltd.** M/s Shudh Labh is into community composting and solid waste management solutions. Founded in 2014, they are currently managing about 20 bulk generators ranging from 10 units to 350 units for the last two years. He is composting for the last 5 years using both aerobic and anaerobic (Bokashi) composting methods. M/s Shudh Labh is into home composting and consultancy in waste management solutions. He gave a talk on an easy and fast method of making manure of excellent quality. He also enlightened the residents on the 2-bin-1-bag concept in an interesting interactive session.

### ✚ 22-10-2016: Staff Sports Meet At Suvidha

Suvidha has been buzzing with sports and cultural activities. On 22nd of October our Ladies' Club held a Sports Meet for our Staff Members which is a favourite event for our Staff. All the Staff Members, including the Security Guards, took part in the meet enthusiastically. Prizes for the winners and snacks were sponsored by the Ladies' Club. At the conclusion of the events, the winners of the games received their worthy trophies from Smt. Mythili Sampath, a senior resident of cottage # 181A. Smt. Mythili Sampath is the former Asst. State Commissioner Guides, Bharat Scouts & Guides, Karnataka State. We thank her for accepting our invitation.



To add a silver lining to the occasion, Mrs. Shobini Gurudas and Dr Ashok Gurudas, our Director, graciously sponsored and distributed special gifts to all the Staff Members who received the gesture with a warm smile.

The event was a great success and was well received by the staff and the residents alike. On behalf of all Suvidhites, we would like to sincerely thank the Ladies Club for organising this event. Here is the link to the photos taken on the occasion: <https://goo.gl/photos/e3ijSNDvk77cWLrcA>

### ✚ 23-10-2016: Day of Events

- **Open House on Garbage Collection System:** Smt. Gayathri and Smt. Indu Champati gave a practical demonstration of the new mandate of "Two bins and One bag" waste collection mandate using the recommended containers. Accordingly the waste will be segregated at the cottage by concerned resident into wet waste, dry waste and the hazardous waste as described in the pamphlet. The garbage collection vehicle will collect the waste from the cottages on any given working day between 11 am to 12 noon. During the meeting a few volunteers have been identified to co-ordinate the programme. It is envisaged to initiate the waste collection system from 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and meanwhile several training sessions will be held to train the concerned residents as well as the house keeping staff.
- **India's Amazing Bio Diversity :** SUVIDHA Ladies club arranged a talk on the said topic by Mr. Champati of Cottage # 115A, who took the entire audience through a spell bound experience of a slideshow of Indian animals in their wild habitat. The naturalist, Mr. Champati with 35 years experience in the wild life photography and conservation shared some of the rarest encounters with the animals that are at the verge of extinction. There were strong requests from the audience to have a repeat programme on a specific topic. Mr. Champati readily agreed to the suggestion.



### 1-11-2016: Kannada Rajyotsava 2016 At Suvidha

61st Kannada Rajyotsava (Formation of Karnataka State) was celebrated at Suvidha on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016, with great pomp and enthusiasm. The event was sponsored and conducted by our 'Sunset Club'.

Mrs. Rajeshwari and Mrs. Vasanthi hoisted the Karnataka Flag. Befitting the occasion, Suvidhites who are learning spoken-Kannada and their 'Guru' Mr. SM Subba Rao, were felicitated.



To mark the occasion a gala procession of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari was organised from the club house to the main gate. The procession went around the new main gate constructed recently. An eye catching dance and enthralling drum beats of Dollu Kunitha by Kempe Gowda Janapada Kalavidaru, Ramanagara and Pooja Kunitha by KB Swamy and troupe from Mandya were performed from morning till afternoon. Residents/Shareholders/Guests/ Staff danced to the reverberating drum beats. Sumptuous breakfast and lunch were served to all present.

In the evening a music concert was organised. Sri Mrityunjaya Doddawada, Singer & Composer and his troupe performed soothing songs. On behalf of all Suvidhites, we thank the 'Sunset Club' for making this possible. Here are the links to the photos taken on both the occasions:

Kannada Rajyotsava 2016 At Suvidha On 01/11/2016 – Morning Programme

<https://goo.gl/photos/jqAN5kE7HQoSnWcW7> - courtesy Mr. CB Prabhakar

<https://goo.gl/photos/JW9fCMsZJYncCaow5> - courtesy Dr. K Lakshman

Kannada Rajyotsava 2016 At Suvidha On 01/11/2016 – Evening Programme

<https://goo.gl/photos/dTeDYKAyZ3uiFAZw7> - courtesy Mr. CB Prabhakar



### 3-11-2016: Inauguration of the Green House

At the outset, Dr PM Chandrashekara welcomed the gathering. The newly established Green House and the Plant Propagation Hall were inaugurated by Mr. SR Sampath of cottage # 181A. During the inaugural speech Mr. Sampath shared his experience in the plant field at various institutions that he served during his long service as an expert in the field. He also shared / donated various books on the subject that he has authored.



