



YUVA BHARATI

Voice of Youth

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Editor : P.Parameswaran.

Invocation

mandaakinisalilacandanacarcitaaya
nandishvarapramathanathamaheshvaraya
mandaarapushpabahupushpasupujitaaya
tasmaimakaaraayanamashshivaya(2)

My Salutation to Lord Siva
who is in the form of the
syllable ' ma', who is bathed
with waters of Ganga and
sandalpaste, who is the
supreme Lord of Nandi and the
other leaders of the troop of
attendants in Kailasa and who is
elaborately worshiped with
mandara and many others
flowers.





Modern day Messiah...

Some personalities impress their mark in the world with their valor, some with their aggression and violence, some with their riches and some others by the suffering and misery they bring upon other people. Highly infrequent and precious have there been personalities who have made a mark expressing their sheer divinity and nobility, who become beacons of hope for a humanity that is plodding its way blindly through the dusky gloom of selfish survival and sensual pleasures.

When India was wallowing in self-pity, clueless as to why we got there and directionless in where we were headed, such a rare divine form took birth as Sri Ramakrishna. An embodiment of simplicity, he refused to accept anything more than was necessary for his bare survival and was repelled by accumulation of wealth. Capable of nothing but divine thoughts, Sri Ramakrishna presented in our times a confluence of different and diverse streams of spirituality in a way that some would say as much as the Gita did in its time. He reaffirmed through experience and realization that even apparently divergent streams indeed empty into the same ocean of divine bliss. The real heights he achieved in his spiritual flights, we may never know for he didn't claim for himself any credit and never bothered to explain to others who hadn't the faintest clue about the vastness of spiritual experience.

He practiced Tantra and Vedanta, propounded Dualism and Non-dualism, preached Jnana but lived as a Bhakta and was calmly confident when he said that he sees God just as he sees people. This illiterate poor man from a nondescript village in Bengal carried within him the power to raise the whole nation to awareness which is what Vivekananda referred to when he said "From the day Sri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of modern India and of the Golden Age... His life is the living commentary to the Vedas of all nations. People will come to know him by degrees".

Today we live in what is claimed to be a global village where we lose track of the number of digits in the scams that loot public money in every nation, where accumulation and gratification of the senses is not only praised but preached and rewarded. It is also not difficult to see where we are headed on the whole. Sri Ramakrishna's message of renunciation and spirituality are more relevant today than ever in the past. We have already allowed a century to pass and not followed his divine guidance. Let us pray to Thakur to instill in us the mental strength and moral courage to follow in his path and pull ourselves out of the thick morass that we have allowed ourselves to get into.

P.Vasanth
YB-ET



Sishya on Guru



"It has become a trite saying that idolatry is wrong, and every man swallows it at the present time without questioning. I once thought so and to pay the penalty of that, I had to learn my lesson sitting at the feet of a man who realized everything through idols; I allude to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If such Ramakrishna Paramahansas are produced by idol worship, what will you have - the reformer's creed or any number of idols?... Take a thousand idols more if you can produce Ramakrishna Paramahansas through idol-worship, and may God speed you!"

Despite many iniquities that have found entrance into the practices of image-worship as it is in vogue now, I do not condemn it. Ay, where would I have been if I had not been blessed with the dust of the holy feet of that orthodox, image-worshipping Brahmin!

We think of [Sri Ramakrishna] as a person who is like god. Do you know... what it is like? There is a point between the vegetable creation and the animal creation where it is very difficult to determine whether a particular thing is a vegetable or an animal. Likewise, there is a stage between the man-world and the God-world where it is extremely hard to say whether a person is a man or God... I don't say that he is God. What I am saying is that he is a

God-like man... We offer worship to him bordering on divine worship.

If anyone accepts Paramahansa Deva as an Avatara, it is all right; if he doesn't do so, it is just the same. The truth about it is that in point of character, Paramahansa Deva beats all previous records; and as regards teaching, he was more liberal, more original, and more progressive than all his predecessors... this is the religion of this age - the synthesis of Yoga, knowledge, devotion and work - the propagation of knowledge and devotion to all, down to the very lowest without distinction of age or sex.

Know truth for yourself, and there will be many to whom you can teach it afterwards; they will all come. This was the attitude of my Master. He criticized no one. For years I lived with that man, but never did I hear those lips utter one word of condemnation for any sect. he had the same sympathy for all sects; he had found the harmony between them. A man may be intellectual or devotional or mystic or active. Yet it is possible to combine all the four in one man, and this is what future humanity is going to do. That was his idea. He condemned no one, but saw the good in all.

It was given to me to live with a man who was as ardent a dualist, as ardent an Advaitist, as

ardent a Bhakta, as a Jnani. And living with this man first put it into my head to understand the Upanishads and the texts of the scriptures from an independent and better basis than by blindly following the commentators; and in my opinion and in my researches, I came to the conclusion that these texts are not at all contradictory.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna was an extraordinary searchlight under whose illumination one is able to really understand the whole scope of Hindu religion. He was the object-lesson of all the theoretical knowledge given in the Shastras. He showed by his life what the Rishis and Avatars really wanted to teach. The books were theories, he was the realization. This man had in fifty-one years, lived the five thousand years of national spiritual life and so raised himself to be an object-lesson for future generations.

His whole life was spent in breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and dogma. He formed no sect. Quite the reverse. He advocated and strove to establish absolute freedom of thought. He was a great Yogi.

Others who have nothing to teach will take a word and write a three-volume book on its origin and use. As my Master used to say, what would you think of men who went into a mango orchard and busied themselves in counting leaves, the size of twigs, the number of branches, and so forth, while only one of them had the sense to begin to eat the mangoes?

Sri Ramakrishna is a force. You should not think that his doctrine is this or that. But he is a power, living even now in his disciples and working in the world. I saw him growing in his ideas. He is still growing. Sri Ramakrishna was both a Jivanmukta and an Acharya.

Oneness in practice: "Serve man Serve God"

Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

I am spiritual; I do not want to fall into this entanglement of service to society! We have many such seekers in our society who feel that service to the society etc is a lower practice. A spiritual Seeker should not waste his time in such things as it would not help him in spiritual advancement. Such service activities may be alright in the beginning but these may be binding or may worn out the seeker who is longing for the absolute and not the relative. One of the dialogues of a disciple with Swami Vivekananda is very revealing on this issue.

Disciple asked: But, sir, what is the necessity at all for doing good to others?

Swamiji: Well, it is necessary for one's own good. We become forgetful of the ego when we think of the body as dedicated to the service of others -- the body with which most complacently we identify the ego. And in the long run comes the consciousness of disembodiness. The more intently you think of the well - being of others, the more oblivious of self you become. In this way, as gradually your heart gets purified by work, you will come to feel the truth that your own Self is pervading all beings and all things. Thus it is that doing good to others constitutes a way, a means of revealing one's



own Self or Atman. Know this also to be one of the spiritual practices, a discipline for God - realisation. Its aim also is Self - realisation. Exactly as that aim is attained by Jnana (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and so on, also by work for the sake of others.

Disciple: But, sir, if I am to keep thinking of others day and night, when shall I contemplate on the Atman? If I rest wholly occupied with something particular and relative, how can I realise the Atman which is Absolute?

