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VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PRAKASHAN



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत ।
क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्गं पथस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ॥

Kathopanishad - 3:14

Arise, Awake, (O man)! Realize (that Atman) having approached the excellent (teachers). Like the sharp edge of razor is that path, difficult to cross and hard to tread, - so say the wise.

Editorial

LET SANITY PREVAIL

The recent statements made by those holding responsible positions, only goes to show that the noble, altruistic minds have to work still harder to protect the oldest of all monuments in the world. "the dredging will continue and there are no evidences that this is man made" says one. "those who oppose this project are anti nationals" says another. It is ironical that these statements are made when the people around the world are busy celebrating the world archeological day.

Ram sethu is not just another bridge; whether man made or naturally formed. It is the reminiscence of an age when virtues ruled the world. It is the symbol of the tapas made by people who led dharmic life and their triumph over kama, krodha and moha. For the first time in our country, environmentalists are also opposing a

project, which the Hindus don't want to materialize in the proposed manner. It is not just the religious sentiments of the Hindus, which is seldom cared for, which will be hurt by the breaking of Ram sethu.

The gulf of mannar is considered the richest marine biological resource. It has a very ancient maritime history and was famous for the production of pearls and shankh{ conch}. The sea grasses are some of the largest remaining feeding ground for the endangered marine mammals like Dugong. It has 3600 species of plants and 117 species of corals. Many species of marine turtles, crustaceans, mollusks, gastropods, more than ten species of whales including blue whales and fish inhabit in this region.

The ecological degradation which is sure to happen if Ram Sethu is broken is not the only matter of concern. Security analysts feel that opening this region for international navigation is akin to committing suicide,

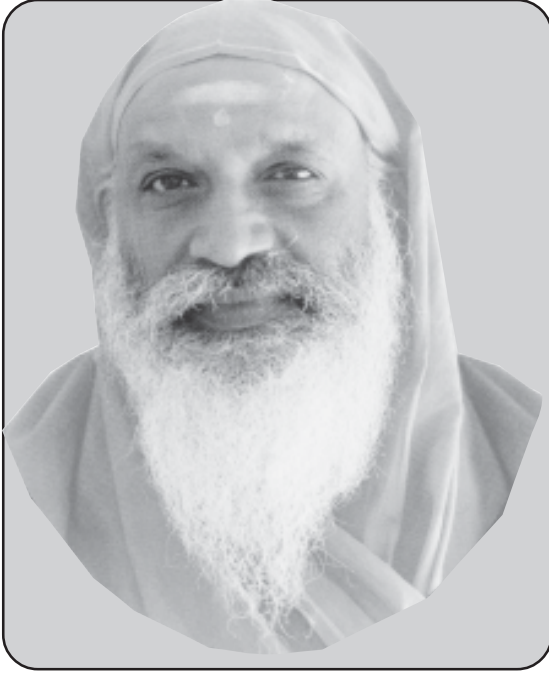
especially when we take into consideration the America's interest in this region and the tacit role they are playing in the Srilanka imbroglio. Further the thorium rich nodules in the 53,000 sq.km of the sea bed is something which India can ill afford to lose. There is no archeological work seem to have been done by India even after the statements and photographs released by the NASA.

Not only this, but it has very serious economic implications also. More than 40,000 fishermen in a population of 1,60,000 in 125 villages who depend on these fast depleting resources will have to starve. Already 65% of the coral reefs are damaged due to human interference. The remaining 35% will also die if the project is implemented. This is one project which has received severe condemnation from all quarters. Marine archeologists, geologists, several NGOs, archeologists, retired judges, social activists and former naval officers are together in their voice against this project.

But then, it is to be noted that the people who oppose this project are opposing only the present proposed trajectory. They are not against the project. If the alternative path suggested by all those who are opposing i.e. the Danushkodi route, is adopted, then all the concerns will be taken care off. But nothing seems to move those who are in authority to take such decision.

This is an unfortunate but often repeated case of a state working against the nation. A scenario which you can see nowhere else in the world. Barring Somnath temple and the Vivekananda rock memorial, seldom does the social and national aspirations were respected by the state. This dredging will not only put an end to the world's richest bio reserve but also to the standing edifice which is an evidence to the hoary, great culture of ours. When the aspirations of the society are trampled upon, when the faith and emotions of people are laughed at, it is bound to create some repercussions in the society. It is not just the silting in the ocean, which is bound to happen after the dredging, which is going to cost us dearly as a recurring cost but if the route destroying Ramsethu is taken up then it would be a costly mistake. National concerns were never heeded to in the past. But the situation has changed far since. Apart from the loss of thorium, bio-reserve, defense vulnerability, economic loss; the silting at the human emotions will be even more costly which our society can ill afford to. Lets pray to Lord Rama that good sense prevails among those who are at the helm of affairs.

V.V.BALASUBRAMANIAN
ON BEHALF OF
YUVA BHARATI EDITORIAL TEAM



‘RAMA SETHU BRIDGE IS MAN-MADE ONLY’

– Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Refuting the claim of a scientist that there is no-man made structure called Rama Sethu or Adam’s bridge between Mandapam at Rameswaram and Thalaimannar in Sri Lanka, Swami Dayananda Saraswati (who is a scholar in such matters) has cited the study of a geologist to reaffirm his position that a bridge had indeed been built by humanity at the present site.

Stating there cannot be a natural, geological formation at the Rama Sethu connecting Indian sub-continent with Lanka, the spiritual leader

quoting from the observations of the geologist says the climate and soil conditions in the Bay of Bengal between the two land masses did not allow for an undersea volcanic ridge (a long raised strip) as there was no seismic activity in this area. ‘Nor can it be a submarine linear platform or plateau from a linear block of rock mass that rises up between two parallel faults or crustal fractures because such structures are not found in this area,’ he reasoned.

Extending the thesis further, the Swamiji said the present formation could not be a coral ridge as coral islands were scattered in the coastal and offshore areas and not in the present site which was running at right angles to the coastline. Also, the undersea land strip could not be a submerged hill or an anticlinal (sloping downward away from a common crest) ridge as the bridge was found in sediments which were not subjected to any folding activity, he explained.

‘Thus with no evidence to the contrary, the under-sea bridge could not be a geological formation and remained a man-made structure only,’ he said citing the geologist’s study.

Referring to the gazette published in 1803 by the British government for the Madras Presidency, Swami Dayananda Saraswati said in the glossary, the first entry was ‘Adam’s Bridge’ which, it noted, was also called Rama’s Bridge or Neela’s Bridge. The gazette also mentioned the bridge’s position in terms of

latitude and longitude with its dimension of 30 miles length and 1.25 miles wide. 'The gazette further reports the bridge was used by people to cross between Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka until the middle of 15th Century when there was a breach due to a storm, causing a part of the bridge to be submerged,' he recalled. The copy of the map of the bridge along with its submerged portion in that period was available in the Saraswati Mahal Library in Thanjavur.

