

YUVA BHARATI

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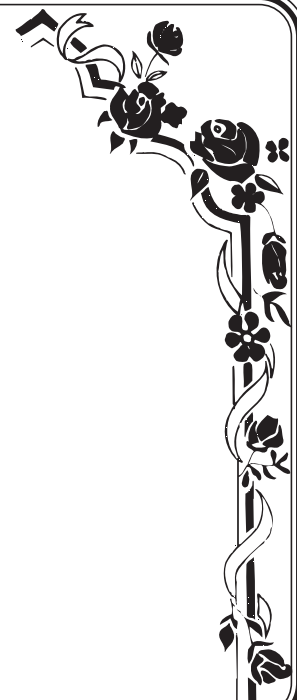
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प्रार्थना
INVOCATION



EDITORIAL



Spiritually Oriented Service

1 9 November - the birth anniversary of Mananeeya Eknathji, founder of Vivekananda Kendra, is celebrated in Kendra as Sadhana Diwas. This day is utilized by the Kendra Karyakartas to thoroughly understand the thoughts of Eknathji about this movement and internalize the same. This is the day on which each karyakarta takes up a specific responsibility in the Kendra Karya and all through the year puts forth his/her best efforts to fulfill it. Each citizen needs to understand the mission of our nation and strive hard to merge his individuality with it to make it the mission of his/her own. This alone is

the greatest Sadhana for every one at this precious moment in the life of our nation.

This motherland of ours has been charting her course to guide the humanity in spite of hundreds of years of persecution and nearly a thousand year of foreign rule and oppression. At every time of need, the deep conscience or the ethos of our Motherland responded to the peculiar situation or problem by bringing up a great personality or an organisation. Therefore each national, cultural and spiritual organization of this land represents a specific response of Mother India. Hence, to carry out the purpose of each organization, its Karyakartas have to understand what role they have to play and what 'need' they have to fulfill.

In this respect it would be worthwhile to see how Eknathji understood this need and how he placed the same before the Karyakartas of Vivekananda Kendra. He said, "People of our country are, by tradition, religion-minded and this country is therefore described as a land of religion and spirituality. Swami Vivekananda used to say that the soul of our country is in religion.

The highest and the ultimate goal, or Purushartha, aspired for by the people of our country is Mukti...

"If going to temples, visiting places of pilgrimage, participating in Bhajans, Yagnyas and Anusthanas as also listening to philosophical and religious discourses by millions of people, or the presence of numerous religious teachers, gurus and such other men of God all over the country are the manifestations of a growing religiosity, our country is, perhaps, more religious today than it ever was at any time in the past.

"But, unfortunately, the natural impact of this apparent God-wardness of the general society is little in evidence today. Purposeful living, discipline, character, truthfulness, fellow-feeling, fearlessness, subordination of the self and a zest for works of public good, which are some of the traits that develop in a God-ward society and which, we have enough evidence to say, existed in good measure in our country in the past, are seen fast disappearing from our midst. Ironically enough, with the apparent religious fervour presently on the increase, general corruption, indiscipline and other kinds of moral

degradation are also in the ascendant. How is this paradox to be explained?

"...Any discerning mind will be able to see that a distorted conception of religion is the root cause of most of our ills for the last several centuries, which persist even today. It is rightly said that religion is the soul of our country. But, as that itself is blurred, we have the sorry spectacle of deterioration all round.

"Religious awakening means experiencing the presence of God in one's own self and in the world. That makes one conscious of the divine within and urges him to work for its unfoldment and enables him to grow spiritually. Simultaneously, it generates in him a sense of oneness with God's creation and, consequently, an intense fellow-feeling for the members of his own species – the human race – and prompts him to work with zest for human welfare and progress... If, and as long as, the religious awakening intensifies on these lines, it is dynamic and full of tremendous potentialities for the transformation of humanity into higher and higher planes of existence. But, if it remains

limited to rituals, forms of worship and offerings to God, or prayers and praises addressed to Him, it becomes static and has hardly any role to play in human advancement.

“Swami Vivekananda was the foremost among the modern religious teachers who strove to take out religion from that static condition into which it had degenerated over the centuries, and drew the attention of the people to its real role. He pointed out in no uncertain terms that ceremonies and forms are not the essence of religion but that it lies rather in the realization of a higher life. He said, ‘We may study all the books that are in the world, yet we may not understand a word of religion or of God. ...Religion is not in doctrines or dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation. It is realisation in the heart of hearts; it is touching God; it is feeling, realising that I am a spirit in relation with Universal Spirit and all its great manifestations.’ To those who lost themselves only in forms and rituals, turning their back on the people and the misery that had befallen them, he said, ‘What vain gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the god that we see all

around us, the Virat (Janata Janardan) When we have worshipped this, we shall be able to worship all other gods.”

A Two-pronged Movement: The Need of the Hour: The remedy for the ills of our country, therefore, lies in launching a mighty movement of right thought sweeping the entire country. It has to be a two-pronged move. On the one hand, it is to be aimed at (1) transforming our people’s inherent God-wardness into the right spiritual urge rising out of the teachings of the Upanishads, namely, (a) each soul is potentially divine and (b) faith in God, in turn means faith in one’s self, i.e. in one’s potentiality to rise to divine heights. On the other hand, it is (2) to convert the spiritual fervour thus released into works of national reconstruction”.

Vivekananda Kendra works with the twin ideals of Man – making and Nation-building. Man-making means giving confidence to a person to rise to divine heights and work for the nation with a feeling of Oneness. Nation building is possible only by creating teams of such men who would take up the work of national reconstruction to fulfill her mission of

guiding the world in spirituality. Thus, the service activities of Kendra do not depend on the occurrence of cyclones, earthquakes, poverty etc. Mananeeya Eknathji says in 'Sadhana of Service', "If we are merely a service-oriented organization, 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. It is the core of all our thoughts behind this organization." Real service is awakening a person to his potential divinity and making him realise the purpose of life. The purpose of life also has to be the fulfillment of the mission of this nation. The mission of this nation has been to evolve an Ideal Social Order based on the vision of Oneness seen by the sages of our nation. This spiritually oriented service is what Kendra intends to do.

