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AUPA eNEWSLETTER

MANTRA TO PONDER

GOOD ACTIONS MAKE A GOOD MAN

Our actions shape our character. The Upanishads fully endorse the power of work – good or bad – in making us what we are. Therefore they do acknowledge, on the relative plane, causation in the psychological domain.

Ārtabhāga and Yājñavalkya declared the great place of karma.

A man becomes good through good work and evil through evil work.

*karma haiva tad (Ārtabhāga-Yājñavalkyau) oochatuh
punyo vai punyena karmanā bhavati
pāpah pāpena ||*

Brihadāranyaka Upanishad – 3.2.13

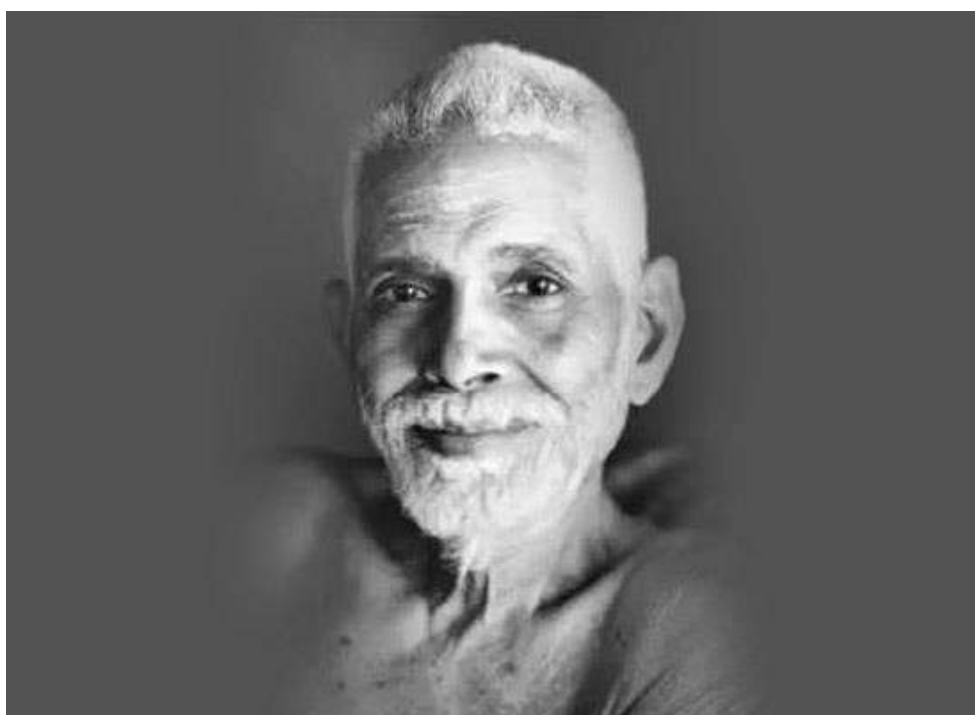
Light on Self-inquiry

THE CENTRAL POINT, THE CENTRE

80 years ago

Dr Emily Gatheir, S.J. Professor of Philosophy at the Sacred Heart College, Kodaikanal, asked:

Can you kindly give me a summary of your teachings? May I have *the central point* of your teachings from your lips?



Maharshi responded:

The *central point* is the thing. Find the *Centre*.

(Extract from) Talk 602, January 1, 1939

{In this witty answer, we can see Maharshi avoiding an academic style of explaining things; he rather calls for self-enquiry and for erasure of the ego, whereby the *centre* of our existence and of the entire universe may be discovered. – Editors}

From the Editor's Desk



Swami
Chidananda

CHARACTER BUILDING

"Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny," was a wise voice that pointed out causation in the realm of personality development. Time and again we have the choice, it seems, to align our thought, word and deed with our values or to go by the urges and instincts that arise in our bosom. The scriptures say to us in one voice, "Be good and do good".

When Hāridrumata, the teacher asked Satyakāma, the prospective student, what his lineage (*gotra*) was, the boy had the choice to tell a lie and mention some respectable *gotra* or to speak the truth that he simply did not know. The boy opted for truthfulness. He spoke with transparency, "I do not know my *gotra*¹. I am the son of Jabālā. When my mother was young, living with her husband, she was too busy attending to a number of guests who came to our house. She never got time to ask my father what our *gotra* was. And my father passed away when I was yet a child."

The teacher was touched by the straightforwardness of the boy and accepted him in his *gurukula* saying, "You must be from good background if you are speaking the truth in this manner."

Such openness made Satyakāma emerge as a great person in the years to follow. Our *karma* follows us like our shadow. From one angle of view, the concept of *karma* may seem pessimistic as though our freedom is taken away. It is not so really. The choice we have at the present moment gives us new, fresh chance to *reshape* our own existence.

"Our tomorrow is our yesterday as *modified* by our today," said Swāmi Chinmayānandaji. No doubt our past *karma* has a bearing on what we are today and on what we enjoy or suffer today. The good news however is that our present *karma* can pave the way towards a happy, positive life for us tomorrow.

