

Value Insight

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Bi-Monthly

Righteousness

- Reflecting on Righteousness
- Education and Ethics : Hand in Hand
- Righteousness Immortalised



A bi-monthly magazine of
Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV)
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Value Insight

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Commander S. Mohan Sought voluntary retirement from the Indian Navy after an exciting sea-going career of a quarter century as an electronics engineer. Apart from supervising construction of new warships and project management of ship-construction whilst posted in shore assignments, during his sea-going tenures he was Head of the Electrical Department on board a missile-frigate, an anti-submarine frigate (INS KIRPAN), and mine-sweepers.



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Aruna Srinivasan is a journalist, columnist and an author. She writes both in English and Tamil on subjects ranging from business management, current affairs and social issues. Her works have appeared in mainstream newspapers and magazines in India and Southeast Asia. She has authored a book in Tamil on management, a book in English on Women in Tamil Fiction and has edited an online Tamil magazine, "Thisaigal." She has also presented a breakfast talk series for All India Radio. 'Cosmic Dots', a novel, is her latest work.

Readers Write

“ I read some extremely well written articles on Gratitude in the October issue of FRNV. They have made me think deeply about how we must cultivate the habit of feeling grateful for everything around us. The air we breathe, water we drink and the food we take to sustain us are all provided by nature. Nothing belongs to us. When we water a young coconut tree it gives it back in the form of tender coconut water as it grows into an adult tree. Appreciating even a small gesture of kindness from someone makes our mind expansive and removes all constrictions. When the mind is expansive all negative feelings get dissolved and gets replaced by a feeling of blessedness.

When we move about in this world without any help from others we must stop and think for a while that many people are not so fortunate. They have to depend on others for their routine activities.

Gratitude gives us inner strength in the sense that we understand that nature is there to look after us and we don't have to worry about our well-being. Nature will take care of that. But for that we must also take care of nature and preserve it for our future generations.

Thank you so much for the insightful articles.”

Warm regards

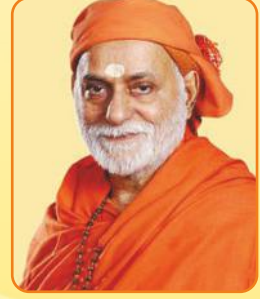
Smt. Shabnam Banerjee
Kolkatta, West Bengal

“ I am delighted to read last few copies of the bi-monthly magazine *Value Insight* being published by the Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV). The publication is of very high quality, both in terms of the content and presentation of the journal. The articles are from diverse areas of values and ethics written by persons well-versed in the subject. Rightly, it includes a Childrens' Corner. The efforts should continue and the regularity need to be maintained. More contributors, both in-house and external, may be requested to join in contributing to the journal. Articles on Indian ethos and heritage as well as management lessons from the rich storehouse of Indian classical treatises may be included. Thanks to all authors, editorial board and management of FRNV for this commendable initiative.”

Dr. Arun Kumar Rath
Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Our Dharma is Very Comprehensive

Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha, a well-known exponent of spiritual treasures like Bhagavad Gita, is the head of Narayanashrama Tapovanam, Trichur, Kerala. He has provided inspiration to people across the globe including corporate leaders on ethical practices



Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha

I am reminded of two statements in our dharma or dharma-śāstra. One is

आत्मनः प्रतिकूलानि, परेषां न समाचरेत् ।

Ātmanah pratikūlāni pareshām na samācharet ।

(Mahabharata)

Ātmanah pratikūlāni. Whatever is adverse to oneself, unacceptable to oneself, harmful, displeasing, disheartening, troublesome, do not try to inflict on others. Do not inflict it on others... Suppose somebody speaks lies before you, would you like it? No. So, do not lie before anybody. If somebody beats you, will you like? No. Don't beat another. Suppose somebody speaks ill of you, will you like it? No. Do not speak ill of others. In this one proposition, the entire dharma is covered...

Sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ. The ideal situation will be that you should always be thinking and feeling interested in the welfare of all creatures upon this earth. Think of

their welfare. For the sake of your life, you should not interfere with adversely in any other life. Our criminal penal code makes a provision. What is that? When somebody hurts you, you can defend yourself against his hurting and in the process, even if you happen to kill the other person, you are not considered criminally guilty. This is a very, very significant provision. In defending yourself, in protecting your life and body, you can if necessary, as a part of your defense, you have the freedom to hurt another man even to the point of killing him. But you have to prove in the court that it has taken place in this manner.

Sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ - Interested

in the welfare of all creatures. Sri Krishna while describing the characteristics of good devotees with whom He is pleased, speaks of many things, many are spiritual,

philosophical and societal principles. One shloka is very relevant to this discussion. What is that?

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

yasmān-nodvijate loko lokān-nodvijate ca yaḥ ।

(Bhagavad Gita 12.15)

A devotee should be one whom the world does not find unacceptable or repulsive. In the name of devotion, you cannot always be naked if that form is not acceptable and pleasing to the others. You cannot dress yourself in an ugly manner which is repulsive or displeasing to the others. Similarly, any way of life you adopt, physically, socially, domestically or otherwise, it should not hurt or cause displeasure to others. Looking at the world, multifaceted world, you should not have any kind of an agitation, unpleasantness or intolerance.

I once noticed in the National Geography program on TV, a huge bison walking in the forest. About seven or eleven female lionesses, they were taking their position here, there etc. And ultimately, the bison got afraid. He need not have got afraid. Suppose he had turned back and with his horns and defended himself or attacked them, all the lionesses would have fled. I am very sure about it. So, I was looking at it

and feeling, what kind of a heroism and valour is this? A bison, a single bison going and lionesses are surrounding him from all directions. Is there any greater cruelty and injustice than this? But it is an injustice, it is a cruelty. It is part of the world. Because they are not a human beings, we cannot bring them to the books of law and we don't oppose it.

One point is there. For the lionesses, this is their food. So, if they have to live, they have to eat... So, when I looked at it, my imagination went very high and deep. *"Who are you to worry about it? This earth is not made by you... you. I have created the bison and I live. I am noticed by the lionesses, they prey on me. They must have some food. A huge bison will be enough for eleven or twelve lionesses for one or two days. What is your problem? Your pity is for the bison, means what? The life of the bison. What is this life? I am myself born as the bison, I am thriving there and I am being hurt, killed and eaten*

by the lionesses. In the lion also, I am the life form. In their prey also, I am the life form. So, if at all anybody is to be felt for, you are feeling for me. I find it quite acceptable. I have no grumbling or complaint at all. I will continue to be born as bison and offer myself as food for the lionesses. I will continue to be born as lionesses and prey on the innocent animal. There are many other things, this is also one."

This world is a forum for multipronged developments. Looking at the world, you should not say something more could have been here that would have made it fuller. So, the world is full of beauty, ugliness, harmony, disharmony, conflicts, cruelty, fondness. Every form of emotion is there. Every form of life is there. So, it is the full expression of life, full expression of existence. Simply look at it, draw your lesson and keep quiet. Don't try to kill the lionesses. Don't try to protect the bison. Then you will be denying the food for the lionesses. What will they do poor creatures? Can you understand this?

But the same principle cannot be extended to human beings. If a set of human beings start preying upon another human being, that will not be allowed because human beings have their own will, wish, discrimination, ingenuity etc. What are the humans

doing? They have resorted to various strides of civilization as a result of which they have resulted in global warming. The globe was not warming before human beings came up with ideas of civilization. He started using fossil oils. All of them are burnt and the carbon deposits and heat generated are so much. He has polluted the virgin soil, earth. Similarly, the air and water. Is it right? It is under his own loss and his own ambition called science and technology and civilization. Now he will have to understand that these adverse factors are not admissible. So, I leave it to his prudence.

So far as non-humans are concerned, don't interfere. Look at the huge forests, mountains. The mountains and forests have been remaining for quite a number of millennia. No population has become extinct there, either animals or worms or birds, creepers, plants, trees. Everything falls dead there and everything is assimilated by the earth, cycled by the earth. The leaves decay. They become food and nourishment for plants. These plants are eaten by animals. They also die. Their carcasses get decomposed.

Everything is recycled by nature. All the plants upon the earth are either food and nourishment or medicines. Gold may be a metal extracted from deep down. Similarly, all other

metals. But you will find there are many plants on the surface which contain gold, silver, lead, tin, brass, copper, mica...But all these things are on the surface blended with the earth. And that is why so many different plants grow drawing different materials in different proportions and they are all in a digestible form. That is why Ayurvedic medicines which consists of herbs are the most suitable to our system because they are already assimilated by life forms or organized so to say.

Yasmān-nodvijate loko lokān-nodvijate ca yaḥ.

You should not be repulsive to the world and you should not look at the world and find repulsion at any point whatsoever. My dear soul, this is something very serious. Here raping is being repeatedly reported. Who rapes? Our own men, boys. Have you incorporated a type of education which organizes their minds against raping? I don't think. I don't think. Not yet, there is a lesson there. Have you told everybody the consequences of raping? You should feed and, tuition their mind, that is for not doing. And you should punish them, book them after commission.

