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VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PRAKASHAN

यो देवानां प्रभवश्चोद्भवश्च विश्वाधिपो रुद्रो महर्षिः ।
हिरण्यगर्भे जनयामास पूर्वे स नो बुध्या शुभया
संयुनक्तु ॥४१॥

**May He, the creator and supporter of the gods, the lord of all, the
destroyer of evil, the great seer, He who brought the cosmic Soul
into being, endow us with good thoughts.**

--Svetasvataropnishad, III,4.

Editorial

**“The Indian way--
the only way of salvation”**

--Arnold Toynbee

Yet another year – according to the Gregorian calendar – has rolled on. Prithvi Devi, the Mother Earth has completed another round of her annual parikrama around the sun. The auspicious Makara Samkrama which falls on Jan 15th brings us the inspiring remembrance of Swami Vivekananda’s 144th birth anniversary. Humanity has been witnessing unprecedented development in its civilisational march. Revolutionary progress in science and technology, particularly in information and biotechnology, has made our globe a wonderland and also a tense and jealous market. Reckless harnessing of natural resources for human comforts has reduced Mother Nature into a docile tool to such an extent that our generous planet has

become a dangerous place to live in. Human ingenuity has made everything possible except matching natural resources to the galloping greed of man. The best of world’s scientists are at a loss to devise ways and means of compensating the devastation that has been wrought on nature.

Sometime back, one of the greatest living scientists, Stefan Hawking, posed a question to the intellectuals of the world. The question was whether humanity can survive at this rate of civilisational rampage another hundred years. It was a challenging question for which there was no straight answer, excepting hopes and fears, pious wishes and deep concerns. Finally they returned the question to the author, who in his turn gave

an honest answer, "I do not know!". He added that the planet's future being uncertain, we could rather explore the possibility of colonizing other planets in outer space. It was an astoundingly foolish response from one of the leading intellectuals because, where is the certainty that, after having destroyed this Akshaya Paatra of our great Mother Earth by our wanton greed and cruelty, we will be able to create a new one in an unknown planet?

There is no doubt that the world is experiencing a crisis, which is entirely man-made. It has been a sin of commission consciously indulged in, fully knowing the terrible consequences. We polluted every source of water, poisoned the life-sustaining atmosphere, engendered global warming and made the sea-level go up to a threatening extent. Even the ice at the Poles is continuously melting. The snowy Himalayan Mountains and their glaciers are receding so that in the foreseeable future, even the sacred river Ganga may go dry leaving the vast and fertile Indo-Gangetic plains arid deserts. What is callous is that this spectre is neither unknown nor irreversible. But, it seems that the western materialistic civilisation is driving humanity to mass suicide.

Science and Technology are not to be faulted with for this deepening crisis. Innovative and appropriate technology is a must for human progress but also as Shri Aurobindo pointed

out, it is an indication of human ingenuity. But what we are witnessing today is a civilisational crisis. Man has missed his goal. The civilisation, which is the driving force behind science and technology, is bereft of a wholesome philosophy of life. It has failed to define a befitting vision for humanity's future. Man, as he evolved from the animal level, should have simultaneously evolved a higher goal than that of the species from which he emerged. Animals are instinct-driven. They need no philosophy or vision. But, the 'penalty' man has to pay for his 'evolved' status is that he has to grope his way through reason and discrimination because, unlike his animal predecessors, he has not been endowed with an unerring instinct. At the same time, animal wants are limited and self-restricted, whereas man has unlimited wants over which there is no inherent restriction. Restriction has to be self-imposed. It requires control over senses, self-discipline and a sense of higher values. These are attainable only if there is a philosophy to guide his life, determine his priority of things and keep his march ahead on the right and desirable high way of progress. The modern western civilisation has either failed or has not cared to evolve such a philosophy and value system, either for individual or for society. With sense-indulgence as the sole objective of life and acquisition of material comforts as the sole preoccupation, western society has landed itself in the present predicament from which it does not know how to extricate itself.

It was once believed that the problems created by science and technology could be easily resolved by employing more and more sophisticated and efficient science and technology. That does not seem to be happening. What is really happening is more fierce competitions, more destructive weaponisation. New theories of 'clash of civilisations' are abetting these developments, thereby threatening to bring the day of reckoning nearer and nearer.

Nor is senseless and sensuous consumerism solely attributable to comparatively modern ideologies like communism or capitalism having no goal beyond an earthy paradise, here and now. The Abrahamic religions also have only the vision of a paradise assured for those who believe in them. Whether it is a paradise here on earth or one hereafter, the vision is more or less that of a glorified star-hotel with abundant and inexhaustible sensual comforts all around. Such a philosophy – whether religious, political or economic – can only result in exploitation of nature no less than man and constructing correspondingly suitable technology. More often than not, capitalism and religion go hand in hand replenishing each other. Communism, of course, is only another religion with its own Church, Bible and God- Party, Communist Manifesto and Karl Marx. The world today stands in need of a totally different philosophy of life in keeping with the evolutionary goal of mankind from bestiality to real divinity. Such a philosophy

must be suitable and applicable to all mankind. If that is to be so, it should be much more than a sect or a dogma or a religion or a creed. It should be spirituality in its truest and largest sense. In short, such a philosophy should be global in its vision and universal in its application. When Swami Vivekananda spoke about Vedanta as a Universal religion, he did not mean any sectarian religion at all. He had explained...

"We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran.

Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best."

Thus, it is already clear that the solution for the crisis and the philosophy which could generate it, cannot come from the western civilisation either in its religious manifestation or modern ideological systems. It is this firm realisation that gave courage and conviction to the world historian cum philosopher Arnold Toynbee to openly declare, "It is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have an Indian ending. At this supremely dangerous moment in

human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way". Of all the living civilisations in the world, it is only the Hindus who have evolved a vision that embraced the entire world. Right from the period of its inception, it had been thinking about the whole world. For it there was no stranger or enemy to be excluded or to be annihilated. Right in the Vedas, we find hymns like – letting us look at all beings with friendly eye. (*Mitrasya chakshushaa sarvaani bhootaani sameekshaamahe*). Hindu civilisation was guided by the wonderful idea of the whole world as one family (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*). It envisioned a state of affairs where all humanity will come together as birds in a nest (*Yatra vishwam bhavati eka needam*). It openly invited auspicious thoughts to come from all parts of the universe (*Aano bhadraa kratavo yantu vishwsatah*). The Upanishadic Rishis fervently called upon the entire world to share the sublime vision of the effulgent truth, the shining Purusha, by knowing which, one becomes immortal and declared that there is no other way of salvation.

*Shrunvantu vishwe amrutasya putraah,
Aa ye dhaamani divyani thastu
vedaahametam purusham
mahantam
aaditya varnam tamasah parastaat
tameva viditvaa atimrutyumeti
naanya panthaah vidyate ayanaaya*

The sages of Sanatana Dharma had pledged themselves to the noble task of elevating and enlightening people of all the worlds (*krunvantu vishwamaaryam*). In the history of mankind, it is not possible to find this kind of all-embracing vision, all-consuming love and self-sacrificing sense of mission for not only humanity but to every creature as well. Hindus have made this vision a practical reality by evolving the details of individual and collective life on the basis of it. For every human being, a complete scheme of life was prescribed by which a graded scale of evolution was ensured. No one has left without a goal to be achieved and the means by which to arrive at it. Simultaneously, they also saw to it that a socio-economic order of the whole society was envisaged which will steadily lead the individual to his ultimate goal. It also gave a philosophy, which made every individual identify himself with ever widening circles of human relationship, right from the family through the society, the nation, the comity of nations, mother earth, the entire nature and creation. Thus, there was no conflict between the individual and the larger units to which he was to grow by identification. Everything was knit together into a web of living relationship complementing and supplementing each other, the majestic light of the Divine, illuminating all from within.

This was not just a theory or an empty ideology nor was it a figment of the frenzied

imagination. It was a practical scheme realisable, and in fact realised, in individual and collective life. On the basis of this philosophy, India evolved a way of life, which lasted many millennia and still continues to be alive and kicking. This is not only national heritage fit only for internal consumption or application. It has relevance to the entire world, even in today's context, as much as it had in the past. In fact, it is crucially and increasingly relevant today.

