



YUVA BHARATI

Voice of Youth

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National Award for Vivekananda Kendra





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Invocation

**Sarvopanishado gavo dogdha
gopalanandana:**

**Parthovatsa: sudheerbhoktha
dugdham gitamrutam mahat**

(If)All upanishads are (likened to) cows. The milker is the son of the cowherd, Krishna; Arjuna, son of prutha, is the calf; the men of purified intellect are the drinkers and the milk is the supreme nectar of Gita.





Gita Jayanti

Gita Jayanti is the Utsava we celebrate mainly to invigorate ourselves by diving deep into our scriptures. Gita gives in a very simple and yet profound manner the Vedic Wisdom. Whether a pandit or an ordinary person, aged or young, a leader or a follower, Gita is for all. Gita represents not only the wisdom of Vedas but also gives such a synthesis of thought that we can resolve all the paradoxes of life. But this insight in Gita we cannot get by giving cursory reading of just celebrating Gita Jayanti. The study of Gita has to be daily with reverent contemplation for whole life.

Gita is like a mother who takes us in her lap when we are grieved and sad. She is like a Guru who guides us for achieving the goal of life and also guides us in our path. She is also like a goddess who protects us from the fall if we hold on to her. She is also the scriptural form of our dear motherland as She tells all that which this land of ours is manifesting in her national life.

Sometimes people quote the saying of Swami Vivekananda that, "You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of Gita" and say that the game of football is more important than the study of Gita. But it is missing the point. Gita is not for mere intellectual study but it is to be practiced in life, as for us religion is not in believing but in being and becoming. Swami Vivekananda said, "You will understand Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you ...If one reads this one shloka –Klaibyam ma sma gamah Partha ...- one gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita; for in this one shloka lies embedded the whole Message of the Gita ...for all of us in this world, life is a continuous fight ... Many a time comes when we want to interpret our weakness and cowardice as forgiveness and renunciation ... Gita opens with this very significant verse: Arise O Prince! Give up this faintheartedness, this weakness, Stand up and fight."

A tamasik and coward cannot face the battles of life. To be fearless and not to be chickenhearted one requires strong body and courageous heart. Strong and not weak men can practice Gita. It is to develop that strength, Swamiji said 'Play Football'.

Secondly, the game of football is completely a team game. Each second, each action and each intention of the team member is to be internalized by each team member. With all efforts and best play by a player, it is possible that the credit of making goal may not go to that player but someone else in the team.

Each one in the team offers his best to the team effort and does not make any individual claims. That is what is Yagna- the central theme of Gita. Offer the fruit of your action to the society at large and partake only the Yganashishtah - whatever remains for you. That is, one must have that team spirit, that humility to be part of the team and then to do the best of whatever comes to our lot.

After doing work to the best of the ability offer it again to the collectivity at large and partake whatever comes to your share. This dynamics can be seen explicitly in the game of football. That is why Swamiji had said that to understand Gita better play football. Here 'playing football' is not given as the remedy to understand Gita but as an indication of what is required to understand Gita.

Nowadays there is lot of awakening regarding the religious conversion that is taking place. Srikrishna tells us in Gita why conversion should not be resorted to. He says '*Paradharma bhayavah*' – the religious practices of others could be horrible for our growth. He says, '*swalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat*' – even a little but regular practice of our own Dharma can be elevating. Commenting on that Swami Vivekananda had said, "Even if you have knowledge, do not disturb the childlike faith of the ignorant. On the other hand, go down to their level and gradually bring them up. That is a very powerful idea, and it has become the ideal in India. That is why you can see a great philosopher or Vedantin like Sri Shankaracharya going into a temple and worshipping images. It is not hypocrisy. Swami Vivekananda while talking about the service to the masses always used to say that, "Elevate the masses without injuring their innate spirituality."

Why there should be conversion at all? Only a person who has no understanding of God would resort to convert others or would limit God to his god. God is not different but is only worshiped and prayed to with different names. Swami Vivekananda further explains, "Sri Krishna says, "Even those who worship other deities are really worshipping me" It is God incarnate whom man is worshipping. Would God be angry if you called Him by the wrong name? He would be no God at all! Can't you understand that whatever a man has in his own heart is God-even if he worships a stone. What of that!

We will understand more clearly if we once get rid of the idea that religion consists in doctrines. One idea of a religion has been that the whole world was born because Adam ate the apple, and there is no way of escape. Believe in Jesus Christ-in a certain man's death! But in India there is a quite different idea. Here religion means self realization and not somebody else's resurrection. . It does not matter whether one approaches the destination in a carriage with four horses, in an electric car, or rolling on the ground. The goal is the same. For others the problem is how to escape the wrath of the terrible God. For Hindus it is how to become what they really are, to regain their lost selfhood.... Therefore, Krishna says, if your method is better and higher, you have no business to say that another man's method is bad, however wicked you may think it.

Again we must consider, religion is a matter of growth, not a mass of foolish words. Two thousand years ago a man saw God. Moses saw God in a burning bush. Does what Moses did when he saw God save you? No man's seeing God can help you least bit except that it may excite you and urge you to do the same thing.

That is the whole value of the ancient's examples. Nothing more. Just like signposts on the way. No man's eating can satisfy another man. You have to see God yourself... Each one thinks his

method is best. Very good. But remember, it may be good for you....Because it is good for you do not jump to the conclusion that your method is everybody's method.

Sri Krishna says, "Better die in your own religion than attempt the path of another." This is my path, and I am down here. And you are way up there, and I am down here. And you are way up there, and I am always tempted to give up my path thinking I will go there and be with you. And if I give up, I am neither there nor here. We must not lose sight of this doctrine. It is all a matter of growth. Wait and grow, and you attain everything; otherwise there will be great spiritual danger. Here is the fundamental secret of teaching religion. (Vol I – Gita III)" A person who is truly religious will never resort to convert others or deride the faith of others as false.

Even one of the attributes of God is that he accepts all the people as they are and does not exclude anyone. While talking about Krishna, Swamiji says, "This was the great work of Krishna: to clear our eyes and make us look with broader vision upon humanity in its march upward and onward. His was the first heart that was large enough to see truth in all, his the first lips that uttered beautiful words for each and all."

Whether management, sociology, self-development, education on each subject Gita has something to tell us. Now a days many such books are also coming in the market. We should try to understand Gita in present context and then pass it on the next generation. They are bound to admire and practice Gita if it is told to them in today's language and paradigms. Our purpose of celebrating Gita Jayanti should be this that the relevance of Gita is understood and explained to the younger generation in today's terminology. Gita should become the basic book that is read and discussed in the families. Family is a place where children acquire views and values. In moulding the children, the influence of Gita would be most useful, elevating, guiding force not only in their childhood but also later when the parents around. Gita – as a mother would take care of the individual and any collective whole its life. This linking of our children, youth to Gita is the purpose of celebrating Gita Jayanti.

To conclude in the words of Swami Vivekananda, "May the great Krishna bless us, and lead us all to the fulfillment of our aims."

Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

Oneness: The Message of India

Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

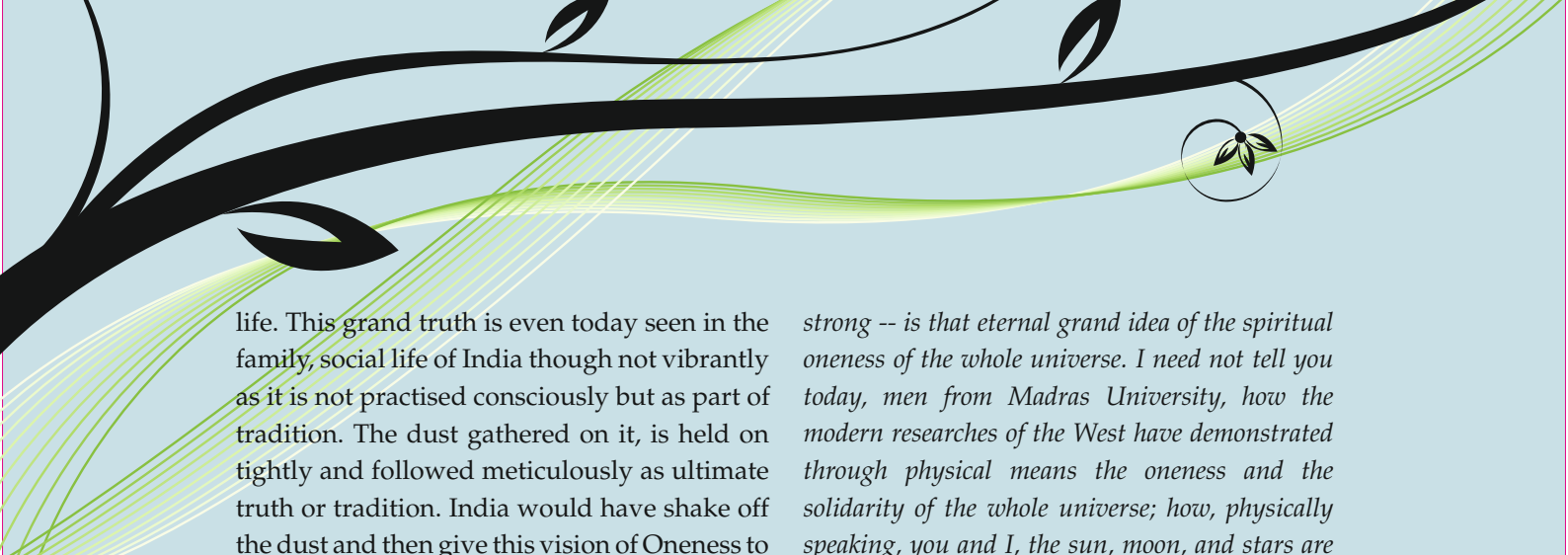
Swami Vivekananda had the unique advantage of knowing the East as well as the West. He had experienced Samadhi at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who personified the spiritual sadhana of man through ages. Swamiji had the best of Western education, had digested all the philosophies including the theology of Christianity. Not only the knowledge but he also got intimately acquainted with the people both learned and uneducated, highly placed and humble folks in India and also in West. Thus he could see the pluses and minuses of each civilization, he could also see that beyond all the identities, pretensions, it was the same humanity which was striving to know the Ultimate whether consciously or unconsciously. He saw that to manage to live up to the complexity of human life man has to have the foundations of his life based on eternal truths of existence.

