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Kumbh Mela
The Nectar called Faith

Invocation



यत्र यत्र रघुनाथ कीर्तनम् तत्र तत्र कृतमस्त कान्जलिम् ।
पाशपवारि परिपूर्णलोचनम् मारुतिम् नमता राक्षसान्तकम् ॥

yatra yatra raghunatha keertanam tatra tatra krutamastakanjalem |
pashpavari paripurna lochanam marutim namata rakshasantakam ||

Sri Maruthi (Son of Wind God), the destroyer of demons (Rakshasas) is present wherever praise of Sri Rama is sung, with joyous tears in His eyes and folded hands over His head. To Him we offer our salutation.

SACRIFICE as the Supreme Service



Sacrificing means the act of giving up something important or valuable to you in order to get or do something that seems more important. The mother sacrifices everything for the sake of her children. The father makes all sacrifices so that his loved ones may live happily. At the spiritual level, we find that Kannappar, an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva offered his eyes as he could not tolerate his Lord suffering from pain and transplanted his eyes and felt happy (Ultimately it was his Lord's duty to protect him).

Every individual is endowed with a special gift of natural fervor to sacrifice something for the sake of someone else. Animals are no exception. The cow sacrifices herself to quench the thirst/hunger of not only the calf but also hundreds of human beings. The banyan tree with its bough provides a protective shelter to hundreds of animals, birds and human beings while it exposes itself to the scorching heat of the Sun. While the sun itself spreads its ray round the clock without rest so that things may happen normally elsewhere. The earth moves around the sun nonstop to give us 'days and nights'.

The list can be never-ending. Such act of committing oneself to doing something or performing something without attachment or without waiting for results is all that we have to do. To be even-minded in success and failure is what is called for. But remember to do your duties in life, as per Dharma or duty, without concerns of results, a sort of constant sacrifice of action to the supreme. It is action done without the thought of gain.

The quality of sacrifice manifests itself in a number of ways when the duty karma is carried out. The intensity and the commitment to the task can be a yardstick. Our forefathers were committed to carrying out such a task 'Yagna' with the sole motive 'do not injure, injuring any being is a sin'.

Self-sacrifices, the act of deliberately following a course of action that has a high risk or certainty of suffering or deaths (which could otherwise be avoided) in order to achieve a perceived benefit. Self-sacrifice may also be broadly defined as selflessness or the readiness to inflict pain upon oneself to save others.

For instance, the medical profession is one. A medical doctor foregoes sleep to allow his patient recuperate soon in his path to recovery. He foregoes sleep and personal comforts to ensure an assured smile on the patients and their loved ones. During the War, when the INA soldiers were given the option of surrendering, they embraced death with a

smile and with cries of Jai Hind! There were some who wouldn't allow their wounds to be attended to because they recalled Netaji's promise "Give me blood and I shall give you freedom". These men believed that by bleeding to death, they were doing service to India.

There are multitudes of them who faced the gallows courageously making the highest sacrifice. There were yet others who politely refused to accept the freedom fighters' pension and honors such as 'Thamara Pattaya'. To them any Service rendered is not for sale. Perhaps there is no price to pay for it. There have been multitudes of them, for instance on March 23, 1919, Bhagat Singh, Shivram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar, the victims of the British hegemony, were hanged.

Oh! Young women and men of this great nation. Please do make introspection. Aren't you proud of these great warriors? How many of our leaders are guided by this spirit of sacrifice. Revive the spirit of Mother India and build a resurgent India.

Prof P.Ramani



The Nectar called Faith.



Kumbha Mela derives its name from the immortal - Pot of Nectar - described in ancient Vedic scriptures known as the Puranas. Kumbha in Sanskrit language means 'pot or pitcher'. Mela means 'festival'. Thus Kumbha Mela literally means festival of the pot. Or in this case a festival celebrating the appearance of the pot of nectar.

The ancient origin of the Kumbha Mela is described in the time-honored Vedic literatures of India as having evolved from the bygone days of the universe when the Devas and the Asuras conjointly produced the nectar of immortality. It is said that the Devas and the Asuras assembled on the shore of the ocean of milk that lies in the celestial region of the cosmos. The Devas and the Asuras made a plan to churn the ocean to produce the nectar of immortality. They then agreed to share the nectar equally once it was produced.

For the task of churning the ocean, the Mandara Mountain was used as the churning rod, and Vasuki, the king of serpents, became the

rope for churning. As the churning began, the Mandara Mountain began to sink deep into the ocean, at which time Vishnu incarnated as a great tortoise and supported the mountain on His back. With the Devas at Vasuki's tail and the Asuras at his head, they churned the milk ocean for one thousand years.

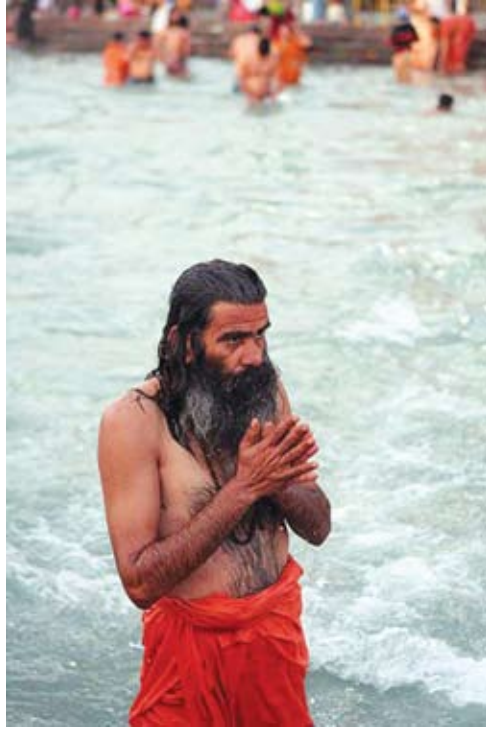
The churning of the milk ocean first produced a deadly poison which Shiva drank without being affected. As Shiva drank the poison, a few drops fell from his hands and were licked up by scorpions, snakes, and similar other deadly creatures. After Shiva drank the poison, numerous opulent items were produced. First a Surabhi cow appeared, who could yield unlimited quantities of milk. A white horse named Uccaihsrava was then produced, as well as a white elephant named Airavata. Then a valuable gem called the Kaustubha-mani appeared.