Hindus are preeminently fitted for this most vital responsibility in this age of globalisation, because, as pointed above, Hindu culture and civilisation always had a global background and outlook. It was not a visionary dream or a fascinating idea but a passionate commitment, which they have always been practising. This is in stark contrast with the expansionist and exploitationist ideology and its ruthless application of other civilisations till to-date. History bears ample proof that India had been one of the most invaded countries. Dr. Abdul Kalam, our Rashtrapathi, had once asked historians to study as to why India had been continuously invaded and colonised by outside forces and why, not even once, India had not gone out to conquer even an inch of alien land. Hindu culture had spread all over the world. India's contribution to world culture and civilisation is unique. But, it had never been through military conquest or forcible

occupation. The spread of Indian culture was through our cultural ambassadors, our sages and saints, poets and philosophers who taught by example and not by use of force or fraud. Buddhism spread to southeastern Asia, China and Russia through Buddha Bhikshus. As Swami Vivekananda has said, the influence of Hindu culture is comparable to the natural spread of the sweet fragrance of blossoming flowers. Christianity and Islam and, later on, capitalism and communism spread their tentacles through military invasions, violent conversions, economic exploitation and imperial domination. It is the same continuing legacy that is causing the present unrest all over the world. Islamic fundamentalism has added another dimension to this. It is only the Hindu culture and civilisation that can present an alternative vision and a workable paradigm at this critical juncture. But, for this possible scenario to emerge as a visible reality, an ideal Hindu paradigm has to be created, as a model, in Bharat. As the new year commences against a dim horizon of fear, insecurity, violence and even the threat of survival, and as we are once again celebrating the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, it is most appropriate that we make a resolve to rebuild our motherland the way Swamiji visualised - a Bharat that can conquer the world with her inherent power of true spirituality. ■

P. Parameswaran

Awakening The Matruchetana: Need of the Hour

- Dr. M. Lakshmi Kumari -

'Matrudevo Bhava' is a mahamantra which contains within it a highly relevant and practical message for universal peace and survival of mankind. For that very reason it is imperative that the strength and sanctity of motherhood be fully understood and made to manifest.

To transcend the multifarious problems and confusions that riddle the human mind resulting from the feeling of dualism, it is necessary that the mind is exposed to the advaitic Truth - awareness of ONENESS. Advaita is the crest jewel of human thought which our great country has upheld from time immemorial. Unless and until we in India fully comprehend the significance of advaitic thought and its special relevance for the survival of our multicultural nation, we may also, like many a nation of the bygone eras, soon slip into oblivion.

Isn't 'advaita' something 'dry' and 'out of this world' of day to day living? How can advaita be brought to inundate the multidimensional human transactions? If advaita is relevant as the Supreme Ultimate Truth, having nothing to do with human life, dry indeed it would be. But if it is allowed to descend from the knowledge in the brain, to light up various human feelings and emotions, then

something wonderful happens. Just as a seed put in the water sprouts up putting new leaves, just as a dry arid land touched by rain immediately gets covered with a green mantle of grass, just as a drying tree sprouts up all over again when watered so does the human mind get enriched and enlivened, when the One in the 'advaita' gets transformed into the 'many' in the human mind. Firmly rooted in Oneness, the human mind blossoms in the beauty of the diversity. In the storehouse of the human mind there are any number of devices through which this wonderful transformation can be achieved. Like a musical instrument with many strings, the mind can create an infinite variety of notes, unmake them and make them again to create a harmonious orchestra of life if it so wills or vice versa. It is the awareness of advaita that leads to harmony and peace. If this basic note is lacking, only discordant notes emerge and such a life becomes filled with contradictions.

Standing on this pinnacle of advaita how can this awareness of oneness be made part of the three main life-streams, Jnana Bhakti and Karma, making life extraordinarily rich and fulfilling? To understand this miracle God seems to have provided us with the ideal of motherhood. In how

many ways our Bharateeya culture has captured and expanded this ideal of motherhood! The Divine Mother and her manifold bhavas as Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga, Parvathy and other forms of Divine Mother - each in essence indicating the rich potentialities and possibilities of the human mind, Mother Ganges, Veda Mata, Gita Mata, Mother Earth, this wonderful Motherland of ours and so on - each one reveals the immense spiritual power and sanctity that lie hidden in motherhood. One can raise oneself to cosmic proportion meditating on this mystery of motherhood and its unfoldment in infinite ways in this universe. To help us enter into the portals of such a meditation we have in front of us one's own dear mother in whose milk we had the first taste of Life Universal.

Motherhood represents the principle of inter-relatedness, inter-connectedness and inter-dependence that hold together everything in the universe. The first unit of this phenomenon is our family. The one that gives meaning and who preserves family as a unit is none other than the uncrowned queen of the house, the Mother. Just as protons, neutrons and electrons are held together by indefinable and invisible magnetic forces in an atom, so do the various units of a home held in place by the magnetic power of love that the mother embodies, without creating any disharmony. The power of that magnet lies in its extraordinary capacity to emanate 'oneness' through love, sacrifice and service. These form the true nourishment for the children more than

anything else. In their absence children wither away and their personality gets distorted. Unhappy homes are the breeding grounds for creating imbalanced men and women who in turn disturb the peace and harmony in the society.

When we explore the very origin of maternal instinct and the mysterious spiritual power behind, it will naturally take us to that ultimate primary cause of the universe, the Divine Mother Herself. SHE is the source and cause of all creation - the primeval energy - the primary cause. So is She the original source of motherliness - the cause and effect relationship that we notice anywhere in the universe. Therefore when 'Matruchetana' is awakened in any one of us there is a spark of the original transmutation of the ONE into many. If one cares to meditate on this original instinct of motherhood and expand that 'bindu' into an all embracing feeling of love - awareness of inter-relatedness one can raise oneself to Universal Motherhood, to the status of Sri Mata. One need not be a mother in the worldly sense to achieve this as it is a spiritual awakening and elevation. In her gets embodied all that is best in creation - beauty (Lakshmi), knowledge (Saraswati) and action (Durga). All Godly powers are at her service. Such a mother is an adornment to her family and a blessing to the society and the nation she belongs to. All diversities get merged in that ONENESS of motherhood and so do all problems wither away in her divine presence.

Such an expansive feeling of motherhood is very much needed to rectify the mistakes that we are perpetrating in the name of caste, creed, religion, race and so on. All fanaticism, violence, terrorism, etc. have their roots in the misguided notions of dividedness. To replace them with love, kindness and tolerance, the easiest way is the way of the mother. Man-made barriers can be broken down, sanity restored and peace created when true motherliness is made to manifest (be it in a woman or a man).

Unfortunately, majority of today's women have lost this capacity for spiritual expansion. Materialistic hankerings distort their personality, disturb their innate qualities as mothers, making them selfish, greedy, vengeful and blind. When children are exposed to this

unnatural motherliness they fail to develop sustaining qualities in themselves. When the mothers at home spread unhappiness and bitterness, slowly the whole society reflects that and peace and happiness disappear. On the other hand, when true motherliness blossoms in a mother, there is an expansion of personality and all petty feelings disappear. Is it really possible for an ordinary woman to achieve such heights of perfection? The answer is, yes. Our puranas are full of stories of such exemplary mothers. In recent history we have the wonderful example of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, inspired by whom Swami Vivekananda emphasised again and again the need to revive this Indian ideal of Motherhood for restoring the glory of our nation and to bring all-round peace and well being. ■

YUVA BHARATI
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Samartha Bharata Steel-like Determination

- N. Krishnamoorti -

Sumati: Brother India has a long history of metal smeltings? Steel making?

Sumanta: Yes. Before 1100 BC (2000th year of Kaliyuga) south Indian megalithic cultures were using steel from Adicha Nallur to Vidarbha. In 300 BC (2800 ky) Tamil Nadu was a hub of ferrous processing. It is said King Purushottama (Porus) gave some steel as a gift to Alexander (2700 Kyuga). High-carbon-steel was imported by Damascus. It came from India. The Western countries gave the name wootz steel to what was called 'ukku' in Kannada and 'ekku' in Tamil (3000 Kaliyuga).

Sumati: I have studied about the corrosion – resistant, rust free steel-pillar near Qutb Minar in Delhi!

Sumanta: It belongs to 400 AD (3400 ky). There is also an iron pillar in Kochadri in Kanataka, and there are the iron beams of Konark in Orissa, both situated in humid coastal areas, and they are standing uncorroded, unspoiled, like the reputation of the iron-smiths of India.

Sumati: Indians not only made good steel, they exported good quantities to foreign countries as well?