Every law takes effect only after committing the wrong. But we want

a system whereby the mind will be persuaded and enlightened not to do it. So, there is no law or legislation to act upon the mind against raping. That has to be achieved by dhārmic tuition. Have you made any arrangement for it? I think,

***Ātmanaḥ pratikūlāni pareshām
na samācharet |
sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ |
yasmān-nodvijate loko lokān-
nodvijate ca yaḥ |***

These are fundamental notes of our dharma. Our dharma is very comprehensive, very specific, very particular. We were highly reasonable, rational and logical in treating with any item of life. Remember this.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru. Jai Guru.

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SUBHASHITAM

परोपदेशे पाण्डित्यं सर्वेषां सुकरं नृणाम् ।
धर्मे स्वीयमनष्टानं कस्यचित्तु महात्मनः ॥

It is easy for everyone to acquire skills for preaching others. But to practise the righteous principles oneself is a quality of few that are great.

दूसरों को उपदेश देना सभी सीख जाते हैं। परन्तु स्वयं धर्म का पालन करना एक ऐसा गुण है जो कुछ महान लोग ही दर्शाते हैं।

From the President's Desk



As we send another year into our past and look forward with hope and excitement at the new year, may I wish you all a happy and prosperous time ahead. The new year is also proverbially, the time to make resolutions, however short lived they may be. I venture to retrospect over the past year of FRNV and indicate some resolutions that we could make, albeit be strong and sustained in keeping it.

We are in the midst of yet another election. What I mentioned earlier about the defects in our electoral system continues unchanged, unabated. And we are also watching the process helplessly without taking any adequate steps to correct the malaise.

Another glaring failure of FRNV is in not being able to spread infectiously through the length and breadth of the country.

On both the issues we can't keep lamenting. We have to act and this should be our resolution which we should fulfil during the coming year. I would therefore request all the members and those who are reading this magazine to give their views on both the issues so that some remedial action could be taken by FRNV. I hope there will be an adequate response from the members. Responses that have energy and transmit it too.

I must end with a word of appreciation for FRNV. This journal has found its footing. The editors are bringing us quality material promoting a better understanding of values in an interesting manner. It is up to us to participate, contribute and internalise the nuggets in this effort.

Once again with the best of wishes for a bright value-based new year.

S. Regunathan
President (FRNV)



Righteousness

The Guiding Beacon

Vandana Tandon

Righteousness embodies the very essence of virtuous living. It is a beacon that guides us through the intricate maze of moral dilemmas and ethical choices, shaping our character.

Across the archives of history, righteous individuals have always risen as torch bearers of hope. The concept of righteousness has been consistently guiding humanity through its evolution. Philosophers have contemplated righteousness with profound reverence. Religious

scriptures like Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. offer a plethora of examples.

In the modern era, righteousness is no longer confined to the pages of history or sacred texts. Today, it emerges as a moral compass in a

complex world, helping individuals and societies navigate the unexplored waters of the present.

The Complexity of Moral Dilemmas

Moral dilemmas test the mettle of our righteousness. They can take various forms, from dilemmas of life and death to those involving personal gain and societal welfare. These dilemmas, however, are rarely black or white.

The gray areas between right and wrong demand thoughtful introspection, as navigating through the complexity of ethics often involves balancing conflicting principles and values.

Consider the surgeon who must decide whether to prioritize the life of a young patient over an elderly one in an emergency room, or the politician weighing the interests of their constituency against their own ambitions. Real-life examples provide a glimpse into the complex terrain where righteousness is tested.

Factors Influencing Ethical Choices

Our personal values and beliefs serve as the cornerstone of ethical

choices. They dictate our moral boundaries and guide us towards virtuous decisions that align with our individual philosophy.

Cultural and societal norms exert significant influence. They can either boost or challenge our ethical standpoints. What is considered righteous in one culture may differ from another, highlighting the need for cultural sensitivity.

External pressures and circumstances, such as economic disparities, political environments, and global challenges, can also shape ethical choices.

Key virtues such as courage, wisdom, justice, and compassion play a pivotal role in ethical decision-making. Nurturing these virtues within ourselves fosters a foundation for making righteous choices. It encourages individuals to strive for excellence in character, transcending the mere adherence to rules and regulations to embody the essence of righteousness.

Ethical Challenges in Today's World

The rapid advancement of technology has ushered in

unprecedented ethical challenges, particularly in the realm of privacy.



Image by Freepik

Issues like data breaches, surveillance, and the responsible use of AI demands rigorous consideration to balance technological progress with individual rights.

Environmental ethics call us to reassess our relationship with the planet. Climate change, deforestation, and resource depletion pose profound ethical questions about our obligations to future generations and the natural world. Righteousness in this context involves sustainable practices and conscious stewardship.

Inequities in society continue to test our commitment to righteousness.

Social justice issues encompass racial, gender, and economic disparities. Pursuing justice and equality, overcoming bias, and addressing systemic discrimination are moral imperatives in today's world.

Strategies for Navigating Moral Dilemmas

The journey to righteousness often begins within. Self-reflection and self-awareness empower individuals to recognize their values, biases, and emotional responses. This introspective process aids in making ethical choices.

In navigating complex moral dilemmas, seeking guidance and diverse perspectives is invaluable. Engaging in dialogues with others, whether through mentorship, group discussions, or seeking advice from trusted sources, broadens our understanding and helps us make well-informed decisions.

Righteousness often requires striking a balance between personal interests and the greater good. Recognizing the interplay between individual well-being and societal welfare is essential. It demands thoughtful deliberation and a

willingness to make sacrifices for the greater benefit of the community.

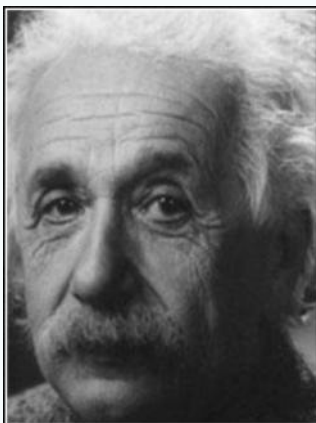
Realizing Righteousness in Action

Examining real-life case studies of individuals or organizations that have exemplified righteousness provides practical insights. Whether it is whistleblowers exposing corporate corruption, activists championing social justice, or companies adopting sustainable practices, these stories inspire and demonstrate that ethical decisions can indeed lead to positive change.

Identifying common approaches and strategies that have proven successful in ethical decision making equips individuals with tools to navigate dilemmas effectively.

Righteous acts have a profound ripple effect on society. By examining the transformative power of ethics, we gain a deeper understanding of how individual choices can lead to positive societal shifts. This reinforces the importance of pursuing righteousness in our actions.

To conclude, the pursuit of righteousness is a lifelong journey, a continual effort to uphold the principles of virtue and ethics in our lives. In this endeavor, we become stewards of a more just and compassionate world, where our moral compass guides us through the ever-evolving landscape of moral choices.



True religion is real living; living with
all one's soul, with all one's
goodness and righteousness.

— *Albert Einstein* —

AZ QUOTES



Picture credit : Anthony Tori on Unsplash

Reflecting on Righteousness

Vikram Bhalla

*While righteousness is often revered as an aspirational quality,
it is not reserved for a chosen few.*

Righteousness is a concept which is often glorified, depicting individuals of an exalted status who are considered as a cut above the rest or possess exceptional qualities. Being righteous is perceived as a goal to be achieved - cultivating an aspirational set of qualities or goals – something that only a select few attain.

I have a simpler view of

righteousness. I believe righteousness is not solely for attaining an elevated status, but rather, it encompasses self-reflection. For me it is as much about self-reflection as it is about any acts it may inspire.

Clear Distinctions

To understand this concept let us explore the essence of righteousness by examining both the concepts of



right and wrong and how they shape our understanding of this virtue. To aid simplification, let's first establish clear distinctions between right and wrong. There are certain actions that universally fall into these categories. For example, mistreating someone with less power is unquestionably wrong, while helping someone in an emergency situation is undoubtedly right. These examples serve as a foundation for basic moral guidelines.

Beyond Black and White: The Gray Areas

While some actions are clearly right or wrong, there exist many situations



that require deeper contemplation.

Life is not about absolutes, on the contrary it is the compilation of a million instances, actions and experiences. Each of these are in the gray, which means that depending upon the context, they can be experienced positively or negatively. In these gray areas, righteousness compels us to reflect on our intentions, impact, and long-term consequences. It encourages empathy, fairness and an understanding of different perspectives in order to make informed decisions.



The Ripple Effect of Righteousness

Each of our actions not only affect the people directly involved but also has a ripple effect; it affects the lives of many more. We humans can take many paths to our destination and each of them leave an indelible mark on other people's lives. Like the butterfly effect, each righteous act contributes to the collective striving for a more just and virtuous world. People are affected not only by our actions; the way and manner of our

actions also make a big difference. For example, us being polite and opening a door for a person who is stressed and, in a hurry, can make a difference vis-a-vis just giving way. This ability to add the human touch and kindness to mundane tasks is a superpower we all possess and are oblivious to it. The million-dollar question is how to use this power, how to do the right thing specially since socially everything is ambiguous.

The Role of Self-Reflection

A lot of people may argue that what is right for you may be wrong for others. The answer to that or rather



total clarity on what is right or wrong when one self reflects. Self-reflection is central to righteousness. One focuses on what one would like to experience to themselves and how would one perceive the treatment handed out to them. Once one starts looking at the world from this lens then one starts leading an authentic life. It involves introspecting one's own thoughts, emotions and behavior and evaluating them

against moral standards. Self-reflection allows individuals to recognize their own biases, flaws, and areas for improvement. It fosters personal growth and serves as a compass for navigating the complexities of right and wrong.

