

YUVA BHARATI

Voice of Youth

Vol.36 No.7 Magha-Phalgun 5110 February 2009

Founder-Editor

Mananeeya Eknathji Ranade

Editor

P.Parameswaran

Editorial Consultants:

Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

Prof. P.T.Santha

Prof. P.Ramani

Editorial Team:

A.Sudarsan

P.Vasanth

S.Shivsankar

S.Aravindh

V.V.Balasubramanian

Marketing:

D.Krishnamoorthy

H.Gnaneswara Rao

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

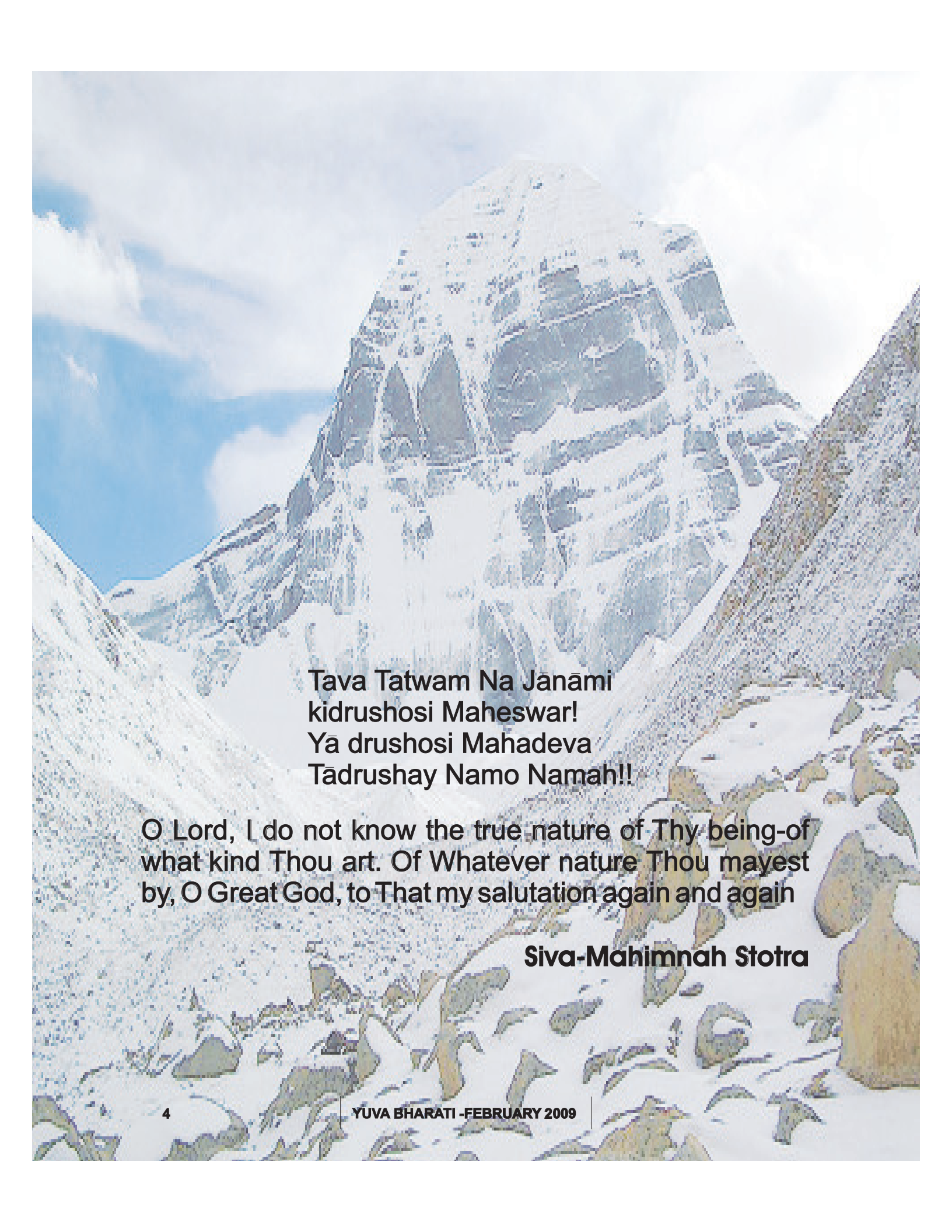
CONTENTS

Editorial	5
Sri Ramakrishna and his Principal Disciples	
N.Krishnamoorti	7
Lead by Example	
Srinivasa Desikan	11
Managing Change	
Sqn.Ldr.Dr.P. Ramani	16
Sri Vallabhacharya	
Swami Krishnananda	21
The Narmada Parikrama	
K.K.Venkatraman	27

Single Copy	Rs.	10/-
Annual	Rs.	100/-
For 3 Yrs	Rs.	275/-
Life (10 Yrs)	Rs.	900/-
Foreign Subscription:		
Annual	-	\$25 US Dollar
Life (10 years)	-	\$250 US Dollar
(Plus Rs.50/- for Outstation Cheques)		

Published and Printed by L.Madhavan on behalf of Vivekananda Kendra from 5, Singarachari Street, Triplicane, Chennai - 600 005. at M/s.RNR Printers and Publishers, 8, Thandavarayan Street, Triplicane, Chennai - 600 005.

Editor: P.Parameswaran.



**Tava Tatwam Na Janami
kidrushosi Maheswar!
Yā drushosi Mahadeva
Tadrushay Namō Namah!!**

**O Lord, I do not know the true nature of Thy being-of
what kind Thou art. Of Whatever nature Thou mayest
be, O Great God, to That my salutation again and again**

Siva-Mahimnah Stotra

Editorial

Sri Ramakrishna - Harmony Personified

Any discussion of global problems may now seem to have become trite, what with every other journalist peddling their own stories on the innumerable 24 hour news channels to help themselves and their bosses make a few more bucks. But the very natures of the problems we as humanity face mean there can be no whining for loss of comfort, no rest taken – for the threats are current, real and they threaten our very existence as the existence of every other creature.

The causes of the two gravest and most immediate threats are almost opposite of each other. Religious fundamentalism makes women, teenagers and young men kill themselves and in the process cause maximum damage to human lives and property of “the others”. A driving passion and fanaticism motivates these people to sacrifice their all and themselves in an attempt to establish superiority of their religion. The second threat convinces people into a hedonism driven by profit motives of big business houses causing irreparable damage to the psyche of entire generations. It deludes people into the individualistic and selfish belief that their own comfort and happiness is worthy enough to sacrifice the entire planet and all its resources for.

It is nature's way, God's way, that the cure, the solution is presented before any (what we call) “problem” actually begins. It is for us to step up and make use of it. It was not accidental that the prophet of religious harmony and a model of renunciation and selflessness took birth and preached his glorious message when he did. It was clear then which way things were turning: a Macaulayan education system taking root, uprooting our culture in the process; a strain of fundamentalist Islam with a fanaticism not seen for several centuries brainwashing droves of men in its wake, scores of harvesting Christian preachers were at their calculative best to increase their flock, an emasculated nation in India, with its people losing focus on everything else other than survival, driven to poverty and disease by a cruel shopkeeper's army. It was into this world that Sri Ramakrishna took birth - an antidote to every poison that was killing us.