Sumanta: Yes, Historical accounts from Rome, Middle East, Alexandria and Europe testify to this fact. They have written admiring reports about India's crucible steel. The descriptions of Seres (Kerala) Telang (Andhra) steels are found in Greek, Roman, medieval Persian and Arabi literature (date 300 AD – 800 AD) Kaliyuga (3300-3800).

Sumati: There might have been a well-flourishing trade between us and these countries!

Sumanta: Yes. Just as Indian numerals (wrongly called Arabic Numerals) and the Decimal system went Westwards, our steel also traveled. The famous Damascus sword was made of Indian Steel. Surgical instruments were made. I have heard that even shaving knives were made from Indian steel. The unparalleled Indian tradition of manufacturing steel was known as Hindvi or Hinduwani steel tradition. Even the Prophet Mohammad was using a Telang (Andhra) sword. Damascus – made Indian steel swords left the Europeans amazed. Many writers have written interesting stories about those swords.

Sumati: Both finished goods as well as the raw materials were exported?

Sumanta: German and Italian descriptions say that thousands of pounds of steel ingots were exported to Europe (1657 to 1722). One Egyptian description says that steel from India was most highly rated in Egypt. No artisan in Paris could succeed in forging a tool out of it.” It was a highly specialised job that Europe did not know.

Sumati: Naturally they would have tried to analyse and understand the composition of Indian steel!

Sumanta: Yes. The composition of Wootz steel excited the European mind. The famous Michael Faraday, the discoverer of electricity, and the Royal institute at London analysed Indian steel and found out that its special qualities were due to the ingenious incorporation of carbon in steel.

Sumati: What did Europe do with that knowledge?

Sumanta: The British and the East India Company acquired the technology and then went about deliberately and systematically destroying the indigenous Indian steel industry. They wanted to boost their own factories at Birmingham. They callously reduced Indian steel workers to poverty.

Sumati: Where can I read all the details of this fascinating history of Indian steel?

Sumanta: During the centenary of Tata iron and steel company at Jamshedpur, the

Tatas have commissioned a book ‘India’s Legendary Wootz steel’ by Sharada Shrinivasan and Srinivasa Ranganathan, a book published by The Indian Institute of Science Bangalore.

Sumati: Oh, the names Tata, Steel, IISC Bangalore bring to me a bunch of memories about Swami Vivekananda, Tatas, the institute, steel industry etc.

Sumanta: You are right! Swami Vivekananda while travelling to America met Jamshedji N.Tata who was his co-passenger in the ship. Swami Vivekananda impressed upon the senior Tata, the necessity of channelising the abundant ascetic spirit of India into useful endeavour Recalling this meeting J.N. Tata later on wrote to Swami Vivekananda.

“I trust, you remember me as a fellow-traveller on your voyage from Japan to Chicago. 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.” So it seems Swamiji’s influence was behind the famous Tata institute.

Sumati: How appropriate is the fact that a book on Indian history of steel making should come out of this institute!

Sumanta: Not only that, J.N.Tata went on to establish the famous Tata iron and steel company

at Jamshedpur which is now celebrating its centenary. The TISCO has evolved not only as a company producing the finest quality of steel, but also as a company with great social consciousness, accountability and equity.

Sumati: How did the Indian steel companies succeed to such a great extent?

Sumanta: Steel making, high quality control, economic production are all in the Indian mind. India owns vast quantities of high quality iron ores, manganese and chromium ores. Quality coal is also available. Repeated success in steel making has invested the Indian with a great amount of self-confidence. All these have combined to make Indians, top class managers in the steel industry.

Sumati: I have read in the papers that the Tatas have recently taken over a West European Steel company.

Sumanta: It is a fine tribute to the great history and tradition of steel making in India. It also seeks to set right, though some what belatedly, the injustice done to Indian Steel technology by the East India company. The company which you mention is actually an Anglo-Dutch Firm called The Corus group. This take over of Corus group by the Tatas, makes the combined company the world's fifth largest steel company. The deal was worth 4.3 billion pounds. (35,000 crores of rupees)

Sumati: My God! Such a big deal!

Sumanta: Yes, think of the gains. There is a global consolidation of the steel industry. Together these two companies will make 24 million tonnes (2.4 crore tonnes) of steel per year. This will give Tatas, a foot-hold in European markets. India's large reserves of iron ore and Tata's managerial expertise will help the companies that have been taken over.

Sumati: And all this come in the wake of Shri lakshmi Mittal's take over of Arcelors!

Sumatan: Yes! Early in this year (2006) Shri Lakshmi Mittal who started his business career as a scrap seller, took over the W. European company Arcelor. The merged company produces 109 million (10.9 crore) tonnes of steel per year.

Sumati: Obviously the West would not have liked it.

Sumanta: Yes. There was a lot of parochial talk, economic hurdles, legal battles, political pressure, Indian companies have to complete with well known companies from Brazil and Russia. Patient negotiation, business acumen, and the final logic of being better managers clinched the issues in favour of Indian companies.

Sumati: What does this mean to Indian economy?

Sumanta: India's recent reputation in foreign earning has depended upon the the software industry, where our advantage comes out of

our cheap but expert manpower. These two steel company take-overs signify, that Indian manufacturers are raising high in the world, standing on the shoulders of strong engineering and manufacturing skills.

Sumati: This has been a successful year for Indian investors abroad?

Sumanta: Yes. Fairly good year. Indian companies have invested 7.5 billion dollars (7.5 x 100 crores x 45 rupees) to acquire some 115 companies abroad. But this is not a flash in the pan. India has been a success story all along. Tata Tea took over Tetley Tea, Essel packing acquired Prospect of Switzerland, making it world no.1 in producing laminated tubes. Tata Motors purchased Daewoo of South Korea. Ranbaxy has gone global, acquiring RGP Aventis, a French company, CP Pharma of England has come under The Wockhardt, the Indian giant. The Hindalco and Sterlite have come to own copper mines in Australia and Zambia. The Sundaram Fasteners have purchased The 'Dana Spicer Europe'. Amtek Auto has gobbled up the GWK group in UK. Kirloskar company has been supplying spare parts to British SPP pumps. Now Kirloskar has purchased that company.

Sumati: Some people call it reverse colonialism!

Sumanta: Never. India can teach, serve, love, produce and build. It can never colonise, enslave or humiliate nations. It is against her spirit.

Sumanti: Then what does this steel business mean to her civilization?

Sumanta: Swami Vivekananda wanted to build ideal human beings, an ideal nation, an Ideal World Order guided by India. Every tonne of steel forged in our steel mills, will build determination and will power in the Indian mind.

Swami Vivekananda said "What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel inside which dwells the mind of the same material as that of which thunderbolt is made-strength, manhood, kshatra virya plus Brahma Teja."

The outward progress of India will be matched by her inward growth to take human beings everywhere to pinnacles of glory, full development. Tatas and Mittals exemplify our steely determination and Man making and Nation Building. ■

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Goodness and Weakness

- Dr. K.subrahmanyam -

Goodness and weakness are not one and same. But often one is mistaken for the other. Also, one generates the other. Goodness born out of weakness is no virtue. Nor is weakness a virtue if it is an outcome of goodness. They both should never complement each other. They are, if together, detrimental to one's character and progress.

While goodness cannot and shouldn't be given up under any circumstances, weakness should never be allowed to creep into our constitution even in the disguise of goodness. Aeons of goodness may cause weakness. And deep-rooted weakness may appear to be goodness. Unless there are challenges, opportunities and occasions for the practice and display of strength there is every possibility of a person becoming weak and cowardly. Physical weakness may be, to some extent, excused, but never psychic weakness. It is poison killing slowly from within. Our virtues too will be slain by it. Non-violence is no doubt a great virtue. But it should not be born out of fear and weakness. Nor should it be out of attachment to anything or anybody including body and senses at the cost of righteousness. Weakness should be

curbed wherever it is. Virtues must be upheld and promoted at any cost.

Arjuna in the Mahabharatha is a valiant warrior without any shade of weakness. He has arrived on the battlefield to do away with unrighteousness root and branch. But at the sight of his kith and kin he becomes despondent. He becomes weak mentally out of attachment to the brothers and teachers. He wants to withdraw from the warfare and observe the principle of nonviolence. Sri Krishna, then, takes up cudgels and whips Arjuna with poignant words, "Man, shed this weakness. Fight, fight man, fight. It is unbecoming of anybody to allow weakness, in the disguise of goodness. It taints one's make-up".

