



YUVA BHARATI

Voice of Youth

Vol.35 No.10

Chaitra-Vaisakh 5110

May 2008

Rs.10/-

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Single Copy Rs. 10/-

Annual Rs. 100/-

For 3 Yrs Rs. 275/-

Life (10Yrs) Rs. 900/-

Foreign Subscription

Annual - \$25US Dollar

Life 10 Yrs - \$250US Dollar

(Plus Rs. 50/- for outstation Cheques)

Published and printed by L.Madhavan on behalf of Vivekananda Kendra from 5, Singarachari Street, Triplicane, Chennai-5. at M/s. RNR Printers and Publishers, 8, Thandavarayan Street, Triplicane, Chennai-5. Editor: P Parameswaran.



Yadvaktra manasa-sarah pratilabdha-janma
bhasyaravinda-makaranda-rasam pibanti |
pratyasam-unmukha-vinita-vineya-bhrngah
Tan bhasya-vittaka-gurun pranamami murdhna ||

I bow down in reverence to the (Adi) Guru, Sri Shankara, from whose countenance, which is like Manasarovar (the holy lake near the Kailas mountain, symbolising the divine lake of the mind), the lotus of Bhashyas (commentaries on the Scriptures) took birth, attracting numerous trained scholars like honey-bees, eager to drink the nectar therein.

(From the Panchapadika of Sri Padmapada)

Editorial



FROM PASUPATI TO TIRUPATI

A garland of explosives around the country's neck

The short-sighted political leadership at the national level right from the time of India's independence, has been following such unimaginative and myopic policies both at the domestic and the foreign fronts that now Bharat is faced with extremely difficult issues of vital importance. The overwhelming victory of the Maoists in Nepal is an ominous sign. Leadership of political parties of whatever hue and persuasion may wholeheartedly or halfheartedly welcome the election results, because democracy based on adult franchise has become a sacred cow. India has not been able to evolve a system of governance in tune with her own age old democratic temperament; our leadership has been under compulsion to tow the line of the Westminster model which we inherited from our colonial masters. But, countries like China haven't succumbed to such compulsions. What kind of governance the Maoist led Nepalese government will follow when it comes to office is a matter which only time can answer. Whatever it may be, there is no doubt that Nepal hereafter is going to be a major source of insecurity and concern for India.

When we look back at Indo-Nepalese relationship through the historical perspectives, we will find that Nepal should have been one of our most reliable friends, with inviolable cultural linkages existing from the dawn of history. Nepal has never wavered in its conviction that they are a Hindu Nation. Likewise, the Great Indian thinkers, even during the renaissance period, like Swami Vivekananda and Mahayogi Aurobindo, had been unequivocally asserting that India is a Hindu Nation. India and Nepal, though politically and administratively separated and autonomous for historical reasons, Hindu Nationalism had always been the binding chord between the two. If at the time of independence, and thereafter, the leadership in India had realized the centrality of Nepal's relationship to India and made serious and sincere efforts to cement and strengthen the cultural identity, a much more stable and enduring mutual relationship could have been built up. But, unfortunately that did not happen. Our first 'visionary' Prime Minister was a total stranger to realpolitik. He cared more for international approbation than for abiding National interest. He was against Monarchy, particularly when it is a Hindu Monarchy, so much so that he kept the King of Nepal at arm's length. One could only wish that if farsighted statesmen like Sardar Vallabhai Patel lived longer, probably things would have developed differently. Within the larger framework of Indian Republic, some sort of an autonomous Nepal, with or without a king could have been carved out. But, such a thought would have been anathema to Nehru.

But look at China. They had no deep historical and cultural relationship with Tibet as India had with Nepal. Tibet was anytime closer to India in terms of religion, culture and language. Even the very name Tibet is a derivative from the Sanskrit word: "Trivishtap". India had intense moral and spiritual authority over Tibet which China could never claim. But China, inherently imperialistic, decided that Tibet should be alienated from India and brought into the Dragon's Coil. They made no bones about it. China marched its army into Tibet, and forcibly occupied and drove His Holiness, The Dalai Lama with millions of his followers out of Tibet. The whole world meekly acquiesced in the genocide, while India abandoned even her moral claims over the Tibetan region.

Now a situation has developed, where not only Tibet but also Nepal have come under the Maoist umbrella. It is a clear case of total diplomatic failure and policy bungling on India's part. Prime Minister Nehru realized his failure too late when despite the much proclaimed 'Panch Sheel' agreement; Chinese army invaded India and humiliated us. Even afterwards, they have been time and again asserting and re-asserting their claim over the entire Arunachal Pradesh, thus holding out a threat to our sovereignty over the entire border area. All weather roads, huge aerodromes and other military and civilian facilities are being constructed across our border.

It is not that Prime Minister Nehru was not warned about these developments in time. Shri. Guruji, who played a decisive role in the integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India, had also tried for sound friendly relations with Nepal. He had personally visited

Kathmandu and held discussions with King Tribhuvan and his Prime Minister Tulasī Giri, with whom Shri. Guruji had excellent personal relationship. On coming back he wrote a letter to Pandit Nehru about his experiences and suggestions in this regard. Over and above, Shri. Guruji invited King Tribhuvan to be the Chief Guest at the Nagpur Vijayadashami function in the year 1965. Had it materialized, the relationship between the two countries would have risen to very great heights. But, Pandit Nehru blocked King Tribhuvan's visit to India. This naturally embittered the King's attitude. A golden opportunity was lost on account of personal prejudice over-riding National Interest.

Monarchy might be anachronistic in the modern world. But it is not always a negative symbol. Even today, in spite of England priding itself as the model of parliamentary democracy, maintains a dignified dynastic monarchy for which the entire nation owes symbolic allegiance. Monarchy in England is not considered a negative symbol or as antidemocratic. Similar is the case with Japan. They hold their king in the highest esteem, while there is a dynamic, functioning, full-fledged democracy all the time. Nobody pleads for retaining monarchy anywhere in the world including Nepal. But anarchy and violence are not suitable substitutes for symbolic monarchy.

Dalai Lama is condemned for his efforts to get back to Tibet and perform his spiritual ministry to his people in their own homeland. It is condemned, alleging, that he will be presiding over a theocracy. But the same people have absolutely no hesitation to uphold the Pope as the Head of a much smaller Vatican state and from that position to rule over a huge empire of Catholic community cutting across every national border. If this is not double standard, then what else is?

Maoists coming to power in Nepal and occupying adjacent Tibet, totally under Chinese control is a matter of grave concern for India. Already there exists a well entrenched "Red Corridor" with armed Naxalite network right from Nepal to Andhra and even Tamil Nadu and Kerala. All our security experts are agreed that the greatest threat that India is facing now arises out of this powerful paramilitary organization. It is in this context, that the latest developments in Nepal and Tibet have to be perceived and measures taken to cope with it. It brookes no delay. It must also be remembered that recognized political parties and forces that supported Chinese invasionists of 1962 are still very much active in India.

The real saving factor is people to people relationship that exists and that should be strengthened. Beneath the political turbulence and the electoral earthquake, common people of Nepal are as much Hindu minded as those in India and are proud of their age-old Hindu culture and tradition. It is this subtle and perennial bonds that have to be re-vitalized. Vivekananda Kendra International has vital role to play in this.

-P.Parameswaran

THE WORK BEFORE US

The Role of Vivekananda Kendra International

I

Vivekananda Kendra International is the third step in the growth and evolution of the great mission initiated by Mananeeya Eknathji Ranade . The first was the Vivekananda Rock Memorial at Kanyakumari. The second was the work of Vivekananda Kendra at the National level. Today we are celebrating the fruition and fulfilment of the third step -- Vivekananda Kendra International. These remind us of the three long strides taken by Vishnu, 'the Trivikrama', in his Vamana Avatara. The parallel is highly significant.

Vivekananda Kendra International at Chanakypuri is an excellent concept, brilliant idea; Swami Vivekananda was a great practical philosopher who called his philosophy ' Practical Vedanta'. Arya Chanakya was one of the world's greatest strategists and statesman who successfully utilized his ideas to build up a powerful Hindu empire the most powerful in his times.