Dr Narayanan also spoke on the occasion on Greenhouses and problems in their management.

The SLC must be congratulated on bringing the Green House project to a successful conclusion. Please find here the link to photos taken on the occasion:- <https://goo.gl/photos/1j3qebtZaPuGJbA37> - courtesy Dr K Lakshman.

#### **5-11-2016: Yoga Classes for Senior Citizens of Suvidha**

The Neighbourhood Whatsapp Group of Suvidha administered by Mr. Rajendran, cottage # 99 took up this initiative. Thus, Yoga classes for the senior citizens was inaugurated on Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 11.30 am. Miss Bijaya Yoga Therapist from Sagar Clinic gave a talk on the topic and demonstrated some aspects by encouraging some volunteers to participate. She will conduct two sessions per week, that is, on Saturdays and Sundays.

#### **12-11-2016: Waste Management Mandate**

Smt. Padma Arun, Manager, "Stone Soup" conducted a lecture-demonstration of waste management. The meeting also discussed the ways and means of introduction of waste collection programme from the cottages. Emphasis was given to educate the house keeping staff about their responsibility with respect to the waste segregation at the source. At the same time the residents were appraised about the mandate of two bins and one bag system of waste management that will come to effect from next week onwards. Arrangements are on the way to procure the necessary coloured bins and the bags after obtaining the consent from the individual resident to participate actively in the programme.



#### **14-11-2016: Samoohika Sri Satyanarayana Pooja**

As was done during the last year, "Samoohika Sathynarayana Pooja was performed with devotion this year also on the Karthika Full Moon day ie. on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016 {Poornima}. Elaborate Pooja and lunch arrangements were made for the convenience of the participants in the Pooja. Dr. KS Shekar and his family hosted the festive lunch to all Suvidhites including the staff members.

The residents and staff participated in the Pooja with enthusiasm and received the blessings of Lord Sri Sathynarayana Swamy. Here are a few photos taken on this occasion: - <https://goo.gl/photos/8UjP9oMGLqWSUxoLA>



➤ **Suvidha On The Move :**

- **Grievance Handling:** In recognition of the need to promptly address the grievances, Smt. Prathima Shetty, the new Director, on Suvidha Board, has been allocated the responsibility of coordinating to find the solutions to the grievances filed by the residents. She could be contacted on [prathimavshetty@gmail.com](mailto:prathimavshetty@gmail.com)
- **Phase 1a:** Last two cottages have reached the final finishing stage and should be ready for occupation within this month. The approach road is also nearing its completion. Likewise the viewing gallery is progressing rapidly and the ground level steps have been laid and the pillars are being raised.



- Construction of wet and dry waste cabins near the generator room is nearing its completion.



- Project of additional street lights behind 115 b and 115c as well as around the park next to the cottage # 106 has been successfully completed.



- **Repairs to Compound wall:** Likewise erection of razor-edged barbed wire fence and completion of the gaps in the peripheral compound wall are also nearing completion.

#### ➤ **Suvidha Staff News:**

- Mr. Padmanabhan K, 64 years of age, has reported as Senior Cook in place of Mr. Balakrishna. Mr. Padmanabhan is a Hotel Management Diploma holder from Pussan Institute of Hotel Management, New Delhi and has 35 years experience in the field since then. His service record enlists his experience at Hotel Obaroi at Jammu and Kashmir, Hotel Gulmarg at Srinagar, Hotel Asia Jammu Tawi at Jammu, Hotel Sofital Surya, N Delhi, Hotel Holiday N Delhi, National Institute of Hotel Management – Chennai, Hotel Ananda Inn at Pondicherry, Hotel Plaza at Salem, Hotel Ganipat Grand at Palam and Serene Adinath senior citizen home at Chennai.



With a view to introduce Mr. K Padmanabhan to the residents and other canteen users, an inter-active session was organised on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2016 in Suvidha canteen. During the session the residents were requested to name their new choices of menu, if any and the senior cook responded to the suggestions enthusiastically. This session has gone off very well and helped building up rapport.

With the help of the members of the Ladies Club, the recent volunteers like Prof. Sankar; Mr. Ramani, Mr. Chandra kanth, Smt. Saraswathi and Smt. Chandra, the members of the Kitchen Committee will meet and draw a fresh weekly menu incorporating the new items.

