



YUVA BHARATI

Voice of Youth

Vol.40 No.4 Kartik-Margashirsh 5114 November 2012 ₹.15/-

Happy Diwali





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Founder-Editor

Mananeeya Eknathji Ranade

Editor

P.Parameswaran

Editorial Consultants:

Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

Prof. P.T.Santha

Prof. P.Ramani

Editorial Team:

A.Sudarshan

P.Vasanth

S.Shivsankar

S.Aravindh

V.V.Balasubramanian

Marketing:

D.Krishnamoorthy

Design & Layout

V.Senthil Kumar

Editorial Office:

5, Singarachari Street,

Triplicane,

Chennai 600 005.

Ph: (044) 28440042

Email: vkpt@vkendra.org

Web: www.vkendra.org

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Editor : P.Parameswaran.



Invocation

Deepeana Dipitam Iti, Pa alnena Palitam,
Aayurdaayakam, Walnana Arjitam
Layayogena lipsitam Iti Deepawali
Deepawali Prakashyeta Khalu Sarvam!!

May the Deepawali (Diwali) take the humanity towards
Eternal Light! This light is the physical light created by
the earthen Lamp, for seeing around, where I do exist.
May it lead me to Eternal flame and to provide me
meaningful Long life, the higher Yoga of Supreme
realization and grant me the boon of Spiritual
illumination!



॥ शुभ
दिवाली ॥



Ignorance can rarely be bliss



During the reign of Louis XVI of France there was a famine which created widespread sufferings. When people were struggling to have at least one meal a day, the king was rolling in luxury and indulgence. The queen quiet oblivious of the sufferings of the people, advised them to eat cake if bread is not available." if there is no bread, eat cake" is a infamous and callous saying attributed to the queen Marion Antonio, though there are disputes whether she actually said these words.

Rulers indifference to the apathy of the common man is not a thing of past. The very recent uttering by our Prime Minister that "Money does not grow on trees" in trying to justify the nod given by his government FDI in retail, is sure to become one of the most insensitive statements ever. The government's stealthy move to allow FDI in retail was passed over with minimal discussions and debate.

The traders and farmers do agitate. But it is seldom given enough exposure by our Media. It is no secret that the companies which are going to swallow the Indian market are the crooked cronies of our Media, which gets its pelf from the advertisements and expects a bigger chunk from these foreign players.

People for and against the FDI are putting forth their views and they are mainly about the economic fallouts. Last 2 decades have seen a lot of growth in the industrial sector and information technology as a result of Globalization. While some of us are proud of getting the status of the "back office of the Western world" there are some who rue the progress as it has put to sword the values which our society endeared. Cultural degradation which is an unavoidable after shock of the Globalization has resulted in many broken families.

The situation has deteriorated to such a level that we now hear voices to legitimise gay marriages and live in relationships. The government has probably felt that the degradation is not fast enough and to fasten that has introduced the FDI in retail. The urge to ape the west with lust and greed as tools to do it, our society is sadly losing its destined path. It would be apt to recall what Swami Vivekananda has said about this craving to ape others.

"Another great lesson we have to remember; imitation is not civilization... Imitation, cowardly imitation, never makes for progress. It is verily the sign of awful degradation in a Man... We have indeed many things to learn from others, yea, that man who refuses to learn is already dead... learn everything that is good from others, but bring it in, and in your own way absorb it; do not become others. Do not be dragged away out of this Indian life; do not for a moment think that it would be better for India if all the Indians dressed, ate, and behaved like another race."

Time to wake up.

V.V.Balasubramanian.

YB - ET

The Love of a Monk that Transformed India

Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

It was the love for India that made Swami Vivekananda to go to such a distant land like America without any ground support in those days of poor communications. It was that overwhelming love for India that kept him working on his return even though he needed the rest. Even though he was a world conqueror; even after his return, he was the same person of kindest heart which cared for his Gurubhais and which wept and grew restless at the plight of his countrymen.

Each person had a place in the encompassing heart of Swami Vivekananda. After his return to India, during his stay in Nainital, an incident occurred which reveals the compassionate heart of the Swami Vivekananda. The Western women disciples who were in his travel group had gone on their own from their residence to visit the temple of Mother. That time, they happened to enter into conversation in broken language with two nautch-girls. In their ignorance the Westerners took them for respectable women. The



dancing-girls enquired where they could find Swami Vivekananda; so the disciples brought them to the place where Swamiji was staying. Swami Vivekananda was talking to many visitors who had come to meet him. Those

women begged to be admitted to his presence, so as to receive his blessings. The local persons and the listeners there wanted to turn those women away. But Swamiji refused to have them turned away. This immediately caused a storm of disapproval among his listeners, but he ignored it and allowed them to come to him. He blessed the women and spoke to them such words of power, full of kindness and with no trace of reproach, that the hearts of all present were touched. It was after this incident that Sister Nivedita recalled that Swamiji told his disciples the story of the nautch-girl of Khetri.

Similarly for the festival of Sri Ramakrishna Jayanti when women of ill-repute had come to take prasad, some were of the opinion that they should be turned away as their presence might mar the sanctity of the occasion. Swami Vivekananda with all the compassion in his heart shining in his wonderful eyes said, "Do they mar the sanctity or they get sanctified. If not here, where else would they go?"

His love for India was so transforming that whatever may be the religious path Swamiji touched and transformed one and all. At Nainital Swamiji, met a Muslim whose name was Mohammed Sarfaraz Hussain. Struck by the personality and extraordinary spiritual power of Swami Vivekananda, he exclaimed: "Swamiji, if in after-times any one claim you as an Avatara, a special Incarnation of the Godhead, remember that I, a Mohammedan, am the first!" He became greatly attached to Swamiji, and from then on counted himself as one of his disciples, under the name Mohammedananda.

Whosoever worked for the people of India that person would become very dear to Swami

Vivekananda. Thus he was all praise for Swami Akhandananda who started the work at Sargachi for feeding and caring for the poor and the orphans. Thus gradually Ramakrishna Mission itself took to extensive service activities. The sufferings of the people during the plague, famine, floods used to make him restless.

He was overjoyed when he came to know that Sister Nivedita has taken up extensive work to help those affected by plague and also to clean the areas so that the plague would be contained. Whether it was the plight of the poor, the fallen and the downtrodden or the condition of his dear motherland, he was moved. Many times thinking of his people; he would not even sleep whether he was in America or in India. He knew that the problems of India like self-forgetfulness, the blind imitation of the West would get further worsened if media was not in our hands. Thus he encouraged his disciples to start the magazines and print books. When Josephine Macleod gave a handsome donation of \$ 700 to Swamiji, he immediately got a press started in the Ramakrishna Mission.

Swami Vivekananda wanted India to take to industrialization which due to British policies had completely been destroyed. But he foresaw that even if India develops in industry, she would remain dependent for technology know-how on the Western countries which would always try to maintain their lead in technology. He felt that institutions should be set up to take up research in material science. Taking this inspiration from Swamiji Sri J N Tata later established Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. In the field of religion he

wanted the truth of Vedanta to become a living truth which would bring oneness, service and fearlessness. Thus his loving heart took in its sweep all walks of Indian life.

Jogeshchandra Datta, whom Swamiji had known in his school-days at the Metropolitan Institution, thought it desirable that funds should be raised so that Indian graduates could be sent to England to study for the Civil Service; who then on their return would help the poor of India. He put forward the plan to Swamiji. But Swamiji explained the futility of the idea, he said, "Nothing of the kind! Those graduates would, mostly, turn outlandish in their ideas and prefer to associate, on their return, with the Europeans. Of that you may be sure! They would live for themselves and copy European dress, diet, manners, and everything else, and forget the cause of their own country." How true he was! And then he spoke of the apathy of Indians for the material improvement of their country, and of their lack of enterprise, especially in the industrial field, he wept with anguish. Seeing the tears running down his face, the audience was moved. Jogeshbabu later narrated about it as, "I shall never forget that scene in my life! He was a Tyagi, he had renounced the world, and yet India was in the inmost depth of his soul. India was his love, he felt and wept for India, he died for India. India throbbed in his breast, beat in his pulses, in short, was inseparably bound up with his very life...."

Swami Vivekananda was once asked by one of his foreign disciples Josephine Macleod that what should we do for you. Swami Vivekananda had told 'Love India'. Some of them used to say that the love for India was

born in their hearts the day they listened the word 'India' from Swami Vivekananda.

Once after a fiery and passionate talk of Swamiji about working for the deprived sections of our society, a disciple asked, "But where is that strength in us? I should have felt myself blessed if I had a hundredth part of your powers, Swamiji.

Swamiji replied, "How foolish! Power and things like that will come by themselves. Put yourself to work, and you will find such tremendous power coming to you that you will find it hard to bear. Even the least work done for others awakens the power within; even thinking the least good of others gradually instills into the heart the strength of a lion. I love you all ever so much, but I wish you all to die working for others -- I should rather be glad to see you do that!"

Disciple then asked, "What will become of those, then, who depend on me?"

Swamiji assured from his own experience that, "If you are ready to sacrifice your life for others, God will certainly provide some means for them. Have you not read in the Gita (VI. 40) the words of Shri Krishna, that never does a doer of good, O my beloved, come to grief"?

For those who saw only the faults of India and her people, his message was--

"This national ship, my countrymen, my friends, my children -- this national ship has been ferrying million and millions of souls across the waters of life. For scores of shining centuries it has been plying across this water, and through its agency, millions of souls have been taken to the other shore, to

blessedness. But today, perhaps through your own fault, this boat has become a little damaged, has sprung a leak; and would you therefore curse it? Is it fit that you stand up and pronounce malediction upon it, one that has done more work than any other thing in the world? If there are holes in this national ship, this society of ours, we are its children. Let us go and stop the holes. Let us gladly do it with our hearts' blood; and if we cannot, then let us die. We will make a plug of our brains and put them into the ship, but condemn it never. Say not one harsh word against this society. I love it for its past greatness. I love you all because you are the children of gods, and because you are the children of the glorious forefathers. How then can I curse you! Never. All blessings be upon you! I have come to you, my children, to tell you all my plans. If you hear them, I am ready to work with you. But if you will not listen to them, and even kick me out of India, I will come back and tell you that we are all sinking! I have come now to sit in your midst, and if we are to sink, let us all sink together, but never let curses rise to our lips."

