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Samaanee va aakootihi
samaanaa hridayaani vaha
samaanamastu vo mano
yathaa vaha susahaasati

**Common be your inclinations. Be your hearts of one accord. May
you all be of one mind. May all live well together.**

Rigveda : X.191.4

Editorial

Determined leader and a disciplined worker

Every time we go through the book Story of Rock Memorial, it gives us a surprise and makes us feel that we are reading it for the first time. It's because of the ability of the man who made the insurmountable into a possibility. The sheer determination to accomplish the task against all odds makes Mananeeya Eknathji Ranade stand out even among the crowd of illustrious social workers. All the requisites for an efficient leader were present in him. Perseverance, dedication, being one with the mission for which he is working, ability to win people without stooping, capacity to transfer the vision with clarity to the next generation, pro active working catering to the future centuries are the qualities which one may find in him, even when they go through his work. To get inspired one need not be his contemporary. Some of the qualities were innate and some cultivated by his long association with Rashriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. One may wonder what Shri Eknathji would have done in present day situation, which are becoming a quagmire for us, as our society is beleaguered by the challenges it is facing from various dimensions. Surely, a man of his quality is direly needed as the challenges are multidimensional and multinational. The construction of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial was by no means an ordinary task. The project faced all kinds of oppositions right from the beginning, from political, communal, financial and as it happens always a complete indifference from the society for which it is addressed. But Shri Eknathji changed the scenario to our advantage making it appear as a

cake walk. But in reality it was an arduous task. This will come to light if we remember the vital statistics. One crore and thirty lakhs for the completion of the project in a period when people used to buy houses for few thousands even in metros; Getting 323 members of the parliament to toe his line and that too within two days; Diffusing a communal problem at the budding stage itself which is the master stroke, as we know that national interest will always be the one to suffer when politicians are asked to choose between minority interest; Political oppositions were managed in a apolitical manner; Making the society feel one with work through their contributions. And this is not all. He served the ace when the project got completed, starting Vivekananda Kendra, a spiritually oriented service mission. All these will make him appear supra normal, but he was one who can be a fine example of Swamiji's quotation, that each soul is potentially divine. The uniqueness is shraddha, which can be faintly translated as discipline, which made him special. Eknathji and shraddha are synonyms. It is this discipline which made him a worker worth emulating and it is the same discipline which made him a leader par excellence. With this component, shraddha, we too can surmount all challenges. We too can rise above normal human capabilities and unleash our hitherto hidden force. This is the message he leaves for us. The task of not making Swami Vivekanandas and Eknathjis appear as super heroes coming out of Dolton Comics for the future generations, lies in our hand.

V.V.Balasubramanian
Editorial Team

Art of Negotiation

Harvard business review's book is a revisit of Eknathji's approach

Srinivasa Desikan

I happened to be reading the "Story of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial" - a very interesting book, describing momentous events though much of it is not popularly known. What struck me, as it would everybody reading the book, was how Eknathji dealt with people who turned out to be hindrances to the construction of the rock memorial and handled situations that would have daunted the most sincere workers. 'Dealt' and 'Handled' would be understatements - he indeed turned them around to the advantage of the causes he was almost obsessed with - the construction of the memorial and the establishment of the Vivekananda Kendra.

Probably the most remarkable revelation was when I realized that the book that I was reading was a real-life application of some concepts that were published in a book that I had read just before this one - a book on negotiation by the Harvard Business Review. The reason it was so remarkable was the fact that the Harvard Business Review was published in 2003, four full decades after Eknathji had used them in dealing with adamant politicians, proud businessmen and very difficult people in responsible positions. I am sure a lot more incidents went unrecorded even in The Story of the Rock



Memorial, but the following is an attempt to highlight just a few of these events that indicate Eknathji's intense commitment and resourcefulness based on incidents narrated in the book.

The Harvard Business Review on Negotiation advises that we should systematically remove alternatives of the other side and "alter the process in our favour". Eknathji had done exactly that. He approached each

potential opponent and made them a Vice President of the State Committee. He notes there were 8 Vice-Presidents (all of them ex-Chief Ministers) from all political parties, people who otherwise will not even think of being seen together were not just willing, but happy to lend their names to this movement. A notable case is that of gaining Shri. C.N. Annadurai's permission for the project. With the rock falling under Tamilnadu's control and the State being in the grip of the atheist movements, it was important that a tall figure from within that movement approve of the project, lest some opportunist raise an issue and halt the project for petty gains.

The way Shri Humayun Kabir, the then Cultural Affairs Minister, was made to agree with the project going ahead is another case in point. Eknathji, after being co-opted as the Organizing Secretary on 11th Aug 1963, moves to Calcutta on 29th Aug. On 2nd Sept he organizes a press meet presenting the fact that Humayun Kabir was not co-operating for the project. Opposing a project for Vivekananda will be disastrous for a politician in Bengal, and almost immediately, Humayun Kabir consents. We can safely presume that such work could not have been fully organized in only the 3 days that Eknathji was there in Calcutta. He most probably had it all planned out and prepared before even leaving for Calcutta.