Swami Vivekananda had said, *"Truth does not pay homage to the society. Society has to pay homage to the truth or perish."* It is something like gravitational force. If someone does not know or refuses to accept gravitational force, then he is not going to be spared the hurt if he jumps from a tree. Gravitational force cannot adjust to the desires or foolishness of a person, a person has to adjust himself, align himself with the truth or get perished. The human life, human society has come to that state that unless it aligns itself with the truth it would perish. The grandest truth which humanity has to take into



account is the Vedantic vision of Oneness. More Swamiji moved in the West more he realized how the Vedantic truth is the need for the good of humanity. Actually he realized that, that is the purpose of his life. He wrote, *"The dry Advaita must become living -poetic- in everyday life; ...all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work."*

On his return to India, Swami Vivekananda reminded India that it was her national mission to give the vision of Oneness to the world. This grand truth was realized in India and was nourished and lived in her national



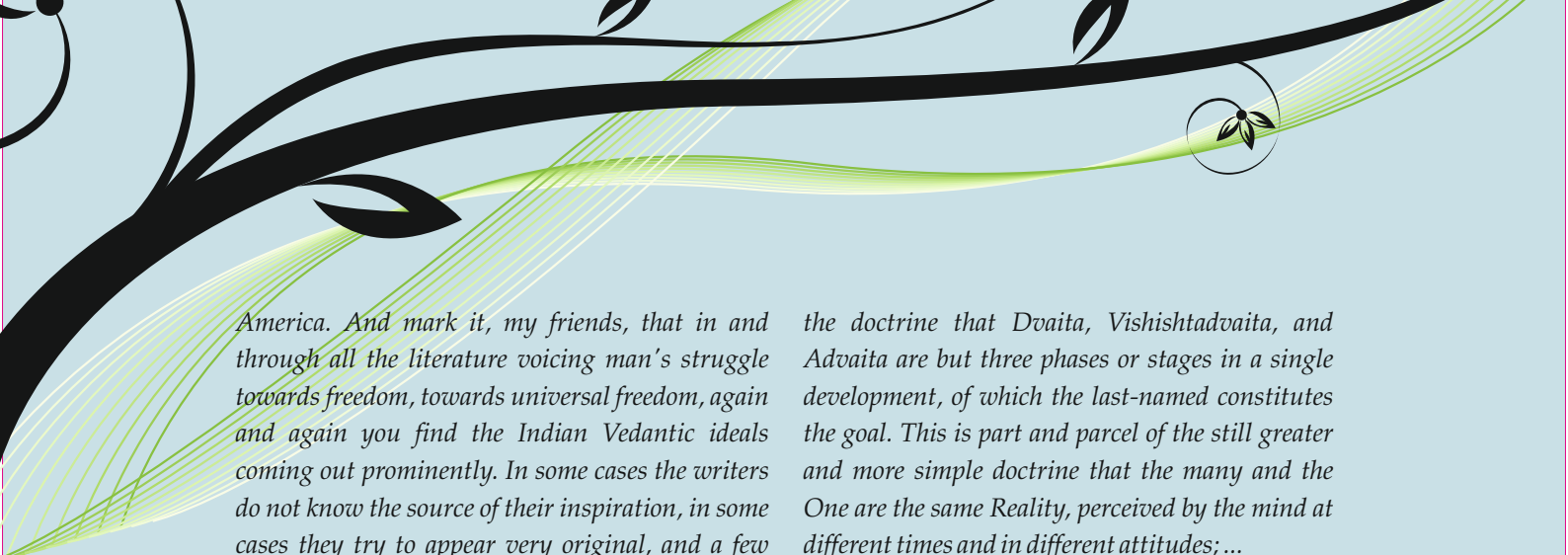
life. This grand truth is even today seen in the family, social life of India though not vibrantly as it is not practised consciously but as part of tradition. The dust gathered on it, is held on tightly and followed meticulously as ultimate truth or tradition. India would have shake off the dust and then give this vision of Oneness to the world. Swami Vivekananda thus landing at Columbo in his very first speech said, "...hammer blows of modern antiquarian researches are pulverising like masses of porcelain all sorts of antiquated orthodoxies, when religion in the West is only in the hands of the ignorant and the knowing ones look down with scorn upon anything belonging to religion, here comes to the fore the philosophy of India, which displays the march of beings, and the infinity of the universe. ...what can hold any more the allegiance of cultured humanity but the most wonderful, convincing, broadening, and ennobling ideas that can be found only in that most marvellous product of the soul of man, the wonderful voice of God, the Vedanta? ...the idea of the oneness of all, the Infinite, the idea of the Impersonal, the wonderful idea of the eternal soul of man..."

Subsequently again in his lecture at Madurai and then in many more lectures he reminded India, "This idea of oneness is the great lesson India has to give, and mark you, when this is understood, it changes the whole aspect of things, because you look at the world through other eyes than you have been doing before. And this world is no more a battlefield where each soul is born to struggle with every other soul and the strongest gets the victory and the weakest goes to death..."

The other great idea that the world wants from us today, the thinking part of Europe, nay, the whole world -- more, perhaps, the lower classes than the higher, more the masses than the cultured, more the ignorant than the educated, more the weak than the

strong -- is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe. I need not tell you today, men from Madras University, how the modern researches of the West have demonstrated through physical means the oneness and the solidarity of the whole universe; how, physically speaking, you and I, the sun, moon, and stars are but little waves or wavelets in the midst of an infinite ocean of matter; how Indian psychology demonstrated ages ago that, similarly, both body and mind are but mere names or little wavelets in the ocean of matter, the Samashti; and how, going one step further, it is also shown in the Vedanta that behind that idea of the unity of the whole show, the real Soul is one. There is but one Soul throughout the universe, all is but One Existence.

The rational West is earnestly bent upon seeking out the rationality, the *raison d'être* of all its philosophy and its ethics; and you all know well that ethics cannot be derived from the mere sanction of any personage, however great and divine he may have been. Such an explanation of the authority of ethics appeals no more to the highest of the world's thinkers; they want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the only Infinite Reality that exists in you and in me and in all, in the Self, in the Soul? The infinite oneness of the Soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers -- every literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom has preached that for you -- but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality. Europe wants it today just as much as our downtrodden masses do, and this great principle is even now unconsciously forming the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France, and in



America. And mark it, my friends, that in and through all the literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom, towards universal freedom, again and again you find the Indian Vedantic ideals coming out prominently. In some cases the writers do not know the source of their inspiration, in some cases they try to appear very original, and a few there are, bold and grateful enough to mention the source and acknowledge their indebtedness to it."

Again it is not that Swami Vivekananda was only telling or repeating what is Vedanta, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda synthesised all the darshans and all struggles of man. Sister Nivedita writes about it beautifully, "The Swami Vivekananda would have been less than he was, had anything in this Evangel of Hinduism been his own. Like the Krishna of the Gita, like Buddha, like Shankaracharya, like every great teacher that Indian thought has known, his sentences are laden with quotations from, the Vedas and Upanishads. He stands merely as the Revealer, the Interpreter to India of the treasures that she herself possesses in herself. The truths he preaches would have been as true, had he never been born. Nay more, they would have been equally authentic. The difference would have lain in their difficulty of access, in their want of modern clearness and incisiveness of statement, and in their loss of mutual coherence and unity. ...He taught with authority, and not as one of the Pandits. For he himself had plunged to the depths of the realisation which he preached, and he came back like Ramanuja only to tell its secrets to the pariah, the outcast, and the foreigner.

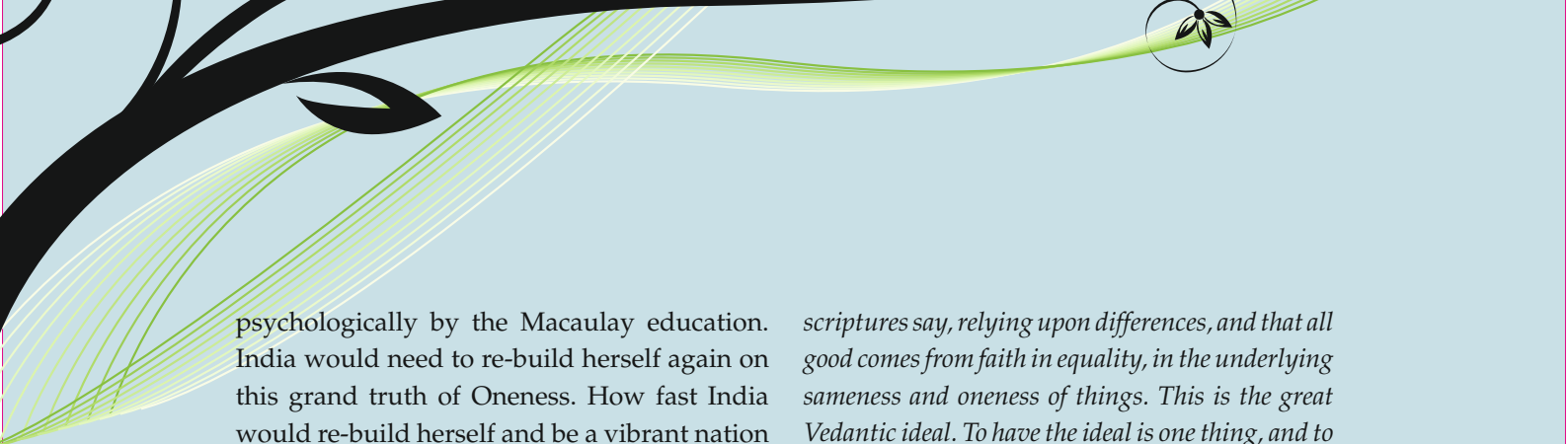
And yet this statement that his teaching holds nothing new is not absolutely true. It must never be forgotten that it was the Swami Vivekananda who, while proclaiming the sovereignty of the Advaita Philosophy, as including that experience in which all is one, without a second, also added to Hinduism

the doctrine that Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Advaita are but three phases or stages in a single development, of which the last-named constitutes the goal. This is part and parcel of the still greater and more simple doctrine that the many and the One are the same Reality, perceived by the mind at different times and in different attitudes;...

It is this which adds its crowning significance to our Master's life, for here he becomes the meeting-point, not only of East and West, but also of past and future. If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realisation. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid.

This is the realisation which makes Vivekananda the great preacher of Karma, not as divorced from, but as expressing Jnana and Bhakti. To him, the workshop, the study, the farmyard, and the field are as true and fit scenes for the meeting of God with man as the cell of the monk or the door of the temple. To him, there is no difference between service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality. All his words, from one point of view, read as a commentary upon this central conviction. "Art, science, and religion", he said once, "are but three different ways of expressing a single truth. But in order to understand this we must have the theory of Advaita."

