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CONTENTS

Editorial	03
Mata's Message	05
The Task Ahead	06
Vivekananda – the Peripatetic Orator and The Conqueror of America	12
Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda	23-30
Oh! The youth of India India is calling – Swamiji	35
Vivekananda's Material Wisdom	38
Sankara and Siddhartha in Vivekananda	45

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Invocation

Anyakshetre kritam paapam punyakshetre vinashyati
Punyakshetre kritam paapam Praayagatheerthanayake vinashyati
- Rig Veda

Bad karmas committed elsewhere can be washed off in pilgrim centers; but Prayag theerth can wash off even bad karmas committed in pilgrim centers.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA 150: THE CARAVAN MOVES ON



This month marks the dawn of the year long celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the advent of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda represents a new phase in the social history of Hindustan and a new awakening the consciousness of the planet. As the nineteenth century was drawing to a close Swamiji found him amidst a whirlpool of changes spanning all humanity. While more than half of the human race was subjugated by colonialism and plagued by internal stagnation, a considerable minority of humanity – the West- was progressing fast in science and technology, culture and in building socio-political institutions. New discoveries in science were shaking the basis of the old religious structures of the West. But the same old structures of the West found new pastures for their predatory pursuits in the subjugated humanities of the colonized worlds. Native spiritual traditions under social stagnation and colonialism became internal tyrannies, mere decadent forms bereft of their soul-strength. It was at this juncture that Swami Vivekananda appeared on the world scene. His message of universal brotherhood based on Vedantic humanism, showing the immense possibilities of synthesis of science and religion, democracy and tradition and different cultures from all the directions of the globe. Even as the leading socio-political philosophers of the West were hotly debating the supremacy of individual or that of the State, Swami Vivekananda harmonized both in a characteristically Vedantic way. In his social vision, the importance of freedom and the need for social equality have to organically moderate each other. He spoke of liberation of the downtrodden through Vedanta. This was a revolutionary way of ushering Vedanta into the socio-political realm.

The old order panicked. The predatory belief systems marked this penniless youth their prime enemy. And they slandered him. In his authoritative two-volume biography on Swami Vivekananda Prof.K.N.Dhar explains how various factions came together to slander Swamiji:

...at the time when the orthodox agitation against Swami Vivekananda was going on, his old "friends", the Christian missionaries, perhaps also Pratap Chandra Majumdar, and Dr.Barrows also joined in the fray. They had a common object, viz., to bring down the Swami in public estimation, so as to ruin his work, though their lines of attack differed.... There was something funny in Christian missionaries and Brahmo reformers who did not believe in caste attempting to belittle one for non-orthodoxy... (A Comprehensive Biography, Vol-2, p.940)

All these happened soon after Swami Vivekananda started his active mission in India after his success in the World Parliament of Religions. More than a century later, today as a nation fondly looks forward to celebrate Swami Vivekananda's 150th birth anniversary.

In a nation today bitterly divided by identity politics and ideological vested interests, the figure of Swami Vivekananda towers above all petty divisions, uniting India emotionally, cerebrally and spiritually for the world mission She has. And the forces of divisiveness panic at the prospect of an India united and strong, progressive and spiritual. So we find another malicious campaign against Swami Vivekananda unleashed by a section of English media. Indo-phobic, anti-Hindu mania of a section of English media, owned by Marxist media barons, penned by limousine liberals and funded mostly by Western academic institutions, have started a scathing attack on Swami Vivekananda, showing how still Swami Vivekananda remains the enemy numero uno of these anti-Indian forces.

Yet Swami Vivekananda continues to inspire and guide the nation. His grand vision of unity propelled Tesla; fructified in Einstein and proceeds in E.C.George Sudarshan. His idea of Karma Yoga was imbibed by Gandhiji in his interpretation of Gita. His vision of Vedantic human equality and projection of Buddhist compassion manifested itself in the actions of Dr.Ambedkar. His holistic vision of humanity inspired and found fulfillment in the writings of Sri Aurobindo whose evolutionary vision of humanity in transition into Overmind has become a map for the future of humanity. His vision of national uniqueness and fullness of human organism found a comprehensive ideological expression in Deendayal Upadaya's Integral humanism. And he will continue to inspire many a million to come – each contributing his or her own song to the beauty of human civilization and glory of Mother India.

Yes. The grand Indic caravan of peace and benediction will move on through the vastness of time and royal routes of history, creating paths where none existed before and unfolding possibilities for the expression of the highest where none dreamt it as plausible, ignoring the howls of the lesser minds with the rich compassion they deserve.

Aravindan Neelakandan
YB-ET

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA-A HINDU SUPREMACIST?

Aravindan Neelakandan



When a magazine, supposedly objective and mainstream, does a controversial story on a popular personality, a national icon, basic ethics demands that it presents both views –for and against that personality. The same is not true of a campaign of calumny against a person indulged in with malicious intent. The latter is called hate propaganda. The cover story conclusively titled 'Hindu Supremacist' run by 'Outlook' magazine on Swami Vivekananda, brought out exactly at the time when the nation started celebrating his 150th birth anniversary is a perfect instance of such hate propaganda. The magazine published an excerpt from a book on Swami Vivekananda by a left-propagandist and visceral Hindu hater, Jyotirmaya Sharma, masquerading as an objective scholar. Sharma's hatchet job on

Swami Vivekananda started much earlier. Reviewing his 2007 book on Gururji Golwalkar which was given a paranoid title 'Terrifying Vision' (Penguin Viking), Christopher Jaffrelot another visceral Hindu baiter from France affirmed Sharma's assessment of Vivekananda thus:

Vivekananda's respect for pluralism was largely a façade because his tolerance was presented in terms of some universalisation of the self: Hinduism is so "tolerant" that it can accept every religion... in its fold. Hence the very abstract definition of religion promoted by Vivekananda who had not selected the Vedanta just by chance: "All other religions of the world are included in the nameless, limitless, eternal Vedic religion." Vivekananda, therefore, added to the Hindutva ideology a benign face, which presents Hinduism as an all-encompassing and, therefore, hegemonic creed.

In the excerpt published by *Outlook*, Sharma twists the words and their meanings to suit his own design of presenting Swami Vivekananda as an intolerant exclusivist wearing the garb of

an outwardly tolerance. Let us take a specific example of such a gross misinterpretation:

When the argument for a single universal faith had to be made strenuously, Vivekananda abandons even the "We must each have our own individual religion" rhetoric with alacrity: "There never was my religion or yours, my national religion or your national religion; there never existed many religions, there is only the one. One Infinite Religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this Religion is expressing itself in various countries, in various ways." What, then, about the argument that promised to accommodate even twenty million or more sects in the world, even if this acceptance of plurality was only based on the acknowledgement of a multitude of external forms of religion? The above quote ends with the following sentence: "Therefore we must respect all religions and we must try to accept them all as far as we can." The respect for other religions was, therefore, conditional. It depended on phrases like "so far as the externals of it go" and "as far as we can".

It baffles one how this 'rhetoric' when read with 'alacrity' negates Swami Vivekananda's 'the argument that promised to accommodate even twenty million or more sects in the world'? To negate the twenty million sects, which actually Swami Vivekananda identifies with individual and national religions, the one 'Religion' which he proposes should be based

on some exclusivist dogmas. But if one reads what Swami Vivekananda states about the One Religion also has the adjective 'Infinite' – which Sharma ignores so that he can present that as another sectarian religion what Swami Vivekananda calls the 'One Infinite Religion'. Far from the way Sharma presents the idea of a universal religion by Swami Vivekananda was radically different and inclusive to the maximum. In his lecture titled 'The Ideal of a Universal Religion' Swami Vivekananda leaves no room for any ambiguity much less the 'supremacist' tendencies invented by Sharma:

What then do I mean by the ideal of a universal religion? I do not mean any one universal philosophy, or any one universal mythology, or any one universal ritual held alike by all; for I know that this world must go on working, wheel within wheel, this intricate mass of machinery, most complex, most wonderful. What can we do then? We can make it run smoothly, we can lessen the friction, we can grease the wheels, as it were. How? By recognising the natural necessity of variation. Just as we have recognised unity by our very nature, so we must also recognise variation. We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes.¹

According to Sharma the exclusivist of Vivekananda manifests through the usage of words such as 'phases' which he uses to demote other religions as mere stages towards his own:

...Vivekananda learnt from his Master that all religions in the world were phases of one eternal religion. Notice the dexterity with which the word 'phases' has been added and introduced. What was the parity and equality of all faiths becomes "phases" of one "eternal religion" in the hands of Vivekananda.

But what Swami Vivekananda means by phases are not like stepping stones towards yet another sectarian religion. In his 1900 lecture Swami Vivekananda says:

Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth. It is, therefore, addition; not exclusion. That is the idea. System after system arises, each one embodying a great idea, and ideals must be added to ideals. And this is the march of humanity. ... Our watchword, then, will be acceptance, and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy, and I do not believe in it. I believe in acceptance. Why should I tolerate? Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. Is it not a blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live? I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I

shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of every one.²

The twisting of meanings indulged in by Jyotirmaya Sharma, falls flat at every point exposing Sharma as a malicious campaigner against Hinduism and examining his claims when done through the original works of Swami Vivekananda only proves that Vivekananda's ideas of Universal Religion, an inclusive one that recognizes the diversity of religious experiences and their deeper unifying nature, are becoming more and more relevant in the modern world we live today.

Swami Vivekananda a Caste Votary?

'Yes' says Sharma. He quotes the following passage from a letter written by Swami Vivekananda on 3rd January 1895:

Now, take the case of caste — in Sanskrit, Jāti, i.e. species. Now, this is the first idea of creation. Variation (Vichitratā), that is to say Jati, means creation. "I am One, I become many" (various Vedas). Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active, it must throw out varieties. When it ceases or is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of Jati was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his Prakriti, his

Jati, his caste; and so it remained for thousands of years. Not even in the latest books is inter-dining prohibited; nor in any of the older books is inter-marriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India's downfall? — the giving up of this idea of caste.