At a time when it was considered elite to be educated in English schools, when a person's wisdom was judged by the graduations that he can claim to have completed, when it was a sign of sophistication to be as much or even more British than the British themselves, the level of elevation Sri Ramakrishna achieved without any of these buried the credibility all such

pompous claims once and for all. The spiritual height achieved by the master was immediately visible to all that cared to look. A man who could not even sign his own name lived and spoke the greatest Vedantic truths and became a beacon that showed us how our lives should be conducted. At a time when fundamentalism of the exclusive religions was gripping the masses in its mesmerizing and vicious grip, Sri Ramakrishna preached the holiness, divinity and equality of all religions - a message almost completely unheard until then. At a time when hoarding material was considered 'normal', when pursuing a 'comfortable life' was wholly 'understandable', Sri Ramakrishna preached renunciation - showing us how little we actually need in our lives.

It was through Sri Ramakrishna that God was speaking, giving us the solutions for the great challenges that will face mankind, those which were just stepping out of their wombs. A great many followed his words; a far greater number still do. But it has simply not been enough to overcome the challenge. Today we see the challenges have become threats; threats not only to us but to the entire planet. Everybody knows the planet has been changed, changed by our greed, our exploitation of resources in search for an elusive 'comfortable life'. Everybody knows that terrorists and fanatics, fired with a vision of heavens they will reach, are procuring technologies that will wipe out millions in a

flash. What everybody does not know, or knows but doesn't recognize enough its importance and gravity, is that a solution for these has already been given.

We are not awarded the luxury of putting off until tomorrow like it was done by previous generations. There is no time for pointing accusing fingers, no time for deducing possible alternatives for there just isn't any. This is a time for action and act we must for if we don't, we jeopardize our collective existence. The integrating, inclusive message of the Vedanta that boldly proclaims every being as a spark of divinity, a child of Immortal Bliss has to be spread across the globe. Our hands cannot remain folded and let this duty be given to another more worthy we. God has given us the life-boat through Sri Ramakrishna. It is for us to clamber on and survive. God has put us in the balance, and let us not be found wanting.

P.Vasanth
Yuvabharati Editorial Team

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS PRINCIPAL DISCIPLES

N. Krishnamoorti

Sumati: Brother. How could one person like Sri Ramakrishna enlist the services of so many brilliant disciples?

Sumanta: Thakur's glory and grace were such that, so many disciples were required to elicit, store, express and live and work out all that he had to say. Secondly, Sri Ramakrishna acquired his disciples by acts of great prayer and tapas. He used to climb on to the balcony of the building and cry out to the Divine Mother, to send in those disciples about whose arrival SHE has promised. Getting good disciples is a great gift of God. And getting a perfect Guru is an expression of God's grace.

Sumati: And Sri Ramakrishna's disciples were of such variety! There were pure monks, Sannyasins, there were householders, there were great women and there were men or women who had travelled the wrong path and have been redeemed by Thakur.

Sumanta: And they were of different temperaments and needs. Men like Narendra and Rakhai were born Yogis. They were also great scholars. Swami Saradananda was a great



Karmayogi who held a responsible position in the Math for a long spell. Swami Shivananda, aptly called Mahapurush Maharaj was a great man-maker. He was described by his disciples as a Man with a golden touch.

Sumati: Sri Ramakrishna himself would categorise six of his disciples as of Ishwara Koti.

Sumanta: Yes. Narendra, later called Swami Vivekananda was the chief of them. Swami Brahmananda was a Sannyasin's Sannyasin. Swami Yogananda was identified as a perfect yogi by Sri Ramakrishna himself. Swami Niranjanananda was redirected by Thakur from the life of mystical powers to pure spirituality. Poorna Chandra Ghosh was the only Grihasta who was among the Ishwarakoti disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

Sumati: How did Sri Ramakrishna recognize his true disciples?

Sumanta: Thakur had the instinctive capacity to recognize spiritual inclinations. His disciples used to compare him to a geiger counter or a seismograph, which would recognize distant and faint vibrations and radiations in the earth. He could trace the faintest spiritual vibration of a man.

Sumati: And the Thakur taught different disciplines to different students!

Sumanta: That made Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest spiritual teacher. He could handle intellectual giants like Naren or Rakhal, he could spot the spiritual bent of Latu - later Adbhutananda. Under the deceptive carapace of Girish Chandra Ghosh's hedonism, love of worldly pleasures, Sri Ramakrishna could see the current of spiritual life and tapped the same. He would permit freedom in food intake to Narendra, but was very strict with others in matters of food. He recognized the fire in Naren which would burn away the impurities, any, in his food.

Sumati: And how would the Master instruct them?

Sumanta: There also Gurudeva recognized the

Swadharmas or natural inclinations of each disciple. Students like Rakhal stayed with the Guru for long years and were groomed with great deliberation.

Sumati: It is no wonder that Brahmananda was seen as the future head of the Sangha and was appropriately called Raja Maharaj.

Sumanta: Yes. Holy Mother Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda were trained with great concern by the Master, so that they can be true conduits of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual power. All the disciples were true fellows of the Avatara Purusha.

Sumati: The early disciples got a lot of exposure to Guru Maharaj's direct instruction and training.

Sumanta: Yes. And they came in bunches. Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) and Rakhal (Brahmananda) were Brahmasamajis. Sarad (Swami Saradananda) and Sashi (Swami Ramakrishnananda) were related to each other. Again Sashi (Swami Ramakrishnananda) and Hari (Swami Turiyananda) were from very orthodox families, where religious practices were part of the household life.

Sumati: Their financial backgrounds also varied greatly.

Sumanta: Yes. Baburam Ghosh (Swami Premananda) hailed from a rich family. Yogen (Yogananda) and Latu (Swami Adbhutananda) were poor. Tarak (Swami Shivananda), Kali (Swami Abhedananda) and Hariprasanna (Swami Vijnanananda) were well-educated, articulate and had exposure to modern education. Gopal the elder (Swami Advaitananda) and Saradaprasanna (Swami Trigunatita) met tragedies in their lives, turning

them towards the Master. Gangadhar (Swami Akhandananda) was service incarnate. Subodh (Swami Subodhananda) came to the Thakur through book learning.

Sumati: How did the Guru instruct them all?

Sumanta: He used a variety of methods. He worshipped Holy Mother Sarada Devi as an incarnation of Parashakti. He gave *sparsa diksha* (initiation by touch) to Naren. He wrote the mantra on the tongues of some of them.

He chanted the name of the divine in the ears of the disciples. He removed their hurdles. He corrected their worldly actions and behaviour. He made them serve him. He asked them to meditate under specific influences and at specific places. He visited some of the disciples in their dreams and protected, directed and guided them.