There is another dimension of spiritually oriented service too. Vivekananda Kendra is also considered as a thought movement. Which thought does Kendra want to work out as an organisation? Dharma

is the soul of this nation. But, if our understanding of Dharma gets limited to lifeless outer forms then the nation declines and the society becomes callous and indifferent. Its assertiveness is affected. Therefore, the need is to stress the right meaning of Dharma, to imbibe the life giving principles of Sanatana Dharma embedded in Upanishads, so that our life is transformed and our energies are channelised for rebuilding the nation. What are the sublime principles of Sanatana Dharma? The whole existence is the expression of the Divine and hence, the family, society, nation and the whole creation - ever expanding circles of Consciousness - are linked to each other. Each soul is potentially divine and the goal of life is to manifest that divinity. This manifestation is possible through Yoga - the time-tested science. This thought of Yoga - the way of life - is therefore to be propagated.

Yoga means uniting with the ever expanding, larger dimensions of our Self. It is integration with our nation. Making Yoga the core of each activity of Kendra means awakening the confidence in one's own divine nature

and in channelising the energy thus released for national reconstruction.

As per Patanjali Yoga Sutra, **Total surrender to God** is one of the ways of practicing Yoga. Kendra Karyakarta has to realize that he/she is the instrument in the hands of the Divine. This continuous Bhava of surrender in Karyakarta - of being the instrument of Divine - is the core of our work. Eknathji says in 'Sadhana of Service', "That service is the best and the noblest which is performed with the attitude of total surrender to God. ...It is the divine design that I should render service on His behalf. He desires the betterment of the world and I am being used as a tool or a means to carry out His design. I am just an instrument in His hands ...the action must be performed without any attachment but sincerely

and honestly to the best of our ability with an attitude of being a tool only. We have been called upon to execute whatever is essential and possible as willed by God. This is SERVICE. We are doing His work. Such work elevates us and leads to Self-realization, which is the supreme goal of human life."

As the service rendered with this bhava of being the instrument in the hands of God leads to self-realization, it is termed as "spiritually oriented service". Such surrender helps the karyakarta to merge with the organization and thereby strengthens it to carry out work of national reconstruction. To see Mother Bharat seated on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was, the need of the hour is to render such "spiritually oriented service".

--B.Nivedita



**SITA AND RAMA, THE IDEAL
ADMINISTRATORS**
DR.K.SUBRAHMANIAM



Nobody is a born sinner. Everybody is basically divine. An ideal administrator is one who sees the divinity in all. In spite of that intrinsic divinity, people may commit mistakes. And mistakes are no mistakes as long as they are seen as events. Every event or issue is by itself neither good nor bad. It is subjective. It is relative. What is wrong from one point of view may not be wrong from another point of view. What is correct at one point of time may not be correct at another point of time. An exemplary leader is one who is capable of separating issues from individuals, events from preferences and prejudices. Each incident is to be viewed independent of the colours. Nor should it be viewed against the background of past events. Comparison, very often, is at the root of all evils. If it is inevitable to look at the past as well, one has to take the good acts of the past and give them due weightage. When we find a deed to be good, we take it and ignore all the evil actions of the past. If the present act is not good, we take into consideration the previous good deeds. If every action has been bad, we give a long

rope and provide measures for reformation. An administrator thus has to be positive.

Everybody is but a doer. Man is a bundle of actions and experiences. No action is good or bad. No experience is sinful or otherwise. Killing is good on the battlefield; bad in the social life. To die for a righteous cause is heroic and praiseworthy. To commit suicide for want of courage to live is sinful. Wise people are they who are capable of viewing events as events and experiences as experiences without attributing any motive to them.. Swan can split milk into cream and water. Paramahamsas or Swan-like wise people can separate activities and experiences from their attributes—good or bad. They are serene under all circumstances and are able to see the sublime divinity in every person. Nothing can affect them. Nor do they have any coloured spectacles to be partial. They are ever pure and their views and actions therefore are always fair.

Within a short period of time Sri Rama had to face both the offer of crown and order of exile. He received the message that he was going to be the crown-prince. In no

time, he was asked to leave for the woods. He was calm right through. Like a painted lotus on the wall, he was quiet under the two opposite situations. Palace cannot lure him; forest cannot repel him. Throne does not entice him; exile does not scare him. He remains the same all through. But, his brothers are unhappy. They are annoyed and are angry. They propose to kill the people who are responsible for Sri Rama's forest life. Lakshmana goes to the extent of drawing his sword to do away with the parents themselves for the adverse turn of events. Bharata goes a step further and proposes to disown his own mother, who is supposed to be responsible for Rama's exile. Now, it is a tough time for Rama to cool down the agitated brothers. Sri Rama reminds Lakshmana and later Bharata of their intrinsic impartial nature. He also tells them about the purity of their parents' hearts. Neither Dasaratha the father, nor Kaikeyi the mother is wrong. Both of them are full of love and affection. Their words and actions on the eve of Sri Rama's unfulfilled coronation were but a passing phase. Dasaratha was under the spell of an adverse wave of fate. Kaikeyi too was under the influence of an alien thought. The foreign fumes of poison, for some time, had enshrouded their innate goodness and kindness. Dasaratha's love for his wives, children and people cannot be forgotten

or underestimated because of his strange behaviour during the episode of Sri Rama's departure from Ayodhya. So also, Kaikeyi cannot be mistaken for a cruel mother or cunning lady. Both of them are ever pure. The disturbance is but transient. Nature is not always turbulent. Sea is not stormy always. Waves are only on the surface, that too only at the shore. Deep within, the sea is ever quiet. Wise people do not get disturbed by the waves. They see far ahead, beyond the ordinary mortal's ken, deep within the hearts and remain calm. Neither Dasaratha nor Kaikeyi is to be misunderstood. The past words and actions of both are contrary to their present behaviour. If they are judged to be cruel and cunning, it means that there is no weightage given to their earlier long life of loving endearment. One should develop the ability to see the pure and bright heart of divinity behind the clouds of improper behaviour.

