

Prologue

'Vedas' and other holy scriptures describes clearly that the general public follow their leaders. Most of our so-called religious 'gurus' are misguiding the ignorant people for their personal material gains. Who knows the truth and logic, better than a scientist? But I am sorry to say; they tend to confine their scientific thinking to the labs only and outside they behave in a similar superstitious & orthodox manner as others. By now it should be clear that we have gone downhill in the matter of rational thinking and proved.

Science has made tremendous progress in Space, Defense, Atomic Energy, Material Sciences, Astrophysics and Oceanography etc. Every man believes in God as everyone remembers Him at least in difficult times. But, it would be more appropriate to remember Him – by following His dictates i.e. the righteous path, making use of one's intellect and rejecting anything against the scientific (natural) laws & logic. For example, solar and lunar eclipses are well explained as shadow effects of sun, moon and earth; so-called miracles are either finesse (skill) of hands or can easily be explained by basic principles of science (physics & chemistry etc.).

Now, one may ask a question what is to be done? The answer lies in the development of a scientific temper. The superstitions are flourishing as lack of scientific reasoning has taken a front seat and we are unable to come out of the outworn customs and blind faiths. It is an irony that we refuse to recognize the fact that the grounds on which the original beliefs were based, are no longer applicable.

Maharshi Dayanand raged a total war against all the evils prevalent in the society at that time, including the ones for which Raja Ram Mohan Roy has also fought. He ignored the abuses showered and the stones hurled on him to fight all types of superstitions, misconceptions & blind faiths etc. Being a follower of the rishi's ideals, I have taken up this work of translating popular Hindi book "Andhvishwas Nirmoolan" in its English version. In this book an attempt has been made to analyze logically how, when & why a particular superstition might have started so that people can realize (if they are willing to do so) themselves it's inapplicability in today's context. I have made certain additions with the explicit permission of the author with the sole intention of making the book more useful to the readers

In the end, I thank Shri Madan Raheja, author of "Andhvishwas Nirmoolan", for reposing his faith in me for the preparation of this English version. In fact, it is a big job to collect a list of so many misconceptions, blind faiths and superstitions. He has done a wonderful work in this regard in this book. Every effort has been made to present as correct information as possible in this text. However, if a mistake is pointed out it will be accepted with thanks. I hope and pray to God that this work benefits the society at large. God may bless all.

Ram Niwas Arya

Index of various superstitions

Chapter 1 – God 1-31

Superstition # 1: God has attributes and form!

Superstition # 2: God descends in the world as an incarnation – Lord Krishna has stated this in the Geeta!

Superstition # 3: So many people visit temples, are all of them are superstitious – blind venerators?

Superstition # 4: God pleases if one lights a lamp and an incense stick (*agarbatti*) in the house.

Superstition # 5: God bestows His favours only on those whom He likes and not on all!

Superstition # 6: The soul is a part of the Supreme Spirit – God and extremely blissful!

Superstition # 7: Man can attain Salvation and wash off his sins by remembering God's name with gratitude!

Superstition # 8: God pardons our sinful acts, if we apologise or confess to Him!

Superstition # 9: If you have '*Shraddha*' – faith and show reverence to an idol, God will response to your prayer!

Superstition # 10: People go to temples for worship because God resides only in Temples!

Superstition # 11: Prayers, Blessings and Curses have effect on one's life!

Superstition # 12: Often, it is said, "God is all in all. He does everything in the Universe. We all are like puppets in His hands. We cannot do anything of our own and even a leaf cannot move without His will or permission!"

Superstition # 13: Anyone can visualise God, if mind is clean!

Superstition # 14: God takes away ('*Harta*' & a colloquial word) and pardons our sins!

Superstition # 15: God gets pleased and one's desires are fulfilled if one goes to the temple of deities either moving on his/her knees or crawling!

Superstition # 16: It's 'Brahma', Vishnu" and 'Mahesh' who creates, operates and destructs the Universe respectively! On the other hand 'Brahma' has created the Universe, 'Vishnu' operates & directs it and 'Mahesh' causes its destruction!

Superstitions # 17: God know the past, present & future of everyone!

Superstition # 18: God is Omnipotent; He can do anything He wants!

Chapter 2 - Gods & Goddesses 32-51

Superstition # 1: Offering of mustard oil to '*Shani Devata*' on Saturday, reduces the evil effects and '*Shani*' gets pleased; so it does not trouble you!

Superstition # 2: By making 'an animal sacrifice' – all desires are fulfilled, all obstacles from the path get removed & the success comes to you in your endeavours!

Superstition # 3: According to 'Puranas' (Hindu mythological scriptures), by invoking 'Laxmi' (The goddess of Wealth); Laxmi comes to one's house and stays there!