"His disciples used to compare him to a geiger counter or a seismograph, which would recognize distant and faint vibrations and radiations in the earth. He could trace the faintest spiritual vibration of a man".

Sumati: He swallowed like Shiva the poisonous qualities of some of his disciples.

Sumanta: Girish, Pratap Chandra Hazra and Surendra Nath Mitra might have gone astray, losing their ways, but for the saving grace of Sri Ramakrishna.

Sumati: And there were downright atheists?

Sumanta: Yes. Ramachandra Datta, Nityagopal and some others went through a phase of skepticism and lack of belief, before they were changed completely by Sri Ramakrishna's grace.

Sumati: There were also hard-boiled

intellectuals.

Sumanta: You should remember that in those days Calcutta was not only the political capital of India but also its intellectual capital. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and a number of well-educated government officers heard of Sri Ramakrishna's saintliness and came and met him. They had a number of questions to ask regarding the practicalities of spiritual life. And Sri Ramakrishna gave them answers, not from books, but from the book of his experience.

Sumati: And the Brahmasamajis?

Sumanta: Keshub and the Brahmasamaj were great religious, social, intellectual forces. They proved to be the nursery from which emerged some of the top disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Keshub

himself, was a convert from the Brahma Samaj's intellectual head, to Sri Ramakrishna's heart-based jnana. Sri Ramakrishna tempered the intellectuals with Bhakti, mythology and worship. It was in this general background one should study the story of blossoming up of the disciples.

Sumati: So great were Durga Charan Nag, M, and Balam Bose!

Sumanta: About Nag Mahashay, Holy Mother would say that there were few like him. If devotion to Sri Ramakrishna could assume a human form, it would be like Nag Mahashay. About Balam Babu, Thakur has talked of his

Mission of serving the devotees. Sri Ramakrishna has visited Balaram Babu's house a hundred times. M was endowed with prodigious memory, devotion and focused attention to absorb whatever Gurudev said. His is a unique example of hagiographic writing.

Sumati: There is the uniqueness of female disciples.

Sumanta: Yes. Sri Ramakrishna was the first to formally teach and accept women-disciples starting with the Holy Mother. He inspired Aghoramani Devi who saw child Krishna in Sri Ramakrishna. Golap Ma saw Sri Ramakrishna as Kali Herself and served the Holy Mother for a long period. Yogin Ma also saw Kali in the Master. Gauri Ma was recognized as a servant of Chaitanya by Guru Maharaj. Vinodini Das, a drama actress, was converted into a great devotee by Sri Ramakrishna.

Sumati: In this manner the Master brought about a revolution paving the way for women-

Sannyasinis later on. In a manner, he sowed the seeds of the Sarada Math which came up in 1953, the centenary year of the Holy Mother. What did all those disciples do?

Sumanta: They gave the Ramakrishna Math the present structure, shape, discipline and work. Service activities, relief work and propagation of Dharma became the chief activities of the Sri Ramakrishna Math. Institutional and non-formal service, relief in times of natural or man-made calamities are the service activities. Emphasising the Divinity of Man as the Vedas saw, Sri Ramakrishna lived and Swami Vivekananda preached, is the main thrust of the Math's preaching work. The direct disciples of the Master gave the Math its stability and continuity and made it what it is today. The women-disciples worked outside its organizational structure until the Sarada Math was formed. In this manner imbibing the great teachings of the Master the direct disciples paved the way for making Dharma a LIVING RELIGION.

Sparks of Wisdom



Do all your duties with your mind always fixed on God. As for your parents and wife and children, serve them as if they were your own, but know in the inmost recesses of your heart that they are not really yours, unless they too love the Lord. The Lord alone is really your own, and also those who love the Lord.

Lead by Example

Srinivasa Desikan



Leadership is one quality that is absolutely essential in every sphere: personal and professional, social and national. For many of us, the difference between leadership and management is quite nebulous. The difficulty is primarily because all of us can recognize these so instinctively that we don't bother with a clear articulation of these in our own minds. So let us try and understand what leadership and management are and what it is that differentiates them, if at all.

Management is more of an organized structure with teams and designated roles and authority. The ability of a person to get a task executed depends on whether he/she is vested with the power in the role that he/she plays in the organization. One cannot be a leader if he tells others "Do this! or else...". That is more of thuggery. This might explain why some

"independent thinkers", also commonly referred to as anarchists claim management is authorized thuggery. Whereas leadership is the ability to get others to willingly follow. Willingly is the watchword. It is not menacing people into obedience but to get them to follow willingly, almost spontaneously. The Gita verse (in box) throws even more light in what is left unsaid. The people seen as icons in society are followed by the masses not after any discriminative analysis, but blindly.

**yadyad ācarati śreṣṭhas tattad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṣaḥ kurute lokas tad anuvartate**

Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by his exemplary acts, all the world pursues.

(Bhagavad Gita - Chap 3. Verse 21)

Given that a leader is one who inspires rather than threatens, what qualities define a leader? What is it that "gives" leadership? Let's attempt to elaborate and verbalize what is usually only a "feeling" we get about leaders.

"Give more than you expect others to give"

This is probably the most important idea that one has to assimilate about leadership. To claim leadership, one has to lead. A simpler explanation of this will be 'Doership equals leadership'. It is only a person who has knuckled down and contributed, worked his heart out that can rightfully claim a position of leadership. In fact, such a person need not claim any; he/she naturally emerges as a leader.

Sounds too simplistic? Take a look around at the people claiming "leadership". It is most likely that the "leader" behaves like a dictator demanding special privileges. It seems as though the British raj has left an indelible mark in our social psyche: the "leaders" consider themselves superior and then imagine a right to treat their subordinates with disrespect.

To put it in another way, a leader should lead from the front and they must do more than what the average team member is expected to do. Swami Vivekananda says this was one of the reasons many war were lost by the Hindu kings. Because the

commanders commanded the armies to rush ahead when they themselves stayed behind. Such 'leadership' has never worked, never will



"It is only a person who has knuckled down and contributed, worked his heart out that can rightfully claim a position of leadership".

work. A leader has to set an example, to be an inspiration. Giving more than what is expected from the team members is almost a prerequisite condition for leadership.

"Optimism and Perseverance should be combined"

A leader is no leader if he/she cannot inspire the masses and nerve them to take up difficult tasks en route to achieving the great goal. It is quite obvious that pessimism can

never inspire anyone to work. It can only breed a cynical and self-fulfilling defeatism. Such a mindset can hardly create any enthusiasm to make us exert to our fullest or achieve anything lasting in life.

It is only a message of hope, optimism and the prospect of being part of a brighter future that can inspire the masses to endure the strains

and steadfastly persevere which alone can lead to victory. To be a transmitter of such thoughts, then, becomes a defining characteristic of a leader.

To be Continued...