Anjaneya was a witness to the miserable plight of Sita Devi in the Ashoka Vana. The garden which was to dispel all despair became a veritable hell to torment the tender lady, Sita. The women employees of Ravana were ever the source of trouble and torture to the pious Sita. The pangs of her separation from Rama were intensified by the pricking words and deeds of the demonesses. Sita was, with

utmost patience, putting up with all the suffering. She went on swallowing suffering as Lord Shiva drank poison. Sita's way to conquer sorrow is to swallow suffering. Only a strong person of stamina and forbearance can dare to drink everything that is adverse. As there is a capacity needed to enjoy pleasures, there is a capacity necessary to swallow suffering. Only healthy persons of vitality can enjoy the pleasures of the body. Similarly, only persons of physical and psychological strength can endure with defiance any ill-treatment meted out to them. One has to strengthen the hidden capacities to endure all. Especially, leaders and administrators cannot allow themselves to be overwhelmed by petty pleasures and sufferings. One has to remain above them, strong enough to devour them. Anjaneya, after seeing the troubling sentinels and guarding women around Sri Sita Devi, offered to kill them all, so that peace might prevail. Sita dissuades Anjaneya saying "Dear Hanuman, I appreciate your concern for me. Thank you for the offer of your service. But I must learn to remain free from all suffering by withdrawing my mind or by making it strong and large

enough to swallow suffering. Also, I must learn to see the torments and tormentors as distinctly different from each other. These women around me are but the paid servants of Ravana. They are mere mercenaries. They have no hold over their deeds. They do not have hatred for me. They just do what they are asked to do by their boss. Do you get angry with an arrow that wounds you? It is but an instrument. Tools are neither good nor bad. It depends upon how we use them. Presently they are in the hands of a person who uses them for troubling me. Tomorrow the hands that handle them may change. And they may be used for a different purpose. It is foolish to be angry with instruments. Desist, therefore, from the move to destroy these innocent women. They are but tools. Wise people see the deeds and doers as distinctly different from each other. Revenge according to some is wild justice. It is not justice at all. Sages therefore are neither angry, nor revengeful. Vibhishana, in self surrender, fell at the feet of Sri Rama. And Sri Rama offered to protect him. Also he promised to make him the king of Lanka soon. The elderly well-wishers of Rama were astounded at

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the words of Sri Rama. They told Sri Rama “Dear Ramji, we admire your kind heart. But, Sir, if Ravana too comes and seeks your protection, what will you do? You have already promised Vibhishana the crown of Lanka. How can you keep your promise if Ravana too is to be protected?” Rama replies, “Absolutely no problem. Nobody is intrinsically bad. Ravana too has the same divinity in him. There is every possibility of demoniac clouds disappearing one day revealing the divine purity hitherto hidden in him. It is this purity that I perceive. If Ravana’s ignorance is dispelled, he will once again shine with enlightenment which is divine.

In case, he comes to me reformed, I do not look at him as a demon. Even otherwise, his demoniac behaviour does not tarnish my clear view and impartial judgement. I am capable of distinguishing him from his deeds. I will only be happy if he is restored to divinity. If he is able to identify who he really is, what else is needed? All my efforts are to wake him up from the delusion that he is a demon. In case he comes to me like his brother Vibhishana, I shall ask Bharata to quit Ayodhya and give that kingdom to him (Ravana)”.
Nobody is bad. We should see good in all.



YUVA BHARATI

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SHRI EKNATH RANADE

A humble tribute to the Late Maananeeya Eknath Ranade on the occasion of his Jayanthi falling on 19.11.2006.



Prof. A.K.Mazumdar addressed the life-worker trainees on 24.11.86 at Vivekanandapuram thus:

I first met Eknathji in 1973 when I visited Kanyakumari while I attended a meeting at Alwaye. At his instance, I addressed the then batch of trainees as I am doing at present.

Eknathji was a leader par excellence. His skill of remembering every detail during lengthy and heavy discussions was astounding and he had the good practice of reducing these in the form of minutes and sending it to the concerned for his confirmation. This served two purposes. The persons concerned will have an (enough) opportunity to know what was spoken and also can correct any minor inaccuracies, and the records can be set straight. But Eknathji had a different point on this method. This pegged down the politicians once for all and they cannot get out of their commitment once made and many times they had to eat their own words. The case of a Central Minister for Education and Culture and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu are points in this direction. He is one who cannot take NO and cannot be denied a thing when he sets about it.

His capacity to stand up to any obstacles on the way is a proof of his rising power to meet all opposition. He seemed to possess strength

in proportion to the increasing demand. A great man indeed! He was virtually a human dynamo as proved by his constant tours round the country. Whenever he spoke of Swamiji, he spoke as if he was "possessed", and in an inspiring way. His lectures put together in the **Sadhana of Service** is an example. He could reduce complicated philosophical thoughts to simple forms for the understanding of his students, if I can call his workers thus.

He set more store by the need to cover wider audience instead of a select elite group. He used to say that he was happier in the receipt of Re.1/- from individual common men towards the Memorial fund though large donation was also welcome. No social movement can succeed unless it is backed by popular support and there is involvement of the mass.

