

Methodological Significance in Indian Culture and Hospitality

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the culture and hospitality of Indian society in the light of religion and mythical stories. When we analyze human nature, we understand that many of the human culture and habits are possessed from religious as well as mythical backgrounds. Since Hinduism is the oldest religion and has a number of details, Hindu mythology also developed in the midst of the gods and goddesses of Hindu religion. So in this context, our culture and hospitality also grew from this background. This article highlights some of the evidence available both in the religious as well as mythological literature, which is practiced even today in Indian societies, especially in the name of hospitality. So this paper mainly focuses on Hinduism because it was the ancient Indian religion that began in 1500 B.C. Moreover, the mythical stories are directly and indirectly connected with this religion. So the effect of this religious and mythical idea was seen in history today.

INTRODUCTION

Mythical storytelling has been an integral part of human culture for centuries in understanding the world and imparting moral and ethical lessons through imaginative narratives. So many mythologies have emerged on the earth since the early ages of history. At the same time, these mythical stories gave the cultural as well as religious identity to the people in India. So a human world without myth is not imaginable. In India, 80% of the Indian population belongs to the Hindu faith, and Hinduism is said to be the oldest religion in the world.

Religion plays a major role in the Indian way of life, especially the dietary habits. In Hinduism, the majority of the Hindus are vegetarians. The food habit reflects the culture of the society. Since food is seen as a material expression of building social relationships in human society, we must have the spirit of unconditional hospitality. Food and drink are almost universally associated with hospitality, but our country is described as a land of legendary hospitality because Hinduism treated “hospitality as a cardinal virtue flowing out from the great human virtue of liberty,” says Rig Veda. We learn from the Upanishad that we should treat the guest as god. The Sanskrit word for guest is “atithi,” which means one who came without prior notice. Which means, without any expectation, we should be generous in our act of giving. Giving food and drink to the guest is the greatest act of hospitality. So orthodox Hindus believe that hospitality is an act of worship because, in worship, God is the only possible guest inside the temples, whereas outside the temple, through selfless service to others, they see themselves as manifestations of God. So here in this paper, let us take in details about the significance of Indian religion and how it emphasizes the act of hospitality in building social relationships in society.

ORIGIN OF HINDUISM

India is a land that respects history, philosophy, cultures, religion, and languages. It starts from the history of several thousand years from the Mohanjadaro and Harappa civilizations, which gave birth to several world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, and also to various languages. The origin of the concept of God in Indian religion is connected with Aryan tribes who came from Iran with their deities and moved into the northern part of India.

Hinduism is the world's oldest living religion and the third largest behind Christianity and Islam, with more than 1 billion followers. It has no common creed, nor is it based on the teachings of a founder or holy book, and it remains a mystery for many. Around 1700 BC, the Aryans came to India, and they brought a mythic tradition that became the basis of an early form of Hinduism. Those migrated Arian had an actual fight at Harappa with the people of the Indian subcontinent; the mythology also grew increasingly. "**Kosambi** says that the Arian looted the treasure house of the godless and destroyed the urban culture with the help of Lord Indra." This is how Hinduism flourishes in India.

Hinduism follows a polytheistic tradition; Hindus worship a number of deities. It is believed that there are 330 million gods and goddesses in Hindu mythology. Each god and goddess symbolizes a certain aspect of life (e.g., Goddess Saraswathi, the source of knowledge and wisdom). The 330 million gods came during the Upanishadic period, but the Vedas clearly indicate that there are only 33 major deities. Even though Vedas were composed thousands of years ago, scientists found out that there are connections between these Vedas and modern science (e.g.). **Albert Einstein** once said, "When I read the Bhagavad Gita and reflect about how God created this universe, everything else seems superfluous."