VIVEKANANDA KENDRA - KANYAKUMARI

S H I B I R C A L E N D A R - 2009
(for General Public)

NAME OF THE SHIBIR	DATES	AGE	CAMP DONATION
Spiritual Retreat (Eng)	05 - 11 Feb	40 +	Rs. 1000/-
Spiritual Retreat (Hindi)	05 - 11 Feb	40 +	Rs. 1000/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Eng)	05 - 19 June	18+	Rs. 1500/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Hindi)	05 - 19 June	18+	Rs. 1500/-
Spiritual Retreat (Eng)	08 - 14 Aug	40+	Rs. 1000/-
Spiritual Retreat (Hindi)	08 - 14 Aug	40+	Rs. 1000/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Eng)	01- 15 Dec	18+	Rs. 1500/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Hindi)	01- 15 Dec	18+	Rs. 1500/-

Further details: E-mail: camps@vivekanandakendra.org /
Fax: 04652-247177 / Phone: 247012
Vivekananda Kendra, Vivekanandapuram, Kanyakumari - 629 702

Know Thyself - Grow Thyself - 6

Managing Change

Sqn. Ldr.Dr.P.Ramani

Change is inevitable everywhere. We should be willing to face the challenges of the changes, accept them, and change ourselves to meet the new situation or context. People who are not ready to change themselves normally are left behind. Individuals as well as organizations should observe the environment and the changes that happen internally or externally and adjust themselves to meet the challenges of the changes that occur. If we do not change ourselves according to changing demands, the change will change us.

What is change?

Change is a kind of an alteration in the existing system which tends to pose a new challenge.

When changes occur, the way the jobs are performed get changed, rules and procedures get changed, organizational and hierarchical structure gets changed, leadership styles get changed, economic status gets altered etc.

Facing challenges of the changes

Individuals and organizations can face these

changes effectively. There are internal changes and external changes that normally influence the functioning of an organisation. In an ideal organisation one may not generate suspicion when changes are introduced. Whenever, changes are suggested, they may be accepted or resisted. The change agent should possess the ability to interact positively and convince the partners of a group and influence everyone in the organisation.

Responses/reactions of individuals / organizations to the change.

People may not be willing to accept changes. They will feel that the existing system is fine.

Individuals of an organisation will resist change. They may believe that change will give rise to uncertain future.

There may be some who will believe that changes occur for better.

An ideal organisation must be actively engaging itself in bringing about positive

changes in social, economical and cultural environments.

Gearing up to meet the challenges of changes.

Any new situation will pose a new challenge. We must be able to provide a solution, with an innovative and creative mind.

Approaches to change.

There are any number of approaches or methods by which one can always learn to face changes.

The boss is always right.

There are some who always take orders from the boss and accept to work under the rule of law. They believe that the boss is always right.

Substitute Approach.

In some organizations, some resist change. The change agents replace them with new people who believe that changes only will work/assist in bringing about development.

Information Dissemination Approach.

Individuals can be presented with information concerning change and motivated to accept changes.

Consensus Approach.

Partners of an organisation discuss the issues in question democratically and arrive at a consensus towards solving problems/finding solutions.

Problem-Solving Approach.

Changes can happen through problem-solving and group discussion and brainstorming teamwork and interpersonal relationship.

Teamwork and interpersonal relationships.

Better teamwork and improved relationships contribute to organizational effectiveness. The

members of a team or an organisation can work together to find better working environment.

Follow your leader approach

Even the people who oppose changes agree to follow their leader with regard to performing official tasks/duties.

Emulative Approach

Colleagues/members of any organisation can ideally choose someone as their role model and emulate their qualities while setting goals, accomplishing mission, etc.

Back to Basics Approach

There are some who believe that their parents have been ideal role models. Some believe their teachers are their role models. Yet others believe and draw inspiration from Mother Nature and will be skeptical about changes. However, when they confront changes, they look back for guidance from the parents and teachers and others and get convinced after realizing that they themselves were products of such changes.

Thus, all of us need to believe that we are essentially governed by changes at every moment of life and hence we should respond to changes appropriately.

Four skills of a change agent

Anyone who aims at change should possess certain basic skills, namely

- a) cognitive skills,
- b) action skills,
- c) communication skills and
- d) affective skills.

Cognitive skills

Cognitive skills involve an ability to analyse and comprehend. One should be motivated to perceive the need for change and the desire to

bring about change. The change agent should clearly define objectives in relation to the intended outcomes. He must plan and organize events anticipating positive results. The change agent should also be in a position to evaluate the nature, expectations and orientations of the clients.

Action skills

The change agent shall be at best performing his jobs as a counsellor, facilitator and trainer

1. helping the clients in assessing their attitudes, expectations and motivation levels,
2. dealing with the clients' expectations, value systems, etc.,
3. developing an awareness about the positive results of change,
4. making a road-map towards growth and national development and
5. keeping the morale high amongst the stakeholders.

Communication skills

The change agent should

1. possess the appropriate persuasive skills,
2. define goals and objectives for every initiative undertaken,
3. receive feedback and act appropriately.

Affective skills

To achieve mission accomplishment, apart from cognitive skills, action skills and communication skills, we must ensure appropriate positive attitude governed by a high sense of moral values and code of ethics.

Planning for change

Changes occur inevitably everywhere. We employ a number of strategies knowingly or

unknowingly. We may deliberately anticipate the events that are going to happen and plan accordingly to meet the challenges of the change. We may also observe the real life occurrences and take appropriate actions.

Traditional mindset may forbid us from moving beyond. However, our experience tells us that we can perform better 'when the mind is without fear'. When we are confident, we become creative and the things that we do certainly turn out to be better. We may also anticipate the positive things that are likely to result from the actions already initiated. The very thought or the feeling that the changes are bound to enhance the quality of life of the people makes us feel happy.

We can always plan strategies and implement our plan to realise the best of the benefits of change. However, we will have to deal with the changes in a professional way rather than in an amateurish way.

Interface amongst the variables resulting in positive changes

All human efforts must have a definite mission to accomplish to realise this mission accomplishment we make use of our knowledge and skills as individuals and as members of teams maintaining appropriate attitudes and effect changes towards visualizing the mission commitment.



SRI VALLABHACHARYA

(1473 - 1531 A.D.)

(PROPOUNDER OF SUDDHADVAITA – PUSHTI MARGA)

Swami Krishnananda

EARLY LIFE

Vallabhacharya was a successor of the great Vaishnava Acharyas – Ramanuja, Nimbarka and Madhwa, and a contemporary of Sri Krishna Chaitanya (1485 – 1533 A.D.). He was the son of Lakshmana Bhatta and Yellamma Garu who belonged to a family of learned Telugu Vaishnavas. Vallabha was born in the village of Champaran, near modern Raipur. His parents settled at Varanasi. Vallabha was a child prodigy, whose education started at the age of seven under the teacher Vishnudatta. He mastered the Veda, Vedangas, Sat-Darshanas, Gita, Bhagavata and the Pancharatra.

THREE PILGRIMAGES

After his father's passing away when Vallabha was eleven, he undertook three pilgrimages of India over a period of 20 years, covering southern, western and eastern parts.

At the invitation of his maternal uncle, a high official, he visited Vijayanagara. The famous Vaishnava ruler, Krishnadevaraya honoured Vallabha with Kanakabhisekha, when he defeated a Vedantist leader in debate.



Madhavendra Yati, an ascetic of Madhwa sect, introduced him to the mysteries of Bhagavata Purana and later helped him to establish a temple at Govardhana. Finally, he initiated him into Sannyasa.

His second pilgrimage started when he was about 15 years old. He visited Vijayanagara, Pandaripura, Gujarat, Vraja region, Badrinath and returned to Varanasi. At Pandaripura, he

received the divine command to marry and become a householder. Accordingly, he married Mahalakshmi, daughter of Devadutta in 1500 A.D. Two sons – Gokulnatha and Vittalnatha were born. Vittalnatha became a great scholar and later consolidated the Sampradaya started by Vallabha.

Between 1500 and 1502 A.D. while camping at Gokula, he got the divine call to found his new Sampradaya of 'Religion of Grace'. Vallabha gave the name 'Brahma Sambandha' (union with Brahman) to this relationship between God and man. The initiating mantra was 'Sri Krishna Sharanam Mama' (Sri Krishna is my refuge).

During this period, the manifestation of the image of Govardhan Nathji out of a cave in Vraja was discovered. The image accepted food offerings of Madhavendra Swami and Vallabha. A big temple was built for 'Sri Nathji'. Later, due to muslim invasion, it was transferred to Nathdvara near Udaipur. Sri Nathji holds the highest place in this Sampradaya.

His third pilgrimage in central, western and eastern India lasted for about 4 years. It was a missionary enterprise to establish the superiority of 'Pushti Marga'. He held many 'Bhagavata Saptahas' and initiated many with the mantra 'Sri Krishna Sharanam Mama'. He got the greatest response in Gujarat where already the ground had been prepared by Narasimha Mehta (1414 - 1481 A.D.) by his devotional songs on Lord Krishna.

MEETINGS WITH SRI KRISHNA CHAITANYA

The meetings with Sri Krishna Chaitanya took place in Ganga Sagar, Brindavan and Gokul. Finally, he had philosophical discussions

at Puri. Both of them accepted 'Bhagavata Purana' as the most important scripture and Sri Krishna as the 'Purnavatara'. Vallabha advocated loving adoration of boy Krishna (Bala-Krishna) to devotees. Only to a limited number of devotees, he preached 'Madhura Bhava' or 'Sringera Bhakti' based on Radha Krishna leelas.

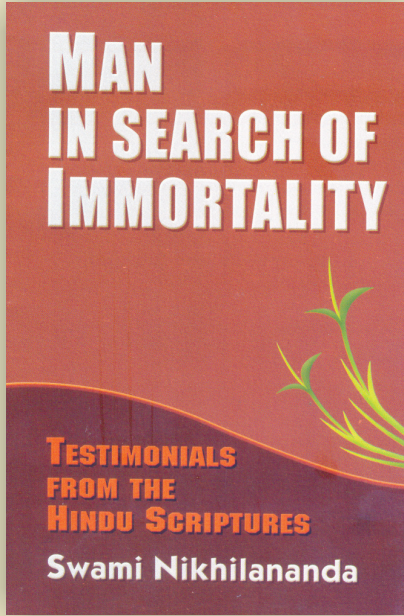
Vallabha's commentary on 'Brahma Sutras' is known as 'Anu Bhashya'. His commentary on 'Bhagavata Purana' is known as 'Subodhini'. In these commentaries, he has clearly explained the distinctive Vaishnava school of thought, called 'Pushti Marga'. In it 'Atmanivedana' or surrender of one's self and everything to Bhagavan Krishna by a ceremony called 'Brahma Sambandha' is detailed. The mantra of 'Sri Krishna Sharanam Mama' absolves one from all past sins. Now, the 'Pushti Jiva' is eligible for the superior Bhajananda, by the service of Bhagavan Krishna, the 'Purna Purushottama'.

HIS SANNYASA AND SAMADHI

After completing 52 years of householder's life, he got the third divine call to renounce this world and reach the divine abode. So, he took Sannyasa from Madhavendra Swami and assumed the name Purnananda. He left for Varanasi as a wanderer from Adel village where he was settled. At Hanuman Ghat he gave the last message to his sons and devotees: 'Worship Sri Krishna, the Lord of Gopis and he will give everything in this world and also other worlds'. Then, he plunged into the Ganga and disappeared. An effulgent light rose from that spot and merged with the firmament.



Book Review



Author : Swami Nikhilananda
Published by : Sri Ramakrishna Math,
Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004.
Pages : 152
Price :Rs. 35

original, Holy Mother, Vivekananda: A biography, Hinduism: Its meaning for Liberations of the Spirit.

The book under review is a compilation of five articles by the Swami with an Appendix of quotes from the Srimad Bhagwad Gita and few Upanisads.

The book under review Man in search of Immortality by Swami Nikhilananda, was originally published in 1968 and then reprinted by Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre New York in 1992. The extant edition published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, in January 2009 is meant for circulation in India. The author, a monk of Ramakrishna Order has authored in the past well read books such as Translations of The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, The Upanishads, The Bhagwad Gita, Self Knowledge, and in

The first chapter titled Immortality is a text of the lecture given by the author in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in October 1964. The topic-Immortality has been addressed by the author by putting forth the Advaita point of view of the Hindu scriptures – Srimad Bhagwad Gita and some of the Major Upanisads. The chapter has been enriched by the lucid presentation by the author by referring the scriptures with dexterity.

The second chapter titled Is Death the

End? – a time immemorial query of the human mind, has been dealt with in the context of Katha Upanisad, citing the question raised by the inquist youth-Nachiketa to the God of Death – Yama. The Kathopanisad deals with the topic of Immortality of Soul. The Vedantic view of eternal and ephemeral, and means to experience the Eternal and Immortal within each of us appearing in this upanisad are explained. Surprisingly no slokas from this upanisad are refered in the article either in verbatium or translated.

The third chapter. Three states of the Soul reflects the wisdom of the Mandukya Upanisad explained lucidly in its Karika by Gowdpadacharya (known to be Parama guru of Adi Sankaracharya). A parable of Prajapati and Indra & Virochana, appearing in Chhandogya Upanisad, is quoted to drive in the States of Awarness – Awakened (Jagrita) Dream (Swapna) and Deep Sleep (Susupti) and the Trascendental fourth state (Turiya) as explained in the Mandukya Upanisad. In this chapter also references to scriptures in inverbatium or otherwise are not made.

The fourth chapter That Thou Art is focused on one of the four Mahavakyas

– Tat Twam Asi appearing in Chhandogya Upanisad. The topic of all pervasiveness (Sarva Vyapitwa) of the Brahman and in-separable relation of the Atman with it, dealtwith in the Upanisad has been accentuated by the author by quoting Sankaracharya's Vivekanandamani (Verse 254 to 263).

The fifth chapter is What is Man. At the outset the author deals with western and theologians' concept of man as product of sin, then refers to a better explanations as per thinking of Plato-Socrates – soul beyond the physical gross body and thereafter puts forth the vedantic conept of Pancha-Kosha. The chapter is aptly laced with Sthita-Prajna Lakshana and Immortality of Soul-tracing back the line of thought to the first chapter of the book Immortality and to the title of the book—Man in search of Immortality.

The book, as claimed by the Publisher should be useful as an introductory book to the beginners. But to be qualified as a compendium as claimed, it should contain references quoted in verbatium or transliteration thereof.

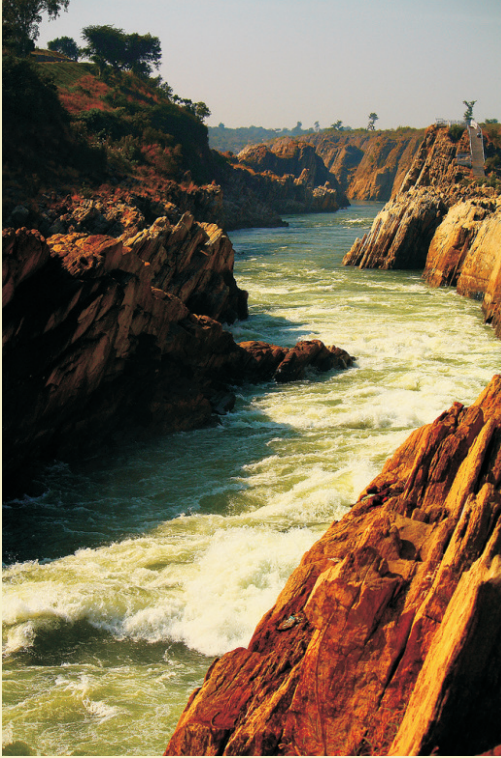
Satish ShamRao Chowkulkar

The Narmada Parikrama

(Clockwise Circumambulation of River Narmada)

K.K.VENKATRAMAN

10



Letters to and from the banks of Narmada after the Parikrama

After the completion of my Parikrama, I wrote to all who had extended hospitality to me (about 300 in number), informing them about the successful completion of my Parikrama and thanking them for their love and kind hospitality. Some of them replied to me. The general contents of the replies ran like this. "I showed your letter to all the people. We are very glad to learn that by the grace of Mother

Narmada, you have completed your Parikrama without any difficulty. You have thanked us for the hospitality extended to you. We consider ourselves very fortunate that Mother Narmada had given us an opportunity to serve Parikramavasis like you. On every grain, the name of the person who should consume that grain is written. The food you ate was your share. Please do visit our village. To reach our village, come by train from your place (I was in Arunachal Pradesh those days) and get down at ____ railway station. From there take Government / Private bus to ____ place. From there, bullock-carts are available. If you want to walk to our village ____ kms, please leave your bag in ____ shop in the bazaar and walk to our village. We will send someone to collect your bag. If you inform us in advance, we will receive you at the railway station itself." All the letters were full of love and affection as if they knew me for a long time. I also felt that the letter is from one who is very near and dear to me.

While on Parikrama I was keeping the pictures of Lord Iyyappa, Mother Narmada and the photo of my parents with me. In the morning and evening I used to take the pictures and photo out of my bag and do my prayer. At one place, one person became curious and enquired

(Common printed letter sent after the Parikrama to about 300 persons who had extended hospitality during the Parikrama.)

के० के० वेंकटरामन

विवेकानन्द केन्द्र

नदी के पास, डिब्रुगार (असम)

पिन - ७८६ ००१



K. K. VENKATRAMAN

VIVEKANANDA KENDRA

River bank, DIBRUGARH (Assam)

Pin : 786 001

हर हर नर्मदे हर

परम आदरणीय बन्धु

प्रणाम ।

मैया नर्मदा की कृपा से तथा सभी पूज्य-जनों के आशीर्वाद से एवं मित्रों की मंगल कामनाओं से मेरी नर्मदा परिक्रमा ४ मार्च १९८८ को पूर्ण हुई । यह २५२० कि० मी० (१५७५ मील) की परिक्रमा पूर्ण करने में मुझे चार महिने ग्यारह दिन लगे ।

यह महान् कार्य पूर्ण करने में मुझे आपका सहयोग मिला । आपको याद होगा कि मैं सेतु बन्धन रामेश्वर कन्याकुमारि का परिक्रमावासि को आपके गाँव से जा रहा था । मैं मुक्काम किया था । आपका आतिथ्य बहुत प्रेमपूर्ण एवं श्रद्धामय था । आपकी कृपा के बिना यह कार्य असम्भव था । आपके स्नेह तथा कृपा बिना मेरा मार्ग दुष्कर होता । आपके स्नेह के लिए अनुग्रहीत हूँ ।

मेरी मैया नर्मदा से प्रार्थना है कि आपका जीवन सुख-शांति, मांगल्य-प्रेम एवं ज्ञान से परिपूर्ण करें । आपकी अल्प सी सेवा करने का अवसर यदि मिले तो मेरा परम सौभाग्य होगा ।

बड़ों को सादर प्रणाम एवं छोटों को प्रेमपूर्वक शुभकामनाएँ ।

हादिक प्रार्थनाओं के साथ ।

पुनश्च प्रणाम ।

आपका विनम्र
वेंकटरामन

(Translation of the common printed letter in Hindi sent after the Parikrama to about 300 persons who had extended hospitality during the Parikrama.)

K.K. Venkatraman

Vivekananda Kendra

River Bank, DIBRUGARH (Assam), Pin: 786 001.

Har Har Narmade Har

(Salutations to Mother Narmada, the Destroyer of sins.)

Most Respected Brother,

Salutations.

By the grace of Mother Narmada, blessings of elders and best wishes of friends, I completed Narmada Parikrama on 4th March 1988. It took 4 months and 11 days (131 days) for me to complete this 2,520 kms (1,575 miles) Parikrama.

I received your help to accomplish this holy task. I hail from Rameshwaram / Kanyakumari and passed through / halted at your village on _____. You had extended hospitality with love and devotion. I could not have accomplished this task without your cooperation. Your friendship and help was a great source of inspiration for me to move forward. I am extremely grateful to you for your friendly attitude.

I earnestly pray to Mother Narmada to grant you peace, good health and prosperity. I would consider myself fortunate, if I get an opportunity to be of service to you.

Salutations to elders and love and best wishes to youngsters.

With hearty prayers and salutations,

Yours sincerely,
Venkatraman

(Reply received after the Parikrama from one of the persons who had extended hospitality during the Parikrama.)

श्री श्री

प्रति

श्री श्री

परम आदरणीय

श्री श्री

सादर नमस्कार

मेरे चले अपने आधा परिवार सहित
मुंबई में है तथा मेरे नर्मदाजी की छुट्टी से आप भी अपने
असह्य साहित्य साहित्य साहित्यिक लेखों में बहुत समाचार ले रहे हैं कि
आपका पत्र पढ़ने से मुझे बहुत खुश मेरे परिवार तथा समस्त
शाखा परिवार को पत्र पाकर बड़ी प्रसन्नता हुई। आप जिस
समय हमारी शाखा से निकले, उस समय हम सभी शिक्षकों
की ऐसा प्रतीत हुआ कि हम में से तो कोई शिक्षक जा रहा है
सास्त्र में बड़ा दुःख भी हो रहा था परंतु इसी क्षण आपका
उद्देश्य था। हमारी शिक्षक संघों की इलाकी की कुछ समुदाय
हम सबके पास आप उफने तो बखी बड़ी प्रसन्नता देखी नही थी।
इसरी बात यह है कि बने जाने में स्वामी वशिष्ठ का नाम
फिखा रहता है जो आपका लिखा साहित्य पाए तुम। यदि आप
कभी इस क्षेत्र में आते तो आपका साहित्य मेरी छुट्टियां में बहुत
आवे ताकि आपके आने से हम सब प्रसन्नता का अनुभव
कर सकें। परंतु एक दुःख हमारे मन में यह है कि
साहित्य आप अपनी पुरिष्ठक परिक्रमा पूर्ण होने पर स्वयं चरि
दे देते तो हम कुछ शिक्षक अवकाश समारंभक आपके
पास पहुँचते। शेष दुःख

आप की प्रतीक्षा में
मदन रायकार

(Translation of the reply in Hindi received after the Parikrama from one of the persons who had extended hospitality during the Parikrama.)

Sri Hari

Narasimhapur, Dated: 5-6-88.

Most respected Sri Venkatraman,

Salutations.

I am well here along with my brother teachers and family members. By the grace of Mother Narmada, yourself and your colleagues also would be keeping well. I received your letter yesterday. All the members of my family and the teachers of our school were very happy to receive the same.

When you took leave of us, myself and my brother teachers felt that one among us was leaving. Really, we were very sad, but, we consoled ourselves, as, you had a holy task to accomplish. All of us had the feeling that it would have given us more joy, if you could have spent more time with us. Elders say "Each grain bears the name of the person who should consume it" and you received your legitimate share.

If you happen to come this side, kindly visit us and give us the pleasure of your company.

However, one desire of ours remains unfulfilled. Had you informed us on reaching Amarkantak after completion of the Parikrama, some of our teachers would have definitely come and met you.

All well here. Looking forward to your letter.

Madan Raikwar

(Reply received after the Parikrama from the person to whom I had sent a picture of Lord Iyyappa as promised by me during the Parikrama.)

चन्दनलाल रेन्ड्रे
गाम - बीजापुरी
पो. - घुनाडी (लामता)
जि. - ब्यालाघाट (प्र.क.) Dist - Balaghat (M.P.)
Chandanlal Tembhare
Vill - Bijapuri
Post - Ghunadi (Lamta)

हर हर नर्मदे हर 3.7.88
परम आदरणीय बन्धु. श्री के.के. विकटरासन जी
प्रणाम।

आपका पत्र मुझे दिनांक 2.7.88 को प्राप्त हुआ। पत्र अंजन के लिखे बहुत धन्यवाद मैं वास्तव में बहुत आभारशाली हूँ कि आपने मुझे याद किया तथा आप अम्मी तक मुझे भूले नहीं हैं। मैं कुरालरविक हूँ तथा आभा से आप भी नर्मदा की इसी कृपा से आप भी कुराल रहे। आपका पत्र पाकर मुझे बहुत खुशी हुई कि कुछ क्षण की मुलाकात सब योड़े समय का प्रेमनेत्र दोनों को इतने पास ला दिया। आपने अपने वधि के मुलतिक मुझे श्री हरिपुत्र का जोशे श्री मित्रवा रिया जिसे पाकर मैं बहुत प्रसन्न हुआ। मैं आपसे सादर आभार करता हूँ कि एक बार यहाँ आकर हमें दरनि दे मुझे बहुत खुशी होगी। बाकी सब कुराल बड़ों की सादर प्रणाम, धीरे की रक्षार। हार्दिक प्रणाम।

आपका
चन्दनलाल

(Translation of the reply in Hindi received after the Parikrama from the person to whom I had sent a picture of Lord Iyyappa as promised by me during the Parikrama.)

Chandanlal Tembhare
Vill - Bijapuri, Post - Ghunadi (Lamta)
Dist. Balaghat (M.P.)

3-7-88.

Har Har Narmade Har
(Salutations to Narmada, the Destroyer of sins)

Most respected brother Sri K.K. Venkatramanji,

Salutations.

I received your letter on 2.7.88. Thank you very much for sending the letter. I am really very fortunate that you have not forgotten me and you still remember me. I am keeping well and hope that by the abundant Grace of Mother Narmada, you too are keeping well. I was very happy to read your letter that our meeting and heart to heart talk which lasted only few minutes has brought us very close.

You have kept your promise by sending the photo of Sri Hariharaputra. I am very glad to receive the same.

I earnestly request you to pay a visit to our place, which will give me immense pleasure. All well. Humble salutations to elders and love to youngsters.

Hearty salutations,

Yours,
Chandanlal

about the picture of Lord Iyyappa. I told him that the picture is that of Lord Iyyappa who was born of the holy union of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu and narrated the story. Then he requested me for the picture. As I did not have an extra copy, I told him that I needed the picture for my daily prayer and would send him a picture after completion of the Parikrama. I promptly sent him the picture of Lord Iyyappa as promised. He was

very happy. He never expected that I would keep my promise. He wrote a letter full of love and genuine feelings.

Similarly, I sent the picture of Devi Kanyakumari to a person who wanted the picture on knowing that I belonged to a village near Kanyakumari. I received a similar letter from him too.

(to be continued)



Our Heroes

Swami Dayananda

Among the great company of remarkable figures that will appear to the eye of posterity at the head of the Indian Renaissance, one stands out by himself with peculiar and solitary distinctness, one unique in his type as he is unique in his work. It is as if one were to walk for a long time amid a range of hills rising to a greater or lesser altitude, but all with sweeping contours, green-clad, flattering the eye even in their most bold and striking elevation. But amidst them all, one hill stands apart, piled up in sheer strength, a mass of bare and puissant granite, with verdure on its summit, a solitary pine jutting out into the blue, a great cascade of pure, vigorous and fertilizing water gushing out from its strength as a very fountain of life and health to the valley. Such is the impression created on my mind by Dayananda.

Here was one who did not infuse himself informally into the indeterminate soul of things, but stamped his figure indelibly as in bronze on men and things. Here was one who knew definitely and clearly the work he was sent to do, chose his materials, determined his conditions with a sovereign clairvoyance of the spirit and executed his conception with the puissant mastery of the born worker. As I regard the figure of this formidable artisan in God's workshop, images crowd on me which are all of battle and work and conquest and triumphant labour. Here, I say to myself, was a very soldier of Light, a warrior in God's world, a sculptor of men and institutions, a bold and rugged victor of the difficulties which matter presents to spirit. And the whole sums itself up to me in a powerful impression of spiritual practicality.