King Ashoka after the Kalinga war turned sorrowful. He felt sorry for the bloodshed. War, weapons and warriors were detested by him. He wanted to be kind and so wanted never to wage a war again. He chose to remain peaceful. Withdrawal from war is not peace. Withdrawal from the mind of polarities and attachment is peace. And that is what Srikrishna preaches in the Gita. Actions are

not a botheration. Nor are the fruits of action a nuisance. It is when the mind is entangled in them that it causes agitation. "Give up attachment to action and fruits of actions. You will remain peaceful and non-violent, unperturbed and quiet". Weakness lies in attachment. It is strength when the mind is successfully withdrawn from all, both acts of violence and non-violence. Violent actions may be prompted by weakness. Kamsa was a tyrant and terrorist ever engaged in acts of violence on account of his cowardice. He was obsessed with fear of death. Fear weakened him. His weakness was at the root of all his violence. And nonviolent actions too may be prompted by weakness in the mask of goodness. Introspection reveals whether our non-violence is out of strength, kindness and goodness or weakness, fear and cowardice.

Yudhishtira after the Mahabharatha war was moved with pity for the dead warriors on the battlefield. The ghastly sight of colossal death made him weak for a while. He declined, therefore, to accept the crown won by bloodshed. Bhishma, then, taught him the import of the Gita. Like Ashoka, Yudhishtira did not resolve to desist from war. But he decided to withdraw from the mind that made him weak. He therefore grew to be strong and he could overcome all weakness. Devotees of Krishna recite the Gita regularly. Forgetting His instruction, we renounce actions. Sri Krishna has never asked anybody to renounce activity

and run away from responsibility. He has only repeatedly exhorted everybody to be peaceful withdrawing from attachment to actions and the fruits there of.

Swami Vivekananda sitting on the rock at the southernmost tip of India for three days thought over the plight of Indians. Are Indians weak or good, or both? Goodness is laudable but not weakness. It is really strange that to the Indians who have been the disciples and descendants of great gods like Rama and Krishna, fearlessness and valour have become weak unable to resist the foreign influences. Sri Rama is good, kind and accommodative but never weak at any point of time. Nor has Krishna preached weakness in the Gita. Looking at the people all over the country steeped in lethargy and weakness at all levels, Swamiji chose to rouse them up. And he shouted from the rock at Kanyakumari in Dec. 1892 to wake them up from slumber and to shed cowardice. Inertia and inaction are worse than poison. They make people insensitive to invasions and atrocities, aggressions and unrighteousness. "Resist not evil" is good, if by that goodness evil is transformed into good. Angulimala is changed into a man of goodness by the goodness of Buddha. If the people of India are really good, the proof of it should have been seen in aliens embracing Hinduism. Other religions and their followers entering India must have embraced Hinduism. But that is not the case. Foreigners

maintain their identity. Alien religions propagate their superiority. We cannot cite the example of Buddha because we are unable to be good like him with a capacity to transform cruelty into kindness and violence into non-violence. Therefore we cannot call ourselves to be of goodness, strong goodness. Perhaps, the inner weakness is being shown as goodness. It is still worse. It is better to confess weakness than to conceal it behind the mask of goodness. Nor can we call ourselves to be bad and unkind. Many a refugee from foreign lands and religions have been sheltered in our country with all hospitality.

Indians cannot be called weak as well. There have been wars, battles and quarrels, among themselves in the name of religious sects and castes, in the name of royal families and other petty causes. People in India have been fighting against each other. It is a clear indication that they have never been physically or psychologically weak. But somehow when it is a question of aliens, Indians have displayed abnormal and unusual goodness which is tantamount to weakness. Neither the goodness nor the weakness is genuine. If it is real goodness, it should be capable of transforming everyone into the ocean of goodness. If it is really weakness there should never have been any quarrels or battles or in-fights within the country as well. It is a strange combination of goodness and weakness that has been witnessed in India by Swami Vivekananda. Therefore he gave the clarion call, "Arise,

awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

Anjaneya was in the search team to find out the whereabouts of Sita. When the sea in the South blocked their further progress towards Lanka, where she was reported to have been kept captive, everybody was worried. The aged warrior Jambavan instilled vitality in them and exhorted them to rise to the occasion. Each of the vanara warriors then began to make an assessment of his ability to cross the sea. Only Anjaneya was silent. He was not aware of his strength. He was like a weakling sitting without responding to Jambavan's call. It was then that the old leader shouted at Hanuman, "how is it you are quiet? Are you not good? Are you not kind? Are you not strong? Are you not the son of the impetuous Wind God? Are you not the offspring of the mighty Kesari, the king of the woods? Are you not the same Hanuman, who when but a boy flew to the sun to swallow him? Don't you find the cause of Rama to be just? Are you not his follower? How are you able to be silent and dull, when Sita is in danger? Come on, wake up, get up, jump". As Jambavan was so exhorting, Anjaneya rose to his feet and increased his bodily features to such enormous proportions as to assume the cosmic form. He took a leap from the Mahendra Mountain and proceeded towards Lanka determined to fulfil the mission.

All Indians are like Hanuman. They are all committed to the national cause. As Sita is held

captive in Asoka grove, Indian mind is kept imprisoned in the alien materialism. As Hanuman is not aware of his strength, the people of India are unable to remember their potentialities of patriotic fervour. As the great, good and Mahaveer Hanuman is for a while silent without rising to the occasion, Indians, good Indians, strong and valorous Indians are presently in a state of stupor. They are waking up rather slowly. But when once they wake up and take a leap, none, none can resist them.

“To be weak is miserable doing or dying”. “Strength is life. Weakness is death” Swami Vivekananda could never approve of laziness and weakness. He wanted us to be men and women with “nerves of steel and muscles of

iron”. Our minds must be strengthened with courage of conviction and our wills must be gigantic.

It is Hinduism that shuns weakness at all levels. It is Hinduism that advocates metamorphosing goodness at all levels. If we are unable to be good and strong, kind and courageous, bold and benevolent, mighty and metamorphosing, we cease to be Hindus. No leader or god, so far in India had propagated either weakness or cowardice.

Nobody can afford to be meek and mild, weak and submissive. Hinduism is “the mother of all religions” capacitated to absorb all, guide all, govern all, because of its strength and goodness. ■

Sattra Darshan

- Dipankar Mahanta -

The two-day programme on *Sattra Darshan* – *Celebrating the Sattra Institution of Asom* concluded on 26th November, 2006 at the Chinmaya Mission Auditorium, New Delhi. The *Sattra*- a manifestation of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva's [1449-1569] vision - is a multi-faceted spiritual institution that has played an important role not only in Asom but also on the overall Indian Socio-cultural canvas.

The Guwahati-based Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture, organized the programme to effectively project the innate capacity of the Sattras on the National platform and to link people working for the development of the North East in Delhi with these efforts.

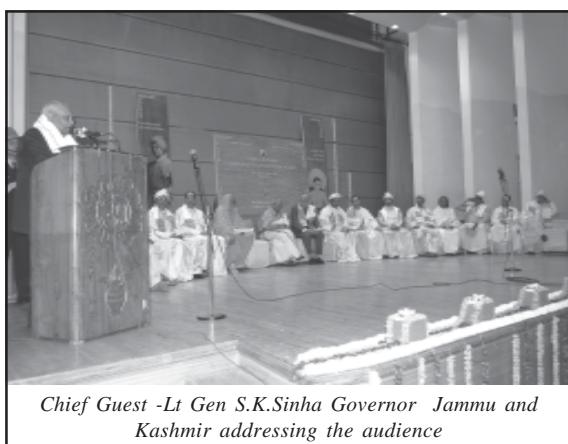


*Poojyapad Shri Narayan Chandra Goswami, Sattradhikar,
Sri Sri Natun Kamalabari Sattra, Majuli*

The delegation from Asom consisted of the holy presence of 15 Sattradhikars, 15 scholars, 40 artistes and volunteers. Inaugurating the programme on 25 November, 2006 at the Sai International Center, New Delhi, the Chief Guest, Lieutenant General S.K.Sinha, [retd] Governor, Jammu and Kashmir said - ***“My being here with all of you is as though I am in Assam. And “whatever I will be speaking it will be the reflections of all learned people amongst whom I was sitting. I am going from here very much rejuvenated to my place in J&K.”*** He recalled the greatness of Srimanta Sankaradeva, his all-comprehensive vision for the entire nation and his multi-dimensional contribution in the fields of religious reform, painting, weaving, agriculture, theatre, manuscript-making and literature. Referring to the demographic changes caused by infiltration from Bangladesh, he said, that the entire nation especially Asom should work to ensure that it remains an integral part of India. The Sattras have a pivotal role to play in this. Appreciating the unique programme organized by VKIC, the Chief Guest said it would help in promoting

a clearer understanding of Asom's rich heritage. Asom should be proud of its past and India should be proud of Asom, he said.