India alone is marked by the providence to give this message by actually living it in family, social, economic, national life. That is the experiment the Rishis were carrying in our country which were interfered with physically by invasions after invasions and later



psychologically by the Macaulay education. India would need to re-build herself again on this grand truth of Oneness. How fast India would re-build herself and be a vibrant nation so that it could enlighten the whole world or whether she would annihilate herself by blindly imitating the West, Swamiji lost his sleep over it. Whatever was his talk and wherever it was, the basic tune was Mother India, the main exhortation was 'Up India, conquer the world with your spirituality'. He said, “...there is a great opening for the Vedanta to do beneficent work both here and elsewhere. This wonderful idea of the sameness and omnipresence of the Supreme Soul has to be preached for the amelioration and elevation of the human race here as elsewhere. Wherever there is evil and wherever there is ignorance and want of knowledge, I have found out by experience that all evil comes, as our

scriptures say, relying upon differences, and that all good comes from faith in equality, in the underlying sameness and oneness of things. This is the great Vedantic ideal. To have the ideal is one thing, and to apply it practically to the details of daily life is quite another thing. It is very good to point out an ideal, but where is the practical way to reach it? ”

When we are preparing ourselves to celebrate 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, it should not be just celebrations on large scale, but we should strive to apply Vedanta, to give the foundation of Oneness to our individual as well as collective life. So that Bharat can enlighten the world which is suffering from materialism, licentiousness, disintegration of systems, meaninglessness of human life and from religious exclusivism.

—————

Bala Bharatam

N.Krishna Moorthi

Sumati: Mother! How does the Bharateeya culture look upon a child?

Mother: In our tradition, the innocent, totally guileless child is likened to God. The child is pure. Its awareness (Prajna) is ideal. The Upanishad Compares a Brahma jnani to a child – Balavat – unmattavat. A child is spontaneous; it is without vikल्पas - inhibitions. Such a happy and pure childhood and its sweet memories are sought again and again even by adult human beings, throughout their adult lives. It is important for a child to have many happy experiences. Because according to psychologists all the happiness an adult gets is only a recollection and reliving of its childhood. When an adult person gets problems, he tries to remember those shelters and refuges of his childhood, which gave comfort to the child.

Sumati: Then remembering one's childhood can be happy experience helping one's spiritual sadhana, in getting Ananda!

Mother: Yes! Mahayana Buddhism has methods of spiritual sadhana, taking the person to his childhood and to his earlier births. These goings back called

regression can take place step – by-step, or all of a sudden – ekakshanabhi Sambodhi. Vama deva in a Rig Vedic hymn says” Being now in the womb (garbhenu san), I have known all the births of the gods (devas)”. The Gita says Sri Krishna knows all his birth. In this manner, the Vedas, the yoga shastra and Buddhism glorify one's childhood memories.

Sumati: What is Vatsalya Bhava?

Mother: The Purity, innocence and broad consciousness of the child have moved mystics to see god in children and god as a child. Writes Vinobaji.

“If we learn to see the Lord in little children how we should rejoice! Dhruva, Prahlada, Nachiketa, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanandana, Sanatkumara, were they not all children? But

the authors of the Puranas, Vyasa and the rest, did not know where to place them, what to do with them. Shukadeva a n d Shankaracharya were free from desires even since childhood. And so too was Jnanadeva!

All of them were children! No where is the Lord manifest in such clear, pure form as in these children. A saint



loved children dearly. Once His disciples asked Him "You speak so much about the kingdom of god. Who can enter it?" He lifted up a child standing by and set him on a table and said "Of such is the Kingdom of god. To enter therein, one must become as a little child." What he said is true. Swami Ramadasa was once playing with children. Some grown up people who observed the saint, romping with the children, were surprised. One of them asked "What has come over you today?"

Samartha answered:

"Those who remained young became great; those who grew up became great rogues"

As one grows up one sprouts horns, one develops self-will. Then one never thinks of God. The hearts of little children are unspoilt, their minds pure. We say to a child, "Don't tell lies." He asks, "What is a lie?" Then we expound to him the doctrine that statement must correspond to fact. The boy is puzzled and begins to wonder whether there is another way of speaking than saying what is. How can one say what is not? This is like telling one to call a square a square and not a circle. All this only surprises the child. What are children? Images of purity, of God-head. Grown ups teach them all wrong. The truth is; if we cannot see the Lord in mother, father, teacher, Saint and CHILD, in what other form can we see Him? There is no nobler form of God than these. Learn first these gentle and familiar forms of the Lord. In these the Lord is written in bold, clear letters." (The talks on the Gita)



That is why in Sanatana Dharma, God is worshipped as Ganesha and Kartikeya, the children. Sri Rama and Krishna are portrayed in the writings of Suka, Surdas, Tulasidas, Periyazhwar and Kulasekhara as Godly Children. Vatsalya bhava, treating God as a child is glorified in our literature. It is easy to practise. It ennobles the practitioner. It is open to all.

Sumati: What does modern western psychology say about this?

Mother: Carl Jung the Austrian psychoanalyst, whose many ideas are comparable to our Dharma, says that the whole humanity has

some standard patterns, universal experiences called the Archetypes. Among others he mentions the mother image and a prankster, trickster child as being loved universally. The maternal solicitude and sympathy of the Mother are universally revered. The mother represents (to the child) all that is benign, all that

cherishes and sustains. On the negative side the mother Archetype may connect anything that devours and poisons.

Sumati: I am reminded of puranic images of Parashakti and Kali and Putana of Bhagavatam!

Mother: Carl Jung also talks about the lovable trickster child as occupying the universal mind. This child with malicious pranks has power to change his shape. He is half animal, half divine. He is exposed to all kinds of fortunes. He is also a saviour. All mankind loves this child.

Sumati: I am reminded of our Hanumanji.

Mother: The trickster character is loved across civilizations. He is worshipped, adored, idolized in art and caught in performing artistic forms.

Sumati: How well does this description suit our Sri Krishna and his portrayal in devotional hymns, dharma, philosophy, religion and art. How do we bring out the Krishna, Sita and Parvati from every child?

Mother: The shodasa samskaras, the Vedic and puranic rituals begin with the child in the mother's womb and go on up to its education at the Gurukulam. Mother's health, proper feeding of the child, tonsuring its head, giving an appropriate name, and teaching how to read and write are all codified in the shastras so that the child is brought up properly.

Sumati: Does modern Science agree with this kind of treatment of the child!

Mother: Yes. Large scale experiments have been done about educating a child even when it is in its mother's womb. Moral and social teachings and encouraging words are recorded to the rhythm of the mother's heart beat and this record called BABY – PLUS is tied to the pregnant mother's hip and played for an hour a day. Children born after this treatment were studied in Russia and U.S. for the next sixteen years of their lives. Their children showed good educational skills, moral values and social habits and realized potentialities. Giving proper Samskaras to the pregnant mother and the young child lays the foundation for the growth of a good Human Being

Sumati: Now I understand why the English poet said "The Child is the father of the Man." What is the position of children in free modern India?

Mother: You should remember that Independent India started with a heavy backlog of child related problems. (1) High birth rate and death rate of children. (2) General poverty affecting child – nutrition. (3) Macaulay system of education, depriving our children of their cultural roots. (4) Lack of Medical and hygiene facilities! Compared to what Bharat was in 1947, much improvement has come in all these fields, but we have a long way to go before, we declare our country to be child centered and child – friendly.

Sumati: Who does the job of looking after our children?

Mother: Better education for our women has helped in improving the child survival rate and nutritional and educational service; The central and state governments have started good services' for children's education health and Nutrition. At the international level UNICEF does excellent work.

Sumati: Where do the voluntary organizations stand?

Mother: The government and the voluntary sectors have pooled their energies to provide child care. Eradication of child labour is a field where the NGOS have done good work. In the field of arts, children's magazine's books, films and library facilities have improved. Publication of children's book has taken a leap forward led by uncle Anant pai's Amarchitra Katha. But both education and arts have a preference for urban children neglecting rural



children. Education for children is one of the major factors for rural population migrating to towns. Sister Nivedita said National education is education in our Epics (The Ramayana and the Mahabharata) but we find whole generation of our youngsters growing up without cultural and patriotic education. The voluntary sector has to work hard to fulfill Sister Nivedita's dream.

Sumati: In terms of numbers?

Mother: Every year 2, 67, 87000 children born in India. Of them 17, 26, 000 die before completing 5 years. For every 1000 child birth 50 die before one year and 34 die at birth. India's life expectancy at birth is 64 years. Though 83% of the children enter primary schools, many drop out. 28% of our children are born with low birth weight facing lifelong problems. 66-87% of our children get immunisation facilities - a great improvement from the past. Though 85% of our boys and 81% of girls enter primary schools only 66% survive in our schools. India (2009) has 44 crores of children under 18 and 13 crores of children less than 5 years. The birth rate is 22 per 1000 per year and the death rate 8 per thousand per year.

Sumati: What are the remedial measures?

Mother: (1) A study of the lives Spiritual, National and environmental heroes and heroines with special reference to their childhood. Accepting them as the society's role – models.

(2) According priority for human development with children, youth and women getting

special attention.

(3) Giving special care for women of productive age group 15–44, care for pregnant women and new born children.

(4) Emphasizing, nutrition for survival and development and health as different from fashion – based fast-foods.

(5) Taking to positive health programmes instead of a disease – and medicine – based approach. Stress on Indigenous products and practices.

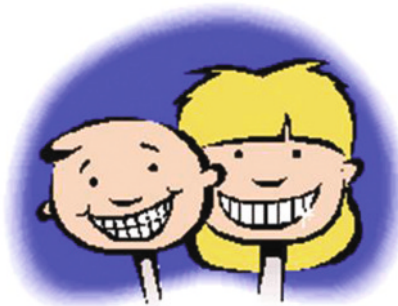
(6) Education that brings out the best in every human being, education that helps each person in identifying his /her niche in the family, society, Nation and world, instead of education that makes each person treat the rest of creation as a competitor or a threat,

Education that celebrates cooperation and co-existence. It should take advantage of our Bharatiya – tradition which has done so much for humanity.

(7) A family – planning philosophy that worships life, reveres life, instead of that which destroys and devalues life.

(8) A clear understanding that each person, child, youth, adult or old person has childhood memories lingering in him/her. This memory is the stimulus for all ethical, moral, spiritual, social and environmental values. The aim of the society should be to make the life of every child memorable, worth remembering.

Sumati: We shall pray and work for these ideals of childhood.