Sometimes it was very difficult for Swami Vivekananda to stand the pain of sufferings of the people of India. His heart would become restless. As in America when he was on peak of the popularity he could not sleep whole night thinking of his people, similar incident happened in India too. Once when Swami Vijnanananda, a brother disciple of Swamiji,

was in the next to Swamiji's room, his sleep was broken in the night by the sound of sobbing of Swamiji and so he rushed to his room. There he found Swamiji bitterly crying, 'Are you not feeling well Swamiji?' asked Vijnanananda. Swamiji was startled and said, "I presumed you were asleep, No, my dear, I am not sick. But I cannot sleep as long as my country suffers. I was crying and praying to Sri Ramakrishna that we would soon see better days."

It were Swamiji's prayers, his love that slowly entered – and is still entering the morrow of our moribund the nation. As was told by Swami Vivekananda--

"India will awake again if anyone could love with all his heart the people of the country -- bereft of the grace of affluence, of blasted fortune, their discretion totally lost, downtrodden, ever-starved, quarrelsome, and envious."

The intensity of Swamiji's feelings set in the process of transformation. And thus gradually freedom movement came up. In all walks of national life some changes, progress came. But the progress is slow; we need to increase the pace. The 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda is the great occasion for us to take his message to all and to transmit his love for all. And that can be done by loving India as she is and by working for making her more glorious than ever.



Dhanwantari—The Man and his Works

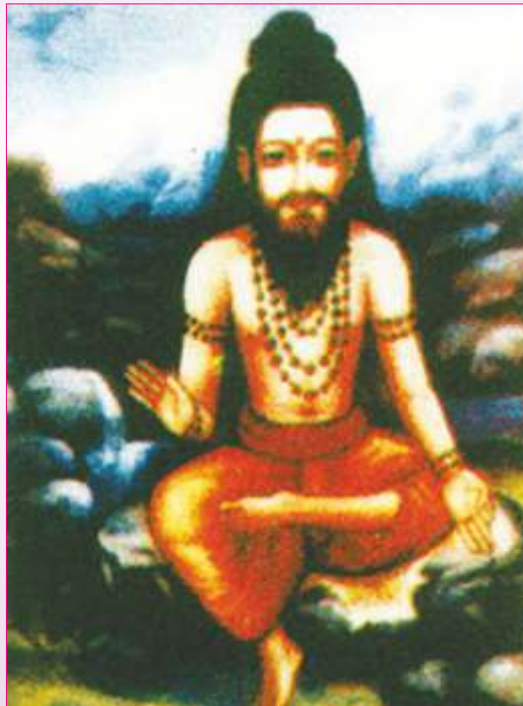
N. KRISHNAMOORTI

Sowmya: Guruji. We hear so much about Dhanwantari and his contribution to the field of medicine. Naturally I would like to know about his life, his books, his place in the field of medicines.

Guruji: Dhanwantari is respected as the originator of Ayurveda, the science of health and longevity. Listen how the Bhagavata describes the emergence of Dhanwantari. When the ocean of milk was churned by the Devas and Asuras “There arose from the sea a man with a unique and astounding form. His hands were long and stout; and his eyes reddish in tinge. His neck resembled a conch shell. Blue in complexion and young in appearance,

he was bedecked with garlands and various kinds of ornaments. Having smooth and curly hair broad-chested and handsome, he wore a yellow cloth and his strides resembled those of a lion. In his arm decorated with bracelets, he carried the pot of amrita. He was Dhanwantari,

an incarnation of a part of Vishnu, who is noted for promulgating Ayurveda, the science of health and who is entitled to a share of the Yajna Ahuti”. Harivamsa says Dhanwantari was named Abja. The Harivamsa also says that DHANVA a descendant of Kasi Raja,



propitiated Abja by long penance and got ABJA as his son, naming him Dhanwantari. It is Dhanwantari who taught his own eight disciples the eight parts of Ayurveda. The Brahavaivartapura na describes how Dhanwantari overcame in a battle, the poisonous. Manasadevi, a maid of Vasuki, the King of serpents. There is also

a reference to another Dhanwantari called Amritacharya in a book *Ambashthacarachandrika*. This, Dhanwantari was born to a girl Virabhadra with the blessings of Galava Maharshi.

Sowmya: The original Dhanwantari has left

any books.

Guruji: Yes. 19 works are ascribed to Dhanwantari; the standard Ayurveda books mention them. Some of them are 1) *Cikitsadipika* 2) *Balacikitsa* 3) *Dhanwantari Nigantu*, 4) *Vaidya – Bhaskarodaya* and 5) *Ayurveda Saravali*. The *Nigantu* is the oldest of these books.

Sowmya: I would like to know something about the iconography of Dhanwantari.

Guruji: Various postures of Dhanwantari include 2 armed, 4 or 6 armed forms holding the Amritakalasa. Some figures of Dhanwantari have Shankha and Chakra like Vishnu. Some figures show Dhanwantari bathing in the Amrit, pouring it from the pot. In a rare icon, Dhanwantari is shown holding a leech in one hand, suggesting bloodletting in surgery.

Sowmya: The word Dhanwantari itself has come to mean a good doctor.

Guruji: Yes. Dhanwantari means a doctor who has known 300 medicines. A Bhishak is an expert in 200 medicines. A vaidya is a master of 100 medicines.

Sowmya: Who are the traditional Gurus or Acharyas of Ayurveda?

Guruji: According to tradition, Brahma, Ashwins, Indra, Bharadvaja – Dhanwantari, Atreya and Susruta and Caraka, - this is the Guru-shishya tradition. Of these Bharadvaja and Dhanwantari are believed to be the same. Atreya and Susruta are the same perhaps. Caraka and Susruta are great authorities. Susruta is not the teacher of Caraka. The knowledge is both Vedic as well as Traditional.

Sowmya: What does Ayurveda talk about?

Guruji: Ayurveda is a wide ranging discipline. It talks about

- 1) Universal and individual themes about the basic relationship between matter and life.
- 2) Biology of (a) conception of the child in the womb (b) body, life and soul (c) genetics.
- 3) Physiology and Pathology.
- 4) Food.
- 5) Rules of health and longevity.
- 6) Diseases, diagnosis and treatment.
- 7) Poisons, antidotes.
- 8) Ethics.

Sowmya: I have heard of Ashtangas or eight parts of Ayurveda. What are they?

Guruji: They are 1) Kayachikitsa (therapy) 2) Salyatantra (major surgery) 3) Salakya tantra (minor surgery) 4) Bhutavidya (mental disorders and influence of evil forces – demons) 5) Kaumarabhritya tantra (treatment of children) 6) Agada tantra (poisons and cures) 7) Rasayana tantra (restorative treatment of old age related diseases) and 8) Vajikarana (increasing virile powers).

Sowmya: How does Ayurveda approach the patient, his illness and the treatment?

Guruji: Caraka as well as Susruta considers the following factors while treating a patient. 1) the body (Sarira) 2) the proper physical and moral way of keeping the body fit (Vritti) 3) causes of diseases 4) nature of pain and diseases 5) treatment (Karma) 6) effect (Karya) or restoration of the patient to his normal state

7) Kala (influence of seasons) 8) Kartri – the agent, the physician and his professional requirement 9) means and instruments (Karanas) and 10) prescription (Vidhivinischya).

Sowmya: Naturally I would like to know the philosophy behind Ayurveda.

Guruji: Ayurveda mainly follows Sankhya and Vedanta and considers the body to be made of Prakriti and Purusha interaction. A living being is a Karmapurusha, made up of mind, sense organs and material body. The material body is made up of 5 bhutas (elements) - (Akasha, Vayu, Agni, Aapa, Prithivi), 3 Gunas (Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas) and 3 doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha). When these components get imbalanced the person falls sick. Digestion and metabolism also promote or prevent diseases. This being basically an act of Agni, aided by Vayu, Pranayama helps in restoration of health.

Sowmya: How does a Vaidya diagnose the diseases of the patient?

Guruji: Apart from examining the body of the patient, the Vaidya determines the imbalance of the three doshas -Vata, Putta and Kapha,. Nadi pariksha also helps.

Sowmya: And the treatment.

Guruji: Ayurveda uses a variety of drugs – Oushadhas, strength giving drugs and curing drugs: Kriyas or treatment processes involve dieting, right conduct, medication, cleansing, sedating. Purificatory treatment involves Vamana, Virechana, enema etc. Fasting,

physical exercise, oil massage, causing perspiration, spiritual guidance, removing (exorcizing) evil spirits, prayers, etc. Surgical treatment is also involved. Blood letting was known. Bandaging and plastering (alepana) were also resorted to. The drugs were of vegetable, animal or mineral origin. Caraka and Susruta provide detailed information about dosage and administration of medicines. Then there is eugenics, the art of begetting, a healthy and intelligent child. The science of restoring vigour to the body Kayakalpa. Preventing diseases – treatment of trees, Vriksha Ayurveda separate sciences for cows, horses, and elephants were known.

Sowmya: Ayurveda seems to be as large as the ocean.

Guruji: (laughing) Dhanwantari was born from the ocean of Milk!



Sowmya: In what way does Ayurveda differ from Allopathic medicine of the Modern West?

Guruji: Ayurveda is nature oriented. It takes into consideration the five koshas of a human being Anna, Prana, Mana, Vijnana and Ananda. It uses the gifts of nature like vegetables, minerals and animal products in such a way that original virtues of these raw materials are not lost. There are no side effects.

Ayurveda energises the body by making the pranic energy more effective. There are yogic exercises such as Asana, Pranayama, especially Nadi Shuddhi. The ideal way of treating the body is to allow it to heal itself by rest, sleep, diet and yoga. Medical and surgical intervention is an exception rather than rule.