In a sense, Vivekananda Kendra International will function as a centre of strategic studies in order to explore how the practical Vedantic philosophy of Swami Vivekananda could be applied to the present global scenario, so that , as Swamiji had predicted " We will then go to every country under the sun, and our ideas will before long be a component of the many forces that are working to make up every nation in the world. We must enter into life of every race in India and abroad ; weshall have to work tobring this about".

Vivekananda Kendra International is a Centre of activity rooted in and centered around the life and Message of Swami Vivekananda. Though headquartered in Delhi its sphere of activities is global.

II

It is the immortal message of Sanathana Dharma that VKI is new packaging and broadcasting all over the world. The message is beyond time and clime, and absolutely impersonal. Then, why the name Vivekananda? Vivekananda is the brand name that has irresistible appeal transcending cultural boundaries, national identities and ideological differences. It is through him that the relevant and basic ideas can be effectively and persuasively propagated. This is evidenced by the fact that every year lot of new literature dealing with different aspects of Swamiji are being brought out in every language. So Swami Vivekananda is the vehicle that can carry the message all over the now globalised world.

But,that does not mean that VKI is trying to confine its activities to the one single personality of Swami Vivekananda. Even Swamiji would not have approved it. He never approved of any personality cult. It is striking that in all his innumerable lectures in the East and the West, he very rarely eulogized the personality of his great Guru although he had the highest reverence for him whom he considered God incarnate. But he used to say that he only preached the eternal and the

universal principles of the Upanishads. VKI will do the same, bringing of Advaita to the crucial issues faced by the contemporary humanity.

VKI is essentially an ideological forum where there would be continuous dialogue between representatives of the various civilizational thought currents. Even after the collapse of the Communist experiment, Marxist intellectuals continue to repackage the materialistic thought in ever so many new forms, changing labels in order to market it better. Even in India this process is being systematically followed by academicians, deeply entrenched in various universities and centres of cultural activities. VKI is never afraid of any thought patterns new or old. We are ready to engage with them. But our basic difference towards the Marxist intellectuals is this: We say, connect yourself to the past, keep the life current intact and then march forward into the promised land of the future. Swamiji has said, "Look as far back into your past as you can, derive inspiration and then go forward to build up a far brighter future". An absolutely positive approach. But the leftist intellectuals say, "Cut-off your umbilical cord into the past because they are all obscurantist superstitions and take a leap into the darkness of the future". This is suicidal, as recent history has amply demonstrated. So VKI looks upon Swami Vivekananda as the role model for communicating with the rest of the world.

III

Vivekananda lived at a time when imperial powers from the West were bringing the countries of the world under their domination. He had a message for them, appropriate to the prevailing situation. Empires were the forerunners of the present global set up.

Today as we stand at the dawn of the 'Global Millennium' Swamiji's life and message are extremely relevant, perhaps more relevant than at the time he lived. Swami Vivekananda was one of the most prominent internationalists thrown up by Modern India.

He was the most authentic spokesperson of Hinduism as is evidenced by the fact that his lectures at the 'Parliament of Religions' were most heartily and unanimously welcomed as the authentic voice of Hinduism. More than a century afterwards it is only Swami Vivekananda and his speeches that are gratefully remembered, preciousy treasured and widely propagated all over the world.

IV

His pronouncement of the eternal and universal principles of Hinduism welled out of the depth of his own personal realization. He was not preaching any dogma or doctrine received second-hand from any religious text or scripture. He carried conviction because to him "Religion is realization. Religion is Being and Becoming. It is verifiable and hence absolutely scientific". He was bold enough to say that it is better to be an honest atheist or rationalist than a blind believer or fanatic.

Swami Vivekananda said, as the Vedic Rishis had told much earlier, that "Truth is one, sages call it by various names". There is only one God which people call by different names. The same God - the ultimate goal of all - can be approached following different paths. Swamiji said various religions are various paths leading to the same goal. There need be no quarrel or conflict among the various routes different men adopt. He was the preacher and practitioner of true and genuine harmony.

Vivekananda Kendra International is set up with the intention of making it a powerful centre of this most authentic Hindu thought which alone can bring about cultural and religious harmony in a strife-torn and struggling world, mutually intolerant and violently aggressive.

V

About one and a quarter century have elapsed since Swamiji made his debut at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago and delivered his life giving, historic message. Much has changed since then, changed beyond recognition. But the sense and essence of his teachings are so relevant even today, since they provide answers for the most crying needs of the present world situation.

Swamiji was a "Patriotic Hindu", a 'Cyclonic Hindu Monk' as he was then called. At the same time he was a true globalist as every true Hindu is. '*Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam*' was his credo. He had foreseen that a global situation is developing and that the time has come when even local problems have to be seen in the context of the global perspective and solutions to be sought from that point of views. "Think globally and act locally" was not a concept which was strange or unknown to him. In fact he followed that dictum. Some of the most pressing problems of the day threatening the very survival of human civilization were foreseen by Swami Vivekananda. He had warned us about them religious intolerance, cultural exclusiveness and blind fanaticism were identified by him as dangerous portents. In his famous Chicago address he had forcefully brought out that these dark forces had deluged the world with rivers of human blood and brought beautiful civilisations to extinction. He quoted profusely from Hindu scriptures to show how 'Sanatana Dharma' has established a cultural and civilizational pattern for spontaneous and principled co-operation among people following different religions and how it was actually practiced on a country wide scale for centuries together. India was the model for harmony among civilizations instead of clash of civilizations.

Swamiji preached Practical Vedanta as the Universal Religion of the future which will gladly accept every religion into its loving embrace and also provide space for such religions as will be born in the future. He visualized a spiritually comprehensive philosophy which will ultimately take man beyond every creedal religions and every written text, to the infinite realm of a transcendental spiritual experience.

"Our watchword, then, will be acceptance, and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy, and I do not believe in it. O believe in acceptance. Why should I tolerate? Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. Is it not a blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live? I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of every one.

Not only shall I do all these but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation, going on? It is a marvellous book - these spiritual revelation of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other sacred books, are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them. We stand in the present, but pen ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that

will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future." (*Swami Vivekananda's Works--Universal Religion: Its Relation Pages 371-372*)

We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suitshim best. (*Swami Vivekananda*)

VI

Another very important threat to human survival is man's insatiable greed and rank selfishness. Greed leads to mindless exploitation of natural resources and selfishness prompts man to establish domination over other peoples and Nations of the world. Economic exploitation and political and cultural domination are playing havoc, threatening peaceful co-existence among the Nations of the world.

Exploitation of Mother Nature by man blinded by craze for vulgar consumerism is a major threat to human survival. Swamiji said there were two civilizations which had developed and thrived upon two different approaches to life. The Western approach was based upon the quest as to how much a man needed to acquire and possess in order to be happy. The Eastern - the Hindu - approach was a quest as to what is the minimum that a man requires to possess in order to remain happy. The West developed a mighty civilization of 'Bhoga', consumerism while India produced a civilization based on 'Tyaga', renunciation. In the name of globalization the Bhoga inspired approach is today engulfing the whole world causing grave threat of environmental degradation and possible ruin of all living species on earth ending biodiversity. The only remedy is Tyaga inspired philosophy of life which will provide the need of all but not the greed 'Yayathi' and 'Dadheechi' are the two poles around which these two kinds of civilization evolved.

VII

Hinduism preached and practised a philosophy and a way of life, holistic and fully integrated, taking into consideration every aspect and aspiration of human beings and balancing and fulfilling each of them within a comprehensive framework. The West has failed to evolve such a comprehensive view of life. They have not evolved a way of life that could harmonize the individual with society, man with Nature, Bhoga with Tyaga, Nations with one another, 'Samutkarsha with Nishreyasa.'