Swamiji: *The highest aim of all disciplines, all spiritual paths, is the attainment of the knowledge of Atman. If you, by being devoted to the service of others and by getting your heart purified by such work, attain to the vision of all beings as the Self, what else remains to be attained in the way of Self-realisation? Would you say that Self-realisation is the state of existing as inert matter, as this wall or as this piece of wood, for instance?"* (VII 111)

Such service activities actually become the source of bondage: Another distortion that is there with respect to service to the society is that such type of work makes man more tense, restless. If looking after one family can create so many tensions then looking after the society can create much more tensions. There are such persons who work for few years for the society and then tell that 'I have to go for a Sadhana or I need a break for a Sadhana.' It means the work itself had not become Sadhana for such a person. This is where the role of selfless service comes, a service which is rendered in the spirit of offering to God that is without the fruits of action, or done as the instrument of God where the thought that 'I am doing this' is absent. If service is done with selfish desires whether for name or fame it can become the source of tensions. In a dialogue a disciple asked, '...But may not that kind of continuous work become a source of bondage in the long run?' To that Swamiji replied,

"If you have no eye to the fruits of work, and if you have a passionate longing to go beyond all selfish desires, then these good works will help to break your bonds, I tell you. How thoughtless of you to say that such work will lead to bondage! Such disinterested work is the only means of rooting out the bondage

due to selfish work. "There is no other way out" (Shvetasvatara Upanishad, III.8)." (Volume VII 160)

First realize the truth and then do service to the society: One more distortion that is often heard is 'unless you realize the truth you have no right or you cannot really do service to others. So first strive for the realization and then enter the service.' Swami Vivekananda himself had first realized God and then he worked for humanity.' It is worth seeing as to what Swami Vivekananda himself says on this in his dialogue with his disciple? When the disciple asked that, 'Some say, "First of all become a Siddha (one who has realised the Truth), and then you have the right to Karma, or work for others", while others say that one should work for others even from the beginning. How can both these views be reconciled?' Swamiji answered,

"You are confusing one thing with the other. Karma means either service to humanity or preaching. To real preaching, no doubt, none has the right except the Siddha Purusha, i.e. one who has realised the Truth. But to service everyone has the right, and not only so, but everyone is under obligation to serve others, so long as he is accepting service from others." (Volume V 319)

First set your own home in order and then think of service to others! - This is one more routine argument that is used. 'I know we should work for the society. I too want to do such work but my family; parents have taken so much care of me so first I have to fulfill their desires. I should first take care of my family, my wife, children etc who are dependent on me. Then later I shall see. Ignoring my own family how can I work for the society?' In this

argument generally we forget that it is not just the family but the whole society, culture, traditions that we belong to have worked to mould us. Thus we owe to them too. And in a vision of Oneness we should clearly understand that when we take care of the 'Whole'; the Whole being interconnected, interrelated and interdependent; if it taken care of by offering our time, energy and money then part is also taken care of. This is what Sri Krishna explains in Bhagavadgita. Swami Vivekananda thus quoting the Bhagavadgita clears the doubt of his disciple in following conversation.

Disciple: What will become of those, then, who depend on me?

Swamiji: If you are ready to sacrifice your life for others, God will certainly provide some means for them. Have you not read in the Gita (VI. 40) the words of Shri Krishna, "never does a doer of good, O my beloved, come to grief"?

Disciple: I see, sir.

Swamiji: The essential thing is renunciation. Without renunciation none can pour out his whole heart in working for others. The man of renunciation sees all with an equal eye and devotes himself to the service of all."(Volume V 381)

Let one rascal be less! There are some persons who say that, 'If I stay good that itself is a service to the world at least one rogue is less! If everyone takes care of oneself, that is enough!' But in a vision of oneness there is no 'I' and others. And thus for the well-being of oneself one has to be good and also do good to others

who are only the extended form of the self. Swami Vivekananda says,

"The internal man is to be purified by not speaking falsehood, by not drinking, by not doing immoral acts, and by doing good to others. If you do not commit any sin, if you do not tell lies, if you do not drink, gamble, or commit theft, it is good. But that is only your duty and you cannot be applauded for it. Some service to others is also to be done. As you do good to yourself, so you must do good to others." Volume III 360

Ultimately a person starts evolving, can raise himself higher only if he is doing good to others because 'others' are the higher, the expanded manifestation of the Self. Thus by ignoring the society there is no personal good.

The way of doing this Selfless Service

Just start doing the work, the required means would come to you - Generally the inhibition is - how can we serve people, it needs money and we do not have it. The solution is just start doing whatever you can do and the means keep coming, the plan gets unfolded. The point is worrying about many things we do not start the work. Desire remains at the desire and then eventually evaporates. While encouraging his disciple to start feeding the infirm people Swami Vivekananda told,

"In a truly noble work, not to speak of men, even God Himself befriends the doer. When people have thus been attracted, you will be able to stimulate the desire for learning and spirituality in them. Therefore the gift of food comes first. ... You just find out one or

two blind or infirm people and apply yourself to their service. Go and beg food for them yourself; cook with your own hands and feed them. If you continue this for some days, you will find that lots of people will be coming forward to assist you with plenty of money. "never, my son, does a doer of good come to grief." (Gita, VI.40) (Volume VII 160)."

As we work for others the inner strength is enhanced - Many a times we hesitate to start the work thinking do we have really the capacity to work for others? But as we start doing work, the inner strength increases. When once Swamiji instructed his disciple to

"Impress upon their (masses) minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmins. Initiate all, even down to the Chandalas (people of the lowest castes), in these fiery Mantras. Also instruct them, in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc. If you cannot do this, then fie upon your education and culture, and fie upon your studying the Vedas and Vedanta!

To this disciple asked apprehensively, "But where is that strength in us? I should have felt myself blessed if I had a hundredth part of your powers, Swamiji." Swamiji thundered,

"How foolish! Power and things like that will come by themselves. Put yourself to work, and you will find such tremendous power coming to you that you will find it hard to bear. Even the least work done for others awakens the power within; even thinking the least good of others gradually instills into the heart the strength of a lion. I

*love you all ever so much, but I wish you all to die working for others -- I should rather be glad to see you do that! ... Don't you see how Sister Nivedita, a British lady, has learnt to serve Indians so well, by doing even menial work for them? And can't you, being Indians, similarly serve your own fellow - countrymen? Go, all of you, wherever there is an outbreak of plague or famine, or wherever the people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings. At the most you may die in the attempt -- what of that? How many like you are being born and dying like worms every day? What difference does that make to the world at large? Die you must, but have a great ideal to die for, and it is better to die with a great ideal in life. Preach this ideal from door to door, and you will yourselves be benefited by it at the same time that you are doing good to your country. On you lie the future hopes of our country. I feel extreme pain to see you leading a life of inaction. Set yourselves to work -- to work! Do not tarry -- the time of death is approaching day by day! **Do not sit idle, thinking that everything will be done in time, later on! Mind -- nothing will be done that way!**" (Volume V 381-382)*

Do it in an organized way – Selfless service needs to be done in an organized way so as to reach out to many, to bring and involve those who want to work, to learn to be part of the bigger 'T' and to give permanency to the work. Swami Vivekananda saw that in America the people did not wait for some superman to come and do the difficult task. But they organized themselves and combining the good in them achieved great things. Swami Vivekananda continuously wrote to his disciples and brother disciples to organize to

do good to the people. In one of his letters to his brother disciple he wrote,

"I am giving you a new idea. If you can work it out, then I shall know you are men and will be of service. . . . Make an organized plan. . . . You have got lots of poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time -- and open their eyes. Books etc., won't do -- give them oral teaching. Then slowly extend your centres. Can you do all this? Or only bell-ringing?" (Volume VI 289)

Do it without any expectations- When one starts working for the others it is again getting entangled in so many tensions and stresses. Thus many feel that it is better not to get caught into this. But when we are part of the world can we stand aside? Many start the work either themselves or in some organization and then experience lot of blows to their ideas and feelings. Whether for others or for our selfish end, every action does bring the bondages and tensions. Does that mean we stay without actions? Is it really possible? Swami Vivekananda explained this,

"This world's wheel within wheel is a terrible mechanism; if we put our hands in it, as soon as we are caught we are gone. . . . There are only two ways out of it; one is to give up all concerns with the machine, to let it go and stand aside, to give up our desires. That is very easy to say, but is almost impossible to do. . . . The other way is to plunge into the world and learn the secret of work, and that is the way of Karma-Yoga. Do not fly away from the wheels of the world - machine, but stand inside it and learn the secret of work. Through proper work done inside, it is also possible to come out.

Through this machinery itself is the way out.

. . . Although this universe will go on always, our goal is freedom, our goal is unselfishness; and according to Karma-Yoga, that goal is to be reached through work. . . . The Karma-Yogi asks why you require any motive to work other than the inborn love of freedom. Be beyond the common worldly motives. "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof." Man can train himself to know and to practise that, says the Karma-Yogi. When the idea of doing good becomes a part of his very being, then he will not seek for any motive outside. Let us do good because it is good to do good; he who does good work even in order to get to heaven binds himself down, says the Karma-Yogi. Any work that is done with any the least selfish motive, instead of making us free, forges one more chain for our feet.

