

Value Insight

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Bi-Monthly

Equanimity

- The Hunt for Objectivity
- A Warrior's Resistance in Adversity
- Acceptance: A Pathway to Equanimity



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

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THEMES FOR THE NEXT ISSUES OF THE JOURNAL

Month	Theme	Deadline for articles
October 2024	Bhakti	August 1, 2024
December 2024	Love	October 1, 2024

BRIEF GUIDELINES FOR THE ARTICLES

1. Write up may include original articles / short stories. In case of extracts / excerpts / photographs, due credit by way of acknowledgment is to be given.
2. About 900-1400 words.
3. Not political and / or religious.
4. Student(s) are encouraged to send through their school(s).
5. Brief profile of about 70 words and a photograph along with the write up may be sent to frnv@valuefoundation.in and / or frnvindia@gmail.com
6. Honorarium, if any, may be considered by FRNV Editorial Board for articles published.
7. The decision of the FRNV Editorial Board shall be final and binding.



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Acharya Mahapragya (14 June 1920 – 9 May 2010) was the tenth head of the Svetambara Terapanth order of Jainism. He was a spiritual leader, philosopher, author and poet. He formulated the Preksha Meditation system and developed the "Science of Living" education system. He traversed more than 100,000 km on foot reaching out to masses spreading the message of harmony and peace. He launched the Ahimsa Yatra movement in 2001 to promote non-violence.

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ERRATA

June 2024 issue of Value Insight (Vol.3 Issue 3)

Article – Elevating Business

by Dr. Arun Kr. Rath

Page 26

The first sentence and the para to be read as :

In the heart of Indian culture lies the timeless principle of 'seva' selfless service. This noble concept is not just a moral directive but a transformative practice that fosters compassion, humility and unity.

UNQUOTE

The error / printer's devil is regretted

Editorial Board

Readers Write

“ Received Value Insight volume:3 issue:3 June 2024. The articles published deserve appreciation. The intention of the FRNV is reflected in the book. When National Values are neglected and brushed aside, the in-depth articles and articulations published in Value Insight give inspiration to the new generation. Our youth are living in illusion without understanding the grass root reality (not all) about life. The articles will naturally encourage the youth of our country to travel through the right path. I appreciate all the contributors and the editorial board for keeping its dignity of the dream of F R N V. ”

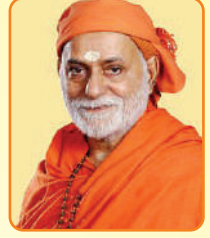
Adv. N.S.Gopakumar.
Kochi.

Samatva-Buddhi

Equal Vision

Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.



I shall tell you something very important about the Sadhana that all of you are engaged in. I have been thinking about it from three angles – how to make you aware as to what Sadhana is, how to make you pursue it with greater intensity, and thirdly, how to make the practice endearing and easy.

Devotees often ask me: “Swamiji, you are saying that life is always one of interactions. The interactions take place at the level of the senses. During the process we get two experiences – happiness and unhappiness. They have to be looked at equally.” Our question is: *“Are they not opposite in nature? Then how to make them equal?”*

It is a very good question. First of all, you must understand and also agree that it is possible to make the responses equal. Samatva-buddhi should be the focus and the goal. Secondly, you should be earnest about and deeply interested in attaining the samatva-state. Only then, the question of proceeding towards the goal need be discussed.

Mind - the source, sustainer and terminus of interactions

Is it not a fact that life is full of interactions, and these interactions take

place at the level of senses? During the interactions, the objects do nothing; everything is done by our senses. Is it not?

Look at the sun. The sun is at such a great distance, and it is so huge. But in the process of my seeing the sun, the sun has no role to play! The 'poor sun' does not even know that I am seeing him! I see the sun. The sun does nothing. The whole interaction is my own creation. So, we can say that in general, the objects being inert, simply lend themselves to be perceived.

Perception itself has two stages. Physically, it takes place at the sensory level. But it has to be sought and initiated by the mind. The senses are only instrumental. They are part of the biological body. They cannot have likes and dislikes. Suppose a person dies. His cornea can be taken out and grafted onto a blind person. And the blind starts seeing. What does it mean? The mind is necessary for the cornea to function. It simply goes to prove that the senses have limited functionality – it is the mind that actually sees and interacts.

This mind is completely different from

the biological aggregate called body. It is the mind that initiates interaction. How does it initiate? The mind feels: “I want to see”. That 'feeling' becomes the propulsion for animating and activating the senses. It is not that every time the mind has to say, “I want to see”; it becomes a spontaneous function of the mind. Then immediately the impulse is carried to the eye-lids. The eyes open. They are focused on the objects and then perception takes place.

Understand that the initiation is by the mind. And while seeing is going on, the process cannot be disconnected from the mind. So, the mind is the source and also the sustainer of perception. While seeing, the perception is registered and remembered by the mind.

I want you to understand that your Sadhana starts at this point. If everything is taking place in the mind-level, where is the question of your seeking anything external for making your Sadhana effective? Throughout your Sadhana, you need nothing other than your mind! See, when you grasp this knowledge, **please make the knowledge your own.** You should apply the theory to practice and make it functional in your life.

The world is plural and the objects are many. But, all the infinite variety is made of only five kinds of perceptions, taking place through the five senses. And when they enter the mind, all these have only two outcomes in the mind – pleasant and unpleasant.

The pleasantness or unpleasantness is not created by anything outside. It is mind's own creation. The mind chooses to interact with the world and thereby generates the twin notions of pleasantness and unpleasantness. Even when there is no object, the mind may bring in a thought and create pleasantness; and later, it may recall another thought, which may be unpleasant. Here, the thought is created by the mind and the pleasantness or unpleasantness is also mind's offshoot. During the interaction with the external world, the objects become instrumental in producing these twin emotions. In both cases, the mind is the author of happiness and misery.

The 'mind-substance'

Now, your question is: *“How to evenize happiness and misery, or how to make them light?”*

Impress upon your intelligence one important conclusion we just made. What is that? Happiness and misery are mind's creations. The 'content' of happiness or the 'content' of unhappiness is no other than the mind. Understand this well.