In his Keynote Address, Shri D.N. Bezboruah, former editor, *The Sentinel*, Asom, said that - ***The sattras are very important institutions for Assam. There is no Assam without Sattras. It is very much one of the great contributions of Shrimad Shankardeo not only to Assam but to the whole country. We should have the road map so that through these institution we will be able to develop Assam in the right way***". One must anticipate change in order to ensure that the change is positive. Speaking about the demographic aggression caused by infiltration and conversion he said the Sattras have a vital role to play in safeguarding Asom. Re-organisation and re-vitalisation of the Sattras is required and for this the resources have to come from within. Shri Bezboruah called for a 50-year plan towards this end.



Chief Guest -Lt Gen S.K.Sinha Governor Jammu and Kashmir addressing the audience

The Benedictory addresses were given by Sri Sri Narayan Prabhu, Sattradhikar, Sri Sri Notun Kamalabari Sattrra, he stressed that - ***"It is a very happy moment for us to be in our capital and VK has organized this seminar. So many people from here will come to know about the sattras"*** . Sri Sri Narayan Prabhu said that it is probably the first time in 500 years that so many Sattradhikars have come together on a single platform outside their home state. Swami Dayananda Saraswatiji said that Hinduism has the twin role of not only upholding its values but also withstanding the onslaught of aggressive forces.

Sri Sri Bhadrakrishna Goswami, Sattradhikar, Sri Sri Jokai Sattrra, released two books: *Glimpses of the Sattrra Institution* – a lecture series brought out by VKIC on the *Sattras* and *Namaghosha* - a translation into Hindi by Dr. Sanjib Kumar Barkakoti of Srimanta Sankaradeva and Sri Sri Madhabdeva's devotional compositions. Shri I.P. Gupta, Chairman of the programme's Organising Committee welcomed the gathering. Shri Dipok Kumar Barthakur, Chairman of Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture outlined the objectives of the programme and Shri Balakrishnanji, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari spoke on *Vivekananda Kendra – a Thought Movement*. Col. S.C. Sarma, Member of the Organizing Committee offered the vote of thanks.

An exhibition on *Srimanta Sankaradeva and Vivekananda Kendra* was inaugurated by Sri Sri Janardhan Deva Goswami, Sattradhikar, Sri Sri Uttar Kamalabari Sattra.

Technical session saw presentations on “*The Performing Art Forms*” by Dr. Pradipjyoti Mahanta, Reader, Dept. of Assamese, Gauhati University, “*Vision of Srimanta Sankaradeva*” by Dr. Nagen Saikia, Former President, Asom Sahitya Sabha “*Organisational Dynamics of the Sattras*” by Shri Purandar Baruah, Senior Teacher Azad Hind High School, North Lakhimpur, “*Namghar*” by Dr Dipanka Saikia, Hon. Director, Deva Dutta Goswami, Educational and Cultural Research Institute, Guwahati, “*Socio-economic Role of the Sattra Institution*” by Dr. Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti, Senior Lecturer, ADP College, Nagaon. Prof A.C. Bhagwati, Former, Vice Chancellor, Arunachal University, Prof Mrinal Miri, Former Vice Chancellor, North East Hill University, Shillong, and Sri Atulananda Goswami noted Litterateur of Guwahati, moderated the Sessions.

Poojaneeya Swami Gokulanandaji, Secretary, R.K.Mission, New Delhi also came to bless the programme.

The Sattradhikars interacted with scholars, seekers and youth in the session *Resurgence through the Sattras* . Chaired by Shri M.P.

Bezbaruah, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, the session brought forth many queries and suggestions on the topics, education, initiation and socio-economic development.

Mananeeya Nivedita Didi, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, summed up the two-day programme. In the Valedictory session on 26th November Sri Sri Dr. Pitambora Deva Goswami, Sattradhikar of Auniati Sattra, Majuli said - “*We are very much grateful to Vivekananda Kendra to have such a seminar in the capital. VKIC and Sattras will work hand in hand. We are very much concerned with the challenges of our country and particularly of Assam. This is a very good beginning.*” He also appreciated VKIC’s role in bringing 15 Sattradhikars, scholars and concerned people together for such an occasion.

Mananeeya P. Parameswaranji, President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari said that “*Shrimad Shankardev is the Poorna Avtar in the real sense as he has touched all the fields of development of the society. His teachings are needed not only for Assam but for the whole country. The whole world needs Bharat, Bharat needs Assam, and Assam needs Sattras and without Shrimad Shankardeva’s teaching there is no Sattra. Therefore Sattras are to be strengthened not only for development but*

to face the challenges. Assam is one of the limbs of Bharat. This part has to be looked after properly as it is situated very critically and is passing through so many challenges. Without Assam, Bharat will be crippled and without Bharat, Assam will be orphaned. Vivekananda Kendra is very much concerned for the all-round development of Assam in particular and the NE as a whole.”

Both the days also saw a scintillating cultural programme by the Titabor Zila Sattrā Mahasabha, Jorhat. Borgeet, Dihanam, Sattriya Nritya were performed on the first day while the second day saw an excellent

performance of the Ankiya play, *Parijata Harana*. The play was directed by Shri Govinda Mahanta.



Mananeeya Parameswaranji, President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari delivering the Valedictory Address

Over 450 people attended the programme on each of the days. ■

Youthful Dhingra

- B.L. Roy -

Khudiram Bose was hanged on 11th August 1908. He was then a nineteen years old youth. He was the first martyr of Indian Independence struggle. When he listened to the news in London, Madan Lal Dhingra was extremely shocked. He immediately closed the radio. He noted in his diary the name and date of execution of the freedom fighter. After three months he added one more name to his martyrs' list; and the youth was Kanai Lal Dutta. He was hanged on 20th November 1908. Since then Madan Lal lost his cheerfulness.

Thereafter one day he listened to the radio reporting another name: Ganeshrao Savarkar. What happened to him? He was punished with life-imprisonment. While listening to the news he could not control his angry breath. He cried, "It's beastly!" And closed the radio. Then he silently walked out of the room and shortly he was on a London road. He was seething with anger at the Imperial treatment meted out to the freedom fighters in India. He was downbeat and speechless while walking along the road. Soon he was in front of the India House in London. He knocked the door.

"Yes, get in." The man who responded was Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the younger brother of Ganeshrao Savarkar.

Madan Lal got in and said, "I've come to share your saddened life."

"Thank you." So saying Savarkar looked at the young boy, a Punjabi youth and engineering student in London. Savarkar knew his passionate love for India.

Madan Lal asked, "What's wrong with your brother?"

Savarkar said, "He was a poet. He writes poetry."

"Is it a crime to write poetry? Is it a crime to get life imprisonment?"

"The Imperial verdict speaks like that."

"Is he a rebel poet?"

"Right. His pen must be scary of the Colonial sword."

"Please recite one."

Savarkar recited, "Pray, tell, was political freedom ever won without a war..."

Madan Lal was markedly excited with the very first piece of the verse. He exclaimed, "The poet is absolutely right!"

He listened to the complete poem and remained silent for minutes. Then he got up and returned to his lodge. Thereafter he analyzed the current brutalities of British Raj in India from different angles. Khudiram Bose was hanged to death. Why? Kanai Lal Dutta was hanged to death. Why? The search for the reasons for the above two 'whys' consistently disturbed his mental peace for a long six months. Thereafter a new 'why' was added to his grim account. And that was Ganeshrao's life imprisonment. Madan Lal had no satisfactory answer to any of those three whys. He only understood that each of the victims had passionate love for a free India. They were not just three individuals. Their actions obviously reflected the British inhumanity in the land of Jana-Gana-Mana. The immoral handiwork of the sovereign was a definite sanction of the colonial outrage on Indians. Gandhiji's nonviolence was his absolute love for India's freedom. But his temperate voice was also hardly audible to the white colonists. Instead they always loved to treat his nonviolence mostly with violence! He recalled with sorrowful indignation the inhuman massacre of the Indians by the British on Indian soil, the blowing up of women-folk in the mouth of the guns, the indiscriminate hanging and cold-blooded murders of men, and

crushing of infants under the cruel British boots...