Sowmya: Are there regional variations and local versions of Ayurveda?

Guruji: Tamil Nadu has its own Siddha Vaidya of Agastya Muni, similar in content to Ayurveda. The treatment is done through Mani (gems), Mantra (sacred chants) and Aushadha (herbal medicines). All tribes of India have their own herbal and local medicines. With them Ayurveda has a give and take relationship. Some of the tribes of Kerala have been found to possess very rare medical practices. In areas such as Arunachal, medicine, worship and mantra are inalienably intermixed. Many Vaidyas are also Pujaris. Nature cure and yoga therapy also should have same respect as Ayurveda.

Sowmya: Is there a renewal of interest in Ayurveda?

Guruji: Yes. The frequent cases of side effects and the short term cure of Western Allopathic medicine, its high costs, have forced people to search for a nature-friendly, cheaper and simpler medical practices. Worse, the western medical practice resorts to surgery more frequently than it is really needed, say may Allopaths. The intimate relationship between the patient and the Vaidya is being usurped by machines, scanners, and the complex diagnostic machinery. All these factors have forced nearly 70% of the world's population to seek simpler, local, natural remedies. The

government of India has established the department of AYUSH, Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy. There is greater research and better practices of manufacturing of Ayurvedic medicines. Simple Ayurvedic medicines are available across the counter. Rejuvenation therapies such as Kayakalpa are unique. More fashionable people also resort to this process.

Sowmya: Are mantras a part of Ayurveda?

Guruji: Yes. Ayurveda is basically a psycho-physical approach to life. Caraka-Susruta recommend chanting Vishnu Sahasranama as a part of this treatment. Music therapy has been found to be effective in preventing disease and promoting health. After all Ayurveda aims at longevity of life, a unique feature among the medical systems of the world. Pranic healing, Reiki, Chi-medicine of China, Acupressure, Varma Vidya all should be considered derivatives of Ayurveda. Ayurveda is a holistic system, it is concerned with all aspects of human life. Ayurvedic medicines can be used for expansion of consciousness PRAJNA – VIKAS agrees Patanjali. All our mantras directly or indirectly evoke the Prana Shakti, the ultimate source of good health.

Sowmya: I would like to know a mantra to propitiate Dhanwantari.

Guruji: You chant this mantra for all-round health, physical, mental and spiritual.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE
DHANVANTRAYE
AMRITAKALASHA HASTAAYA
SARVAAMAYAI
VINAASHANAAYA TRAILOKYA
NAATHAAYA
VISHNAVE SWAAHAA.

Durga Puja

Dr. Bhaskar Roy Barman

I

THE great gods of the purano-tantric Hinduism, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, that is Siva, each have consorts regarded as their active powers. Siva's - I am concerned with her only in this article - is known by various names such as Parvati, Uma, Durga, but these are but different aspects of one Sakti or Power, the source of cosmic creation. Cults devoted to Sakti got prominent in North India around 1000 CE and their tantras, rituals, place Siva and Shakti at the head of the cosmic order, but with reversed priority Siva is considered the cause of bondage and, Sakti the cause of liberation.

It is characteristic, it deserves to be noted, of India to have still now retained a tradition of the highest being as goddess, a notion that has achieved a sort of universality in prehistoric times, before patriarchal societies elevated a male god to the highest position of authority. While patriarchy is characteristic of Vedic religion with the macho Indra at the apex of the Vedic pantheon, Goddess worship remained part of that tradition. Some of the most celebrated Goddess hymns, such as Vaksukta (hymn to speech) are also found in the Rig Veda.

Vaishnavism and Saivism have placed importance on Goddess worship. We cannot

think of Vishnu without Sri, Rama without Sita and Krishna without Radha. Every Vaishnavite and Saivite is often treated to an interesting story of an ardent and famous Siva worshipper refusing to worship Parvati. Instead of circumambulating both divinities that Siva worshipper slipped through between the two; in order to teach him a good lesson, Siva became an ardhnari, half-woman, half-man, that is, he became one person with Parvati, so that the devotee could not help worshipping Parvati while worshipping Siva.

One of the most impressive and formidable goddesses of the Hindu pantheon - she is one of the most popular - is Parvati known as the goddess Durga. The primary mythological function ascribed to her is to combat demons who threaten the stability of the cosmos. She is depicted in this role as a great battle queen with ten arms, each arm wielding a weapon. Riding a fierce lion, she is irresistible in battle and undefeatable. The most popular epithet attached to her is Mahisamardini, slayer of Mahisa, the buffalo demon and her most common iconographic representation shows her defeating Mahisa.

At a certain point in her history Durga becomes associated with the god Siva as his consort and assumes in this role domestic characteristics and is identified with the goddess Parvati, mother in her later history of four children, four deities known as Kartikeya, Ganesha, Saraswati and Lakshmi. At her most popular festival, Durga Puja, Parvati, that is, Durga is shown flanked by the four deities, her children assisting her in slaying Mahisa.

At some point in her history Durga has had some connection with the crops or the fertility of vegetation and is associated in her festival

held at harvest time with plants. She receives at the harvest festival blood offerings, which suggest re-nourishment of her powers.

II

Although the Vedic literature tells of the heroic deeds of Vedic gods in slaying demons—they are eulogized as great warriors - no goddess is cast in this function. Though the name Durga is mentioned in Vedic literature, no goddess resembling this warrior goddess is found mentioned in these early texts.

On the mythological level it is worthwhile to refer to the legends of birth centring on the Goddess Durga. The first known myth of her birth is in fact the myth of Harivansa, that appendix to the Mahabharata whose explicit aim is to recount the acts of Krishna in such a way as to flesh out their epic illusions. At the moment in which Vishnu is to incarnate himself in the womb of Devaki so as to become the avatara Krishna, Kamsa, who is as asura incarnate as well as the son of Devaki's brother, vows killing him, for it has been foretold to him that Krishna will kill him. Vishnu enjoins his divine sister, Kali (also called Kausiki, Katyayani, Ekanamsa, Nidra, Vindyavasini) to incarnate herself at the same time in the womb of Yosada in order that the two might be exchanged on the night of their birth. This substitution having been effected, Kamsa seizes the infant, he believes to be Devaki' s child who is in fact the incarnation of Kali, and smashes it by striking it against a boulder - a sila. She escapes from his grasp and laughs, saying that his slayer has been born. The role of the goddess is limited to this function. It would be certainly a mistake to see hers as a passive role; she is sacrificed in order to enable her brother to fulfil his role as avatara to kill

Kamsa. Here in this episode she is depicted as a virgin goddess and the worship promised to her in exchange is a bloody worship. More than this she is attributed the discus and the conch, the weapons of Vishnu. It may nevertheless be supposed that she bears a relationship to Siva's consort, Parvati, the daughter of Parvata 'the mountain'. It is interesting to note that the synonym for Parvata is saila 'boulder, outcropping' and Parvati is consequently known as Sailaja, daughter of the Mountain. Here we find an echo of the boulder -sila - upon which Kamsa sacrificed the infant and thereby caused her to be reborn into her celestial existence.

Around the fourth century AD. century the image of the goddess Durga slaying a buffalo, flanked by her four children, starts being worshipped throughout India. But in the medieval period after the sixth century Durga has become a popular and commonly worshipped deity. Her mythological deeds and description of and injunctions to undertake her autumnal worship have got embalmed in late upa-puranas, that is, lesser puranas. The most celebrated texts describing Durga's mythological exploits is the Devi Mahatmya (the Glorification of the Goddess Durga), a section of Markendeya Purana. In fact the Devi Mahatmya constitutes chapters 81-93 of the Markendeya Purana., one of the Mahapuranas, ascribed to the son of Markanda, who was remarkable for his austerities and his long life (he is called 'Dirghayus. 'Long-lived'), most of his stories supposed to be told by birds knowledgeable in the Vedas. The myth of Durga defeating Mahisa is also found in the Vamana Purana, one of the puranas, dealing with the dwarf avatara (descent) of Vishnu,; in Varaha Purana,

one of the Upa-puranas, describing how Vishnu in the form of the Avatara of a Varaha (Boar), saved the earth from being submerged in the ocean; in Siva-Purana and Devi Bhagabata Purana, an upa-purana considered one of the 18 Maha-Puranas, eulogizing Sakti, this Purana replacing the Vaishnava Bhagavatam.

Let us revert to the Devi Mahatmya for a short while to deal with the birth myths of Durga in some detail.

Doubtlessly the Devimahatmya is a later source, even though the Mahabharata hymn to the Goddess already portrays her as enjoying the blood of the buffalo and the iconography of the goddess as a slayer of the buffalo goes back to the 2nd century AD. This contains two juxtaposed birth myths and one of them reiterates her familial ties to Vishnu, albeit in different form from that of the Harivamsa. Purely Puranic is the setting, in which Vishnu is sleeping on the serpent Sesha who is resting upon the waters of the flood. There arises off Vishnu's navel a lotus which, as it opens, reveals Brahma. Brahma watches horrified two asuras born from the impurities of Vishnu's ears preparing to attack him. He then begins to invoke Yoganidra. Yoganidra-Yogendra (yoga-sleep) is the trance-like condition of Vishnu between the destruction of a universe and the creation of a new one and is personified the Great Illusion (Mahamaya) - suspends Vishnu, staying inside him, in his state of yogic sleep during the cosmic night. It is Yoganidra herself who, emerging out of Vishnu, awakens him and deceives the creatures. At the invocation by Brahma, she, emerging from his eyes, awakens Vishnu and makes him slay the asuras. To this point, Yoganidra, the unwed sister of Vishnu, limits

herself to helping the god in the service of creation. On the first glimpse, the second Devi Mahatmya is more problematic, inasmuch as, the goddess here seems to replace the avatara in his role as a saviour of the social and cosmic order. Her kinship with the gods dissolves into an all-encompassing bond with the world of the gods in which not only Vishnu and Siva but also the Vedic pantheon are counted. Yet we should not be taken in by these appearance, for the emergence of the goddess is directly subordinated to the war between the gods and the asuras, in which Mahisasura, (buffalo demon) the king of the asuras or demons must be defeated and killed. In his death at the hand of the goddess Mahisasura gets sort of divinized, as he is worshipped in the worship of the goddess as Durga.

