

YUVA BHARATI

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Editorial	<i>P.Parameswaran</i>	04	Founder Editor MANANEEYA EKNATHJI RANADE Editor: P. PARAMESWARAN Editorial Office 5, Singarachari Street Triplicane, Chennai - 5 Ph: (044) 28440042 Email: vkchennai@vsnl.net www.vivekanandakendra.org Single Copy Rs. 7/- Annual Rs. 75/- For 3 yrs: Rs. 200/- Life (20 Yrs) Rs. 800/- (Plus Rs. 30/- for outstation Cheques)
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The leaders of our societies have never been either Generals
or Kings, but Rishis. - Swami Vivekananda

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ॐ ऋक्षुः INVOCATION

मौनव्याख्याप्रकटितपरब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं ।
वर्षिष्ठान्तेवसदृषिगणैरावृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः ॥
आचार्येन्द्रं करकलितचिन्मुद्रमानन्दरूपं ।
स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥

I Praise Lord Dakshinamurti, the ageless one, who expounded the truth of nondual Brahman through silence, who is surrounded by aged disciples, who ever abide in Brahman, who is the best among the teachers, whose hand is held in the gesture of *chin-mudra*, who is the embodiment of joy, who revels in himself and who has a smiling countenance.

Dakshinamurti Dhyanam

EDITORIAL



VICTORY WITHOUT WAR

DR.K.SUBRAHMANYAM

Pairs of opposites do exist always. Without them there is no life. Birth and death, ups and downs, prosperity and adversity, friend and foe, good and evil, and many such polarities are ever in existence. They cannot be done away with. Nor can we have only one. It is very often believed that the only way to be victorious is through fight. But there are many other means to be successful without resorting to war. At no stage sword becomes essential to people who are capable of swallowing evil. We can be amidst polarities enjoying peace. The ocean is vast to receive anything and makes everything a part of itself. Lord Siva has swallowed poison. And the snake is an ornament in his neck.

Positive outlook promotes peace and prevents friction, fight and fragmentation. Every rose plant has more thorns than flowers. Since the thorns are more, we do not call it a bush of thorns; we call it a garden of roses. Nor do we try to remove the thorns; we only collect the flowers. Even if the society is to consist of more evils, we can still see it to be a community of virtues. Even the ditch water is capable of producing and nourishing a lotus. If only the evils are channelised, they will become rich soil and manure to promote virtues. Poison, too, when used as a medicine becomes nectar to save lives.

Ability to be positive is the first step for a friction-free functioning. Capacity to use a disadvantage to an advantage is the second step for progress and for promoting a healthy environment. And the final step to be victorious over all evils is the ability to metamorphose all into a harmonious society of coexistence through the all-embracing love. Gauthama the Buddha has been able to change Angulimala, a murderer, into a loving benefactor. Ratnakar, a plunderer is transformed to be sage Valmiki. Girish, a wholesale sinner has been



elevated to the heights of a Siddhapurusha worthy of a place by the side of Swami Vivekananda. And the credit goes to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.. Yudhishtira of the Mahabharatha-fame was able to find everybody to be good everywhere. His cousin Duryodhana was unable to see a good person anywhere. The former is positive and the latter is negative. Khandava Vana a forsaken forest was transformed into a happy habitat Indraprastha by the Pandavas. Lord Siva's love has enabled species of opposite traits to live together without harming each other. His vehicle bull is not bullied or bruised by the lion which is the vehicle of Siva's spouse, Parvathi. The crawling cobras of poison do not dare to devour the tiny rat of Siva's son Vinayaka. Nor does Kartikeya's peacock scare away the snakes of Siva. They all live together on account of Siva's all-embracing affection.

Global culture it is to accommodate all civilizations. Universal religion it is when in the flood of its endearing humanism attempts to conversion are dispensed with. All religions of the world are broadly, three. They are religions of faith, love and reason. Every person is but a combination of those three. None of them is superior or inferior to the other. But in some, one of them may be more

conspicuous and predominant. At the same time nobody is totally devoid of any one of them. In the all-assimilating and harmonizing flood of humanism they can comfortably coexist without fight or fear or friction. Helping tendency can be promoted to minimize or overcome the harming instinct. Self-assertion should in one's own interest give way to coexistence and cooperation. And in and through self-dedication at the heart of a few, we can be sure of social harmony.

All said and done, good and evil are relative terms. One's food is another's poison. What is helpful at one point of time turns out to be harmful at another point of time. There is nothing like "absolute good of all time" and "absolute bad of all time". And nobody is permanent. Therefore during one's sojourn on earth one has to be accommodative and adaptable. Better it is if one can learn to be of assimilating capacity. Protection of the one cannot be the persecution of another. Enlightened individuals cannot afford to be either instinctive or impulsive. An ideal social set up cannot be at the cost of harmony and peace. Cowardice and exploitation have no place in a society of accommodative individuals. Privileges and power mongering have to be won over and dispensed with by our endearing love of universalism.

Social evils are indeed many. They all can be categorized into three groups. The first consists of evils and sufferings caused by some who are greedy and lustful. They are of grabbing tendency and their desires are innumerable. The second group consists of people who perpetuate misery to many due to their feeling of insecurity, sadism

and fear. And finally most evils are due to a vast majority of people who are weak, ignorant and seekers of petty pleasures. Desire, fear, weakness and ignorance are at the root of all evils. For all evils, right education and all-absorbing love are the panacea. If only the leaders of any society are capable of swallowing evil on account of their affection there will not be any warring groups. Even if there are any, they too can be won over without war.

We long for love. We want to love and want to be loved. If only religions, cultures, civilizations and nations can practise and teach us by example how to love all in spite of every type of barriers, we are sure to have a global family. Does any one in any place of worship pray for the peace and prosperity of anybody other than himself or herself, other than the favourable ones? Let's learn to pray for all. If we can cultivate that universal prayer for the well being of all, we need not have to resort to conversions, quarrels or wars. All embracing love is the only way to promote peaceful coexistence.

Sri Ramakrishna's philosophy of unselfish and loving assimilation has promoted Swami Vivekananda to popularize the twin ideal of renunciation and service.

Christian self-sacrifice, Islamic solidarity and Hindu Universalism are but a three dimensional culture of mankind.

Looking through the pages of history, sometimes we doubt whether we had at any point of time really tried to bring all people together. Our labels are more of separatism and segregation. Let us



remove all labels and see through to find the core commodity of mankind. And that is humanism. We are all first of all human beings. Let us therefore be kind and loving.

Wars and quarrels are signs of little civilization. However it is through them we evolve to peace without war. During the times of Sri Rama the war was between externals belonging to two totally different individuals. In the Mahabharata age of Sri Krishna it was between cousins belonging to one family. The war was within the family. Further, in the recent past during the age of Sri Ramakrishna it was between materialism and spiritualism which are within the same person. The fruit of the war

within is assimilation of them both. And it is in Swami Vivekananda that the success of Sri Ramakrishna's synthesis has taken the form of global harmony – a blend of the east and west, body and mind, religion and philosophy. And that is cosmic oneness. We are all ONE – from the same source we came and go back to the same source at the end. Therefore why should there be a war during our journey in between? Let us be one.

When once there is oneness, there is no need for war. War is for transient victory. Lasting victory is possible only without war.

Let us travel together peacefully.



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.