As one can imagine, none of the Vice-Presidents would have been easy catches. With the rock memorial construction taking on religious overtones and the Indian polity being so bent on a "clean image", the incident of how Shri Jyoti Basu, the veteran communist leader was approached is probably indicative of how the others would have reacted as well. Shri Jyoti Basu starts off in a very hostile tone, even refusing to accept that Eknathji has come to the correct person. "There are 6-7 Jyoti Basus here... Somebody has misguided you" "Vivekananda Rock Memorial and all these things are far away from my mind. I don't think you can have any work with me" he tells Eknathji. By the end of the discussion, Shri Jyoti Basu is almost worried that he cannot directly participate because of his party compulsions. But he is firm that he cannot participate. Eknathji comes up with an alternative – Shri. Jyoti Basu's wife, not being a member of the party, is not bound by its diktats. One can understand how relieved Shri Basu would have been. This method, of not

compromising even though the other side has drawn a line and said "no further", but looking for creative solutions is also mentioned in the HBR as one of the key capabilities of a successful negotiator. We are advised to approach a negotiation with "an open mind, not being rigid" and to aim for "creative outcomes" instead of just haggling to satiate egos and losing the objective. If one was filled with a sense of pride because of the scale or importance of the project, he would have given up on Shri Basu right at the door step when he says he cannot have anything to do with such a project. Eknathji on the other hand, turns the whole situation around – a milestone in inter-personal skills.

But this process of identifying creative alternatives has a limit. We don't see Eknathji looking only for creative alternatives. When decisions had to be made, they were made and firmly made. This aspect is seen throughout: the way he deals with Shri. P.T. Rajan when he wants to put a statue of the Raja of Ramnad on the rock, and with the Travancore Devaswom Board when they demanded that the Shripada Mandapam should be handed over to them, are probably indicative. Eknathji approached each one and kindly requested them to reconsider. They are politely informed about why their stand is not valid and detrimental to the cause. When they show themselves to be too confident of their positions and unwilling to reconsider, the other parties are bitterly reminded of Eknathji's correctness and firmness. We also see Eknathji's conviction that such a Memorial should not be built through agitations and other disruptive means. There was one "politically oriented sannyasi" (Eknathji is too polite to name him) who offered to fast unto death. Eknathji tells him that "the greatest service you can do to Swami Vivekananda is to keep quiet.

Don't come near the Vivekananda Rock. Don't talk about this project." The HBR names this "knowing when to walk away". Being creative in finding solutions doesn't apply everywhere and nor should that become an obsession.

Another important factor that HBR refers to the knowledge of the other side's "people, culture, their goals, and how they have framed the issue". Eknathji comes out as a master in this aspect. Time after time, he understands the real motivations of people who stand in the way and tactfully eases them out of the way. Convinced in the belief that there was a universal aspiration among all people regarding the future of India, and that it is only political affiliations that creates

differences among people, he deals with each issue most skillfully. The way Shri Bhaktavatsalam, the then Chief Minister of Tamilnadu is convinced is extremely important. Eknathji had known that Shri Bhaktavatsalam had visited the Kanchi Kamakoti Sankaracharya first after becoming the Chief Minister. On learning that the Acharya himself had given his blessings for the project, Bhaktavatsalam had no second thoughts – he immediately agrees. And agrees not just to a 15' x 15' tablet but a shrine-like structure which eventually turned out to be 180' x 56.5'.

Pure faith and conviction in our ideals and dharma can make each one a man with the capital M, and Eknathji is a shining example. ●

Chennai



MEMOIRS OF EKNATHJI

1. Padma Bhushan G P Birla, Chairman of Hindustan Motors recollected a trait of Mananeeya Shri Eknathji . Shri Eknathji would steadfastly write letters to all the well wishers of the Vivekananda Kendra Rock Memorial during the construction phase and all the patrons when Vivekananda Kendra came in to existence. Some of the leaders would be so busy that they might not send a reply to every one of the letters he would write. But still Eknathji knew that his letters will be read. Once Shri Birlaji would not send a reply for a number of years (perhaps 7 years). Still Mananeeya Eknathji was regular in his communications. Shri G P Birla made a special mention of it and supports Vivekananda Kendra Rural Development Project for the last 28 years.

That the response he continues to give to the letters of Eknathji.

2. Once the Bhuvaneshwar Branch of Vivekananda Kendra organized the Universal Brotherhood day in the press information auditorium. The event was very well publised in the both electronic and Print media . Getting this news an elderly lady waited for the Kendra Workers to come out after the programme. She said "Mananeeya Eknathji came to our house, had a cup of tea and told us about the Rock Memorial and the Kendra. I am happy to know that the organization has grown so big that it can hold a programme in such a large hall. I want the Kendra workers to come to my house and have a cup of tea so that I can relive that memory". Such was the influence Eknathji created over people.

Reader Voice

Last issue of Yuva Bharati was an eye opener for many like me as to the service activities done by Late Swami Lakshmananda Saraswati. Media doesn't bother to give us the right perspectives.

Krishnan
Chennai

It was very smoothening to note that a seminar was held on Nationalist lines in our capital. Such events should be held all over India and the messages of such events should reach all.

Mrs Sharadha Ramachandran
Chennai

Ek Nathji and Spirituality

B.Nivedita

Swami Vivekananda talked of 'Practical Vedanta'. Many persons like Swami Ranganathanandaji, Prof Kapila Chatterjee felt that Ek Nathji had understood the essence of Swami Vivekananda very aptly and had put it in action. Ek Nathji started Vivekananda Kendra an organisation which he has termed as a spiritually oriented service mission. Some persons also considered that the spiritual legacy of Sri Guruji was continued by Ek Nathji. With all this background it would be informative and inspiring to know how spirituality was expressed in the life of Ek Nathji. To put it in other words, real spirituality is always practical, vibrant and dynamic as is seen in the life of Ek Nathji.

Unfortunately, due to various reasons, the foreign invasions and the all round degradation that had set in during British period, a spiritual nation like India had lost the real meaning of Spirituality. Spirituality in its degenerated and misinterpreted form got expressed in our nation in various degraded forms. Either it was other-worldliness or escapism from the duties and responsibilities, or sort of mental dependence or incapacity to be responsible for one's own progress or by conforming only to the outward forms. Painfully, spirituality in a spiritual nation had become a refuge of hypocrites.

