

# Introduction

*Lose an hour in the morning, and you will be all day hunting for it.*

*- Richard Whately*

This is 4:30 a.m., and I've just started writing this excellent book - **from NIGHT-OWL to MORNING-LARK**. There is absolute silence and divine peace all around my room. There is no one to disturb, no one to draw my attention to, and no one to ask any questions to me. My stress level is zero; I am experiencing calmness and feeling divine. This is how I start my day. I love and admire beautiful early morning hours because this is the time when I find the real "*Me Time*." Soon after this, I will move out, embrace nature, talk to the plants I've on my balcony, and welcome the morning breeze coming through the window.

When I was a kid, my parents advised me to wake up early in the morning to study well. They often said - "*Waking up early in the morning should be a part of your life. It disciplines you. If you want to learn, practice, or memorize your lessons, you should effectively utilize your early morning hours. It is when the goddess **Saraswati** (Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, art, speech, wisdom, and learning) showers her divine blessings around, and we can easily receive those.*" Since my childhood, rising early morning hours has become my habit. It helped me during my entire academic career and still helping in my professional life.

I have experienced several times that early morning is the best time when I get new ideas in my mind related to all areas of life, i.e., health, relationships, career, money, etc. I understand that thoughts are like butterflies; they come and vanish in no time. So, I note down those ideas in my personal diary and use them later when I write my next book. I'm sure those precious ideas bring a smile to your face, values in your life, and positive changes in your daily habits. After all, this is what the purpose of my life is!

Before starting writing this book, I recently conducted a survey among my clients on the topic "*Your 5:00 a.m. routine.*" The intention was to understand their opinion about the importance of early morning hours. Once the survey was over, I got surprised by the results.

65% of the participants favored getting up early in the morning; they already knew its importance, but they were unable to regularly stick to their 5:00 a.m. routine.

10% of the participants did not find it helpful to wake up at 5:00 a.m.; their daily routine starts somewhere after 7:00 or 7:30 a.m. For them, waking up early and joining the 5:00 a.m. club is not their cup of tea.

The rest, 25% of the participants, were actually the morning larks and disciplined to follow their early morning schedule.

Once I got the results, I planned to closely observe each participant. Since I personally knew each of them, it was easy for me to observe their behavior closely and talk to them as and when I needed to. I did this exercise for a couple of weeks, and the below results reveal their current behavior:

- 65% of the people who are aware of the importance of the early morning hours but are unable to maintain the schedule regularly mostly procrastinate their work. They unnecessarily and voluntarily delay or postpone their tasks despite knowing there will be negative consequences. They are less motivated and don't take quick action. They think of the blood, sweat, and tears that face them in achieving a task or objective. They forget to think of the long-term rewards and benefits. I also found that such people have unrealistic or unclear goals and less motivation to finish them.
- 10% of the people who never think of getting up early in the morning are actually sluggish and lethargic. Most of them are suffering from diabetes, obesity, depression, etc. They don't get enough time to eat breakfast; they hardly do any morning workouts. Going to late-night parties and spending late-night hours on social media surfing is common for them. I also notice that they join my workshop/webinar late and always find a reason to defend themselves.
- I find that 25% of the people who are strict with their 5:00 a.m. schedule always come on time to my workshop, are attentive, and have a smiling face. They remember what I had taught them in my previous sessions, and they ask questions regularly to improve their knowledge. They are less prone to distractions during the sessions. One common thing I found in all of them is that they all meditate and exercise daily in the morning. That makes them cheerful and enhances their ability to remain focused throughout the day. Many of them reported a healthy relationship with all their family members too.

I accept that the above survey is totally based on my point of view, and some of you may not agree with the benefits of being the morning larks (especially those who tend to remain night owls). I totally agree that there may be no greater pleasure for some of you than sleeping in, staying in bed, and not getting up until you absolutely have to. Early mornings for some of you can be a drag. But as it turns out, there may be more merit to getting up early. Hundreds of researches, stories, spiritual talks and scientific theories prove the proverb "*The early bird gets the worm*" right.

If you greet the morning sun, you bring a new meaning to your life. You start observing the beautiful nature closely, feel its quietude, and appreciate every piece of it. You start listening to its own sound, silence, the breeze, and birds chirping. This helps you to look at your life from a completely different perspective.

If you are going through the tough times in your personal or professional life, feeling depressed, or are overstressed, try waking up early & share your feelings with *Mother Nature*. You will be surprised by seeing how nature then starts taking care of you as its own child. I promise, soon you'll start seeing the magical results in your life.