All of us have heard, "If wealth is lost, nothing is lost; if health is lost, something is lost; but if character is lost, everything is lost." In spiritual immaturity, if not in spiritual bankruptcy, our priorities go upside down. People who give the greatest importance to wealth and neglect health and character ruin their lives, which becomes evident in due course of time. Many in today's world have become health-conscious and give much importance to fitness but take the matter of character too lightly. They too pay a heavy price for the error. Those of us who realize the paramount place of character and, keeping character as the foundation, pursue health and wealth, will surely attain true peace and experience bliss as life takes us to its later stages.

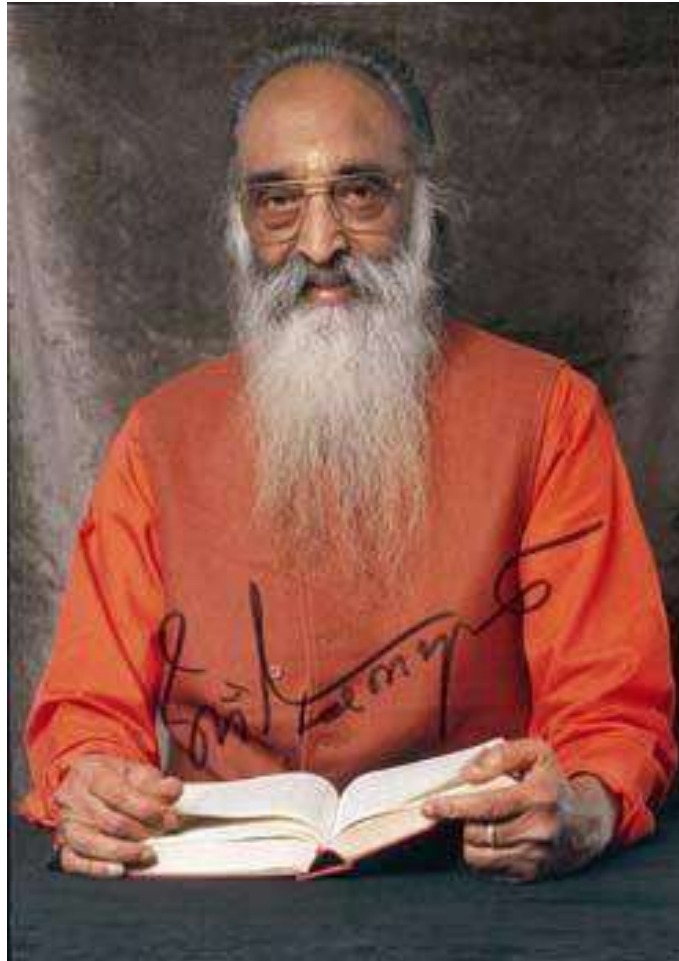
Notes:

1 *nāham-etad-veda yad-gotro'ham-asmeeti* – **Chāndogya Up. 4.4.4**

Thus Spake Chinmaya



WE MUST STUDY



It is sure to be dark if you close your eyes!

Swami Chinmayananda

Word

Of the month

RITAM and SATYAM (TRUTH)

In some general contexts, ritam and satyam both mean what is true. Accordingly, anritam and asatyam would mean falsehood.

For example, in the well-known verse¹ (a *subhāshita*), “Speak what is true; speak what is pleasing; do not speak the unpleasant truth; and do not speak what is false (just) because it is pleasant. This is the eternal law,” the word *satyam* is used to imply what is true, and the word ‘*an-ritam*’ is used to indicate what is false.

The word *ritam* in certain other contexts can mean ‘order’ or ‘cosmic order’ where things are in balance and in right proportion.

Then again when the two words appear together, as in the famous *shānti-mantra*² of Yajurveda, they have the following meanings:

ritam is the meaning that we bear in mind, as said in the scriptures, with the determination to act accordingly.

satyam is ‘doing it’ accordingly, which implies we say as per *ritam* and we do as per *ritam*. We speak the truth and we perform dharma.

At some places, like in the Mundaka Upanishad³, *satyam* can stand for the people who speak the truth and act truthfully.

~

Notes:

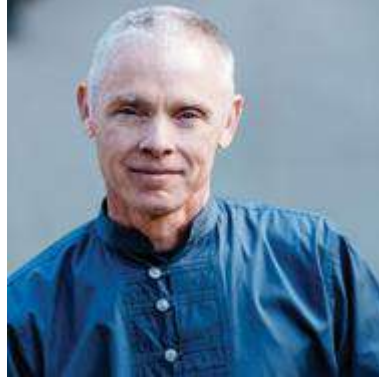
1 *satyam brooyāt, priyam brooyāt, na brooyāt satyam-apriyam
priyam cha nānritam brooyāt, esha dharmah sanātanah*

2 *shan-no mitrah sham varunah* – in **Taittiriya Upanishad**, for example. We have over there – *ritam vadishyāmi, satyam vadishyāmi*.

3 *satyam-eva jayate, nānritam* – **Mundaka Up. 3.1.6**

QUOTE OF THE ISSUE

IT IS YOUR OWN CREATION



Whatever you resist you become. If you resist anger, you are always angry. If you resist sadness, you are always sad. If you resist suffering, you are always suffering. If you resist confusion, you are always confused. We think that we resist certain states because they are there, but actually they are there because we resist them.