*So, the only way is to give up all the fruits of work, to be unattached to them. **Know that this world is not we, nor are we this world; that we are really not the body; that we really do not work. We are the Self, eternally at rest and at peace. Why should we be bound by anything?** It is very good to say that we should be perfectly non - attached, but what is the way to do it? Every good work we do without any ulterior motive, instead of forging a new chain, will break one of the links in the existing chains. Every good thought that we send to the world without thinking of any return, will be stored up there and break one link in the chain, and make us purer and purer, until we become the purest of mortals." (Volume I 114)*

Let us organize ourselves in the name of Swami Vivekananda to serve others

Swami Vivekananda after his hectic tour in the West return to India thinking he could have some respite to recoup his health. But he found India was eagerly waiting to listen to him, to receive his message, to get his guidance. Naturally he could not back out. He had a message and a very bold message at that! He knew India who has to guide the world in spirituality, in acquiring this vision of Oneness, first needs to be capable of delivering the message. India needed to be awakened to her heritage and purpose so that the world could be enlightened, the humanity could further proceed. Thus he worked relentlessly, toured from Columbo to Almorah, gave lectures, met groups of people, made disciples, moulded them, inspired youth to work for the country. This message of 'Serve man Serve God' which he gave boldly inspired many men and women. The freedom movement itself owes its inspiration and momentum to this great soul. He revitalized India, she started surging ahead. If today the world looks towards India as the up-coming world-power the inspiration has been of Swami Vivekananda's.

The 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda is a great occasion again to take up his message, to put it in action in various fields. Swami Vivekananda had great faith in the younger generation. Youth can come forward on this occasion and organize themselves in their own locality, college or village and take up some work for service of the society. Youth can render organized service in the name of Swami Vivekananda in that field which is their core strength or their interest or the need of the area. It would be a great tribute to Swami Vivekananda on his

150th birth anniversary.

The youth can organize themselves to guide regularly the younger students of local schools in their studies. As Swamiji had told 'muscles of iron and nerves of steel', the youth could start an Akhada – a body building association where everyday exercises, sits-up, suryanamaskars etc are done. It is the confidence in the strong body that can help youth to develop their personality as well as for self-protection. Youth can also organize themselves to work among the people either in a locality or a village to create awareness and suitable action about the water-management, cleanliness, upgradation of knowledge, protection of environment, the consumerism that is consuming our families, traditions, natural resources etc. First take up a simple survey to assess the need of the area where work is to be done, then make a plan with the basic core team available and start the work without any expectations of name, fame or wealth. To keep the vision of the work clear and also for maintaining the team dynamics, weekly meets can be organized for review and planning and also for studying Swami Vivekananda and the application of his ideas in the field selected for the service. If this selfless service is not lost sight of, then the selflessness of the youth coupled with their dynamism and their organized strength would create immense impact on the society. This practice of oneness would help raise the society. Oneness is not a subject to be taught but it is radiated when lived and practiced. Selfless service of the people is the best means to practice it. Swami Vivekananda's clarion call is propelling us today, *“Arise! Awake!! And stop not till the goal is reached!”*

Primer of Vedanta

by Swami Tyagisamanda

published by Sri Ramakrishna Math,

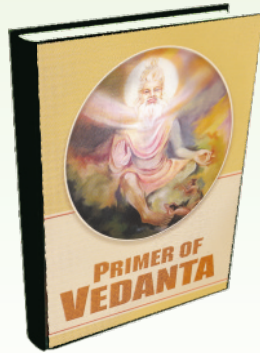
Mylapore 600 004,

Pages v+82

Price Rs.20/-

Swami Tyagisamandaji's booklet is born out of the class notes on Vedanta. He delivered the lectures in the informal Vedanta College of the Bangalore Sri Ramakrishna Math in 1939. The preserved notes are being printed in the present book for after a lapse of 71 years. There is an increase in the demand among the public for primer, basic texts, question and answer forms and Dictionaries in Vedanta. The mindset of the people has become much open ready to read subjects shunned so far. This handy volume very good as a starter, has ten, three on the scriptures, one an Upanishads, two an pramanas, four on faith, reason, science of reality etc. There is a systematic, step by step building up of the arguments on Pramans before faith, Shraddha in the scripture is taken up. The central article looks upon Vedanta as philosophy as aware and as religion.

Written in a simple language in the question answer format, the booklet will serve as a good introduction to Vedanta, inspiring the seeker for standard texts and primary sources. Produced in the typical Sri Ramakrishna Math elegance, the book should have been brought out much longer.



Let New India arise..... Let her arise -out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough; out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler, and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts, and from the markets. Let her emerge from groves and forests, from hills and mountains.

Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force and competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be

. - Swami Vivekananda

Sister Nivedita And Her India

Anirban Ganguly

During the last one year we have explored various facets and aspects of Sister Nivedita's life and have marvelled at her many sided genius. We have also tried in some measure to describe and portray the unusual dynamism and force that she embodied and displayed. This year, we propose to explore and unravel Sister Nivedita and her India – in the sense – the India that she saw, that she worshipped and identified with. It is essential to recall that unique relation and bond – if we are to understand the Swami's vision for India, his hopes of her and his dreams for her. Sister herself wrote once candidly about her books, "About my books – you know they are all Swami's. He gave me the power and inspiration."

In our troubled times, when threats to our national integrity and unity are intense, when the ethical standards of our public conduct and life are at a low ebb, when false worship is offered at false altars, it may be useful to recall Sister's unique bond with her chosen land in order to reinvigorate and revivify this bond. When asked sometime towards the end of 1902 during a visit to Madras on what will be her future work in India, Sister simply, firmly, cryptically and yet profoundly replied, "My life is given to India. In it I shall live and die." Such words more than adequately describe for the discerning reader and explorer of her life,



her total consecration to India, to her people and to her future. Nationalist intellectual history is almost always ignored and overlooked when analysing Indian history

and in it Sister Nivedita's contribution, her role in contributing to the creation of that intellectual tradition and history is almost always ignored or forgotten. We hope to be able to give a glimpse of that history through a survey of and meditation on Sister's thoughts. The narrative shall be interspersed in between with some unique insights into the Swami's mind, ways and life as Sister had recorded them, for she was one of those few who were trained and prepared spiritually by him.

We can begin then by narrating a deeply moving description that the Swami makes of his Master through Sister's record of the conversation. It was during Sister's fund-raising trip to the West in the company of the Swami that she witnessed the following, "At lunch on Friday, the King [Swamiji] talked again about Sri Ramakrishna. He abused himself for being filled and poisoned with the Western reaction of those days, so that he was always looking and questioning whether this man was "holy" or not. After 6 years he came to understand that He was *not* holy, because He had become *identified with holiness...*" On the same trip Westward on board the monsoon tossed ship we have another profound description by her of the Swami, "...in spite of discomfort there have been hours so glorious that one would go through 50 monsoon for them. Sometimes it is Rajpootana or an Indian story that starts him off, but oftener now he talks to me of the future and the work. The old indifference is dropping off, and he lets me feel that something depends on me, that he looks to me for certain powers and so on. ... And always that claim "I am Kali's child in some special sense" – and I never try to tell him what I hold to be the truth – what I see now like daylight – "Not child at all – but Siva – Consort and Spouse!" (July 5th 1899)

Sister's action for India, as discussed, extended in many directions – there was her political action, educational action, cultural action, civic action – and through each she tried to revive and consolidate the national thought and national unity among the people especially the young. Through each one of her actions she attempted to weave the triple aspects into a grand and mutually-sustaining and upholding unity of "*jana-desh-dharma*". The sole aspect that she strove to work for and fructify was that of national unity, and even in that her convictions were contrary to the general belief of the age then and probably even now, "We are one! *We have not to become one. We are one.* Our sole need is *to learn to demonstrate our unity*" she said sometime in 1907 at the height of first phase of the nationalist struggle for freedom. Even today such an utterance and conviction stands in striking contrast to the opinion and understanding of India and Indian nationhood held by a large number of intellectuals in the country!

What strikes the serious student and explorer of her life and mission is the striking contemporaneity of a large number of her words and thoughts and of the power in her utterances on India. We may as well begin the new section with one of these gems – "Indian National Ideals", [*in a manuscript found at the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, CWSN vol.5*] in it we can still derive direction and inspiration. It is one of the most unfortunate aspects of our national life that our youth today most often grow up without getting to read these being deprived of its direct force and inspiration.

There ought to be a civic ideal – and what could be it? – Sister notes: "...the people should do the work of their country and not merely enjoy." What is the work of the nation?