Next came the Apsaras, beautiful dancing girls, and a host of other wonderful things appeared from the milk ocean. At last a God named

Dhanvantari appeared carrying the pot of immortal nectar in His hands. Seeing Dhanvantari with the pot of nectar, both the Devas and Asuras became anxious. The Devas, being fearful of what would happen if the Asuras drank their share of the nectar of immortality, forcibly seized the pot.

Wherever the Devas went with the pot of nectar, fierce fighting ensued. In an endeavor to keep the nectar from falling into the hands of the Asuras, the Devas hid it in four places on the earth, Prayag (Allahabad), Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nasik. At each of the hiding places, a drop of immortal nectar spilled from the pot and landed on the earth. These four places are since believed to have acquired mystical power.

Maha Kumbha Mela is held in Allahabad every 12 years. It also takes place in three other holy places in India every 12 years—Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik. The time for Kumbha-mela is judged by the astrological positions of Jupiter and the Sun. In Prayag (Allahabad) the Kumbha-mela takes place during January-February, when Jupiter is in Taurus and the Sun enters Capricorn. The Kumbha-mela in Prayag (Allahabad) is considered especially auspicious. This very interesting event draws about several million people and is the largest attended event in the world.



People from all sects come to Kumbha Mela

A huge temporary city is created for the millions of pilgrims that arrive for the most auspicious bathing days. Kumbha Mela is like a Yogi Convention, where yogis, sadhus (saints), holy people, and pilgrims come from all over India. Many sadhus come from various holy places, the most remote forests, and mountain caves in the Himalayas. The most famous are the Naga Babas, who are completely naked. They cover their bodies only with the sacred ash and wear their hair in dreadlocks. People belonging to various sects of Hinduism come to this place to have bath.

It is said that if one bathes at the Sangam of the Ganges, Yamuna and underground Saraswati on one of the main bathing days during Kumbha Mela that one attains liberation. In the Vishnu Purana it says that one get

a great benefit from bathing during Kumbha Mela than performing 1,000 Ashwamedha Yajnas (horse sacrifices) or circumambulating the earth 100,000 times. It is said that by bathing at Kumbha Mela that all a person's sins are washed away and that 88 generations of ancestors are benefited.

The main bathing days are known as Shahi Sn-

ans or Royal Bathing Days. The main bathing day, when the most people come, on the Mauni Amavasya day (the dark moon), several million people used to take bath. The next main day or Shahi Snan is said to be on Basant Panchami (fifth day of the new moon),.

Here is a comprehensive list of Kumbha Mela dates with the names of the host cities. The Maha Kumbh Mela is held every three years in each of four different locations (Allahabad, Haridwar, Nasik and Ujjain), returning to each of four places every twelve years. Besides the regular Kumbha Mela, an Ardh (half) Kumbha Mela (festival) takes place six years after the Maha Kumbh in each location.

Haridwar Ardh Kumbh Mela 2010 (March-April)

Haridwar (the gateway to God) will host the Ardh Kumbha mela in the year 2010

Allahabad (Prayag) Maha Kumbh Mela 2013 (January 27th to February 25th)

The Maha Kumbha Mela will again be held at Allahabad (Prayag) in the year 2013.

Nasik Maha Kumbh Mela 2015 (August 15th to September 13th)

Nasik will host the Maha Kumbha Mela in 2015

Ujjain Maha Kumbh Mela 2016 (April 22nd to May 21st)

The Kumbha Mela in the year 2016 will be held at Ujjain



It is through the heart, and that alone, that the world can be reached.



The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears

to be awaking and a voice is coming to us – away back where history and even tradition fails to peep into the gloom of the past, coming down from there, reflected as it were from peak to peak of the infinite Himalaya of knowledge, and of love and of work, India, this motherland of ours – a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterances, and is gaining volume as days pass by, and behold, the sleeper is awakening! Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away, and only the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more.

India that is to be, the future India, must be much greater than ancient India.

Jewels in the Crown

Prof.P.Ramani.

Bhagat Singh was born in a village called Banga in Loyalpur district of Punjab (now in Pakistan). He was the third son of Sardar Kishan Singh and Vidya-vati Devi. His father Kishan Singh and Uncle Ajit Singh were members of Ghader Party founded in the U.S. to oust British rule from India.

'Bhagat Singh' means 'the fortunate' and he was named so because his family thought that he brought good luck. Born on September 27, 1907 and martyred at age of 23 on March 23, 1931, he gave a new direction

to the revolutionary movements in India. He formed 'Naujavan Bharat Sabha' to spread the message of revolution in Punjab, and 'Hindustan Samajvadi Prajatantra Sangha' along with Chandrasekhar Azad to establish a republic in India, assassinated police official Saunders to avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, dropped bomb in Central Legislative Assembly along with Batukeshwar Dutt.

Bhagat Singh believed that the overthrow of British rule should be accompanied by the socialist reconstruction of Indian society, and for this political power must be seized. To avoid early marriage, Bhagat Singh ran away from home and went to Kanpur. Here, he came into contact with Chandrasekhar Azad. The

two formed 'Hindustan Samajvadi Prajatantra Sangha'. Its aim was to establish a republic in India by means of an armed revolution.



In February 1928, a committee from England, called Simon Commission visited India. The purpose of its visit was to decide how much freedom and responsibility could be given to the people of India. but there was no Indian on the committee. This angered Indians and they decided to boycott Simon Commission. The slogan coined by Bhagat Singh gave a new meaning to the struggle.

*Hindustani Hain hum, Hindustan Hamara
Murjao Simon, Jahan hai Desh Tumara*

'We are Indians and India is ours. Go back Simon to the country to which you belong!'

While protesting against Simon Commission in Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai was brutally lathicharged and later on he succumbed to the injuries. Bhagat Singh was determined to avenge Lajpat Rai's death by shooting the British official responsible for the killing, Deputy Inspector General Scott. He shot down Assistant Superintendent Saunders instead, mistaking him for Scott. Bhagat Singh had to flee from Lahore to escape punishment.