Vedanta believes in the unity of existence. Multiplicity is the manifestation of One Basic Unity. Man, Nature and Universe are all one, interrelated, interconnected and interdependent. One cannot exist without the other. There is a rhythm and a delicate balance in the universe which sustains it in its totality. Each has its Dharma. When man exploits nature, there is bound to be a backlash and consequent chaos. This makes it imperative that man and nature replenish each other and both attain maximum well-being. 'Parasparam Bhavayanta' 'Sreyaha paramavapsyadha' - This is the philosophy behind Vedantic approach to Nature, unlike in the West where environmental protection is only a matter of expediency arising out of unavoidable compulsions.

VIII

Swamiji believed that the East and the West must learn from each other, complement each other and develop a new global culture which will flourish on the basis of freedom for all humanity and

respect for pluralism. Unity and diversity will be the principle on which man will be able to evolve further and man could be able to express fully the divinity that he potentially is.

The advent of such a global order was a commitment and a conviction with Swamiji. He firmly believed that a golden age a *Satya Yuga*-- was bound to emerge, an age of peace, prosperity, justice and true happiness for all, based on the eternal and unshakable foundation of Dharma. Swamiji had actually stated that with the advent of Sri Ramakrishna, the rule of Kali has ended and Satya Yuga has commenced. It is to the fulfilment of this global vision that Vivekananda Kendra International stands committed.

Vivekananda Kendra International is to develop into a powerful centre for dialogue among various civilizations of the world and also into a full-fledged laboratory where the scope and manner for the evolution of future mankind could be explored.

Having said all these, I will be failing in my duty if I do not sound a note of warning, lest we assume that the task ahead is an easy one. In fact, it is much more difficult than one would imagine. Great optimism was expressed by Swami Vivekananda in his concluding remarks at the end of the Parliament of Religions, Chicago. With poetic imagination and a prophetic vision he had expressed the memorable words : - "I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal. Upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: "Help and not fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension." " (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol 1- Page 4, 24*)

But we all know as a matter of history that this sanguine expectation has not yet been fulfilled. On the other hand things have become much more difficult, complicated and conflict-ridden. Today the world is confronted with the menacing Scenario of crusaders on one side and jihads on the other prepared for a bitter war with no holds barred. No country on earth can be considered a safe place to live. Even India, the land that produced Swami Vivekananda, has become home to Islamic terrorists on the one hand and Christian evangelists on the other, bent upon annexing this beautiful land to their respective empires by any means what soever.

Bharat is the only land and Hindu Dharma the only way of life which can bring about real and lasting harmony among the peoples of the world. History and destiny together have endowed India with necessary tools of wisdom and experience to achieve this. But as things stand today we do not seem prepared to effectively play this role and the world does not appear to be in any mood to accept India as capable of playing such a historic role. The leader at the top of the country apparently is not confident." The tryst with destiny" speech delivered at the Red Fort at the crucial hour heralding our independence seems to have fallen on deaf ears. The present mindset should change. India should once again equip herself with all the requirement, both spiritual and material, in such an efficient and enlightened manner that India's message - the message which Swami Vivekananda delivered at the Chicago Parliament of Religions - would ring loud and clear across the world with an irresistible force and compelling effect. Vivekananda Kendra International can play its true role successfully only on the basis of Vivekananda Kendra National.

(Speech delivered by Mananeeya P.Parameswaranji, President, Vivekananda Kendra, on the occasion of Grihapravesham held at Vivekananda Kendra International, New Delhi, on 20th March

MEANING OF PEACE

"There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them.

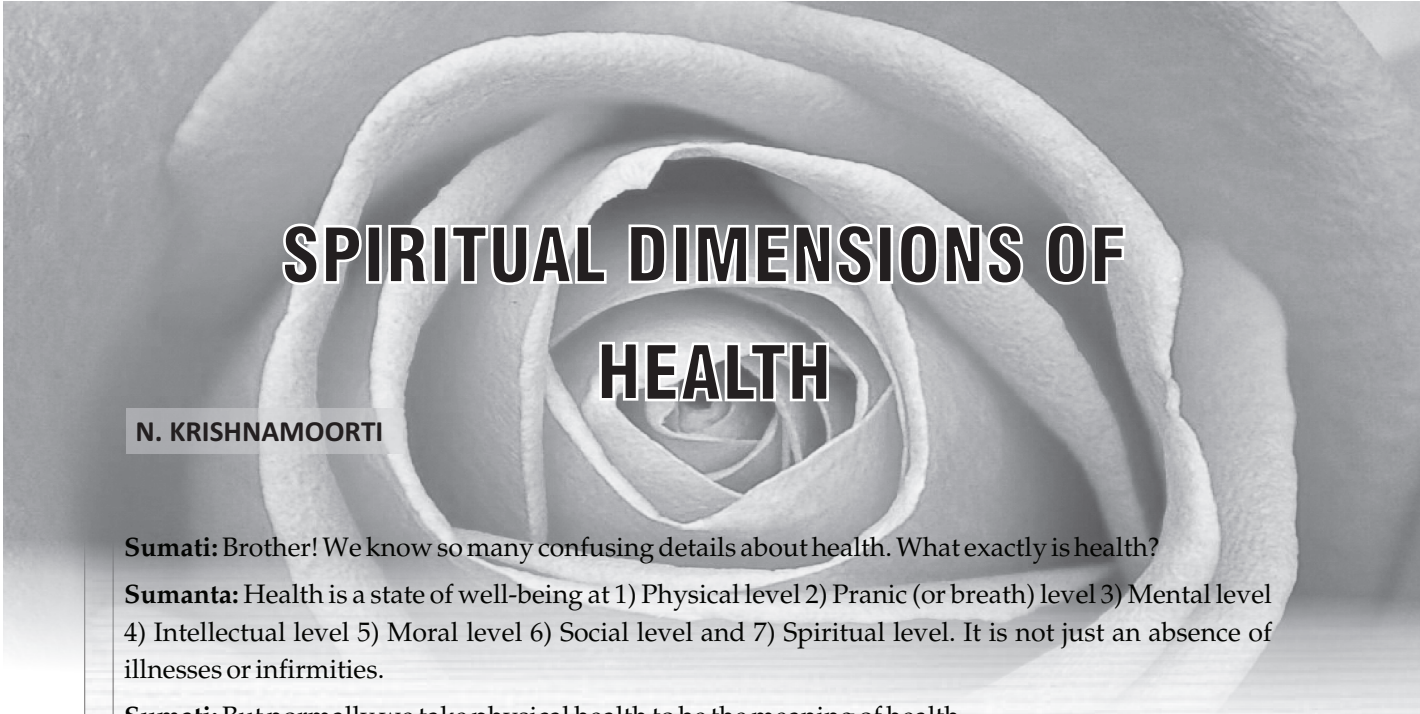
One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peaceful towering mountains were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The other picture had mountains too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, in which lightening played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all.

But when the King looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest ... perfect peace."

Which picture do you think won the prize? The King chose the second picture. Do you know why? "Because," explained the King, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."





SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH

N. KRISHNAMOORTI

Sumati: Brother! We know so many confusing details about health. What exactly is health?

Sumanta: Health is a state of well-being at 1) Physical level 2) Pranic (or breath) level 3) Mental level 4) Intellectual level 5) Moral level 6) Social level and 7) Spiritual level. It is not just an absence of illnesses or infirmities.

Sumati: But normally we take physical health to be the meaning of health.

Sumanta: No doubt, physical health is very important and very basic on the face of it. But physical health is only an external expression or a symbol of healthy breathing, healthy mind and emotions, healthy intellect, healthy social interactions and relations and a healthy spiritual attitude. All these levels of health show themselves often at the physical level also.

Sumati: Let us start with the physical level.

Sumanta: Physical health is referred to in our scriptures as consisting of a strong body, a flexible body, a body that can withstand optimal amount of work and strain. At the same time, the physical body should also be capable of proper breathing, proper thinking and feeling and proper social interaction, service to others. This physical part of man is circumscribed by its basic urges, *Ahara* (Food), *Nidra* (Sleep), *Bhaya* (Fear), and *Maithuna* (Multiplication of the species). In addition to these urges, man has got *Mana* (mind) which also functions at times as his intellect (*Buddhi*). This mind/intellect distinguishes man from other animals. In all languages of the world, the words for MAN come from MANA (MIND). And the urge to reveal oneself *Atmapradarshana* is also a basic urge.