- Sister saw it in a threefold direction: 1. "To love the soil and water of the land we live in." There ought to be no sense of alienation, nor a habit of exploitation, nor even a sense of denigration (*heenabhava*) it was to be a complete identification with the sustaining earth with effort to help in the country's growth and progress. 2. "To realise the highest ideal, each in his own way." There ought to be for each one an elevating ideal in pursuance of which each was to contribute towards the sum total of national progress and well being as well as one's own progress outer as well as inner. 3. "To share in the whole life of humanity – national or international." There had to be an expansion of our national life and our self in tune with humanity at large. But Sister herself defined her three points in a remarkably lucid manner:

"With regard to the first point: We should love the soil of the country. (In this is included our religion which is the product of the land we live in.) We must do some work for the country each in his own humble way. Everybody cannot do work on an elaborate scale. But each can, if he likes, help in the growth of the

country in his own way....

With regard to the second point: ...each one of us should try to realise the highest ideal each in his own way. To think of certain ideals as the exclusive possession of a man or of a nation is vulgarity, according to the Hindus....

With regard to the third point: We must expand our narrow self. Our duty should be to share in the whole life of humanity – national or international. One cannot be a cosmopolitan unless one be a nationalist. And to become a nationalist, we must extend our narrow self."

A nationalist – at least and Indian nationalist – had to be cosmopolitan, an internationalist and one who had extended beyond the narrow self while embracing humanity – there simply was no contradiction between the two.

In her description of India, Indian nationalism and nationhood, like in her understanding of other national aspects, Sister was always in tune with the land's essential and fundamental spiritual vision of the past as well as of the future. And in that she herself embodied all the above points – a true nationalist and internationalist at the same time!

SHIBIR CALENDER - 2012

| NAME OF THE SHIBIR | DATES | AGE Years | CAMP DONATION |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Spiritual Retreat (Eng) | 07 - 13 Feb | 18 to 70 | Rs. 1500/- |
| Spiritual Retreat (Hindi) | 07 - 13 Feb | 18 to 70 | Rs. 1500/- |
| Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Eng) | 05 - 19 May | 18 to 60 | Rs. 2000/- |
| Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Hindi) | 05 - 19 May | 18 to 60 | Rs. 2000/- |
| Spiritual Retreat (Eng) | 07 - 13 Aug | 18 to 70 | Rs. 1500/- |
| Spiritual Retreat (Hindi) | 07 - 13 Aug | 18 to 70 | Rs. 1500/- |
| Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Eng) | 01- 15 Dec | 18 to 60 | Rs. 2000/- |
| Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Hindi) | 01- 15 Dec | 18 to 60 | Rs. 2000/- |

Adventurous Journey of Swami Vivekananda to Chicago

VedMohonGhose

It is on 31st May, 1893, a gorgeous passenger ship 'Peninsular' of P & O company is about to leave Bombay Port. Mr. Jagmohanlalji private secretary of Maharaja of Khetri State and Mr. Alasinga Perumal of Madras were standing on the shore. Tears streamed down their cheeks when they waved good-bye to their beloved Swamiji.

On the deck Swamiji was standing beside the railings, acknowledged them with blessings. Among so many passengers he was very distinct and centre of all attractions. A young man of thirty he was tall, square shouldered, heavily built, olive complexion, vast forehead, magnificent large dark eyes with an imposing appearance. The young 'ascetic' was wearing a beautiful red silken robe, orange colour silken tie on his waist, deep yellow turban on his head. Like a charming young Maharaja of India.

Young Swamiji named himself as Vibidayananda and some times as Sachidananda. But this is the first time that on request of Maharaja of Khetri his ship-ticket was booked as Swami Vivekananda. So far this name was not at all known to any body. Surely it was the wish of God that he will be known world wide as Swami Vivekananda



and not by any other name along with the name of his master Lord Ramakrishna.

Swamiji was deep in thought. He was hesitant to decide to undertake the long strenuous expensive journey to the west to attend the World Parliament of Religions, to commence some time during September 1893 at Chicago in America. The journey was indeed an astonishing

adventure. He had heard vaguely of Parliament of Religions. He did not know the exact date, nor the conditions of admission. Proper address and names of the authorised persons were not known to him. He did not have any credentials to approach. But finally he decided to go to Chicago. It was the directive from God. He revealed in a dream as

if his master Ramakrishna walking across the sea and asking him to follow. From Madras Swamiji wrote to holy Mother Sarada (Wife of Master) at Calcutta to extend her valuable guidance. Reply came from Mother who asked her beloved disciple to go ahead with confidence and blessed him to achieve tremendous success at America.

At Madras his friends started collecting funds for his overseas journey. But meanwhile a special messenger came from Maharaja of Khetri. He was invited to attend the royal ceremony being arranged for his new born prince. He was desirous of having a son and praying for long and on blessings of Swamiji, God gifted him with a son. Swamiji could not avoid to ignore the earnest request of Maharaja and decided to visit Khetri and to travel America from Khetri itself instead of Madras.

He went to Khetri where he got the royal reception and blessed the new born prince. After the function he left for Bombay. Maharaja sent his private secretary Jagmohanlalji to escort him. As per instruction of Maharaja all necessary items arranged at Bombay considering the long strenuous journey of Swamiji. In spite of the objection of Swamiji the beautiful silken robe, turban etc. were purchased to dress him like a prince. It is the will of God that he appeared representing the whole world in his charming prince dress and nobody ever came near him without paying respect to his majesty.

Ship left Bombay Port and now on her voyage to the destination. Swamiji was very much embarrassed and finding difficulty with so many valuables and luggages. He as Parivraja Ascetic used to travel with bare minimum clothings and belongings. However slowly

things began to settle His journey from Bombay to Chicago was very very long and adventurous. He went to Colombo, Penang, Singapore, Hongkong and then Canton, Nagasaki and Kobi by ship. Then by land through Osaka, Kyoto, Tokyo and Yokohama. From Yokohama, again by ship to Vancouver in Canada and from Vancouver by train Chicago of America. The entire journey expected to cover by about seven to eight weeks of time. The nature, language, food etc. of his foreign co-passengers of the ship was absolutely new to him. But Swamiji with his quick, God gifted grasping power, divine personality, smiling face and sweet talks soon became friendly with the captain of the ship and few other German passengers.

On the way ship arrived at Colombo. In the town Swamiji tried to talk to the local people and Buddhist Monk but could not do due to language problem. By the way Penang and Singapore he reached Hongkong. About Hongkong he wrote ".....reaching Hongkong it is now understand that we are really in China. As soon as the ship embarked countless China boats arrived to take passengers to the town. These boats are used as Boatman's residence and also to carry passengers. All the boats are having two helms to steer and the wife of the boatman use one by hand and other by leg". He was fascinated. After three days he reached Canton.

There he was eager to visit China temple where foreigners were not allowed. Swamiji requested his German friends and interpreter to join him to visit the temple. They were hesitant but accompanied reluctantly. As soon as they approached the temple and entered inside, a team of Chinese security guards came rushing to them to attack. Swamiji's German

friends immediately escaped from the site. Puzzled Swamiji could not explain them due to language problem. But Swamiji's presence of mind acted as he started shouting 'Yogi-Yogi'. It acted like Magic Mantra. They stopped and slowly came to Swamiji and on bended knees started uttering some China words out of which he could follow one word 'Kabach-Kabach'. He asked interpreter the meaning of 'Kabach'. Interpreter explained him that Kabach means some sacred Mantra or Amulet which they are now praying to get from him since he announced himself as Yogi. These amulets they used to keep with them to drive-out evils. Swamiji was in a critical situation. He never keeps any amulet and without the same he cannot escape from these people. He thought for few moments. Then took out few blank slips from his diary and wrote some big letters and handed over to them. Astonishingly they received the slips with devotion. They took Swamiji inside the temple and the monks showed him many rare religious old manuscripts. He was struck to find Sanskrit manuscripts written in old Bengali characters. Everywhere both at China and Japan his attention was attracted by all that confirmed his hypothesis-his conviction alike of the religious influence of ancient India over the Empires of the Far East.

From Canton his ship arrived at Kobi Port via Nagasaki of Japan where his first phase of ship journey completed. From here by road to Yokohama via Osaka and Tokyo, from Yokohama his second phase journey by ship started. Swamiji or Jagmohanlalji could not consider the climatic conditions and customs. As a result Swamiji froze on the ship when he arrived in Canada-Pacific Railways and reached Chicago on 30th July 1893 at about to night.