The Simplest Path to Righteousness

While righteousness is often revered as an aspirational quality, it is not reserved for a chosen few. In my opinion the simpler approach is to lead a life where your actions, words and interactions are based upon what you would like to experience; a life where you aim to create a happier and more hospitable space around yourself.

So does this work? The answer is unequivocally a yes. The reason for its success is simple: It is the lowest inertia approach to doing good. We expect decency and good will from others as at some level we feel we deserve it. Once we give what we expect we are subconsciously raising the bar on our behavior which in this quick paced is a breath of fresh air.

So in a nutshell, treat other people with the concern and kindness you would like them to show toward you and before you know it you would be leading a sustainable righteous life.



Photo by Monica Lalzad

Education and Ethics Hand in Hand

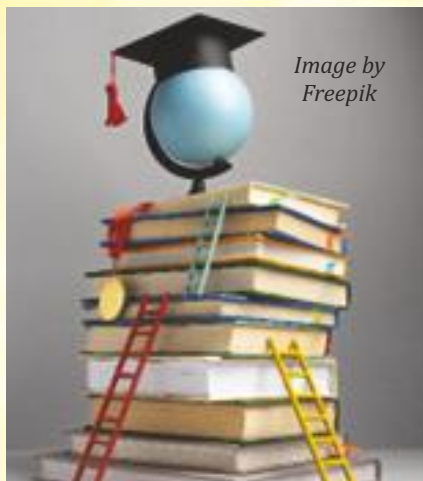
Bijoya Sawian

*Education is a holistic
experience which instills the
right values and prepares
an individual for life;
not merely for a living.*

Ethics in education is a vital aspect of fostering a positive learning environment and shaping responsible citizens. It is through a commitment to ethics in education that we can create a more just and compassionate society. However, the time has come to question education as it is understood and implemented. Education is not merely gathering information and passing examinations, it is not only about books, results, degrees and careers. A person who is exposed only to this is literate but not educated. Most schools emphasize on brilliant results in order to attain the degrees and qualifications

needed for a lucrative career which will enable them to amass wealth and reach that enviable standard of living by procuring all the material glitter that tempts them through the insidious bombardment of the media. This is the first step on the road to ethical and spiritual destruction. This is, in my opinion, the cause of all the malaise of modern society. So as educators and parents we have an arduous task ahead and we have to guide the children and lead by example. Education begins at birth and stretches across a human being's lifetime. The child's first school is his home and the parents and elders

around the child are the first teachers. Every gesture, every word,



every movement is observed by the child, is felt by the child and all this is important for his/her emotional health and overall development. A child may be brilliant and talented but if he/she grows up to be a disturbed adult the consequences are, as we are all aware, tragic and aggravates the societal imbalances which are already present. Nowadays a child joins school as early as three years of age. The teacher's role is, therefore, immense. In ancient India we had the Gurukuls where education was imparted. Guru means teacher and Kul means home/family. Children lived in the gurukuls and were involved in the lives of their teachers. Besides a rigorous routine in learning, the students participated in domestic

chores, gardening, tending the cattle and any other work which was part of the Gurukul. This enabled the teacher to form a strong bond with the child and also observe his strengths and weaknesses. So, in the classroom, the interaction was comprehensive and this enriched the child's learning experience. The teacher thus became the mentor and guide of the student. If we bond with children the teaching of values comes naturally. The child takes it as part of life and not a mere 'subject' to be learnt. The Gurukul concept is being revived to an extent and this will definitely bring a positive change in the years ahead. In the olden days in the Khasi Hills, traditionally, a child was handled with care right from infancy. The way we bathed a child, held a child, fed a child was always with gentleness and love. This was the first step towards his/her emotional stability. Good behavior and etiquette were taught at special timings when an elder would instruct and read out stanzas from our book of ethics and etiquette, *Ka Jingsneng Tymmen*. Stories were told around the fire during long winter nights and endless days of rain when one was forced to stay indoors. Those folktales, tales of origin and explanatory tales were akin to history books. The jokes and riddles were the quiz books, proverbs were

the tight encapsulation of our beliefs and philosophy, the trickster tales were for humor and laughter. More importantly, however, sitting together was all about bonding and the children felt secure and loved. The environment, the hills and forests, the streams and rivers were the Geography books and the men would take their children outdoors and instruct. Life has changed tremendously but the idea of bonding cannot be undermined. Teaching is only successful if the child feels good about the teacher especially in the teaching of values. It is simple - you would not respond to someone who you don't feel connected to.

The emotional wellbeing of a child depends a lot on the environment, the atmosphere and the method of teaching. In my school I have a subject for Playgroup and Nursery - Good Manners and Good Values along with Spoken English. In the senior classes the specified syllabus does not have Value Education but the teachers are instructed to find opportunities in class to talk on Honesty and Integrity, Compassion and Diligence, Respect and Gratitude, among other qualities. Also to have informal talks and share good karma experiences - what good deed did I do yesterday? Encourage the children to share and show appreciation generously.

In life eventually what remains, is your reputation. In the literary masterpiece, *Ka Jingsneng Tymmen*, Radhon Singh Berry Kharwanlang wrote :

Whatever you all know whatever you gain

It's useless if not by Truth sustained;

Even if very rich you become

If no one respects you, what use is the pomp ?

Even if you are grandly attired

It's useless for its only your shame camouflaged;

You may reach the top sit on horse, elephant

If your reputation is sullied what use is it then ?

If one is properly educated one will automatically realize all this and also that work is worship. Work should be carried out with dedication and honesty for your own self-respect and reputation. It must be also clearly understood that every single job and career should be treated with respect. In society, in every single society, everyone's contribution is important, everyone is an essential cog in the wheel. Respect for all humans regardless of caste, creed, color and class has to be instilled. Every teacher will, obviously, work in keeping with the mindset of the students one teaches.

As parents and teachers we have a long journey ahead ...



Righteousness Immortalised

Sudhamahi Regunathan

*Our epics and texts are replete with stories about the righteous ones
so as to inspire and reaffirm the importance of being so. Truly,
that which lives after, the stuff that immortality is made of, is righteousness.*

Valmiki, known as Adikavi or the first poet who wrote the Ramayana, begins telling his story with an account of his own reflection. One day he was sitting by himself and a thought came to him...can there be a man with all good qualities? At that moment the celestial bard, Narada, happened to visit Valmiki and the sage posed the question to him. He mentioned fourteen qualities, barring one, of which the rest could all be brought under one principle: the principle of righteousness, or dharma. The one quality that had been excluded was splendid appearance.

The answer to this question, as given by Narada is, “It is indeed rare to find a person endowed with all the mentioned qualities...but I do know of one person called Rama...”, and that is how the story of Rama unfolds. The fourteen qualities mentioned by Valmiki are: a person full of virtues, possessed of prowess, knows what is right, is conscious of services done, truthful of speech, firm of resolve, right conduct, conquered anger, subdued the self, amicable, full of knowledge, above fault-finding, brave with righteous indignation.

What better description of righteousness can one find? And what can be more eloquent than this question and answer to understand that righteousness is not easy to practice. Most of us feel we are righteous. We do not knowingly cause harm to anyone. We try to adhere to the truth. But there is more...brave with righteous indignation means to fight against injustice with courage and face the consequences. To conquer anger is no mean achievement. And to follow right conduct all the time is a tall order. Since Rama was endowed with all the qualities he is called *maryada purush* or the ideal human being.



However, how many voices rise in protest against calling him *maryada purush*? If he was really that, why did he let Sita go through the *agni pariksha*? He spoke such unkind words to her. Is that behooving of a

righteous man? The question is well asked. To put the whole matter in perspective for those who are unfamiliar with the Ramayana, when Rama had conquered Lanka and Ravana, he asked Sita to be brought from her place of captivity. When she came, he addressed her rather cruelly, telling her that he won the war not for her sake but to get rid of evil. As far as she is concerned she is free to live her life as she chooses... maybe with Vibhishana or whoever she wants. Sita squirms at these words. The explanation given for Rama speaking thus is that he, as a king, intentionally provoked her into righteous indignation because he wanted the whole world to see his wife was one who lived by her word. That was what righteous conduct demanded of him at that time. Equally, Sita was righteous. Brave with righteous indignation, she told Rama, "Why do you speak like a common man...it does not behoove you. If you think your lineage is great, mine is no less..." She is the one who asks Lakshmana to light the fire so she may enter it and burn if there is an iota of falsehood in her. Unfortunately today, we imitate the kind of provocation Rama used for Sita to enter the fire, imagining that to be righteous, but we do not have the strength of character that Sita had to rise above it.

Righteousness is thus not easy...what may be righteous to one may not be so for another in specific circumstances. Righteousness reminds you of your station not just in society, but within yourself, as centering around your core.

A similar episode is related in the Mahabharata when Shakuntala goes to meet Dushyanta. King Dushyanta had strayed into sage Kanva's ashram where Shakuntala lived. Besotted by her he marries her in a Gandharva wedding. When after six years, Shakuntala goes to meet Dushyanta with her son, the king refuses to recognize her (for the same reason as Rama). Shakuntala reminds him of his conscience...just because nobody was witness, your actions do not go unwatched...there is your inner being. To be true to your inner being is righteousness.