Sumati: Healthy *Ahara* (Food) I can understand.

Sumanta: It is not as simple as it appears. *Ahara* is not merely what you place in your mouth, chew and digest to derive physical strength. According to *Adi Shankara*, food is that which goes into you, through your senses and shapes your personality and your *samskaras*. What you taste, what you hear, see, touch or smell are all *Ahara*. According to the *Gita*, the food that would augment vitality, energy, vigour, healthy joy and cheerfulness, which is full of *Rasa* (juicy) with enough fat, eaten in sufficient quantity and is agreeable to a person is called *Sattvika*. *Rajasika* food is with strong taste and smell whereas *Tamasika* food is stale and impure. (*Gita* Chapter 17 slokas 8, 9, 10)

Sumati: Obviously these kinds of foods, when eaten and digested will leave their mark on the mind of the man. If they are wrong types, they will make him sick at some level or other.

Sumanta: Not only that, the food that is digested is divided into three parts by the body. The crude part of the food goes away as waste, mala, mootra the middle portion becomes the seven aspects of the physical body. 1) Skin (*Tvacha*) 2) Blood (*Rakta*) 3) Flesh (*Mamsa*) 4) Fat (*Medhas*) 5) Bone (*Asti*) 6) Marrow (*Majja*) 7) Semen (*Shukla*). And the finest part of the food becomes the Mind, the Prana and the Speech. So says the Samaveda, Chhandogya Upanishad.

Swami Vivekananda quotes Ramanuja approvingly in his Bhakti Yoga lectures:- Food becomes impure from three causes. 1) By the nature of the food itself as in the case of garlic etc. 2) Owing to its coming from wicked and accursed persons and 3) Physical impurities such as dirt, hair etc. The Shrutis say 'when the food is pure, the Sattva element gets purified and the memory becomes unwavering' and Ramanuja quotes this from the Chhandogya Upanishad.' Swamiji agreed that the food influenced a person's mind.

Sumati: Perhaps, the way the food is earned also influences the mind.

Sumanta: Yes, an old verse says, "*Kalau kalmasha chittanaam, papadravya upajivinam, vidikriya vihinanam*" that "in the Kali Yuga, people have sinful and tainted minds, earning sinful wealth and performing wrong acts."

Sumati: We have started with simple physical body and its food needs, and we have covered, the psychological and the moral aspects of food and its relation with human anatomy.

Sumanta: Yes, the psychological and ethical dimensions are the spiritual aspects of health, physical health.

Sumati: How should a person eat then?

Sumanta: Vinobaji says, that 1) predetermined quantity of sattvik food, 2) balanced in nutrients 3) earned by honest labour 4) offered to God as

Nivedana 5) shared with fellow human beings and 6) consumed with peaceful mind makes for healthy food.

Sumati: So many details about food. What has the peaceful mind to do with it?

Sumanta: A relaxed body requires less food. A tense body requires more food. A relaxed person is able to absorb more energy from the food taken. Whereas a tense and stressed mind wastes food and throws it away says the Svetasvatara Upanishad. Ayurveda, Alchemy and even Western science agree that a human body at some special circumstances can synthesize new elements, or convert one element into other.

Valmiki Ramayana states that Sri Rama and Sita saw in the forests, yogis who could draw energy directly from sunlight, water, air and space (Akash). You know that Kanchi Acharya could walk lakhs of kilometers with a simple diet of three handfuls of puffed rice (*murmura*) a day. The relaxed body of a Yogi can save food for the Nation.

Sumati: What is the next dimension?

Sumanta: The next dimension of good health is the Pranic dimension. Prana is the fundamental energy of the human body, prana is the basic fabric of the whole creation. Prana pervades the whole body, stimulates the five senses, balances the body, pushes down waste, raises the vital energies and takes the energies to the far corners of the human body. Prana is manipulated through breath in the form of Pranayama, Prana links the mind with the body. In a healthy person there is free flow of pranic energy. There is a balance of the pranic flow in the two halves of the body.

Sumati: Oh. That is why while practising stretching exercises, Asanas, Suryanamaskars, and Nadi Shuddhi we try to balance the two halves of the body, left and right, front and back.

Sumanta: Yes. In divine personalities, this

pranic symmetry is naturally established. Sri Rama is described by Valmiki Maharshi as "*Samah sama vibhaktangah*" The right and left halves of his body were mirror images of each other. There was perfect pranic balance in his body. To concentrate our mind on his physical body will induce pranic balance and good health in us also. A sadhaka who normalizes his erratic breathing, slows down the speed of breath and balances his pranic imbalances, is able to disconnect mental agonies (*Adhis*) taking the shape of disease (*Vyadhis*). There are meditation techniques in which we closely observe our breathing to control our mind, in the process, gaining good physical health also. Spirituality and good health are closely related.

That is why Swami Vivekananda used to say that Vedanta is not the meat for weak stomach. Sri Ramakrishna would thoroughly check the body to see whether the disciple would be able to undertake strenuous spiritual exercises.

Sumati: You have already brought about the connections between food, body, breath and mind and a person's overall health.

Sumanta: Yes. The Body is controlled by breath and the Breath is influenced by the mind. A healthy mind induces smooth breathing. A mind disturbed by *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Mada* and *Matsarya*, the six enemies makes the breathing process very disturbed. We can normalize, subdue one by the other, though the mind is much more fundamental to a human being than the breath. Mind influences breath as well as the body. The diseases of the physical body caused by mental imbalances are called psychosomatic illnesses.

Sumati: What is mind then?

Sumanta: Mind is the expression, an activity of the Atman, the soul using the tool of brain. In an untrained person, it can have turbulence in the form of *Kama* (Desire and Lust), *Krodha* (Anger), *Lobha* (Greed), *Moha* (Confusion), *Mada* (Arrogance), and *Matsarya* (Envy). These are the six enemies. They upset the health at the physical and the breath levels and destroy a man's power of discrimination (*Viveka*). He

becomes unhappy, sick, inefficient and intellectually indiscriminate.

Sumati: Mind can make a man sick?

Sumanta: Yes, an angry, greedy, passionate mind can run riot and cause a lot of physical problems to a man, indigestion, breathing troubles, asthma, hypertension, diabetes, joint pains, migraine, hyperacidity, back-ache, etc. whereas a person with a calm mind, a mind that expresses itself not through the Shad-ripus, six enemies, but through loving, positive emotions, *Sneha*, *Prema*, *Daya*, *Bhakti*, Sharing, etc., can radiate happiness to others, and he can be a healthy man himself. If a person nurtures unhealthy thoughts, he radiates unhealthy thoughts in the society and also harms himself. Extreme cases of anger and hatred, set off a chain of illnesses in the person who has such feelings.

Sumati: How are we to control, subdue, or sublimate the mind?

Sumanta: Apart from Asanas, Pranayama and Dhyana, positive, constructive and creative art forms are helpful in calming down the mind. That is why in Bhaktiyoga, the art and science of calming an agitated mind, we use Bhajan music, Love of God, Dance dedicated to God, study Literature describing the Glory of God, observe and worship the beautiful art forms of God like idols, rangolis, colour, patterns, chakras, visit, architecturally beautiful buildings like temples and ashramas, render loving service considering others as our dear ones and as God. All these spiritual practices make a person healthy in the mind eradicating the shad-ripus, reducing tension.

Sumati: You have made the mental health appear like an offshoot of social health.

Sumanta: Yes. In Indian tradition, a person's character is believed to be shaped by his family, family by the community (*Kula*), the community by the society and the society by the Nation. Therefore a person's health is judged not only by his personal parametres. If a person disturbs the society he lives in, he is a sick person, to be treated and corrected. In the modern western

science also they talk of a Bio-social level of consciousness, a level reflecting a person's social environment. One scientist Stanislav Grof, a psychiatrist says, "A person functioning is a mechanistic world-view may be free from manifest symptoms but he cannot be considered mentally healthy. Such individuals may lead ego-centred, competitive, goal-oriented lives. They tend to be unable to derive satisfaction from ordinary activities, in everyday life and become alienated from their inner world. They become infused with a sense of meaninglessness, futility and even absurdity that no amount of external success can dispel"

Fritjof Capra, the famous scientist writes: "My attention has now shifted to the environmental, social, and political dimensions of health. I began with a survey of environmental health hazards and many others - air pollution, acid rain, toxic chemical wastes, radiation hazards and many others, and realized very soon that these many fold health-hazards are not just incidental by products of technological progress, but integral features of an economic system obsessed with growth and expansion (and wrong lifestyle)."