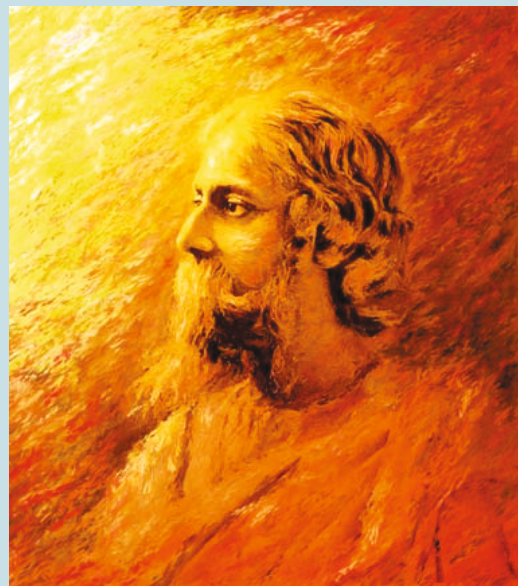


Rabindranath Tagore - A social Reformist in His own Inimitable Way

Subhrendu Bhattachariya


Though not at par with a host of distinguished Indian social reformers like Raja Rammohun Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda and B.R.Ambedkar, Rabindranath was unique in his endeavour – of course in his own inimitable way-to ameliorate the economic as well as social condition of the poor people, inhabiting in his ancestral Estate of Silaidaha (formerly in Pabna district, now Kustia district of Bangladesh) in particular, and other adjoining villages in general. Surprisingly, Tagore's social works have not been highlighted by the intellectuals of our country and abroad in same proportion, intensity and dimension as his other notable faculties have all along been projected. It may seem to be difficult to do so, for Tagore was a versatile genius and for that matter his multifarious activities encompassed a vast area of humanity. In this context, what Chinmohun Sehanavis has remarked is apt:

...while he (Tagore) was primarily a great artist, a poet, composer, short-story writer, novelist, playwright and painter – he was also a thinker who wrote innumerable articles and delivered lectures and addresses, an educationist – a practical man – who founded and ran institutions like Santhiniketan and Viswa-Bharati. He



was also a social worker who alongside Santiniketan organized Co-operatives, the Sreeniketan and a Palli Charcha Kendra (Centre for study of Rural work and Development). And he never hesitated to intervene in the political turmoils of India when matters came to a head and demanded his attention, (Vide : Rabindranath Tagore – A 125th Birth Anniversary Volume, Govt. of West Bengal, 1988, p.28)

Keeping this view in mind and in order to justify that Tagore was a social reformist, I intend to project him as such in the forthcoming discourse. As already said,



besides being a renowned artist, Tagore was a social worker (par excellence). He, when only 25 years old, was sent to Silaidaha by the authorities of the Tagore family at Jorasanko to look after their Estate. There he not only came in contact with the bounties of nature, but also the naive simple-minded peasants most of whom were his own subjects. His long sojourn there enabled him to gather vast experience about the problems of rural people mainly economic, educational and social. Though a visionary and a poet, Tagore was a man of the practical world where we are subjected to weal and woe, joy and anguish. What he realized was that for their improvement the villagers would have to work hard, unitedly and methodically, under the guidance of one who had sympathy and love for them.

However, in order to give a practical shape as to how to solve their problems, he advocated unflinchingly for introducing village self-government which, according to him, would help them to comprehend what they were supposed to do for their betterment. Accordingly, he segmented his entire Estate into three subdivisions – (i) Shajadpur (in Kustia district of Bangladesh) (ii) Kaligram (in Rajasahi district of Bangladesh) and (iii) Birahimpur (in Nadia district of West Bengal). As usual, Silaidaha remained as Headquarters (of the district). With this arrangement the process of decentralization, the very root of democracy, came to the forefront. In each of the three subdivisions, as stated above, *Hitaishi Sabha* (Welfare Organization) was instituted, headed by the Pradhan (Headman) who was to be selected by all the villagers as members. Obviously, *Hitaishi Sabha* was reckoned as the centre of inspiration and motivation to perform welfare works.

Needless to say, founding of an organization is not enough, it must be backed up by financial resources; hence to defray expenses towards management of the Sabha and to implement welfare schemes, a *Common Fund* was constituted with the collection of membership subscriptions and donation from the rich people and to add to this, Tagore as Estate manager contributed a lump sum of Rs.2000.00 as exgratia. Whatever money thus accrued was deposited in the Estate's Treasury under a separate head, called *Common fund*. Interestingly, there was another unique feature – if the subscription amounted to Rs.1000.00, the Estate would contribute another amount of Rs.1000.00 as matching grant, and thereby doubling the amount. From the Treasury money would be allotted to the three Sabhas, enabling them to perform welfare works.

Next important work was to earmark the main functions of the *Hitaishi Sabha*, to be executed by the village members. Initially, it was decided that each Sabha would remain confined to the functions of (i) improvement of economic condition (ii) opening of schools to eradicate illiteracy (iii) setting up of health centres to specially banish mosquitoes as well as malaria and (iv) construction of roads for betterment of transport. Thus encouraged, enthused and empowered, the villagers under the aegis of *Hitaishi Sabha* began their multifarious activities in right earnest.

Significantly, within three years from the inception of *Hitaishi Sabha* the villagers showed spectacular results, overcoming drudgery and inertia to which they had so long been accustomed. With joint collaboration the villagers were able to found some Pathshalas (primary schools), middle-

stage schools (Junior High Schools) along with a High School at Patisar. Some Health Centres were set up, cutting across the entire Estate. Many Homeopathi doctors were entrusted to provide medical treatment to the villagers. Even many Kutcha (non-metalled) roads were either repaired or constructed a new. Above all, Tagore got a concrete road constructed from Silaidaha to Kustia, then a sub-divisional town, by them with the money borne by his Estate. Here it is pertinent to note that the *Kaligram Hitaishi Sabha* proved to be superior to the other ones, for the villagers there were very serious and sincere in developmental works; they could pursue their studies well. Provided the Common Fund could not afford to bear expenses in this regard. Tagore would allot necessary funds from his own Estate.

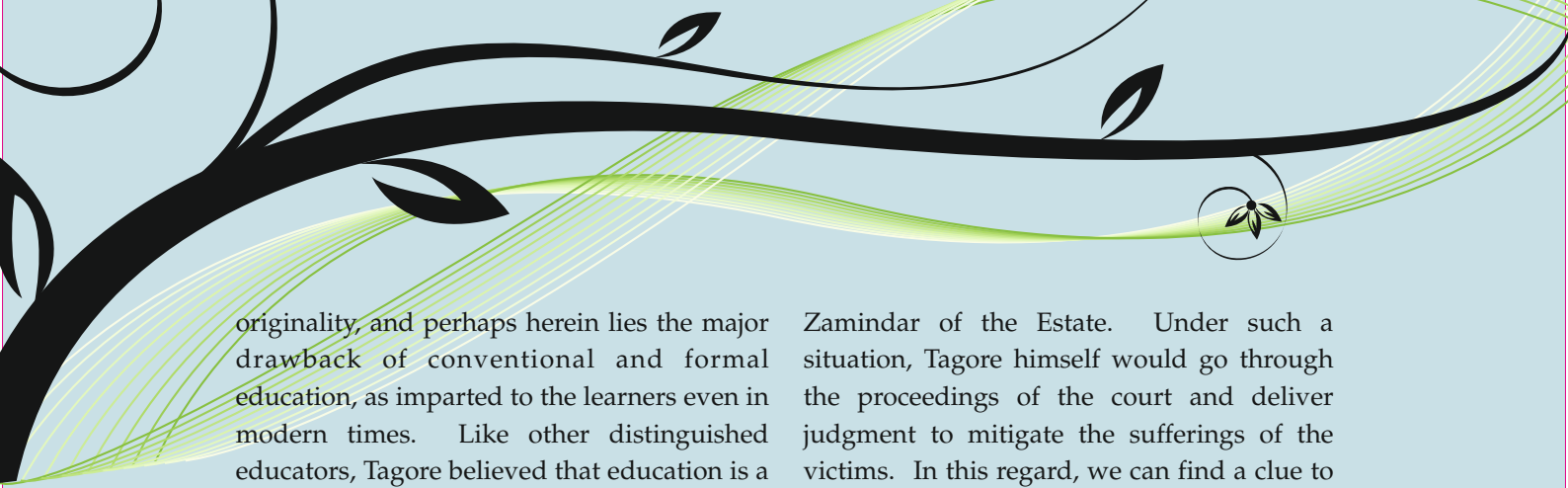
Besides, Tagore was of the view that agriculture could not be the sole means of the villagers' subsistence in life; to supplement their income he encouraged them to resort to handicrafts like pottery, umbrella-making, weaving etc., which could be done in their off-time. Thus they could easily improve their economic condition. As a matter of fact, Tagore, being a liberal-minded man, believed staunchly in assimilation of the salient traits of important civilizations – the civilization of the east, especially Indian, is vastly rich in ethical and spiritual values, whereas the civilization of the west is based on scientific and technological advancement. Therefore, Tagore was by no means, averse to science and technology. To lead a worthy and potential life, he realized, science is as useful as spiritual inculcation. With this end in view, he gave



Rabindranath Tagore's house of Silaidaha

unequivocal emphasis on modernization of agriculture and co-operative farming, as introduced by the west long ago. After his visit to the Soviet Union in 1930 he was fully convinced of the fact that the rural upliftment could be accomplished through co-operative farming and appliance of scientific implements, and as such he advocated for the use of tractor, husking machine and high-yielding seeds in agriculture. Even he sent his son, his son-in-law and one student of Santiniketan to the USA to keep abreast of modernization in agriculture and to acquire necessary expertise as to how to improve the lot of the villagers economically. To augment agricultural output, Tagore introduced in small way co-operative farming and the use of tractor in the Kaligram segment of his Estate. Sreeniketan, his own creation, is an eye-opener to all, so far as modernization of agriculture is concerned. Sreeniketan is still an epitome of green energy, free from environmental pollution.

All this apart, Tagore in the domain of education brought about some vital changes to make the learners free from stereotyped formal or conventional education which could not offer scope for free thinking and creative pursuits. It could simply stifle their



originality, and perhaps herein lies the major drawback of conventional and formal education, as imparted to the learners even in modern times. Like other distinguished educators, Tagore believed that education is a means, not an end in itself, and for that matter its main objective is to help the learners grow up as perfect citizens of the country, by not thrusting the burden of the course of study indiscriminately upon them; rather they must be given chance to choose the course of study independently by themselves and for their feed-back they ought to be given some options. Modernity was, therefore, the hallmark of his conception of education.

Moreover, Tagore highlighted the concept of love for nature in educational system, as he categorically stated that the learners must come in close contact with nature to acquire proper education. Bereft of nature, education is incomplete, for the students must suck out the resources which nature offers, and thereby supplementing and enriching the course of studies. His concept of nature study has now culminated in environmental education, much in vogue in modern Indian educational system.

Interestingly, Tagore, to avoid litigations to which the villagers were prone, set up two arbitration courts at Kaligram and Birhimpur, two segments of his Estate, to try the cases arising out of all kinds of disputes. Pradhans (Headmen) with the inclusion of some senior members of the villages were given power to do so for settlement of disputes to the satisfaction of all concerned. With the decision of the courts one party might not be satisfied, and for that matter it could appeal to the

Zamindar of the Estate. Under such a situation, Tagore himself would go through the proceedings of the court and deliver judgment to mitigate the sufferings of the victims. In this regard, we can find a clue to the present system of *Lok Adalat*, set up across the country to minimize time, labour and litigation expenses.