Recognizing the challenge in adhering to righteousness, our epics and texts are replete with stories about the righteous ones so as to inspire and reaffirm the importance of being so.

Yudhishtira, agonized by the tribulations Draupadi has to go through because he lost in the game of dice and was exiled from the kingdom asks sage Markandeya if he

knows of anyone else who, being so good, has still had to suffer. Sage Markandeya relates the story of Savitri-Satyavan to him. Yama had taken Satyavan's life, but Savitri won it back. Her years of moral rectitude gave her the power to be able to face Yama, the Lord of Death and gain victory.

It was Yudhishtira again who asked sage Narada why King Harishchandra is extolled as the greatest king. The answer is because of his righteousness, his adherence to truth. King Harishchandra was tested by a sage called Vishwamitra. Vishwamitra caused Harishchandra to be deprived of his kingdom and worse, facing a debt of one thousand gold coins. Harishchandra had to sell his wife as a slave and work in the cremation grounds to repay that debt. In the most trying of times, the king did not lose his focus: his dharma. When he is employed in the cremation ground, his wife comes with their son who is lifeless. To cremate him neither the father nor the mother had the money. Harishchandra's duty is to take money for cremation. He refuses to cremate his son, however much agony that causes him. In the cremation ground that is his duty, he cannot let his fatherly affection cloud his vision. Then the Gods appear

before him, restore his son to life and return his kingdom to him for he never swerved from the path of moral rectitude through all the trying situations.

To be righteous is demanding, but its importance cannot be undermined. All festivals and celebrations in every cultural environment are celebrations of this character. That is what makes a human being different from animals or demons. time.



Explaining this beautifully is an instance in the Ramayana. The war has been won and Hanuman goes to tell Sita, “If you give me permission I will finish off all the *rakshasas* (demons) who tormented you”. Sita stops him. “They were only obedient servants,” and she tells him a story.

Once upon a time a man being pursued by a tiger quickly climbed up the nearest tree. Once up there he saw a huge bear sleeping on another branch. This tree was the bear's

house. The tiger knew that. He called out to the bear and asked to push that man down for his lunch. The bear refused, saying that a guest must be protected by all means. “He has sought refuge in my house and I cannot let him down,” said the bear and went to sleep, thus ending the conversation.

When the bear started snoring the tiger asked the man to push the bear down. This man did. The bear was adept in survival. He caught on to another branch and saved himself. The tiger said, “Look at this ungrateful visitor of yours...at least now you can push him down?”

The bear refused. And he gave us the wisdom to remember at all times. He said, “A wrongdoer or evil person should not turn the righteous away from his or her path of rectitude. The virtuous ones wear only one ornament: that of being righteous. That should not be forsaken at any cost. To return evil for evil does not befit such people. To pardon and show compassion should be their reaction. No one is above error...not to err ourselves should be our greater concern.”

To bear in mind the lesson the bear taught is our dharma.

Core Values

Prema Raghavan

Our behavior is in our control based on how we perceive things and stories provide an easy form to sift through and digest the beauty of existence

Why do we turn to religion and mythology when we have to talk of righteousness? Is it because we find few examples in real life? Whenever I come across morally edifying stories, my eyes fill up and my heart feels content. Righteousness is not a mythical ideal state. It exists. I feel like recounting a few.

Sparrows Nest



Image by kuritafsheen77

The erstwhile Chief Election

Commissioner of India, T.N Seshan, was traveling through U.P. with his wife. On the way, they saw a large mango plantation filled with sparrow nests. His wife was mesmerized by the intricate beauty of these nests and wanted to take two of them home. The police escort called a small boy who was grazing the cows in the fields and offered him Rs. 10 to bring the nests down. The boy refused. Seshan raised the price on offer to Rs. 50.

The police informed the boy that Seshan was a big officer and asked him to do as he was told. The boy told Seshan, "Saabji, I will not do it for whatever you will give. Inside these nests, there will be baby sparrows. If I give the nests to you, in the evening, when the mother sparrows return with the food for the babies and do

not find them there, they will cry. I do not have the heart to see it.”

Hearing this, Seshan said, “My position and status melted away in front of him as I stood like a mustard seed in his presence.” They gave up their wish and after returning, this incident haunted him with guilt for days. Education, position, and social status is never the yardstick for the measure of humanity.

The sparrow is a sign of good luck in England. In Thailand, the sparrow is called “bird of joy. A Sparrow's nest brought luck to Seshan by heightening the sensitivity of an integrated, honest human!

Guided by Habit

The Kasturba Marg police recently rewarded a 55-year-old auto-

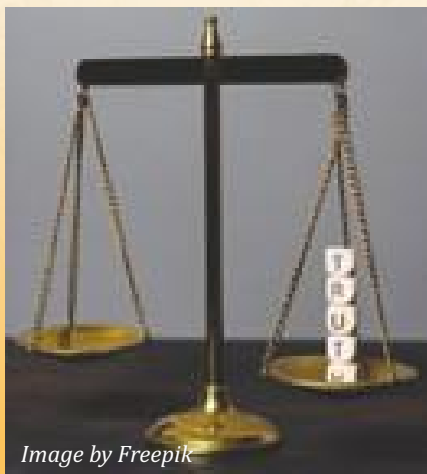


Image by Freepik

rickshaw driver for returning a

passenger's bag. It contained cash and jewellery. While this story in the newspaper incentivises others to follow such noble actions, the driver's actions stemmed from recognising the values that ultimately serve one's greater good.

One of my friends, Sita is very particular about righteousness and inculcated the habit in her children in their formative years. Her son Sekar went for an interview for his first job. Arriving at the office, he saw many people leaving with disappointment clearly visible on their faces. Although slightly unnerved by this, he did not become discouraged. Eventually, when his time came, he got up, put on a smile, and headed to the interview room. As he walked down the corridor, he noticed some extra lights that were on, so he switched them off. Coming across a few misplaced chairs, he moved them neatly to the side. He knocked on the door and went inside. After completing the basic formalities, the interviewers confirmed that he was hired. “You didn't ask me any interview questions other than my name”, he said, feeling rather perplexed. Pointing towards the monitor, one interviewer answered, “Do you see that? We saw everything that you did on the way to the interview room; that was your interview. We were seeking someone who recognises these things. The people before you did not see the extra lights switched on or anything

else that was out of place. How could they possibly work for us?”

Childhood Influences

As a child, my grandmother bought flowers every day to decorate the deities in her prayer room. One morning, the flower seller returned an extra Rs.2 that she found my grandmother had given her the previous day. This was a time when Rs. 2 could help one buy 25 kgs of rice. A precious commodity for a poor family. My grandmother rewarded her honesty by giving back the money to her.

I had a similar experience later in life. I bought some books from a roadside seller at Flora fountain in Mumbai. I was discussing an important issue with my student as I did the transaction. I gave Rs. 100 and forgot to get the back change of Rs 60. As we moved along, the seller left his roadside shop unattended and came running to return my money. I told him that it was my mistake and not his and thanked him for rushing to reach me in this busy hour. He responded that he did not want to add to his karma with unearned money in his hands. I also rewarded him just as my grandmother had many decades earlier.

Victor Hugo narrates in his famous classic 'Les Miserables', the transforming power of one's integrity and righteousness. A priest gave food, shelter and clothing to an

escaped convict with love. Once rejuvenated, the convict stole two silver candle stands of the priest and fled. The Police seized him and brought him before the priest. The priest looked at the convict and then at the Police and slowly informed them that the silverware was not stolen but gifted to him. The Police released the convict, who went through a great inner transformation through this experience and turned into a noble soul.

Cosmic Order

People are required to discharge their duties according to the moral code of



Image by Pixabay

ethics. Ethics are of two kinds, individual and social. Individual ethics is indicative of the good qualities that are essential for individual well-being and happiness. Social ethics represents the values required for social order and harmony. Cosmic order is the unseen force, which shapes the evolution of nature and guides the moral values in human society. When this harmony and balance are disturbed, there is disorder and suffering. This is the

power or force that lies behind nature and keeps everything in balance.

The Bhagavad-Gita advocates selfless action (niškāma karma). Actions performed without

consideration of the fruits derived from them. It is an altruistic action aimed at the well-being of others rather than for oneself. In Hinduism, this doctrine is known as karma yoga.

*“Where there is righteousness in the heart, there is beauty in the character.
When there is beauty in the character, there is harmony in the home.
When there is harmony in the home, there is order in the nation. When there
is order in the nation, there is peace in the world.”*

– A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

Your core values are the deeply held beliefs that authentically describe your soul.

– John C. Maxwell





Speaking Tree

...We may all agree that education is very important in making peoples' life better and, in

fact, most progress can be attributed to it. However, present education is mostly skill/employment biased. It also creates an unrealistic worldview and lots of aspirations in students.

There is little or no understanding or direction of life. This manifests into serious issues in the society such as “indefinite individual conduct”, obesity, depression, suicide, mistrust, conflict in relationships, corruption, injustice, all-time-fighting at all-levels, violence, court-cases, extortion, exploitation of each-other and Nature, vote-bank-power-politics, injustice, insecurity, “I’m Right, I know all syndrome”....