Sumati: Now you have said, food, body, prana, mind, society, environment all influence health and a person who fails to integrate them will fall ill.

Sumanta: Yes. The ultimate truth, Paramatman the cosmic conscience, the great Unifier, The Supramind, the great Intelligence, whom we call God is the ultimate sign of health. A body that is well-exercised through Asana and Surya namaskar is needed. A body that is fed by Sattwik food is required. A breathing system that has found its inner balance is needed. A mind that is full of love, connecting and integrating well with the family, the society and the entire creation is required. Only such a person will be able to relate with his inner self. Spirituality, expresses itself as physical health, pranic balance, mental poise, and intellectual power of discrimination. Nowadays Yoga-therapy is popular all over the world. Yoga probing deep into human personality, brings up untapped powers of vitality that heal, enlighten, ennoble and release.

Sumati: It is wonderful to know that human health starts with dispelling diseases and ends with spiritual health, creativity, ethics and perfect happiness and harmony with society and Nature.

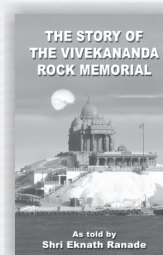
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RAMA'S ART OF MANAGEMENT

Dr.K.Subrahmanyam

// Each Soul is potentially divine". Everybody is endowed with a gift. Each person is born with a talent. A good manager cannot afford to ignore this universal fact.

All are managers. We manage our finances. We manage our families. We manage our travels, our time, our energy and our body-mind-intellect equipments. Therefore, it should not be difficult for anybody to manage our fortunes, future and destiny. To be a very good manager, we have to be always balanced in mind, without stress and strain; we have to be positive in our look, without negativism and a fault finding bent of mind, we have to be of constructive working caliber, without considering anybody to be useless.

The very word "management" implies, that we have to manage "man", the first three letters of the word, "management". Man of any type and temperament is useful in one way or another, at one point of time or another, at least to somebody, to some extent. Nobody is absolutely useless. Therefore, elimination of anybody is but an extreme step. It is only when somebody has to be compulsorily strengthened for a righteous purpose, somebody else may have to be eliminated as but a last step. Very often, loss of something should be of great gain to us. An intelligent manager with his positive approach and constructive activity drops the insignificant and the useless, and gains the magnificent and the beneficial. However, the intelligence of a manager lies in his ability to see a gem in every person that he manages. The first seven letters of the word "management" indicate this intrinsic quality of man-"man, a gem"...

The gem like quality, latent in every person, is to be first identified by a good manager.

It is not enough if the hidden gift, the latent talent and precious gem within man is identified. It has to be encouraged and ennobled; nourished and trained for a dharmic purpose by the visionary manager with missionary commitment. In Sree Rama, we find an ideal manager who during his period of exile has ably demonstrated his managerial skill.

When Sree Rama left Ayodhya, he was accompanied by his wife and brother, without any other friends, relatives or armies. When the problem of Sita's disappearance had cropped up, he was left with no other alternative except to mobilize and manage the available local manpower to get back his spouse Sita. Similarly, when Indians have faced the problem of their mind being caught in the clutches of Western materialism, the nationalist managers are left with no other way except to organize native power to restore Indian heritage and culture. Rama needed men. So, also the

nationalist movement requires many a man many a gem man, a gem.

Rama, at the very first sight was able to find out the gem like quality in Hanuman. Sree Ramakrishna was able to see a sparkling gem in Naren. Every leader-manager must be able to see the bright gems in the boys and girls of our country.

Hanuman, though a gem was without the due brilliance, for want of direction towards a righteous goal. He was without a noble direction. He was to be encouraged and elevated to a cosmic level in a divine activity. Sree Rama, not only identified the gem in Hanuman, but elevated the Vanara to a cosmic form and mission. Hanuman, today, is a Chiranjeevi of divine dimension. So, is Naren a global personality. This encouragement and ennobling elevation are indicated by the letter 'e' following the "gem" in "management". Every man is a gem. Encourage him. Elevate him. Ennoble him, Sree Rama the positive person of managerial ability has done this noble work of identifying and ennoble the gem in Hanuman.

The full fledged Hanuman needs only a direction. The full grown Naren requires only a bit of guidance. They are already burnished gems requiring only a touch of righteous direction. In the case of Surgeeva, the hidden gem is not only to be freed from impurities but should be brightened with good nourishment in the form of help and favourable environment. From the caves of obscurity, he should be brought out to the open with fearlessness and boldness. The impeding and the darkening enemies and evils, therefore, must be removed. Nourishment in the form of encouragement through nutritious food in the form of healthy



environment is to be provided. Therefore, the eclipsing Vali is to be eliminated and the strength-giving kingdom is to be restored. Sree Rama, as an able manager did both. He killed Vali and made Sugreeva the king. Good food is not only medicinal but nutritious as well. Therefore the measures of surgery are applied and the gem is rid of all fears, weaknesses and inhibitions. By making him king, Rama made surgeeva bright, bold and dynamic. Our young boys and girls in the colleges are no doubt gems but they are now not free enough to shine usefully in the national building activity. They are to be freed, cultivated and cultured in the fires of discipline. Else, they will be rotting in the smoke of narrow minded materialism and selfishness. The Vali of conceit is first to be slain

in them. When Surgeeva is free from Vali, he is able to rise high in the service of Rama. Similarly, when our youthful men and women are free from sectarianism, regionalism, casteism and communalism, they will be brighter gems shining in the service of "Mother Bharath". This nourishment in the form of medicinal and strengthening food is implied in the letter 'n' preceding 't' in management.

Finally, it is not enough if there are encouragement and nourishment, there should be a proper training which is indicated by the letter 't' at the end of the word "management". Training includes and means disciplined training. Anybody and everybody can be made brilliant and useful under good training. A gem requires to be regularly polished in the form of discipline and training. Angada in Ramayana is the son of the conceited Vali. The boy is not bad. The gem of righteousness is latent in him. Right from the childhood, it has to be duly fostered,

trained and taken care of. Else, it may turn out to be useless and dangerous. Left to himself, he might become an enemy to Rama because his father Vali was killed by Rama. He may even grow to be a terrorist. Instead, on account of the managerial skill of Rama's mastermind, Angada the gem of a boy could blossom as a shining model for righteous service.

The three fold activity of ennobling encouragement, nutritious nourishment and tactful training could be found indicated by the last three letters "... ent" of "management". To sum up, Sree Rama is an ideal manager who can identify the gem of talent in Hanuman, Sugreeva and in Angada. The full bright gem in Hanuman is ennobled. The eclipsed gem in Sugreeva is brightened. The gem-in-embryo in Angada is brought up and brought out in disciplined training. This wise, Sree Rama has proved himself to be an expert in the art of management.



THE IMMORTAL SANKARA

.... Siva, Vishnu, Devi and other manifestations of the Supreme are worshipped by us Hindus every day. The *vratas* relating to the worship of these manifestations survive in our midst today only because of our *Acharya*. For, if he had not been born, Buddhism, Jainism, *Sankhya* and *Mimamsa* would still be flourishing in our land, and all of them together would have expelled God from the hearts and minds of our people. If, today, we celebrate Sri Rama Navami, Janmashtami, Sivaratri, Durga Puja and other festivals connected with the different manifestations of the Supreme, Sri Sankara alone has made it possible. It is to remind ourselves of the irredeemable debt that we owe to our *Acharya* and to express our gratitude to him for his service to our religion, that we celebrate Sri Sankara Jayanthi.

