

“Let Us Be A Light Unto Ourselves...”

Note prepared by Swami Jyotirmayananda for the conclusion-day of the Seven-Week Residential Vedanta Course (October 8 - November 24, 2013), conducted by Swami Tattvavidananda, a learned disciple of Swami Dayananda Sarasvati and an Acharya at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, PA, U.S.A.

As an ardent student of ‘Vivekananda Literature’, having had the privilege of attending Swami Tattvavidanandaji’s Vedanta Course for a couple of years at the Gurukulam, I am glad to present some of my thoughts before you.

Swami Vivekananda, who made history in Chicago 120 years ago, once said that Science and Spirituality should shake hands. It is indeed heartening to note that his wish seems to be gradually getting fulfilled. As we all know, Swami TV (as he is popularly known amongst his Vedanta students), in the course of his Vedanta class, does not miss an opportunity to place before us the outcome of various modern researches and developments in the fields of science and psychology vis-à-vis the Indian spiritual lore, and the Vedic wisdom in particular. It is evident that the modern science, psychology, as also the biology are increasingly tending to confirm the exalted spiritual experience of the ancient saints and sages of India, so much so we are now in a position to understand how spirituality

(*adhyatma-vidya*) takes a quantum leap into the realm of the Unknown and the Unknowable, while the science seems to have been caught up in a vicious circle, faltering under the weight of the known.

Besides being a learned, traditional teacher of Vedantic lore, blessed by Pujya Swami Dayanandaji, Swami TV is also endowed with a clear understanding of the historical perspective of how Swami Vivekananda and his life and times have marked a significant turning point in the annals of the Indian history. As his students know, Swami TV’s Vedanta class is often interspersed with references to Swami Vivekananda and his significant utterances in the realms of science and spirituality. It clearly reflects on Swami TV’s admiration of and love for Swami Vivekananda, and many a time, his scintillating expositions during the Vedanta class, have invariably reminded me of the “Inspired Talks” of Swami Vivekananda at the ‘Thousand Island Park’ in the U.S. To my mind Swami TV is the only disciple of Pujya Swamiji

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who is an ardent votary of Swami Vivekananda and his teachings, having been fired with the Advaitic zeal and wisdom of Vivekananda, so much so at times I have even felt that if Vivekananda were to pay an unexpected visit to the Gurukulam and attend Swami TV's Vedanta class, he would feel immensely happy that what he envisioned more than a century ago is gradually getting unfolded. As Swami Vivekananda exhorted long ago, "Work out the salvation of this land and the whole world, each of you thinking that the entire burden is on your shoulders. Carry the life and light of the Vedanta to every door, and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your success, you will have the satisfaction that you have lived and died for a great cause. In the success of this cause, however brought about, is centered the salvation of humanity here and hereafter."

Needless to say that Swami TV's scriptural expositions, incisive and didactic as they are, reflect on the depth of his understanding, erudition, command over the 2

Sanskrit language, and above all, his knack of presenting the intricate subject matter with all possible clarity and certainty, backed by his unassuming nature, childlike simplicity, his inimitable sense of humour and didactic anecdotes, is a great blessing to the students of Vedanta and the spiritual aspirants. Thus, in Swami TV himself do we find a happy blend of Science and Spirituality — both going together hand-in-hand. We see, quite often, in the course of

his expositions, he invariably supports and reinforces the *adhyatma-vidya* with the latest scientific evidences and research analyses. And, above all, his uncompromising insistence on the adherence to the basic disciplines of the Vedanta like *viveka* and *vairagya*, and the paramount need for freedom from all psychological dependence and total negation of all that is temporal (*mithya*) – the habitual human addiction to names and forms (*naama-rupa buddhi*), even as one endeavours to lead a normal and simple life of devotion and dedication, for the attainment of the summum bonum of human life (*atma-jnana*).

As Swami TV loves to put it, let us, the students of Vedanta, be a light unto ourselves and thereby to the world at large. In other words, may we all try our best, with all our sincerity, to live up to the lofty teachings of the Vedanta in our day-to-day life and be blessed thereby.

Finally, I should not fail to mention here as to how Swami Vivekananda brought me in contact with Pujya Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, in as much as we together participated in Washington, in a program (two decades ago) celebrating the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's appearance at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893. While Pujya Swamiji spoke eloquently on the occasion, I had the rare privilege of paying my reverential Homage to Swami Vivekananda, the Great Hindu Monk of India. Later, in the year 2000, when Pujya Swamiji invited me to participate in the 'UN Millennium Peace Summit' at New York, I also had the unique privilege of visiting the AVG, (along with the other monastic

delegates to the Summit from India), where we were all formally honoured by Pujya Swamiji himself. Since then, by the Divine Grace, I have been able to visit abroad, ever year, to attend various programs and conferences in the US. I have also been able to attend annually, the AVG anniversary celebrations and other programs at the AVG, and every time Pujya Swamiji and the AVG have been very kind during my visit and stay here. Whatever little knowledge of Vedanta I have gained is solely due to my participation, from time to time, in the lecture programs and the Vedanta classes conducted by Pujya Swamiji and his senior disciples who are the Acharyas at the AVG. I feel thrilled when I visualize in my mind how overjoyed Swami Vivekananda would have been if he were to visit Pujya Swamiji's Gurukulam, to see the great work done here for more than a quarter of a century, in the noble cause of disseminating

the Vedic Knowledge in particular, and in the service of the Hindu Dharma and the Samaj, in general! Let the lines from Pujya Swamiji's 'Benediction' to my book on Vivekananda (released by Pujya Swamiji last year) speak for itself: "Swami Vivekananda is looked upon by an informed Indian as a person who enshrined in himself all that is true and noble of the spiritual heritage of Bharath. His vision to make everyone see the beauty of oneness, love and harmony, backed by his tireless efforts to actualize it, is getting unfolded all over the world not only through the Mission and Order he founded but also through various other individuals and institutions who owe to Swamiji's vision for their inspiration..." – significant lines indeed, revealing the source of inspiration behind the great work done by Pujya Swamiji himself as also the AVG founded by him.

Action can produce likes and dislikes only if the result is looked upon as a success or failure. When the result is looked upon as a function of the invariable laws of action or if it is looked upon as prasada from the Lord, the reaction of success and failure is avoided. The mind is calm and tranquil in spite of apparent successes and failures and no new likes and dislikes are created. The existing likes and dislikes are created. The existing likes and dislikes will no doubt create desires and produce actions but creation of new likes and dislikes are avoided. The vicious chain of action-success/failure-likes/dislikes-desire-action is broken. With the attitude of prasada buddhi, or karma yoga with respect to the result, an action which is born of likes and dislikes becomes the means of eliminating the very likes and dislikes. The mind free from the reactions of success and failure is free from the agitations of elation and depression. Such a mind is a contemplative mind. It can evaluate the results and learn.

Pujya Swamiji