Hinduism is different than other major world religions because there is no single founder but is instead a fusion of various beliefs. It is a complex belief system with an amalgamation of numerous faiths, beliefs, and practices. Main Hindu beliefs are the Vedas, Brahmannas, and many gods and goddesses. Hindus believe in the doctrines of samsara (the continuous cycle of life, death, and reincarnation) and karma (the universal law of cause and effect). One of the key thoughts of Hinduism is "atman," or the belief in the soul. Hinduism is a religion of Hindus, which gives them great hope and courage. There is no religion in the world that is as colorful and vibrant as Hinduism, the pantheon of Gods and Goddesses, and the vision of a hierarchical universe, which is ruled by the numerous deities who derive their power and authority; they live in their own spheres and participate in the creation, preservation, and destruction of the worlds and beings as part of their obligatory duties.

I. Mythological Significance in Hindu Religion

Myths are religious narratives or stories that provide the religion's basis for religious beliefs and practices. Some myths exist in written texts in the form of art, music, and drama. The roots of mythology came from classical Hinduism. So the character theology philosophy and stories of ancient Vedic myths, which are linked with Hindu belief the whole of Bhagavat Gita, which is based upon a mythological story known in Mahabharat, takes place on the battlefield before the start of the Kurukshetra war and takes the form of dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. Krishna was the divine one and had descended to earth in human form to restore peace on earth.

Hindu mythology explains how God and Goddess became reincarnated into many different manifestations (e.g., the tale of the elephant God Ganesh is popular among Hindu

worshippers). From this myth, Ganesh (the God of Protection, a wisdom for all Hindus) statues or images were placed in Hindu houses facing the front door. In this way, all evil is believed to be away from entering the house, and wisdom and guidance are invoked on all those who enter before him, so all Hindu ceremonies and rituals are begun by inviting the presence of Ganesh in order to run smoothly. All sacrifices and all ceremonies by Hindus with the invocation Ganesh.

Most of the male and female deities are worshipped not only in their individual aspects but also in their universal aspects. The most popular gods and goddesses are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Durga, Kali, Rama, Krishna, Hanuman, and their local versions. Lakshmi is the consort of the god Vishnu. Lakshmi is also called Sri because she is endowed with six auspicious and divine qualities. She is one of the principal deities of Hinduism and the most popular goddesses of Hindu mythology. Lakshmi is known as the goddess of wealth and purity, fortune and prosperity. Lakshmi has also been a goddess of abundance and fortune for Buddhists and was represented on the oldest surviving stupas and cave temples of Buddhism. Lakshmi is commonly portrayed as a beautiful woman with four arms, standing on a lotus flower. There are usually one or sometimes two elephants behind her, anointing her with water. She is often depicted sitting beneath Vishnu, massaging his feet. Her iconography shows her with four hands, which represent the four goals of human life considered important to the Hindu way of life: dharma, kama, artha, and moksha.

Lakshmi is particularly worshipped during the festival of Diwali. This festival commemorates the epic story. Ramayana is the legend of Lord Rama's battle with the demon Ravana, in which Lakshmi features. In the story of Ramayana, Sita is married to Lord Rama. Hindus believe Sita is an incarnation of Lakshmi. The story tells us that Rama had been cast out of his rightful kingdom and had gone to live in a forest with his wife and brother. The battle between Rama and the demon Ravana begins when Ravana abducts Sita from the forest. The epic follows the story of Rama defeating the demon and his eventual return to his kingdom. As the three heroes, Rama, his brother Lakshman, and Sita, returned home, people lit candles to guide their way in the dark. In honor of this, on the second day of Diwali, people light candles in their homes to guide Lakshmi, in the hope that she will bestow good fortune on their home for the coming year.

However, religion plays a major role in the Indian way of life. India is the birthplace of four of the world's major religious traditions, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, and boasts of so many other religions, including Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism. The vast majority of Indians engage in religious rituals, worship, and other religious activities. Dietary habits are significantly influenced by religion. The majority of Hindus are vegetarians, and this can be traced back to the Rig Veda, which proclaims "Do not harm anything."

