

## VIBGYOUR

*“Oscar Wilde once said, ‘To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all’. I couldn’t agree any less. These profound words, in a very simple language, have stated the root cause of depression and other mental health issues—in the quest to survive, human beings have stopped living.”*



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*Homo sapiens* is the only species that has been blessed with the ability to reason, the only species capable of understanding abstract concepts. Yet, we have failed to appreciate the spectrum of life. You wonder why? Because our prejudice, our stereotypes, our values, our morals, our duties, our incessant haste, our voracious greed and so many other things have conditioned us to segregate our

experiences into right and wrong, good and evil, yin and yang, putting them at two extremes.

However, in reality, life is not black and white; it consists of several kaleidoscopic moments, meant to be lived one day at a time.

You see, there are potent violet and indigo days, when everything is in our control. Authority uplifts us to cloud nine, as we take pre-planned steps, inching closer to our goals. The odds seem to be in our favor and the world appears to be laid down at our feet. Nothing compares to the anticipation

that courses through our veins. Our guts back us up as we leap forward to explore the unseen and write our destiny.

And then there are saturnine blue days, when our souls are drowned in grief, mourning for traumatic losses. We stumble, for our hearts feel heavy, and our eyes struggle to pour out The burden. Everything feels crumbled as darkness cripples us. Gloom spans the horizon and flowers wilt in despair over the grave of hope. In these ruins, we forget that there are burgeoning green days too, when our success makes all the noise, trumpeting our hard work from the top of the mountains. The reverberations choreograph us to dance to its symphony. Spring blossoms as we rejoice. These days are followed by ebullient yellow days, when our smiles shine brighter than the sun. Warm and positivity radiates from us, as contentment blooms in our chest. The cold nights become a thing of the past. Our world vibrates with the chords of happiness as a new dawn breaks, streaking the ambience with promises.

There are also zealous orange days, when our ambition blazes. Our enthusiasm drives us forward, as we strive day and night to realize our dreams. Sacrifices put another log in the fire that aspires to conquer the

world. Our sweat and blood nurture a legacy that will be carried forward by the generations to come.

Oh, did I recall the fervid red days, tainted with intense passion that tile our psyche by a mosaic of emotions? Love, hatred, excitement, fear and an infinite number of unnamed feelings sketch our bonds, erasing all the lines that constraint our personality, marking us with the strongest of all tinge that never fades away.

In addition, a multitude of other hues shade the in-betweens so that the canvas of our life is as colorful as it can be. And as we breathe our last, although our bodies are shrouded in white, our souls are variegated.

Sadly, as our hairs turn gray and our vision becomes cloudy, we begin to neglect this diverse gamut and exclaim, 'Life happened!'. So ironic! In fact I think it is absolutely vain to turn a blind eye to this vibrant vibgyor and tag our memories as a monochromatic compilation. I'd also like to state the wise words of Abraham Lincoln: In the end, it's not the years in your life that counts; it's the life in your years.

In short, the undeniable truth is that life gives meaning to colors. It enhances our ability to appreciate the subtle differences in a million shades. In order to fully comprehend this notion, it is essential that we direct

our attention to treasuring each moment.

So, instead of merely inhaling and exhaling, let's break our outdated lenses and create brand new ones. Let's embrace the entire spectrum of life and not restrict ourselves to its two opposite poles. Let's suffocate the stupid ardent desire to win the rat race and walk at our own pace, glorifying the colors just like we do during the festival of Holi. Let's cross the boundaries of ancient definitions of black and white and meet each

other in the middle ground, where the rainbow of life arches across the sky.

Quoting Mae West, "You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough", I would like to wrap up with the following words:

*Human beings were created  
So that life could be celebrated.  
About its length, we do not have any  
clue.*

*As long as we are alive, let's cherish  
each hue.*

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## HE TRAGEDY OF TRANSIENCE V/s ENDLESS ENDURANCE

*When the sand is grains trickling through your fingers,*

*And the tide is receding from your feet,*

*That is when you look around,*

*To admire the serenity of the beach.*



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It is often said that you never know what you have until it's gone and change is the only constant. There are a few situations have proven the old adages as true as the recent quarantine and lockdown has.