To start with, let me give you a few examples of the morning schedules of highly effective people; this might motivate you to come along with me on this beautiful journey:

**Narendra Modi** (*Prime Minister of India since 2014*) wakes up in the early morning at 4:00 a.m., and the whole day he doesn't get into bed till night. After waking up, he is first done with daily courses and then goes for *Suryanamaskar, Pranayam, and Yoga*, which helps him be fit and fine. He never forgets to do Yoga in starting of the day.

**Tim Cook** (*the chief executive officer of Apple Inc. since 2011*) rises at 3:45 a.m. to answer emails before heading to the gym at 4:30 a.m.

Other early risers include **Michelle Obama** (*the first lady of the United States from 2009 to 2017*), who works out before doing emails, and **Anna Wintour** (*editor-in-Chief of Vogue since 1988*), who wakes at 5:00 a.m. and plays tennis in New York's Midtown tennis club.

**Tim Armstrong** (*AOL CEO*) wakes up at 5:00 a.m. or 5:15 a.m. to work out, read, tinker with the site, and hang out with his daughter.

**Indra Nooyi** (*PepsiCo CEO*) wakes up as early as 4:00 a.m. In a speaker's series at Pepsi, she reveals that she is at work every day by no later than 7:00 a.m.

**Bill McNabb** (*chairman and former CEO of the Vanguard Group*) has a strict early-morning routine that he has not changed in decades. He wakes up around 5 and gets to his desk by 6:15 a.m.

**Simon Alexander Ong** (*life coach & business strategist*) swears by getting up early every day.

**Caroline Burckle** (*American former competition swimmer and Olympic bronze medalist*) wakes up early to work out. She wakes up around 5:30 a.m. and eats an energy bar before beginning a running interval, weight-training or swimming workout.

**Melody Hobson** (*President and co-CEO of Ariel Investments and the chairwoman of Starbucks Corporation*) has been waking up before 6 a.m. for more than two decades.

Enough of the inspiring examples for now, right? It's time to go deeper!

Our forthcoming chapters will deep dive into it, and you'll learn why being a morning lark is favored by various high achievers, scientists, researchers, spiritual organizations, and religions.

If you think waking up early in the morning means less sleeping, I'll break this myth also and prove how being a morning lark can make you feel more rested, achieve more excellent sleep rhythm, and gain more minutes of sleep.

**I'll also guide you on becoming a morning lark from a night owl by choice - the purpose of this book.** Hope to see you with me on this beautiful journey...

# Spiritual Significance of Early Morning Hours

*"The voice of your inner heart can be best heard during the early morning hours. If you miss those hours, you can't experience the profoundness of your own inner voice."*

- Ravi Tewari

*"Laziness erodes a person of his enthusiasm and energy. As a result, the person loses all opportunities and finally becomes dejected and frustrated. The worst thing is that he stops believing in himself."*

- Sam Veda

It is worth understanding why various religions talk about the importance of early morning hours. The knowledge that different religions have put into their scriptures or holy books is quite extraordinary and not an easy task to practice every day by an ordinary person. No doubt, the teachings are so profound and powerful that they encourage us to ponder deeply and open up the gates of our divine wisdom.

While studying and researching various different scriptures, I found one thing common: They all have mentioned the importance of **Amritvela** (early morning hours). Before the hustle and bustle of life, one can easily meditate on God and receive the Lord's divine blessings in this period. In short, *Amritvela* has been defined as a period of calm and peace.

If you go deeper, you'll be fascinated by the profoundness of *Amritvela*. It's my honor, and I'm utterly grateful that I got an opportunity to bring this topic to you through this book. I believe I'll be able to do the full justice with it.

## What is *Pahar*?

Before defining *Amritvela*, describing what "**Vela or Pehar**" is essential.

The word *Pahar* is derived from the Sanskrit word *Prahar*, an ancient unit of time in India. *More commonly pronounced Peher*, *Pahar* is a traditional unit of time used in **India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh**. In India, the measure is primarily used in North India and Urdu-speaking communities throughout the Deccan in southern India.