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SHIBIR CALENDAR - 2005		VIVEKANANDA KENDRA, KANYAKUMARI	
NAME OF THE SHIBIR	DATES	AGE	DONATION
2. Spiritual Retreat (Hindi)	20 th - 26 th Oct.	40-70 Yrs.	Rs. 700/-
3. Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Eng.)	1 st - 15 th Dec.	20-55 Yrs.	Rs.1000/-
4. Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Hindi)	17 th - 31 st Dec.	20-55 Yrs.	Rs.1000/-

HELP AND NOT FIGHT

Dr. M. LAKSHMI KUMARI

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 that 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”’.

More than a century has passed since Swami Vivekananda’s sonorous voice echoed these immortal words, resplendent with the never diminishing shine of eternal Truth. In fact, these words were a short commentary on the inexplicably sweet utterance he made at the opening of the Parliament of Religions: “Sisters and Brothers of America”. These words fell like the first rain drops on the thirsty ‘chataka birds’ who had thronged the opening session of the Parliament yearning for a new message, a new vision, a new impulse and a new command that would make not only their lives fruitful but also bring the very much needed new silver lining on the dark clouds that were gathering over the worlds horizon. Nobody could imagine that a silver line would be drawn by that attractive Prince among Saints who sat deeply absorbed in himself. There was none among the audience who could have gone behind his eyes and shared the vision that he was seeing – ONE in the many and the many in the ONE. It was this vision that translated itself into the words ‘Sisters and Brothers of America’



as he stood up and began his address to the Assembly.

The sound vibrations that emanated from him have merged and become part of the Universal Sound. But the soul stirring expressions that poured out of him over the next nine and a half years still remain with us as his own commentary on the vision he had nurtured, thanks to this realization of the Self within. Those commentaries fortunately remain with us distributed in the volumes of Vivekananda literature. In living form they remain in the monasteries and mission centres for which he laid the foundation in his own life time and in the hearts of millions of Indians for whom they form a never ending source of inspiration and guidance. The only place where they are lacking today is alas our Indian political sphere, where Swamiji’s wisdom has been cast aside paving the way once again for a lack – luster Indian nationalism.

The point worth contemplating in this context, which provides a vision of the Indian Religious approach centered on Universal acceptance and tolerance is that while all the other religious leaders presented vies from the stand point of their particular religion stressing its uniqueness, Swamiji alone presented a vision of the universal

dimensions of Sanatana Dharma, global in its sweep and at the same time centered in each individual. What enabled him to achieve this soul transforming miracle? For this we have to go back to the wonderful spiritual heritage, the elixir of which flowing through his arteries and veins since childhood had set him on the journey towards Self-Realisation. We have to go back to the years he spent with that unusual 'Best among Avatars' whose life experiences had transformed even the most intricate religious ideas and experiences into his very life's breath.

It is from this immaculate teacher that Swamiji learned that the first ideal of religious realization is renunciation. Secondly, that "the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion ... One infinite religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this religion is expressing itself in various countries in various ways. Therefore we must respect all religions and we must try to accept them all as far as we can."

One idea Swamiji was emphatic about in this connection was the need to recognize "that each one of them has the same saving power as the other. Firmly rooted in his realization of the one Ultimate Truth he firmly reiterated that the same God answers all... the same Almighty God is responsible for all". To attain realization of this God are needed "tremendous purity and renunciation which is the one secret of spirituality". He considered 'renunciation as the background of all religions and if senses crept into the field of religion spirituality decreased in the same ratio'. Again and again he voiced his Master's words "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects or churches or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, and the more this is developed in a man the more powerful is he for good.

This was also the voice of Mother India, who from time immemorial had kept the gates of her home open to all those who approached her for refuge from the tyrannies in their homelands be it racial, religious, or political.

What is so special in the voice of India that is absent in others? To quote Swamiji's own words, "This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, the same India whose influx of spirituality is represented, as it were, on the material plane, by rolling rivers like oceans, where the eternal Himalayas, rising tier above tier with their snow caps, look as it were into the very mysteries of Heaven. Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first sprang up inquiries into the nature of man, and into the internal world. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, the existence of a supervising God, an immanent God in nature and in man, and here the highest ideals of religion and philosophy have attained their culminating points .. It is the same land which stands firmer than any rock in the world, with its undying vigour, indestructible life. Its life is of the same nature as the soul, without beginning and without end, immortal, and we are the children of such a country." Thanks to the multitude of peoples and cultures that got assimilated in our country we alone could formulate a "Universal Religion" as well as originate the idea of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, the Universe as one family.

What is so unique in Hinduism that is absent in other religions? "Hinduism is a true religion because it teaches that God alone is true, that this world is false and fleeting, that all your gold is but as dust, that all your power is finite and that life itself is oftentimes an evil. Hinduism is a true religion because it teaches renunciation and stands up with the wisdom of ages to tell and to declare to the nations not to be ruined by the senses, to renounce

the love of the senses and of the world. That is the way of religion. Through renunciation is the way to the Goal and not the enjoyment”.

Swamiji could think, talk and act as he did because he was a true Hindu, a Vedantin. Vedanta is built on principles, not personalities. Sages discovered them who tried to become illustrations of the principles they preached. Because of this Vedanta a most impersonal religion – based on principles and yet with infinite scope for the play of persons. Hinduism recognizes that “unity in variety is the plan of the universe.” That Universal Existence is God, the Ultimate Unity in the Universe. In Him we are all one. At the same time in manifestation, these differences must all remain. “We must learn that Truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways and each of the ways is true as far as it goes. We must realize that the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints, and yet be the same thing.”

“It is in vain that we try to gather all the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult to make them gather together even around eternal and universal principles. If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must always be through principles and not through persons. We must gracefully accept the fact that through high philosophy or low, exalted mythology or refined ritualism or arrant fetishism, every sect, every soul, every nation every religion, consciously or unconsciously is struggling upward towards God, every vision of Truth that man has is a vision of Him and of none else”.



Swamiji intuitively felt that the world is waiting for this grand idea of universal tolerance. It will be a great acquisition for civilization. Nay, no civilization can long exist unless this idea enters into it. No civilization can grow unless fanaticism, bloodshed and brutality stop. No civilization can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon one another; and the first step towards that much needed charity is to look charitably and kindly upon the religious convictions of others. Nay, more, to understand that not only should we be charitable, but positively helpful to each other, however different our religious ideas and

convictions may be ... Love alone is the fittest thing to survive and not hatred, it is gentleness that has the strength to live on and to fructify and not mere brutality and physical force. The other great idea that the world wants from us today ... is the eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole world. Swamiji refers to it as “a life giving idea” and was convinced that this was what the world wants from us today and which the mute

masses of India want for their upliftment, for none can regenerate this land of ours without the practical application and effective operation of the idea of the Oneness of things.

Another more scientific and appealing rationale which Swamiji offers in this connection is with regard to that most highly priced ethics in human society. The West is desperately seeking the *raison d’etre* of all its philosophy and its ethics other than mere sanction of any personage, however great and Divine he may have been would finally settle on the ethical and moral code based on some eternal principles of truth. This eternal sanction

can be in the only Infinite Reality that exists in every one as their own self in the soul.