The dichotomy of circumstance is

precisely what held us hostage through the months of the pandemic. Most of us would have jumped at the chance to take a short break, catch up with friends and family through various media, work from home and make the best use of our Netflix subscriptions. A description of quarantine in that regard would not be entirely incorrect but it would also be woefully inadequate. Aside from the relentless bleak news articles, stress of unstable working conditions and worry about the rising cases, it was the lack of choice in the matter

that made for a more unpleasant situation.

We seldom sought company as desperately as we did when trapped for months on end within our homes. What initially began as a worrisome but ultimately transient situation, gradually ballooned into an extended lockdown of epic proportions?

The dichotomy lies in the general attitudes towards the lockdown, particularly those rights in the beginning stages.

We made meme after meme on the absurdity of a year that 2020 had proven to be; soothsayers came out of the woodworks with predictions they had made and every second person had an opinion on the management of future lockdowns.

Petitions piled on, parents were fearful of exposing their children to the virus and 1-month vacations grew into a monstrous break that was well beyond even the scope of our wildest imaginations. Work from home was the new buzzword and it was catching on fast, with studies even showing greater productivity in the comfort of home offices.

However, in the wings there remained a festering wound, one that these people were content to ignore or worse, tut pitifully at and then turn away. While the general public complained about inconvenient wait times on food delivery, there were far too many people for whom the lockdown was so far beyond a minor

We saw children excited to bunk a few extra days of classes

and working parents heaving a sigh of relief as they finally were spared the endless travels between home, day-cares and work. We watched as people began to make time for hobbies, the home bakers multiplied exponentially as did the various DIY mask makers and home workouts.

inconvenience, it extended right into tragedy India as a country is built on the backs of daily wage labourers and when the very foundation of the country was buckling, how could we see it as anything but a catastrophe? The fate of migrant workers was eventually documented but it was short lived and ultimately a paltry bandage on the bullet wound that was the lockdown. From the pani puri seller on the streets to the cobbler who waited for the customers that never showed; in the homes of the auto rickshaw drivers and the privately hired maids, drivers and gardeners; right from the street vendors who coloured every excursion to working professionals laid off from their companies right up to companies like Delta Airlines and Corona Beer; its seldom that such a wide spectrum of people are seen affected by a single event.

The spectrum of life is diverse, not in their appearance for there is always going to be another who looks

different from you; but in their experience and in their reaction. There is a parable of six blind men who grasp different parts of an elephant- its tail, its trunk, its legs and torso- and draw false conclusions to its appearance. While it teaches us to see the bigger picture, I often find myself empathizing with those men because if you are given one experience, is it incorrect to act on your learning's? Furthermore, wouldn't it be more prudent for them to pool their conclusions to get the ideal conclusion?

The lockdown was an experience in isolation for some, in endurance for others and in boredom for still more. It served as a unifying experience, not in the shared tragedy but in the teaching of empathy and depiction of humanity's ability to endure and evolve. While one's experience might

not have been entirely negative, or entirely positive, it does not discount another's story and it certainly doesn't minify one's own. Rather they both served only as testimony to humanity's survival.

Anthropologists have posited that mankind's evolution as a hunter was not due to their speed, for there were far faster creatures, but their ability to outlast their prey. They didn't run fast but they ran long and ultimately, endurance bore fruit. The lockdown was a trial that sought to eke out the vulnerable but it is my hope and belief that it also unearthed the empathy within us. It was heartening beyond belief that for every lost job, there was a family to fall back on, for every monetary loss, there was a GoFundMe, and for every tragedy, there was light amidst the dark

## DIVIDED WE STAND



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“We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic and secure to all its citizens: Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.”, states the Preamble of The Constitution of India. While one might argue the validity of all the above-stated values, Secular is probably the most abused among them. The Indian news media has been majorly obsessed with only two kinds of news for the past month or so, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and incidences of religious unrest. Be it the pelting of stones between two religious’ groups on Ram Navami in various parts of India or the clashes in JNU over eating non- vegetarian food during Navratri or the chanting of Hindutva slogans during screenings of the Kashmir Files, religious intolerance in India has become an intensely sensitive issue.