He then quotes from the same letter the following:

The present caste is not the real Jati, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of Jati, i.e., caste or variation. Any crystallised custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (Jati) from having its full sway, and whenever any nation ceases to produce this immense variety, it must die. Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this: That India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not—caste. Let Jati have its sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste and we shall rise.

And from these now Sharma draws his conclusions:

In practical terms, caste designated individuals to perform certain actions according to their natures, their prakriti. As long as they continued to perform those without locating their actions or varna-prescribed vocation in custom, privilege or heredity, caste functioned smoothly. So, the cobbler, the

peasant and the sweeper, despite an education, will continue to do their jobs and do them even better as long as they got the sympathy of the upper castes. This, in sum, is Vivekananda's argument till now.

The question that is to be asked is when Swami Vivekananda differentiated the present day concept of caste with what he considered was the ancient original concept of Jati – was he suggesting that 'the cobbler, the peasant and the sweeper, despite an education, will continue to do their jobs'? The answer can be seen already in the words of Swami Vivekananda which Sharma quoted and emphatically in the words from the same passage he left out – both rejecting his thesis that Swami Vivekananda supported the birth-based continuation of caste occupations. This is what Sharma left out which presents the entire case in a very different light:

Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this, that India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. **Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not-caste.** Let Jati have its sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste, and we shall rise. **Now look at Europe. When it succeeded in giving free scope to caste and took away most of the barriers that stood in the way of individuals, each developing his caste — Europe rose. In America, there is the best scope for caste (real Jati) to develop, and so the people are great.** Every Hindu knows that astrologers try to fix the caste of every boy or girl as

soon as he or she is born. That is **the real caste — the individuality**, and Jyotisha (astrology) recognises that. And we can only rise by giving it full sway again. This variety does not mean inequality, nor any special privilege.³ (Emphasis added)

So in the chopped off passage what Swami Vivekananda means by caste is very clear – the individuality. Sharma thus provides an excellent case of 'suppressio veri and suggestio falsi' often indulged in by limousine liberals who inhabit a section of Indo-phobic English media in India. And the reader should be cautioned against Swami Vivekananda's reference to astrology. He says that the astrology recognizes the fact that a child's caste is his or her individuality. While endorsing this idea of recognition of an individual's individuality, Swami Vivekananda has rejected astrology as 'sign of a weak mind'.⁴

What is important here is that it was the democratic social system of United States of America which Swami Vivekananda shows as the example for the real manifestation of the ancient idea of 'Jati' – which is complete rejection of birth-based imposition of any profession considered exalted or defiled on any individual by customs or traditions. Even in the very quote which Sharma shows as proof for Vivekananda's adherence to birth-based caste system, Vivekananda states that both inter-dining and inter-marriage should not be proscribed and no privilege be given to any section of the society.

In other words Swami Vivekananda stood for complete annihilation of caste system. He simply wanted Jati to become a psychological phenomenon for the individual to decide his relation to the society based on his individuality and the society should be

democratic enough to allow full manifestation of this individual variation in the society to contribute to the welfare of the society and the individual.

In August 1889 in a letter to Pramada Das Mitra an orthodox Hindu from Varanasi, Swami Vivekananda questioned the stand of Sankara himself on caste and wrote:

The doctrine of caste in the Purusha-Sukta of the Vedas does not make it hereditary--so what are those instances in the Vedas where caste has been made a matter of hereditary transmission? The (Sankara) Acharya could not adduce any proof from the Vedas to the effect that the Shudra should not study the Vedas. He only quotes Tai. Samhita, (VII.i.1.6) to maintain that when he is not entitled to perform Yajnas, he has neither any right to study the Upanishads and the like. But the same Acharya contends with reference to Vedanta-Sutras, (I.i.1) that the word Aw here does not mean "subsequent to the study of the Vedas", because it is contrary to proof that the study of the Upanishad is not permissible without the previous study of the Vedic Mantras and Brahmanas and because there is no intrinsic sequence between the Vedic Karma-kanda and Vedic Jnana-kanda. It is evident, therefore, that one may attain to the knowledge of Brahman without having studied the ceremonial parts of the Vedas. So if there is no sequence between the sacrificial

practices and Jnana, why does the Acharya contradict his own statement when it is a case of the Shudras, by inserting the clause "by force of the same logic"? **Why should the Shudra not study the Upanishad?**⁵ (Emphasis added)

In May 1897 Swami again wrote to Mitra, and now he concluded:

The Smritis and Puranas are productions of men of limited intelligence and are full of fallacies, errors, the feelings of class and malice... the conviction is daily gaining on my mind that the idea of caste is the greatest dividing factor and the root of Maya; all caste either on the principle of birth or of merit is bondage. Some friends advise, "True, lay all that at heart, but outside, in the world of relative experience, distinctions like caste must needs be maintained." . . . The idea of oneness at heart (with a craven impotence of effort, that is to say), and outside, the hell-dance of demons--oppression and persecution... I am a Shudra, a Mlechha, so I have nothing to do with all that botheration. To me what would Mlechha's food matter or Pariah's? It is in the books written by priests that madnesses like that of caste are to be found, and not in books revealed from God.⁶

Such was the idea of Swami Vivekananda regarding caste: a scheme of harmonizing the individuality of the individual with the welfare of society based initially on merit and later corrupted to hereditary and today

existing purely as the greatest obstacle to the progress and unity of Indian society and spiritual emancipation of the individual. As a system as a social institution as it exists today and as it existed in the day of Swami Vivekananda, he declared clearly where he stands with relation to it in no unclear terms: The caste system is opposed to the religion of Vedanta.⁷

Aryan and Brahmin in Swami Vivekananda

Now Sharma takes up the Aryan question:

The common rubric under which he attempts to club all the races and tribes was found in the term 'Arya'. Even the distinction between Aryan and Dravidian was casually brushed aside as merely a philological one and not of race and blood. Once language and race were unified, the asymmetry between cultures had to be rectified: "Just as Sanskrit has been the linguistic solution, so the Arya the racial solution. So the Brahmanhood is the solution of the varying degrees of progress and culture as well as that of all social and political problems." Once the supremacy and the primacy of the Aryan race were established, he could now readily pronounce Brahminhood as "the great ideal of India". It was true that the degradation of Brahminhood and Kshatriyahood was prophesied in the Puranas; in the Kaliyuga, they claimed, there would only be non-Brahmins. Vivekananda regrets that this was becoming increasingly true, though a few Brahmins remained, and did so

only in India. Any vision of bringing about order to the diversity of races and languages, then, can only be brought about by a superior culture. The Aryans, Vivekananda asserts, provided such a culture and this culture expressed itself through the caste system: "It put, theoretically at least, the whole of India under the guidance—not of wealth, nor of t h e s w o r d — b u t o f intellect—intellect chastened and controlled by spirituality. The leading caste in India is the highest Aryans—the Brahmins."

Swami Vivekananda did not have the advantage of data from archaeology and genetics to completely and decisively reject the notion of race and invasion. Yet he was totally uncomfortable with the idea and was quite sure that humanity was an admixture of many races and what goes by the name Aryan itself was not a 'pure' race but an admixture of two grand linguistic groups.⁸ He dismisses both the biological basis of racial categories and birth based superiority of any caste. If the 'the so-called craniological differentiation' finds 'no solid ground to work upon' in India,⁹ then the 'super-arrogated excellence of birth of any caste in India' is equally 'a pure myth'.¹⁰ Swami Vivekananda also condemned those who wanted to cut themselves off from the masses of India on the basis of European race theories.

In Sharma's presentation, the Brahmins, an endangered minority of the Aryans are to bring 'order to the diversity of races and languages'. He presents as if Swami Vivekananda meant the 'Brahmins' to the Master select of a Master race. However what Swami Vivekananda meant was entirely different. After rejecting the idea of blood based division existing in

India, Swami Vivekananda considers the proof of Brahminhood on anyone claiming to be Brahmin, as democratization of the Brahminhood:

Then anyone who claims to be a Brahmin should prove his pretensions, first by manifesting that spirituality, and next by raising others to the same status. On the face of this, it seems that most of them are only nursing a false pride of birth; and any schemer, native or foreign, who can pander to this vanity and inherent laziness by fulsome sophistry, appears to satisfy most. Beware, Brahmins, this is the sign of death! Arise and show your manhood, your Brahminhood, by raising the non-Brahmins around you—not in the spirit of a master - not with the rotten canker of egotism crawling with superstitions and the charlatanry of East and West—but in the spirit of a servant. For verily he who knows how to serve knows how to rule.¹¹

What Swami Vivekananda presents then is a far-cry from a Master select few of a Master race but a democratization of a spiritual idea.

Sharma then makes even a wilder claim:

Was it then possible for a Shudra to acquire learning and become a Brahmin? Vivekananda's answer is emphatically in the negative: "If you want to rise to a higher caste in India, you have to elevate all your caste first, and then there is nothing in your onward path to hold you back." The lower castes had to aspire, en masse, to rise to the level of a higher caste. It did not

really matter whether caste was seen as an ideal or perceived as a social institution in operation. For Vivekananda, the rules to aspire for a higher status were already put in place by the Aryan and Brahmin superior culture inaugurated in ancient India.