By the word 'content', I do not mean what 'it contains'. I am not saying what the thought is about or should be about. Let it be anything. We are not discussing the object of thought. Rather, we are interested to know what thought is made of – the very 'substance' out of which the 'thing' is made. That is what I mean by 'content'. We generally use the word 'substance' to mean something material.

Here I am using the same word to focus on something non-material – what 'thought is made of'.

For example, think of the sea. There are waves. There are ripples. What is the content of the waves or the ripples? Is it not water alone? So, we can say that the 'substance' of 'waves and the ripples' is water alone. When you see the waves, you know that the 'substance' of 'wave' is water.

In the same manner – in the happiness or unhappiness, what is the actual 'substance' involved? Is it not the mind alone?

So, what is the message in all this? Don't be swept away by happiness or unhappiness – but be anchored in the 'content' or 'substance' of both! Meaning – **be aware that it is just a display of the mind alone.** If the substance in both happiness or unhappiness is the same – the mind alone – why should you prefer one or dislike another?

My dear children, what I am saying is so simple that anyone can practise it and make the practice a success. Where is the difficulty? Think of fire. Is it not always hot? Can it ever be cold? Can ice be hot? But, here is a peculiar situation where the mind by virtue of its supra-material nature has the potential to give you this dual and opposing concept of happiness and misery. How can the same mind produce happiness and unhappiness? Well, that is its supra-material potential.

It is its power. That is why you will find that the mind suddenly becomes miserable, and after some time, the same mind becomes happy.

Actually, the mind remains as mind in both the cases. That dual notion is a mere delusional display. When you understand the truth about happiness and unhappiness – that the 'content' of happiness and that of unhappiness is the same, your flair for one or dislike for the other will automatically dwindle.

You are now thinking about the objects and evaluating your life in terms of the objects of the world. Instead, you must be able to say: "The objects do nothing. It is my mind that interacts with the objects of the world. And in interaction, the starting point is the mind, the middle point is the mind and the end point is also the mind. The objects are like the walking stick. The walking stick never walks – our legs do the walking." This understanding will take you to an unassailable position.

In this way, if you keep enquiring about the mind, automatically, you will gain inner harmony. You will stop getting elated by one or depressed by another. You will experience lightness in both. You were asking me: "*Swamiji, how to make it even and how to be light? What is the way?*" I am now telling you: "This is the way!" By repeatedly contemplating on these lines, you will be able to rise above dualities of happiness and misery. You would then reach that

transcendental level. “Rising above both” should be your mantra! Not getting overpowered by either of them!

The fleeting nature of happiness & misery

Now, I would like you to look at the whole thing from another point. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna:

**मात्रास्पर्शास्तुकौन्तेय
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व
भारत॥ (Bhagavad Gita 2.14)**

Interactions between the senses and the objects ((mātrā sparśāḥ) give rise to happiness and misery for the mind, like cold and heat for the body. They come and go, being ephemeral. Forbear them, O Arjuna.

Krishna is saying that happiness and misery are fleeting – they come and go. Understand that they are complementary to each other. For happiness to be born, the unhappiness has to end. That means, prior to happiness, unhappiness was there. Is it not then true that it is unhappiness that gives rise to happiness? Again, happiness ends after sometime and gives rise to unhappiness. So, if happiness depends on unhappiness and vice versa, why do you dislike one and like another?

Can you have happiness alone? No! Why? Because it is fleeting, *anitya*□. Then why should you hold on to it? Even if you want it, it will not stay forever.

Should you be afraid of unhappiness? No! Why? Because, that also is fleeting. After sometime, it will go away and bring happiness.

When you think like this, Sadhana becomes very easy and facile. All that you have to do is keep thinking about it. This contemplation should become your habit. Whenever you do a work, are you not thoughtful about your work? Here, you have to be thoughtful about your Sadhana. During the day, whatever you do should contribute to your Sadhana. Be aware that Sadhana is your focus. You may be caught up in your work, but in between, again and again this idea should come to you. This kind of thoughtfulness will intensify your pursuit.

First of all, do sufficient listening so that you will assimilate the knowledge. It should become your own knowledge. That means, you should be able to apply it any time in any situation. Not only will your Sadhana then become facile, it will also be an endearing source of joy and fulfillment.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.
Vicharasethu-January 2013
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SUBHASHITAM

Bhagavadgita 2.48

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥

हे अर्जुन!

आसक्ति को त्यागकर योग में स्थित होकर कर्म करो ।
सफलता और असफलता में समभाव रखो,
क्योंकि समत्व को ही योग कहते हैं ॥

O Arjuna, perform action being steadfast
in Yoga, abandoning attachment.
Remain equipoised in success and failure,
for equanimity is called Yoga.

From the President's Desk



Over the past month I have been travelling in Europe. Apart from admiring the nature around me, I have been struck by one common feature: there is a sense of belonging of each individual to their village/ city/nation. They may criticize or be in disagreement with their government, but they are aware and concerned.

Why is it that we are unable to transmit this to our people? Why is it that we, as a people, do not seem to care about our nation? There is nothing wrong in pursuing self-interest. People all over the world do that. But, there is a respect and responsibility that they evince towards their country. That is what I feel we should take pains to instill in our children. In fact, even in adults!

For instance, how many of us have lost sleep over the fact that 25% of our recently elected political leaders have serious criminal records and cases against them? Some of them are holding portfolios too. If that is not enough it is reported that around 93% of the elected representatives are '*crorepatis*'. Muscle and money power is really a lethal combination for democracy. In contrast, as far as we know, is the story of two other nations which went to poll around the same time. There do not seem to be candidates with criminal records against them who have been allowed to contest.

Till recently I was confident that even if we have 'misguided' people as leaders at the political level, at the administrative level we have a strong and robust administrative service. But, a few days ago I heard about the misdemeanour of an IAS probationer. It was reported in all the papers and one of the suggestions from her higher-ups has been dismissal, which means her actions were serious and could not be overlooked as a one-time mistake. After 2 years of training if the probationer behaves in such a manner, it poses many questions about the selection process, the effectiveness of the training given and so on. It can be comforting to think this is only one case, but such cases come to fore every now and then and also one case is enough to damage the morale of the people and their faith in the administration.