On historical level, the origin of Durga seems to be among the indigenous non-Aryan cultures of India. Owing to there being no similar goddesses among the deities of the Vedic tradition, many early references to Durga bracketed her with peripheral areas such as Vindhya (a range of mountains stretching across Central India and dividing the Madhyadesa, homelands of Aryans, from the South, the Deccan and many events described in the epics and puranas relate to the Vindhyas), tribal peoples such as Sabaras, and non-Aryan habits such as drinking liquor and blood and eating meat. Although Durga becomes an establishment deity in medieval Hinduism, saving the cosmos from the threat of demons and guarding dharma, her roots seem to be among the tribal and peasant cultures of India, which eventually leavened the male-dominated Vedic pantheon with several goddesses associated with power, blood and battle.

Hindu mythology categorizes and deals with the origin of Durga. There are many accounts of her origin, but the best known account of her origin is narrated in connection with the defeat of Mahisa, which overshadows all other accounts.

By performing great austerities, Mahisa demon was granted a boon that made him invincible to all, except to a woman. Armed with this boon he defeated all the gods and, usurping their positions, drove them out of the heaven. Indra assembled all other gods, all the gods bubbling over with an intense anger at having been defeated and ousted from heaven. Overwhelmed with anger, they emitted fiery energies which in a mass of light congealed into the body of a beautiful woman whose splendour spread throughout the universe. The parts of her body were formed from the gods, her face from Siva, her hair from Yama, her arms from Vishnu and so on. Similarly each of the male deities from whom she had been created gave her a weapon: Siva gave her his trident, Vishnu gave her his cakra (a discus-like weapon), Vayu his bows and arrows and so on. Thus equipped by the gods and supplied by the god Himalaya with a lion as her vehicle, Durga, the embodied strength of the gods, roared mightily, causing the earth to shake.

III

Now we should focus our attention on the worship of the goddess and its signification, as it obtains not in the present-day community worship, but in the household worship in the olden days.

The most common account of the worship performed of the goddess by the people in the olden days is based on the analogy between

the service of a deity and the treatment of a guest. The guest is to be honoured above everyone else. The host invites his guest, goes part of the way to meet him, and welcomes him. When time comes for him to leave, the host bids him farewell and reminds him to come again. The ideal way to treat a guest is the way to treat the gods. Guests represent gods.

Puja, that is worship, consists of many parts, each a step in service of a deity as a guest. This service is usually performed through the offering of sixteen saladan. The god is welcomed in the place of puja, invoked into the ghat, offered a seat, water to wash his feet, a towel to dry him, and oil and turmeric to rub on his body. The goddess is offered red lacquer to paint her feet, collyrium to paint his eyes, a mirror and sacred thread to prepare herself for the public.

Bodhan and amantran are the initial welcoming rituals in Durga puja; Welcome and respectful reception of the goddess, connected with the primary invocations, are the rites of bellbaran, kalparambha and sankalpa. They share certain general features, all welcoming rites including a sankalpa, the central act of the rite. Bodhana is the awakening of the goddess, an invitation to the annual festivities.

Durgapuja is celebrated in the autumn during the month of Aswin over a period of nine days (navaratri), the iconographical details being faithful to the scene as described in the Devi Mahatmya and other scriptures. Durga is shown as possessing ten arms, each arm bearing a weapon; she, standing on her lion vehicle, thrust trident into the chest of Mahisan who in a human form half-emerged from the carcass of a slain buffalo. The Devi Mahatmya is recited in its entirety several times. The

Durga puja festival clearly asserts the goddess's central role as a battle queen and the regulator of the cosmos.

This festival in which Durga is worshipped in the form of a mighty warrior goddess seems to have been until recently part of a pattern of worship undertaken by rules to achieve success in battle through the blessing of the goddess.

The worship of Durga dates back to the epic age; it came to be associated with the military success of the Pandava brothers in the Mahabharata and Rama in the Ramayana. Although her worship by the heroes was not initially part of either epic tradition - the incidents are not found in the critical editions of either epic - there has developed a tradition insisting on the necessity of the Goddess Durga being worshipped for the success of the heroes in both epics. Durga is worshipped twice in the Mahabharata, in the Virata-Parva 6 by Yudhisthira and in the Bhishma-Parva 23 by Arjuna. In the latter case the appearance of Durga is clear. The setting is just before the great battle which is the highpoint of the epic. In the Bhishma-Parva, Krishna enjoins Arjuna to recite a hymn to Durga, seeking her blessings for defeating his enemies. The hymn that Arjuna recites is full of references to Durga's military might and prowess. Durga appears before Arjuna and promises him victory and since then it has become established that whoever hears and recites the hymn will be victorious in the battle.

The placement of the second hymn addressed to Durga in Virata-parva is more difficult to understand. The Pandava brothers have emerged from twelve years of exile in the forest and are about to begin a year of life in

disguise lest their enemies discover them. Before entering the city of Virata and taking up their disguises they hid their weapons in a semi-tree near a cremation ground, Yudhisthira prays Durga to protect them from being discovered during the coming year and ensure their success against their enemies. She appears at the end of the utterance of the hymn by Yudhisthira and grants his wishes. The hymn seems to be an interpolation; it might have been placed at this point in the text because the worship of a sami tree on the outskirts of a town is a part of Dasara festivals. The author or the editor of the hymn might have thought of this as an appropriate place to insert a hymn to Durga for military success.

The Devi-bhagavata-purana shows Rama despondent at the problems of reaching Lanka with a view to defeating Ravana to get back his beloved Sita. The sage Narada advises him to invoke Durga for help. When asked by Rama how to worship her, the sage Narada instructs him concerning the Durga puja or Navaratra. Sage Narada tells Rama that earlier on, the festival was performed by Indra for killing Vitr, by Siva for killing the demons of three cities and by Vishnu for killing Madhu and Kaitabha. In compliance with the sage Narada's advice, Rama performs Durga worship and Durga, mounted on her lion, appears to him and asks him what he wishes. When he requests victory over Ravana, she promises him victory. The traditions of Rama's inaugurating Durga worship for the purpose of killing Ravana is found in, among others, the Bengali version of the Ramayana by Kittibasa written in the fifteenth century. Bengali villagers tell of a tradition in which it was customary for the goddess to be worshipped during the spring. Rama, however, needed the

goddess's help in autumn when he was about to invade Lanka so worshipped her in the month of Aswin and inaugurated autumnal worship which has become the most popular worship. Side by side there exist different accounts pertaining to the originating of the worship of the goddess. The accounts tell a different story. It is Brahma who invoked the Goddess Durga to aid Rama in rescuing Sita from the grip of Ravana, for Rama was an earthly incarnation of the great God Vishnu. The Goddess Durga, disguised as a beautiful girl was then sleeping on a leafy branch of a bel (wood apple) tree. Brahma knew it and awakened and invoked her to help Vishnu incarnated as Rama on the earth in rescuing Sita by Killing Ravana. When Rama had killed Ravana and rescued Sita, Brahma made all gods assemble together and worshipped the goddess with them. The victory in the death of Ravana of good over evil is memorialized in the name of Vijaya Dashami that marks the end of the festival, that is, Durga Puja.

In all the myths pertaining to the evolution of Duga Durga appears alone. Mother and wife, these twin identities the goddess has assumed over time are typical of the eastern part of India, where other gods and goddesses have formed her entourage as her children. The figures in Durga's entourage are Kartik, the warlord, Ganesha, the giver of success, Saraswati, the goddess of learning and Laxmi, the goddess of prosperity. Each of the divinities has a story of origin.

Kartika, general of the divine army and handsome bachelor god is described in some less-popular accounts as being born out of the union of the Agni, the fire god and Ganga, the river goddess. Ganga, unable to carry about the burning seed in her womb cast it away on

one of her banks. The seed in course of time developed into a baby. Six krittikas or demigods spotted and rescued him.

A popular myth, drawing upon Skandapurana says that Kartika was born of Shiva and Parvati.

Another legend has it that Surapadma, a demon king, having become immensely powerful thanks to a boon granted him by Shiva, conquered heaven and turned all the gods out of it. According to the boon none but Shiva himself could defeat him. The gods rushed to Kailash, Shiva's abode and entreated him to restore heaven to them by defeating Surapadma. Shiva took pity on them and transformed himself into a six-headed figure and produced six glowing masses of light. A divine proclamation that followed said that the child born out of the commingling of the glowing masses of light would be the saviour of the gods turned out. Shiva told the gods to take the six glowing balls of light over to Ganga, river goddess. Ganga deposited the glowing balls on a place near the Mount Uday. As soon as the six glowing balls got deposited on the place, they transformed themselves into six new-born babies.

It so happened that six krittikas spotted and adopted them as their sons. When the gods came over to the bank of the river, the six babies turned themselves in a six-headed boy. Shiva named him Kartik, the term derived from Kartikaya, son of Krittikas.

Kartik, armed with Shiva's spear defeated Surapadma in battle. He did not kill him, because the demon entreated his forgiveness. Kartik forgave him on the condition he would become his mount. Surapadma agreed to this condition and was turned into a peacock. In

course of time Kartik's five heads disappeared. He is now worshipped as a one-headed god, mounting a peacock.

Another male figure, not less important than Kartik in the entourage is Ganesha, the giver of wisdom. According to Shivapurana, his birth owed itself to the domestic squabble between Shiva and his consort Parvati. The squabble resulted in Shiva allowing his rowdy followers into Kailasha at ungodly hours to intrude into the privacy of Parvati. Parvati retaliated upon her humiliation by creating a boy in consultation with her two companions Jaya and Vijaya and assigned to the boy the duty to guard at the gate against any intrusion into her privacy.