'With all these facts, we can safely assume that Rama Sethu is much more than a Hindu sentimental issue. It is an issue of national and human heritage,' the Swamiji said. If UNESCO came to know of this ancient land-strip, it would safeguard Rama Sethu as a 'phenomenal accomplishment of human genius,' he said.

(Courtesy - New Today)

AN APPEAL BY HINDU DHARMA ACHARYA SABHA

The Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, an apex body of all Mutts, Adeenams and Acharyas had appealed to the Government to Stop the dredging activities which will destroy the Ram Sethu. They passed a resolution to this effect in their recent meeting. It reads thus : "The Acharya Sabha is alarmed to read in the Press the contention of the Hon'ble Minister Sri T.R. Balu that there is no bridge under the water except some sand where Rama Sethu is supposed to be.

The NASA's picture is available in the internet, and I am sure, the Hon'ble Minister had seen it. No one can accept the contention that there is no bridge under water. The bridge was used by people till the 15th century according to the gazette published by Madras Presidency in 1803. According to the tests made by some scientists and geologists, the bridge is there and it is man-made. If it is man-made, it is sacred to the Hindus; if it is God-made, it is more sacred to them.

The Acharya Sabha and all others who care for our heritage and environment including public savants like Sri V.R. Krishna Iyer are against this alignment which will destroy the Sethu. Therefore, we want the Sethu project people to drop the current route and opt for one of the other alternatives suggested."

Acharya Maha Mandaleswar
H.H. Sri Swami Avimukteswarananda,
Representative of Sankaracharya of Dwaraka
& Joshi Mutts.

Acharya Maha Mandaleswar
H.H. Sri Swami Vishveshwarananda

Maha Mandaleswara Swami Nirmalananda,
Representative of H.H. Sri
Balangadharanathaji of Adi Chunchunagiri
Mahasamsthana Matha.

Representative of Pejawar Paryaya
Adhokshaja Matha Jagadguru H.H. Shri
Vishvesha Theertha Swamigal.

Sri Swami Paramatmananda, Secretary of
Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha.

“STOP ONGOING SETHU SAMUDRAM PROJECT”

Resolution passed by the All India General Body of Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari in its Meeting held at Chennai on Sunday, the 15th April, 2007

The All India General Body of Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari by a resolution voices its strongest protest against the proposed Sethu Samudram project for the reason that it is impracticable, unwanted and a security risk political project hurting Hindu sentiments.

The General Body of the Vivekananda Kendra, which met at Chennai on Sunday, the 15th April, 2007, discussed the nature and ramifications of the project. The General Body, after deep deliberations, has felt that the fears and concerns expressed by various knowledgeable persons and organizations about the ongoing RAMA SETHU project is well founded and based on irrefutable facts.

The proposed project will destroy, the most ancient Hindu relic of Heritage, the RAMA SETHU, linking Sri Lanka and Rameshwaram, traditionally believed by all Hindus to have been built by LORD SRI RAMA and hence accepted to be a matter of National Pride.

At a time when the whole world is becoming more and more aware of the need for preserving their ancient heritage and even, the UNESCO is liberally funding the preservation of such heritage sites, it is inconceivable, even sacrilegious for India to destroy the World's most ancient heritage by a willful act of wanton destruction.

The project, will have very serious consequence on the security of the country. It will also throw open India's National waters for International Navigation.

The project will create a catastrophic situation to the coastal regions, if another Tsunami takes place.

The large scale Thorium deposits in the coastal area will be washed away with the result that our nuclear potentialities will be radically destroyed.

The current plan does not take into fact the possibility of alternate routes which will be free from the above said undesirable consequences.

The persistence with which the dredging activities are being carried out in spite of well-informed and well-intentioned criticism by eminent people gives rise to the suspicion that there may be ulterior motives to the entire project. Hence the General Body meeting of Vivekananda Kendra calls upon the concerned authorities to put a 'stop' to the current activities and explore other available alternatives. It also calls upon the people in general to jointly protest against the Sethu Samudram Project as it is planned and implemented currently.

The project is deliberately designed to destroy the oldest Hindu relic and heritage – the ancient Rama Sethu Bridge linking Sri Lanka and Rameswaram.

The Kendra asserted by its resolution that the sentiments of Hindus stand wounded by this destruction of Rama Sethu- a Bridge built by Lord Rama. The Kendra resolves that the project gives no economic advantage to India, was never wanted by the masses or by any of the world's shippers. The Kendra resolves that the project is a great security risk and must be abandoned forthwith.

The Kendra calls on all sections of the society to raise their voices in protest and take every step to stop the project that destroys the greatest ancient Hindu heritage.

For and on behalf of
the General Body of
Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari

(P Parameswaran)
President

Copy to :
Honorable President of India
Honorable Prime Minister of India
Honorable Chief Justice of India
Honorable Governor of Tamil Nadu
Honorable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

SAVE RAM SETHU

On 12th May 2007, an international Seminar on scientific and security aspects of sethu samudram channel project was held in Chennai. Several scholars, Geologists, Marine Archeologists and Social activists took part and expressed their concern and apprehension about the impending disasters, which will happen if the proposed project goes underway. Excerpts of the Experts' opinion are given below:



S. Badrinarayanan

Director (Retd), Geological Survey of India, Formerly, Coordinator, Survey Division, National Institute of Ocean Technology.

“...It is a well known fact that coral reefs can only form in clean and unpolluted water and these being marine organisms require firm and compact formation as foundation. Corals grow only in hard rocks. The presence of loose marine sands below these clearly indicates that these are not natural and are transported. Unless somebody has transported and dumped them these could not have come there. This is an ancient causeway and an engineering marvel....”



Prof. M.D. Nalapat
Professor of Geo Politics,
Manipal University

“....the impotence of Ram Sethu is that it establishes the clear cultural links with the rest of India. .. for that reason , it should be protected. It is very clear that it is an effort to deny our history... Lord Ram was not a myth. He was a reality. And unless this be openly admitted, the young women and men of India will not have the link that gives them the ability to see themselves as the equals of any other people, and as the generation that would restore India to greatness. Lord Ram is not Hindu icon, he is an Indian hero....”