As usual I write to all of you seeking suggestions. At FRNV we are planning further action to define the path ahead of us. Enrich it and make it more effective with your participation.

S. Regunathan
President (FRNV)



The Right Balance

A person of equanimity stays calm, cool and collected and navigates the sea of delusion with dexterity. You can protect yourself from imposters who promise you joy, success, prosperity and fame, writes Narayani Ganesh

At an ashram recently, I met a seeker from Australia, who was looking to find a suitable path. One day, the food served was a bit tasteless in an otherwise normally simple but tasty daily menu. I turned to him and commented, “Today the food is below average, isn't it?” He joined his palms together gently and bowing his head, said softly, “I am accepting what is served, with gratitude.” Though he was clueless about the path he was to embark on, he had certainly grasped the core value of being spiritual, that is, to remain centred, non-judgemental and thankful. These are traits of a person who is cultivating equanimity, a difficult state to achieve, but which opens infinite doors to higher dimensions.

Adi Shankara in his *Bhaja Govindam*, spoke of *sama darsana*, equanimity,

pointing out that the very same divinity is present in you, me and everyone else. Therefore, it follows, that we need to be equal-minded, that is, cultivate even-mindedness. Then, emotional upheavals will not affect you – you will remain calm in the face of joy and sorrow, success and failure, heat and cold, praise and abuse, gain and loss, fame and anonymity. You will accept bouquets and brickbats with the same grace.

Failure is not the opposite of success; we need to see it as a prelude to future success.

Krishna in the Bhagwad Gita speaks at length on the virtues of being a *sthitapragya*, a person of equanimity. On the battlefield at Kurukshetra in the Mahabharata, faced with the prospect of

fighting against his own relatives and teachers, Arjuna asks Krishna, in chapter 2, verse 54, what is the disposition of one who is situated in divine consciousness? How does an enlightened person talk? How does he sit? How does he walk? To these questions, Krishna responds thus: When one discards all selfish desires and cravings of the senses that torment the mind, and becomes satisfied in realization of the Self, such a person is said to be transcendently situated. One whose mind remains undisturbed amidst misery, who does not crave for pleasure and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is in a state of steady wisdom. One who stays unattached in all situations and is neither elated by good fortune nor dejected by failure, is the one with perfect knowledge.

If you can withdraw your senses from objects like the tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell at will, you are established in divine wisdom, explains Swami Mukundananda, commenting on the Gita. Krishna says the Self-realised one is free from hankering, fear, lamentation, and remains undisturbed in both misery and happiness. It is not that he doesn't have the senses; he indeed has the five senses like anyone else, but with steady intellect, he has control over them like the tortoise has, over its limbs. Then, does he not wish to be happy? If he has no desire for happiness, can he still be happy? Everyone wishes for happiness. We are all drops of bliss, so naturally, we are drawn to the Source, the ultimate ocean of bliss of Divinity. Therefore,

when you aim to merge with the Source of bliss, it is not difficult to detach yourself from worldly attractions; your taste is higher; as a drop of bliss, your aim is to merge with the ocean of bliss.

Rudyard Kipling's poem titled 'If' speaks eloquently of remaining cool and collected, in a state of equanimity, in the face of situations and issues that threaten to make or mar your life. He says,

*"If you can dream, and not make
dreams your master
If you can think, and not make
thoughts your aim
If you can meet with Triumph and
Disaster
and treat these two imposters just the
same...
Yours is the Earth and everything
that's in it..."*

Failure is not the opposite of success; we need to see it as a prelude to future success.

*For the true spiritual seeker,
there is no such thing as defeat.
To him, all is victory. This is
because he has gained victory
over his mind and senses in all
situations and circumstances.*

You win some, you lose some, and one need never forget that when you touch rock bottom, there's no other way but to go up. Nothing is permanent. This is the

cycle of life, the law of nature. Guru Nanak's words echo this. The *Gurbani* says, for *gurmukh*, the true spiritual seeker, there is no such thing as defeat. To him, all is victory. This is because he has gained victory over his mind and senses in all situations and circumstances. Accepting defeat in life is very important; we need to cultivate this art.

The truly victorious is the one who has mastered the art of accepting both likes and dislikes, success and failure, good and bad, in equal measure, with intuition. Such a *gurmukh* rises above all *dooja bhaav*, dualities, by practising equanimity, that is, even-mindedness. In contrast, a *manmukh*, one who is into material pursuits only, gets carried away by momentary ups and downs, as the *manmukh* is directed by his ego.

In fact, as the saying goes, '*Jeeto boodai, haaro tirai*' – the victorious are doomed while the defeated swim across. That is, overcome by success, the one who wins may become very egoistic, overconfident and arrogant, paving the way for a possible downward spiral, whereas the defeated acquires a new perspective that encourages him to keep swimming in order to survive.

As Kipling points out, both triumph and disaster are nothing but imposters. What is real is our ability to rise above both and achieve a state of equilibrium that makes us non-judgmental and all-embracing, compassionate and thankful. Whereas, when you start basking in the glory of a

win and lead an egoistic life, and forget who you really are and your place in the universe, trouble could brew in the future.

In the Ramayana, when Prince Rama is told by his father Dasaratha that he will be coronated as King of Ayodhya, Rama accepts that without being particularly elated or joyous. Soon after when his father tells him that he needs to be exiled in the forest, Rama accepts that, too, without disappointment or sadness. This is the mark of one who is even-minded, whether it is a winning or losing situation as per various perspectives. In short, winning and losing are two sides of the same coin. Once this truth is accepted, everything becomes bearable and there is greater understanding all around.

In Sanskrit, another term, *upeksha*, also means equanimity, the term being more current among Buddhists. The Buddhist path to nirvana is smoothened by cultivating *upeksha*, acquired through



knowledge and awareness. Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras counts upeksha to be among the four positive attitudes – the other three being *maître*, loving-kindness, *karuna*, compassion and *mudita*, joy.