Thus Tagore proved himself to be one of the greatest pioneers in setting up village self-government and for that matter it is heartening to note that the *Balwantri rao Mehta Committee* which recommended after independence to the Government of India for introduction of the present three-tier Panchayati Raj System throughout the country had to take the Rabindric-model of self-government into consideration. Hence Tagore's concern for the rural upliftment still holds water.

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Indian economy is not state dependent

The greatest strength of Indian economy is her self-dependent approach. The economies in different parts of the world, including the developed and the richer countries, largely depend on the state and state mechanisms. But the Indian economy is different. Indian culture teaches people to stand on one's own legs and not depend on others, however close they may be. As a result the Indian society imbibed the values of self-dependence in the lives of its people and saw to it that they practiced them.

People have been taught to choose and engage in one or the other productive activities. Dedication to one's own work is considered a higher quality. Hence people take up work as their basic duty and privilege.

Family is the foundation of life in India. It is mandated that the sacred duty of the householders is to take care of the dependents in the family. Hence they engage in different activities to earn an income and protect the well-being of their family members. They also take up new initiatives so that they could earn more for their families. As a result different economic activities are continued and new ventures get started without waiting for others from outside.

Simple living and saving for the future are two important characteristics of the Indian life. Indian life discourages wasteful expenditures. Hence people save money even when their incomes are less. Such habits enable the society to mobilize funds for purposeful initiatives.

Indian families are closely knit and society oriented. The parents help their children in all possible ways. They bequeath their assets, pass on their savings and make their services available

to the next generation. As a result it becomes easier for the younger members to grow, as their basic facilities are already fulfilled and resources are available for further growth.

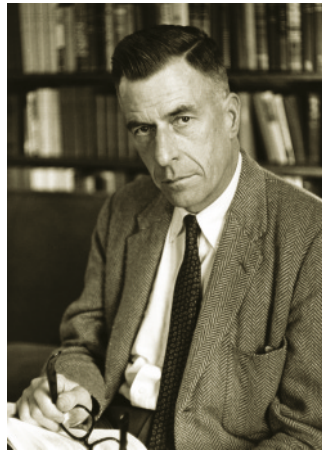
Since families lead community oriented lives, they take it as their duty to help their near and dear ones. As a result of the network of relationships, promotion of new ventures and economic development becomes easier and faster. Prevalence of social capital in the country

makes it possible for the people to live in a peaceful atmosphere and it helps people to concentrate on the developmental activities.

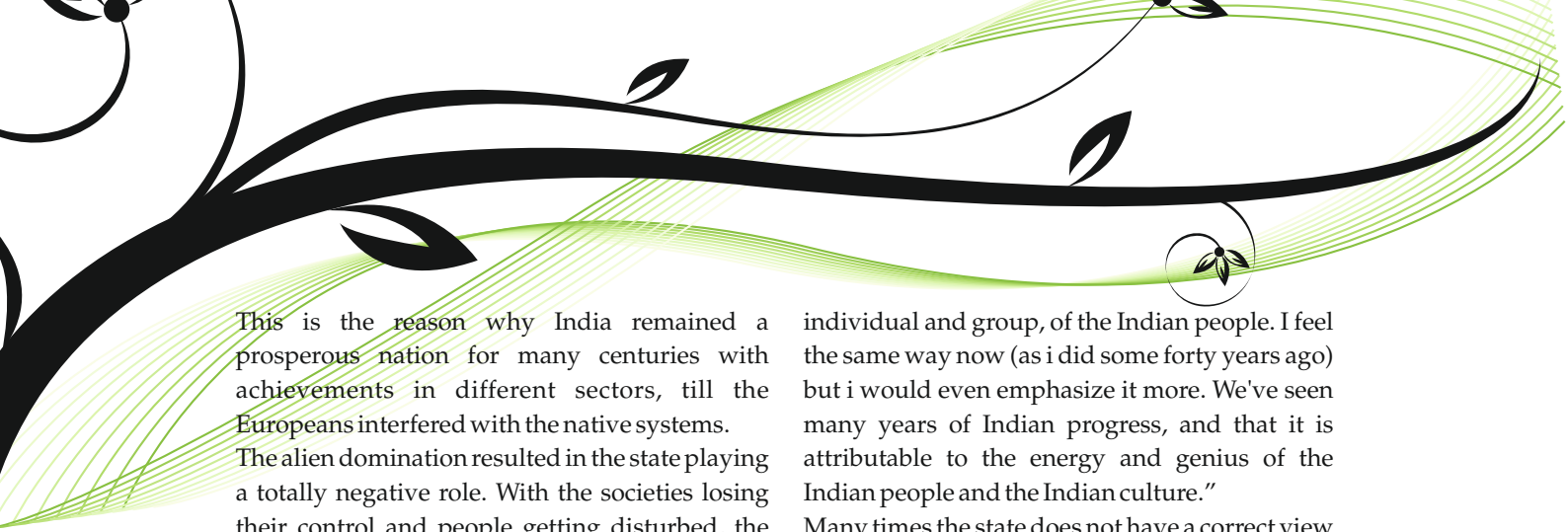
All these features of Indian lives with the age-old culture and tradition as the foundation, makes the economy move on without much expectations from the state. People take to activities on their own as they consider it their duty to engage in useful activities, earn resources, nurture their families, lead useful lives and achieve success in their fields.

It is true that in the ancient periods the rulers were advised to frame suitable policies and provide the required facilities for the proper functioning of the economy. Studies on the economic history of India show that the states and their agencies facilitated the economic activities very actively by making policies for different segments at different levels, establishing the necessary facilities, providing the required support and encouraging people to involve in different kinds of work. The states were also engaged in a few of the activities considered significant.

Systems were established in such a manner that even during the times of war the economic activities continued without any interruption.



John Kenneth Galbraith



This is the reason why India remained a prosperous nation for many centuries with achievements in different sectors, till the Europeans interfered with the native systems.

The alien domination resulted in the state playing a totally negative role. With the societies losing their control and people getting disturbed, the native arrangements were destroyed. As a result people could not do much and the economy had to suffer seriously.

The independence gave the people a feeling of security and confidence. They felt immediately that they could pursue economic activities without the fear of an oppressive alien power. Studies show that without waiting for the state, they started working on their own. The seeds for development were sown in the 1950s, without even the state fully realizing it and it continues to go on. Since then irrespective of the ideologies of the state, the economy has been growing as the people remain pushing it.

It is unfortunate that the ruling classes of independent India have failed to evolve a suitable policy framework for the all-round development of her people and provide the necessary support, though the people are willing to work hard and undertake the required steps to make the country progress in the right direction. It is in this context that we have to appreciate the Indian people, who continue to toil and do whatever is possible for development.

In this connection it may be worth remembering the words of John Kenneth Galbraith, himself a noted economist and, the ambassador of the US to India in the 1960s. He made these comments when he visited India in 2001. To quote: "I wanted to emphasize the point, which would be widely accepted, that the success of India did not depend on the government. It depended on the energy, ingenuity and other qualifications of the Indian people. And the Indian quality to put ideas into practice. I was urging an obvious point that the progress of India did not depend on the government, as important as it might be, but was enormously dependent on the initiative,

individual and group, of the Indian people. I feel the same way now (as i did some forty years ago) but i would even emphasize it more. We've seen many years of Indian progress, and that it is attributable to the energy and genius of the Indian people and the Indian culture."

Many times the state does not have a correct view of the functioning economic systems. It results in slowing down and even hindering progress. But people through their will power and persistence, continue to work and achieve success. Writing in the context of the entrepreneurial qualities of the Gounder community who dominate the western part of Tamil Nadu, Sharad Chari writes: "To paraphrase S.Neelakantan, an economist from western Tamil Nadu, familiar with these environs, Gounders have succeeded *despite* the state and it is this success under inhospitable conditions that the central role of the entrepreneur."

Studies in different economic and business centres across the country indicate that people take up economic activities on their own and have achieved success even when the attitude of the state is not favorable. Reports and surveys continuously point out that the entrepreneurial ventures at different levels are initiated by people without much assistance from the state agencies.

The Indian economy remains self-dependent to a large extent in spite of the lack of proper understanding from the policy makers and paucity of mechanisms to provide the required support for its smooth functioning. It is this quality that has enabled India to move forward, from the colonial times to the contemporary periods, even when the rest of the world has been facing serious difficulties with their states groping for solutions to get out of the crisis.

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M.C.Subramaniam The man who served God in man

**"They alone live who lives for others – Others are more dead than alive".
Swami Vivekananda**

C.Gopalan



Observed so Swami Vivekananda once. The life and contribution of Shri M.C. Subramaniam, (endearingly addressed as M.C. by his friends) Founder –Hon. Secretary of Public Health Centre in West Mambalam, Chennai, is a concrete example for the words of The Mother. His birth centenary falls on December 12 and it is worth recalling the exemplary life led by the less known dedicated soul.

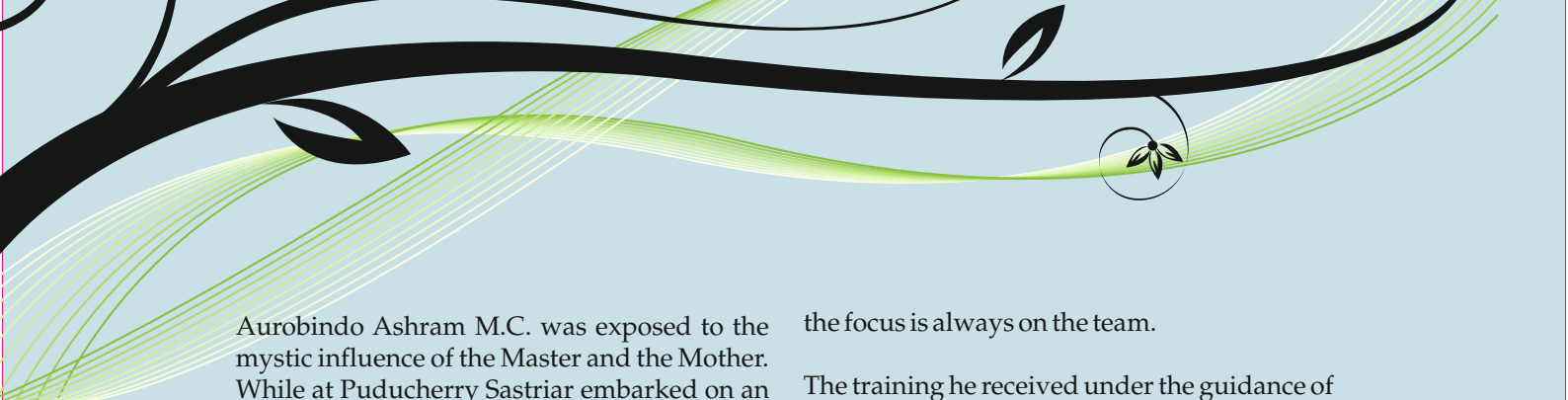
Shri Subramaniam hailed from Thiruvannamalai in North Arcot area of Tamil Nadu, the place hallowed by the presence of great siddha purushas, notable among them being Sri Ramana Maharishi and Sri Seshadri Swamigal. As a boy he lost his father and grew under the affectionate care of his mother and aunt (mother's sister).