Soon after the incident Shiva with his followers, Nandi and Vingi arrived to enter through the gate, but the boy obstructed his entry. Shiva tried to cajole him into allowing Shiva and his followers in, but the boy could not be persuaded and beat up Nandi and Vhingi mercilessly. The news of Shiva being debarred from entering his house reached to the ears of other gods and they rushed to the help of Shiva and his followers, but the boy beat them away, too. Being beaten away by this powerful boy, they had recourse to a mischievous tactic. Vishnu engaged the boy in a direct combat and Shiva chopped off his head from behind.

Bubbling over with rage at the cowardly killing of her son, Parvati, took to wreaking havoc on the creation frightened, Shiva, in order to propitiate her, sent his followers out in the northern direction to bring the head of any creature that first would fall into their eyes. His followers went away and came back after a while with the head of one-tusked elephant.

The head was placed on the torso of the beheaded boy. The boy was resuscitated. Shiva named him Ganesha (Lord of the people) and blessed him, saying that he would be worshipped at the start of all rituals.

There is a different account of the birth of Ganesha, described in Brahmabaibarta purana. The account says that Shiva and Parvati remained childless for a long time. They practised penance for years on end and a son was born to them. There was a jubilation following the birth of the son. All the gods came in to see the boy and showered blessings on him. But only Shani, Saturn, the god of misfortune stayed away from the boy, for his wife had once uttered a curse on him to the effect that whatever his eyes fell on would be destroyed, Parvati did not know of it and apportioned his staying away from the boy to his desire to slight her and felt it an affront. Just to appease her anger, Shanti came in and looked at the boy and the boy's head was completely destroyed. It was Vishnu who rushed out with his Sudarshan Chakra (divine discus) and returned after a while with an elephant's head and replaced the head of the boy with it.

One of the two female figures in Durga's entourage is Saraswati, goddess of learning.

The origin of this goddess is not distinct. In the Rig Veda, in particular she is referred to a river and a river deity. The Saraswati river was the boundary of Brahmavarta, the home of the early Aryans and was considered sacred to them. Gradually she found himself associated with the rites performed on her banks and started wielding influence on the composition of the hymns that were important part of the rituals. This explained her identification with

Vak, goddess of speech. In late mythology, she is mentioned as the spouse of Brahma and as the goddess of wisdom, eloquence and the arts.

Brahma, the father of the universe prepared himself for creation and abandoned himself to a deep meditation. The sublime quality of his spirit (satyaguna) that accumulated in his mind was emitted from his head as speech or Saraswati. He ordained her stay on the tip of everyone's tongue and exist on earth as a river and a part of her stay in him.

There is still another account of her origin, but it has no relevance to the present discussion.

Now I shall talk about another goddess, the last figure in Durga's entourage. She is Laxmi, the goddess of prosperity.

When creation was in progress, a beautiful female form emerged from the left side of Paramatma, the Supreme Being. At the command of Paramatma, the female form split herself into two enchanting figures both equal in splendour and majesty. One was Laxmi and the other Radha. Both Laxmi and Radha desired Paramatma to be their consort, so Paramatma divided himself into the two-handed Krishna and the four-handed Vishnu. While Radha chose Krishna and lived on earth, Laxmi married Vishnu and lived in heaven.

There are many accounts of the manifestations of Laxmi. But this is not the place to discuss these manifestations. Saraswati and Laxmi are worshipped in the Durga puja as Durga's daughters.

Earning for others is a distinct feature of Indian economy

Prof.P.Kanagasabapathi

The Indian tradition enjoins the householder to earn for the families and maintain them with care. Arthashastra notes that the dharma of the householder is to sacrifice his own pleasures for the sake of those dependent on him. Hence abandoning a dependent, without a valid reason, is considered a serious offence. It gives examples in this connection: a husband abandoning his wife, a father his son, a brother his sister, a maternal uncle his nephew and so on.

The idea behind this system is the duty based approach of life as evolved by the Indian culture. A crucial point to note here is that the householders are not allowed to entertain a feeling as to why they alone should earn money for all the others in the family. They have to do it as it is their duty, in the same way their children have to look after them when the householders become old. So, even while the householders have to take up the full

responsibility for working and earning, their earnings have to be used for the benefit of all the members in the family. Besides, occasions might necessitate a part of the earnings being used for causes outside the needs of the immediate family.

Hence the culture of earning for others dominates the Indian lives even today. National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) conducted the National Survey of Household Income and Expenditure with 2004-05 as the reference year. It was conducted across the country in both the rural and urban areas, covering different segments of the population in terms of occupation, education and income. The survey notes that only around 28.1 per cent of the population in the country is engaged in one or the other financially remunerative activities. It reveals the number of earners per household as 1.4. Please see Table 1 for the details relating to the Indian households and the earners.

Table 1: Estimates of households and population (2004-05)

| | Rural | Urban | All India |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Households (crore) | 14.45 | 6.14 | 20.59 |
| Population (crore) | 73.2 | 29.5 | 102.7 |
| Household size | 5.08 | 4.81 | 5.00 |
| Number of earners per household | 1.43 | 1.34 | 1.4 |

Note: Original figures in millions for population and households converted in to crores by the author for easy understanding.

Further analysis of the survey shows that in more than two thirds of the Indian households only one member earns for the entire family. In 68.8 per cent of households in the country there is only one earning member. It means that in all these cases one person earns money for the entire family, with the rest depending on him/her. While 23.7 per cent of households

have two earning members, there are 7.5 per cent households with more than two members who earn. This shows that a great majority of the population is dependent on the income of one or more persons who earn for the family. The survey also notes that 17 per cent of the women earn income working outside.

Table 2 presents figures relating to the household income and expenditure from the survey for further understanding.

Table 2: Household income and expenditure estimates (2004-05)

(Amount in Rupees)

| | Rural Areas | Urban Areas | All India |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Household income | 51,922 | 95,827 | 65,041 |
| Household expenditure | 40,124 | 68,352 | 48,558 |
| Income over expenditure | 11,798 | 27,475 | 16,483 |
| Investments | 4,103 | 9,763 | 5,795 |
| Cash saving | 7,694 | 17,706 | 10,688 |
| Percentage of income saved | 22.7 | 28.7 | 25.3 |
| Percentage of cash saving | 14.8 | 18.5 | 16.4 |

Note: All the above figures are for the year.

The table shows that people prefer to keep more of the amount earned in the form of cash and deposits in banks. Further details show that the regular salary/ wage earners and self-employed people in the urban areas and the

agriculturists in rural areas earn comparatively more returns, than those engaged in the other types of activities.

When it comes to saving the hard earned incomes, the NCAER survey notes that the



earners give priority to the interests of the family, before allotting a share for their future. It says that 83 per cent of the households save for emergencies and 81 per cent for the education of children. Saving for the old age of the earners, as financial security, is only their third priority (69 per cent). The next important reason for saving is again the family and the relations. 63 per cent of households save for weddings, births, social events and ceremonies. While 47 per cent households save for business expansion, 43 per cent save for construction and purchase of the house. 22 percent save for the purchase of consumer durables, while 18 per cent save for making gifts and donations, and undertaking pilgrimages to places of worship.

Field level studies emphasize that almost all the earning members consider family as the single most important concern in their lives. They further note that their lives would be fulfilled if they could keep the family members happy. The financial security of the family and the future of their children are the two most important objectives of earning and saving. It would be interesting to note that even in the case of the second-income earners, the objectives remain the same. In a study conducted among the lady college teachers in Coimbatore, 60 per cent of the respondents ranked bank deposits as their most preferred avenue for

investments, while another 35 per cent rated it as their second best preference, due to the safety provided by the bank deposits. More than two third of them gave the least preference to stock market investments, though they have studied and were engaged in teaching finance subjects, as they do not want to invest their earnings in risky avenues.

It is significant to know that even while making long term investments, the householder- earners prefer buying assets in the names of family members. In a study of 279 respondents comprising of the school/ college teachers and doctors in Coimbatore city, 60 per cent of them noted that they preferred to buy assets in the names of their spouses, children, parents and even grandparents. It is important to note that a large number of people make investments in the names of their family members, instead of doing it in their own names, though the money was earned by them, as the earners believe that their earnings belong to all in the family.

Studies on different business clusters indicate that invariably the families of the promoters contribute the maximum amount for initial investments. In most cases, the relatives and friends also lend a helping hand. A sample study conducted among the diamond



exporters of Patel community in Surat and Ahmedabad showed that all of them were helped by their relatives, when they mobilized funds for their businesses during the initial periods. In about 89 per cent of the cases, such support exceeded more than 20 per cent of the initial capital invested in business. It means that people provide funds willingly to their relatives for promoting businesses.

Hence the studies reveal that even today the Indian tradition of earning and saving for others continues without interruption. This is a remarkable quality that keeps the Indian family system intact. It is also a distinct feature of India that makes the economy to move forward with confidence, proving to the world that the culture of this land plays a crucial role in matters related to economic development.

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'Are you growing spiritually? Can you love others? Can you feel oneness with others? Have you peace within yourself? And do you radiate it around you? That is called spiritual growth, which is stimulated by meditation inwardly, and by work done in a spirit of service outwardly.

Swami Ranganathananda



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WINDS OF CHANGE

VIVEKANANDA OF THE “SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF AMERICA”

Philip Goldberg

A catalyst for the propagation of Vedanta

As a catalyst for the propagation of Vedanta, Gerald Heard was unrivaled, largely because he sparked the interest of people who in turn reached millions of others. In 1934 began a shared spiritual quest among Heard and Huxley that transformed their lives and countless others. By 1937, they ended up settling in southern California for the rest of their lives. The Vedanta Society in Hollywood became both a campus for their ongoing education and a platform for their advocacy of Eastern philosophy. Both Heard and Huxley had come to know that material objects were the visible expression of an underlying non-material essence. They had also come to know "that the unit of world peace is indeed individual peace, that a forest is only as green as the individual trees in the forest are green." The streams of their ruminations came together in Vedanta, whose depiction of the Ultimate Reality as both transcendent of and immanent in everything that exists appealed to them more than the standard Judeo-Christian notion of personified God who stands apart from the world. Of greatest appeal was the practical teaching, that awakening to one's divine nature brings "the peace that passeth understanding." Contrary to conventional



wisdom, they concluded, Eastern mysticism did not have to lead to escapism. It could, in fact make us better citizens. "It is because we don't know who we are. Because we are unaware that the kingdom of heaven is within us, that we behave in the generally silly, the often insane, the sometimes criminal ways that are so characteristically human."

