



Optimist Day

Are you a glass-half-full or glass-half-empty kind of person? If you're a natural optimist in life, you might consider yourself 'a glass-half-full,' an 'h-a-wonderful' kind of human, which is a fantastic quality to have. But for the rest of us, it might be challenging to be positive all day, every day, which is why Optimist Days is the perfect solution for us, well, average earthlings. Here's a chance to spend a day focusing on the positive things. Whether you're a natural optimist, or slightly pessimistic, this day is here to inject some fun-fueled positivity into your life.

#WELL-BEING

Health Benefits of Walnuts

Eating walnuts every morning can have several potential effects on your body. From heart health to cognitive function, these tiny kernels offer a myriad of advantages that may surprise you.



As the sun rises, casting its golden glow upon a new day, a simple morning ritual could hold the key to unlocking a cascade of 'health benefits' for your body. Enter walnuts, the unassuming yet nutrient-packed nuts that have earned a reputation as a nutritional powerhouse.

Eating walnuts every morning can have several potential effects on your body. From heart health to cognitive function, these tiny kernels offer a myriad of advantages that may surprise you.

- **Heart health:** Walnuts may help lower cholesterol levels, reduce inflammation, and support overall cardiovascular health due to their omega-3 fatty acid content.
- **Brain health:** Omega-3 fatty acids in walnuts are associated with cognitive function, and some studies suggest that regular consumption may have a positive impact on brain health.
- **Promote satiety:** Despite being calorie-dense, walnuts may promote feelings of fullness and help control appetite, potentially aiding in weight management.
- **Antioxidant support:** Walnuts contain antioxidants, such as polyphenols, which may help protect cells from damage caused by free radicals.

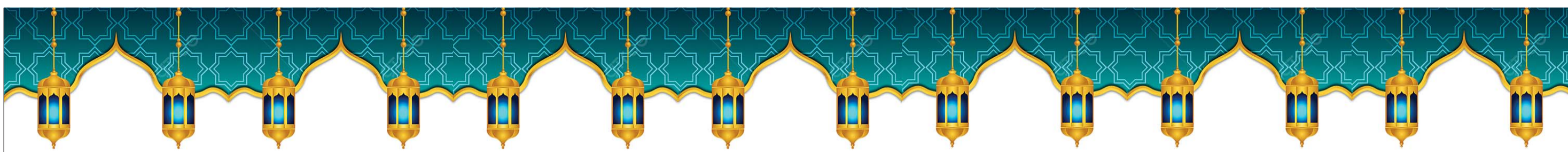


What are the advantages of including walnuts in your morning diet?

- **Rich in omega-3 fatty acids:** Walnuts provide a plant-based source of these essential fatty acids.
- **Nutrient-dense:** They contain various vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- **Potential heart health benefits:** Some studies suggest walnuts may positively impact cholesterol levels and reduce cardiovascular risk.

What are the disadvantages of including walnuts in your morning diet?

- **Caloric density:** While walnuts offer health benefits, they are calorie-dense, and excessive consumption may lead to weight gain, if not accounted for in overall dietary intake. It's a slippery slope, so, incorporate them into a balanced diet without exceeding calorie requirements.
- **Allergies:** People with 'nut allergies' should avoid walnuts and other tree nuts to prevent allergic reactions.



Anarkali.

No one really knows who Anarkali was, though, her legend never fails to fascinate the world. The stories in the popular media all begin with *Anarkali's* introduction to Akbar and Salim but none of them have delved into the very origins of *Anarkali*. In Nav Gulati's saga, *Anarkali's* destiny and origin seem to be intricately intertwined with that of the 'Mughals' and the 'Ottomans.'

Where Did Anarkalis Come From!!

PART: 2



Sultan Murad III.



Emperor Suleiman.



Sultana Hurrem.

#ONE CONCUBINE TWO EMPERORS



Safiye was raised in the harem at Topkapi Palace by Jalpuri. On January 16, 1574, drunken Selim assaulted and raped the fifteen-year-old virgin Safiye in a newly built hammam at the Topkapi Palace. Shortly thereafter, the overweight and drunk Selim, slipped on the floor and died.