Her Holiness Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi's Inaugural Address at Vivekananda International Center, New Delhi Tuesday, December 1st 2009

(Continued from the Last Issue)

Modern society is like a person suffering from a severe fever. As the fever increases, the patient says senseless things. Pointing at a chair on the floor, he may ask, "Why is that chair flying?" What answer can we give? Most of us live like this. It is easy to wake a sleeping person but, it is impossible to awaken a person who is pretending to sleep.

Meetings should not be a mere coming together of people, it should be a meeting of hearts.

Youth are attracted by Swami Vivekananda's words not only because he spoke the language of logic and the intellect, His words were extremely sincere as well. At the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893, when he began his speech with the words "Sisters and Brothers of America!", the entire hall exploded with excitement and joy. Why? Because, his address was so sincere and touching. If there is sincerity in our words, they will definitely give others the inspiration and strength to perform selfless actions.

The foundation of all positive change is true ed-



ucation. True education is the secret mantra to obtain success in life. such education is the solution to all problems. As Swami Vivekananda said, "What is education? Is it book-learning? No,. Is it developing certain skills? Not even that. True education is the process by which our power of will and habits are transformed into useful energy that can change both society and the individual"

Knowledge and awareness of dharma are two sides of the coin of education.

The only goal attributed to modern education is worldly success. The most favourite mantra of the youth today is "success." 'Whatever path you choose in life, you must succeed.' This is the slogan of the modern educational system.

The educational system has been reduced to a tool for obtaining the success they want. But will such success last? Through this, will we obtain love and respect from society? We may obtain temporary gains, but as time passes we will be rejected by society.

We should understand the hollow, artificial meaning and shallowness of the modern concept of success to which today's youth are clinging. Regarding success, Swami Vivekananda has said, "Please try to understand the correct implication of the term successful life. It signifies the creation of a noble personality. It is atma-Viakasa, Atma—Nirmana. When you talk of success with reference to life, it does not merely mean succeeding in everything that you undertake. The essence of true success is what you make of yourself. This depends upon your character, interactions and commitment to society..."

The definition of a soldier is not only those who attack their enemies with swords and cannons. Anyone who strives to reach the goal of life, is in a way, a soldier. A kshatriya is one who fights battles. Where? In every field of life. Be it in the field of art, politics, business, spirituality, or education – we need the ability to harmoniously combine the three qualities of Satva, Rajas and Tamas. We need to courage and vigour of action to focus all our attention on the goal of life and move ahead. To prevent selfishness, we need the light of goodness in our heart. We also need the ability to express this goodness. The goal of all our actions should be the complete growth of society and the welfare of humanity. Growth of humanity, includes our own growth as well, this is true growth. For this understanding to become firmly rooted in our mind, we need discrimination.

What the youth of today lack is proper judgment. Merely by dissemination of information, we cannot develop judgment. For this, we must develop faith in the cosmic power, the power beyond our mind and intellect. We should eliminate the egoistic notion that our life will become fruitful through mere human

effort alone. We should bow down. Then this cosmic power will flow into us.

If we ask a guitarist or a singer where their music comes from, they will probably say, "From my heart," But, if we surgically open up their heart, will we find any music there? If they say that the music comes from their finger tips or their throat, would we find music if we search in those places? Then, where does the music arise from? It arises from a place beyond the body and mind. This place is the abode of Pure Consciousness, God. The younger generation should strive to understand and respect this power. The modern system of education does not give importance to this type of understanding. Youth should be made aware of the importance of love, selfless service, humility and the necessity of giving back to society, the fruit, reaped from their success. For a householder, a CEO of a company or even a political leader, first one should know oneself. This is true strength. One should know and accept one's own faults, short comings and limitations, and try to overcome them. That is when a true leader is born.

True leaders are those who can lead others to the path of dharma with self-confidence, sincerity, and self-awareness. Today's youth will become tomorrow's leaders, so they should understand the source of true strength. When they develop a good heart and are able to perform actions without any expectation, only then will they be able to attract the hearts of people.

Meditation and spirituality are inseparable factors of life. A meditative mind and spiritual thinking are necessary in order to attain clarity and subtlety in our thoughts and actions. To see spirituality and life as separate is ignorance. Just as food and sleep are necessary for the body, spiritual thinking is needed for a healthy mind. But, how do we view meditation and spirituality today?

Once, two friends met at the roadside. The first man asked the other, "Hi, how are you?" the other said, "Fine, thanks."

The first continued, "How's your son? Did he get a job yet?"

The second man said, "he is learning meditation".

"Meditation? What is that?"

The second man replied, "Uhh, I'm not sure, but I heard that it is better than doing nothing at all."

Like this, many people think that spirituality is for those who have nothing better to do.

Our Indian youth should develop a deep connection with their culture and country. At the same time, they need an independent intellect and an open mind. They should find the courage to accept goodness wherever they see it, rejecting evil. It is because Swami Vivekananda had these qualities that he was able to take pride in his Indian heritage and at the same time develop the free thought and vigour of action of the West.

Diversity is God's Creation. This universe is too vast to be grasped by any single religion or philosophy. If we want peace, contentment, and progress, we should try our best to make the world understand the path of interconnect- edness, the principles of all-embracing Sana- tana Dharma.

Vedanta is the basis of India's expansive vision with regards to religion. It sees all religions as steps to the same goal. Swami Vivekananda proclaimed that Vedanta is not only the scrip- ture of the past, but contains essential prin- ciples that have the potential to overcome all challenges of the future, growing as a global life outlook.

Amma sees the whole world as a flower. Each petal represents a nation. If one petal is infested with pests, it will affect the other petals as well. The beauty of the whole flower suffers. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to protect and nurture this flower. When Amma travels abroad and sees the paved roads, clean- liness, discipline and order, she wishes that it

were like that in India as well. countless ac- cidents could have been avoided, if we had such good roads. Prevention of epidemics and other diseases would have been much easier if we cultivated the same degree of cleanliness. India's development and growth would have flourished much more if we had the same work ethic.

There is one thing that each Indian citizen should remember. Our heritage is incompa- rable. We should view other countries from the standpoint of having firm love for our own country and its culture. While Sree Rama was leaving for the forest, when he reached the bor- der of the Ayodhya Kingdom, taking a handful of sand he said, "Our mother and our mother land are even greater than heaven itself."