One *pahar* nominally equals three hours, and this way, there are **eight pahars in a day**. Traditionally, night and day were each allocated four *pahars* or "watches." The below list will give you some more idea on this-

- 3 a.m. - 6 a.m. ⇒ 4<sup>th</sup> *Pahar* of night
- 6 a.m. - 9 a.m. ⇒ 1<sup>st</sup> *Pahar* of day
- 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. ⇒ 2<sup>nd</sup> *Pahar* of day
- 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. ⇒ 3<sup>rd</sup> *Pahar* of day
- 3 p. m. - 6 p.m. ⇒ 4<sup>th</sup> *Pahar* of day

- 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. ⇒ 1<sup>st</sup> *Pahar* of night
- 9 p.m. - 12 p. m. ⇒ 2<sup>nd</sup> *Pahar* of night
- 12 p.m. - 3 a.m. ⇒ 3<sup>rd</sup> *Pahar* of night

Each *pahar* of a 24-hour day-night cycle has a specific name and number. The first *pahar* of the day, known as *pehla pahar* (Hindustani: *pehla*, meaning first), corresponds to the early morning. The second *pahar* is called *do-pahar* (Hindustani: *do*, meaning second). In the common speech of North India, Pakistan, and Nepal, *do-pahar* has come to be the generic term for afternoon or midday. The third *pahar* is called *seh pahar* (Persian: *seh*, meaning three) and has generically come to mean evening, though the term is less commonly used than *shaam*.

*Amritvela*, which literally means the "ambrosial period," is usually ascribed to the 4<sup>th</sup> *pahar* of night, i.e., 3 a.m. - 6 a.m.

### What different religions talk about *Amritvela*?

#### Sikhism

Sikhism or Sikhi (Sikh, disciple, seeker, or learner) is one of the religious faiths that originated in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent around the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE. It is the fifth-largest organized faith worldwide, with about 25–30 million adherents (i.e., Sikhs) as of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sikhism developed from the spiritual teachings of **Guru Nanak Ji (1469-1539)**, the faith's first guru, and the nine Sikh gurus who succeeded him. The tenth guru, **Gobind Singh Ji (1666-1708)**, named the Sikh scripture **Guru Granth Sahib** as his successor, bringing to a close the line of human gurus and establishing the scripture as the 11<sup>th</sup> and last eternally living guru, a religious, spiritual/life guide for Sikhs.

**Japji Sahib** is the Sikh thesis that appears at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib. It was composed by **Guru Angad Ji** and is mostly the writings of Guru Nanak Ji. According to **Christopher Shackle, emeritus professor of modern languages of South Asia at the University of London**, it is designed for "**individual meditative recitation**" and the first item of daily devotional prayer for the devout.

Guru Nanak Ji in the Japji Sahib (4<sup>th</sup> *Pauri*) says - "*In Amritvela, meditate on the grandeur of the one true Name. In this period, one can easily meditate on God and receive the Lord's divine blessings because it is the period of calm and peace.*" He further emphasizes the need to rise early for prayers and explains that it is the time to worship God.

We can find the importance of *Amritvela* throughout the Guru Granth Sahib. According to this holy scripture - "*Those who consider themselves a Sikh must wake up daily at Amritvela and be in tune with the Naam (the Lord's Name).*"

**Sukhmandir Khalsa Ji, the president of Dharam Khand Sikh Academy in San Martin**, beautifully defines the importance of *Amritvela*. He says - "*Amritvela or early morning meditation is a vital part of a Sikh's daily worship schedule. According to the Sikh code of conduct, Amritvela is three hours prior to dawn. Amritvela is considered the most opportune time to achieve that instance of immortality when the soul relinquishes ego for union with the*

*divine. Whether or not you are a Sikh, to successfully observe Amritvela, it is essential to establish a routine so that early morning meditation becomes a habit."*

He further explains that *Amritvela* can help you attain, maintain, and sustain a richly rewarding meditation practice for life. For him, the most significant motivating factor in establishing the habit of waking up for *Amritvela* and engaging in early morning meditation is the longing and desire of the soul for spiritual union with the divine beloved.

In essence, Sikhism strongly believes and defines the importance of *Amritvela* - It is to create a sacred space where you can leave aside the world to merge with the beloved divine. This is when one can taste the nectar, the sweetness, of the divine and take sustenance to empower oneself.

How wonderful it is!!

## **Hinduism**

Hinduism is an Indian religion and *dharma*, or way of life. It is the world's third-largest religion, with over 1.2 billion followers, or 15–16% of the global population, known as **Hindus**. *Ayurveda*, a Sanskrit term meaning "**the science & knowledge of life,**" is one of the vast collections of knowledge passed down orally for thousands of years before being compiled in written form and becoming foundational scriptures of Hinduism.

*Ayurveda* is a traditional medical treatment method in India that has been practiced for more than 3,000 years. The philosophy of *Ayurvedic medicine* says that the body, mind, and soul are connected to the outer world. When the relationship among these elements of one's personality is out of balance, health problems arise.

The wee hours of the morning are defined as ***Brahma Muhurta*** in various Hindu scriptures, especially in *Ayurveda*. It describes *Brahma Muhurta* as "***the time of Brahma (i.e., creator)***" for rising up in the morning. ***Brahma*** (the creator) is considered the ultimate knowledge, and ***Muhurta*** means "the period."

*Brahma Muhurta* is the perfect time for perceiving the ultimate knowledge.

1 *Muhurta* equals 1/30<sup>th</sup> of a day, i.e., 48 minutes. *Brahma Muhurta* starts exactly 2 *Muhurta* before sunrise. Hence, it begins 1 hour and 36 minutes before sunrise and ends 48 minutes before it. According to *Ayurveda*, early morning is the ***VATA*** (*consisting mainly of the two elements air and space, i.e., ether, and is generally described as cold, light, dry, rough, flowing, and spacious*) dominating period associated with the blossoming of the mind.

During *Brahma Muhurta*, the environment is pure, calm, and soothing. According to various Hindu scriptures, about two *Muhurta* before sunrise, a significant shift in energy fills nature. Then, about one *Muhurta* before sunrise, a second boom of energy dawns in the atmosphere. Hope, inspiration, and peace manifest at this time. This time is considered the best for attaining meditation, supreme knowledge, and eternal happiness.

Practicing meditation during *Brahma Muhurta* improves mental performance, therefore, subduing mental irritation, hyperactivity, and lethargy. Waking up during *Brahma Muhurta* increases one's lifespan and helps avoid diseases.

Here is another spiritual belief. The ***Shrimad Bhagavad Gita***, often referred to as the ***Gita***, is one of the holy books of Hinduism. It was written about five thousand years ago as part of the

*Mahabharata*. It has teachings said to be given by **Lord Sri Krishna**, the Supreme God. This Holy Scripture recommends that we wake up at least an hour before the sun rises for a happy and healthy life because the morning hours are said to be in the *sattva-guna*, the mode of goodness.

Also, according to the **International Journal of Yoga and Allied Sciences** research, nascent oxygen is available in the atmosphere during the *Brahma Muhurta*. This nascent oxygen easily mixes with hemoglobin, forming oxyhemoglobin, which has several health benefits such as - increased energy level, balanced blood pH, and enhanced absorption of minerals and vitamins. Medical science has even found that the waste material in your body, such as your urine, has certain qualities that it does not have at any other time of the day.

In short, the *Hindu dharma* beautifully defines the *Brahma Muhurta* as - **"The time to create yourself. It offers the possibility of becoming the Brahman or creator and making yourself the way you want."**

How profound it is!!

## **Islam**

Islam is an Abrahamic monotheistic religion whose main text, the **Quran**, is considered by followers, known as **Muslims**, to be the word of God. It is the world's second-largest religion, with more than two billion followers or 24.9% of the world's population.

*Quran* is the Islamic sacred book, believed to be the word of God as dictated to **Muhammad** by the archangel **Gabriel** and written down in **Arabic**. It is the holy book of the Muslims. It lays down the law and commandments, codes for their social and moral behavior, and contains a comprehensive religious philosophy. Several ritual prayers in the *Quran* touch upon all aspects of human existence, including matters of doctrine, social organization, and legislation.

**Fajr, the dawn prayer**, is one of five daily prayers in the Islamic religion. It is mentioned in the *Quran* as obligatory rituals through which all Muslims praise *Allah*, acknowledge His greatness, and re-affirm their belief. **Fajr is performed before sunrise**. The *Islam dharma* describes the importance of this early morning prayer as follows:

***A person who conducts the morning prayer is under Allah's (God's) guarantee. The morning prayer is the first test and first worship of the day. Therefore, you need to pass the first test by making an excellent start to be strong and ready for the other difficulties and dangers. A person who starts the day with Fajr obtains enough confidence and strength to cope with the problems he will encounter until the following day.***

The famous book **Sözler** explains the importance of the early morning time as - *"The time of Fajr, the early morning: This time until sunrise resembles and calls to mind the early spring, the moment of conception in the mother's womb, and the first of the six days of the creation of the heavens and earth; it recalls the Divine acts present in them. (Dokuzuncu Söz, Dördüncü Nikte)"*

As per Islamic belief, the rising of the sun and the spread of its rays across the skies is considered a sacred time when Angels are said to descend. These Angels bear witness to the prayers of worshippers and hear their recitations of the *Quran*. They record these good deeds in their Scrolls to report back to *Allah*. **Prophet Mohammed** said - *"Angels take turns among you by night and day, and they all assemble at the dawn and afternoon prayers."*