During that time World Trade Fair was going on at Chicago where people from all over the world had come. Swamiji lost himself in the crowd. He did not know where to go and he was hungry, shivering in cold, extremely tired and fatigue and could not walk with his luggages. Because of his unusal Indian dress curious people started asking silly questions instead of rendering help. He could not afford to meet the heavy demand of the Porters to carry his luggages. He was completely exhausted. While describing such awful condition he started-' I will not give up-it is the will of God'. Finally fate helped him, Fate always helps those who know how to help themselves. Yet it is true. God blessed him to conquer the World Parliament of Religious with his simple opening words 'Sisters and Brothers of America' and that created another World history.



It is struggle against nature and not confinity to nature that makes man what he is.

-Swami Vivekananda

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Higher social capital helps the growth of the Indian economy

P.Kanagasabapathi

Social capital is an asset that exists in societies, but cannot be seen directly. It can only be understood. It is critical for the smooth functioning of societies. So what is it? It may be defined as the state of a society conditioned by the relationships and understanding among the members who constitute it.

Positive relationships, understanding and approaches among the members of the society lead to a mutually beneficial and peaceful atmosphere in the society. When there is higher social capital in a society, then it is better for it as the members derive lots of benefit out of it. On the other hand, societies with lesser social capital encounter serious problems as there will be distrust and negative feelings among the members.

It is important to understand that the benefits that accrue to the societies with higher social capital are not just confined to the family and social matters, but extend to the economic issues also. So we find more economic development in societies where there is mutual understanding and appreciation among people.



Francis Fukuyama

Francis Fukuyama notes: "A healthy capitalist economy is one in which there will be sufficient social capital in the underlying society to permit businesses, corporations, networks, and the like to be self-organizing. In default of this self-organizing capacity, the state can step in to promote key firms and sectors, but markets always work more efficiently when private actors are making the decisions."

India is a family-based and community-oriented society. Close-knit relationships remain the basis of lives of people in the

country. Hence going beyond oneself, living for the near and dear ones, reaching out to others and expanding relationships are natural to Indians. As a result there is plenty of social capital among different communities in the country. It helps them in different ways for their economic development. When the families and societies develop economically, the country also grows automatically.

Studies on the Indian economy amply prove that the prevalence of a high degree of social capital has been responsible for the faster and smoother development of our economy. In fact the social capital is responsible for initiating, propelling and even sustaining development in many places across the country.

Research studies among the successful business communities of India reveal that their social capital has helped them enormously in their entrepreneurship and growth. Many successful communities such as the Marwaris, Patels, Nadars and Gounders owe a lot to the higher social capital for their development. In fact the entry of so many people from these communities into different businesses was facilitated by the network of relationships.

There were only few Gujaratis in the diamond business during the initial periods. But gradually their numbers increased. Now it is they who dominate the diamond markets at the national and international levels. They have more than two-thirds share in the international markets. With the result they relegated the Jews who were controlling the business to the second position. Similarly the motels of the US are now almost totally in the hands of Patels who are of Indian origin.

Social capital helps in the growth of business in many ways. The network of relationships

influence people to take bold initiatives, make them engage in activities with confidence and helps them in case of setbacks and failures. The fear of failure is the biggest threat to entrepreneurship. Communities countered this through social capital even from the earlier days. Quoting sources, Sudip Dutta notes there were one lakh merchants belonging to the *Agrohabiradari* of the *Agarwal* merchants in *Agroha* town. When one of their businesses fails, each of the remaining 99,999 businessmen would donate one rupee and a brick to help the insolvent person so that he could build his house and start business again.

Social capital innovates mechanisms to help people enter businesses when they have serious shortcomings. For example, when the enterprising people from the *Nadar* community found it difficult to invest funds and start business, the community developed a native financing mechanism called '*mahamai*' which helped them with the necessary financial support by mobilizing it from within the community. As a result more number of people entered business.

It is interesting to note that the social capital helps the faster growth of industries by supplying the required capital even while the state institutions are weak, and enable businessmen to compete in the international market successfully. The *World Development Report* published by the World Bank acknowledges these aspects: "Since 1985, Tirupur has become a hotbed of economic activity in the production of knitted garments. By the 1990s, with high growth rates of exports, Tirupur was a world leader in the knitted garment industry. The success of this industry is striking. This is particularly so as the production of knitted garments is capital-

intensive, and the state banking monopoly had been ineffective at targeting capital funds to efficient entrepreneurs, especially at the levels necessary to sustain Tirupur's high growth rates. What is behind this story of development? The needed capital was raised within the *Gounder* community, a caste relegated to land-based activities, relying on family and community networks. Those with the capital in the *Gounder* community transfer it to others in the community through long-established informal credit institutions and rotating savings and credit associations. These networks were viewed as more reliable in transmitting information and enforcing contracts than the banking and legal systems that offered weak protection of creditor rights."



Harvard economist Stephen Marglin notes that their economic systems and theories undermine communities. To quote: "..... over the past four hundred years, the ideology of economics has fostered self-interested individual and the market system, and has undermined, and continues to undermine, the community." With the result there is a huge lack of trust among members in their societies. Hence people remain without the support mechanisms that they need and lead disturbed lives. It ultimately affects social peace and hinders economic development. The richer countries of the world are thus compelled to spend around 20 per cent of their GDP to maintain societies and families.

Social capital results in higher efficiency and provides cost advantages in economic activities. It enables mutual trust among members and when there is trust in a society, the transaction costs get reduced. Yujiro Hayami notes this: "..... trust accumulated through personal interactions in the community increases efficiency and reduces costs....." The economic growth of different regions of India has been facilitated by easier availability of funds and the cost advantages enjoyed by people due to social capital. We have to remember that the native Indian attitude of communities go beyond all the narrow considerations such as castes, creeds and religions.

One important reason as to why India has been emerging as a very important nation at the international level is the social capital that prevails in our country. It enables people to withstand difficulties, to maintain peace at the family and social levels and to take constant steps for progress. When many of the countries are faced with serious social and economic difficulties, India remains a unique nation. The higher social capital that prevails in our country has been helping us to move forward in spite of many problems that are confronting us.

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Most of the western countries are faced with serious social and economic problems, as their individualistic beliefs and practices disturb community lives and destroy social capital.

Vivekananda's July 4th Surprise

Dr.K.M.Rao, Ph.D

Of the innumerable July 4th celebrations over the past 213 years in American history, one instance stands out for the manner of its observance, as also the person who conceived it.

The special celebration took place in 1898 in a houseboat on Dal Lake in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. It was conceived by Swami Vivekananda as a "surprise present" for two American disciples who had chosen "to love and serve India" at the call of the young Indian visionary.

Persistent researches carried out in India and in America reveal that this is how the Srinagar July 4th celebration came about:

On his return to India in 1897, at the conclusion of his triumphant lecture tour of America and following his inspiring addresses at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda launched a



At Swami Vivekananda's July 4th celebrations for his American disciples in Srinagar in 1898. from left to right. Miss Josephine Macleod, Mrs Ole Bull, the host and Sister Nivedita

ceaseless campaign "to elevate the downtrodden Indian masses."

Out of this campaign was born the Ramakrishna Mission dedicated to "the service of the needy and the uplift of the outcasts."

Releasing that this stupendous mission demanded the services of countless volunteers, Vivekananda called upon his many foreign friends to lend a helping hand. From England came Margaret Noble, who subsequently became famous as Sister

Nivedita.

And from America came Mrs. Ole Bull and Miss Josephine MacLeod. Bull, daughter of a wealthy senator from Madison, Wisconsin, and wife of a renowned Norwegian violinist, came into contact with Vivekananda in 1894. Her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, became a meeting place for the Swami's admirers and ardent devotees when he was there.

MacLeod happened to attend a Vivekananda lecture in New York City in January 1895. "From that moment, life had a different import," she later declared. "It was like the sun that you'll never forget once you have seen it."

As part of the "training to serve in India," Swami Vivekananda took all three for a journey through India so they could know the people, the conditions of life and their needs. The party journeyed through northern India and on to the beautiful Kashmir Valley.

Hereabout it was almost July 4th. Realizing its importance to his American friends, Swami Vivekananda thought out "a secret plan to surprise them" with a colorful celebration of American Independence.

"With a touch of youthful zest," according to one account—Vivekananda was only 35 at that time—he took the one non-American member of the party, Sister Nivedita, into his confidence to carry out the plan. He got the services of a Kashmiri tailor and guided him to

stitch an American flag, complete with the Stars and Stripes.