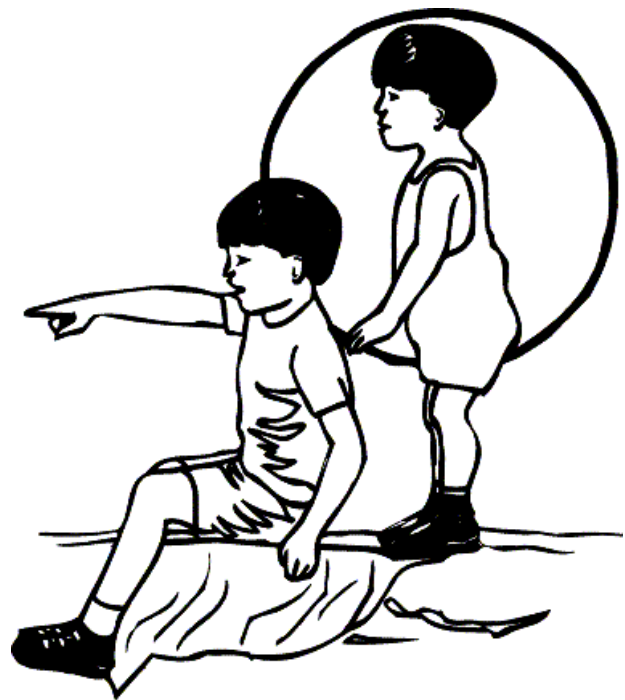
“The infinite oneness of the Soul is the eternal sanction of all morality and you and I are not only brothers – every literature voicing man’s struggle towards freedom has prescribed that for you – but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality”.

Swamiji preached Advaita not as a sectarian philosophy but because of its universal and widely acceptable grounds. He felt that the Advaita aspect of Vedanta is necessary to rouse up the hearts of men, to show them the glory of their own souls. Mark his words: Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self conscious activity. This was his clarion call, calling upon man “to discover the innate potential divinity of his soul, by controlling nature external and internal”. This can be done through work or worship, psychic control or philosophy, by one or more or all of these. This alone can take him to his ultimate freedom.

Harmony of Science and Religion

Harmony of science and religion was another very important aspect of Indian approach that he upheld before his Western audience. “Science is nothing but the finding of unity. As soon as science would reach perfect unity, it would stop from further growth, because it would reach the goal”. So is with religion. The science of religion becomes perfect “when it would discover Him who is the one life in a universe of death, Him who is the constant basis of an ever changing world. One who is the only Soul of which all souls are but manifestations Thus is it, through multiplicity and duality, the ultimate unity is reached. Religion can go no farther. This is the goal of all sciences”.

The sooner this knowledge of the harmony of Science and Religion enters into the comprehension of mankind, the nearer will we be to peace and understanding at the global level. Religion will not then be ‘blind’ nor science ‘lame’ any more. Religion of the future will have to be modelled on the basis of this mighty confluence of science and spirituality. The result, the world will get a faith which is not afraid of truth, which is not afraid of ‘others’ which is also not afraid of a God sitting above us in Heaven judging us. Rooted in fearless pursuit of Truth man will attain a new dignity, strength and sense of fullness and freedom. Swami Vivekananda’s teachings foreshadow this inevitable coming together of the objective



scientific truth and subjective Spiritual Reality. Out of this synthesis should emerge a universal religion urging man to manifest the ‘Universal Self’ in him in place of his limited individual self. That would indeed be the crowning glory of religion and science.

Swamiji often spoke of 'Universal Brotherhood'. How can we ordinary beings conceive of this brotherhood, when our minds are so filled with jealousy, hatred, intolerance and so on. How to get rid of the negative impulses in our mind? Swamiji wants us to take a good look at religion as he firmly believed that religion is the highest plane of human thought and life. No doubt religion has created very many negative forces in the society. But again "the intense love that humanity has ever known has come from religion. The noblest word of peace that the world has ever known has been uttered by religious men". Therefore we must concentrate on those aspects which shall enhance in us positive qualities by which we can create better humans. Swamiji underscores this by defining religion as "the manifestation of the Divinity which is already in man".

"The time has come for renunciation and then you will see the harmony in all the religions of the world. You will know that there is no need of any quarrel

and then only will you be ready to help humanity. To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions was the mission of my Master. Other teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but this great teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself. He left every religion undisturbed because he had realized that in reality they are all part and parcel of the one eternal religion". In Sri Ramakrishna the world saw Universal Symphony of Religions. It was this symphony that Swami Vivekananda so effectively replayed in the Parliament of Religions. Knowledge of the Unity in diversity was the secret behind his unified vision which brought out those unforgettable words – 'Sisters and Brothers of America'.

We in India need this vision today most urgently so that we can write in bold golden letters in our Nation's banner "HELP AND NOT FIGHT", 'ASSIMILATION AND NOT DESTRUCTION', 'HARMONY AND PEACE, AND NOT DISSENSION'.



YUVA BHARATI Subscription Renewal - An Appeal

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(Ends with September '05)

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SIX LESSONS FOR TEACHERS

Cultivate enthusiasm for knowledge. Children have a natural eagerness to know more and learn more skills. Encourage this hunger by feeding it with more interesting knowledge. Appreciate their achievements and their success in obtaining knowledge. Success leads to further success. Success in one subject will give them courage to take up another subject. It will give them confidence and strength of mind. Do not allow their zeal to fade away when they fail in the first attempt. By means of love and sympathy, you can kindle enthusiasm and confidence. It is not wrong to fail; the fault lies in not working to the fullest, getting disheartened, and giving up further effort. Give them chances to succeed in other directions and their zeal will blossom again. The experience of failure will induce them to double their efforts.

Hold before the children examples of great lives. Tell them stories of men and women who sought fearlessly to acquire knowledge, skills and insight and succeeded in spite of overwhelming problems. They must be encouraged to compare themselves with such models and to work hard to follow their example. Have pictures of these personalities in the rooms where they gather. Do not keep pictures of scenes of violence and sex etc. The goal of a useful life must be constantly before them.

Do not allow children to lower the targets. The percentage of marks that children have to get for a pass in the examination is now 30 or 35. Therefore, they try to reach up to that level only. Their talents are not tested to the full. Induce them by loving

interest and affectionate understanding to reach up to 95; they will then earn at least 60 or 65. Never say 'enough', but always draw forth more from the children's own talents. This must be the trend of the guidance you give.

Pay equal attention to all the subjects the children learn. A single hole can empty totally a glass full of water. A single subject which the child is not proficient in can affect its total achievement, and declare it as a failure. Do not feel that your duty is done when the child learns well your lessons. For, through personal study of each problem, one can help the child to blossom full into an embodiment of Divinity.

Pay special attention to the development of memory. In fact, the faculty of memory is very strong in children.

They are eager to gather facts. If they are felt to be important and meaningful, they will be kept in memory faster and longer. Otherwise, they may keep the pages of the book open before their eyes, and they may be even reading aloud the words, but they would not stick in memory. The eye, the tongue, the hand and the mind have to coordinate with each other to promote attention and concentration. A burning desire to know helps memory to grow.



Cultivate the skill of writing also, along with the skill of reading. The final test of one's knowledge is how much the child can muster and how clearly he can express it on paper. So, even while teaching the children to read effectively with clarity and understanding, train them to write on what has been read. This method has an additional advantage. Writing helps to imprint facts and ideas deeper in mind, while mere reading might touch only the surface.