Adyashanti

[Adyashanti (born 1962) is an American spiritual teacher and author from the San Francisco Bay Area who offers talks, online study courses, and retreats. He is the author of numerous books, CDs and DVDs and, together with his wife Mukti, is the founder of Open Gate Sangha, a non-profit organization established in 1996 which supports and makes available his teachings.]

TIPS FROM THE UPANISHDS

THE ULTIMATE TREASURE

Countless possibilities mark our life – both outside and inside. The spiritual science speaks of the “inside”. The Upanishads awaken us to realize the hidden treasures of our inner world, all within us. While we usually stay identified with our senses and their pleasures, the Vedānta helps us take cognizance of the deeper layers of emotions, values, beliefs and, ultimately, Pure Awareness (*chit, purusha*).

Spiritual life is a movement in Awareness towards Awareness (*purusha*).

There is nothing higher than the PURUSHA. That is the ultimate; that is the highest state to be reached.

purushāt na param kinchit, sā kāsthā sā parā gatih

Katha Upanishad, mantra 1.3.11

Dr G wrote:



LEARN TO BE ALONE (AND HAPPY) Ward off Loneliness!

The truly happy person does not rely on others to feel better. There are people who are comfortable all by themselves, even for long stretches at a time. They do generally like other people. These are the people who don't need to put up a false front to try to impress or intimidate you. With them, what you see is what you get. When you are in the presence of such people, you can see the serenity and tranquillity emanating from them.

One such person was a widely respected swami who came out into the wider world so seldom that he was no familiar with the practice of being put on hold when making a telephone call. He turned to his companions with a questioning look when the music began to play.

"They play the music so you won't get lonely," one of the others explained. The swami laughed. "Do they really think I will get lonely if there is no one else to talk to? Do they not realize that you can be alone without being lonely?"

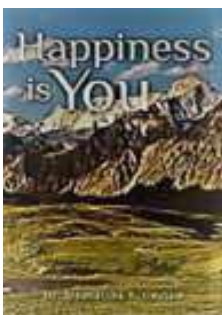
The neuro-chemical oxytocin

Sadly, most of us don't have that realization. We avoid being alone at any cost. Often those lacking human companionship turn to animals for warmth and affection. Various scientific studies confirm that proximity to pets is healing and raises the level of the feel-good neuro-chemical oxytocin in the brain. But Americans had 61 million pets in the year 1991; today¹ we have 161 million animal companions. Why has there been such a dramatic increase in the number of pets, and why do we spend so much (an estimated \$48 billion each year) on their care? Certainly not everyone gets a pet as insurance against loneliness, but the numbers seem to show making a pet part of their lives is one way Americans avoid being alone.

Why are we so afraid of being alone? Part of the reason is that being alone forces you to face who you are and most of us strive to avoid that kind of self-awareness. But this is precisely what you need to do in order to experience what is happiness. Look at yourself as you are, a spiritual being having a human experience, a being full of faults and virtues. Now accept that person and get to know that person better. Love that person because you will never truly be able to love others if you don't love yourself – again, not in an egotistic way but in a healthy, accepting way.

Note:

1 The reference to "today" should be taken as 2012, when this book came out.



{The above is an excerpt from the book by Dr. Siddhartha B Gautam,
HAPPINESS IS YOU, pages 10 - 11.}

Smt. Indira Gautam writes from USA



We at S T E P (Society to Educate People) wish all the readers of AUPA, the e-newsletter, Happy New Year 2019.

HAPPINESS YOGA 68 will be held on Saturday February 2, as most of our participants take time off in the first few days of January to travel, to spend time with family, relatives and friends spread across the country.

On the first Saturday of February, Dr Manesh Thomas will speak on “Health Care Tips for a Healthy Heart”.

During this monthly event, we meet to have fun while we discuss a topic that the public can benefit from.

I will report on the HY68 in the next issue of AUPA.

STEP (Society to Educate People), a non-profit organization initiated by Dr Sid Gautam. HY is held on the first Saturday of every month.

Words from Guest Writers



WHY VIVEKANANDA MATTERS MORE TODAY **Prof. Makarand Paranjape**

A COUPLE OF YEARS BACK, ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA’S birthday *tithi* according to the Hindu almanac, I found myself through sheer grace at Belur Math, on the outskirts of the great colonial metropolis of Kolkata. This is the international headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the order of monks and the movement that Vivekananda founded on May Day, 1897, in the name of his guru, Sri Ramakrishna. There were hundreds of monks from different parts of India and the world attending events, helping in the arrangements, meeting the thronging visitors and blessing those who cared to bow down to them. It was a joyous and festive occasion

I was fortunate to meet senior Swamis of the order, including the general secretary, Swami Prabhananda, and the vice-president of the order, Swami Suhitananda. A seemingly casual conversation with the latter, which I am sure he himself must have forgotten, gave me an insight into why Vivekananda matters all the more today. Swami Suhitananda asked me how I came to be so interested in Vivekananda as to produce two or three books on him. I said, “When I was still a graduate student at the University of Illinois, my teacher, Professor Giri Tikku, put the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* into my hands. Whatever I learnt about spirituality and *sadhana* started seriously with that book.” There was a silence before I added, a bit haltingly, “But I’ve never been able to write about Thakur [Sri Ramakrishna]... I am stuck with Swamiji [Vivekananda].” With an enigmatic smile, Suhitananda ji said, “Thakur himself has ensured that Swamiji has taken hold of you—he will make you work!”

THE WORK THAT SWAMI VIVEKANANDA came to do was this great transformation of the human condition. This is a truth that few of his many million admirers fully understand or know. That is because his short life of less than 40 years (1863-1902), especially the last nine after his spectacular debut at the Parliament of World’s Religions in Chicago, was marked by such extraordinary dynamism and activity in the public sphere that Vivekananda’s spiritual mission seems eclipsed today.

Vivekananda burst onto the world stage on that fateful 9/11 in 1893, bringing the full force of Sanatan Dharma into the very heart of the modern, techno-dominant Western civilisation. Vivekananda not only pioneered a new chapter in the science- religion, but also the inter-faith dialogue. Thus he set into motion the double-helix of a rational-spiritual alter-modernity, pushing back against the global tide of the hegemonic, colonialist-materialist Western civilisation. Vivekananda refashioned Hinduism for the contemporary age, coining the evocative phrase ‘Practical Vedanta’ for this purpose. He also inaugurated a new phase of national awakening and affirmation, emphasising that strength is virtue, weakness sin. This was just the message that a supine and defeated civilisation needed.

It was Vivekananda who linked the personal and the political in a manner that was later honed and advanced in the direction of India’s independence by Mahatma Gandhi.

It is no surprise that Vivekananda became modern India’s first international celebrity in addition to a national hero. His triumphant return home is captured in a series of extraordinary public lectures collected under the title *From Colombo to Almora*. Anyone interested not only in understanding Vivekananda’s continuing relevance but exploring solutions to India’s enduring problems ought to read this book. It is a nation-rousing sequence of outpourings of the cyclonic monk who, during his nearly four years of extraordinary success abroad, never forgot the plight of India. Experiencing the luxuries and enjoying the prosperity of the West, he often anguished over the utter penury and wretchedness of his countrymen. His letters were filled with instructions not only on the daily routine of monks and plans for a bigger headquarters for the Order, but on how to transform his country. He dreamt of creating a generation of selfless men and women who would have the courage to serve their less fortunate Indian brothers and sisters. He asked of them the strength of a Kshatriya, a warrior, and the learning and luminosity of a Brahmin, a scholar. But this combination was to be transformed into a different kind of *shudra*-dharma or work of dedicated service of the masses.

As he declared on February 28th, 1897, on his victorious return to Calcutta, “India I loved before I came away. Now the very dust of India has become holy to me, the very air is now to me holy; it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha” (*Complete Works* 3: 325). Immediately plunging into work, he founded the Ramakrishna Mission, enjoining upon his new order of monks the service and uplift of the masses through an efficient, Western-style organisation. Its motto, ‘*Atmano mokshartham jagat-hitaya cha*’, means for one’s own liberation and the welfare of the whole world. Inspired by a mantra from the Rig Veda, it fashioned a new kind of spiritual activism,

India's own liberation theology. Neither purely spiritual seekers nor mere activists, the sadhus (holy men and women) inspired by Vivekananda were dedicated to both inner and outer transformation. It was Vivekananda who thus linked the personal and the political in a manner that was later honed and advanced in the direction of India's independence by Mahatma Gandhi. No surprise, then, that in recent decades, perhaps more than anyone else, it is his namesake Narendra Modi, who as Gujarat's Chief Minister and India's Prime Minister, has been most influenced by Vivekananda's doctrine of empowering India.

Galvanising both masses and classes, Vivekananda toured the length and breadth of the land, carrying his message of religious and social transformation. For Vivekananda, the key to changing the national psyche was religion, which he considered the backbone of India. Vivekananda harped on three fundamental themes: making the highest truths of Indian spirituality available to the masses; removing caste and gender inequalities; and instilling self-respect and pride in a colonised country by awakening in each citizen the idea of the innate divinity of the self, which to him was the essence of Vedanta. His radical egalitarianism and championing of religious and social democracy made him India's most progressive reformer long before Marxist ideology had taken root in India. Vivekananda's words are still rousing in their eloquence and prophetic power. As he said at the start of his Ramnad address on January 25th, 1897: "The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking..." (*Complete Works* 3: 161).

One of Vivekananda's radical theses was that India had declined because of its neglect of women and 'untouchables': 'We are horrible sinners,' he says in his letter of March 19th, 1894, to Swami Ramakrishnananda, 'and our degradation is due to our calling women, 'despicable worms,' 'gateways to hell,' and so forth....' (*Complete Works* 6: 265). In the same letter he goes on to say, 'Do you think our religion is worth the name? Ours is only don't-touchism, only 'Touch me not,' 'Touch me not....' (ibid). In his letter to Alasinga Perumal, he is even more categorical: 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages!' (*Complete Works* 5: 57). From statements such as these, it would appear that Vivekananda had a complete programme for the regeneration of India.

Indeed, it is to Vivekananda that we should turn to have a truer insight into what it means to be a modern Hindu than to the other champions of political Hinduism or cultural nationalism. No wonder the 'integral humanism' of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya arguably owes more to Vivekananda than other major thinkers of that period. Sri Aurobindo, too, carried Vivekananda's line of thought and action forward in his key contributions to human progress such as integral yoga and the supramental manifestation. Similarly, in his uncompromising opposition to social inequality and caste prejudice, Vivekananda anticipates BR Ambedkar without going so far as to break Hinduism itself. Thus, Vivekananda remains, without question, pivotal to these and many other movements that led to the making of modern India.

Vivekananda, the visionary, was neither a hater nor blind admirer of the modern and materially superior West. In his speech in Ramnad on returning to India, he clearly spelt out the dangers that assailed India on its road to modernity: "There are two great obstacles on our path in India, the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern European civilisation. Of these two, I vote for the old orthodoxy, and not for the Europeanised system; for the old orthodox man may be ignorant, he may be crude, but he is a man, he has a faith, he has strength, he stands on his own feet; while the Europeanised man has no backbone, he is a mass of heterogeneous ideas picked up at random from every source— and these ideas are unassimilated, undigested, unharmonized"

(CW 3: 166).

In the inaugural issue of January 14th, 1899, of *Udbodhana*, the Bangla periodical of the Ramakrishna Order, he calls for a blend of the ideals of ancient Hindus and Greeks for modern India, of renunciation and action in the world, of *sattva* (purity) and *rajas* (activity): ‘the real life of the Western world depends upon the influx, from India, of the current of Sattva or transcendentalism; and ... unless we overpower and submerge our Tamas [slothful ignorance] by the opposite tide of Rajas, we shall never gain any worldly good or welfare in this life....’ (CW 4: 404).

In an interesting and a wide-ranging interview published in the *Hindu* in February 1897, Vivekananda offers a radical re-imagining of Karma as a doctrine of empowerment, instead of the fatalism it was understood to be then. Moreover, his overall emphasis on democratic reform is unmistakable: “The new order of things is the salvation of the people by the people” (CW 4: 206-208). In an interview published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of September 1898, Vivekananda was asked, “What do you consider the distinguishing feature of your movement, Swamiji?” He unhesitatingly replied, “Aggression... aggression in a religious sense only. Other sects and parties have carried spirituality all over India, but since the days of Buddha we have been the first to break bounds and try to flood the world with missionary zeal.”

Vivekananda’s fundamental beliefs are pithily captured in some of his sayings and utterances. The most striking, memorable, or inspiring of these quotations offer us a short-hand entry into Vivekananda’s mind and philosophy. For instance, the declaration, ‘Man is born to conquer nature and not to follow it’ (*Complete Works* 5: 411). The whole purpose of religion is to raise ‘the brute unto man, and man unto God’ (*Complete Works* 5: 411).

Weakness, thus, is the worst form of ignorance, while strength is the virtue that we need to seek in our quest for self-excelling: ‘This world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong’ (*Complete Works* 5: 411). The way to self-realisation depends on one’s temperament: ‘Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma—these are the four paths which lead to salvation. One must follow the path for which one is best suited’, but, in the very next breath he adds, ‘in this age special stress should be laid on Karma-Yoga,’ leaving us no doubt that an active, energetic, heroic life was preferable to a sedentary, quiet, defeatist one (*Complete Works* 5: 416).

The essence of religion in everyday life was helping others, being compassionate: ‘Let me help my fellow men; that is all I seek’ (*Complete Works* 5: 419). The highest value in uncertain times was truth: ‘I stand for truth. Truth will never ally itself with falsehood. Even if all the world should be against me, Truth must prevail in the end’ (*Complete Works* 5: 420). Perhaps the whole of his life’s mission may be summed up in one of these utterances: ‘Doing good to others is virtue (Dharma); injuring others is sin. Strength and manliness are virtue; weakness and cowardice are sin. Independence is virtue; dependence is sin. Loving others is virtue; hating others is sin. Faith in God and in one’s own Self is virtue; doubt is sin. Knowledge of oneness is virtue; seeing diversity is sin’ (*Complete Works* 5:421).

Vivekananda was not only an inspired spiritual teacher and leader, but also a great bridge-builder between the West and the East. In a short span of less than nine years starting with his legendary debut at the Parliament of World’s Religions in September 1893 till his death in July 1902, he triggered a national awakening in India and contributed to a new phase of the global inter-faith movement, based on religious pluralism and openness in the Western world. When we confront a career so astonishing, we are compelled to admit that in spite of the growing body of knowledge on him, including his own works going into nine volumes and the hundreds of books by others, a large part of him defies our comprehension.

Josephine MacLeod, one of his most faithful and long-standing admirers, sums up the feeling of awe he inspired in all those who came in contact with him: 'The thing that held me in Swamiji is his *unlimitedness*. I could never touch the bottom— or top—or sides. The amazing size of him!' (quoted in NP Sil's *Swami Vivekananda: A Reassessment*: 23). As Romain Rolland, in his Prelude to *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, puts it, '[H]is pre-eminent characteristic was kingliness. He was a born king and nobody ever came near him either in India or America without paying homage to his majesty' (Rolland: 5). Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, India's last governor-general, premier of Madras Presidency, and governor of West Bengal, goes a step further, 'Swami Vivekananda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom. We therefore owe everything to Swami Vivekananda' (*Great Thinkers on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda*: 85). Even Jawaharlal Nehru, India's secularist and socialist first Prime Minister, acknowledged in a statement that 'He came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralised Hindu mind and gave it self-reliance and some roots in the past' (ibid: 104).

Vivekananda, the Swami who remains somewhat of an enigma, still beckons us to exceed the limits of our understanding, to reach the heights and depths of consciousness that he had tried to communicate through his dazzling though short life. No wonder he is more relevant today than ever before.

*{The above is 'extracts' from a longer article by Dr Paranjape. Prof. Paranjape is the director, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. He is the author of the forthcoming book **Swami Vivekananda: Hinduism and India's Road to Modernity**}*



WHAT IS REAL?

Look beyond the entire domain of the known!

In ancient India there was a king called Janaka, who was also a sage. One day Janaka was taking a nap on his flower-strewn bed with his servants fanning him and his soldiers standing guard outside his door. As he dozed off, he had a dream in which a neighboring king defeated him in battle, took him prisoner, and had him tortured. As soon as the torture began, Janaka woke with a start to find himself lying on his flower-strewn bed with his servants fanning him and his soldiers on guard.

Once again he dozed off and had the same dream. And once again he woke up to find himself safe and comfortable in his palace.

Now Janaka began to be disturbed by several thoughts: While he was asleep, the world of his dreams had seemed so real. Now that he was awake, the world of the senses seemed real. Which of these two worlds is the real one, he wanted to know.

None of the philosophers, scholars, and seers he consulted could give him an answer. And for many years he searched in vain, till one day a man called Ashtāvakra knocked at the door of the palace.

Now, Ashtāvakra means, "deformed or crooked at eight places," and he got that name because that is exactly what his body had been from birth. At first the king was not disposed to take this man seriously. "How can a misshapen man like you be the carrier of wisdom denied to my seers and scholars?" he asked.

"Right from my childhood, all avenues have been closed to me – so I avidly pursued the path of wisdom," was Ashtāvakra's reply. "Speak, then," said the king.

So this is what Ashtāvakra said: "O King, neither the waking state nor the dream state is real. When you are awake, the world of dreams does not exist and when you dream the world of the senses does not exist. Therefore, neither is real."

"If both the waking and the dream states are unreal, then what is real?" asked the king. "There is a state beyond these two. Discover that. It alone is real."



Webinars:

The following webinars were held in the recent past:

Webinar 137 Dec 2, 2018
ON BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD part 4 – by Swami Chidananda

Webinar 138 Dec 16, 2018
EDUCATION FOR WELL-BEING – by Sri Satyesh Bellur

Webinar 139 Dec 23, 2018
THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND – by Swami Chidananda

EVENTS:

DHIMAHI WING

Aurangabad, Dec 1 – 3: The article by Dr Piyul Mukherjee gives the details of the three events we had in Aurangabad.

New Delhi, Dec 11: Col Dahiya and Rajan Puri facilitated an interactive session with the boys of class 8 in a government school in South Delhi. Swamiji engaged the students on setting goals, focusing on their studies and other work etc against the larger backdrop of life's purpose.

AUPA ACTIVITIES IN AURANGABAD, DECEMBER 2018 (Report by Dr Piyul Mukherjee)

Situated in the Deccan heartland, Aurangabad is a vibrant city of over a million inhabitants, with a history that can be traced back a thousand years. It is a well known tourism hub.

Aurangabad is also the seat of a permanent bench of the Bombay High Court, with over 18 judges and 1000 practising advocates.

This December, Swami Chidananda as the Chief Guest, delivered the Late Adv. Vishnupant Adwant Memorial endowment lecture. Held at an auditorium in the MP Law College, the jam-packed audience of members of the judiciary, the Police Commissioner, senior office bearers of the municipal corporation including the Mayor's office, and the staff and students of the college paid rapt and absorbed attention.

Swamiji, in his inimitable and lucid way, discussed '**The Contours of Law and Morality in Indian Society**', drawing the attention of the august audience to the fact that while 'laws' may be of

professional interest to those involved in the legal profession, 'laws' were made by lawmakers, who were in fact entrusted by society-and that,ultimately both law and morality was of interest to all humanity.

Over time and throughout history, there was always a divergence and a difference of opinion in the interpretation of laws. Taking the example of Bhagat Singh, Swamiji pointed out that while we Indians saw him as a freedom fighter, the British saw him as a terrorist - it appeared as if the eyes of morality and the eyes of law tended to go in opposite directions. In the name of religions, the world had seen bloodshed. Divisions drove strife between nations, between religions, and even between families and human beings.

Swamiji quoted Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Zen Master who has said that miracles were not in flying or in walking on water. The real miracle was in walking on earth with peace in the heart.

On an earlier evening, on December 1, at a beautiful venue named Benchmark, Swamiji met and interacted with a select gathering of the elite professionals of Aurangabad, where he spoke a few words on 'Wisdom for Right Action'. In spite of increasing comforts, of modern science and technology, we were divided by strife and conflicts. In a world of ever increasing knowledge, there was a shortage apparently, of wisdom. Drawing an analogy with a tree, Swamiji showed that the beauty and life of the tree was to be found both in its new shoots and leaves (the new technologies of the world), and in the old roots (the ancient, time-tested wisdom). Wisdom was to be found in all schools of thought across religions,be it Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Sufi traditions.

Swamiji suggested that we dig deeper, even into wisdom, and make note that all thoughts, words, actions and indeed, wisdom, stemmed from Consciousness.

And advanced spirituality was when we could take a second look at ourselves, in the spirit of self-inquiry. Only when we would be free of all biases – religious,regional, political; when we would not expend all our energies on the 'outside' senses, would we be able to see all humanity as one.

Quoting Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita: *swadharme nidhanam shreyaha paradharmo bhayawaha (3/35)*... Swamiji asked that we discover where our true skills lie. To find out our true temperament, and not get carried away by fancies or passing fads.

The erudite and well-read Police Commissioner of Aurangabad, Chiranjeev Prasad later appreciatively commented that he was very happy to hear Swamiji's interpretation of the shloka, since it has often been misrepresented in a narrow manner that suggests one should follow only one's own religion, and stay away from other religions.

Later, during the same trip, Piyul Mukherjee of the AUPA team addressed first year students of law, at the MP Law College, on the need for the subject of 'Sociology', and for all of us to pay attention to the working of human society. What appears to be existing by itself, was often needed to be understood systematically. The more we paid heed to social institutions – such as family, education, governments, the more we would understand the workings of concepts such as 'power', 'dominance', 'inequality', 'class' and 'caste'. Since each of us was a member of society, the task was often 'reflexive' – we needed to study objectively, something that we were part of, ourselves.

The **AUPA** event under its wing called **DHIMAH**I was extremely well received and covered extensively across local newspapers at Aurangabad. The links to the talks can be found on Swamiji's FaceBook that is run by the **AUPA team**.



Swami ji speaking at Benchmark, Aurangabad, on December 1st, 2018



On dais at Benchmark



Swami Ji being facilitated by Hon.Nandkumar Ghodele, Mayor of Aurangabad.



Audience consisting of lawyers, jurists, civil servants and students for Swamiji's talk at Tapadia Natya Mandir, Aurangabad, December 2, 2018



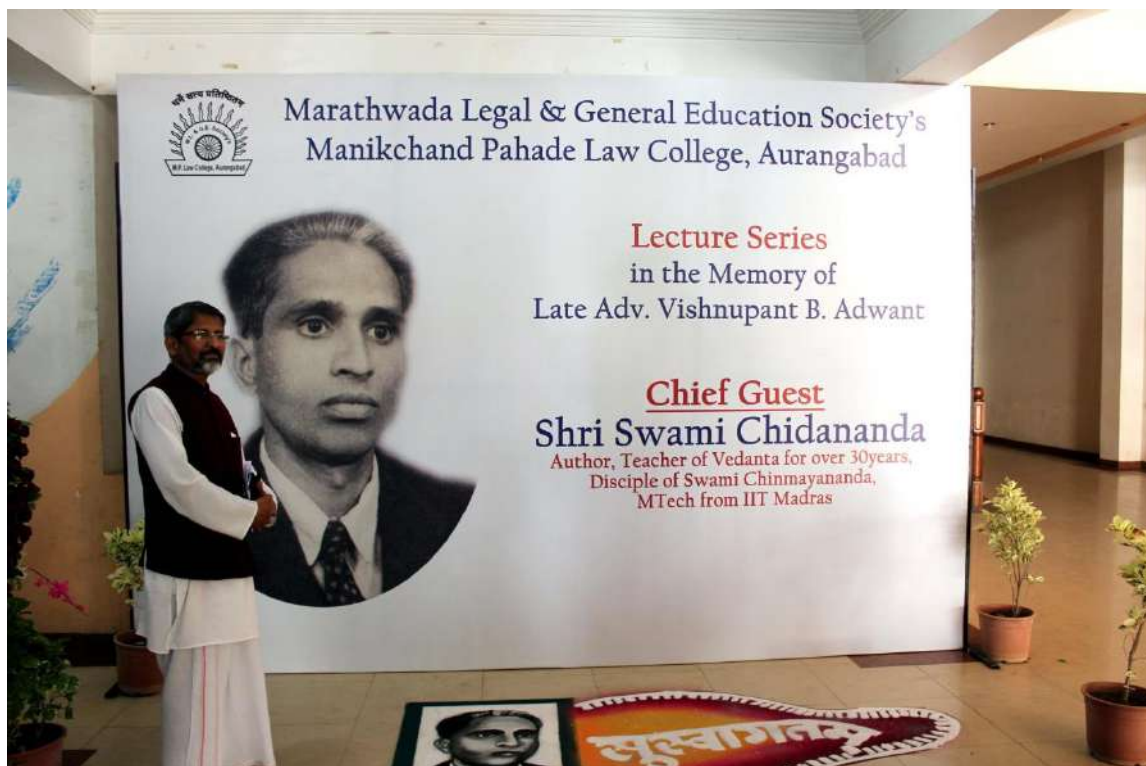
Swamiji giving talk.



Overflow of audience gathered in the foyer to listen to Swamiji's talk on the big screen



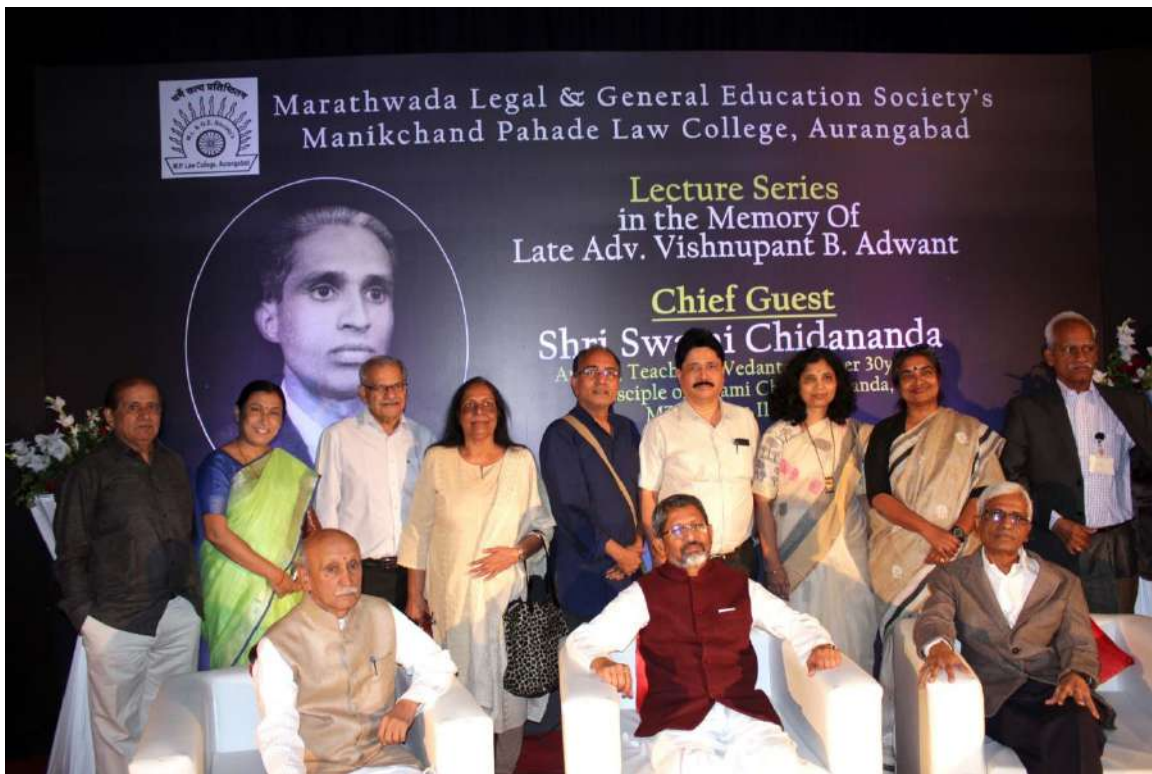
Releasing the booklet with the text of the lecture



The grand event was in memory of Late Advocate Vishnupant Adwant



Advocate Shrikant Adwanti and family with Swami Ji



Key members pose for a photograph after the lecture



Dr. Piyul Mukherjee being facilitated by Principal Dr. C. M. Rao



Rajan Puri and Swamiji for the DHIAMHI event at a South Delhi school on December 11, 2018



January 3 thru 9: The much publicized National Camp is finally going on at the time this e-newsletter reaches your hands. After inauguration on January 3, where Smt Romila Lalwani from Los Angeles was the chief guest, we had the classes on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and Sundar Kand start off. Ms Diya Bose presented a short dance during the inaugural function.

On **January 4**, Siddharth Belmannu, an upcoming and accomplished singer, presented a musical concert.

On **January 6**, Ms Kanika Bhat from the nation's capital will present a dance.

DHIMAHI: Swamiji and Cdr Guruprasad will address soldiers / officers of Indian Navy on January 8 at INS Shivaji in Lonavala. They will in fact hold a dialogue that addresses issues that relate to soldiers' life.

**NATIONAL YOUTH DAY
BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
Saturday, January 12, 2019**



Team AUPA pays homage to the memory of the Lion of Vedānta, Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902), on the auspicious day.

He helped countless Indians rediscover their spiritual heritage and regain their pride in their own culture and tradition.

BIRTHDAY OF GURU GOBIND SINGH
Sunday, January 13, 2019



The tenth Sikh Guru, a spiritual master, warrior, poet and philosopher, was installed as the leader of the Sikhs at age nine. In his short life span of 42 years, he founded the Sikh warrior community, introduced the Five K's (the five articles of faith) and enshrined the Guru Granth Sahib as Sikhism's eternal Guru.
Our Reverential Salutations to Guru Gobind Singh!

MAKARA SANKRĀNTI
Tuesday, January 15, 2019



This festival is in reference to Surya Deva (Sun-god). The sun stops his southerly excursion and begins to move northward again, on this Indian equivalent of the winter

solstice. [The dates of Western astronomy and Indian astrology differ here for certain reasons. Both have their own validity.] Uttarāyana(the six months in a year when the sun keeps moving northward) begins on this day. Religious acts like japa (repetition of God's name or of a mantra), tapas (austerities) and dāna (giving away gifts to deserving people) have much more efficacy on this day.

We wish all our readers HAPPY SANKRĀNTI.

TEAM AUPA

(AUPA is the short form of AUPANISHADA-PURUSHA, the truth of the sacred source called Upanishads. This e-newsletter comes from Project Manager of the website: aupa.in – Upanishad Wisdom).

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