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# RELIGIOUS ROUTE TO HAPPINESS

## INSIGHTS FROM ANCIENT HINDU SCRIPTURES

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### Abstract

Humanity strives for happiness. A quick check of the word 'happy' in Google yielded 2.59 billion hits while the word 'sex' yielded only 1.62 billion hits. Everyone knows the beauty of being happy and no one wants to face pain, suffering, sadness and miseries in life. But in reality, happiness does not last forever and it actually comes in discontinuous bouts. Hence it is buried between sorrowfulness of activities at large. Then the question is how can one reach long lasting happiness? Do religions lend a hand to speed up the happy endeavour? These questions haunt the minds of millions people worldwide at some point in their lives. In fact, religions do provide the necessary social support network that people need and it also outlines all the essential ethical guidelines one has to follow to coexist in society with happiness. Hinduism is considered to be the world's oldest living religion with over a billion followers and it offers an interesting way out to the ultimate happiness. This article explores practical and philosophical insights into Hindu scriptures and what they preach about the secrets of happiness.

*Keywords:* happiness, family, society, human values, righteousness

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### 1. Introduction

According to the World Happiness Report, 68% of people globally say that religion is an important aspect in their lives [1]. But understanding religious impact on happiness is limited as the subject matter is deeply subjective. The happiness report indicates that faith is common in countries where peoples' lifestyles are harder with low levels of income, education and safety. A recent study confirms that people with religious faith have more satisfaction in life with better physical and mental health [2]. In USA, religious believes are intense where the society is still reluctant to see an atheist running for presidential elections. Also, religious believes appeared to be greater in some parts of the USA where living standards are harder [3].

India is a land of great ancient temples. It is well-known for the largest Hindu religious pilgrimage on our planet. Travelling to holy places is a must for every Hindu faithful. A total of 330 million gods and goddesses are revered

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across the nation hence deities can be found throughout the landscape covering every village, town, city, along roadsides, under banyan trees, inside caves, in dense forests and in elaborate temple complexes built by ancient kings and contemporary entrepreneurs [4]. The idea behind the millions of deities is just a symbol for the incalculable names and forms by which the divine makes itself reachable to the ordinary human mind [4, p. 5]. But the question is why so many across India continue to pursue religious faith in search of peace, prosperity and happiness? A closer look at the historical background of India including its ancient Hindu scriptures may shed some answer to this curious query.

## **2. India's religious history**

India is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world covering an area of 3.2 million km<sup>2</sup>. Huge rivers namely the Ganges and Brahmaputra in the east, Indus in the west, Narmada in central and Cauvery in the south run wild — all major rivers are considered sacred in Hinduism [5]. Ancient rock shelters and cave paintings at Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh state are the earliest records of human life dating back to 10,000 BC. The Indus Valley Civilization represents the advanced human civilization in 2,500 BC [6]. In the coastal city of Harappa, amazing docks were built to control tidal waves. Ancient cities were remarkable in managing 50,000 inhabitants and an example is Mohenjo-Daro. Between 1,500 and 1,200 BC, the Vedas were compiled. Two major religions came out of Hinduism in 500 BC; they are the Buddhism and Jainism. Both questioned the Hindu religious discriminatory caste system. King Asoka unified small kingdoms in 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC by stretching his empire widely from Afghanistan to the west, Assam to the east, and Mysore to the south. Philosophy, literature, art, music and Buddhism thrived during that period. From 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD onwards, India underwent the golden era during the Gupta dynasty when Science, Engineering, Arts, and Astronomy prospered. By the end of Gupta dynasty, Hinduism became India's dominant religious, cultural and social force.

Invasions from central Asia took place between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. Mahmud of Ghazni raided Somnath Shiva temple in Gujarat state where 70,000 Hindus died defending it. In one raid alone, Ghazni looted 6.5 tons of gold from the temple. When he died in 1033, his empire came under the control of the Seljuys and later by the Ghurs from Afghanistan, who invaded India in 1191. The Ghurs's general, Qutb-ud-din occupied Delhi and later became its Sultan. The mughal rule continued in most parts of northern India and the famous kings included Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jahan (who built the Taj Mahal), and his wicked son Aurangzeb — who imprisoned his father and seized power [7].