And on the morning of July 4th, when the two American ladies entered the common hall of the houseboat for breakfast they were thrilled to see Old Glory bedecked with Kashmir's choicest flowers and bunches of evergreens. The American Independence Day turned out to be as colorful and heartwarming as at home, back in America.

"To enhance the joy of the occasion, "Swami Vivekananda composed a special poem for the grand observance that he read aloud.

Titled "To the 4th of July," and very carefully preserved by Bull, the poem in part reads:

Bethink thee how the world did wait,
And search for thee, through time and clime,
Some gave up home and love of friends,
And went in quest of thee, self-banished,
Through dreary oceans, through primeval
forests,
Each step a struggle for their life or death;
Then came the day when work bore fruit,
And worship, love, and sacrifice,
Fulfilled, accepted, and complete
Then thou, propitious, rose to shed
The Light of FREEDOM on mankind.

That then was the unique July 4th celebrations, perhaps the one and only celebrated on a houseboat in Srinagar.

And as fate would have it, Swami Vivekananda died on the same date—July 4th—four years later in 1902.

Hindu Civilization and the Genius of Russia

Aravindan Neelakandan

Much furor has come about with the case in Russian court demanding a ban on the commentary on Bhagavad Gita written by the founder of International Society for the Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). However not much is known about the great influence Hindu thought exerted on the great minds of Russia during the last century. During one of the most oppressive periods in human history some of the most beautiful and elegant human geniuses from Russia drew their spiritual strength from the fountains of Hinduism and India.

Russia was the major chunk of erstwhile Soviet Union (USSR 1917-1991). And for anyone who grew up in 1980s, Soviet books were part of the intellectual landscape in this country. Those low-priced yet attractive books depicted an enlightened and progressive society where religion and spirituality have become relics of a bygone era. The intellectuals, whether artists, philosophers or scientists, were guided by the light that emanated from Marxist dialectic materialism as expounded by Marx, Engels and Lenin (though for a short period Stalin too). Every book on science would be peppered with

quotes from Marx, Engels and Lenin and often ended with a 'dialectical materialist moral of the story' like ending.

However, when Gorbachev became the premier of the USSR and unleashed a fresh wind of liberal openness in the press, the Soviet press slowly started showing patterns that were markedly different from the propaganda lines they sold us earlier. The Soviet press of late eighties and early nineties told a remarkable story. It was the story of how human love for freedom and truth, under an

oppressive regime, searched for philosophical light to endure oppression and yet keep the vision of the search for truth afloat. And in that story we find Hinduism and Indian thought playing no small role. Often Marxist Soviet Indologists have treated Indian thought with the same Hegelian dismissal, as stumbling semi-philosophical religious system, stagnant and

surpassed by European and definitely Marxist philosophy. But paradoxically in the darkness of oppression that ruled Soviet Union, it was Hindu spiritual philosophy that became a guiding light for some of the greatest Soviet



Vernadsky

thinkers.

The best place to start would be Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky (1863-1945).

Vernadsky can rightly be considered as the Einstein of system biology. He was the first to see how life is not an isolated phenomenon from the geological process and not even a resultant epi-phenomenon. Life was for Vernadsky, a co-evolving, transforming and interactive phenomenon with the geological processes of earth – indivisible and integral. Lynn Margulis microbiologist who was the originator of the Gaia hypothesis saw the prefiguring of the idea in Vernadsky. In her book 'What is Life' co-authored with Dorion Sagan, she stated:

Vernadsky dismantled the rigid boundary between living organisms and a nonliving environment, depicting life globally before a single satellite had returned photographs of Earth from orbit. Indeed, Vernadsky did for space what Darwin had done for time: as Darwin showed all life descended from a remote ancestor, so Vernadsky showed all life inhabited a materially unified place, the biosphere.¹

Though Vernadsky was hailed by Soviet science establishment later, during his own lifetime Marxist theoreticians did not view his ideas favorably. Though Vernadsky considered himself a 'cosmic realist' and though his philosophy appeared to be primarily materialistic, he did not condemn the idealistic philosophies outright like Marxists and he also did not advocate dialectics as the only materialist evolutionary movement possible. This earned the wrath of the then Soviet establishment. Polish environmentalist Rafal Serafin observes:

This materialism did not stop many at the Soviet Academy from

accusing Vernadsky of mysticism.

The often venomous criticism, however, seems to have been motivated by Vernadsky's stubborn refusal to condemn idealistic philosophies, such as those of Teilhard de Chardin, and to adopt dialectical Marxism. Vernadsky steadfastly refused to recognize dialectical Marxism as an objective and universal philosophy that created conditions for a flowering of science, holding instead that this doctrine had no more monopoly on the truth than Teilhard de Chardin's teleological speculations or Indian philosophies.²

Though 'Indian philosophies' are mentioned casually on the go by Serafin, Vernadsky seems to have dwelt deeper into Indian philosophies and got enthused by them deeper than in a casual manner. Barely three years after the turmoil of 1917 Vernadsky made the following entry in his diary:

In the work of Vashro I feel very clearly (again, just as I felt in reading Gilyarovsky in Kiev) that Indian philosophical thinking is not taken into account. It seems to me as regarding the problems of the soul and deity, the religious and philosophical thoughts of the Hindus give us much more than our own ideas which are so closely associated with Judaeo-Christianity.³

Again in a letter to his friend, Vernadsky pointed out the universal significance and timeless relevance of Vedic thought. Obviously referring to the 'Nasatheyasukta', popularly known as 'Creation Hymn', in the tenth Mandala of Rig Veda, Vernadsky wrote:

I send you the stunning hymn of

'Rig Veda' in the metric translation by Deissen. It seems that the latter rather faithful to the content of the original. This is a work by an unknown poet who lived at least many hundred years before Christ and long before Buddha, Socrates and all Greek philosophers and science. But how contemporary it is and what profound thoughts it generates. I see it as a leap into eternity because it raises great doubts as to any creator and the root of existence is transported into what is outside this world, what is born and disappears and what cannot be seized or explained, that is the longing of the heart and feeling of love.⁴

According to academician Alexander Senkevich, Vernadsky asserted that the people living at the end of the 20th century would turn to ancient Indian philosophy and it would help them defend the humanistic values of their own cultures. Academician Aksenov informed in the 'Science in USSR' magazine, that Vernadsky in his last days was deeply attracted by the works of Swami Vivekananda.⁵

Another important Russian pioneer who was highly inspired by Indian spirituality was paleontologist and science fiction writer Ivan Antonovich Yefremov (1907-1972).

His famous science fiction novel '*Andromeda Nebula*' attained the status of a cult novel in Soviet Union which was then basking in the glory of Sputnik. In '*Andromeda Nebula*', humanity sends its first space expedition and

the spaceship is named '*Tantra*' and the lead female character was named '*Veda*'. Yefremov always considered ancient Hindu philosophy and pre-Christian pagan Russia as his two major loves. His depictions of Hindu temples were so accurate that his readers found it very hard to accept the fact that he had never visited India even once.⁶

Yefremov was showcased by USSR regime as a model of Soviet science fiction. However the enthusiasm did not last long. The reasons are not hard to discern. Author-Journalist Paul Stonehill explains:



Ivan Yefremov

Ivan Yefremov dared to have his own vision of Communism: of a humane society, of a future world based on the ideas of equality of all in reason and in spiritual life regardless of the distinctions between races, tribes, customs and religions. Professor Yefremov took fundamental principles of Soviet ideology (Communism and dialectics) and applied to them his own meaning, greatly removed from their orthodox Marxist ideas. His complex philosophy combined materialism with a dialectical (but non-Marxist) base and ideas derived from Eastern philosophies....His books, even the utopian *Andromeda –the Space Age Tale* (1956) challenged the official ideology by exposing the inadequacy and constraints of existing Marxist dialectical materialism and showing the necessity for a new spiritual philosophy.⁷

Here it should be pointed out that the diagnosis of Yefremov that Marxism is spiritually deficient is strikingly similar to the same conclusion arrived at by Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the chief architect of Indian constitution. Even at a time when pro-Soviet propaganda was at its zenith in India and when leaders like Nehru were completely mesmerized by Marxism, Baba Saheb Ambedkar was cautious and pointed out that Marxist socialism was spiritually deficient. He stated:

Carlyle was of course wrong. For man needs material comforts. But the Communist philosophy seems to be equally wrong, for the aim of their philosophy seems to be to fatten the pigs as though men are no better than pigs. Man must grow materially as well as spiritually.⁸

There is a parallel between Ambedkar and Yefremov. Yefremov realized the spiritual deficiency of Marxist philosophy through his understanding of Eastern philosophies. The same way Baba Saheb Ambedkar realized the deficiency of Marxism through the study of Buddha's Dharma.

