



Marking Hindi Diwas: Language That Connects Millions

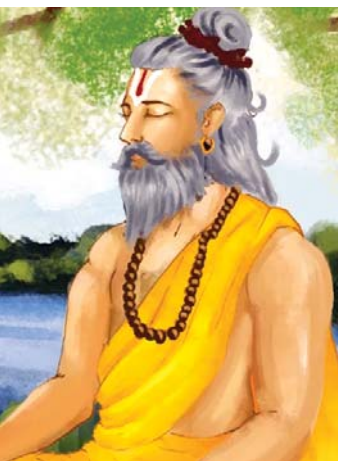
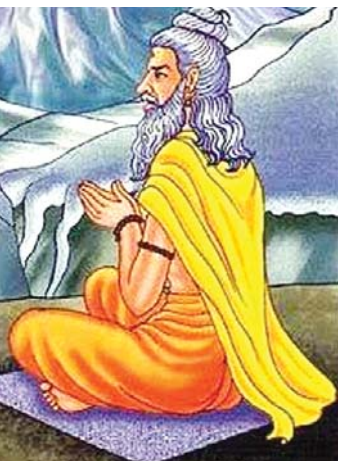
Hindi Diwas is celebrated every year on September 14 to commemorate the day in 1949 when Hindi, written in the Devanagari script, was adopted as one of the official languages of India. The observance highlights the cultural and linguistic significance of Hindi, spoken by over 40% of the population. Schools, colleges, and government institutions organize debates, poetry recitals, and awareness campaigns to promote the language. More than just a reminder of heritage, Hindi Diwas underscores India's linguistic diversity and the effort to preserve and strengthen a language that connects millions across regions.

#ANUPRASA

The Music of Repeated Sounds in Sanskrit Poetry

उत्तपात्युक्तत्विट् प्रकट-कटकट-छान-संघट्टनोद्यद् विसृद्युद्ध-स्फुलिङ्ग-प्रकर-विकिरणोत्त्वथिते बाधिताङ्गम्। उद्गाढं पात्यमानं तमसि तत इत एतकीकीरिणां पङ्क्तिं ते, पङ्क्तिं शाब्गां गरिम्णां ग्लपयति हि भवद्-द्वेषिणो विश्वदद्या।

Poetry is not made beautiful by meaning alone. The sound of words, their rhythm, movement, repetition, and musicality, can itself create an aesthetic experience. Poets often repeat particular sounds to produce rhythm, emphasis, harmony, or even to imitate the mood and action described in the poem. In Sanskrit poetics, this artistic use of repeated sounds is called Anuprasa (अनुप्रास).



Anuprasa and English Figures of Speech

English poetry has several figures of speech that make use of the repetition of sounds. These include alliteration, consonance, and assonance. Alliteration involves the repetition of similar sounds, especially at the beginnings of words. A familiar example is:

"The fair breeze blew,
The white foam flew,
The furrow followed free."
The repeated /sound creates a sense of movement and flow, appropriate to the movement of the ship and the breeze.

Another famous example comes from Shakespeare:

"Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble."
Here, the repetition of sounds contributes to the tatory and magical atmosphere of the lines.

Anuprasa in Sanskrit Poetics

Anuprasa belongs to the tradition of sabdalankara, or figures of sound. Sanskrit poets were highly sensitive to the relationship between sound and meaning. A skilful poet could select and arrange sounds so that the very texture of a verse suggested the action, emotion, or atmosphere being described. The effect can be

gentle and melodious, but it can also be harsh, violent, rapid, or disturbing. Thus, repeated sounds are not merely ornamental. They can reinforce the rasa, mood, or emotional force of the poem. A striking example occurs in the description of the tortures of hell in Trivikrama Pandita's Vyassuti. The verse describes the terrifying sufferings of sinners in hell:

उत्तपात्युक्तत्विट् प्रकट-कटकट-छान-संघट्टनोद्यद् विसृद्युद्ध-स्फुलिङ्ग-प्रकर-विकिरणोत्त्वथिते बाधिताङ्गम्। उद्गाढं पात्यमानं तमसि तत इत एतकीकीरिणां पङ्क्तिं ते, पङ्क्तिं शाब्गां गरिम्णां ग्लपयति हि भवद्-द्वेषिणो विश्वदद्या।

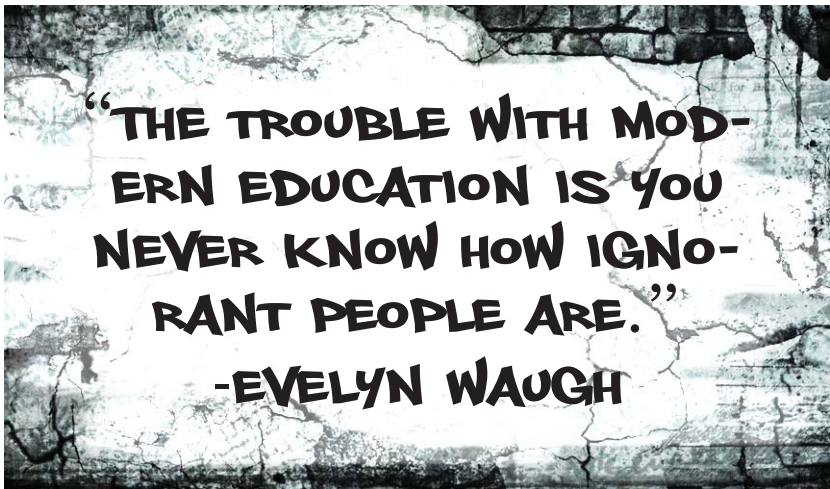
The verse presents a colorful and horrifying picture of the torments of hell. But the description becomes even more powerful when it is heard aloud. The repeated hard consonantal sounds, particularly the t, th, k, t, ta, katata-like clusters, create a harsh, pounding, crackling effect. The sound seems to echo the violence of the scene: the clash, heat, sparks, blows, and suffering experienced by those undergoing punishment.

Words such as katakata themselves have an almost onomatopoeic quality. We seem to hear the terrible sounds of collision and destruction. The verse therefore does not merely tell us about hell; through its sound pattern, it allows us to experience something of its terrifying atmosphere.

This is one of the great strengths of Anuprasa. The ear participates in the imagination. The repeated sounds make the physical and emotional character of the scene audible.



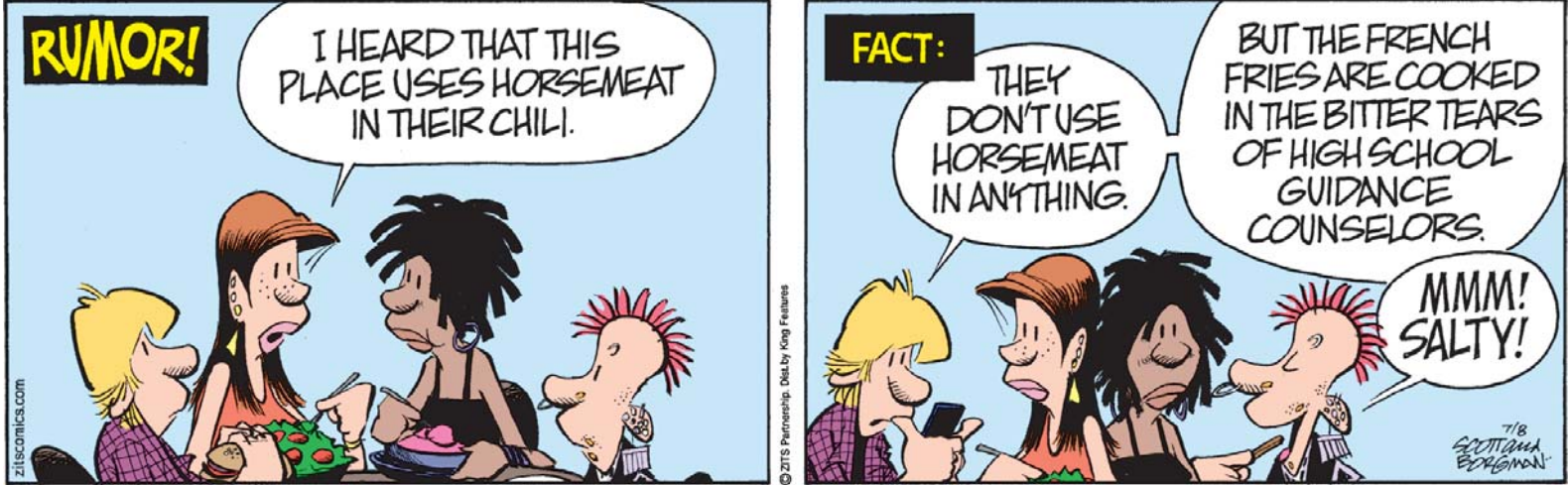
THE WALL



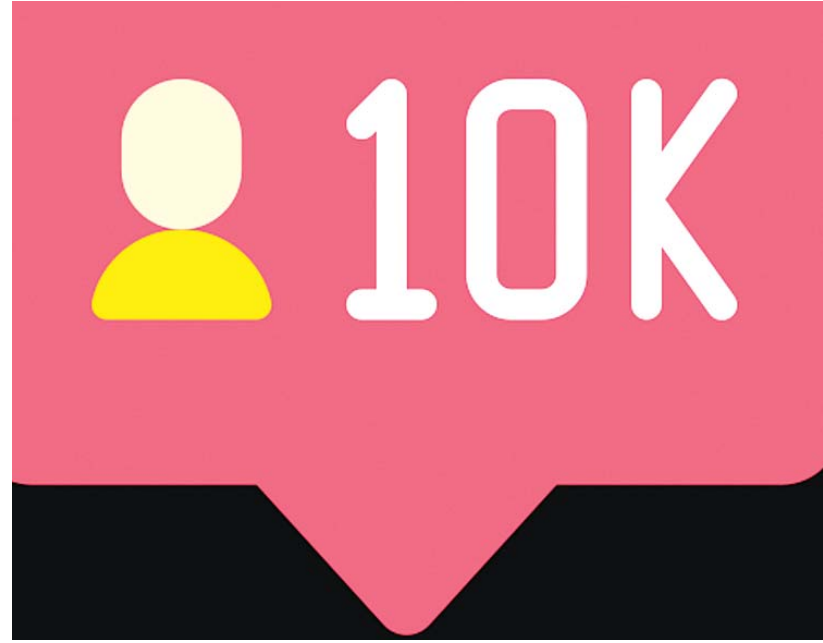
BABY BLUES



ZITS



The Masks We Wear!



It was simple. Almost innocent. You were a hero if you could climb the tallest tree in the colony and drop a bagful of sour imlis for everyone. You were celebrated if you could run the fastest, or score the highest runs in the gully cricket match. You were respected if you were the one who would sit after school and help everyone pass that dreaded math exam. And then there were those few, those incredibly large-hearted ones who would always pay in the canteen, who would make every outing warmer just by being there.



Shashank Kaurani

C onfined to bed after a surgery, I had time to ask a question we keep postponing, where did the good guys go? It is difficult to pen down one's experiences. You sit with a blank page and you wonder what to reveal and what to hide. Because for years, we have worked very hard to create an image. An image that is often false, but carefully maintained. We all suffer from it. A faux external validation syndrome. A few days ago, I was forced to be confined to bed after a surgery. No meetings. No calls to make. No place to be. Just four walls and a lot of time. And when the body is forced to stop, the mind finally starts. It went

back to our growing up years. Do you remember what it took to be adored then? It was simple. Almost innocent.

You were a hero if you could climb the tallest tree in the colony and drop a bagful of sour imlis for everyone. You were celebrated if you could run the fastest, or score the highest runs in the gully cricket match. You were respected if you were the one who would sit after school and help everyone pass that dreaded math exam. And then there were those few, those incredibly large-hearted ones who would always pay in the canteen, who would make every outing warmer just by being there.

The scoreboard was made of character. We have grown up since then. And adulthood came with a new rulebook. No one handed it to us, but we all learned it very quickly. Follow the rules, or be labelled a recluse, a misfit, someone who could not keep up. So, we complied. We put ourselves inside a neat, acceptable box. We surrendered to the word 'acceptable.' And the scoreboard changed completely. Now, people are



judged by their financial success. By the number of followers they have. By the contacts they can name-drop. By the car they drive and the holi-

day they post. It is a loud, noisy world. And somewhere in all this noise, the good guy and the good girl have quietly lost out. We have all put

#MONUMENTS

Sheesh Mahal Reopens After 370 Years

Delhi's Hidden Jewel in Shalimar Bagh Now Welcoming Visitors

Sheesh Mahal is in Shalimar Bagh, a historic Mughal garden modeled on the classic Charbagh layout, with fountains, shaded pavilions, and water channels

A fter being hidden from public view for nearly four centuries, Delhi's Sheesh Mahal has finally reopened its doors. Tucked inside the historic Shalimar Bagh, this 17th-century Mughal marvel, once a glittering retreat for royalty, is now ready to welcome visitors into its world of mirror-lined elegance and architectural grandeur.

Location: Shalimar Bagh, Delhi
Timings: 11 AM - 7 PM
Commissioned in 1653 by Emperor Shah Jahan, the Sheesh Mahal (meaning Palace of Mirrors) was designed as a summer pavilion, reflecting the opulence of Mughal leisure life. With its delicate mirror inlays, carved arches, and intricate frescoes, the structure was once the heart of royal garden parties and quiet regal escapes.

Over time, the monument fell into obscurity, lost beneath layers of dust, neglect, and Delhi's rapid urban sprawl. For decades, it remained closed, locked away and largely forgotten, even by many locals. But now, following extensive conservation efforts by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Delhi Department of Archaeology, the Sheesh Mahal has been carefully restored and



opened to the public for the first time in 370 years. The restoration has focused on preserving as much of the original structure and craftsmanship as possible. Though some parts were too weathered to fully repair, visitors can still admire the restored mirror work, elegant Mughal floral patterns, and beautifully carved jharokhas (windows) that catch the sunlight in magical ways.

"It's more than just opening a monument," said an ASI official

involved in the project. "It's about reviving a cultural memory that had nearly faded and making it accessible to the public."

The Sheesh Mahal sits within Shalimar Bagh, itself a historic Mughal garden modeled on the classic Charbagh layout, complete with fountains, shaded pavilions, and water channels. Together, the garden and the palace offer a peaceful escape from the city's chaos and a tangible connection to Delhi's royal past.



Entry is currently free, with visiting hours set from 11 AM to 7 PM daily. Heritage enthusiasts, photographers, and curious wanderers alike are encouraged to explore this newly revived site. After 370 years in silence, the Sheesh Mahal is ready to dazzle once more. Whether you're drawn by history, architecture, or simply the chance to step into a forgotten world of mirrors and marble, now's your chance to experience it. History just got a little shinier.

#BILHANA

The Princess Who Sealed the Deal

She Saw, She Liked, and She Made the First Move

T here are love stories in which the man pursues the woman. There are stories in which the woman waits to be pursued. And then there are stories in which a woman sees what she wants, understands the moment, and simply makes the first move.

This is one such legend. More than a thousand years ago, in the 11th century, a Kashmiri poet named Bilhana travelled far from his homeland. A gifted poet and scholar, he eventually arrived at the court of a king who was deeply impressed by his literary talent. The king, recognizing Bilhana's brilliance, asked him to teach his daughter.

But there was one problem. Bilhana was young, handsome, and, by all accounts, charming. The king feared that if his daughter and her handsome new tutor ever saw each other, affection might grow between them. So, he devised a clever arrangement.

He told his daughter that Bilhana was blind. At the same time, he told Bilhana that the princess suffered from leprosy.

The lessons would therefore take place with the two seated on opposite sides of a curtain. They could hear one another, but could never see one another.

Day after day, the lessons continued. The curtain remained between them. Neither knew the other's true appearance. And yet, something else was beginning to develop: an intimacy created not by sight, but by words. Then came one extraordinary night.

The moon had risen. The sky was clear. Somewhere beyond the curtain, Bilhana looked up at the moon. Its light inspired him, and the poet began composing verses. He recited:

निरर्थकं जन्म गतं नलिम्बा
यया न दृष्टं नृहर्नांगुविम्बम्।
The thought was simple and beautiful:

A lotus has wasted its life if it has never seen the face of the moon.

But the princess was startled. How could a blind man know that the moon was shining?

She listened carefully. Then curiosity overcame caution. She pushed aside the curtain.

And there he was. Bilhana was not blind.

He was sitting there, gazing at the moon.

The princess suddenly discovered that everything her father had told her was a lie. The man she had been speaking to every day was not blind. And, more importantly, he was not merely her tutor. He was young. He was handsome. He was a poet. And she was looking directly at him. Something changed in that instant.



Perhaps, she had already fallen for his voice, his intelligence, his poetry, the intimacy of their conversations. Perhaps, the sight of him simply gave a face to feelings that had already begun to grow.

But the most remarkable part of the story comes next. She did not retreat behind the curtain.

She answered his verse. Bilhana's first line had spoken of a lotus that had wasted its life without seeing the moon. The princess completed the thought:

उद्यानचिन्तितोऽपि निमज्जन्
कृता विमित्रा नलिनो न येन।
The meaning transformed the entire verse. Even the moon's existence is fruitless if it does not awaken the sleeping lotus. Suddenly, this was no longer merely poetry about the moon and a lotus. It was a conversation between two lovers.

Bilhana's lotus could be understood as his own eyes, longing to see a beautiful, moon-like face. And the princess's response was almost a confession: The moon-like face you are searching for is here. But she took it one step further.

The moon itself would have lived in vain if it could not awaken the sleeping lotus, the lotus that had not yet realized that the moon was right before it. In a single poetic exchange, two people who had been separated by a curtain revealed themselves to one another. He had been looking for his moon. She had just told him where to find it. And she had done something wonderfully bold: she made the first move. The beauty of the story lies not merely in the romance, but in the intelligence of the princess. She did

not simply discover that Bilhana was not blind. She understood what his poetry was saying. She recognized the meaning hidden inside his words and answered him precisely the same poetic ground.

He spoke. She understood. He hinted. She responded.

And in that response, the curtain between them ceased to matter.

Their love was sealed through a verse. The story of Bilhana and the princess has survived through the centuries because it captures something timeless about attraction: sometimes, love begins long before two people ever see each other. It can begin in conversation, in wit, in admiration, in the sound of someone's voice, or in the way another person's mind works.

And sometimes, when the moment finally arrives, someone has to be brave enough to cross the distance. In this legend, it was the princess. She saw him. She liked what she saw. She understood what he meant.

And she made the first move. Perhaps, that is what makes her the real hero of the story.

Not because she waited for the poet to declare his love, but because she recognized the moment, and answered it.

The curtain was meant to keep them apart.

Instead, it made their eventual meeting unforgettable.

And with a single verse, the princess did something that poets spend their entire lives trying to do: She turned a moment into a legend.