It is perhaps the first time in the history of our country, an experiment of this nature is made in bringing out lay missionary workers

without regimentation of a sannyasi order. The really dedicated will continue and work sincerely while those who took this as a chance-filler in their life will leave; but even then they will have imbibed the spirit and teachings of the organization so well imparted. In any case, a man who had come in contact with Eknathji will be definitely different from what he was.

His scholarly approach was evident when he asked me to clarify whether Swamiji followed Shankara's theory of Advaita or propounded his own original ideas. Awe-struck by his knowledge, I was not quite confident of myself and, in fact, was quite diffident. I told that Swamiji put out his original theories about this. Then he further wanted me to clarify about the seeming paradoxes in

Swamiji's sayings. He, on the one hand, wanted universal brotherhood and at the same time extolled the virtue on Hinduism. I gave out my explanation as known to me that while one should be appreciative of all religions, he need not feel shy of being proud of his own religion. Eknathji was also of the same view, I think. He was a proud Hindu not because Westerners appreciated the greatness of Hinduism, but on his own understanding.

A lesser man of limited capacity could not have left behind a memorial as worthy as the Vivekananda Rock Memorial and we all should feel grateful that a man of his zeal and capacity was given to us during our time and we should all prove worthy of his hopes and aspirations.

IN THE WORLD OF FAITHFULS

Satish Chowkulkar

While in Hyderabad in September '06, — my attention got attracted towards a banner “Inter-faith Dialogue”. The banner was at the entrance of a hall, evidently the venue of the programme. Strongly worded deliberations were heard outside, as the public address system was hyper-vocal. From what I heard, it was more of a shouting at each other than a dialogue. I could visualize the scenario inside, as frequently such situations are articulated by media channels ostentatiously for educating the masses. However, as everyone knows, the purpose of these media channels is far from educating the masses. They are somehow successful in claiming the enhanced viewership of their channel and increase the advertisement revenue. Besides, they also serve the purpose of their political bosses in pushing forth those thoughts which are suitable to develop their own pressure groups from among the gullible audience and viewers.

As I was observing this, quite a few youth, owing allegiance to various faiths and ideologies were coming out of the hall, discussing with each other. All of them, as seen from their faces, were thoroughly disappointed due to the way the “dialogue”

was going on. Some of them were strongly critical about the way the proceedings were being conducted and were evidently eager to experience a real, well meaning dialogue. The subject of the deliberations, as I gathered from their discussions, was the opinion aired by the Pope about Islamic Jihad and the resultant outbursts from the Muslims across the world. Newspapers, TV Channels, and now this forum of interfaith dialogues programme! These disillusioned youth, while discussing among themselves, were proceeding towards a bus stop, where I saw Shiva Swarupananda standing, already surrounded by a group of young students. As the students were belonging to various faiths—Hindu, Muslim and Christian, I sensed that the discussion will be worth listening to. So I also got drawn into the group.

Shiva Swarupananda was interacting with the disturbed youth students in his inimitably comfortable, calm and confident way. “Let us understand this crisis among the “faithfuls”. All of them have firm faith in their gods. The problem is each one of them have their exclusive concepts of god. Each of them wants the world should be introduced to their god. They perceive the world in parts, one part which knows and admits their god and

other part which do not know or do not admit their god. The group of people who do not know or accept their god, Christians call them as Heathens and Muslims call them as Kafirs. These faithfuls among Christians want these heathens to be Christians and the faithfuls among Muslims want to convert these Kafirs to the Islam.”

“But what if these heathens and kafirs are not interested to become either Christians or Muslims?” asked a youth.

Shiva Swarupananda replied, “These faithfuls claim that their god has sent them a message through a divine messenger, that they must do it by hook or by crook. Not only that, one who does it will be nicely rewarded after

his/her death with a comfortable position in God’s own place i.e. heaven.”. “And what if these two groups of faithfuls want to bring other faithfuls to their God?” The youth asked again.

“You mean, Christians want to bring Muslims to their faith and Muslims want Christians to bring to their faith?” asked another student who wanted to get this more clear.

“This is where the **War of swords** and the **War of words** begin.” Shiva Swarupananda stepped in, “Christians, in the past, were prompted by their leaders to take up the swords calling it as crusade and Islamic leaders called upon their faithfuls to take up the sword calling it as ‘Jihad’”. “Does it not

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mean that both 'Jihad' and 'Crusade' are violent methods of preaching one's own faith?" asked a girl student.

"I heard in this interfaith meeting that the word Christian means a godwardly person and the word Muslim or mussalman means a true human being?" – can this jihad and crusade be a spiritual, godward and truly humanist approach" asked another student.

"This is where the utterances of the Pope triggered a worldwide commotion" said Shiva Swarupananda.

"You have spoken about the approaches of Islam and Christianity; what about the Hindu approach? asked a student who was wearing a cross around his neck. "Yes, let us understand this also" Shiva Swarupananda continued. "The word Hinduism does not represent any particular sect, unlike Islam or Christianity, it has no messenger or prophet or any such message of the god. The core of Hinduism is Sanatan Dharma, the Vedas. These core-teachings, do not divide the people in the world into believers and non-believers. So the bringing the 'faithless' people into the faithful's group does not arise. So! No Crusades or Jihads, no assurances of reward of positions in the heaven, after death. The Vedas call upon the people to respect every member or unit of the world – animate, inanimate, human beings non-human beings alike. Vedic teachings call upon all people to not only to tolerate but also to respect all in the creation and

experience this unity. "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahuda Vadanti"... Experiencing this wholesome unity is the joy, the Ananda, the God--the projector himself. So, in principle, Hindus will not be in conflict with the people prophesing other faiths. Hindus are by their very nature accepting the gods of these "faithfuls" also. The student quipped again, "How the Hindus in India have responded to these faiths and conflicts triggered by the Jihads and Crusades in the past?"