The combination of these two words, usually so divorced from each other in our conceptions, seems to me the very definition of Dayananda.

Dayananda seized on all that entered into him, held it in himself, masterfully shaped it there into the form that he saw to be right and threw it out again into the forms that he saw to be right.

That which strikes us in him as militant and aggressive, was a part of his strength of self-definition.



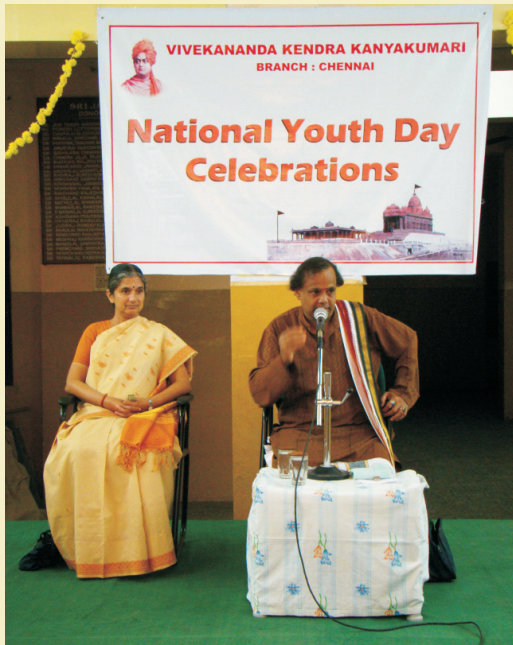
He was not only plastic to the great hand of Nature, but asserted his own right and power to use Life and Nature as plastic material. We can imagine his soul crying still to us with our insufficient spring of manhood and action, "Be not content, O Indian, only to be infinitely and grow vaguely, but see what God intends thee to be, determine in the light of His inspiration to

what thou shalt grow. Seeing, hew that out of thyself, hew that out of Life. Be a thinker, but be also a doer; be a soul, but be also a man; be a servant of God, but be also a master of Nature!" For this was what he himself was; a man with God in his soul, vision in his eyes and power in his hands to hew out of life an image according to his vision. Hew is the right word. Granite himself, he smote out a shape of things with great blows as in granite.

May his spirit act in India pure, unspoilt, unmodified and help to give us back that of which our life stands especially in need, pure energy, high clearness, the penetrating eye, the masterful hand, the noble and dominant sincerity.

Excerpts from "Dayananda – The man and his works" by Sri Aurobindo

VIVEKANANDA KENDRA SAMACHAR



West are waking up to the fact of family virtues and its influence on the productivity of the people.

CHENNAI

The National Youth Day – Swami Vivekananda Jayanthi was celebrated with a talk on “Family and Children – the Foundation of Society”. The guest speaker was Shri Nagai Mukundan, a renowned orator. He spoke about the value, strength and structure of family then, now and hereafter with bright insights from the Ramayana. Susri Nivedita didi, Vice-President, Vivekananda Kendra, presided over the event attended by 150 people. She gave a brief view of the period when Vivekananda Kendra was founded. She stressed on the need to uphold family values and how even the states of the

R T NAGAR (BENGALURU)

* On 24th and 25th December two days orientation programme was organized for the Karyakarthis of Karnataka in which 25 people attended.

* On 27th December one-day youth camp was organized for the 48 college students.

* The 146th Jayanthi of Swami Vivekananda and Culmination of Samartha Bharat Parva were celebrated on 16th January. Around 400 people attended to listen the renowned orator of Karnataka, Shri Chakravarty Sulibele, Vice-President of Samskar Bharati, Karnataka, who was the Guest of Honour on the occasion. Shri

Bhanudasji, General Secretary of Vivekananda Kendra was the Chief Guest and Swami Gangadharanji presided over the function.

Shri Chakravartyji in his scintillating and inspiring speech called upon the audience to come out of the homes and engaged themselves in the service of the poor, fallen and neglected mass. Children of Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, Kallubalu, Jigani and children of Nataraj Natyalaya, enthralled the audience by their beautiful dance programmes.

MANGALORE

* One month Yoga satra for 10 executives from Tata Group of Hotels and Pranayama satra for 13 mothers from our samskara varga students, were conducted in December.

* Sri Mohan Kumar Kumblekar gave a talk on Jagrata Parivar-Jagrata Bharat.

* Sri Chandrahas, a well-wisher presided over the function of Samartha Bharat Parva.

* There was an inter-school cultural meet for 212 students from 16 schools.

GWALIOR

Sri Mukul Kanitkar, Sri Umashankar Pachori, Sri Suresh Sharma and Sri Govind Gandhe delivered talks on the Role of a Family in National Security at four different places on the occasion of Gita Jayanthi held in December.

Sparks of Wisdom

A rich man's maid-servant will do all her duties, but her thoughts are always set upon her own home. Her master's house is not hers. She will, indeed, nurse her master's children as if they were her own, saying often; 'My own Rama,' 'My own Hari.' But all the while she knows full well the children are not hers.



A smile at last...

For many in the coastal areas of Tamilnadu, life changed once for all on December 26, 2004 due to the devastating tsunami. Aid flowed from around the globe, but some were still left in the lurch. Vivekananda Kendra took up the task of helping these distressed people who couldn't get any relief. Many lost their houses and got them rebuilt when the relief, but there were some unfortunate ones who were living in hutments or not even having a proper place to live even before the tsunami. Such people, due to this reason, couldn't get any relief. The task of identifying such families was entrusted to Coastal and Rural Development Trust – an NGO situated and working in and around Kovalam, Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu. A total of 12 families were identified. Vivekananda Kendra embarked on the project of building a house for each of these families in 2008. The first house was completed and the key to the house was handed over to the beneficiaries Mr. Kuppan and his family by Mananeeya Nivedita Bhide, the Vice-President of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari in a function held at Kovalam in October 2008. Other identified beneficiaries also participated in the program among the 200 people that attended.



Ma. Nivedita Didi handing over the keys of the house to Mr. Kuppan



Ma. Nivedita Didi interacting with the villagers of Kovalam.



A beaming Mr. Kuppan with the office-bearers of Vivekananda Kendra in his New House

Man-Making

Nation-Building

Vivekananda Kendra Calling !

(a Spiritually Oriented Service Mission)



“ A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion’s courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up, the gospel of equality.”

**Are you among those who Swamiji had in mind
for awakening our people to the mission of our Motherland ? -
The JAGADGURU BHARAT**

You can serve humanity through the Man-Making and Nation-Building projects in education, culture and sustainable development, and branches spread all over India.

Come, dedicate yourself for the service of the nation as a full-time worker.

It is not a career - but a mission

Your Yogakshema - well-being - would be taken-care of
by the Kendra.

Contact on the following address with full bio-data:

General Secretary

**Vivekananda Kendra, Vivekanandapuram,
Kanyakumari - 629 702.**

Phone : 04652-247012, Fax 04652-247177

Email: info@vkendra.org, ngc_vkendra@bsnl.in

For details log on : www.vkendra.org