In south India, great empires included the Cholas, Pandyas, Chalukyas, Cheras, and Pallavas [8]. The Cholas dynasty led by King Rajaraja Cholan (985–1014) controlled the entire southern India, Deccan plateau, Sri Lanka, parts of the Malay Peninsula, and the Srivijaya kingdom in Sumatra. The heartland of the Cholas was the fertile Cauvery river delta of today's Tamil Nadu state. They ruled from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century AD and since then Hinduism remained as a major

force in the south. In central India, King Shivaji took part in many heroic acts against invading forces from 1646 to 1680. The Europeans started to visit India and in 1498, the sailor Vasco da Gama landed in south India. Subsequently, the Portuguese captured Goa in 1510, and Diu in 1531 — they occupied both territories till 1961. Most of India came later under the control of the British East India Company, and since 1856, the British rule continued till India gained freedom in 1947 [7, p. 484].

### **3. Religious way to happiness**

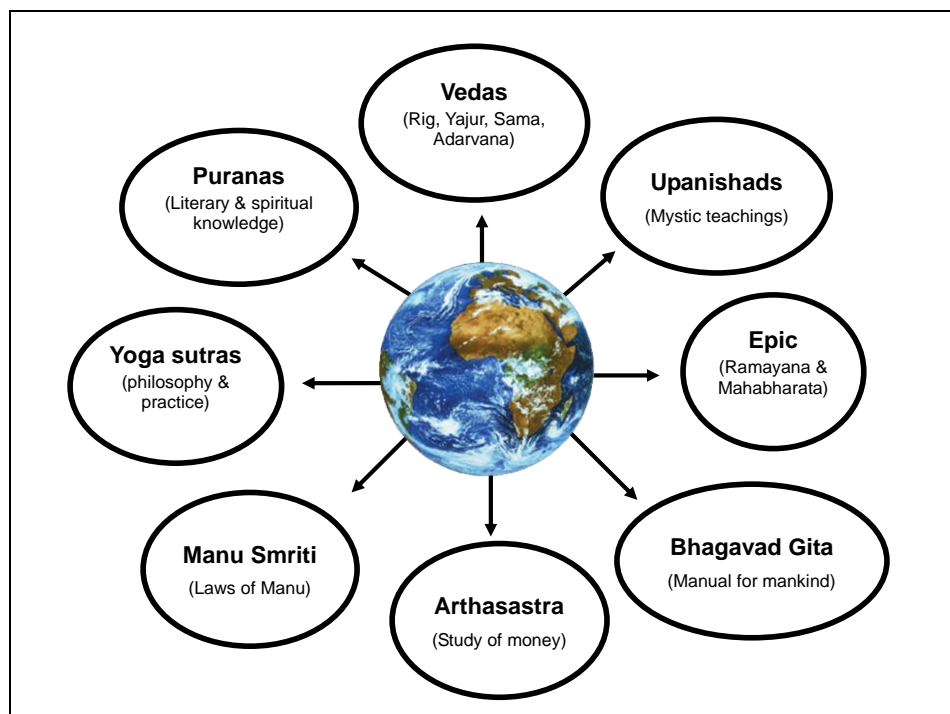
Hinduism has neither a single founder nor a sole scripture; hence it does not have any dogmatically determined sets of teaching. It is a way of life in which what one commonly define a religion by determining all social and cultural structures and interactions supported by numerous scriptures [9]. Islam came to India through invasion while Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism were offshoots of the Hindu religion. The Apostle Saint Thomas was believed to have arrived in India during 52 AD [10] and afterwards Christianity cherished across India. Hence Christianity came rather spontaneously to spread the Lord's Gospel through numerous sacred seers. Today all three religions enrich each other embracing peace and they continue to exist in inclusive harmony. The values of society have been passed from generation-to-generation with deep rooted customs so temples, churches, mosques, and monasteries dominated the landscape for centuries. Yoga and Ayurveda combined with religious and philosophical sentiments have played an important role in the evolution of India's spiritual quest for happier human life.