In the past when Muslims from Arabia and other places invaded Persia, the persecuted followers of Zoroastrian faith were received and helped by Hindu Kings in Gujarat's coastal region. They are the Parsis of India today. When the Jews were persecuted and thrown out of their homeland, Indian kings received and treated them with respect. Islamic preachers / traders reached Kodungallur on the Coast of Malabar (present Kerala), the King treated them with respect and honour. In the first century A.D. Christian Priests reached Kerala by sea-route, they were received and treated with respect. None of these visiting faithfuls were ill-treated. Not only that, they were given land and money to pursue their spiritual practices and prayers. Some man-power was also kept at their disposal to assist them. All these kings were not spiritual giants but it was in their blood and behaviour due to Vedic teachings, God i.e., Truth is one sages call them by different names.....

So, the approach of Hindus was not confrontation but conciliation – "Samanvaya". Shiva Swarupananda concluded.

"Well! That might have happened a few centuries back....can you show any official stand from the Hindu thinkers of late?" asked a Muslim student.

"Well! This stand of Samanvaya of Hindu thinkers is not a "policy" but a consistent approach. Just in 1893, September 11 Swami Vivekananda spoke at World Parliament of Religions at Chicago. He reminded the representatives of all the faiths present in Chicago what Hinduism or India is and what it stands for. He made the ideas crystal clear in his "Paper on Hinduism." This paper was acclaimed by all the Hindu Luminaries subsequently and unanimously accepted and appreciated by all the intellectuals in the "Parliament". Thinkers, poets, scientists and artists spoke to western world about these ideas in modern times. Poems in Gitanjali of Rabindranath Tagore echoed these ideas. Nobel Prize was given for Gitanjali as an acknowledgement of these Vedic thoughts. Incidentally today, 27th September is the day on which Swamiji while addressing in the concluding session of the World Parliament of Religions said,

Much has ben said of the common ground of religious unity. I am not going just now to venture my own

theory. But if any one here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of the religions and the destruction of the others, to him I say, 'Brother, yours is an impossible hope.' Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid....

The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: 'Help and not Fight', 'Assimilation and not Destruction',

‘Harmony and Peace and not Dissension’.

On 27 September 1893, Swamiji warned the world of dire consequences of the intolerant, ir-religious and intemperate approaches of the conflicting faithfuls. The World had to face two devastating World Wars, eventual conflicts of cold war and now holocaustic acts of terrorism prompted by conflicting religious perversers.’

After a brief contemplation, Shiva Swarupananda recalled the lines of a Sanskrit song. "Maitreem Bhajata Akhilahrijetrem" After humming the lines he continued "This song was composed by Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati – Paramacharya of Kanchi Kamakshi Peetham (near Chennai) and the song was sung by the world famous Melody Queen Late Smt. M.S.Subbalakshmi. This song was sung on the occasion of celebration of 25th Anniversary of the United Nations Organisation. The song echoes what Swamiji advised to the World in the concluding session of the World Parliament of Religions on 27th September 1893. "Ah! This is how the persons, whom world accepts as Jagadguru should speak. Their utterances should lead to accord and never a discord or conflicts", the Muslim youth said with a nod," "utterances of the Pope Benedict XVI do not appear to be benedictory in contents".

"But! Please, can you tell us what really could be behind this game of bringing all people of the world to one's own faith, leading to the Jihads and Crusades?" asked a student.

Shiva Swarupananda was leaning against the bar of the bus stop shelter. He adjusted his position and started sharing his ideas.... "In the world of faith and spirituality, strictly speaking, there should be no place for personal ambition. Swami Vivekananda tells in his Lectures on Karma Yoga, "each is great in one's own place". One has to pursue the faith you are born in and grow as per one's own scheme of things--a packet of Karma one is born with. We call it Prarabdha Karma. Whenever people think of manipulating this plan in other persons by meddling with their faith, the ideas smack of ambition to get control over everything around and being always on the centre stage, an ambition to be the Almighty. Then, the thoughts and actions which prompt a person, are no longer spiritual. They can be sectarian but not spiritual or religious, for that matter. The worldly considerations, such as political hegemony, economic imperialism, ambitions to control worlds resources through monopolizing the trade and commerce etc., take over the persons, institutions and organizations who outwardly use the religious and spiritual vocabulary. The impartial historians have recorded that such ambitious personalities donning the garb of religious paraphernalia have been

masquerading this Earth. The holy scriptures and even words of the prophets and messenger they adore, are misused to expand their empires. That is how in the medieval period Europe and Western Asia have seen more of blood-shed, lootings, territorial annexations and human sufferings in the name of religion than the debates of the scholars and efforts to understand the real purport of the scriptures. Horrible after-effects of these were accentuated with inventions of industrial revolution. And in the modern era the increase in knowledge and the technological advancement through science and technology have progressively increased the feeling of insecurity, mutual suspicion, weapons of mass destruction and sorrow. The world is divided into major blocks--Anglo-American with Churches as their ally and Islamic block with terrorism as their tool. One block speaks against the other and eventually reciprocates through intemperate reactions. Words are seemingly religious but one can't miss the political expansionist undertones. If they want to have a debate or dialogue on spiritual tenets of their faiths there should be no problem, but that is only an apparent cause. The real agenda is a 'hidden agenda'. Shiva Swarupananda took a newspaper from his shoulder-bag and read out a passage.

The Pope and the debate on Islam

Hasan Suroor

After the Pope's expression of regret, the controversy over his

remarks about Islam--needless to start with--should hopefully end now. But anyone genuinely interested in a sensible debate on the issues raised by him or on the relations between two of the world's most important religions must reflect on the events of the past week and ask himself: is this the way to conduct an argument?