Mythology of animal killing

In most religious traditions, animals play a symbolic role. In Hinduism, that highlights two basic ideas: "Humans can enjoy the highest states among the living things, but keeping in mind that the idea of". The position of each animal in the hierarchy of life is determined by the fixed law of karma in the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda, where we find praise towards anyone who shows sensitivity towards animals. It is also supported by the beliefs that Hindu deities reincarnate as animals, especially as monkeys and cows for (e.g.) Rama and Krishna. Detailed

studies show that "Indian religion gives more priority to animals because various divinities have symbolic links with various animals."

According to **Nandita Krishna 2010**, the cow veneration arose during the Vedic era. As is well known, the cow occupies a special place in Hinduism. The Chandogya Upanishad, which confirms that non-violence or Ahimsa should be observed towards all beings. Killing of animals is restricted in both Buddhism and Jainism. Since these are part of Hinduism, let us see the principle of their religion regarding animal killing. Mahayana Buddhism describes the ultimate reality of all Buddhas regarding the status of animals: one should refrain from killing and follow the eight-fold path of Buddha. On the other hand, Buddhism retains not only the hierarchy of life but also the idea that the animal realm is evil.

Jainism is another ancient Indian religion in which life style is marked with pure vegetarianism and one should not harm no animals because according to Jainism all living things are meant to help one another. So, killing is not allowed; even in self-defense, killing is to be avoided not because of the inherent value of living things but to keep one's soul pure. One important prayer of Jaina is that plea for forgiveness from all living beings because Jiva is present everywhere, in Gods, in humans, in animals, and in plants.

Though Buddhists have always claimed to be vegetarians, not all Buddhists were or are vegetarians. Because at the time of Buddha, eating meat was not forbidden. **Lankâvatâra Sûtraxl** clearly states: "The bodhisattva who regards all beings as if they were his own child cannot indulge in flesh eating." The food of a bodhisattva includes rice, barley, beans, clarified butter, oil, honey, molasses, and sugar. Today, a number of monasteries, including Namgyal Dratsang, the monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, no longer allow meat to be cooked in their kitchens, and there are a small but growing number of monks and nuns who have abandoned meat eating altogether. Many Buddhists prefer not to be dogmatic and do not want to absolutely forbid the eating of meat. It is left to the conscience of the individual to take into account the intention and, with the guidance of precepts, to make a mature decision. In Judaism, **Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's** "Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you who you are." Social anthropologist **Mary Douglas** has also demonstrated how food communicates ideas about holiness that provide identity and order. A person is affiliated with and belongs to a certain group through a set of rituals, customs, and sacred meals eaten. The family or clan would not consume certain foods and drinks because they considered them to be polluting or defiling. According to **Douglas**, to be holy is to be wholly separate. Israelites were "clean" because, apart from obeying God's covenantal order, they were not mixing with outsiders and their gods. This separation was also seen in dietary restrictions such as the prohibition against eating pork. The prohibition to eat pork (see Leviticus 11:1–8) arises because pigs do not meet all the criteria of "normal" farm animals: cattle, sheep, and goats, which all had cloven hooves and chewed their cud. Pigs have a cleft in their hooves, but they don't chew their cud. Therefore, they are unclean.

The blood of any animal; shellfish (e.g., oysters, shrimp, crabs) and all other living creatures that creep; and those fowl enumerated in the Bible (e.g., vultures, hawks, owls). All foods not stated in these categories may be eaten. People who eat food that is unclean are themselves unclean and are prohibited from approaching the Temple. It was within this setting that the Gospel of Luke records the table fellowship of Jesus. The Bible prescribes only the eating of unleavened bread during the Passover season. According to Jewish rabbis, biblical texts indicated that humanity was vegetarian before the Flood, but after the Flood, God gave

humanity permission to eat meat explicitly. Sacrificial programs that existed in the Temple times involved not only sacrificing animals but also eating them. Both meat and wine are essential to a celebration, and not eating meat signifies that one is mourning.

II. MYTHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN INDIAN CULTURE AND HOSPITALITY

Cultural identity is generally associated with the myths. Nearly all of the civilizations have their own mythologies. In western culture, Homeros is the starting point of their culture movement. After the medieval age, during the years of the Renaissance, Reform, and Humanism, the West turned their faces towards the Ancient period and looked for some reference guides. And the mythological sources were waiting for them.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn 2008, the historian who was awarded the 1970 Nobel Prize for Literature (1918-2008), highlights the importance of literature and says that "literature becomes the living memory of a nation." This statement underlines the role of literature and mythology for cultural identity and cultural heritage. In this respect, the heritage of buildings, historical places, temples, and artifacts; the intangible heritages such as music, dance, and crafts should also be preserved, and some facilities should be done to regenerate them. And mythology keeps on its existence in those intangible assets. The tangible assets also bear some mythological values. The economic, political, and geopolitical powers of a nation in the past had a limited time. But the mythology, folk tales, and legends sometimes in the form of literature keep on their existence throughout the time. So, it is obvious that the cultural identity and cultural heritage of a nation live in mythological mode.

Hospitality in Hindu Culture

Hindus view everything as permeated by God's presence, so hospitality becomes an act of worship. God is the only possible guest, encountered inside a temple through ritual worship and outside the temple through karma yoga or selfless service to others, seeing them as manifestations of God. Saints and mystics have experienced the presence of God through both ritual worship and selfless service, attesting to the power and authenticity of these practices.

God as Guest in Ritual Worship

In Hindu forms of worship, God is the divine guest, and rituals and sacrifices were offered to God similarly, the kind of hospitality that is generally offered to an honored guest in India. Among the things that are offered are an honored place to sit, words of welcome, water for washing hands and feet, water to drink, water for bathing, clothes, sandal paste, flowers, incense, light, and food. The offerings themselves are symbolic and are accompanied by appropriate Sanskrit mantras. More important than the symbolic.

Hospitality is an important Hindu value.

A guest is God, not an intruder. All Hindus have a heart to receive the guest as God. In traditional Indian culture, as soon as a guest visits you, you are given a glass of water. **Lavina Melvani** writes: "Hospitality is an important Hindu value. She tells the story of Lord Krishna. When his boyhood friend, Sudama-hunger-arrived at the palace, the guards almost did not allow him inside. But Lord Krishna, overjoyed to see his old friend, received him with open arms and joyfully led him to his throne. He personally washed his feet and fed him with his own hands. Sudama had brought him a humble gift, a handful of parched rice tied onto the corner of his shawl, and was too ashamed to give it to him in front of all the fine courtiers,

but Lord Krishna opened the pouch and ate the grains with pleasure and appreciation. To him, the true value of this valueless gift lay in the affection with which it had been offered. "If Lord Krishna was the perfect host, then Sri Ram embodied the perfect guest. During his exile in the forest, he visited Subari, a lowly woman who, in her devotion and anxiety to give him only the very best, tasted each berry before she fed it to him. With grace, Sri Ram accepted her offering, seeing the love with which it was given. There are so many stories of God Vishnu himself donning a beggar's raiment and coming to the door for alms. So, the next time the doorbell rings, welcome your guests with an open heart. Look beyond the facial features, the clothing, and the physical bodies into the eternal soul, which glows within each of us like the purest of gold. This is the self that scripture says is immortal, the one that water cannot wet, a sword cannot cut, nor fire can burn. And so, bending low, with folded hands, welcome the divine Paramatma, the God who is within each of us."

(ii) Food is Life

Food is served to guests and the poor at important ceremonies and during festivals. Serving food to the poor and the needy and to the birds, insects, and animals is very good karma. "Whenever you happen to come across any of these, don't fail to offer any thing suitable—food, cloth, vehicle, money, jewelry, etc., as appropriate—to a saint or a monk; similarly, you are expected to help the poor and the needy—a pregnant woman, child, hungry person, beggar, or destitute. The help you do comes back in multiples later." In ancient India, it was a religious duty to serve food to the begging students and sadhus and to the Brahmanas. According to the Rig Veda, "He who, possessed of food, hardens his heart against the weak man, hungry and suffering, who comes to him for help... God is not liberal to anyone who asks for alms. Food is also distributed to people at the end of many religious ceremonies. Many Hindu temples distribute food freely every day to the visiting devotees.

The concept of welcoming strangers and sharing every last bit of food and water with them is a noteworthy aspect of Hindu philosophy. There are sacred Hindu texts that emphasize the importance of serving guests before one's self. The Vedas emphasize that 'Food is life' and therefore food should be given to others because it is the highest offering one can humanly give.

(i) Brahma Fashion this World with a Desire of Food

The basic meaning of food in Hinduism is seen in the parable of the creation of food by Prajapati, the Lord of creatures, who exclaimed, "Here are the worlds and the guardians of the worlds. Let me create food for them...". The connotation here implies that only food that is digested and assimilated by one's digestive breath (apana) is food. Another important meaning of food is that "all creatures live by food, and in the end they return to food." One can infer from this text that there is no being that is for itself, and every being is seen as food for something else or someone else. Yet another meaning of food is given in the Maitri Upanishad, which states that "Verily, all things here fly forth, day by day, desiring to get food. The sun takes food to himself by his rays. Thereby he gives forth heat. When supplied with food, living beings here digest. Fire verily blazes up with food.' This world was fashioned by Brahma with a desire for food. Hence, one should reverence food as the soul (Âtman)". This implies that to be food is to be subject to the one who eats the food. When we consume food, it shows that there is an intimate union with the earth, a deep communion with all things that grow from the earth. It is important to realize that the process of eating food is akin to a baby clinging to the feeding breast of mother earth. Indian families usually eat in silence, which is

often accompanied by rituals and prayers. In the Bhagavad-Gita, the consumption of food is understood as appeasing the divine fire (*vaicēvānara*) in the body of living beings. The family meal eaten together strengthens the bonds and fuses the human and the divine dimensions. Women would offer food to their ancestors before they would sit down to eat. They would give food to the birds to eat or to the cow. Sometimes food would be given to the *bhikshu* (monk) as a symbolic gesture of offering to the poor. Some Hindus offer their food to their personal God mentally before eating it. Others never eat their daily food without consecrating a small portion to God and also giving a portion to a needy person passing by or a cow.

III. CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MEAL IN CHRISTIANITY

Table fellowship for the Jews was more than a simple social event. Sharing a meal led to the building of trust and brotherhood (cfr. Gen 26: 30; Gen 31: 54). Further, a guest who was invited for a meal was somehow considered to belong to that family. It was the meal that cemented the ties and bonds of fellowship between the host and the guest. The Jews do not eat any meal without praising and thanking God. A Sabbath meal is only an augmented form of an ordinary Jewish meal. Prayers over bread and wine are recited in Jewish homes as a grace before meals, such as "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast created the fruit of the vine." There is also a long doxology after the meal to thank God for the food. According to Gonslaves Francis 2000: The cultural significance of meals in Christianity is useful for exploring the relationships between religion and food in particular contexts like ancient Israel. They demonstrate the connections between religion, food, and other cultural systems.

From the very beginning of Christianity, food and drink have indicated the fact that the Christian religion is not only personal but also communal. In the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, he wrote, "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). "My brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another" (1 Corinthians 11:33). The invitation to break bread together emphasizes that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is a communal prayer: as we eat the bread, drink the wine, and praise God, we are constantly aware of our humble presence together before God. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Life Together* stated, "So long as we eat our bread together, we shall have sufficient even for the least.

"The table fellowship of Christians implies obligation. It is our daily bread that we eat, not my own. We share our bread. Thus we are firmly bound to one another not only in the Spirit but in our whole physical being. The one bread that is given to our fellowship links us together in a firm covenant. Now none dares go hungry as long as another has bread, and anyone who breaks this fellowship of the physical life also breaks the fellowship of the Spirit." In Biblical times, almost every covenant was sealed with a common meal. When Jesus was offered hospitality at the home of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38–42), he demonstrated that, like Mary who sat at the Lord's feet, genuine care for persons is far more important than attending to conventions and preparing delicious food. In a second meal at the home of a Pharisee (Luke 11:37–54), Jesus challenged the mindset of the Pharisees, who focused on the external observance of the law with the priority of interior attitudes. During a Sabbath meal at the home of a leading Pharisee (Luke 14:1–6), Jesus cured a man afflicted by dropsy, indicating that his presence, especially on the Lord's Day, restores one back to health. At a meal in tax collector Zacchaeus' house (Luke 19:1–10), Jesus declared Zacchaeus to be like the prodigal

son who was lost but is now saved. At the Last Supper (Luke 22:14-38), a formal meal between Jesus, the host, and his disciples as his invited guests, Jesus cared for and loved each of them; he washed their feet and was ready to lay down his life for all of them, including the one who betrayed him. This Last Supper was the climactic part of Jesus' mission for the kingdom of God. Jesus' appearance to the disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) shows how disheartened disciples were who were not able to recognize him in their midst till the breaking of the bread. Encountering the entire community in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-49), Jesus asked them, "Have you anything to eat?" The disciples then recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread and eating with him and became witnesses to his passion, death, and resurrection (Grassi Joseph 2000). The deeper message of this was that only those who accept the gospel of the passion, death, and resurrection (which includes a call to repentance) can recognize the living Jesus in the breaking of the bread. These incidents in the life of Jesus show us how Jesus used the setting of a meal to put forth his message of the forgiveness of sins and the possibility of a new relationship with God and with one's fellow humans. Hence Jesus' tablefellowship had a profound salvific meaning. "The inclusion of sinners in the community of salvation, achieved in tablefellowship, is the most meaningful expression of the message of the redeeming love of God." By habitually dining with the religious and social outcasts of society, he demonstrated in a most convincing way that God's love is not conditional, not restricted to the religious elite, but reaches out to everyone.

IV. INDIAN CULTURE OF HOSPITALITY

India is famously described as a land of legendary hospitality, bolstered by a cultural and religious spirit of tolerance. There is no doubt that Vedic Hinduism treated hospitality as a cardinal virtue, flowing out from the great human virtue of liberality, praised much in the R. g. Veda (The R. g. Veda 2002: 328 [X: CXVII:3]). According to **John McKenzie**, liberality 'found a place permanently in the thought and practice of the Hindu people, and all through it retains something of its original character' (McKenzie 1971: 10). Later Indian religions, like Buddhism, fostered this inheritance. Hospitality offered by the householder to the wandering monk and the religious student of twice-born castes was considered a religious duty. When an offering was made to all gods each day, the householder and his wife did not refuse anyone who asked for food. In the Upanisads, hospitality and speaking of truth were considered two positive virtues, which in turn could be traced in some way to the great Indian virtue of ahimsā, or non-injury. Negatively, you are not to cause harm, and positively, you are to give and be hospitable. As part of the ritualistic tradition, denial of hospitality wrought demerit upon the householder, and its performance brought him merit (**Marasinghe** 2009). It is in the Upanishads that we see the most cited passage on Indian hospitality (treat thy guest as God). This instruction is given as part of the parting instructions to be passed on by the teacher to the student at the time of his leave-taking. The student is to be truthful in speech, diligent in the study of the Veda, firm in the practice of Dharma, and in the search for the wholesome and the great. He should not neglect the sacred works owed to the gods and to the ancestors. He should treat his mother, father, teacher, and his guest as God (Taittirīya Upanis. ad 2000: 245-6 [I:II:1-3]). A study of the Upanishads reveals that a strong hospitality ethos was already part of the Vedic society when these sacred texts were composed. Hence, it is from such a spirit of generous, liberal outpouring towards the other that hospitality was conceived as a social ideal. The Sanskrit word for 'guest', "atithi," literally means 'the one who comes without

prior notice'. Atithi need not be a stranger. In certain passages of the Taittirīyaka-Upanishad, a spirit of unconditional hospitality ideal is visible. 'One should not refuse anyone in one's house; that should be the vow. So one should get food by any means possible. Folk say, 'Food is prepared for him.' It is the karmic order of nature that reciprocates the giver with karmic merit, prosperity, and more food. The hospitable act is non-reciprocal in the sense that there is no expectation of a return from the receiver of hospitality. More than an open home, because food is a symbol of hospitality. I shall conclude with two stories: one from Hindu mythology and the other from recent history. The story from mythology highlights the dual role of God as guest and teacher. Disguised as a wandering mendicant, Krishna visits a wealthy family, who welcome him warmly and offer him hospitality that matches both their devotion and prosperity. When it is time to leave, he blesses his host profusely, promising him even more wealth and glory.

Krishna's next visit is to a poor widow, whose only possession is a cow. She too welcomes him with great devotion but all that she can offer him is a glass of milk. When it is time to leave, Krishna blesses her and tells her that her cow will die soon. Arjuna, who has accompanied Krishna to both the places, is horrified. He asks Krishna, "Your wealthy hosts lacked nothing and yet you blessed them with even more wealth. Whereas your blessing to the poor devotee accompanied the ominous news that she will lose her cow. This is unfair and unacceptable." Krishna smiles and tells Arjuna, "My wealthy host is insanely attached to his wealth and his reputation; he has a long way to go before he becomes spiritually awakened. On the other hand, this poor devotee is already far advanced on the spiritual path. The only thing that is separating her from the highest freedom is her attachment to her cow. I removed the hurdle from her path." The insights that this story provides are obvious. God can enter our lives in any form and at any time, often in most unexpected circumstances. The blessing that the divine guest bestows upon us can be difficult to decipher at first glance.

CONCLUSION

Mythology plays a very important role in society. It's impact is to be seen in Indian society not only in the religion but also in the art and literature. Many of the Indian literature, including the Ramayana and Mahabharata, is based on the stories of Indian myth. Hence we should remember that mythology itself is a collection of traditional stories that are passed down from generation to generation and have symbolic and cultural significance. These stories are often used to explain the mysteries of life. Due to this reason, we continue to study mythical stories. Apart from these two most popular epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata), there are other influential epics that made an impact on humankind. Some of them are Raghuvamasa, Budhacharita, Shishupalvadha, Kirtarjuniya, Manimekalai, Silapadikaram, Kumarsambhava, and Shri Ramcharitmanas.

Even Hindu festivals that are celebrated in India based on the mythological stories (e.g., the story of Lord Rama and his defeat of demon king Ravana) indicate (Diwali) the victory over evil. So people celebrate this victory as a festival. Similarly, the festival of Narathiri is identified as the goddess Durga celebrating her victory over the demon Mahishasura. So the festivals like Holi, Diwali, and Dussehra still teach us about right and wrong. From these festivals, we learn the moral lesson that wrong should not be tolerated and why victories over evil should be celebrated.

Mythological stories are important in anybody's life because they remind us constantly of our heritage, culture, hospitality, and religious traditions. Myth is defined as "a story presented as historical, dealing with traditions specific to a culture or a group of people." These stories help an ordinary person to do superhuman things under particular circumstances because mythology and science are two completely different subjects isolated from each other.

These myths are still important because they become the foundation for a lot of religions that are practiced. These mythological stories tell us about the battle between good and evil because every religion has mythological stories. Through these stories, one can learn morals and values that are important to defeat the evil. Because the myth of yesterday is the reality today.

Thomas Mann says that "life is a steady mythical identification, a procession in the footsteps of others, a sacred repetition".

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