They brought intellectual rigour, modern perspective and stylistic grace to the Vedanta literature

In 1939, having settled in Los Angeles, Heard sought out the Vedanta Society in Hollywood. It was run by Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976), who had founded it in 1929. Heard and Huxley were eager to learn from a genuine representative of the Vedanta tradition and to receive personal guidance in meditation. That summer Christopher Isherwood joined them at the hilltop enclave. By 1947, largely through the persuasive Heard, so many artists and intellectuals had been drawn to Vedanta. As eager students and professional writers of the highest caliber, Heard, Huxley, and Isherwood brought intellectual rigour, a modern perspective, and stylistic grace to the literature. From 1939 to 1941 Heard was co-editor with Swami Prabhavananda of the society's journal, '*Vedanta and the West*'. He served as its editorial advisor from 1951-1962, contributing thirty-nine articles over the years. Huxley and Isherwood also wrote for the journal (the latter was editor for some time), and all the three were featured, along with other distinguished contributors, in two highly popular mid-1940s anthologies, "*Vedanta for Modern Man*" and "*Vedanta for the Western World*." Isherwood edited both books and supplied elegant introductions. He also co-authored three classics (*The Song of God*', a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*; '*The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*', a translation of a classic discourse by Shankara, the genius of Advaita Vedanta; and '*How to Know God*,' a translation and commentary on '*Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*') with Prabhavananda. The trio also gave well-attended talks at the Center, which soon turned into a compound; devotees leased apartments in nearby buildings and the property expanded to accommodate a Convent and a

monastery. Prabhavananda outlived Heard and Huxley, passing away on July 4, 1976, the bicentennial of U.S. independence and seventy-four years to the day after Swami Vivekananda died. Of the three expatriates, Heard was the least celebrated, but he was most prescient about Vedanta's importance for America's religious future. Heard was also by far the most dedicated practitioner of the trio. He lectured at major universities and appeared frequently on television. He was austere by nature. He took a personal vow of celibacy in 1934 and he kept it. Heard pursued enlightenment with the rigour of the scientists, meditating everyday. In 1941 he was instrumental in establishing Trabuco College which facility was turned over to the Vedanta Society in 1949, and it remains the Ramakrishna Monastery to this day. A devoted *sadhak* (yogic practitioner) to the end, Heard had him read passages of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*' every night after suffering a series of strokes beginning in 1966. He died in 1971, at eighty-one. As to his vision of the unfoldment of a world-changing Western Vedanta, his basic prescription has proceeded apace: 'that "man should now ... further his psychological evolution by expanding his consciousness through Yogic methods."

He brought artistic grace to the translation of the sacred works of Hinduism

To the translations of the sacred works of Hinduism, in collaboration with Swami Prabhavananda, Christopher Isherwood brought the artistic grace of a first class novelist. He also made the commentaries accessible with the deft use of metaphor and finely tuned awareness of post-war Western

sensibilities. As a disciple and devoted friend of Swami Prabhavananda, working on the books enabled him to spend long periods of time with his guru, discovering the highest knowledge of the Vedas. To optimize the opportunity, Isherwood lived for a while in the monastery. The first of his collaborations with Swami Prabhavananda, "*The Song of God: Bhagavad Gita*", was called by *Time Magazine* "a distinguished literary work." The absence of verse numbers and the exquisite mix of poetry and prose made it distinctive among Gita translations. The book has sold over a million copies since its publication in 1944. Before and after Swami Prabhavananda's death, Isherwood remained a beloved presence at the Vedanta Society for a long time. He contributed about forty articles to the society's journal, and his commitment to the Vedantic teachings is well-known. Right to the end (1986, at eighty-one), his literary output was replete with Vedantic themes. With reference to spiritual awakening, one of his works (1954) describes vivid inner experiences (a "consciousness that had no name, no face, no identity of any kind" and "knew no feelings, except the feeling of being itself"; "there's a source of life within me - and [I am] much more essentially in It than in I") that rank among the most felicitous descriptions of meditative states ever rendered in fiction.

His Vedantic-perennialist outlook, work and friendship affected vast numbers of people

Aldous Huxley had intellectual passions that ranged far and wide, from philosophy, politics, and religion, to social sciences, the physical sciences, history, and the arts. Through his work and friendship, he affected vast numbers

of people, some of whom were highly influential themselves. In this regard, he did as much as any other individual to introduce Vedanta to Western culture. Like Heard and Isherwood, Huxley took formal initiation from Swami Prabhavananda. His book: "*The Perennial Philosophy*" was considered "The masterpiece of all anthologies." It was published in 1944, the same year as the Isherwood-Prabhavananda Gita. Huxley describes the perennial philosophy as "The metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being." Huxley's book was an instant hit, leaving thousands of readers exhilarated by the discovery of universal spiritual principles and introducing a large proportion of them to Eastern philosophy. It remains a must-read for students and seekers. Huxley's Vedantic-perennialist outlook also came through in his later novels. Though he always maintained an association with the Vedanta Society, Huxley's insatiable curiosity and spiritual experimentation took him far afield.

The world-famous interpreter of Hindu mythology who absorbed a broad base of Eastern and Western philosophy

The East Coast equivalent of Swami Prabhavananda was Swami Nikhilananda (1895-1973). In 1940 he found his equivalent of Christopher Isherwood - Joseph Campbell, a popular teacher, who later became the world-famous interpreter of mythology and a

beloved media personality. That year he discovered the *Mandukya Upanishad*, about which Schopenhauer had predicted that "one day, India's wisdom will flow again on Europe and will totally transform our knowledge and thought." India certainly transformed the knowledge and thought of Joseph Campbell. He had absorbed a broad base of Eastern and Western philosophy, besides studying Sanskrit and oriental studies. Swami Nikhilananda was an active teacher, author and translator, and what Campbell learned at his side informed much of his subsequent work. Among his earlier insights was that union with the transcendent source was beyond thoughts and words, but nevertheless attainable. This was "a credo by which Joseph Campbell found that he could live." Towards the end of his life, Campbell read the *Bhagavad Gita* everyday. He also kept a copy of the Upanishads in his hospital room.

He became the mainstay of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-Center

Nikhilananda recruited Campbell to work with him on his translation of Sri Ramakrishna's conversations in Bengali which was published in 1942 as "*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*", and was called "one of the world's most extraordinary religious documents." It introduced thousands of Westerners to Sri Ramakrishna, guru of Swami Vivekananda. For the rest of his celebrated career, Campbell would pepper his lecture and books with anecdotes from Sri Ramakrishna's life, giving occasional talks, and working with Nikhilananda on other translations, notably a four-volume Upanishads. The Swami and the scholar remained friends until the former's

death in 1973.

He exposed more people to Vedantic precepts than any other Western scholar

In one of his books, Campbell explains, "the ultimate divine mystery is sought beyond all human categories of thought and feeling, beyond names and forms, and absolutely beyond any such concept as a merciful or wrathful personality, chooser of one people over another, comforter of folk who pray, and destroyer of those who do not." In the same book, he outlines the four yogic pathways, tells the story of Shiva and his consort Parvati, and invokes the Upanishadic dictum '*tat tvam asi*' (Thou art That), which he often used as a guiding motif. In the course of his book derived from the series of his PBS broadcast, "*The Power of Myth*", are passages like this: "The Christ in you doesn't die. The Christ in you survives death and resurrects ... Heaven and hells are within us, and all the gods are within us. This is the great realization of the Upanishads of India in the nineteenth Century B.C. All the gods, all heavens, all the worlds, are within us." In the series of his PBS broadcast is present the Vedantic-Yogic perspective in his discussion of the *chakra* system of subtle energy centers and the *kundalini* force that rises through them; his explication of the sacred syllable 'OM'; his description of the symbols in the '*Shiva Nataraja*', "dancer, whose dance is the universe"; his references to Indian deities and teaching stories; his quotes from Vedic texts; and his use of Sanskrit terms. It is also present in his depiction of myths as road maps of spiritual development, his portrayal of divinity as both with form and without form,

and his insistence on the primacy of inner experience over belief. When the TV anchor calls him a man of faith, Campbell responds, "I don't have to have faith. I have experience." In the context of his use of the word 'bliss', Campbell tells the TV anchor, "I came to this idea of bliss because in Sanskrit, which is the great spiritual language of the world, there are three terms that represent the brink, the jumping-off place to the ocean of transcendence: *sat-chit-ananda*. The word *sat* means 'being'. *Chit* means 'consciousness.

Ananda means 'bliss' or 'rapture". Campbell influenced a legion of people from various walks of life, and countless others whose names are not known but who have quietly affected many lives. Campbell enabled thousands - artists, soldiers, politicians, and people of different faiths and every imaginable persuasion, to see their spiritual life in a new way. Directly and indirectly, he exposed more people to Vedic precepts than any other Western scholar, with the possible exception of his good friend Huston Smith.

to be continued...

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A VERSATILE GENIUS AND A TRUE YOGI

P.PARAMESWARAN

Mananeeya Sudarshanji who passed away in the early hours of 15 September 2012 was unique in life and unique in death. He passed away like a Yogi as described in our scriptures. Sudarshanji's death reminds us of the Sloka in the Bhagavat Gita:

*“Prayanakale manasa calena
Bhaktya yukto yogabalena caiva;
Bhrvormadhye pranam avesya samyak
Sa tam param purusam upaiti divyam”*
(chapter 8 sloka 10)

Such a person attains the highest state after he quits the body. It can be safely said that Mananeeya Sudarshanji attained this state which is the coveted goal of all true Sadhakas.

According to the Hindu line of thinking Sudarshanji combined in himself the path of Karma and the path of Jnana in a harmonious manner. His own life is a shining illustration of this statement. He qualified himself as an Engineer and could have attained to very high positions as understood by the common people. But, he opted for a life of selfless service by joining the Rashtreeya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). His noble and successful life started as an ordinary Swayamsevak and culminated in the highest rank of the organization as its Sarsanghachalak. He could do this gradually, degree by degree. He proved his ability to successfully discharge the duties assigned to him at every stage. He was a versatile genius. He was very good in the physical, intellectual and every other field of activities like leading



discussions and delivering lectures. His dedicated and efficient performance naturally elevated him from one post of responsibility to a higher one. From an ordinary Pracharak at the Taluk level Sudarshanji held responsibilities at the District, Zone and at the State-level before he was appointed as the Joint General Secretary at the all-India level. After the passing away of Poojaneeya Rajjubhaiya, Sudarshanji became the Sarsanghachalak – the highest position in the organization. How efficiently and with what dedication – he discharged his duties and

earned the admiration of one and all is too well-known. Sudarshanji's period also has shown a remarkable expansion along with rich diversification of the activities of the movement.

He was an earnest and tireless student ever reaching out to higher and wider areas of knowledge. There is no field in which he had not sought to acquire the latest information. Sudarshanji's quest of knowledge cannot be equated with bookish knowledge nor his scholarship was confined to mere intellectual learning. He personally came in contact with every experiment going on in different parts of the country with the objective of improving the socio-economic condition of the people. Thus he acquired practical, experiential knowledge from all parts of the country. He was equally eager to communicate this knowledge to all concerned people wherever he went. He did it through individual, personal conversation, through group meetings of Swayamsevaks and well-wishers and through his public lectures as well. The vastness of his knowledge and eagerness to communicate it naturally made his Bouddhik and lectures often very long. He broadcast his knowledge through long discourses to large audiences in all parts of the country. They were the traditional Jnana Yajna in the context of modern national reconstruction.

It was his inspiration that led to the expansion of Swadeshi Movement. He was an enthusiastic supporter and tireless advocate of Swadeshi, not only in the production of goods, but also in the field of science and technology. Under his able guidance, Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Swadeshi Science Movement attracted very eminent persons both social activists, as well as scientists.

Sudarshanji practised what he preached to the very letter and spirit. His was a model of simple living and high thinking. Occupying the highest position in the vast organization,

he lived the life of an ordinary swayamsevak. He enjoyed the e v e r y d a y r o u g h a n d tumble that an Indian faces in



his life. Sudarshanji shunned every luxury. He lived in tune with the nature. He discouraged using air-conditioners, washed his own clothes and ate simple food. Very often, while on his tour, he used to observe the problems of Karyakartas and personally attended to them. I remember how he himself taught by demonstrating Yogasanas which an ordinary Pracharak was to practise so that he could get over his back pain. There are many such examples narrated by Swayamsevaks who had benefited by Sudarshan ji's personal guidance.

As a national level office bearer of the Sangh, Sudarshanji used to closely study the various problems faced by the Hindu society in all parts of the country. His was not a generalized understanding but a minute and detailed learning of every aspect of each problem. Northeastern parts of Bharat are riddled with innumerable diverse and complex problems which are the sources of separatist and disintegration movement. Even to intellectually grasp them, it is a task too difficult for an ordinary mind, but it should be said to the credit of Sudarshanji that he had a masterly comprehension of every aspect of the problems of north-eastern regions of our country. He was an authority on that.

Another important contribution of Sudarshanji is in the field of dialogue with the people belonging to various religions and ideologies. He initiated the process of the 'culture of dialogue' with the highest spokespersons of Christianity and Islam. It was as a result of a series of dialogues with the

Christian leaders in Kerala that a very co-
 ordeal and correct understanding was built-up
 in the State. He had earned the admiration of
 the highest among them for his theological
 understanding and co-operative approach.
 Sudarshanji's sterling qualities and
 innumerable contributions are so varied that it
 is not possible to recount them in a single
 write-up. There were two items in his daily life
 which he never missed wherever he was. One
 was attending the regular Shakhas and
 offering Sangh prayer. The other was his now
 famous morning walk. He enjoyed it
 thoroughly and benefited immensely. We
 know that it was after his last morning walk
 that he passed away while doing Pranayama.
 Sudarshanji was a true Yogi in the sense that he
 was totally unattached to power and prestige
 which naturally came to him as the
 Sarsanghachalak. The moment he felt that his
 memory was failing and that it might stand in

the way of his discharging the onerous
 responsibilities placed on him, he came to the
 conclusion that it is the time for him to quit. In
 the historic Prathinidhi Sabha held at Nagpur
 in the presence of all the prominent workers of
 the Sangh movement, Sudarshanji
 unequivocally announced his decision to
 handover the responsibility to
 Maananeeya Mohanrao Bhagawat. Everyone
 assembled was stunned. It was a momentous
 decision and the organization had no choice
 but to accept. Even after he voluntarily gave
 up the position of Sarsanghachalak,
 Sudarshanji continued to carry on whatever
 work was assigned to him with utmost
 dedication and sincerity. Thus he continued
 till the very last day of his life. Sudarshanji's
 loss is mourned not only by every
 Swayamsevak but also by a very large number
 of people, irrespective of caste, creed, religion
 all over the country who has come to know
 him.

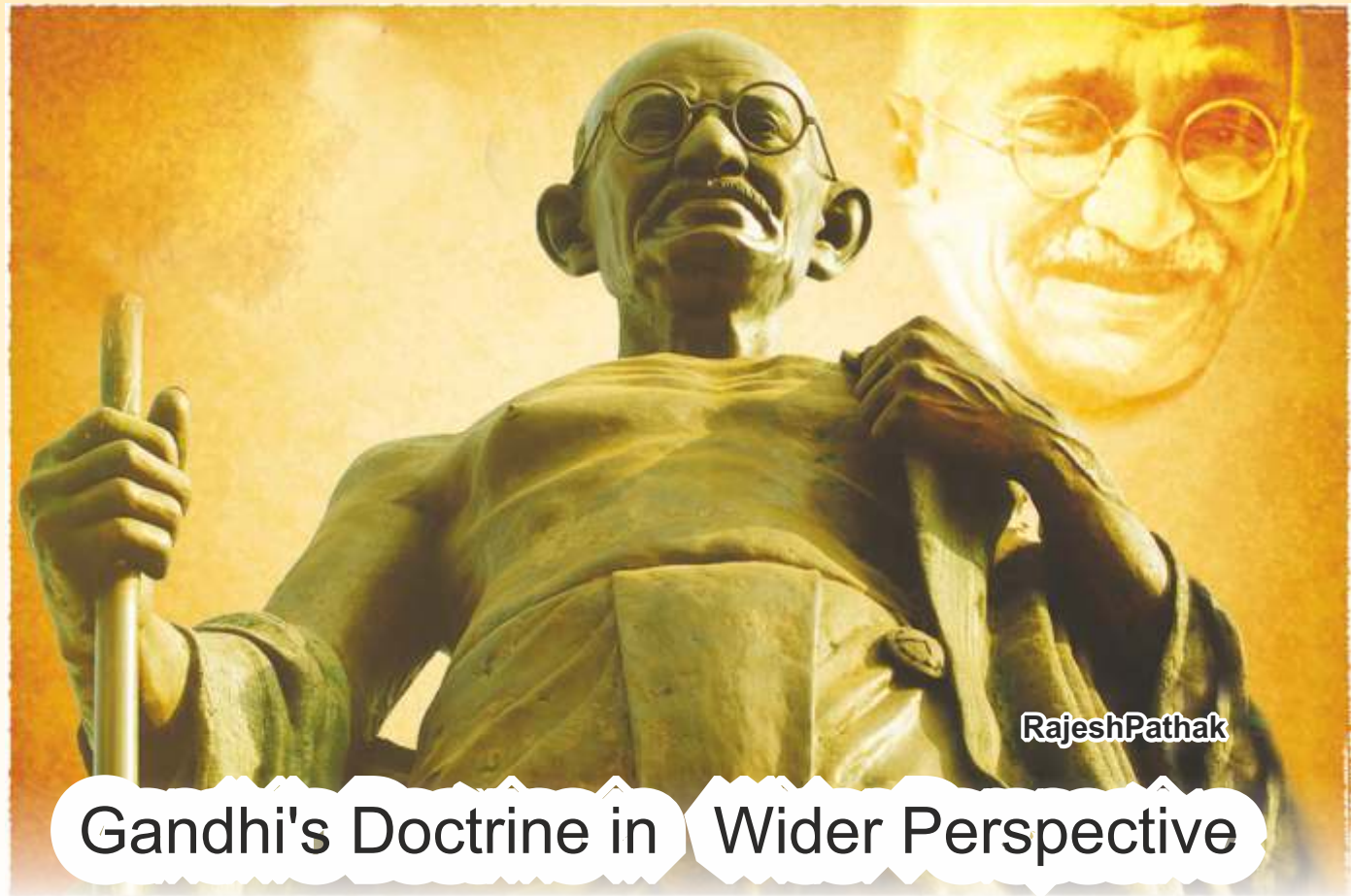


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RajeshPathak

Gandhi's Doctrine in Wider Perspective

Godhara [Gujarat] is one of the places that have been the hotbed of communal elements since as long as pre-independence days. This has led to the recurring of the incidents of communal strife their time and again, making the lives of common people miserable. One such incident occurred in 1920, which is linked with Mahatma Gandhi and throws light on the wider perspective of his doctrine of *Ahimsa* [non-violence]. What happened that, taking the advantage of docile attitude of Hindus, Muslim bullies indulged in harassing their women. So much so that at one point of time it crossed all the limits of brazenness.

Lastly, unable to bear affronts to their women folk anymore, they formed a delegation and approached Gandhiji to tell their woes, and his intervention thereof. After hearing them, how Gandhiji responded is notable. Instead of preaching them *Ahimsa*, he exhorted them to fight back. According to him, “The 1400 years of imperialist expansion has made fighters of the Musalmans. They are, therefore, aggressive. Bullying is the natural excrescence of an aggressive spirit.” [‘*Young India*’, 19.6.1924].

Thus, contrary to what has been popularly believed and, more so, preached by the

particular political class known to be secularist, Gandhi's outlook regarding *Ahimsa* was not all that mute tolerance against injustice or, for that matter, the complete abstention from the use of power, no matter what kind of circumstances and forces are there to cope with. And, rightly so, he made it crystal clear on the various occasions.

When in 1942 all the measures of containing the menace of dacoits in Sindh and Gujarat came a cropper and it assumed dangerous dimension, he called upon people to arm themselves and raise the self-defense forces. So also, when it came to defend Kashmir from Pakistan-sponsored raiders, he inspired the Indian troops and other defenders to hound them [raiders] out of the valley rather than submit.

So also, if his *Ahimsa* was not the meek submission to injustice, his outlook to

secularism was not myopic either. What were his views regarding very existence of Christian missionaries in India are eye-opener. He said, "The way the Christian missionaries are indulged in their activities of religious conversion these days, they will be given no chance of doing so in free India. They are inflicting harm to entire India. This is a tragedy for the mankind to have the thing like missionary preaching. So long as you missionary people consider non-Christians and Indians as the people lost in the darkness of ignorance, there will be no place for you in free India." [Mahatma Gandhi-*Christian Missions, There Place in India*, page 151 and 220].

Thus, shedding the exclusivist misleading dogma regarding Gandhi's ideology, what is needed is to understand it [Gandhi's ideology] in wider perspective.

Shradanjali



We regret to inform the readers of "Yuva Bharati", that Mr.T.R.Venkatesh one of the Senior Staff working for the last 28 years as General Asst. in Stores-Dept. of Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trust passed away in the Office premises itself on 11.08.2012. Mr.T.R.Venkatesh was ailing for last few months. He was a very sincere worker and was having good relationship with other staff. He was married and blessed with two sons. VKPT prays for the peaceful and eternal rest for the departed soul.

The Treasure: Glorious Glimpses of the life and Paintings of Swami Ramanuja

Sri Ramanujacharya (1017-1137 CE) respectfully called Bhagavan Bhashyakara by Swami Vivekananda was a saint of incomparable spiritual attainments and achievements in the social and literary spheres. He was considered as Avatara of Adishesha and Lakshmana, hence the name RAMANUJA.

A philosopher-saint, social activist, scholar, Sri Ramanuja lived the complete human life-span of 120 years and lived to see his schemes tested in real life situations and proved successful.

A worthy successor to a great chain of Saints and Acharyas, Sri Ramanuja gave new strength to the philosophy of Visishtadvaita, and the religious sect of Shri Vaishnavism worshipping Sri Vishnu and Mahalakshmi. His compassion found no limits of social castes or even religious set-ups and defying one of his Guru's restraining orders, he preached the Lord's name to the lost and neglected men. He organized the temple worship according to Shri Vaishnavism beginning with the central shrine of Shrirangam. He established a pattern of chanting the 4000 divine verses of the Alvars in Vishnu Shrines completing the cycles in seasons, years and 12 years.

On his visit to Viranarayanapuram lake, he saw the 74 gates discharging water for irrigation. This sight reminded him of Vishnu's grace flowing out through countless channels. Ramanuja organized 74 jeer pithams dividing Bharat into 74 segments and appointing a Jeer (Saint) to take care for the

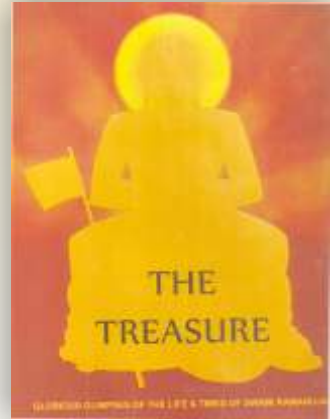
spiritual needs of the people of each of the areas.

Sri Ramanuja paid back his debt to his beloved teachers by creating a large band of brilliant and

devoted disciples. The disciples carried forward the great man-making work the Master has started.

Sri Ramanuja released an amazing gush of spiritual energy and great changes in the society naturally followed. Literary and philosophical work, social reform, moral uplift of individuals, vegetarianism all came in the immediate aftermath of the Master's work.

Inspired by his work and devotion other sects of Vishnu worship were created to engulf the whole country and to try encompass the whole world. Madhvacharya's Dvaita, Vallabha's Pushtimarga, Chaitanya Deva's Gaudiya Vaishnavism and Shankara Deva's work in the North-East India could be directly or indirectly linked to Shri Ramanuja and Sri Ramanuja's work. Today the Hare Krishna Movement, an offshoot of the Chaitanya sect is a sort of spiritual grandchild of Sri Ramanuja. The effects are there for all to see.



N.Krishnamoorti

Mysore Universal Brotherhood Day

Inter-school Cultural Competition: On 8th September, cultural competition was conducted. 202 students from 14 schools participated in different events like Patriotic song, Essay writing on topic My Hero Swami Vivekananda, speech on Chicago speech and drawing – topic Swami Vivekananda. Smt. Sreemati inaugurated the function.

Inter-college Cultural Competition: 124 students from 12 colleges participated in the Patriotic song, essay on topic “ Vision 2020 “, speech on “ Punya Bhoomi Bharat”, Drawing on Swamiji, on 9th September.

UB Day celebration: Sri C V Gopinathji, Retd. Additional Secretary, Govt of India was the Chief Guest. Smt Nagaratnamma presided over the function. Sri Gopinathji spoke on the application of Swamiji's message in the present world and Wake up Bharat and enlightened the world. 172 people attended the function. On 11th September, public function was held at Gopal Swamy College. Dr. A S Chadrashekar, Nagar Pramukh, Vivekananda Kendra Mysore presided. Sri Pradhumnaji, Sangha Chalak, was the Chief Guest. 78 youths attended the function. Dr. Chandrashekarji spoke on 150th birth celebrations of Swami Vivekananda and he invited people to devote their times in this national cause. Sri Aravinda Prasad briefed the Kendra activities. Sri Pradhumanaji inaugurated the “ YUVA BHARATA” activities and spoke on that segment.



Yoga Shiksha Shibir at Nagadandi, Kashmir

A 15 days (20 August to 3 September 2012) Yoga Shiksha Shibir (YSS) was organized here, an oldest branch centre of Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari. The Kendra used to regularly organize All India Yoga Shiksha Shibir here till 1989 and in that year more than 100 had participated. This year's - 2012 - Shibir was the attempt to resume it after a long gap of 23 years. Total 11 participants from 7 States (Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Tamilnadu & Andhra Pradesh) turned up with lot of hesitation as the news they were receiving through the media was so discouraging. But the beautiful Kashmir's attraction was so powerful that the so-called disturbed area did not become the blockage in their path.

Though the number was small, but the participants were receptive and all proved to march the path of a Yogi-A Karma yogi. The participants while sharing their experiences narrated how their will was strengthened by following time to time daily routine and how to get the things done when one get their mental blockage of negativities removed by getting the whole outlook to see the things in different perspective. This attitudinal change was the outcome of the 15 days YSS.

As the Kashmir is the crown of the Bharat, the vibrations can be felt more intensely while one is on the spot. This Ashram (where Vivekananda Kendra is situated) is doubly sanctified by the intensive Tapas of Swami Ashokanandaji, a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. So this Yoga Shiksha Shibir is the beginning of the All India activities of Vivekananda Kendra in Kashmir and many more such activities are to come in future.

The Vivekananda Kendra Ramakrishna Maha Sammelan Ashram is situated in Acchabal Distict near Anantnag. This was handed over to Vivekananda Kendra by Swami

Ashokanandaji in 1972 to Swargiya Ekanathji, the founder of Vivekananda Kendra. It is a beautiful campus with more than 8 acres of land. Vivekananda Kendra is maintaining it well and also organizing local and all India activities. Though after 1989 the Kendra could not organize all India activities as this was militancy disturbed area till recent years, the local activities - Ram Navami, Nag Panchami, Bhandara in Shir Bhavani, helping needy in difficulties were going on without any break. All the people feel free to be part of the activities and also extend help to the Ashram. This Ashram is house to all.

Valliyoor

The twin festivals--Gokulashtami and Rakshabandhan were celebrated with an intense fervour on 07th September. The function began in the august presence of Sri Ayyappan, Secretary, RDP, VK, Sri S.K.Subramanian, Correspondent and Smt R.Andal, Principal. The programme was started by singing the Krishna song by the students in the way of welcoming the Lord Krishna. Following that, Mrs.S.Devi, one of the senior teachers of VKV delivered a thought- provoking lecture about Krishna Jayanthi and Rakshabandhan. She also said that how the relationship should be maintained among the brothers and sisters. Sri Ayyanpanji gave an oration about the importance of Krishna Avathar and advised the students to get the prosperous future by following good manners. Besides celebrating the programmes, our students chanted Bakthi yoga slogans from the Bhagavat Gita devotionally. Dance of Gobikas and Uriyadi by two Balakrishnas were very special and also it beautified the programme. In each class sisters and brothers were asked to tie the Rakhi on the Occations.

VIJAYA DASAMI & VIDYARAMBACELEBRATION

VKV celebrated Vijaya Dasami, Vidyaramba in a grand manner on 24th October. Smt Mallika, Teacher welcomed the gathering. Su. Aparna Palkar, All India Vyavastha Pramukh, Vivekananda Kendra, presided over the function as a chief guest. Next our school Correspondent Shri. S.K. Subramanian, felicitated the function and completed the Vidyaramba with a great inspiration. A large number of parents with their children participated. Next our new admission students wrote their name in the turmeric rice. This is a way of ancient tradition method writing in the rice.