Other-worldliness or escapism is to shirk the



Ek Nathji with Pujya Swami Ranganathananda

responsibility of what is happening around us, not to be concerned and connected to the people around. This attitude expresses in many ways like not taking care of one's own family or not bothering about society, nation and culture saying 'whatever God wills will happen'. Many persons project even their lack of cleanliness either personal and of their surroundings as their spirituality. In society there are people who comment that 'so and so is a very spiritual person. He never bothers to oil or comb his hair or does not even wear chappals, wears unkempt clothes' etc. What is spirituality in this? Ek Nathji always stressed that if we are going to communicate the good thoughts then we should also be presentable. Not ostentatious but neatly and modestly dressed. Spirituality is expressed in care and respect we show even to our

surroundings.

The other-worldly people say 'what to do man proposes and god disposes.' Eknathji never agreed with this. He used to take full one hour class for the Karyakartas saying it was other way round actually, 'God proposes and man disposes' by not rising to the occasions. He always stressed that the difficulties are opportunities in disguise. In Kendra Prarthana he has given this in two beautiful lines. 'Iha Jagati sada nastyaga sevatomabodhai bhavatu vihata vigna dhyeya marganuyatra.' By continuous practice of Tyaga, Seva and Atmabodha (Tyaga- renunciation of the ego that I have done this, seva- doing one's duty with surrender and conviction that I am the instrument in the hands of God and Atmabodha - conviction that I am not body but all-pervading Atman so working with confidence and also feeling of oneness with others) we can transform the difficulties into opportunities. For him a spiritual person – a person with knowledge of the Self - Atmabodha – was one who took on difficulties and never ran away from it because this person knows that he has all the capacity – the Atmashakti – to solve, face and cross over that difficulty. Eknathji himself never avoided difficulties and calamities like for example the construction of Vivekananda Rock Memorial, the floods of 1950s in the North East but with all preparation and precision he took on them and successfully transformed them into opportunities.

A really spiritual person is very active and not passive looking vacantly in the sky. Srikrishna, Srirama, Adi Shankaracharya, Sivaji Maharaj, Srimanta Shankardeva and Swami Vivekananda all these persons worked ceaselessly, responded to the challenges in not just in personal life but also in the social and

national life. Eknathji also walked on the same path. For him spirituality was always expressed in responses to the situation around. Spirituality does not separate man from his surroundings but prepares and propels him to mould surrounding and situations as required and willed by God.

In the Bhagawadgita while describing the spiritual person it is said that he is Nitytripto, Nirashrayah – always contented and not dependent on anything. Really this means tapping the inexhaustible source of happiness and strength that is within us. We see many so-called spiritual persons who in order to avoid taking responsibility for one's own action or growth want to hide behind some pilgrimage or gurus or rituals. They do not want to strive but want a magic wand for their progress. Some persons find it difficult to be responsible for their actions and their own future. So they want to find 'security' in someone or something. Therefore continuously they want either some body is talking to them, or caring for them. It is reflected in certain habits like some people always want to talk to others on mobile. If a call does not come they feel neglected. Some just keep purchasing things so that they want to feel being valued on the cost of that. But no person or a thing can give that happiness permanently. Infinite happiness cannot come from finite things.

Actually such moments of restlessness, inadequacy or helplessness are the ones when we should turn to the inexhaustible source within us and not search happiness outside in persons or things. This is what Eknathji did in life and also guided the Karyakartas to do. In "Sadhana of Service" he says that, "All other help may fail, but there is a power within you which will never let you down. It is your own

Self. Depend on it and march ahead with unceasing prayer to God to give you strength to fulfil His will”

Many times there is hypocrisy also in the practice of spirituality. A person may pose that he has no ego but the ego is very much there. For example some say 'I do not want name or fame' but their sense of owning one's name and desire for fame do not go away. If a person whom they have developed starts respecting some other person also, they feel hurt. But in Eknathji's life it is seen that his humility of not having his name anywhere either written on Rock Memorial or even in the invitation card of inauguration program was real and not a faked one. When the time came for handing over the ferry service to Government he was unaffected and consoled other workers.

In the name of spirituality some persons sacrifice the interest of the collective/organisation like 'this is my principle, I have given the word so I should do it' or 'how can I hurt so and so otherwise what he would think of me if I do not accept whatever suggestions are given by him?' Or 'What right I have to hurt others or it is sin to hurt others' etc. In short, the principle is compromised under the name of spirituality but actually to cover one's cowardice or incompetence or unwillingness to work harder. In Eknathji's life, it is very amazing, he never compromised the interest of the organisation but he also maintained good relations with all types of persons. He believed that if our motives are pure then if we talk heart to heart we can always find a common ground to function together with any one. He could convince anyone to support the national cause he was working for. This is real spiritual power that you can work with anyone without



Eknathji with Paramacharya of Kanchi

compromising principles. The organisation and national interest was never sacrificed and yet people were brought together. This is real spiritual power and spiritual work which ultimately made him Ajatshatru He did not go in search of making himself Ajatshatru as that would have been selfish and ultimately defeating the very purpose for which he was working. .

For Eknathji the spirituality meant living in the present with higher aim. Even if harmed by others his heart never had one bad word or thought for that person. Even when the Christians opposed the building of Vivekananda Rock Memorial he never allowed any one to say that Christians opposed this work. But also he was a person who would not sacrifice the truth. He would say as well as made it a point that others in the Rock Memorial Committee say that 'a section of a Christian community had opposed the memorial'. Not that he had disregard to the temple but he worshipped the living God. Thus never he missed Shakha or meeting people or spreading the work of service as far as Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh.