After his first tour of the US, when Swami Vivekananda reached Chennai, it is said that he rolled in the sand and proclaimed through tears, "Even after visiting so many countries, I have never found a Mother like mine." When he stayed in a five-star hotel, instead of sleeping on the fancy bed, he laid on the bare floor and shed tears remembering the poor and starving people in India. Many people who leave India realise, "Our birth mother's rice gruel is tastier than our step mother's sweet pudding." This love and respect for one's own country and cul- ture should be an example for all of us, espe- cially for the youth of our country.

At a time when modern thinking and its stress on indulgence was eating away at the treasure of Indian culture, causing illness like spoiled food, Vivekananda arose with the amrita ka- lasha (pitcher of immortality) he had drawn from the rishi parampara (lineage of ancient Rishis). Whether it is an individual or human- ity as a whole, the sum total of all the culture gained from the past is what sheds light on the present. This is why he was able to ac- complish so much in such a short time, both in India and throughout the world. Every single word he uttered is capable of gifting humanity the strength and self-confidence to face Hima- layan obstacles, to swim across rivers of tears

and deserts of hardship. He accepted sorrow and suffering as the greatest teachers. His life became a deepa stambam (a giant lamp) of optimism to a people who were drowning in hopelessness. Before his birth, sannyasa meant detachment from the problems of the world. Swami Vivekananda added to that intense vairagya, the sweetness of love and the fragrance of worship.

May this institution be able to spread the life and message of Swami Vivekananda throughout the world, and implement the plan of action that he created. Amma prays that this institution becomes a blessing to the whole world, and that all the efforts of Amma's children, bear fruits.

Before concluding, Amma would like to share some extra ideas with Her children.

1.It is not wrong for each person to believe that their faith alone is right. But just like each person has their own faith, others should also be given the freedom to have their own. It is when one person forces their religious beliefs onto another that religions that were born with the message of love become a cause for bloodshed. That is when religions that proclaimed/sang the greatest songs of peace become the most violent.

2.Before the British system of education, India's educational system was based on the Gurukula tradition. At that time, education was not a mere brain-to-brain transfer of knowledge, but a heart-to-heart transfer of culture. From birth itself, parents would chant the name of God in their child's ears. In this way, the child would grow up chanting God's name. Later they would be sent by their parents to a Gurukula where they would live the life a brahmachari and learn all the scriptures from their Guru. They would learn what life is, how to live and how to respond to the world. As a result, children matured into discriminative adults. They were lion-hearted, willing to dedicate their whole life for the sake the truth.

3.Having an institution of Sannyasis for the purpose of serving society was Buddha's idea, and Swami Vivekananda put that into action. One hundred years ago, he said that worship of the poor as God is what is needed today. That statement remains as powerful today as it was then. When the plague spreading through Calcutta, he served the diseased with the same devotion he had in serving his Guru, whom he believed to be an Avatara of God. He was even ready to sell the Belur Math, if it was needed. The truth that everything we see in Creation is the Creator, Himself, was a flow of energy that touched his heart and made his hands serve continuously.

4.Each of our fingerprints, facial features, and iris are different. Anything made from the same mould – whether it is a needle, a shoe, or a statue – will be identical. However, in God's Creation, no two blades of grass or no two flower petals will be the same. So, what to say of human beings, themselves. God has sent each person to the earth with special ability hidden within them. Each one of us has a life purpose that only we can fulfil. And the purpose of each of our lives is to find that special power within us. Demonstrating this is what gives meaning to our birth. That is when life becomes a joyous sharing. True education helps us in this task. Swami Vivekananda clearly said that we need education that will help us to develop not only our intellect, but our heart, as well. A society where everyone is identical would be mechanical, dead. The beauty of life is in diversity.

5.Today, 90% of people don't realize the infinite potential within them. We are born in sorrow, we grown in sorrow, and we die in sorrow. We need the guidance of a Self Realized Guru/master in order to discover the God given talents within us, which we don't even know are hidden with us.

6.To give children the proper value system, it is not enough to teach students the basic tenets of religion in school. It is crucial to make them aware of the overall redeeming qualities of all religions, without giving importance to their

differences. This is the only way to maintain mutual respect and love in society, even as religious diversity increases. Along with this, our value-based educational system should be able to bring about hope and optimism for the future, in the midst of difficulties. Swami Vivekananda's global vision and poetic style made his writings and speeches are perfect example for teaching school children.

7.He clearly showed us the paths needed for our society, country and world to grow. The curse upon our society is ignorance regarding our traditions and the basic principle of spirituality. This needs to change. Amma has visited so many countries around the world and personally seen so many countries and their people. All of them take pride and satisfaction in their own heritage and traditions.

Even the indigenous people of Australia, Africa and America take pride in their heritage. But we, here in India neither have understanding nor pride. In fact many people even deride it. Only if we lay a strong foundation can we erect a tall building. Similarly, only if we have knowledge and pride in our forefathers and history, can we create lustrous present and future. First we create the proper environment for this. For this, we need to pay special attention to the starving and illiterate from the lower strata of society. For this, we need to go into society and act. Swami Vivekananda also stressed the importance of educating women and giving them their proper place in society. In short, we should be prepared to adjust our attitude with the changing times, have a mind ready to act and move forward along the path that Vivekananda Swami directed us along.

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Are they the Best we have?

Bhadrinath Pani

Everybody vie for the best. It is the best that is always sought after in all the realms. Cricket is represented by the best talents in India, the best of Indian minds go into IITs and IIMs and even at high school song competition every school strives to represent their best talent. At every phase of life we choose the best. But this logic somehow fails miserably in choosing our representatives – The Politicians.

An average Indian is always hailed to be morally upright. We consider Lord Rama as our idol in maintaining chaste relationship with our spouse but only very few of our elected leaders have this virtue. Polygamy is an offence for ordinary citizens but doesn't seem so for our law makers. Their affairs don't make it into the current affairs, shows the plight of our media which is otherwise interested in sleaze. We consider it a great sin to think of others money. We adhere to 'Aparigraha'- Non-Possessiveness as a fundamental doctrine. As expected our representatives are experts in usurping nation's property. We find it acceptable paying exorbitant price for quality products. But after embezzling all our money they don't even meet our needs.