J. Balakrishnan,
Capt (Retd)
Indian Navy

“...The Indian Meteorological Department has assigned the Palk Bay area as a ‘High risk Area’ for cyclonic activity. The cyclone season the Bay of Bengal is generally between Oct to Jan. It is interesting to note that the IMD’s records from 1891-2001, states that of the 452 cyclones that hit the Indian coastline, 256 were on the East coast. We mariners, in a lighter vein, refer to the Tamil Nadu coast between Rameswaram and Cuddalore as the ‘cyclone coast’.

Maritime Terrorism

While terrorist attacks are predominantly land based, non-state actors have also sought to exploit vulnerabilities in shipping, ports and the container supply chains in Asia, Middle-East, Europe and North America.

The LTTE factor has a direct bearing on the safety of shipping navigating through the SSCP. The LTTE has control over most of North Sri Lanka coastal region and the seas contiguous to it. The Sea Tigers, the naval arm of the LTTE, have displayed considerable ingenuity and daring in sea borne insurgency. They have carried out numerous daring attacks on Sri Lankan naval ships, and have not hesitated in resorting to suicide missions. It is pertinent to note that the SSCP is a ‘next-door-neighbour’ in the area of operations of the Sea Tigers...”

Dr.S.R.Rao

Former advisor

Marine archeology center, National
institute of oceanography.
Founder of marine archeology
society of India.

“... It is no less Important than Swami Vivekananda Rock where a memorial is built....we found at Dwaraka a natural rock was dressed suitably as a wharf for berthing ships about 3600 years ago. Similarly rock connecting Mannar and Rameswaram must have been used by piling up rubble manually on it to enable the vanaras to reach Srilanka. For the ancient marine engineers who could build a tidal dock at lothal in 2300 B.C. and modify a ridge for berthing ships at dwaraka, the piling up of stones on the so called Adam’s

bridge for an army to reach Lanka was an easy task. Hence both from marine archaeological and traditional points of view Ram Sethu deserves to be declared as an UNDERWATER WORLD HERITAGE SITE....”



Prof. C.S.P. Iyer

Executive Director
Centre for Marine Analytical Reference
and Standards, Trivandrum

The Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Bay form a backwater system. The Adam's Bridge acts as a barrier to flow of water. In the area, a complex ecosystem exists. A factor for serious consideration is the fact that the Palk Bay is a sedimentation sink with high deposition rate. Various sedimentation rates have been reported, depending on the area studied. The EIA report of NEERI selectively takes a convenient value for the sedimentation

rate which does not reflect the true picture. Even accepting the NEERI report, around 85 million m³ of material has to be dredged (20 km of dredging at Adams Bridge and 54.2 km in the Bay of Bengal). In addition, for the maintenance of the canal, material of 0.1 million cubic metres has to be removed annually for the Adam's Bridge Legalone. This is excluding the Bay of Bengal leg for which no value has been reported. Due to dredging, the bottom flora and fauna would be destroyed. Doubts have also been expressed about the nature of sea bed in this area. It is feared that with depth some places would be rocky which would call for blasting. The damage to marine life by such underwater blasting can be imagined. The impact of dredging and dumping on the marine life has not been assessed. Literature survey has brought out very clearly that turbidity, which would result from such activities would drastically reduce the productivity in the area and thus of the fish population. Many of the species in this region would face extinction. Similarly the corals would also be destroyed. Excessive inputs of sediments can destroy coral reefs by smothering, reducing the light availability and potentially reducing coral photosynthesis. Once the material is dredged, the next important question is the dumping site. It is suggested that the sites for dumping would be over Pampan Island, between Rameswaram and Dhansukodi and in the Bay of Bengal.

In case of Adam's bridge is broken, making wider passage, it is feared that the waves coming into the Park Bay, would be funneled through this passage. The funneling process would increase the intensity of the waves. Further increase would take place due to the waves propagating from south of Sri Lanka. Thus, if these waves of higher intensity were to hit the Kerala coast, the devastation would be catastrophic. The funneling effect and the destruction it can cause is noted to a certain extent at Valiazhckal on the Kerala Coast.



Justice Parvatha Rao

Retd. Judge, Andhra Pradesh High Court

“... We are duty bound to preserve what has been given to us by our ancients i.e. heritage. It is the duty of the state to protect and preseve it. I am not able to understand why we have waited so long for this. The state dares because we are silent. Just like the Tehri Dam case the Supreme Court should appoint a committee to get the facts...”

Opposition from all Quarters

Justice K.T.Thomas

Former Judge of Supreme Court.

“ in projects like this decisions are to be based not only on a study of geological implications;the religious sentiments of the people are also to be taken into account. The sentiments of the people of India must be honoured and there exists a tradition in this land, of honouring religious sentiments. So, it is my definite opinion that Ram Sethu must not be broken”

Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer

Former Judge of Supreme Court.

“...Our nation will be weaker and may suffer new dangers with American presence in the Setusamudram waters by doing what for centuries has never been considered necessary or feasible or in any manner advantageous to the people of India. The choice of a channel alignment for SSCP should be done only after a detailed multi-disciplinary evaluation of the impact of tsunami of the type which struck the Indian coastline. Ram Setu reduced the impact of the tsunami. If the work is continued on the present alignment, an enormous energy of the next tsunami will be absorbed through this channel and result in the destruction of Kerala and significant parts of Tamil Nadu coastline. The PMO has raised 16 objections, including the observations of tsunami expert Prof Tad S Murthy of Canada who has been engaged by India to set up tsunami-warning system. There is the issue of thorium and other rich mineral deposits close to the Ram Setu in Kerala sands. The project will have a profound impact on the country's nuclear programme according to the website of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre...”

Re-design of Setusamudram Canal Project

There are other feasible alternatives which is followed will not affect either the sentiments of the people or the environment. The following conclusion in the paper presented by Dr.S.Badrinarayanan should compel a re-design of the channel passage project into a land-based canal project on the lines of the Panama canal with adequate protective measures to maintain the relatively calmer waters in Gulf of Mannar.

“The dredging and opening of the Adams Bridge in all likelihood may cause the sediments and turbulent tide to enter the tranquil Gulf of Mannar and choke and destroy the delicate coral island. As an alternative dredging in the Pamban or nearby areas and by passing the Adams bridge could be favourably considered like other inter sea canal (Panama Canal) locks could be provided both in the palk bay side and Gulf of Mannar side so that such calamities could be prevented.” This should be done, in addition, to incorporating adequate protective measures along the coastline, to cope with another tsunami, on the pattern of high-walls constructed along the coastline areas of Japan, as may be seen from the following report.