Eknathji did not fall in the trap of 'service' as is established by the Christian missionaries

where the weaknesses of the people like poverty, sickness, ignorance etc are exploited to serve their purpose of conversion. Eknathji termed such service as trade. An act of service which awakens the potential divinity in man is real service to an individual. But the supreme most act of service according to Eknathji was evolving rebuilding a nation with strife less society. Thus to the Kendra Karyakartas he told that, "If we are merely a service-oriented organisation, we will have to pray to God to create cyclones, floods, famines and accidents to provide us opportunities of service. Service with a spiritual orientation results in man-making which is invariably and inseparably connected with nation-building." A spiritual person who sees oneness everywhere alone could think of such deeper and wide-ranging concept of service. This is what has been the tradition of our country. But Eknathji understood internalised

and then presented it so well that he created support from all sides for the work. A spiritual person does not pamper the weakness of others but really brings out the best in them, the higher qualities in them.

Eknathji knew how to harness the power of 'here and now'. He was never seen lacking in the effort. In no undertaking it could be said that he did not do his best. Thus nothing was impossible for him. He was never seen complaining about others or the situation. He would fight with all his might for the desired result and if the result did not come at that time he would just smile and move ahead. For a person with patience, perseverance and purity the ultimate success is always assured. Free like an air, never he got stuck up with the happenings or persons or opinions or setbacks. More we study the life of Eknathji we see really how real spirituality expresses in action and attainments.



E – Humour

N. Krishnamoorti

S hri Eknathji Ranade, the spirit behind the Vivekananda Rock Memorial and the Founder of the Vivekananda Kendra, was a person of very serious concerns and their meaningful pursuits. There was no time in his life for trivialities, frivolities.

But like great men everywhere, he had a delightful sense of humour, which would sparkle in his speeches and light up his writings. He had a rich fund of stories both historical and pauranic. His long years of experience as a public figure have enriched life with very illustrative anecdotes. His speeches and lectures were very authentic not only because of his experience, but also because he would use the nuggets of wisdom experienced, very appropriately. Some of the stories he told and retold in his classes acquired a proverb - like sheen. Naturally they have become the stock-in-trade for Kendra-speakers.

The story of a hotelier serving rasagollas to his late-night guests is such a tale. The hotelier showed extra courtesy in serving the rasagollas, He would not charge the customers for them "any way he was going to throw them, to the dogs." A man not good enough for his worldly pursuit, seeking to 'dedicate' himself to public service is symbolized by the rasagolla.



Not all his tales and parables were deliberate and constructed diligently. Some of them were ready wit, spontaneously produced to manage a situation. Then the very situation would add to the depth of humour.

He would ask the trainees to develop immense patience, if they were to emerge as good leaders. A leader in an organization should develop a big stomach to swallow problems, difficulties, surprises and shocks, losses and face the general human frailty he would say. He was somewhat large-bellied. Once he was talking to a group on the benefits of Yoga. An Arunachali boy with his typical innocence asked, "If yoga can reduce the bulk, why do you have a big stomach?"

An ordinary person would have been upset by this unseemly comment. But not Sri Eknathji. He said, "It is only because of Yoga, my stomach is this big. Otherwise it would have been much bigger!" A hearty laughter by his listeners diffused a prickly situation.

His humour would never hurt an individual or laugh at a person's handicaps. It would pity the human frailty and laugh at the general human failures. Talking about human beings wasting their intelligence in mere variety in

food, instead of seeking higher things in life, Sri Eknathji would say. 'A pig would not need variety in food. Day after day, it would consume cabbage and ask for nothing more. But alas Man! He wants his rice to be converted into a variety of food items; a dish should not be repeated!'

His innate simple habits went well us a social worker, working and visiting odd places and travelling at odd hours.

These would create some unintended humour. Once in 1980 Shri Eknathji along with an Educational consultant and myself left Delhi for Udaipur very early in the morning.

It was breakfast time, when we reached somewhere beyond Bhilwara. Shri Eknathji without much ado, stopped the car, entered a road side dhabha and ordered some puries and vegetables. I ate with him the simple fare. But our third companion used to five-star comforts looked lost. Sri Eknath looked at him and simply said, 'have something' His invitation and example persuaded the consultant partake of the rural delicacies though some what unwillingly. It was with difficulty that I could stifle my laughter.

Sri Eknathji was known for pun, using words to give extra meaning Slesha. His speeches and writings are strewn with deft use of pun. Once a worker Abhyankar was posted in the area in which I was working. Sri Eknathji introduced us saying that the new worker was Abhayankar – not to be afraid of . The ice was broken and a working rapport was built immediately between us.

Not all humour was born of lighter moments. Lecturing in the re-unification of the Hindus and re-welding them into a meaningful society,



Sri Eknathji would quote Bibin Chandra Pal who said "If all of us would stand up and spit at the same time, the English would be drowned in the flood of the spittle." Alas! we could not even spit at the enemy at one time.

Sri Eknathji's correspondence is also peppered with spicy humour. To a newly married worker, he wrote "the world will appear more beautiful to you now, because you are now blessed with an additional pair of eyes."

Humour is a sensitive weapon. If used carelessly, it would cut, hurt and wound. But e-Humour, his Humour never hurt, it healed, solved problems, mended relations, bonded people in healthy links of love and service. If some one could collect the parables, tales, anecdotes, jokes, puns and stories from his books, editorials, tapes and letters and personal memories inlaid in the hearts of his co-workers, it would make a delightful bouquet – deeply meaningful, warm and apt.



Ek Nathji on National Security

A. Balakrishnan

Swargeeya Eknathji Ranade, the spirit behind the Vivekananda Rock Memorial and Vivekananda Kendra, dedicated his life for the service of Bharat Mata and her children, at an early age. Immediately after writing his B.A. examination, without waiting for the results to be out, he volunteered to become a RSS Pracharak.

He was thoroughly inspired by Swami Vivekananda's life and message and decided to work for the cause of Bharat by serving her children and to create a vibrant Hindu society.

He was a great strategist, and a daring personality. This can be seen from his various dare devil actions while as a Pracharak in RSS and then during the campaign for the construction of Vivekananda Rock Memorial at Kanyakumari.

As a true son of Bharat Mata, he was greatly concerned about the nation's security. He firmly believed that India is a land of religion and spirituality. The true soul of India is Hindu Dharma. While writing to one of the workers of the Kendra he put it in very unambiguous



manner that the very purpose of his life was to carry the message of Sanatana Dharma to each and every household. It is only by resuscitating Sanatana Dharma that Bharat can regain her lost glory and become again Jagatguru for the entire humanity.

While talking to the Jeevan Vratis, he highlighted the various challenges Bharat has to face in the coming days. He was for the creation of a vibrant Hindu society which would firmly and effectively deal with all the challenges confronting the nation's security.

His concern for the security of majority of Hindu society could be noticed from the discussions he had in 1963, with late Bhaktavatsalam, Former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. While discussing with the Chief Minister, Shri Eknathji said:-

"It may be true that you can remain unaffected in spite of the strong sentiments of 45 crores of Hindu people in the country but all the same I honestly feel that you have been already cowed down by a small section of Christian

fanatics at Kanyakumari.”

Ekmathji was deeply concerned about widespread prozelitisation carried out by the various Christian denominations all over the country, in general and in Kanyakumari district, in particular.

After the devastating Islamic conversion in Meenakshipuram and Ramanathapuram regions of Tamil Nadu, which occurred in 1980, Vivekananda Kendra started large scale service activities for the poorer sections as directed by Ekmathji. He was very much concerned by the large scale conversion of innocent and poor Hindu people by appeasement, coercion and intimidation by the anti-Hindu forces.

During one of his visits to Assam in 1975, when it was brought to his notice about the large scale infiltration of Muslims from Bangladesh, he immediately said, this could be a great threat to our nation's security and therefore all out efforts should be made to organize all the Hindus of Assam and awaken their dormant spirit. He said that our government would not take any action to stop the unauthorized inflow of Bangladeshis, unless and until the Hindus all over the country raised their voice in an organized manner keeping the national security uppermost in their conscience.

To another question, Sri Ekmathji said that the Hindus who were being tortured and forced out of Bangladesh were refugees and therefore it was the duty of Assami Hindus to give them shelter and protection. Whereas, the Muslims entering into India from Bangladesh are land grabbers and part and parcel of demographic aggression of Assam. These systematic and schemed aggressions would gradually destroy the cultural mosaic of Assam and would become

a threat to India's unity, integrity and cultural oneness. All the nationalist minded people irrespective of caste, color, creed, political affiliation should join hands and destroy the calculated and scheming attempt made by the anti-national forces within and from outside the country.

Ekmathji gave topmost priority for Kendra's work in Arunachal Pradesh. He was in no doubt that the attack of India by China in 1962, was not only to establish its claim over Arunachal Pradesh but also to extend its hegemony over North east India and up to Bay of Bengal. He felt that there was only one way by which India could thwart the attempt of China occupying vast tract of Indian land, which was by creating nationalist consciousness in the minds of Arunachalee people towards India. People of that region should owe everything to India for which Kendra should take up number of service activities and bring the people to our fold. After 30 years of incessant service activities by Kendra, to-day the people of Arunachal Pradesh are totally loyal to India and it is not going to be an easy cakewalk for China, as it happened in 1962.

At the very inception of Kendra movement, Ekmathji's strategy was to penetrate the isolated and virgin areas of tribal parts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Orissa, Chota Nagpur region, Andaman Islands, which are the potential breeding grounds for the anti-national forces paving way for definite foreign cultural invasion.

He used to quote Kashmir valley as an example, from where the Hindus were driven out, maimed and butchered by the Muslims who form the majority community. Whenever

and wherever Hindus become minority, the history is a witness to us that they met with most unholy treatment resulting in either mass conversion at the point of sword or mass exodus losing all their material possession.

He was of the opinion that Kendra's service activities should be mainly for two reasons: Firstly, it should alleviate the sufferings of the Hindu people. Secondly, it should cultivate among the people such values like organized way of living, national consciousness, and pride in Bharatiya Culture. He used to quote often from Swami Vivekananda "Then and then alone you are a Hindu, when the very name sends through you a galvanic shock of strength. All our hatchets let us burry: send out this grand current of love all round".

Today our Bharat is facing challenges within, mainly from three sources. One, Islamic fundamentalism, two, Christian conversion leading to denationalization and three, from Maoists bent upon indulging in widespread destruction of property and killing of innocent people for bringing out a political power change by major upheaval!.

The solution to face these challenges is not to look to the feeble governmental efforts, but to organize the Hindu Society by arousing their Antar Atma. This calls for highest form of sacrifices and dedications. Eknathji used to say,

"We Hindus strongly believe in re-birth. The present birth is not accidental and not the final one. We had many many past lives; we shall have many more future lives. Then why not give the present life to Bharat Mata by dedicating ourself at her feet in order to become a small weapon in Her hand to destroy all the evil forces confronting her to-day from various sides, from within and without. Bharat Mata is Dasaprharanadarini. Let us all become weapons in her hands to destroy all the evil forces and thus make our life sublime".

"I am superior to many, I am inferior to few, but nowhere am I the last, I can also do something".

-Nachiketa – Kathopanishad.

Eknathji Speaks

" No person is to be rejected as useless, unworthy or invincible. There is no letter which cannot be used as a sacred chant, there is no root which is not medicinal, there is no person who is unworthy, only the proper organiser is difficult to find"



Know Thyself - Grow Thyself - 4

(Self Development Series)

Don't be Timid

Sqn.Ldr.Dr.P.Ramani

Soft skills are non-technical competences that include communication skills, presentation skills, persuasion skills, self-confidence, management of change developing right attitudes, interpersonal skills, personal management skills, customs, culture, manners, etiquette, protocol, moral and ethical code, group discussion skills, interview skills and telephone skills. An important sub-skill of soft skills namely, 'self-confidence' is the most crucial and fundamental to the successes of all human beings.

All living things are god's creations. Every living thing has a fundamental right to live on the earth though we believe in the 'survival of the fittest' theory. However, we will do well to stay confidently to face any challenge in life.

What is confidence?

Whenever we feel secure, we feel confident. When we were young, we felt secure to be in the company of our loved ones especially the mother, the father and other siblings. As we grew, we felt secure and confident in the company of the familiar ones, friends and others. Thus confidence is always associated



with a secure feeling, a happy feeling, an energized feeling, a light hearted feeling without stress or tension, a state in which one can trust and believe and be sure about one's abilities and qualities.

Confidence is the real threshold and springboard to all successes in life. When a person feels secure, he has a great sense of confidence. A confident person's mind is ignited by a kind of fire and the person who has this fire in him throws light around and the entire space gets radiated. A confident person always believes in throwing up this energy around him. He doesn't suspect anyone around. He is open and committed to act both as a team leader and a team player. For someone to act as a leader requires extraordinary levels of knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes. He should be

guided by a strict ethical code and moral code. All his efforts should be oriented towards promotion and well-being of the members of the group or society. Confidence can be acquired at any point of time. People around should facilitate in igniting the fire of confidence in everyone.

Initially we should get support from the parents and the teachers. When we face the world of work, colleagues, administrators, employers, members of the community, government and others shall endeavour to provide a secure ambience which will make the employees feel confident. Confident individuals contribute to better working atmosphere and productivity levels. Any organization with its band of employees who are confident create a sense of belongingness and a strong bond among its members promoting healthy relationships.

Beware of the factors that affect confidence levels

- Criticism by friends, colleagues.
- Absence of encouragement.
- Choice of wrong goals and objectives and strategies.

Act Confidently / Courageously

- You must believe you are confident
- Believe that you can do / achieve anything
- Sport a feeling of confidence
- Appear confident
- Sound confident
- Believe in your confidence
- Act confidently
- Think confidently
- Motivate yourself to become confident
- Set your goals confidently
- Be non-chalant in the face of criticism

because of the strong sense of self-esteem.

- Learn to think objectively and act confidently even during testing situations.

Developing confidence

Ask the following questions and find answers.

Do you know how much self esteem you have?

Are you getting worried about the mistakes you make?

How do you face criticism?

Do you withdraw yourself and lie low because you feel guilty?

Or do you blame others for the mistake you have made?

Do you indulge in self-pity?

First, you will have to feel responsible for making any mistake.

A word of caution. When you feel responsible for the mistake you have made, please do remember that you cannot go to the extent of hating yourself. Self-esteem helps you to learn from mistakes. Perhaps you gather confidence and take care not to repeat the mistakes. Self-esteem levels have a definite bearing on your decisions, your attitudes, your loyalties, your relationships etc.

Developing self-esteem

How do you develop self-esteem?

First, make an introspection and make a serious self-analysis and identify your strengths and weaknesses. Explore how your weaknesses / failures can be at best exploited to render them as benefits.

Secondly, when you make a mistake, don't try to curse yourself. Learn from the past mistakes. Develop positive attitude and avoid negative attitude.

Thirdly, never indulge in comparing yourself with the others. If you compare yourself with others, you may feel that you are inadequate and start cursing yourself.

Set your goals, targets and create a benchmark to achieve them and work untiringly to achieve them. At every stage, do not wait for the approval or praise from someone. Think and believe you are the deciding factor and do praise yourself for good work you have done. The moment you achieve your target, you feel motivated and you will want to reach greater heights. The best way to reach your targets will be through a sound training in effective communication skills, interpersonal skills and team work and leadership skills. Your self-esteem is bound to scale great heights.

Some more tips to feel confident

- Be friendly and open.
- Infect the atmosphere/environment with your smile/ warmth/ love/ affection.
- Establish a strong eye contact.
- Cultivate a natural friendly expression.
- Evince interest in people and their activities.
- Talk to people looking into their eyes and get interested in listening to them.
- Display appropriate body language and ensure a secure ambience.
- Do appear in such a way that you are able to make a definite mark on your identity.
- Cultivate good habits.
- Dress appropriately. Do not wear gaudy dress.

Remember the colours and garments that will suit you most.

Control your voice and project it through an appropriate voice modulation effort.

Speak maintaining appropriate level of tone (rising tone, falling tone, etc)

Speak at a pace that can be followed by your audience (adhere to breath group and sense group technique allowing pauses appropriately)

Establish an excellent rapport following good conversational style (which is a strong indicator of the confidence level)

Beyond Physical Ambience

Seek inner enlightenment

Be calm and composed

Overcome any nervousness

Try to lead a healthy life

(Health is wealth and ill health affects your mental state)

Seek peace through prayer and meditation

Accept anything as they confront you (and undertake mid course correction later)

Concentrate on every task you undertake.