Major part of life-skills and values come from the parents, teachers, and religious beliefs. Over the years, a situation has reached where parents have little time for the children and are, in fact, busy managing their own lives and problems. In schools and colleges, focus is almost entirely on skills in science, technology, and vocational /professional courses for making a living. Religions,

Role of Spiritual Technology in Education

Sushil Jain

originated in basic principles of life and well being, create so much confusion due to conflicting rituals and beliefs. There is no focus on the human development and systematic teaching of Life-skills. Result is a continuous deterioration of human quality and disharmony in society.

Since, every man-made system is run by human beings; the system performance is as good as the human beings running them. In the process, governance, planning, resources, people are all adversely affected. We keep making more and more laws to deal with aberrations in society, but the situation does not improve leading to an environment of frustration, unhappiness, and full of negativity. Thus, with the present education, it has been a huge challenge to build and maintain the quality of all-important human resource.

The long-term solution is to provide Quality Holistic Education to ensure Definite Human Conduct by using the Spiritual Technology, based on simple and universal principles of life. We need Self enlightened/ actualized leaders through education.

Spiritual Technology for Rescue

Technology is the way we do things.

Spiritual Technology (ST) is thousands of years of extensive research, by so many in India and elsewhere, on human life and on the spirit within all human beings. It is about simple and universal principles of life that give the necessary quality and direction to our lives, taking us to higher levels of consciousness. It is applicable to us as spiritual beings/Human Beings for our well-being and well-being of all. *ST is the key to stability, justice, peace, happiness and harmony at all levels of our living – individual, family, society, and with Nature. Therefore, it needs to be the essential part of education, for all, in schools, colleges and training institutions. NEP2020 recommends it.*

A Potential Path Forward

Universal Human Values (UHV) is helping to develop a holistic and humane world-vision. It is based on the essence of our traditional wisdom, for the well-being of all in a universal, logical, verifiable manner, which can be placed in mainstream education. I call it the modern-day Spiritual Technology which meets the aspirations articulated in NEP2020. I feel it can transform education and contribute to a society which is founded on the well-being of all. UHV Team (Prof R. R. Gaur et al) has made commendable voluntary effort, in the last 4+ decades, in developing content, methodology, text book, teachers' manual, transformative training workshops (Self-exploratory, highly interactive, Self validating) for

faculty, students, families, and general staff. UHV courses have been adopted as part of curriculum successfully in 40+ Universities in India. AICTE adopted it in 2017. UHV is based on facilitated Self-exploration through very simple questions and proposals, to be verified at individual levels on the basis of their "natural acceptance", innate in all human beings. No do's and don'ts, no preaching. It is scientific and systematic. It is transformational in terms of understanding harmony at four levels of our living - individual, family, society, nature/existence. UHV Program outcomes and feedback (from students, faculty, others) are very encouraging.

All educational and training institutions should consider adopting the UHV program to awaken future citizens to the spirit of NEP2020 and making effort for personal transformation, as well as participating to develop the equitable and just society we all aspire for.

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Image by Freepik

The Nexus Righteousness and the Law

Lavanya Fischer

Laws are formulated with a strong moral foundation, aligning with the ethical standards of righteousness. However, this alignment is not always perfect as laws can be influenced by societal biases and cultural differences.

The attraction of black letter law was the belief that it would provide individuals an equal and just basis for living in society. But here too juristic evolution could not ignore the awareness of something larger within theories of justice or right action. What is commonly referred to as the 'spirit' of the law. The spirit of the law links itself to a sense of righteousness. This belief in a legal essence allows for the interpretation of law and its application in a way that accords with what is accepted as right or just in society at a particular moment in time. But that is not to say that the judge is completely comfortable with having to balance

righteousness with the application of statutory law. The challenge is wresting concretized principles, enforcing equality and embedded in statutory law to yield justice to the satisfaction of an accepted understanding of righteousness. Perhaps this concept was more easily expressed in more flexible community based legal conciliation and mediation systems, which is why courts, as they develop, seem to become more tolerant of customary arrangements local to their societies (likened to *svadharma* or individual codes of right actions compare to equitable orders which do not form precedent).

The notion of righteousness is somehow inextricably connected with law, but it is just as closely linked with morality in religion. Each religion has a theory of what constitutes moral, virtuous, and righteous action. Though each with its own unique interpretative characteristics. Many judgements compare righteousness to the concept of Dharma. Then there are juristic interpretations where righteousness is likened to biblical theories or the Islamic good conduct.

But perhaps, ironically, the link with law and religion is most succinctly captured in a 1932 reference, in the Calcutta High Court, against the publication of two articles by newspapers protesting British rule. The judge stated, while deciding against the newspapers, and agreeing that the articles 'incited hatred for British rule' stated that "‘religion' and 'righteousness' are, in a sense, synonymous when used with reference to the conduct of human beings or institutions." There are many such judgements where the colonial judiciary appropriates themes of righteousness to side with the colonial administrator, finding ways to hold righteousness close to interpret law in its favour and thus not necessarily morally or justly. So as with all ideas of human behaviour, righteousness is not a straightforward and clear principle

governing jurisprudence but a changing ideal, appropriated to serve the current perception of what is good for society, and hence just as capable of being misappropriated as any other noble ideal.

The Supreme Court in independent India, has understood righteousness as being a part of the group of concepts that constitute integrity in the performance of an individual's duties. Even a judge has to command the virtue of righteousness, impartiality, objectivity and scholarship to ensure respectability to this judgement (*Shanti Bhushan v Supreme Court of India*, 2018).

In a 2009 case titled *D.M Premkumar v Commr.*, the Court held that the removal of a teacher from her post would have been unjust despite the rules being against her. The order goes on to explain that it is often thought that the "law is merciless.... It has led people to mistakenly think that it is separated from feeling or righteousness." Not only do the courts use righteousness to describe individual action. They also associate the term with proving an action aligns with law, such as in a case where the legitimacy of a will was in dispute. The judge, quoting an English case while judging the authenticity of a will, says those who benefit from the will 'have thrown

upon them the onus of showing the righteousness of the transaction'. The transaction being the will's method of preparation. Though to be clear there are multiple cases where the Court is at pains to point out that righteous actions govern the preparation of the will but not its contents, the righteousness of which is not for the court to examine.

Going a step further, the court sees righteousness as applicable to individuals and institutions but also to public policy. Public policy is in itself an elusive theory of what is good for society at a higher level. The term public policy has been used flexibly by the court but in a 2017 loan recovery case (*H.P Financial Corpn. V Anil Garg*), the Court held that broadly public policy will mean what is in the larger interest of society involving questions of 'righteousness, good conscience and equity upholding the law and not a 'retrograde interpretation' i.e., an understanding of what is currently thought of as right or righteous. While discussing the requirements of justice and equity in a case on division of land, the 2014 Delhi High Court order in *Nisha Priya Bhatia v Union of India*, articulates the predicament of judge. The judge tries to understand and overcome the dilemma posed when equity is thought to be better than justice and yet is not quite opposed to justice but

is in fact a type of justice. The judge puts forth the view that the justice which is rendered when the judge is true to law may be called righteousness - explaining it as being concerned not with justice which is measured by positive law but rather by that which positive law itself is measured. Justice, it goes on to say rendered through this perspective means equality but may not always be equity.

The ideas of righteousness and freedom from bias is an important hallmark of safeguarding ethical behaviour. A higher standard must be expected and kept. Institutions that protect and uphold philosophies of morality and equity and are themselves inextricably linked with the concept of righteousness. That means not only deciding what is right, but being imbued with an essentiality of righteousness, a moral firmament on which the edifice of acceptable justice is built.



In every single thing you do,
you are choosing a direction.
Your life is a product of choices

Dr. Kathleen Hall



Illustration by Neharika Srivastava



Illustration by Neharika Srivastava

RIGHTEOUSNESS

One day at a time

Cdr. S. Mohan

*In this world abounding with
atrocities and injustices, practising
'righteousness' is a tall order!*

*Yet, it is the most
desirable human behaviour that
we need to learn*

Morally correct and justifiable conduct -Telling the truth, not cheating, being generous and loyal, are all various facets of righteous behaviour. Much can be written on righteousness; let me try to do justice to the topic by restricting myself to just the most important aspects – honesty and justice.

Honesty

सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् , न ब्रूयात् सत्यम्
अप्रियम् । प्रियं च नानृतम् ब्रूयात् , एष धर्मः
सनातनः ॥

“Speak the truth, but only what is

*pleasant; Do not speak that which is
unpleasant, even if it be true. Never
should we speak pleasant untruths;
this is the law of Sanatana Dharma.”*

Thus was our upright conduct defined, right from ancient times. It hardly needs to be emphasised that we ought to be absolutely honest in our dealings with everyone; in its practice, this becomes very easy if we live our lives in water-tight compartments of one day. Practising any correct behaviour 'Just for Today' is easy, whereas to do so for a lifetime is an arduous task.

However, telling the truth would not always be desirable – especially when it endangers someone else's safety and life. During the Second World War, a twelve- year- old girl, Anne Frank, hid herself in a secret attic to save herself from the Nazi



Gestapos. The soldiers ruthlessly searched out the Jews, and exterminated them in gas-chambers. Obviously it was vital that no one disclosed the truth about the hide-out. Do we need to be instructed that when a helpless girl is in hiding, fleeing from danger, someone who knows her whereabouts should surely not tell the marauder the truth about her hiding place!