Muslims, as on previous occasions, hugely over-reacted reinforcing the image of an intolerant community quick to take offence at anything that does not accord with its own image or its religion. There is nothing in what the Pope said that can be termed an "insult" to Islam. The violent streak in early Islam—a result of the circumstances of its birth—is a fact and has been acknowledged even by Muslim scholars. Moreover, Islamic theologians are free to join the issue with the Pope by pointing to Christianity's own blood-soaked history and the Vatican's regressive position in important issues to do with individual freedom and choice. That is the way to debate and clarify issues.

By reacting to perceived "hurts" the way they invariably do,

Muslims are in danger of losing the few friends they have, and of becoming even more isolated than they already are in a world where ideas and belief systems are routinely questioned.

The passage was from the writings of a columnist Sri Hassan Suroor in the newspaper "The Hindu" dated September 20 on page 10.

For a few moments, the focus of attention was shifted from Shiva Swarupananda to the newspaper column he was quoting. Quite a few were pouring their attention on the Hassan Suroor's column in the Hindu "Now we have understood why the deliberations of the Inter-faith dialogue we were attending were meaningless and confusing." Many of the youth were heard murmuring. "All the speakers were on their toes to score off other speakers' points; instead of putting forward their own". "All were shouting at the same time without allowing the audience to listen to **one at a time**". "Not only this programme, all the talk shows on TV Channels are the replicas of this show."

"Is it not better to go without any faith than allowing our heads to be broken with these faithfuls!" exclaimed one youth.

Suddenly Shiva Swarupananda came up and said "Wait, wait, let us understand this game plan also. There is one more "cousin' of these faithfuls." He said smilingly.

Cousin? Who?..." surprise was evident on the faces of the students.

"This breed is called Atheist". Shiva Swarupananda said with a sarcastic smile. These people masquerade as rationalists. This is also a European bug getting itself propagated in the world as an anti-thesis of capitalism. They are in their own paradise. They think they can use these former two blocks for pursuing their agenda. But many a time they end in being used by these blocks in furtherance of their sectarian agenda. Such 'thinkers' have infiltrated themselves in the intelligentsia of the society to such an extent that anybody who wants to be identified as Liberal, Progressive, Open-minded, Impartial, Creative, Dynamic and Modern, etc. automatically come under their spell. Such talk-shows and dialogues you are referring to are engineered by them."

"But! What do they stand for? What will be their gain?" asked a few youth.

"In the earlier part of the twentieth century the Western World had two politico-economic ideologies--Capitalism and Communism. The cold war between these two blocks influenced the world. But as both the ideologies are obverse and reverse of the same coin, materialism, it was a foregone conclusion that one of them will collapse. However in the post-cold war period, remnants of the communism assumed the garb of all the adjectives, I just now spoke

of. They are still optimistic and “waiting in the wing” of the world stage. So long as the religious blocks are battling among themselves, for non-spiritual considerations, their hidden agenda is to eradicate the very premise of faith from the minds of the onlookers. All the three blocks--Anglo-American with churches, West Asian Jihadis and these Atheists have a common target – India and its Spiritual Strength. Their hidden agenda is to weaken this spiritual base from the grass root of the Indian masses. On the face of it they will appear as, Rationalists, Human rights Liberals, Progressive, Creative and Intellectual opinion makers. They too have a worldwide lobby working in various European, Latin American and South African nations. They interfere in the affairs of unalert, gullible nations. As a strategy they will not antagonize the former two blocks but focus on whatever is happening in nations like India and South East Asian nations. They provide all the supports to activities of subvertive groups in India and South East Asian countries, under the labels of Amnesty, Human Rights, World Watch, etc. They also have their clouts in U.N.O. We in India should be aware of these ‘Cousins’ – said Shiva Swarupananda.

“What could be the impact if they are successful? How should we react to this challenge?” The two questions came as an instant response from two seriously thinking students.

Shiva Swarupananda glanced at his wrist watch and said, “I am afraid I will be delaying you. I will be as brief and to the point as possible.

He said, “Visionary hero of Indian Youth”....., “Swami Vivekananda?” asked some students “Yes! Mark his quotation He cautions what will happen if the atheists are successful.

“Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest; fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies; and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be. ... Will she die? This old Mother of all that is noble or moral or spiritual, the land which the sages trod, the land in which God-like men still live and breathe?

Your second question! “The legacy of this visionary was carried forth by another visionary – Late Sri Eknathji Ranade the founder of the Vivekananda Kendra. He gave action plan for Indian youth. Get more details from him (He signalled at me). In his semi-biographical book “Story of Vivekananda Rock Memorial” he gives the remedy. In an yet another publication of

Vivekananda Kendra – “Call of the Millennium”, they have reprinted a few editorials written by Eknathji in Yuva Bharati. He had clearly emphasized that the youth of India should work through non-sectarian, non-political, spiritually oriented service mission, as directed by Swami Vivekananda. As all the youths were thronging around me,

Shiva Swarupananda left us smilingly and while going he said to me “Now you can celebrate 19th November with added zeal. All the best!

A TRIBUTE TO EKNATH RANADE : SOME REMINISCENCES

Prof. K.N.VASWANI

A good worker, a great worker is he, who creates good workers, or rather he does not create, but draws, attracts, mobilises good workers. They are there to seek, to find and to attract and mobilise into a great movement – so said Eknathji, and he was such a one himself. He had the rare quality of self-effacement, instill confidence and courage in other co-workers, to give them valuable experience in conducting activities, organising functions, while he remained behind to guide and advise and correct when necessary. And so it was that he could leave behind a well-trained team to give an excellent account of themselves and carry forward his good and great work, which grows as is evident through the expansion of the activities of the Vivekananda Kendra and the growth of Vivekananda Kendra Movement.