Be aware of what you do.

Believe you can do anything and everything

Set aside sometime for you to relax

Meditate at least for fifteen minutes in the morning and fifteen minutes in the evening.

Be conscious of everything happening around and watch as an outsider objectively.

Choose great role models, (great achievers, thinkers, leaders, teachers, social workers, scientists, philosophers, humanists, etc) and emulate them

Trust in you, you are the maker of your destiny.

The Narmada Parikrama

(Clockwise circumambulation of River Narmada)

K.K.VENKATRAMAN

8



Offer – refusal and consequence (continued)

As I was trying to recollect the happenings of the day, I suddenly remembered the incident, which took place in the morning. I refused to accept the heart-felt offer of a sincere person. Now, I was convinced that non-availability of food that day was the punishment for my arrogance, which I deserved. Next morning, I left the place early without tea and after covering about 5 kms, reached a village where a villager offered me tea. He requested me to have lunch with him and I readily agreed. I narrated the previous day's incident to him. When he came to know that, I had not had food the previous day, he immediately offered roasted

groundnut and another cup of tea to appease my hunger till lunch was ready.

Keeping the morale high and the flag flying

It is not an easy task walking all alone continuously for days together. The monotony, physical discomfort and fear would force a person to give up. Expeditions of adventure are undertaken by people in groups to keep the morale of the participants high.

Narmada Parikrama being a divine mission, I never felt lonely and the thought of giving up never occurred to me. I always kept my goal (reaching the Source of Narmada at

Amarkantak) in front of me and as I took a step forward, the goal was nearer by one step. Before commencing the Parikrama, I made a resolved not to leave the bank of Narmada without completing the Parikrama. This was always in my mind, carrying me forward to my destination.

I had thrice sent a common letter to our 13 schools in Arunachal Pradesh addressed to our Administrative Headquarters at Dibrugarh in Assam. My brother-worker Shri M. Satyanarayananji meticulously planned the despatch of these letters to all the schools giving clear instructions for sending the replies to me. I received all the letters sent by our students and teachers. This would not have been possible without his enthusiastic help. The replies received from our students were a great morale booster for me.

At times, when the morale began to sag due to overstretching of the capacity to endure physical discomfort, I used to recollect the thrilling stories of adventurers who had successfully undertaken more arduous tasks.

- a) Charles Augustus Lindbergh, an American Pilot was the first to fly across the Atlantic Ocean in May 1927 in 33 hours and 30 minutes.
- b) Sir Edmund Percival Hillary (New Zealand) and Tenzing Norgay (Bhutan) were the first to climb Mount Everest in May 1953.
- c) Mihir Sen was the first to swim across the Palk Strait from Talaimannar (Sri Lanka) to Dhanushkoti (India) in April 1966 in 25 hours and 44 minutes.

Completion of the Parikrama

On Day 130, I reached the Ramakrishna Kutir at Amarkantak after covering more than 2,500 Kms. From there the source of Narmada is 1 Km ahead. Before returning to the source, one has to visit Jwaleshwar temple about 7 Kms away from the river towards North and go round the garden of Mother Narmada at Amarkantak and then enter the temple of Narmada to complete the Parikrama.

On Day 131, (Friday, 4th March 1988), I visited Jwaleshwar temple, went round the garden of the Mother walking 20 Kms. and reached the source of Narmada in the temple. As per the tradition, I poured out some water from the bottle I was carrying into the water at the source and filled the half empty bottle with the water at the source.

After spending two days at the Ramakrishna Kutir sharing my experiences with the monastic members, I went to Omkareshwar and offered the holy water to Omkareshwar Mahadev as per tradition and completed the Parikrama.

It is customary for one who has completed the Parikrama, to offer Pooja to nine small girls, give them new clothes and feed them as a gesture of thanksgiving for the Bhiksha received during the Parikrama and for the abundant grace of the Mother which alone enables one to overcome successfully the difficulties. This ceremony was arranged by my mother during my short stay at home after the Parikrama.

Distance and Number of Days Bank-wise and State-wise

Distance

State →	M.P.	Maha-Rashtra	Gujarat	Total
South Bank	940 Km	70 Km	172 Km	1,182 Km
North Bank	1,130 Km	---	216 Km	1,346 Km
Total	2,070 Km	70 Km	388 Km	2,528 Km

Number of Days

State →	M.P.	Maha-rashtra	Gujarat	Total
South Bank	48 days	3 days	10 days	61 days
North Bank	55 days	---	14 days	69 days
Total	103 days	3 days	24 days	* 130 days

South Bank to North Bank sailing through the Sea by boat - 1 day (Total - 131 days)

Average distance covered per day - 19.5 Kms. (approx.)

Number of places in which halted more than one night - 5

GUJARAT

Dhanpore (53, 54); Katpore (60, 61); Malsar (68, 69).

M.P.

Nemawar (94, 95); Mandla (118, 119)

Note: The numbers within brackets indicate the Day of the Parikrama.

The distance on the North Bank is more. Because of the construction of dams across the river, large areas on the North Bank have come under submergence and one has to make a detour walking away from the river.

(to be continued)

Vivekananda Kendra – Kanyakumari Akhil Bharatiya Adhikari Baithak 2008 - A Report



Bhajan Sandhya

The 3-day (18-20 October 2008) Akhil Bharatiya Adhikari Baithak 2008 of Vivekananda Kendra's 219 Adhikaris who represent different branch centers and projects from all over the country was concluded on 20th with the blessings of Almighty, specially by Varun (Rain God) and Arun (Sun God) Devatas' at its Headquarters.