Justice

Talking about a grave travesty of justice (though it happened over 150 years ago), the famous “Dreyfus affair” needs to be retold to the

world. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, an intelligent young French army officer of Jewish parents was tried



for treason. In 1894, he was accused of selling military secrets to the German military attaché. He was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The legal proceedings, which were based on specious evidence, were highly irregular. Although he denied his guilt and although his family consistently supported his plea of innocence, public opinion and the French press as a whole, led by its virulently anti-Semitic faction, welcomed the verdict and the sentence. They used Dreyfus to

symbolize the supposed disloyalty of French Jews. But doubts began to grow. Another officer, Major Esterhazy was engaged in espionage and it was his handwriting which was found on the letter that incriminated Dreyfus. The affair was made absurdly complicated by other anti-Semitic Army officers. Yet the truth could not be suppressed, and a massive movement began for revision of Dreyfus's trial.

Émile Zola, the famous novelist, wrote an open letter in the newspapers under the headline "J'Accuse." [I Accuse!] By the evening of that day, 200,000 copies had been sold. Zola accused the army of covering up its mistaken conviction of Dreyfus and of acquitting Esterhazy, the real culprit - on the orders of the Ministry of War.

By the time of the Zola letter, the Dreyfus case had attracted widespread public attention and had split France into two opposing camps. The issues were regarded as far exceeding the personal matter of the guilt or innocence of Dreyfus. The anti-Dreyfusards (those against re-opening the case) viewed the controversy as an attempt by the

nation's enemies to discredit the army and saw it as a case against Jewry, of France against Germany.

The Dreyfusards (those seeking the exoneration of Captain Dreyfus) saw the issue as the principle of the freedom of the individual subordinated to that of national security and as civilian authority pitted against a military authority that acted independently of the state. It was a total travesty of justice, sad to say. The case was re-opened, and Captain Dreyfus was exonerated and restored his rank with full military honours. However, what is highly regrettable is that an upright and honourable man languished for twenty years in jail, for no crime! Justice was finally given by the country to Capt Dreyfus, but what a price he had to pay! Justice delayed is justice denied.

Shakesperean Justice

"The quality of mercy is not strained!"

In a lighter vein, I am reminded of the way Portia dispensed justice to Shylock—even while saving Antonio's life! This is an incident from a famous play "The Merchant



of Venice” written by William Shakespeare.

[To those who have not had the time or the inclination to read Shakespeare, let me briefly narrate the story.]

Antonio and Bassano, two friends living in Venice approach Shylock, a Jewish money-lender for a large loan. While they do want the money, the friends heartily hate the Jew and constantly abuse him. A contract agreement was drawn, wherein

Shylock stipulated return of the money within ninety days, failing which he could have a pound of Antonio's flesh from the body closest to the heart. (That is Shylock's sweet revenge!) They were confident of returning the loan in time; but ill-luck always has a way. Antonio's ship struck shoals and sank, and hence he was unable to return the loan. Shylock took them to court, demanding justice.

Who should their case appear before but Portia -- the pretty, intelligent, rich, heiress from nearby Belmont, who appeared as a judge in disguise. She was actually Bassano's fiancée, and appeared in Venice as a stand-by judge. The case was presented in court, and though the contract was clear, Portia pleaded with Shylock to have mercy and spare Antonio's life. As Portia passionately implored:

*"The quality of mercy is not strain'd.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from
heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice
blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him
that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest...
It is an attribute of God Himself.
And earthly power doth then show*

*liketh God's
When mercy seasons justice.
Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider
this:
That in the course of justice, we do
pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us
all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoken
thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea"*

If she follows the strict laws of Venice, she would have to decide against the merchant, Antonio. Shylock did not heed her mercy plea; rather, he warmed up to the idea of getting his revenge, and began sharpening his knife on the whetstone. As Antonio bared his chest, Portia's intelligence and quick wit cautioned Shylock "Wait! Beware, you do not draw even one drop of blood while cutting your pound of flesh! And no more, no less—just one pound! If you do, all your money, lands, and property will be confiscated and you would be charged with murder!" What a master-stroke of juris-prudence! To sum up, we need to be righteous - by word and deed. This is easy to practise if we live life One Day at a Time.

Special Feature

2023

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Aruna Srinivasan

*As we prepare to welcome the new year 2024,
many would look back to 2023, the events and the news
that drew our attention.*

When I look back at the year 2023, the first thing that strikes me is life in the post Covid world. Although everything is back to pre-Covid normal, there is still a lingering fear among the people world over. Traveling in Europe this October, I found this lurking fear evident in many faces. Hats off to the cautious and the alert individuals.

In India, the success story of Space mission Chandrayan 3, by the Indian Space Research Organisation, (ISRO) made Indian proud across the world. There was a lot of cheer and excitement as Vikram Lander, the Indian Space craft, made a historical soft landing on the south pole of the moon on 23rd August this year. The subsequent manoeuvres of

the mission on the moon with the Pragyan, the rover, rolling out of the Lander and sending significant data back to earth were much watched news items among the Indians. ISRO confirmed that the Rover has



discovered the presence of aluminium, sulphur, calcium, iron, titanium, oxygen and silicon on the moon. The Space organisation also

launched another significant space project called Aditya -L 1. Launched



in early September this year, the coronagraph spacecraft, designed and developed by ISRO, is moving towards a point called L 1 and is expected to position itself there in January 2024 from where it will study the Sun's atmosphere.

The New Delhi Summit of G 20 was another highlight of the year with the Indian Government pulling off all stops to make it a success. The body of 21- member nations/ union of nations, clinched an amicable New Delhi Declaration.

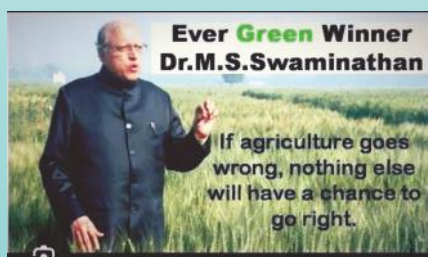
In May, Manipur, the North Eastern State, writhed in pain with ethnic violence erupting. The violence hogged the headlines with the state and the central government drawing criticism for failure to quell the fire of violence.

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine slipping to the back burner, and when it appeared life was

limping back to normal. The Hamas attack on Israel hit the headlines in early October. The traumatic news and visuals of dislocated people from the Gaza region shook the world. The solution is not in sight yet as this piece is being written.

The earth quakes in Turkey - Syria region in February and in Morocco in September were major earth quakes that registered significant loss of lives and damages to the regions.

The nation lost one of its most revered and loved personalities, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, the architect of Green Revolution. Pioneering high yielding genetic variations into Indian Agriculture system, he brought India from a drought stricken and food imports dependent



country in the sixties to a self-sufficient food production country in 1971. Other dignitaries the nation lost include Vani Jayaram, the singer and Bindheshwar Pathak, the sociologist who initiated a

movement for cleanliness with his Sulab International, the social service organisation that promoted environmental sanitation and non-conventional sources of energy.

On Technology front, Artificial Intelligence (AI) exploded and many tech companies jumped on the AI bandwagon to offer myriad apps and technology for the users. Although launched at the end of last year, Chat Gpt, the AI chatbot, created a significant impact on the common man this year.

In India, after several years of debate, the government brought in the Data Protection Act in August. The Data Protection Act, called, "Digital Personal Data Protection Act", will now bind how organisations handle personal data and offer citizens control over the personal data gathered for them. With some exceptions, the Act will make it mandatory for entities collecting user data, to obtain clear user consent before processing the data.

In the field of sports, September 2023 brought India a silver medal in the International Chess Championship, 2023 FIDE World cup, held in Azerbaijan. The champion an unassuming young man of 18 years, Rameshbabu Praggnanandaa made India proud.

Indians were not just proud but also touched when Sheetal Devi, a 16-year-old archer from Loidhar village in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir, became the first female archer without arms to win three medals at the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou.



On the entertainment front in India, two Indian movies won the Oscars, making Indians proud. The movie RRR, won an Oscar for the best song and the short movie, Elephant Whisperers bagged the best film in Documentary category.