Superstition # 4: Offering of water (mixed with milk) on 'Shivling', pleases Lord Shiva!

Superstition # 5: If you are in fear, recite 'Hanuman Chalisa'!

Superstition # 6: It is said that true devotees of the goddess ('mata') will experience her presence in their physical body!

Superstition # 7: Printing of eulogy in the name of deities and its distribution will bring prosperity to your profession and business!

Superstition # 8: Worship of 'Ganapati' – the Hindu elephant-headed god, by red betel nuts and betel leaves pleases Him!

Superstition # 9: Idols of 'Ganapati' (elephant-headed god), surprised the whole world by drinking milk!

Superstition # 10: Shri Ram Chandra was bestowed with twelve arts ('Kalas') whereas Shri Krishna had sixteen and that is why Shri Krishna is more popular than Sri Rama!

Chapter 3 – Ghosts 52-58

Superstition # 1: There is no riddance from ghost, an evil spirit, monster, a witch & a demon etc.; because all these do exist!

Superstition # 2: One who sits or urinates under a tree at night, he/she will be affected by an intangible image of the 'Bhoot/Prêt' (Ghost/an Evil spirit) and may become mad and eventually may die too!

Superstition # 3: Ghosts / evil spirits (Bhoot / Prêt) etc. live in darkness and they work only when it is pitch dark!

Superstition # 4: Wandering souls rest in peace, by performing 'Pooja' through Brahmins!

Chapter 4 – Guru 59-69

Superstition # 1: Adoption of a 'Guru' – Mentor/Preceptor/Guide/Teacher is essential, without which the Salvation cannot be achieved in life!

Superstition # 2: It is said that talking ill of saints, sages, hermits and gurus is a sinful act!

Superstition # 3: The saints whose names are followed by "Shri, Shri Shri, Shri 108, Shri 1008 etc." - are supposed to be perfectly enlightened and closer to God!

Superstition # 4: Only a spiritual guru gives a true 'Naam Daan' i.e. a sacred formulae or God's name for recitation & one's upliftment!

Superstition # 5: When a 'Saint with supernatural powers' desires, his soul can enter into the body of another person & perceive the thoughts of that person and return back to his own body!

Superstition # 6: Many gurus/mentors/preceptors say that "This world is an illusion, a dream. God is the only truth and everything else is all delusory!

Chapter 5 - Mantra/Tantra/Yantra 70-80

Superstition # 1: Man is covered by nature. He believes that he power of a voodooist and witchcrafts (Mantra –Tantra) could cure him/her from his/her fears!!

Superstition # 2: Charms or magical formulae (Mantras), amulets (Yantras) and mystical practices (Tantras) in the form of voodoos & witchcrafts have many powers. They can bring success to one's endeavours!

Superstition # 3: Magic-Mantra can help one blow over or avert a crisis or some critical moments in one's life!!

Superstition # 4: By tying a particular 'thread' or an 'amulet' around neck or on arm as a charm, will protect from evil eyes and make you fearless.

Superstitions # 6: The Tarot readings (future predictions etc.) are always seems to be correct!

Superstition # 7: If a colour therapy is done on a patient's photograph with the help of a genuine faith healer, a patient staying anywhere in the world can be treated and recovered!

Chapter 6 - Holy places 81-87

Superstition # 1: Dropping of coins in the waters of fountains, rivers and holy ponds fulfil wishes!

Superstition # 2: By travelling to pilgrimage places ('Tirth-Yatra'), one washes off the sins!

Superstition # 3: Water from Holy Rivers like the Ganges, need not be boiled!

Superstition # 4: It's a sacred act to worship!

Chapter 7 - Festivals 88-94

Superstition # 1: 'Laxmi' (goddess of wealth) should be worshipped on 'Diwali' (Hindu's most auspicious day); otherwise getting displeased, she leaves the house and one may have to live with poverty.

Superstition # 2: According to the so-called 'Vastu' experts, "pure ghee lamp should be lighted in the house only during 'Diwali' & 'Navratri' (Nine nights of goddess *Durga*) time"! It can be lighted only in temples but not in the house On other days, otherwise one may lose the riches & the 'Griha laxmi'!

Superstition # 3: Donations on the dark-day ('Amavasyaa') are considered good & auspicious!

Superstition # 4: Prosperity prevails at home, if sweet vermicelli's are offered/fed to a painted picture of 'Shravan Nakshatra' on the outer wall of the house in the month of 'Shravani',!

Chapter 8 - Astrology 95-102

Superstition # 1: Charity, munificence and countering the evil planetary effects; can change one's destiny!

Superstition # 2: The astrology, which has made prophecies/predictions hundreds of years back about solar & lunar eclipses, cannot be wrong!