Now let us return to Yefremov. Yefremov did not become a member of Communist Party of Soviet Union and he also made some satirical veiled criticism of social conditions in both US as well as USSR – it was something that never went well with the party.⁹ In 1963 he published 'Lezvie Britvy' (The Razor's Edge). If *Andromeda Nebula* dealt with the outer space exploration, *The Razor's Edge* dealt with the inner exploration and the uncharted realms and possibilities of the human mind. Yefremov confessed to a friend in 1971:

I had to put many things today you could not talk about or spend 10 years in Siberia in Stalin's time, in the frame of adventure. These things are yoga, the spiritual

power of a human and self-education.¹⁰

In his next novel he made some bold open statements against totalitarianism which resulted in a KGB interrogation. Later he was placed under the surveillance of KGB which continued till his death. His further literary activities were forbidden.

These are instances of two of the greatest creative minds of Russia being captivated and inspired by Indian philosophy. That Indian spirituality has been an inspiration to men such as Vernadsky and Yefremov, is not surprising. The civilizational values of India always emphasize that the diverse strands of humanity come together in peace and benediction and not in proselytizing aggression based on exclusive claims to truth. In these troubled times this can make the common heritage of humanity become more enriched and intensely spiritual. As Vernadsky rightly pointed out Indian culture and spirituality can make all cultures of humanity validate their own spirituality which after all, though diverse, is our common collective heritage.

1. Lynn Margulis & Dorion Sagan, *What is Life?*, University of California Press, 2000, p.51
2. Rafal Serafin, *Noosphere, Gaia and the Science of Biosphere in The biosphere and noosphere reader: global environment, society, and change*, (Ed. Paul R. Samson, David Pitt), Routledge, 1999, p.136
3. Alexander Senkevich (Trans. Alexander Mikeyev), "A Pilgrimage to the world of immortal images", *Soviet Literature*, (No. 8 (497)), 1989
4. Ibid.
5. G. Aksenov, Contact-response, *Science in the USSR*, No. 4, July-August 1990
6. I. Soerich, 'The Yefremov Phenomenon', *Science in the USSR*, (No.4 July-August, 1990)
7. Paul Stonehill, Professor Yefremov's KGB Files-I, *Pravda*, 27-Oct-2009
8. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol-3, Education Dept., Govt. of Maharashtra, 1987, p.462
9. Steve Shelokhonov, *Biography for Ivan Yefremov*, IMDB, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0947234/bio>
10. Ivan Yefremov letter to Dmitrievsky dated 25th of May, 1971.

To Fashion Man

Mukul Kanitkar

Swami Vivekananda's whole life has been a man making endeavor. Even during his wanderings he transformed lives of many. Almost every one who came in his contact was transformed. These were the sporadic experiments of man making. But the full bloom of his art of the job - 'To fashion man' is seen in his training of his disciples. Though the station Master of Hathras Railway station, Sarat Chandra became first of Swamiji's Sanyasin disciples, his favorite young disciple was Alasingha Perumal of Madras. He was the one who collected youth of Madras and started Swamiji's work in Madras.

He came in contact with Swamiji's stay in Madras after his meditation at the last tip of Mother Bharat. He and his enthusiastic band of youth convinced Swamiji to go to the Chicago Parliament of Religions. He collected money for Swamiji's journey. Though it was not adequate, this was the effort that sealed Swamiji's mind on the voyage. Before this he was not very keen to take the suggestion seriously.



Transformation by Correspondence:

The work of galvanizing the youth for nation building started during the discussions of these eager youth with the Swami during his stay at Madras. But the real training of Alasingha as the coordinator of the work and leader of the youth team was done through a continuous flow of letters. The correspondence is full of Mutual love, respect and openness. Swamiji in particular has poured his heart in the 38 letters he had written to Alasingha. The correspondence which began when Swami visited Hyderabad before going to America and continued through out his journey

abroad. These letters are full of Swamiji's experiences. The struggle, humiliation, physical and emotional challenges he faced in the alien land. Swamiji has shared his despair without any compunction in the letters written to Alasingha. He also shared the triumph and honour bestowed upon him after the Parliament.

Apart from all this sharing the main theme of all these letters is training of a young activist. Swamiji trained Alasingha first in the western

ways of working. How to organize meetings, getting resolutions passed, sending them to the News papers and then spreading the word in the right sectors by distributing the paper clippings to the influential people. When the missionaries with the aid of jealous Indians like Pratapchandra Majumdar started a vicious campaign against the Swami in America, Swamiji guided Alasingha in the counter public relations mechanism. It was difficult to train. We can imagine the difficulties owing the distance and the mode of postal communications in those days when it took months for the letters to reach a place. But more importantly it was difficult for the Swami to convey the American atmosphere and the formal ways in which they work to the orthodox Brahmin teacher of Triplicane. We see the desperation, scolding, admonitions flying in a very heated language from Swami Vivekananda to Alasingha in these pages. But he was quick to accept his folly in the next letter, "So far you have done good work. Do not mind what I write in some moments of nervousness". Both the admonitions and the acceptance are part of the training. Swamiji's main job- Fashion Man.

When this phase of counter propaganda was over immediately came the caution, "We are not for name and fame. Do not send me all these paper clippings; they are of no use to me." The real work of collecting the youth and putting them to the work of reconstruction of the nation. Swamiji through his letters guided Alasingha to form a committee to do the work. He guided and even supported financially to

start the magazine "Brahmavadin". He guided him on the editorial art. When the content became too technical he would write, no one wants to know the technicalities of the rituals. The message of the scriptures should be transmitted in easily palatable doses. When in few issues there was over dose of theosophical ideas Swamiji points out the fallacy, "Brahmavadin is for preaching Vedanta and not Theosophy."

He teaches him the Art of Leading. How one should not Boss over others and be one of the team. Lead like a child or a servant and not as a master. How to give freedom for the innate nature of the other team members. When G G



Alasingha Perumal

Narsimhachary was going on a different path of writing article etc rather than organizing the youth Swamiji asks Alasingha to let him do the work according to his liking and inclination. A leader should not force his ideas or personality on the others. They should also be given a chance to blossom in their own way. We see that though in the beginning Swamiji discouraged Alasingha to start any publication and to concentrate on practical work

instead he relented after seeing the editorial interest being prime in his disciple, and then he guided him the science and art of editing.

Alasingha Perumal is shining example of Graduating in the course of Man Making through distance Education mode.

Transformation by training:

Swami Vivekananda was a master trainer. Even during his work in America after the initial hectic round of Lectures, he started

training disciples for a permanent work. The idea of forming Vedanta society to spread the message of Vedanta in west was based on training of workers for running these societies. The retreat at the "Thousand Island Park" is the glowing example of this. After returning to Bharat, he formed the "Ramakrishna Muth and Mission". He recruited and trained many Sanyasins but the most illustrated example is that of Sister Nivedita.

Margaret Noble's transformation from an adamant, more often than not arrogant daughter of a missionary, a teacher, a proud British citizen into a "More Hindu than any other Hindu born" as Rabindranath Tagore called her, is a revealing study in human excellence training. We are fortunate to have the original account in the lucid poetic expressions catalogued by sister herself in the masterpiece biography of the Prince as she used to refer to the Swami in her letters to her friends, "The Master as I saw him". This masterpiece read along with her letters gives us the details of intense training imparted by the eager master to the equally eager disciple in a great hurry.

The saga is full of divine love, motherly care, intellectual admonitions and spiritual experiences. The great pilgrimage to Himalayas, culminating at Amaranth was the pinnacle of this training course. It was struggle so intense that she honestly accepts. It used to become often unbearable to her as well as the

co-passengers. He aimed at preparing her fully before offering her to his Aradhya (idol of worship) Bharatmata. He was not prepared for any half measures. She tells us at mere reference to Indians as alien, something like you Indians or these Indians, Swamiji would flare up and once shouted, "If you are still a proud British you better return. We don't need a British to

come and teach us. If you are to work here you have to become the worthy daughter of Bharatmata." When the disciple was finally fashioned adequately he initiated her into life of Sanyasa and gave her the poignant title – Nivedita, the dedicated. The ninth and final step of Bhakti. The ultimate offering of the complete self – Atmnivedan.