Since then born was a rebel in Madan Lal, an engineering student in London. He consulted none but his own conscience. He believed that an insult to his country's eternal paragon of tolerance was an insult to his God. He recalled the stories of British tyranny in India since beginning. He learnt of the cruelties of the then British counselor Curzon Wylie. He learnt that the land was held in bondage with the help of bayonets! He then deliberately concluded his understanding. He discovered where all those vices originated from; whose was the scamp role for all those felonies; and who deserved the blackest quality for elimination. A nation held in bondage with the help of bayonets certainly defined a perennial war. He settled his project and in time he would decide how to lay out the plan and go for execution. Though small, in time that would be added to the big cause of India's freedom.

He was deliberate and cautious about his decided mission. And needless to say that his college going remained his natural pursuit. He was friendly to many in and out of the college. His movement signified his life. But his resolution was always alive within. In that respect he was discreet enough to collect reports related to his mission. At last he got one pivotal report that could be taken as a crucial opportunity for his resolve. The report

said that on 1st July 1908 a dignified meeting was going to be held in the Imperial School in London. Colonel Sir Curzon Wyllie was one of the dignitaries attending the conference. Madan Lal believed he got the opening for his target; he deliberately began his preparation. He precisely surveyed the Institute and its surroundings. Then he covertly planned his historical project. He was resolute for the execution of his plan. Since gun was denied to him, he would draw forth his pistol and attack by surprise.

On the assigned day Madan Lal passed through the gate of the Institute in time and waited in ambush. The concluding hour was then drawing near; and he was patiently waiting and watchful for the high time. At last the hour struck and he was on his toes. All the dignitaries were coming out of the conference hall. In front of all, Colonel Sir Wyllie was pacing towards the gate. Madan Lal got his sight. His index finger in the pocket was on the trigger of the pistol. He was watchful for the Colonel's strides within his arm's range. The moment he stepped within, Madan Lal fired! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Three bullets pierced the chest of Sir Curzon Wyllie. He gave a mortal cry and died on the spot. The attack was so quick that there was a terrible confusion. Yet escape was not possible for the assassin. He was arrested then and there. And the news spread like wild fire.

His parents and brothers all disowned him. The protagonists of non-violence also downgraded his revolting action. But, he was unperturbed. He was thoroughly positive about his principle of sheer disapproval of the brutal measures adopted by the British in India. He was right in avenging the English tyranny in India by killing an English tyrant on the English soil.

Madan Lal Dhingra was then in Brixton Jail. One day V.D.Savarkar, the leader of Young India met him. He greeted him with a bright smile and said, "I've come to have your darshan."

On hearing the tribute to his sacrifice, glee played over the face of Madan Lal. Grateful tears rolled down his cheeks.

In astonishment Savarkar said, "You're the symbol of Indian courage! You're weeping?!"

"No, not that." Madan Lal said, "These are my happy tears to honour you, the great leader of Young India not rejecting me!"

"Dear friend, not only I." Savarkar said, "Mr. Hyndman, the father of British Socialism also reacted to the situation. He admitted the impeachment you levelled against British Government was literally true."

The young rebel said, "In the service of our country I have nothing but my blood!"

Savarkar said, "Your courage and sacrifice at the altar of motherland cannot go unnoticed. It will stir up a fresh vigour in our national veins!"

Madan Lal was then noticeably bright and had a lively smile. He said, "I dedicate my small sacrifice for the big cause of our freedom struggle."

"Right dedication. And be sure that young India will honour your blood!"

The young rebel did not engage any lawyer. During the trial, no Indian was allowed inside the court. Yet he was unruffled and markedly cheerful. Throughout the trial he strongly held that his action was only an audible disapproval of the British malice in India. He then confirmed, "I shed English blood intentionally and on purpose as a protest against the Imperial inhumanity on Indians!"

"Don't worry," the court said, "We shall preserve justice."

"Yes, I expect so." Madan Lal said. "And that is from no other court but the one having authority on me!", he added.

"The court is meant for you and all."

The young rebel fiercely looked at the justice and said, "But, I don't recognize your authority on me!"

Thereafter one day the judge read out the verdict of death penalty. A happy smile played on Madan Lal's face. He said, "Thank you. I got exactly the measure of your humanity!" And he was taken to his authorized cell. There he cheerfully waited for the day of capital punishment in London.

The day of Imperial execution was a remarkable one. Madan Lal was incredibly cheerful. He dressed like a beau, as if he was going for a wedding ceremony. Officers and all officials were amazed at his jolly composure and unfaltering steps to the gallows. Facing the death with supreme courage, he looked like a victor standing on the victory stand of freedom struggle in India! He kissed the noose, as if the very noose for him would intensify the struggle for India's freedom! As the hangman was about to perform his duty Madan Lal gave a victorious cry: BANDE MATARAM!

And he was hanged. ■

COURAGE IS RESISTANCE TO FEAR AND MASTERY OF FEAR
NOT ABSENCE OF FEAR.

Geyam Gita-Naama Sahasram.....

- Satish Chowkulkar -

The 4th December 2006, was a sacred day of Margashirsh Pournima, observed as Sri Dattatreya Jayanti by Sri Dattatreya Bhaktas and also observed as Karthika Deepam Night in Tamil Nadu. I was in Tamil Nadu in a temple. The whole temple was decorated with oil-lit earthen lamps. Men, women and children were rejoicing with all splendour as that of Deepavali. The whole atmosphere was vibrant with Bhajans, Kirtanas and spiritual dance-dramas.

Among the many, like me, who were enjoying this enchanting experience just as an observer, was Shiv Swarupananda. I rushed towards him as he had been away somewhere for more than a month. He was floating on the ocean of bliss as usual, but did not hesitate to respond when I greeted him. "I was away at New Delhi – Kurukshetra -- to be specific". "Oh! The Kurukshetra in Hariyana,! The place associated with Mahabharat's Dharma Yuddha"! I asked.

"Yes, the place where Gitopadesha was given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna", he added smilingly. "In fact I planned and went there, so as to be there, on Moksha Dayini Ekadasi (1st

December) which is observed as Gita Jayanti in our tradition". "Yes" I said, "in Vivekananda Kendra this day is observed as one of the five major *utsavs*." "Oh! I did meet quite a few number of Kendra Karyakartas there". he said. I asked, "Now that you were there, please tell whether the Kurukshetra is maintained properly or with passage of time shopping complexes, multi-storeyed flats and parking lots have invaded the place."

He smiled and said "*Kalay Tasmair Namah!* The original Kurukshetra which was the venue of Dharmayuddha, was spread over in the present area of five districts of Hariyana. The present Kurukshetra Teerth has an area comprising of 3cricket stadia. Right over there is a temple in sight where Gitopadesha was given. Definitely the present Kurukshetra cannot accommodate eighteen *akshouhini* army with their chariots, elephants and war-heads and provide the moving space for the army to fight a deadly war for eighteen days. Perhaps that is why quite a few cynical minds infer that the Mahabharat war is imaginary, its being fought in (present days') Kurukshetra is humbug." "Yes, they go further and say that the war of Mahabharat being a myth, the

episode of Gitopadesha by Sri Krishna to heroic Arjuna is also a figment of the imagination of some fertile but cynical brain. They also question the probability of the Bhagwad Gita being told while armies from both the sides were itching to begin the fight. **Was the army waiting for Sri Krishna to complete the Gitopadesha to Arjuna? This question is often asked to ridicule the Gita.**” I said. “Well, said Shiva Swarupanada, I always give such people the most modern episode as justification. In December 2001, our Parliament was attacked by Pakistan - trained Traitors. Then, Indian Army and Pakistani Army stood facing each other, lining themselves along the international border in a *ready to attack* state, waiting for signal from the Heads of their nations. The heads of the nations were at loggerheads at each other with western countries as referees. Efforts were on to wean away the ready to fight nations. The parleys went on for *more than 10 months*. Whereas, in those days, when war was considered a last resort to resolve the issues, the proceedings of the Gitopadesh were continued for only *less than 4 hours*. How then the element of impossibility comes?”

“Fantastic! this will silence the cynical critics”, I said. “But I always wonder why these so called intellectuals are weary of accepting the antiquity and authenticity of Gitopadesha, what is it that they are afraid of?”