On the contrary, the western world that we desperately try to imitate has stricter norms for their representatives. It starts right from Bill Clinton's impeachment over affair with Monica Lewinsky to the latest case of John Terry being removed from captancy. The western public is

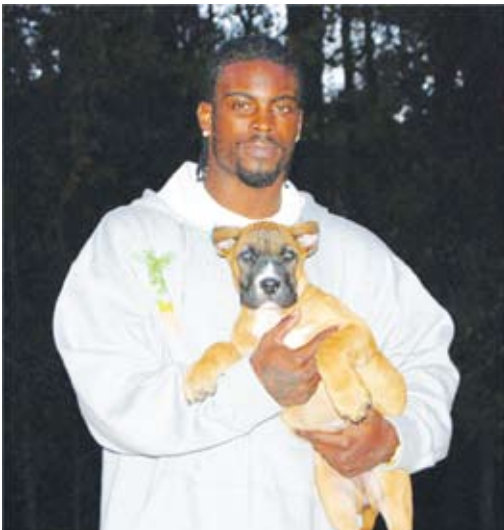


critical of the qualities of their representatives. They ensure the defaulter is stripped of his stardom as in the case of Tiger Woods. All his advertisements and endorsements were terminated. The leaders automatically become role models. The western society is trying to showcase moral values in their stars. Michael Vick, a professional American football player was sus-



John Terry the Sacked English Soccer Captain

pendent and imprisoned for 23 months for showing cruelty to animals. He was involved in dog



Micheal Vick with his dog

fighting, a cruel sport forcing the dogs to fight each other. In the event the dogs get injured so much that some of them even die. In our country, even stars hunting blackbuck, a precious species, go scot free. The western movie industry also ensures a good dose of moral values

to their kids. A plethora of animated movies like 'Bee Movie', 'The lion king', 'Happy Feet' to name a few, even teaches elders a lesson. The west is cautiously choosing oriental wisdom over occidental to avoid any accidental consequence.

If we were to calculate our country's IQ going by our ability to select

leaders we would be well below average. We don't go to an ear specialist for heart attack or to an accountant for fixing our bath tap. Adversely we hand over chemical ministry to a person who has least knowledge of it, Information ministry to a rookie, renewable energy ministry to a medical doctor and this list continues. Never ministers are elected for their qualification or experience. This callousness towards our country's state of affairs is prevalent in every walk of life.

Indians were known to be the embodiment of moral values. And always our leaders have led from front by setting high standards. But today, our representatives seem to create a chord of cacophony that might harm this beautiful system. The vibrations of a society at micro and macro level have to synchronize to create the necessary resonance of prosperity. To prevent this degradation we need to wake up and start asking questions.

Aspire to climb up

Gopinath R



Speaking of sports in India, A prominent opinion prevails among the countrymen concerning the choice of favorite sport, and a more conspicuous manner in which a sport is perceived among people from different walks of life. Some see it as pure entertainment, most see it as business, and a very few participate or compete in it with the spirit for which it came in to existence. And we live in a period today, where certain sports are being invented purely for the purpose of business. And this hapless situation, as it could be seen is clearly because of the lack of support, resources and facilities offered by the government. As this scene has already drawn in some hopeless and condemning comments from various quarters, that doesn't need a mention here, On the contrary, we're going to see a much brighter perspective of an interesting sport, which many are yet to realize it as a form of sport in many parts of our country.

A Sport means to be an active diversion requiring physical exertion and competition. Most pursue a sport, or anything for that matter, for the fact that he or she purely enjoys being engaged in it. In reality this joy completely obscures the fact that a sport is a package with a lot of interim benefits than the direct success involved in it. Mountaineering is one such sport that will always top the list when it comes to the number of interim benefits that the sport offers. Unlike most sport, mountaineering demands special environment, facilities and some special supervision and training, which clearly pegs up the status of this special adventure sport.

"Luck always avoided me, first time I was disappointed, second time I went heart-broken, the third time never came. I started avoiding luck and adopted hardship. I chose endurance as a key force that could drive other qualities. That made me a mountaineer. I was born at the

sea level. I've never laid my foot on a mountain until I was 16. Now, I've conquered one. I knew it was always going to be a deep fall

where one could get expert training in mountaineering in a natural environment is the Directorate of Mountaineering and Allied Sports, Manali in the Himalayas.



Camp Establishment in Bakartaj For Snow and Ice Craft

when the wrong foot touches the wrong place at the wrong time, yet I desired to challenge myself to the extreme. I climb mountains not just "because it's there" but the challenges I face help me foster Courage, Determination, Bonhomie, Camaraderie and at times humility too.", shares a friend who pursues this interesting sport.

The weather of the Himalayas though conducive is highly unpredictable, it was said that, one could experience a sample of all the six seasons in a single day, yet many flock to the destination hoping for an experience of the lifetime. Unfortunately, the sport could only attract foreign expedition teams, International tourists and backpackers. Indian military and police services usually attend this training program as a part of their competency development activities. But a very few volunteered to

learn mountaineering as a sport in this 26 day training course, which covers each and every aspect of mountaineering in a purely practical manner. The course strength happens to be a diverse batch of students hailing from different parts of India, even a few from outside India. The training demands extreme levels of fitness and will power to complete the whole course,



15500ft in Shethidhar

A favorite high altitude destination in India



Students Gearing up Before Training

as many fail to make it throughout the program and attain the qualifying height during



Students Rapelling down in Manali Rock Climbing Site

the height gaining day.