Another term used in the Gita for equanimity, is *samatvam*. In chapter 2, verse 48 Krishna says:

*Yoga sthah kuru karmani sangam
tyaktva Dhananjaya
Siddhi asiddhiyoh samo bhutva
samatvam yoga uchyate*

Krishna is asking Arjuna, to be steadfast in yoga, give up all attachment without regard to success or failure, and continue to diligently do the work assigned. Such equanimity of mind is called yoga.

How does one go about cultivating all the attributes that will contribute to making one a person of equanimity? Swami Sivananda says there are several qualities that such a seeker needs to learn and cultivate, including *viveka*, the power to discern; *vairagya*, dispassion; calmness, mind control, reining in the senses, learning to withdraw, the art of endurance, deep faith and mental balance and the yearning for liberation.

A practice that can help here is that of meditation, and particularly, Vipassana. Deep breathing techniques like pranayama are also tools that help one

remain balanced and calm.

To the ignorant, the person striving for equanimity and who is practising detachment by resisting sensual temptations, is reduced to being a robot. If you do not emote when the situation demands it, such as a big win when you scream with joy, a failure when you cry and go into depression, it is concluded that the person is devoid of all feelings and operates in a clinical fashion.

A person of equanimity is nothing like a robot; he would be compassionate and kind, warm, understanding and conscious. His neutral state comes from total awareness and intelligence rather than avoidance and robotic responses. The Buddha said that a mind filled with equanimity is abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and ill-will.

In Vipassanā meditation, practitioners can come to understand and see clearly into the nature of reality, the impermanence of all experience. From this newly developed perspective of equanimity, the mind becomes less easily disturbed and suffers less from unexpected conditions and emotional states. Meditation can train the mind to be sensitive and flexible, which results in developing and maintaining a state of composure, peace, and balance. It all boils down to finding the right balance.



Equanimity To accept what is

Comm. S Mohan says equanimity is a tool that can bring our focus back from habits that are harmful to our well being.

I have read how Arjuna, in the Mahabharata, becomes unnerved on the battlefield in having to face his revered Gurus and elders and he puts down his arms and refuses to fight. Lord Krishna then urges him to be a '*sthita-pragya*'- of a stable state of mind. On further questioning about what is the definition of *sthita-pragya*, and how does one achieve it, Krishna explains in many verses of the Bhagavat Gita, “... *nabhinandati na dweshti, tasya pragya prathishthita*” ...

One who neither rejoices with joy and celebration nor seethes with anger and hate, such a person is said to have a stable mind. This was essential for Arjuna to be able to fight his dear ones in the opposing Kaurava army. Equanimity is synonymous with Serenity.

Is this practical? Yes, quite so! I found it

resonating in the 'Serenity Prayer' - a beautiful poem written in 1925 by Reinhold Niebuhr, an American theologian.

We need to accept people, places, situations, and circumstances as they are, not as we would like them to be – because after countless futile attempts over several painful years, we realize that we are unable to change anybody . Haven't some of us tried to change our errant husbands or sons addicted to gambling, drug abuse, alcohol, or smoking? Some distraught parents who tried every possible means (counselling, cajoling, pleading, threatening, and even violent treatment) would readily identify with me.

If we cannot change people, places, or circumstances of our lives, what indeed

can we change? As the next line wisely says, change the things we can. It comes as a great revelation to realize that we can only change ourselves! Why is courage involved in changing the things we can? It requires great moral courage to be able to go back to someone we had harmed and ask forgiveness! Is it easy to re-visit our 'crime' and stand before someone we had embezzled money in the past, or hurt a person by our words or by our deeds, and make amends – fully well expecting the other person to punch us in the face? But we must, if we are endeavoring to change ourselves....and we have only *this* life to reform ourselves. It requires great courage, yes, but it can be done. In both situations - To accept things as they are (not as we would wish them to be!) as well as to change ourselves - we seek Serenity from the Ultimate - God.

Talking about the Serenity Prayer, it may be of interest to learn that over five million ex-alcoholics, drug-addicts, and gamblers all over the world (in 130 countries including India) who once were hopelessly addicted – with broken homes, and untold woes in every family – have reformed and not reverted to their

addiction-- not even one sip of a drink! There are men, women, and youngsters from all walks of life who have been completely sober for ten, twenty, or forty years – leading a purposeful life in happy, contented homes. They find great strength in the initial three lines of the Serenity Prayer, which can be recited at any time – in moments of great emotional turmoil or in the quietness of their hearts. A remarkable secret is that they handle life One Day at a Time. In fact, this prayer is so practical that it is worth learning its full form.

Yesterday is History, ... and we cannot change one iota of the past!

Tomorrow is a Mystery... and we cannot control the future.

Today is the 'Present' ... and a wonderful gift from God!

adopting these simple homilies, we can surely handle just one day – Today – and achieve a fair modicum of success in maintaining our equanimity. As theologian Niebuhr says, we can be reasonably happy in this world, and eternally happy with Him in the next.

The Hunt for Objectivity

What does one do when it's critical to be objective, but objectivity itself is, arguably, subjective? asks Arvind Sukumar



“Be objective!”

It's one of the first and most-repeated phrases in Journalism school. It's the foundation on which a career in journalism is built. It's the cornerstone of a good news report, the pillar on which the narrative stands, and the walls and roof that protect the sanctity of the news report.

For journalists, especially news reporters, objectivity is meant to be an immovable rock. The concept should ideally dictate every word, line, phrase, and sentence used. It should be the basis for questions asked, and the filter that separates the colour and noise from the

facts. One must keep things 'black & white.'

No adjective is too crucial, no adverb imperative, no exclamation essential, and no qualifier compulsory when recounting events of which the audience is being informed.

Therein lies a problem.

As reporters, the responsibility to inform is conjoined with the obligation to first identify the news. Gatekeeping, it's called. It's supposed to be a sacrosanct duty – to determine what is vital information a reader needs to know to add value (if not meaning) to their lives,

and how to deliver this information. Conversely, this envelopes the burden of competent and effective censorship. It is a sacred trust, and one not to be abused.