Further complacent when Babur died four years later, in 1530, and Humayun was crowned 'Emperor of Hindustan' in Delhi. Meantime, the cauldron was boiling over in Persia. In 1534, the young Shah Tahmasp of the Safavid dynasty, then, twenty years of age, was beginning to cause Suleiman problems on the eastern border, which he shared with Persia. At this time, Baghdad was the leading City of the Islamic world and a centre of wealth, learning, and culture. Baghdad was still under Persian rule, and this was a major thorn on Suleiman's side. He wanted 'Baghdad' for his Ottoman Empire.



Shaillaza Singh
Published author,
poet and a YouTuber

he wealth of sixteenth-century Hindustan (India) was very attractive to the Ottomans in Istanbul. The 'Ottomans' were a feared war machine, but the 'Mughals' had more wealth at that time in history. Ottoman Sultan, during Humayun's early reign, was a young and ambitious Suleiman, who had been on his throne since 1520. His armies had already become feared, after his conquests of Rhodes, Hungary, and the Balkan States by the time he turned his attention to Hindustan. The 'Ottomans' were fierce, sworn enemies of the 'Shah of Persia.' The Ottoman sultan was also contemptuous of the new upstart, Babur, whom they referred to as a 'Timurid' (descendant of Timur), not even acknowledging him by his name. In the early formative stages of the 'Mughal Empire' in Hindustan, Suleiman was too busy 'conquering other lands.' His spies were watching Hindustan, and the Ottomans were convinced that the new upstart Babur's dynasty would not last, particularly, since they had a very good read on the weak character of his son, Humayun. The Ottomans became



Inside the Topkapi Palace.

for the time being. And with this fateful decision, two beautiful concubines from Humayun's palace, *Anarkali* and *Jalpuri* became occupants of *Suleiman's harem* in Istanbul. And thus, it was through 'these concubines' that the two empires became intertwined. The girl, born in 1559 from Ottoman Sultan, Suleiman and *Anarkali's* embraces, was named Safiye, meaning 'The Pure One.' Suleiman allowed himself this 'one indulgence with *Anarkali*,' only after the death of his love, his wife, Hurrem. His successor, Selim II, had lusted for both, *Anarkali* and *Jalpuri*, since his teenage days. When hiding behind a latticed curtain, he saw them bathing in the hammam of the harem. As the new sultan, his first order of business was to summon them both to his bedchamber. Jalpuri succumbed, albeit unwillingly, and she gave up her virginity to the drunken Selim. *Anarkali* refused him, claiming that she had loved only Suleiman, and this was the worst she gave to him. 'She would never willingly give herself to another

man, even though, he may be the sultan himself.' Selim did not take her forcibly. Instead, he condemned her to the customary punishment of a 'harem concubine gone astray.' On a foggy dawn, on the Bosphorus waters, she was placed in a sealed sack, laden with stones, dragged behind a caramuseli fisherman's boat, and left to sink in the waters near the Seraglio. She died chanting *Suleiman's name* in a hymn. In a legend of the caramuselis of Istanbul, for many years, on foggy mornings, they heard the mournful song of *Anarkali*.

Safiye was raised in the harem at Topkapi Palace by Jalpuri. On January 16, 1574, drunken Selim assaulted and raped the fifteen-year-old virgin Safiye in a newly built hammam at the Topkapi Palace. Shortly thereafter, the overweight and drunk Selim, slipped on the floor and died.

Thus, ending the eight-year reign of debauchery and terror of 'Selim-the-sot,' Jalpuri was finally freed from his lustful bondage. To honour the memory of her long-lost friend, the offspring of Safiye and Selim was named *Anarkali*. Selim II was succeeded by his eldest son, Murad III, who ruled for twenty-one years till 1595. *Hindustan* was now ruled by the third 'Mughal' Emperor, Akbar, the Great.