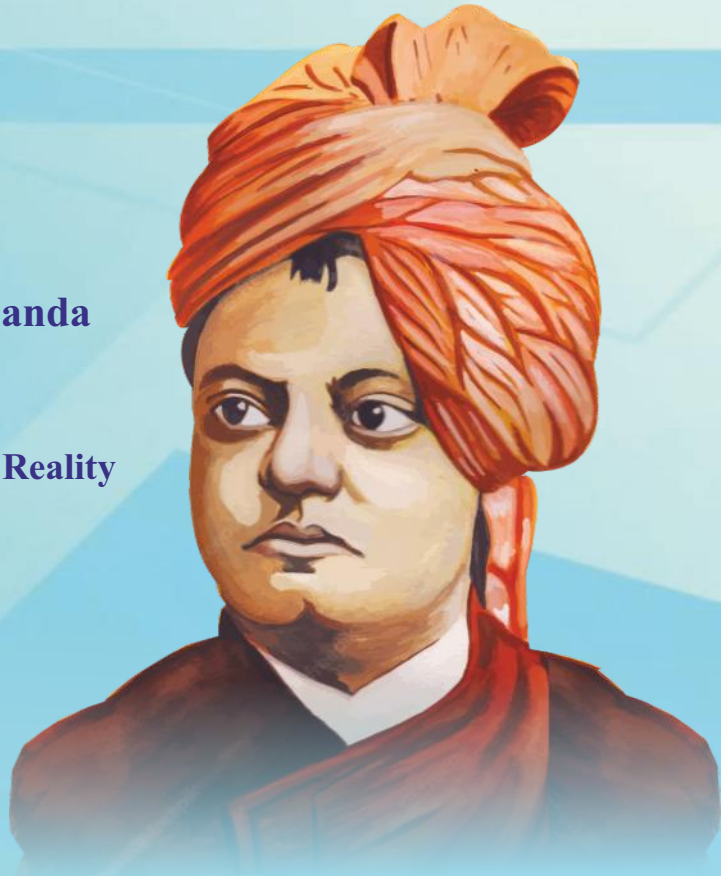
Now, about the new year, 2024, none of us can predict what the year would bring us. Let us hope the new year will bring good tidings and peace to the world.

Swami Vivekananda

The Universal man

Face to Face with Reality

S. Regunathan



Thus far: In the last two issues the need for a Master to test his disciple and inturn for the disciple to test his guru were recounted. This episode moves on ahead.

Guru Sri Ramakrishna had assessed his disciple. He still had to give one more experience to Narendra before he transferred all his spiritual powers to him. He knew that Narendra was still looking for reason and proof and had traces of Brahmosamaj's

influence on him. He still entertained doubts about personal God and idol worship. His reading of western philosophies did not allow him to lose his individuality and freedom. He also knew that if Sri Ramakrishna told him of Mother Kali and that he should believe in Her, Narendra would be sceptical. He had to experience the presence of Kali himself. And that experience was to come soon. When Narendra was still young and studying, all of a sudden,

one day his father passed on. The emotional shock notwithstanding, there came another shock of a rich bustling household with many hangers-on, now reduced to abject poverty. The family was in penury. His relatives who were enjoying the hospitality and benevolence of his father turned against the whole family to the extent of even taking the family to court contesting the ownership of the property.

Narendra, who was ensconced in an ideal world, felt the first blow of reality when he sought employment and help to overcome the situation. Those who would fete over and pamper him, treating him with respect, began to ignore him and show complete indifference. He also realised that people were only appearing to show sympathy, but in truth, they did not care for the needy and the poor.

It took many encounters with heartless people for him to have this realisation. When he was completely exasperated with this experience, he finally thought he should request Sri Ramakrishna to intervene on his behalf to seek Mother Kali's help. He approached Ramakrishna and requested him. Sri Ramakrishna told him that he had never asked the

mother anything and that Narendra should seek help himself. So on one Tuesday night Sri Ramakrishna sent him to the temple to pray to the mother. When Narendra entered the temple, he forgot all about his requirements and saw mother standing, full of life. He was overawed by Her presence and forgot himself. For the first time, he prostrated before the idol. He went back to Sri Ramakrishna and on asking said he had completely forgotten to request the mother so Sri Ramakrishna sent him back again. The experience repeated itself. So he was sent the third time. This time Narendra could articulate his feelings. He said he felt it was too trivial a matter to seek divine intervention. He returned to his master and narrated his experience and understanding. He knew in his heart that it was his guru who had completely influenced his mind to experience the presence of the mother and forget about his financial distress. When he narrated his experience to Sri Ramakrishna, the master laughed and said that now that he had realised the presence of the Mother, his life would not be plagued by worries of survival. He blessed Narendra saying that his family would always have enough to meet their basic requirements.

Children's Corner

Community Matters

Story and Illustration: Devika Raghav


It was a bustling residential campus just on the edge of the city. Children, along with nannies and grandparents came out to play. Laughter could be heard everywhere in this beautiful campus. This was set amidst a small Urban-jungle, or what little was left of it.

The sun had just dipped on the horizon and the sky was aglow with beautiful streaks of pink and orange hues. The swifts came out in the cool of the evening, taking to the sky, frolicking about just for a few minutes before they had to settle in for the night.

But something wasn't quite right today evening. Tucked away in this tiny patch was a jackal's family of four. The last of them in this urban jungle setting. Each day was a task for them to hunt small catches

consisting of mice, the grey-francolin, the tiny quails. When there wasn't much human movement, the jackals would make their way through the thickets keeping a low





profile. Lately it had become very difficult for them to catch a good meal.

In this fragrant moonlit jungle, the family was unusually quiet, till the elder baby jackal spoke out. "Ma, I want to go out to have fun and of course to make new friends!" Mother jackal looked at her 2- year old son with a smile and said, "I understand you, Labadee, and your need to make new friends; as all others of our pack have gradually left the forest. But you can't mix with the neighborhood dogs!" They are scavengers to begin with!

She sighed; then putting a paw across to her son, she explained why he could not be friends with local dogs. "You will put us all to risk. Our safety and health both will get affected." "But how mumma?" cried out the little one. "That's 'cause they eat from garbage and left over food from restaurants. Whereas we take pride in hunting for our meals only when we are hungry. They carry infections which may be deadly to us," explained mother. "Also, if anyone follows you back to the den, we may all be at risk. People may spot us and lay traps to capture us."

Mother explained that the other day, the builders had come to see the patch along with the farmer who still grows crops. Labadee listened carefully to all what his mother had to say and nodded in affirmation.

After a pause, father jackal cleared his throat and spoke, "Labadee, you have a younger sister to watch out for. What feels thrilling for a few hours may not have good repercussions. Feeling a momentary right may not be correct for the whole family. In a bigger forest you will meet larger packs of jackals, wolves and wild dogs.

One day if you become the pack leader, you will have to be responsible for all. Your existence and happiness are not for you alone. We live in packs and community matters. Hence one has to be conscientious and righteous towards the members."

Mother jackal lovingly pulled the young one towards herself and said, "I think today's lecture was enough! Let's listen to the night-jar's calls." Both the parents cuddled up to the little ones while keeping a vigil on the sleepy jungle alongside.

Children's Corner

Jazz and Buddy

Story and Illustration: Gayatri Kumari Diggi

One early winter morning Mini and her dog, Jazz, went for a walk along a narrow path that led to a beautiful pond where birds flew from faraway places just to enjoy the clean water, fresh air and lush green environment. Mini sat down near a river and started her yoga while Jazz went snooping around in the soft grass.

It was quiet and peaceful till they heard the sound of angry dogs barking. Jazz bounded off to see what was happening. Mini too got up and followed. She saw three skinny dogs. One had something in its mouth which the other two also wanted. Jazz growled and pounced on the

dogs, snarling angrily, and caught the neck of the dog that was carrying something in its mouth. The dog immediately dropped it and all three dogs got scared and ran away. Mini and Jazz looked at what the dogs were fighting over and saw it moving. Mini said "Look Jazz, it's a



baby turtle! And it's so frightened and hurt! ” she picked it up and they rushed home. Mini immediately got her first aid kit and applied medicine on the turtle's legs. Just then there was a “tring tring” sound of a cycle bell. Gopi the little dairy boy had arrived with fresh milk and butter “oh! that's a water turtle!” he said.

“I will bring some insects and worms for him to eat and you get some fresh water,” he told Mini. All this while Jazz was fondly wagging his tail. Mini said, “Let's call him Buddy as he is your friend now Jazz.”

Jazz and Buddy became good friends and walked together around the garden happily. Buddy would sometimes disappear in the little pond Gopi had made for him at the corner of the garden. Mini would sit in her rocking chair knitting and listening to music. As time passed, Buddy grew bigger and would walk around the garden foraging for his own food but the little pond was now too small for Buddy. He would look around curiously and walk towards the gate.