He moved to Chennai and received his school education at the Muthialpet High School. There he came under the protective influence of Shri T.V. Kapali Sastriar who taught Sanskrit. Besides being a great scholar in Sanskrit and a poet of a very high order in the language Shri Sastriar was a great patriot. That was the period when the whole country was charged with the thirst for freedom under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Stalwarts like C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Satyamurthy and others were campaigning for council entry. No wonder young Subramaniam also joined the band of

youth who protested against the visit of Simon Commission. The day of school boycott coincided with the last day for remitting the fee for the public examination. Unmindful of this Subramaniam was standing outside the school expressing his protest. Sastriar who came to the school as usual went in and verified with the office whether Subramaniam had remitted the prescribed fee. On hearing in the negative Sastriar paid the amount from his pocket and moved to his class. Subramaniam came to know of the noble gesture of his mentor and thanked him. Years later he used to recall this incident gratefully and tell that but for his teacher's timely act there could have been a break in his academic career.

M.C. finished his B.A. (Hon) in English literature and chose journalism as his career. He used to write under the pen name 'Kumar.' Rajaji whenever he wrote to M.C. used to address him as Kumar only. He was held in great esteem by veterans of the field and his contemporaries like Shri A.N. Sivaraman of Dinamani, Shri A.G. Venkatachari and Shri R.A. Padmanaban and others. He was associated with the Sunday Times for a long period.

His relationship with Kapali Sastriar did not stop with the school. It continued to grow till the demise of Sastriar in the year 1953. Sastriar evinced great interest in the spiritual growth of his student. Under his guidance M.C. was exposed to the spiritual influence of Sri Ramana Maharishi and Kavyakanta Ganapthai Muni, a multidimensional personality and Sanskrit poet of a very high order. Later, when Sastriar moved to Sri



Aurobindo Ashram M.C. was exposed to the mystic influence of the Master and the Mother. While at Puducherry Sastriar embarked on an ambitious project of writing a commentary on the Rigveda in the light of Sri Aurobindo's findings, Subramaniam helped him in several ways, one among them being procuring rare reference books for his perusal.

After India became a republic the first general election was held in the year 1952. M.C. was then living in West Mambalam, Chennai. The area lacked many basic facilities for a healthy living. Shri T.T. Krishnamachary contested the election as Congress candidate for the South Madras Lok Sabha constituency. M.C. played a key role in canvassing for him. In the course of their interaction with the residents of the area they came to the conclusion that Mambalam was in dire need of a health centre. Without waiting for the initiative of the government and with the active support of a dedicated band of social minded friends M.C. launched the Public Health Centre. It had its humble beginning in a cottage. He used to engage himself in manual labour along with other volunteers in leveling the ground and other related works. He used to visit the houses in the area and explain to them the aims of the centre and seek their help and support in all possible ways. Years later he used to recall movingly how one purohit of very limited means offered four annas (present twenty-five paise) as his contribution.


From a humble beginning in a small hut the centre grew into a well equipped hospital with multidisciplinary facilities. It is all due to the tireless efforts of M.C. and the whole hearted cooperation extended by a team of volunteers and physicians under his inspiring leadership. It is very important to note here that the influence exercised by M.C. over his team was not of an aggressive nature. It was like the gentle dew which enables the rose bud to blossom on its own and in its own phase. He never allowed anybody to project himself as the builder of the institution. He saw to it that

the focus is always on the team.

The training he received under the guidance of Shri Sastriar enabled him to provide a sound spiritual foundation for the initiative. Apart from the curative side of the centre he tried to expose the patients and his team members to the rich heritage of yoga in all its aspects. In this respect the celebrated yoga exponent Shri Krishnamachariar of Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram visited the centre and gave lecture demonstrations. With a view to expose the younger generation to our cultural heritage he arranged for guest lectures by Shri S. Sankaranarayanan, an expert in Tantra Sastra and a great scholar in Sanskrit, which threw light on various intricate aspects of our culture like Mantra, Tantra, Yantra and others.

After his stint in the Sunday Times M.C. joined the Ministry of Industries and Commerce of which TTK was the Union Minister. Thereafter he served the Government of Madras as State Information Officer. In the sixties, TTK revived the legendary Indian Review journal started by G.A. Natesan, a nationalist of yester years. M.C. became its editor and helped in its growth as journal enriching life, literature and culture.

M.C. was a genuine patriot. As days passed he could not bear the increase of fall in public life values. Whenever friends used to gather in his office he used to discuss the problem in all its dimensions. In these gatherings friends who are old in age and experience as well as young men will join. Each one of them will be cherishing a particular ideology which may not be to the liking of others. M.C. used to interact with all in his own gentle way and try to impress upon them the role of the individual in ensuring a clean public life. Though conflicting views will be aired, no one will feel hurt. That was the unique way of M.C. in educating fellow citizens in the art of enlightened citizenship. During the dark days of emergency between 1975-77 Shri Subramaniam played a crucial role in encouraging the underground workers in



their attempt to overthrow the Indira regime.

Many eminent men like Shri R. Venkataraman, former President of India, Shri Cho Ramaswamy, Editor, Thuklak magazine, have immensely benefited by their periodical interaction with Subramaniam on key issues. A few of his friends used to request him to write on current affairs and sent the same to upcountry journals as their own and earn substantially. M.C. never bothered about their behaviour and continued to oblige them unmindful of the physical strain caused to him.

His style of writing was of a high order. A casual browsing of his column 'On Leaves Green and Grey' in the Indian Review will reveal the same.

He was held in great esteem by stalwarts like TTK, Kamaraj, Bhaktavatsalam and others. He never used these contacts for this personal benefit. Such contacts were utilized by him to help men around him who were in distress and for the development of his pet project The Public Health Centre. At a time when one finds a plethora of NGOs in public life each owing allegiance to a resourceful individual it will be

difficult to believe that M.C. built an NGO by totally remaining in the background and projecting his colleagues in every possible way.

People say by serving man we serve God. With the spiritual legacy inherited from luminaries like Ramana Maharishi, Mahatma Gandhi, Kapali Sastriar and others Subramaniam through his enlightened social service made us realise the spiritual dimension of the saying i.e., by serving man we only serve God in him. This noble and enlightened soul passed away in 1993.

We began this tribute with a quote from The Mother and it will be appropriate to conclude with an equally relevant quotation from the songs of Saint Thayumanava

*If only you make me fit to serve your devotees
the state of bliss will reach me on its own accord.*

If each and every one of us cherish and practice at least one aspect of his value laden life then that will be the best homage we will be offering to the memory of a noble and dedicated soul.

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Citadels of Indian Culture

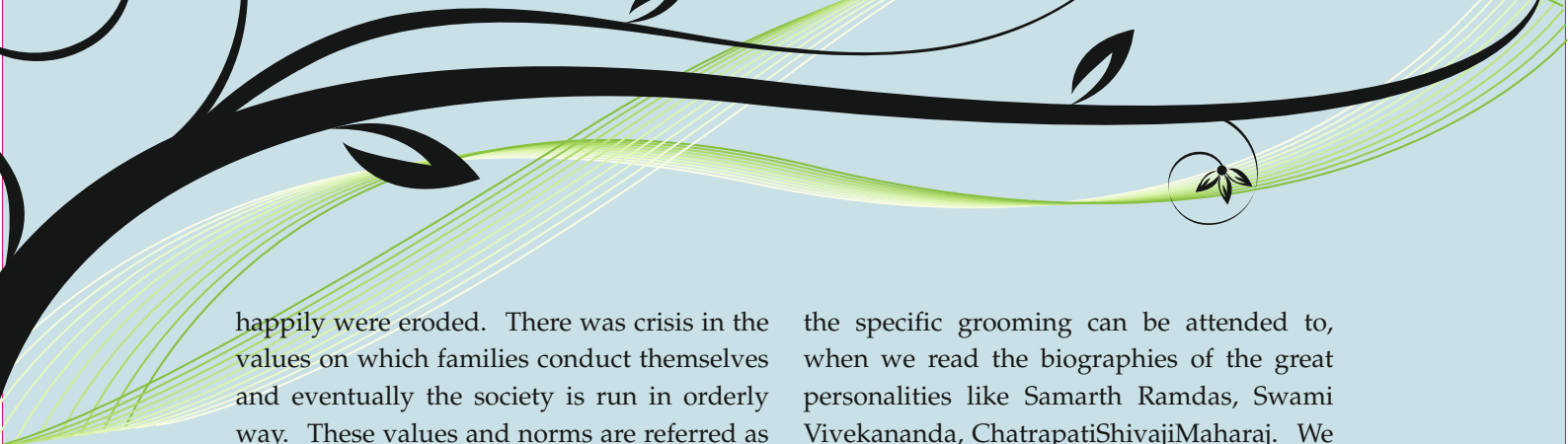
SatishChowkulkar

Indian culture has been unanimously accepted as the oldest living culture. Remnants of its contemporary and subsequently emerged cultures are found only in the museums, archives and archaeological samples. Many historians and thinkers are searching for the secret of its eternity. What could be the reasons for its being most ancient and yet modern and thereby being alive? Let us have a look at it.

As well-known, principles of Indian Culture have emanated from Vedas and Upanishads handed down to us from generation to generation. These principal ideas are rejuvenated time and again by the seers through their practical guidances one such latest guidance came 5114 years age through Srimad Bhagavad Gita. These principles are practically lived by the masses, not only in the *Maths* and *Asrams* but in the houses by *Grihasthas* through the unit of family i.e. *Kutumba*. Indian Culture is alive for millennium together

because its base is spiritual and its teachings have been imparted through the perennial chair of Family Tradition – i.e. *KutumbaVyavastha*. All other cultures in the world have degenerated and became defunct for want of these two enlivening dispensations. As we all know the teachings in the Bhagavad Gita were imparted by Bhagavan Sri Krishna on the battle field – *Kurukshetra*. The war was fought between the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas* who were cousins-belonging to same family – Kuru dynasty. Their fathers were brothers. That means the values on which the families normally live





happily were eroded. There was crisis in the values on which families conduct themselves and eventually the society is run in orderly way. These values and norms are referred as *Dharma*. Sri Krishna expressly states that *Dharma – Sansthapana* i.e. re-establishing the values and social norms, is the purpose of His taking the incarnation. The knowledge in Bhagavad Gita is oriented towards that.