In 1593, respecting the wishes of Jalpuri, who sought approval from Murad III to go back to Hindustan, the young 'Anarkali' was gifted to the Zenana (*harem*) of Akbar, with Jalpuri as her guardian. Sultan Murad had agreed. It was 'this Anarkali' who enchanted the crown prince of the 'Mughal' empire, Salim. From one 'Selim' to another 'Salim,' she passed from the 'Ottomans' to the

'Mughals of Hindustan.' It was she, who eventually became the legendary love of the later Emperor, Jahangir.

The details are intricate and well interspersed with history. One wonders how an IT'ian wove such a historical tale. Nav Gulati says, 'I was always fond of 'Ottomans' and 'Mughals' because I believed that there is a very close link between our culture and theirs.'

So, why did he not become a writer? He replies, 'Earlier on, though, I had an interest in history but I also wanted to go to IIT, so that I could go to the US and earn good money. My fear was that if I became a full-time writer in my 20s, I would die in poverty and my kids would suffer. But when I launched my career, I was in management consulting, which was a high-pressure job. I couldn't get any time to write. The first time I really started 'seriously writing' was when I got posted in Dallas in 2010. I was working in banking at the time. I used to commute from Dallas to California. So, on Monday morning, I would go to Dallas and on Friday evening, I would come back to California. During the week, I had an apartment there and it was very close to the library. Rather than wasting my time in watching television, I decided to do some detailed research about the 'Mughals' and the 'Ottomans.' So, for six years, till about 2016, this was my schedule and I read every book that I could find about these empires. Every evening, I would read a book, make notes, put my thinking cap on and work on my story, which was already in my mind.'

-To be continued

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#JLF

THE LITERARY EXTRAVAGANZA

Here is what to expect at the 17th edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival, which is all set to begin from 1 February to 5 February, at Hotel Clarks Amer.



Tusharika Singh
Freelancer writer
and city blogger

The Jaipur Literature Festival 2024 is all set to begin. Scheduled to run from February 1st to 5th, at Hotel Clarks Amer, the grand literary extravaganza will see over 550 writers, speakers, and performers, and will represent 16 Indian and 8 international languages. The Indian languages include Assamese, Awadhi, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, KuruKh, Malayalam, Odia, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Sanskrit, Tamil, Toda, Urdu, and the Banjara language, Lamani (Lambada).

A diverse array of speakers

The Festival presents an extraordinary array of literary figures, this season. Among them are Aarathi Prasad, National Geographic's Regional Manager for Europe and Western Asia, celebrated for her work, 'Silk: A History in Three Metamorphoses.' Former Indian cricketer and commentator, Ajay Jadedja will also grace the event, alongside Anand Neelakantan, renowned for his 'Bahubali trilogy' and 'Asura: Tale of the Vanquished.' Anjan Sundaram, the award-winning author of 'Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship,' and Ben Macintyre, known for bestselling titles like 'Operation Mincemeat' and 'SAS: Rogue Heroes,' will share their insights.

Moreover, attendees can anticipate engaging discussions with Bonnie Garmus, a talented novelist and creative director, Gulzar, well-known poet and scriptwriter, and Georgi Gospodinov, recipient of the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature. Gopalkrishna Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal and author of 'I Am an Ordinary Man: India's Struggle for Freedom (1914-1948),' will offer his perspective. Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Hernan Diaz, will join the lineup, as will Jonathan Freedland, the Orwell Prize-winning journalist known for 'The Escape Artist: The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World.'

Katherine Rundell, winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize, and Katie Kitamura, acclaimed for her recent novel 'Intimacies,' will also enrich the festival with their presence. Nicholas Shakespeare, a prize-winning British novelist and biographer of 'Ian Fleming,' along with Sital Kalantry, a distinguished law professor and writer of 'Court on Trial,' and Sonora Jha, professor of Journalism and author of 'The Laughter' and 'Foreign' complete this illustrious gathering of literary talents.

Sustainable festival

This year the festival has an endeavour towards a 'zero-waste' and more 'sustainable festival' through a series of initiatives and partnerships, including Earth Day. The festival will also aim to move towards a more carbon-neu-



tral upcoming edition' with its 'green partners.'

