

Four Senior Citizen Friends

A Journey of Laughter, Legacy, and Lifelong Bonds

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About the Author & Introduction

Ashok Khanna, aged 70, brings a lifetime of rich experience, deep observation, and warm humour to his writing. After decades in the relocation and customs field, he turned to storytelling—not just with facts and figures, but with heart, soul, and the quiet wisdom that comes from living fully.

He is the author of *Life not easy* (in Hindi), *Indian Customs Baggage Rules*, and *Sweet and Sour Experiences in Life*, *Hiccups In life*, *Four Senior Citizen Friends*. Modern saints' messages. Each work reflects his sharp insights, thoughtful reflections, and love for capturing real-life moments that connect people across generations.

In this latest book, *Whispers of Wisdom and Laughter*, he shares stories inspired by four close friends navigating their golden years. Through shared laughter, spiritual dialogue, and life's ups and downs, these tales explore love, loss, health, friendship, and the search for meaning.

Ashok Kumar Khanna invites you to walk alongside Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, Rajesh, and others—and perhaps find glimpses of your own story within theirs. Because in the end, life is not easy—but it is beautiful, especially when shared. After covid, I was advised by doctors to spare times on reading and writing and so this journey starts and this really helps me cope with Anxiety and depressions.

Our Joyful Senior Citizen Life

We are a group of four senior citizens, all aged **70 and above**, living life with happiness, positivity, and purpose. Many people think that old age is a time of slowing down, isolation, and dealing with health issues, but we believe that **life is meant to be enjoyed at every stage**, and we have made sure to do just that! I would like to mentioned of my father Shri Hans Raj now aged 94, still active and going independent for walk and having good times with the friends of all ages. I inspired to write on seeing his life.

Our Daily Routine – The Secret to Happiness

Every morning, as the sun rises and the birds start chirping, we look forward to the most exciting part of our day—our **daily meetup in the garden**. This is not just a habit; it is a ritual that brings joy, laughter, and energy into our lives. No matter what happens, we never miss our meeting.

As we gather in the garden, we begin our activities, which are designed not only to keep us physically fit but also to ensure mental well-being and emotional connection.

Our Activities – A Mix of Fun and Fitness

◆ **Walking & Light Exercise** – We start our session with a brisk walk around the garden. Walking keeps our bodies active, improves blood circulation, and refreshes our minds. Sometimes, we also do light stretching exercises or yoga poses to stay flexible.

◆ **Laughter Therapy & Jokes** – After walking, we sit together and share jokes, funny incidents, or stories from our past. **Laughter is the best medicine**, and we make sure to laugh heartily every single day. The energy we get from these moments keeps us going throughout the day.

◆ **Discussion & Storytelling** – We love sharing experiences from our lives—memories of childhood, our working years, the lessons we learned, and the changes we have seen in the world. These discussions keep our minds sharp and remind us of how far we’ve come.

◆ **Spiritual & Meditation Time** – Some days, we also take a few minutes for meditation or spiritual discussions. This helps us stay calm, focused, and grateful for life. Pranayama (breathing exercises) is also part of our routine, as it keeps our lungs strong and our minds peaceful.

◆ **Health Tips & General Advice** – Since we have spent decades experiencing life, we often exchange useful health tips, discuss new things we’ve learned, and support each other in every way possible.

◆ **Tea & Snacks** – Some days, after our garden session, we visit a nearby tea stall or one of our homes for a cup of tea and light snacks. This is another way we **extend our bonding time** and continue our conversations in a relaxed environment.

Why This Lifestyle Keeps Us Happy

Many people in old age struggle with loneliness, boredom, and a lack of purpose. But we have **created our own little world of joy** through our friendship and daily gatherings. This routine keeps us:

- **Physically active** – Walking and exercises keep our bodies strong.
- **Mentally sharp** – Conversations and storytelling stimulate our minds.
- **Emotionally connected** – We always have someone to talk to and rely on.
- **Stress-free and happy** – Laughter, positivity, and meditation help us enjoy life.

Message to Everyone

Old age is not the end of life—it is a **golden phase** that should be enjoyed to the fullest. We believe **everyone should have a close group of friends** to spend time with, share happiness, and stay active. Whether it is morning walks, group activities, or simply sitting together for a conversation, such moments add meaning to life.

If you are getting older, or even if you are young, start building strong friendships and positive routines. The key to a happy life is not wealth or luxury but good company, laughter, and an active lifestyle.

We are proud to say that at 70+, we are **living our best lives**—and we encourage everyone to do the same!

The Golden Morning of Four Friends

In a quiet neighbourhood, nestled among lush green trees, there lies a beautiful garden that has become a second home to **four inseparable friends** – Ved, Krishna, Mukesh, and Rajesh. Each of them has lived a long and fulfilling life, but their true **happiness lies in their daily meetings at the garden.**

They are not just friends; they are **brothers by heart**, bonded by time, shared experiences, and a common love for life.

The Four Pillars of Friendship

Ved (71) – A businessman who built his empire with hard work and dedication. His two daughters are happily married, and he enjoys the peace of knowing that his family is well-settled.

KRISHNA (65) – The youngest, still actively running his furniture export business alongside his son. His energy and enthusiasm bring a lively spirit to the group.

Mukesh (80) – The eldest of the group, and a retired government officer. His only son is settled in the UK, so he values these morning gatherings as his special time to connect with close companions.

Rajesh (65) – Retired from a corporate career, he has seen the fast-paced world of business but now enjoys a slower, more peaceful routine. With one son living in the USA and another staying with him, Krishna finds comfort in his family and friends.

Despite their different backgrounds, they have one thing in common—a **desire to live happily and healthily.**

The Routine That Binds us

Every morning, without fail, we, the four friends meet in the garden at **6 AM sharp**. It is our **sacred time**, a ritual that brings structure and joy to our lives.

As soon as we gather, smiles light up our faces. The first words of the day are always warm greetings, a firm handshake, or a friendly pat on the back.

Today was no different.

After exchanging pleasantries, **Ved said**, “Let’s start our walk.”

As they took their first steps, their rhythm was set. One round of the garden takes fifteen minutes, and as always, they aimed for two full rounds—thirty minutes of pure joy, exercise, and camaraderie.

A Walk Filled with Smiles

Their walks were never silent. They weren’t just exercising; they were **living in the moment**.

Each step brought laughter, casual discussions, and sometimes even deep reflections about life. Over the years, their presence in the garden had made them **familiar faces** to many other morning walkers.

Whenever they crossed paths with someone, they exchanged smiles and greetings. A simple “**Good morning! How are you?**” had become a beautiful habit. These small interactions **made the walk feel shorter** and the morning brighter.

“Time passes so fast when you’re surrounded by good people,” Mukesh remarked with a smile as they completed their second round.

The four friends knew that while **age brings many changes**, **friendship keeps the heart young**.

The Secret to a Happy Life

This daily meeting was more than just a habit—it was a **lifeline**. Many people their age spend time alone, but they have found a way to keep life vibrant.

We stayed physically active.

We maintained strong friendships.

We enjoyed small but meaningful moments.

The garden wasn't just a place for walking; it was a place where we relived memories, created new ones, and cherished the simple joys of life. Here actually the story starts;

A Morning of Friendship, Fun, and Nature

It was another beautiful morning in the garden where the four inseparable friends—Ved, Krishna, Mukesh, and Rajesh—met as part of their daily ritual. **They weren't just ordinary morning walkers; they were a group bound by camaraderie, laughter, and the desire to make every day special.**

Ved (71) – The natural leader of the group, always full of new ideas and energy. He decided what the day's activities would be, keeping everyone engaged and entertained.

Krishna (75) – The calm and wise one, always enjoying the company of his friends while keeping a keen eye on the beauty around them.

Mukesh (80) – The senior-most, a retired government officer who still had the spirit of youth when it came to enjoying life.

Rajesh (65) – The youngest and still actively running his furniture export business, full of energy and always up for a challenge.

As the clock struck 6 AM, the four friends met at their usual spot in the garden, greeting each other with smiles and warmth.

Brisk Walk & A Friendly Challenge

"Let's start our walk!" Ved announced, leading the way as they began their brisk two-round walk, which totalled thirty minutes. The path was lined with trees, and as they walked, they exchanged greetings with familiar faces. Their presence in the garden had become well known, and their circle of acquaintances grew every day.

But Ved, being the lively leader, always had a surprise up his sleeve.

"Now, let's do something different!" He said with excitement in his voice. "We'll have a 100-meter jog. The last one to reach will have to treat everyone to a cup of tea!"

The friendly competition was set. The four friends lined up; their eyes filled with childlike excitement.

"Three... Two... One... Go!"

They ran, with Rajesh, the youngest, sprinting ahead, followed by Krishna and Ved. Mukesh, being the eldest, came last—but with a big smile.

Rajesh cheered as he reached the finish line first. Mukesh, laughing and catching his breath, said, "Well, I guess teas on me!"

A Moment of Peace in Nature

Before heading for tea, Ved asked them to pause and take in the beauty of nature.

"Look around," he said. "See the different trees, plants, and flowers? Life is full of beauty if we just take a moment to appreciate it."

The group looked around at the vibrant display of flowers—roses, lilies, sunflowers, marigolds, hibiscus, jasmine, daisies, dahlias, bluebells, calendulas, poppies, orchids, and even tulips this season.

Rajesh, amazed, asked Ved, "How do you remember all these names? I love flowers, but I never remember what they're called!"

Ved smiled, "It comes with observation. Let's go further, and I'll show you more!"

As they walked, he pointed out plants—Abronia, Aloe Vera, Barrel Cactus, Hellebore, Snake Plants, Bamboo, Baby's Breath, Celosia, Canna Lily, Banyan, Bael Plant, Maple, Money Plant, and even an Oak tree.

Rajesh, impressed, clapped for Ved. "Wow, your knowledge is incredible! I only recognize Aloe Vera and Money Plant!"

Everyone laughed.

Discovering the Trees & Wildlife

Krishna, curious, said, "Ved, I never realized the trees here had nameplates. Have they always been there?"

Ved chuckled, "Yes, but we never paid attention!"

As they walked, they read the nameplates aloud—Mast Tree, Ashoka, Neem, Banyan, Peepal, Jamun, Siris, Gulmohar (Golden Shower Tree), Barna, Barged, and Tamarind

Suddenly, Mukesh pointed excitedly, "Look! Owls!"

In the branch of a large tree, a hole about 18 inches wide housed three owls, all staring curiously at the group. It was a rare sight, and everyone took out their phones to capture the moment.

"Wow!" Rajesh exclaimed. "This morning is getting better and better!"

Ved smiled, "That's the magic of nature. You never know what surprise awaits you."

As they continued walking, they spotted sparrows, crows, and sometimes if luck was there they saw a peacock, a Common Myna, or a Tailorbird.

Krishna jokingly added, "Thank God dogs aren't allowed in this park, or we'd have to remember all their breeds too!"

Everyone burst into laughter.

Krishna looked at the sky and brought our attention to the sunrise. It was a canvas painted with hues of gold, orange, pink, and purple as the first light of the sun breaks through the darkness. The garden, still wrapped in the soft silence of dawn, slowly came to life.

As the sun rises on the horizon, the dew-covered grass sparkles like tiny diamonds, reflecting the golden rays. The flowers open up as if greeting the morning, their petals bathed in soft sunlight, revealing a stunning palette of red, yellow, pink, violet, and white.

The trees, standing tall, stretch their branches as if awakening from slumber. Their green leaves shimmer under the golden light, while some

trees, like the Gulmohar and Cassia, are adorned with bright red and golden-yellow blossoms, creating a breathtaking contrast against the deep blue sky.

In the centre of the garden, a small fountain dances gracefully, as its crystal-clear water catches the morning sun and forms a rainbow of colours in the mist.

The garden paths, edged with neatly trimmed hedges and rows of vibrant flowers, invite morning walkers to take a refreshing stroll. Fallen petals and leaves add a natural beauty to the stone pathways.

As we reached the park's exit, we saw a hawker selling fresh coconut water.

Ved suddenly declared, "Forget tea! I'll treat everyone to coconut water instead!"

Krishna, surprised, asked, "Why so generous today, Ved? What's the occasion?"

Ved smiled, "It's my daughter's birthday today. This coconut water is on me!"

All three immediately wished his daughter a very happy birthday.

Mukesh, feeling the warmth of the moment, suggested, "Why don't we continue our celebration? Let's meet at Promenade Mall at 7 PM for a cup of coffee.

Everyone agreed enthusiastically.

We all met at Cinnabon, pulled four chairs, and sat down. Ved headed to the cashier to place the order and pay the bill. After a few minutes, he called us to pick up our orders individually, as it was self-service. The order included four cappuccinos, pretzels, and Cinnabon baked with cream.

As soon as Krishna and Mukesh saw the food, they glanced at Ved and said, "Why did you order junk food? Who's going to eat this?" Ved felt a bit awkward and replied, "Sorry, friends, I thought you'd enjoy these with coffee. But take whatever portion you like and leave the rest." However, as we continued our conversation and laughter, all the food on the table

gradually disappeared. Ved looked at the empty plates, then at us, and burst into laughter. "You guys finished everything!" He exclaimed. Krishna and Mukesh, momentarily speechless, finally admitted, "It was delicious!"

As we enjoyed our coffee, a little girl, around six years old, approached and sat in a nearby chair. We all exchanged glances, surprised to see a child sitting alone. Ved leaned forward and gently asked, "Hello, my dear! How are you? What are you doing here alone?"

She looked at us confidently and said, "Uncles, I came here to eat a pretzel. I love them! Whenever I visit this place, I always have one."

Ved smiled, "Have you placed your order, or would you like some help?"

She shook her head. "No, Uncle, thanks! My mom is shopping next door, and she'll join me soon."

Ved, amused by her confidence, said, "Don't worry, I'll get one for you."

She looked at him curiously. "Are you really going to get it for me?"

"Of course!" Ved assured her.

She grinned mischievously. "Then, please don't mind bringing a hot chocolate too. I love chocolates!"

We all chuckled at her innocent request. "What's your name, dear? Or should I just call you my daughter?"

"My name is Sujata, but you can call me baby, daughter, whatever you like!" She said sweetly.

With smiles on our faces, we watched as she happily enjoyed her pretzel and hot chocolate. Moments later, her mother walked in, surprised to see her daughter already eating. "Sujata, how did you get the food?"

"These uncles are very nice! They ordered it for me," the little girl replied cheerfully.

Her mother looked at us, momentarily silent, then apologized for the trouble and offered to pay.

Ved waved it off. "No need for that. Your daughter is lovely, and she reminds me of my own. My daughter had the same cheerful nature, and now she's married and settled in the USA. Seeing her today took me back 45 years. She looked just like this when she was little. Don't think of us as strangers—we're now her grand-uncles! By the way, we were just celebrating my daughter's birthday with my morning-walker friends, who are more like family to me."

The mother smiled warmly. "Thank you for your kindness and consideration. But I must say, today's generation is fearless—they have no hesitation in talking to strangers!"

Ved laughed. "Please, don't call us strangers! It's always nice to meet wonderful people. Your daughter is a blessing. Some connections feel as if they were meant to be. This has been a red-letter day for us."

She stepped forward, shook hands with all of us, and handed over her business card. "My name is Rita Menon. I'm an interior designer."

We nodded in acknowledgment as she picked up her shopping bags. "Come on, Sujata, let's go. Thanks again, Uncles!"

Sujata beamed and waved. "Thanks, Uncles! I love you all!"

Some people leave a lasting impression in just one meeting—she was one of them.

As we prepared to leave, Rajesh said, "Let's head home. My wife must be waiting."

Ved smirked. "She knows you're with us, doesn't she?"

"Of course, she does!"

"Then why the rush?"

Rajesh sighed. "She gets unwell when alone. I have to give her medicine."

Ved patted his back. "Go ahead, my friend. See you all tomorrow at the garden."

With that, we parted ways, carrying with us the warmth of a beautiful morning and an unforgettable encounter.

Next day morning

The next morning, all of us reached the garden on time—except Ved.

Rajesh looked around. "Where is our leader, Ved?"

Mukesh pulled out his phone and dialled Ved's number. "Hello, Ved? Where are you?"

"Sorry, Mukesh, I just woke up. You guys start the brisk walk. I'll join you in 10 minutes."

Ved was already waiting at the starting point when we finished our first round, and he joined us for the second.

Krishna asked, "What happened, Ved? How could you be late?"

Ved replied, "Let me finish this round first, and then I'll tell you."

After completing the walk, Ved suggested, "Let's take a five-minute break."

Krishna insisted, "Now tell us, why were you late?"

Ved sighed, "Well, at around 3 AM, the guard rang my doorbell. When I opened the door, he told me that some people from the colony were calling me downstairs. I was confused but went down. It turned out that a drunk taxi driver had crashed into several parked cars, including mine. A few young men from the neighbourhood had caught him and were waiting for the police. My car had a scratch at the back, but I told them it was minor and that I had to leave early in the morning, so I wasn't interested in making a fuss. But they insisted I stay and wait for the police. I ignored them and went back to my flat. That whole incident disrupted my sleep, and that's why I was late."

Krishna shook his head. "Oh my god! Even at night, our cars aren't safe. Anyway, let's move on. What's our next exercise?"

Ved smiled. "Let's do five minutes of jogging in place. I've set the timer. Run at your own pace, and if you feel uncomfortable, stop."

Rajesh jogged fast, while the rest of us took it easy.

"Now let's take another break and do some breathing exercises," Ved suggested

We sat in Vajrasana (or Sukhasana), straightened our backs, and followed Ved's instructions:

1. Take a deep breath in through your nose, hold for ten counts, and release. Repeat five times.
2. Breathe in deeply and contract your stomach inward as much as possible, hold for ten counts, and release. Repeat five times.
3. Breathe out and push your stomach outward, hold for ten counts, and repeat five times.

Ved asked, "How are you all feeling?"

"Good! Feeling light and relaxed," we responded.

"Great! Now, let's chant 'Om' three times. Close your ears and feel the vibrations inside."

We followed Ved's lead, and with each 'Om' chant, we felt more at peace, ready to take on the day.

A Morning of Friendship and Reflection

As we wrapped up our morning walk, Ved stretched his arms and said, "Alright, gentlemen, see you tomorrow at 7 AM. But before you go, let me share a small health tip—try drinking warm water with a pinch of salt."

Krishna, always curious, raised an eyebrow. "Why, Ved? What's so special about it?"

Ved smiled. "It's a simple but effective habit. According to health experts, salt water helps hydrate the body and maintain electrolyte balance. It's a great way to start the day."

He continued, listing the benefits:

- Boosts detoxification by flushing out toxins.

- Maintains electrolyte balance for better hydration.
- Improves metabolism, helping digestion.
- Supports alkalization, keeping the body balanced.
- Enhances oral health, preventing bacteria build-up.
- Provides essential minerals, improving overall well-being.
- Promotes skin health, keeping it fresh and youthful.
- Reduces stress, calming the nervous system.

“But remember,” Ved warned, “only a pinch of salt! Too much of anything is bad. I read about this in a health journal and have been following it for a while. That said, it’s always best to consult a doctor before making any dietary changes.”

Rajesh nodded. “I’ve heard about this from a family friend. Sounds good—let’s give it a try and see how it works.”

An Unexpected Request

Just as we were about to leave, a woman in her early sixties approached us hesitantly, yet with a warm smile.

“I’ve been watching you all for quite some time,” she said. “You senior citizens truly know how to enjoy life! You laugh, joke, and stay active—it’s inspiring. I was wondering... could I join your group?” “By the way, I am Deepika and I run an Interior designing business.”

She pointed toward Ved, “I live in your lane, just at the beginning, at the corner building.”

Ved replied, “I’m really sorry, but I have never noticed you in the lane. Anyway, it is nice to know about you and it is wonderful to have a nice neighbour like you. Trust me, we will keep meeting.”

We exchanged glances, caught off guard. Before we could respond, she quickly added, “If it’s not possible, I understand. I’m a widow, and I thought maybe I could find the same happiness as you all.”

Her voice carried a mix of hope and vulnerability. As she turned to leave, we could see the slight disappointment on her face.

Krishna broke the silence. “I feel bad for her, but if we add a lady to our group, we might not feel as free. Our conversations, jokes... everything might change.”

Ved sighed, “Let’s give it some thought before deciding.”

We watched as she slowly walked away, feeling a strange sense of unease. Sometimes, small moments leave a deep impact.

Rajesh added, “We leave it to our leader, as she is also his neighbour.”

A Birthday Surprise

As we exited the park, Mukesh turned to Rajesh. “By the way, tomorrow is your birthday! What’s the plan?”

Rajesh laughed. “How did you even remember?”

Mukesh grinned. “Facebook reminded me!”

Rajesh chuckled. “Well, I have a family celebration planned for the evening, but let’s have a small get-together after our morning walk.”

Ved clapped his hands. “Great idea! Let’s have a birthday breakfast together. It’ll be our way of celebrating friendship and life.”

We all shook hands and parted ways, already looking forward to another morning of laughter, health, and togetherness.

Friendship is the Secret to a Happy Life

Our little group of four had unknowingly built a small world for ourselves—a space where age didn’t limit joy, where simple moments became cherished memories, and where every morning was a new reason to smile.

We weren’t just walking in the park; we were walking through life—together.

Next day as per routine, we first took two rounds of park, Mukesh did only one round as he desired to do only one, may be tired, or late sleep.

Ved told us to do the breathing exercise and will let you know the benefits

Breathing Techniques to Improve Oxygen Levels and Lung Strength

Regular practice of these breathing techniques helps increase oxygen levels in the body, making the lungs stronger and more efficient.

1. Diaphragmatic Breathing (Belly Breathing)

How to do it:

- Lie on your back or sit in a comfortable position.
- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Take a deep breath, ensuring that your stomach expands while your chest remains still.
- Exhale slowly and repeat.

Benefits:

Increases oxygen capacity

Improves breathing efficiency

Reduces stress and anxiety

2. Pursed-Lip Breathing

How to do it:

- Inhale deeply through the nose.
- Purse your lips (as if you're about to whistle).
- Exhale slowly and steadily through the pursed lips.

Benefits:

Enhances oxygen flow

Makes breathing easier

Helps expel trapped air from the lungs

3. Anulom-Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing) & Kapalbhata

How to do it:

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- For Anulom-Vilom: Inhale through one nostril while keeping the other closed, then exhale through the opposite nostril. Repeat alternately.
- For Kapalbhata: Take a sharp, forceful inhale, then exhale quickly and deeply while engaging your abdominal muscles.

Benefits:

Cleanses the lungs and respiratory tract

Improves blood circulation

Increases oxygen levels in the body

All of the above can be done in 5 to 10 minutes.

"Thanks, Ved Bhai! Brother, we are really feeling light and fresh," said Krishna after their morning exercise session.

Ved turned to Rajesh and asked, "So, where are you taking us for breakfast?"

Rajesh smiled, "I'm a middle-class man, I can't take you to an expensive place. Let's go to Haldiram's and enjoy some fresh breakfast."

They all agreed and headed to Haldiram's, Vasant Kunj. Upon arrival, they occupied a table and called the waiter for the menu. Each one browsed through it before placing their orders:

- Ved: "I'll have Aloo Paratha with buttermilk."
- Krishna: "I'll go for Aloo Dosa."
- Mukesh: "I'd like Puri Bhaji with almond milk."
- Rajesh: "I'll take Idle Samar."

As they waited, they chatted and laughed. When the food arrived, they shared their dishes, enjoying every bite. Afterward, they ordered Gajar Ka Halwa as a sweet treat to complete the meal.

After the delicious breakfast, they all shook hands and hugged Rajesh, thanking him for the wonderful treat. "Happy Birthday once again!" They wished him warmly.

A New Suggestion

Ved then suggested, "Guys, in the future, why don't we celebrate birthdays at home? That way, we can also get to know each other's family members."

Mukesh nodded but hesitated. "It's a good idea, but at the age of 80, it's difficult to drive alone at night."

Ved reassured him, "Don't worry! We'll arrange pickup and drop-off for you, or we can carpool."

Mukesh smiled but said, "Let's move now, my wife must be waiting for me."

Ved winked mischievously, "Why are you so afraid of your wife?"

Mukesh sighed, "It's not about fear. She's not well these days and gets agitated over small things. You could say that she has a short fuse."

Ved chuckled, "Come on, Mukesh! We're all family here. You should tell your wife that at our age, what we're doing is necessary for our happiness and health."

Mukesh agreed, "She understands, that's why she allows me to come."

An Unexpected Encounter

As they were exiting the restaurant, they noticed a familiar face entering—the lady who had earlier expressed interest in joining their group. She looked at them with curiosity and said, "How come you all are here so early?"

Ved responded, "Today, we came to celebrate Rajesh's birthday."

She turned to Rajesh and asked, "Oh, so you're Rajesh?"

Ved nodded and gestured toward him. The lady smiled, shook Rajesh's hand, and warmly wished him, "Happy Birthday!"

Then, she playfully remarked, "I see you all didn't invite me. I hope you are still considering my membership in your group."

The men exchanged glances but remained silent, offering only polite smiles. Without giving a definite response, we bid farewell and parted ways to our respective homes.

As usual, my daily routine is to get up and go to the park and meet friends. After two rounds of walking, Ved told us to let us take rest, first I will tell you a story, I hope you will like it.

The Small Wit and the Great Beast

Deep in the dense jungle, where towering trees whispered ancient secrets, lived a tiny but clever rabbit named Chiku. Despite his size, Chiku was known for his sharp wit and quick thinking. In the same jungle, there also lived a mighty lion, Balar, feared by all creatures. He ruled with power, making the weaker animals live in constant fear.

One day, Balar roared across the jungle, "From now on, every day one animal must come to my cave as my meal!" The animals trembled, but none dared to disobey.

When it was Chiku's turn, he devised a plan. He deliberately arrived at the lion's cave late, panting and looking terrified.

"Why are you late?" Balar growled.

Chiku bowed, "Forgive me, mighty king. Another lion stopped me on the way! He said he is the real king and that you are a fraud!"

Balar's eyes burned with rage. "Another lion? Where is he?"

Chiku led Balar to a deep well and pointed inside. "He's hiding there, my lord!"

Balar peered into the well and saw his own reflection in the water. Mistaking it for another lion, he roared loudly, and his reflection roared back. Enraged, Balar jumped into the well to fight his 'rival'—and that was the end of him.

The jungle rejoiced! A tiny creature had outwitted the greatest beast.

Moral: Wisdom and intelligence can defeat even the strongest foes.

Friends this story we heard when we were in school,

Ved, let treat this as time pass;

Here is another story

Crying in the Wilderness

A lone traveller named Arjun wandered deep into an uncharted forest. He had set out on a journey to find himself, but now he was lost. The towering trees loomed over him, the wind howled through the branches, and the distant cries of wild animals sent shivers down his spine.

As night fell, exhaustion took over, and Arjun collapsed near a large rock. His heart pounded with fear, and for the first time in years, tears rolled down his cheeks. The vast wilderness echoed his silent cries, as if the trees and the wind mourned with him.

"Why am I here?" He whispered. "Why does life feel so empty?"

Then, out of the shadows, an old hermit appeared—his long beard flowing, his eyes wise and calm. "Why do you cry, traveller?" The hermit asked.

Arjun wiped his face. "Because I feel lost—not just in this forest, but in life. My success feels hollow, my heart feels heavy, and I don't know where I truly belong."

The hermit smiled. "The wilderness does not hear your cries in sadness; it hears them in transformation. Sometimes, being lost is the first step to being found."

He picked up a handful of soil and let it slip through his fingers. "Life is like this forest—wild, untamed, and full of unknown paths. Only when you stop fearing the unknown can you find your true direction."

Arjun looked around. The trees no longer felt intimidating, and the wind seemed to whisper guidance instead of fear. His cries had not been a sign of weakness, but a release of burdens.

As dawn broke, Arjun stood up. He wasn't lost anymore. The wilderness had answered him—not with words, but with understanding.

Moral: Sometimes, in the wildness of life, our cries lead us to the path we were always meant to take.

I just watched a video yesterday, which was quite interesting, focussing on the transformation of mind and body.

LIKE ABCD

A mean Asna

Benefits of Asanas (Yoga Postures)

Practicing asanas regularly provides a wide range of physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. Here are some key benefits:

1. Physical Benefits

Increases Flexibility – Regular practice stretches muscles and joints, improving overall flexibility.

Strengthens Muscles – Builds strength in different muscle groups, reducing the risk of injuries.

Improves Posture – Corrects body alignment, preventing back and neck pain.

Enhances Lung Capacity – Deep breathing in asanas like Pranayama increases oxygen supply.

Boosts Immunity – Improves circulation and detoxifies the body, strengthening the immune system.

Improves Digestion – Poses like Pawanmuktasana and Bhujangasana help in better digestion and relieve constipation.

Regulates Blood Pressure – Gentle asanas help in lowering high blood pressure and improving heart health.

2. Mental Benefits

Reduces Stress and Anxiety – Calms the nervous system and lowers stress hormones.

Enhances Focus and Concentration – Improves brain function, memory, and mental clarity.

Promotes Emotional Stability – Helps in self-awareness and emotional balance.

Encourages Relaxation – Induces deep relaxation, reducing insomnia and fatigue.

3. Spiritual Benefits

Increases Self-Awareness – Connects the body, mind, and soul for a deeper understanding of the self.

Enhances Energy Flow – Asanas unblock energy channels and awaken inner strength.

Promotes Inner Peace – Helps in achieving a meditative state and a sense of contentment.

4. Specific Asanas and Their Benefits

Tadasana (Mountain Pose) – Improves posture and strengthens legs.

Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose) – Strengthens the spine and relieves back pain.

Vrikshasana (Tree Pose) – Enhances balance and concentration.

Padmasana (Lotus Pose) – Aids in meditation and mental peace.

Shavasana (Corpse Pose) – Reduces stress and rejuvenates the body.

B; Breathwork out

Breath Workouts (Pranayama) and Their Benefits

Breath control, known as Pranayama, is an essential part of yoga that enhances lung capacity, mental clarity, and overall well-being. Here are some effective breath workouts and their benefits:

1. Diaphragmatic Breathing (Belly Breathing)

How to Do It:

- Sit comfortably or lie on your back.
- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Inhale deeply through the nose, allowing the belly to expand while keeping the chest still.
- Exhale slowly through the nose.

Benefits:

Increases lung capacity

Enhances oxygen intake

Reduces stress and anxiety

2. Pursed-Lip Breathing

How to Do It:

- Inhale deeply through your nose.
- Purse your lips as if whistling.
- Exhale slowly and gently through pursed lips.

Benefits:

Improves oxygen flow

Strengthens respiratory muscles

Helps in conditions like asthma and COPD

3. Anulom-Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing)

How to Do It:

- Sit comfortably and close your right nostril with your thumb.
- Inhale deeply through your left nostril.
- Close your left nostril and exhale through the right nostril.
- Repeat the cycle for 5-10 minutes.

Benefits:

Balances brain function

Enhances focus and concentration

Detoxifies the respiratory system

4. Kapalbhati (Skull Shining Breath)

How to Do It:

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- Take a deep inhale through your nose.
- Forcefully exhale by contracting your abdominal muscles (short bursts).
- Continue for 1-2 minutes.

Benefits:

Detoxifies the lungs and improves circulation

Boosts metabolism and digestion

Energizes the mind and body

5. Bhramari (Humming Bee Breath)

How to Do It:

- Close your eyes and take a deep inhale.
- Exhale while making a humming sound like a bee.
- Feel the vibrations in your head and chest.

Benefits:

Calms the nervous system

Reduces anxiety and enhances mental clarity

Improves sleep quality

The Power of Chanting: Benefits & Techniques

Chanting, especially sacred sounds like "Om", mantras, or prayers, has been practiced for centuries across various cultures. It is a powerful way to calm the mind, improve focus, and promote overall well-being.

1. Chanting "Om" (Aum)

How to Do It:

- Sit in a comfortable posture with your spine straight.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
- As you exhale, chant "Om" in a long, slow manner: "Ooooo Mmmmm"
- Feel the vibration resonate through your body.

Benefits:

Creates deep relaxation and inner peace

Balances emotions and reduces stress

Increases focus and mindfulness

Improves lung capacity and breathing efficiency

2. Mantra Chanting (Repetition of Sacred Sounds)

How to Do It:

- Choose a mantra (e.g., "Om Namah Shivaya", "Hare Krishna", or any positive affirmation).
- Repeat it continuously in a rhythmic way, either aloud or silently in your mind.
- Feel the meaning and energy behind the words.

Benefits:

Strengthens concentration and mental clarity

Reduces negativity and promotes positivity

Enhances emotional stability

Connects the mind and body for spiritual growth

3. Bhramari Pranayama (Humming Bee Breath with Chanting)

How to Do It:

- Sit in a meditative position and take a deep breath.
- Exhale while making a deep humming sound (like a bee).

- Repeat for a few minutes.

Benefits:

Soothes the nervous system and reduces anxiety

Improves sleep quality

Enhances self-awareness and relaxation

4. Group Chanting (Kirtan & Bhajans)

How to Do It:

- Join a group or sing alone in a rhythmic, repetitive manner.
- Use musical instruments like drums or harmonium if available.

Benefits:

Creates a sense of unity and joy

Boosts energy and emotional well-being

Strengthens spiritual connection

D; Dhyana

The Power of Dhyana (Meditation): Unlocking Inner Peace

Dhyana, or meditation, is an ancient practice that helps in achieving mental clarity, emotional stability, and spiritual growth. It is a state of deep concentration where the mind becomes still, allowing one to connect with their inner self.

1. What is Dhyana?

Dhyana is the seventh limb of yoga (as per Patanjali's Yoga Sutras) and is the practice of profound meditation, where the mind is completely absorbed in the present moment. It goes beyond simple relaxation and leads to self-realization.

2. How to Practice Dhyana

Choose a Quiet Place – Find a peaceful environment.

Sit Comfortably – Sit in Padmasana (Lotus Pose) or Sukh asana (Easy Pose) with a straight spine.

Close Your Eyes – Reduce distractions and turn inward.

Focus on Your Breath – Observe the natural rhythm of your inhalation and exhalation.

Use a Mantra or Object – Chant "Om" or focus on an object (like a candle flame).

Let Thoughts Flow – Do not resist thoughts; simply observe and let them pass.

3. Benefits of Dhyana (Meditation)

Mental & Emotional Benefits

Reduces stress, anxiety, and depression

Enhances focus, memory, and decision-making

Promotes emotional stability and inner peace

Physical Benefits

Lowers blood pressure and improves heart health

Boosts immune system and sleep quality

Increases energy levels and vitality

Spiritual Benefits

Deepens self-awareness and mindfulness

Strengthens intuition and inner wisdom

Leads to self-realization and enlightenment

4. Types of Dhyana (Meditation Techniques)

◆ Mindfulness Meditation – Observing thoughts and sensations without judgment.

◆ Focused Meditation – Concentrating on a single object, like a flame or mantra.

◆ Transcendental Meditation – Using specific mantras for deep relaxation.

◆ Loving-Kindness Meditation – Cultivating love and compassion for oneself and others.

Dhyana is a powerful tool for transforming the mind, body, and spirit. Regular practice leads to mental clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual awakening. Even a few minutes daily can bring profound

The Morning of Wisdom and Joy

As the morning sun spread its golden hues across the sky, the fresh breeze carried the scent of blooming flowers in the park. The group of four senior friends—Ved, Krishna, Rajesh, and Mukesh—had just completed their session of exercise, breathwork, and meditation. There was an unusual calmness in the air, a kind of peace that settled deep within their hearts.

Krishna, overwhelmed with gratitude, turned towards Ved, his eyes gleaming with admiration. With a playful yet sincere expression, he folded his hands in a namaste and said,

"O Lord, where are your feet? Let me touch them! You are not just our leader but our Guru. Today's program was the best so far!"

The other two, Rajesh and Mukesh, burst into laughter, yet they nodded in agreement. Ved, amused yet touched by Krishna's words, chuckled and shook his head.

"Krishna, my dear friend, if I am the Guru, then you all are my strength. Without you, I would be just another man walking alone in the park!" he said warmly.

Rajesh added, "But truly, today was something different. I felt lighter, fresher—like my body and mind had been washed of all worries."

Mukesh, who usually stayed quiet, finally spoke, "Yes, I think today we truly connected—not just with each other but with ourselves."

They all stood silently for a moment, appreciating the energy of the morning. The sounds of birds chirping and the rhythmic swaying of trees created a natural harmony around them.

Krishna broke the silence with a grin, "So, Ved Guruji, what's next on our path to enlightenment?"

Ved laughed, raising his hands dramatically, "Next, my dear disciples, is the most sacred act of all—BREAKFAST!"

Everyone roared with laughter. They knew their bond was beyond just morning walks and exercise; it was a brotherhood of happiness, wisdom, and companionship.

And so, with joyful hearts, we walked out of the park together—ready to enjoy another beautiful day of life.

Ved informed all of us to bring their mobiles and headphones for meditation, It is goods for beginners.

A Morning of Inner Transformation

Today, as we gathered for our morning routine, Ved announced, "Today, we will take only one round of walking. After that, we will immerse ourselves in meditation inspired by Sister Shivani of the Brahma Kumaris."

Intrigued, we all agreed. Meditation was always a refreshing experience, but today, Ved had something different planned.

"I will open a video link," he continued. "You all will listen to it through headphones and repeat the meditation words, word by word. The goal is to truly absorb the essence of what is being said."

We found our spots under the shade of a large tree, the morning sun filtering through the leaves, casting dappled patterns on the ground. As we put on our headphones and closed our eyes, the voice of Sister Shivani filled our minds—calm, soothing, and deeply insightful.

Ved had explained earlier, "When we just listen and talk to ourselves, we cut off from the outer world. The more you look inward, the deeper you will feel the transformation within you."

As the guided meditation progressed, we could feel a shift—our breaths became slower, our minds calmer. The usual chatter of our thoughts started fading, replaced by a profound stillness.

By the time we opened our eyes, there was a visible change in everyone's expression. A sense of peace, a silent joy.

Krishna was the first to speak, his voice softer than usual. "That was... different. I felt as if I had stepped into another dimension. A place of stillness within me."

Rajesh nodded. "Yes, for the first time, I truly felt disconnected from the world but connected to something deeper—myself."

Mukesh, who often took time to process his emotions, finally said, "I think we should do this every day."

Ved smiled, looking at each one of us. "That's the magic of meditation. You don't need to search for peace outside; it's already within you. You just need to look."

As we slowly walked out of the park, our usual laughter and banter took a backseat. There was a new silence among us—not the silence of emptiness, but the silence of inner contentment.

And in that silence, we realized—we were not just walking toward health, but toward a better, more peaceful version of ourselves.

Ved said:

It should be done on regular basis daily in the evening and morning, you can select any method of meditation, its target is the same to connect our self within

The Art of Meditation: A Journey Within

Introduction to Meditation

Meditation is not just about closing the eyes and sitting still; it is a profound practice of self-discovery, inner peace, and mental clarity. It helps in aligning the mind, body, and soul, allowing us to detach from the chaos of the outer world and connect deeply with our inner self.

Ved introduced today's session by emphasizing, "Meditation is a daily practice that nurtures the soul. Just as we eat food for our body, meditation is food for our mind and spirit." Sit straight and relax yourself.

While meditating, exactly in the middle of the forehead where we apply tilak, see yourself as a very powerful, shining star. I am the soul, the power that runs this

body. I am the master of the mind. I am the master of the senses. I am the soul, the power that makes every resolution. I am the soul who always thinks good. I am the soul who thinks less.

I am the power that speaks every word. I am the soul; I speak less. I am the soul; I speak softly. I am the soul; I speak sweetly. My every word is a blessing. My every action is the best. I am the soul; there is light in every existence. I give respect and love to everyone. I make every impossible possible. I am a powerful soul; rays of power spread all around me. I am an angel; the souls that come in contact with me are very good.

They are very good. They are powerful souls. Their behaviour is perfect. Our relationship is strong. I am a soul who gives love and respect to every soul and gives blessings to every soul. I am a soul who is full of love. Whatever is happening for me is happening for my welfare. I am a soul who is full of happiness. Rays of happiness are spreading all around me. I put a dot on past things. I finished them. I lighten them. I forgive myself. I accept myself. I love myself. I am a soul who is full of peace. Rays of peace are spreading all around from my soul. I am an angel. I am close to the formless God. God is always with me. God is my companion. I share everything in my mind with Him. If I have any question or need advice, or if I have to make a decision, I tell Him. I get answers to everything from Him. Every meaning becomes lighter after talking to Him. The powers of the Almighty God are coming into and going from my soul. Old habits have been destroyed. I, the soul, am filled with the powers of the Supreme Soul. The Supreme Soul is the ocean of love. He accepts me as I am. He loves me. I do not need anything from anyone else.

I am filled with God's love. The powers of every soul are emanating from me, the soul, and reaching every soul. Every soul is filled with the powers of the Supreme Soul. Every soul is peaceful. Every soul is happy. Every soul is healthy. The rays of the Supreme Soul, the ocean of purity, are giving power to all the five elements of nature. Nature is pure. Nature is powerful. Nature is my companion. There is a protective shield of the powers of the Supreme Soul all around me. Everything is peaceful. I, the soul, am an angel who gives power. I am an angel. Om Shanti.

Any preacher's main aim, target, destiny is one, to connect yourself to your inner world, their path, their way may be different but destiny is same.

A Father's Worry (Rajesh)

Rajesh was feeling low today. Instead of walking with his friends, he chose to sit quietly on a bench and watch the world around him. The park was alive with activity—some people were jogging on the track; others were sitting on benches chatting. A few were doing yoga, while some prayed towards the rising sun. Kids ran around laughing, a group of men worked out at the outdoor gym, and near the fountain, a few elderly folks dipped their hands in the flowing water, lost in thought. Somewhere in the distance, the soothing sounds of bhajans and mantras filled the air.

After finishing their usual morning walk, Ved, Arjun and Lakshman came to Rajesh and sat beside him. Sensing his mood, Ved gently asked, "What happened, dear friend? You seem troubled. Hope all is well."

Rajesh let out a deep sigh. "Not all is well. Today's generation is mad. My sons have created a situation that is driving me crazy. I couldn't sleep the whole night."

Concerned, all three leaned in. "Tell us, Rajesh. If we can help in any way, please let us know."

Rajesh shook his head. "My elder son, Arun, is in America. He has returned with his girlfriend, an Indian-origin woman. I overheard him telling her everything about our family, our business, our property. But when I asked if he knew anything about her family, he dismissed me outright."

Ved frowned. "What do you mean?"

"He told me he loves her, and that's all that matters. But when I asked about her background, he said he doesn't care about her parents, that they are separated and living in different cities. I tried to explain that before taking such a big step, he should understand her family, their customs, and their values. But he cut me off, saying, 'Dad, I love her, and she is my closest friend. Please don't create a scene in front of her.'"

Rajesh's voice trembled. "I told him clearly—I will never agree to this relationship unless I know her family better. But instead of understanding, he stormed out with her. He hasn't returned home, and he's not answering my calls."

Laxman sighed. "And your wife? What does she say?"

Rajesh let out another deep breath. "She is taking his side. She says, 'What will you do if he elopes?'"

There was silence for a moment. Then Rajesh continued, "As if that wasn't enough, yesterday, a friend told me that my younger son was seen in court, bailing out a known criminal real estate agent. I suspect he is interested in the man's daughter. Tell me, how can I be at peace? I feel like I'm going mad."

Ved placed a reassuring hand on Raju's shoulder. "This is life, my friend. Ups and downs are part of it. Be strong. Things will work out."

Laxman nodded. "Ved is right. Don't let this consume you. Let's take one step at a time."

Ved then turned to Laxman. "Please take Rajesh home and make sure he rests. We'll meet again in the evening. Maybe by then, we can think of some solution."

He then looked back at Rajesh and smiled. "Smile, my friend. Don't let negativity take over. Think positive, and everything will fall into place."

Rajesh managed a weak smile. "Thank you, Ved. You always know what to say."

As they parted ways, the mood was sombre. Though they had tried to reassure Rajesh, all of them felt a lingering sadness.

Ved called Lakshman and Arjun and told them if they are free, let us go to Rajesh house. All agreed and decided to meet by 8 at his house.

Ved pressed the doorbell and the maid opened the door. Ved, we are friends of Rajesh, can we see him. Rajesh's wife called loudly at the door, Maid replied, some friends of Sir.

Mrs Rajesh came to the door and wished them all and offered to sit at the drawing room. He has just gone to market and will be here any moment.

Maide came with a tray of glass of water and beside some dry fruits, nuts were there.

All picked the glass and she placed the nuts at the table. Everyone consumed water as per their need and picked up nuts also. Ved to Mrs Rajesh, we met for the first time though we have been daily walkers since long, yes, I know, he briefed me daily what you did. I am happy at this age that companies should be there otherwise lonely people would kill less people.

Ved what is your name or can we call you Bhabhi ji, Sister, you can call me Bhabhi, I am THE Youngest between you all, otherwise my name is Reeta. All said Bhabhi ji is better.

She said no ji only Bhabhi. All smiled and agreed to call her Bhabhi.

The bell rang and his maid rushed to the door, looking sir has come. She opened the door and Rajesh was there, we stood and wished him and handed Shaken. Rajesh, surprised to see you all here, welcome. I had an intuition that you would come and just went to a wine shop to grab some beers and wines.

Ved sounded oh that is so nice of you but came here to know how is your mood.

Rajesh's Son called me yesterday feeling sorry and the younger son was misguided and he too realised and assured me that he will break up with her.

I questioned them, is it that easy? They assured me they will be only friends and will not think about life partnership. I feel let them decide what is good or bad for them. We unnecessarily interfere, You can only advise them, the rest is on them to decide.

Ved; Facing Life's Challenges with Courage

Life constantly pushes us in different directions, and these pushes sometimes create cracks—some of which remain forever. In this world, we often struggle to fulfil our desires due to external circumstances. However, those who overcome obstacles with time and courage are the ones truly called brave.

Many people spend their lives trying to improve others, sometimes at the cost of their own peace. While guidance is important, especially for children, maturity is a process that cannot be forced. If children are raised with strong values, life tends to take its natural course. But if things don't go as expected, there's little benefit in unnecessary worry—after all, banging one's head against the wall achieves nothing.

Patience and time heal many things. Instead of excessive concern, trusting the journey and allowing events to unfold naturally often brings the best outcomes.

Ved continued;

It is such a great relief, we all were just thinking about you, we all are so happy and why not we should celebrate, bring beers please.

Rajesh after beer, you would like to go out for dinner. Before we could reply, Mrs. Rajesh came in and told us that she had already ordered paneer tikka and chicken tikka.

Ved, what a good day it is, if you had asked for something else, you would have got that too. All laughed.

Rajesh All are our here, no formalities., Let us cheer, everyone clinked glasses and said cheers. Bhabhi glanced at the phone and said as per tracking, Zomato guy will be here in 5 minutes. The snacks came and served; it was quite delicious. Ved, May I know who served, it was very delicious, she said just from mall Dabha.

The Burden of Worry

Ved leaned back in his chair, watching Rajesh's worried face. With a gentle smile, he said, "You know, some people spend their lives worrying unnecessarily, ruining their own happiness. Life is full of challenges, but those who face them with courage are the ones who stay truly happy. When the mind is clear and positive, even nature helps in its own way."

He continued, "Take a river, for example. Sometimes, it breaks its banks—it's natural. But if someone keeps worrying, thinking, 'Oh no, the bank has broken! The city will flood!' instead of finding a solution, what's the use? Life works the same way. We panic over small problems, but after some time, everything settles down on its own."

Rajesh nodded slowly, absorbing Ved's words.

Ved smiled again. "The problem is, people start offering advice without being asked. It's like serving food to someone who isn't hungry. Naturally, neither the food nor the advice is appreciated."

Rajesh, why you are saying like this, you are our leader, our well-wisher, Your all advice are welcome and accepted with true heart.

Ved smiled at Rajesh and said "Look at him. He doesn't even know the full story, yet he's already worried. My friend, let me tell you something—when a man is caught in a whirlpool, he tries every possible way to escape, whether by good or bad means. That's how life is."

Mukesh chuckled, shaking his head. "Oh, our great philosopher, our very own Gyaani Devta! Enough of this wisdom—let's call it a night. It's already 11 o'clock."

Rajesh, now feeling lighter, smiled. "You guys did a great job coming over. My mood has completely changed."

Everyone laughed and raised their glasses. "Cheers!" they said, toasting with pure beer, enjoying the moment.

As they got up to leave, Ved patted Rajesh on the back. "So, you're coming tomorrow, right?"

Rajesh grinned. "Of course! How can I miss spending time with such wonderful friends?"

With that, they all left for their homes, feeling lighter, happier, and grateful for each other's company.

Rajesh wife, they have left,

Yes, Rajesh replied,

By the way, what was the need to tell kids' stories to all of them?

They are not only good friends; they are more than brothers.

It is said,

Happiness Multiplies When Shared, and Sadness Diminishes Through Expression

Joy grows when we share it with others, spreading positivity and strengthening bonds. On the other hand, burdens become lighter when shared—expressing sorrow with trusted individuals eases the weight on our hearts. Life is a balance of both, and knowing when to share happiness and when to seek comfort makes the journey smoother.

She said, this is disgraceful and disgusting

Rajesh "Why are you making a mountain out of a molehill?"

We just had a good time, we you are spoiling my mood

Right Do whatever you like, she replied.

Cool Madam cool,

"She mumbled something and went to her room."

Rajesh thought to himself, "Oh God, we cannot do anything on our own." He took a deep breath and exhaled loudly to calm himself down.

Next day meeting

As usual they met in the morning, took 2 rounds of walking, 100 metre jogging and rested for 10 minutes.

Krishna to Ved, what next by boss.

Ved thought for a moment and said let us do vipassana today.

Connecting Within Yourself

To connect with your inner self, here are some insights and practices:

In life, sooner or later, we all face difficult and challenging moments. A well-trained mind, body, emotions, and feelings can help confront these ups and downs with grace. Today, let's focus on **Vipassana**, a meditation technique that promotes self-awareness and purification.

Introduction to Vipassana Meditation

Vipassana is one of India's most ancient meditation techniques. Rediscovered by Gotama the Buddha over 2,500 years ago, the term *Vipassana* means "seeing things as they truly are."

It is a process of self-purification through self-observation. Here's how it works:

1. Start by Observing the Breath

- Sit straight on a yoga mat or chair.
- Close your eyes and your mouth.

2. Focus on Your Breathing

- Concentrate on your natural breath as it flows in and out.

- Do not worry about whether the breath is passing through your right or left nostril.
- Simply observe your breath—whether it is short or long, slow or fast.

3. Be Present in the Moment

- Be fully aware of the breath entering your body and leaving it.
- Do not try to control or change it; just observe.

By practicing Vipassana, you cultivate sharpened awareness. This awareness helps you observe the changing nature of your body and mind, leading to the realization of universal truths like impermanence, suffering, and timelessness.

1. Breathing Awareness: A Path to Inner Transformation

- Keep your attention focused on your breathing—when it flows in and when it flows out.
- Feel the gentle sound of your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
- Maintain full awareness and vigilance, observing each breath as it goes in and comes out.
- Be a witness to your breathing, staying fully present in the moment.

Your mind may wander, and that's natural. When it does, gently bring your focus back to your breath, flowing in and out.

The Breath: A Highway to Purity

- Each inhalation brings purity into your being.
- Each exhalation cleanses your inner self, releasing impurities.

The more you purify yourself through this practice, the more active and powerful your soul will become.

Awakening the Soul

- The soul is powerful, angelic, and a source of positivity.
- It inspires us to do good deeds and meaningful work.
- As you practice, you'll begin to notice positive changes within yourself.

Sit quietly and observe your breath for as long as you can—at least **10 minutes a day** is recommended.

Benefits of Vipassana

This simple practice has profound effects:

1. **Overcoming Harmful Habits:** You may naturally forget cravings like intoxication, which harm the body and mind.
2. **Mental Wellness:** It helps dissolve ego, anxiety, depression, and other illnesses.
3. **Ecstasy and Fulfilment:**
 - Vipassana brings a state of ecstasy—a supreme joy.
 - Once you experience this, worldly desires lose their appeal and become meaningless.
 - True ecstasy transcends everything, offering a sweetness and fulfilment beyond worldly pleasures.

A Simple Mantra: "So Hum"

You can enhance this meditation by silently repeating the mantra:

- Say **"So"** as you inhale.
- Say **"Hum"** as you exhale.

This technique deepens the meditative experience, creating a blissful intoxication that lasts longer. It is a joy even gods and goddesses crave.

When you feel the effects of this spirituality, it will seem sweeter than any worldly pleasure.

Rub you both hands and touch the eyes, forehead, cheeks, shoulders, knees.

Rubbing Hands Close-Up: Benefits and Significance

Rubbing the hands together generates heat in the palms, offering both spiritual and physical benefits. These are explained below:

1. Energy Flow

The palms contain various acupressure points connected to different organs in the body. Acupressure is a healing science that can be practiced even by those who cannot perform yoga asanas. The warmth generated from rubbing the hands can be applied to areas that need healing. This practice stimulates specific energy points, sending vibrations throughout the body. Certain meridian points in the palms are linked to different energy channels, and stimulating them can help clear blockages. However, a deep understanding of these meridians is necessary before attempting advanced practices.

2. Healing

Rubbing the hands together creates heat, which, when placed on areas of discomfort, may help relieve pain and promote healing. Many diseases are believed to heal faster when patients have a strong intention to recover. The warmth from the hands acts as a psychological cue, reinforcing the body's natural healing response.

3. Stress Relief

Placing warmed palms over the eyes soothes tension and improves blood circulation around them. This practice is especially beneficial for those who spend long hours working on computers. After a yoga session, rubbing the hands and placing them on the eyes, face, and body allows the body's self-generated energy to be absorbed, helping to balance and activate the nervous system.

4. Relaxation

Yoga practitioners can use this movement after intense vinyasa yoga sequences or challenging asanas like the Handstand Pose. If the palms and wrists feel strained, rubbing the hands together may help release tension. This practice can also be incorporated into warm-up or cool-down routines, depending on the time of day and the individual's needs.

5. Accessibility for All

This simple yet effective practice can be performed by senior citizens, pregnant women, postpartum mothers, bedridden individuals, and physically challenged people. It is particularly beneficial for eye health and can be combined with yoga-based eye exercises. People who spend long hours driving or straining their eyes at work should be taught this practice so they can use it when needed.

6. Spiritual Significance

On a spiritual level, rubbing the hands together generates positive energy in the mind. Our hands play a vital role in shaping our actions—whether we are working, cooking, or helping others, they reflect our intentions. Ancient Hindu Vedic traditions emphasize the importance of hands in karma (action). According to these teachings, upon waking up, one should rub the palms together and look at them while reciting a morning prayer. This prayer, "Om Karger Vaastu Lakshmi," invokes blessings for knowledge, prosperity, and divine guidance throughout the day. After chanting, the warmed palms are placed on the face to carry positive energy into daily life.

All were staring at Ved, how you know all the details, you must be doing some research, reading etc.

Yes, I keep on reading, all is available in the Media, I noted down in my notebook yesterday and briefed you all. Tomorrow we will discuss Budha and Nirvana.

Changed Morning Walk Time in Winter

Winter has just begun, and we all decided to change our morning walk time from 7 AM to 9 AM. Cold weather increases the risk of heart issues, especially for senior citizens, so we made this adjustment as a precaution.

Today, everyone arrived at 9 AM as planned. As usual, we completed our walk, and Ved suggested that we do some stretching exercises afterward.

1. Types of Stretching Exercises

A. Static Stretching (Holding a Stretch)

- Involves holding a stretch for 15–60 seconds.
- Helps improve flexibility and relax muscles.
- Best performed after a workout.

Examples:

- **Hamstring Stretch** – Sit with legs extended and reach for your toes.
- **Quadriceps Stretch** – Stand on one leg, pull the other foot towards the glutes.
- **Shoulder Stretch** – Bring one arm across the body and hold with the opposite hand.

B. Dynamic Stretching (Active Movements)

- Involves controlled movements that prepare muscles for activity.
- Best performed before a workout.

Examples:

- **Leg Swings** – Swing one leg forward and backward.
- **Arm Circles** – Rotate arms in a circular motion.
- **Torso Twists** – Rotate the upper body from side to side.

C. PNF Stretching (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation)

- Involves contracting and relaxing muscles while stretching.
- Used in rehabilitation and advanced flexibility training.

Example:

- **Partner Hamstring Stretch** – Push against resistance, then relax and stretch further.

2. Benefits of Stretching

A. Physical Benefits

Improves Flexibility – Helps muscles and joints move through their full range of motion.

Enhances Posture – Reduces muscle tightness that leads to poor posture.

Increases Blood Circulation – Delivers more oxygen to muscles, improving recovery.

Prevents Injuries – Reduces muscle stiffness and lowers the risk of strains.

Reduces Muscle Soreness – Helps in faster muscle recovery after workouts.

B. Mental & Relaxation Benefits

Relieves Stress – Loosens tight muscles that hold tension.

Boosts Energy Levels – Increases blood flow, making you feel more active.

Enhances Mind-Body Connection – Improves awareness of body movements.

3. Tips for Effective Stretching

Warm-up first – Stretching is more effective when muscles are warm.

Do not bounce – Avoid jerky movements to prevent injury.

Hold each stretch for at least 15–30 seconds – To allow muscles to relax.

Breathe deeply – Helps muscles loosen up.

Stretch regularly – Consistency leads to long-term flexibility gains.

Before Nirvana, let us know about Buddha.

The Life of Buddha (In Short)

Gautama Buddha, originally **Siddhartha Gautama**, was born around **563 BCE** in **Lumbini (present-day Nepal)** into a royal family. Despite living a luxurious life, he was deeply moved by the suffering he saw in the world.

At **29**, he renounced his palace life and began his spiritual journey, seeking enlightenment. After years of intense meditation and self-discipline, he attained ***nirvana* (enlightenment)** under the **Bodhi tree** in **Bodh Gaya** at the age of **35**.

He then travelled across India, teaching the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eightfold Path**, which guide people toward overcoming suffering and achieving inner peace. His teachings laid the foundation of **Buddhism**.

At **80**, Buddha passed away in **Kushinagar**, attaining **Parinirvana**—the final liberation from the cycle of rebirth. His wisdom continues to inspire millions worldwide.

Nirvana: The Ultimate Liberation

Nirvana is the highest state of peace, wisdom, and liberation. It is not just a religious idea but a profound realization that frees one from suffering. By following ethical conduct, mindfulness, and meditation, one can progress toward enlightenment and inner freedom.

Nirvana is a central concept in Buddhism and Hinduism, referring to the ultimate state of liberation, enlightenment, and freedom from suffering. It represents the end of the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara) and the dissolution of all worldly attachments and desires.

1. Meaning of Nirvana

The word "**Nirvana**" comes from Sanskrit and Pali and means "**extinguishing**" or "**blowing out**"—like extinguishing a flame. In this sense,

Nirvana symbolizes the extinguishing of ignorance, desire, and suffering, leading to complete inner peace.

2. Nirvana in Buddhism

The Four Noble Truths & Nirvana

In Buddhism, Nirvana is closely linked to the **Four Noble Truths**, which describe the nature of suffering and the path to liberation:

- **Dukkha (Suffering Exists):** Life is filled with suffering.
- **Samudaya (Cause of Suffering):** The cause of suffering is desire and attachment.
- **Nirodha (End of Suffering):** Suffering can end by eliminating desires and attachments.
- **Magga (Path to Liberation):** The **Eightfold Path** is the way to Nirvana.

The Eightfold Path to Nirvana

To achieve Nirvana, one must follow the **Noble Eightfold Path**, which includes:

- **Right View** – Understanding reality and the nature of suffering.
- **Right Intention** – Developing good intentions and thoughts.
- **Right Speech** – Speaking truthfully and kindly.
- **Right Action** – Behaving ethically and morally.
- **Right Livelihood** – Earning a living in a righteous way.
- **Right Effort** – Making continuous efforts toward self-improvement.
- **Right Mindfulness** – Being aware of one's thoughts and actions.
- **Right Concentration** – Practicing deep meditation.

Types of Nirvana in Buddhism

- **Nirvana with Remainder (Saupādisesa Nirvana):** A state where an enlightened person (Arhat) is free from desires and suffering but still exists in a physical body.
 - **Parinirvana (Final Nirvana):** Achieved at the moment of death, when an enlightened being completely transcends the cycle of rebirth.
-

3. Nirvana in Hinduism and Jainism

Hinduism:

- In Hinduism, Nirvana is similar to **Moksha**, the liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth.
- It is achieved through self-realization, devotion, karma, and meditation.
- The soul (Atman) merges with **Brahman**, the ultimate reality.

Jainism:

- In Jainism, Nirvana refers to the complete liberation of the soul from karma and reincarnation.
 - It is achieved through asceticism, non-violence (Ahimsa), and self-discipline.
-

4. What Happens After Nirvana?

- In **Theravada Buddhism**, Nirvana means the total cessation of existence.
 - In **Mahayana Buddhism**, Nirvana is not a separate realm but a state of existence where one continues to help others attain enlightenment (Bodhisattva path).
-

5. How to Attain Nirvana?

- **Meditation (Dhyana):** Practicing mindfulness and deep concentration.
- **Detachment:** Letting go of desires and ego.
- **Compassion:** Helping others selflessly.
- **Wisdom (Prajna):** Gaining insight into the true nature of existence.

The Story of the Buddha and the Angry Man

One day, Buddha was walking through a village with his disciples. A man approached him, furious and filled with hatred. He began insulting Buddha, calling him names and trying to provoke him.

Buddha, however, remained calm and did not respond. The man grew even angrier and said, **“Why are you silent? Do you have nothing to say?”**

Buddha smiled gently and asked, **“If someone offers you a gift, but you refuse to accept it, to whom does the gift belong?”**

The man replied, **“To the person who offered it.”**

Buddha nodded and said, **“The same goes for your anger. If I do not accept your insults, they remain with you.”**

The man was stunned by this wisdom. He bowed to Buddha and walked away, reflecting on his words.

Moral:

Anger and hatred harm the one who holds them, not the one they are directed at. By staying calm and not reacting, we can maintain inner peace.

A Sudden Health Scare

The moment we exited the gate, Krishna noticed something unusual—Ved was fumbling while speaking. Before he could warn him and the others,

Ved started stumbling. Krishna cried out, "Something is wrong with Ved! He is fumbling and stumbling!"

A few people gathered around, and we requested their help to take him to the hospital. Krishna quickly brought his car near the gate and flung the door open. Some people lifted Ved and carefully placed him inside.

We rushed to the nearest hospital, driving as fast as possible. Upon reaching the emergency gate, Ved was immediately taken inside on a stretcher.

The doctors noticed his breathing was deteriorating. They quickly put him on oxygen, and within five minutes, his vital signs appeared on the monitor. His blood pressure was stable. The doctor administered an injection and then shifted him to the ICU as a precaution.

Worried, we anxiously asked the doctor, "Is everything okay?"

The doctor reassured us, "We have shifted him to the ICU as a precaution. His breathing is now stable."

Then he asked, "Where did he collapse?"

Krishna replied, "At the garden. We had just finished our walk and exercise when it happened."

The doctor advised, "You should avoid going for walks early in the morning during winter. As retirees, it would be safer to schedule your walks in the afternoon."

Krishna explained, "We usually come at 6 AM, but today we changed it to 9 AM. Is 9 AM also unsafe?"

The doctor nodded, "Early morning cold air can worsen respiratory conditions, particularly for those with asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Studies show that low temperatures can constrict airways, making breathing difficult and increasing mucus production. Additionally, winter air is dry and cold, which leads to dehydration and affects the respiratory system adversely. A dry throat can cause discomfort while breathing. Given the high pollution levels, it's best to avoid morning walks in winter."

Krishna agreed, "Well explained, doctor. We will now meet in the afternoons instead."

Meanwhile, we had already informed Ved's family, and they were on their way. The doctor handed us a slip and instructed, "Please deposit the money at the cashier and then come see me in the basement, Cabin No. 7."

A few moments later, Ved's wife and both his daughters arrived, looking visibly shaken.

A Heartfelt Moment at the Hospital

We all greeted her with a respectful Namaste and reassured her, saying, "Don't worry, everything is fine now. The issue was due to the cold and pollution affecting oxygen levels."

"Yes, the doctor did ask us to deposit the money," Krishna added. "Bhai Sahib, we have insurance, but I need to ask him where he has kept the documents. Can I meet him?"

"Yes, let's go to the doctor," someone suggested.

As soon as we reached, the doctor checked again, "Have you deposited the money?"

Mrs. Ved, visibly annoyed, responded, "You're worried about money while our loved one's life is at stake!"

The doctor calmly replied, "Okay, don't be upset. The Head of the Department is here. You can submit an application stating that you will provide the insurance papers within two hours or else make the payment via credit card."

Krishna assured, "Bhabhi ji, I will prepare the application and bring it right away."

Krishna then turned to her "Excuse me, could you please tell me your name and the names of your children?"

"My name is Disha. My elder daughter is Reena, and the younger one is Tina," she replied.

Both of them met the Head of the Department, who accepted their application.

Mrs. Ved then said, "I want to meet him."

Krishna nodded, "Yes, let's go to the second floor." However, upon reaching, the Head Nurse informed them, "He is resting right now. You may see him for a minute."

Mrs. Ved and her daughters, Reena and Tina, entered the room and inquired about his health.

Ved replied weakly, "I'm fine, just feeling a little weak."

"Thank God, you're okay!" Mrs. Ved sighed in relief. "As soon as Krishna told us about you, we were all so scared. I immediately called Reena and Tina. Poor thing, she left her children in the maid's care and rushed here."

She continued, "The hospital is asking for either payment or the insurance papers."

Ved replied, "The insurance papers are in the almirah next to our bed, in the top drawer."

Disha reassured, "You take rest. I will go home and bring the papers."

Looking at us, she added, "He seems better now. You all have been here since morning. I truly appreciate it from the bottom of my heart. You should go home and rest. The family members are also on their way."

Krishna replied, "It's alright, Bhabhi ji. We are leaving now, but if you need anything, don't hesitate to call."

Mukesh added, "He is not just our friend; he is our brother, our Guru."

Then, addressing the group, he said, "Friends, let's go. Life is uncertain—we never know what will happen the next moment. Let's just pray for his recovery and hope to meet again in the garden soon."

Rajesh said, "Let's cancel tomorrow's plans. I will come again at night to check on him."

Krishna nodded, "Someone is coming to my place and asked Rajesh, after meeting Ved, please inform me also about his condition.

Mukesh turned to Rajesh, "Alright, let's meet at 6 in the evening."

Again, visited Hospital to meet Ved

Both arrived at the hospital and met Mrs. Disha Bhabhi, sister to inquire about Ved's health.

She replied, "He is fine and has been shifted to the ward. As a precaution, they may conduct an angiography tomorrow."

Rajesh reassured her, "Oh, don't worry! He will be perfectly fine. He is very strong—our mentor and leader."

"Can we see him, Bhabhi ji?" Rajesh asked.

"Yes, he is in Ward 5, Room 10," she replied. "I can come along, but they don't allow more than two visitors at a time."

Both entered the room, where a few guests were already present. Seeing them, Ved smiled and welcomed them warmly. They stepped closer, shook hands firmly, and wished him a speedy recovery.

Ved introduced them to his guests—Prakash and Pankaj, his brothers-in-law, and Marshal, his school friend. Realizing the room was getting crowded, his guests decided to take their leave. Before leaving, Prakash shook hands with Rajesh and said, "It was nice meeting you. Hope to see you again. By the way, Ved has been praising you all a lot."

"We might not have met before, but we know about your group—the four friends who meet daily in the garden for fitness, mindfulness, and self-improvement," he added with a smile.

Rajesh replied, "We owe it all to Ved. He has immense knowledge of well-being and natural remedies."

Prakash and the others smiled and left the room.

Ved then asked, "Should I order tea or coffee for you?"

Rajesh declined, “No, we just wanted to check on you. We’re looking forward to seeing you back in action on the ground soon.”

Ved sighed, “Well, it all depends on my angiography report.”

Rajesh reassured him, “It’s quite simple these days. They scan you with a machine, inject some contrast dye, and the report is generated almost instantly. That’s what I heard from my friends.”

Just then, tea and biscuits arrived. It seemed to have been ordered for his brothers-in-law, but since they had already left, Rajesh and his friend ended up consuming it.

As they sipped the tea, Rajesh remarked with a smile, “There’s an old Hindi saying—

दाने दाने पर लिखा है खाने वाले का नाम

(The name of the person who eats it is written on each grain.)”

Hospital visits often bring a sense of relief to patients, and Ved indeed seemed lighter and in better spirits. Soon, more visitors arrived, and Rajesh and his friend took their leave, wishing Ved well before heading home.

On the way back, Mukesh turned to Rajesh and said, “I’m 80 years old now. Thank God all my health parameters are in order, but lately, I haven’t been getting proper sleep.”

Rajesh nodded in understanding.

“I remember,” Mukesh continued, “once Ved gave us some valuable advice on improving sleep. Let’s follow it, my friend.”

Tips for Better Sleep:

- Sleep in complete darkness.
- Avoid excessive use of gadgets, as they suppress melatonin production.
- Consume foods rich in melatonin, such as bananas, ginger, garlic, tomatoes, radishes, and red wine.

- Eat tryptophan-rich foods in the evening, including dairy products, soy, seafood, and nuts, to support serotonin and melatonin production.
- Drink chamomile tea for relaxation before bedtime.
- Reduce exposure to blue light from laptops and mobile phones, as it interferes with melatonin production and can lead to insomnia. Turn off gadgets at least an hour before bed.

Additional Useful Tips:

- Use a comfortable pillow.
- Let natural light into your room in the morning.
- Only go to bed when you feel sleepy.
- Engage in regular physical activity during the day.
- Spend time outdoors in sunlight or natural light.
- Make your bedroom a peaceful and restful environment.
- Establish a calming pre-bedtime routine, such as brushing your teeth, drinking warm milk, reading lightly, or practicing relaxation techniques.
- Use your bedroom solely for sleep to reinforce a strong mental connection.
- Practice yoga and meditation for improved sleep quality.

Yoga Poses for Better Sleep:

- Head-to-Toe Knee Pose (Janu Sirsasana)
- Thread the Needle (Urdhva Mukha Pasasana)
- Reclined Twist
- Nighttime Goddess Stretch
- Child's Pose
- Cat and Cow Pose

- Twist Pose
- Rock-a-Bye Roll
- Viparita Karani (Legs-Up-The-Wall Pose)
- Vajrasana

Other Techniques:

- Meditation
- Chanting
- Yoga Nidra (Shavasana)

I have listed a few bedtime yoga poses, detailed instructions can be found through various online resources, including YouTube.

Yoga Nidra Practice for Relaxation:

- Lie down in Corpse Pose with your arms at your sides, palms facing up, and feet slightly apart.
- Close your eyes and take three deep breaths.
- Inhale deeply and chant "OM" three times, feeling the vibrations throughout your body.
- Mentally scan your body with gratitude, appreciating its function and health.

Mantras for Gratitude and Peace:

- "Thank you, God. I am a hundred times better than others."
- "God, bless me with peace so I can meditate, chant, and experience ecstasy."
- "I am entering Yoga Nidra. I will awaken refreshed; I will not fall into deep sleep. I will remain aware."

Body Awareness:

- Focus on different parts of your body sequentially:
 - Right foot, right knee, right thigh, right hip.
 - Left foot, left knee, left thigh, left hip.
 - Right hand, right fingers, right elbow, right shoulder.
 - Left hand, left fingers, left elbow, left shoulder.
 - Spine, head, ears, nose, face, abdomen, stomach, chest, throat, lips, and teeth.
- Take deep breaths, counting to 15 with each inhale and exhale, allowing complete relaxation.

Visualization for Deep Relaxation:

- Imagine yourself lying on a comfortable bed in a spacious room with soft lighting.
- Visualize a window overlooking a green park with people strolling, children playing, and the scent of fresh flowers in the air.
- Picture a fountain with water gently flowing, creating a soothing atmosphere.
- Feel the warmth of the rising sun, casting beautiful colors across the sky.
- Hear the melody of bhajans, see a serene image of Shiva, and inhale the calming fragrance of incense.
- Imagine sitting by the sea, watching the waves, boats, and people enjoying the ocean's rhythm.
- Visualize yourself walking in a peaceful forest, inhaling the natural scents and feeling a deep sense of tranquillity.
- Picture a small hut, where a saint's radiant smile welcomes you with peace and wisdom.

A Moment of Reflection and Gratitude:

- Seek divine blessings for peace and wisdom.
- Rub your palms together, gently touch your eyes, and take a few deep breaths before drifting into a restful sleep.

Yes, yes! I remembered some of them, but thanks for refreshing these tips again. They are really helpful!

He also said, these are only general remedies, if prolonged, consult your doctors or yoga experts.

Next day routine walk

As they walked together, Rajesh turned to Mukesh, his voice heavy with concern. "Mukesh, we've been following this morning routine for years—our walks, our exercises, our discussions. But without Ved, how will we continue? It just doesn't feel the same."

Mukesh, ever the practical one, nodded thoughtfully. "I understand, Rajesh. But life must go on. The show must continue. I'll talk to Krishna, and we'll fix a new schedule. We've been training under Ved for so long—we can manage. Maybe it won't be the same, but we can still do whatever we can."

Rajesh sighed but agreed. "You're right. Talk to Krishna and let me know the plan. What time should we meet?"

Mukesh considered for a moment. "We should avoid the morning cold, especially after what happened to Ved. Let's plan for the afternoon—maybe around noon or a bit later. I'll confirm with Krishna and let you know."

Later that day, Mukesh called Rajesh with the final plan. "Krishna and I have decided—let's meet at 2 PM."

And so, at 2 PM, the three friends gathered at their usual spot in the garden.

At first, they tried to stick to their usual routine. They took two rounds around the park and did some light exercises. But

something felt missing. The energy, the motivation—Ved's presence had always been a driving force behind their activities.

As they finished their light workout, they sat on their usual bench, staring into the distance. A quiet sadness lingered among them. None of them spoke for a while.

After some time, Rajesh finally broke the silence. "It just doesn't feel the same without Ved."

Krishna nodded. "I agree. It's like there's a void—an emptiness we can't fill."

Mukesh sighed. "Maybe it's just today. Let's give it some time. We'll come again tomorrow at 2 PM. Slowly, we'll find our rhythm again."

The other two agreed. With a sense of longing but determination, they stood up and left the park, hoping that tomorrow would feel a little better.

As we were walking out, we came across a woman we often ran into during our morning outings. She stopped and greeted us.

"Hello, everyone! I see only three of you today. Where is your fourth friend?" she asked, looking around curiously.

Rajesh sighed and replied, "He fell sick yesterday and is admitted to the hospital."

"Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that! What happened to him?" She asked with genuine concern.

"I already told you—he fell sick," Rajesh said, trying to avoid getting into too many details. "Sorry, but we're in a bit of a hurry right now."

As we walked away, Krishna whispered to us, "She's so tiresome. Talks too much. I don't like her... Just saying."

Before we could react, a loud crashing sound startled us. We turned around and saw two scooters had collided at the intersection just ahead.

In an instant, people rushed towards the scene, including us. Both riders had fallen but were trying to get up. We helped lift their scooters back up, checking if they were injured.

At first, it seemed like a minor accident, but suddenly, tempers flared. One of the men, clearly angry, grabbed the other by the collar and started shouting.

"Are you blind? You almost got me killed!" He yelled furiously.

The other man, just as enraged, shoved him back. "You think this is my fault? You were the one speeding! Don't you dare try to blame me!"

The argument escalated quickly.

"I'll teach you a lesson!" The first man threatened, rolling up his sleeves as if ready to throw a punch.

The second man smirked defiantly. "Oh yeah? Try it! You can't even touch the hair on my head!"

Before things could get worse, several bystanders, including us, stepped in to separate them. We pulled them apart and urged them to calm down. "Enough of this! Fighting won't solve anything," someone said.

The tension was thick, but after a few moments, both men took deep breaths, muttered a few more curses under their breath, and finally relented. They dusted themselves off, picked up their scooters, and, still glaring at each other, rode off in opposite directions.

The whole incident left us shaken. It was yet another case of road rage—a moment of uncontrolled anger that could have led to serious consequences.

Krishna shook his head. "Why do people get so angry so quickly? What's the point?"

Mukesh sighed. "Some people just look for a reason to fight. They don't think about the consequences."

Rajesh added, "One moment of impatience, one wrong decision, and things can spiral out of control. Then you're dealing with the police, courts, and unnecessary stress."

We exchanged glances, realizing how fragile tempers had become in today's world.

"Let's go," Krishna finally said. "We've seen enough drama for one morning."

We nodded in agreement and walked away, leaving the chaos behind.

Ved back to home from Hospital

Krishna called Rajesh and Mukesh and gave the good news that Ved had come back from the hospital and suggested visiting his house at 7 pm that day.

We all three first went to the flower shop and purchased a bouquet of flowers that we presented to him and welcomed him. It was a very soothing feeling about his return safe and sound and more good thing is all results were negative; no operation took place. Doctors said at the age of 80 his heart is stronger than younger people. Breathing problem looks due to pollution and cold waves.

His house was occupied by all his near dears, relatives and friends. There was an outpouring of congratulations and smiles on all the faces.

One of his relatives gave good advice on this subject of pollution.

Pollutions, Cold Wave, and Asthma

1. Pollution and Its Impact: Air pollution, especially in urban areas, is caused by vehicle emissions, industrial discharge, construction dust, and burning of waste. It releases harmful particles like PM2.5 and PM10, and gases such as nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and carbon monoxide.

- These pollutants irritate the respiratory tract, inflame the lungs, and weaken the immune response.
- Prolonged exposure increases the risk of developing asthma and worsens symptoms in existing asthma patients.

2. Cold Wave and Its Effects: A cold wave is a period of unusually low temperatures that affects large regions. It can drastically affect health, particularly for vulnerable individuals.

- Cold air is dry and can constrict airways, making breathing difficult for people with respiratory issues.
- It increases mucus production and susceptibility to respiratory infections.
- Inhalation of cold air can directly trigger asthma attacks.

3. Asthma and Vulnerability: Asthma is a chronic condition in which the airways become inflamed and narrow, leading to breathing difficulties, coughing, wheezing, and chest tightness.

- Polluted air and cold temperatures are major triggers for asthma.
- Combined exposure during winters can lead to frequent and severe asthma attacks.
- Children, elderly, and people with pre-existing conditions are more vulnerable.

Precautions and Tips:

Wear Masks: Use N95 or similar masks when going outdoors in high-pollution areas.

Avoid Outdoor Activities: Limit outdoor exercises during early mornings and late evenings in winter when pollution and cold are at their peak.

Stay Warm: Dress in layers, cover your nose and mouth with a scarf to warm the air before it enters your lungs.

Use Air Purifiers: Especially indoors to keep air clean and breathable.

Take Medications Regularly: Asthma patients should not skip their inhalers or preventive medications.

Monitor Air Quality: Use apps or websites to check AQI (Air Quality Index) before stepping out.

Steam Inhalation & Hydration: It helps keep the airways open and clears mucus build-up.

We should Consult Doctors for Regular health check-ups and personalized advice for asthma management are crucial.

Krishna asked him, “You sound like a doctor. Are you one?”

He smiled and replied, “No, I’m the General Manager of one of the hospital chains. I handle the management side of things. From time to time, we also release press notes to spread awareness and share useful information with the public.”

Krishna responded, “Well, thank you. That was truly valuable advice, almost like a lecture.”

Rajesh interjected with a smile, “A lecture? Not at all! It was genuine guidance and practical precautions.”

At that moment, Mukesh, usually the quiet one in the group, opened his diary and recited a heartfelt poem. Everyone listened intently, then broke into applause, touched by his words.

Welcome Back, Dear Friend

You were missed in every breeze,
In morning walks beneath the trees,
The garden felt a little less bright,
Without your laugh, your guiding light.

The bench still waits, your tea cup too,
The sunshine paused its golden hue,
The jokes we shared, the tales we spun,
Were only echoes, missing one.

But now you're back, and skies are clear,
The wind brings whispers: "*He's near, he's here!*"
With every step you bravely take,
Our hearts rejoice, our spirits wake.

The hospital days now left behind,
You've shown us strength of heart and mind,
Your courage lit the darkest phase,
And brought us hope in countless ways.

So welcome back, oh cherished soul,
With you, our circle feels more whole.
Let's Walk again, let's laugh once more,
With health restored, as days restore.

We'll thank the stars, we'll pray, we'll cheer,
Grateful to have our friend so near.
A bond like ours, time can't unbind—
You're home again, in heart and mind.

Everybody clapped, including Ved.

Ved; called her granddaughter Varuna and asked understand you have made a poem for me,

Where is that poem?

You want me to sing now

Yes, everyone keenly knows your talent.

Okay, here is my presentation to my dear grandpa;

Welcome Home, Grandpa

By your little sunshine

The house feels warm, the air feels right,
You're back, Grandpa – what a beautiful sight.
We missed your smile, your gentle cheer,
It's so, so good to have you nearby.

I watched the stars and said a prayer,
Wish each night you'd soon be there.
And now you're home, safe and strong,
Right where your heart has belonged all along.

I remember your stories, wise and grand,
The way you'd hold my tiny hand.
Your laughter soft, your hugs so wide,
The safest place was by your side.

You taught me patience, love, and grace,
With every wrinkle on your face.
Through every ache, through every test,
You still stood tall—you're simply the best.

So here's my hug, tight and true,
For all the love I get from you.
Rest now, Grandpa, take your time,
Your little girl is right here—fine.

And when you're ready, we'll take a walk,
Share our smiles and stories, and talk.
For now, just know – from the bottom of my heart,
Your love and strength are a work of art.

We all enjoyed coffee and snacks, then took permission from Ved and his family to take their leave.

“We'll head home now,” said Rajesh, smiling. “It was truly a wonderful and exciting moment for all of us to see you back, Ved. Please take care, and we hope to see you in the garden soon.”

Ved's wife smiled gently and said, "Sorry, but he won't be going out until the winter passes."

We looked at her, then at Ved, with a silent question in our eyes—what should we say now?

Ved reassured us with a calm smile. "Don't worry. In a week or so, all four of us can continue our activities on the first floor of my house—the space we made originally meant for yoga."

All three of us were thrilled at his response and immediately agreed, adding, "Only if the doctors allow it."

He introduced us to his neighbour, Mr. Deepak Jain, who appeared to be around 50 years old, and told us that Deepak is a keen golfer. "I often see him early in the morning, heading out for his golf game," Ved said with a smile.

Rajesh asked, "Where do you play, sir?"

Deepak replied, "I usually play at Qutab Golf Course and DLF. Have you played golf before?" he asked Rajesh.

Rajesh chuckled, "Yes, I started a long time back but didn't really enjoy it. It's not an easy game—it's highly technical. You need to be precise about your posture, ball placement, grip, and selecting the right club for the shot."

Deepak responded, "Well, I'd disagree slightly. Golf is a beautiful and addictive game. With practice, your swing becomes natural. If you still have a golf bag, you should consider getting back into it. I can introduce you to my coach—he's very skilled and knowledgeable."

Rajesh smiled, "I do have a golf bag, but it must have rusted by now. It's one of those old steel ones. These days, people use more advanced, lightweight bags. But you've got me thinking. I might just give it another try."

By the way, I read about a major tournament at DLF recently. The winner was American Ollie Schniederjans, right? He clinched the title with a total score of 10-under 278, and Bryson DeChambeau finished four strokes behind him."

Deepak nodded, “Yes, you’re right—that was the International Series India held in January. But you may have missed the more recent one. In March, Spanish golfer Eugenio Chacarra won the Hero Indian Open with a final round of four-under-par, finishing two strokes ahead of last year’s champion, Keita Nakajima.”

“These tournaments really show how prestigious DLF Golf and Country Club has become,” he added. “It’s attracting top golfing talent from all over the world.”

Rajesh said, “Oh, I didn’t know about the March tournament. Is there a video or highlight reel available?”

“Yes, it’s available online,” Deepak replied. “Let’s exchange numbers—maybe we can plan a game sometime.”

“Sure,” Rajesh said, and they exchanged their mobile numbers with a smile.

Deepak further added, “You know, in Ved’s Lane, there’s a lady named Deepika—she’s also a keen golfer. I’ve played with her a few times. She’s cheerful and full of life. Though she’s a widow, some people just know how to truly live.”

Ved chimed in, “The same Deepika who met us several times at the garden and even expressed interest in joining our group?”

Rajesh smiled, “Looks like there’s some connection from a past life! Her name keeps popping up around us. But I didn’t know she played golf. That’s interesting. Maybe it’s time I gave golf another shot.”

“Deepak, can you please share your coach’s number with me?”

Deepak nodded, “Of course, I already have your number—I’ll forward his contact. But just a heads-up, he’s in high demand. Charges ₹2000 for a 30-minute session.”

Rajesh’s eyes widened, “What? ₹2000 for half an hour? Forget it! I’m a retired man, not a tycoon.”

Deepak chuckled, “In that case, try the Asiad Village Golf Driving Range. You might find a coach there for about ₹500 per hour. It’s a good place to start.”

Everyone burst into laughter. Krishna added with a grin, “Suddenly so much interest in golf? Is it Deepika or something else behind this excitement?”

Ved laughed, “Golf is an expensive hobby, my friend. Don’t jump in without thinking.”

Rajesh, now a bit more serious, said, “No, I’m truly interested. I already know the basics. I’ll start practicing at Asiad Village first, and if needed, I’ll take a few lessons.”

Krishna teased, “After hearing Deepika’s name, you’ve done a full 360! If you plan to play with her, better inform your wife first. Spinning too fast at this age could be dangerous—to both health and marriage. Don’t behave like your sons now!”

Rajesh laughed, “I’m serious! In fact, I’ll ask my wife to join me—she used to play golf back in the day too.”

Ved smiled, “Wow, so many secrets surfacing today! It’s your life—do what makes you happy, but don’t forget your old friends.”

Mukesh added playfully, “So now only two of us will be left for morning walks?”

Rajesh quickly responded, “No, no! I’m with you. I’ll still come to the garden in the morning—and play golf in the afternoon!”

Everyone smiled, shaking their heads in amusement at Rajesh’s sudden enthusiasm.

Before we left, Ved called Mukesh, shook his hand warmly, and said, “Thank you for sharing those wonderful poems.” Mukesh smiled and said even your granddaughter’s poem is amazing.

We all smiled, thanked him, and quietly left his house, hearts lighter and spirits lifted.

The next day, all three of us met at the garden as usual. We took two rounds, did some stretching, followed by *pranayama*—*Anuloma Vilom* and *Kapalbhati*.

Suddenly, we noticed a small crowd gathering nearby. We soon learned that some politicians had come for canvassing, as the Lok Sabha elections were approaching. They handed out pamphlets and left with folded hands, greeting everyone politely.

Afterward, we sat down on a bench and naturally drifted into a discussion about politics.

Krishna said, “Let’s guess—will Modi come back, or someone else?”

Rajesh and I immediately responded together, “Modi has full chances of returning, but getting over 400 seats seems unlikely.”

“There’s no real competition for Modi,” Rajesh added. “I was watching a debate on TV yesterday. Even the experts agreed that this time, Modi might need to form a coalition government.”

Mukesh chimed in, “But some people say he acts like a dictator.”

That triggered a heated but friendly argument. “Where, when, and in what way have you seen him act like a dictator?” I asked. “We have full freedom to speak our minds, criticize the government, and travel anywhere. There’s no restriction on us. So how can someone call him a dictator?”

Mukesh raised his hands and smiled, “I agree with you, my dear friends. He’s doing a good job. I only mentioned what some people think.”

Krishna nodded, “You can’t satisfy 100% of the people. Some will always be negative or have personal agendas. Not just in politics—this is true in life as well. You just can’t please everyone.”

Rajesh; The amount of time our PM is giving to the nation is remarkable. We just go to the USA and take 10 to 15 days to recover from jet lag and he lands in Delhi the next morning we read news that evening he is in Chennai. It is the rule of the Almighty who does labour honestly and sincerely, always gets the award and brings results. I am really admiring his hard work.

“I think this is the first time we’ve discussed politics during our morning walk,” someone chuckled.

Rajesh added, “Honestly, I can’t stand watching political debates on TV anymore. They’re so depressing—everyone just shouts over each other. They never stick to real issues. If the media asked me, I’d suggest they unmute only the person who’s answering the question and mute the rest. Then maybe we’d actually hear a real debate.”

He laughed and added, “Instead, I switch to the Kapil Sharma Show. At least it makes you laugh—and laughter is the best medicine.”

Mukesh grinned, “Well said, Bhai. On that note, I’m feeling hungry. Let’s call it a day.”

Rajesh and Krishna agreed. “Right, see you guys tomorrow!”

Rajesh's Golf Practice

Rajesh returned home and shared the entire golf discussion from Ved's house with his wife. She paused for a moment and said, "Yes, we can restart. I think my golf bag is still at my mom's place – I'll have to check with her."

Soon after, both Rajesh and his wife decided to visit Asiad Village for practice. Their rhythm and swing weren't quite right, but they gave it a try. A professional golfer playing nearby noticed them and kindly offered some tips:

"Take your swing as slowly as possible, keep your right hand straight, and never take your eyes off the ball. Stay focused on the ball – then swing."

They hit about 50 balls—only 20 landed well. The golfer encouraged them:

The pro golfer said, "Practice for at least 15 days, and you'll feel a better rhythm and see better results."

Though they couldn't manage daily sessions, they practiced three times a week. This routine continued for three months, and they gradually built confidence. One day, they finally said to each other, "Let's try playing on a real golf course now."

Morning Walk & Gratitude Meditation

During a walk with friends the next day, Rajesh revealed, "We've been practicing golf regularly, and now both of us feel confident enough to play on a course."

After finishing their walking rounds, Krishna suggested, "Why don't we try a gratitude meditation today?"

Rajesh and Mohan agreed, "We're ready—but you'll have to guide us."

Gratitude Meditation Practice

Preparation (1–2 minutes)

- Sit comfortably in *Sukhasana* (cross-legged pose).

- Keep your spine straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Gently close your eyes.
- Take a few deep breaths: inhale deeply through your nose, exhale slowly through your mouth.
- Let your body relax and your thoughts settle.

Breath Awareness (2 minutes)

- Breathe naturally through your nose.
- With each inhale, feel your lungs filling with energy.
- With each exhale, let go of tension.
- Focus on the breath: at your nostrils, your chest, or your belly.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the breath.

Gratitude Focus (5–10 minutes)

1. Gratitude for the Present Moment

- Silently say:
“At this moment, I am safe. I am alive. I am breathing. And that is enough.”
- Say: **OM** — and thank God for this life and breath.

2. Gratitude for People in Your Life

- Bring to mind someone who supported or helped you — a parent, teacher, friend, or stranger.
- Visualize them and silently say:
“*Thank you for your presence in my life. I am grateful for our connection.*”
- Offer gratitude by chanting: **OM**.

3. Gratitude for Life's Daily Gifts

- Think of clean water, food, shelter, sunshine, and laughter.
- Silently say:
"Thank you for these small blessings that enrich my life."
- Chant **OM** in thankfulness.

4. Gratitude for Life's Challenges

- Recall a challenge that made you stronger or wiser.
- Silently say:
"Even through struggles, I grew. I am thankful for the lessons."
- Thank the Divine with chanting **OM**.

5. Gratitude to Ancestors and Parents

- Offer heartfelt thanks to those who gave your life and shaped your journey.
- Silently say:
"Thank you for bringing me into this world. I honour you with love."
- Chant **OM**, in deep reverence.

Closing the Practice (1–2 minutes)

- Bring your attention gently back to your breath.
- Take 2–3 deep, conscious breaths.
- Wiggle your fingers and toes softly.
- Slowly open your eyes.
- Sit in stillness for a few seconds and observe how you feel — calm, light, and centred.
- **Medicine-Free Life**
A reminder that the best medicines don't come from a bottle — they come from nature, habits, and the heart:

- Sleeping early and waking up early is medicine.
- Chanting Om or Ram Ram is medicine.
- Yoga, Pranayama, and regular exercise are medicine.
- Morning and evening walks are medicine.
- Fasting is medicine for many ailments.
- Sunlight is a natural medicine.
- Drinking water from an earthen pot (matka) is medicine.
- Clapping hands activates energy and is medicine.
- Chewing food thoroughly is medicine.
- Drinking water slowly, like eating it, is medicine.
- Sitting in Vajrasana after meals is medicine.
- Choosing to be happy is a powerful medicine.
- Silence, at times, is medicine.
- Laughter and humour are healing medicine.
- Contentment is medicine.
- Peace of mind and body is the ultimate medicine.
- Honesty and positivity are medicine.
- Selfless love and emotions are medicine.
- Helping others is medicine.
- Receiving genuine blessings is divine medicine.
- Living harmoniously with everyone is medicine.
- Eating, laughing, and bonding with family is medicine.
- True, caring friends are walking medical stores – free of charge!
- Staying happy, busy, healthy, and cheerful – that's lifelong medicine.

- Enjoying each new day fully is medicine.
- The happiness of doing a good deed – like sharing this message as *prasad* – is also medicine.
- Understanding the greatness of nature is the ultimate medicine.
- All of these are absolutely free and abundantly available.

“Krishna, how do you like this gratitude meditation and free medicines tips?”

“It was very nice. Amazing. I’m feeling light.”

“Krishna, now let us get up and move to our homes.” We were about to move when we saw Deepika just 20 metres away from us. Everyone paused, letting her come closer, and greeted her respectfully with folded hands.

Deepika said with a playful smile, “Oh my! What’s happening today? Everyone bowing down and folding hands? All, okay?”

Krishna chuckled, “Well, yesterday we met Deepak Jain. He mentioned that you’re quite a golfer. And since then, our dear Rajesh here has been actively practicing. His wife too has joined him.”

Deepika said, smiling warmly, “That’s wonderful to hear, Rajesh ji! Let’s definitely play a round sometime. I’ll ask Deepak to join us as well. Also, please share your wife’s number. We have a ladies’ golfers club, and we’d love to include her.”

Rajesh was glad hearing that. He replied, “Absolutely! Here’s my number and my wife, Reeta’s as well.”
(He shares both numbers with Deepika.)

Just then, Krishna and Mukesh, teasingly nudged Rajesh and said, “You rascal! If you had asked for anything more, you might’ve gotten that too!”

Rajesh, laughed. He then replied, “My dear friends, be broad-minded! I’m in a circle—I have my limits. I can’t even think of stepping out!”

Everyone burst into laughter, thoroughly enjoying the light-hearted moment. With smiles on their faces and joy in their hearts, they all headed home—the day ending on a cheerful note.

First experience at Golf course

Deepak Jain called Rajesh and confirmed that the slot at DLF is booked for this Saturday at 7 Am. Please reach there by 6: 45, I will convey at the gate to allow you inside. Rajesh what will be the damages mean their fees. Don't worry, you are my guest. NO, please let me know, Rajesh said.

It is for you both will be Rs.16000/- but they will bill me, you need not to pay.

Rajesh was thinking in his mind that Ved was right about golf being a very expensive game, Anyhow what can be done, now refusing to play is also not fair and decided to play at DLF.

Rajesh reached the Golf pro shop and Deepak and Deepika were also there. Their golf attire was colourful and particularly Deepika looking stunning, green top, green shoes, green golf gloves, cap was also green.

Rajesh couldn't help himself and blurted out, "Deepika, your attire looks really nice—a green outfit in a green environment... just perfect!"

"Thanks, Rajesh, for the compliment," she replied with a warm smile.

Deepak chuckled and added, "Not just the clothes—her whole presence, her fitness—everything is impressive. You're looking stunning, Deepika."

Deepika laughed, "I'm flattered," and gracefully proceeded toward the golf course in a buggy.

Rajesh turned to his wife, Rita, and said, "I'm excited... and a little nervous too."

They were in one buggy, while Deepak and Deepika shared another.

On the way, Rita teased him, "You were praising her quite a lot. Have you *ever* praised me like that?"

Rajesh smiled, "Of course I have!"

Rita muttered, "Men will be men."

Trying to change the subject, Rajesh pointed out, "Look around—the greenery, the water bodies, the peacocks... isn't it beautiful?"

Rita replied sharply, "Don't change the topic. I didn't like it—both of you kept praising her, and did not utter a word about me."

Rajesh sighed, "Okay, okay, my friend. I admit—I slipped up. Let's focus on playing with love and care now, alright?"

Deepak suggested cheerfully, "Let's do Ladies vs Gents. What do you say?"

Everyone agreed, and the game began.

After the round, Deepak said with a smile, "You two played really well for first-timers!"

Turning to Rita, he added, "Bhabhi, you played even better than Rajesh.

Reeta you too played like a professional, two birdies, four par, unbelievable.

Deepak told Rita that golf was a very unique game, as it is good one day and useless the other day.

He looked at Deepika and said, "And as always, brilliant performance."

Rajesh quickly walked up to Rita and said, "Baby, you also played really well!"

Rita smiled, "Finally, a compliment! Some improvement, at least."

Everyone laughed and headed to the coffee shop for breakfast. Deepak graciously ordered for everyone.

Deepika turned to Rita and said, "Come, let me show you the spa—it's beautifully done

"Wow, next time we must try the sauna, steam, and jacuzzi," she said, delighted.

By the time they returned to the restaurant, breakfast had arrived. Everyone enjoyed the delicious spread and praised the food.

Rajesh tried hard to pay the bill, but Deepak firmly refused.

With warm smiles and full stomachs, everyone left for their homes — hearts light, spirits high, and memories made.

The next morning, as usual, the three friends met at the garden. After finishing their walk and yoga, Mukesh and Krishna turned to Rajesh.

Mukesh: “So, Rajesh, where were you yesterday? We missed your witty comments!”

Rajesh (grinning): “We went to play golf. Me and Rita on one side, Deepak and Deepika on the other. Had a blast!”

Krishna: “Golf? Wah! Who knew our friend was becoming a pro?”

Rajesh: “Forget the game, the ambiance at DLF was no less than a 7-star resort — the greenery, the service, everything top-class.”

Mukesh: “But must’ve cost a bomb, right?”

Rajesh (laughing): “Yaar, it was so expensive, I felt like I’d burst my backside just paying! Thank God Deepak picked up the bill.”

Krishna (teasing): “You scammed him well! He must’ve spent at least thirty thousand on you three. Poor guy!”

Rajesh: “That’s why I’m calling it a ‘once-in-a-blue-moon’ experience.”

Rajesh (smiling sheepishly): “I praised Deepika’s golf swing a bit... and Deepak joined in. Rita got a bit annoyed, though I was too generous with compliments. Knew the day would start with drama. But all is good by the end.”

Just then, they saw Deepak approaching the group.

Deepak (cheerfully): “Namaste, friends! I came to invite you all personally. Day after tomorrow is Mahavir Jayanti. We’ve organized special prayers, and our Guruji will be there too. You must come!”

Mukesh (grinning): “Deepak, make sure Rajesh brings Bhabhi too!”

Deepak: “Of course, she must come!”

Later that day, Rajesh mentioned it at home.

Rajesh: “Rita, Deepak invited us for Mahavir Jayanti. Should we go?”

Rita (smiling knowingly): “After he spent so much on us? Of course, we should go!”

Rajesh: “Alright then, it’s a plan!”

All four friends and their wives visited Deepak Jain’s house. There was Huge tent hall made with tarpaulin and an air cooler arrangement. Dias, platform was there and their saint was sitting there at the plate form.

At the back of the event, refreshment was there, we were requested to first please take breakfast and then proceed to the event and hear the spiritual messages from our Guru.

The breakfast menu was as under and it was quite delicious.

Moong ka cheela

Moong Dal Cheela is a savoury pancake made from ground moong dal (split green gram) batter, spiced with green chilies, ginger, and coriander. This dish is not only tasty but also a powerhouse of nutrition. Moong dal is rich in protein, fibre, and essential vitamins,

Handvo

Handvo is a traditional Gujarati dish that has gained popularity nationwide due to its unique texture and taste. It is made from a fermented batter of rice and lentils mixed with spices and grated vegetables like bottle gourd or carrots. The batter is then cooked until it forms a crispy crust on the outside while remaining soft and fluffy inside. Handvo is usually seasoned with mustard seeds, sesame seeds, and curry leaves, giving it a delightful aroma and flavour.

Poha

Poha, or flattened rice, is a staple breakfast dish in many Indian households and is particularly popular in Jain cuisine for its simplicity and lightness. Prepared by sautéing poha with mustard seeds, curry leaves, green chilies, and turmeric, it's quick to prepare and easy to digest. Adding ingredients like peas, grated coconut, and peanuts enhances its nutritional profile, providing a perfect mix of carbs, fibre, and healthy fats.

The caterers displayed templates about Jain breakfast, which was quite in detail.

Jain cuisine, rooted in the principles of Jainism, is a unique culinary tradition that emphasizes non-violence, purity, and health. It's a rich and diverse culinary experience, offering various flavourful and nutritious dishes. For Jains, food is not just about taste but also about mindfulness and adhering to the principles of the religion. The cuisine is known for its strict adherence to vegetarianism and avoids root vegetables like onions, garlic, and potatoes, which are believed to harm small organisms in the soil when uprooted. This philosophy also extends to their breakfast dishes, making Jain breakfasts a wholesome and enriching way to start the day.

Jain breakfast dishes are crafted with nutritious and easy-to-digest ingredients, ensuring a balanced source of energy for the day ahead. They incorporate a variety of grains, pulses, vegetables, and spices, creating meals that are light on the stomach and packed with Flavors.

Jain dishes for breakfast avoid root vegetables like onions, garlic, potatoes, carrots, and radishes. They also exclude any ingredients that harm microorganisms, making them strictly vegetarian.

It was quite informative though in our kitchen we also make with different ingredients.

We went to the hall and sat on chairs; it was about 100 metres away from the Dias. Some devotees were sitting on the floor as well, perhaps sofas and chairs were arranged for senior citizens and the saint greeted everyone first and his message was something like this.

First Ancher talked about the life of Lord Mahavir;

Lord Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism, was born in **599 BCE** in **Kundalpur** (now in Bihar, India) into a royal family. His birth name was **Vardhaman**. Though raised in luxury, he renounced worldly life at the age of **30** to seek spiritual truth.

For **12 years**, he practiced intense meditation, penance, and self-discipline. Finally, he attained **Keval Gyan** (absolute knowledge) and became a **Tirthankara**, a spiritual teacher who shows the path to liberation.

Mahavir preached **ahimsa** (non-violence), **truth**, **non-stealing**, **celibacy**, and **non-possessiveness** – values that form the core of **Jain philosophy**. His teachings emphasized **self-control**, **compassion**, and **inner purity** as the way to achieve **moksha** (liberation from the cycle of birth and death).

He passed away at the age of **72** in **527 BCE**, attaining **nirvana**. His life continues to inspire millions to live peacefully and ethically.

Muni Sagar preaching message

India has been the spiritual guru of this world. Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and other Vedic literature have been the subject of contemplation and research. Revolutionary Saint Munishri Tataruna sagarji is not only Jain but extremely powerful, wise and a pioneer. His powerful speeches have been compiled in a 9 part series called Kadve Pravachan. While the saint himself has got it registered in the Guinness World Records, this book is an international bestseller. Presenting Part 1 of Kadve Pravachan Hindi eBook format, where he talks about simple, but important things in life.

While delivering a discourse, the Muni said that for change and development in life, accept this fact that happiness is related only to the mind. Be happy with what you have. Don't run after what you don't have. Money will get you facilities but not happiness. He said that every man faces problems. What should a poor person eat if he is hungry and the problem before the rich is that what should he eat when he is hungry. The solution to all problems is in penance. Don't wait to sing bhajans when

circumstances come in life. If you want to sing bhajans then do it immediately. As long as there is life, problems will not end.

Explained the same in better way

Shri Mahavir ki Jai Jai Jai

Ahimsa Paramo Dharma ki Jai

Once, a young man came to me with a heavy heart. He said, “My life is filled with sorrow. All I see around me is darkness. There’s no way out. Sometimes I feel I should just end this life.” His eyes reflected deep despair.

I gently asked him, “If you're driving a car and suddenly a mountain blocks your path, what would you do?”

“Would the car crash into the mountain?”

“No,” he replied.

“Would you reverse it?”

“No,” he said again. “I would take a **diversion**.”

I smiled and said, “Exactly. When a mountain of problems stands in your way, don’t panic. Find a diversion. **Every mountain can be crossed.**”

People often blame their **circumstances** for their sorrow — lack of money, relationships, or status. But **wise saints say**: Sorrow is not in the world outside. Nor is happiness. Both lie **within the mind**.

If you understand your mind, no sorrow can bind you. If you don’t, even in paradise, you’ll find a reason to cry.

We believe money will bring happiness. But even the rich cry. Why? Because someone else is richer. True joy isn’t in **how much you have**, but in **how content your heart is**.

If you feel you have **enough**, you’re already rich. But if you keep running in the race to be number one, you will forever feel behind.

Remember, happiness is not about achieving everything — it’s about being **at peace with what you have**.

Story

This is a beautiful and thought-provoking piece filled with humour, wisdom, and the profound teachings of **Muni Shri Tarun Sagar Ji Maharaj**, known for his bold yet deeply insightful discourses. Here's a polished and concise version that preserves the story's charm and message, perfect for inclusion in a speech, book, or article:

The Two Pictures and the Secret of Happiness

Once, during an inspection of a mental asylum, a team met two patients.

The first one had recovered slightly and would beam with joy every time he looked at a photo. When asked about it, he said, "I wanted to marry this girl, but I couldn't. That's why I went mad."

They moved to the second patient, who had the same photo – but reacted with frustration and anger. When asked, he said, "I **did** marry this girl, and that's **why** I went mad!"

The team was baffled. One went mad **because** he couldn't marry her, the other went mad **because** he did! The conclusion? **If we rely on external things for happiness, sorrow will always find a way.**

Muni Shri Tarun Sagar Ji Maharaj used to say:

"We cannot bless someone into happiness. But if you follow the right path, happiness follows you."

He offered **four simple mantras** for a happy life:

- **Believe in nature's law** – Everything happens for a reason.
- **Be content** – Consider "what is enough" as truly enough.
- **Live freely** – Don't let rigid rules cage your joy.
- **Think positively** – A pure mind is the foundation of lasting happiness.

Maharaj Ji's teachings remind us:

“Money can buy luxury, not peace. Penance, simplicity, and contentment are the real answers.”

In today’s world, we have everything – TV sets, sofa sets, tea sets, diamond sets – **except peace of mind.**

We should speak sweetly, think rightly, and live humbly. Happiness is not in **getting more**, but in **needing less.**

Bitter words of a national saint

1. Big scientists are worried about life on Mars, but nobody is worried about Mars in life.
2. The poor are running to the doctor for sugar control and the rich are running to the doctor for sugar control.
3. This is the effect of the 21st century. Earlier there was happiness even in scarcity and today there is lack of happiness.
4. Till yesterday life was run by silence, today it is run by loan. While paying the loan instalments, the man himself gets paid one day.
5. The one who walks with you till the crematorium is not with you, the one who goes with you beyond the crematorium is yours.
6. Desires are endless, gather them. If you have 90 rupees in your pocket, do not get into the hassle of 100.
7. The wife is the one who keeps on fighting with the husband, ends the money.
8. Keep the silence fast, there will be peace in the house.

Families Meet, Hearts Connect

For the first time, all four senior citizen friends gathered with their families.

Ved arrived with his wife Reeta, daughter Teena, and grandson Ankit. Mukesh came with his wife Sunitha, sharing that their son is currently studying in the UK.

Rajesh joined with his wife Reeta, mentioning that one of their sons lives in India while the other is in the USA.

Krishna arrived with his wife; the couple, though without children, always exudes warmth and wisdom.

Ved teasingly asked Mukesh, “You’re 80 and your son is still studying in the UK?”

Mukesh smiled, “Yes, we were blessed with a son after 15 years of marriage. He was sensitive and often ill due to the pollution here. On my sister-in-law’s advice, we sent him to the UK, and thankfully, his health improved. He’s closer to her now, but we visit often. Still, I love my country. I’d never settle abroad—where’s the joy without a cook, driver, gardener, and maid? I can’t survive on fast food!”

Ved nodded. “We’ve been good friends for 7-8 years, and we’re lucky to still walk on our own two feet. At our age, that’s a blessing. We may be senior citizens—but one of us is super senior!”

Krishna smiled, “We should meet with our families more often. Social life with good people is the best kind of medicine.”

Just then, Deepak and Deepika arrived with a warm invitation. “Lunch is ready,” he said. “Please accept this as *prasad*, offering—a blessing from our Guruji.”

Ved laughed, “Brother, breakfast hasn’t even settled yet!”

Deepak insisted, “Come on, just a little—it’s *prasad*.”

Ved agreed, “Alright, if you insist, a little bit then.”

The buffet was beautifully arranged, with name cards labelling each dish. Appetizers included Chickpea & Quinoa Salad, Bhel Puri, Tamatar Ka Shorba, Papadum, and Papri Chaat. Main courses offered Vegetable Paneer Jalfrezi, Coconut Curry, Biryani, Mutter Paneer, and Chana Masala. The dessert spread featured Mango Ice Cream, Malai Pista Kulfi, Shahi Kheer, Gulab Jamun, and Rasmalai.

After eating heartily, Ved joked, “We said we’d eat just a little and now can’t even breathe—we’re too full!”

As everyone sat enjoying the moment, Deepak accidentally spilled curd on his pants, then playfully wiped his hand on Deepika’s brand-new scarf. She gasped, “Are you mad? This was new and expensive!”

Deepak grinned, “Madam, we’re golf partners and friends! This is just a little fun.”

Deepika snapped, “I’ll complain to your wife!”

Ved intervened gently, “Come on, don’t be upset. These things happen among friends.”

Deepika sighed, “Still—it was brand new!”

Deepak clasped his hands, “You’re my best friend or not?”

“Of course,” she smiled.

“Then put water on it and smile at me.”

Everyone laughed. Deepak fetched water and tissues and cleaned her scarf with care.

After a heartfelt lunch and inspiring preaching from Guru Muni, the group bowed in gratitude.

With full hearts and happy faces, they all said their goodbyes and headed home—already looking forward to the next gathering.

Bittersweet Evening

After returning home, Rajesh called out to the maid, “Please bring some green tea.”

Reeta chimed in, “Make one for me too.”

Rajesh sighed, “I’ve eaten too much... feeling heavy and sluggish.”

Reeta smiled, "It was simple Jain food, without onion or garlic. It wasn't heavy. But you... I saw how many sweets you had! That's why you feel like this."

After a short pause, Reeta asked, "What do you think about Deepak and Deepika?"

Rajesh looked puzzled, "What do you mean?"

"I saw them at the golf course the other day. They were very *friendly*... and today, he wiped his hands on her scarf! I didn't like it at all."

Rajesh chuckled, "There's a saying—*big toy, big boy*. Let them enjoy themselves. Why are you so bothered?"

Reeta frowned, "I'm just concerned about his poor wife. She seems so innocent—does she even know what's going on?"

Rajesh shrugged, "It's nothing unusual. On the golf course, people hug, high-five, even celebrate with a little drama when they get a buddy shot or a hole-in-one. He did it in front of everyone—it was harmless."

"Disgusting," Reeta muttered. "You don't see it because you're not around."

Rajesh raised his eyebrows, "So what do you want me to do—throw mud at them? Please, don't get involved unnecessarily."

Reeta, still upset, added, "Like father, like son."

Rajesh sighed, "Now why are you dragging me into this? Why this fight? What have I done?"

Reeta paused, took a deep breath, and said, "Sorry... but I want one thing—you won't play golf with her again."

Rajesh replied, "Fine, boss. As you say. Be happy—and let me be too. Just a suggestion though—don't involve yourself in others' business unnecessarily."

"Alright," Reeta nodded.

“I’m going to the bedroom,” Rajesh said, rising. “And tomorrow, tea in the garden. Ved is finally coming back after four months—we’re all excited to see him.”

Rajesh, Krishna, Mukesh were waiting at the entrance of the gate at the garden of Ved. He got in an Ola car and came out. We all greeted him, welcomed him, all said we are so excited and happy you are here again, we were really missing you. We were coming here and we were missing your jokes, walk, yoga, tips, your great company.

Rajesh: “You have come in an Ola, you should have asked us to pick you up. It was not a big deal, we would have picked you up.”

Ved: “Don’t worry about me and thanks for your offer and kind consideration. Let us go to our place and start today’s activity. Today I am coming after four months and I will just walk half a round and I will increase it slowly by slowly.”

We started a brisk walk and completed three rounds except Ved as he went back to the designated place after 100 metres.

“Ved sir, what will be the next activity?”

Ved: “Today, we will not do anything else, we will only gossip, please share any special things that happened to you guys.”

Rajesh: “My wife got annoyed yesterday between the episode of Deepak and Deepika. Finally, she cooled down after my explanation.”

Mukesh: “My wife was laughing and laughing about spoiling her scarf by Deepak.”

Ved: “My wife said that too, that Deepak should not have done that mischief.”

Krishna: “Recently, two things have happened to me.”

A Miracle and a Lesson

I was driving at Nelson Mandela Marg and just before the shopping mall, I heard a big noise and saw from the back mirror a car coming hurtling

towards me—flipping over, dragging itself along the road on its roof. My instincts kicked in, I quickly accelerated and swerved left to avoid it. From the car itself, I dialled the police.

“There’s been a terrible accident,” I reported. “A car is lying upside down on the road.”

Within moments, a crowd had gathered. Some people were looking inside the wrecked vehicle; others were busy making reels and videos. After some effort, nearly twenty people joined hands and managed to flip the car upright.

To everyone’s shock, three teenage girls crawled out—completely unharmed. Not a scratch. I stood there, stunned. *What a miracle*, I thought. *Look at the grace of the almighty.*

But the story didn’t end there. My phone wouldn’t stop ringing—police, ambulance, fire department—each asking for details. I had to repeat myself over and over again. After a point, I wondered if I’d made a mistake by getting involved.

Not long after, I began feeling breathless. I asked my driver to take me straight to Fortis Hospital. First, they checked my blood pressure—it was normal. To be cautious, they recommended an ECG. As I waited, a woman was rushed in with an angina attack. The doctor turned to me, concerned.

“Sir, not a single bed is available. If we don’t treat her immediately, she could die. Would you mind waiting?”

“Of course not,” I replied. She was immediately given an inhaler and an injection. After some time, my ECG was done—it came back normal too.

“Are you in pain?” The doctor asked.

“No,” I said.

“Then you’re okay to go home.”

“Where should I pay?” I asked.

The doctor paused. “How old are you?”

"Sixty-five."

"You're my father's age. Uncle, no need to pay. You can go."

I was taken aback. "Really?"

He smiled warmly. "Really. Everything's fine. Take care, uncle."

As I left, I couldn't help but think—*even in today's world, full of haste and harshness, there are still good people out there.*

Ved asked Rajesh, "How are your sons doing? Are they still with those girls, or have they broken up?"

Rajesh sighed, "You can't say anything about today's generation. They act like they're our fathers. Everything is served to them on a platter, so they don't see why they should work. They have all the facilities, and no matter how much I try to guide them, it's like talking to a wall. In our time, we couldn't even dream of bringing girlfriends home. But today, the girls know everything about us!"

He continued, "My sons are not interested in knowing their girlfriends' families. My wife supports their relationships. She says it's better they understand each other now. These days, whether it's a love or arranged marriage, divorces are costly. In live-in relationships, there's less risk. So, let them enjoy themselves. What can I do in this scenario?"

Ved nodded, "Time teaches everything. Don't worry, things will fall into place. We were no different at their age. Our parents were just as upset and worried."

Mukesh added, "Yes, there's a saying – 'All's well that ends well.'"

Krishna shifted the topic, "Tomorrow, the election results are coming. I hope Modi returns."

Ved said thoughtfully, "I think BJP will form the government, maybe even without Modi."

Mukesh challenged, "Let's bet on it. Modi will definitely return to power."

Rajesh laughed, "This gossip turned political. I also believe Modi will win."

Ved smiled, "Alright then. Let's meet tomorrow at 1 PM for a walk. If BJP wins, Mukesh owes us a drink at a nearby bar at 8 PM!"

Krishna said, "We really enjoyed that day at Deepak's house. By the way, can anyone share the differences between Mahavira and Buddha?"

Ved responded, "Mahavira and Buddha, two of ancient India's most influential spiritual leaders, significantly shaped the region's religious and philosophical landscape. Both aimed for spiritual liberation but took very different paths."

"**Mahavira**, also known as Vardhamana, was born around 599 BCE in Bihar. At age 30, he renounced his royal life and, after 12 years of intense meditation and discipline, attained Kevala Jnana (omniscience), founding Jainism."

"**Buddha**, born as Prince Siddhartha around 563 BCE in Lumbini, left his palace at 29 to seek answers to suffering. After years of ascetic practices, he achieved enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and founded Buddhism."

"**Mahavira's Jainism** emphasizes five core principles:

- **Ahimsa (Non-violence)**: Absolute non-harm to any living being.
- **Satya (Truthfulness)**: Truth in thought, speech, and action.
- **Asteya (Non-stealing)**: Not taking what is not freely given.
- **Brahmacharya (Celibacy)**: Self-control and mental clarity through abstinence.
- **Aparigraha (Non-possession)**: Detachment from material things."

"**Buddha's Four Noble Truths** are:

- Life involves suffering (Dukkha).
- Suffering is caused by craving and ignorance (Samudaya).
- Suffering can end (Nirodha).
- The Eightfold Path leads to cessation of suffering (Maggā)."

“Buddha’s Eightfold Path promotes ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom, favoring a balanced life—what he called the Middle Way.”

“**Jain Practices** include fasting, vows (Vratas), and non-violence even towards microscopic beings. **Buddhists** focus on mindfulness, meditation (like Vipassana), and compassion through practices like chanting and awareness.”

“While **Jainism** leans towards strict asceticism, **Buddhism** seeks a balanced path. Mahavira believed in an eternal soul (Jiva) and karma-based rebirth, whereas Buddha taught **Anatta**—no permanent self.”

“Both faiths, however, advocate for ethical living and compassion. Their legacies remain influential through rituals, festivals, art, and teachings across centuries.”

“**Poojn.in** also supports spiritual seekers with items for practice: meditation cushions, statues, malas, and ritual items for both Jain and Buddhist traditions.”

“In conclusion, while Mahavira and Buddha differed in their paths, both emphasized transformation from within. Their teachings continue to inspire peace, simplicity, and mindful living for millions across the world.”

“I remember, earlier we discussed about Budha and Nirvana.”

Ved ended with a smile, "Let's remember their teachings as we journey through life."

Everyone nodded in agreement as they looked forward to another peaceful walk together the next day.

The Call from Dehradun

The next day, Krishna called Ved, “I won’t be able to join tomorrow. There’s a serious dispute at my sister’s place in Dehradun—between her son Satish and daughter-in-law Sneha. It escalated to the point where the police had to get involved. Please inform the others; I might be gone for a couple of days.”

“As per TV updates,” Krishna continued, “there’s still no clear election wave even at noon. The picture should clear up by the afternoon. Keep me posted.”

Ved replied, “So that means tomorrow’s bar plan is cancelled. I read in the paper—it’s dry days till counting ends.”

“Yes, liquor shops and bars are shut,” confirmed Krishna before leaving for Dehradun.

By 7 p.m., Krishna reached his sister’s home. As he knocked, his sister opened the door and hugged him tightly.

“You sounded so upset on the phone,” he said.

“I’ll explain everything. Just sit down—I’ll get you some tea and water. You must be tired.”

She returned with tea and snacks. Krishna took a bite. “These biscuits are delicious!”

“They’re from Ellora—a famous shop here,” she smiled weakly.

“Now tell me everything,” he said gently.

“You know Satish and Sneha had a love marriage. Now they want to separate. Sneha is demanding one crore as compensation and threatening legal action. Her father is quite influential, and the police came by. They haven’t registered a case yet but advised us to resolve things amicably to avoid future trouble.”

Krishna frowned. “Where are they now?”

“She’s at her parents’ house—her office has given her leave for treatment. Satish is still at work, and should be back soon. Her mental health had improved after treatment, but recently she had a relapse—panic attacks, negative thinking, shouting fits. Even the neighbours noticed.”

“Take some rest, Krishna,” she offered.

“I’m fine. The journey was smooth this time—just five hours—thanks to the new expressway. It used to take me nine.”

Just then, Satish walked in, bowed, and touched Krishna's feet.

"You've changed, my boy! Put on some weight and those white strands—signs of wisdom!" Krishna chuckled.

"Uncle, work stress... long hours. Life is tough."

"My advice? Discipline. Sleep early, wake early, exercise. Mental peace brings physical health. Now tell me what happened—from your side."

"She's snobbish, overly sensitive, makes mountains out of molehills," Satish sighed.

"Son, this was a love marriage. Didn't you see these traits earlier?"

"Love is blind, uncle. Everything felt heavenly before. Only after marriage did I realize the grapes could be sour."

Krishna turned to his sister. "Please speak to her father. Let's meet and try to resolve this calmly."

"It's arranged for tomorrow at their home—1 p.m.," she confirmed.

The next day, they reached Sneha's parents' home. Her father greeted them warmly.

"Satish, touch your father-in-law's feet," Krishna prompted.

Though reluctant, Satish complied. The elder blessed him.

Everyone sat together, and both sides were heard. The problems boiled down to communication gaps, unmet expectations, ego clashes, and outside interference.

Krishna spoke softly, "We are guardians to both of you. Our aim is to help, not judge. Let's have a calm space for honest dialogue. This may take more than one meeting."

Sneha nodded. "I don't want to be blamed. But he never talks to me, never shares what he's feeling. He sleeps separately because I snore—though he snores too, and I never complained. I feel like we're strangers under the same roof. And my mother-in-law never hears me out—only supports him."

Krishna responded with warmth, “Would you consider a short break instead of a breakup?”

Sneha looked at Satish, “I’ve realized things during this time. I don’t want to separate. I just want to be heard and understood.”

Satish nodded, “I agree. I’ll make an effort to talk, to share, to listen.”

Krishna smiled. “Reflect on how you met, what brought you joy. Sometimes a playful memory or a shared laugh heals more than serious talks. If love still exists, it can find its way back—but not through guilt or force.”

“Uncle, you’re so kind and wise,” Sneha said, her eyes moist. “I promise to give it my best.”

“I suggest you two go out for a nice lunch today—just the two of you. Then come back home together. We’ll welcome you with smiles.”

Everyone smiled. Krishna and his sister were overwhelmed with relief and joy.

Happiness had returned to their home.

Sometimes we’re surprised at how quickly problems resolve—but truly, nothing is in our hands. Everything happens by the will of the Almighty. We are merely instruments, and when an idea flashes through our mind at the right moment, it can work miracles.

There is no greatness in us. It’s all God’s wish—unfolding in ways that may or may not be in our favour.

That morning, Krishna joined the usual garden session and shared the good news with his friends. “Everything went well,” he said. “The visit was successful.”

All congratulated him.

Meanwhile, the election results were out. BJP had secured 240 seats, and there were strong chances of Modi ji forming the government again.

Mukesh had previously offered to host a party if BJP won. Ved reminded him and proposed a gathering at 8 PM at the bar in Basant Lok, Vasant Vihar. Everyone agreed.

Krishna said, "Is a party really necessary? Why should Mukesh bear the cost alone? Let's all contribute equally."

Ved agreed. "Done! And anyway, we should sit together once in a while. This is the only age and time left to enjoy."

Rajesh asked, "If you don't mind, can I call Deepak Jain?"

Ved quipped, "He must be a teetotaller and vegetarian. No fun. Don't call him."

Krishna said sarcastically, "You mean Deepak and Deepika?"

Rajesh chuckled. "No no, Ved is right. Deepak's too proper. And if my wife finds out Deepika was there, I'm dead. They're my worst enemies."

That evening, they all reached the bar named *KHI KHI Zine*.

Ved asked the waiter, "What does 'KHI KHI' mean?"

"Sir, it literally translates to 'Giggles' in Hindi. For us, it's a playful spirit. We laugh, unwind, drink, eat, groove, and giggle together."

Ved smiled, "Interesting. Bring the menu."

A model-like young woman approached them with menus. "Sir, may I have your mobile number? Just for promotions—discounts, offers, updates."

Ved politely declined. "Sorry, we don't give out numbers. We get flooded with spam calls."

She assured them, "No worries, sir. We're a reputed company. We never misuse data."

Ved nodded. "Fine. Let's see the menu, and we'll call you for the order."

The menu cover read: *KHI KHI Zine – Cocktails Stirred with Satire Recommended: Hospitality from the Heart, Modern Indian Plates, and Nightlife-Focused Vibes.*

Ved asked, “Guys, what do you want—beer, whisky, cocktails?”

“It’s too hot,” Krishna said. “Let’s go with beer.”

Ved called the server. “Four Kingfisher Coronas with some nuts.”

“Anything to eat, sir?”

“We’ll order that later.”

Beers arrived, and they started sipping.

“Order snacks,” Krishna nudged. “Empty stomach and beer is dangerous.”

Ved ordered:

- OG Chicken Tikka with Picante Chutney
- Pather Gosht with Salsa Negra
- Green Salad

After two rounds of beer:

“Anything else?” Ved asked.

Mukesh suggested, “Let’s go for one round of single malt and some hearty food.”

Ved nodded and ordered:

- Single malt whisky
- Onion-Anardana Kulcha with Za’atar Sumac Butter, served with black gram (kali daal)
- Hot Pot Chicken and Egg Rice

“Give us 15 minutes,” the server said.

“Bring the whisky first,” Ved added.

The bar was now jam-packed. Youth danced to loud music, making it hard to talk.

After finishing their drinks and food, they split the bill equally and stepped out.

Ved said, “Hope everyone enjoyed.”

“Yes!” they all shouted.

Krishna smiled, “Let’s skip tomorrow’s morning session—it’s already midnight.”

All agreed and returned home with cheerful hearts.

A Divine Morning in the Park

Krishna arrived early at the park and began strolling leisurely. As he walked, he heard the soothing sound of musical instruments. Drawn by the melody, he followed the music and soon found a group singing devotional *bhajans*. A photo of Lord Shiva adorned the small setup, radiating a powerful presence. It felt as though Shiva was gazing directly at him.

Mesmerized, Krishna felt a deep spiritual pull. Overcome with devotion, he joined the group, clapping and singing along with heartfelt enthusiasm. The sweet fragrance of agarbatti (incense sticks) filled the air, and a *diya* flickered brightly, casting colourful reflections in its flame.

Bhajans, devotional songs that resonate with the divine, hold a cherished place in Indian spirituality. They are heartfelt expressions of love and reverence towards God, sung in praise and worship. Their melodies create a spiritual ambiance, offering joy, solace, and a sense of unity.

Although the voice is the soul of bhajan singing, the musical instruments used elevate the experience, weaving a rich tapestry of sound that deepens spiritual connection. Among the instruments that enhanced this particular session were:

- 1. Harmonium**

Originating from Europe and embraced in Indian music, the harmonium has become a cornerstone of bhajan gatherings, providing melodic support to vocalists.

- 2. Tabla**

A pair of hand drums known for their intricate rhythms, the tabla adds dynamism and energy to bhajans, making them come alive.

3. **Mrdanga (Mridangam):** A traditional drum made of clay or wood, the mrdanga's deep, resonant tones anchor the performance and evoke a profound spiritual grounding.
4. **Tanpura:** A drone instrument that creates a harmonic backdrop, the tanpura's gentle hum supports and elevates the melodic lines of the bhajans.
5. **Bansuri (Flute):** The bansuri, a bamboo flute associated with Lord Krishna, adds a serene, ethereal touch. Its soothing notes echo the whispers of nature and invite inner reflection.

The entire atmosphere felt otherworldly, as if the universe itself had joined in the divine chorus.

Meanwhile, Ved, Mukesh, and Rajesh were searching for Krishna, calling him repeatedly on his mobile. But Krishna was so deeply immersed in the bhajans, it was as though he had transcended this world—lost in devotion, drunk on divine love.

Eventually, when the session ended, the artists began packing their instruments. One of them gently touched Krishna's shoulder and lovingly woke him. Slowly regaining his senses, Krishna opened his eyes and rushed toward his friends, who had nearly finished their own gathering.

Seeing him, they were surprised and relieved. Krishna explained everything, his voice tinged with guilt. "I'm sorry... I didn't mean to disappear like that. I just got carried away. I feel ashamed."

Ved smiled warmly. "There's nothing to feel sorry or ashamed about. Getting lost in bhajan and devotion is rare. We're happy you had that divine moment. You are truly blessed."

Mukesh, with a playful tone, added, "Just make sure tomorrow you're here with *us*, not somewhere in trance again! We missed you and were worried. But hey—all's *well that ends well*. See you tomorrow!"

Morning Cheers and Evening Celebration

Mukesh had a big announcement to make. He called all three friends—Ved, Rajesh, and Krishna—along with Deepak and said, “You all must join me at The Grand, Vasant Kunj, tomorrow evening. My family is organizing a grand celebration for my 81st birthday. They want to celebrate it on a large scale, and you all must be there with your spouses.”

Everyone happily agreed. Ved added, “And as always, we’ll meet in the morning too for our regular garden walk and tea party. That’s non-negotiable!”

The next morning, the group met under the mellow sun, full of cheer. As usual, they took two relaxed rounds of the garden before Ved took charge.

“Let’s go easy today. Light exercises only,” Ved said, clapping his hands.

“All right, everyone—Tadasana Namaskar! Stand straight, join your palms near your chest. Count to ten and release. Repeat five times.”

Ved couldn’t help but tease them “Ved, don’t look here and there! Focus on yourself and your namaskar pose!”

They all chuckled.

“Next, twisting! Stand straight, push your chest out, and twist your waist left and right. As fast as you can, count 50!”

They moved with surprising energy.

“Now Urdhva Hastasana. Stretch up high, higher than your usual mountain pose!”

The seniors, though seasoned by age, stood tall with grace.

“Bending time. Raise your hands, bend forward, try to touch your feet. Repeat five times. But listen—do as per your ability. No heroics!” Ved warned playfully.

They followed with controlled breathing—deep inhales, holding for ten counts, and slow releases. Neck movements followed, left and right, back and forward, with the same gentle rhythm.

Finally, Ved instructed, “Let’s end with Bhramari Pranayama. Thumbs in ears, close your eyes, deep breath, and chant Om... Five times.”

After the last chant, a peaceful silence hung in the air. Rajesh broke it, smiling, “I always enjoy pranayama. It cools the mind. So many benefits!”

Ved nodded, “After sixty, light exercises and daily routine are the key to staying light and happy. Now, tea time!”

Just as they began to walk, Mukesh said, “Wait. My driver is on the way.”

Ved raised a brow. “What for?”

“He’s bringing something,” Mukesh said with a smile.

Soon, the driver arrived carrying a large thermos and a bag. From it, he pulled out small boxes with samosas, namkeen, and slices of cake. He poured steaming masala tea into tiny paper cups.

They all gathered around, laughing and munching. “Happy Birthday, Mukesh!” They cheered.

Passersby, seeing the joyful group, stopped to wish Mukesh too. Ever the planner, he had brought over 20 snack boxes and generously handed them to all who came by.

Ved nudged Mukesh, “Good idea! We saved time and spread joy. How many boxes are left?”

Mukesh asked the driver.

“Only five left, sir.”

“Okay, give me three, and keep two for yourself. Wait for me outside,” Mukesh instructed.

He turned to his friends and handed one box to each of them. “Please take this for your wife. And don’t forget—tonight at 8 PM, The Grand, Vasant Kunj. With your spouses!”

The friends nodded, box in hand, hearts full of warmth and anticipation for the evening celebration.

An Evening to Remember

By 7:45 PM, the entrance of The Grand, Vasant Kunj, was glowing with warm lights and a soft classical instrumental playing in the background. Guests in elegant attire were beginning to arrive, greeted at the door by Mukesh's smiling family members. A banner read in gold letters: **"Celebrating 81 Wonderful Years of Mukesh Kumar"**

At exactly 8 PM, Krishna arrived with his wife Suman, followed by Rajesh and his graceful wife, Asha. Ved came walking slowly with his wife, Meera, dressed in a simple silk saree with a glowing smile.

The friends greeted each other with hugs and playful jibes.

Krishna whispered, "Rajesh, see that flower decoration? Hope Mukesh didn't take a loan for this!"

Rajesh grinned, "If he did, we'll be paying interest with our samosas."

They all laughed, just as Mukesh entered the hall, escorted by his son and daughter-in-law. He was wearing a navy-blue blazer, a maroon pocket square, and a twinkle in his eyes. His grandchildren rushed to him with a bouquet and a handmade birthday card.

Everyone stood and clapped as the emcee announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the birthday boy, our beloved Mukesh!"

Mukesh waved like a film star, slightly shy but enjoying the attention.

A short video played on the big screen—photos from his childhood, wedding, work life, and moments with his friends and grandchildren. The video ended with a line: **"81 years of grace, wisdom, and laughter. Still counting!"**

The guests gave a standing ovation. Mukesh turned emotional, wiping a corner of his eye, and took the mic.

"My dear friends, family, and my precious team of morning walkers," he said, looking at Krishna, Ved, and Rajesh, "I thank you all for making this evening special. After 81 years, I can only say—life is a blessing when shared with such people."

His voice cracked, but the smile never left.

Then came the cake—three tiers, decorated with miniature walking sticks, tea cups, and little caricatures of four old men laughing together. Everyone burst into laughter.

Ved leaned toward Deepak, “That one on top looks like me with that bald patch!”

Deepak replied, “Only you would notice your baldness in frosting!”

After the cake-cutting and photo sessions, the buffet was opened—North Indian, South Indian, and even a corner for chaat lovers.

During dinner, the friends sat at a round table, their wives chatting nearby.

Rajesh raised a toast with his lime soda, “To Mukesh—may you complete a century, with us still dragging ourselves behind you every morning!”

Mukesh chuckled, “And may we all live long enough to celebrate each other’s hundredth birthday, one after another.”

Krishna added, “But no long speeches then. Just cake and loud laughter!”

As the evening closed, a light instrumental version of “*Lag Ja Gale*” played softly. Guests started leaving, blessing Mukesh and hugging him warmly.

As the elegant dinner was winding down and guests lounged with desserts and conversations, Mukesh clapped his hands for attention.

“Before the night ends,” he said with a mischievous grin, “those who want to continue the celebration—there’s a bar on the first floor. Please go and enjoy yourselves!”

That was all the invitation needed. Slowly, a small crowd began to drift upstairs. Our group too made our way to the bar, curious and cheerfully relaxed. Some ordered beers, others went for their usual—whisky, a cocktail, or even mocktails.

To our surprise, Deepak and Deepika also entered the bar. They greeted us warmly before heading straight to the bartender.

“Bloody Mary for me,” said Deepak.

“Cuba Libre,” added Deepika.

We looked at each other, puzzled. Cuba what?

Noticing our curiosity, the bartender smiled and prepared it right in front of us—he poured **80ml cola, 25ml lime juice, and 50 ml white rum** into a glass. The mix of **three layers—dark cola, citrusy lime, and clear rum—looked beautiful and tempting.**

People nearby couldn’t resist asking Deepika, “What’s that drink called?”

She must have answered at least ten times. “Cuba Libre,” she smiled politely each time, though we could tell she was getting a bit tired of explaining.

As rounds of drinks flowed, the mood grew lighter—and so did the balance of many. A few guests, especially those new to alcohol, began to stumble playfully, laughing loudly.

To our astonishment, the number of women in the bar was actually **more than the men**. The place buzzed with chatter—compliments flying around.

“Oh wow, lovely dress!”

“Where did you get this top?”

“You’re glowing tonight!”

It was like a spontaneous mini fashion show inside a cocktail party.

Meanwhile, Deepak and Deepika walked toward us with their drinks in hand. Rajesh, ever the curious one, asked with a smirk, “Deepak Jain! We never knew you drank. At a recent party, we thought of inviting you but figured you might be a teetotaler.”

Deepak chuckled, “Generally I avoid. But once in a while, during business gatherings, I have a little... just to give company.”

Reeta, Rajesh’s wife, leaned toward Deepika and said with playful admiration, “You’re looking really pretty tonight—and honestly, quite sexy in that top and mini skirt. You look no more than 30!”

Deepika laughed, “Oh really? Thanks for the compliment! I’m flattered.”

Reeta wasn't done, "I'm serious. Many guys are checking you out. I've noticed."

Deepika smiled and laughed softly, "Well, thank you again! But I'll have to leave early. I've had a bit more than I can handle, and I can't drive in this state."

Rajesh offered immediately, "Don't worry. My driver will drop you. You can leave your car here and pick it up tomorrow."

Reeta's eyes immediately turned sharp. She gave Rajesh a silent but icy stare, her expression loud and clear.

Before the cold front could thicken, Deepak asked Reeta, "You're having Coke? No hard drink?"

Reeta replied casually, "No, there's some rum in the Coke."

Deepak smiled, "That reminds me of my teenage years. I used to mix rum in Coke so my family wouldn't catch on!"

Changing the topic, he added, "By the way, where's Rajesh? Let's play this Saturday at Delhi Golf Club."

Reeta perked up, "Who's playing?"

Deepak said, "Me, you, Rajesh, and my old friend Ashok Khanna."

Reeta asked teasingly, "Why not Deepika? She plays too."

Deepak looked slightly uncomfortable. "She talks too much and keeps disturbing the game. I do play with her sometimes, but not regularly."

Reeta smiled knowingly. "Let's see. We have no plans yet. Rajesh will confirm."

"Great," Deepak said and walked off.

On the way home, inside the car, Reeta finally spoke.

"You men are all the same. Why did you offer to drop Deepika?"

Rajesh, already bracing for this, replied, "Why are you girls so jealous? She was drunk, and I offered help—in front of you, openly."

Reeta didn't back down. "I'm your wife. And I don't like the way you spoon over her. Always so eager."

Changing the topic, she continued, "Also, Deepak invited us to a golf game this Saturday. Please confirm with him."

Rajesh sighed, "Again? If Deepika plays too, you'll start lecturing me again. I get confused—should I talk to her or not? Praise her or not?"

Reeta replied calmly, "Don't worry. Deepak already told me—she's not playing. Ashok Khanna is. So, confirm with him."

Rajesh nodded, "Right. I'll do that."

Outside the hotel, as the friends waited for their cars, Ved said, "This evening reminded me... we are lucky. Not everyone has such friendships and such families at this age."

Krishna nodded, "True. We may be old, but we still know how to live."

Mukesh smiled, holding his wife's hand, "And how to love."

They waved to each other and went home, carrying with them memories of laughter, food, and a friendship that had only grown stronger with time.

Next Morning – Bar Tales and Banter

The sun peeked through the trees as the four friends—Krishna, Ved, Rajesh, and Mukesh—met again in their favourite corner of the garden. The air was fresh, the birds chirping, but the real buzz was among the four old lions recalling last night.

Ved stretched slowly, his hands behind his back, and smirked, "What a party last night! Mukesh, you've raised the bar—literally and socially."

Krishna chuckled, "And some of us raised glasses too... even the ones we thought were lifetime members of the lemon-soda club."

Rajesh added with a grin, "And some ladies... raised eyebrows! Did you see the mini fashion parade in the bar?"

Mukesh laughed, "Yes yes, I saw everything. But what surprised me most—Deepak and Deepika drinking like pros! Bloody Mary, Cuba Libre... sounded like the names of Latin dancers!"

Krishna joined in, "We even learned how to make Cuba Libre. Cola, lime juice, white rum—three colours in one glass! Even the bartender was impressed with Deepika's popularity. Every second person was asking her about the drink."

Ved said mockingly, "Poor girl must've thought she's in a Viva Cuba tourism campaign."

Rajesh laughed but then his face changed subtly as he remembered the tension from last night. "But after offering to drop Deepika, I got into a different kind of cocktail—of emotions."

Krishna raised an eyebrow, "Uh-oh. Reeta?"

Rajesh nodded, "Yes. She gave me that silent treatment, the 'how-dare-you-smile-at-her' look."

Ved said, "Don't worry. We all get those looks. It's like a marriage package—tea, trust, and tension."

Mukesh added thoughtfully, "But I liked one thing about Deepika—she knew her limit and said openly that she can't drive. That's responsibility."

Krishna said teasingly, "And then Rajesh, being the knight in shining kurta, offered his chariot."

"Which later turned into a courtroom drama in the car," muttered Rajesh.

They all laughed.

Ved stretched again, "By the way, Deepak invited us to play golf this Saturday—me, Rajesh, Reeta, and one Ashok Khanna."

Krishna smirked, "No Deepika?"

Rajesh said quickly, "No no. Deepak made it clear—she talks too much, disturbs the game."

Krishna said slyly, “That’s one way to escape a double bogey and a double lecture.”

Mukesh changed the topic, “Well, I’ve one more box left from yesterday’s snacks. Shall we?”

He opened the last box—a small samosa, some namkeen, and a slice of cake. They shared it like children, each taking a small bite.

Ved took the last sip of his thermos tea and said warmly, “You know, friends, parties, whisky, or samosas—it’s not the food or drink we remember. It’s the company.”

They all sat silent for a moment. The breeze carried a soft scent of jasmine. A few young joggers passed by, waving to the group.

Krishna nodded, “Yes. We may be in our 70s and 80s... but with friends like this, we’re still young at heart.”

Let us do Yog Nidra, Shavasana today.

Here is a **simple and soothing Yoga Nidra script** tailored for my senior friends. The session lasts about **20–25 minutes**, focusing on deep relaxation, light awareness, and emotional calm.

1. Settling In – Preparation (2 mins)

“Lie down comfortably on your back, legs apart slightly, arms by your side, palms facing upward. Close your eyes. Let your whole body become still. Feel the ground beneath you, supporting you completely. Let go.”

“Become aware of your natural breath. Don’t try to change it... just observe. Inhale... and exhale...”

2. Sankalpa – Positive Intention (1 min)

“Now bring to mind a positive intention, a simple resolve, such as:

- ‘I am peaceful and healthy.’
- ‘I remain calm and joyful in all situations.’
- ‘My body and mind are healing every day.’

Repeat it silently in your heart three times with full faith and feeling.”

3. Body Scan – Rotation of Awareness (5–6 mins)

“Now gently shift your attention to different parts of the body as I name them. No movement, just awareness. As each part is named, feel it fully, then let go.”

Right side

“Right hand thumb... second finger... third... fourth... fifth... palm... back of hand... wrist... forearm... elbow... upper arm... shoulder... right side of chest... right waist... right hip... thigh... knee... calf... ankle... heel... sole... top of foot... big toe... second... third... fourth... fifth...”

Left side

“Left hand thumb... second finger... third... fourth... fifth... palm... back of hand... wrist... forearm... elbow... upper arm... shoulder... left chest... waist... hip... thigh... knee... calf... ankle... heel... sole... top of foot... big toe... second... third... fourth... fifth...”

Back

“Now feel the back of your body... lower back... middle back... upper back... shoulder blades... spine...”

Head

“Now your head... back of head... top of head... forehead... right temple... left temple... right eye... left eye... nose... cheeks... lips... chin... neck...”

4. Breath Awareness (2 mins)

“Now bring your attention to your natural breath again. Feel it moving in... and out... through the nostrils.

Don’t control it... just watch.

Count each breath silently from 1 to 27, then backwards from 27 to 1.

If the mind wanders, gently bring it back.”

5. Opposite Sensations (2 mins)

“Now feel the sensation of warmth in your body. Imagine sunlight touching your skin, the warmth, the comfort.

Now shift to the sensation of coolness, as if a soft breeze is blowing. Feel cool, light, relaxed.

Warm... and cool...

Now let both sensations fade. Just let the peace remain.”

6. Visualization (3 mins)

“Now imagine a beautiful peaceful garden. You are sitting under a tree, birds are singing, soft flowers blooming, gentle breeze.

You feel completely safe, happy, and free here. Let yourself rest in this peaceful place for a while”

(Pause gently)

7. Repeat Sankalpa (1 min)

“Now once again, repeat your intention—your Sankalpa.

Same words as before.

Repeat it 3 times silently and with full belief.”

8. Return to Awareness (2 mins)

“Now bring awareness back to your body lying on the mat or ground. Feel the contact with the earth.

Gently move your fingers, and toes.

Take a deep breath in, and out.

When you feel ready, slowly roll to one side and sit up gently.

Rub your palms together and place them over your eyes.

When you’re ready, open your eyes slowly, slowly.

“Your Yoga Nidra session is complete. Feel refreshed, calm, and grateful. Thank yourself for this time of rest.”

After completing the Yoga Nidra session, everyone sat up slowly, their eyes shining with serenity and subtle joy. The atmosphere was filled with a peaceful silence, as if each one had returned from a deep inward journey.

Krishna stretched his arms and smiled brightly.

“Friends, I’m feeling great... light, energetic, like I’ve pressed a reset button inside me!”

Rajesh laughed gently. “Yes, this Yoga Nidra really brings clarity. It’s like a massage for the mind.”

Mukesh nodded, sipping from his thermos. “I didn’t expect such calmness. These moments are rare. It’s like we paused life for a while and met ourselves.”

Krishna suddenly leaned forward with a spark in his eyes. “I have a suggestion. Why not plan a spiritual trip together? Let’s go to Gaya, in Bihar, the divine place associated with Lord Buddha. It’s not just a pilgrim site, it’s a place of silence and deep spiritual energy.”

Ved, always thoughtful, immediately caught the idea. “That’s a beautiful thought. Let’s seriously consider it. When we eventually meet our Maker, we should be able to say with pride, ‘We did our part, visited the sacred places, felt the divine presence.’”

He looked around at the friends and added with a soft smile, “You know, a change in routine brings more than rest—it transforms you. It opens the heart, refreshes the mind. Peace can be cultivated through meditation and pranayama, yes... but visiting a holy place like Gaya... the air itself carries blessings.”

Mukesh agreed, rubbing his hands with enthusiasm. “And we deserve that joy! We’ve spent our lives working, worrying, and raising children. Now, we should collect experiences that bring peace and meaning.”

Krishna stood up, mimicking a tour guide with a playful tone. “Welcome to the spiritual express! We’ll meditate under the Bodhi Tree, walk through the Mahabodhi Temple, and sip tea with monks.”

Everyone laughed, imagining the scene.

Rajesh added, “Let’s keep it simple—one week, a relaxed schedule. Maybe we even include a stop at Nalanda or Bodh Gaya. We’ll talk, walk, and meditate. And maybe meet a few interesting seekers along the way.”

Krishna, who had been listening quietly nearby, chimed in: “And don’t forget local food. Litti-chokha and sweet khaja—divine taste too!”

Everyone chuckled again.

Ved raised his hand like a schoolteacher. “Done! Let’s make this our next group project. Mukesh, you contact the travel agent. Krishna, you shortlist the places. Rajesh, make a budget. And I will handle the spiritual schedule!”

Krishna smiled, “Let’s enjoy the good spiritual vibes while we’re alive and together. After all, it’s not just about visiting a holy place, it’s about sharing the journey with holy souls.”

There was a quiet moment of appreciation among them, the unspoken understanding that life’s true joy now came from shared peace, travel, laughter—and each other.

Would you like me to expand this Gaya trip into a full story scene—perhaps including train journey moments, temple visits, or even some comical spiritual encounters?

A Journey to Gaya – Pilgrimage of Peace and Laughter

The plan was finalized within a week. Krishna booked the train tickets. Ved arranged a simple itinerary with spiritual touchpoints. Rajesh managed the budget like a retired CFO, while Mukesh took responsibility for snacks, of course.

Early in the morning at New Delhi Railway Station, the group gathered, bags packed with essentials—and a few extras: dry fruits, camphor tablets, a blood pressure monitor, and a Bluetooth speaker loaded with old bhajans and 70s Bollywood songs.

Train Journey Begins

Inside the 2nd AC coach, they made themselves comfortable. Krishna took the window seat, his eyes gleaming with childlike excitement. “Dekho yaaron, we are off not just to a city—but to a state of mind!”

Mukesh opened a tiffin box just 30 minutes into the journey. “Anyone hungry?”

Ved: “Mukesh, train ne theek se speed bhi nahi li, aur tum snacks le aaye?” (“Mukesh, the train has not even picked up speed properly, and you brought snacks?”)

“Zindagi ka rule hai: Eat when happy!” (“The rule of life is: Eat when happy!”) Mukesh replied, distributing tepas and dhokla.

Soon, other passengers around started joining the laughter. One young backpacker even said, “Uncle log, your group is more fun than mine!”

That night, under soft lights, Ved led a short meditation session in their berths.

“Close your eyes... feel the motion of the train... like the motion of life... always moving, yet at rest.”

Mukesh whispered, “Aur feel the smell of aloo puri from the pantry car.”

Arriving in Gaya

As the train rolled into Gaya, a calm energy welcomed them. The air was warmer, and the noise softer. Their first stop: **Mahabodhi Temple**.

Inside the temple complex, silence spoke. They stood in awe before the **Bodhi Tree**, the sacred fig tree under which Buddha attained enlightenment.

Krishna, deeply moved, whispered, “So much happened here... and we’re here too. Centuries later, same silence.”

They sat for a while in quiet meditation, eyes closed. Nearby, monks chanted softly in Tibetan and Pali. The vibration was pure and timeless.

Rajesh opened one eye and whispered to Reeta, “Can you imagine, if we’d come here 40 years ago, we’d have rushed through in 20 minutes.”

“Now we sit still and listen,” she replied with a knowing smile.

Light Moments in Sacred Surroundings

Later, they visited nearby **Sujata Stupa**, where a local guide began explaining Buddha’s early life.

Mukesh suddenly asked, “Bhaiya, yeh Sujata ne kheer banayi thi, kya uska recipe milta hai yahan?” (“Brother, Sujata had made this kheer, can I get its recipe here?”)

Everyone burst out laughing—even the guide.

In the evening, they walked along the **Niranjana River**, the breeze soft and warm. A local shopkeeper offered them chai.

“This is Gaya’s tea,” he said.

Ved tasted it and declared, “It has karma, dharma, and a hint of cardamom.”

At night, in their guest house, they played antakshari. Krishna began with “Chingari koi bhadke...” (“If a spark is ignited, who will extinguish it?”) while Mukesh countered with “O duniya ke rakhwale...” Their voices may have cracked with age, but the spirit was ageless.

Departure – A New Realization

On the last morning, they offered prayers and donations at **Vishnupad Temple**. Ved placed his hands on the cool stone and said softly, “Life is beautiful when it’s shared—with friends, with silence, and with the divine.”

As they boarded the return train, Krishna looked around at his lifelong companions.

“This was not a vacation, it was an awakening. We should do this every year—new place, same friends.”

Everyone agreed.

Rajesh said, “Agla station? Rishikesh? Or Sarnath?”

Mukesh raised his eyebrows, “Wherever there's peace... and snacks.”

They laughed again—like old boys on a young journey.

Back in Delhi – Reflections and New Dreams

The group was back in Delhi. The spiritual energy of Gaya still lingered in their hearts and minds. A few days later, as per their ritual, the four friends—Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, and Rajesh—gathered in their favourite corner of the garden. The sun was gentle, birds chirped, and life had returned to its familiar rhythm.

Krishna, sipping his masala tea, broke the silence.

“Friends, I feel like we left a piece of our worries under that Bodhi tree.”

Ved nodded, closing his eyes briefly.

“Yes. The quiet there wasn't just outside—it crept inside us. I've been sleeping better. Even my BP is stable.”

Mukesh, always the lightener of moods, added,

“Mujhe lagta hai meri acidity bhi theek ho gayi.” (“I think my acidity has also been cured.”) “Buddha and boiled food—killer combo!”

They all laughed.

Rajesh leaned back on the bench, thoughtful.

“I've realized one thing. At this stage in life, experiences matter more than possessions. The peace we felt, the jokes we shared—it's better than any medicine.”

Ved forwarded a bag of dry fruits “Here's something for your post-Gaya glow,” he smiled.

Krishna, mischievous as always, asked, “Now that we've bathed in wisdom at Gaya, what's next? Shall we dip our toes in the Ganga at Rishikesh?”

Ved, always ready with a quote, responded, “ तीर्थ केवल स्थल नहीं होते, वो आत्मिक अनुभव के द्वार होते हैं। ” (“Pilgrim places are not just places, they are gateways to spiritual experiences.”) Let's open more such doors.”

Rajesh looked at his phone, opened the calendar, and said, “How about next month? Rishikesh. Stay near the Ganga. Morning aarti, light yoga, and maybe one rafting session for old times’ sake?”

Ved gasped.

“Rafting? At this age?”

Mukesh winked, “We’ll wear life jackets... and if the raft flips, we’ll find moksha faster!”

Everyone burst out laughing again.

A New Chapter Beckons

The idea gained momentum. Reeta and Deepika volunteered to join this time. The wives too had caught the spiritual bug, mixed with a bit of wanderlust. Even Deepak, who had initially scoffed at temples, said: “If there’s hot chai and cool air, I’m in.”

Ved took out a small notepad and began jotting:

- Travel by train or by car?
- Stay at an ashram or hotel?
- All must carry their medicines
- Will we attend Ganga aarti at Triveni Ghat?

They all began planning excitedly again.

As the sun dipped low, the garden was filled with warm golden light. The friends stood silently for a moment, gazing at the orange sky.

Mukesh, so today was only gossip about Gaya and future planning. No walk, no exercise

Krishna softly said, “We began with simple walks, now we walk into deeper joys. Gaya showed us peace. Rishikesh might show us flow.”

Rajesh, placing a hand on Krishna’s shoulder, added, “As long as we walk together, every journey becomes a pilgrimage.”

They smiled—not just at each other, but at life itself.

Rishikesh Diaries – Ganga, Grace, and Gentle Rafting

A few weeks after their serene Gaya trip, the group, now joined by Reeta, Deepika, and Deepak, boarded the morning Shatabdi to Haridwar and drove onward to Rishikesh. The air grew cooler, the mountains greener, and the chatter louder.

Rajesh, with his city-hardened scepticism, said, “Let’s see if Rishikesh has anything more than just cafes and yoga mats.”

Krishna, smiling as he looked out the window, replied, “It has the Ganga, my friend, and the Ganga has everything.”

Check-in and Early Impressions

They checked into a peaceful riverside guesthouse near **Swarg Ashram**, rooms facing the flowing river. From the balcony, the mighty Ganga shimmered like silver threads weaving through green hills.

Mukesh flopped onto the bed, “No 5-star needed when nature gives 7-star views for free!”

Reeta and Deepika left for a quick shopping walk at Lakshman Jhula (swing), promising to return with “just a few kurtas.” (They came back with bags.)

The Ganga Aarti at Triveni Ghat

At twilight, the group reached **Triveni Ghat**, where the atmosphere was alive with the scent of incense, chants, and the glow of hundreds of diyas. The river reflected every flame, every prayer.

Ved, his eyes closed and palms folded, whispered, “The same Ganga... that saw Ram, Krishna, Buddha... now sees us.”

Reeta held a diya with both hands.

“Let’s pray for health, peace—and more such trips,” she smiled.

As the aarti began, the sky turned saffron. Conch shells blew. Priests in saffron robes raised huge brass lamps in synchronized motion.

Deepak, filming the aarti, murmured, “I came for the scenery... but this is hitting me deeper.”

They all released diyas into the river, watching the flickering lights float away like silent prayers.

Morning Meditation and Yoga

The next morning, by the banks, **Ved** led a **Yog Nidra session**, followed by gentle yoga.

“Stretch, breathe, and let go. This is not exercise; this is reunion—with yourself,” he said.

Even Mukesh, usually the laziest, was doing *Tadasana* with surprising dedication.

A foreign couple walking by stopped to ask, “Is this a paid session?”

Rajesh laughed, “No, it's our group therapy. Free—courtesy Ved Baba!”

The Rafting Misadventure

The highlight—and the chaos—came with the rafting.

After much persuasion, they chose the beginner's 9-km stretch. They wore helmets, life jackets, and false bravado.

The guide, a young man named Manu, asked, “Anyone here above 60?”

All four men raised their hands.

Manu (grinning): “Okay then... no jumping, no pulling others in, and if you scream, scream together!”

The raft set off. Calm waters. Jokes. Laughter. But the moment they hit the “Roller Coaster” rapid, Mukesh yelled, “Ganga maiya bachao!” (Save us oh Ganga! River mother!)

Rajesh lost a paddle. Krishna started chanting Hanuman Chalisa.

Meanwhile, Reeta and Deepika, surprisingly calm, shouted, “Relax! This is fun!”

By the time they reached the shore, wet and gasping, the guide laughed, “Sir, I’ll remember this group forever.”

Evening Reflections

Back at the guesthouse, wrapped in shawls, sipping hot ginger tea, the group sat quietly watching the Ganga flow in moonlight.

Krishna said softly, “We came for peace, got that. Came for adventure, got double. And most of all—we stayed young.”

Deepika added, “Next time, let’s go to Sarnath—or maybe Dharamshala?”

Rajesh, holding Reeta’s hand, said, “Yes. But wherever we go... let’s never stop.”

Chapter: New Mornings, Young Feet, and Growing Roots

Back in Delhi, the group resumed their regular garden meetups. But something had shifted. Rishikesh had left its mark—not just on their minds, but deep in their hearts.

That morning, they gathered as usual under their favourite neem tree. The breeze was soft, the sun gentle, and the tea—especially sweet.

Krishna, still in a state of post-trip glow, said, “My sleep has improved, joints are less stiff, and strangely... I don’t feel old anymore.”

Ved, stretching into *Tadasana*, replied, “Maybe it’s not the trip—it’s the *shift*. We’re seeing joy in simplicity now.”

Mukesh, nibbling on a piece of toast, grinned, “And when your wife gives you only toast after three days of samosas and tea parties, you know you’re back to reality!”

Everyone laughed.

A Young Visitor and a Gentle Nudge

Just then, Ved's 9-year-old grandson Aarav came running in, school project in hand.

Aarav: "Nanu! I need to make a chart on 'Local Heroes and Their Work'... and my teacher said we can choose people in our own life."

Ved raised an eyebrow, "And you came to me? I'm no hero!"

Aarav nodded seriously.

"You are. You help people, talk wisely, and... you're on YouTube! Mama showed me your Rishikesh video!"

The group was stunned and then burst into laughter.

Krishna: "We got famous."

Reeta, walking by with a watering can, added: "Instead of laughing, do something worthwhile. Why don't you all plant trees in the park? Become heroes for real."

The group paused. Ved, eyes twinkling, said: "She's right. Let's plant a tree for each trip we take. Gaya, Rishikesh... next Dharamshala?"

Deepak, entering with two cutting chai glasses, added, "I know a nursery guy. He'll give us plants at half price if we tell him, it's for senior citizen heroes."

The Beginning of "Friends for Future"

Within a week, they arranged a small event with the colony kids and their families. They planted 10 saplings—Peepal, Neem, Gulmohar, and Ashoka trees.

They named their initiative: "**Friends for Future**".

Krishna made a short speech: "These trees are like us—rooted, growing, offering shade and smiles. Let's water them, like we water our friendships."

Aarav proudly presented his chart the next day in school, with a photo of his grandfather planting a tree.

The title? “My Real-Life Heroes”

Closing Reflections

Back in the garden, the four friends watched their new saplings sway in the breeze.

Rajesh, softly: “We’re not just passing time now. We’re creating a legacy.”

Ved: “Yes. Let’s keep walking, talking, travelling... and now, growing too.”

And as Aarav ran across the lawn with other kids, Krishna said with a smile, “Maybe they’ll sit under our trees one day, and remember us not just as grandfathers... but as men who lived fully, till the end.”

Chapter: A Dark Morning and a Light Within

The air in the garden was heavy that morning. A grim silence hung around the four friends—Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, and Rajesh. Even the chirping of the birds seemed subdued.

They had all read the horrifying news: the killing of innocent tourists in Pahalgam, Kashmir.

Mukesh broke the silence, shaking his head: “We just travelled peacefully to places like Gaya and Rishikesh. And now this? It's frightening to think such violence can erupt anywhere, anytime.”

Rajesh clenched his fists: “What happened should *never* happen. Innocents targeted. This government is strong; I’m sure they’ll take action. They’ve done it before. This time too, a lesson must be taught.”

Ved, visibly disturbed, replied, “But what happened after 26/11? Life moved on. No real consequences. Just candle marches and hashtags.”

Rajesh said firmly, “No, Ved. I disagree. Things have changed. This government has responded when needed, and I believe they will again. What’s painful is how dirty politics has become—rivals now behave like sworn enemies.”

Mukesh, calmer, added, “And yet, politicians across the board disappoint. Why waste our peace on them? Whoever rules, our only hope is they protect the people and ensure welfare. Nothing else matters more.”

Ved nodded slowly.
“True. But even here in our peaceful garden, people are filled with anger.
Everyone’s talking about revenge. They want justice.”

Mukesh, a little more animated: “But look at some leaders—they’re still defending the enemy, still playing vote-bank politics. It’s disgusting. People will remember this when the time comes. We’re watching too.”

Ved said, with a heavy heart, “Our PM has already declared that revenge will be taken—not just against militants, but their masters too. I couldn’t sleep last night. What had those tourists done wrong? Checking religion before killing... Only a deranged mind can do that. It’s inhuman.”

Rajesh quietly added, “For now, maybe we should avoid traveling until things cool down.”

Ved, firm and fiery: “No! Why should we hide? Life must go on. There’s a saying—*jo dar gaya, samjho mar gaya*. Let us live with courage.”

He paused, then softened his tone, taking a deep breath.

Ved: “To calm ourselves, let’s talk about the teachings of Buddha. His words soothe our troubled minds.”

Ved’s Reflection: From Outrage to Inner Peace

Ved spoke like a teacher, and the others leaned in.

“Buddha’s path is a spiritual map. His teachings are not bound by any one religion. Whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian, agnostic, or Buddhist, the message is the same: Devotion, friendship, compassion, and the removal of ego, greed, and attachment.”

“He taught that the more we say ‘mine’ or ‘yours’, the further we drift from the Divine. The real sickness in humanity isn’t outside—it’s inside. Greed. Hate. Fear.”

“Isha Foundation says: ‘You are not the body. You are not even the mind.’ If you leave behind body and mind, what remains is spirit—pure consciousness.”

Krishna, now calmer, said, “So true. That divine spirit connects us all. It’s not politics or revenge that saves us—it’s peace within.”

Ved continued: “Buddha says: *Get in the boat of the Divine and begin your journey*. You will slowly change. You will defeat suffering. And the root of suffering? It is a desire.”

“Desires trap us like bees in honey. We go deeper, thinking we’ll find more pleasure, and end up stuck—unfulfilled. We die with regrets.”

“Instead of feeding worldly desires, feed your inner spirit. Learn to connect with your soul. The soul is a fragment of the Divine.”

“External journeys are full of problems. But internal journeys solve them. True Nirvana is when you are free—from pain, from ego, from fear.”

A moment of silence followed. The breeze returned, gentle and comforting. A bird flew low and landed near the saplings they'd planted last week. It was as if the world was listening.

Krishna, eyes closed, said softly, “I feel better now. Yes, the world is full of madness, but if our hearts stay kind, our spirits stay strong.”

Rajesh, nodding, added, “Let's remember this every morning. Even if darkness rises outside, we'll keep our light burning here.”

We met in the garden the next day and it was decided that instead of two rounds, we will take three rounds and do mediation. During the walk, there was a heated discussion about Pakistan and India. Today there was a blackout and mock drill and people were excited that this time they have to learn a lesson and oh God, please protect our country and people.

Ved sits down in Gyan Mudra

Among the most revered of **powerful mudras**, the Gyan Mudra stands as a beacon of knowledge and enlightenment. By connecting your thumb and index finger, you form a symbolic circuit that's believed to alleviate tension and depression. This grounding gesture is more than just a pose; it's a bridge to enhanced mental clarity and a deeper connection with one's inner wisdom.

Close your eyes gently and look a little upward so you can focus on the forehead just above and centre of the eyebrow.

Focus on your breath while inhaling and exhaling, do it for five minutes.

Now repeat what I am saying:

Oh God, give me peace

Oh God, allow me to focus on my breathing

Oh God, Give me and world happiness

Oh God, Kill my negative power

Oh God, keep me happy and satisfied in whatever you have given

Oh God, in return, I thank you for giving me everything I need

Oh God, remove the darkness around me

Oh God, Destroy the enemies

Oh God, Bring light towards me for enlightenment

Oh God, I am your and you are mine

Oh God, today you have sent me into this world, tomorrow I have to merge with you.

Oh God, I pray for the health and wealth of all my nears and dears.

Om shanti, shanti shanti

Take deep breath and chant OM.

Rub your palm and place them on your eyes.

Thank you all and God blessed all

When we opened our eyes, we saw more than 10 people sitting with us and accompanied us for this lovely mediation time.

Ved further said, “You know there are 10 type of Mudras and we will discuss another day, but they are as under:

1. Gyan Mundra, which we have done just now
2. Shuni Mudra
3. Surya Ravi Mudra
4. Buddhi Mudra
5. Prana Mudra
6. Dhyana Mudra
7. Anjali Mudra
8. Vayu Mudra
9. Rudra Mudra

10. Uttara bodhi Mudra

Morning After Operation Sindoor – Garden Gathering

Early in the morning, as the sky glowed with the first light of summer, all my friends gathered in the garden at 6 a.m. sharp. Despite recent tensions, there was a calm, hopeful air. Everyone bowed to each other, exchanged warm smiles, and felt unusually light – as if a burden had lifted.

Ved entered with an excited grin, gave a hearty high-five, hugged each of them and said loudly,

“Congratulations, friends!”

Everyone looked puzzled.

“What for?” Krishna asked.

Ved, shaking his head in mock disbelief, said, “You guys really don’t know? Yesterday, our forces launched a successful strike on the militant camps – destroyed seven of them! Heavy losses reported on the other side. The operation was named ‘Sindhoor’ – because they wiped off the vermilion of our sisters, and this was our retaliation. A lesson long overdue.”

“Wow!” said Rajesh, clapping his hands. “Salute to our forces and the government. I had a dinner to attend, so I missed the news. Honestly, I thought this was all mock drills again.”

Mukesh added, “I was glued to a documentary and missed the updates too. What a powerful response! May such brutal acts never happen again.”

They all stood in a brief respectful silence, a silent prayer in their hearts for peace and strength to the nation.

Ved then asked,

“So, what’s today’s plan? Walk or some breathwork?”

Rajesh groaned, “I overate last night and barely slept. No walking for me. I’ll join for pranayama only.”

Ved, smiling, said,

“Perfect! Let’s do a special breathing technique today – the Sudarshan Kriya.”

He explained with calm authority:

“‘Sudarshan’ means ‘right vision’, and ‘Kriya’ means ‘purifying action’. So, Sudarshan Kriya gives you clarity and purifies your inner self. It aligns the body, mind, and emotions by harmonizing the breath.”

Steps of Sudarshan Kriya

Ved gently led the session:

1. Ujjayi Pranayama (Victorious Breath)

- Sit comfortably.
- Inhale slowly for a count of 4, hold for 7, and exhale for 10.
- A gentle throat sounds like a whisper.
- Repeated for 25 rounds.

They paused, rested.

2. Deep Breathing

- Inhale deeply... exhale fully – repeated three times.

3. Second Round – 4-7-10

- The same cycle again: inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 10 – repeated calmly.

4. OM Chanting

- Deep breath in, chant OM – long and slow – three times.

5. Closing

- Rub palms, place gently over the eyes and ears.
- Slowly open the eyes, still immersed in stillness.

There was silence for a few moments – peaceful, powerful, shared.

Mukesh spoke softly,
“Every time we do this, I feel elevated... a kind of ecstasy.”

Ved Explains Benefits

Mukesh, curious, asked,
“But Ved, what exactly are the benefits of Sudarshan Kriya?”

Ved replied, counting on his fingers:

Mental & Emotional Benefits

- Reduces anxiety and depression (clinically proven)
- Enhances focus, clarity, and creativity
- Builds emotional resilience
- Brings inner peace

Physical Benefits

- Improves lung capacity and oxygen flow
- Boosts immunity
- Reduces cortisol, the stress hormone

Spiritual Benefits

- Deepens meditation
- Promotes self-awareness
- Aligns body, mind, and soul

Guidelines

- Best learned through certified Art of Living instructors
- Do it on an empty stomach
- Practice in a quiet, calm space
- If you have medical issues, consult a guide or doctor

Rajesh's Trip to Chandigarh

As they slowly gathered their bottles and towels, Rajesh said, "Guys, I won't be around for four days. I'm heading to Chandigarh – got a business deal to finalise."

Ved nodded, "Thanks for informing, and all the best for a successful deal!"

They all waved him good luck and slowly left the garden, carrying with them the freshness of breath, the pride of the nation's strength, and the serenity of a spiritual start to the day.

Rajesh's Misstep in Chandigarh

Rajesh and his son arrived in Chandigarh for a crucial business trip. After a marathon round of back-to-back meetings, both were mentally and physically drained.

"Let's get a spa," Rajesh suggested. "We need to relax."

At the hotel's front desk, Rajesh inquired.

The staff replied, "Sir, we don't have a spa here, but there's one just three buildings down."

Trusting the recommendation, they made their way to the spa, paid ₹6,000 for the massage and ₹1,000 for the steam. A young receptionist escorted them to a cabin and handed each a short robe to change into.

As the massage began, Rajesh noticed the therapist subtly offering "extra services." Confused, he was about to ask what she meant when his son knocked on the cabin door, his voice firm.

"Dad, please come out now. We're in the wrong place. This isn't a legitimate spa – these are sex workers."

Stunned and embarrassed, Rajesh quickly got dressed and exited the room. Outside, he turned to his son, apologetic.

"I'm really sorry, beta. I had no idea... The hotel staff misled us. I'll report them."

His son, calm but disappointed, replied,

“No need, Dad. They’re probably getting commission from the place. Let’s just go.”

The incident left Rajesh feeling humiliated. *“I thought such things only happened in Bangkok, not here in India,”* he muttered to himself.

Meanwhile in Delhi – A Golf Plan

Reeta called Rajesh, saying she was feeling bored and asked,

“Can I join Deepak and Deepika for a game of golf?”

Rajesh replied,

“No need to ask, just go and enjoy yourself.”

Qutab Golf Course – The Match Begins

At Qutab Golf Course, Reeta and Deepika paid the green fees and began their game. They were soon joined by Ashok Khanna, a quiet observer.

Deepak suggested with a grin,

“Let’s spice it up – gents versus ladies, with a small stake.”

Deepika protested,

“That’s unfair. Our handicap is much higher!”

Deepak replied,

“We’ll give you four free strokes.”

Reeta, ever the negotiator, bargained,

“Make it six, or we don’t play!”

Laughter followed. They settled on ₹50 per hole, maximum ₹200.

The game began.

By Hole 4, the ladies were 2 down.

Hole 5 – A Tip from Arnie

At Hole 5, they paused by a signboard titled:

“Golf Tips from Arnie”

- Play golf to enjoy – whack the ball and have fun.
- 90% of golf is mental.
- Think constructively on the way to the course.
- Warm up before teeing off.
- Keep your head still during the swing.
- Don’t bend wrists in the first 12 inches of backswing.
- Take the club back only as far as you control it.
- Use enough clubs – most people don’t.
- Don’t fix fundamentals mid-game.
- Focus especially during three holes.
- Play aggressively – attack the course.
- Try bold shots – most play too safe.
- If tired, swing easier, not harder.
- Give your best – the game rewards it.

Hole 5 and 6 were won by the ladies (thanks to free strokes).

7 and 8 went to the men.

Hole 9 was taken again by the ladies – final score: Men win by one hole.

When Reeta and Deepika tried to pay the ₹50 stake, Deepak refused.

“That was too much fun to put a price on.”

The 19th Hole – Bar Time

Deepak laughed,

“Shall we head to the 19th hole?”

Reeta, confused, asked,

“What do you mean? There are only 18.”

Ashok smiled for the first time and said,

“Nineteenth hole means the bar.”

Reeta was surprised.

“Ashok, you finally spoke! You were so silent earlier.”

“I take time to mix. I mostly listen and observe,” Ashok replied gently.

Reeta: “I don’t drink, though.”

Deepika: “No problem, have a virgin cocktail or mocktail. I’m starving too!”

At the bar:

- Deepak and Ashok ordered draft beer
- Deepika asked for a Bloody Mary
- Reeta ordered a Virgin Mojito

Deepak, describing the drink:

“Virgin Mojito is incredibly refreshing — lime juice, mint leaves, sugar syrup, ice, and fizzy soda. Light, flavourful, and perfect for any occasion.”

Reeta smiled and agreed.

They ordered:

- Chicken Tikka
- Paneer Tikka
- Green Salad for Reeta
- Peanuts and cashews for starters

As the drinks arrived, Deepak asked for a repeat.

Ashok and Reeta politely declined.

Deepika requested the bar menu.

She considered trying a Whiskey Sour, and asked if it included egg white.

The waiter responded,

“Traditionally, yes, but we serve it without eggs.”

Deepika: “Perfect. I’ll take one.”

A Moment Between Reeta and Deepika

Over drinks, Reeta turned to Deepika and said sincerely,

“I’m a big fan of yours.”

Deepika raised an eyebrow.

“Why?”

Reeta:

“Because as a widow, many women withdraw from life... but you’ve blossomed. I admire that.”

Deepika grew reflective.

“I went through a very dark time. Eventually, I realised — nothing would change unless I changed. I worked with psychologists and sociologists... slowly, I rebuilt myself and learned to live, not just exist.”

Reeta:

“Thank you for sharing. You’ve inspired me.”

Wrapping Up

As the evening wound down, Ashok stood up and said:

“Thanks Deepak, for the game and the company. Hope to play with you all again soon. Nice meeting everyone.”

Everyone echoed the sentiment, warm smiles all around.

Rajesh Returns from Chandigarh

Rajesh returned from Chandigarh late evening, visibly tired – both from the business meetings and the awkward spa incident. He saw Reeta lounging in the living room, looking fresh and cheerful.

Reeta smiled, “Welcome back! How was your trip?”

Rajesh hesitated, unsure whether to share the full story. “Let’s just say... hectic. I’ll tell you over tea.”

Reeta laughed, “I heard you had your own version of a ‘spa treatment’.”

Rajesh blinked. “Who told you?”

“Your son called. Don’t worry, he was discreet – just told me, ‘Dad had an unexpected surprise at a shady spa.’” She giggled. “Don’t worry, you’re not the first man to walk into a trap.”

Rajesh sighed, “Still... I feel awful.”

Reeta put her hand gently on his, “You made a mistake, not a crime. You walked out. That’s what matters.”

Over Tea with Friends

The next morning, the senior group – Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, Rajesh, – gathered again at the garden bench, sipping tea under the neem tree.

Mukesh: “So, is the Chandigarh trip done? Closed the deal?”

Rajesh nodded, “Deal’s done. But let me tell you, I’ve never felt more embarrassed in my life.”

Everyone leaned in.

Rajesh: “We went for a spa... turned out to be one of *those* places. My son figured it out before I did.”

There was a moment of stunned silence – then Ved burst into laughter.

Krishna added with a smirk, “You went for a steam bath and almost ended up in a hot soup!”

Mukesh , deadpan: “Massage with benefits?”

The group roared with laughter. Even Rajesh chuckled, “Yes yes, laugh all you want – but next time, I’m only going to temples and tirthas!”

A New Trip Idea – Spiritual Detox

Krishna sipped his tea, then said thoughtfully,

“Speaking of temples – why don’t we plan our next trip to Varanasi. We’ve been talking about it for weeks.”

Ved nodded, “Yes, Pind Daan, Vishnupad Temple, old-world charm... and plenty of peace. No spa surprises.”

Rajesh “And no bar either?”

Deepak joined them just then, overhearing the last bit.

“You guys keep the temple; I’ll find the snacks.”

Rajesh: “Deal. One condition – we all go together, no solo exploring shady buildings.”

Everyone laughed.

Train to Varanasi – Laughter, Memories & Moksha

The senior gang – Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, Rajesh, Ashok, and Deepak – boarded the overnight train to Varanasi from New Delhi. They had booked two first-class AC compartments, hoping for peace... though with this group, peace is never guaranteed.

Ved, holding a bag full of snacks: “This is not a train ride. This is a moving picnic.”

Rajesh, stretching out on the berth: “As long as no one offers me a ‘special massage’ onboard, I’m at peace.”

Everyone laughed.

Chai, Chana & Chitchat

By 7 PM, the group had opened their dinner boxes – a mix of thepla, pickles, sandwiches, and thermos-packed tea.

Ashok, quietly nibbling: “You know, every time I visit Varanasi, I feel something strange... like time slows down there.”

Krishna: “Because in Varanasi, even Death waits for Salvation. Kashi is not just a city – it's a threshold.”

Mukesh: “Arre bhai, before moksha, let's get some moong dal halwa. I packed it specially.”

Deepak, jokingly: “Halwa first, heaven later.”

Stars Outside, Stories Inside

As the train whistled past dark fields and tiny village stations, they turned off the lights and lay down, chatting in the dim night glow.

Rajesh: “You know, after that Chandigarh spa drama, I realized – life doesn't give warnings. Only lessons.”

Ved: “True. We prepare for everything... but never for the unexpected.”

Krishna, softly: “That's why Ganga flows east – she teaches us to bend, to flow, to cleanse. That's why we went to her.”

Ashok: “And in her arms, even sinners feel safe.”

There was silence. For a moment, the sound of the train became a lullaby.

Arrival at Varanasi Junction

At 5:30 AM, the train pulled into Varanasi Junction.

Cool breeze, holy chants from distant temples, and that unmistakable scent of burning incense and early morning dew.

Deepak, stretching: “Ah! We've arrived at the centre of the universe. And my back needs alignment already.”

Reeta, who had joined with Deepika and a few more ladies in the next coach, greeted them on the platform. “Good morning, Pandit log! Ready for Ganga Sanan?”

Deepika: “We’ll wash our sins, but don’t expect us to forgive yours, Deepak!”

Assi Ghat – Sunrise, Soul, and Silliness

By 6:15 AM, the group reached Assi Ghat – the sky painted in orange hues, the Ganga shimmering gently, and chants of mantras echoing across the ghats. It was surreal.

Rajesh, whispering: “This... this is what peace looks like.”

Ved, hands folded: “We wake up every day, but here... it feels like the *soul* wakes up.”

Ganga Aarti – Divine Choreography

Dozens of young priests stood in sync, facing the river with brass lamps lit, conch shells blowing, and incense filling the air. The group sat cross-legged, watching the sacred dance of devotion.

Krishna, eyes moist: “This river... has seen everything. Kings, beggars, poets... even corpses. And yet she flows, untouched.”

Deepika, closing her eyes: “I feel like she’s hugging my pain away.”

Reeta, softly: “Ganga gives without asking. That’s *real love*.”

Boat Ride – Waves of Wisdom & Wit

After the aarti, the group hired a wooden boat, steered by a chatty oarsman named Bhola – who was anything but simple.

Bhola, smirking: “Babujis, don’t worry – my boat floats even in philosophy.”

Mukesh: “Great, then row us through enlightenment.”

As they floated past Dashashwamedh Ghat, Manikarnika Ghat, and Harishchandra Ghat, the mood turned reflective.

Ashok, staring at a cremation pyre: “So many final goodbyes... but no one ever says, ‘I’ll be back’.”

Krishna: “Because they will. Not in body... but in lessons, in children, in stories like ours.”

Back to Humour – Bhola the Boatman

Bhola: “You know, once a foreigner asked me, ‘Is this river holy?’ I said – Madam, even if it wasn’t, people bathe here every day, so it’s now at least immune!”

The group burst into laughter.

Reeta: “Bhola, you should do stand-up comedy.”

Bhola: “Already doing it, madam. My life’s the joke; the boat’s the stage.”

Return to Ghat – Moments of Gratitude

Back on land, the group offered floating diyas in leaf bowls – one for peace, one for health, one for those they’ve lost.

Deepika, placing hers: “For my late husband – may his soul be free like this flame.”

Rajesh, quietly: “For forgiveness... of others and myself.”

Krishna: “For our nation – may it find its balance, like the river does.”

They watched as the diyas drifted, twinkling on the water’s surface – tiny hopes sailing toward eternity.

Kashi Vishwanath Temple – Bells, Bhakti, and a Bit of Chaos

The group walked through the narrow, colourful lanes of Varanasi, flanked by flower vendors, cows, and chai wallahs. The air was thick with devotion

and sandalwood. Their destination: Kashi Vishwanath Temple — one of the holiest sites in Hinduism.

Ved, adjusting his kurta: “Here, Shiva doesn’t just reside... he breathes with the people.”

Mukesh, smiling: “And the cows breathe louder than him.”

Everyone chuckled, dodging a stubborn cow blocking the path like a temple bouncer.

Security, Sevaks & Shuffle

After the security check, they stood in line. Loud bells rang in the distance. An enthusiastic priest was guiding a group of South Indian devotees in Sanskrit, while another group was arguing over the cost of special darshan.

Rajesh, whispering: “Why is that man holding a coconut like a grenade?”

Krishna: “Probably afraid he’ll be overcharged for cracking it.”

Suddenly, a sevak appeared and offered them a “VIP shortcut darshan” for ₹500 per head.

Reeta: “We’re senior citizens, not VIPs.”

Deepika: “Same thing these days.”

They paid, half-joking, half-grumbling — but it got them inside.

Face-to-Face with the Lingam

Inside the sanctum, chants of “*Har Har Mahadev*” echoed. The atmosphere was electric.

They bowed before the Jyotirlinga, the symbol of Lord Shiva’s infinite energy. A priest applied sandal paste on their foreheads and offered holy water.

Ashok, eyes closed: “When the mind bows, the ego dies. That’s the real darshan.”

Krishna, touched: “For a moment, I forgot every complaint I had in life.”

Mukesh, lightly: “Even about the railway food?”

They laughed — softly, reverently.

Puja with a Twist

Back outside, they sat under a banyan tree where a young priest offered to do a short puja for peace and well-being. He began with full energy.

Priest: “Om Bhur Bhuvah Swah... Repeat after me...”

Group: (mumbling in broken Sanskrit)

Priest: “May all your desires be fulfilled.”

Ved: “Even if I wish to be 25 again?”

Priest, without blinking: “In your next life, sir.”

Midway through the aarti, a monkey swooped down and snatched a banana from the prasad plate.

Deepika: “Even monkeys want blessings.”

Priest: “Madam, this is Kashi — even monkeys meditate.”

Spiritual Reflection Under the Tree

As the puja ended, the group sat quietly under the tree.

Reeta: “I was sceptical about this trip... but today, something inside me shifted.”

Deepika: “Shiva doesn’t change your life. He changes how you *see* it.”

Ashok, softly: “Silence is the loudest prayer... I heard it there.”

Annapurna Darshan – A Surprising Connection

The guide, walking slightly ahead, paused beside a beautifully sculpted statue in a glass case just outside the main temple courtyard.

Guide: "Sir, this is Maa Annapurna, the goddess of nourishment. This original statue was stolen during British times... but just last year, it was brought back to India and installed here again with full honour."

The group gathered closer, sensing the significance.

Ashok, eyes lighting up with recognition: "Wait! This very statue... I remember now – it came through customs. I personally cleared it at the airport! We had it transferred to the Archaeological Survey of India."

Everyone turned to him in surprise and admiration.

Ved: "You never told us this!"

Ashok, smiling humbly: "It was routine duty back then. But seeing her here... it feels like a full circle. Maybe that's what they call *Prabodha* – destiny playing out."

Krishna, bowing his head: "Annapurna Mata feeds the whole world... and she gave *you* the honour to welcome her home."

Mukesh: "Next time someone mocks customs duty, I'll tell them we clear gods too!"

They all laughed gently, but there was a genuine reverence in the air.

Reeta, softly: "I felt something... not just pride, but like a blessing."

Deepika: "We bow to her not just for food – but for the grace that feeds our soul."

All came back happily; it was truly a divine place, and they felt themselves settled in the colour of complete devotion. The sound of temple bells, the fragrance of incense, the chants still echoed in their hearts. Even the bustling streets of Varanasi seemed calmer now – as if the city itself had paused to bless them.

On the way back to the guest house, no one spoke much – not because there was nothing to say, but because they were all absorbing the experience in silence.

Krishna, breaking the silence gently: “This city doesn’t just live history... it breathes *moksha*.”

Rajesh smiled: “Even a short stay here feels like a pilgrimage of many births.”

Deepika nodded: “True. Varanasi is not just a place... it's a feeling.”

They reached their rooms, tired in the body but light in spirit. Before sleeping, Ved looked out of the window at the quiet Ganga below and whispered a small prayer.

Ved (thinking): “May our country heal... may our minds remain at peace... and may our bonds stay strong – like the flow of this river.”

Early next morning, Ved made a video call on the group chat with Krishna, Mukesh, and Rajesh. His voice was unusually serious.

Ved (on video call): “Guys... switch on the news right now. Pakistan has fired multiple drone missiles across various parts of India!”

All three friends immediately grabbed their remotes, phones, or laptops. The headlines flashed:

"Breaking News: Indian Air Defence Shoots Down 27 Drones in Coordinated Attack Attempt."

Mukesh (shocked): “What? Just yesterday we were talking about peace and devotion... and now this madness again?”

Krishna (clenching his fist): “Thank God our defence systems are so strong. Not a single drone reached its target. Salute to our armed forces!”

Rajesh: “They tried to scare us... but ended up embarrassing themselves. This is not the India of the past!”

Ved: “Exactly! All drones were destroyed mid-air. Our surveillance and response is top-class now. Operation *Suraksha Netra* worked brilliantly.”

Krishna (with pride): “Even in Varanasi, look at the faith and the strength... People are calm, carrying on with devotion. This country cannot be shaken easily.”

They all sat quietly for a moment, watching the footage — trails of fire in the sky, radar visuals, and the confident face of the Defence Spokesperson.

Mukesh: “Let’s pray in our hearts. For our soldiers... for our safety... and for peace to ultimately prevail.”

All nodded silently, feeling both the weight of current times and the timeless strength of their country and friendship.

Next day it was hot news at garden

BREAKING: India Thwarts Massive Drone and Missile Attack by Pakistan – Strikes Back at Night with Precision Attacks

Krishna (tense):

“15 cities? That’s a full-scale provocation... Are civilians safe?”

Ved (calming slightly):

“Yes, that’s the good part. Our forces were alert. Drones, missiles, and even fighter planes tried to breach our borders — but were shot down one after the other. Our defence grid was impenetrable!”

Mukesh (proudly):

“This is the India of 2025. Not just ready, but always a step ahead.”

Rajesh (reading from his phone):

“And listen to this — after the failed attacks, our armed forces launched a coordinated counter strike late last night. The Army, Navy, and Air Force together targeted multiple strategic locations in Pakistan — Karachi, Lahore, Sialkot, and Peshawar!”

Ved (nodding):

“Yes, Operation Sindhoor was just the beginning. Last night’s retaliation has created panic across their military bases. This is the real power of unity and resolve.”

Krishna (folding his hands reverently):

“Mother Annapurna blessed us in Varanasi, and our brave soldiers guarded the nation. What a divine connection. Yesterday we prayed... today we witness the power of protection.”

Mukesh (with misty eyes):

“We talk a lot about yoga, peace, and spirituality... but today, I feel immense pride – not just for our faith, but for our fearless warriors.”

Rajesh:

Let’s pray not just for India’s strength – but also for sense to prevail in our neighbours.”

Ved:

“Agreed. Jai Hind!”

Scene: Early Morning – Garden Walk

Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, and Rajesh met as per their morning routine. The atmosphere was a bit different today—charged, yet proud. The sun had barely risen, and the cool breeze carried an air of silent celebration.

Ved (stretching arms):

“We’ve discussed enough about the news. Let’s go for our regular walk and exercises. If something new comes up, we’ll talk then.”

The group nodded, and all began their slow, rhythmic walk around the garden. Today, something was noticeably different. Several walkers, elderly and young, instead of saying ‘Hello’ or ‘Namaste’, greeted them with loud, confident cries of ‘Jai Hind!’

Stranger (with a smile):

“Jai Hind, sir!”

Mukesh (saluting playfully):

“Jai Hind! Proud morning, indeed.”

They all exchanged greetings with warmth and pride.

Rajesh (smiling):

“It feels like the whole country is one family today.”

After a few minutes, as the pace slowed and they began stretching, Krishna looked a bit thoughtful.

Krishna (softly):

“You know, after that video call yesterday... I couldn’t sleep properly. I kept watching the news... My heart was pounding when they showed those drones entering Indian airspace. For a moment, I felt helpless.”

Ved (patting his back):

“You weren’t alone. All of us felt the same.”

Krishna (nodding):

“But what a relief it was... when they announced that all enemy drones were neutralized, and even two of their fighter planes were downed – turned to ashes. I felt like bowing down to our defence forces. What courage, what precision!”

Mukesh:

“This isn’t just about defence anymore. It’s about our unity, our preparation, and above all – our resolve.”

Rajesh:

“Operation Sindhoor has become a symbol. A symbol that we won’t tolerate any harm to our soil or our people – especially not to the Sindhoor of our sisters, as Ved had said.”

They paused under a neem tree. A group of young boys ran past, shouting playfully, “Jai Hind!” again.

Ved (with a smile):

“These boys... they might not fully understand yet, but they’re growing up in an India that’s confident, proud, and protective.”

Krishna (softly):

“Let us always remember — courage isn’t just on the battlefield. It’s in how we live, how we stay united, how we teach the next generation to value peace, but never be afraid of standing up when needed.”

They resumed walking.

Mukesh:

“Come on now, enough emotion! Let’s do some breathing. Today, we’ll keep it light. Just a few rounds of Anulom Vilom and Bhramari Pranayama.”

And with that, the friends stepped into their routine, grounded in breath and spirit — their hearts lighter, their backs straighter, and their souls a little prouder.

The next morning, as usual, all friends gathered at their favourite spot in the garden. The mood was serious, yet thoughtful.

Krishna looked around and said, “Let’s skip the usual walks and exercises today. So much is happening between India and Pakistan—let’s sit and talk about it.”

Everyone nodded in agreement.

Mukesh began passionately, “I’ve truly become a fan of Modi Ji. Just the name— ‘*Operation Sindoor*’—sends a powerful message. It’s not just a military action; it speaks of national pride and the pain we all felt after the Pahalgam attack. The whole world is seeing that India is not going to stay silent anymore. And more importantly, this name has united every Indian. Everyone is standing together, demanding justice.”

He continued, “This operation was launched in response to the Pahalgam attack on April 22, 2025, where 26 innocent civilians—25 Indians and one Nepali—were killed in Baisaran Valley, Jammu and Kashmir. The government blamed The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of Lashkar-e-Taiba. TRF had initially claimed responsibility and then taken a U-turn,

blaming a cyber hack. But the damage was done—and so was India’s decision.”

Rajesh added, “And what a decision it was! The operation was focused and precise. India made sure not to target Pakistan’s military directly, to avoid full-blown war. Still, over 100 terrorists were reportedly eliminated. One of the major ones was Abdul Rauf Azhar—the same man involved in the IC-814 hijacking and the killing of journalist Daniel Pearl.”

Mukesh nodded, “And did you hear? Ten of Masood Azhar’s family members were also killed. Now he’s crying and saying, *‘I wish I had died too.’* Only when pain hits them personally do they realize what they’ve been doing for years.”

Ved, always calm yet firm, spoke next, “Instead of talking peace, they responded with drones and rockets. Thankfully, not a single bomb touched our soil. God protected us, and so did our armed forces. The photographs we’ve seen—militant camps destroyed, their launch pads gone, and their supply bases burnt down—was a strong and well-executed response. Eventually, Pakistan had to beg world leaders, and finally pleaded with our Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) for a ceasefire. India agreed, but with strict conditions.”

Rajesh sighed, “I remember the moment those drones were seen flying toward us. For a while, we were all holding our breath. When the news anchor finally said all enemy attacks were foiled, that’s when we could breathe again. Salute to our brave forces for such a flawless job.”

Mukesh added, “Yes—and let’s not forget—the forces were given a free hand by the government. That support made all the difference.”

He paused, looked at his watch, and said, “By the way, our Prime Minister is addressing the nation at 8 PM tonight. Let’s all watch it together. I’m sure he’ll speak from the heart.”

After a moment of silence and reflection...)

Rajesh chuckled and said, “You know, I told my wife yesterday— ‘Operation Sindoor’ is going on at the border, and at home, I’m under ‘Operation

Broom'. She didn't like my opinion on dinner and launched an attack with a Jhadu!" (Broom)

Everyone burst into laughter.

Ved added, "And here I thought only Pakistan needed to worry about air strikes. In my house, even my opinion gets intercepted before it lands!"

Krishna, shaking his head with a smile, said, "You both are lucky. My wife declared a ceasefire... but only because I agreed to wash the utensils for the next three days."

Mukesh, laughing, said, "Arrey bhai, if we had to negotiate with our wives the way our government deals with Pakistan, we'd be single by now!"

The whole group laughed heartily, the garden echoing with their joy. The tension of the earlier discussion eased, reminding them again that humour is a healing balm—even in the face of serious matters.

The group nodded. Though the air was heavy with the seriousness of recent events, they felt proud and united—just like the rest of the country.

The next evening, all of us decided to watch the Prime Minister's address together. Ved had invited us to his home, and when we arrived, he led us upstairs to his private theatre room.

We had been there once before when Ved was unwell. It was a large, comfortable hall—equipped with a ten-seater sofa and a soft carpet covering the entire floor. Despite the inviting couches, we all chose to sit cross-legged on the floor, just like old times, bringing back memories of childhood gatherings and community spirit.

Ved had invited a total of sixteen people. Everyone was introduced with smiles and warm greetings. Some were friends, a few were neighbours, and others were relatives—yet it felt like one big family coming together for something important.

The news anchor on the television kept building the anticipation: "Now 5 minutes left... now just 2 minutes..."

Finally, at exactly 8:00 PM, the screen switched to the live national broadcast. The Prime Minister appeared—dressed sharply, looking calm yet confident. A deep silence fell over the room.

Then, he began:

“My dear countrymen, Namaskar!

In the past days, we have all witnessed both the strength and the patience of our nation.

First of all, on behalf of every Indian, I salute our brave soldiers, our intelligence agencies, and our scientists.

The courage shown by our forces in Operation Sindoor has made every Indian proud.

Operation Sindoor is not just a name—it reflects the emotions of millions of Indians. It represents our unshakable commitment to justice.

On the night of May 6th and early morning of May 7th, the world witnessed India’s resolve. Our forces struck terrorist camps deep inside Pakistan with precision.

Terrorist hubs like Bahawalpur and Muridke—long known as training grounds for global terrorism—were destroyed. These were the breeding grounds behind attacks like 9/11, the London bombings, and countless tragedies in India.

Over 100 dreaded terrorists were eliminated, including leaders who had roamed freely in Pakistan for decades. The terrorists who dared to wipe the *sindoor* from our sisters’ foreheads have now been buried in the dust.”

The room remained completely silent. Everyone was listening, eyes fixed on the screen, hearts swelling with pride.

“Operation Sindoor is now India’s policy—a new benchmark in the fight against terrorism.”

“Let me be clear:

1. If there is a terrorist attack on India, a fitting reply will follow—on our terms.
2. India will not be blackmailed by nuclear threats. We will strike where it matters.
3. We make no distinction between terrorists and those who protect them. During Operation Sindoor, the world saw Pakistani army officers paying tribute to terrorists. This is proof of state-sponsored terrorism.

Pakistan must dismantle its terror infrastructure or it will self-destruct.

Terror and talks cannot go together. Terror and trade cannot go together. Water and blood cannot flow together.”**

He ended with thunder in his voice:

***“Once again, I salute our armed forces, and I bow to the unity and courage of every Indian.

Bharat Mata ki Jai!

Bharat Mata ki Jai!

Bharat Mata ki Jai!”**

As the screen faded, the room remained still for a few moments. Then came spontaneous clapping—long and heartfelt.

Rajesh whispered, “Goosebumps...”

Ved, eyes moist, said, “This speech... will be remembered for years. It wasn't just words—it was a message to the world.”

Mukesh stood up and declared, “This was not just a policy announcement. This was a declaration of India's new spine—a clear message that we will no longer wait or watch silently.”

Just then, Krishna, with a mischievous smile, lightened the mood: “Friends, after this powerful speech, I think even my neighbour’s dog stood up and barked in salute!”

Laughter broke out, cutting through the tension in the room.

Rajesh, wiping his glasses, said, “True... If any terrorist had watched this speech, he’d probably be packing his bags and looking for a new profession.”

Ved laughed, “Maybe yoga or pottery!”

The group chuckled and relaxed again, feeling proud, emotional, and united—not just as friends, but as Indians.

As we sat chatting upstairs after the PM’s address, Ved’s wife, Disha, gently stepped into the room. “Dinner is ready,” she said with a kind smile.

We all looked at each other, a bit surprised.

Krishna replied first, “Bhabhi ji, we weren’t prepared for dinner. There was really no need to go through all this trouble.”

She laughed softly, “Don’t worry at all. I haven’t done anything myself. It’s all been arranged by a caterer. And today, everything is vegetarian—no liquor either. It’s Mahavir Jayanti, after all.”

She paused and smiled proudly at Ved. “My husband is a follower of Buddha. He has deep knowledge of his teachings.”

Krishna, nodding thoughtfully, said, “We know. Ved is a disciplined man. Running eighty-two, still active, sharp, and frankly, he looks younger than all of us! That’s something—touchwood.”

Everyone chuckled and nodded in agreement.

“We wish him a healthy life beyond a hundred years,” Mukesh added sincerely.

Disha folded her hands, touched by the gesture. “Thank you for the kind words and blessings. Now please come down to the ground floor. Dinner is waiting.”

We all stood and made our way downstairs. The dining area was well-arranged, with two buffet tables neatly lined up and chairs set for comfort.

Naturally, our first instinct was to inspect the buffet! Everyone circled the tables, inspecting the dishes like soldiers on a mission.

The spread was simple but inviting—jeera rice, black gram curry, paneer masala, soya butter curry, and a delightful selection of sweets. Plates began to fill as everyone picked their favourites.

Krishna, savouring a bite of paneer, turned to Disha, “Bhabhi ji, may I ask who the caterer is? This food is excellent—especially this soya butter curry!”

She smiled, “Credit goes to my brother. He arranged everything. I believe it’s from Kwaliti Caterers.”

As the meal wound down, everyone felt warm—not just from the food, but from the company, the care, and the sense of togetherness that had grown stronger through the evening.

Before leaving, each of us folded our hands in a respectful Namaskar to Ved and Disha.

Rajesh, smiling, said, “This wasn’t just dinner. It was a memory. Thank you both for the hospitality—and the warmth.”

The Next Morning

The garden felt different that day. The air was fresh as always, the sun golden, but there was a quiet pride in the way everyone walked in. The previous night’s speech had clearly stirred something deep.

Krishna arrived first, holding a thermos and cups. “Today, we drink tea in the name of the Indian Army,” he said with a smile.

Soon, everyone gathered. The chatter began—low at first, then animated.

Ved said, “Last night, I couldn’t sleep. I kept thinking about those words—‘*Water and blood cannot flow together.*’ Powerful. Truthful. That’s the kind of clarity we needed for years.”

Krishna, “You know, for the first time, my 10-year-old grandson came and asked me, ‘Dadu, can I also become a soldier one day?’ I hugged him tight. Even the children now feel inspired.”

Krishna added, “Even my maid was talking about it this morning. She said, ‘Sahab, ab to lagta hai desh sach mein badal gaya.’ (Sir, now it seems the

country has really changed) If ordinary citizens are feeling it, the change is real.

Mukesh, still fired up, said, “I watched the speech again after everyone left! My son and daughter-in-law were so moved; they stood during the last ‘Bharat Mata ki Jai’. It wasn’t just a speech—it was a turning point.”

Just then, Deepika, Rajesh’s cousin, passed by the garden with her friend. She waved and joked, “Looks like you uncles are having a war strategy meeting again!”

Rajesh, quick on the reply, said, “Yes, madam. We’ve declared war on laziness and cholesterol.”

Laughter echoed through the garden.

Ved, sipping his tea, leaned back and said, “Jokes aside, it’s heartening. People are talking about national pride, about unity—not politics, not religion, not caste. That’s real progress.”

Mukesh, a bit emotional, added, “And it’s not just about revenge. It’s about sending a message—that India will not bow anymore. We have the brains, the heart, and now the will.”

A short silence followed, this time one of reflection.

Then, Krishna, as always, brought a lighter note. “By the way, I told my wife, ‘Modi ji has a policy for Pakistan, but what’s the policy for husbands whose tea is always cold?’ She replied, ‘Get a better thermal flask—Modi ji can’t help you at home!’”

Everyone burst into laughter again.

Rajesh said, “Well, if our soldiers can stay awake for nights to guard the border, the least we can do is guard the samosas at tea time.”

As they laughed, joked, and reflected, they felt something they hadn’t felt in a while—*hope*.

Tiranga Rally in the Garden

The garden had never looked so vibrant. Two days after the Prime Minister's historic speech, the local community decided to organize a Tiranga Rally—a symbolic march to express solidarity with the nation and pride in the forces.

It was Ved's idea, but it was Mukesh who took the lead in organizing. He spoke to the Residents' Welfare Association, and within hours, posters were up, flags were arranged, and even the children were ready with painted cheeks and rehearsed slogans.

That morning, the garden was a sight to behold. Little paper flags waved from benches. The children had dressed in white kurta-pajamas and tricolor ribbons. Senior citizens had pinned flags to their shirts. Even the ladies came in sarees—some in orange, some in green, some in white, forming a moving tricolor themselves.

Rajesh, seeing the crowd gather, whispered to Krishna, "Looks like today even the pigeons are standing in attention on the power lines!"

Krishna smiled, "They've finally realized the garden is not just for their droppings anymore—it's now headquarters for Mission Desh bhakti!"

At 8:30 AM sharp, the rally began with the sound of a dhol, Drums. The group of over 100 people—young and old—began marching around the walking path. Children led the group, waving flags and shouting:

"Bharat Mata Ki Jai!"

"Vande Mataram!"

"Indian Army Zindabad!"

Ved and Mukesh carried a giant tricolor between them. It waved proudly in the soft morning breeze. Behind them walked Krishna, Rajesh, Deepika, and a few retired Army men who were specially invited for the day.

After two full rounds of the garden, everyone gathered near the open stage under the old banyan tree.

A small ceremony followed.

A young girl recited a Hindi poem about soldiers. A boy dressed as Bhagat Singh delivered a fiery short speech. One retired Colonel was honoured with a shawl and a plaque by the senior members of the garden club.

Then, Ved stepped forward and spoke briefly:

"This Tiranga Rally is more than a march—it's a message. To our children, to our neighbours, and even to those far away who threaten our peace. We are united, alert, and proud. And today, every step we walked, we walked for our brave soldiers, for our nation's pride."

Everyone stood for the National Anthem, which echoed through the speakers as flags waved, heads held high, and some eyes turned moist.

After the anthem, Krishna, with his usual spark, couldn't resist:

"Friends, now that we've completed the rally, can we also complete the breakfast rally? I've marched enough to deserve at least two samosas!"

Mukesh, laughing, said, "Don't worry, General Krishna, the mess hall is ready!"

Tea, jalebi, and samosas were served to all. Children ran around playing, elders sat sharing memories, and even the birds seemed to chirp more freely that day.

As they sipped their tea, Rajesh said softly, "Sometimes, patriotism isn't about big speeches. It's in small moments like these... a flag in your hand, pride in your heart, and friends by your side."

Krishna looked disturbed, scrolling through his phone.

Krishna: "I don't understand this. In a time of national crisis, when we all should be united, some people are busy trolling our own heroes. Can you believe it? They even targeted the Foreign Secretary and brave officers like Colonel Sofia Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika. Thankfully, many people responded and gave those trolls a fitting reply... but still, why would anyone do this?"

Mukesh shook his head. “Mostly to get attention... or they’re under pressure from political groups. Some people don’t care about the country—they care only about the narrative.”

Rajesh sighed, “Now I truly understand why the Mughals and British ruled us for centuries. Disunity is in our history. It’s sad. Everything becomes a political opportunity these days. Honestly, I’ve stopped watching TV debates—they’re so negative, I just switch the channel off.”

Krishna shrugged, “This noise will go on. Some people just love to talk nonsense. But the good part is, the majority of Indians are standing strong and united. When it matters, the nation knows where to stand. And right now, people are with the forces and the government.”

A brief silence followed. The group looked tired but emotionally full—grateful, thoughtful, hopeful.

Krishna stood up, stretching. “Chalo, let’s call it off. We’ll meet tomorrow.”

Ved smiled, “Yes, and tomorrow... let’s talk about something that brings peace—the messages of Mahatma Buddha.”

Everyone nodded in agreement. A perfect topic for reflection. A perfect pause after a heavy day.

As they walked out under the quiet sky, the garden lights dimmed, and the breeze carried with it the faint scent of jasmine and a sense of calm.

Next Morning – Garden Meeting

The sun was soft, the breeze gentle. Birds chirped overhead as the four friends—Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, and Rajesh—sat in their usual corner of the garden. After the emotional intensity of the previous day, today felt lighter. More silent. Almost meditative.

Ved arrived with a calm smile and a small book in his hand. “As promised, today we’ll speak of Buddha’s teachings—simple words, deep meanings.”

Krishna: “Exactly what we need. Something to cleanse the noise inside us.”

Ved opened the book gently and read a verse:

“Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.”

Mukesh, reflecting, said, “So true. Yesterday I was boiling with frustration over those trolls. But really... what good comes from reacting with more anger?”

Rajesh: “And Buddha also said—‘*Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule.*’ We forget this when the blood is hot, especially in a crisis. But he knew better. He taught the long-term view.”

Ved: “Another one of his gems—‘*Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Observe, experience, and only then accept.*’ This applies to news, debates, gossip, even our own opinions.”

Krishna, nodding thoughtfully: “We live in a time where everyone is rushing to react, to judge, to post something. But Buddha taught us to pause, to observe the middle path. Neither anger nor apathy, just balance.”

Mukesh chuckled: “So today no political debates, no social media scrolling. Just silence and chai.”

Rajesh smiled: “And maybe a long walk after that.”

They all laughed softly, as the gardener walked past, watering the plants. The simple rhythm of life around them felt like a balm.

Ved (softly, with a serene smile):

“Friends, this body—this very human form—is like a temple. And within it lies a world that is *so beautiful*, it’s beyond any words, beyond imagination. That inner world... that is where the awakened ones live.

We keep searching outside—for beauty, love, joy—but those who have awakened, they know the truth. They’ve tasted something that cannot be described, only experienced. A silence so full, a love so vast, it shines through their very presence. That’s why we say their face glows... there’s a natural radiance, a sparkle in their eyes. This, my friends, is the *wonder of Nirvana*.

Once—even for a moment—you’ve had a glimpse of that inner light, then all the noise and glitter of the world starts to feel... tasteless. Like chewing on empty husks. Inside is treasure. Outside is mostly trash. Within you is boundless joy. Outside? Mostly distraction and discontent.

Those who are connected to their inner self—truly connected—do not live in sorrow. Not because life is easier for them, but because they’ve learned not to get stuck in the quagmire of desires and fears. This world... It’s like a swamp in many ways. Don’t get trapped in it like a bee stuck in honey. It looks sweet but can be fatal.

Buddha said: *Train your mind*. The mind is everything. Through meditation, dive deep into yourself. That’s where you’ll find freedom—not from life, but from the suffering we create inside it.

All your problems, your pain, your confusion—they begin in the mind. And they end there too, if you’re willing to sit with it, look inward, and gently let go.”

(Everyone falls silent for a moment, absorbing Ved’s words. Even the breeze seems to slow, as if listening.)

Ved closed his book, looked up at the sky, and said, “If we can live just one day like this, with mindfulness and kindness, that itself is enough tribute to Buddha.”

A moment of peaceful silence settled among them.

Then Krishna broke it gently, grinning: “Still, if trolls come in front of me, Buddha might need to forgive me.”

Everyone burst into light laughter, the kind that heals rather than hurts.

“Generation Gap? Or a Bridge?”

That evening, after the rally, everyone had gone home except Arjun, who stayed back with Ved. The two sat on the terrace, sipping lemonade as the sun dipped below the trees.

Arjun, lazily scrolling through his phone: “Nana, can I ask you something serious?”

Ved, smiling: “That itself is serious news. Ask.”

Arjun: “How do you guys sit and meditate for hours? I can’t even finish a movie without checking my phone fifteen times.”

Ved chuckled: “We didn’t have phones. That helped.”

Arjun: “But honestly, is meditation even practical today? I have 17 unread WhatsApps, 9 Instagram DMs, 3 Zoom calls pending, and one brain that refuses to shut up.”

Ved looked at him kindly: “That’s *exactly* why it’s needed more today than ever before.”

Arjun: “But Nana, Buddha didn’t have deadlines or Wi-Fi. He wasn’t stuck between assignments and memes.”

Ved: “No, but he had distractions—desires, doubts, fears, ego. Same battles, different weapons.”

Arjun, leaning back: “So, you’re saying I’m not lazy, just born in a noisier world?”

Ved: “You’re not lazy. You’re just scattered. And the world profits from your distraction. But peace comes to the one who *chooses* where to give his attention.”

Arjun, impressed: “You should make reels with these lines, Nana. You’d go viral.”

Ved, laughing: “I’d rather go *inward*, not viral.”

They shared a quiet moment.

Arjun: “Okay, one day, teach me to meditate. But make it short. Like five minutes short.”

Ved: “We’ll start with one minute. Just breathe. And maybe, just maybe, you’ll meet your inner Buddha—before your next notification.”

Arjun: “Deal. But I’ll post about it later.”

Ved: "Only if you hashtag it: PauseBeforeYouScroll."

They both laughed, as the stars began to twinkle above them.

Ved Hospitalised

Deepak called Ashok, "Sorry, I won't be able to play today. My neighbour Ved just called saying he's not feeling well and no one is home. I'm heading upstairs to check on him. Deepika is coming; if everything is fine, I'll join later. Please excuse me."

Deepak rushed upstairs to Ved's house. Ved was sitting on the floor, looking restless and pale. Deepak, who always carried Disprin in his pocket, quickly gave him one and called for an ambulance.

"Hello? We need an ambulance urgently," he said, trying to keep calm. Ved could only wave weakly—he was unable to speak.

The ambulance arrived swiftly. Ved was placed on a stretcher and given oxygen. A doctor in the ambulance administered an injection. Ved was unconscious by the time they reached the hospital and was immediately moved to the ICU.

Deepak called Rajesh, one of their garden friends, and explained everything. Rajesh replied, "I'm on my way. I know his wife's number; I'll inform her."

He is called Disha.

"Bhabhi ji, where are you?"

"I'm with my daughter. Why?"

"Please rush to Spinal Injury Hospital—Ved is admitted."

"What happened?" she asked, panic in her voice. "I spoke to him last night and he was fine."

"Deepak took timely action, and he's getting the best care. Don't worry. I, Krishna, Mukesh—we're all here. I've handed over my credit card for the bills. Just come quickly."

Disha, now visibly shaken, said, "I'm coming with my daughter."

She reached the hospital within the hour. "Where is he?" she asked anxiously.

Mukesh handed her a glass of water. "He's in the ICU. Don't panic."

"I want to see him!" she cried.

They accompanied her to the ICU floor. A nurse informed her, "His ECG is irregular. We suspect a minor heart attack. He's under observation."

"Can I meet the doctor?" Disha asked.

"He may be in his ground-floor cabin. You can check."

She hurried to the doctor's office. "Please, how is he?"

"Don't worry," the doctor said. "He's stable. We'll conduct an angiography tomorrow. He's getting the care he needs."

Scene: Hospital Temple – Disha's Prayer

Disha walked slowly into the small temple nestled in a quiet corner of the hospital. The air was still, filled with the faint scent of incense. Her hands trembled slightly as she folded them before the deity. Kneeling down, eyes closed, her lips began to move, whispering a heartfelt prayer. Silent tears rolled down her cheeks.

Disha (whispering in pain and hope):

"हे भगवान, मैं आई तेरे द्वार,
डूब रही मेरी नैया,
तू ही पार करा दे।
मुझे आस भी है, विश्वास भी है,
तू रक्षा करेगा मेरी।
पूरी श्रद्धा से कर रही हूँ प्रार्थना,
मेरी अरदास सुनो भगवान,
मत करना निराश...
मैं आई तेरे द्वारा।"

O Lord, I have come to Your door,
My life is drowning,
Only You can help me cross.
I have hope, and I have faith,
You will protect me.
I pray with full devotion—
Please hear my humble plea, O Lord,
Do not disappoint me...
I have come to Your door.

Just then, from the speakers above the temple door, a soft devotional bhajan began to play—like a divine reply to her silent weeping:

Bhajan (playing gently):

"पकड़ लो हाथ बनवारी,
नहीं तो डूब जाएंगे।
हमारा तो कुछ न बिगड़ेगा,
तुम्हारी लाज जाएगी।
भरी है पाप की गगरी,
हमारे सिर पर ये भारी।
फँसी है भँवर में नैया,
प्रभु अब डूब जाएंगे।
खिवैया आप बन जाओ,
तो बेड़ा पार हो जाए।"

"Hold my hand, O Lord,
Or else I will drown.
Nothing will happen to me—
But Your honour will be questioned.
The vessel of sin is full,
Heavy upon my head.
My boat is caught in the whirlpool,
Lord, I will drown.

*If You become the boatman,
Then the boat will surely reach the shore."*

The divine words sank deep into Disha's heart. She stayed bowed, motionless, as if the universe itself was holding her in embrace. For a moment, the temple became her refuge—the place where pain and prayer met, and strength quietly returned.

Meanwhile, Deepak approached her. "Please excuse me—I have some urgent work. But if you need anything, I'm just a call away."

"I'm deeply grateful," Disha said. "The doctor told me that even a small delay could have been fatal."

"No thanks needed. Just hoping Ved returns home safe and healthy."

The others—Rajesh, Krishna, and Mukesh—had been at the hospital for over four hours. Disha thanked them and insisted they go home to rest.

Rajesh said, "We were waiting for him in the garden when Deepak called. We came as soon as we heard."

She assured them she and her daughter would manage and promised to call if needed.

As they turned to leave, Rajesh suddenly said, "Oh! My credit card is still with the hospital!"

Disha smiled faintly, "Don't worry, I gave them Ved's insurance policy."

Rajesh collected his card from the cashier, and the three friends left quietly, hearts heavy but hopeful.

Flashback: The Journey of Disha and Ved

As the bhajan continued to echo softly, Disha remained seated in the temple, her eyes closed but her mind wide awake—drifting back in time...

She saw a younger Ved—strong, ambitious, with a spark in his eyes. It was the first time they met, in a college seminar on Indian philosophy. He was quoting Buddha, and she was scribbling notes, pretending not to listen—yet secretly mesmerized.

Then came memories like warm flickers of a diya:

- Their modest wedding, with close friends, laughter, and the awkward yet sincere promises whispered between vows.
- Long train journeys during Ved's early government postings, with her clutching their firstborn, and him holding a tiffin with homemade theplaas .
- The time Ved sat all night outside the hospital when she had fallen sick, chanting quietly and refusing to let fear overcome him.

And then more recent memories:

- Their morning tea ritual in the balcony—Ved always poured hers first.
- His quiet strength when she lost her younger brother.
- The day he cried silently when their daughter got married, hiding behind a newspaper.

Back to the present...

A nurse gently tapped her shoulder. “Ma’am, the doctor wants to see you. He’s come out of the ICU.”

Disha wiped her tears quickly, nodded, and stood up. She bowed once again to the deity before turning away, her face now steadier—still anxious, but filled with grace and silent strength drawn from her prayer and her memories.

As she walked towards the doctor, she whispered softly to herself:

“Ved must come back. He is not just my husband... he is my rhythm, my prayer, my quiet.”

Scene: Hospital Waiting Lounge – Outside ICU

The four friends sat silently on a long bench. A television in the corner was playing news, but the sound was muted. Occasionally, a nurse would walk

past, and all four heads would turn in anticipation, but then fall back in quiet.

Rajesh, pacing up and down:

"क्या कर रहे होंगे डॉक्टर... एंजियोग्राफी तो कल करनी है... पर वो ठीक हो जाएगा बसा"

(What are you doing doctor... Angiography has to be done tomorrow... but I hope he gets well.)

Krishna, trying to calm him:

"ये वक्त बस धैर्य का है, राजेश... वेद मजबूत है, बुद्ध के भक्त हैं... उनका मन भी शांत है... और दिल भी क्लासिक है।"

(This is the time to just be patient, Rajesh... he is a strong Vedic man, a devotee of Buddha... his mind is calm... and his heart is strong too.)

Mukesh, suddenly trying to lighten the air:

"यार, याद है वेद को आखिरी बार बीपी बढ़ा था तो हॉस्पिटल स्टाफ उसका आईडी कार्ड देखकर बोल दिया था 'सर, पेशेंट तो आपके पापा होंगे!'"

("Friend, remember when Ved had a high Blood pressure last time, the hospital staff saw his ID card and said, 'Sir, the patient must be your father!'")

They all chuckled, briefly.

Deepak, half-smiling:

"हां, और वेद ने बोला था 'मैं तो अभी मॉर्निंग वॉक करता हूं, तुम्हारे पापा तो अब व्हीलचेयर का इस्तेमाल करेंगे!'"

("Yeah, and VED said, 'I just go for a morning walk, your dad will be using a wheelchair now!'")

They laughed—softly but sincerely. It wasn't just humour—it was hope in disguise.

Then came a moment of silence. Krishna looked at the small photo of Mahatma Buddha he always carried in his wallet. He held it in his hand and muttered:

"वेद तो कहता था, दुख सिर्फ तब तक है जब तक हम उससे चिपक के बैठे हैं... वो दुख के पार जाना जानता है।"

("Ved used to say that suffering exists only as long as we cling to it... He knows how to go beyond suffering.")

Suddenly, Disha came walking out, her eyes slightly swollen but her face calmer.

Disha:

"डॉक्टर ने कहा है वो स्थिर है...लेकिन एंजियोग्राफी जरूरी है। आज रात आईसीयू में ऑब्जर्वेशन रहेगी...प्रार्थना करो कि सब ठीक हो।"

("The doctor said he is stable... but angiography is necessary. I will be under observation tonight... pray that everything goes well.")

Rajesh:

"हम तो यहीं प्रार्थना कर रहे हैं भाभी जी...बस आप हिम्मत रखो।"

("The doctor said he is stable... but angiography is necessary. I will be under observation tonight... pray that everything goes well.")

Mukesh:

"और कोई भी जरूरी हो, कोई भी समय...फोन करना, हम सब यहीं हैं।"

("And if you need anything, any time... call us, we are all here.")

Disha gave a small nod. Her lips trembled as she tried to say "thank you," but she couldn't. Instead, she folded her hands in silent gratitude.

Deepak placed his hand gently on her shoulder:

"वेद सिर्फ आपका नहीं है, हम सबका है।"

("Veda is not just yours, it belongs to all of us.")

Krishna, standing up, turned to everyone:

"चलो, आज रात को सब एक दीया जलाएं वेद के लिए...वो जल्दी घर लौटेगा...बुद्ध उसके साथ हैं।"

("Come, let's all light a lamp for Ved tonight... he will return home soon... Buddha is with him.")

They all agreed silently.

And in that moment—amidst the smell of antiseptic and the low hum of machines—the power of friendship, prayer, and quiet faith was stronger than any medicine.

Scene: That Night – Homes of the Four Friends

Narrator (soft reflective tone):

The night was unusually quiet. The city noise had dulled into a hum, and in four separate homes across the neighbourhood, four elderly friends, like four corners of a square, sat with one thought—Ved.

1. Krishna's Home – Balcony with a Buddha Statue

Krishna sat in front of a small Buddha idol on his balcony. A small brass diya flickered in front of the statue.

Krishna (thinking aloud):

"Veda, you are a devotee of Buddha... how can Buddha ever leave you in sorrow? But to tell you the truth... the courtyard feels deserted without you. Come quickly brother."

He placed a flower near the diya and closed his eyes, chanting softly:

"Buddham Sharanam Gacchami..."

2. Rajesh's Home – Drawing Room

Rajesh sat near the window, the television off, his phone in hand showing an old group photo from the garden: Ved laughing, holding a cup of tea.

He sighed, lit a candle, and muttered:

"Veda used to call me every morning... I didn't hear his voice even once today. God, please bring back his smile."

He picked up his diary and wrote:

"Day 1 – Ved in ICU. Waiting for his smile to return."

3. Mukesh's Home – Kitchen Table

Mukesh sat with a cup of hot milk, his wife sitting across him silently. A small ghee diya glowed between them.

Wife:

"Veda ji is a good person...his good deeds will support him."

Mukesh (nodding):

"And all of us too. The way he made everyone smile every day, uniting everyone... may God send him back with the same smile."

He folded hands, looking at the diya.

4. Deepak's Home – Bedroom Corner

Deepak had just returned from the hospital. He washed his face, placed a tea light candle on a side table, and stared at it.

Deepika:

"You know, if you don't go on time then maybe..."

Deepak (gently):

"No... whatever was destined to happen, God wrote it through my hands. Now I just have to pray for that."

They both sat in silence. He messaged the group:

"The lamp is lit. For Wade. Everything will be fine tomorrow."

"The lamp is lit. For VED. Everything will be fine tomorrow."

Scene: Morning at the Golf Course – Tee Number 10

It was a bright, breezy morning. Birds chirped over the manicured greens, and the golf course looked like a page from a calendar—calm, elegant, and just waiting for someone to mess it up with wild swings.

Deepika Arrives at the Clubhouse

Deepika entered the golf course, sunglasses on, cap slightly tilted, and looked around.

Deepika (to herself):

"Wow, this golf course looks emptier than the VIP wedding lawn!"

She walked over to the cashier and asked, "Any bookings under the name Ashok or Arvind?"

The cashier, busy rearranging tees and markers, looked at the register. Cashier:

"No ma'am, no payments under those names."

Deepika sighed and dialled Deepak.

"Deepak, please share Arvind or Ashok's number. Seems they're playing hide and seek instead of golf."

Deepak (over the phone):

"Hang on, I'll WhatsApp it. And yeah—tell Arvind, my heart is with the golf ball but my body is stuck in the hospital next to Ved."

Deepika Calls Arvind

Deepika:

"Hi Arvind, Deepika here. Where are you two hiding?"

Arvind (laughing):

"We're having a pre-game fuel-up at the café. Join us quickly, and then we'll head to Tee Number 10. We've paid the green fees online—don't worry, even Deepak's covered."

Deepika:

"Online payment? Wah! So now golf also comes with UPI convenience."

At the Café

She joined them at a table under a sun umbrella, where Arvind and Ashok sat looking suspiciously casual for people about to swing clubs.

Ashok (smiling):

“Where’s Deepak? We thought today’s comedy act would begin with him.”

Deepika:

“Deepak is doing real-life hero work—his neighbour Ved had a health emergency. He might join if he manages to escape hospital duty.”

Arvind (mock serious):

“Then the golf gods better bless our game today. Without Deepak’s mis-hits and lost balls, who will entertain us?”

Ashok (laughing):

“True! Last week he hit the ball and it went into the gardener’s tea cup.”

They Head to Tee Number 10

The trio reached the 10th hole, where the fairway stretched like a lazy river.

Arvind (stretching):

“Okay, standard rule: No phone calls, no cheating, and no blaming the wind.”

Deepika:

“And what about no bragging after lucky shots?”

Ashok:

“That’s the only rule I break proudly!”

They took turns teeing off.

Arvind’s shot was clean, and landed near the green.

Ashok’s shot curved dramatically and hit a nearby tree.

Ashok:

“See? Even nature wants to stop my talent.”

Deepika took her swing—smooth and graceful—and the ball landed closer than both men.

She smirked.

Deepika:

“Gentlemen, welcome to ‘Ladies First – and Best.’”

Banter Continues as They Walk

Ashok:

“Next hole, we need to handicap Deepika. Maybe we tie one hand behind her back.”

Deepika:

“Or give you two a map to find the ball after every swing?”

Laughter echoed across the green. Despite Deepak’s absence, the game was full of fun, gentle roasting, and that unmistakable warmth of shared play.

Scene Ends with Message Ping

Just as they reached the next tee box, Deepika’s phone buzzed.

Message from Deepak:

“Ved stable. Angiography in the evening. Might drop by for the 18th or 1 hole if you haven't wrapped up!”

Arvind (reading over her shoulder):

“Perfect! We’ll save a penalty stroke just for him.”

Ashok:

“And a samosa from the café. Our hero deserves a warm welcome—and a reality check on his swing

scene: Tee Number 13 – Midway Through the Game

The game had picked up pace. Arvind’s swing had improved, Ashok had lost *only one* ball to the bushes, and Deepika continued her streak of straight, confident shots.

Suddenly, they heard a familiar voice behind them.

Deepak (waving):

“Fore! Or should I say, more! Because more jokes are coming with me!”

Everyone turned and smiled.

Deepika:

“Look who escaped the hospital! Don’t tell me you left the doctor in charge of Ved and ran away!”

Deepak (laughing):

“No friend, angiography scheduled for evening. Ved’s condition is stable now. His daughter and Disha ji are with him. I just came to relieve some tension.”

Ashok:

“Tension will increase if you start swinging the club.”

Arvind:

“Exactly. Let’s all wear helmets now.”

They handed Deepak a club, and he stepped up to take his shot at hole 14, a tricky par 3 with a small pond just before the green.

Deepak (concentrating):

“Okay, silence please. Let me show you the legendary ‘Deepak Drive’.”

He swung confidently... and the ball *sailed beautifully*—right into the pond.

Deepika (dryly):

“Wow. Straight to the fish. I think even the frog ducked.”

Arvind:

“It is late in the house of God, but there is straight water in the swing of the lamp!”

Ashok (giggling):

“Next time carry a snorkel with your golf bag.”

They all burst out laughing.

A Short Break at the Cafe

They paused for lemon soda and snacks. As they sat under the umbrella again, Deepak shared the update.

Deepak:

“The doctors are positive. Minor blockage. Angiography will confirm, but hopefully a stent or simple medication will be enough.”

Deepika:

“God bless him. And bless you too for acting quickly.”

Deepak:

it’s nothing. We’re neighbours, but more than that—we’re friends. In our age group, a little humanity goes a long way.”

Ashok:

“That’s true. And speaking of humanity, have some mercy on the next golf hole. Aim for the flag, not the lake!”

Arvind (laughing):

“Maybe the flag is scared of him now!”

Scene Ends on a Positive Note

As they stood up to resume play, Deepika said:

“Life is like golf—sometimes a clean hit, sometimes a splash. But as long as we laugh, play, and stand by each other—we’re winning.”

They all nodded, walking toward the next tee, clubs in hand, hearts lighter, and spirits high.

Scene: Tea Stall Near the Golf Course – After the Game

It was a cozy spot under a banyan tree, with wooden benches, steaming kulhads (earthen cups), and the rich aroma of masala chai. The group—Deepak, Deepika, Arvind, and Ashok—sat sipping tea, feeling the comfort of good company after a long game.

Ashok (stretching):

“What a game! Golf is like marriage—lots of swings and occasional yelling.”

Deepika (smiling):

“And in both, if you’re lucky, you find the hole... I mean goal!”

Arvind (chuckling):

“Just remember, in golf, the fewer strokes you take, the better. In marriage, it’s the opposite—more strokes of love, the better!”

Everyone laughed as the chaiwala refilled their cups.

A Touch of Reflection

Deepak (sipping slowly):

“You know, today was fun, but honestly, I kept thinking of Ved. Life really is unpredictable.”

Deepika:

“Yes. One minute you’re laughing, the next you’re rushing to the hospital. But the way you handled it, Deepak, was admirable.”

Deepak (modestly):

“I did what any friend would do. We may grow old, but friendship keeps the heart young.”

Ashok (nodding):

“And tea keeps the bones from creaking.”

Arvind:

“Also, remember Ved’s words the other day—‘Don’t be like the bee stuck in honey, go within, meditate, find peace.’ Maybe we should really start a weekly meditation circle.”

Scene: Golf Course – Hole 1, Mid-Morning Sunshine

Deepika, Arvind, and Ashok walk toward the 1 tee, golf bags slung over shoulders, sun peeking through the trees.

Deepika (grinning): "Alright boys, don't go easy just because I'm the only lady here. I play with grace... and I also win with style!"

Ashok (chuckling): "Win? Last time I checked, golf wasn't about grace... it's about not losing your cool when the ball lands in the pond."

Arvind: "And here I thought it's about pretending to stretch while secretly checking if anyone saw your bad swing!"

They all laugh. Deepika tees off first — a solid, straight shot.

Arvind (clapping): "Whoa! That's a beauty. Ashok, I think we're in trouble!"

Ashok: "I suddenly feel an old back pain acting up... must be the weather."

Deepika (teasing): "Excuses starting already? We haven't even reached the bunker!"

Ashok swings, but his ball hooks badly into a nearby tree. It thuds down with a sad little plop.

Ashok (dramatic): "That tree was obviously planted there to sabotage me."

Arvind (laughing): "Nature is not on your side today, my friend."

They continue playing with light-hearted competition. At one point, Arvind lines up his putt very seriously, wiggling his hips like a pro.

Deepika: "Are you lining up a putt or auditioning for a dance reality show?"

Arvind: "It's called focus. You won't understand — it's a golfer thing."

Ashok: "Looks more like constipation."

Suddenly, Deepak arrives, a little out of breath.

Deepak: "Sorry folks! Emergency handled. I needed some fresh air and bad jokes — looks like I found the right place!"

Ashok: "You're just in time to witness my comeback."

Deepika: "Comeback? You need to *go somewhere* before you can come back."

They all laugh as Deepak joins them. The game continues with more banter.

Later, at the 9th hole...

Deepika (pretending to wipe sweat): "Golf is a spiritual game. You swing, you curse, you walk a mile to find your ball, and repeat."

Ashok: "And you pay good money for the privilege. It's practically meditation... with snacks."

They all collapse at the café afterward for lemonade and sandwiches.

Deepak: "Next time, we should bring scorecards. Not for the game — just to tally the number of lies each one talks about their swing!"

A Final Joke Before Parting

As they got up to leave, a little boy selling peanuts approached.

Boy:

“अंकल, मूंगफली लोमे?”

“Uncle, will you have peanuts?”

Deepak (grinning):

“अरे बेटा, ये लोग तो मूंगफली के दाम में करोड़ के गोल्फ शॉट मारते हैं!”

“Hey son, these guys hit golf shots worth crores for the price of peanuts!”

Ashok:

“Only difference is, moongfali (Peanuts) hits the stomach. Their shots hit the lake!”

They all roared with laughter, bought the peanuts, and walked toward the parking lot, promising to meet again soon—with a prayer in their hearts for Ved’s speedy recovery.

All: "Cheers to that!"

Next Morning – Hospital, ICU Floor

The hospital was quiet except for the soft hum of machines and the occasional footsteps of nurses changing shifts. The sun had just risen, casting a gentle glow through the ICU windows. Disha, sitting on the bench outside, hadn't slept all night. Her daughter sat beside her, holding her hand.

A nurse approached.

Nurse: "Madam, the doctors are preparing for Mr. Ved's angiography. You can meet him briefly before they shift him."

Disha stood up quickly and walked to Ved's bed. He was conscious now, though pale and weak.

Disha (softly): "You scared me... but you're going to be fine. The doctors will take care of you. I'm right here."

Ved smiled faintly, squeezed her hand, and said, "Don't worry. I have faith... and I have you."

Doctor Sharma, a calm and experienced cardiologist, entered.

Doctor: "Good morning. We're about to proceed with the angiography. It's a safe, routine procedure and will help us see if there are any blockages in the arteries. We'll be done in about 45 minutes."

Disha (nervously): "Will he need surgery?"

Doctor (reassuringly): "Let's not jump to conclusions. We'll decide after seeing the results. You've brought him in time — that's a good sign."

Ved was wheeled away, and Disha folded her hands, whispering a quiet prayer once more.

Waiting Area – 1 Hour Later

The door to the Cath Lab opened, and Doctor Sharma came out. Disha and her daughter immediately stood up.

Doctor: "The angiography is done. Ved had a 70% blockage in one of the main arteries. We've placed a stent. There was no major damage to the heart muscles. You were lucky – and wise to act quickly."

Disha's eyes welled up in relief.

Doctor: "He'll be moved to the recovery room shortly. If things remain stable, we'll discharge him in 3–4 days with medication and lifestyle guidance. He'll have to take it easy for a while – and avoid stress."

Disha: "Thank you, Doctor. You've given him back to us."

A Few Hours Later – Recovery Room

Ved opened his eyes slowly. Disha and his daughter were sitting nearby. Krishna, Rajesh, and Mukesh entered quietly with flowers and a get-well card.

Krishna (jokingly): "Next time you want to skip morning garden walks, just say so. Don't go to the ICU to avoid us!"

Everyone laughed, even Ved, with a faint chuckle.

Mukesh: "From now on, we're putting you on a laughter therapy plan... daily dose at the garden with us."

Rajesh: "And yes – we'll bring boiled food and boring jokes, doctor's orders."

Ved looked at them, eyes moist.

Ved: "You all are more than friends... you're my lifeline."

Two Weeks Later – Ved Returns Home

Soft instrumental music played in the background. Ved was now at home, sitting on the balcony with a shawl draped around his shoulders. A gentle spring breeze rustled the plants around him.

Disha came with a glass of warm water and a small bowl of boiled fruits.

Disha (smiling): "No more kachoris and samosas. Doctor's strict instructions!"

Ved smiled and nodded, surprisingly cooperative.

Ved: "This brush with death has taught me more than any book or lecture."

He looked out into the sky, lost in thought.

Garden – Next Morning

The group of four—Krishna, Rajesh, Mukesh, and Deepak—was already gathered near their regular bench. A "Welcome Back Ved" banner, hand-drawn and full of quirky doodles, hung between two trees.

As Ved slowly walked in with Disha and his daughter beside him, the group erupted in cheer.

Rajesh (pretending to blow a trumpet): "Announcing the return of our brave soldier—Sir Ved Kumar the Great!"

Krishna (laughing): "Don't scare him with your voice. He's just got a new stent installed!"

Mukesh (pulling out a chair): "Sit down, sit down. We missed your philosophical lectures—and Disha's tea!"

Everyone laughed. Disha handed over a small thermos.

Disha: "Green tea only. No sugar. His favourite, now."

After the Laughter – Quiet Reflection

As the group calmed down, Ved looked around at his friends, eyes a bit misty.

Ved (softly):

"When I was unconscious... there was a moment where everything around me dissolved.

I saw a light – not outside, but within. It wasn't a tunnel, like people say.

It was a feeling... a vast silence. Peaceful. Infinite.

I heard no voices, but I felt a message: 'You are not your body. You are that which watches.'

And then I returned."

The group grew silent. Krishna placed a hand on Ved's shoulder.

Krishna:

"That's the state of awareness the sages talk about. You touched it – maybe just a glimpse. But it changes you forever."

Deepak: "I believe that. You look different. Quieter... more alive."

Ved nodded.

Ved: "From now on... I want to live lightly. No anger. No excess. I'll still joke, still laugh – but I'll remember this spark inside me. And yes... daily walks, boiled food, and your bad jokes are part of my prescription."

Group Laughs Again

Rajesh: "So no more samosa parties?"

Ved: "Samosas I can skip – but not you people."

They all burst out laughing.

Mukesh (pulling out a small notepad): "Today's group therapy topic: 'How to make boiled food taste like biryani.'"

The morning sun filtered through the trees as the group sipped green tea, basking in each other's warmth – more grateful, more present, more alive.

The old neem tree stood like a silent guardian over the familiar bench. Today, the group was finally complete. The sun filtered through the leaves, casting a dancing pattern on the ground as birds chirped overhead.

Krishna looked around slowly, his eyes softening.

Krishna (gently):

"We are all together... after a full month.

This never happened before. Not once in the last five years.

Not even during lockdown did we skip meetings for so long."

The air grew still with his words. Each friend sat with a quiet nod, feeling the weight and beauty of that moment.

Ved (with a smile and calm voice):

“Yes... this is life.

Ups and downs are not interruptions—they are the very rhythm of life.

Sometimes the winds are gentle, sometimes they storm through.

But they always leave us with a lesson—if we’re willing to learn.”

He paused, sipping his green tea slowly.

Ved (continuing):

“Pain is not always a punishment.

Sometimes it is a call—to pause, to change direction, or just to realise...
that we are not as permanent as we believe ourselves to be.”

Deepak (nodding):

“I saw your strength that day, Ved. But now I understand—your real
strength wasn’t physical.

It was how calmly you embraced what was happening. No panic... just
presence.”

Ved:

“Presence is a blessing, Deepak.

Lying in that ICU, machines beeping, a mask on my face...

I felt more alive than I ever did while walking freely in the park.

Because I was finally aware.”

Mukesh (lightly):

“You’ve returned as a philosopher! Next you’ll ask us to leave everything
and live in a cave!”

The group laughed, and Ved chuckled with them.

Ved (smiling):

“No, no caves!

But maybe... less noise, less racing thoughts, less ego.

And more silence, more breathing, more gratitude.”

A Pause for Reflection

A gentle breeze swept through the garden. Krishna closed his eyes and breathed deeply.

Krishna:

“You know, Ved...

When we were younger, we used to chase success.

Now, I think we are chasing peace.

And I realise—this bench, this friendship, this laughter... this is peace.”

Rajesh (playfully):

“But Krishna, chasing peace is also hard.

Especially when your blood pressure rises reading political debates!”

Everyone laughed again.

Ved:

“You're right. Peace doesn't mean escaping the world—it means staying calm within the storm.

Like the eye of the cyclone... still, unshaken, centred.”

Mukesh Breaks the Serious Mood

Mukesh (grinning):

“Enough of Ved's Vedanta for now.

Let's take a group selfie and send it to the doctor—he'll discharge the rest of us out of sheer boredom!”

They all laughed and huddled together, their faces close, hearts closer.

Click.

The camera captured not just a group of senior citizens, but a bond forged over years—now stronger after surviving the winds of illness and time.

Mukesh looked at a woman standing near the corner with two small children—one playing with a toy car, the other clinging shyly to her sari.

Mukesh (curiously):

“Bhabhi ji... is she your relative? I saw her with you earlier.”

Disha (softly smiling):

“No, Mukesh ji. She is our house help—Asha.

But more than that, she is like family to us.

She’s been with us for nearly 10 years now.

We’ve seen her through her toughest times, and she’s never let us down.”

Mukesh (genuinely surprised):

“She seems very devoted. And those kids... such innocent faces. Yours?”

Disha (laughs lightly):

“No, no... her children. The girl is 7 and the boy is 4.

They’re full of life.

The little boy is a bit naughty—he once hid Ved ji’s glasses and we spent an hour searching!

But they bring joy to the house... especially during festivals.”

She paused, looking fondly at the children playing by the glass door, sunlight warming their tiny faces.

Disha (continuing):

“We’ve given Asha a servant quarter behind our building.

And we take care of all their basic needs—food, clothing, and most importantly... education.

Her daughter studies in a decent English-medium school.

I help her with homework sometimes.”

Mukesh (leaning forward, with admiration):

“Bhabhi ji... what you and Ved are doing—it’s no small thing.

In today’s time, when even family members forget each other...

you’re looking after your maid like a younger sister and her children like your own.

That’s rare. Truly rare.”

Disha (modestly):

“It’s nothing extraordinary, Mukesh ji.

She has stood by us through thick and thin.

When Ved ji was in ICU, she looked after our home like it was her own.

When I cry, she cries with me.

In this world, some relationships are not by blood—but by faith.”

Mukesh (emotionally):

“This is what service, sewa, really means.

Not just donating money or doing charity—but touching lives, day by day.

You and Ved must have done great karma in your past life.

Otherwise, such humanity is not seen in most homes these days.

I truly salute you.”

Disha (with tears in her eyes, but smiling):

“We’re only doing what we believe is right.

In the end, what remains?

Just the goodness we spread... the hearts we touch.”

Asha Notices the Conversation

Asha noticed them looking her way and smiled shyly, adjusting her pallu.

Her son came running toward Disha.

Boy (excited):

“Aunty! I drew a fish! See!”

Disha took the paper from his little hands and smiled, gently stroking his head.

Disha (to Mukesh):

“You see? He says I’m his second mother.”

Mukesh smiled warmly; his heart touched.

Mukesh (to himself, softly):

“Sometimes, God sends angels in ordinary forms—like Disha and Ved.”

Ved’s Home – The Day of Discharge

It had been a tense week. After the angiography and observation, doctors confirmed that Ved had suffered a mild heart attack, but thankfully, no major blockage was found. With medication and lifestyle changes, he could recover fully.

Krishna, Mukesh, and Rajesh had decorated the entrance of Ved's home with flowers and small handmade posters—"Welcome Back Ved Bhaiya!" written in bright, bold letters by Asha's children.

Asha was at the door, lighting a diya, her eyes brimming with quiet happiness.

As the car arrived, Disha stepped out first, supporting Ved gently. A shawl was draped over his shoulders. He looked weak, but there was a serene smile on his face.

Asha (with folded hands):

"Welcome home, sir... the house feels complete again."

Ved (smiling faintly):

"Asha, thank you. Your prayers must've reached God before anyone else's."

Suddenly, her children ran up to him.

Boy (with a cheeky grin):

"Uncle, I made this for you!"

(He handed Ved a drawing—a house with a sun, trees, and stick figures labelled 'Ved Uncle' and 'Auntie'.)

Ved (tears in his eyes):

"This is the most beautiful gift I've received."

He kissed the boy's head gently, his eyes moist.

Living Room – Later that Evening

All my friends had gathered. Disha served light snacks. Asha was busy in the kitchen, but refused to sit, saying she had "a special soup" recipe she wanted Ved to have.

The conversation drifted to their usual light banter.

Rajesh (grinning):

"Ved, your absence made Mukesh behave! He didn't crack a single joke for one whole week!"

Mukesh (laughing):

“That’s because I was afraid Disha Bhabhi would throw me out!”

Krishna (teasing):

“And you lost weight out of tension... see, your shirt fits again!”

Laughter filled the room. Even Ved chuckled, holding his chest lightly.

Then Asha came in with a tray.

Asha:

“Soup for everyone. Special turmeric-coconut recipe. My mother used to make it.”

Everyone took a bowl and praised the taste.

Deepika (smiling):

“Ved bhaiya, now you have two wives. One cooks, one prays, one scolds!”

Everyone burst into laughter.

Disha (mock annoyed):

“Excuse me, which one scolds?”

Krishna:

“Of course, you... with love!”

Even Ved laughed heartily now.

That Night – Quiet Reflection

Ved sat near the window, the breeze gentle, carrying the fragrance of mogra flowers.

Disha came and sat beside him. Both looked outside, saying nothing for a while.

Ved (softly):

“Life gives us reminders... not punishment.

I saw something while unconscious—faces, memories, even Asha’s kids.

Maybe we don’t realise, but they are our greatest blessings.”

Disha (placing her hand on his):

“We’re lucky, Ved. Our family is more than just blood.

Asha... her children... our friends... they are all part of us.”

Ved nodded.

Outside, Asha was folding laundry, her children running around. One of them shouted,

“Good night, Ved Uncle!”

Ved waved, smiling deeply.

Scene: Disha’s Invitation – A Quiet Turning Point

It had been a few days since Ved returned home from the hospital. His movements were restricted; the doctor had strictly advised rest—no stairs, no exertion. Disha, always practical yet gentle, took charge of everything while ensuring Ved remained surrounded by positivity.

That morning, she invited Ved’s close friends—Krishna, Mukesh, Rajesh, and Deepak—over for tea. The living room was bathed in soft sunlight, and the aroma of tulsi-ginger tea filled the air. Ved sat comfortably in a recliner, supported by cushions, his eyes brighter than they had been in days.

Disha (with a calm smile):

“The doctor says Ved won’t be able to move much for the next three months. So I was thinking... The top floor of our house has a theatre room. It’s spacious, quiet, and filled with good memories. Why don’t all of you start gathering there for your daily yoga, meditation, and morning discussions? That way, Ved can still be part of it too.”

The friends exchanged smiles, touched by the thought.

Rajesh (nodding):

“Yes, Ved had made a similar offer the last time he was hospitalized. He always puts others’ comfort first.”

Mukesh (grinning):

“We used to think we came for yoga... but truth is, Ved was the soul of

those sessions. Without him, the laughter and peace just weren't the same."

Krishna (reflectively):

"Today's generation might be tech-savvy, have more access to information... But real wisdom? That comes from experience, reflection, and living through the ups and downs of life. Ved gave us that—not just in words, but in how he lives."

Deepak:

"He always said yoga is not just for the body, but a path to align the mind with inner truth. I didn't fully get it then... but now I do."

Disha (softly):

"Every evening, he still asks me what you all discussed in the garden. He misses it deeply."

Ved (with a faint smile):

"I just don't want to miss the fun. That's my therapy."

Laughter rose gently among them, filled with affection and relief.

The Top Floor – A Gentle New Beginning

The next morning, the group arrived with yoga mats, flasks of herbal tea, and warm enthusiasm. Disha had transformed the theatre room—thick curtains, incense burning lightly, cushions arranged in a circle, and soft instrumental music humming in the background.

Ved was wheeled in and settled comfortably. He looked around, visibly moved.

Ved:

"Now *this* is what I call a healing environment."

Mukesh (stretching his arms):

"Let's begin with laughing yoga. That's the only asana I'm perfect at!"

Krishna (grinning):

"Only if you promise not to laugh at my belly."

Rajesh:

“Belly? It’s a whole mountain range now!”

They all burst into laughter—a laughter that echoed through the room, filled with life, friendship, and gratitude.

Next Morning – The Theatre Room

The friends arrived with yoga mats, flasks of tea, and smiles that spoke of deep connection. The theatre room had transformed—curtains drawn, soft music playing, a faint scent of sandalwood in the air.

Disha wheeled Ved in, settling him beside a window with a view of the garden below. He looked around and smiled contentedly.

Ved:

“Now *this* feels like a healing retreat.”

Mukesh (stretching):

“Let’s start with laughing yoga. We need that more than any asana these days.”

Krishna:

“Only if you promise not to laugh at my belly!”

Rajesh (teasing):

“Belly? That’s a small hillock now!”

Everyone burst into laughter, their chuckles echoing warmly off the walls.

Post-Yoga Reflection

As the session ended, they sat in a loose circle, their bodies lighter and hearts fuller.

Ved (gently):

“Friends... the real test of our bond isn’t when we’re all strong, but when one of us is down.

You come here each day... this isn’t just friendship—it’s *seva*.

It makes life meaningful.”

A thoughtful silence followed—deep, sacred, and full of love.

Krishna:

“Yes. We are all just walking each other home. That’s the beauty of this bond.”

And with that, they sat quietly, feeling the presence of something greater than themselves—a shared soul, a circle of grace.

Post-Yoga Reflection – Words That Stay

After the yoga session, they sat in a relaxed circle sipping warm tea.

Ved (his voice calm, yet filled with emotion):
“My friends... life will always test us. But the true test of any bond isn’t when we’re strong—it’s when we are weak and yet not left alone. You come here every day—it’s not just friendship. It’s *seva*. It’s what makes growing old a privilege, not a burden.”

There was silence. The kind that wraps around the heart, deeper than words.

Krishna (looking around, his eyes misty):

“We are all just walking each other home. That’s what this friendship is.

Ved, what’s the news these days? I have neither read the newspaper nor watched the TV.

Rajesh; Presently cease fire going on but politics of Blame game going on.

7 delegations & 1 message: How India chose 33 countries for ambitious diplomatic push post-Op Sindoor

Seven all-party delegations will depart India in the next few days to build New Delhi’s case against Pakistan’s cross-border terrorism. Over 30 nations to be covered.

The agenda of the delegations, with 59 members in total, is to highlight Pakistan’s role in cross-border terrorism and to ratchet up global pressure against Islamabad while ramping up support for New Delhi.

Rahul Gandhi Attacks Jaishankar

As the sequence of events goes, Jaishankar spoke to the media last week and said, “At the start of the operation, we had sent a message to Pakistan, saying we are striking at terrorist infrastructure and we are not striking at the military. So the military has the option of standing out and not interfering in this process. They chose not to take that good advice.”

Sharing his video on X, Rahul Gandhi alleged that informing Pakistan “at the start of our attack was a crime”.

“EAM has publicly admitted that GOI (government of India) did it. Who authorised it? How many aircraft did our air force lose as a result,” the Congress leader asked.

Earlier today, Rahul Gandhi launched another attack on the EAM and said that his “silence” on the questions is “damning”.

“EAM Jaishankar’s silence isn’t just telling — it’s damning. So, I’ll ask again: How many Indian aircraft did we lose because Pakistan knew? This wasn’t a lapse. It was a crime. And the nation deserves the truth.” he posted on X.

Scene: Morning Gathering – Ved’s Living Room

The group of old friends—Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, and Rajesh—sat comfortably in the sunlit drawing room at Ved’s house. Cups of herbal tea steamed gently on the side table. The morning light filtered through sheer curtains, warming the room not just with sunshine, but with animated conversation and laughter.

Krishna (with a mix of amusement and disbelief):

“You know, this guy Khera—the Congress spokesperson—he’s really gone off the rails this time. Called Jaishankar an informer, a mole, even a traitor! And demanded he resign.”

Ved (raising his eyebrows):

“That’s a serious accusation. What triggered such a remark?”

Krishna:

“I was watching a debate last night on ET Now—between Ranganathan and Srivastava. You know how much I enjoy watching Ranganathan—sharp as ever, witty, and doesn’t mince words. His reply was just brilliant.”

He took a thoughtful sip of his tea and continued with excitement.

Krishna:

“Ranganathan began by saying, ‘We may differ on many issues, but I compliment my fellow panellist for articulating his views clearly.’ Then he turned to Srivastava and asked, ‘Tell me, did I compliment you before the debate started or after it began?’”

Mukesh (chuckling):

“Ah! Classic setup. What did Srivastava say?”

Krishna:

“He hesitated and said, ‘The debate is still ongoing.’ Ranganathan smiled and looked at the anchor, Navika, and said, ‘That’s the point. Whether before or after the operation—it’s still during the action. Jaishankar informed them only after the operation had begun, not before. It’s not betrayal—it’s protocol.’”

Rajesh (nodding thoughtfully):

“Ranganathan always uses logic like a surgeon’s scalpel—precise and undeniable.”

Krishna (leaning forward):

“And he didn’t stop there. He added, ‘Let’s say we had informed Masood Azhar before the strike—wouldn’t he have moved his family out? He himself claimed that ten of his family members died. That alone proves there was no prior tip-off.’ That shut down the entire argument.”

Ved (with a sigh):

“And what was the opposition’s response?”

Krishna:

“Just vague distractions and shifting the narrative—same old tactics. No clarity, no accountability.”

Ved (with quiet reflection):

“My family has been loyal to Congress for generations. But these days, I feel disheartened. The leadership seems out of touch with the people.”

Rahul Gandhi—he needs better advisors or maybe a new direction altogether.”

Mukesh (bluntly):

“Even the best advisors can’t help if the core lacks vision. Rahul lacks the instinct and the grit needed for leadership.”

Rajesh (offering a softer take):

“I don’t completely agree. He’s not there yet, but sometimes people grow into their role. And the public does get tired—maybe one day they’ll want change.”

Ved (smiling gently):

“Hope is always good, Rajesh. But experience teaches us to see with clarity. Anyway—thank you all for this lively debate. Keeps our minds alert.”

He adjusted his recliner slightly, his voice turning reflective.

Ved:

“God has been kind. Twice in one year I was taken to the hospital. Before that, I never even needed a check-up. To be home, with friends, after that... I’m grateful.”

Mukesh (with warmth):

“You’ll live to be over a hundred, Ved!”

Rajesh (smiling):

“Absolutely! Just last week, I read about a 113-year-old woman from Maharashtra who cast her vote—still sharp, still active!”

Mukesh (enthusiastically):

“Yes! And her lifestyle was simple yet inspiring. She followed no fancy diets or fitness trends—just a life of discipline. Let me share the highlights I read from her story. Truly remarkable.”

He leaned in, recounting from memory:

The 113-Year-Old Woman’s Secrets to a Long Life

(As narrated by Mukesh)

1. No Processed Foods – She ate simple, home-cooked meals using natural ingredients.
2. Stress-Free Work – She avoided toxic workplaces. “No job is worth your peace,” she believed.
3. Letting Go of Grudges – She refused to carry resentment. “It only ages the soul,” she said.
4. Limited Sun Exposure – She stayed protected from harsh sunlight and cared for her skin.
5. No Fad Diets or Extreme Workouts – She focused on moderation—walking, gardening, and a balanced diet.
6. No Drama – She distanced herself from gossip and negativity, choosing peace over pettiness.
7. Prioritized Sleep – 8–9 hours of sleep every night—her body’s natural reset button.
8. A Sense of Purpose – Gardening, cooking, volunteering—she always had something to look forward to.
9. Gratitude Over Worry – She chose joy daily, focusing on what she *could* control.
10. Legacy of Simplicity – Her longevity came not from what she *added*, but from what she *avoided*.

Ved (thoughtfully):

“We have similar habits, don’t we? Our yoga, our walks, our balanced diet. Yes, we indulge occasionally at parties, but we always bounce back. I call those days my ‘cheating days’—and I make up for them the following week.”

He smiled and looked around the room at his friends—each one nodding in agreement.

Ved (gently):

“Tomorrow, let’s shift gears. I’ll pick a good YouTube session on spirituality—something calming, something that nourishes the soul. I’m sure you’ll all enjoy it.”

The friends stood, gathering their belongings—newspapers, reading glasses, and phones. The warmth of the room lingered, not just from the sun but from years of shared mornings like this.

As they walked toward the door, Krishna turned back with a smile.

Krishna:

“We’re lucky, you know? In one cup of tea, we manage politics, philosophy, laughter—and life. What a recipe!”

The room echoed with light chuckles and a deep sense of contentment as they stepped out into the morning sun.

Scene: The Next Morning – Ved’s Living Room, Spiritual YouTube Session

Setting:

Same sunlit room, but this time the curtains are partially drawn to create a serene atmosphere. Incense gently burns in the corner. A Bluetooth speaker is connected to Ved’s iPad, playing a calming chant as everyone settles in.

Intro:

The friends sit in their usual spots with a quiet energy, sipping warm lemon water today instead of tea. Ved, looking content, taps his screen

First following highlight came on the screen

Guru Dakshina – Offerings to Teachers

In the sacred and unbroken **guru-shishya Parampara** (teacher-student tradition) of India, it has always been the custom for **gurus** to impart spiritual wisdom freely—without expectation of reward. Their teachings, rooted in compassion and selfless service, are offered as an act of dharma, a sacred duty.

In return, **shishyas** (students or disciples) express their **gratitude** and reverence through **guru Dakshina**—a symbolic or material offering. This is not a transaction, but a gesture of deep respect and heartfelt thanks. Guru Dakshina is a way to honour the time, energy, and blessings the teacher has lovingly shared.

Though times have changed and tools have become modern, the **spirit of this tradition must be preserved**. Whether through a simple token, service, support, or digital contribution, students should feel moved to offer something in return—not by obligation, but by inner recognition of the guru's grace.

Such offerings help **maintain the sanctity of the teachings**, ensure the **humility of the student**, and sustain the **dignity of the guru's role** in society.

Let this noble practice continue—timeless in essence, adaptive in form.

Ved: "Today's session is by Swami Sarvapriyananda. It's about 'The Art of Letting Go', about how detachment isn't about renunciation, but wisdom."

Krishna (grinning): "As long as he doesn't ask me to give up mango pickle, I'm in."

Mukesh: "Detachment from pickles is a spiritual level I haven't reached yet."

(Laughter)

Scene evolves: The video begins. The swami speaks about clinging—how we hold onto pride, ego, regrets, even grudges. His words are calm but powerful.

Key lines from Swami (paraphrased):

"You don't carry old luggage on every journey. Why carry the baggage of the past in your mind every day?"

"Forgiveness is not about the other person—it's a gift you give yourself."

The friends listen, some nod, some introspect.

Rajesh (softly): "This reminds me of my elder brother. We haven't spoken in five years over something trivial. Strange how ego works."

Ved (gently): "Then maybe it's time, Rajesh. Time gives us wounds, but it also gives us chances to heal them."

Krishna (after a pause): "This swami should replace half of today's TV anchors. He calms the nerves instead of setting them on fire."

Mukesh: "And imagine—if the Parliament opened with its sessions instead of shouting matches, we might actually pass some peace."

Closing moment:

As the video ends with a mantra, the group sits in silence for a minute. Then Ved quietly says:

Ved: "Let's try this once a week. Not just for knowledge—but for the heart."

They all agreed.

Final line from Krishna (walking toward the door): "First yoga, now YouTube Satsang... If this keeps up, we'll become enlightened before our grandkids even learn to meditate."

Next Morning – Reflections and a Surprise Reminder

As the cool breeze swept across Ved's terrace the next morning, the scene was calm and serene. The marigolds from the previous day still hung gently, slightly faded but fragrant, as if soaking in the afterglow of the laughter and joy shared just hours ago.

Ved was already seated on his mat, legs crossed, eyes half-closed in quiet meditation. Though still recovering, his face glowed with peace.

By 8 AM sharp, the rest of the group began arriving – Mukesh, Rajesh, Krishna, and Deepak with their usual energy. Their yoga mats were rolled out in their familiar spots, and soon, the group began their morning routine of gentle yoga and pranayama.

Ved participated lightly, doing soft stretches and simple breathing, his movements slower but intentional.

After a short silence, Ved opened his eyes and spoke in his calm voice, “Friends... Does anyone remember what’s special about today?”

The group paused. Krishna looked around, eyebrows raised.

“You all forgot my birthday already?” He said dramatically, holding his heart with mock pain.

Everyone laughed.

Ved chuckled and said, “That we celebrated yesterday. Today is special for another reason.”

Krishna’s eyes twinkled, then widened with realization. “Wait... you remember?”

Ved smiled and slowly stood up with support. “Of course, I do. Come here, my friend.”

Krishna walked over, confused, and Ved held out his hand warmly. They shook hands tightly, then Ved pulled him into a warm hug.

“Today,” Ved said softly, “is the anniversary of the day you and I met – our first day in college. Fifty-two years ago. You were late to class, stumbled in with a bag full of samosas, and offered me one before even asking my name.”

Everyone burst out laughing again.

Rajesh clapped. “And that’s when the mischief began!”

Mukesh got up and hugged Krishna too. “We may not remember all the holidays, but the day we met a friend like you—we’ll never forget.”

Moved, Krishna looked at everyone with a rare seriousness. “You know, we joke a lot... but it’s this friendship, this shared life, that gives every year meaning. Thank you for remembering.”

To lighten the moment, Deepak quipped, “So should we celebrate this as *Friendship Day 2.0?*”

Rajesh added, “We’ll need another cake then. And more samosas!”

Krishna grinned. “As long as you let me be late again and carry the snacks!”

The group laughed together once more. The terrace, now bathed in sunlight, felt more alive than ever. What had started as a casual yoga session turned into another celebration of memories, connection, and the simple joy of showing up for each other.

As the laughter settled into a peaceful hum, Ved reached beside his mat and pulled out a small, neatly wrapped box. The golden ribbon shimmered softly in the morning light.

“Krishna,” Ved said warmly, “this is just a little token—from me to you. For the friend who still argues like a teenager but stands by us like a saint.”

He handed it over with a smile.

Krishna opened the box gently and lifted out a beautiful silk tie—deep blue with a delicate silver pattern.

Krishna looked at it for a long moment, then looked up at Ved. “This... this is the kind of gift that doesn’t come from a shop. It comes from memory... from years.”

Ved nodded. “You wore a similar tie the day you met Sunita for the first time, remember?”

Krishna laughed. “Of course! She said it looked like a curtain tassel.”

Everyone roared with laughter again.

Mukesh clapped his hands and said, “Now, enough emotions. From our side, we have a proposal. Let’s celebrate Krishna’s birthday again—but this time, properly, with food, music, and dancing.”

Deepak added, “Tonight, 8 PM. Hayat Hotel. All of us, with our better halves.”

Rajesh leaned in with a wide grin, “In other words, one more *cheating day*—good food, no diets, maybe even a drink!”

Krishna raised an eyebrow in mock indignation. “Sir, at this age, every good day is legal—even if it’s cheating!”

The group chuckled. Plans were quickly made. Calls went out to spouses. The evening was set.

As they rolled up their mats and descended the stairs, the excitement in the air was unmistakable. What began as a quiet yoga morning had turned into something more—a celebration not just of a birthday, but of the continuing spirit of youth that lived within them all.

By 7:45 PM, the lobby of the Hyatt Hotel buzzed softly with ambient music, fresh flowers, and the muted clinking of cutlery. The banquet hall reserved for the group had a private corner adorned with candles, soft lighting, and a welcome board that read:

“Celebrating Krishna – And the Gift of Friendship”

One by one, the friends arrived—Rajesh, dapper in a cream-colored blazer, adjusting his hair every two minutes. Mukesh, in a shiny blue shirt that looked like it came straight out of the 80s. Deepak, casual but smart. And Ved, walking tall and proud, escorted by his wife Disha, her gentle elegance grounding his newfound strength.

Then came Krishna, entering like a movie star. Wearing the silk tie Ved had gifted, paired with a classic black suit, he held Sunita’s hand like it was their first date. He paused at the entrance, gave a mock salute to the group, and said, “Behold! The birthday boy is ready for inspection!”

Laughter rang out.

After warm greetings and seating, the evening began with toasts. Mukesh raised his glass: “Here’s to a man who has aged like fine wine – except he talks more after two sips!”

More laughter.

Then Rajesh stood up. “We all know Krishna. But few know that back in college, he entered a dance competition—and got *second place*. Not for dancing, but for slipping on stage during his final spin!”

Krishna shook his head, smiling. “सब याद है, तुम लोगों को!”

("You guys remember everything!")

As dinner was served—paneer tikka, grilled fish, pasta, and a lavish dessert spread—the music shifted to soft retro Hindi songs. Then, something unexpected happened.

From the other side of the hall, an elderly gentleman approached their table.

"Excuse me... Krishna? Krishna Malhotra?"

Krishna turned—and then gasped. "अरे! मिश्रा! कॉलेज का काला सांड!" ("Arreyyyyyy! Mishra! College ka kaala saand!")

It was Mishra, their college rival from the debating team, now white-haired but still with the same booming voice. Hugs followed, old leg-pulling resumed, and soon, Mishra joined the table, merging right in.

Rajesh stood again. "There's only one way to close a night like this..."

He signaled the DJ.

The tune changed. "*Yeh dosti hum nahin todenge...*"

Without waiting, Krishna pulled Sunita to the floor. Then Ved and Meera joined, followed by Rajesh and Mukesh. Soon the whole group was moving—awkwardly, joyfully, even wildly. Deepika and Sneha cheered them on from their seats, recording videos and giggling like teenagers.

When the music stopped, they were breathless but glowing.

Krishna looked around the room and said, "You know, I've had many birthdays. But I've never had a night where I danced with my past, my present, and my future—*all at once*."

Ved added, "That's because you're not just growing older, Krishna. You're growing more unforgettable."

As the clock neared 10:30 PM and they gathered near the exit, none of them wanted to leave. But life moves, and so did they—slowly, together, promising to meet the next morning again on Ved's terrace, not just for yoga, but to relive the night's laughter over cups of chai.

Because for them, friendship wasn't an event. It was a ritual of love, repeated daily, dressed sometimes in sweatpants—and sometimes, in a silk tie.

That night at Hayat would be more than dinner, it would be another chapter in the ever-growing book of their friendship.

Title: “Krishna’s Satsang – The Humble Voice Within”

Two days had passed since the laughter-filled evening at Hayat. The group, still glowing from the warmth of friendship, had gathered again at Ved's terrace, this time not for yoga or birthday fun—but for something quieter, deeper.

A small circle had formed.

In the centre sat Krishna, in a simple white kurta, a Tulsi mala (Tulsi Mala, a sacred garland made from the holy basil plant, holds a special place in hearts and cultures around the globe) in his hand. A gentle breeze carried the faint scent of sandalwood incense lit by Deepika. A few neighbours had joined today's gathering, drawn by Krishna's growing reputation for Satsang that blended wisdom, humour, and modern-day relevance.

Ved opened the session with a smile. “Today, Krishna ji will speak. And let me warn you—his words can stir both laughter and silence within you.”

The group chuckled.

Krishna began with folded hands and calm eyes.

“Just yesterday,” he said, “I read something profound by ISKCON's Saint Vajendra Nandan Das. He said—*a person should always remain humble and tolerant. Humility is the ornament of a human being.* I believe this with all my heart.”

He paused, looking at his old friends.

“We are all retired now. But that doesn't mean we've stopped living. Retirement is not an exit. It's an entry—into reflection, sharing, and service.”

He continued, his voice steady.

“Our tongue,” he said, “has just two functions—to speak and to taste. Let us not waste either. Speak with love—love that is truthful, yet pleasant. And taste food that is Satvik, clean, pure. Lord Krishna in the Gita reminds us: *Eat in a way that respects all life. Avoid violence—even on your plate.*”

Little explanation on this food

In general, sattvic foods are ripe, raw, or lightly cooked and freshly prepared. Foods that are old or not prepared properly are not sattvic. The sattvic diet is high in nutrient-rich plant foods and low in processed and fried foods. Sattvic foods include:

1. Sprouted whole grains
2. Whole grains
3. Fresh fruit
4. Land and sea vegetables
5. Pure fruit juices
6. Nut and seed milk
7. Cheese
8. Legumes
9. Nuts
10. Seeds
11. Sprouted seeds
12. Honey
13. Herbal teas
14. Ghee

Foods to avoid on a sattvic diet include:

1. Salty and sour foods
2. Tea

3. Coffee
4. Alcohol
5. Onions and garlic
6. Frozen food
7. Fast food
8. Microwaved foods
9. Processed foods
10. Meat
11. Fish
12. Eggs

A few nodded solemnly.

“Charity,” Krishna said, “is the highest dharma. When we give—not just money, but time, effort, or even a smile—we instantly feel lighter, happier. Try it. You’ll see.”

Then he turned playful.

“And yes, if you hear or read something good—*share it!* Why keep wisdom locked up like old sweaters in a trunk? We are senior citizens, but our minds can still bloom like springtime—if we listen to noble thoughts.”

At that, Mukesh added, “And if the thoughts are boring, we still have Rajesh to crack a joke and balance the universe!”

Laughter rippled through the group.

Rajesh grinned, “My only donation is jokes. No tax, no GST!”

“But I have one good story, if you allow me to share...”

“Please go ahead,” all said.

Rajesh: “Let him finish first, I will share the story later.”

Title: The Fire Within – A Lesson in Anger

The group had finished their light yoga and seated themselves on mats with glasses of warm Tulsi water. Today's session had no guests, no agenda—just hearts open for wisdom.

Krishna looked thoughtful. Sensing it, Ved smiled, “It seems Krishna ji has something brewing.”

Krishna nodded slowly and began: “Today, I want to speak about something that lives quietly within us—until it explodes: Anger.”

The group leaned in, knowing something special was coming.

“There was once a sadhu,” Krishna began, “deep in meditation inside his hut. One day, a man came and asked, ‘*Do you have fire?*’ The sadhu replied gently, ‘*No, I don’t have fire.*’”

“The man left... but returned again and again, asking the same question: ‘*Do you have fire?*’”

“Finally, the sadhu, irritated, shouted: ‘*How many times must I tell you—I don’t have fire!*’”

Everyone listened closely.

“The man smiled and said, ‘*Now you do. The fire is within you.*’”

Krishna paused.

“This story teaches us that anger is not always outside us—often, it’s waiting inside, like a hidden disease.”

Rajesh muttered, “Like BP, it shows up when you least expect it.”

Laughter.

Rajesh chuckled and continued, “You think that was just a story? Now Let me share something that happened to me just recently.”

“I was driving slowly, near a red light, when a Taxi banged into the back of my car. The man jumped off, angry, shouting at me.”

“I said, ‘Brother, why are you shouting? Come with me. I’ll take you to my known workshop. We’ll sort it.’”

“The man followed me, still grumbling.”

“We reached my mechanic. I said, ‘*Fix his Taxi. I’ll pay for it.*’”

Gasps of surprise from the group.

“But then,” Rajesh smiled, “**Rajbir mechanic**—bless his practical heart—blurted, ‘*Why would you pay? He hit you from behind!*’”

“The Taxi Driver looked shocked. He went silent.”

“I turned to him and said gently, ‘*Look, anger is like scratching your own wound to hurt someone else. I don’t want that. I want to go home peaceful today.*’”

Everyone was quiet. There was no punch line from anybody.

Ved spoke softly, “This is what sets us apart, Krishna. Youth might argue over dents and scratches. But we, in our wisdom, have learned to polish the soul instead.”

Krishna added, “Sometimes, I feel we came to this stage of life not just to rest—but to *teach the world how to live better.*”

Mukesh said, “And Rajesh, if this car story goes to the press again, we’ll need a PR manager!”

Laughter returned, but the message had sunk in deeply.

As the sun rose higher, a sense of quiet resolve filled the terrace. They weren’t just passing time—they were passing on timeless values.

Krishna smiled and concluded, “May we all live simply, eat purely, speak gently, and give freely. Then, even in our wrinkles, we’ll carry the glow of youth.”

The Satsang ended with a quiet chant of: “*Hare Krishna Hare Rama...*”

As they sipped warm herbal tea afterward, Mukesh whispered to Ved, “You know, Krishna is not just our friend now. He’s becoming a light for many.”

Ved nodded, “And we’re lucky to be walking in that light.”

Next Morning

The next day, Rajesh looked pale and weak, though he tried hard to hide his discomfort.

Mukesh (gently): “Rajesh, I hope you’re alright. You seem distracted and not focused on yoga today. Your mind seems to be wandering.”

Rajesh (sighing): “Yes, my friends... I didn’t sleep at all last night. My son, who is in America, got married two months ago—without informing me.”

Ved (surprised): “Is it the same girl you had mentioned earlier?”

Rajesh: “Yes, the same one. And now she’s pregnant. Tell me, how can I be at peace? This generation is moving too fast. He didn’t even think it necessary to inform me. This isn’t a small matter. My wife and I were trying to console each other... We couldn’t even eat dinner. I feel physically drained... almost like slipping into depression.”

Ved (calmly): “As humans, these things hurt deeply. No matter how mentally strong we are, such incidents shake us. But look at life from a broader perspective—these things happen. Your son has made a choice. Now, either he’ll grow with responsibility, or he’ll learn from his mistakes. Most people mature when responsibility arrives. My advice is that you and your wife should visit them. Join in their happiness. Your presence might bridge the emotional gap and heal the friction.”

Krishna: “Yes, I agree. After all, he’s your son. Accept what’s done. Support them now.”

Rajesh (anxiously): “But what will I say to relatives, family friends?”

Ved: “Say nothing beyond the truth—your children are grown up and have made their choices. As parents, we only wish for their happiness and a good future. Let them live their life. Being a wise parent means adapting with grace. Compromise is not weakness; it’s a strength, and often the medicine that heals families. Don’t let this eat away at your health.”

Rajesh: “I understand. But as they say, wounds take time to heal.”

Ved (smiling): “My friend, this isn’t a wound; it’s life. They’re still your children. Think back to your own youth, you must have also hurt your parents at times. These things are part of growing up. Don’t take it to heart. Go be with them. Celebrate, don’t grieve.”

Rajesh (relieved): “Thank you, all of you. I was feeling lost. Your words brought clarity and peace. It’s a blessing to have friends like you—not just for support, but for sharing joy and life’s burdens. I truly feel lighter now.”

Ved: “That’s life, Rajesh. We can’t control everything. We came here to relax, but instead we spent the whole time consoling you—because we care. Stay positive. Everything will fall into place.”

Rajesh (with renewed spirit): “I’ve decided—I’ll plan a visit to the U.S. soon to bless them.”

Ved (with enthusiasm): “That’s the spirit! Now let’s laugh—loudly! Five times, together!”

They all laughed as loudly and heartily as they could, the sound echoing through the colony.

Ved (grinning): “Do you know how powerful this laughter is? It’s nature’s best medicine!

Let me remind you of the benefits of laughter:

- **Boosts Immunity:** Enhances immune cells and antibodies.
- **Improves Heart Health:** Increases blood flow, supporting the heart.
- **Relieves Pain:** Releases endorphins—the body’s natural painkillers.
- **Relaxes Muscles:** Reduces physical tension for nearly 45 minutes.
- **Acts as Exercise:** Elevates heart and breathing rate like light cardio.

Mental & Emotional Wellness:

- **Reduces Stress:** Lowers cortisol levels.

- **Combats Depression & Anxiety:** Triggers feel-good brain chemicals.
- **Builds Resilience:** Helps face challenges with a lighter heart.

Social Benefits:

- **Strengthens Bonds:** Creates deeper friendships.
- **Improves Communication:** Breaks down barriers.
- **Fosters Belonging:** Builds a joyful, united space.

Garden Magic also works, which we all are missing for the time being;

- **Promotes Relaxation:** Greenery calms the nervous system.
- **Boosts Mood:** Sunlight increases Vitamin D and joy.
- **Encourages Connection:** A peaceful garden brings hearts together."

Ved (laughing): "And here we are losing none of these gifts!"

The friends all smiled warmly, their laughter fading into peace. They patted Rajesh on the back, cheered him up, and slowly began to part ways for the day—lighter in heart and stronger in bond.

Rajesh and Reeta's Journey to the USA

Rajesh and Reeta boarded the plane and settled into their seats. The comfortable recliners, which converted into flat beds, made the long journey seem more manageable.

Reeta looked at Rajesh with a gentle smile. Reeta: "How are you feeling about meeting Naresh and his wife?"

Rajesh (smiling softly): "We're not meeting strangers. She's our daughter-in-law. And soon, I'll become a grandfather. It feels wonderful."

Reeta (teasingly): "You've taken this news in such a light-hearted way."

Rajesh: "They are our children. As parents, it's not just our job—it's our joy to accept their choices. If they're happy, our happiness naturally follows."

As the laughter slowly faded into a peaceful silence, Rajesh stood up, his eyes lingering on his friends—Ved, Krishna, and Mukesh—each one smiling, each one a part of his life's most cherished memories.

He made a group video conference.

He folded his hands with deep emotion and spoke from the heart: *"I consider it a great blessing to have friends like you. This Satsang, this companionship—it's not just time spent, its grace received. I truly feel that God has been very kind to me, to bring such souls into my life."*

"It is He who brings us together, He who allows us to reflect, to sing His name, and to rise above our worries. Just keep doing Satsang, bhajan-Simran, Japa—and surrender the rest to Him. I've come to realize that we shouldn't burden our children with endless questions—'Why this?' 'How that?'—because what's done is done. Acceptance is the key to happiness."

Ved says it beautifully—"let go of this idea of 'mine' and 'yours'." Drop the questions, drop the pride. Ego is always a burden. It's like a demon that clouds our peace. Whoever can let go of ego is the one who truly finds calm and joy. I pray that everything in your lives remains well and auspicious. Keep smiling, and come to me only with good news."

He bowed slightly, his words lingering in the air.

There was a quiet stillness. The friends silently, letting Rajesh's words sink deep.

Then Ved, with his calm presence and ever-thoughtful voice, responded softly: *"Rajesh, you're radiating such pure thoughts today... Your words carry light. You're giving us very good vibes – the kind that touch the soul."*

Krishna: *"This has become even more special now. First laughter, now wisdom. What more could we ask for?"*

Mukesh: *"Yes, yes... and don't forget – a sweet box too. For the upgraded flight and the upgraded spirit!"*

They all laughed again, this time a little softer, a little deeper – not just from joy, but from a sense of shared peace.

They soon fell asleep in the comfort of the cabin and hardly noticed the 14-hour flight pass by.

Arrival in the USA

At the arrival hall, long lines awaited them, with signs indicating a 45-minute wait for immigration. After clearing formalities, they collected their luggage and made their way to the exit gate.

There, to their joy, stood Naresh and Sangeeta—smiling, fresh, and happy. As soon as they saw their parents, they rushed forward and touched their feet in reverence. Rajesh and Reeta blessed them warmly.

Reeta (holding Sangeeta's hands): "Stay happy always, beta. And may your bond grow stronger every day."

Sangeeta (gratefully): "Thank you, Mom. We really need your blessings."

Naresh led them to a nearby car and drove to a cozy two-bedroom apartment he had rented.

Rajesh (surprised): "Why did you rent a separate place for us? Are you trying to keep us away?"

Naresh (smiling): "No, Dad, please don't misunderstand. Our flat is small—it wouldn't be comfortable for the four of us. This place is nearby, so we can still spend all our time together. I just wanted you both to have space and comfort."

Rajesh (touched): "My son has grown up to think so thoughtfully. I'm proud of you."

Naresh: "Don't worry, Dad. We'll spend lots of time together and make beautiful memories."

Naresh (gently): "You must be tired. Why don't you freshen up and take some rest?"

Rajesh: "I'll take a shower first."

Naresh: "There's a small pool on the terrace—try a swim! It's great for relaxing after a long flight."

Later, while unpacking, Rajesh turned to Reeta in the presence of Naresh and Sangeeta. "We were discussing the baby shower during the flight. Reeta has some ideas—maybe you both can talk and plan together?"

Naresh (smiling): "Oh Dad, you're so cute! Of course, we'll have a proper celebration for the baby shower."

Sangeeta walked over and hugged Reeta tightly, her eyes shining.

Reeta (holding her gently): "You are our daughter now. May you always stay blessed and joyful."

Celebrating the Upcoming Arrival – Baby Shower Preparations

Over the next few days, Rajesh and Reeta settled into their temporary apartment. Every morning began with a visit from Naresh, and every evening ended with laughter, shared meals, and nostalgic conversations.

One afternoon, Reeta and Sangeeta sat together in the living room with chai and snacks.

Reeta: "In our tradition, a baby shower, '*godh bhara*', is not just a celebration, it's a blessing ceremony. The mother is pampered, and elders shower her with love, songs, and gifts for the coming child."

Sangeeta (smiling): "Mom, I'd love that. We were planning something small, but now that you're here, I want to do it your way."

Reeta: "Let's keep it simple yet traditional. I'll prepare some Indian sweets, and we can invite a few of your friends here. I'll bring bangles, turmeric, flowers... And yes, we must sing traditional songs." "If there is any temple nearby, we can all pray for puja and other rituals in the house."

Meanwhile, Rajesh and Naresh were on the balcony sipping tea.

Rajesh: "Son, it's good that you're blending cultures here. But don't forget your roots. These rituals are not just symbolic—they connect us to generations."

Naresh (nodding): "You're right, Dad. Sangeeta and I were a bit nervous, but now that you both are here, everything feels right. It feels like home."

The Day of the Baby Shower

Priest came in a kurta, pyjama attire and saffron Scaff and put Chandan tilak on his forehead.

He took out a book and start reading loudly bhajan on Hanuman:
translation at bottom;

सब मंगलमय कर देते हैं, दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु,
हर बिगड़े काम बनाते हैं, दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु।

जो काम कोई ना कर सकता, ऐसे ही कितने काम किए,
सौ योजन की लंबी दूरी, बस एक छलाँग में पार किए।
मुश्किल को सरल बनाते हैं, दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु।

दक्षिण में जाकर के बजरंग, श्री राम का पूरा काम किया,
माँ सीता ने फिर इसी लिए, हनुमत को था वरदान दिया।
सिया-राम के मन को भाते हैं, दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु।

हर दिशा की महिमा अलग-अलग, हर दिशा की महिमा है न्यारी,
पर दक्षिणमुख के बजरंग पे, हो जाए निरंजन बलिहारी।
शनिदेव से मुक्त कराते हैं, दक्षिणमुख से हनुमान प्रभु।

सब मंगलमय कर देते हैं, दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु,
हर बिगड़े काम बनाते हैं, दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु।
संकटमोचन हनुमान प्रभु, दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु,
श्री पंचमुखी हनुमान प्रभु, दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु।
दक्षिणमुख के हनुमान प्रभु।

छम छम नाचे देखो वीर हनुमान
भक्त बड़े बलवान तुम्ही हो, सालासर हनुमान तुम्ही हो।
आया हूँ मैं दर पे, तुझको आज पुकारा।
पावों में घुंघरू बाँध के नाचे, मेरा बजरंग प्यारा॥

छम छम नाचे देखो वीर हनुमाना।
कहते है लोग इसे राम का दीवाना॥
पाँवों में घुंघरू बाँध के नाचे,
रामजी का नाम इन्हे बड़ा प्यारा लागे।
राम ने भी देखो इसे खूब पहचाना,
छम छम नाचे देखो वीर हनुमाना॥

जहाँ जहाँ कीर्तन होता श्री राम का,
लगता है पहरा वहाँ वीर हनुमान का।
राम के चरण में है इनका ठिकाना,
छम छम नाचे देखो वीर हनुमाना॥

नाच नाच प्रभु श्री राम को रिझावे,
‘बनवारी’ रात दिन नाचता ही जाए।
भक्तों में भक्त बड़ा, दुनिया ने माना,
छम छम नाचे देखो वीर हनुमाना॥
दुनिया चले ना श्री राम के बिना,
राम जी चले ना हनुमान के बिना ।
जब से रामायण पढ़ ली है, एक बात मैंने समझ ली है,
रावण मेरे ना श्री राम के बिना, लंका जले ना हनुमान के बिना ॥
लक्ष्मण का बचना मुश्किल था, कौन बूटी लाने के काबिल था,
लक्ष्मण बचे ना श्री राम के बिना, बूटी मिले ना हनुमान के बिना ॥
सीता हरण की कहानी सुनो, बनवारी मेरी जुबानी सुनो,

वापिस मिले ना श्री राम के बिना, पता चले ना हनुमान के बिना ॥
बैठे सिंघासन पे श्री राम जी, चरणों में बैठे हैं हनुमान जी,
मुक्ति मिले ना श्री राम के बिना, भक्ति मिले ना हनुमान के बिना ॥
दुनिया के मालिक को भगवान कहते हैं,
संकट के साथी को हनुमान कहते हैं।
जब रिश्तेदार तुमसे मुखड़ा छुपाए,
हनुमान तेरा साथ निभाए,
हनुमान पकड़े दामन तुम्हारा,
पढ़ लो सारे वेद और पुराण कहते हैं,
संकट के साथी को हनुमान कहते हैं।
जो काम इसके वश में नहीं है,
एक काम हमको ऐसा बता दो,
हनुमान खुश हो जाएगा तुमसे,
बस इनको थोड़ा सिंदूर लगा दो,
दुनिया के सारे इंसान कहते हैं,
संकट के साथी को हनुमान कहते हैं।

दिल से जो इनकी भक्ति करेगा,
हनुमान उसका साथी बनेगा,
‘बनवारी’ जो भी शरण में रहेगा,
ये उसका बेड़ा पार करेगा,
इनके बारे में श्रीराम कहते हैं,
संकट के साथी को हनुमान कहते हैं।
राम जी के अटके कोई काम नहीं होते,
उनके साथ में जो हनुमान नहीं होते॥
हनुमान जाकर जो बूटी ना लाते,
और सूरज उगने से पहले ना आते,
फिर भाई लक्ष्मण के प्राण नहीं होते।

राम जी के अटके कोई काम नहीं होते,
उनके साथ में जो हनुमान नहीं होते॥
जाकर जो लंका का भेद नहीं लाते,
भक्त विभीषण से जो मेल ना कराते,
फिर लड़ने काबिल श्रीराम नहीं होते।
राम जी के अटके कोई काम नहीं होते,
उनके साथ में जो हनुमान नहीं होते॥
जाकर अगर ना लंका जलाते,
'बनवारी' रावण को गर न डराते,
लंका वाले इतना परेशान नहीं होते।
राम जी के अटके कोई काम नहीं होते,
उनके साथ में जो हनुमान नहीं होते॥
पार होगा वही, जिसे पकड़ोगे राम,
जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा।
तिरना क्या जाने, पत्थर बेचारे,
तिरने लगे तेरे, नाम के सहारे,
नाम लिखते आ गए हैं, पत्थर में प्राण,
जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा।
पार होगा वही, जिसे पकड़ोगे राम,
जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा।
लंका जलाई, लांघा समुंदर,
राक्षस को मार आया, छोटा सा बंदर,
बस जपता रहा, दिन रात तेरा नाम,
जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा।
पार होगा वही, जिसे पकड़ोगे राम,
जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा।
सुनकर के बातें, मुस्काए राम जी,
मारे खुशी के नाचे, हनुमान जी,

भक्त देखा ना, बनवारी तेरे समान,
 जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा।
 पार होगा वही, जिसे पकड़ोगे राम,
 जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा।
 पार होगा वही, जिसे पकड़ोगे राम,
 जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा,
 जिसको छोड़ोगे, पलभर में डूब जाएगा।
 दुनिया में देव हजारों हैं,
 बजरंग बली का क्या कहना।
 ये सात समुंदर लांघ गए,
 और गढ़ लंका में कूद गए,
 रावण को डराना क्या कहना,
 लंका को जलाना क्या कहना।
 दुनिया में देव हजारों हैं,
 बजरंग बली का क्या कहना।
 जब लक्ष्मण जी बेहोश हुए,
 संजीवनी बूटी लाने गए,
 लक्ष्मण को जिलाना क्या कहना,
 पर्वत को उठाना क्या कहना।
 दुनिया में देव हजारों हैं,
 बजरंग बली का क्या कहना।
 'बनवारी' इनके सीने में,
 सियाराम की जोड़ी रहती है,
 ये राम दीवाना क्या कहना,
 गुण गाए जमाना क्या कहना।
 दुनिया में देव हजारों हैं,
 बजरंग बली का क्या कहना।
 फ़रियाद मेरी सुनके हनुमान चले आना,

मैं ध्यान धरु तेरा बिगड़ी को तुम बनानां,
राम राम बोलो जय सियाराम,
राम राम बोलो जय सियाराम।

तुमको समझ के अपनी फरियाद सुनाता हूँ,
मैं सुबह शाम मन में तेरा ध्यान लगाता हूँ,
क्या भूल गए मुझको मेरे राम हनुमान,
लेता हूँ नाम तेरा चले आओ हनुमान,
चले आओ हनुमान, चले आओ हनुमान,
राम राम बोलो जय सियाराम,
राम राम बोलो जय सियाराम।

तुझ बिन न कोई मेरा हनुमान सहारा,
इस जीवन को मैंने तुझ पर ही है वारा,
क्या यूँ ही तड़पना है हनुमान तू बता,
क्या मेरी इस खता की सजा तो है तू बता,
सजा तो है तू बता, सजा तो है तू बता,
राम राम बोलो जय सियाराम,
राम राम बोलो जय सियाराम।

आँखों में भरे आंसू तुम तरस तो खाओ,
क्या दोष हुआ मुझसे मुझको तो बताओ,
अब मेहर करो सुनकर बाबा मेरे हनुमान,
बिगड़ी तुम्ही बनाना मेरे राम हनुमान,
मेरे राम हनुमान, मेरे राम हनुमान,
राम राम बोलो जय सियाराम,
राम राम बोलो जय सियाराम।

सेवा के ये सच्चे अगर भाव ना होते,
हनुमान के सीने में सियाराम ना होते।

उड़े उड़े हनुमान लांघ गए समंदर,
पवन वेग से उड़कर श्री राम के पायक बनकर,
संकट मोचन वीर बली के चर्चे ना होते,
हनुमान के सीने में सियाराम ना होते।

शिव की नगरी लंका में बैठ बजाए चुटकी,
कच्चे पक्के बल खाए भरे राम नाम की बटकी,
मात सिया के चरणों में अंजना लाल ना होते,
हनुमान के सीने में सियाराम ना होते।

जीवन की ये नैया लहरों के ऊपर है चलती,
कब आ जाएँ तूफ़ां पल में पलट जाएँ ये कश्ती,
मूर्छित को बूटी पिलाई लक्ष्मण ज़िंदा ना होते,
हनुमान के सीने में सियाराम ना होते।

तेरे दीवाने की अँखियाँ छलक रही हैं बाबा,
अँसुअन की मोती माला तुझे अर्पण करू मैं बाबा,
सज्जन शिव अवतार ना लेते राम काज ना होते,
हनुमान के सीने में सियाराम ना होते।

Since some foreigners were also present there, the priest repeated the same in English as well:

Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu makes everything auspicious,
Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu makes every messed-up task right.
Works that no one else can do, he has done so many such tasks,
Crossed a long distance of hundred yojanas in just one jump.
Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu makes difficult things easy.
Going to the south, Bajrang completed Shri Ram's work,

Mother Sita had given a boon to Hanuman for this very reason.
Siya-Ram like Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu.
Each direction has its own glory, each direction has its own glory,
But Niranjan would be willing to sacrifice himself on Dakshinmukhi
Bajrang.
Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu frees us from Shanidev.
Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu makes everything auspicious,
Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu makes every messed-up task right.
Sankatmochan Hanuman Prabhu, Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu,
Shri Panchmukhi Hanuman Prabhu, Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu.
Dakshinmukhi Hanuman Prabhu.

Watch brave Hanuman dance chham chham
Devotee, you are very strong, you are Salasar Hanuman.
I have come to your door, I have called you today.
My dear Bajrang dances with bells tied to his feet.
Look, Veer Hanuman dances Cham Cham.
People call him a devotee of Ram.
He dances with bells tied to his feet,
He likes the name of Ramji very much.
See, even Ram recognized him very well,
Look, Veer Hanuman dances Cham Cham.
Wherever there is kirtan of Shri Ram,
There is a guard of Veer Hanuman.
His abode is at the feet of Ram,
Look, Veer Hanuman dances Cham Cham.
Dancing dance pleases Lord Shri Ram,
'Banwari' keeps dancing day and night.
The world has accepted that the devotee is the greatest among devotees,
Look at the brave Hanuman dancing.
Duniya Chalena Shreeram Ke Bina
The world cannot move without Shri Ram,
Ram ji cannot move without Hanuman.
Ever since I have read Ramayana, I have understood one thing,
Ravana cannot die without Shri Ram, Lanka cannot burn without
Hanuman.
It was difficult for Laxman to survive, who was capable of bringing the
herb,
Lakshman could not survive without Shri Ram, herb could not be found
without Hanuman.

Listen to the story of Sita's abduction, Banwari listen to it from me,
Without Shri Ram, she could not be found, without Hanuman.

Sri Ram ji is sitting on the throne, Hanuman ji is sitting at his feet,
Without Shri Ram, salvation cannot be found, without Hanuman,
devotion cannot be found.

The owner of the world is called God,
The companion in trouble is called Hanuman.

When relatives hide their face from you,
Hanuman stands by you,
Hanuman holds your hem,
Read all the Vedas and Puranas, they say,
The companion in trouble is called Hanuman.

The work which is not in his control,
Tell us one such work,
Hanuman will be happy with you,
Just apply a little vermilion to him,
All the people of the world say,
The companion in trouble is called Hanuman.

Whoever worships him from the heart,
Hanuman will become his companion,
Whoever stays in the shelter of 'Banwari',
He will help him cross the ocean,
Shri Ram says about him,
The companion in trouble is called Hanuman.

Ram Ji's work does not get stuck,
If Hanuman is not with him.
If Hanuman had not gone and brought the herb,
and had not returned before sunrise,
then brother Lakshman would not have survived.
Ram ji would not have had any pending work,
If Hanuman was not with him.
If he had not gone and brought the secret of Lanka,
If he had not made Vibhishan meet devotee,
then Shri Ram would not have been able to fight.
Ram ji would not have had any pending work,
If Hanuman was not with him.
If he had not gone and burnt Lanka,
If 'Banwari' had not frightened Ravan,
The people of Lanka would not have been so troubled.

Ram ji would not have had any pending work,
 If Hanuman was not with him.
 Only the one whom you hold on to will cross, Ram,
 Whomever you let go, will drown in a moment.
 What does the poor stone know about floating,
 It has started floating, with the help of your name,
 We have been writing the name, life in stone,
 Whomever you let go, will drown in a moment.
 Only he will cross the ocean, whom you hold on to,
 Whomever you let go, will drown in a moment.
 He burnt Lanka, crossed the ocean,
 Killed the demon, a small monkey,
 Just kept on chanting your name day and night,
 Whomever you let go, will drown in a moment.
 Only he will cross the ocean, whomever you hold on to,
 Whomever you let go, will drown in a moment.
 On hearing these words, Ram Ji smiled,
 Hanuman Ji danced with joy,
 Have you seen a devotee like you, Banwari,
 Whomever you let go, will drown in a moment.
 Only he will cross the ocean, whomever you hold on to,
 Whomever you let go, will drown in a moment.
 He will cross the ocean, whomever you hold on to,
 Whomever you let go, will drown in a moment.
 There are thousands of gods in the world,
 What to say about Bajrangbali.
 He crossed seven seas,
 And jumped into the fort of Lanka,
 What to say about scaring Ravana,
 What to say about burning Lanka.
 There are thousands of gods in the world,
 What to say about Bajrang Bali.
 When Lakshman ji fainted,
 He went to bring Sanjivani herb,
 What to say about reviving Lakshman,
 What to say about lifting the mountain.
 There are thousands of gods in the world,
 What to say about Bajrang Bali.
 'Banwari' lives in his heart,
 What to say about this crazy Ram,

What to say about the world singing his praises.
There are thousands of gods in the world,
What to say about Bajrang Bali.
My plea, Hanuman, please come after hearing my plea,
I will concentrate on you, you will fix the mess,
Say Ram, Jai Siya Ram,
Say Ram, Jai Siya Ram.
I tell you my plea after understanding you,
I meditate on you in my mind morning and evening,
Have you forgotten me my Lord Hanuman?
I take your name, come Hanuman,
Come Hanuman, come Hanuman, come Hanuman,
Ram Ram, say Jai Siya Ram,
Ram Ram, say Jai Siya Ram.
Without you Hanuman, there is no one to support me,
I have given this life to you,

The Power of Prayer: A Devotional Bhajan

Priest, there is great power in prayer—
Let us immerse ourselves in this bhajan, with love and reverence.

Bhakti has many forms:
Bhajan, Aarti, Simran, and Stuti—
Praise, chant, and remembrance—
These are the sacred paths that lead us to the divine.

Say Ram, Ram,
Your Ram, my Ram—Ram is there for everyone.
Ram is in my heart, Ram is in your heart—Ram is everywhere.

Temples may rise, pilgrimages may call,
But it is devotion that brings us closest to Him.

I seek no gold, no silver—
I seek only devotion.
Whatever I have, O Lord, is yours—
I own nothing, yet you've given me everything.

I bow in gratitude—
For your power, your kindness, your grace.
True happiness I have found in your remembrance.

You bless without asking,
You give without measure—
This is your infinite generosity.

The path to reach you is simple:
It lies in heartfelt prayer.

Say Ram, Ram,
Your Ram, my Ram—Ram is there for everyone.
Ram is in my heart, Ram is in your heart—Ram is everywhere.

And today, O Divine, I offer a prayer:
May this family be forever joyful,
May the soul arriving in this home
Be a light of love, peace, and happiness.

Pandit ji: "My prayers and blessings are complete. You may now proceed with your rituals."

Rajesh: "But before you go, please don't leave without having some food. And here is a small token of our gratitude—a kurta-pyjama and a humble offering. Kindly accept this from our side." "Once again, thank you sincerely for your prayers and blessings for our family."

The priest accepted the offerings with a warm smile, and folded hands.

Pandit ji: "May the grace of God always remain with your family and loved ones. May happiness, peace, and prosperity be with all who have gathered here today and namaskar to all."

Continue baby shower

The living room was transformed with soft drapes, marigold garlands, and colourful cushions. Reeta dressed Sangeeta in a beautiful saree and adorned her with bangles and a small *maang tika*.

Friends and neighbours, both Indian and American, arrived with gifts and good wishes. Rajesh welcomed everyone warmly.

Reeta performed the traditional *puja*, applying *kumkum* on Sangeeta's forehead and gently placing a coconut in her lap. Women sang folk songs, clapped, and took turns feeding sweets to the expectant mother.

An American friend of Sangeeta whispered to her, "This is so beautiful and emotional. Our baby showers are fun, but this... this is soulful."

Rajesh, standing nearby, added with a smile, "That's the strength of tradition. It brings emotion, community, and memories together."

Naresh clicked pictures while Reeta handed a silver anklet to Sangeeta.

Reeta: "This is from your Dadi's collection. It's for your baby girl—or boy. It doesn't matter. It's for love."

Later That Night

Back in their apartment, Rajesh and Reeta sat quietly, sipping warm milk.

Reeta: "Today felt so complete. Did you see the glow on Sangeeta's face?"

Rajesh: "Yes. And on yours too."

They both smiled.

Reeta: "We came with anxiety and returned with peace. Life has its own way of healing—through love, family, and acceptance."

Rajesh: "And through friends who remind you to laugh, and children who teach you to forgive."

They looked out at the city lights, hearts full.

Naresh: Please stay a little longer and go after the delivery.

Reeta and Rajesh looked at each other and agreed.

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They looked out at the city lights, hearts full.

The Arrival of a New Life

Two months after the baby shower, a calm evening turned into a night of gentle excitement.

Naresh rushed into Rajesh and Reeta’s apartment.

Naresh (breathless): “Dad! Mom! Sangeeta’s water just broke—we’re going to the hospital.”

Rajesh stood up quickly, his hands trembling slightly.

Rajesh: “Call the cab—I’ll bring the hospital bag.”

Reeta, surprisingly composed, guided Naresh and said calmly,

Reeta: “Don’t panic. Everything will be okay. Call us once you settle in the hospital.”

Hours Later – A Grand Welcome

At 3:17 AM, their phones buzzed.

A picture appeared: Sangeeta holding a baby wrapped in a soft pink blanket.

Naresh’s message: “It’s a girl. Both are healthy. Her name is Anvi.”

Reeta’s eyes filled with tears as she handed the phone to Rajesh.

Reeta (softly): “Anvi... a name so gentle, so divine. Our granddaughter.”

Rajesh kissed the picture on the screen.

“A new chapter begins.”

Meeting Anvi for the First Time

When they visited the hospital later that morning, Sangeeta smiled faintly but brightly.

Reeta embraced her and whispered, “You did beautifully. I’m so proud of you.”

Rajesh held Anvi for the first time, cradling her tiny form carefully. “Welcome, Anvi. You’ve already changed our lives.”

Naresh clicked a picture and said, “This one’s for the group back home.”

Video Call with the Garden Group in India

That evening, Rajesh set up a video call with Krishna, Ved, Mukesh, and the rest of the garden friends.

As the camera turned on, Rajesh proudly held Anvi.

“Meet the newest member of our family—Anvi.”

Ved (wiping tears): “Rajesh, you are glowing like a 25-year-old. Congratulations!”

Krishna (teasing): “And now who’s going to lead the laughter yoga back home? You’ve gone international!”

Mukesh: “Put the phone near her—let me sing her a song!”

Everyone laughed, clapped, and gave their blessings virtually.

Rajesh: “Friends, I was lost a few months ago. And today, I’m reborn as a grandfather. Thank you for holding me up when I was falling.”

Ved: “We all fall, my friend. But life brings us back—with the love of children, the laughter of friends, and the birth of hope.”

Back in the Garden – The Missing Piece

It was a bright, fresh morning in the neighbourhood garden. Birds chirped, the grass was still wet with dew, and the sound of laughter was missing a note—Rajesh’s deep, hearty chuckle.

Ved, Krishna, and Mukesh sat cross-legged on their yoga mats, having just completed their breathing exercises.

Ved (stretching his arms): “Ahh... feels good. I’m feeling stronger every day. Thank you, friends, for not letting me slip into laziness.”

Krishna (chuckling): “Of course! We can’t afford to let you grow roots into that sofa of yours.”

Mukesh (grinning): “But still... something’s missing.”

They all paused for a moment. Then Ved looked towards the empty mat next to his and spoke with affection:

Ved: “Rajesh... we three are doing our daily yoga and missing you deeply. Come back soon, my friend. Now that I’m fit and sound again, we want to start from the garden—from where it all began.”

Krishna nodded and added, “We’ve even kept your mat rolled up in the same spot. It’s waiting—like a bookmark in a half-read book.”

Mukesh leaned back, gazing up at the trees.

“Tell Anvi we’ll teach her laughter yoga when she grows up. But right now, your laughter is needed here. Come home, Rajesh.”

Rajesh’s Response

That evening, Rajesh sat on a balcony in the U.S., Anvi asleep on his chest, her tiny breaths warming his heart.

His phone pinged. A short video from Krishna: the three friends sitting together, waving, smiling.

Ved (in the video): “This garden isn’t the same without you. Come back and let’s laugh like old times.”

Rajesh's eyes moistened. He whispered softly, "I'm coming, my brothers. I've held a new life in my arms, and now I long for the arms of old friends."

He sent back a voice note:

"Anvi is a blessing, and being here was necessary—for her, for Naresh, and for me.

But my mat is calling, my mornings are incomplete without your scolding and laughter.

I will return soon. Let's start our garden gatherings again—stronger, wiser, and filled with stories to tell. Wait for me."

A Letter to Anvi, before leaving US

That night, Rajesh sat down and wrote in a small notebook:

"Dear Anvi,

You are not just a baby. You are the bridge between generations, the smile after a storm, the calm in our chaos.

You have no idea how you've healed us already.

Love,

Dadu."

Rajesh Returns – The Garden Reunion

The sun had just started to rise. Morning mist lingered over the garden grass as Ved, Krishna, and Mukesh unrolled their yoga mats. A mild breeze passed through the trees, as if whispering something special was about to happen.

Suddenly, a familiar voice called out from behind them: "Oye! Breathe in... and now breathe me in!"

The three friends turned at once.

Ved (shocked and delighted): "RAJESH!"

Krishna: "He's back! Our missing laughter has returned!"

Mukesh (rushing to hug him): "You've lost weight or is it American yoga?"

Rajesh laughed deeply, hugging each one tightly.

“It was Anvi yoga. Holding her in my arms was the best workout of my life.”

They all sat down on the grass, no yoga this morning – just joy, laughter, and stories.

Ved: “You became a grandfather, and we became incomplete. Tell us everything.”

Rajesh (glowing): “Sangeeta is doing well. Anvi is the gentlest little soul I’ve ever seen. And Naresh... he’s truly become a man. I’m proud of him. We danced at the baby shower and cried at her birth.”

Krishna (teasing): “We want sweets. Grandfather is back, and we haven’t had even a single laddu!”

Mukesh: “He’s brought something more valuable—a reminder of life’s new beginnings.”

Rajesh looked around at the trees, the benches, the breeze brushing his face.

Rajesh (softly): “This garden... it’s more than a place. It’s my peace. I missed you all—your nonsense, your wisdom, your care. You made me strong enough to accept what I feared. Thank you, my brothers.”

Ved: “And now, we begin again. With more laughter, more yoga, and less judgment.”

Krishna: “And next time, you’re not allowed to miss the Holi in the garden. That colour is waiting.”

They all laughed, loudly and freely—as if nature itself joined them.

The pigeons fluttered around, the sun grew brighter, and the garden echoed with their renewed bond.

A Burst of Colour and Joy: Holi Celebration at Ved’s Terrace

Ved had invited all his dear friends, neighbours, and their families for a grand Holi celebration on the terrace of his home. The preparations had

been going on for days, and on the festive morning, the space was beautifully decorated with bright marigold flowers, colourful streamers, and natural colour plates arranged artistically at various corners.

By 9 a.m., the terrace started filling with cheerful faces. About 30 adults and 10 lively children had gathered, each dressed in white, ready to transform into human canvases. The children, full of energy and mischief, were especially excited—they raced around with water pistols, small buckets, and traditional pitchkaris, giggling and squealing with joy as they sprayed coloured water at each other... and sometimes at unsuspecting elders.

Ved had thoughtfully arranged for flower-infused water tubs—vibrant with petals of rose, marigold, and palash—ensuring everyone used natural colours that were skin-friendly and safe. Plates of dry organic gulal, made from flower extracts, were neatly placed at the corners for the elders, who preferred a more traditional, gentle Holi.

Soon, the air was filled with the sound of laughter, playful shrieks, and the unmistakable spirit of Holi. Friends and family smeared each other's foreheads with colours, embraced warmly, and exchanged heartfelt wishes. It was not just a celebration of colours but of togetherness, memories, and belonging.

As the festivities were in full swing, a curious little boy walked up to Ved, colours splattered all over his face, and tugged at his kurta.

"Uncle, why do we celebrate Holi?" He asked innocently.

Ved bent down with a smile and replied, gathering a few children around him: "That's a beautiful question, my child. Holi is not just about playing with colours. Like every festival in our culture, it carries deep meaning and stories from ancient times. Let me tell you one..."

He began narrating the legend of Holika Dahan, the tale of King Hiranyakashipu, his pious son Prahlada, and his evil sister Holika, who had a boon to remain unharmed by fire. Ved told how Holika's wicked plan to burn Prahlada backfired because of her ill intent, and she was reduced to ashes, while the devoted Prahlada was saved by the grace of Lord Vishnu.

"That," Ved said, "is why we celebrate Holika Dahan—for the triumph of good over evil. It reminds us that no matter how powerful evil may seem, truth and devotion will always win."

The children listened in awe, nodding thoughtfully before running off again into the whirl of colours.

Ved then smiled and called out to everyone: "Now that we've celebrated the meaning, let's enjoy the flavours too! There's fresh chaach (buttermilk), a little bhang for those who dare, crispy bharwa kachoris, puris, spicy aloo sabzi, gujiyas, and of course, tea and coffee for everyone. Please eat, drink, and be merry!"

Soon, plates were full, glasses clinked, and laughter echoed across the terrace. As the food settled, someone put on classic Holi songs on the speaker, and what followed was an explosion of dance and joy:

"Rang Barse..."

"Khelo rang hamare sang..."

"Ang se ang lagana..."

"Aaj na chhodenge..."

The elderly joined the younger ones, matching their steps with enthusiastic twists and turns. Some danced bhangra, some did the twist, while others swayed in their own unique style. A few sat on the ground, clapping to the rhythm, lost in the moment.

It was nearly 3 o'clock in the afternoon when the music softened, the colours faded into each other, and the terrace calmed down. Exhausted but elated, everyone hugged once more and began dispersing—cheeks still glowing, hearts still full.

As they left, someone said with a grin, "This was the best Holi ever!"

And Ved, watching his guests depart with joy in their eyes, whispered softly to himself, "Yes, indeed it was."

Ved told his garden friends that he was fine and suggested to start again from the garden as they were all missing the fresh air, the birds chirping, the sunrise, the greenery, the fountain, the yoga and more.

"So tomorrow we meet at the garden at 5:30 as it is too hot after 8."

Krishna (chuckling): "Ved, that was a masterpiece! Now let me tell you about the time I almost got *married* on Holi—by mistake!"

Everyone: "Married?! On Holi?!"

Krishna (grinning): "Yes! I was in college. We used to have a huge Holi celebration on campus. That year, a friend of mine dared me to act like a pandit and 'conduct a wedding' between two classmates—just for fun. I borrowed a dupatta, put on tilak, and sat them down under a tree."

Mukesh (teasing): "And you were the priest? Bhagwan bachaye us couple ko!" (God save that couple!)

Krishna: "Haan bhai! But guess what? The prank went a little too far. The girl's father arrived midway, saw me tying the 'mangalsutra' we made out of marigold, and thought it was a real wedding! That poor man almost fainted!"

Rajesh: "What happened then?"

Krishna: "After a lot of explaining, laughter, and some scolding, he finally calmed down. But for the rest of college life, everyone called me *Pandit Krishna Maharaj*! Even today, people from that batch send me wedding invites with 'Please don't perform any rituals!' written at the bottom."

Laughter erupted.

Mukesh (wiping tears): "Okay, okay, my turn! Mine is short but sweet. Holi 1985, I decided to impress a girl in our colony. I dressed in white, got the best herbal colours, and even composed a *shayari*!"

Ved: "Wah, wah! Poet Mukesh in action!"

Mukesh: "Just as I reached her house and said, '*Rangon se bhari ho tum, jaise basanti bahar...*' ('You are full of colours like the spring season...') her younger brother dumped a bucket of ice-cold water on my head—with some expired paint mixed in!"

Rajesh: "Ha ha! That's love for you!"

Mukesh: "I looked like a wet peacock with orange and purple feathers. The girl? She laughed so hard, she snorted. Needless to say, romance didn't bloom that Holi – but I became a legend in that colony."

Rajesh: "And now it's my turn. Holi 1979—I was newly married. I was showing off in front of Reeta ji, acting all brave with colours. I said, 'See how I apply gulaal with style!' and I threw it... straight into my mother-in-law's face!"

Everyone: "No..."

Rajesh: "She went red—not from gulaal, but from shock! For a moment, I thought she'd cancel the marriage retroactively!"

Ved (laughing): "And yet here you are—alive, married, and telling the tale!"

Rajesh: "Yes! And since that day, I have never played Holi without first touching my mother-in-law's feet, just in case!"

The friends laughed till their eyes teared up, hearts warm and cheeks sore. The colours of Holi had long washed off, but the joy, the memories, and the friendship lingered—brighter than ever.

Krishna (raising his tea cup): "To Holi! The festival of colours, chaos, and crazy stories we'll never forget!"

All: "To Holi! and to lifelong friendship!"

Bad news of Rajesh

Mukesh called Ved and said in a very nervous tone, "I've received some news about Rajesh..."

Ved looked up anxiously. "What happened?"

"He... he's no more. He went to sleep last night and never woke up."

Ved's face turned pale. "This is heartbreaking. We've lost one of our closest friends."

"They won't proceed with the cremation until the boy arrives from the USA," he added quietly.

Mukesh, who had already visited Rajesh's house, explained, "For now, they've kept him in the mortuary. The cremation will take place in a day or two."

Ved took a deep breath. "We must go and pay our respects. Let's follow the program."

Together, Ved, Mukesh, Deepak, Deepika, Disha, Suman, and Krishna went to Rajesh's house. They consoled his grieving wife, Reeta. With folded hands, they spoke gently, "We are truly sorry. We have lost a dear friend."

Reeta's eyes were swollen from hours of weeping. Her pain was visible and far deeper than words could express.

Ved spoke softly, "Reeta ji, if there's anything we can do, please let us know."

Reeta, struggling to hold back her tears, replied, "My brother is handling everything. He's hired an event management company to take care of the arrangements."

She pointed across the room. "Look, my brother Trilok has also come. If there's anything, you may speak with him."

They all approached Trilok.

"Is there any way we can be of help?" Asked Mukesh.

Trilok nodded with gratitude. "Thank you. Your presence and condolences mean a lot to us. You've been sitting here a long time. Please go home and get some rest. The final rites will be held the day after tomorrow at ten o'clock."

The group quietly took their leave, hearts heavy with grief. As they walked away, silence hung between them like a shared sorrow.

Each of them was deep in thought. "What kind of life is this?" They wondered. "No one knows what tomorrow holds. Rajesh went to bed peacefully—and never woke up."

Ved later reflected, “The Vedas say that such is the death of a saint—one who departs without pain, without causing sorrow to others. Rajesh lived with dignity, and in silence, he left—like a whisper in the night.”

Cremation ground

Two days later, as the morning sun rose softly over the city, a sense of stillness hung in the air. The group—Ved, Mukesh, Krishna, Deepak, Deepika, Disha, and Suman—gathered once more at Rajesh’s home for the final rites.

Rajesh’s son had arrived from the USA the previous night. Grief-stricken but composed, he stood beside his mother, greeting everyone who came to pay respects.

Seeing him, Ved couldn’t hold back his tears. He embraced the young man tightly, whispering, “Your father was a noble soul. He loved you immensely and was proud of the man you’ve become.”

The rituals began. The priest chanted solemn mantras, the fragrance of sandalwood and camphor filling the air. Reeta sat silently beside her son; her eyes red but dry—perhaps all tears had already been spent.

Ved, Mukesh, and Krishna took turns helping with the rituals—offering flowers, lighting incense, and supporting the son as he performed the last rites. The scene was deeply emotional.

As the priest recited the final shlokas, Ved whispered to Krishna, “Rajesh always said, ‘Live simply, give generously, and leave peacefully.’ He truly lived that way till the end.”

Krishna nodded. “Yes. His was a life of quiet kindness. And now, even in death, he reminds us of the impermanence of everything.”

After the cremation, the group returned to Ved’s house and sat together in silence for a long while. Then Deepika broke the silence.

“Rajesh would want us to remember the joy, not just the end. He’d want us to meet in the garden again, do yoga, laugh, talk about life.” I have also played golf with him. Having so many activities, even Gone so early.

Ved smiled faintly. “Yes, and maybe next week, we’ll gather again—this time not in mourning, but in memory. We’ll tell his stories, celebrate his spirit.”

Mukesh added, “Let’s dedicate our next Satsang to him. We’ll sing bhajans, reflect, and keep his soul in our prayers.”

Everyone agreed. Rajesh may have left his body, but his presence, his laughter, and his wisdom would forever echo in our hearts.

Scene: The Garden Gathering — A Tribute to Rajesh

It was a crisp morning, just a few days after the cremation. The sun filtered softly through the trees in the garden where Ved, Krishna, Mukesh, Deepak, and the rest of the group had gathered for years. Today, there was an empty chair next to Ved’s—Rajesh’s usual spot. A garlanded photo of Rajesh was placed on a small table beside it.

Everyone had come quietly, dressed in white. The air was heavy with emotion, but there was also a quiet strength in their presence.

Ved lit a diya and placed it before Rajesh’s photo. He folded his hands and softly began chanting a simple bhajan. Others joined in, their voices blending gently in the morning silence.

After the bhajan ended, Ved stood up and spoke: “Rajesh was not just a friend. He was a brother, a fellow traveller in the journey of life. His laughter, his wisdom, and his kindness were gifts to all of us. He lived with simplicity, always helping others without expecting anything in return. Today, we don’t mourn his death, we celebrate his life.”

Krishna added with a bittersweet smile: “Do you all remember how he once scolded me for complaining about joint pain during yoga? He said, ‘We’re lucky to even feel pain at this age; it means we’re still alive and kicking!’ That was Rajesh—always seeing the brighter side.”

Laughter bubbled through the group, briefly breaking the heaviness. Mukesh wiped a tear from his eye and said: “He would’ve been angry if we cried too much. He’d say, ‘Go enjoy life; I’m just ahead of you on the path, not gone forever.’”

Deepika brought out a small box and handed it to Ved.

“These are sweets Rajesh liked. I made them at home. Let’s share them in his memory.”

Everyone took a piece and offered one to the birds, as Rajesh often did after their yoga sessions.

Disha softly said: “Rajesh taught us how to live meaningfully, even in our older years. Let’s keep his memory alive by doing one act of kindness every week in his name.”

Ved nodded and concluded: “We’ll keep this chair here for a while, empty but not forgotten. And every Satsang, every bhajan, every shared laugh—Rajesh will be with us.”

The garden, touched by the gentle voices of old friends, seemed to glow a little brighter that morning.

I remember one bhajan which is totally fit for Rajesh.

इतना तो करना स्वामी,
जब प्राण तन से निकले
गोविन्द नाम लेकर,
फिर प्राण तन से निकले ॥
श्री गंगा जी का तट हो,
यमुना का वंशीवट हो,
मेरा सांवरा निकट हो,
जब प्राण तन से निकले,
इतना तों करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले

पीताम्बरी कसी हो,
छवि मन में यह बसी हो,

होठों पे कुछ हसी हो,
जब प्राण तन से निकले,
इतना तों करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले

श्री वृन्दावन का स्थल हो,
मेरे मुख में तुलसी दल हो,
विष्णु चरण का जल हो,
जब प्राण तन से निकले,
इतना तों करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले

जब कंठ प्राण आवे,
कोई रोग ना सतावे,
यम दर्शना दिखावे,
जब प्राण तन से निकले,
इतना तो करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले

उस वक्त जल्दी आना
नहीं श्याम भूल जाना
राधा को साथ लाना
जब प्राण तन से निकले
इतना तों करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले

सुधि होवे नाही तन की,
तैयारी हो गमन की,
लकड़ी हो ब्रज के वन की,
जब प्राण तन से निकले,
इतना तो करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले

एक भक्त की है अर्जी,
खुदगर्ज की है गरजी,
आगे तुम्हारी मर्जी,
जब प्राण तन से निकले,
इतना तो करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले

ये नेक सी अरज है,
मानो तो क्या हरज है,
कुछ आप का फरज है,
जब प्राण तन से निकले,
इतना तो करना स्वामी जब प्राण तन से निकले

Translation

Oh this much Swami,
When the soul leaves the body
Taking the name of Govind,
Then let the soul leave the body.

Let there be the banks of Shri Ganga Ji,
Let there be the Vanshivat of Yamuna,
Let my Sanwara be near,
When the soul leaves the body,
Do this much Swami when the soul leaves.

Let there be a yellow cloth tied,
This image should be settled in the mind,
Let there be a smile on the lips,
When the soul leaves the body,
Do this much Swami when the soul leaves.

Let there be the place of Shri Vrindavan,
Let there be a Tulsi leaf in my mouth,
Let there be the water of Vishnu's feet,
When the soul leaves the body,
Do this much Swami when the soul leaves.

When the soul comes to the throat,
Let no disease torment me,
Let Yam's darshan be seen,
When the soul leaves the body,
Do this much Swami when the soul leaves.

Come quickly at that time
Do not forget Shyam
Bring Radha along with you
When the soul leaves the body
At least do this much Swami when the soul is gone.
You are not aware of the body,
You are ready to leave,
You are the wood of the forest of Braj,
When the soul leaves the body,
At least do this much Swami when the soul is gone.
This is a request of a devotee,
It is a demand of a selfish person,
Now it is your will,
When the soul leaves the body,
At least do this much Swami when the soul is gone.
This is a noble request,
If you accept it, what is the harm,
It is your duty,
When the soul leaves the body,
At least do this much Swami when the soul is gone.
All left the garden with heavy heart

Late Night at Reeta's Home

Two months had passed since Rajesh's passing, but Reeta still struggled with the silence that now lived in every corner of the house. That night, she sat in bed with a book open in her lap, though she hadn't turned a page in a while. Sleep eluded her. Her thoughts drifted again and again to the life she had shared with Rajesh—his laughter, his calm wisdom, the gentle way he held her hand during evening walks. Tears welled up, but she quickly wiped them away.

Suddenly, she heard a noise at the front door—a fumbling sound, followed by a low thud. Alarmed, she rushed to the entrance and opened it.

To her shock, her younger son, Rakesh, stood there, swaying slightly—clearly drunk. Beside him stood a young woman, also unsteady on her feet.

Rakesh blinked, trying to focus. "Oh... Mom, you're still awake?"

Reeta's eyes blazed. "Still awake? You think I can sleep peacefully anymore? You're drunk! And so is she!" She clapped her hands in disbelief. "Your father died just two months ago, and this is how you mourn? This is how you honour him?"

Her voice broke, trembling with pain and anger.

Rakesh's expression crumbled. His knees buckled slightly as he stepped inside, collapsing onto the couch. Tears streamed down his face.

"Mom... I'm sorry," he whispered. "Please forgive me. I don't know what I was doing. I promise, I'll be careful now. I won't let her come near me again. First your brother acted on the sense with us and now you are following his footprint.

He clutched Reeta's hand. "I love you, Mom. I can't drive... She will sleep in the other room."

He hugged her tightly, then suddenly went limp—fainted from exhaustion, grief, and intoxication.

Reeta screamed, "Oh God! Children these days... what have they become?"

She turned to the girl, who stood silently, eyes filled with guilt.

"Help me take him to his room."

The girl, Urvashi silently nodded. Together, they carried Rakesh to the bedroom and laid him gently on the bed. Reeta covered him with a blanket and then turned to Urvashi. "Come, I'll drop you to your house."

Urvashi hesitated. "Aunty... I told my parents I was staying at a friend's house. If I go back now... my father will... Please, let me stay tonight."

Reeta pressed her forehead with her fingers, exasperated and exhausted. "Oh God, what is happening to this generation?" After a long pause, she sighed. "Fine. Just for tonight. But remember, from now on, be careful. Don't bring shame to your family—or mine."

"Thank you, aunty," Urvashi whispered.

Reeta led her to the guest room, gave her a clean night suit, and told her to sleep.

But that night, no one in the house could sleep. The stillness was not peaceful—it was heavy, laden with pain, guilt, and the unspoken burden of love, loss, and fractured trust.

A New Beginning

The next few days passed quietly. The atmosphere in the house was thick with the weight of transition. Rakesh, true to his word, began waking up early. The once-scattered beer bottles and game controllers disappeared from his room. He even joined Rita for morning tea, something Rajesh used to do without fail.

One morning, as they sat in the garden with birds chirping around them, Rakesh looked up from his cup.

“Ma, I’ve been thinking... I want to take over Papa’s part-time trust work. The school sponsorships he used to handle—I want to continue it.”

Rita looked at him, surprised. “You barely paid attention to that before.”

“I know. But now I realize... he did so much for people. Quietly. With dignity. I want to at least try.”

Rita nodded slowly, tears forming in her eyes. “He would’ve been proud.”

That same day, Rakesh spoke to Trilok and arranged a meeting with the trust committee. He even reached out to his father’s old friend from the NGO. There was awkwardness in his steps, hesitation in his words—but there was also determination.

Meanwhile, Urvashi began helping around the house. Not because Rita asked her to, but because she wanted to. She cleaned the prayer room, arranged Rajesh’s old books on the shelf, and sat silently with Rita in the evenings.

One evening, as they watched the sky turn amber with dusk, Urvashi said softly, “Aunty, I want to earn your trust. Not just for Rakesh, but for you

too. I didn't have a mother like you. But I want to be worthy of being part of this home."

Rita placed a hand on hers. "Trust isn't asked for, child. It's built. You're on the right path."

Later that night, Rita lit a diya in front of Rajesh's photo. She folded her hands and whispered, "You left early, Rajesh. But maybe, just maybe, your leaving taught the ones you loved how to truly live."

The flame flickered, steady and warm.

Circle of Wisdom

On Barsi Prayer of Rajesh, Ved, Krishna, and Mukesh came over to Rita's house. It was the *Shanti Path*, a quiet prayer ceremony in Rajesh's memory, marking 12 months since his passing. The house had a calm dignity, simple garlands around Rajesh's photo, incense softly wafting through the room.

Rita welcomed them with folded hands. "He would've been so happy to see you all here."

Krishna smiled gently. "He's here, Reeta ji—just not the way we want him to be."

After the prayer, the four old friends sat on the veranda with steel tumblers of buttermilk. Rakesh came out hesitantly and greeted each of them, touching their feet.

"You've changed, beta," Mukesh said, adjusting his glasses.

"I'm trying, Uncle," Rakesh said sincerely. "I think I just needed a... push. Sadly, it came at a cost."

Ved, ever the philosopher, placed a hand on his shoulder. "Sometimes God removes the lamp to show us the stars. We just have to look up."

Krishna chuckled. "And sometimes, he sends our father's old friends to nudge us in the right direction."

They all laughed. Even Rakesh.

Later, when Urvashi brought out tea and snacks, the elders watched quietly. She was shy but graceful. Krishna raised an eyebrow and whispered to Rita, "So... the daughter-in-law in training?"

Rita gave a weary smile. "Let's see. They have a long way to go. But they're learning."

After a pause, Rita added, "Rajesh had one wish—to see the kids take up responsibility and carry forward his values. Maybe... he's still teaching them. Just from the other side."

The group grew silent, each one lost in thought. Then Ved spoke softly.

Ved's Speech at Rakesh's Prayer Meeting

Ved slowly stood up, his hands folded in a humble namaskar. His eyes, moist but calm, scanned the room filled with friends, relatives, and well-wishers. A garlanded photo of Rakesh sat on a simple wooden stand, a diya glowing beside it.

"Dear family and friends,

I stand before you today not to mourn, but to reflect. To speak not of loss, but of love. To remember not the end, but the journey of our dear Rakesh, whose time on this earth, though short, touched many hearts.

He was like a sapling that faced many storms but still tried to grow towards the light. I watched him—like many of you did—struggle, stumble, and yet strive to become better. And he did. In the last few months of his life, we saw a transformation, a sincerity, a seeking heart.

Sometimes the Divine writes a story we cannot understand. Why someone so young? Why now? But our scriptures say, "जो आत्मा से जुड़ता है, वह मृत्यु से नहीं डरता" ("The one who connects to the soul fears not death.") Rakesh, in his own way, had begun that connection.

Life is like a river—flowing, unpredictable. And death... death is not the end. It is simply a bend. Where the river merges into the ocean of the Divine. Rakesh has returned to that vast ocean. He has gone home.

Let us not remember him with sorrow, but with prayers. Let us carry forward the lessons his life taught us—to never give up on someone, to always extend a hand when a soul is trying to rise.

I ask you all to light a lamp in your heart today, not of grief, but of gratitude. For having known him. For having loved him. For having been part of his journey.

May his soul find peace. May we find strength. And may the circle of love that Rajesh bhai and now Rakesh have left behind, continue to shine through all of us.

Om Shanti. Om Shanti. Om Shanti.”

“Let’s not let Rajesh’s story end. Let’s make sure his spirit keeps guiding us—and them. Every Saturday, let’s gather here. Read a little from the Gita, talk a little, and laugh a lot.”

Mukesh grinned. “And drink Rakesh’s tea.”

Rakesh bowed. “It would be my honour, uncles.”

The sun dipped below the trees, casting long golden shadows over the garden. For a moment, it felt like Rajesh was there—sitting with them, smiling quietly, as the circle of life and love continued without pause.

As Ved ended his speech with a gentle “*Om Shanti*,” the hall was silent. Even the air seemed to pause. Some eyes were wet, others closed in silent prayer.

Rita, seated in the front row, clutched a handkerchief, her face streaked with tears but calm. She looked up at Ved with folded hands and whispered, “Thank you... you spoke like a father. Like Rajesh would have.”

She slowly stood up and addressed the room: “Rakesh made mistakes, yes, but he was trying. He was my child... and I know his heart. Ved ji, Krishna ji, Mukesh ji—you were more than just friends to Rajesh. You’ve become my family now. Please continue guiding me... I am not alone because of you.”

From the back, Urvashi stood up. Her eyes were swollen but steady. Her voice trembled. “Aunty, I know I wasn’t the best influence... I made many wrong choices. But I swear to you all today—I will honour his memory by

becoming someone he would have been proud of. Please give me a chance... and your blessings.”

Krishna, with moist eyes and a steady tone, gently said: “Beta, everyone deserves a second chance—especially when they ask for it with true repentance. Walk the path of truth and simplicity. We, elders are here, not to judge but to guide.”

Mukesh added with folded hands: “We’ve lost much—first Rajesh, now Rakesh—but we’ve also gained something... a reminder that life is fragile. Let us use it wisely, help one another, and keep this circle of love alive.”

The friends—Ved, Krishna, Mukesh—gathered beside Rita, placing their hands gently on her shoulders. A quiet strength surrounded them. Somewhere in the background, a soft bhajan began to play...

राम नाम सुखदाई भजन करो भाई
ये जीवन दो दिन का
ये तन है जंगल की लकड़ी
आग लगे जल जाई, भजन करो भाई
ये जीवन दो दिन का...
ये तन है कागज की पुड़िया
हवा चले उड़ जाई, भजन करो भाई
ये जीवन दो दिन का...
ये तन है माटी का ढेला
बूँद पड़े गल जाई, भजन करो भाई
ये जीवन दो दिन का...
ये तन है फूलों का बगीचा
धुप पड़े मुरझाई, भजन करो भाई
ये जीवन दो दिन का...
ये तन है कच्ची है हवेली
पल में टूट जाई, भजन करो भाई
ये जीवन दो दिन का...
ये तन है सपनों की माया
आँख खुले कुछ नाही, भजन करो भाई
ये जीवन दो दिन का...

Translation

Ram naam sukhadai bhajan brother
This life is for two days
This body is wood from the forest
If it catches fire it will burn, bhajan brother
This life is for two days...
This body is a packet of paper
If the wind blows it will fly away, bhajan brother
This life is for two days...
This body is a lump of mud
If a drop falls on it it will melt, bhajan brother
This life is for two days...
This body is a garden of flowers
If it falls on the sun it will wither, bhajan brother
This life is for two days...
This body is a raw mansion
It will break in a moment, bhajan brother
This life is for two days...
This body is an illusion of dreams
If the eyes don't open at all, bhajan brother
This life is for two days...

The room fell silent. Every verse pierced the heart like a gentle truth—reminding each soul present that the body is but a fleeting vessel. Rita's eyes welled up again, but this time with a strange peace. Urvashi closed her eyes and joined her palms. Deepak whispered softly to Krishna, "This is why Satsang is important... It brings us back to what really matters."

By the final verse, "Ye tan hai sapno ki maya..." ("This body is an illusion of dreams") the air was heavy with introspection and grace.

As the last note faded, Ved stood once more and said gently: "This life... is indeed only two days long. Let us live it with love, forgiveness, and the name of Ram on our lips."

A Gentle Visit and a Renewed Spirit

It was a quiet afternoon when Deepika's finally rang the bell at Reeta's house. Reeta opened the door, surprised but pleased, her face softening at the familiar sight.

Deepika stepped in warmly.

"I've been meaning to come for so long," she said, placing her hand gently on Reeta's shoulder. "But life gets so programmed... I'm really glad to see you again."

Reeta managed a faint smile.

"Same here. It's good to see a friend. How's your golf going these days?"

Deepika sighed lightly as they sat down.

"Not much, honestly. Deepak has his own regular foursome now, and being on my own, I hardly go. Sometimes Arvind or Ashok call me to join, but it's rare. You could say my clubs are gathering dust."

She paused, then added purposefully, "But the main reason I came today is to ask you to join our kitty party. There are a few new ladies in the group who are also into golf. I thought maybe we could start a new foursome, our own little team."

Reeta looked down, her fingers gently tracing the edge of her dupatta. "You think I can play... in this state of mind? After losing him... I still miss Rajesh every moment. It's hard."

Deepika nodded, her voice softening.

"I know. I truly do. I've been through that pain too. I'm a widow, Reeta, and I understand how grief wraps around your heart like a shadow. But I've learned that the only way through it is to keep moving. Keep living. Sitting in silence with old memories can hurt more than heal."

Reeta was quiet, her eyes misty. Then, slowly, she said: "You're right. Maybe you're right... Invite me to your next kitty party — just as a guest. I'll come and see if I can handle it."

Deepika's eyes brightened.

"That's the spirit! I'm so happy to hear that. And about golf—you loved it. It'll feel good to swing the club again, feel the breeze on your face. Just being outside helps."

Reeta nodded faintly.

"Yes... I do miss it. Maybe I'm ready to try."

Deepika reached over and hugged her.

"I'm proud of you, Reeta. I'll call you with the details. You'll see—it'll do you good. And we'll all be there with you."

As Deepika stood to leave, Reeta walked her to the door. They exchanged a long look, full of shared strength and silent understanding. For the first time in a while, Reeta felt a small shift inside—like the first ray of morning after a long night.

Reeta Attends the Kitty Party

A week later, Reeta stood in front of her mirror, adjusting the soft pastel-coloured dupatta on her shoulder. It had been months since she had dressed up—not for a prayer, not for a ceremony, but for herself. A part of her still felt hollow, but Deepika's words had planted a small seed of strength. Today, she would try.

When she arrived at Deepika's home, the sound of laughter and clinking cups floated through the air. Women in their sixties and seventies, dressed in cheerful colours, sat in a cozy circle with snacks, cards, and jokes flying across the room like old tunes.

Deepika welcomed her with a warm hug. "I'm so proud of you, Reeta. Just relax and enjoy. No expectations today—just tea, talk, and togetherness."

Reeta smiled nervously and sat beside a woman with expressive eyes and silver-streaked hair, who immediately reached out her hand.

"I'm Nalini. You must be Reeta. We've heard so much about you from Deepika—all good things, don't worry!"

Reeta laughed—a small, hesitant laugh, but it was real. Others chimed in with warm greetings. Someone handed her a cup of masala chai. The aroma comforted her more than she expected.

Soon, the chatter turned to familiar stories—how husbands forget anniversaries, how grandkids used emojis they couldn't understand, how the price of onions could ruin your mood more than your horoscope. Cards came out, laughter grew louder, and Deepika kept stealing glances at Reeta, who was now smiling, even teasing another lady during a game of Tombola.

After a while, Deepika nudged her gently.

“So... are we forming our own golf gang?”

Reeta chuckled: “Yes. But only if we agree to play slow and gossip faster.”

Everyone burst out laughing, and someone shouted, “That’s the rule already!”

For the first time in many weeks, Reeta felt a quiet peace within. It wasn't that her grief had vanished—but today, it had made space for something else: friendship, shared smiles, and the beginning of a new chapter.

Reeta's Return to the Golf Course

It was a bright Saturday morning. The sky was a soft blue canvas, dotted with wisps of cloud. Reeta stood at the edge of the golf course, dressed in a white cap and a soft pink sports t-shirt, gripping her old but trusted golf club. Deepika stood beside her, brimming with excitement.

Deepika: “Just like old times, isn't it? But this time, we play at our own pace—no husbands hurrying us up!”

They were joined by Nalini and Sarita, both equally enthusiastic but playfully competitive. Sarita winked, “Hope Reeta doesn't beat us all on her comeback round!”

Reeta, smiling with a spark in her eyes: “Don’t underestimate a woman with months of quiet meditation. I’ve been visualizing perfect shots in my dreams!”

They all laughed. The caddies were amused—four women, all 60+, swinging their clubs with elegance and cracking jokes louder than the birds chirping in the trees.

On the third hole, Reeta took her shot—a clean swing, and the ball soared smoothly across the fairway.

Deepika clapped: “There she is! The Reeta I remember!”

Reeta grinned, her cheeks flushed not just from the walk, but from something deeper—a sense of herself returning.

At the ninth hole, they sat on the bench under a neem tree, sipping coconut water.

Nalini: “So, Reeta... how does it feel?”

Reeta looked at her surroundings—the peaceful greens, her smiling friends, the sound of distant laughter from another group.

“It feels like... breathing again. Like opening a window in a closed room,” she finally said.

Sarita: “And guess what, we’ve signed you up for the senior ladies’ mini tournament next month. Just four holes. No pressure.”

Reeta raised an eyebrow, then laughed. “You people don’t waste time, do you?”

Deepika held her hand: “We’ve wasted enough time mourning. Now we create joy — for Rajesh’s memory, for your healing, and for ourselves.”

They sat quietly for a moment. A gentle breeze passed through, as if the universe itself was smiling on their little group of resilient souls.

The Senior Ladies' Mini Golf Tournament

It was a sunny Sunday morning at the club. Colourful banners fluttered by the entrance:

Senior Ladies Friendship Cup – 4-Hole Fun Tournament

The atmosphere was festive. There was a light breakfast laid out near the clubhouse, with music playing softly in the background.

Reeta arrived with Deepika, both dressed in smart golf attire. Nalini and Sarita greeted them near the starter's desk.

Sarita (teasing): "Reeta ji, I hope you've been practicing... I don't want to hand over the winner's badge without a fight!"

Reeta smiled, the sparkle in her eyes brighter than ever: "You'll have to earn it, Sarita!"

The tournament began.

At the first hole, Reeta swung gracefully, sending the ball close to the green. A group of other seniors watching from a distance clapped. Some were surprised—it was Reeta's first tournament after Rajesh's passing, and she looked serene, poised, and even happy.

Deepika, whispered, "He's watching you today. I'm sure he's proud."

Reeta didn't speak, but her eyes glistened for a moment. She looked up at the sky, silently saying something only she and Rajesh would understand.

On the second hole, Sarita missed an easy putt, and everyone burst out laughing as she jokingly fell to her knees in mock prayer. The laughter was contagious. Even the club's young caddies chuckled, clearly enjoying the energy of this graceful, vibrant group of senior women.

At the third hole, Reeta made a surprising birdie. Deepika ran over and gave her a light high-five. "Look at you! We'll need to call you the comeback queen."

The final hole was near a small pond. As they approached it, a gentle breeze carried the scent of flowering trees nearby. Reeta paused to take it in.

Reeta (softly, to Deepika): “I didn’t think I could feel this alive again... Thank you.”

Deepika: “You brought yourself here, Reeta. We just stood by.”

After the final putt, they all gathered near the small stage where the club secretary handed out fun badges—not for winning, but for style, sportsmanship, and spirit.

Reeta was awarded the **Graceful Comeback Award**.

As she received it, she said into the mic, gently: “Life gives us sorrow, but it also gives us friends—and greens to walk on. Thank you all for helping me take this step forward.”

The crowd clapped. Some were visibly moved. It wasn’t just a game today; it was a celebration of resilience, of friendship, and of quietly powerful healing.

Club Lounge – Post-Tournament Tea

The women gathered around a large table by the glass windows of the lounge. Outside, the golf course glowed in the soft afternoon sun. Cups of masala chai, ginger tea, and plates of sandwiches, kachoris, and biscuits were being passed around.

Reeta sipped her tea, her cheeks still flushed from the game and laughter.

Nalini (smiling): “Reeta ji, we didn’t expect you to be the star today. What’s your secret? Yoga or some divine power?”

Reeta (with a light laugh): “Maybe both. But I think it’s the first time in months I didn’t feel like I was carrying a mountain on my chest.”

Sarita: “See? I told you—golf isn’t just a sport. It’s therapy with a stick!”

Everyone laughed. Deepika leaned closer to Reeta and whispered: “I see your smile coming back. Slowly, but surely.”

Reeta (quietly): “It felt good... to be among friends, to move freely. But when I go home, the silence returns. I still sleep with his kurta next to me sometimes.”

The table grew silent for a second, respectful of her vulnerability.

Nalini (gently): "That's not a weakness, Reeta. That's love. And none of us are strangers to loss."

Sarita: "You know, when my husband passed, I kept his golf cap by the dining table for a whole year. One day, my grandson wore it to school by mistake, and I laughed and cried at the same time."

Deepika (softly): "We carry them with us—not in sorrow, but in our steps, our smiles, our stories."

There was a tender stillness in the room—the kind that only comes when grief finds companionship.

Reeta, gathering herself: "I think... I'll come next week too. And maybe host the next kitty party at my house. Rajesh would've wanted that."

The group lit up with joy.

Sarita: "Now that's a plan! But only if you make your famous chutney sandwiches!"

Reeta, smiling wider: "Deal. And you're bringing your guava cake."

Laughter returned. The chatter turned to grandchildren, saree sales, and who cheats the most in rummy. Life, it seemed, had taken another small but meaningful turn back toward the light.

Yoga session at Ved house again.

Deepika to Reeta: "If you are free tomorrow, let us do yoga meditation at Ved's house; Ved sir had invited me and Deepak for the session. Yes, one thing, wear a loose tracksuit, the shirt must be round neck.

Reeta: "Why round neck?"

Deepika: "Just understand yaar, should I give you a hint?"

Reeta: "Yes."

Deepika: "When we bend our head to our knees, there are chances of exposure."

Reeta: “Oh, I see. Right, I will be there.”

Ved: “Let us first sit in yog mudra.

Close the eyes, take a deep breath and release.

Repeat it three times.

Now close your ear with thumb and chant “om”.

Repeat this three times.

In old days, in the village we used to see our mother making butter from whey.

Let us do butter making exercises.

The morning sun cast golden light across Ved’s open terrace. The usual group—Krishna, Mukesh, Deepak, and Ved—sat cross-legged on yoga mats. A large brass bowl of milk sat at the center of their circle.

Krishna: “What’s this, Ved ji? Breakfast experiment?”

Ved (grinning): “Today we churn. Not just milk, but our thoughts.”

Deepak: “So this is your new yogic ritual? Spiritual lassi making?”

Everyone chuckled.

Ved handed each of them a wooden churner and continued: “Milk is like our mind—white, pure, but filled with distractions and layers. When we churn with focus, what rises?”

Mukesh (smiling): “Butter, of course. Makhan.”

Ved: “Exactly. Butter is our essence—peace, clarity, truth. Let’s try. Slowly. Gently.”

They began rotating the churners in sync, the wooden paddles gliding through the creamy milk. Silence followed, broken only by the rhythmic *thup-thup-thup* of the churning.

Deepak, playfully: “Ved ji, if we churn any slower, the milk might meditate before us.”

Ved: “Let it. We’re not in a hurry.”

Minutes passed. Laughter quieted. The motion became meditative. Minds began to settle.

Krishna (softly): “Funny how our lives are like this milk—so much stirring is needed to bring out what’s best.”

Mukesh: “And if you don’t churn... the butter just stays hidden inside.”

Just then, a golden glob of butter floated to the top.

Ved: “There it is. The essence. Just like us.”

He scooped it out and held it up to the sun.

Ved: “This, my friends, is not just makhan. It’s our morning mantra—stir yourself daily, remove the froth of ego and regret, and rise as your purest self.”

They dipped fingers into the butter and tasted it—fresh, sweet, soulful.

Krishna, licking his finger: “Now this is what I call divine breakfast!”

Ved’s next exercise

A curious setup sat in one corner—a small, hand-operated wheat grinding mill (chakki), borrowed from a neighbour for the day.

Krishna, raising an eyebrow: “Ved, what’s today’s spiritual tool? Are we opening a village bakery?”

Ved, smiling: “Today, we grind—not just wheat, but also our ego, anger, and old habits.”

Deepak chuckled: “Sounds heavy. Do we get parathas at the end?”

Everyone laughed, but Ved’s eyes twinkled with meaning. He handed the first turn to Mukesh, who began turning the wooden handle with a slow, steady motion. The grinding stone groaned gently, wheat pouring in from the top, slowly turning to flour.

Ved: “This wheat grain—it’s like our thoughts. Whole, rigid, carrying weight. But when we grind them with awareness, they soften. Become useful.”

Deepika, watching with interest: “And if you don’t grind it, the grain sits... beautiful, but unbaked.”

Reeta, quietly: “Like grief... until you process it, it weighs you down.”

Everyone paused, sensing her deeper reflection. Ved nodded.

Ved: “True, Reeta ji. Life gives us two stones—time and reflection. And between them, we must grind our experiences into wisdom.”

Each friend took turns—even Deepika tried, with Krishna offering comic instructions like a chef hosting a cooking show.

Krishna: “And now, madam grinds guilt and forgiveness, with just a sprinkle of patience!”

Everyone laughed again, but the rhythm of the grinding became calming and meditative.

Mukesh: “It’s hard work... but satisfying. Like life. No shortcuts—just honest effort.”

After a while, the bowl filled with warm, fresh flour.

Ved: “This flour is soft, ready for nourishment. Just like our refined thoughts—ready to feed the soul and others.”

They stood silently for a moment, each reflecting on the grind of life—painful, yes, but necessary for transformation.

Deepak, rubbing his shoulder: “Next time, Ved ji, bring a mixer. My spiritual growth needs electricity.”

They all burst out laughing.

“Now let us do twisting exercise.”

Ved, acting like a cheerful instructor, clapped his hands: “Alright everyone, today’s focus is on the twisting exercise—not just for the waist, but for untwisting the knots in our minds!”

Krishna, chuckling: “Twisting? I already feel twisted—with bills, doctor appointments, and my grandkids’ online classes!”

Reeta, smiling faintly: “This kind of twisting is better than the emotional one we all carry.”

Ved: “Exactly. Now... feet shoulder-width apart, hands on your waist, slowly twist your torso to the right... inhale... and to the left... exhale.”

They all followed, their movements gentle, deliberate, accompanied by the occasional creak of aging joints and a few dramatic sighs.

Mukesh, groaning playfully: “My body’s turning like a rusted door—it needs oiling!”

Deepak: “Then we should serve tea with this workout—oil inside, oil outside!”

Laughter rippled through the group, but their breathing began to slow, and the rhythmic twisting became more mindful.

Ved, calmly: “Each twist—think of it as releasing an old regret, an old worry... Just like wringing water out of a cloth, we wring out tension from our hearts.”

Deepika, softly: “It feels like we’re squeezing out the old stories we’ve held too tightly.”

Disha, reflecting: “And making space for newer, lighter ones.”

They twisted a few more times, eyes half-closed, letting the gentle breeze brush their cheeks. It wasn’t just a physical stretch—it was a spiritual realignment.

Reeta, after a pause: “You know... for the first time in months, I feel like my chest isn’t so tight. Maybe I needed this—not just for the body.”

Ved, nodding: “Pain is part of life, but suffering... that we can twist out, slowly, with awareness.”

As the session ended, they all stood silently for a moment—a group of old friends, gently unwinding not just their bodies, but their burdens.

Then Krishna broke the silence: “Ved, next time you twist me this much, at least bring some jalebis to straighten me back out!”

They all burst into laughter, grateful—for movement, for memories, and for each other.

Reeta: “I feel today was good fun and we should do it more seriously. Exercise means exercise, fun moments should be after words.”

Ved noted Reeta Ji, all left for their Homes.

Next day the same yoga was repeated in serious mode.

Take deep breath hold for count 3 and release.

Repeat the same five times.

Take Deep breath and chant OM.

Repeat this five times.

Chakki chalanasana (mill running) is a beginner-level sitting posture that requires the involvement of almost every part of the body to work in a synchronized manner. Being one of the rotational poses, it involves the periodic transition in the spine that makes it flexible. Moreover, it also stretches the entire back.

Apart from sculpturing the outer body, Chakki Chalanasana is an effective practice to improve the functioning of internal organs. To ensure equal benefits, the practice should be done in both directions equally to balance the subtle energy that participates silently in this asana practice. Hence, it also holds spiritual benefits.

Meaning

Chakki Chalanasana is the Sanskrit term, which when translated, can be understood as ‘Chakki’ means ‘rotating wheel’, ‘Chalana’ means ‘to move’ and ‘Asana’ means ‘posture’. Therefore, practicing this asana makes an individual mimic the person that actually rotates that wheel for a living.

Chakki or Mill is a device that had been mainly used to grind or crush food grain like wheat, rice, millet, corn, etc into powdered form in ancient India.

A person pours a handful of food grain into a circular space along with the rotation of chakki or mill in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. It usually takes hours to obtain a good amount.

Chakki Chalanasana Practice Guide

Practitioners can go through the points to perform this asana for safe and imperative practice.

Contraindications

- Pregnant women should avoid practicing this Asana due to continuous change in shape and size of the abdomen. This could be physically uncomfortable to the fetus and as well as to the mother.
- A patient who has undergone surgery on the stomach, waist, or any region, which has been affected while practicing, should refrain oneself from doing Chakki Chalanasana.
- Practitioners with the condition of High blood pressure should avoid practicing this Asana for too long or should go mild. Practice needs to be stopped as one begins to feel uncomfortable physically.
- Individuals with the Injury in the neck, shoulder, knees, and back might worsen their present condition. One should wait till recovery or consult the doctor before enrolling himself into this Asana practice.

How to do this Asana

Begin the practice by getting into the Dandasana. Your legs and back should be erect here.

- Now, slowly bring space between your legs as wide as possible and hands-on your waist or can be placed beside the hips to assist widening of the legs.
- After setting up your legs, raise your hands up to the sternum level. Clasp your hands into each other just as you are holding a stick in a wheel.

- Now, inhale and engage your core, calves, thighs to move your upper body forward to the right side.
- This is the beginning point to form an imaginary circle. Now, exhale to come in a backward direction to the left side.
- Afterward, change the direction from clockwise to anti-clockwise and vice versa. Maintain here and keep making the circle for 10 to 15 minutes.
- As you finish the practice, bring your clasped hand in the center, and then, back to the previous position (beside the hips). Bring legs together by decreasing the space in between and finally into the Dandasana, then relax.
- Practitioners should follow the points below to ensure the right and safe practice of Chakki Chalanasana.
- The space in between the legs should be equal in both directions. Less or more space to any of the sides lays pressure on kidneys while changing the direction. Therefore, adjust your legs well before you begin to practice.
- While going in a forwarding direction, prefer steady and slow diving to coordinate with breathing, which is one of the efficient aspects of Chakki Chalanasana. Any hurry while doing this could interrupt breathing that further affects the practice.
- It is to be advised that while coming backward always use your core and entire legs to stabilize the posture. However, this will also prevent you from falling backward.

Tips for Beginners, Reeta and Deepika

- Beginners might be having difficulty spreading their legs wide enough in this Asana. So, one should not proceed beyond their limit as it could cause damage to the Hamstrings.
- The clasped hand should be straight and well gripped. So, they are able to perform well and round an imaginary circle. Avoid losing

your concentration here. Make yourself active to refine the posture.

- It is important to keep the spine erect throughout the Chakki Chalanasana practice because it will provide the necessary orientation that keeps your base well mounted on the floor.
- Do it up to your capacity.

Benefits

1. Tone Up Upper Body

Chakki Chalanasana requires the active involvement of the upper body, which makes the muscles in this region experience a good workout. On regular practice, it leads to the toning up of the concerning muscles. However, it also improves flexibility in the long run.

2. Strengthens Abdominal Organs

The churning movement in this asana causes the abdomen to relax and contracts as a practitioner rotates circular. This provides a massaging effect over the internal organs like the stomach, kidneys, pancreas, liver, adrenal glands, intestines, gallbladder, etc. This improves their functioning and provides strength to the Abdominal organs.

3 Stimulates Sacral Chakra

Regular practice of Chakki Chalanasana with the right breathing techniques under the skilled yoga teacher can result in the stimulation of the Sacral chakra residing on the sacrum. It transforms you into the energy source to creative activity, desire, relationships, movement, and pleasure.

4. Enhance Spinal Flexibility

Round and round motion increase the movements between the spinal columns attached to each other vertically. Such movements on being experienced by the spinal columns on a regular basis enhanced flexibility.

5. Makes Hamstrings strong and Flexible

Spreading of legs while performing Chakki chalanasana loosen up the muscle fibers attached in numbers to shape a muscle. These fibers become flexible and strong on stretching, which refines their basic structure.

Chakki Chalanasana is an effective yoga practice that makes one flexible and strong. However, it is also widely used to lessen various disorders of internal organs by regulating their functioning.

Now buttermilk exercise

It likely refers to the traditional churning of curd to extract buttermilk (lassi) using a wooden churner or whisk (madani/dahi mathani).

Just sit down, spread your legs straight and widen it, now make a fist of both hands, presume there is rope in your hand and rope is at the pole of the pot. The rope has to be pulled with one hand and released with the other, pull it 20 times and release it 20 times.

Let's explore what this could mean as an exercise and what the benefits might be:

1. Arm and Shoulder Strengthening:

- Continuous movement engages biceps, triceps, and shoulder joints — useful for maintaining upper body mobility.

2. Improved Grip and Hand Coordination:

- Strengthens fingers and palms — beneficial for arthritis or age-related stiffness.

3. Core Activation:

- The twisting motion from the waist helps gently engage the abdominal muscles.

4. Joint Mobility and Circulation:

- Promotes better blood flow in arms and shoulders — vital for senior citizens.

5. Posture Awareness:

- Encourages upright sitting or standing, which supports spinal alignment.

Mental and Emotional Benefits:

1. Rhythmic Repetition Promotes Calmness:

- Like knitting or meditative tasks, the repetitive motion can induce a calming effect.

2. Cultural Connection:

3. Brings back memories of village life, traditional kitchens, and simpler times – promoting emotional well-being

4. Mindfulness through Simplicity:

- Focusing on a simple motion can anchor attention and reduce mental clutter.

Deepika said to Reeta ji: "You're doing your buttermilk workout again? You'll soon have biceps like a wrestler!"

Reeta smiled and replied: "This Madani has seen more action than the gym machines. And it gives me lassi too!"

Ved, you know, in summer buttermilk gives lots of health benefits.

Health Benefits of Buttermilk:

1. Probiotic Powerhouse
2. Calcium Boost
3. Potassium Rich
4. B-Vitamin Source
5. Weight Management
6. Digestive Aid
7. Hydration Support

8. Soothing Effect
9. Rich in Protein
10. Boosts Immunity
11. Heart Health
12. Lactose Digestion
13. Anti-Inflammatory
14. Skin Health
15. Vitamin D Absorption

Final Reflections – Ved’s Thoughts

Ved sat quietly, reflecting on the passage of time. He had survived two more hospitalizations, each time returning safely—grateful, yet changed. Krishna had moved to Dehradun to be with his sister. Mukesh, battling liver cancer, was undergoing treatment. Reeta had relocated to the USA to live with her son. Deepika and Deepak had immersed themselves fully in golf. And now, Ved found himself alone.

The circle that once met daily had slowly scattered. Such is life.

Some people walk with us for years. Some cross paths briefly yet leave lasting impressions. Some quietly exit—from our lives or from this world—once their role is done. We are all actors on this grand stage, playing our parts before fading into the wings.

Life continues—through friendships, memories, and the love we carry.

So, live well. Stay rooted in your soul. If you are healthy, content, and connected to the divine within—know that you are on the right path.

Walk this journey with awareness, gratitude, and grace.

Radha Soami

Happy to share some spiritual notes.

"जो कुछ भी होता है, वो हमारे कल्याण के लिए होता है।" (*Whatever happens, happens for our ultimate good.*)

"मनुष्य का असली धन उसकी शांति है।" (*A person's true wealth is their inner peace.*)

"मुक्ति बहार नहीं, अंदर की शुद्धि में है।" (*Liberation is not external; it lies in inner purity.*)

"जीवन एक सफर है, मंजिल नहीं - सीखने का, समझने का।" (*Life is a journey, not a destination – it's for learning and understanding.*)

"अहंकार से बड़ा कोई रोग नहीं, और विनम्र से बड़ा कोई दवा नहीं।" (*There is no illness greater than ego, and no medicine greater than humility.*)

"कल क्या होगा का चिंता छोड़ो, वर्तमान में जीना सीखो।"
(*Stop worrying about tomorrow, learn to live in the present.*)

"जैसा विचार, वैसा जीवन।" (*As your thoughts are, so will be your life.*)

"जो चला गया, उसे छोड़ दो; जो आया है, उसे अपनाओ."
(*Let go of what has gone; embrace what has come.*)

"सुख और दुख दोनों शिक्षक हैं - एक धैर्य सिखाता है, दूसरा अहंकार टूटता है।" (*Joy and sorrow are both teachers – one teaches patience, the other breaks ego.*)

"प्रेम बिना जीवन सुना है, और सेवा बिना प्रेम अधूरा।" (*Life is empty without love, and love is incomplete without service.*)

"मन के हारे हार है, मन के जीते जीत।" (*Defeat lies in a defeated mind, and victory lies in a determined one.*)

"जीवन में शांति तब आती है, जब हम अपने कर्मों का पालन करना सीख जाते हैं।" (*Peace enters life when we learn to take responsibility for our actions.*)

"हर सुबह एक नया अवसर है, नई सोच के साथ जीवन जीने का।"
(*Every morning is a new opportunity to live life with a fresh mindset.*)

"जब तक अहंकार है, तब तक परमात्मा दूर है।"
(*As long as ego exists, the divine remains distant.*)

Spiritual Sayings

“This too shall pass.”

– A gentle reminder that both pain and pleasure are temporary.

“True peace comes not from outside, but from within.”

“Do your duty, leave the rest to God.”

– Echoing the message of the Bhagavad Gita.

“The soul is neither born, nor does it die.”

– Bhagavad Gita 2.20

“A thankful heart opens the door to divine grace.”

“Let go of the ego – only then can you find peace.”

“Bhajan, Simran, and Satsang are the ladders to spiritual joy.”

“In serving others, we discover God’s presence.”

“Life is a journey from ‘I’ to ‘We’ – and from ‘Me’ to ‘Thee.’”

“As long as breath remains, keep chanting the name of the Lord.”

॥ संसार समुंदर में नाव है सत्य, प्रेम उसका पटवार है” (In the ocean of the world, truth is the boat, and love is its oar.)

॥ " जो होना है, वो होकर रहेगा – चिंता सिर्फ मन की उलझन है”

(What is destined to happen – worry is only the mind’s entanglement.)

- "मिट्टी से आये हैं, मिट्टी में मिलना है - बीच का समय भगवान का वरदान है।" (We came from dust, and to dust we shall return – the time in between is a gift from God.)

- "आत्मा कभी मरती नहीं, बस रूप बदलता है।" (The soul never dies, it merely changes form.)

- "समय से बड़ा कोई गुरु नहीं।" (There is no greater teacher than time.)

- "जीवन एक मंच है, हर कोई अपना किरदार निभाता है।" (Life is a stage; everyone plays their role.)

- "संकट में शांति धारण करना ही सच्चा धर्म है।" (Maintaining peace in a crisis is true righteousness.)
- "जब तुम्हारे पास कुछ नहीं होता, तब भगवान तुम्हारे साथ होता है।" (When you have nothing, that's when God is truly with you.)
- "वैराग्य में सुख है, मोह में दुःख।"
(There is bliss in detachment, and sorrow in attachment.)
- "जब तक श्वास है, तब तक आस है।" (As long as there is breath, there is hope.)

Other books by the author:

Life Is Not Easy (in Hindi)

- Indian Customs Baggage Rules
- Sweet and Sour Experiences in Life,
- Four Senior Citizen Friends
- Hiccups in life
- Happy not happy, all matters of Karmas
- Modern saints' messages, can change your life

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