In the beginning, the course was divided into small ropes (mountaineering terminology for groups) and trained by separate instructors. Physical and Cardio exercises becomes a routine activity early in the day, followed by Rock Climbing, Knots and roping techniques



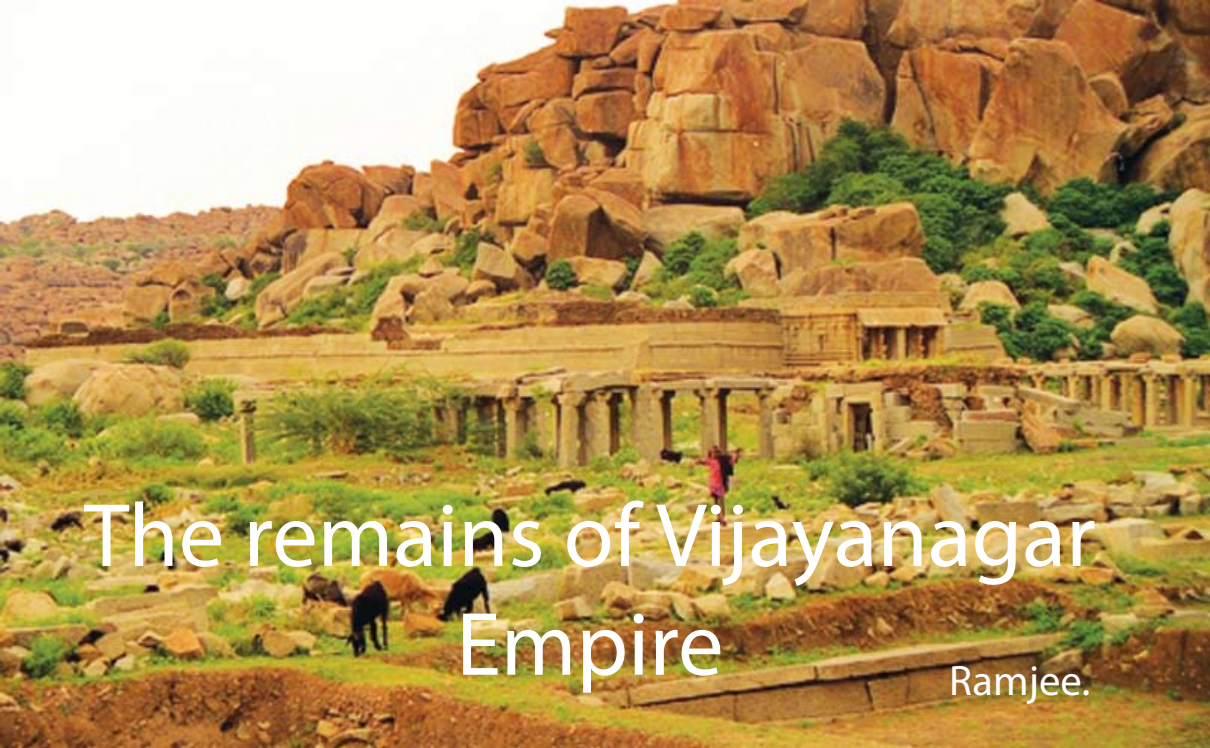
Mystic Himalayas

in the Manali base camp. A daily lecture and a characteristic military obstacle race becomes an integral part of the course in the afternoon through to the evening. As the students get ready to move out and pitch their own tents in strange, light forsaken lands, the course hikes into various camps across nearby valleys such as Solang and Dundhi to learn about Mountain Hazards and Mountain Manners, Map reading, Weather forecasting and River Crossing techniques. A consistent activity throughout

the program is acclimatization, where one gain and lose height gradually, to thrive in unfriendly climatic conditions. Acclimatization hikes in the peak of Pathalsu, gets the students ready for the next stage of the training, The Snow and Ice Crafting including Crevasse Rescue techniques in the perilous snow covered glaciers in a training camp at Bakrataj near the Beas Kund valley (Origin of the Ganges).

One doesn't LIVE in the high altitudes anymore, they just SURVIVE. The students are always engaged in some activities such as gathering fire-woods, flooring the tents and bush crafting to remain active, which regulate a smooth blood circulation that helps befriend the cold wind that pierces into the bones. Many science book theories such as adiabatic expansion in high altitudes, cloud formation, wind movement from mountain towards the valley could be witnessed at its best as the changes become very prominent after a particular height barrier. The Mystic Mountain range has many peaks such as Hanuman Tiba, a difficult one to climb than that of even Mt.Everest; Indrasan, a visible but an intangible peak standing in midst of the clouds; Deo Tiba and Shethidhar, a hunting ground for the beginners. Students were finally tested on their roping-up skills and scale heights in The Shethidhar after the training program and a "Survival night" without food and cover in a Jungle on their way back to the base camp.

The exhaustive training program ends with a badge offered in a decoration ceremony marking the conclusion of the training program. Every student feels like a giant after completing the program, as they realized that they are capable of exceeding their limits at any given time. But a truth remains unspoken that they had just learnt a lot more than just the sport.



The remains of Vijayanagar Empire

Ramjee.

To commemorate the 500th year of Hampi, which was the capital of Vijayanagar Empire, the Karnataka government recently had a very big celebration. Though every year “Hampi Utsav” was celebrated, this year it was grand as it was to commemorate the 500th year.

As there are many information on the internet and in books about Vijayanagara Empire and the way in which the temples were built, I am not going to explain in detail about them. I visited this place when I was seven. I saw the Vittala temple and the stone car and also the musical pillars which were built a little bit away from Hampi and was thinking that was





Sashi vegalu Ganesha

all about Hampi. But when I visited now to see this place situated on the branch of Thungabhadra River, I could get the full dimensions of this wonderful place which has now been rec-

has several temples in it. To have a birds eye view of this place we should go to peak of nearby 'Anekundi' hill which is 15kms from here. Lord Hanumana was believed to be born in this place and there is temple for him which is at least 2000 years old. Vijayanagara Empire started from the foot hills of this hill then when empire got expanded it went to Hampi due to traffic, infrastructure and security reasons.

Many of the temples were built by King Krishnadevaraya during his period but it was three temples which were built by individuals which impressed me the most.



Kadalegalu Ganesha

ognized as a world heritage site by UNESCO. The place which is built around 30kms area,

nesha" temple was built by a groundnut merchant. Anybody who is rich can build a temple

today, but these three temples that goes to show the greatness of Krishna Devaraya who not only allowed these temples to exist along with the other temples built by him but was also not too conscious in etching only his name in the history.