When you observe these six points in practice, you are bound to succeed in your attempts to shape the children under your care. (Baba gave these directions in a Discourse to SSE teachers).

Courtesy : Sri Satya Sai Bal Vikas





THE MOMENTOUS CHICAGO ADDRESSES

SWAMI SUDARSHANANANDA



Why was the Chicago Parliament of Religions momentous? What was its significance? Why is it creating a great sensation even after 112 years? Do we get any benefit from the addresses of this Parliament? These are some of the questions, which agitate modern minds. An attempt is made here to clear our queries.

In September 11, 1893 Swami Vivekananda delivered a memorable, momentous and impressive lecture. It is said to be quite unprecedented in the history of the world. There was no second instance like that which caused such a stir in the minds of the people. In the history of oratory the historical importance of this incomparable speech is extraordinary. In the field of thoughtfulness of the modern world it unfolded a renaissance.

Swami Vivekananda participated in the Parliament of Religions as an uninvited representative. In that Parliament of Religions, the oldest religion, Hinduism was not invited. If Swami Vivekananda had not participated voluntarily in the Parliament of Religions, then nobody would have the opportunity to listen to the magnificent ideas of Hinduism. The people would remain ignorant about the sublime philosophy of Hinduism. Buddhism, Jainism and Brahma Samaj who had got the opportunity to send their representatives to the Parliament of Religions, only carried partial and incomplete ideas of Hinduism.

In the Parliament of Religions Swami Vivekananda unhesitatingly and undauntedly proclaimed the excellence and sublimity of Hinduism. That proclamation was not an outburst of passion or emotion. He has brought to light the underlying truth of the philosophical significance of Hinduism. While analyzing the historical introduction of Hinduism Swami Vivekananda said: "I am proud

to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance... I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of Israelites who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation."

In this backdrop of the historical events the philosophical standpoint has been operative. In this connection Swamiji pointed out: "To him (a Hindu) all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the infinity each determined by the conditions of its birth and association, and each of these marks a stage of progress; and every soul is a young eagle soaring higher and higher, gathering more and more strength till it reaches the glorious sun."

Hinduism is not a different name of the doctrine of the world beyond death only. It is not a blind allegiance to some fixed and established customs and practices only. Clearly revealing this fact Swamiji said: "Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realizing – not in believing, but in being and becoming."

Hinduism does not only regard a man as an embodied being. Hinduism has also found out the mystery of life's supreme accomplishment through the spiritual knowledge. Hinduism has led the way to achieve perfection through imperfection. With regard to this Swamiji said: "Therefore to gain this infinite universal individuality this miserable little

prison-individuality must go. Then alone can death cease when I am one with life, then alone can misery cease when I am one with happiness itself, then alone can all errors cease when I am one with knowledge itself.”

Hinduism has revealed profound intuitive wisdom about the real nature of the universe. Drawing the attention of all towards the propitious scientific attitude of this profound wisdom Swamiji said: “Manifestation and not creation is the word of science today and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language and with further light from the latest conclusions of science.”

Missionaries headed by Ram Mohan censured Hinduism for its idolatry. Swamiji put forth effective counter-argument in support of idolatry and confuted the accusation. Ram Mohan said: “The trend of idolatry is the cause of moral degradation of Hinduism.” He rained upon the history of Hinduism bitter reproaches about its idolatry. He

wrote in the introduction of ishoponisad, “Fatal system of Idolatry induces the violation of every humane and social feeling – and moral debasement of race...” The experience of Swamiji about idol worship bore completely different witness. Ram Mohan had not even venerated to the smallest extent the arduous practices of Sri Chaitanya, Ramprasad, Tulsidas and Mirabai. But sitting at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna whatever Swamiji knew, he unhesitatingly uttered: “The tree is known by its fruits. When I have seen amongst them that are called idolaters, men, the like of whom in morality and spirituality and love I have never seen anywhere, I stop and ask myself, can sin beget holiness?” Swamiji showed the difference of idol worship of Hinduism and other religions and said: “Unity in variety is the plan of nature and the Hindu has recognized it. Every other religion lays down certain fixed dogmas, and tries to force society to adopt them. It places before society only one coat, which must fit Jack and John and Henry, all alike. If it does not fit John or Henry, he must go without

AN APPEAL FROM YUVA BHARATI

To All Readers, Subscribers, Well-wishers, Advertisers, and to the Youth. . .

Yuva Bharati is one of the very few monthly magazines which is being regularly posted for the last 33 years without any break. In the history of Yuva Bharati many twists and turns happened reminding us of the verse “men may come and men may go.. but I go on for ever”

The mounting cost of production compel us to change our tariff rates. We appeal to all to support, sustain and to nourish Yuva Bharati by generously participating financially, and most important, by enrolling at least 5 more subscribers from your side. The new Tariff is as below:

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a coat to cover his body. The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be realized, or thought of, stated through the relative; and the images, crosses and crescents are simply so many symbols – so many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on.”

Superstitions have entered into Hinduism as in other religions. Swamiji has unhesitatingly admitted it. But in real religious life Hinduism clearly revealed its basic importance. The Hindu has never tainted him by persecuting others. That’s why in the voice of Swamiji sounded those words of illumination: “The Hindus have their faults, they sometimes have their exceptions; but mark this, they are always for punishing their own bodies and never for cutting the throats of their neighbours. If the Hindu fanatic burns himself on the pyre, he never lights the fire of Inquisition.”

Sri Ramakrishna proclaimed: “As many faiths, so many paths.” Swami Vivekananda also said: “To the Hindu, the whole world of religions is only a travelling, a coming up of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of them all.”

That’s why Hinduism shows reverence to all religions. Hinduism is friendly to all religions. Swami Vivekananda in his valedictory speech at the Parliament of Religions told about the broadminded outlook of Hinduism. He said: “The seed is put in the garden, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth, or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant, it develops after the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth and the water, converts them into a plant. Similar in the case with religion. 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.”

This is the proper solution to all clashes among all religions. It is the basic truth of Hinduism. In the sacred addresses at the Chicago Parliament of Religions Swamiji made an eternal bridge linking all the religions of the world. He gave there the holy magical formula (Mantra) to all the religions of the world how to live in amity following their own religions. And that’s the significance of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago.



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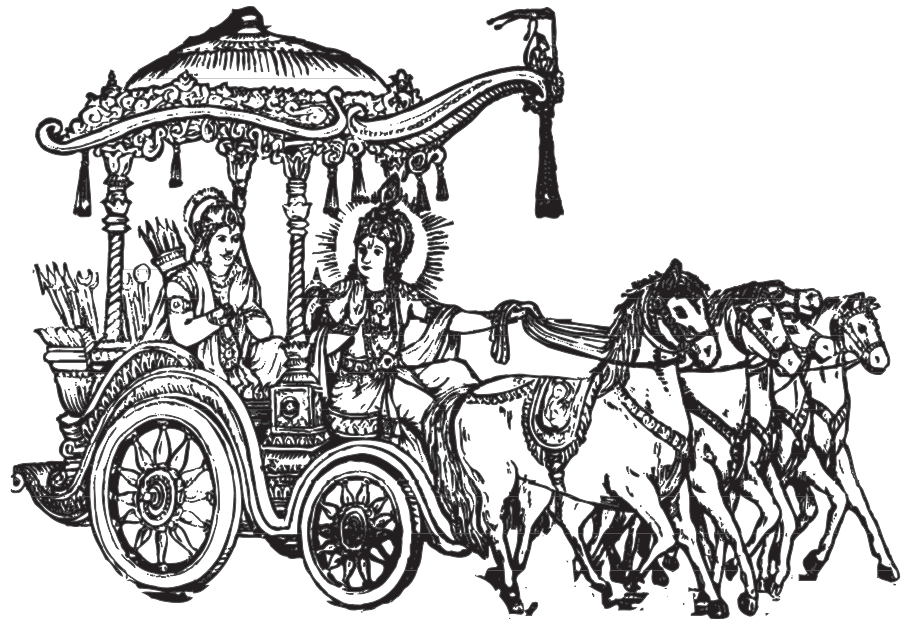
GITA FOR THE YOUTH WORK IS WORSHIP