Mother, father and guru (Sanskrit syllables word *gu* meaning darkness and *ru* meaning destroyer of darkness or the one who dispels ignorance with spiritual illumination) are treated with reverence in the Hindu culture. Most believe in *karma* (law of cause and effect) by which each person creates destiny by thoughts, words and actions. Karma does not mean fate. Humans are not born as sinners — each and everyone has a spark of divine in them so the legendary Swami Vivekananda eloquently said, “Each soul is potentially divine” [11]. Hindu spirituality is all about respecting life forms. Besides, reverence to the five major elements (*pancha mahabhootas*) such as space/sky (*akash*), air (*vayu*), fire (*agni*), water (*jala*) and earth (*prithvi*) has been intertwined in Hindu society for generations. According to *Ayurveda* (knowledge for long life), which is the ancient traditional medicine, five elements are present in balanced state in human body and any imbalance may cause health problems [12]. These elements are associated with five organs of actions as well in body that include touch (air), smell (earth), vision (fire), taste (water) and hearing (space).

### **4. Hindu Scriptures on happiness**

Among the numerous ancient Hindu scriptures, the most sacred of all is the four Vedas (*Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva*) and each had 21, 109, 1,000 and

50 branches, respectively with a total of 100,000 verses in 1,180 branches (Figure 1). But now only 20,379 verses exist (10,552 of *Rigveda* organized in 10 sections, 1,975 of *Yajurveda* in 40 chapters, 1,875 of *Samveda* in 21 chapters and 5,977 of *Atharvaveda* in 20 chapters). These holy verses praise the gods and goddesses of the Universe to seek their blessings for happier life in Earth. There are six *Vedangas* that are parts of the Vedas; they include *Vyakaran*, *Jyotish*, *Nikrukt*, *Shikcha*, *Chand* and *Kalp Sutras*. Besides, there are four *Upvedas* (subsidiary) called *Arthveda* (science of Sociology/Economics related to *Rigveda*), *Dhanurveda* (science of defence/war related to *Yajurveda*), *Gandharvaveda* (science of Music/singing related to *Samveda*), and *Ayurveda* (the Medical science related to *Atharvaveda*). The first three became extinct while *Ayurveda* still survives and continue to help millions of patients across the world.



**Figure 1.** Ancient Hindu scriptures highlight righteousness in society leading to ultimate happiness.

There are six *Darshan Shastras* based on six distinct schools of philosophical thoughts: (i) *Poorv Mimansa* by Sage Jaimini, (ii) *Nyay* by Sage Gautam (iii) *Vaisheshik* by sage Kanad, (iv) *Sankhya* by Bhagwan Kapil, (v) *Yog* by Sage Patanjali and (vi) *Uttar Mimansa* or *Brahm Sutra* by Bhagwan Ved Vyas [13]. The scriptures were extensive and difficult to comprehend so the sage Jaimini wrote *Poorv Mimansa Sutras* to facilitate better understanding of the Vedas. There are 18 *Puranas* to discuss the creation and dissolution of the

universe [14]. The philosophies of the *Upnishads* and the *Darshan Shastras* are hard to comprehend, but the *Puranas* make it easier. The *Bhagvatam* narrates selfless devotion to Lord [15] while the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are considered as great epics [16].

Only 200 *upanishads* are available now [17] and they introduce the correct understanding of the Self (*atman*) or eternal essence unchanging and indistinguishable from the essence of the Universe. The major concept of *upnishads* is to surrender to Lord and receive liberation from the bondage of the cosmic material power so that one can enter into the eternal bliss or everlasting happiness. The deeply mystical teachings are perhaps the most significant knowledge known to humanity. The term *upanishad* derives from *upa* (near), *ni* (down), and *s(h)ad* (to sit), and it may be translated as ‘sitting around’. This etymology points to a group of students who sat around their spiritual master to learn the secret doctrines of happiness. In the tranquility of the forest hermitages, sages meditated and contemplated deepest concerns of humanity and communicated their knowledge to students near them [17, p. 19]. These scriptures highlight concepts such as *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire), and *moksha* (liberation). The first three are seen as worldly while the last one signifies freedom from worldly desires including the cycle of rebirths. The texts that deal with liberation are concerned with the nature of cosmos, including the supreme-being and the human soul. In fact, *moksha* is a way to abandon the established order in society and to pursue the ultimate self-realization leading to everlasting happiness.

In other words, the doctrine of *dharma* promotes righteous behaviour in society. For example, the Law of Manu [18] provides a collection of rules on how humans should live in the ancient India society adhering to righteousness [19]. The teachings on *moksha* on the other hand promote detachment from materialistic universal desires [20]. Only few people with high level of mental purity can follow the path of total detachment from the materialistic world of *maya* (illusion) to acquire the absolute knowledge of the Self. That is why the popular scriptures such as Gita bridge the *dharma* and *moksha* paradigms so that the vast majority in society can easily comprehend at least the rules of righteousness to have temporary happiness involving pain and pleasure in life rather than the demanding task of liberation that will require high level of mental purity. As such, they serve as law codes for human conduct in Hindu society.

In fact, all ancient scriptures mention happiness as ‘*Ananda*’ (bliss). The word ‘*aa*’ meaning from all side and ‘*nanda*’ meaning joy hence it literally denotes bliss in all sides. Activities linked to sense organs start a chain reaction that begins with attachment towards desired worldly objects. The attachment then triggers anger when things do not materialize as per the desire’s demand. Anger then evolves to delusion, which is followed by mental suffering and misery. Then one may question, would it be possible to turn the mind away from all tempting sensory worldly objects? Yes, but it’s not all that easy and the procedures to go forward can be found in the most popular scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*.

## **5. Happiness through righteous actions**

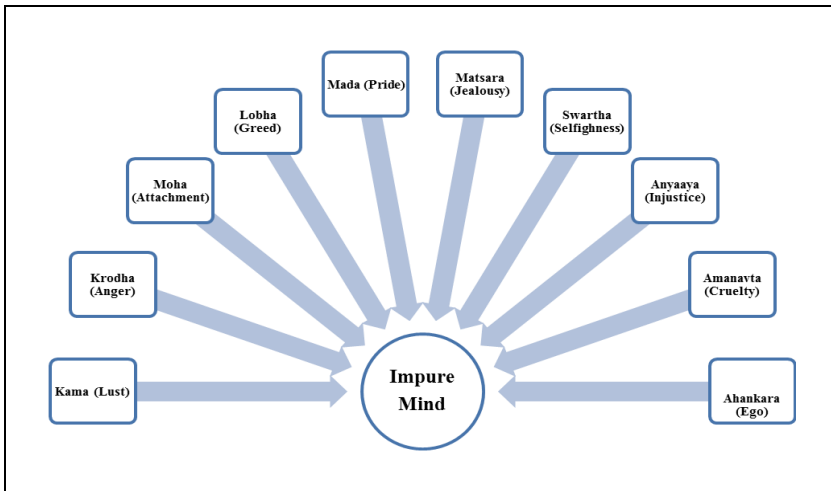
The Bhagavad Gita literally translates as the ‘Song of God’ is an ancient sacred scripture, which is also the longest song known to humanity. It is popularly called as ‘Gita’, and it is a part of the Mahabharata epic. Its philosophies go beyond the scope of world religions therefore it’s referred as the ‘Manual for Mankind’. This scripture was admired by Mahatma Gandhi, Aldous Huxley, Albert Einstein, Carl Jung and numerous other scholars [21]. The teacher was Krishna — the manifestation of Lord Vishnu [22]. It’s a dialogue between Krishna and Prince Arjuna before the start of the Mahabharata war. The epic revolves around the struggle between the sibling clans of Kauravas and Pandavas for the throne of Hastinapura kingdom that resulted in war that took place in Kurukshetra (today’s Haryana state).

The Kauravas were collectively composed of the hundred sons of a blind king, Dhritarashtra, and the Pandavas were the five sons of Pandu (second was Arjuna); they followed the rules of righteousness [22]. Krishna was the sole advisor of the Pandavas clan. When the battle started, he took the duty of driving Arjuna's chariot. When Arjuna was confused with a dilemma to fight against his clan, Krishna explained values with analogies that led to the Gita often described as the concise guide to Hindu theology. During the dialogue, Krishna imparted the valuable lessons on how to live in society. Subsequently, the Pandavas won the battle and took over the Kingdom. As it is taken to represent a summary of the Upanishad teachings, it is called as the ‘Upanishad of the Upanishads’ and ‘Scripture of Liberation’ leading to ultimate happiness. Most Hindus have a copy of Gita in their homes as a symbol of worship, the same way Christians have a copy of the Bible. Gita has a total of 18 chapters, and each chapter is called ‘yoga’, which is the science of individual consciousness achieving unity with the ultimate consciousness leading to happiness [22, 23]. The Gita preaches 10 major human values that include pridelessness, non-violence, straightforwardness, reverence to parents/teachers/God, cleanliness (body/mind), simplicity, absence of ego, balance of mind, seeing the fault in materialist world and detachment.