Due to the Moghul invasion and attacks by the other kings many of the temples were destroyed. The vigrahas are damaged. But Nitya poojas are done even today to Lord Virubaksha in Virubhaksha temple as there is no damage to the moolasthan. The main gopuram of this temple has a unique feature. The shadow of the gopuram falls upside down on a wall in the temple. The construction before 5 centuries had used something similar to the pin whole technology in our cameras. It is absolutely wonderful and not to be missed. My humble request to those who are reading this article. When I was a young boy, I went to this temple and I could touch the musical pillars and hear the sounds from them. But now due to renovation and various other security reasons, you can see them only from distance. Moreover I got a friend who is interested in places of Historical importance. He had a



book which detailed how the temple in Hampi got destroyed due to our negligence and lack of awareness. So what remains now may not remain for long if we remain in our ignorant slumber. This negligence is a manifestation of the lack of pride in our heritage. If we don't wake up now then future generations can see these heritage sites only in internet and books. Visit these places as early as possible. More on hampi and our negligence, next month.

Swami Vivekananda may be regarded as the spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement. Reckless in his sacrifice, unceasing in his activity, boundless in his love, profound and versatile in his wisdom, exuberant in his emotions, merciless in his attacks, but yet simple as a child –he was a rare personality in this world of ours.....

The impact of Swami Vivekananda made on the students of our times by his works and speeches far outweighed that made by any other leader of the country. He, as it were, expressed fully their hopes and aspirations. The foundation of the present freedom movement owes its origin to Swamiji's message. Our countrymen have gained unprecedented self-respect, self-confidence and self-assertion from his teachings.

---Subhas Chandra Bose.

An Indian buys off East India Company



The company which ruled several parts of India for more than a century and opened the doors for Britishers to come in has now been bought by an Indian. This historically important acquisition happened in the month of February. Indians will never forget the name East India Company, as it paved way for more than a century of oppression and tyrannical rule. A 48 year old Indian Sanjiv Mehta, has bought this company and has become its 'Boss' now.

He was working hard in this direction right from 2004 when he started buying the shares of that company. Only now he was able to have majority of the shares and take hold of the company. Mr. Mehta had visited several archeological centers and museums throughout the world to know more about this company.

The history of this company starts from the year 1600. It was on December 31st of that year Elizabeth the first; the queen of England permitted the company to start its business. The company was given permission to do its trading activities in South Asian countries. People who started the company referred to these places as East India and that is why the company adopted that name. It is important to note that there was no such reference to East India before that. But instead of focusing in South Asia the company was trading mainly in India and China. The company entered India for trading purposes but after that the British government threw that company out to ease itself into the seat of power. The British Government could completely control the Indian economics then captured the entire country too.

In the year 1874 on January 1st the British gov-

ernment took all the powers from the company. After that the company didn't function. It is a surprise for all Indians that a company with this kind of a past has now been bought by an Indian. Mr. Mehta plans to expand the company by setting up branches in Middle East, Japan, Russia and U.S.A. The company plans to trade coffee, tea, perfumes, chocolates, leather goods and wooden furniture. The Mumbai born Sanjeev Mehta has spent around \$15 million to own this company. Sanjeev Mehta says that it gave great pride and happiness to know that he is going to control the company which once controlled our nation.

Its time for reversing the historical wrongs too. Isn't it?



The debt which the world owes to our Motherland is immense. As I look back upon the history of my country, I do not find in the whole world another country which has done quite so much for the improvement of the human mind.



SHRADDHANJALI

Swami Satyananda Saraswati, founder of Bihar School of Yoga and a direct disciple of Swami Sivananda of Divine life Society attained Samadhi on 5th December 2009. He molded many exponents in the fields of yoga, Vedanta and tantra. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati was directly trained by him. He gave a scientific insight in to the yogic practices, due to which he got disciples from all the continents. He popularized Sita kalyanam in the villages of Bihar, which has become an annual event now. Swami Satyananda Saraswati was born in Almora, in the Himalayan foothills. His parents were large landowners. As a young child he experienced spontaneous spiritual experiences. In 1943 at nineteen, Swami Satyananda came to live and take Sannyasa from Swami Sivananda at Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh. There he served in different departments at the Ashram for over 12 years. He edited the Ashram's Hindi journal, wrote various articles and composed poems in both Hindi and Sanskrit. He wrote a translation and commentary in the English language of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad by Swami Sivananda. His deep love, his intuitive understanding and his spiritual experience is evident in every scripture he has translated. He not only translates, but he is a living testament to its ideal and philosophy. He brings to life every character within the scriptures

with such intensity, that we begin to realize that these very same characters exist within us. We then are able to learn how we can purify ourselves until we, too, realize our own Divinity! Swamiji's translations from Sanskrit have been translated into Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, French, German, Romanian and Portuguese, in addition to English.

Upon leaving the ashram, he wandered through India, Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma and Ceylon for the next 8 years, extending his knowledge of spiritual practices. He eventually found his way to Munger, Bihar. After establishing himself there, in 1963 he founded the International Yoga Fellowship and the Bihar School of Yoga a year later.

He taught yoga globally for the next twenty years and authored a number of books. In 1988, he retired from active involvement in yoga teaching and handed active work of his Ashram to his disciple Swami Niranjanananda. He lived in seclusion as a Paramahansa Sannyasin performing higher spiritual and vedic sadhanas.

Sri Nagabhushanji, a former full time worker of Vivekananda Kendra, attained God's abode on 24.12.09. He did a commendable work as an administrator in the schools of Andamans. Later he was in charge of our Ramakrishna Mahasammelan Ashram, Nagadhandi, Achabal, Kashmir then Tinsukia and in Kanyakumari. Wherever he worked he won the hearts of people through his love and children in those places still remember him as he used to give them chocolates and sweets wherever he meets them. He spent his last days in Tiruvannamalai as he got deeply devoted to Lord Arunachaleshwara. May his soul rest in peace!

Shri Shyam Bhagadur Varma, the founder Editor of Kendra's Hindi Magazine, "Kendra Bharati", a close associate of Maaneneeya Eknathji and a Sangha Pracharak shed his mortal body on 20.11.09 at Delhi. He was 77. He was a person of profound knowledge with Master Degree in Mathematics, Hindi, English, Sanskrit and History. He has received his Doctorate for his research on "Shakti worship in the Hindi Literature". Shri Shyamji, a pleasing orator covered both young and old with equal magnitude. He has authored many books and compilations. He retired as a professor in the department of Hindi from the Dayanand Anglo Vedic College, Delhi. "Vishwa Shukti Kosh" a exhaustive work containing three volumes added glory to his golden era. He maneuvered the ship of "Kendra Bharati" in its early days of tumult. We offer our prayer to this true patriot who left his indelible mart in all the fields he touched.