#### ➤ **Suvidha Family News:**

- On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Mr. Len Shepherd celebrated his 92<sup>nd</sup> Birthday in the company of relatives and friends in a well organised function in Suvidha Club House. Of course there was a nice spread of goodies for the children as well as the invitees. Mr. Shepard has recently shifted to the Cottage No. 77 which meets his needs like - an additional guest room.
- On 12<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Brig Parthasaradhy, VSM, of Cottage # 84 with the object of promoting merit and scholarship among students, has donated a Silver Trophy and Cash Prize to RVC Centre College and Higher Secondary School to be awarded to the "Best Outgoing Student of the Year".

Here are some snaps taken on that occasion - <https://goo.gl/photos/dmsEcu8kwFPrAizD7>



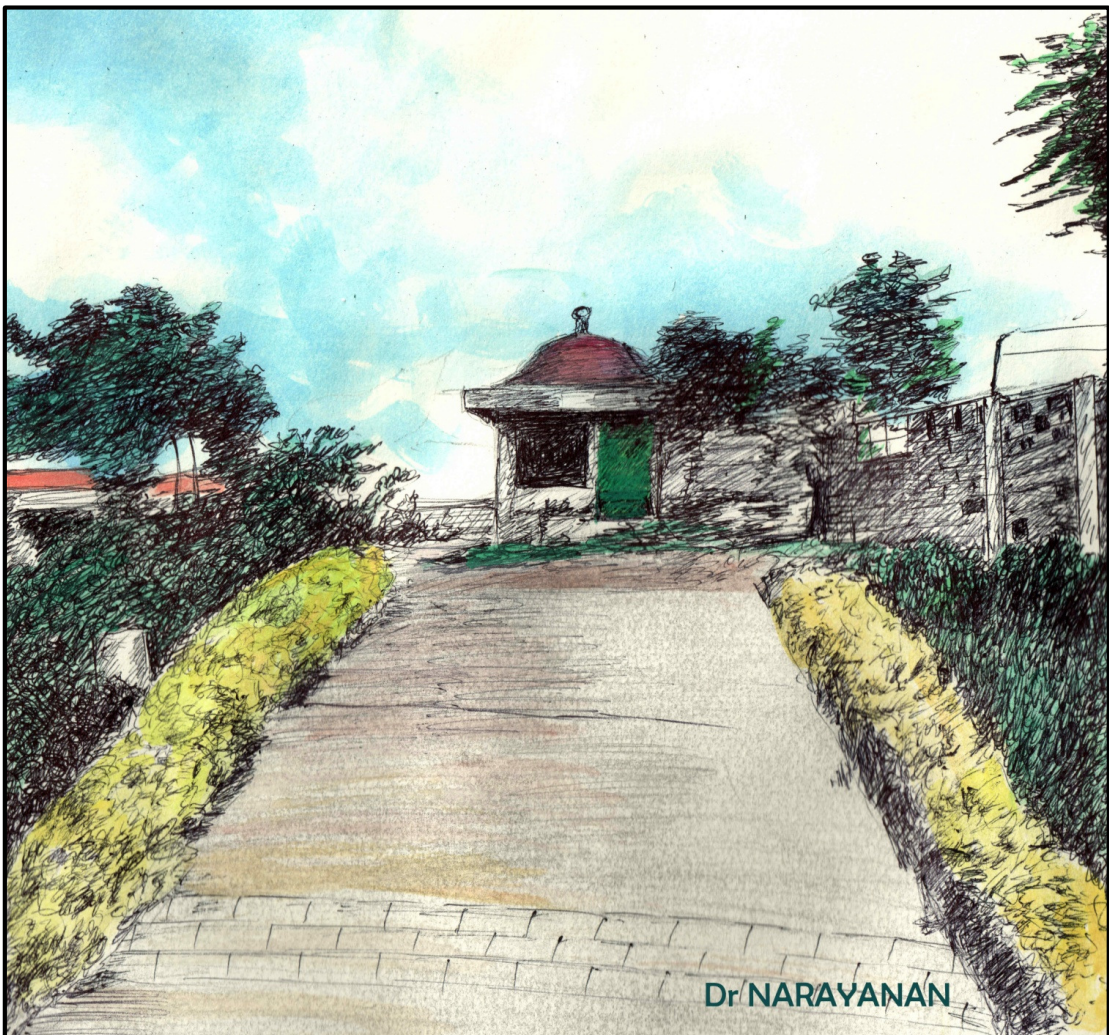
➤ **Suvidha Talent Corner:**

Under this banner, we introduce to our readers, the contributions of our Suvidha family members who have developed substantial special skill-sets as hobbies. Hope you will all enjoy such presentations. We welcome all such talented members to participate in this endeavour.

