

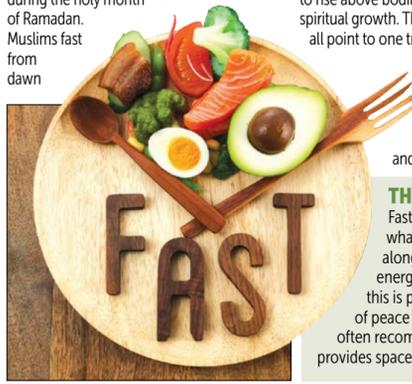
The spiritual benefits of fasting: More than just a detox

Aditi Malhotra

Fasting has been practiced for centuries, often associated with religious rituals, cultural traditions, and health benefits. In today's wellness-focused world, fasting is frequently promoted as a detox tool—something that resets the body, clears toxins, and aids weight loss. But beyond the physical advantages, fasting holds a much deeper significance.

Fasting in spiritual traditions: A sacred practice across cultures

Fasting is one of the few spiritual practices that transcends religious boundaries. Across the world, different faiths have embraced fasting as a means to purify the mind, seek divine connection, and cultivate discipline. In Hinduism, fasting (known as vrata) is observed during auspicious occasions such as Ekadashi, Navratri, and Shivratri. It is believed that abstaining from food enhances spiritual awareness and strengthens one's connection with the divine. In Islam, fasting is one of the five pillars of faith, most notably observed during the holy month of Ramadan. Muslims fast from dawn



FASTING AS A JOURNEY, NOT JUST A PRACTICE

In the modern world, fasting has been repackaged as an intermittent fasting routine, a weight-loss strategy, or a detox plan. While the physical benefits are undeniable, it's essential to remember that fasting has always been more than just a tool for health—it is a journey inward. For those who have never tried fasting with spiritual intent, it can be a powerful and eye-opening experience.

to sunset, refraining not just from food and drink but from negative speech, anger, and indulgences. This self-discipline is meant to develop Taqwa—a heightened sense of God-consciousness.

In Christianity, fasting has long been associated with purification, penance, and prayer. The 40-day Lenten fast, inspired by Jesus Christ's fasting in the desert, encourages believers to abstain from certain foods or habits, using the time for self-reflection and spiritual renewal. In Buddhism, fasting is practiced to cultivate detachment from material cravings and strengthen meditation practices. Buddhist monks often follow a routine where they do not eat after noon, training their minds to rise above bodily urges and focus on spiritual growth. These diverse traditions all point to one truth: fasting is more than just an act of deprivation—it is a tool for spiritual deepening, teaching patience, resilience, and inner peace.

THE ROLE OF FASTING IN EMOTIONAL CLEANSING

Fasting is not just about what you remove from your diet; it's also about what you let go of emotionally. Spiritual traditions encourage fasting alongside prayer, chanting, or meditation—to channel this emotional energy constructively. During a fast, emotions may feel intensified, but this is part of the cleansing process. Many people report feeling a sense of peace and emotional clarity after a fast. It's no coincidence that fasting is often recommended during times of grief, introspection, or spiritual seeking—it provides space for emotional healing and renewal.

Fasting as a path to mindfulness and inner clarity



One of the greatest spiritual benefits of fasting is the heightened sense of awareness it brings. Fasting helps break the routine of constant consumption. In a world where instant gratification is the norm, pausing to abstain from food forces us to slow down and be more mindful. It reminds us of the difference between need and want, helping us cultivate gratitude for the simplest things.

Many spiritual seekers describe an increased ability to focus, a sense of lightness, and deeper intuition while fasting. The mind, no longer bogged down by digestion, operates with greater clarity, making meditation, prayer, and self-reflection more effective.

Fasting and Self-Discipline: A Practice in Control

The ability to control cravings is one of fasting's most profound spiritual lessons. We live in an age of excess—abundance is everywhere, and indulgence is encouraged. When one fasts, the initial hunger pangs serve as a test of willpower. However, over time, the body adapts, and the mind gains strength over desires.

This control over hunger extends beyond food—it helps in managing emotions, curbing impulsive actions, and practicing patience in daily life.

The Connection between Fasting and Gratitude

One of the most profound effects of fasting is the sense of deep gratitude it cultivates. When we take food and water for granted, we forget how truly blessed we are. Many who fast regularly speak of the immense joy of breaking their fast. This shift in perspective carries over to other areas of life as well, fostering gratitude for small moments, simple pleasures, and everyday blessings.

Savsar Padvo, a captivating experience

Govind S Poteker

The celebration of Savsar Padvo or Gudi Padva ushers in with new hope and aspirations as Chaitra months begins. Colourful Gudi will be installed atop every temple and houses to welcome the New Year. People begin the day with Pooja at home and paying obeisance to their presiding deity in the villages and towns. Gudi signifies a sign of victory and protection from evil spirit.