Textual evidences for Rama Setu (or Setu bandha)

Apart from the Ramayana which has emphatic references to the construction of Setu bandha in 85 *Slokas* in a separate sarga in Yuddha kanda, Mahabharata also refers to the continued protection of Nala Setu following the command of Sri Rama. Kalidasa’s Raghuvamsa also refers to the Setu of mountains. So does Skanda Purana (111.1.2.1-114), Vishnu Purana (IV.4.40-49), Agni Purana (V-XI), Brahma Purana (138.1- 40) refer to the construction of Rama Setu.

The evidences — textual, epigraphic, scientific marine-archaeological explorations — document Rama Setu (or, Setu bandha) as an ancient monument. A channel linking Tuticorin Port with Haldia can be designed without damaging this monument which is an object of national importance, indeed, a world heritage site with Ramayana episodes including the construction of Setu bandha by Nala venerated in many Ramayanas in many parts of the world. Development imperative or abhyudayam can co-exist with protection of monuments, places and objects of national and international importance. Let us hope that Govt. of India will see it fit to realign the Setusamudram Channel to avoid impacting on Ram Setu, the heritage which should be immediately declared as a protected monument under the AMASR Act, 1958. This is a solemn duty of the State of Bharatam.

SUBMIT OR FIGHT

Dr. K.Subrahmanyam

Law is meant to do justice. Wise heads frame law to ensure justice. Traditions, too, are expected to render justice. They are often time-tested. But, here and there, now and then, we find injustice taking place. Neither the law of the land, nor the established traditions may be in a position to render natural justice. Should we then submit to it or fight it out? Is it weakness to submit? Is it really right to fight at the cost of many a precious life? Should we submit to unrighteousness as but fate? Should we fight it out with our utmost might, even if it is the invincible fate?

Lakshmana's brother is Rama. Arjuna's brother-in-law is Krishna. Lakshmana's elder brother, Rama is denied the throne of Ayodhya. Arjuna's elder brother, Yudhishtira is deprived of the crown of Hastinapur. Lakshmana is angry. He has, therefore, drawn the sword to fight it out. Arjuna, too, is equally angry and has arrived on the battlefield with bow and arrows to vanish the foes and render justice. Both Lakshmana and Arjuna are intolerant of injustice. They both want their elder brothers to be installed as the kings of their respective kingdoms, since

they are the rightful heirs to the thrones.

Both Rama and Yudhishtira, however, are not so enthusiastic about asserting their claims to the crown. They love peace. They shun bloodshed. They want the wishes of the parents to be fulfilled. Sons do have a greater responsibility to please mother and father, than wife, brothers and children. Mother and father are the visible forms of divinity. Anybody is next only to them. If it is the wish of mother Kaikeyi and father Dasaratha that Rama should go to the woods and Bharatha should reign the kingdom, it is the duty of the sons to fulfil the parent's desire without any hesitation and with utmost devotion. Similarly, should the Pandavas and Kauravas strive to satisfy the parent's wish, even if it is unpalatable.

Yudhishtira, the lover of peace, is reluctant to fight for his kingdom. Rama refuses to fight for his crown. Both are willing to submit to the wish of elders. But, Lakshmana is disturbed in the mind. He is burning with anger. He has drawn his sword to kill all, who are responsible for Rama's exile. Arjuna too is agitated. He has arrived

on the battlefield of Kurukshetra to do away with all the Kaurava brothers, who have refused to give back the kingdom to Pandavas. While Lakshmana continues to be hot with the drawn sword, Arjuna suddenly becomes despondent and drops all weapons. He is overcome by compassion. He is moved with pity. He offers to withdraw from the war to avoid bloodshed and colossal tragedy. War and peace cannot co-exist. He prefers peace to war and so volunteers to quit Kurukshetra. Both Lakshmana and Arjuna do not have a quiet mind. While the former is ready to fight to do justice, the latter wants to submit to peace and withdraw from fight to render a different type of justice. Is Lakshmana right? Is Arjuna right? If the former is right, the latter cannot afford to be correct. If the latter is right, the former cannot be considered to be correct. One revolts; the other renounces.

Now, it is left to Sri Rama and Sri Krishna to guide the agitated warriors. Lakshmana is persuaded to submit to peace and non-violence. Arjuna is dissuaded from the resolve to renounce war. It is no doubt, not possible for all to fight. Strength is needed to resist evil. Greater strength is needed not to resist evil. To speak is difficult. To be silent is more difficult. To fight may be easy. But to submit is not easy.

(to be continued...)

VK SAMACHAR

CHENNAI

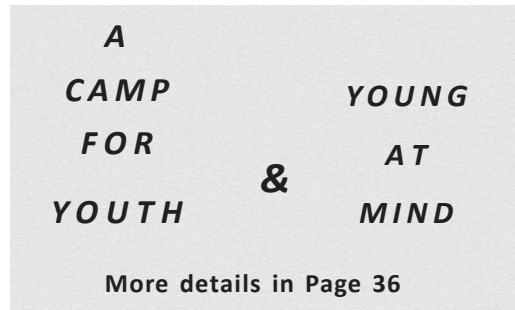
A non-Residential Personality Development Course was conducted for school students. In 3 batches 143 students participated. In Yoga Satra for the month of May 64 people participated. These courses were held in Triplicane and Adambakkam Nagars.

BANGALORE

A free computer teaching center for poor students was inaugurated. Vivekananda Kendra, Aditi Anchal and Aptech have jointly made this venture possible. The unit is called AVA Maitri Computer teaching center. Sri Dr.B.S.Venkatrami Reddy, Dean, Karnataka Veterinary animal and fisheries Science University (B) Hebbal, Bangalore, and Sri U.R.N.Murthy, Managing Trustee, Aditi Anchal and Director, Aptech education center, presided over the function.

LUCKNOW

A youth meet was organised on April 1st 35 people attended. A Samskar varga was organised at Ambedkar Maidan and 20 children participated



VEDIC VISION OF ENVIRONMENT

N. Krishnamoorti

Sumati: Brother! What is environment?

Sumanta: Whatever surrounds Man and helps him to live, work, enjoy and realize, is called the environment. The five elements (Pancha Bhutas) Akasha, Vayu, Agni, Aapah and Prithvi, are the bases of the environment. The vegetable kingdom, trees, bushes, creepers, grass, water plants are part of the environment. The animal kingdom, animals, reptiles, insects, water-based-lives, birds etc. are another part of the environment. For a man, his family, village, nation and the whole creation forms the environment.

Sumati: In what way does the environment help man?

Sumanta: The planet earth has the right temperature, atmosphere and water for supporting all living beings. Though the universe is very very large, the planet earth alone has the right conditions for supporting living beings. The environment gives man oxygen to breathe, food for nourishment. It provides man with work for creative (Srijanatmak) life. Gardens, flowers make man enjoy life. The Mysteries of Nature stimulate man to know more about Nature and

about himself. This spirit of inquisitiveness gives man his science and philosophy.