Shiv Swarupananda clapped and said, “Yes! This is a very interesting point to ponder over”. He proceeded : “These critics are mostly *Macaulay Educated Intellectuals*. They further develop cynical attitudes when their intellect gets hybridized with the thinking of their eastern European counterparts, namely atheists. They become perverts and negate any good ideas preceding the advent of their philosophy. By accepting the wisdom of the Bhagwad Gita and its antiquity beyond 5000 years, they fear that they will lose their ground. Their fears are not ill founded. Then, they cannot influence the modern scientific minds, both in India and abroad, because teachings in the Bhagwad Gita are true for all the people, of all the times, in all the places. The universal application of these teachings has influenced the intellectual in their native places – Europe and America. They are therefore trying to hit at the root of these teachings – the Bharat and the Bharateeya. So that they can regain their lost ground in Europe and America.”

I intervened...“But! Most of them are Indians' at least born in India to Indian parents. Their forefathers, in all probabilities, were faithfully chanting and following the Teachings of the Gita”.

Shiva Swarupananda said, “The story began in 1836 – the time when Macaulay’s education pattern was brought in by the then British rulers. Macaulay employed the Western

Intellectuals to translate and mis-interpret our spiritual literature in English, so that English educated faddist would swallow it. As this was preceded by lethargy on the part of our people in not knowing and not practising our scriptures correctly – Mecaulayan Masters thereby had a free run. These “educated”(?) stalwarts subsequently became the leaders and opinion makers. The gullible masses followed them. Quite a few among these people inherited British throne after 1947. They roamed in corridors of power and had access to our Education Curriculum. The present atheist, so called progressive, humanistic and broad-minded (?) elements are products of this dynamics. They are Bharateeya by being born in Bharat and parentage only. They do not own Bharat and its glorious heritage. These elements, unwittingly, may be unknowingly also, are playing into the hands of the Master-minds of semitic and proselytizing faiths--mainly Christianity” – Shiva Swarupananda looked at me for response.

I said, “What you are telling, satisfies the reason. But a statement that Christianity is trying to encourage to misrepresent and mis-interpret the Gita teachings will not go unchallenged--more than others, by our Hindu Brethren”. Shiva Swarupananda smiled and asked, “Have you come across a “document” Gita Saar being hung in many places – Mutts, Asrams, temples, hotels, restaurants and of innumerable Hindu houses?” Without waiting

for my reply he proceeded – you can’t miss it. Public functions are buzzing with poetic version – CDs and cassettes, of this so called "Gita Saar", sung by a melodious singer Mrs.Anuradha Poduwal – “*Kyun vyartha chintit ho rahe ho?*”. The innocent lady and the listeners appreciating her may be unaware that the ideas in the Gita Saar song, she is singing are not reflecting anywhere in the Bhagwad Gita and the most positive, vibrant, enlivening philosophy of the Gita is not even a miniscule part of whatever she is singing. Ironically these things are sold and played in celebrations of Gita Jayanti organized by many Hindu organizations.

The document and the song reflect that the message of the Bhagwad Gita has a negative approach towards life, no tangible motive is cited for following the Vedic teachings. The message mesmerises the most eligible youth to shun the active life and resort to *do nothing*. Their design is that through this Gita Saar misguidings, this active, positively oriented modern youth will reject the original Bhagwad Gita and will be left with no other alternative but to either become a marked atheist or roam in the precincts of the church. This design is the strategy of proselytizing faiths and Leftist atheists. Hindus of high rank also get mesmerised because Gita Saar is depicted with enchanting picture of Sri Krishna with Arjuna. Unwittingly people accept, use and propagate the message of the Gita wrongfully”.

Shiva Swarupananda after a pause said, “But, while at Kurukshetra on Gita Jayanti I saw a revitalizing original document of Bhagwad Gita – the Gita Sandesh, on Vivekananda Kendra’s book stall. I was very happy that the Karyakartas of the Kendra could site the slokas from the Bhagwad Gita, co-relating the 10 point message in the “Sandesh” making it an authentic document. No such authenticity is even attempted in the so called Gita Saar. Even the name of the author of the text is hidden. I was told that your people have so far circulated more than one lakh copies through house to house campaign. This authentic message should replace the dubious “Saar”. Positive message of the Gita only can re-charge Bharat.” He stopped and looked at me. I acknowledged his feedback. Then I took a copy of Kendra’s publication “Gita In Daily Life” from my bag and passed on to him and said, “Please have a look at this and share your views”. He glanced through it and exclaimed “Oh! You have integrated selected Sanskrit slokas from the Gita with their Hindi version from “Sri Hari Gita” by Sri Deena Nath Bhargav i.e. Dinesh. This version is in a meter called – Sri Hari Vritta. It is very

musical and melodious when sung and heard. Let some good singer sing it. Let it echo at public programmes. It is better to sing and hear these verses in Hindi than to the misguiding verses in Gita Saar “*kyon vyarth chintit ho rahe ho*”, however melodious they may appear. Adi Sankaracharya has also emphasized in the **Charpat Panjarika Strotram** twice.....

*Bhagwad Gita Kinchidadhita,
Gangajal Lawa Kanika Pita
and*

*Geyam Gita Naam Sahasram
Dhyeyam Sripati Rupamajasram*

I smilingly nodded and took leave of Shiv Swarupananda.

Reference :

चर्पटपंजरिकास्तोत्रम् Popularly known as
भजगोविंदम्

5th Sloka (1st Line)

भगवद् गीताकिंचिदधीता गंगाजल लव
कणिका पीता

13th Sloka (1st line)

गेयंगीता नामसहस्रम् ध्येयं श्रीपति रूपम
अजस्रम

Mind, Soul and body are 3 pillars of life; the world rests on a combination of them.
Neglecting it would be inimical and disastrous.

Vivekananda Kendra Samachar

KODUNGALLUR

September and October were months of joyous celebrations. September ushered in the festival of Onam. As usual we distributed forty Onam kits of food items to the poor people in the neighbourhood. On Onam day we had the opportunity to play host to about 60 orphan children from a number of orphanages who spent the whole day with us. It was a heart-filling experience. End of September marked the beginning of Dussera. We kept the doll show for children, had daily readings from Sri Chandi and Saraswati Puja. A good number of local children kept their books at our shrine and came for Vidyarambham on Vijaya Dasami day.

Universal Brotherhood day was celebrated with a special programme for some twenty youths who wanted a three-day residential camp exclusively to understand Swamiji and his message. Swami Purandharanandaji's collaboration with us made possible such a camp. Prof. P.Ramachandran, Prof.R.P.Memon and Lakshmi didi took the classes elaborating Swamiji's message. On the concluding day which coincided with the Universal Brotherhood Day celebration, Justice K.P.Radhakrishna Menon presided and

Prof.P.Lakshmi Kutty delivered the key note address. September also brought Sri Krishna Jayanthi celebrations in which good number of tiny tots emulated Sri Krishna and his manifold pranks.

The Satsanga Prabhashana on September 17th was by Sri T.R.Somasekharan who spoke on Mandukya Upanishad – the science of sciences. Srimat Swami Nirmalananda Giri took Kathopanishad class on the same afternoon. On October 8th, Sri Ramanathan spoke on Devi Mahatyamam. On 27th September was Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji's class on Kathopanishad.

All programmes were well attended and well appreciated.

PORT BLAIR

Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya has organised Two '3 days' Teachers' Orientation Camps' for 104 teaching staff working in our Vidyalayas. The camps were held on 18th to 20th month and from 23rd to 25th month. Mananeeya Nivedita Didi guided the course. Sri Rajkumar, Director of Education was the Chief Guest. Annual Varshik Baithak was also held at Port

Blair. 14 persons attended from 9 nagars. 3 day residential PDC was held for 41 children at VKZPV, Diglipur from 10th to 12th Nov.

VKV, Port Blair has arranged a vocal recital by the famous Bombay Jayashree as part of SPICAMACAY on 1st Nov. in the school auditorium.

Sadhana Divas was celebrated in the morning of 20th Nov. at VKV Port Blair. Brief speeches on the life and message of Eknathji were delivered by Kum Nitya Nair[student], Sri Prabir Halder [Teacher] and Sri PR Prasad[Principal]. Students enacted a skit depicting Eknathji's meeting with Sri Guruji, Sri Humayun Kabir and Sri Bhaktavatsalam. Senior students sang songs from Padavali invoking the blessings of Mananeeya Eknathji.

Kum R Dipika VKV student was selected for the National Science Congress for her project on 'Role of Mangroves as protection against Tsunami'.

VADODARA

6th August'06 we conducted a school level Sanskrutik Swadhyay Kasauti. About 12,00 students enrolled their names 886 students appeared for the exam, and 686 students had cleared it.