(Source : *Acharya's Call*)

THE NARMADA PARIKRAMA

K.K.VENKATRAMAN

D. EXPERIENCES

My ego and Mother's compassion

On the first day I carried packed lunch and dinner given by the Ramakrishna Kutir, Amarkantak. On the second day, bhiksha had to be sought. But, the ego did not permit. So, the whole day I could not get even a cup of tea. Frequently drinking water, I walked whole day. Before sunset, I reached a village and decided to halt for the night. An elderly person saw me and asked whether I would have tea. I happily accepted the offer and enjoyed the tea. Then that person suggested that I have dinner with him and stay for the night. Had I not taken dinner that night, it would not have been possible for me to have resumed walking the next day. Mother does not allow Her children to go to bed hungry.

This is how Nature works and takes care of one who has thrown himself to her lap. Did not Wordsworth write, "Nature never did betray, the heart that truly loved Her"?

Sole cracks, Foot walks

Being not used to walking barefoot, I had difficulty initially. Moreover, the path at many places has small stones and thorns. Deep cracks used to develop on the soles, making it difficult for keeping the sole on the ground. Although, both the feet are walking on the same path, strangely, cracks used to develop on only one sole at a time. After the cracks on the affected sole disappear, the other sole will develop cracks. I would limp and hence the distance covered on that day would be less. Had cracks developed on both the soles simultaneously, it would have rendered me totally immobile.

Sleeping alone without fear

At the place of night halt, the parikramavasis generally sleep in the temple or the small shelter on the riverbank. The villagers generally visit the riverbank to know whether any parikramavasi is halting there for the night. They enquire whether the parikramavasi has taken food and feed if necessary. They also enquire personal details. Except on very few occasions, I used to be the lone parikramavasi halting at a place for the night. I used to record the distances and the villages (places)

covered during the day, names of the persons who had extended hospitality and other relevant details in my notebook. As I will be writing in English, they will be curious to know more about me. Fortunately, as I could speak Hindi, I had no difficulty in interacting with them. They used to identify me as a person belonging to Rameswaram / Kanyakumari (they are not familiar with Tamilnadu, Madras now Chennai) and doing Parikrama. Although, they have not had formal education, they used to talk about the great epics like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and even Vedanta; it used to be very interesting. Then suddenly someone will realize that it is getting late and remind others that as I would be tired, I needed to rest to resume my walking next morning. They will then disperse.


After they leave, I used to go to sleep keeping the stick (my only companion) by my side. Due to fatigue, I used to fall asleep immediately, but after few hours, around 3 a.m. the sleep used to get disturbed, because of chillness and I used to coil myself to retain the warmth of the body and wait for dawn. Only the flowing of water, full-throated sound of frogs and barking of the dogs in the village, would break the silence of the night. In most places there would be wild growth, bushes around the shelter. Although it used to be dark and I was alone, I never had any fear as I always felt that the Mother is with me. I was not bitten even by an ant, let alone, by snakes, scorpions or other insects.

Faith

In the morning when I leave a place, the people who had extended hospitality to me, the previous night would request me to stay for lunch. But I used to tell them that I wanted to resume walking in the morning itself as the weather would be pleasant, and more distance could be covered. Then they would request me to at least carry lunch with me. On the first few days, I used to carry the lunch as I had a lurking fear that I may not get lunch. But when I reach a place during noon, the people there would offer me lunch. As I did not like to waste the food, which had been prepared for me and given to me with love, I had to reject the offer of lunch. Then I realized that if I was carrying food, it meant that I was not sure of getting my next meal. That meant, I had no faith in the Mother. If I had faith, I should not carry food with me. Then onwards, I never carried food with me and never starved.

Divine thoughts through Chanting

Many parikramavasis do parikrama in a group and very few parikramavasis go alone. When I was at Ramakrishna Kutir, Amarkantak, before starting the parikrama, I did have a lurking fear in my mind of doing the parikrama alone. A senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order came on a visit to Amarkantak to spend a few days at the Ramakrishna Kutir. When he came to know about my intention to go on parikrama, he advised me that one must undertake such pilgrimage all alone, so that one is immersed in the thought of God all the time. He said that I was lucky to do the parikrama alone. As I was alone, and there was nobody to talk to, I used to chant Vishnu Sahasranamam and sing bhajans mentally while walking. At the place where I halted for the night, I would have satsang with the villagers, and benefited a lot listening to them. Although most of them had no formal education they could convincingly talk about the efficacy of devotion to God, quoting



examples from the Puranas.

Dog, the Guide

Apart from the main Forest Route, one has to pass through short stretches of forest (5 to 20 km distance). On such stretches, which are not inhabited, one does not come across anyone. One will not be able to walk along the bank of the river and may have to walk 2-3 kms. away from the bank.

One may find the foot track bifurcating and may not know as to which track has to be taken. Although the track on the right hand side would lead to the river, it may not be the correct track. On one occasion, when I was in a dilemma, I saw a dog coming from the direction from which I had come and taking one of the tracks. I felt that the dog would know where to go and would take the correct track. I also took the same track and that was the right track.

Ego getting crushed


I) As per the custom, if bhiksha is not given when sought, one can seek again from some other person. If not given, it can be sought only one more time. If no bhiksha is received after seeking thrice, one should not seek bhiksha and should forego that meal. One should accept this as the will of God and remain without food during that part of the day. My routine was to leave the place where I had halted for the previous night, around 7.00 a.m. Many times, more than one person would offer tea. I used to walk till around noon covering 10 to 12 kms. Most of the time, someone will offer ration on his own. I used to tell them that I did not require ration, as I did not know to cook, but would be happy to accept cooked food instead. Immediately, they would request me to rest for a while so that they could cook fresh food and serve me. I was not taking bath in the morning. During noon, before food, I used to wash the clothes (soap not to be used either for bathing or for washing clothes) and spread the same on the bank for drying and then get into the river for bath. By the time I finished my bath the clothes would be dry. Then I used to take the food offered.

One day, I was passing through a village around noon. No offer of food was forthcoming. One woman was standing outside her house. I sought bhiksha, but she did not respond. I sought from another person and again there was no respond. Now I was left with one more chance. So I was very careful to choose the next person. There was a house having a provision shop in the front portion. An elderly person was sitting inside the shop. I sought bhiksha and he offered to give ration. I politely told him that I would like to have cooked food, as I did not know to cook. He immediately snubbed me asking rudely, "Why do you undertake parikrama if you do not know cooking?" He was right. So I immediately apologized to him, turned back and started walking. After I had gone a few steps I heard a woman's voice calling "Baba, Baba". I turned back, and saw an elderly woman coming towards me running. Behind her the shop owner was also coming. I understood that they were husband and wife. Both of them touched my feet. "We committed a blunder, please do not be angry! Kindly forgive us and have bhiksha in our house". I told them politely that I was not angry. Her husband was right. A parikramavasi was expected to cook his food. I resumed walking. They came in front of me and pleaded with me, saying that unless I had bhiksha in their house they will be very unhappy. Although, I was very hungry I felt that I should go without food, as I deserved this

punishment for not cooking my own food. At the same time I did not want to reject their offer, for two reasons (1) They had apologized. (2) I felt that they were scared of incurring my curse. If I had rejected their offer, they would be permanently under fear. So, I relented and told them that I would have my bath and then take food. They were very happy. The woman had made special sweet dishes in addition to normal food and I really enjoyed the same.