Sumati: How do the Vedas help man in his scientific and spiritual quest about the environment?

Sumanta: The Vedas tell man that he is an inseparable part of all that exists. The Isa Upanishad describes the unity of all that exists.

OM Isavasyam idam Sarvam Yat Kinca Jagatyam Jagat !
Tena tyaktena bhunjitha: Ma gridhah. Kasyasvid dhanam

(OM. All this whatsoever moves on the earth should be covered by the Lord. Protect yourself through that detachment. Do not covert anybody's Wealth)

This is the basis of all love and all morality. Again the Upanishad says (6)

Yastu Sarvani bhutani atmanyevanupasati
Sarva bhuteshu chatmanam tato na vijugupsate

(He who sees all beings in the very self and the

self in all beings, feels no hatred by virtue of that realization)

Sumati: Does the Veda say that all the things that exist are inter related?

Sumanta: Yes. The Mundaka Upanishad talks about the inter relatedness of all creation as in a spider's web.

Yatha urnanabhiih Srijate grhnate ca
Yatha prithvyamoshadhaya: Sambhavanti (7)

(As a spider spreads out and withdraws its thread, as on the earth grow the herbs)

Sumati: How do we apply these grand truths in our day today life?

Sumanta: Since everything that has been created is inspired by God, we worship everything. We worship mountains (eg. the Himalayas, the Vindhyas) We worship rivers (the Ganga, the Kaveri). We worship the Pancha bhutas, we worship animals (the Lion, the cow, the bull) we worship the reptiles (snakes), birds (garuda) plants (tulsi) and trees (Ashwattha and Vatha). We believe that the whole creation is divine and adore every things as God-given.

Sumati: How does the worshipful attitude towards Nature express itself?

Sumanta: We respect nature, worship

nature. We use natural objects most economically. Re-use water, recycle it. Do not pollute air. Do not hurt or kill animals unnecessarily. Do not cut trees without need; keep that to minimum. Optimum utilization of natural things is the way to worship nature. Just like a cow that is milked, an enjoyer should use the wealth of the earth, without destroying the earth.

Vatsam Kalpaya me vira yenaham vatsalaa tava
Dhokshye Ksheeramayan Kaman anurupan sa
dohanam (Vishnu Purana)

So requested Bhumidevi from King Prithu.

When Prithu milked her, Bhumidevi gave him all plants. The devas got nourishing milk-food. The rishis got truth and virtue. The manes (Pitrus) got swadha. The cobras and serpents got poison. The daityas and danavas got courage, valour and maya as the milk. The gandharvas milked the earth and they got music. The mountains got diamonds. The sacred trees got the power of growing again when cut or burnt. In this manner the Mother earth became the provider of everything, to everybody.

Sumati: What a beautiful imagery! Now I understand why the Atharva Veda says "Mata Bhumi Putroham Prthivyah (We are children of mother Earth)

Sumanta: Every morning when we get up from our beds and set our foot on the ground, we seek the permission of Mother earth to do

so.

Samudra vasane devi Parvata sthana mandale
Visnu Patni Namas tubhyam Pada-sparsam
kshamasva me!

Sumati: I have read in the papers that when the Prime Minister of India quoted this verse and explained its meaning in the Rio-de-Janiro conference on Environment, the World political leaders and scientists greatly appreciated the statement.

Sumanta: The Vedas are full of worshipful prayers addressed to nature, glorifying the gifts of nature and the Rg Veda, especially the Purusa Suktam, praises Nature, cows, animals etc. The Atharvaveda praises nature extensively for giving human beings the needs of this worldly life. In the Prithvi suktam of the Atharva veda, all the components of Nature are invoked, Earth, Trees, ocean, hills, cows, horses, forests, various birds are mentioned, as worthy of respect, utilization, protection and admiration. We shall see one Mantra from Rg Veda, the most ancient book of mankind.

Madhuvata ritayate Madhuksharantu sindhava:
Maadhvi: Ma santu oshadhee:
Madhu naktamutoshaso madhumat
parthivamraja:
Madhu, dyourastu na: pira
Madhumanno vanaspati: Madhuman astu surya:
Madhvira gavo bhavantu na:

The air, ocean, vegetables, earthly dusts the sky the trees, the sun, the cows all these give pleasure and sweet nourishment to us – says the rishi.

Sumati: There is no wonder that inspired by the Vedic vision of seeing friendly forces in all Nature, God Shiva protected the living beings by drinking the poison at the time of Samudra Manthan. Vishnu chose the ocean as his dwelling places. Sri Rama befriended monkeys, bears, and eagles in the forest. And Shri Krishna in the Gita identifies himself with the Peepul tree, the Ganga, the ocean, the sun, the moon the fire, the wind etc. He loved the cows so much, that of all his names, Gopala Krishna is the most popular one.

Sumanta: We worship Matsya, Kurma, Varaha and Lion as forms of God, Lakshmi as the daughter of the ocean. Inspired by the Vedic vision of God in all creation, our Dharma sastras ask human beings not to cut trees, injure animals or pollute water or air. The Dharmasastras ask the kings to promote water - bodies and punish those who misuse public utilities. The Mahabharata, the fifth veda puts beautiful words in the mouth of Dharma Vyadah, who insists that trees and plants are also living beings.

Sumati: The story of emperor Shibi protecting the dove and the episode of Dharmaraja refusing to abandon his companion dog on his entry into Swarga are great instances of man's love and protective care of nature.

Sumanta: In fact the whole Hindu culture worships Nature and sees God as pervading all Nature. Sri Rama and the Pandavas are happy to go to the forest to be a part of the Natural environment. Sita becomes ecstatic at the opportunity of living in the forest. The Hindu tradition describes three basic categories of forests. One is SHRIVAN, the forest that provides man with prosperity. The next is tapovan where sages contemplated on truth. The third Mahavana, the great natural forest where all natural species of life find shelter. All these categories of forests are to be preserved.

Sumati: I recall the name Brihad – Aranyaka Upanishad and the name Aranya for Sannasins according to Sankara’s Dasanami Sampradaya. There are also names like Vana, Giri, Tirtha, Sagara, Parvata, Our Tirtha Yatra is nothing but Nature worship. There is also the concept of Panchavati, the five sacred trees and five Deva Vrikshas.

Sumanta: The Ayurveda has special branches for protecting animals, and even trees. Recently Vriksha Ayurveda has been published with Tamil/English translations.