Noted historian and folklorist, Rajendra Kerkar mentions about the unique cultural practices of tribal communities in villages of Goa during New Year which are all connected to nature. Dinya Jatra in Canacona and Giroba carved out from mango tree trunk used as Holi at Mopa and Ranmale in Zarme, Sattari are some of the rare Gudi Padvo rituals and cultural traditions. Despite changing times, the villagers have kept the tradition kicking and alive.

The tribal agrarian village comprising Gaonkar and Velip community of Gule in Shristhal village in Canacona, celebrate by invoking the blessings of Gram Dev Shree Mallikarjun and Kul Devta Garvai Purush. Unmarried youths of the village perform energetic dance that captivates the festive atmosphere making a great beginning to the New Year.



national highway.

Garish states that unmarried youths called Gade takes part in dance, at one of the two Maands, the sacred place where village rituals are performed. They sway to popular folk songs as the beats of Dhol, Taso and Shamele turns few of the Gade undergoing trance (Bhaar) state. Holding a beautifully decorated Dino stick (Khamb), Bandicoot berry (Lea indica) branch decorated with Kosam leaves, Ashoka and Uski (Calycotris floribunda) flowers, the atmosphere turns charged as Gade in trance are lost in the celebrations. The villagers enjoy the act with passion and amusement. The revelers hum folk songs such as 'Aboli fulli baykade, sundare navta



Gule, known for organic jaggery, is one of the village wards comprising some 1300 inhabitants, though they don't celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi, Holi and Savsar Padvo is a big celebration, acknowledges, Ganesh B Gaonkar, former sarpanch of the village. Ganesh says preceding the festivals, the villagers follow a strict norm by consuming vegetarian diet right through Maha Shivratri till Gudi Padvo.

The day begins early morning before sunrise when devotees pray by visiting their folk deity, Shree Ghode Paikdev where they offer mud horses. Later, the focus shift to Shree Garvai Purush temple, the protector of the village where the devotees gather for a long day's festivity.

All the major festivals are celebrated in their ancestral homes up in the hills where they lived about 50 years ago. Due to scarcity of water resources and access to places of work and occupation, the villagers built their houses at lower elevation, very close to the

navyikade' (Abolim have bloomed near well, beauty is bathing in the riverside) and 'Aboli shivti bavoli, devalya matva pavoli' (Abolim Shevhi have wilted, even as they reach God's abode) and other lyrics are quite a popular ones, Gaonkar cites.

After that vigorous dance in semi-conscious state, a fire is lit and ash (Bibut) is applied on forehead of Gade. They return back to Garvai Purush temple. After bath at the village well, five coconuts are broken blind-folded. In the evening there is auction of fruits. Gaonkar says, "There is a good competition to buy Shripahl (Devacho naal). The price of which sometimes go up to 40 thousand rupees or more."

There is special offering prepared on the occasion. Matann Naivedya Wadi made of rice by the villagers, which is offered to Shree Jalmi Dev, the folk deity. This Prasad is given to every devotee who takes it home for distribution. On Savsar Padvo day, after Pooja and temple visits, delicious cuisines are something to relish as relatives, friends and guests who pay a visit to exchange greetings and well wishes.

Savsar Padvo is day when special dishes are made. A sweet, Turi is made from locally produced Tur daal, which cost almost 1000 rupee a kilo, informs Gaonkar. It is grown in the hills during monsoon and harvested sometimes in the months of January-February taking almost six months to harvest. As the availability and cost of this local pulse is unaffordable to most, some residents prepare sweet using Moong, split green gram instead of Tur.



Observing the solemnity of Lent with music

For Romeo Monteiro will be conducting two concerts of sacred music, 'Bhokti-gayonantlean Niall - Meditation through Sacred Music' at St Anthony's Chapel, Old Goa on March 30 at 7 pm and Our Lady of Remedios Church, Betalbatim on March 31 at 6.30 pm. The programme will include the hymn of the Jubilee year 2025 on Hope, a motet in Konkani, 'Khorrench sangtam Pedru tuka...', Stabat Mater (in English translation) by the German composer J Rheinbeger, 'Ho poi taka ami polletanv', a traditional Veronika song in Konkani, a motet in Konkani, 'Koxttovta jiv mhozo', 'Vochat, Xubhvortoman porgott korat' on the theme of this Pastoral year 2024-25, 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain' from the Oratorio Messiah, by G F Handel and 'Bapa porim doiall zaiat'.

"These concerts are meant to savour the beauty of Catholic Sacred music, experience the mysteries of our faith through the medium of music and song and a reflection on the sacred mysteries with the help of sacred music," says Fr Romeo. The programme will be interspaced with meditations in tune with the



season of Lent.

The concert will showcase the talent of 62 participants including singers and musicians who will perform with violins, viola, violoncellos, double basses, clarinets, trumpets and trombones. The participants are not part of any formal group, but a group of Catholics, lovers of sacred music who desire to come together to meditate on the sacred mysteries of the Faith through the medium of music and song.

Bal Bhavan Summer Camp

The Summer Camp 2025 of Bal Bhavan, Panjim and Bal Bhavan Centres across Goa will be held during the month of April 2025. The camp will be conducted in April and May with various special and regular activities at Panjim and all the Bal Bhavan Kendra. The activities for summer camp shall be drawing/painting, handicraft, clay modelling, harmonium, tabla, guitar, vocal, dance, drama, computer, games, and library. The children for this camp will be divided into two age groups, 5 - 8 years (9.30 am to 12.30 pm) and 9 - 16 years (2.30 pm to 5.30 pm). Besides above activities, there will be special workshops in performing and creative art and creative writing section. For each session, 300 children will be admitted on a first come first serve basis.

Venue: Forms are available at Bal Bhavan, Panjim
Date: April 1 onwards
Time: 10 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5.30 pm

World Theatre Day performance

Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts, in association with Abhiyakttee-Panjim, will organise a special performance of Agyaat-Katha to celebrate World Theatre Day 2025. This production explores a reimagined episode (Agyaat-Katha) from the Lok-Mahabharat, delving into the delicate interplay of masculine and feminine energies—concepts that transcend gender and manifest uniquely in each individual. Structured in the traditional Goan Katha Gaayan

(story recitation) format, the performance blends elements of Indian theatre and dance to bring to life an untold story from this timeless epic. Dr. Saish Deshpande has worked on the production design, music and directed the performance while Antara Bhide has worked on the script. The performance is open to all.

Venue: Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts, Altinho, Panjim
Date: March 29 and 30
Time: 7 pm

Herald Gaming Console

Dilbert



Garfield



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crossword 4805

ACROSS

1- The ___ Ranger rode a horse called Silver; 5- Exon predecessor; 9- Boater or bowler; 12- Footless; 13- Coral colonies; 15- Ornamental fabric; 16- Must've been something ___; 17- 71% is under water; 18- Bookie's concern; 19- Medical treatment place; 21- Vigorous exercises; 23- Cpls' superiors; 25- Sisters; 26- Partner of away; 29- Hog sound; 31- Obtained; 35- Before, in verse; 36- Some horses; 38- Witherspoon of 'Legally Blonde'; 39- 'Pirates of the Caribbean' star; 41- Bridget Fonda; to Jane; 45- Tabula ___; 44- Deplete; 46- Hotelier Helmsley; 48- Encountered; 49- Hoi ___; 51- Ladies of Spain; Abbr.; 52- ___-Cone; 53- Bubbly drink; 55- Bahrain bigwig; 57- Tubular pasta; 61- Not us; 65- Skip past; 66- Cruise ship; 68- Not tricked by; 69- Narrow path for walkers, cars or ships; 70- Rock; 71- Active one; 72- Common article; 73- Impressed; 74- Kind of D.A.

DOWN

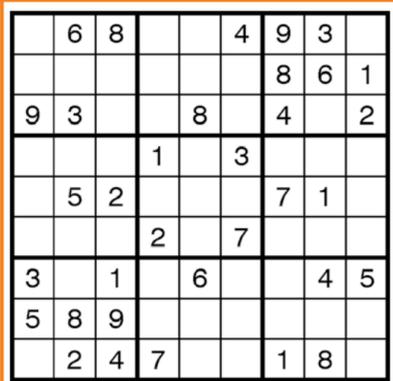
1- Not of the cloth; 2- Iridescent gem; 3- Denier's words; 4- Perfect places; 5- Building; 6- Neptune's domain; 7- Antioxins; 8- Many times; 9- ___ but known...; 10- Electrically versatile; 11- Hardy lass; 14- Gesture of indifference; 15- Marine crustacean; 20- Helicopter pioneer Sikorsky; 22- ___ about; 24- Slow mover; 26- Sick and tired; 27- You ___ right!; 28- Beat back; 30- Leg joints; 32- Crews; 33- Ruhr city; 34- Cool!; 37- Cross the goal line; 40- Throb; 42- Captivated; 45- Impoverished; 47- Be that ___ may...; 50- Graven images; 54- Writer Loos; 56- Harper sitcom; 57- Shed feathers; 58- Eastern nanny; 59- Silver screen; 60- ___ pronunciation you...; 62- Slaughter of baseball; 63- Hwy's; 64- Put in order; 67- Opposite of WSW;



solution 4804



sudoku 4805



Instructions for Sudoku

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

solution 4804