Britannica defines religion as human beings’ relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of special reverence. But the line between relation and fanaticism has become so thin nowadays that it’s hard to tell if a middle-aged guy wearing a tilak on his forehead is going to a

temple for prayer or a park to harass a couple involved in a little public display of affection or both.

From the time I have gained sense, religion has constantly been a source of tension for the masses. The tension between Hindus and Muslims in India is the most common occurrence and has been affecting India for decades. I'm not trying to cast these two religions as evil by any means. Almost every religion has seen bloodshed: Jews during the Hitler regime, Christians during The Troubles in Northern Ireland and numerous other examples are interspersed throughout the history of humankind. Now, I'll attempt a biopsy to find the roots of this Hindu Muslim malignancy.



It all started with the British East India Company ruling India with a known to all “divide and rule” policy which carved a rift between the people of the two religions, previously living in harmony. The

division of the Indian subcontinent into a Hindu dominated India and a Muslim dominated Pakistan in 1947, was a result of a war-torn British empire leaving haphazardly and an unfulfilling administrative threesome between M.K. Gandhi, J.L. Nehru and M.A. Jinnah. Mass migration from both sides unfolded and blood irrigated the fertile soils of Punjab and Bengal. Women were abducted and raped, children slaughtered, coaches of trains carrying refugees were torched, and countless other atrocities occurred. Anywhere from a couple hundred thousand to a couple of million people were slain.

The next big strife between the two religions happened in February 1983 in Assam. Known as the “Nellie Massacre”, the violence ensued in 14 villages of central Assam and a couple of thousand Muslims were killed in a matter of 6 hours by the Hindus. Most of the victims were women and children as men could escape the mobs. It was a play of complex factors including elections being conducted in tension-ridden areas, the “foreigner” sentiment against Bengali Muslims, the political effect of the All Assam Students’ Union and the incompetent police force. While the killed were forgotten conveniently, the killers were labelled as martyrs by the government at that time.



Perhaps the most seismically destructive event for the coexistence of the two religions was the Gujarat Pogrom in 2002. After the demolition of Babri Masjid by Hindu nationalists, the Muslim community was aggravated. The burning of several coaches of Sabarmati Express carrying Hindu devotees in Godhra was the last link in the chain which lassoed Gujarat into a violent fit. Mobs of Hindus attacked Muslim settlements in various cities across the state. The attacks were extremely brutal and didn't spare any human, not even an unborn foetus. The use of mass sexual violence against girls and women as a method to humiliate the Muslim community was the last straw of humanity let go by the mobs drowning in hatred.

Although Indian history is smeared with Hindu-Muslim barbarity all over, the three major events described above give us an insight into how religious intolerance has increased over the decades. I've not dived deep into the intricacies of the events as details get gory. I didn't even attempt to mention the displacement of Kashmiri Pundits from Kashmir as Kashmir and its history need a separate discussion.

Politics has almost always been intermingled with religious unrest.

Most politicians have as much moral integrity as there are bones in a

human penis. Religion has always been used by politicians to push their propaganda and satisfy their vote bank fetishes. There are merely any mentions of reparations for the victims by these lousy life suckers of the nation. An ill-mannered news media provides dry wood to the wildfire of religious tensions. A broadcast of opinions rather than the news by the TRP-driven news channels is exactly what is not required in this fragile environment. An inefficient law enforcement system, an overburdened judiciary system and a deeply divided social structure only add to the woos.

After the assassination of the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi by her two Sikh bodyguards in 1984, riots broke out in many cities and New Delhi bore the major brunt of it. Leaders of the Indian National Congress instigated the mobs, policemen became dumb bystanders and the media gave biased reporting. It is not a Hindu-Muslim issue but the Anti-Sikh Riots of 1984 exemplify a perfectly gruesome recipe of religious violence containing all the aforementioned ingredients.

This article may seem like a mumble jumble of negative sentiments in long ill-formed statements, but this country fits the same description. What gives me hope is the prospect that this fanatic thought process is only a possession of a very minute rot

of this country; almost every commoner wants equanimity and non-aggression. It's now upon the youth of this country to see through the

gluttony, use religion as a tool to unify all and try their best to "Make India Great Again".

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