That abuse, cub reporters are taught, is often far too easy to orchestrate -- often unintentional, and mostly subconscious. Most find out the hard way. All it takes is a simple slip.

What's deemed important by one may not be as important to another -- and so the importance (or lack thereof) a reporter places on an event or story need not be as important to even another reporter covering the same beat, let alone the audience. And if a vast majority of the audience does not perceive the import of the story to the same degree the reporter has, the story itself becomes useless -- a waste of time, energy, and effort.

Often, the story can also be drowned out by the noise of the narrative. Picking the narrative style to tell a story may not resonate at the same level across age-groups, genders, and what have you. This means the reporter must find a peg and style that has universal appeal and relevance, and tailor the content and delivery to suit.

This is a fine balancing act that takes practice. There's an equally difficult and far more interesting conundrum that must be navigated: objectivity itself can be quite subjective. A reporter's views are often tinted by his/her own prejudices and experiences. So how does

one sift through these internal factors and deliver a narrative that is truly dispassionate, but still holds the audience?

Take for example, a headline that screams "Massive manhunt on for killers of 4-year-old Hindu girl". It's a fairly commonplace headline. But are the words "massive" and "Hindu" necessary? Do they add value to the story? How massive is massive? Does the girl's religious identity have any bearing on the case or the actions in progress? Does her age? Would it matter at all if the killers were of a different, but same religious persuasion? What if they were each followers of different religions? What if the murderers all also identified as Hindus? Would that push the needle either way?

And what happened to 'innocent until proven guilty'? Wouldn't the headline 'Massive manhunt on for alleged killers of 4-year-old Hindu girl' be more appropriate? Or is the reporter trying to convey that the killers were identified and found guilty, after which they absconded?

Does "Police launch 100-person manhunt for alleged killers of 4-year-old child" work better? What about "Police launch manhunt for killers of child"? Does this do enough to hook the reader? None of the headlines above may be factually incorrect. Neither are they wantonly misleading. Which one would you choose to lead with?

Some people may find the last headline inadequate, belittling the scope and nature of the crime, or the events that came thereafter. Some may argue that it works perfectly, since it informs on the facts without ruffling feathers or inciting emotions, just as a good news report should. It leaves passion and passion-inducing words out.

This leaves the reporter with another problem: will a merely factual statement give the impression that the report was written by someone who was unmoved by the incident, or just not invested enough in the events or the outcome? And so, if the reporter does not seem to care, why should the reader?

Similarly, a dispassionate account need not be seen as dispassionate by everyone. The power to distill an event or occurrence varies from person to person, as does the level of acceptability of this objectivity. The onus of making the article not just readable and relatable, but every portion of it a hook to ensnare and hold the reader falls on the reporter and the sub-editor who proofs, edits, and in some cases rewrites, the copy. It's this imperative that is often the biggest hurdle to objectivity.

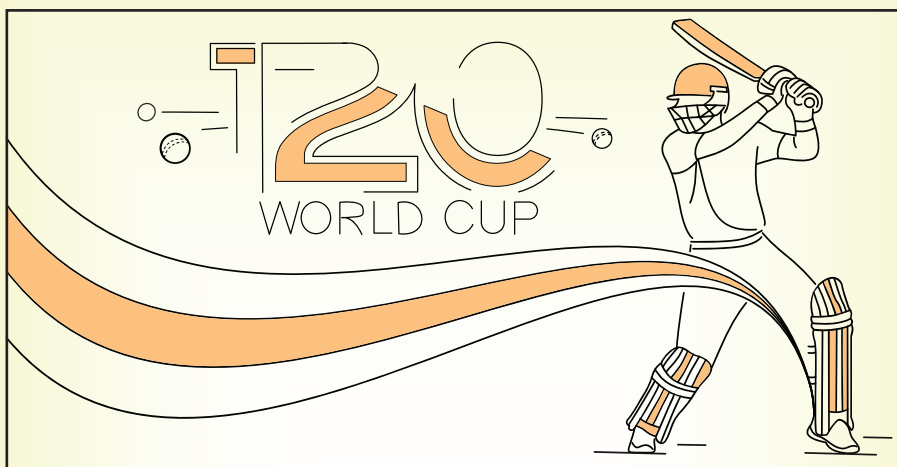
The online mechanism for news delivery only makes it tougher. Clicks are money. Clickbait, the term used to refer to headlines or captions that compel or coax a reader to click on the headline to engage with the article, have become desirable. And in this race for clicks, the easiest approach is often to lead with

emotions, inveigle with the visceral, and ensnare with the outrageous; to tease and tempt and tickle the interest.

And so we have headlines like “Murder in Mumbai: 5 kill 4-year-old Hindu girl, abscond”, or “Hate Crime? 4-year-old Hindu girl's love for ice cream used to kill her”. Tabloid-style writing has been slowly and steadily encroaching on the broadsheets, and it may well be here to stay.

In such an environment, the average reporter has to walk a tightrope, find a fine balance between delivering the news and giving the audience something to chew on. In the interest of objectivity, the story has to be a narration of events, not give opinion. It should deliver the facts and let the reader draw their own conclusions and inferences. It should raise questions and answer them but do so in a manner that is not intrusive or overbearing; in effect, the report should lead without leading; it should illuminate, not impose.

Once, a news story had to be like the bed and porridge Goldilocks liked – not too hard and not too soft, not too hot and not too cold! Fundamentally, that has not changed. But finding the right softness and the right temperature takes practice and experience, and above all, the equanimity to say, “I've been true to the journalistic credo and I've done my best to walk the middle ground; may the chips fall where they may.”



India's T20 Cup and 3 P's of Success

Mona Mehta finds equanimity leads to victory

Even to someone who has been living under a rock and woke up to India's victory in the T20 World Cup, irritated by the sound of crackers bursting in the middle of the night – these cricket matches can have some trophy-worthy life lessons to offer.

Poring over reams of content and commentaries, these matches revealed some profound truths.

Past failures purify

Failing in a game can actually work in your favor. India's cricket team had been reeling under a decade-long bad spell of missing cricket trophies by exiting matches either in the semi-finals or finals. Criticism that failure brings can help in two ways – it can reveal your imperfections and offer opportunities for purification. Now loopholes can be

plugged and performance improved. Criticism also teaches us detachment and the best way to deal with critics – neither getting affected by them nor wasting time holding on to grudges. Instead, direct your energy towards improving the game.

Perseverance pays

No matter what happens and whatever kind of adversary you are up against, it is essential to do your dharma, in this case, as a cricketer, play a wonderful game of cricket, wholeheartedly. Krishna talks about this attitude in the Bhagwad Gita verse III:16, when he asks a disheartened and depressed Arjun to pick up his bow and fight and do his karma as a warrior, for that is the path to glory: 'He who does not follow the wheel of creation thus set going in this world, i.e. does not perform

his duties, leads a sinful and sensual life, he lives in vain.'

Sage Vasishth too glorifies *purusharth*, human effort, in Yog Vasishth II:4:12, when, upon sensing that his student, Prince Ram, was becoming complacent and lethargic, he states that whatever one wishes to have, one works to achieve it accordingly; it is certainly attained if effort is not abandoned halfway through. Once you are in the self-improvement zone, it is essential to discard the ladder of criticism and hurt that motivated you to get here. Now, just persevere. The Japanese have a word for this – *ganbarimasu* – which means not stopping until the objective has been reached. It stands for perseverance along with patience. In their book, *The Ikigai Journey*, Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles quote a Japanese proverb '*if you want to heat a rock, sit on it for a hundred years*'...for patience with perseverance leads us to fulfilling our goals.

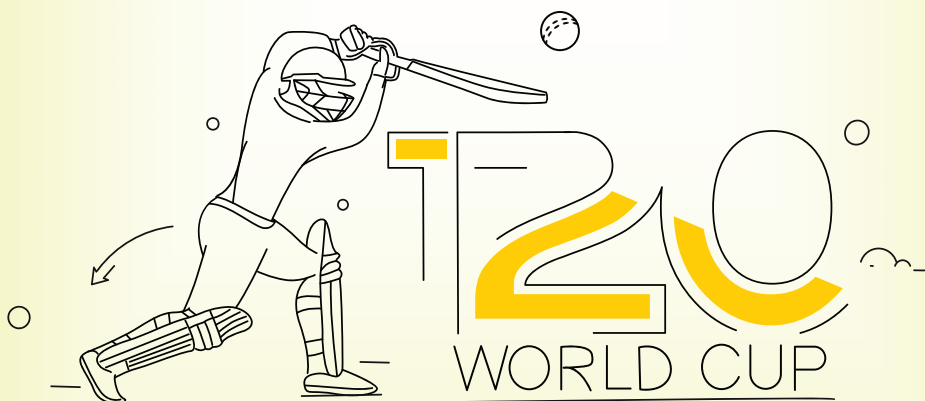
Pressure-proof yourself

With the South African team on the verge of victory, the final cricket match being played under the watchful eyes of millions of cricket fans, the tsunami of pressure must have been sky-high. But Surya Kumar Yadav used all his energy, presence of mind, focus, and agility – to take a historic catch that sealed India's victory. We can withstand all kinds of pressure and perform well if we focus all our energy only on the present – detaching ourselves from all past happenings, as well as stonewalling all shards of future anxiety. This way, we move into our zone, where each of our actions is automatically tailored to meet the need of the moment.

India's victory helped us net three 'Ps' that can help us glide through life's ups and downs effortlessly.

From: [Speaking Tree](#) in TOI July 4, 2024.

Image by Rochak Shukla on Freepik





A Warrior's Resistance in Adversity

Manish Pant explores the theme of equanimity in adversity through the lens of Shivaji's remarkable story - the story of the lionhearted warrior's great escape from imprisonment.

During the turbulent political climate of 17th- century India, Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha empire, vowed to free India from an intolerant, totalitarian regime of the Mughal ruler, Aurangzeb. Shivaji's life journey is a study of both triumphs and setbacks.

After inflicting humiliating defeats on the armies of the Sultanate of Bijapur and the Mughal empire, he finally faced defeat when he encountered a formidable 100,000-strong Mughal force led by Mirza Raja Jai Singh in 1665. Under the terms of the Treaty of Purandar, Shivaji became a vassal of the

Mughal Empire, surrendering 23 of his 35 forts. He had to travel to Agra with his son, Sambhaji to pay respects to Emperor Aurangzeb. The journey was fraught with danger as Aurangzeb was known for treachery.

Lying in the Indo-Gangetic plains, Agra is exceedingly hot and dusty in May. Shivaji and his son stood in the scorching heat before Aurangzeb. Shivaji made a *nazrana* (offering) of 1,500 gold pieces after which the emperor called him to the foot of the throne. Upon his making the three

He was overwhelmed by rage and a commotion ensued when he protested vehemently against this insult. Shivaji's reaction was duly reported to Aurangzeb who ordered him to be lodged in Jaipur House outside the city and guarded by heavily armed Mughal soldiers.

What would you do in a similar situation? The choice before Shivaji was stark: capitulate or fight back. His response would be determined by his equanimity.

Shivaji was one of those who bounce back when their back is against the wall. His patient resilience emerged during his house arrest as he made plans to escape. News started circulating that he had fallen gravely ill. Distribution of sweets to the city's brahmins, mendicants and courtiers was started to please the deities for his early recovery. These offerings went out daily in huge baskets slung from a pole by two men. The imperial guards would thoroughly check the baskets before letting them through. However, as days passed, the checking of the baskets waned and gradually stopped altogether.



customary salutations, Aurangzeb signaled for him to be moved to an obscure corner reserved for low-ranking nobles in the court. The emperor's action left Shivaji flabbergasted!

The Great Escape

As uncertainty around Shivaji's health



The security informed their supervisor who rushed to report to Aurangzeb that Shivaji may have used witchcraft to disappear into thin air.

“Whether he flew into the sky or disappeared into the earth, is not known, nor what magical trick he has played.”

To avoid capture, rather than taking the direct route to Deccan from the southwest, Shivaji first travelled east towards Puri, before turning southwest to reach home

persisted, news came on August 19 that his health had deteriorated. When guards came to check on him they found him lying fully covered in a quilt with only his arm and the trademark gold bracelet visible. The next day his half- brother Hiraji Farzand left the building after requesting the guards to speak in a low voice to avoid disturbing the patient. As hours passed, the guards realized that not only had the quarters become unusually quiet but the daily steady stream of visitors that would come to check on the important guest's health had also stopped. When they entered the room, they found the bed empty! Shivaji and his son, Sambhaji had escaped in the sweetmeat baskets a day earlier. Farzand had taken his place in the bed for a night.

at Raigad Fort. Eight years after his legendary escape, Shivaji was crowned 'Chhatrapati' (ruler) in June 1674. The event marked the beginning of the Maratha empire.

Shivaji's equanimity – his ability to maintain composure and balance – was pivotal. It allowed him to strategize, endure and ultimately escape. His story teaches us that leaders, CEOs and common individuals alike can draw from equanimity in times of distress. Whether facing a totalitarian regime or navigating corporate challenges or confronting family crises, maintaining inner calm enables effective decision-making and resilience.



Traversing Life's Storm's with Grace and Serenity

*Sunil Dutt, the versatile actor, politician and social worker, demonstrated equanimity and resilience in the face of crises. **Humra Quraishi**, in an interview with the actor, delves into his remarkable journey.*

I had met and interviewed actor turned politician, Sunil Dutt, during that phase of his life when he and his family were facing challenging times. His son, Sanjay Dutt, had been arrested and faced imprisonment for 19 days under TADA...and TADA charges slapped on him.

How did Sunil Dutt face that rough - tough - turbulent phase?

I still recall how he looked straight ahead and without expressing any bitterness, had said rather calmly, in that matter-of-fact way: "It's been extremely shocking for us and I don't think we'll be able to ever recover from it. It can't ever be washed away from our minds. At times I keep thinking that this is what we've got in return for all that we did for the country. You go punishing a person who is yet to be proved guilty and whose family did whatever possible for the Motherland."

On how he coped with the tensions and stress? "I had told myself that time alone will show and tell them the truth. Also, where did I have the time to prove our innocence. During all this crisis I'd been sleeping only about a couple of hours every night. I would wake up by 4 a.m. and be out by 5 a.m., to meet the lawyers. TADA charges were slapped against

Sanjay, though the lawyers said it was an arms offence case!"

He added that though he's left shattered by the hounding and allegations that he and his family have been facing, it wouldn't stand in the way of his reaching out to anyone in deep distress and pain: "I have always and always helped anybody in pain, in need and anybody who is suffering. Though I have myself been a victim of the Partition and with that suffered tremendously, my mother taught us never to hate a human being. I have been brought up on this principle and this very principle I have passed on to my children." His resilience and commitment to serving others remains unwavering, rooted in his upbringing and principles.

He also detailed, "Can you imagine even my dead wife Nargis was dragged into all this! I could hear people say that his (Sanjay's) mother was from a different religious community. I told these people that you can slash Sanju and me as much as you like but at least spare the dead; or remember Nargis for the work she did for the spastics, for the blind ...Nargis worked for all regardless of religious affiliations. Look at what all we did for the country. During the two wars we went to the border areas to meet the

jawans and those days, around 1962, when we were financially hard up, I'd donated I lakh for the PM relief fund. I am ready to do anything for the country." But, yes, he was frustrated with the way the political system was working or functioning, more so as he had even threatened to resign when the Mumbai riots were peaking. "Yes, I was definitely feeling very guilty, for even though I was/ I am an elected Member I couldn't do much for my constituency people ...I had entered politics to serve people and yet felt so helpless. Political *tamashas* taking place ...all that reflects the decay in our society, for politicians don't come from outside. They are part of the society." Then he'd gently added, "But then, there are still strong secular forces in the country which can alone stop this decay."

And when I asked him about his friends in the political circles he said, "I have no enemies; all are my friends. In fact, I have no best friend, as I am myself my best friend! Also, I do believe that nobody is your enemy except your own destiny. Destiny has been rather tough on me ...*tapairai khai hain zamanai kei*.... Faced very, very tough times in my life. But I suppose one has to fight on, to go on with life and whatever it has to offer. Right from my childhood it has been a struggle but what happened to my son I couldn't have ever even dreamt of. But these are tests of life..."

Sunil Dutt commented that after Sanjay was arrested he had "approached and met everybody possible yet it took 19 days for Sanjay to be released. Only few friends stood by us during that crisis.

From the film industry it was Dilip Kumar, Rajendra Kumar, Pran saab, and also Members from the South India Film Chambers." He had looked pained as he recounted that he did not get much support from Bollywood. "Only three or four friends in the film industry stood by me. The rest labelled Sanju guilty even before the courts could do so - these are the ways of life! I have no complaints and grudge or anger or hatred against anyone at all. This is life ... it teaches one so much ... just carry on, facing what's there ...carry on without any anger or revenge or ill feeling."

I also recall asking him whether there was any possible solution for the civil strife and violence getting to be witnessed in our country? And within a couple of seconds he'd said "There can be one solution. Last night I was going through the latest Time magazine and the horror photographs of war ridden Somalia shocked me so much that I couldn't eat. It was dinner time but I just couldn't touch a morsel. Just couldn't ...Those horrifying pictures of human beings dying, sitting injured and ill, crawling about, rendered so frail and weak that they couldn't even walk. These human disasters were because of the ongoing civil strife in Somalia. And now I am going to suggest that all those photographs/pictures be displayed all over our towns and cities and villages. Displayed at all public places, libraries and school and colleges and universities and shopping centres. And displayed with this caption: "See what internal war or strife or unrest can do to you, to your country, to your fellow countrymen."

A Pathway to Equanimity



Equanimity is a valuable quality that blesses individuals with the ability to navigate the unpredictable course of human existence writes Prof. C.S. Krishnadas.

To stand firm amidst trials and tribulations, remaining calm and composed, requires genuine mobilization of one's inner resources. Derived from the Latin words “*aequus*” (equal), and “*animus*” (evenness of mind), equanimity is cultivated in the face of difficult life situations.