She not only continued Swamiji's work even after his Samadhi but gave it a wider meaning and perspective in the national

political scenario. She influenced both the fractions of Congress movement. She had heated debates on principles with the likes of Gopal Krishna Gokahle. But that did not diminish the mutual respect they held for each other. On the other hand she supported the revolutionary efforts. She wrote books explaining Hinduism to the west. Her influence on the art and literature gave birth to the era of Indian renaissance in the field of art. She left her mark on all the walks of National life in a very critical period of Indian History.

Swami Vivekananda life is full of such Man



Sister Nivedita

Making Miracles. He transformed the lives of all his brother disciples. After Ramakrishna Mission was formed he sent Swami Ramakrishnananda to establish the Madras Math. The mother hearted Shashi Maharaj as he was called by his brother disciples turned into an able organizer. Swamiji's respectful interactions with elders like Pramadas Moitra, Girish Ghosh changed their outlook towards life. He had the knack of asking questions with humility to penetrate the hard cover of many intellectuals. His inspiring personality had a thunderous motivational force. May it be Jamshedji Tata or Rockefeller in America he could motivate them to use their resources in a more productive way for the whole Humanity. It was his inspiration that

triggered the formation of Indian Institute of Scientific Research by the Tatas. He was the force which almost resurrected the depressed Jagdish Chandra Basu. Swamiji's interaction with the great scientist in 1900 during the Paris Science Conference was instrumental in the monumental work of research Dr Basu produced even after the tragedy of Radio waves discovery.

The list of Swami Vivekananda's achievements in the field which he called his main Job, Fashion Man, is unending. This work of his continued even after his leaving the mortal body. In fact it still continues and we find many remarkable examples of total transformation even today inspired by his thoughts.

Obituary

Farewell Hitch!

-SHIVSANKAR

First off, what are we doing, writing an obituary to Christopher "The Hitch" Hitchens in Yuva Bharati? He was a foul-mouthed speaker/writer, self-advertised polemicist and atheist, who died of esophageal cancer on 15th December, 2011 contracted most probably due to his addiction to cigarettes. He did not hesitate to state, "The main source of hatred in the world is religion, and organised religion."

The point is very simple: though Hitch was all this, he was also more. He was a fearless and courageous person, who did not hesitate to stick to his guns as well as ask questions that others hesitated to ask. And he undoubtedly shares a place in a long line of thinkers including Einstein who were in awe of the universe and stated categorically "...one life is enough for me."

He was a wit without match and a critic without mercy. If he had stated "Cancer victimhood contains a permanent temptation to be self-centered and even solipsistic." then he never gave in to that temptation, the proof to which are his writings - from the relations between US and Pakistan after Osama's death to a portrait of writer Joan Didion, each of them a masterpiece created after his diagnosis. He was informed of this diagnosis on the morning of 8th June, 2010, the same day he had a launch event at New York for his memoir Hitch-22. His outlook though was vastly different from the average human being who would have broken down on knowing that his/her days are numbered. As Salman Rushdie who was present at that event records, "It was hard to believe that he had been so publicly magnificent on such a privately dreadful day. He had shown more than stoicism. He had flung laughter and intelligence into the face of death."

If he was addicted to cigarettes, so was he addicted to company. As a compulsively social

person and a brilliant entertainer he had a large number of friends across ideological and professional spectrums. He expended the effort to keep in touch with people who had the good fortune of having his friendship and attention.



Christopher Hitchens

He was a journalist of great integrity and when compared to shoddy journalism and media presence in India and elsewhere, he is almost godlike in relative perfection! He did not hesitate to undertake painful or humiliating experiences when necessary, which were later transformed into beautiful columns or rather treats for his readers. Wherever he saw stupidity and preposterousness, it was complete annihilation – he once flouted "a whole slew of New York laws. That is to say, I sat on an upended milk crate, put my bag next to me on a subway seat, paused to adjust my shoe on a subway step, fed some birds in Central Park, had a cigarette in a town car, attempted to put a plastic frame around a vehicle license plate, and rode a bicycle without keeping my feet on the pedals at all times" to expose the pettiness and arbitrary victimization imposed on the denizens of one of the world's most open-minded cities.

He was above all a great writer who entertained his readers through exquisite language and a flair to communicate important public perceptions with a personal touch. He was a prolific writer, who has left behind the millions of words written during his four decades of action and activity. Hitch, will always live on through the hitchslaps he dealt and the hugs he gave...

Vivekananda Kendra Samachar

Tuki salutes VKV family Inter-VKV Science Exhibition

ITANAGAR, Dec 17: Chief Minister Nabam Tuki today expressed gratitude to the family of Vivekananda Kendra for molding and shaping the future of Arunachal Pradesh without expecting any materialistic comfort and profit.

“The excellent academic results year after year exemplify the dedication, devotion and



sincerity of its teachers and officials. I salute them for molding and shaping the future of Arunachal Pradesh and India in the best possible way through the noble profession of teaching,” Tuki said while inaugurating the three-day Mahabhaskara Shastra Vigyan Pradarshani or the Inter-VKV Science Exhibition here at the premises of

Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, Chimpu this morning.

Vivekananda Kendra, a non-profit organization, formed with inspiration from the patriotic saint of mother India, Swami Vivekananda, has held aloft the vision of 'Man-Making and Nation-Building' in imparting education, Tuki asserted and hailed its volunteers for their relentless service with dedication despite numerous hardships.

About 315 students are participating in the exhibition from 52 VKVs, including those from Assam and Nagaland.

Tuki advised the young scientists that while severe brainstorming and spirit of competition would take center-stage in these three days, they should make most of the time and foster long lasting friendships and bring the neighbor states closer together.

Hailing the 34 VKVs in the state, he called upon the teachers and officials of the organization to continue with their good work, as he felt that the job was still half-done. Assuring the support of his Government in all possible ways and means, he said his doors are open for the Kendra family.

“Please feel free to step in with not only your problems but also suggestions so that I can contribute my bit as Chief Minister as well as a senior citizen of the state,” Tuki offered. “Here I would like to remind my young friends of the historic decision of the Government of India to implement the Right To Education Act on

August 29, 2009. You and your younger brothers and sisters are lucky to have this Act in your time. Our generation hasn't been so lucky," he said and urged the students to avail the benefits of the Act to secure their future.

While expressing concern over the quality of education imparted in schools of the state, he also raised the issue of lack of safety measures in schools and institutions. Citing unfortunate tragedies in the form of fire mishaps, traffic accidents, etc he appealed authorities of all schools across the state to give special attention to safety measures.

"I stress on this particularly in this season of picnics and parties. If our young friends are safe, our future is safe," the Chief Minister pointed.

Likewise, he also emphasized on creating awareness amongst the students on road safety measures, first-aid knowledge, disaster preparedness, drug addiction and HIV/AIDS. He suggested regular health checks, camps and mock-drills and other activities to train and prepare the young people to meet any eventuality.

Later, the Chief Minister made a round of the exhibition put up by the students as well as few government departments.

Also present on the occasion were MLA TapukTaku, Dr Anil D Sahasrabudhe, Director of Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering Pune, Nivedita RaghunathBhide, All India Vice President of the Kendra, DrJoramBegi, PrantPramukh, RadhaDidi, Pramukh and DrTejumPadu, Trustee VKVAPT.

Bengaluru

On the occasion of Swami Vivekananda's 150th Birth Anniversary Celebration, Karnataka Pranta VIJAY POORNA VIJAY is going on in different part of Karnataka.

VKBengaluru organised a three days Residential Vijaya Poorna Vijaya Shibir for Bengaluru City from 15-18th January 2012.

In this shibir, 21 participants from 3 colleges of three different part of Bengaluru participated. The shibir was inaguarated on 15th January 2012 on Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as per tithi, by Swami Sadatmanandaji, Arshya Vidhyashram, Bengaluru.

Eminent speakers were invited on this occasion. Following Topics were discussed like, PunyaBhoomi Bharat -Aa.Nageshji, Bharat Mata by Sri Krishnopadhyaya of Sanskara Bharati, Swamiji and the Youth-Sri.Raghavendraji, Swamiji as Role Model to the youth by -Smt. Radha Ramasamyji, Man making and Nation Building by- Sri. T.A.P. Sheno, Challenges and Responses and Vivekananda Kendra Activities by - Ma. Balakrishnanji, Vice-President of Vivekananda Kendra.