li) One afternoon I was passing through a village. A villager directed me to a provision shop, which distributes groundnut and jaggery free to parikramavasis. I went to the shop. The owner was sitting in the shop and rudely told me to sit on the floor (although a bench was there) and wait. After sometime he instructed a boy in the shop to give me groundnut and jaggery. His attitude was as if giving alms to a beggar. I was really shocked, as people revere parikramavasis and treat them with utmost respect. I collected the items, and was about to leave, when I saw a Hindi Newspaper kept on the bench. As I had not read newspaper for many days, I just took the paper to read at least the headlines. As I was holding the paper, he snatched it from my hands and told me arrogantly, "Are you doing parikrama or reading newspaper"? I was completely taken aback and was very angry. For a moment I thought of hitting him with the stick I was carrying. Then suddenly I realized that during parikrama one should not lose temper whatever be the provocation. So, if I had to hit him I had to break my vow of not losing my temper. I told him that the groundnut and jaggery what he gave me was in the name of Mother Narmada. So it was Prasad. Otherwise, I would have thrown it away. Without waiting for his reaction, I started moving. Four young men stopped me and requested me to halt in that village for the night. I politely told them that I could walk for another 2 hours till dusk and cover about five kilometers. But they persisted and told me that they were watching the happenings. They agreed that the shop owner had misbehaved with me. They said that I would be carrying a bad impression about their village. They admitted that, the shop owner is a very rude person and an exception in their village. They pleaded with me to halt in their village for the night to get convinced that they were very hospitable. I yielded to their pleadings. They arranged tea and started enquiring about me. When they came to know that I belonged to Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, they were very happy and said that they had sold Re.1/- coupons brought out by the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee in the 1960s and raised funds for the construction of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial at Kanyakumari. They took me to a small community hall where the villagers gather during functions, festivals and other activities. They requested me to take rest saying that they would come back after an hour. After some time people started arriving and I came to know that most of the villagers would gather in the evening and a community dinner was being arranged in my honour. As the time was very short, only fifty people could attend. They sang bhajans and some of them spoke and we had a very nice time. I really enjoyed the dinner, offered with sincere love. Those people who were away during the day and could not join us during dinner, started arriving later, and the session went on till almost midnight. They took leave of me saying that although they would like to continue the session, they wanted me to take rest as I had told them very clearly that I would resume my walk next morning. They assured me that they would bring tea in the morning and requested me not to leave without tea.

About ten persons came next morning. After tea I left place. They escorted me and wanted to



accompany me up to the next village. After walking about 1 km. from their village I had to plead with them to return to their village. They took leave of me reluctantly. I had great difficulty holding back my tears.

Cold Night Warm Service

One evening as the Sun was setting, I was looking for a suitable place to halt for the night. There was a village about 2 kms. away. As I was walking, an elderly person who was returning from his work in the field wished me. I stopped and wished him. He addressed me as Bhagwan (Lord) and said that he belonged to a low caste and would be happy if I had bhiksha in his house. I readily accepted his offer. We walked along the river some distance. There was a small hut on the bank. He said that he and his wife lived in that hut. He was a daily wage earner and worked in the fields of landowners. He called his wife and both of them prostrated.

I kept my belongings in his hut, went to the river, had a wash and returned after evening prayer. His wife had cooked fresh food and they served me with great reverence. I really enjoyed their hospitality.

As his hut was very small, he said that he and his wife would sleep outside and requested me to sleep inside. I refused the offer and told that I would sleep outside. With great reluctance he agreed, but said that he would also sleep with me outside.

Being winter, I was experiencing severe cold during nights even while sleeping under a roof. But, although I spent that night in the open, the warmth of his service and the beauty of the full moon made it a memorable night.

Desire getting fulfilled - 1

All through the parikrama, the main desire was to complete the same in the shortest possible time. Occasionally, the desire to satisfy the palate would arise in the mind and would soon get fulfilled.

Groundnut cake was a popular eat at home and during my army days whenever I returned from home after leave, my mother would prepare groundnut cake for distribution to my colleagues. During the parikrama, people used to offer raw groundnut and jaggery. I used to enjoy eating this. One day when someone offered these items, I felt that had I been at home, my mother would have prepared groundnut cake.

That evening when I reached a village and decided to halt there was already a group of 4 parikramavasis (1 man and 3 women) in the small hall on the bank of the river, where pilgrims halt for the night. After a wash, I went to the temple nearby to attend the evening Arati. The other four parikramavasis were already there. After the Arati, the poojari asked one of us to sing bhajan. No one came forward. Then the poojari said, "Everyday after the Arati, bhajan is sung and today the usual singers have not come". Then he requested me to sing. Fortunately, I knew two bhajans and could manage the entire parikrama (131 days) with these two songs, as I was constantly on the

move and spent not more than three hours in a place (except at the place of night halt). I sang one bhajan. The poojari said that he was hearing that song for the first time. The group of parikramavasis also said the same. I told them that this song is sung in the Ramakrishna Math during Ram Nam Sankirtan on Ekadasi days.

After some time I returned to the mantap on the riverbank for the night halt. The other Parikramavasis were already there. We had satsang and the group requested me to sing one more bhajan. I sang the other song, which is also sung during Ram Nam Sankirtan. Then, one of the three women told me that the man with their group was her brother and of the other two women, one was her sister and the other her brother's wife. She said that if I joined their group, her brother would have a male company. Her brother also requested me to join their group. They were doing the parikrama as per the tradition (3 years, 3 months and 13 days) and they had started only 3 months back. I told them that I had to complete the parikrama in the shortest possible time say in about 4 months and requested them to excuse me for not joining them.

Next morning, before leaving the place I was rearranging my bag. I took all the items out of the bag to keep them properly inside the bag. There was a packet of groundnut and a packet of jaggery. On seeing this, one of the women requested me to wait for sometime so that she could prepare groundnut cake and give it to me. As they were traditional parikramavasis they were carrying utensils. They accept ration items and cook their own food. I gave the raw groundnut and jaggery to the woman. She prepared groundnut cake and gave it to me.

Usually during night halt, I used to be the lone Parikramavasi. But that night there was a group of Parikramavasis halting at the village. Had I not halted with that group for the night, my desire for eating groundnut cake would have remained unfulfilled.

(To be continued)

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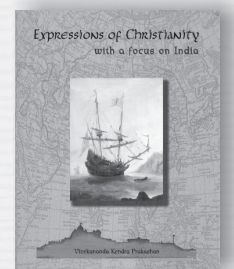
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PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

- A YOGIC VIEW

Sumant Chandwadkar

Practices that help personality development:

Following practices help one to achieve all-round internal personality development so that it will be an ideal instrument to develop one's external personality. Though the practices are predominately meant for the development of respective body of internal personality, they also influence other bodies of internal personality as all these bodies are inter-connected, inter-related and inter-dependent.

Physical and Vital body: Yogic exercises, *Yogasana*, Healthy diet and *Kriya* (process for internal body cleansing) are for the physical body, *Shwasana Abhyasa* and *Pranayama* are for the vital body.

Mental body: *Trataka*, *Savasana*, *Yoga Nidra* and Meditation.

Emotional body: Chanting, recitation, singing classical-devotional-patriotic songs, classical-traditional-devotional dancing, sensible painting and hobbies which are helpful for creativity provided they do not increase attachment.

Intellectual body: Reading - contemplation and understanding healthy literature which is helpful to give inputs to the intellect and help in understanding it. Do some mechanical activities regularly which takes out stagnated and unwanted energy from the system, like washing one's own clothes, cleaning the room and the surrounding, polishing one's own shoes, watering plants, helping others in domestic work etc.

All practices are ultimately helpful for development of **spiritual personality**.

Cycle of divine life (Dharma Chakra) for self-sustained personality:

Though the basic aim of personality development is to be happy, to find out truth and get knowledge for success in life, every individual has a duty to preserve and develop the external world i.e. family, society, and the nation. Unless family, society and the nation give man a congenial atmosphere, man will not have proper growth and development. In the same way, if an individual fails to contribute to the development of his family, society and the nation, they will not be in a position to take care of the individual. When a child is born, the family, the society and the nation take care of his health, education and growth; this is called *yogakshema*.

When an individual grows, he will have to work (*Karma*) for himself, for his family, society and nation. In return, he gets the fruits of action (*Karma Phala*). Out of this fruit of action, a part has to go back to the family, society and the nation; this approach is recognised as divine action (*Yajna Karma*), so that they will be enriched to take care of the next generation (*yogakshema*). Along with the fruits of action (*Karma Phala*) an individual also has to give his time, experience, mind and wealth (*Tan, Man and Dhan*), which she / he has got from the family, the society and the nation. This is called 'service and renunciation' by Swami Vivekananda and it is a twin ideal for uprising Bharat. This is called Cycle of divine life (*Dharma-Chakra*).