What Swami Vivekananda meant, was something altogether different and radical. Very definitely an individual Shudra or Dalit making himself to the level of Brahmin or Kshatriya had happened. Swami Vivekananda was aware of that. But that had not benefitted the upliftment of the downtrodden community itself. Swami Vivekananda observed:

By this very qualitative caste system which obtained in India in ancient days, the Shudra class was kept down, bound hand and foot. In the first place, scarcely any opportunity was given to the Shudra for the accumulation of wealth or the earning of proper knowledge and education; to add to this disadvantage, if ever a man of extraordinary parts and genius were born of the Shudra class, the influential higher sections of the society forthwith showered titular honours on him and lifted him up to their own circle. His wealth and the power of his wisdom were employed for the benefit of an alien caste — and his own caste-people reaped no benefits of his attainments; and not only so, the good-for-nothing people, the scum and refuse of the higher castes, were cast off and thrown into the Shudra class to swell their

number. Vasishtha, Nârada, Satyakâma Jâbâla, Vyâsa, Kripa, Drona, Karna, and others of questionable parentage were raised to the position of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya, in virtue of their superior learning or valour; but it remains to be seen how the prostitute, maidservant, fisherman, or the charioteer class was benefited by these upliftings. Again, on the other hand, the fallen from the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, or the Vaishya class were always brought down to fill the ranks of the Shudras.¹²

It should be remembered here that Dr. Ambedkar rejected the conversion to Christianity for two important reasons one was that it was an alien religion ('Converting to Buddhism is like changing rooms in the same house but converting to Christianity is like going over to another house.') and another was that it would only provide solution for the individual but not to the entire community.¹³ And the real mischief that Sharma indulges here is when he states what Swami Vivekananda wanted was that 'the lower castes had to aspire, en masse, to rise to the level of **a higher caste**'. On the contrary what Swami Vivekananda wanted was that the suppressed castes — Shudras and Dalits — should arise as a class to take on the intellectual and spiritual leadership of the society.

Even here far from arrogating to those who called themselves Brahmins the right to recognize other communities as Brahmins, which would have been the case had an individual Shudra or a Dalit wanted to claim Brahminhood, Swami Vivekananda proposed a solution that was altogether radical and

would have made the very foundation of socially stagnant caste system crumble if materialized into practice:

Let us suppose that there are castes here with ten thousand people in each. If these put their heads together and say, we will call ourselves Brahmins, nothing can stop them.¹⁴

Taking all these together the context becomes very clear that when Swami Vivekananda spoke of entire communities acquiring Brahminhood rather than the individual that would administer effective death knell to the socially stagnant caste system. Further Swami Vivekananda identified himself with the Shudra and the Dalit – in the face of the attacks of orthodoxy on him.

Thus at every point in the excerpt provided, the maligning campaign of Jyotirmaya Sharma actively abetted by *Outlook* magazine falls to the ground on empirical examination.

So what is the game plan in maligning Swami Vivekananda?

But what is more important is the uncivilized and untruthful campaign of hatred unleashed on one of the founding fathers of Modern India. It was Swami Vivekananda's unique interpretation of Upanishadic teachings that paved the way for a great unleashing of the forces of national liberation and social emancipation. It is not an accident that Dr. Ambedkar emphatically traces the spiritual roots of social democracy to the monism of Upanishads whose unrealized potential for social liberation Swami Vivekananda was the first to realize and announce. Dr. Ambedkar says:

Democracy demands that each individual shall have every opportunity for realizing its

worth. It also requires that each individual shall know that he is as good as everybody else. Those who sneer at *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahma) as an impudent Utterance forget the other part of the *Maha Vaky*a namely *Tatvamasi* (Thou art also Brahma). If *Aham Brahmasmi* has stood alone without the conjunct of *Tatvamasi* it may have been possible to sneer at it. But with the conjunct of *Tatvamasi* the charge of selfish arrogance cannot stand against Brahmanism. ...this theory of Brahma has certain social implications which have a tremendous value as a foundation for Democracy. If all persons are parts of Brahma then all are equal and all must enjoy the same liberty which is what Democracy means. Looked at from this point of view Brahma may be unknowable. But there cannot be slightest doubt that no doctrine could furnish a stronger foundation for Democracy than the doctrine of Brahma. To support Democracy because we are all children of God is a very weak foundation for Democracy to rest on. That is why Democracy is so shaky wherever it made to rest on such a foundation. But to recognize and realize that you and I are parts of the same cosmic principle leaves room for no other theory of associated life except democracy. It does not merely preach Democracy. It makes democracy an obligation of one and all.

When charging Hindus that they never realized the potential of this concept of Brahman for social democracy both Swami Vivekananda and Dr. Ambedkar condemn Hinduism for this gross neglect almost in the same language and tenor. Dr. Ambedkar continues:

... we have on the one hand the most democratic principle of Brahmanism and on the other hand a society infested with castes, subcastes, outcastes, primitive tribes and criminal tribes. Can there be a greater dilemma than this?¹⁵

One can almost hear the same voice in his letter to Alasinga dated 20th March 1893, in which Swami Vivekananda wrote:

No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism.... religion is not in fault, but it is the... hypocrites, who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of doctrines of Pâramârthika and Vyâvahârîka.¹⁶

David L Gosling, a Cambridge scholar and author of the seminal work 'Religion and Ecology in South East Asia' states that Vivekananda's interpretation of karma-yoga as the basis for this-worldly action which was central to his teaching paved the way for Gandhian ethics.¹⁷

Swami Vivekananda himself would have welcomed a merciless rational discussion of his ideas and criticisms. However the slandering of Swami Vivekananda that is being indulged in by a section of English press, known for its antipathy towards anything

Hindu, should be seen for what it is. It is not a scholarly study or healthy criticism in the spirit of free thinking and reason, nor in the spirit of equality and fraternity but it is an attack and hate propaganda against the foundations that hold this nation together and which have helped much more constructively, and much more holistically in empowering the masses of India without endangering them to totalitarian ideologies and predatory expansionist exclusivist belief systems.

1. Swami Vivekananda, The Ideal of a Universal Religion, Collected Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-II, p.382
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VIVEKANANDA: ESSENCE AND SIGNIFICANCE



Dr. Anirban Ganguly

Swami Vivekananda's 150th birth anniversary celebrations was launched all over the country on 12th January. Behind the grandeur and colour of every commemorative celebration lies the deeper truth of the significance of the personality or the event. At times, amidst the clash of cymbals, the sound of trumpets, marches and speeches the essential symbolism of the occasion or the personality gets submerged, while it may not be the case on this occasion, the event nevertheless offers an opportunity to delve into the essence of Vivekananda's life and action and to internalize its essential significance and message. The essence of such commemorations then must necessarily lie in that collective internalization.

At a time when cynicism gains periodic ascendancy and faith in the sublime receives repeated jolts, it is instructive to see that Vivekananda's mission, against great

prevailing odds, was that of '*Man-making*' – it was 'his own stern brief summary of the work that was worth doing.' And in the span of a short and action packed life he did just that, 'laboriously, unflaggingly, day after day...playing the part of Guru, of father, even of schoolmaster, by turns.'

In his renunciation – as the 'archetype of the Sannyasin' – Vivekananda exuded a cardinal difference from the norm. His renunciation had a dynamic dimension to it. While he often exclaimed, burning with renunciation, 'Let me die a true Sannyasin as my Master did,' he seemed to have equally embodied the spirit of the 'ideal householder' – 'full of the yearning to protect and save, eager to learn and teach the use of materials, reaching out towards the reorganization and re-ordering of life.' In his dynamic Sannyasa Vivekananda displayed an eagerness to 'see the practicability of modern science developed among his own people' with the 'object of giving [them] a new and more direct habit of thought.' Such eagerness, when communicated to some of the leading men of action of the day did have the desired catalyzing effect. Jamshedji Tata (1839-1904), for example, recalled the Swami's suggestions given to him while on a journey to the West and, inspired, wrote back to him with a new vision of scientific research in India, asking the

'cyclonic-monk' to lead the movement:

I very much recall at this moment your views on the growth of the ascetic spirit in India, and the duty, not of destroying, but of diverting it into useful channels.

I recall these ideas in connection with my scheme of Research Institute of Science for India, of which you have doubtless heard or read. It seems to me that no better use can be made of the ascetic spirit than the establishment of monasteries or residential halls for men dominated by this spirit, where they should live with ordinary decency, and devote their lives to the cultivation of sciences – natural and humanistic... (23rd November, 1898)

Living at a time 'when men were abandoning the old' and unquestioningly turning their minds away from their civilisational fundamentals, Vivekananda, while being fearless of the new', continued to remain an 'ardent worshipper of the old.' For him, it was the nation's 'own life, proper to her own background' that would eventually act as the fountain of regeneration. 'India must find herself in Asia, not in shoddy Europe'. She would find life in her 'own life...not in imitation.' It was from 'her own proper past and environment that she would draw inspiration.' While it was true that the 'future would not be like the past, yet it could be only firmly established in a profound and living reverence for that past.'

Such a conviction led Vivekananda to 'persistently, pertinaciously' try and discover 'the essentials of national consciousness.' And in this quest of his, no 'smallest anecdote, no trifling detail of person or custom, ever came amiss to his intellectual net', he was certain that a 'still greater future' had to be 'built upon the

mighty past.' The meaning of his Sannyasa then was to 'reassert that which was India's essential self, and leave the great stream of the national life, strong in a fresh self-confidence and vigour, to find its own way to the ocean.'

Faith and invincibility were the other keynotes of his life. When the Indian intellect stood subjugated, when her traditions stood denigrated and a sense of weakness and confusion overshadowed the national psyche, here was a man 'who never dreamt of failure. Here was a man who spoke of naught but strength.' To many a close observer he seemed 'supremely free from sentimentality, supremely defiant of all authority' refusing to 'meet any foreigner save as the master'. To an 'Englishman who knew him well' the Swami's 'great genius' lay 'in his dignity', it was 'nothing short of royal.' In an age when the prevailing perception of India was that of a perpetual receiver of Western enlightenment, the Swami was firm in his conviction that 'the East must come to the West, not as a sycophant, not as a servant, but as Guru and teacher.' His cry was always unsettling to conformists of the age: 'We are under a Hypnotism! We think we are weak and this makes us weak! Let us think ourselves strong and we are invincible.'

The central deity of his adoration and spiritual identification, however, was India. To a generation of the Indian intelligentsia who grew up on and propounded the notion of an externally inspired and evolving Indian unity, Vivekananda came as a mighty nonconformist. To him the 'idea that two paise postage, cheap travel, and a common language of affairs could create a national unity, was...childish and superficial.' He laughed at such facile explanations of Indian unity and argued instead that 'these things

could only be made to serve old India's turn if she already possessed a deep organic unity of which they might conveniently become an expression.' His stand came, not from a mental assessment of that unity but rather from a profoundly empirical experience of it. For 'something like eight years' Vivekananda had 'wandered about the land changing his name at every village, learning of every one he met, gaining a vision' of the land that was at once 'accurate and minute as it was profound and general.' It had enabled him to firmly grasp and absorb the uniting dimensions of this vast land.

But his perception of this unity was not merely meant for articulation or verbal explication; he lived and was an embodiment of this 'diversity in oneness'. Through his intimate interactions and ceaseless travels he had learnt, 'not only the hopes and ideals of every sect and group of the Indian people, but their memories also.' He held the entire land, her traditions, her people, their ways and their sense of the past, as it were, in his soul, and radiated that national unity, which the superficial eye of the curious Orientalist or 'Anglicised native' failed to see:

A child of the Hindu quarter of Calcutta returned to live by Ganges-side, one would have supposed from his [Vivekananda's] enthusiasm that he had been born, now in the Punjab, again in the Himalayas, at a third moment in Rajputana, or elsewhere. The songs of Guru Nanak alternated with those of Mira Bai and Tanasena on his lips. Stories of Prithvi Raj and Delhi jostled against those of Chitore and Pratap Singh, Shiva and Uma, Radha and Krishna, Sita-Ram and Buddha. Each mighty drama lived in a marvellous actuality, when he was the player. His whole heart and soul was a burning epic of the country, touched to an overflow of mystic passion by her very name.

As an indefatigable defender of his land and his people, Vivekananda was perhaps second to none. Never did his zeal falter when it came to defending and presenting India to the world at large. Portrayed often as an uncompromising critic of a stagnant India, the Swami was equally one of her most ardent and articulate worshippers and standard bearers. When the national mind wallowed in a tendency of habitually issuing cringing-apologia, Vivekananda on the contrary firmly felt that 'nothing Indian required apology.' And if anything Indian seemed 'barbarous or crude' to the 'pseudo-refinement of the alien', he sprang to the defence and 'without denying, without mimising anything his colossal energy was immediately concentrated on the vindication of that particular point, and the unfortunate critic was tossed backwards and forwards on the horns of his own argument.' On such occasions there was 'no friend that he would not sacrifice without mercy...in the name of national defence.' To Vivekananda, 'everything Indian was absolutely and equally sacred', India for him, as he once said, was the land to which 'must come all souls wending their way Godward!'

He demanded such an adherence to India from all those who came to him, especially the Westerners, 'Remember' he told them, 'if you love India at all, you must love her *as she is*, not as you might wish her to become.' It was this 'firmness of his, standing like a rock for what actually was, that did more than any other single fact...to open the eyes' of a vast multitude to 'the beauty and strength of that ancient poem – the common life of the common Indian people.'

Singularly absent from Vivekananda's nature was the denominational sense of exclusivity;

he was at ease among adherents and practitioners of all faith. Being himself 'the exponent of Hinduism' he would stretch out whenever he found 'another Indian religionist struggling with the difficulty of presenting his case' and sitting down would write 'his speech for him, making a better story for his friend's faith than its own adherent could have done!' Behind the denominational variation he clearly perceived standing 'the great common facts of one soil; one beautiful old routine ancestral civilisation...'

But what attracted most, all those who saw and followed him closely was his ceaseless and immediate responsiveness to everything concerning India, and his supreme faith and confidence in the destiny of this land, 'no hope but was spoken into his ear, - no woe but he knew it, and strove to comfort or to rouse.' He seemed to hold in his 'hands the thread of all that was fundamental, organic, and vital'; he seemed to know 'the secret springs of life' and to understand 'with what word to touch the heart of millions', and above all such knowledge gave him a 'clear and certain hope' when it came to India. He 'never dreamt of failure for his people...to him India was young in all her parts', to him the 'country was young' and the 'India of his dreams was in the future.' He was firm in his conviction that despite all passing appearances the 'great deeps' of India and of her people would forever remain 'moral, austere and spiritual', it could not be otherwise. And her ancient civilisation meant for him, simply, the 'inbreeding of energy through many a millennium.'

Like the religio-cultural, the socio-political too strongly attracted and interested Vivekananda. In his expressions of concern for India, this aspect often distinctly flowed out through his talks, conversations and letters.

The mighty urge to see India liberated, self-reliant and spiritually conscious and vibrant continuously occupied his being and he attempted to work this out not as a politician, but as a 'nationalist.' He 'was no politician: he was [rather] the greatest of nationalists' and therefore to him the 'destiny of the people was in their own soil, and the destiny of the soil was no less in its own people.'

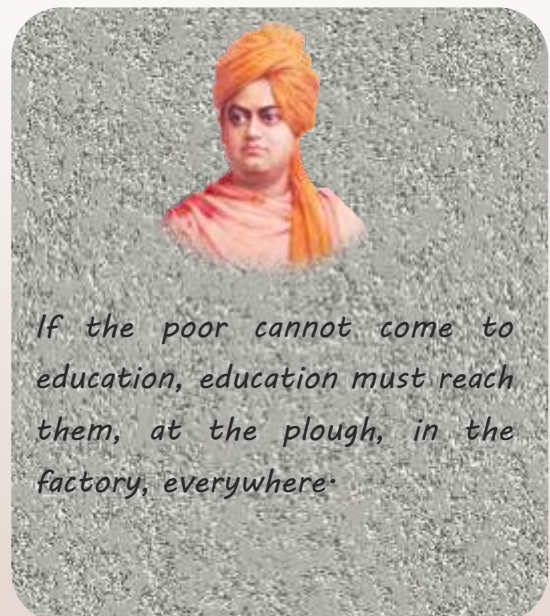
The essence and significance of Vivekananda lay in that: an unwavering nationalist who offered an epochal and liberating vision for his land and his people.

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VIVEKANANDA ON THE REINCARNATION OF THE SOUL

(Part of the Series of Lectures Delivered in New York 26th Jan 1896)



Compiled by Dr.K.M.Rao Ph.D.,

Sometimes people get frightened at idea, and superstition is so strong that thinking men even believe that they are the outcome of nothing, and then, with the grandest logic, try to deduce the theory that although they have come out of zero, they will be eternal after wards. Those that come out of zero will certainly have to go back to zero. Neither you, nor I nor any one present, has come out of zero, nor will go back to zero. We have been existing eternally, and will exist, and there is no power under the sun or above the sun which can undo your or my existence or send us back to zero. Now this idea of reincarnation is not only not a frightening idea, but is most essential for the moral well-being of

the human race. It is the only logical conclusion that thoughtful men can arrive at. If you are going to exist in eternity hereafter, it must be that you have existed through eternity in the past: it cannot be otherwise. I will try to answer a few objections that are generally brought against the theory... The first objection is, why do we not remember our past? Do we remember all our past in this life? How many of you remember your early childhood, and if upon memory depends your existence, then this argument proves that you did not exist as babies, because you do not remember your babyhood. It is simply unmitigated nonsense to say that our existence depends on our remembering it why should we remember the past. That brain is gone, broken into pieces, and a new brain has been manufactured. What has come to this brain is the resultant, the sum total of the impressions acquired in our past, with which the mind has come to inhabit the new body.

I, as I stand here, am the effect, the result, of all the infinite past which is tacked on to me. And why is it necessary for me to remember all the past? When a great ancient sage, seer or a prophet of old, who came face to face with the truth, says something, the modern men stand up and say, "Oh, he was a fool!" But just use another name, "Huxley says it, or Tyndall";

then it must be true, and they take it for granted. In place of ancient superstitions, they have erected modern superstitions, in place of the old popes of religion they have installed modern popes of science. So we see that this objection as to memory is not valid, and that is about the only serious objection that is raised against theory. Although we have seen that it is not necessary for the theory that there shall be the memory of past lives, yet at the same time we are in a position to assert that there are instances which show that this memory does come, and that each one of us will get back this memory in that life in which he will become free. Then alone you will find that this world is but a dream, then alone you will realize in the soul of your soul that you are but actors and the world is a stage; then alone will the idea of non-attachment comes to you with the power of thunder; then all this thirst for enjoyment, this clinging on to life and this world will vanish for ever; then the mind will see clearly as daylight how many times all these existed for you, how many times you had fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, relatives and friends, wealth and power. They came and went. How many times you were on the topmost crest of the wave, and how many times you were down at the bottom of despair. When memory will bring all these to you, then alone you will stand as a hero and smile when the world frowns upon you. Then alone you stand up and say, "I care not for thee even, O Death; what terror has thou for me?" This will come to all.

Are there any arguments, any rational proofs for this reincarnation of the soul? So far we have been giving the negative side, showing that the opposite arguments to disprove it are not valid. Are there any positive proofs? There are; and most valid ones, too. No other theory except that of reincarnation accounts for the

wide divergence that we find between man and man in their powers to acquire knowledge. First, let us consider the process by means of which knowledge is acquired. Suppose I go into the street and see a dog. How do I know it is a dog? I refer it to my mind, and in my mind are groups of all- my past experiences, arranged and pigeon-holed, as it were. As soon as a new impression comes, I take it up and refer it to some of the old pigeon-holes, and as soon as I find a group of the same impressions already existing, I place it in that group, and I am satisfied. I know it is a dog, because it coincides with the impressions already there. When I do not find the cognates of the new experience inside, I become dissatisfied, this state of the mind is called "ignorance" but, when, finding the cognates of an impression already existing, we become satisfied, this is called "knowledge." When one apple fell, man became dissatisfied. Then gradually they found out the group. What was the group they found? That all apples fell, so they called it "gravitation." Now we see that without a fund of already existing experience, any new experience would be impossible, for there would be nothing to which to refer the new impression. So, if, as some of the European philosophers think, a child came into the world with what they call "Tabula Rasa" such a child would never attain to any degree of intellectual power, because he would have nothing to which to refer his new experiences. We see that the power of acquiring knowledge varies in each individual and this shows that each one of us has come with his own fund of knowledge. Knowledge can only be got in one Way, the Way of experience; there is no other way to know. If we have not experienced it in this life, we must have experienced it in other lives. How is it that the fear of death is everywhere? A little chicken is just out of an egg and an eagle comes

and the chicken flies in fear to its mother. There is an old explanation (I should hardly dignify it by such a name). it is called instinct. What make that little chicken just out of the egg afraid to die? How is it that as soon as a duckling hatched by a hen comes near water, it jumps into it and swims? It never swam before, nor saw anything swim. People call it instinct. It is a big word, but it leaves us where we were before. Let us study the phenomenon of instinct. A child begins to play on the piano. At first she must pay attention to every key she is fingering and as she goes on and on for months and years, the playing becomes almost involuntary, instinctive- what was first done with conscious will does not require later on an effort of the will. This is not yet a complete proof. One half remains, and that is that almost all the actions which are now instinctive can be brought under the control of will. Each muscle of the body can be brought under control. This is perfectly well known. So the proof is complete by this double method, that what we now call instinct is degeneration of voluntary actions; therefore, if the analogy applies to the whole of creation, if all nature is uniform, then what is instinct in lower animals, as well as in men, must be the degeneration of will.

Applying the law we dwelt upon under macrocosm, that each involution presupposes an evolution, and each evolution an involution, we see that instinct is involved reason. What we call instinct in men or animals must therefore be involved, degenerated, voluntary actions, and voluntary actions are impossible without experience. Experience started that knowledge, and that knowledge is there. The fear of death, the duckling taking to the water and all involuntary actions in the human being which have become instinctive, are the results of past experiences. So far we have proceeded very clearly and so far the

latest science is with us. But here comes one more difficulty. The latest scientific men are coming back to the ancient sages, and far as they have done so, there is perfect agreement. They admit that each man and each animal is born with a fund of experience, and that all these actions in the mind are the result of past experience. "But what" they ask, "is the use of saying that that experience belongs to the soul? Why not say it belongs to the body, and the body alone? Why not say it is hereditary transmission?" This is the last question. Why not say that all the experience with which I am born is the resultant effect of all the past experience of my ancestors? The sum total of the experience from the little protoplasm up to the highest human being is in me, but it has come from body to body in the course of hereditary transmission. Where will the difficult be? This Question is very nice, and we admit some part of this hereditary transmission. How far? As far as furnishing the material. We, by our past actions, conform ourselves to a certain birth in a certain body, and the only suitable material for that body comes from the parents who have made themselves fit to have that soul as their offspring.

The simple hereditary theory takes for granted the most astonishing proposition without any proof, that mental experience can be recorded in matters, that mental experience can be involved in matter. When I look at you, in the lake of my mind there is a wave. That wave subsides, but remains in fine form, as an impression. We understand a physical impression remaining in the body. But what proof is there for assuming that the mental impression can remain in the body, since the body goes to pieces? What carries it? Even granting it were possible for each mental impression to remain in the body, that every

impression, beginning from the first man down to my father, was in my father's body, how could it be transmitted to me? Through the bio plasmic cell ? How could that be? Because the father's body does not come to the child "in toto". The same parents may have a number of children; then, from this theory of hereditary transmission, where the impression and the impressed (that is to say, material) are one, it rigorously follows that by the birth of every child the parents must lose a part of their own impressions, or if the parents should transmit the whole of their impressions, then, after the birth of the first child, their minds would be a vacuum.

Again, if in the bio plasmic cell the infinite amount of impressions from all time has entered, where and how is it? This is a most impossible position, and until these physiologists can prove how and where those impressions live in that cell, and what they mean by a mental impression sleeping in the physical cell, their position cannot be taken for granted. So far it is clear then, that this impression is in the mind, that the mind comes to take its birth and rebirth, and uses the material which is most proper for it, and that the mind which has made itself fit for only a particular kind of body will have to wait until it gets that material. This we understand. The theory then comes to this, that there is hereditary transmission so far as furnishing the material to the soul is concerned. But the soul migrates and manufactures body after body and each thought we think, and each deed we do, is stored in it in fine forms, ready to spring up again and take a new shape. When I look at you a wave rises in my mind. It dives down, as it were, and becomes finer and finer, but it does not die. It is ready to start up again as a wave in the shape of memory. So all these impressions are in my mind, and when I die the

resultant force of them will be upon me. A ball is here, and each one of us takes a mallet in his hands and strikes the ball from all sides; the ball goes from point to point in the room, and when it reaches the door it flies out. What does it carry out with it? The resultant of all these blows. That will give it its direction. So what directs the soul when the body dies? The resultant, the sum total of all the works it has done, of the thoughts it has thought. If the resultant is such that it has to manufacture a new body for further experience, it will go to those parents who are ready to supply it with suitable material for that body. Thus from body to body it will go, sometimes to a heaven, and back again to earth, becoming man, or some lower animal. This way it will go on until it has finished its experience, and completed the cycle. It then knows its own nature, knows what it is, and ignorance vanishes, its powers become manifest, it becomes perfect; no more is there any necessity for the soul to work through physical bodies, nor is there any necessity for it to work through finer, or mental bodies. It shines in its own light, and is free, no more to be born, no more to die

We will not go now into the particulars of this. But I will bring before you one more point with regard to this theory of reincarnation. It is the theory that advances the freedom of the human soul. It is the one theory that does not lay the blame of all our weakness upon somebody else, which is a common human fallacy. We do not look at our own faults; the eyes do not see themselves, they see the eyes of everybody else. We human beings are very slow to recognize our own weakness, our own faults, so long as we can lay the blame upon somebody else. Men in general lay all the blame of life on their fellow-men, or, failing that, on God, or they conjure up a ghost, and say it is fate. Where is fate, and who is fate? We

reap what we sow. We are the makers of our own fate. None else has the blame, none else has the praise. The wind is blowing; those vessels whose sails are unfurled catch it, and go forward on their way, but those which have their sails furled do not catch the wind. Is that the fault of the wind? Is it the fault of the merciful father, whose wind of mercy is blowing without ceasing, day and night whose mercy knows no decay, is it His fault that some of us are happy and some unhappy? We make our own destiny. His sun shines for the weak as well as for the strong. His wind blows for the saint and sinner alike. He is the lord of all, the father of all, merciful, and impartial. Do you mean to say that He, the lord of creation, looks upon the petty things of our life in the same light as we do? What a degenerate idea of God that would be! We are like little puppies, making life and death struggles here, and foolishly thinking that even God Himself will take as seriously as we do. He knows what the puppies' play means. Our attempts to lay the blame on Him, making Him the punisher, and the rewarder, are only foolish. He neither punishes, nor rewards any. His infinite mercy is upon every one, at all times, in all places, under all conditions, unflinching, unswerving. Upon us depends how we use it. Upon us depends how we utilize it. Blame neither man, nor God, nor any one in the world. When you

find your selves suffering, blame your selves, and try to do better.

This is the only solution of the problem. Those that blame others... are generally miserable with helpless brains; they have brought themselves to that pass through their own mistakes and blame others, but way. This attempt to throw the blame up on others only weakens them the more. Therefore blame none for your own faults, stand upon your own feet, and take the whole responsibility upon your selves. Say, "This misery that I am suffering is my own doing and that very thing proves that it will have to be undone by me alone". That which I created I can demolish; that which created by some one else I shall never be able to destroy. Therefore stand up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny. All the strength and succor you want is within your selves. Therefore, make your future. "Let the dead past bury its dead". The infinite future is before you, and you must always remember, that each word, thought, and deed, lays up a store for you and that as the bad thoughts and bad works are ready to spring upon you like tigers, so also there is the inspiring hope that the good thoughts and good deeds are ready with the power of a hundred thousand angels to defend you always and for ever.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ANSWERS OUR QUESTIONS~1

(Words in Italics are by the compiler)



Compiled by
Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

**performance of beautiful and heroic deeds
and lift our thoughts to the divine perfection.**

What good is it, if we acknowledge in our prayers that God is the Father of us all and in our daily lives do not treat every man as our brother but call them heathen, pagan, kafir or untochable? Books are only made so that they may point the way to a higher life; but no good results unless the path is trodden with unflinching steps! Religion is not in believing but being and becoming.

What is religion and how do we recognize a true religious person?

The goal of religion is to get rid of nature's control over us. Many times we justify our weaknesses, shortcomings, saying, that is my nature and thus we refuse to raise ourselves, to manifest the best in us, the divine in us. Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy -- by one or more or all of these -- and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details. Sacrifices, genuflections, mumblings, and mutterings are not religion. **They are only good if they stimulate us to the brave**

Every human personality may be compared to a glass globe. There is the same pure white light -- an emission of the divine Being -- in the centre of each, but the glass being of different colours and thickness due to each one's aspirations, unfulfilled desires, the rays assume diverse aspects in the transmission. The equality and beauty of each central flame is the same, and the apparent inequality is only in the imperfection of the temporal instrument of its expression. As we rise higher and higher in the scale of being, the medium becomes more and more translucent. The true religious person thus is heroic in deeds, persistent in efforts to raise oneself, compassionate in behaviour with others and transparent in actions.

WISDOM THROUGH STORIES TOLD BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA~1

(Words in Italics are added by the compiler)

Compiled By
Nivedita Raghunath Bhide



Get rid of the Tartar

Krishna strikes another note as a teacher of intense activity. Work, work, work day and night, says the Gita. You may ask, "Then, where is peace? If all through life I am to work like a cart - horse and die in harness, what am I here for?" Krishna says, "Yes, you will find peace. Flying from work is never the way to find peace." Throw off your duties if you can, and go to the top of a mountain; even there the mind is going -- whirling, whirling, whirling.

Someone asked a Sannyasin, "Sir, have you found a nice place? How many years have you been travelling in the Himalayas?" "For forty years," replied the Sannyasin. "There are so many beautiful spots to select from, and to settle down in: why did you not do so?" "Because for these forty years my mind would not allow me to do so." We all say, "Let us find peace"; but the mind will not allow us to do so.

You know the story of the man who caught a Tartar. A soldier was outside the town, and he cried out when he came near the barracks, "I have caught a Tartar." A voice called out, "Bring him in." "He won't come in, sir." "Then you come in." "He won't let me come in, sir."

So, in this mind of ours, we have "caught a Tartar": neither can we tone it down, nor will it let us be toned down. We have all "caught Tartars". We all say, be quiet, and peaceful, and so forth. But every baby can say that and thinks he can do it. However, that is very difficult. The "Tartar" is what 'I have in my own mind', so we must not blame people outside. "These circumstances are good, and these are bad," so we say, while the "Tartar" is here, within; if we can quiet him down, we shall be all right. Shirking our duties to our people, if we try to find peace in pilgrimage,

in so-called spiritual practices etc we cannot find peace. The 'Tartar' - the desires and selfishness inside us would not let us find it. Get rid of 'Tartar'.

Therefore Krishna teaches us not to shirk our duties, but to take them up manfully, and not think of the result. The servant has no right to question. The soldier has no right to reason. Go forward, and do not pay too much attention to the nature of the work you have to do. Ask your mind if you are unselfish. If you are, never mind anything, nothing can resist you! Plunge in! Do the duty at hand. And when you have done this, by degrees you will realise the Truth: "Whosoever in the

midst of intense activity finds intense peace, whosoever in the midst of the greatest peace finds the greatest activity, he is a Yogi, he is a great soul, he has arrived at perfection." Our duties – means the work we are supposed to do – is our path to peace, path to God-realization.



Now, you see that the result of this teaching is that all the duties of the world are sanctified. There is no duty in this world which we have any right to call menial: and each man's work is quite as good as that of the emperor on his throne.

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TO THE AWAKENING BHARAT

Satish Shamrao Chowkulkar



While I was waiting for my train to Kanyakumari at Jammu Railway Station, I spotted Shiva Swarupananda – as usual surrounded by young boys and girls. I was missing him for quite a long time and was therefore eager to know what was he upto this time.

He was being heard with rapt attention by the group of youth, as he was sharing his feelings:

“Of late I was moving across different parts of our country like – Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh and Jharkhand. I was also

trying to know the pulse of people in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Punjab and now I am in Jammu and Kashmir for some time.”

Youth were, as though, holding their breath while listening to him.

He continued, “I find the scenario a bit alarming under the sheath of growth and prosperity. While a section of society is busy consolidating the gains in financial front, quite a few are suffering and therefore simmering with discontent. While a few are planning and investing for wealthy future, some are busy with nurturing the descent to make gaping holes in the fabric of the society. One thing being common that our National consciousness is waning. Consistent efforts are on to search for weak links in the socio-cultural structure and use them for disintegrating the nation”. One student abruptly asked “Definitely you may not be the only person to notice this. If a peripheral observation is so revealing, what about the findings of the law-enforcing agencies and the guardians of the constitution of the country?”

“You are right, they also could not have missed this”, assured Shiva Swarupananda and continued, “Bosses in the corridors of power are supposed to act on the Intelligence’s inputs and Vigilance’s findings. They do it, but only to the extent to ensure that they themselves escape unhurt. Please recall how the people in power took care of themselves by cancelling

their pre-planned visits to Pune by acting on the Intelligence's inputs of the serial Bomb-blasts in July 2012. And yet the concerned culprits are untraceable. Sometimes the activities of the disgruntled elements are nurtured by the people in the corridors of power to create trouble in the states ruled by rival political parties. Not only that, such groups are encouraged by the ring-leaders within the same political party to cause embarrassment to bosses in the party. Sometimes these powerful people talk of 'coalition compulsions' – a word coined to ensure their chairs are steady. On quite a few occasions Intelligence's and vigilance's inputs are kept under the carpet to use them at an 'opportune time'. More than often the people in power-game consciously 'do not act' or 'act otherwise' to maintain and project their 'Secular Identity'. Whatever may happen to the nation or society in the long run, their immediate agenda is to ensure that the 'Secular Image' is in-tact."

An intelligent looking girl asked "what exactly is the game-plan? What is its dynamics, can you clarify? Shiva Swarupananda nodded and started explaining, "The very possibility of emergence of powerful and prosperous Bharat disturbs international power-brokers. Their dreams of neo-imperialism get shattered. They have octopus like tentacles. They do not mind to have unholy alliances with the countries having thought-currents diametrically opposite to theirs. The common cause being Anti-India agenda. They are using all the tactics to dis-integrate and weaken the Bharat and its society. They do so by exploiting the under-currents in the society like class-consciousness, caste-consciousness Linguistic paraties, religious fundamentalism, economic disparities, personal ambitions of the leaders of the splinter groups, self-conscious intellengtia, neo-prosperous classes and potential, ambitious but self-centered career seekers." Shiva Swarupananda smiled and took a pause to judge the effect by scanning the faces of his listeners. "Can you tell some specific instances?" quipped a youth who was

evidently a journalism student.

"Yes! Sure! If you have time, I have the inclination" said Shiva Swarupananda and continued.

"In north-eastern part these agencies are fueling the separatist elements. Everyone is dreaming of Nation hood of their own. Some in the state of Nagaland are developing larger Naga Identity by carving out areas from the neighboring states. In the process their dreamed 'Nagalim' will have a bigger reality. Bangladeshis are planning the expand their boundaries by encroaching the Indian area by infiltration. Their game plan is for snatching areas from West Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Jharkhand. Their fifth columnists are already in action with the support of power hungry politicians. Red friends in Nepal are busy with the support of their Indian counter parts to develop a red corridor. They mis-guide and involve innocent *Janajatis* making capital of their problems."

"So they are red-capitalists" gripped a student. "Yes, they come up to forests in Orissa, Andhra and Maharashtra. In the coastal region of south pressure groups of missionaries and the so-called atheist are working together to fuel discontent. Our Arunachal Pradesh is on the high agenda of China, who also has an eye on Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiri separatist with regular 'tonic' from Pakistan have successfully presurried our government to get engaged the secular cum leftist inter-locatory team. In the garb of "larger and effective autonomy" they are serving the cause of Kashmiri separatists.

Islamic fundamentalists-*Jihadis* are active in spreading panic in other parts of the country. The peace, which is needed for the trade and economical growth of the country, is their target. Pan-Islamic *Wahabis* are consolidating the Muslim youth on fundamentalist principles. Besides, they have a soft-target-Hindu Youth-the boys and girls. They are laying the honey trap to lure away young

generation of Hindu society. Their work is made easy by the so-called secularists and atheists who destabilise the Hindus (Only Hindus) from their cultural values”.

“Are you referring to the much discussed Love Jihad”? asked a well-informed youth. “Yes, you are right said Shiva Swarupananda and continued “The phrases like freedom of speech, Individual freedom, right to express etc. are advocated by these people only to attack Hindu's social structure and cultural values. On one hand anti Hindu elements are consolidating and Hindu ethos is attacked consistently to weaken it. It is clear to one and all that if India is to be destroyed, destabilise the Hindus socially and culturally. Because, Hindu way of life is the back-bone of India. Agenda of advocates of free market and globalization is aimed at changing the life style of Hindus.” Make India a nation of consumers and then we can consume India easily”. This is the slogan of MNCs”.

Shiva Swarupananda continued “All the *sampradayas* like Buddhist, Sikhs and Jains associated with Hindu way of Life have been classified legally as “minorities”, one by one. Efforts are on by the enemies of the nation to develop a gulf between these so called minorities and the larger Hindu Identity. While at Srinagar, recently I heard a strange slogan.

*Jhataka Halal Bhai Bhai,
Hindu Koum Kahanse Aayee.!*

“What does this mean?” asked many youth

“I will explain” said Shiva Swarupananda and continued” Sikh leaders, right from Guru Nanak to Guru Govind Singh advocated and protected the Hindu Way of Life from the onslaught of Islamic Mughal Rulers. Some of them became martyrs for this cause. But today's fundamentalist Muslim youth are luring Sikh youth to get organised with them against Hindus. In this specially coined slogan *Jhataka* denotes type of meat preferred by Sikhs, where a animal is killed instantly and *Halal* denotes type of meat insisted upon by Muslims where the animal is killed by torturing.

The slogan thus seeks to unite Muslims and Sikhs for Anti-Hindu agenda.”

Some restless youth stood up and asked “Do we have any solution for these problem? “How can we meet these challenges?”

Shiva Swarupananda with his assuring hand-gesture said “Yes! We have to face these challenges, we only can solve this problem. Infact, this should be the agenda for you, the modern Indian Youth”. We will discuss the modalities in detail”.

to be continued...

Yoga Shiksha Shibir at Kashmir

Medium : Hindi Date : 15/07/2013 to 24/07/2013

Place : Vivekananda Kendra, Ramakrishana Mahasammelan Ashram, Nagdandi, Achabal, Anantnag, Kashmir- 192201 (J&K) Camp Contribution : Rs. 3000/-

Any Physically and Mentally fit person in the age group of 18-60 years. The participant should be able to perform various Yogasanas and exercises.

Enroll will be on first come first serve basis and Registration will end on reaching maximum intake number i.e.50.

For any further information Please contact :

Shri Ajey Kumar Muju : Mob:No:094191-88446 e-mail:panditajey@rediffmail.com

Yuva bharati - 33 - February 2013

VANDE GURUPARAMPARAM

N. KRISHNAMOORTI

Sowmya: Guruji. Why does India celebrate the Guru Tradition both in the sacred fields and in the worldly departments.

Guruji: Bharat knows the nuances of education cannot be communicated through books alone. Experiences are to be transmitted from the Teacher to the taught. Knowledge, Consciousnesses, Jnana and Experience are multi - dimensional and have to come from an authorized teacher if they have to bear fruit.

Sowmya: What are such disciplines, fields of knowledge, subjects?

Guruji: As you know, Bharat does not separate the sacred from the secular. The Vedic Grihya Sutras talk about many aspects of man's material life. The Vastu Shastra, the Artha Shastra, even the Kama Shastra aver that the purpose of all knowledge is spiritual. The Kathopanishad talks about

ANITYAIR DRAVYAI: PRAAPTAVAANASMI
NITYAM

'By skillfully harnessing temporal things one can attain the eternal' (Katha Upanishad)

Every time we handle a material tool or an article, our bodily rhythm, our emotions, our intellect our breath etc. function in a similar orderliness. Therefore all human activities, are called PRAANA VYAVAHARA in the Yoga

Shastra. By proper manipulation of this pranic activities, a human being can attain deeper and expanded consciousness. This experience of a man gained from a small or big activity cannot be learnt from books. An Acharya who practises it (Aacharavan) is required. That is why the Veda says Acharyavan purusho Veda :- A disciple gifted with a teacher earns knowledge.

Sowmya: Such traditions of teachers were there in our country?

Guruji: Yes. One Advaita tradition claims that it starts with Sadashiva, with Shankaracharya in the middle and one's own present teacher at the end. Another tradition reveres Dakshinamurti, Narayana, Padmabhuva, Vasishtha, Shakti, Parashara, Vyasa, Suka, Goudapada, Govinda Bhagawadpada and Shankara. Similarly Vaishnavaites, Shaktas, Shaivites have their own Guruparamparas. Yogis also have their own line of preceptors.

Sowmya: What does a Guru actually do to a disciple? How does he pass on the accumulated wisdom and experience to the student?

Guruji: Through long term efforts the Guru prepares the disciple's body, prana, mind and buddhi. The Guru employs yoga, mudra, pranayama, diet restriction, study of scriptures etc to prepare the student to become a fit

instrument. When the student is ready the Acharya/Guru admits him to the tradition by teaching him a mantra, or planting a pass word as it were deep into the consciousness of the student. Some pranic energy passes from the teacher to the student. Some Shakti is transmitted.

Sowmya: In the Vedas and puranas we come across some greet Acharyas who pass on their wisdom to the disciple through upadeshas, lectures in Upanishads.

Guruji: There were also teachers who made the students go through long years of upavasa (ritual starving) looking after their homes, fires, serving the teacher etc.

Sowmya: Some of the students were kings and avatara purushas.

Guruji: I am going to talk to you about some of the spiritual teachers who gave instructions to the royal disciples as to how to run the country, how to maintain the rule of Dharma among the citizens.

Sowmya: I remember! When Swami Vivekananda was asked why he moved with kings, when his concerns were for the poor and the fallen and the down-trodden, Swami Vivekananda replied that by changing the heart of a king he can bring benefits to ten thousand citizens.

Guruji: Yes. That was in line with our great rishis. Yajnavalkya was the Kulaguru of King Janaka. The Maharshi gave the king such instructions in Brahma Jnana, that the greet Janaka declared himself to be a servant of the Rishi and dedicated the kingdom to his teacher. Bharat has always presented its kings as the followers of greet Mahatmans. But the greet souls had no political or material

ambitions and always lived in remote ashrams far away from the humdrums of the cities of kings.

Sowmya: Even Shri Rama had to undergo the prescribed period of studentship.

Guruji: Shri Rama was a living embodiment of Dharma. He approached Sage Vashishtha for instructions in the scriptures. The sage also taught Shri Rama the ideas of an ideal state. The establishment of Rama Rajya owes its origin to the Sage Vashishtha and its implementation was Shri Rama's responsibility. The period Shri Rama and Lakshmana spent with Muni Viswamitra was of days in a mobile university. Vishwamitra's knowledge included history, geography, Puranas, Dharmashastra, Ayudha Vidya, use of Mantra's in launching missiles, medicines, dietary discipline, yagalore etc. He knew intimately many saints who lived in the area between Ayodhya and Mithila. All this knowledge was passed on to Shri Rama during the trio's walk from Dasaratha's court to that of King Janaka. Agastya Muni in the DandaKaranya forest presented Sri Rama with a number of Astras and Shastras and initiated him into the Mantras of the Davatas presiding over each weapon. This learning was very useful to Shri Rama in fulfilling the mission of his life. Again Shri Krishna was born with all knowledge and wisdom, yet he wanted the world to see that he respected the concept of Guru. He approached Gurus Garga and Sandeepani and spent some years of apprenticeship serving the teachers in their households. Humility and Vinaya, great pre-requisites for learning can be imbibed only by serving the teachers.

Sowmya: But Chanakya was a different kind

of preceptor.

Guruji: Because the historical circumstances called for a different type of lessons. Chanakya not only uprooted the reign of the Nandas, he also established Chandragupta as the emperor of the ideal state. He brought around Amatya Rakshasa the enemy to join Chandragupta's court and serve as the Prime Minister. Chanakya's book ArthaShastra is a classic in political Economy. It was relevant to Chandragupta's times. It is being studied even today as a text book in statecraft. The book talks about the ideal king's personal and social qualities. In that book, defence, Agriculture, Taxation, selection of officers, prevention of corruption, managing enemies, training for warfare, shipping, Environmental issues, nurturing forests, foreign relations, etc are discussed. Artha Shastra is an encyclopedia of good governance, patriotic fervor. That is why the book survives even today.

Sowmya: I was thinking that the Guru talks only about spirituality. It is odd to hear of Gurus talking of taxation and customs and export tax.

Guruji: Spirituality touches all aspects of human life. All PRAANA VYAVAHARAS. In the middle centuries, (15-16) Vidyanarya did wonderful work. He brought Harihara and Bukka and established the Vijayanagara Empire. Swami Vivekananda refers to Vijayanagara empire as an example of creativity, wisdom, poetry, wealth and Hindu consolidation. Vidyanarya wrote the Advaita classic 'Panchadashi'. Vijayanagara Architecture and sculptural artistry are world famous. We can say Vijayanagara redefined the role of a spiritual guru in Hinduism. The culmination of that-effort was the rule of

Krishna Deva Raya the empire builder, temple rebuilder, poet all in one. The Kingdom was an object lesson in containing anti Hindu invasions.

Sowmya: How does the Hindu concept of Guru – and the discipleship of Kings compare with its European counterpart?

Guruji: In Europe the clear cut division between the Guru's work as the spiritual preceptor and King's role as purely temporal was not evident. Many religious heads in Europe had personal political ambitions. This was totally absent in Bharat's Gurus. They kept away from political power just guiding the ruler and keeping Dharma operational.

Sowmya: But Shri Krishna was a different type of Guru!

Guruji: Some times the rulers run into fits of depression and confusion. It is the duty of the Guru to strengthen the heart of the ruling class and help them face the dilemmas of Kings. After the massacre at Kurukshetra, Yudhishtira was depressed and was weary of wearing the crown of the land. Vyasa persuades him to face the problems that go with Kingship. When Bharata returned from Kekaya to Ayodhya, he refused to be crowned the ruler. Then Vashishtha describes to him the fate of the rulerless country. All these examples go to show that the roles of Gurus and Kings were cut out clearly. The spheres of Dharma belonged to the teacher, the act of practical government fell to the lot of the King.

Sowmya: In the case of Samartha Ramadasa!

Guruji: Ramadasa's classic text Dasabodha combines beautifully the spiritual role and the dandaniti of the King. Ramadasa wanted to build a physically and morally strong nation

and he himself was an upasaka of Hanumanji, the marvelous combination of dharma, strength, wisdom and seva. Ramadas swamy trained strong young people who were wise and Dharmagrahis. These people were a great source of strength to Shivaji's fight against adharm. Shri Ramakrishna helped, the spiritual seed in Narendra to sprout so that Naren – Swami Vivekananda could do mother's work. Mother's work was to ignite the fire of Nationalism, help Bharat achieve her freedom and resuscitate herself. Later on Kanchi Mahaswami was constantly exhorting the people to walk the path of Dharma. In Democracy the citizens are the rulers and the

political, moral and behavioural foundation of the country has come to acquire a very large popular base. This is a telling contrast from the ancient teacher instructing and correcting a single ruler. The modern guru has to manage a very large number of disciples to establish the Dharmic state. Every passing era calls for a new definition of Guru Sishya relationship. It is the glory of India that its Gurus have always served the spiritual concepts of ancient rishis, translating and interpreting the spiritual laws into modern functional ideas. That is why our Dharma is called Sanatana and Nitya Nootana.



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**Swami Vivekananda Centenary High School, Malakpet,
Hyderabad-36.
& Swami Vivekananda Academy of Education, Hyderabad-36.**

This institution was started in 1964 on a two acre site by Sri Ramakrishna math, Begumpet gifted by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, and handed over to Swami Vivekananda Academy of Education, Hyderabad for its maintenance.

The school is at present catering to children coming from the lowest strata of society living near by. It has a strength of about 1250 from First to Tenth Class with two sections each in English and one each in Telugu Medium with about 45 members of Teaching and Non - Teaching Staff.

The Management took up construction of a three storied Golden Jubilee Building estimated to cost about one Crore of rupees to replace temporary structures. Foundation was laid in April, 2012 by revered Srimat Swami Jnanadanandaji Maharaj of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Domalguda, Hyderabad, Most Revered Srimat Swami Raganathanandaji Maharaj was Chief patron and a part of the existing Building is in his memory. The building is scheduled for inauguration in 2013-2014.

About 50% of the staff only is in Grant - In - Aid and the Management is struggling to meet the expenditure of salaries to unaided staff and other expenses and therefore desires to raise CORPUS FUND.

We make an earnest appeal to all the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swamiji and all others including the past students of this school spread all over the world to kindly contribute liberally to enable us to complete the project and for building Corpus Fund for the future maintenance.

Contributions may kindly be sent to Golden Jubilee Building Fund, [A/c No. 62220306130 & Bank Code No. SB Hy0020269 of state Bank of Hyderabad](#), Dilsukhnagar, Hyderabad on -line or by cheque/ DD or M.O. to the Head Master, SVC High School, Malakpet, Hyderabad-500036 who will promptly acknowledge with thanks and send a Receipt. Even humblest donations by cash are welcome. Donations are exempt under 80(G) of Income Tax.

Email: swami_school@hotmail.com.

Website: www.SwamiVivekanandaSchool.org



Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari

Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari established education centres in Arunachal Pradesh which had very low literacy rate amongst women. The Kendra is engaged in a large variety of services like Spirituality and Social Development as an integral mission in accordance with long traditions and noble thoughts. It is engaged in educational service running 63 schools with about 22,000 students in six states in India. Besides imparting education, the Kendra takes great care in providing for the poor and the needy while at the same time maintaining high academic and moral standards.

The Kendra is also running 5 Skill Training Centers for women enabling them to become self-employed and two hospitals for the poorest of the poor in the border areas of Assam and one hospital in Madhya Pradesh to look after the health and hygiene of the poor.

Under their 'Anaupcharik Shiksha Manch' they are running 400 Balwadis, Balasevika Prashikshan Shibir, organising Sanskar vargas for school dropouts, running Anandalayas for school dropouts and slow learners and organising cultural competitions for rural children.

Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, is awarded 'S R Jindal Prize - 2012' at the hands of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji jointly with 'SOS Children's Villages of India, New Delhi for their exceptional achievements in the field of Education - with emphasis on moral upliftment. This Award carries a Cash Prize of Rs. 1 Crore to be shared equally.



Shri A. Balakrishnan receiving S R Jindal Prize-2012 for Education with Emphasis Upliftment from Sri Sri Ravishankarji on behalf of Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari

Yuva Bharati - 40 - February 2013

VK SAMACHAR

T Padu conferred Eminent Educationist Award

ITANAGAR, Dec 19: Dr. Tejum Padu, Joint Director of Higher & Technical Education, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh has been awarded "The Eminent Educationist Award" for his outstanding achievement in the field of education by National and International Compendium, New Delhi.

Dr. Padu served as lecturer in English at Govt. College, Itanagar for 10 years, programme officer, NSS for more than 5 years at DNG College, Itanagar. Since 1997 he is in the Directorate of Higher & Technical Education.

He also held additional charge of State Liaison Officer, NSS for 4 years from 1997-200. With his sincere efforts as Project Manager of State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) under the Tech Ed-III Project, assisted by the World Bank the Rajiv Gandhi Govt. Polytechnic, Itanagar was established as per the time bound period.

He also had the opportunity to visit many of the technical institutes in India and Germany in 2003. He is also the author of the books "Partition in the novels of Khushwant Singh and Manohar Malgaonkar" and "Mopin Popir". He has also written some Galo prayer songs and poems. He has extensively toured for educational expansion to many corners of Arunachal Pradesh. He is also Sah Prant Pramukh and trustee of Vivekananda Kendra, Arunachal Pradesh. He is nominee Chairman of Kendriya Vidyalaya -II, Itanagar and also the Member of Executive Board/Governor Body of NEZCC, Dimapur.

Dr Tejum Paduji is the Trustee of Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalayas Arunachal Pradesh Trust and Sah-Prant Pramukh of VK Arunachal Pradesh (email - Dr Tejum Padu <tejum_arunachal@yahoo.com>)

Swami Vivekananda's 150th Jayanti's yearlong celebrations began on 12th January 2013 at Kanyakumari with a Grand "Shobhayatra". It was inaugurated by Swami Chaitanyanandaji Maharaj of Hindu Vidhya Peetham at 8:30 morning at the feet of Swami Vivekananda's statue at Vivekanandapuram. The "Shobhayatra" was led by a group of 150 students dressed as Swami Vivekananda and one of them was mounted on an Elephant. A magnificent 'Ratham' – Chariot, students' band with march-past, Tamilnadu's folk dancers, folk artists and musicians along with over 3000 students, teachers and common people actively participated in the one-and-half-kilometer long "Shobhayatra". The students were from schools and colleges of Kanyakumari and they were carrying slogans and sayings of Swami Vivekananda, and urging all with "Wake Up Bharat, Enlighten the World" – which is the purpose of the yearlong Celebrations. As the "Shobhayatra" passed through the main roads and the byroads of the town, thousands of the public and tourists feasted on the Grand display of the festive admiration of Swami Vivekananda. After four hours and crossing over 6 Kilometers, the "Shobhayatra" concluded at the feet of Swami Vivekananda's Statue at Vivekanandapuram. All 3000 participants of the "Shobhayatra" took prasadam. Thus marked the beginning of Swami Vivekananda's 150 year Celebrations – Sardh Shati Samaroh - at Kanyakumari, the land's end of India.



A Grand Nava-Chandi Homa at Vivekanandapuram

How does Hindu Dharma harmonise Upanishadic wisdom, Pauranic love and ritualistic action? The answer was provided in a grand four days festival of Devi worship at Vivekanandapuram.

Headed by Shri Shankar Bhatta of Nagercoil, 42 Shivacharias from all over TamilNadu and their supporting staff assembled in the tastefully decorated training centre at Vivekanandapuram, Kanyakumari.

On the seventeenth December -12 was the Vancha Kalpa Ganapaty homam with a Gajabuja. The same evening the yoga hall was the venue for a Lalita Sahasranama Deepapuja conducted by Tantrics from the Kanyakumari district.

On the eighteenth the Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya at Vivekanandapuram hosted a Raja Mathangi homam. The teachers and students enthusiastically participated in the homam conducted for their welfare with wisdom as the thrust.

In the evening of 18th there was a Lalita Sahasranama Archana and Chandi Parayana in the specially constructed mantapa in the Training centre. The sacred waters from Seas



and Rivers were established in Kalasams; a specially designed Homa Kunda was constructed. There was a Chandi Homam in the evening and a Lalita Trishati Archana, a sacred text on which Sri Shankaracharya has written a commentary.

Chandi or Durga Sapta Shati is a sacred text, a part of the Markandeya Purana. This text celebrates and venerates Stree Shakthi. All the gods and goddesses invest their energies and tools and weapons in Devi Durga-Chamundi who annihilates the forces of evil, Chanda, Munda, Dhumraksha, Mahisha, Rhakta Bhija and Shumbha Nishumbha. The Chandi Homam is always performed by the Hindus on the eve of major undertakings.

With the grand celebrations of Swami Vivekananda's 150th birth anniversary just two weeks away, the Kendra performed the Homam, for the welfare of all, as in our true tradition.

The scriptures chanted express the great vedantic truth of oneness and harmony, self-revealing, self corrective, self-expressing, beauty, wisdom, loveliness and liveliness through concerted action. The purana gives the exemplary story of the positive forces of the creation acting in absolute harmony and wisdom. The rituals call for accuracy in action as well as in chanting the sacred texts.

To compliment the Sanskrit texts two veteran oduvars sang sacred verses in Tamil to suit each occasion. Their choice of verses was most appropriate, rendering so sweet, that the devotees were enthralled. A team of young, energetic and talented Nadaswaram artistes from Kunrakkudi (Shivaganga District) were in attendance.

Devi Parashakti is the source of all music, a

singer nonpareil and a great connoisseur of music. She was propitiated with aptly selected ragas and talas.

The masterly organization of the priests, the chanters and the supporting staff was a sight to see. The chanting and rituals were most elevating. The musical reinforcements were seamless. The prasada was rich and nourishing and aplenty.

On the concluding day 20/12/12 the final phase of Chandi homam was performed with a Purna Ahuti at the conclusion of chanting of each of the thirteen chapters of the text. A grand final Purna Ahuti in which all the devotees could involve themselves was most inspiring.

As a part of the celebrations, seven of the Kendra's close - well wishers who have travelled from the far - away places to be with us were honoured.

The Shivacharyas thanked Shri Shankara Bhattar who has given them an opportunity to express and enact their knowledge.

The final immersion at the Vivekanandapuram sea and merging of the sacred waters of the Kalasams with the Seas was most poignant event. People wept.

The yajna was concluded with Annadana for more than 2000 people.

When shall we see another such sacred event, that was question in the minds of all the devotees when they tearfully took leave of the Kendra premises.

Man-Making

Nation-Building

Vivekananda Kendra Calling !

(a Spiritually Oriented Service Mission)



“ A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion’s courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up, the gospel of equality.”

**Are you among those who Swamiji had in mind
for awakening our people to the mission of our Motherland ? -
The JAGADGURU BHARAT**

You can serve humanity through the Man-Making and Nation-Building projects in education, culture and sustainable development, and branches spread all over India.

Come, dedicate yourself for the service of the nation as a full-time worker.

It is a mission for the nation your basic needs like food, clothing & accommodation will be taken care of by the organization.

Contact on the following address with full bio-data:

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