I remember how in 1976, at the time of the passing away of Prof. Mahadevan, President of Vivekananda Kendra, he insisted that I agree to be the President. On other occasions too he kept back and insisted that I give the Interview to All India Radio on Vivekananda Kendra and the Movement, that I inaugurate the Book-shop at the Reception, also inaugurate the Charkha and Tailoring Unit at Vivekanandapuram, and on the sad demise of the veteran Freedom Fighter and hero, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan in October, 1979, he sent to me the All India Radio Team to record our tribute, rather than do this himself. He was seeking thus in this lifetime to answer the question, ‘Who after you, Eknathji?’ which was put to him often by the Birlas and others. He was preparing a fine team including Vasudeoji, Balakrishnanji, Dr. Nagendra, Anilji, Krishnamurthiji and towards the end of his days, Dr. Lakshmi Kumari, as earlier Kumaris Shailaja, Nivedita, Sunita, Alpana— and others including Mamaji (Shri Angiras).

BOOK REVIEW
Book :**TO THE YOUTH**

Your Questions and Our Answers

SWAMI HARSHANANDA

It is one of the most exquisite books dealing with the problems, the youth of this country are facing and how those problems can be solved with the help of our Vedantic knowledge. Although the book is small in size (it contains only 68 pages), it is quite comprehensive and encapsulates the entire turmoil gripping the young people of our country. The book is in the form of a series of questions and answers. Practically each and every query arising in the mind and related to the manifold appurtenances of our contemporary life is dispelled with expertise. Not only will it be useful to the youth but also to the people of all age groups to enlighten themselves with the sublime knowledge of our Dharma. In my opinion, it will play a very significant role in enabling the youth to have a modern outlook along with our traditional moral values. It deals with almost all the concepts of spiritualism which it elucidates as an effort to discover the latent divinity and manifest it in our character. It will help the society in eradicating various social evils like, drinking, drug addiction, moral dissolution by evoking the spirit of morality and spiritualism in the hearts of the young people. It clearly illustrates that Dharma alone is the panacea for all the ailments afflicting the modern world.

Publishers of both the books :Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore,
Chennai-4.

Price : Rs.12/- and Rs. 15/-, respectively.

Book :**BOLD MESSAGE FOR WORLD PEACE**

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

All the books of Swami Vivekananda have been masterpieces and this is no exception. It deals with the exhortations made frequently by Swamiji that all religions are true and lead to the same divine goal. It focuses on one of the most fiendish problems facing mankind—religious fanaticism. Swamiji has expounded judiciously that every religion has attempted to express the great truths which constitute the Brahman and we should never perceive that the principles of any religions have ever contradicted each other. Swamiji has clearly expostulated that religion is not in books, doctrines, theories etc. but is a matter of realization. If this book is read thoroughly by any person, the last vestiges of religious bigotry will be exorcised. This book clearly explains that the different religions in the world are basically sects, which have been created so that people having different propensities, different mental levels can have a glimpse of the absolute truth. The main purpose of the religious sects was to complement each other and not to clash with each other. This book clearly provides a bulwark against the proselytising tendencies of Christianity and Islam by stating that each religion must assimilate the spirit of others maintaining its individuality and not get transmuted into the other. This book is absolutely imperative for people of all the age groups, for understanding the concept of spiritualism and it will pave the way for bringing about harmony among people professing various religions.

FACETS OF SHRI EKNATHJI'S PERSONALITY

Excerpts from the letters of Shri Eknathji

The other day, you were wondering how I could constantly remain on tour with my health intact. I may tell you the secret. Besides the sacred cause which is the abiding source of my energy and inspiration, the feeling that I am not alone but hundreds of brothers and sisters all over the country are working ardently and selflessly for the cause not only multiplies that energy but also brings immense charm into the work.

In your letter you have referred to the proverb 'Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future'. There is, indeed, a great significance in this proverb. But on close analysis, you will have to admit that one cannot conceive of a confirmed or a permanent 'sinner' or a 'saint.' *A sinner now, does not mean that he is destined to remain a sinner even in future and he can, therefore, be relegated to the category of 'sinners' for all the time. Similarly, a saint today may cease to be a saint and degrade into a sinner tomorrow, if he fails in his endeavour to continue to remain saintly. In other words, attaining piety in life and retaining it, is a perennial process from moment to moment—nay—life after life. This ceaseless march is not in a*

straight line either. It is mostly a zig-zag movement, sometimes backward, at times forward, depending upon one's sustained requisite effort. This is like an uphill-climbing. The upward movement is assured as long as one keeps on exerting in adequate measure; but the moment one is off one's guard and has slackened one's effort, one is bound to gravitate downwards.

Glimpses of Shri Eknathji's Character

1. Sri Baburao, Eknathji's eldest brother passed away. All his children were not yet settled. Their education was to be taken care of and marriages settled. His Vahini was apprehensive. She requested Eknathji to help the family till the children could stand on their own legs. Eknathji was in a great dilemma. Many incidences flooded his mind. *That Vahini* who had brought him to her house from his parents to avoid his being given in adoption, was asking for help now. *That Vahini* who had showered all motherly affection on young Nath was now asking him to help her. *That Vahini* who had always shared her red strong tea with him of which both were very fond was asking him to share her difficulties. *That Vahini* who, supported him against her husband's wishes to pursue a college course of his choice was asking help now.

That Vahini who even fasted for him so that he might get properly married was now in need of help. *That Vahini* who setting aside the natural desire of getting her son-like brother-in-law married, had blessed him to be Pracharak of RSS was asking him to come back. It was a great dilemma indeed! When a worker dedicates himself for a great cause, not only his sense of duty and sacrifice are to be awakened but he also has to awaken them in his near and dear ones. Otherwise, in such trying moments he will be tempted to leave his path.