- **Paintings:** Dr. Narayanan R, is a popular gynecologist and a resident of Cottage No. 107 at SUVIDHA. Dear readers, you have enjoyed some of his paintings over the past two years. They were captioned under the heading, "Flora of Suvidha". To bring in a change, he now intends to capture the beauty of Suvidha by sketching a few familiar scenes. Hope you will enjoy !



**PUMP HOUSE**



- **Birds of SUVIDHA:** This is a series of beautiful and at times stunning pictures of birds that are either resident of or visitors to our Village. Mr. Ashok Dey, a permanent resident of SUVIDHA since November 2010, has been able to photograph as many as 101 different species of birds in the Village.



### GREY WAGTAIL



The first time I sighted the **Grey Wagtail (*Motacella cinerea*)** in our Village was in October 2015. It was wading in the shallow stream formed by the overflow from our lake at its southeastern corner. Little did I know then that this species is a winter visitor to peninsular India, Sri Lanka and Myanmar after having summered, nested and bred (between May and July) either in Balochistan or at altitudes between 2,000m - 4,000m in the Himalayas. This year it was first sighted by Sarath Champati in the stream behind his cottage (# 115-A) in early October and thereafter by me in end-October and in the first week of November at around the same spot as in 2015.

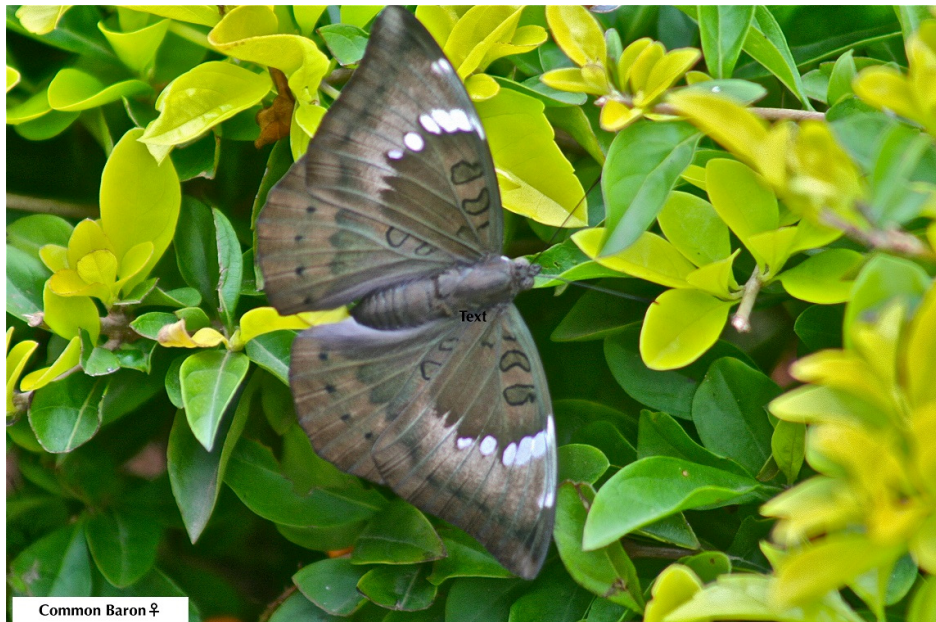
Chiefly grey and yellow in colour the bird is between 17cm and 19 cm from beak to tail. It is quite slim and has a long tail which is incessantly and characteristically wagged up and down. It has white supercilium (a stripe which runs from the base of the bird's beak above its eye, finishing somewhere towards the rear of the bird's head), grey upperparts, and yellow lower breast, vent and undertail-coverts. When in flight its narrow white wing bar and yellow rump become visible, as seen in the photograph below.

The bird feeds mainly on tiny insects and hunts for them by running about in brisk spurts, turning and twisting and often springing up in the air to catch them. It flies in a series of undulating curves produced by alternate quick flapping and closing of the wings.



- **Butterflies of SUVIDHA:** India has over 1,500 species of butterflies. Mr. Ashok Dey, a permanent resident of SUVIDHA since 2010, has been able to photograph and identify 47 species of butterflies inside our Village until now. Our Newsletter will carry this series comprising pictures and descriptions of butterflies of SUVIDHA.