Through the seven hundred *slokas* and eighteen *adhyayas* teachings of Bhagavad Gita told by *Bhagavan* have been documented by *Maharshi Vyasa*. These teachings have some specific pointers as to the four facets of the creations namely *Vyashti* (Individual), *Samashti* (Collectivity), *Srushti* (The world around), *Parameshti* (The Creator).

Values and norms of Life i.e. *Dharma* are prescribed for strengthening the creation at all the four levels. This is the *Yoga Shastra* of Bhagavad Gita – for integrating and streamlining the society. The conduct of an individual while interacting with the other three facets are to be groomed, deciphered and chastened and this will be the *tapasya* of the individual to be an fit person to usher in an ideal social order.

The place where the person gets an opportunity to do this *Tapasya* i.e. tempering is Family. Elders in the family take care of this process of tempering in most unassuming way with caring and nurturing with affection and concern. Many times it is done by putting forth on example *acharana*. Child learns more by observing the behavior of elders and the people around than by precepts and bookish information. Family is the place where a child is observed right from the birth and need for

the specific grooming can be attended to, when we read the biographies of the great personalities like Samarth Ramdas, Swami Vivekananda, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. We observe that they were groomed by their parents - Mothers in particular by telling stories from scriptures.

A family is there for a very needful and effective tool for 'Man-making'. The family i.e. *Kutumba* is a unique institution where an individual grows from *Vyashti* to *Samashti*. At *Samashti* level a family evolves along with the other families into Society i.e. *Samaj* and then eventually into Nation i.e. *Rashtra* and then into the world i.e. *Vishva*. There is an immediate need to strengthen this unit as it is getting contracted day by day due to changing trends in life styles.

The trend of narrow outlook which causes shrinking of family into nuclear family need to be arrested. An ideal family will be that where elders are honoured, children are understood and nurtured. There should be healthy interaction and feeling of organic oneness among its members. Imparting of value based norms of life are to be lived and norms of conduct as told in the Bhagavad evolution- *Vyashti*, *Samashti*, *Srushti* and *Parameshti*, would be lived. There is no other place other than family where this can be done. *Bharateeya Samskriti* the Indian Way of Life is based on the principles of *Tyaga*, *Seva* and *Yajna* as told in Bhagavad Gita. These can be nurtured only through the unit of family. The teachings of Gita and Family i.e. *Kutumba Vyavastha* are the strong holds of our ancient and yet modern society. Let us resolve to live and strengthen these citadels.

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Was Tantya Tope Really Hanged By British in 1857?

The reality revealed by the War documents

Dr. K.M. Rao

Tantya Tope as a wandering Monk (Sadhu)

As mentioned earlier, some old records in the museum at Bikanir reveal that he has spent some time in disguise as a gardener. His life after that dare-devil escape from the clutches of the English Army has yet to be researched. Some more facts were brought to light at Jhansi by Dr.SitaramBhagavat regarding Narayan RaoBhagvat the unknown and unsung martyr who was hanged in the place of Tantya-Tope. Many facts are coming to light regarding his life after that historic escape. His family members gave references of his presence in his sister's marriage and renovation of his ancestral home which was in ruins.

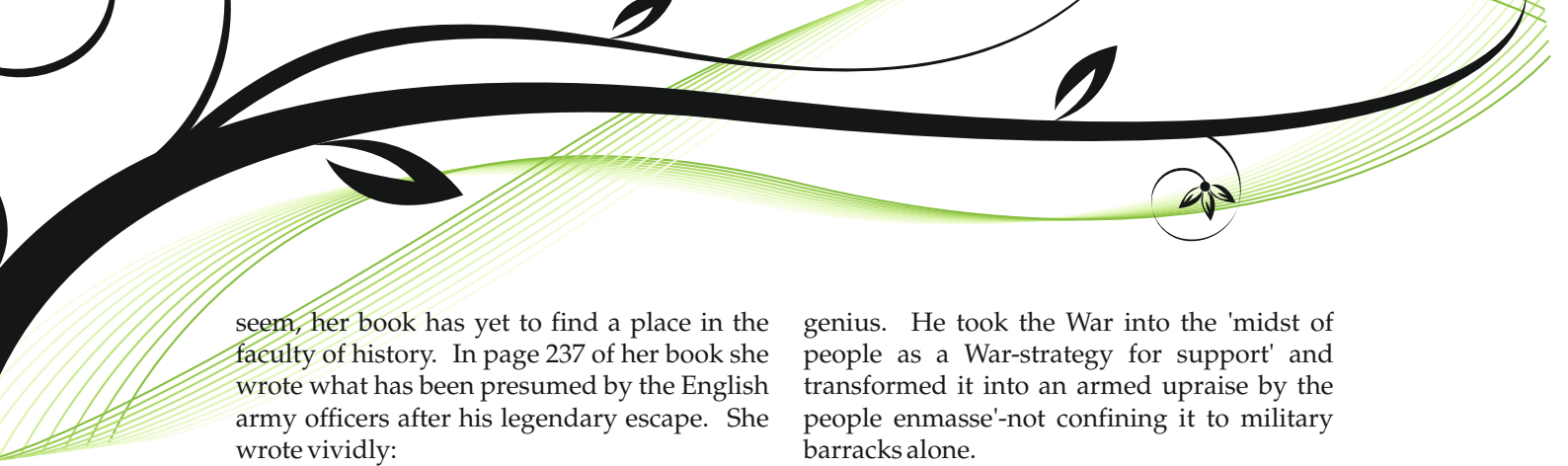
The role of Sadhus in 1857 War

Many reasons were adduced for the defeat in 1857 war. Disunity, lack of patriotism and use of outdated weapons in battlefields had put us in disarray in the war front at crucial times. But the lesson to the English in this war was that it was impossible to establish their hegemony in Bharat. Besides, the Sadhus and saints were a perennial source of inspiration exhorting constantly to preserve precious freedom at any cost during that tumultuous period. According to one well researched source of information was that Swami DayanandaSaraswati and many other Sadhus of repute were firmly supporting the 1857 war with all logistic support at their command. Another important source of information was that Tantya-Tope had become a Sadhu. He had built an ashram in Gujarat. His erstwhile associate Maiharrao met Tantya Tope secretly in his ashram to brief him about the situation after the war. Some British officers also suspected that he had become a wandering Sadhu after the War was over.



MS.HenryDuverly's Diary

Ms.HenryDuverly with her army officer husband travelled two thousand odd miles in rajputana and Central India at the time when attempts were being made to capture Tantiya Tope. She noted down in her diary all experiences of her arduous journey. She published her travelogues in a book entitled "Campaigning Experiences in Rajputana and Central India (1857-1858) in London in the year 1859. Her book of travelogues' a repertoire of graphic description of incidents and depictions of social life and events is still considered as most authentic documents of history of that period. Paradoxical as it may



seem, her book has yet to find a place in the faculty of history. In page 237 of her book she wrote what has been presumed by the English army officers after his legendary escape. She wrote vividly:

“The fate of Tantia appears to be sealed: / his gallant course must be nearly run and however/we may abhor the crimes which he has committed, I we cannot refuse our respect to his / generalship and brilliant talents / the chances are that, finding all attempts I to further resistance vain, he will retire to / some holy place, and changing his name / address, will seek safety in obscurity.”

This was in tune with our Bharatiya tradition to spend the later part of life in spiritual pursuits. That was what Tantya Tope did in his later life after his earlier life of leading the people in the war for independence. Maharishi Arambhomo Ghosh also did the same in our times.

The 1857 war for Independence resulted in defeat. Many of Tantya Tope's trusted lieutenants in his excellent army died in the battle fields. A large number of his valiant soldiers died in the battles. Some of them laid down their arms after fierce battles. He was ridiculed as “The Last of pindarees” by the English army officers. There was no mention by intention about Tantya Tope in the 1858 declaration of Queen Victoria. But the miraculous escape of Tantya Tope, the momentous role played by Raja Mansingh, and the great sacrifice of an unknown person who went to gallows willingly, silently and smilingly in the place of Tantya Tope have changed the course of history of Bharat and gave a new direction to the armed uprising for freedom.

The crucial role of Tantya Tope in 1857 war

In one of his glorious moments of victory Tantya Tope announced that he is one of the Army Generals of the Independent Government of India. He was a great military

genius. He took the War into the 'midst of people as a War-strategy for support' and transformed it into an armed upraise by the people enmasse'-not confining it to military barracks alone.

He enabled every man from all walks of life to participate in the War who overwhelmed the rank and file of his army. He envisaged the armed upsurge of the people in a correct perspective and took the war into the midst of people at the right time.

He was a charismatic war-hero. He mesmerized the people with his charisma wherever he went. He was a born leader of people especially when the nation was at war with an oppressive imperial regime of foreigners. He had a magnetic presence in his person which matched with his magnificent eloquence. Wherever he went with his army, people rose in ovation with raised arms ready to join his army; such was his aura of influence on the people who were emotionally surcharged with patriotism.

He was the first person who suspected the evil plans of Christian missionaries to convert India into a Christian country. He awakened the nation and converted the 1857 war partly as a crusade against Christian missionaries who were supported by the English regime. The great historian R.C.Majumdar wrote “The Sensitiveness of the sepoys to their religious beliefs and practices and the dread of conversion to Christianity worked as a nightmare upon their minds... A Vague dread that the government was determined by hook or by crook to convert the Indians to Christianity pervaded all ranks of society, and the sepoys, fully shared these apprehensions with the rest... The oppressive attitude of the Christian missionaries...in matters of proselytisation had been frequent subject of complaint”. Majumdar also notes “that such apprehensions were not altogether unfounded are proved by a minute recorded by the Governor of Madras in which he draws attention to the importance of converting the



Hindus... to Christianity”.

Among such aggressive activities, Majumdar notes the practice by missionaries of “open unchecked denunciation of their cherished social usages and customs in most violent language, and filthy abuses of their gods and goddesses by bands of Christian missionaries”. Christian missionaries became a powerful wing in this imperial game.

The great uprising of 1857 war was the result of deep discontent aroused by Tantya Tope among both the people and the army against the British rule. Although there were several contributing factors, he made one cause stand above the rest: the widespread belief that there was a conspiracy to convert India to Christianity by the missionaries and their cohorts. The aggressive attitude of the missionaries was derived from the arrogance of having the 'Christian' British in power which enabled the missionaries to have a free

run in India. Tantya-Tope exhorted the people everywhere thus in unequivocal terms:

“This war against the English is not for wresting political power alone Remember always, this is also an armed revolt against Christianity to save the nation from the clutches of Christian missionaries”.