Eknathji told her with great anguish, "See, the country is suffering. I feel it is my bounden duty to serve our Motherland to make her free from misery. But, you say that family is undergoing some difficulties, and I should, therefore, change my goal and come to your rescue. I feel I should not change my path. However, if you still feel that I should keep away my ideal for some time and come to your help, then I am at your services. Think it over and let me know".

The great woman did not take much time to respond. She belonged to the same sacrificing family as Eknathji. Controlling her fears and the swelling tears in her eyes she said, "No, Nath, go and work for the Motherland. You should never worry about our small family here. You are born to work for the big family. I shall bring up

the family against all odds and show you I am your Vahini!" Eknathji touched her feet and left.

2. When Eknath was studying in college, he was to lead the Swayamsevaks for a camp near Wardha. When they reached the station, the train was already on the platform. Therefore, Eknath and all Swayamsevaks entered the nearest compartment and started arranging their luggage. A few British soldiers, who were in the compartment, said insolently, "You all get down from here".

"We too have purchased tickets", said Eknath firmly. Still they insisted, and when the Swayamsevaks did not budge, they threw their luggage out. Eknath got down and first got it confirmed that it was an unreserved compartment. Then again leading the Swayamsevaks, he re-entered with the luggage and started arranging. The soldiers objected, but Eknath neither budged nor allowed the British soldiers to touch the luggage. One soldier hit Eknath with the butt of his rifle. Eknath started bleeding, but he was not a person to be cowed down; he picked up a hockey stick which was there and started beating the soldier furiously. The soldiers got frightened; they jumped out through the windows, leaving the compartment. They went and lodged a complaint with the Railway Police accusing Eknath of assault. When the railway authorities and police came, Eknath pointed out that only the

soldiers had assaulted him. He showed his bleeding wound and pointed out the fact that there was no wound or injury on any soldier. Of course, the authorities could not repudiate this. However, the soldiers being British, a case was registered against Eknath. Eknath pleaded his own case like a lawyer. Impressed by his arguments, the Magistrate enquired what Eknath was

doing. When he came to know that Eknath was doing B.A. (Hons.) in Philosophy, the Magistrate was pleased. Eknath was acquitted and the soldiers were reprimanded for creating trouble in an unreserved compartment. It seems the Magistrate also commented that a person studying Philosophy would not fight.

(Extracts from the book 'Eknathji')



Do you hear Swami Vivekananda saying:

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

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

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

**General Secretary, Vivekananda Kendra, Vivekanandapuram,
Kanyakumari - 629702**

For detailed information, visit us at

www.vivekanandakendrakanyakumari.org



VIVEKANANDA KENDRA SAMACHAR

TEZPUR

The Universal Brotherhood Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm on 11th September 06. Swami Vishwatmananda, Secretary of Ramakrishna Math, Itanagar, was the chief guest and Mr. Prafful Chandra Goswami, the former Vice-Principal of the Tezpur College was the guest of honour. Both Swami Vishwatmananda and Mr. Prafful Chandra Goswami beautifully summed up the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and exhorted people to follow them. Around 250 people participated in the function.

KALLUBALU

On 9-9-06 Rakshabandhan was celebrated. Su Sri Uni Didi expounded the relevance of Rakshabandhan in our present day-to-day life. On 15.8.06, Independence Day and Sree Krishna Jayanthi were celebrated. Ma. Balakrishnanji, Vice President of Vivekananda Kendra was the chief guest. On 22.8.06 Ma. Eknathji's Punyathithi was observed in the school. On 27.8.06 Ganesha Chaturthi was celebrated on 30.08.06 and 31.08.06 there was a Pratibhakaranji competition in Harapanahalli Govt. school.

On 5th September Teacher's Day was celebrated and there was a Kho-Kho competition for students versus teachers. On 11th September 06, Universal Brotherhood Day was celebrated



Dr. R. Nagaratna Didi, the Chief Medical Consultant of Prashanti Kuteeram was the Chief Guest.

VKVs IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Sri Krishna Jayanti was celebrated fervently in all the Vidyalayas of Vivekananda Kendra.

Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated with devotional zeal in all the VKVs in Arunachal Pradesh. In Niausa, a training unit has been set up to teach tailoring to the village women.

PORT BLAIR

Raksha Bandhan was celebrated on 9th Aug., Independence Day on 15th Aug., and Sri Krishna Jayanti on 16th Aug. at Port Blair, Hut Bay, Rancho Tekri, Chouldari, Kadamtala, Rangat, Basantipur, Pahalgoan and Diglipur in the Andamans. In all, 5000 Rakhis were tied. Independence day was celebrated in all these places after the Prabhat Pheri in which 2500 students participated. Janmshtami was celebrated involving 5000 school students in various competitions.

Universal Brotherhood Day was celebrated in all these places from 11th to 20th September. Various competitions were organised in these places for 2000 students.

To mark the centenary of the Cellular Jail, a skit competition was organised with the theme ' history of cellular jail'. Sri M R Bhakta, Hon'ble Membr of Parliament was the Chief Guest at the Port Blair function and Sri Kuldeep Rai Sharma, Congress President of A&N Islands was the Chief Guest at the Chouldari function. A total number of 4000 people participated in these functions.

BARIPADA

Universal Brotherhood Day was celebrated enthusiastically here. There were various cultural competitions, competitions in singing of patriotic songs, essay writing, elocution, etc. 154 students participated in them. The chief guest of the function was Dr.Bibhuti Patnaik who is a renowned Oriya novelist and the function was attended by 400 people.

DOMBIVALI

Universal Brotherhood Day was celebrated with an intense fervour through a three day 'Vyakhanmala' on 15th, 16th and 17th September'06. The chief guest Vivek Ghalasasi gave a thrilling speech on 'Arya Chanakya' on 24th September '06, Bharatiya Sanskruti Pariksha was conducted and 46 students appeared in it.


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