Happiness largely depends on the individual actions so one has to be judicious when it comes to any form of activity in the day-to-day life. The need to prove one’s pride comes because of the need of wanting to be appreciated. The self conceit and pretentiousness are manifestations of the same compulsive urge to enhance one’s ego. So it is essential for people to examine if they are happy within, and if they are, then why crave for superficial respect from others? Non-violence here refers to avoid hurting others physically, verbally and mentally. During my childhood, my father used to say, ‘even if you cannot help others, it’s fine, but you should never think about harming others’. I couldn’t understand what he was talking then. Now I understand that even thinking about harming others is strictly prohibited in the Hindu scriptures. While speaking, one should be truthful and pleasant without agitating others’ minds. Speaking ill of others in their absence or sarcasm is considered verbal violence as per the

scriptures. If one wishes to be treated well, they should think about treating others the same way.

Hate cannot be eliminated by hatred, but it can be nurtured by mercy. Straightforwardness comes from the Sanskrit word ‘*rju*’ meaning straight. When one’s thoughts, words and actions are united, it becomes straightforward as quality. When inner pressures increase in mind, people tend to forget honesty and either evade from problems or deny the existence of problems, and either way, the problem cannot be resolved. Reverence to parents, teachers and elders is a must for all Hindus and the scriptures give the ranking order starting with mother, then father, followed by teacher and finally God. The teacher must stand as an example of what the scriptures advocate through behaviour and solve other’s deepest problems and fulfilment of everlasting peace. Serving such a teacher is a virtue, which will purify the minds of students. Everyone knows about keeping one’s body clean. Similarly, peoples’ behaviours reflect the mind so keeping a clean mind is mandated by the scriptures. When impure thoughts involving lust, anger, attachment, greed, pride, jealousy, selfishness, injustice, cruelty, and ego dominate the mind, then unrighteous actions will follow, ultimately leading to accumulation of impurities in mind (Figure 2). So the state of mind needs to be corrected, and it can be done by spiritual practice.



**Figure 2.** Unrighteous actions will form unpleasant human character leading to accumulation of mental impurities leading to unhappiness in life.

In Gita, Arjuna repeatedly asked Krishna about the best action in life. Krishna told that renouncing worldly desires and becoming a monk (*sanyasi*) to get liberation (*moksha*) is the best, but only when one is fully qualified with mental purity. Otherwise, doing *karma* (action) following *dharma* (righteousness) is the second best way to purify the mind. Arjuna realized that he was not ready to renounce so he took the advice to fight the war. Steadfastness can come only with clarity of understanding, which will come by critical thinking and self-analysis using the intellect.

Ego is the root cause of humanity's problems. It's also the sense of superiority over all other life forms in nature. So keeping one's ego under control is an important spiritual value. But the question however is, can it be done? The ultimate remedy lies in recognizing the Universal Will of God behind all actions. Then only the awareness will slowly emerge displacing the ego. One should understand the limitations of life, body and its physical faculties. This reality needs to be realized often to go forward in the righteousness path. Hinduism believes in reincarnation [24] and the reincarnation of Lord Vishnu for example is remarkable since it represents in a way theory of organic evolution. In order to indicate aquatic origin of life, Vishnu incarnates as *Mathsya* (fish), followed by the amphibious *Kurma* (turtle) and terrestrial *Varaha* (wild boar) depicting life transferring from water to land. Subsequently, *Narasimha* represents a beast's attempt to attain a human form, which is followed by *Vamana*, a pigmy human. In the incarnation of Rama (hero of Ramayana epic), perfect human qualities are identified, while the last one, *Kalki* represents human destruction of Earth giving attention to nature.