Sumati: Perhaps Ayurveda a part of the Rg Veda is the largest body of teachings, underlining the relationship between Man and Nature, especially the Biosphere.

Sumanta: That is because Paramatman pervades every aspect of creation. He protects

your health by Aushadhis, and Vanaspatis. He is also the ruler of entire cosmos. The sun, the moon, the stars are all part of God.

Vistabhyaham idam Kristnam ekamsena sthito jagat.

Sumati: Of all the forces of Nature, the Vedic Rishi has a special respect for Aditya, Marut and Agni.

Sumanta: Aditya, the sun God is the source of all earthly energy. Coal, Petroleum, food, wind, fire-wood, wave energy all come out of the Sun. All these are solar energy captured and preserved in various materials. And Man himself according to Swami Vivekananda, is a form of capsuled Solar energy. All life is solar power. That is why we worship Sun God in Sandhya worship, Chant Gayatri Mantra, call Sri Rama as the descendant of the Solar race. Sun worship and fire worship emphasise the importance of energy in life. Devi is called Shakti.

Sumati: Therefore there here will be great stress on obeying Nature’s laws.

Sumanta: Yes. Nature abhors waste. Naasaivam vidyate kvacit- There is nothing useless or un-holy.

Sumati: I have read the story of a student of Ayurveda coming to his teacher, that after a whole days’ search, he could not find single herb

that was not endowed with medicinal qualities!

Sumanta: The Veda advocates a vegetarian diet, equating food with Aushadhi. The Vedas have hymns extolling Maruts, the Wind Gods. Varuna the Lord of the seas and of water is invoked. There are many Agni Suktas. Vegetables are called Brahma's hairs. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Gita, and the Patanjali Yoga sutras systematically advocate the love of all living beings as Ahimsa. Love is Paramodharama. Sauca, cleanliness, contentedness, Santosha, Limiting one's wants, Aparigraha, Self-control – Brahmacharya are repeatedly stressed as a part of moral life in all our major scriptures. The tenth chapter of the Gita identifies the whole Nature as God's Amsa (Part).

Sumati: I have heard names such as Bhumisukta.

Sumanta: It is a long prayer from the Atharva veda praising mother earth as the source of all life-support systems. In the Maha narayanopanishad Lord Narayana's beauty and charm are described in nature's terms. In the same Upanishad Durva grass is worshipped as Shata moola, statankura. Aditi is worshipped as Aditi Sarvabhutanam mata, medini, prithivi, mahati, mahi, Savitri, Gayatri, jagati, urvi, prithvi, bahula, vishva, bhuta, Katama, ka, ya, sa, satyete amriteti vasishtha: There is a Mrityukta sukta too.

Sumati: To summarise,

Sumanta: The Vedas, epics, puranas and the dharmasastras worship Nature in four ways.

1) As physical earth composed of the five bhutas.

2) Man as a symbol of the earth, each of his indriyas representing a bhuta,

3) Each Natural force is presided by an Atidevata.

4) All this are appearances of one Parabrahman. Therefore the Vedic literature urges man

a) To respect Nature and its components. To Treat each segment as respectable and worshippable.

b) To love all Nature as parts of one's own being.

c) To use Nature's gifts most economically, judiciously optimally – dohanam – and enjoy the worldly life.

d) To realize the interconnectedness of all that exists - the Web of life.

e) And to use Nature as tool for Realisation of God.

In future, a time will come when man will realize, cumulative time, prana, and social webs as parts of his environment. He will learn to respect, use and conserve them.

Sumati: Such a comprehensive approach. Now I realize that the RISHIRINA can never be paid back. ■

Adhyatma Vidya Vidyanam

Satish Chowkulkar

One evening, while I was strolling on the Marina Beach at Chennai, I saw Shiva Swarupananda sitting on the sand facing the sea. He was accompanied by his friend, who was introduced to me as Nadapriyananda. He invited me to join their conversation and we all sat on the sand.

Shiva Swarupananda was saying “Let us look at this sea. People from various walks of life and varied age groups perceive it in their own way. These children playing around, see it as a source of play things – shells and conches. Little more grown-ups see it as a place for enjoying swimming. These fishermen look upon it as a source of their livelihood. For the pearl-divers it is a source of treasure-Pearls and Corals, and for big big cargo handlers it is a mode for navigation. For scientists it is a source of knowledge of the past and for research of marine life. And the sea is not any one of these alone but have all of these attribution plus something else. That “something plus” makes it the *sea* or ocean”. Nadapriyananda asked “what is that *something plus*?” Shiva Swarupananda in his profound way chanted a sloka from Srimad Bhagwad Gita. (Chapter 2 – Sloka—70)

*Apuryamanamacalapratishtam
samudramapah pravisanti yadvat
tadvatkama yam pravisanti sarve
sa santimapnoti na kamakamii.*

It means the spiritual people are like sea. In spite of interacting with the world they remain poised like the sea which maintains its poise despite the continuous inflow of water brought in by the rivers. This calmness, poise, balanced state is the very nature of the both. In fact we are verily like this “by default”. This state of calmness, poise and balanced state is our very nature i.e. Swa-Bhava. However, we allow ourselves to be drifted, by losing sight of our Self. We identify ourselves with problems and problem creating thoughts and get dragged into *avidya*-misunderstanding. Yoga Sastra describes this mishap as *Vritti Sarupyam Itaratra*” (PYS, Samadhi Paad Sutra No.4)

“Then what is the method by which we can regain this true identification?” I asked. Shiv Swarupananda patted me and said “this will bring us back to the discussion we had last time. Yoga Sastra and Vedanta Philosophy deals with this process. In fact this is the central theme of spiritual heritage of Hindu way of life—*Sanatan*

Dharma. This knowledge is called *Adhyatma Vidya* i.e. self knowledge. This knowledge is considered as superior to all other facets of knowledge.” Nadapriyananda quipped in “Are you directing us to the Sri Krishna’s statement in Vibhuti Yoga of Srimad Bhagwad Gita (chapter 10, sloka 32) – “*Adhyatma Vidya Vidyam, Vaadah Pravadatamaham*”. Shiva Swarupananda smiled and said “There you are! Bhagwad Gita is a flag slip of our spiritual heritage. Maharshi Mahesh Yogi has shown that Bhagwad Gita is our unique scripture which deals with all the six *darshanas* through its 18 chapters and 700 slokas.”

My eagerness prompted me to interrupt Shiv Swarupananda and I asked “Can you tell where exactly, I mean, which chapters and slokas in the Gita speaks about the spirituality. What it is and how to become spiritual – what are all the things we should do to become spiritual?”

Shiv Swarupananda smiled and said “whole Gita is about that only. It is Brahma Vidya i.e. Adhyatma Vidya and Yoga Sastra. Arjuna had asked pertinent questions, like you have and replies come from Bhagwan. The persons who have realized or experienced their Spiritual nature through the study of Vedanta and Yoga Sastra are referred herein as *Yogarudha* – one who is established in the process of yoga and also as *Sthita-Prajnya*, one who has been stead-fast in the true knowledge. Bhagwan Sri Krishna describes the inner nature and outward

behaviour of such *Yogarudhas* and *Sthita-Prajnyas*, in detail. One should study this in the Gita. I will just collate some of the basics for our immediate comprehension,” he continued.

“A person, who has experienced his own nature, will be always in a balanced state of mind. Because, he has experienced that, he is not just a body mind complex, and that he is the *Atma* i.e., spirit, which is present everywhere and in everything. He will thereby understand that harming anybody or anything is as bad as harming his Self i.e. himself. He will have equanimity. In our parlance we call it *Samatvam*. As he has understood that he is *Anand Swarupa*, he will not need anything to make him happy. Infact his very presence will exude *Ananda* wherever he goes. His happiness will not depend on being in any particular place or with any particular person or only if he has some particular set of things. He will always be content. We call it *santosh*.

Having experienced his oneness with the Ishwara or Bhagwan, who is everywhere and in everything, when he deals with the world he will not hate, disregard or lookdown on any thing or anybody. He will include everything and everyone – flora-fauna, people from all walks of life as a member of his ‘family’. He will share his resources with any needy person irrespective of whether the needy is known or unknown to him. This quality can be termed All encompassing. We call it *Sarva Samaweshak*

Buddhi.

He will render his capabilities to the needy, without expecting any return – money, name, fame, social status. He will do the service for the joy of serving the society. His every action will be like a yajna-returning to the Totality i.e. society – more than what he has drawn from it. This will be his instant and natural reflex. We call it *Nishkam Seva*.

As he is established firmly in the true knowledge, he will be guarding himself against any wrongful actions on his part. He will be naturally exhibiting tremendous self control in his behaviour with himself, as well as with the others. He will be highly judicious in using his resources – physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. This quality is called *Atma Samayam*". Shiva Swarupananda stopped to gauge our response.

Nadapriyananda counting on his fingers said "So a spiritual person should have five minimum qualities namely; *Samatvam, Santosh, Sarva Samaveshak Buddhi, Nishkamseva Bhava,* and *Atma-Samayam*. Shiva Swarupananda nodded in affirmation.

Then Nadapriyananda asked "But you didn't mention about giving Daan, conducting Pujas, performing poor-feeding, observing rituals, visit to pilgrim places, constructing and visiting temples. Normally one who does all these activities are known as spiritual persons."

Shiva Swarupananda said "I have told last time itself that Spirituality is not an activity, it refers to leading a value based life to rediscover ourselves. What works you have mentioned can be of religious category. If someone does all these activities and do not possess the five aforesaid qualities, collated from Yoga and Vedanta, the person cannot be graded as spiritual. However a spiritually inclined person also can conduct all these activities. And when he does them, it will be with 'value added approach'. I asked "then what are the tenets of the behavioural pattern of such a spiritual person?"

Shiva Swarupananda smiled and said we have nurtured an idea that Spiritual Person should be averse of doing routine mundane work, he should be away from the society doing only Meditation, Japa and Pujas. But it is not valid. As we have seen in case of a ocean just now, the spiritual person is not barred from conducting himself in mundane life. In fact Bhagwad Gita says Swa-Dharm and Swa-Karma should never be given up. Everything should be performed with "Value added" on aforesaid 5 points. Conducting oneself in the light of aforesaid 5 qualities the Spiritual Person will stand apart in the crowd by exuberating few reflexes. Such a person will always be in a habit of introspection. Scriptures call it *Atmavalokan*. He will be very watchful. He does not need an external monitor to check him. Secondly he will always consider himself as an instrument in the hand of *Ishwara*. He will not

run after credit or fruits of his action. He will dedicate the fruits of his action with the Spirit of Karma Yoga. He will surrender himself to the Bhagwan. Scriptures call it as *Sharanagat Bhava*. Thirdly he will have tremendous self control in his Ahar, Vihar, Nidra and never an over-indulgent in pleasures. He will thus have *Samayama*. In order to nurture good qualities in himself and to promote people with similar orientation, he will always be in the company of spiritually oriented people. Thus he will be always in *Satsanga*. He will always update his knowledge about mundane as well as spiritual field. He will share his knowledge with the others and seek guidance from scholars. This is what is meant as *Swadhyay*. Such a person – with five built in values namely *Samatvam, Santosh, Sarva Samaweshaka Buddhi, Nishkam Seva, Atma Samayam* and conducts himself with reflexes such as *Atmavalokan, Sharatagat Bhav, Samayam, Satsang* and *Swadhyaya* will be a boon to the society. Such a person can take any work, be it Politics, Trade and Commerce, Administration and Management, Agriculture, Education, Medicine and Health care, Construction and Engineering Industry, Judiciary, Legal Profession, Art and fine arts, Film industry. He will purify the system and methods and good results for welfare of one and all will be ensured. In fact quite a few number of people from the aforesaid fields, whom we respect had been ‘the Spiritual’,” Shiva Swarupananda paused for a while and looked at us. Nadapriyananda said “I remember a sloka from Kathopanisad. It says

*Ya Setur ijananam Aksharam Brahm Yat Param
Abhayam titirshata param Nachiketa shakemahi.*

This spirituality-*Adhyatma Vidya* is a *Sethu*- a bridge with which one can link ourselves to Akshar Brahma and enjoy fearless ness. *Adhyatma Vidya* or being spiritual is one such *Sethu* for the man-kind.

“Yes!” said Shiva Swarupananda “*Sethus* are very important. In the absence of *Sethu* we will stand isolated. We should build bridges instead of breaking the existing one. Now see, the current controversy of *Rama’s Sethu* at Rameshwar, destruction of this *Sethu* will have serious repercussions in ecology, defence, trade and commerce, lives of the poor whose livelihood is on fishing. The structure whether Man-made or God made should be seen from the point of view whether we are connecting or disconnecting ourselves from the Tradition, Ecology, Security and *Abhay*-fearlessness.

Nadapriyananda said “Yes! We should not destroy even inanimate objects out of our blind arrogance of Power. See what happened to the Powerful Talibans, who arrogantly destroyed the helpless Bamian Images of Buddha”.

“So let us build the bridges instead of breaking them and always remember that all bridges are spiritual, whether man-made or God made” We left the beach on this note. ■

HANUMAN: WHO & WHY

Saurabh Pandey

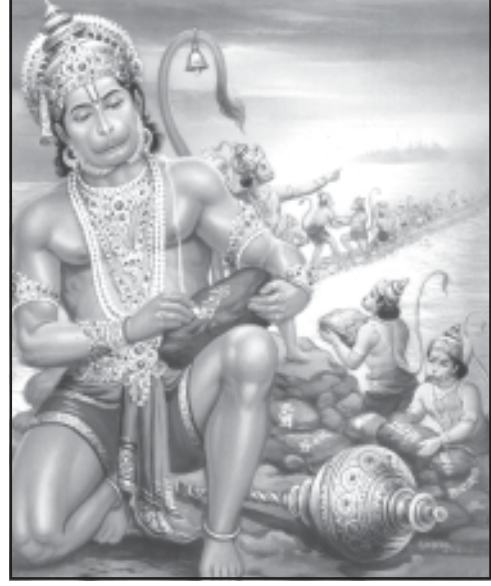
(Continued from Last Issue...)

Upon entering Patala, Hanuman discovered, that he must extinguish five lamps at once to kill Mahiravana. Hanuman assumed the Panchamukha or five-faced form of Sri Varaha, Sri Narasimha, Sri Garuda, Sri Hayagriva and his own, and blows out the lamps. Thus killing demons, Hanuman rescued Rama and Lakshmana. Afterwards, Rama asked Hanuman to crown Makaradhwaya as the king of Patalpuri.

Shortly after Rama was crowned emperor after reaching Ayodhya, Rama decided to ceremoniously reward all those who had helped him defeat Ravana. At a grand ceremony in his court, all his friends and allies were honoured. Hanuman too went up, but without desiring a reward. An emotionally overwhelmed Rama embraced him warmly, declaring that he could never adequately honour or repay Hanuman for the help and services he received.

रट्टुपति किन्हीं बहुत बड़ाई । तुम मम प्रिय भरतहिं
सम भाई ॥ (Han. Cha. 12)

सहस्र बदन तुमरो जस गावै । अस कहि श्रीपति कण्ठ
लगावै ॥ (Han. Cha. 13)



Sita, however, insisted that Hanuman deserved honour more than anyone else. She gave him a necklace of precious stones. Receiving that necklace, Hanuman immediately took it apart, and started peering into each stone. Taken aback, many of those present there demanded to know why he was destroying the precious gift! Hanuman answered that he was looking into the stones to make sure that Rama and Sita were in them, if not, the necklace was of no value. At this, a few mocked Hanuman, saying his reverence and love for Rama and Sita could

not possibly be so deep. At this point, Hanuman tore his chest open, and everyone was stunned to see Rama and Sita literally there, in his heart. The love and unselfish emotion towards someone great is never a matter of exhibiting but to feel in. The feelings make us great.

Again, we see a great example of non-attachment. After the victory of Rama over Ravana, Hanuman went to the Himalayas to continue his worship of the Lord. There he scripted a version of the Ramayana on the Himalayan mountains using his nails, recording every detail of Rama's deeds. When Maharishi Valmiki visited him to show him his own version of the Ramayana, he also saw Lord Hanuman's version and became very disappointed. When Hanuman asked him the cause of his sorrow, he said that his version, which he had created very laboriously was no match for the splendour of Hanuman's, and would therefore, go ignored. At this, Hanuman took those rocks on one shoulder and Valmiki on the other, and went to the sea. There he threw his own version into the sea, as an offering to Rama. This version, called the 'Hanumat Ramayana', has been unavailable since then. Maharishi Valmiki was so taken aback that he said he would take another birth to sing the glory of Hanuman which he had understated in his version. It is said that Tulsidas who composed the 'Ramcharitmanas' was none other than Maharishi Valmiki reborn to fulfill his desire

by composing very famous 'Hanuman chalisa'. Hanuman wanted to be with Rama and his memories but he never got charmed by claiming that he was the only devotee of that status.

Hanuman symbolises the pinnacle of pure devotion and complete surrender and we consider him to be the eleventh Rudra, Shiva incarnate. It gives him authority to go against those who are bad-doers. As the son of Vayu, symbolically he also stands for the subtle body consisting of antahkarana, the combination of mind, the breath and the intellect. Here, we should see Hanuman as the mental body out of three bodies of human beings. The mind is fickle (like that of a monkey), engaging itself in innumerable activities that disturbs the peace of the place. The mind like Hanuman can also travel where it wants to. It can fly in the air, cross the continents and the worlds in an instant with the speed of thought and reach any one and anything it wants to mentally. It can also expand or contract itself. So long as it remains under the control of pure animal passion and the activities of the senses, it remains unstable and mischievous, causing a lot of disturbances in the world of the individual. By killing all the evil-thoughts with its determination, it also lays a firm foundation for the kingdom of Rama (Ramarajya) to get established in the body. Once do we surrender to the inner self and becomes devoted to it completely and unconditionally, we assume miraculous

powers and perform stupendous feats like Hanuman, working for the divine cause.

Hanuman is regarded as the character with perfection. He is depicted to be an ocean of all-pervasive knowledge and all-positive qualities (jnan guna saagar). The pure knowledge and good qualities never die. Thus, he remained immortal (chiranjeevi).

He is easily reachable; just by chanting Rama's name! Conversely, it is also held that the easiest way to attain Ishwara is to worship Hanuman. The Hanuman chalisa says: "Tum-re bhajan Ram ko bhaavey.. janam-janam ke dukh bisravai.", which means "Rama takes care of those sorrowful beings for their several births, provided, they sing the glory of Hanuman". He undoubtedly symbolizes the man with all animal qualities (instincts) in us

who, through the path of devotion and service (bhakti and karma) can purify himself and attain immortality.

It is nice to know that there are saints who have seen Hanuman in modern times, notably Madhvacharya, Tulsidas, Sri Ramdas Swami, Raghavendra Swami and Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Others have also asserted his presence wherever the Ramayana is read. We can invoke Hanuman when we feel vexed and see no way to proceed further.

(Continued from Last Issue...)संकट कटै मिटै सब पीरा । जो सुमिरै हनुमत बल बीरा । (Han. Cha. 36)

Sorrows get removed, the pains get subsided if one worships Hanuman, the possessor of strength and power (bala and veerya). ■

Concluded

D Y
I O
S U
C R
O S
V E
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R F

Cognisance
A Residential camp for Self awareness
for Youth And Middle-aged
at
Shimla
23rd to 29th June

Aspiring Participants, kindly contact:
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