The Baithak started on 18 October with the participation of Vibhag, Prant and above level Adhikaries. This was only the preparation of next two days Baithak in which Nagar level Adhikaris later joined. Ma. Parameswaranji, the President of the Organization, guided the Adhikaris on the "Role of Adhikaris". He said, "We have to look at the individual as a whole and not to confine ourselves alone. Then only

Karyakarta Nirman in real sense is possible". He asked Vibhag, Prant and above level Adhikaris to guide all the Nagar level Adhikaris so that a strong and competent Nation can be built. More and more college level activities have to be started. This will help to search for potential Karyakartas. The Adhikaris have to see that the Karyakartas are trained according to the need of the organization.

The formal inauguration was done by Ma. Parameswaranji on 19th morning at 9 a.m. when Nagar level Adhikaris also joined. He spoke on the theme of the Baithak "Chir Vijaya Ki Kamana Hi Rashtra Ka Adhar Hai" (The base of the Nation is the desire for absolute Victory). He emphasized that time to time many great



Participants in the Baithak

personalities have worked on this line and they have knit the whole nation giving them the confidence. He said, "Brahma Tejas and Kshatra



Concluding Session at the Rock Memorial

Veerya" both are very much necessary. The five personalities – Sri Krishna, Acharya Chanakya, Veer Shivaji, Swami Vivekananda and Mananeeya Eknathji were depicted on the theme 'back drop banner' as they were part of two great twins- Sri Krishna and Arjuna, Chanakya and Chandragupta, Samartha Ramdas and Shivaji, Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji, Sri Guruji and Ma. Eknathji. They have worked for the whole country and brought back the lost confidence.

Two Prabodhans were given – on "Family and National Security" by Shri Balakrishnanji and on "Vijay Hi Vijay" by Kum B. Nivedita, both Vice-Presidents. The concluding ceremony of the 3-day Baithak was on the Vivekananda Rock Memorial in the evening of 20th.



MANGALORE

Universal Brotherhood Day was celebrated on 11th September at two places. Smt. Leela Upadhyaya, Principal, Sharada Pre-University College, spoke on the importance of the day.

On 14th, Free Eye Camp was arranged with the collaboration of A.J. Medical College. Dr. Asha Achar and Prof. Ram Mohan Rao treated the patients.

Earlier on 1st September, inter-school culture competition was conducted in which 180 students from 21 schools participated.

BARIPADA

A cultural competition was held on 26th August in which 228 students of 8 colleges attended.

Universal Brotherhood day was celebrated. Dr. Padmini Tripathy, Retd. Prof. in Sanskrit, was the main speaker. There was a good gathering. Earlier, cultural competitions in Patriotic songs, Quiz, Elocution, etc. were conducted for the school students.

CHENNAI

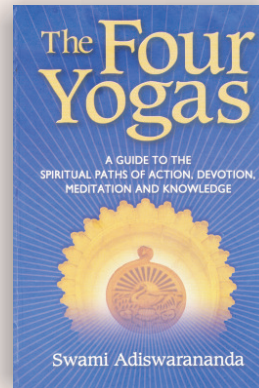
A 3-day Residential Karyakarta Orientation Camp was held in September in which 12 Karyakartas attended. Sri Satish Chowkulkar, Life Worker, conducted the Camp.

On the occasion of 9-day Navaratri Festival, a Kolu was beautifully displayed by the Karyakartas. Music programmes were conducted on all the 9 days. Around 600 people attended these programmes.

Book Review

The Four Yogas

Published by : Sri Ramakrishna Math
Mylapore, Chennai -600 004.
Pages : 277
Price : Rs.200/-



The book under review **The Four Yogas** by **Swami Adiswarananda** is an Indian Edition of original work published by Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre New York (USA). This edition is brought out by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai – 4. The author, a monk of Sri Ramakrishna Math (1925-2007) was a deep thinker and forceful speaker on Yoga Philosophy and Vedanta. The book draws its basis the four paths of Yoga from Swami Vivekananda's famous quote

Each Soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature: external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.

The author handles the theme in five sections – Part I The Way of Karma Yoga : The Path of Action, Part II The Way of Bhakti Yoga : The Path of Devotion, Part III The way of Raja Yoga : The Path of Meditation, Part IV. The way of Jnana Yoga: The Path of knowledge, Part V The Conclusion. The book is further enriched by Notes and Glossary and index to facilitate the un-initiated reader also. The each of these

sections are systematically laid in an order, namely : The Message, The Philosophy and Psychology, preparatory practice and further sections on the special dimension of each of the paths of the Yoga.

The Karma Yoga is accentuated with True Renunciation and its utility for self knowledge. The section on Bhakti Yoga is enriched with characteristics of the Teacher and Aspirant and its spiritual discipline. The section on Raja Yoga is strengthened by Sage Patanjali's Ashtang Yoga. The section on Jnana Yoga deals with self knowledge and various aspects of Liberation (Mukti). The section has extensively quotes from Bhagwad Gita and Upanishads. Cares have been taken by the author to point out at the obstacles in the each of these paths of yoga. The last section deals with the need of harmonising these multifold paths with an integrated approach. The book is helpful to the beginners as well as seasoned practioners of yoga philosophy.

The book would have been more appropriate for the target-Indian Reader, had the slokas from the scriptures had been quoted in original – Sanskrit or transliterated form. The book instead quotes from the translated version of the scriptures by the monks of the order. The book is immensely enriched with the original inspirer, Swami

Vivekananda's guidance and directions in verbatim.

--Satish S.Chowkulkar