In the fortyseventh 'sloka' of the second chapter, Lord Krishna nicely pictures 'Nishkama Karma' and rouses the spirit of Arjuna. Lord Krishna says, 'Oh Arjuna, you have the right, power or competence only to do your duty. But you should not crave for the reward. At no time does it fall within your competence or right to demand fruit. If you so desire the fruit, you yourself will be the cause for your bondage. Don't be the cause for your bondage. Just to avoid bondage do not bring yourself down to stop work altogether. Don't allow yourself to lapse into idleness as a recourse to escape bondage.

Those who are in the run for liberation (Moksha) must steer clear of both merit (Punyam) and sin, Merit or sin entails an action. So he who decides to sit idle without doing any action may be free from bondage of either merit or sin. But this is a wrong way of thinking. None can remain without doing any work. To hope to be absolutely actionless and idle is not proper or desirable.

It is 'Yoga' to do one's duty, without an eye on the fruit and without the feeling of doership. Failure does not depress such a 'Yogi', Nor does success elate him. He maintains equanimity both in success and failure, joy and sorrow, profit and loss, and so on.

Ordinarily in this world we find some good people doing some good deeds in order to win some reward or fame. They are here prompted by some desire to earn not only some material benefit but also undying fame. As people praise them for their sacrifice and missionary zeal, they feel flattered and do more and more good deeds. Of course they are not free from the feeling of doership and desire for reward and fame. Yet we cannot but appreciate their services.



A Jnani (a realised soul) who knows that he is the Atman and not the body and who does work without the feeling of doership no doubt is an example for one who does work as worship. But he does not snub the ordinary good man doing good deeds and say to him to his face that the good deeds that he does bind him with a gold chain and that the circle of births and deaths for him goes on with no prospect of ending, in sight. "Religion is caught but not taught". The ordinary good people doing good deeds for reward or fame are much better than those who take more from society than they give to it. Hence the best

way of elevating such ordinary good people is for the liberated souls to influence them by their example. Even an evolved soul who is well-established in Brahmi-State does work for the benefit of the world. He does “Nishkama Karma” so that others may follow his example. “Example good or bad percolates from above”. The example of such evolved souls is sure to influence the ordinary good men doing good deeds for reward and fame. In the twentysixth ‘Sloka’ of the third chapter Lord Krishna says to Arjuna thus ‘O Arjuna, a Jnani (an evolved soul who is established in his Brahmi state) should not shake and dampen the spirit and enthusiasm of those who with interested motive do good work, by his precept or reprimand. He can see that his example can slowly but surely bring about change for the better in those doing good work with an eye on reward or fame.

An individual by birth or by chance has to his lot some duty to perform. It is called “Swadharma”. It is his bounden duty to perform that performance of his own duty, but not for the high-ness of the duty he is destined to perform. In this context Abraham Lincoln’s words are, “He who does something at the head of one regiment eclipses him who does nothing at the head of a hundred”. So man has to thrust his soul and heart in the work that falls to his lot. Arjuna is a Kshatriya entrusted with the task of protecting the good from the onslaught of the evil. He has to kill the opponents in war and establish righteousness on a firm footing. This task may involve violence and it may not suit his taste. Yet he cannot afford to give up his ‘Swadharma’ (one’s own allotted duty) and go in for other duty though higher and nobler. He has to win laurels by doing his own duty alone. So Lord Krishna in the thirty-fifth sloka of the third chapter says thus: ‘O Arjuna! Though the ‘Dharma’ (duty) of others is attractive and capable of being well-done, it is not worth undertaking for a striver. Your ‘Swadharma’ (allotted duty) is to fight and subdue the evil forces, since you are a

Kshatriya’. Though it is not to your liking, it is far better for you than the ‘Dharma’ of others. In the performance of your ‘Swadharma’ even if death occurs, you stand to gain. Immortal fame and a blessed state are yours. But the Dharma of others is fraught with fear.

Every person ordinarily desires to earn merit (Punyam) and avoid sin. Every one knows that accumulated merit (Punyam) brings in blessings of fortune like millions and mansions and accumulated sin brings in misery and misfortune, yet in spite of himself he does actions that make



him incur sin. In response to Arjuna’s pertinent question, Lord Krishna in the thirty-seventh sloka of the third chapter clarifies thus: Oh Arjuna! The reason sought by you is this; Kama (lust) is born of ‘rajas’ ‘Kama’ leads to ‘Krodha’ (Anger). The more a person indulges in Kama, the more and more will be his longing for further indulgence. It paves the way for sinful actions. So know this ‘Kama’ to be an enemy in the path of ‘Moksha’ (Liberation). The blessed souls who strive to attain Moksha (liberation) must endeavour with their

utmost care to put in check 'Kama' and 'Krodha' (lust and anger).

Our being's end and aim ought to be realization of God or attainment of Moksha. The enemies that drag man into the miserable cess-pool are 'Kama' (lust) 'Krodha' (anger) 'Lobha' (Desire to mass more and more) 'Moha' (Infatuation) 'Mada' (Pride) and 'Matsarya' (Envy). For the conquest of these internal enemies man needs God's grace and guidance. The Kurukshetra war in which Lord Krishna leads Arjuna to victory is symbolic of man's victory over his internal enemies. When once man conquers these enemies, nothing remains to conquer. These enemies stand in the way of the realization of God. The circle of births and deaths continues to suffocate the embodied soul if these enemies are not subdued and suffering too appears sweet to the soul in bondage. Relief comes, the moment the sufferer takes refuge at the feet of God. Arjuna prostrates himself at the feet of Lord Krishna and prays to Him for relief. Lord Krishna in His mercy shows him the way to Moksha (liberation).

Man's duty is just to appeal to God for light and protection. That is human effort. The human effort is in the form of fervent appeal and prayer to Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna in His mercy lifts His devotee from the depths of despair and makes him victorious. Without that human effort (Purusha Prayatnam) in the form of complete self surrender in all devotion, the brood of bloody internal foes broil the embodied soul.

When by the grace of God, the embodied soul keeps the internal enemies at bay, he is free to perform worship in the form of 'Nishkama Karma' (dedicated duty). Then he enjoys his work as worship. Nothing binds him then to the cycle of births and deaths. He carries on his duty with cheer

and equanimity enjoying deep down in his heart abiding peace—peace born of being the recipient of God's grace. As he does work as worship, he gives his mind to God.