What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.

-Swami Vivekananda

The way they see us.

Spirituality As A Way of Life

Susan Smalley, Ph.D



I never liked the word 'spirituality' because it seemed New Age or tied to concepts of God in organized religion. However, having returned

from my first trip to India, I find it best describes the culture I experienced there.

Let me define spirituality as 'a sense of connection to something larger than oneself' and in India this attention to spirituality is pervasive. It is evident in every aspect of the culture -- there is a constant integration of reminders that we are part of something larger than the self. It is evident in the shrines that are present on every street corner, created on sides of houses, roadside stops, hilltops, alleyways, the back of tractor trailers, and beyond. Shrines are big, small, colorful, bland, dedicated to Shiva, Ganesh, Hanuman, or thousands of other manifestations of our shared nature, to Hindus the manifestations of a Oneness or God or an Ultimate Reality. It is evident in the pervasive Namaste -- a greeting with hands folded in a prayer position accompanied by a bow that means something like "I see the Oneness in you." It is evident in the pervasive 'bindi,' the smudge of color between the eyebrow -- a reminder that we are part of something larger than the self -- visible by a 'third eye' if you will.

On a road in a rural region of Rajasthan, we stumbled upon a shrine that had been established in honor of a young man killed on a motorcycle. The motorcycle and image of the

man were centered behind a fire, kept alive by the eternal visits of thousands of strangers to this roadside shrine. Vendors had sprung up to provide gifts of donation at the shrine, bells and drums were played, and devotees prayed for safe travels. It was an example of both the magical and superstitious thinking pervasive in India and the recognition and gratitude for life and our connections to one another; a spiritual connection to something beyond the self.

To the outsider, India and its spirituality may seem a land of irrational thinking -- far from the rational mind of the West. But the integration of spiritual development into daily life may be a factor in why India ranks higher than the U.S. on national rankings of Happiness (e.g. happyplanetindex.org). Perhaps constant reminders of our interconnected and dependent nature make emotions and actions stemming from self-centeredness more difficult to come by.

In the West, we tend to compartmentalize our time for spiritual practice if present (times of day or days of week) while in India it is constant -- morning to night, birth to death. I am not suggesting an adoption of the religions of India but rather adopting an increased awareness of recognition of our interconnected nature into daily life. I am suggesting that attention to our connections beyond our 'individuality,' our individual 'self,' is important for health and well-being (science shows that is true, for example, see R. Cloninger, *Feeling Good: The Science of Well-being*). Perhaps we can take a lead from the Indian culture and attend more overtly to our relationships beyond our self.

It can be part of daily life by acknowledging more readily the influences that shape you:

1. Home, environment, air, water, food
2. Family, parents, children, friends, strangers
3. Music, art, literature, Nature
4. Humanity, Universe, Evolution, God, Oneness, Truth

What if we attend to these elements with acknowledgment, gratitude and love every day from morning to night. It can be internal (heartfelt attention) or external (smile, handshake, eye contact, a nod, listening, and action). It is possible to integrate spirituality into our daily lives without adhering to any particular religion and without compartmentalizing it to circumscribed times of day or days per week.

Perhaps we can make spirituality a way of life, much like in India, albeit with a different external appearance.

Susan L. Smalley, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at UCLA who specializes in the genetics of psychiatric disorders, particularly those with onset in childhood or adolescence, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and autism (www.adhd.ucla.edu). Her basic research centers on gene identification and how understanding behavioral diversity from genetic and non-genetic perspectives influences health and well-being.

She is the founder of the Mindful Awareness Research Center in the UCLA Semel Institute of Neuroscience and Human Behavior to investigate genetics and the mind to better understand how increased awareness of one's interconnectedness to oneself, each other, and nature influences creativity and compassion in shaping a kinder world.

Source: The Huffington Post.

SAKTHI SUGARS

VIVEKANANDA KENDRA SAMACHAR

VKIC Foundation Day

The Foundation Day of Vivekananda Kendra

Institute of Culture, Guwahati was celebrated on 31st January 2010 (Sunday) at 5:30 pm in the Williamson Magor Auditorium. In the welcome address, Sri Dipok Kumar Barthakur, Chair-



The Sanman awardee, Sri Chaoba Kamson

man, VKIC, spoke on the objectives and role of VKIC in the present day scenario. The Chief Guest, renowned columnist and social activist Rajkumar Ajit Narayan Singha conferred the VKIC SANMAN 2010 on Sri Chaoba Kamson, a Social Activist, from Manipur. In his lecture Sri Chaoba Kamson delved on the importance of preserving the traditional heritage of India especially of Manipur.

The Sanman awardee also entertained the invitees with a traditional song at the end of his deliberation. Rajkumar Ajit Narayan Singha, the Chief Guest on the occasion said that in the name of globalization, our communities are facing immense problems; as a result secessionist tendencies are growing amongst them. The programme concluded with a colourful cultural presentation by the Mising artistes of the Sisang Club of Sonaighuli,



The Chief Guest addressing the Audience

Guwahati.



VK.Chennai

National youth day celebrations for the year 2010 were held at "The Hindu Higher Secondary School" Triplicane, Chennai. On this Occasion a Devotional/ Patriotic song competition and Quiz for Families on Indian culture were conducted. Around 75 students and families participated in these events.

Swami Vimurtananda of Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, Editor, Ramakrishna Vijayam, a Tamil spiritual monthly magazine, presided over the function and distributed the prizes for the winners. Swami Vimurtanandaji also released the Vivekananda Kendra Patrika Titled "Green path finders Part 2". 150 people attended the public programme.

He who is the servant of all is their true master. He never becomes a leader in whose love there is a consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end, and never stops to consider high or low, has the whole world lying at his feet.





Swami Vimurtananda giving away the first prize to the family in the Quiz Competition.



Vivekananda Kendra Patrika, "Green Path Finders-II" being released by Swami Vimurtananda