Regarding the Sanskrutik Swadhyay Kasauti we conducted a one-day non-residential Personality

Development Camp on 8th of October, 165 students were present and the camp was scheduled from morning 8:00 to evening 5:30.

From 2nd Nov'06 to 5th Nov'06 three days Residential Personality Development Camp was conducted for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd rank students. Other students were also present; 47 students were their. Baudhik sessions were on 'Jivan-Dheyay', 'Effective-Communication' and 'Desh-prem'. They were also taught Vedic Mathematics and Calligraphy.

We conducted elocution competition for the college students on the Universal Brotherhood Day. 17 students have participated in the competition. Competition was held at Parul Institute of Engineering and Technology, Vadodara.

Varshik Baithak was held on 12th Nov'06 at Vadodara about 51 Dayitwavan Karyakartas were present from all over Gujarat during the Baithak. Ma. Pravinji was there during the Baithak.

On 11th Nov'06 Poornakalik Baithak for Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh was held at Valsad, Vadodara. Ma. Pravinji, Ma Kishorji and Aa. Mukulji were there with us.

On account of the Sadhana Divas a small programme was held at the Karyalaya. 32 Karyakartas were present. We read Ma.

Nivedita didi's letter. Dr. Kamlesh Upadhyay, Vibhag Pramukh, Vadodara, delivered a speech on the book 'Organization and Karyakarta', by Ma. P. Parameswaranji.

RELEASE OF VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PATRIKA

A grand symposium was held at the release function of Vivekananda Kendra Patrika, Volume 35 No.1. It bears the title "Expressions of Christianity with a Focus on India". Various eminent speakers like Mr. Shrinivasji, Mr. Ajit Dovalji, Mr. Michel Daninoji, Mr. Gurumurthyji, Swami Mitranandaji, Director of All India Chinmaya Yuva Kendra of Chinmaya Ashram, and Mananeeya P. Parameswaranji, the President of Vivekananda Kendra, expressed their views about different topics like 'The changing face of our demography', 'Threats to National Security' 'My Encounters with Christians' 'We and the Public space', 'Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah' and 'Organised Response', respectively. All the speeches were brilliant and were enthusiastically applauded by the audience, and the hall was full to the capacity. Mr. Shrinivasji explained clearly the changes in the demographic pattern, which was

taking a sinister turn in the North East due to proselytization activities of the Christian Missionaries. Swami Mitranandaji rendered a brilliant oration, expounding the right type of Dharma, in accordance with Hindu Scriptures. Mr. Michel Daninoji in his speech sprinkled with humour, expatiated the parochial attitude of Christians in their day to day life. Mr. Ajit Dovalji clearly explained how the conversion



activities become detrimental for the unity and integrity of India. Shri Gurumurthyji threw light on Swami Vivekananda's exhortation to pulverize tamas (ignorance) in our country and emerge victorious in every sphere of life. Mananeeya P. Parameswaranji, elucidated how obstacles in the path of our endeavour can be converted into opportunities and opportunities into success. ■

Dear Readers,

Your valuable suggestions for improving the magazine are welcome. Please write to the Editor, Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trust, No.5, Singarachari Street, Triplicane, Chennai 600 005. e-mail : vkpt@vkendra.org

Do you hear Swami Vivekananda saying:



“Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desire of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost, for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen”.

Are you among those whom Swamiji had in mind? Come, dedicate yourself for the service of the nation as a fulltime worker of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari - a spiritually oriented service mission. It is not a career - but a mission. Your Yogakshema would be taken care of by the Kendra.

Send e-mail for details at:

ngc_vkendra@sancharnet.in OR

Contact at the following address with full biodata and a postal order of Rs. 10/-

General Secretary, Vivekananda Kendra,

Vivekanandapuram, Kanyakumari - 629702

For detailed information,

visit us at www.vivekanandakendrakanyakumari.org

Calendar for Shibirs at Vivekanandapuram for 2007

| Particulars | Period | Eligible Age Group | Donation |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Spiritual Retreat (Eng) | 6-12 February | 40-70 years | Rs.1000/- |
| Spiritual Retreat (Hindi) | 6-12 February | 40-70 years | Rs.1000/- |
| Yoga Shiksha Shibir(Eng) | 6-20 May | 20-55 years | Rs.1500/- |
| Yoga Shiksha Shibir(Hindi) | 6-20 May | 20-55 years | Rs.1500/- |
| Spiritual Retreat (Eng) | 6-12 August | 40-70 years | Rs.1000/- |
| Spiritual Retreat (Hindi) | 6-12 August | 40-70 years | Rs.1000/- |
| Yoga Shiksha Shibir(Eng) | 1-15 December | 20-55 years | Rs.1500/- |
| Yoga Shiksha Shibir(Hindi) | 1-15 December | 20-55 years | Rs.1500/- |

Netaji on Swamiji

How shall I express in words my indebtedness to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda? It is under their sacred influence that my life got first awakened. Like Nivedita I also regard Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as two aspects of one indivisible personlity. If Swamiji had been alive today, he would have been my Guru, that is to say, I would have accepted him as my Master. It is needless to add, however, that as long as I live, I shall be absolutely loyal and devoted to Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.

(Netaji's was born on 23rd January 1897)

Nyishi Seminar

Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture Arunachal Pradesh Chapter

The seminar was held on 2nd and 3rd December 2006 in Vivekananda Hall, Itanagar.

The seminar was inaugurated by **Shri. C.C. Singpho**, Hon. Minister for Health and Family Welfare of the state. **Shri. A. Balakrishnan**, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, was the Guest of Honour on this occasion. Hon. Minister also stressed on the need to preserve our age old tradition and culture to preserve our identity. He also inaugurated the exhibition on Nyishi Artifacts which was the main attraction of the seminar. The antique potteries, utensils, daos, instruments with costumes were displayed in the exhibition.

Totally 5 academic sessions were held in the seminar. Different topics like, Are Nyishi Individualistic?, Nyishi Genealogy, Oral History, Marriage System and Institution, Polygamy and its relevance, were presented on the first day of the seminar.

The second day, Sunday, started with the Nyedar Namlo Prayer. The very first paper was on **Manyiang** i.e. hereditary friendship between Nyishi with other Arunachalee



communities like Apatanis, Akas, Mijis, Puroiks, etc. Blessings of Aan Donyi (The Priest Institution), Measurements and Counting System, **Sebbe** (Bos Frontalis), Gods and Goddesses, Costumes, Folksongs, Customary law were the papers which motivated the audience to ask many questions and prompted meaningful discussions.

The Seppa Nyedar Namlo team performed a small dramatic presentation on **Birth ritual**, which reminded everyone of the lives which we were living for ages together. The second session was also very thought-provoking containing topics like, house construction, the **Maj-** Sacred Ornament of Nyishi, Nyishi agricultural system, Nyishi Household instruments and traps.

A special guest Shri. Ramkui Wangbe Neumei, President, Zeliangrong Heraka Association, Nagaland, Assam and Manipur was also visited the venue for some time. He also shared his experiences. He said, the slogan “Nagaland for Christ” is a delusion, in fact 30% Nagas still believe in their tradition. It was said that this world will end by 2000 A. D. but it still exists. Many people are returning back to their own traditions. “Christ for peace” is another slogan which is also false; where in Nagaland you find peace? Drugs, Drinks are prevalent.

The Chief Guest for the Valedictory function was **Su. B. Nivedita**, Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari. She said that, just within 2 days we have tried to understand a tradition which started with the beginning of the world, which is undated and undatable. All respected priests were with us, and they also shared their knowledge with us, though little. This seminar cleared my own misconception about Nyishi Society. I heard

earlier that there were constant fights in between Nyishi and Apatanis. But when we heard the paper on *Manyiang* i.e. traditional friendship between these two communities, I realised that my concept was wrong. As friendship cannot be without peace and tranquillity, there must be acceptance of each other. We were always inclusive. If the teeth bite the tongue sometimes, we don't say that there was a fight between them. Similarly these inter- community feuds do not mean that there was rivalry among the communities. As rightly said, this was neither dependence nor independence but Interdependence.

One more thing about bride price; this was always a question in my mind -- that a community which worships mother how can it sell its girls? In the paper on *Sebbe* (Mithun), the story of two sisters cleared the reason. In *Arsha* (Vedic) period at the time of marriage one pair of Bull and Cow were given to the bride's parents. But the logic I understood today. ■

“For the society to prosper, there are two important needs, they are prosperity through wealth generation and cherishing the value system of the people. The combination of two will make the Nation truly strong and prosperous”

- Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam