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Sabarimala: SC imposed a post Victorian thought on us, which is opposed to Indian ethos

By [Vicky Nanjappa](#) | Updated: Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 16:40 [IST]



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New Delhi, Oct 9: One of the most debated and criticised verdicts in recent times is the one relating to the Sabarimala Temple. The Supreme Court had said that women of all age groups can enter the temple. In no time there were protests and also a review petition in the Supreme Court.



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The review stated that only a believer could have challenged the customs at the temple and the original plea was filed by someone unconnected. D K Hari, the co-founder and author, who runs, Bharath Gyan along with his wife Hema Hari says that the Sabarimala verdict was passed on a post victorian thought, which does not have resonance with the Indian ethos. Bharath Gyan is a Chennai based NGO engaged in research of India's traditions and culture.



D K Hari while discussing with OneIndia the verdict also says that opinion on a denomination temple like Sabarimala should not and cannot be formed on the basis of a western thought that has been imposed on India



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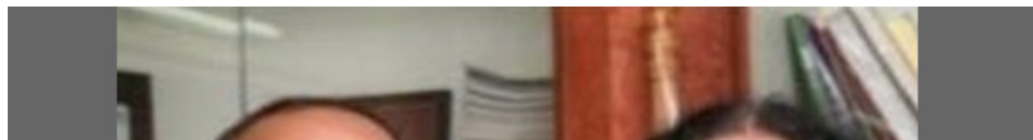
Hari says that to start with he has a problem with the word believer. A believer is only for Islam and Christianity, the Abrahamic faith. We do not have believers. We are seekers and that is the fundamental difference.

Also Read | Only a believer could have challenged Sabarimala ban, the greatest judge can't match peoples' voice

A believer is an idea that is thrust upon you. You believe it whether it is wrong or right. You believe it whether you like it or not. We are people who seek. Hence, believer is not the right word to use, he also says. Hari also says that the term Hinduism was brought in by the British and cemented by the Supreme Court.

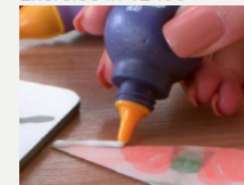
Shad Madham:

Prior to that we had something called Shad Madham. There are six ways of religion that we have- Sauram, Saktham, Ganapathyam, Kaumaram, Shaivism and Vaishnavam. These were the six religions that India had. Shad Madham is concept from the times of Adi Shankar, who lived around 540 DCE. This means this concept has been in India for about 2,400 years and more.



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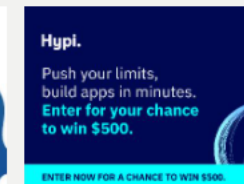
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D K Hari and Hema

Prior to this we had the concept of Sanathana Dharma. Sanathana means, oldest as well as the ever young, which means it keeps moulding to the current changes and needs as per time. Dharma means character, which includes good living or living with character. Sanathana Dharma means living with sync with nature (Prakriti), times (Kala), sciences (Vigyana) and righteous character (Dharma).

What is a denomination temple:

This means there were six different temple worshippers.



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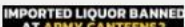
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What is a denomination temple:

This means there were six different temple worshippers. There are two things that however crept in between. One was animal sacrifice and the other was the caste based debarring of entry into the temples. Both have been rightfully removed, Hari says. The way how moss collects in stagnant water, in this case these two aberrations creep in, which should be periodically removed.

Each of these denominations had their temples and the Constitution allows denomination temples and the right to practise the denominational practises, Hari explains. There were temples part of these six denominations and there are also temples outside these denominations.

Also Read | [Sabarimala verdict: Supreme Court says no urgent hearing on review plea](#)

The Sabarimala Temple has a combination of both Vaishnavism and Shavism because there is a combination of both Shiva and Vishnu in Lord Ayyappa. Denomination can be any of the six or a combination of the six or any type beyond the six. Each also has the right to their denominational practises as enshrined in the Constitution.

The caste system:

Like the term Hinduism, the caste system was introduced by the British. Prior to the caste system we had a 'Jaathi Varna' system. The word Jaathi comes from the word Janam, which speaks about birth. Varna is not about colour but about choice. It has been wrongly mentioned as colour. Hari

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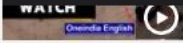
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colour, but about choice. It has been wrongly mentioned as colour, Hari says.

In this the girl gets to choose and as we say in Hindi, Var Doodna (find the groom). It is the girl who has the choice and not the boy. That is why it is called Swayamvar where the girl is the final person who makes the choice. These are the features and facets of the Indian thought, Hari further adds. This is very much like how the animal kingdom also functions. The tigress chooses the tiger, lioness chooses the lion, honey bee chooses the bee and so on.

Also Read | [SC throws open doors of Sabarimala Temple to women](#)

Hence the Indian ethos and Sanatha Dharma is in sync with nature in thought and practise.

Equality vs complimentary:

Another aspect that Hari draws our attention to is regarding the concept of equality. He says that India never stood for equality, but for something more profound and beyond.

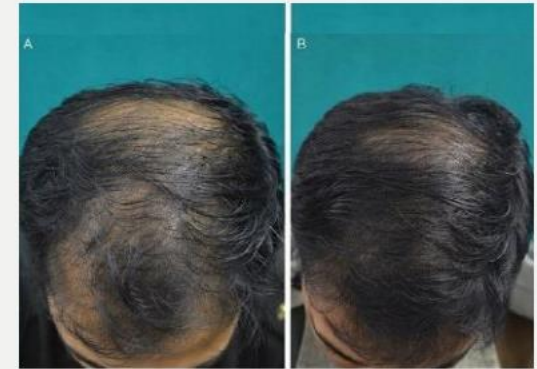
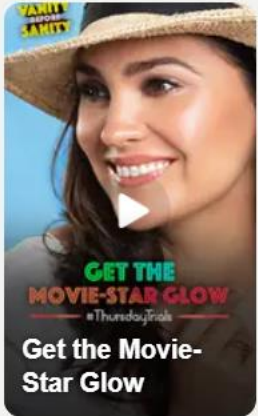
Equality is a very western concept imposed on India. In the West women have always been considered as inferior. Whereas in India, we have had for centuries women who were warriors, scholars and mathematicians. Due to this there was no need for equality in India.

We had a thought called Saha, which means complimentary. The wife is called the Saha Dharmini- the one who treads the path of Dharma along with the man in a complimentary nature. The brother and sister are Sahodara and Sahodari for their complimentary siblings and are not equals, Hari also explains.

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Sama on the other hand means equal in India. Each has a function and role to play, but the fact is that they are not equal to you, but complimentary to you. Even the third gender Napumsaka has a role to play, Hari adds.

Hari says, even the West today is slowly moving away from equality and going towards complimentary. For them, this move is new and post-modern, while we in India have been speaking this complimentary nature for 1,000s of years.

Imposing equality:

Imposing the concept of equality is just a passing phase. All such movements are fads and the equality movement will over the next few decades become complimentary. Equality is not natural, but complimentary is. Imposed thoughts have had their run and failed, Hari also says.

Sabarimala the denomination temple:

Commenting on the Sabarimala issue, Hari says that one must understand the core idea before an opinion is framed. Opinion on a denomination temple such as Sabarimala should not and cannot be formed on the basis of a western thought that has been imposed on India erroneously.

When we have a complimentary nature and a denomination temple, then such temples have the right to frame their own rules, within the ethos of civilisation, which is over many 1,000s of years old. At the same time it is also ensured that it is not grossly ultra virus to the Constitution, which is just 70 years old. There is a need to balance both.

Also Read | [All you need know about the Sabarimala temple](#)

Sanskrit and Samskriti have similar routes. The word Samksrit comes from the words Sams and Krit, which means good or well and to do respectively. We call our ethos and practise as Sanskriti, which means a job well done and which has honed well over time, Hari also says.

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These regional process are honed through regional needs. We cannot have one rule that fits all of India. A rule in Kerala cannot be imposed in Mizoram. This is because the geography and topography is different. This was recognised across the land.

While we have the Kalachar (Culture) concept common to the land, we also have a Desachar (local cultures) concept, for individual concepts. Desachar is about the local needs and comes out of the local Vichar or thought. The common practices become the Kalachar of the land, Hari also says.