Jaipur Music Stage (JMS)

The JMS will present a diverse array of artists from the Indian sub-continent, offering a rich tapestry of musical genres that reflect a fusion of style, sound, and history. Acclaimed singer, songwriter, and poet, Alif (Mohammad Muneem) will be performing on the first evening. He is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Dadasaheb Phalke Film Festival Award for the single 'Latavathi,' IRAA Award for the single 'Like a Sufi,' and the IIMA Award for 'Best Folk Song,' 'Ride Home.' The evening will also feature The Tapi Project, comprising Yogendra Sanyalwala (acoustic and bass guitar, lyrics, composition), Swati Minaxi (voice), Gaurav Kapadia (drums) and Biju Nambiar (keyboards, bass and drums). The band experiments with intricate genres in music like folk, trip-hop, jazz, and ambient textures and uses folk instruments as an essential part of their band.

The second evening of JMS will feature Prabh Deep, a Delhi-based multi-faceted artist, who has evolved into one of the region's brightest visionaries, making his mark as one of the best storytellers in the game today. The second evening will also feature a performance by The Revisit Project, a group which unravels the complexity and rigour of jazz, with a distinctive and characteristic twist. Their music combines a solid groove, old-school funk, and rhythmic jazz while offering pointed observations about life, love, and politics in India.

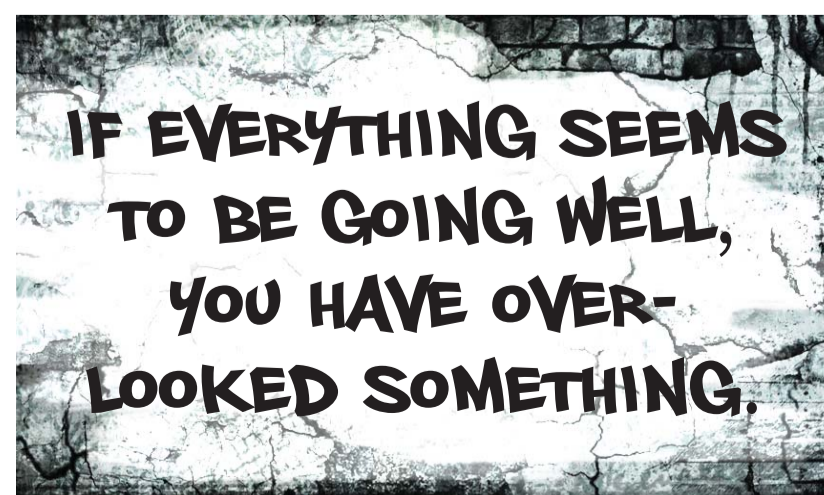
The final evening will witness an incredible set, featuring renowned singer-songwriters Harpreet and Salman Elahi. Harpreet is a versatile artist who sings original musical compositions in Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Assamese, Rajasthani and Haryanvi. He is best known for creating musical scores to epic works of humanist poets like Kabir and Bulleh Shah. Mumbai-based musician, Salman Elahi's soaring voice has captured the hearts of over 20 million people, worldwide, with his popular song, 'Pahadon Mein.' Writing and singing primarily in Urdu/Hindi, Elahi believes in using his music to express his thoughts about life and self-discovery. The evening will also showcase India's ever-evolving band, When Cha Met Toast (WCMT). The band consists of vocalist Ashwin Gopakumar, guitarist Achyuth Jaigopal, keyboard player Palee Francis and drummer Pai Sailesh.

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Jaipur BookMark

The Jaipur BookMark (JBM) unfolds, alongside the Festival, spanning five days, this year and hosting a diverse lineup of sessions featuring prominent figures from the publishing world. These sessions cover a wide array of topics, including the exploration of Indian literature across languages and scripts, the representation of diverse sexualities in regional language publishing, and the commemoration of DC Books' 50-year journey. Additionally, discussion delve into multilingual publishing in the Global South, the evolving dynamics of book marketing in the age of social media, fostering early readers through picture books, and grappling with challenges such as taxation and piracy in the publishing industry.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