In the seventh 'sloka' of the eighth chapter, Lord Krishna clarifies how it is possible to do work keeping the mind on God. Lord Krishna says "so at all times without gap keep your mind on me and think of me with relish. At the same time engage yourself in war and conquer your enemies, (as it is your sacred duty). As you thus give me your mind and 'Buddhi' (intellect) you attain Me. There is no doubt about it".

If one is able to enjoy the nectar of uninterrupted remembrance of God, that itself is 'Moksha' (liberation). It is no wonder if such a person on shedding mortal coil, merges with God.

Lord Krishna's exhortation is that Arjuna should participate in dreadful war and keep his mind on God at the same time. How can one make war while his mind is elsewhere? It is possible. His mind is not on any worldly thing. The only worldly thing he is facing is war. His mind does not run on any worldly thing other than the war he is waging. Hence there will be no clash. The mind is concentrated in its own place in its true self. To keep the mind on God means to keep one's own mind on the self. There is no scope for deviation. He does the work on hand more efficiently (more like child's play) since his mind does not run hither and thither on worldly things and since it is in its own place or element.

Blessed and praiseworthy are those who do 'Nishkaama Karma' (dedicated duty) keeping their mind on God. Such work done as worship cures all the ills in society. If the great and the high at the helm take to work as worship thus, the earth becomes a paradise.





The familiar and interesting figure of Ganapathi, the potbellied, elephant-headed, single-toothed, Lord of knowledge and success, as well as the destroyer of impediments, occupies an outstanding position in the hierarchy of Hindu deities. He is the first God to be invoked at the commencement of all auspicious undertakings of an orthodox Hindu. The immense popularity of Ganesa is mainly attributed to his potency to help surmount obstacles in the performance of all tasks whether religious, social or personal.

Legendary Origin of Lord Ganesa

A popular legend about the origin of the quaint physiognomy of the Gajanan—the elephant-faced—is mentioned in the Sivapurana, as follows: Parvati made Ganesa—he had a normal head then—out of the scrapings of the turmeric paste with which she had anointed her body and set him down to guard the gate while she was having a bath. Meanwhile, Lord Siva returned unexpectedly. Finding the entrance of his own house barred by his own son, Siva got wild, cut off his head and entered the house.

When Parvati came out and knew this, she was irate and would not be pacified until Siva promised to restore life to her child. But as the head was not to be found Siva ordered his Ganas to bring the head of the first creature they met. They brought an elephant's head which was supplanted on the human trunk. But to compensate for the disfigurement of her child, as parvati claimed him to be, Siva made him the chief (Pati or Isha) of his Ganas. He further endowed him with Supernatural wisdom and sagacity and power to help overcome difficulties. And thus, Ganesa became the first God to be invoked before all others.



Sacrifice of His Tusk

It is commonly believed that Ganesa lost one tusk during a quarrel with Parasurama the chief disciple of Siva. Some maintain that Ganesa broke one of his tusks and wrote the 'Mahabharata' with it to the dictation of

Vyasa. To an elephant, the tusk is a matter of great pride. Hence this action of Ganesa is considered as a symbolic demonstration that no personal sacrifice is too much in the cause of spreading knowledge and truth (Dharma and Jnana). Ganesa, also called the Siddhi Vinayaka (Lord of Success) or the Satya Vinayaka (Lord of Truth) is worshipped equally like the Goddess of Learning, Saraswati, in the field of education.

Avvaiyar, the great Tamil Poetess, has depicted Ganesa as the embodiment of all Yoga Sutras, in her 'Vinayakar Ahaval'.

Philosophic Concepts about Origin

Most stories about the origin of Ganapathy agree on one point. He is not born out of the physical union of Purusha and Prakriti, but from the element of earth itself and rides a Mushika (rat). Hence, the corpulent rotund body of Vighneswara (the remover of obstacles) riding on a rat is symbolic of Mother Earth with the burrowing rat hidden under.

A more rational conception about the origin of Ganesa is centred round his immediate relation with earth and its tillers. According to one interpretation Ganesa was a guardian-deity worshipped by the ancient agriculturists. The primitive cultivators were in frequent danger of crop-havoc caused by the wild were the most

perpetually troublesome. An elephant-headed God alone, they thought, was capable of scaring away the elephants and protect the tribes as their Lord (Isha).

Ganesa-Chathurthi

Though Ganesa is a favourite God throughout our country, Maharashtra is unique for its celebration of Ganesa-Chathurthi with great enthusiasm. Ganesa-Chathurthi falls on the fourth day of the month of Bhadrapada (August-September). After an elaborate Puja, clay images of Ganesa are taken in procession and immersed in the sea. A handful of sand is taken back from the seabed and sprinkled in the granary and other valuable household property. During this season, Maharashtra resounds with the slogan of "Father Ganesa, return quickly, come early next year" which is really an earnest entreaty for the quick return of the harvest season.

The 'Skanda-Purana' says that once while Ganesa was walking through 'Chandraloka' (world of the moon) he slipped and fell. The moon, the only witness of this accident, laughed heartily at the massive figure lying prostrate on the ground. Outraged by the insult, Ganesa cursed the moon to vanish from the world forever. The Gods in heaven became perturbed at the sudden disappearance of the moon and deputed Brihaspathi to pacify Ganesa. Ganesa cooled down and modified the curse that those who see the moon on that day of the year will be subjected to false accusations and allegations for the whole year. On further entreaties of the moon, Ganesa prescribed a vrata or puja on the Chathurthi day to annul the bad effects that may befall a person who sees the moon on that particular day. Thus had originated on this day the vrata which is thought the most efficacious means to overcome any hindrances and attain success.

Puranas cite that the performance of this puja had brought success to many. Krishna succeeded in finding the 'Syamanthaka Jewel' ; Dharmaraja won over Kauravas, and Damayanti regained her lost husband, Nala, all because they performed this Puja.

Ganesa is saluted in a peculiar manner by holding the ears and kneeling. It is stated that Vishnu did this

first to make Ganesa laugh and give out the concealed discus (the chakrayudha) of Vishnu which he had playfully swallowed. This episode explains the philosophical doctrine that the functioning of universe is a mere child's play for God.

Synonyms of Ganesa

Based on his physical appearance, Ganesa is known by many synonyms such as Ekadanta (Single-toothed), Vakratunda (twisted snouted), Chamarakarna (with ears like winnowing baskets), Mushika Vahana (rider of rat) and so on. Ganesa is usually represented by images with an infant's body crowned by an elephant-head and having four hands, each holding a noose, an elephant-hook, a cake (modaka) and a lotus or mace. The tantras describe ten principal forms of images as : Vighneswara, Lakshmi Ganapathy, Sakti Ganapathy, Kshipraprasada Ganapathy. Vrinchi Ganapathy and Uchchista Ganapathy. Of these, Maha Ganapathy is represented with as much as 12 hands. In some scriptures he is described as married while mostly he is described as a Brahmacharin.

In Tamilnadu, Ganapathy is known as 'Pillayar' or the Child-beautiful. Images are installed in every nook and corner, enabling the devotees to worship everywhere at any time.

Ganesa-Worship Abroad

In short, this deity has risen from the position of a nature god to its exalted position in the pantheon, even above the Trimurties. The cult of Ganesa is not confined to India or Hindus alone. Along with the Indian culture and civilization, the belief about Ganesa has also travelled and settled down in Central and South East Asia. One of the finest images of Ganesa is now found in the Tabo Monastery of Tibet. Many other bronze and wooden images of Ganesa were discovered during early excavations in different parts of Central Asia.