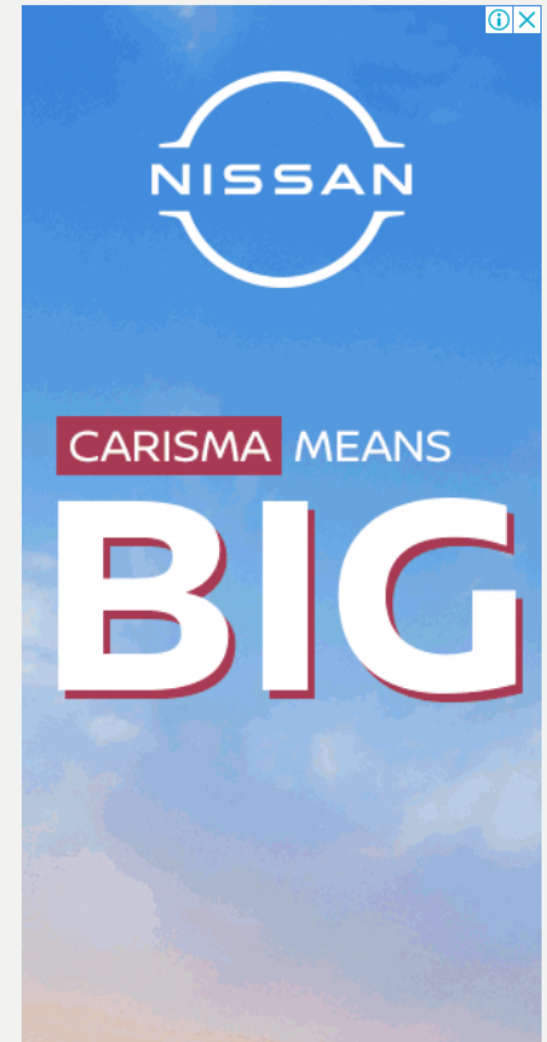
The Namboodri who does the puja at Sabarimala does so where the upper torso is bare bodied. Whereas the same Namboodri who performs the puja at the Badrinath temple, high in the Himalayas is fully clothed, with a sweater on and also wears socks. This is the Desachar, which is based on the local needs and topography etc. It is a judicious mix of Desachar and Kalachar as long as it does not go against the laws of nature fundamentally.

Not about menstruating woman:

The problem is not with menstruating women. It is a biological concept and a pro-creative aspect of nature. Some people take vows and in this case it is a vow to keep away from the fertile face of womanhood. Basically this has nothing to do with menstruating. As long as the vow does not hurt another person, a vow can be taken. This is an un-hurtful vow, which does not hurt a third person. When such a vow is taken, it needs to be respected as long as it does not hurt anyone.

Take such a Vrata or vow is part of the Indian practise. Such vows are taken by different religions across the world in different times and ways. Vrata is also a part of humanity and hence taking one is not wrong.

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Diversity is not about just wearing coloured dresses. It is also in practises and as long as it does not abuse somebody it is part of diversity. That is why India respects diversity and it is to celebrate this that we have such denomination temples, Hari also says.

Delhi cannot decide:

Hari says, a few in Delhi cannot sit and decide everything. One needs to know the local practises of land.

You cannot impose a post Victorian thought of equality on a practise that has honed over 1,000s of years and which is a part of Sanskriti and also the concept of denominational temples, Hari says.

A temple in Chennai would have a different practise from the one in Mangalore even tough both are of the same latitude. The practises are different. Chennai faces the east coast and the pattern of the monsoon is different there. Mangalore faces the west coast and the gradient is different there, Hari says while adding that each place is bound to have a different practise. Hence we have the concept of denominational temples and Desachar.

Also Read | [Despite review petition, Kerala government to implement Sabarimala verdict](#)

The upswell of the peoples' reaction post the verdict needs to be given cognisance to as the land is made up of people and made for them. This is what amounts to a democracy. The so-called objected party ie the women have come out in largest possible numbers in village after village, town after town and city after city speaking for maintaining the Vrata of Ayyappa. Hence the so called objected gender sees no problem in observing of the Vrata, Hari also says.