A Warrior-hero of the stature of one of our foremost Army General of the revolutionary army deserves a grand statue and memorial in any one of the places of battles where he proved to the British Army that he is invincible. A comprehensive research on his life and achievements should be undertaken to perpetuate and cherish his memory as an immortal patriot. Such heroes as Rani of Jhansi, Tantya Tope, Kunwar Singh, and Nana Saheb should live in the nation's memory. Struggle with valour and perseverance preserves independences

Concluded

Book Review

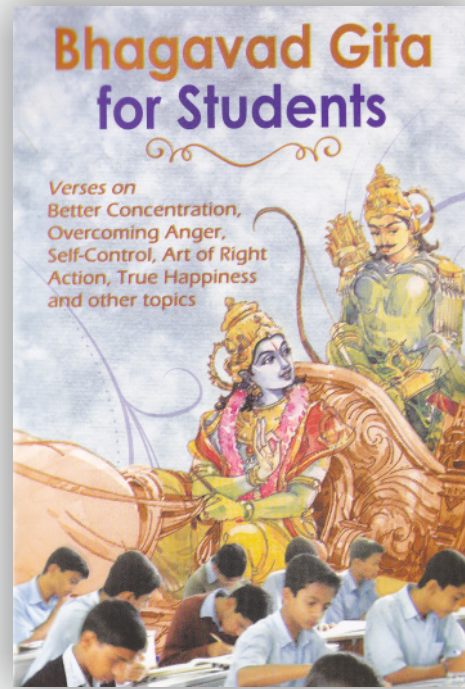
Bhagavad Gita for students – compiled and edited by Swami Atma Shraddhananda, published in Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai 600 084, pages ix+69 price Rs.20/-

The eternally relevant Bhagavad Gita is now-a-days repacked for modern day readers as text for crisis management, personality development, decision making, owning responsibility, emotional balance, analytical wisdom etc.

Arjuna tried to run away from a job, in a battlefield at a time when his whole army was looking up to him for guidance and exemplary action. He was properly trained to do his job and in the recent Virata Parva battle has vanquished the same set of enemies, even without the guidance of Sri Krishna. Now in Kurukshetra, a new and uncharacteristic confusion overpowered him and he tried to take the escape route.

With Arjuna as a test case, Sri Krishna taught people like him a whole set of values physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. Sri Krishna also reminded his student of his inherent strength, and trained him in exercises in concentration, self control and discrimination, traits useful to any student of life.

This book starts with a brief introduction on the usefulness of the Gita for a student. 48 verses have been selected and are presented in the Devanagari script and Roman script; with English translations and parallel passages from Swami Vivekananda's teachings. The verses are arranged under twelve chapters



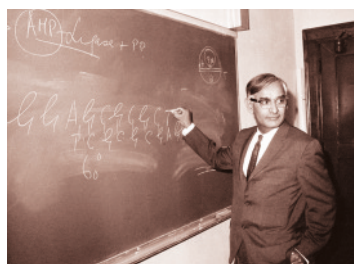
such as Divinity is your real nature, Shape your own destiny, The art of right activity, Thinking positive, Freedom from restlessness, Training the body, mind and speech, Control of anger, Concentration of mind, Types of happiness, Learn to live with others, Your mistakes are not for ever, and prayers.

The book is rounded off with sayings by great men on the Gita. A good appetizer for starting on a full course on the sacred text.

N.Krishnamoorthi

Har Gobind Khorana : A tribute

1960s were exciting times for molecular biology. In 1953 Watson and Crick had discovered the structure of DNA which is considered as the molecular basis of conducting hereditary information in all life.



Francis Crick and James Watson were awarded the Nobel Prize for the discovery of double helical structure in

1962. Then the important breakthrough in the molecular biology research was done by Khorana and his colleague Nirenberg.

Nirenberg-Khorana team looked at how the genetic information is processed by the molecules. Ribo-Nucleic Acid (RNA) is the chemical that translates the genetic code of the DNA. Just like DNA, RNA is also composed of four.

Nirenberg-Khorana showed that the molecular vocabulary is made of three lettered words each of which is originally formed by DNA and then transliterated by RNA which inturn translates it into Amino acids which inturn link together to form proteins and proteins form the molecular framework of all forms of life.

Nirenberg discovered the first word and Khorana extended the vocabulary in chemical laboratories and searched in the amino acid jungle for which code fits which amino acid. All in all 64 distinct three-letter molecular words were discovered, What is more just as in Indus script where some figures marked the end of word sequence, here also certain three lettered

words signalled molecular processes to start or end the protein synthesis process.

It would be tempting to say based on the spectacular success of the work by Khorana that we have finally solved the mystery of protein synthesis. But in his Nobel lecture Khorana cautioned against such an attitude. He stated that it was only in the "restricted one-dimensional sense (the linear correlation of the nucleotide sequence of polynucleotides with that of the amino acid sequence of polypeptides)" that the problem of protein synthesis "would appear to have been solved" and that "much remains to be done at chemical and biochemical level to obtain an adequate understanding of the very elaborate protein-synthesizing system."

In 1972, Khorana made the next important milestone in bio-technology: the construction of the first artificial gene. Four years later, he succeeded in getting an artificial gene to function in a bacterial cell. Essentially what Khorana did was science at its reductionist best. However he never lost sight of this 'one dimensional' understanding of the molecular process is not the complete story. This holistic vision from a man who has contributed to the might of reductionist understanding is indeed invigorating and is essentially the spirit of science.

Though Khorana was an Indian born scientists, his contacts with India both culturally and otherwise were restricted. He was married to Esther Elizabeth Sibling (who predeceased her husband) in 1952. They had three children: Julia Elizabeth, Emily Anne (born October 18, 1954; died 1979), and Dave Roy. Khorana proved that Indian-born scientists can also be leaders at the cutting edge science of the modern times. Despite his indifference to his homeland, his achievement should have inspired many Indian youths to take up science.

Aravindan Neelakandan

Vivekananda Kendra Samachar

V.K.V. KANYAKUMARI

“ Of all created things, the loveliest, and the most divine are children”.

Children's Day was celebrated in VKV – Kanyakumari on 14th Nov- 2011. Science and Art Exhibition was inaugurated in the same day.

The Handwritten Magazine was released by our chief guest Prof. A. Mariakuttikan, M.Sc; M.Phil, Vivekananda College, Agasteeswaram, followed by his address. Sri. Mann. Hanumanta Raoji, Treasurer, VRM & VK, was our special guest. He blessed us with his fruitful speech and he honoured our guest with a moments.

Finally, everyone was thanked by Haritha by students of VII Std and the festivity was concluded.



National Award for Vivekananda Kendra

Vivekananda Kendra, a spiritually oriented service mission with its headquarters at Kanyakumari has been selected for this year's Sat Paul Mittal National Award' for its outstanding services to humanity in the institutional category.

The award Committee of Nehru Siddhant Kender Trust Ludhiana took the decision considering the untiring efforts of Vivekananda Kendra for the suffering mankind.



Sri Balakrishnanji receiving the Sat Paul mittal award from Sri Shivraj Patil, Honorable Governor of Punjab.

Award Giving ceremony took place at Ludhiana on 11 November 2011. The Honorable Governor of Punjab Shri Shivraj Patil was the Chief Guest and The Award - Check of Rs 2 lakhs, a gold medal and a citation, was handed over to Vice-President of Vivekananda Kendra Mananeeya Balakrishnanji with a great honor. The Governor in his speech remembered the days he participated for the collection of the donation for the construction of Vivekananda Rock Memorial. He also was happy that Vivekananda Kendra is selected for this award for its social contribution all over the country.



Sri Balakrishnanji being honoured by Sri Shivraj Patilji.

This programme was organized by Nehru Siddhant Kender Trust in memory of its founder Shri Sat Paul Mittal who worked for the service of the society.

Obituary

Bhupen Hazarika

ओ गंगा तुम, गंगा बहती हो क्यों?
O Ganga, why do you keep on flowing
(without a care)?

A curious or even an inane question to ask the Ganga, the mother of millions of people and a symbol of purity, divinity and spirituality, an inspiration to thousands of sadhakas. But the individual asking the question is not any random guy, nor is the context.

This question, an expression of despair and sorrow – not of one's own, but originating from the empathy of seeing a fellow human struggle on with life – cries out to us from a song of Bhupen Hazarika or “Bhupenda”, as he is fondly remembered by those of us who have



been swayed by his creations. After all, it is not an ordinary song, since it was inspired by that legendary song Ol' Man River sung by Paul Robeson. Bhupenda met Robeson when he was working on his PhD in Mass Communication at the Columbia University in the early 1950s. That was a period of great

reformation in the American society, whose citizens of African origin were fighting for equal rights as the whites.

Robeson was a renowned activist, at the forefront of this movement and was a multi-faceted personality. He was one of the earliest black Americans to graduate from the Rutgers University and studied at Columbia Law School. He was also a sportsman who played in the NFL, and a singer and actor who was part of many stage plays, musicals and later movies. After the World War II, he plunged into the Civil Rights movement. It was at this time Bhupenda met him while he was a student. Bhupenda got an opportunity to witness the agitation from a close hand and his experiences taught him great lessons that he never forgot.

Though hailing from Assam and hailed as its modern cultural face and the icon of Assamese culture, Bhupenda was not bound by any "regionalism". Inspired by the Brahmaputra, he in turn inspired as well as gave solace to the millions living on its banks, which led to him gaining the apt title the Bard of the Brahmaputra. When Bangladesh was fighting for its freedom, he gave voice to their battle cry. When the student movement of Assam was agitating, again it was his voice that provided them inspiration and succor. But his creations reach out far beyond the limitations of geography, language and race. As an artist, he

staunchly held on to originality, creativity and integrity, while many around him were selling their talents for money. His songs were passionate and he never had a second thought while daring to oppose authoritarianism.

He adapted the song sung by Robeson to Assamese supplanting Mississippi for the Brahmaputra or Luit as he is called in Assamese, asking the question "Why do you flow, O ye Old river, without a care for those suffering on your banks?" When creating the Bangla and Hindi versions, the question was finally put to Ganga. And it is very poignant too – Bhupenda asks Ganga why she has not given birth to another Bheeshma to take care of modern India.

He may be no more, but his humanism and brilliance lives on in the legacy of his creations. It is sad that just like Jagjit Singh, we have lost another individual, who by their creative genius refined the taste of the masses. If Jagjit pulled at our heartstrings and turned unearthed the spirit of Bhakti in our hearts, Bhupenda pulled at our courage and rationality, shattering our fears and delusions with sharp questions. In the reek and roil of darkness that surrounds us in the name of art, the heat and shine of such rare and few stars ameliorated our existence. But as their light fades, who will guide us in our journeys?

S.Shivsankar