In respect of the priority for invocation at the beginning of all ceremonies, Ganesa is comparable to the Chinese round bellied god of good luck and the Roman Janus. He bears some similarity to the grain goddess of Mexico, the Demeter of Greeks and Ceres of Rome by the association with harvest festival.

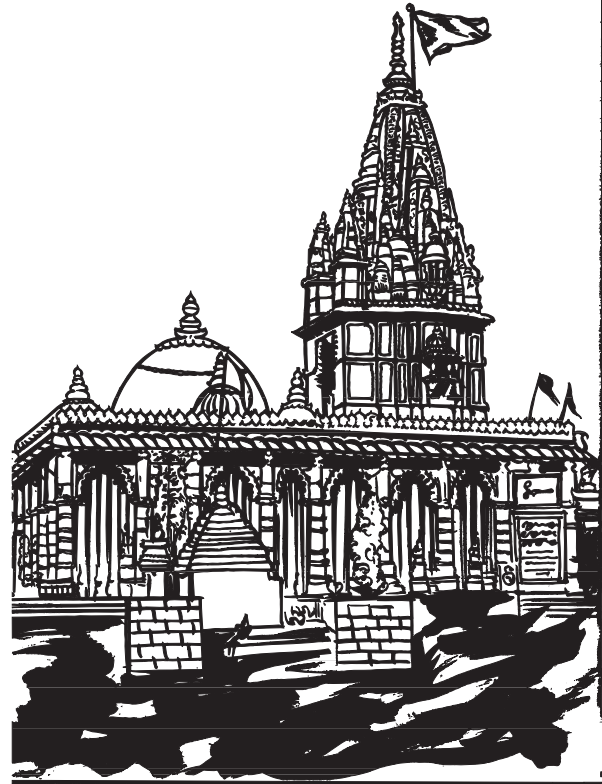


TEMPLES : AN OVERVIEW

Introduction :

The holy cave of Amarnath in Kashmir attracts thousands of pilgrims every year. The trek in the Great Himalayan mountains, amidst crystal clear lakes, like the Sheshnag and ancient glaciers, is a once in a life-time experience. The pilgrimage has something for everyone, depending on one's bent of mind : an emotional or spiritual achievement for the devout; and adventure for the adventurous; and the nature at its best for nature lovers. Sometimes it can even be funny as illustrated by the following incident. A man with a culinary disposition had a strange experience. The *Siva Lingam* (the symbolic representation of the Great Lord) is a natural formation in ice, that changes its size according to the phase of the moon. The man had to wait outside the cave to have the *Darsan*. That particular year, in the month of July (the time when the cave is open for the pilgrims), it was comparatively hot. By the time his turn came, it is said that he was quite thirsty. So when he beheld the *Lingam*, no matter how hard he tried, it could only appear to him as the great ice-candy!!

Man has taken great leaps in technology. This is evident from the standard of living that is tracing a positive exponential curve. What was probably only a wild imagination a century back, has now become a reality, nay a fact that is taken for granted! While the scientific development has given material prosperity to the minor sections of humanity, paradoxically it has left more than half of humanity to struggle for making both ends meet. Millions of people—especially in the underdeveloped and the developing countries—have become the *victims of civilization* in the form of hunger, disease, and lack of basic necessities. For these refugees, the only things that matter and are of primary importance, namely, food, clothing and



shelter which get superimposed on whatever is seen by them!

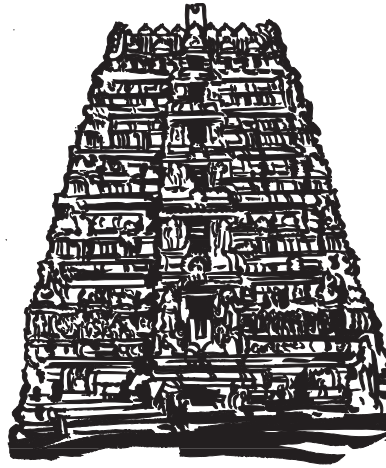
Life as it is understood by most of us is synonymous with activity. Especially that activity which is connected with survival. Though this is true for most of us, there are times when some of us come to experience a strange emptiness, in spite of fulfilling the basic necessities of survival. It is because, man alone has the capacity to reason, and to experience the emotions like beauty, humour, compassion and love. Reason or the capacity to think logically has two directions. The first and the most obvious is that which helps us, get the basic necessities to survive. Giant strides have been taken by man in the field of science and technology. In the process, he has unearthed many secrets of nature, and to an extent been able to control nature while *exploiting* it! In spite of all progress that man boasts of, deep inside, every thinking man is conscious of a persisting emptiness. He discovers that he continues to be the slave of

the lower emotions that are connected with survival, like fear, anger, greed and the rest. This is due to the fact, that reason alone will not allow him to remain content with what he gets. This is when the second direction of constant reassessment of his position, which brings in the feeling of emptiness.

It is at such times that he experiences the sensitivity to feel the pain of *others*, giving place to compassion and other noble traits that distinguishes him from other animals. He starts asking more fundamental questions, which makes him see his own relationship with other fellow men, fellow beings and nature and creation in general. Such questions make him tread the path of self-development. Those persons who dared to experiment with their own lives have been the pioneers in scaling the inner heights, and have more than succeeded in preserving the sanity of humanity. Out of many practical ways suggested by these great persons, temples have played a vital role in the growth of this inner science, and also have positively contributed for the development of architecture, dance, music and other fine arts, that have enriched our grand culture.

Place of Temples in Our National Psyche

Visit any village, no matter how small its population, you will find at least one temple there. It is quite likely, that not all the villagers have a roof above their heads! The Deity housed in the temple is *not just a symbol*, but is a living Entity, by whom every villager swears or on whom he relies for his trivial as well as serious needs, and is prepared to face any consequences to protect the temple. Swami Vivekananda used to say that one



can discuss religion and philosophy with any villager in India, adding with tongue in cheek, that it may be, that he is miles away from imbibing in his own life! Ignoring the irony of the gap between thought and word, and word and action, it has to be agreed that temple is an integral part of our national psyche. Starting from the birth of a child in a family, to the last rites performed after the death, we directly or indirectly depend on the temple.

Temple seems to have solution for every possible problem faced in human life. Child for the childless; health for the sick; success in examination for students; job for the jobless; the list is endless! If

we were to visit any city, we would find long queues of devotees, prepared to wait for endless hours just to have a Darsan of the Deity. The temple of Balaji at Tirupathi in Andhra Pradesh, attracts businessmen from all over the country, who share their profits with the Deity!

A thinking mind, begins to wonder, whether these temples are *demand houses*, for fulfilling all desires, or *business houses* that help in developing business partnerships among the devotees and the deities! But then, we also notice that there are others who visit the places of worship. Among such, are those who have been disillusioned either due to a relationship gone sour; or those who have had their share of misery in the form of a death of a near and dear ones; or those who do not have any sense of fulfilment *in spite* of achieving or having everything; or that microscopic minority of persons visiting the temples just because, they feel like responding to a call from within. With such variety of temple

visitors in mind, we can step into an inquiry into the need for religion in life.