### COMMON BARON



Common Baron ♀

The **Common Baron (*Euthalia aconthea*)** has a wingspan between 55-80 mm, with the female being much larger than the male. This species is found in a variety of habitats over all of south and southeast Asia. In the Himalayas it has been seen at altitudes of 2,400 m. It is not found in dry scrub and grasslands. It flies near

human habitation mainly because its caterpillars feed on leaves of fruit trees like the mango. Its strong and rapid flight is sustained by powerful wing-strokes followed by swift and graceful glides.

The female is pale brown and has a prominent white band on the upper forewings. Both males and females have black dots on their hind wings. The wings have a deep olive-green sheen and therefore appear more olive-green than brown. Males are darker with a row of small white spots. The spots are larger in the female.

The species is fond of basking on the ground, on boulders, on leaves of bushes and sometimes it also settles on trees. It is not a wanderer and spends most of its time feeding on the ground. Well known lepidopterist, Krushnamegh Kunte has this to say about the food habits of this species : "It is a habitual alcoholic. It is not attracted to any flowers at all. Instead it relishes fallen, rotting fruits that are rich in alcohol."

*(Note : The male was photographed when it was in its dying throes having been knocked to the ground by a jet of water from the hedge bordering a pavement in our Village, while the hedge was being watered. It had lost portions of its wings and hence the black spots on the trailing edges are only partially and very faintly visible.)*



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➤ **Readers' Corner :**

**FROM VIOLENCE TO NON-VIOLENCE**  
**as evidenced in the Mahābhārata**

**Courtesy:** Dr. T. S. Rukmani, PhD, D Litt., Resident of Suvidha Village, Cottage # 73-74  
(Presently, the author is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.)

While I was teaching at Concordia University, my very first question to students who wanted to learn about Hinduism would be "Why did you choose to study Hinduism"? One reason students regularly gave was because they considered Hinduism to be a non-violent religion and that they believed Hindus are vegetarians because of that belief. Of course we all know that not all Hindus are vegetarians and neither is the religion in its beginnings totally against violence towards animals since Vedic sacrifices involved animal sacrifice. Even today while animal sacrifice has disappeared in many ritual practices, it is still prevalent in many non-Vedic and Tantric rituals. So it will be interesting to find out how this change of attitude towards animal sacrifice came about in Hinduism which in turn might have had a role to play for the diet change to vegetarian as well.



In this brief paper I have tried to trace the evolution of the idea of *ahimsā* through the post Vedic period into the Classical period. Thus I am dividing the periods between the Vedic age and the age of the epics [the Mahābhārata (Mbh) and Rāmāyaṇa] heuristically into three i.e. the early Vedic period (c.2000BCE-900 BCE), the post-Vedic period (c.900BCE-500BCE) and the Classical or Epic period (ca.500 BCE-400CE). While changes in the direction of non-violence towards animals is seen in all these above periods sometimes in a weak sense as in the Vedic period and sometimes in both a weak and in a strong sense as in the subsequent two periods, it is especially in the Classical period that we find non-violence or *ahimsā* finding a prominent place amongst the five *sādhāraṇa-dharmas* (common *dharmas*) which by this time had become firmly rooted as the *dharma* to be followed by all.

The Classical period has been recognized as of great importance in Indian history. There was great intellectual activity at this time and a number of texts like the Mbh, the *dharmasāstras* (DS), the Gr̥hyasūtras (Gr̥S), Smṛtis such as that of Manu and Yajñavalkya, Kautilya's Arthaśāstra (AS), the Kāmasūtra, The Nāṭyaśāstra (NS), the philosophical *sūtras* and some literary works make their appearance on the scene. The concept of *dharma* also underwent a change from the earlier *varṇāśrama-dharmas* and expanded to include some common *dharmas* for all citizens to follow. All these changes must have been in response to the changed political and cultural changes which came in the wake of Asoka's vigorous ethical practices as well as the impact that the *karma* theory must have had with the fear of retribution for violence committed in previous lives haunting humans. The post-Vedic period ushered in a number of new ideas which are found in the Upanisads such as the *karma* theory, the notion of transmigration of the self, the permanent nature of the self, the relation between violence and non-violence towards animals in view of the implication of the *karma* theory etc, etc. Scholars are divided as to the origin of these new ideas. Some believe that they are due to influence from non-Vedic sources while others like Hauer, Schmidt and Hesterson, "believe that many of the ideas... including that of non-violence do have their roots in the remote past and are implied in the earliest Vedic religion".

Philosophers were conscious of the contradiction that existed between statements like '*na hiṃsyāt sarva bhūtāni*' (Chānd.Up 3.15.1) and animal sacrifice practiced in sacrifices. We find later philosophical texts positioning themselves on some kind of apologetics defending violence in sacrifice but otherwise condemning it (Halbfass, 1991: 87ff). Even though the changes from violence to non-violence are very much in evidence in the Brāhmaṇa period they are more like testing the ground rather than a thorough breakthrough with the Vedic concept of animal sacrifice in *yajñas*. However one needs to acknowledge the freedom with which certain questions were raised in the Taittirīya, Jaiminīya and Satapatha Brāhmaṇas regarding animal sacrifice (Thite, 1975). Any dissent can start with sensitive individuals who find it difficult to agree with the practices prevalent in society and if the dissent is strong enough can gather momentum when many others start thinking on the same lines. The substitution of rice balls (*puṛodāśa*) for animals in sacrifices is very much in the direction of non-violence and it was negotiated through some interesting discussions in the Brāhmaṇas. The reasons for this change could very well have been the belief in retribution for one's acts in the world hereafter and as determining one's future births as well (Mbh. XIII. 114. 12;115.34).

Some of these discussions in the Brāhmaṇas reveal the struggle that was going on to maintain the Vedic beliefs with the new thinking in the wake of ideas like the *karma* theory for instance which definitely engaged the attention of these thinkers. One interesting direction of justifying animal sacrifice is to argue that the victim in a sacrifice is the sacrificer himself. This led to questions like whether the eating of flesh of the victim meant that one is eating one's own flesh and charges of cannibalism (Thite, 1975: 145-47). It is in these difficult questionings that we must search for the beginnings of a change of heart that led to a theory of substitution and interpret sacrifices metaphorically as internal mental sacrifices as we see later in the Aranyaka and Upanisadic literature (Br.Up. 1.1).

Religions such as Buddhism and philosophical schools such as Sāṃkhya and Yoga as well as the rule of Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty with his sympathy for Buddhist principles of non-violence all wrought a change in the way issues such as animal sacrifices, meat eating and treating of animals in general came to be viewed. The tension between being loyal to old values and the urge to accommodate the new values is visible in the Mbh and specially in the Sāntiparvan and Anuśāsanaparvan which are considered to be later additions to the core of the epic. This has been brought into sharp focus when Yudhiṣṭhira asks Br̥haspati and Bhīṣma in the Anuśāsanaparvan different questions regarding how one could square the contradiction between offering meat at sacrifices such as the *śrāddha* ceremonies for the dead which was a *vidhi* and observing non-violence as well (XIII.113-115).

The questions of Yudhiṣṭhira was not just about avoiding animal sacrifice in *śrāddha* ceremonies but covers many other ethical dimensions pertaining to animal killing. Thus he wants to know the demerits that accrue to one killing an animal himself; to someone eating meat when the animal is killed by someone else; again he is curious as to what happens to one who kills not for himself but for the sake of another and finally what is the fate of someone who eats meat by buying it from others (in a shop for instance). These are ethical questions and reminds one of what Vyāsa the first commentator on the Yogasūtras (YS) of Patañjali states under YS II.34. Talking about *hiṃsā* (violence) he says it can be of three types: either done by one self, caused to be done by another or approved when done by another. He calls the killing of animals

in a sacrifice under the belief that *dharma* will accrue to one as due to delusion. Depending on the intensity or otherwise of violence, the above three types is further divided into 27 kinds of injury (*hiṃsā*) in Vyāsa's commentary.

Coming back to the Mbh, Bhīṣma in answering Yudhiṣṭhira's questions gives many reasons why a person should avoid harming animals in any way. The answers cover a lot of ground and can be summarized under different headings. Since religion played a great role in the decision making process it is but natural that the Mbh uses it as one of the incentives to wean people away from animal sacrifices. One is to state that abstention from eating meat gives all the benefits that can come from performing sacrifices as prescribed thus stating that *ahiṃsā* or non-harming animals will achieve the same religious merits as the performance of *aśvamedha* sacrifices every month (XIII.115.8). In one verse abstention from meat (*ahiṃsā* towards animals) is equated to practising *tapas* (austerities) for 100 years (ibid. 115.53). By putting the words praising *ahiṃsā* in the mouth of famous people, the Mbh also seeks to legitimize the practice of non-harming of animals. Thus names such as those of the seven *ṛṣis*, the Vālkhyas, the Marīcīpās (perhaps meaning *yogīs* who live by [drinking] the sun's rays), Manu, Mārkaṇḍeya and others are used for this purpose. When Bhīṣma says that those desiring beauty, healthy limbs, long life, good mental activity, memory and physical strength should abstain from violence (to animals) one can wonder at its uncanny resemblance to the propagation of a vegetarian diet these days for the sake of good health (ibid.115. 6). In the context of *karma*, a powerful moral argument for the religious minded is to spell out the consequences of harming animals. Thus a number of verses are devoted to this moral aspect. Using the Vedic belief of reaping the fruits of one's action in another world after death the Mbh states that such a one does not acquire happiness after death (*pretya na sukhī bhavet*) (XIII.113.5; see also XIII.115.34).

The Mbh is also a cultural text and instructs through using familiar ideas to drive the message home. Thus it concedes that it is not very difficult to give up meat after having known its taste (XIII.114.14-15;115.17) as there is nothing superior to it in taste (ibid.116.7). Then juxtaposing this with statements comparing the meat of other animals to the flesh of one's own son one is made to confront morally the cruelty of harming another. The text also persuades one to give up animal sacrifices by citing the age old practice of using seeds and milk (*vrihipayaḥ*) in sacrifices (ibid.115.49). Since the whole discussion on harming animals was in answer to Yudhiṣṭhira's initial questions the answers to that is also given by Bhīṣma quoting Mārkaṇḍeya in verses XIII.115.37-39 as follows: The sin of killing is equal for him who slays as well for one who eats flesh slain by another. One who purchases flesh, kills creatures through his money; he who eats flesh kills by eating; one who actually kills creatures by binding / catching them is the real slaughterer. One who does not himself eat flesh but approves of the act of killing also suffers equally from the sin of killing.

So now we have come full circle and Bhīṣma concludes in that section by praising *ahiṃsā* in the highest possible manner. Verses XIII. 116.38-39 speak of non-violence as both the highest *dharma* as well as the highest self-restraint. It is the greatest gift and the greatest *tapas*; it is the greatest of sacrifices; it is the highest reward; it is the greatest of friends and it is the greatest happiness. As Bhīṣma rightly says "The merits of *ahiṃsā* are so numerous that they cannot be exhausted even if one were to speak of them for a hundred years (ibid.42).

I have tried to present how the virtue of non-harming or *ahiṃsā* gradually caught on in Hindu society and by the time of the Mahābhārata there was a marked change in attitude when one finds praise for the merits of non-harming and an argument for practising sacrifices by offering puroḍāśa/seeds in place of animals. Since any change can only happen in society gradually when large sections of the population are ready to accept them the Mbh also has sections where Vedic sacrifices with animal sacrifice are also sanctioned in very many places and does a delicate balancing act between *ahiṃsā* and *hiṃsā* having Vedic sanction. This is only a small sampling from the Mbh and one can look for examples from other texts belonging to this period for the concept of *ahiṃsā* slowly making inroads into the society. It will become clear then that the change of attitude from violence to non-violence was the result of many historical and cultural developments that marked this period in Indian history known as the classical age.

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## Road Map to tread the Last Years of Life - Part IV

Compiled by Dr. P M Chandrasekhara, Cottage # 75

### Assisted Living

With “assisted living” as Wilson’s concept became known, the goal was that no one ever had to be institutionalized. The services were, identical to the services that nursing homes provide. But here the care providers understood they were entering someone else’s home, and that changed the power relations fundamentally. The residents had control over the schedule, the ground rules, the risks they did and didn’t want to take. If their mind faded to the point that they could no longer make rational decisions, then their family – or whomsoever they’d designated – could help negotiate the terms of the risks and choices that were acceptable. With “assisted living”, the goal was that no one ever had to feel institutionalized. At the same time, her philosophy was to provide a place where residents retained the autonomy and privacy living in their own homes.



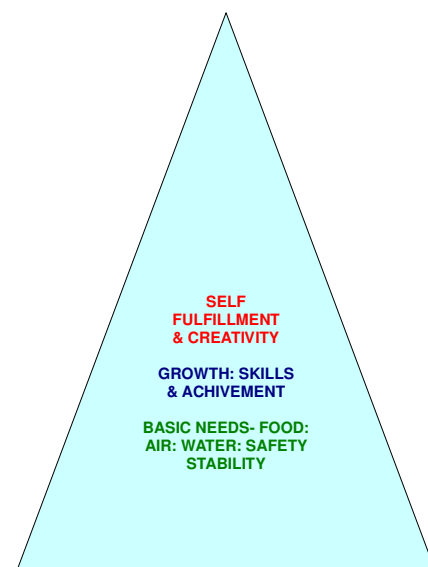
The state monitored the experiment closely. When the group expanded to a second location in Portland – this one had 142 units and capacity for impoverished elderly people on government support – the state required Wilson and her husband to track the health, cognitive capabilities, physical functions, and life satisfaction of the tenants. In 1988, the findings were made public. They revealed that the residents had in fact traded their health for freedom. Their satisfaction with their lives increased and at the same time their health was maintained. Their physical and cognitive function actually improved. Incidence of major depression fell. And the cost for those on government support 20 percent lower than it would have been in a nursing home. This programme proved an unmitigated success.

At the centre of Wilson’s work was an attempt to solve a deceptively simple puzzle : what makes life worth living when we are old and frail and unable to care for ourselves?. In 1943, the psychologist Abraham Maslow published his hugely influential paper “ A Theory of Human Motivation”, which famously described people as having a hierarchy of needs. It is often depicted as a pyramid. At the bottom are our basic needs – the essentials of physiological survival [such as food, water, and air] and of safety [such as law, order, and stability]. Up one level are the need for love and for belonging. Above that is our desire for growth, skills and to be recognized and rewarded for our achievements. Finally, at the top is the desire for what Maslow named “self-actualization” – self-fulfillment through pursuit of moral ideals and creativity for their own sake.

Maslow argued that safety and survival remains our primary and fundamental goals in life, when our options and capacities become limited. If true, the fact that public policy and capacities become limited. If true, fact that public policy and concern about old age homes focus on health and safety is just recognition of those goals. They are assumed to be everyone’s first priorities.

Reality is more complex, though. People readily demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice their safety for the sake of something beyond themselves, such as family, country, or justice. And this is regardless of age.

What is more, our driving motivations in life, instead of remaining constant, change hugely over time and in-ways that don’t quite fit Maslow’s classic hierarchy. In young adulthood, people seek a life of growth and self-fulfillment, just as Maslow suggested. Growing up involves opening outwards. We search our new experiences, wider social connections and ways of putting out stamp on the world. When people reach the latter half of adulthood, however, their priorities change markedly. Most reduce the amount of time and effort they spend pursuing achievement and social network. Studies find that as people grow older they interact with fewer people and concentrate more on spending time with family and established friends. They focus on being rather than doing and on the present more than the future.



Understanding this shift is essential to understand old age. A variety of theories have attempted to explain why the shift occurs. Some have argued that it reflects wisdom gained from long experience in life. Others suggest it is the cognitive result of changes in the tissue of the aging brain. Still others argue that the behaviour change is forced upon the elderly

and does not actually reflect what they want in their heart of hearts. They narrow in because the constrictions of physical and cognitive decline prevent them from pursuing the goals they once had or because the world stops them for no other reason than they are old. Rather than fight it, they adapt – or, to put it more sadly, they give in.

If Maslow's hierarchy was right, then the narrowing of life runs against people's greatest sources of fulfillment and you would expect people to grow unhappier as they age. But a recent research has found exactly opposite. Far from growing unhappier, people reported more emotions as they aged. They become less prone to anxiety, depression, and anger. They experienced trials, to be sure, and more moments of poignancy – that is, of positive and negative emotion mixed together. But overall, they found living to be a more emotionally satisfying and stable experience as time passed, even as old age narrowed the lives they led. And living is a kind of skill. The calm and wisdom of old age are achieved over time and by that time they are old!

Around 1990, based on Wilson's success with retirement homes, Oregon launched an initiative to encourage the building of more retirement homes and ready market was found for these dwellings. People proved willing to pay considerable sum to avoid ending up in a nursing home. Assisted living most often became a mere layover on the way from independent living to a nursing home. It became part of the idea of a "continuum of care" which sounds perfectly nice.

Often the assisted living centres fall short of the expectation due to the fact that to genuinely help people with living "is harder to do than to talk about" and difficult to make caregivers think about what it really entails. For example "Dressing somebody is easier than letting them dress themselves. It takes less time. It's less aggravation." So unless supporting staff's capabilities is made a priority, the staff end up dressing people like they're rag dolls. Gradually, that's how everything begins to go. The tasks come to matter more than the people. Compounding matters, we have no good metrics for place's success in assisting people to live with dignity. By contrast, we have very precise ratings for health and safety. So you can guess what gets the attention from the caregivers, whether the resident loses weight, skips his medication, or has a fall and not whether he's lonely.

One should remember that the assisted living isn't built for the sake of older people so much as for the sake of their children who would finance them. There is place for the person's choices how he or she wants to live first and foremost. Children feel they want autonomy for themselves and safety for those they love. That remains the main problem and paradox for the frail. Thus, the elderly should take some blame for letting their children in decision making and say "well, you are in charge now."

So this is the way it unfolds. In the absence of what people could count on – a vast extended family constantly on hand to let him make his own choices – our elderly are left with controlled and supervised institutional existence, a medically designed answer to unfixable problems, a life designed to live with safety and dignity.

**To be continued....**

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