Superstition # 3: Predictions of astrologers can improve the destiny of many people!

Superstition # 4: Predictions of astrologers may turn out to be wrong, but prophecies of astrology are never wrong!

Superstition # 5: Astrologers can predict one's future, by seeing/reading the lines on his/her palms & forehead!

Superstition # 6: Brahmans prepare horoscope (short or detailed) & auspicious moments etc. at child's birth, which tells you about his/her future and ups & downs in the life!

Superstition # 7: Donations during Solar & Lunar eclipses are considered auspicious, to get rid of their ill effects and remove one's sufferings!

Chapter 9 - Birth & Death 103-113

Superstition # 1: What we see in dreams, more or less comes true! Life span increases if we see ourselves 'dead' in a dream!!

Superstition # 2: A person gets the next birth - according to his/her intentions, sentiments, emotions, desires and feelings etc. at the time of death!

Superstition # 3: It is said, "Clothes of dead persons should not be worn - they should be donated."

Superstition # 4: It is said, "In the house where a death has taken place, worshiping activities (e.g. 'Sandhya' - morning & evening prayers, 'Agnihotra' - performance of holy fire ritual, lighting of Deepak etc.) should not be undertaken for 12 days!

Superstition # 5: Brahmans perform and make us to perform '*Shraaddh*' - a special ritual, for attainment of a better abode for the departed!

Superstition # 6: After the death of father/mother or any other elder member of the family, rest of the family members (except the female folk) should shave their heads!

Superstition # 7: A widow should not marry again! She should be kept in a separate room and dressed in white clothes only. She should avoid make-up and wearing of glass bangles etc.!

Superstition # 8: One should perform '*Pind-Daan*', for the peace of the departed soul!

Chapter 10 - Evil eye 114-118

Superstition # 1: How can one do good in return, if any person harms us by his/her evil deed?

Superstition # 2: To avoid an evil eye of other people, one should hang (1) one fresh lemon & seven green chillies tied together or (2) a old horse shoe or (3) an old worn out slipper at the gate of your house / shop / office etc.

Superstition # 3: A small black mark is applied to infants & children, so that they are not afflicted by the evil glance of others!

Superstition # 4: A small patch on a new '*saree*' (Indian wear) protects the woman from ill/ominous glance of others!

Chapter 11 - Auspicious/inauspicious 119-133

Superstition # 1: It is an inauspicious sign if a cat crosses your path when you come out of the house!

Superstition # 2: Some days are auspicious and some others are inauspicious! During inauspicious days, marriage and related rituals are

not performed. On full day alms & donations as well as performance of 'Yajna' etc. are considered auspicious!

Superstition # 3: Breakage of glass is considered to be auspicious whereas to keep the broken glass in the house is inauspicious!

Superstition # 4: Right hand is auspicious and left hand is inauspicious!

Superstition # 5: It is auspicious to spell ink on the hand while going for the examination!

Superstition # 6: It's inauspicious to sight a 'Brahman', a new pitcher, an oil pot/oil man, a hermit, a hunchbacked person, a woman in menstruation or a cat crossing the road while going out of the house!

Superstition # 7: Breakage of any clay pot on the occasion of a marriage is inauspicious!

Superstition # 8: The sight of a pitcher full of water is auspicious and an empty pot inauspicious when going out of for work!

Superstition # 9: Sound of the bird is considered 'auspicious' whereas the scratching of ear or crying of the dog as 'inauspicious'!

Superstition # 10: Many of the cricketers fully believe that "Getting up from bed by the left side in the morning and tying the left pad on the left leg first before going to field is considered inauspicious."

Superstition # 11: English people throw away an old pair of shoe over the new car before driving it for the first time in England! They call it 'an auspicious act'!

Superstition # 12: It is believed to be inauspicious in western countries as well as in India - to light three cigarettes with one matchstick.

Superstition # 13: To see a falling star in the sky is inauspicious!

Superstition # 14: It is inauspicious to give a knife, scissors or blade in hand!

Superstition # 15: It is inauspicious to wear black clothes on working days!

Superstition # 16: It is inauspicious to give / receive money with left hand!

Chapter 12 - Destiny 134-141

Superstition # 1: Occurrences and acquirements are purely dependent on the records of your destiny!

Superstition # 2: The writ of destiny cannot be changed!

Superstition # 3: A vow of offering on the tomb of saints/fakirs/mentors fulfils our wishes!

Superstition # 4: If one is destined to be unhappy, even the blessings of elders cannot help him!

Superstition # 5: If a piece of yellow cloth with seven knots is thrown on a crossing, misfortunes can be averted! By tying seven knots on a piece of yellow cloth and thrown on a road crossing, misfortunes are averted!