Need for Religion in Life

Curiosity happens to be one of the first off-shoots of mental activity. Man in his initial ventures of mental voyages, may have started by observing nature. It is likely, that in his efforts for self-preservation—which is instinctive to *all beings*—he must have avoided certain things that were detrimental, and must have sought other things that were conducive to his survival. May be, while hunting for food, a sudden down-pour with flashes of lightning and thunder would have made him panic to seek shelter in caves; or his accidental discovery of fire that led to a revolution. The curiosity must not have allowed him to rest content in comfort, and to start taking the first tottering steps towards understanding the world around him.

It is obvious however, that he was not in a position to understand everything. For instance, the wonder that rose and set day-after-day without break, which gave warmth (now, we know it to be the nearest star, which we call the sun!); its disappearance behind the dark masses, which poured water (clouds!); or the phenomenon of great flashes in the sky which sometimes burnt trees (lightning!). Instead, they must have created a sense of awe and wonder in him, giving way to fear and respect. These feelings *may* have developed into the crude forms of religion.

This trend continues even to this day. Normally, most of us—excluding those who depend on reason and science—when not in a position to understand certain things, tend to attribute it to the supernatural! Fear is one of the lanes that take us towards religion. Fear, however, has its own limitation, for it continues to lay stress only on the survival aspect of life. Unfortunately, most of the people seem to stagnate only at the level of



survival, due to the fact that *survival appears to have become the only priority in life!*

Whether we accept it or not, human nature will not allow man to rest content till he starts seeking something subtler and different from acquiring the means of survival. However, the list of means for survival—containing only the basic necessities—has lengthened with status, name and fame, and power being added to it! This lengthening list

which has paradoxically, added more misery to human life, has forced man to re-think about his present understanding of life. Questions like, “Is life meant only for survival and propagation?”; “How is man different from other fellow beings?”; “Why is the mind ever dissatisfied in spite of all possessions that are meant to bring happiness?”. When such questions start pestering the mind, we tend to discover a deeper need : the need for

the *real* religion.

Swami Vivekananda observes : ‘Religion begins with a tremendous dissatisfaction with the present state of things, with our lives, and a hatred, an intense hatred, for this patching of life, an unbounded disgust for fraud and lies.’

But what *is* this religion? It is totally different from the commonly understood religion characterized by dogmas, rituals and books. Swami Vivekananda writes :

‘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.’

This perhaps is the best aphorism available on religion. He has covered everything on religion in this short statement. When man starts getting an inkling about his potential divinity, he starts



seeking it, calling it by various names : Truth, Self-realisation, Salvation, etc. The means is by controlling external as well as internal nature. By external nature Swamiji means all actions

including speech; and by internal nature, all thoughts, feelings and emotions. Swamiji suggests four broad methods of achieving this control, that have been practised for millennia by millions everywhere. *Karma Yoga*, for which Swamiji uses the word Work; worship refers to *Bhakti Yoga*, the path of devotion; psychic control means *Rāja Yoga*, the path of meditation; and *Jñāna Yoga*, the path of knowledge referred to as philosophy.

Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master of Swami Vivekananda, used to say, that among all paths, the path of devotion is the best for Kaliyuga—the age of Kali. All other paths require that the aspirant has to give up the lower life for accepting the higher. Whereas, in *Bhakti* it need not be so. Once an aspirant approached the Master and expressed his difficulty in controlling the feeling of lust, causing obstruction to practice. Smilingly, Sri Ramakrishna told him, that instead of controlling lust, *he should increase it*. Explaining to the wide mouthed devotee, that one should increase the lust and *direct it towards God!* For as soon as one approaches the Divine, the lower passions drop without any effort.

The echo of this can be heard in the words of Swami Vivekananda : '*Bhakti Yoga* does not say "give-up" it only says "Love, love the Highest"; and everything low naturally falls off from him, the object of whose love is the Highest.'

Moreover, as most of us are emotional by nature, *Bhakti* appeals to our hearts. It was the band of *mad Bhaktas* who saved our culture from imminent extinction. They were *mad*, not in the

ordinary sense, but *mad with the love for God!* They cried and laughed, sang and danced with the name of God on their lips. Talking about his Master Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda says :

'I know of one whom the world used to call mad, and this was his answer : "My friends, the whole world is a lunatic asylum; some are mad after worldly love, some after name, some after fame, some after money, after salvation and going to heaven. In this big lunatic asylum, I am also mad, I am mad after God. You are mad, so am I." The true *Bhakta's* love is this burning madness before which everything else vanishes for him. The whole universe is to him full of love alone; that is how it seems to the lover. So when a man has this love in him, he becomes eternally blessed, eternally happy; this blessed madness of divine love alone can cure for ever the disease of the world that is in us.'

This divine love having the capacity to accommodate the whole universe in one's heart was developed by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, in the temple of Kali at Dakshineswar, a suburb of Calcutta. Not only Sri Ramakrishna but many such saints used the temples directly or indirectly, to teach the contemporary suffering people and to alleviate their pain and misery.

Thus we find the temples have a vital role in giving the real religion to the country, and have formed an integral part of our culture. Not only have they been so, but they have also acted as nurseries for the growth of our grand cultural heritage. Answers to the questions like : "How did they become so?; what is the esoteric significance of these architectural landmarks?; how can we make use of temples for our own growth?", will help us in understanding our culture, which is necessary in reclaiming the lost faith in it and more importantly, gaining faith in our own selves.





VIVEKANANDA KENDRA SAMACHAR

BANGALORE

Guru Poornima was celebrated at the newly built Vivekananda Dham on 21st July 2005. Shri V.R.Sudarshan, Chairman, Karnataka Legislative Council, chaired the meeting.

Dr.Lakshmi Kumari, Director, Vivekananda Kendra Vedic Vision Foundatio, was the main speaker.

Quoting extensively from the Vedas, Dr.Lakshmi Kumari dealt in detail with the purport of Gurupoornima. She said, "The chain of Gurus starts with Lord Narayana and descends through Brahma, Vasistha down to our personal mentor." She referred to how Yati amassed knowledge. She also spoke about 21 Gurus who transforms the disciples through different methods.

Dr.Lakshmi Kumari released the Souvenir, HELP AND NOT FIGHT brought out by the Centre.

Earlier, Sri Purushotham, Nagar Pramukh, lit the lamp to commence the programme. Dr.T.Gopal delivered the vote of thanks which was followed by a programme of bhajans and patriotic songs.

KALLUBALU (Bangalore)

The school at Kallubalu celebrated Gurupurnima on 22 July. Dr.Lakshmi Kumari, was the Chief Guest.

The computer centre and the tailoring unit run on the school campus are running well with good enrolment.

TEZPUR (Assam)

The centre observed Gurupurnima on 21st July. The function started with Guru Bhajan and Guru Strotras. Su.S.Nivedita Didi, Vice-President, Vivekananda Kendra, spoke on the message of Guru Purnima. Smt.Prabha Didi, Karyalaya Pramukh spoke on the importance of the day. Shri Prakashji spoke on Vyasa's life. A programme of "Amrut Surabhi" was launched on the day.

NEW DELHI

Guru Purnima was celebrated on 17th July. Sri Praveenji spoke on why the Kendra has accepted Om as Guru. Sri L.C.Moga, Nagar Sanchalak was present on the occasion.

Guru Purnima was celebrated also at Khelgaona, Pachim Vihar, Dwaraka and Janakpuri.