When sense objects seduce, how is it possible to develop detachment? The scriptures show a short cut and if one sees defects in sensual objects, detachment can naturally arise. If mind realizes the cost may exceed benefits, then feeling of detachment will emerge. If the sensual pleasures take away one's own freedom, what is the point of pleasure anyway? Gita says that attachments are like nails driven to the heart and the more one accumulates, the greater misery destined to follow. Detachment can also be done by not binding to others. One can discover the joy of giving freedom to others and unconditional love for others (emotionally freeing others and not to enslave them). Yoga practice may help and for example, yoga postures will help to make the body cooperative while regulated breathing will help the mind to become calm and cooperative. Similarly, meditation will make the mind more cooperative.

We often get confused with love and attachment. Love, by the way is unconditional, while attachment is conditional, and that is why people fall in love and get married and then break up when the self-imposed conditions are not fulfilled in relationship. Relationships are often self-centred and attachment-oriented so people come together to fulfil self-created needs reliant on others. Developing detachment is essential to come out of self-created bondage in all relationships. Independence is directly proportional to minimizing human needs. Just as one does not take things seriously in a magic show, drama or movie rather than enjoys it, one can learn to be a spectator enjoying the magic of life with people all around yet without evoking strong likes, dislikes, attachment and commitments. This is the true spirit of unconditional love associated detachment leading to happiness.

An old saying goes 'mind is like a monkey'. The Hindu scriptures go a step further and state 'mind is like a drunken monkey stung by a scorpion'. So, balancing the mind during favourable and unfavourable situations is not at all easy and one has to have wisdom to achieve it. The nature of human mind is to run after exciting external objects and situations, and in the process loses its



balance. Hence balancing is essential to pursue one's actions in life rightfully. When one can learn to shift from external objects to internal contemplation centred on God, then happiness will emerge. When mind gets purified through righteous actions, naturally balancing ability will get stronger.

The Patanjali Yoga Sutra states, 'one who cultivates a feeling of friendliness for the happy, compassion for the miserable, cheerfulness for virtuous, and indifference for evil, may attain inner peace and cleanliness'. It also shows people can be lumped under four types: happy (*sukhi*), sad (*dukhhi*), virtuous (*punya*) and evil (*apunya*). It outlines four types of attitudes such as: friendliness (*maîtri*), compassion (*karuna*), cheerfulness (*mudita*), and indifference (*upeksa*) to achieve happiness in life [25]. Furthermore, it mandates five basic qualities of social discipline (*yama*) and individual discipline (*niyama*). The former includes non-violence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), observing celibacy (*brahmacaraya*) and abstinence from greed (*aparigraha*). The latter includes cleanliness (*sauca*), contentment (*santosa*), austerity (*tapas*), self-study (*svadhyaya*) and surrender to God (*Isvara pranidhana*) [26]. If one follows the above in general, temporary happiness is certainly guaranteed.

## **6. Detachment - the ultimate happiness**

There are several folklores associated with scriptures that talk about how to culture the mind to develop detachment from burning worldly desires. One such story involves a king and how he got freedom from self-imposed attachment towards his wife [26]. When Bhartrihari was the king of Ujjayani (today's Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh state, India), a great sage visited him. He was treated well so the satisfied sage gave the king a fruit that could bestow upon the eater happiness. The king accepted the fruit, but did not eat it. Instead, he gave it to his beloved young queen named Pingala as a way to express his deepest love.

The next day, a local prostitute came to the king's court and offered him the fruit by stating that she received it from her lover and thought that the king deserved it. The mystified king wondered how the fruit given to his queen ended up with the local prostitute. After serious deliberation, the truth emerged. The queen was secretly in love with her charioteer, so she gave the fruit to him. But the charioteer was madly in love with the prostitute, so he passed on to her. When the prostitute received it, she thought that the only person who deserved such a divine fruit was the King Bhartrihari and no one else. Before the magical fruit episode, the king's brother knew about the queen's affair and warned the king. But the young queen fought back by showing false evidence and thus she prevailed while the king's brother was exiled. After analyzing the events surrounding the queen, Bhartrihari realized that his brother was indeed right. He was emotionally upset for punishing his innocent brother who loved him dearly. At that moment, detachment emerged in the king's mind who thought that there was none in the world who was dear to him and he was convinced that attachment was the enemy so he left his kingdom, wife and children to retire into

the forests as a monk. Bhartrihari meditated for many years in the forest and finally attained the knowledge of the Self (supreme bliss or enlightenment). He wrote a thought-provoking poem in Sanskrit called ‘*Vairagya Shatakam*’ or ‘Hundred Verses of Renunciation’ and Swami Vivekananda’s translations of few lines outlined below [en.wikisource.org/Swami\_Vivekananda/Bhartrihari’s\_Verses\_on\_Renunciation]:

*“Not knowing the power of flame, the insect falls into it.  
The fish swallows the bait, not knowing the hook inside.  
That, well aware of the vanity and dangers of the world,  
We cannot give it up ~ such is the power of Delusion.” (Verse 18)*

*“Life is like a wave upon the waters; Youth only remains a few days.  
Wealth is like a fancy of the mind; it immediately vanishes.  
Enjoyment is like a flash of lightning amongst dark clouds.  
Our most beloved one is only for a moment.  
Knowing this, O man,  
Give your heart unto Brahman to cross this ocean of life.” (Verse 36)*

*“Old age watches us, roaring like a tigress.  
Disease, like enemies, is striking us often.  
Life is flowing out like water from a broken jar.  
Curious still how men do evil deeds in this world!” (Verse 38)*

*“I have not learnt that knowledge which defeats all opponents!  
Nor have been able, at the point of the sword,  
Which can cut through an elephant’s back,  
To send our glory even unto the skies;  
Nor, under the light of the full moon,  
Drunk the nectar of the budding lips of the beloved,  
My youth is gone fruitless, like a lamp in an empty house.” (Verse 46)*

*“When the body is still healthy and disease less,  
When old age has not yet attacked it,  
When the organs have not yet lost their power,  
And life is still full and undiminished,  
Now, now, struggle on rendering great help to yourself, my friend  
It is useless to dig a well in a house that is already on fire!” (Verse 75)*

*“This whole wide earth my bed,  
My beautiful pillows my own two arms,  
My wonderful canopy the blue sky,  
And the cool evening air to fan me,  
The moon and the stars my lamps,  
And my beautiful wife, Renunciation, by my side,*

*What king is there who can sleep like me in pleasure?" (Verse 94)*

## 7. Conclusions

There is no end to the obsession of worldly desires since the longing for name, fame, wealth and material benefits will not yield one to achieve liberation and absolute happiness. It can come only by understanding the Self and immersing in it always. Shri Adi Shankaracharya or the first Shankara with his remarkable reinterpretations of Hindu scriptures, especially on the Vedanta or Upanishads, had an overwhelming influence on the growth of Hinduism at a time when anarchy, superstition and prejudice was rampant. He advocated the greatness of the Vedas — he was the most famous *Advaita* philosopher who restored the Vedic dharma (righteousness) to its glory. He was also known as *Bhagavatpada Acharya* or the illumined guru at the feet of the Lord. He restored the scriptures, cleansed the Vedic religious practices of ritualistic surplus and guided the core intellectual teachings of the Vedas, which is known as *Advaita Vedanta* or non-dualism for humanity. It was the great legend Shankara who restructured various forms of random religious practices into acceptable norms and stressed on the ways of worship and conduct in society as laid down in the Vedas. Accordingly, the Self is *Brahman* or the Divine Creator — *Brahman* is the 'I' of 'Who Am I?' In other words, the bodies are manifold but the separate bodies have the one Divine in them. The unparalleled world of being and non-being is not apart from the *Brahman* but ultimately become one with *Brahman*. In other words, *Brahman* alone is real, and the unparalleled universe is unreal and an illusion. Through intense practice of the concept of *Advaita*, the ignorance of ego and ideas of duality can be removed from the human mind.

Hindu scriptures clearly state that all problems in human lives are self-created. For example, the root cause of the global climate change crisis in the human society is the shortcomings of the individual human attitude towards nature. Until and unless one transforms all the egoistic attitudes into eco-friendly attitudes, the thorny concerns of climate change cannot be cracked. We strongly believe that the righteous values mandated by the scriptures have great potential to influence humanity, especially for those who follow Hinduism in the Indian sub-continent. If the righteous values are adhered in society following the ancestral footsteps, it could certainly decelerate not only the global warming catastrophe but also ease sufferings in life. So simplification of lifestyle — first at the individual-level and then at the society at-large will ultimately leading to eventual peace and happiness in Earth.

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