Chapter 13 - Unlucky Number 142-143

Superstition # 1: It's a belief of many people that number 13 is unlucky & inauspicious!

Chapter 14 - House 144-155

Superstition # 1: Rapping keys at night is not considered good!!

Superstition # 2: It is a belief that one loses wealth & prosperity, if he/she sweeps and throws garbage outside the premises at night!

Superstition # 3: It could cause disaster for the house/housewife/wealth, if your main door is facing south/west and / or air & light comes in from the south/west door! Be cautious!

Superstition # 4: Killing of any living being is sin, but to kill mosquitoes, flies, insects etc. is not a sin!

Superstition # 5: By stealing a sapling (money plant) and planting in your house, it grows very fast and so your riches!

Superstition # 6: Child marriage helps children in not getting spoiled when they grow up!

Superstition # 7: Nails and hair should not be cut on Saturdays. And don't start a journey and don't wear new clothes and/or new shoes also on Saturdays!!

Superstition # 8: One should not cut nails at night in the house and not at all in the shop at any time!!

Superstition # 9: If top portion/side of Saree (called '*anchal*' in Hindi) is fanned from top to bottom of the body of an ailing child suffering from fever, fever subsides!!

Superstition # 10: Tying a thread around a *Papal/Peepal* or a Banyan tree and by going round, unmarried gets a charming husband and the husband of a married woman is blessed with a long life!

Superstition # 11: Health improves by performing "Tulsi Pooja" – worshipping of basil plant & its wedding with child Krishna made of brass also offering fragrance sticks, clothes, bracelets etc. every year!

Chapter 15 - Fasts 156-160

Superstition # 1: According to a narration in '*Satnarayan Katha*' and general belief of a common man, not to accept '*Prasad*' is considered inauspicious!!

Superstition # 2: By observing '*Karva Chouth Vrat*' (fast) by female, life span of her husband increases!

Superstition # 3: Fast on the sixth day of the fortnight, in the name of "*Vaishno Maata Badi Maata & Sheetala Maata*" blesses one with a son!

Superstition # 4: One can be blessed with a long life by performing "*Satyanarayan Vrat*" or/and listening its '*Katha*' – story and by doing hocus-pocus!

Chapter 16 - Food 161-169

Superstition # 1: An accident could occur if you carry lemons, chillies, *papads*, pickles, liquor & so on with you during journey! These are ominous and cause mishaps too!

Superstition # 2: On every food-grain or meal morsel, the name of eater is inscribed on it!

Superstition # 3: Flesh-eating is a sin; even then many people eat non-vegetarian food! Bible or Quran does not call it a sin. 90% of world population is non-vegetarian, they all cannot be sinner!

Superstition # 4: Fruits, flowers and vegetables also have lives. Eating these is not considered an evil deed and then a non-vegetarian also cannot be called a sinner!

Superstition # 5: Drinking alcohol etc. is not a sin, other so-called religions / sects say so!

Chapter 17 - Miscellaneous 170-184

Superstition # 1: Sprinkling on the wheels of the vehicle will make your journey successful!!

Superstition # 2: A eunuch (impotent) should not be teased or harassed. It may invite a curse!

Superstition # 3: Love is a hindrance in meditation & concentration of mind!

Superstition # 4: One should avoid repudiation i.e. not to criticise anyone because in this way, unity is lost & distances increases amongst people!

Superstition # 5: An accomplished Yogi can call spirits, whenever he so desires!

Superstition # 6: One has to believe in what he/she see or hear. If some one's feelings and sentiments are sincere then why to name it as 'Superstitions'!

Superstition # 7: Worship is OK but offering of pure ghee, 'Samagri' (mixture of herbs) & other costly eatables to the fire rituals during the performance of 'Yajna' is wastage of those things, instead they can as well be offered to the poor & needy people!

Superstition # 8: Sometimes 'Miracles' do take place in the world because the occurrence of spectaculars events is only once in a while!

Superstition # 9: Genuine feelings can also convert an impossible task into a possible one!

Superstition # 10: There exist eighty-four lacs i.e. 8.4 millions species (life-states) in the Universe!

Superstition # 11: 'Touchwood' saves you from evil eye and untoward incidents in life!

Chapter 18 - Superstitions in western countries 185-188

Superstition # 1: The Tarot Reading

Superstition # 2: The Honeymoon

Superstition # 3: The Wedding Cake

Superstition # 4: Death

Superstition # 5: Dog

Superstition # 6: Dreams

Superstition # 7: Dying Day

Superstition # 8: Eye Twitching

Superstition # 9: Funeral

Superstition # 10: Grave

Superstition # 11: Mirror

Superstition # 12: Moth

Superstition # 13: Photograph

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Superstition # 15: Umbrella

Appendix: The Vedic Beliefs & Theories 189-196