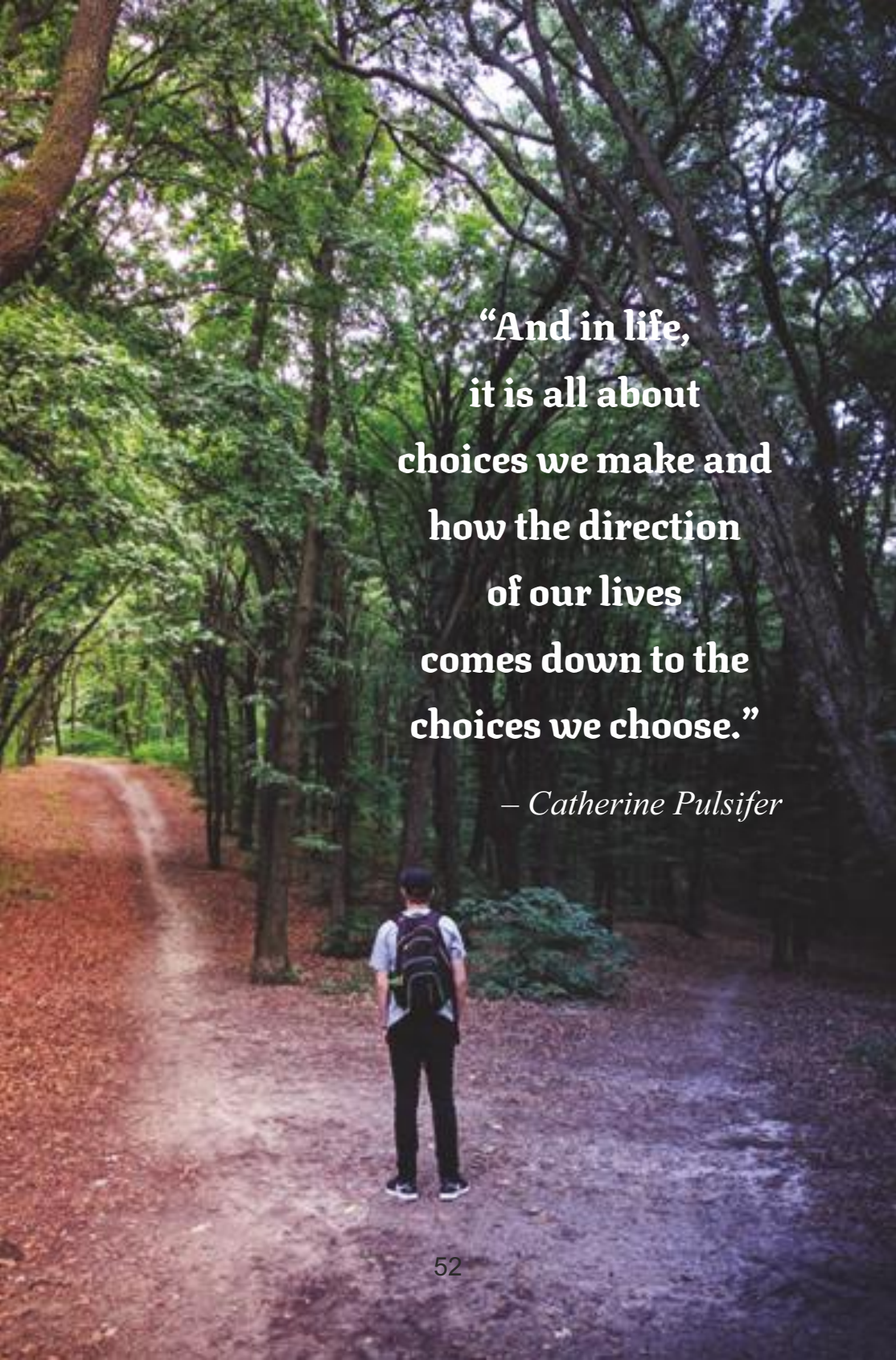
Jazz wondered what the problem

was. One late afternoon when Mini came home she saw Jazz searching for Buddy everywhere.

She also searched behind hedges and flower beds but Buddy was nowhere to be found. It was getting dark. Suddenly, Jazz barked and ran towards the gate. Mini followed him. Gopi heard the commotion and went to get a lantern. The three of them searched here and there for Buddy. Suddenly, Jazz started barking happily. Mini rushed towards the sound and saw Buddy and Jazz walking side by side.

Gopi came running with his lantern saying, “Buddy is going towards the pond!”

Near the pond Buddy stopped and looked at Jazz fondly speaking a language only they both understood. Jazz sniffed and stared back wagging his tail as Buddy walked slowly into the water. They all stood for a long while feeling both happy and sad. They would miss their friend but Mini understood how right Jazz was to let his friend Buddy go and live his life in his own turtle way.

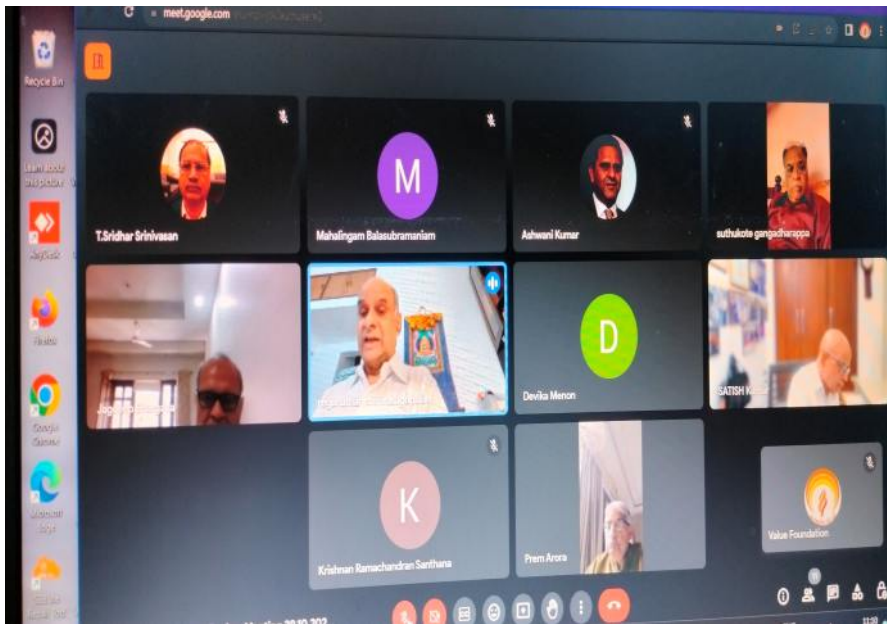
A person with a backpack is standing on a dirt path in a forest. The path is covered in fallen leaves, and the trees are tall and green. The person is looking down the path, which leads into the distance. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**“And in life,
it is all about
choices we make and
how the direction
of our lives
comes down to the
choices we choose.”**

– Catherine Pulsifer

FRNV NEWS AND EVENTS

Regional Chapter Review Meeting 29.10.2023



(L-R Shri T S Sridhar, Chennai Chapter; Shri Mahalingam Balasubramaniam, Chairman/Tamil Nadu Chapter; Shri Ashwani Kumar, General Secretary/FRNV; Shri S L Gangadharappa, Chairman/Karnataka Chapter; Shri Jagdeep Bhargava, Chairman/Haryana Chapter; Shri S Regunathan, President/FRNV; Smt. Devika Menon, Chairperson/Kerala Chapter; Shri Sathish Kumar, Vice President/FRNV; Shri R S Krishnan, Chennai Chapter and Shri Prem Arora, Treasurer/FRNV)

It has been decided that Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV) Regional Chapters will have following officials:-

1. Chairman/Chairperson instead of Conveners
 2. Secretary
- Both Chairman/Chairperson and Secretary will continue to be Life Members of FRNV and they will be authorized officials for correspondences on behalf of Regional Chapters. They will also attend meetings with FRNV HQ.

- **Bhubaneswar, Odisha Chapter**

Life Member Dr. Arun Kumar Rath, IAS (Retd.) has taken over as Chairman of Odisha Regional Chapter of FRNV on 29th October 2023.

- **Bengaluru, Karnataka Chapter**

Karnataka Chapter in its meeting held on 1st November 2023 discussed action plan for the region. It has created a WhatsApp group for its members for effective communication.

- **Hisar, Haryana Chapter**

Chairman Shri Jagdeep Bhargava has initiated steps for increasing the circulation of FRNV Journal - Value Insight. Copies of the journal are made available for the Readers in selected Cafeteria and Clubs.

- **Chennai, Tamil Nadu Chapter**

Chairman Shri Mahalingam Balasubramaniam had taken efforts to translate FRNV Teachers Manual for classes 1-5 in Tamil language. After its translation, the same shall be made available in schools for values based education to students.

Appeal to Readers

1. It was decided to organize Membership drive in the month of November 2023. Concession in Annual/Life membership fee is available for academicians – Students / Teachers / Principals / Vice Principals / Lecturers, etc.,
2. To allocate separate page for Readers Review in the FRNV Bi-monthly Journal – Value Insight - Readers are requested to offer their review/comments on the journal for publication in the subsequent issue.

Institutional (Corporate) Members

(a) Kamal Model Senior Secondary School, Mohan Garden, New Delhi has become esteemed Institutional (Corporate) Member of FRNV, w.e.f. 18th September 2023 in spreading and strengthening the values based education.

(b) Vijay Tanks & Vessels Pvt. Ltd., Vadodara from 8th November 2023 in strengthening values and ethics.

We appeal to Schools, Colleges and Organizations to become members of FRNV in strengthening the restoration of national values. Also subscribe to FRNV bi-monthly print journal for their libraries.

Life Members joined since 1st April 2023

Name	Membership No.	From
Shri K V Ramesh, Bengaluru	FRNV/LM/062	17.07.2023
Dr. Arun Kumar Rath, Bhubaneswar	FRNV/LM/063	16.10.2023
Dr. Jibitesh Rath, Bhubaneswar	FRNV/LM/064	20.11.2023
Shri Samarendra Dash, Bhubaneswar	FRNV/LM/065	21.11.2023
Shri Ashis Mohapatra, Bhubaneswar	FRNV/LM/066	21.11.2023

SUBSCRIPTION

Readers may subscribe to the print version of journal “Value Insight” for ten (10) issues on payment of Rs.1,000/- (inclusive of postage). Payment may be made online/RTGS

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confirmation may be emailed to

frnv@valuefoundation.in or frnvindia@gmail.com.

Bank QR Code is also available on our website

www.valuefoundation.in/contributions.



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