If this cycle breaks by any way, everything will collapse and everything will be destroyed. To enrich the society, the divine actions (*Yajna-Karma*) must continue. If society is not enriched, then its capacity to take care of an individual will be damaged; so the individual is also affected. This is the mechanism for self-sustained personality development.

Four-folds consciousness – the basis for the divine life (*Dharma-Chakra*) :

To protect the cycle of divine life (*Dharma-Chakra*) there are four-folds consciousness which man has to understand and follow. Man cannot live without a community, society or nation and without man, any community, society or nation will not come into existence. All are inter-connected, inter-related and inter-dependent.

Civic Consciousness:

Man in general has to live with the minimum requirement for livelihood and security for development and for this an ideal system is necessary in the community, society and the nation. And every ideal system has rules and regulations. It is the prime duty of an individual

to follow all kinds of rules and regulations of community, society and the nation and then only a proper equilibrium prevails in those areas. Follow the rules and regulations by will and not by fear. In order to follow this, inner consciousness has to wake up. This consciousness is called **civic consciousness**. Municipal rules, RTO rules, court rules, various departmental rules, state government rules, central government rules, these are some of the rules and regulations one has to follow.

Social Consciousness:

Man creates society for healthy and happy living. Without a family or society, man will not be able to live. There are two dimensions of the society: one is family and the other is the entire society. Society is nothing but the conglomeration of families. Family is the basic unit for prosperous and peaceful society and society is the strongest support for a rising nation. All families together form the society and such a society directly or indirectly but continuously protect the families. Man has microscopic importance for building up the society but has a major role to hold and develop of the family. It is just like a single cell of the body which is important for any organ but not so visibly important for the whole body in comparison with a single organ or a single system of the body. To have a healthy organ, all cells ought to be healthy. If a cell gets damaged by any means, the body organism will either repair the cell or destroy it. If the body fails to repair the cell or destroy it, the cell will start damaging the organ and then the whole body.

Every man has to have concern for the family and the society in order to live a happy life for himself. It is the divine duty of a man to protect, enrich and follow the disciplines, festivals and get-together of the family and the society. The consciousness which motivates the man to feel

and to follow it is called **social consciousness**.

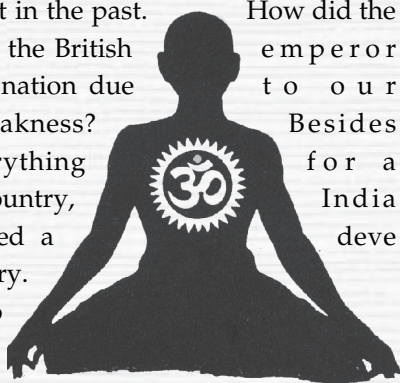
National Consciousness:

Nation means collective identity for every individual. The spirit of nation is flowing all the time and in everybody. It is just like a thread, in a garland. In a garland we can see the flowers but the thread is invisible. Without a thread, making a garland is not possible. Nation is invisible but without its existence no one will have any identity. Our nation India has the history of thousands of years. When the nation is weak, every one of us will be weak and we have experienced it in the past.

Mughals and the British emperor to our national weakness?

How did the Besides for a India develop everything a developed country, is being called a loping country.

Why? To make India great and a superpower, the only thing that is required is a national character and intense love for our nation. The



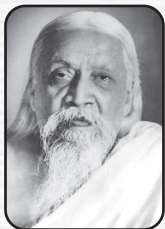
consciousness which motivates man to imbibe the national character is called **National consciousness**.

Spiritual Consciousness:

As we have seen happiness, knowledge and truth are the three facets of 'Ishwara', the ultimate force of universe. To know this, to understand this and to implement this in life is recognised as spirituality. The efforts like different types of *sadhana* towards spirituality raise man from his/her lower instinctive nature towards higher dimensions of life and that allows him/her to be one with all. When man sees oneness everywhere, then she/he gets convinced that every path of *Sadhana* of all sects ultimately leads towards Ishwara. To generate efforts (*sadhana*) and then to establish it in life require a subtle level of consciousness called the **spiritual consciousness**. Every individual can follow it as prescribed in their respective faith. Even one can develop his/her own way for *sadhana* and here in this context Swami Vivekananda said that let there be as many ways for *sadhana* as there are people on this earth.

(Will grow)

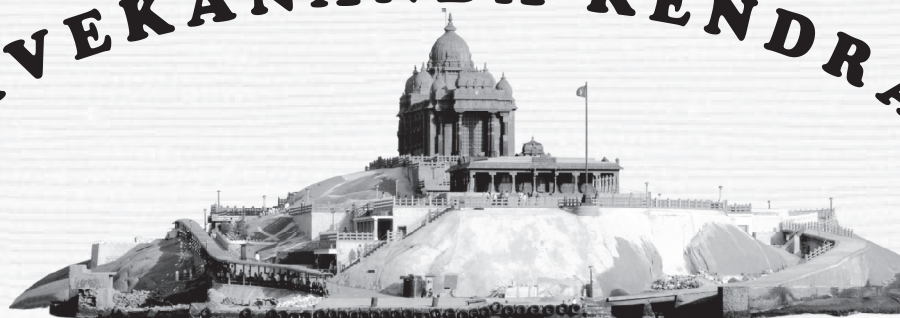
Purna Yoga



By Yoga we can rise out of falsehood into truth, out of weakness into force, out of pain and grief into bliss, out of bondage into freedom, out of death into immortality, out of darkness into light, out of confusion into purity, out of imperfection into perfection, out of self-division into unity, out of Maya into God. All other utilisation of Yoga is for special and fragmentary advantages not always worth pursuing. Only that which aims at possessing the fullness of God is Purna Yoga ; the Sadhaka of the Divine Perfection is the Purna Yogin.

Sri Aurobindo

VIVEKANANDA KENDRA



SAMACHAR

VALLIOOR

25th Year 1008 Deepa Pooja

1008 Deepa Pooja was held at Arulmigu Subramania Swami Thirukovil, Vallioor on 8th March. Mathar Manadu was also held. Sri N. Krishnamoorthiji spoke on the occasion. Sri S. Grahambel, Tirunelveli District Panchayat President and Prop. of S.A.V. Groups addressed the gathering. Mementos were given to Sri S.K. Subramaniam and Mrs.V.Janaki Pushpam for their service of 25 years in Vivekananda Kendra Rural Development Programme. The procession was started by Sri S. Grahambel and Mrs.Thamilarasi lighted the first Kuthuvillakku.

Dr. Kavitha Muthukrishnan, Sri Aruna Sekar, Smt. Kalaiselvam, Sri Thanulingam, Sri Ari Sudalaimani, Sri Chelladurai, Sri S.K.Subramanian, Sri S.S.Thangadurai, Sri Sudalai Muthu, Sri Kesavaperumal, Sri Sankar, Sri Ponnu, and Sri Gopal Sankar donated various kinds of goods for the Pooja. Vallioor area workers were given Sarees and Clothes on the eve of 25th year Deepa Pooja. Sri V. Paramaguru, District In-charge of Vivekananda Kendra organized the function in a grant manner.

TUTICORIN

Swami Gowthamananda Maharaj, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, gave a spiritual lecture on 6th April.

In his speech, Swami Gowthamananda Maharaj spoke about the strong spiritual backward of Hinduism and also the attacks faced by Hinduism from the Muslims and Christians. Actually the British people tried to convert all the Hindus to Christianity, through the Education system of Macaulay. However, it has not happened. Instead, now the Christians in Western countries are converting to Hinduism.

For Hinduism, God includes Happiness, sense and life. Truth in mind, cleanliness in body and soul, unselfishness in life and strong belief in God is the only way to achieve the Almighty.

Susri Nivedita, VicePresident, Vivekananda Kendra, Susri Shantha, Nagar Sangatak, Vivekananda Kendra Rural Development Programme Secretary, Shri S. Ayyappan, Smt. Subathra Vetrivel, Nagar Sanchalak and Shri Sankaran, Nagar Pramuk also participated in the programme.