Exercising equanimity amidst external or inner hardships is not only practical but also immensely beneficial for overall well-being. The very cornerstone of the concept of equanimity is acceptance, the ability to acknowledge the difficulties without being overly emotional or judgemental. Cultivating a sense of acceptance and appreciating and sympathizing with life's challenges gracefully.

It is beyond our intellect to analyse why the worldly life is riddled with inevitable dualities, of pain and pleasure, love and hatred, success and failure or falsehood and truth. These dichotomies are part of our existence. Rather than questioning their nature, we must put forth sincere efforts to transcend these dualities. Equanimity does not mean submitting ourselves to injustice or suppressing positive emotions, but rather about observing them, much like seeing a movie, without personal identification.

Understanding the order of human life often lies beyond our grasp. Man is half and the world is half. so long as the dualities of the world are not accepted, the awareness is not complete. Until we accept the dualities inherent in the world, our awareness remains incomplete. Uncontrollable situations arise, and we must deal with them as they are, not as we imagine. Instead attitude of detachment and 'Let Go'

principle is best suited to overcome seemingly insurmountable situations and challenges in life.

Accepting unfairness is also a part of the concept of equanimity. A Buddhist story, “*Such is the way of life*” illustrates this concept: A crocodile trapped in a net pleads with a passer-by boy for help. The boy was afraid but the crocodile promises not to harm him. However, once the crocodile was freed when the boy removed the net, the crocodile breaks its promise and captures the boy. The boy helplessly looks up and asks a bird, “Save me! Is it not unfair for the crocodile to go back on its words and kill me?” The bird replied, “Such is the way of life, Look, my eggs are being eaten by snakes. What to do?”. Worried, the boy asks a nearby rabbit which advised, “Oh boy! Somehow protect yourself. Be smart. Run away”. Accordingly, the boy escapes. The crocodile asks the rabbit, “Is it not unfair to advise the boy to escape?” The rabbit replied, “Yes, such is the way of life.”

The disturbances and restlessness in human life are unavoidable. To alleviate the disturbances and restlessness, the *Bhagavad Gita* emphasizes performing duties with non-attachment and not to be overly indulgent in hot pursuit of fleeting pleasures. By distinguishing the Real from the Unreal and by seeking the Eternal, one can rise above the realm of dualities that characterise the nature of worldly life. The *Gita* encourages shedding false ego and maintaining calm, quiet patience despite distressful conditions; that everything in life is transitory. The epithets used in the *Gita* are, '*Sthitaprajna*' (stable and steadfast in awareness), '*Samadharshini*' (vision of equality), and '*Samabhava*' (equanimity). The eternal message of the *Gita* is to see the divine in all creatures. The essence of the *Gita* is not passive resignation but an active state of mind—one that allows us to navigate life's challenges with grace and wisdom. Through inward efforts we can attain spiritual maturity and rise above negativity.

Young Voices

True Meaning of Equanimity

Gauranga Krishna Saha



About Gauranga

Gauranga Krishna Saha is a student of Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan Anguridevi Shersingh Memorial Academy (BMVB-ASMA), G.K.-II, New Delhi. He studies in Class 5D. His favourite subjects are Maths and Social Studies. He loves to play cricket and watch movies.

Equanimity means staying calm and balanced when we are in a difficult situation. We should always remain peaceful from inside, no matter how bad the situation is. We should control our emotions. During bad times, we should remember and rely on our inner strength.

Let's take an example. When riding a bicycle, to stay upright and balanced, we need to keep pedaling and not lean to the left or right. This is similar to the idea of 'equanimity'.

To stay calm and balanced when we are sad, we need to keep our balance to face challenges. Equanimity helps us stay calm under stress, maintaining clear and stable emotions.

Like riding a bike, equanimity requires balance and focus. Just as a cyclist keeps physical balance on different paths, a person practising equanimity keeps mental and emotional balance in life's challenges. Both involve staying centered and composed, adapting smoothly to obstacles without losing control.

Mastering this balance, whether on a bike or in the mind, leads to a smoother, more harmonious journey. So, we must keep our mind calm and composed during difficult situations.

Telling Tales



IS THAT SO?

Hakuin was a famous and revered Buddhist monk in a town in Japan. In that very town lived a couple who ran a food store. They had a beautiful daughter. One day they discovered to their dismay that she was pregnant. They were upset and questioned their daughter on who the father was. The daughter just cried and shut herself up in her room but refused to give the name of her boyfriend. Finally, one day, unable to bear her parents constant badgering, she said that it was Hakuin, the revered Buddhist monk.

The parents were taken aback. Just yesterday they had gone to him to seek some solace in their troubled times and to hear that he had behaved in such a manner more than shocked them. They stormed into the monastery and raved and ranted at Hakuin who listened without the show of any emotion. "You have made our daughter pregnant," they said. "Is that so?" he asked.

All the people of the town gathered and said very vile things about the monk. They were grieved that he should let them down so.

A few months later, a baby boy was born. The parents brought the baby to the Buddhist master and said, "He is your responsibility since you are his father," they said. Once again, all that the monk said was, "Is that so?" And he took the child into his house and looked after him as a parent would, nourishing and nurturing the baby.

Almost a year passed, but the girl was not in peace. She was watching the monk beg for milk for the child despite the loss of his reputation. One day she went and told her parents that the baby's father was a fisherman, not the monk. She had said his name to divert their anger to the monk and save herself.

The parents were very ashamed and remorseful. They pleaded forgiveness to the monk. Once again, the monk heard them and said, "Is that so?" They also asked for the child to be given back to them. Hakuin who had grown very fond of the child, returned him to his grandparents on their asking.

In Acceptance

Last week I was travelling with a businessman. He had done well and built up a multi crore business. He was also highly respected in his community. His grandchildren loved him and so did his sons and daughters-in-law. "What is the secret?" I asked. "How do you manage?"

“My spiritual teacher told me to accept whatever comes to me. Do not react. If things do not go the way you want them to, even then face it, do not fight. When matters can be resolved through discussion, then I resort to discussion. Everyone has their ego; I appeal to that. When existing rules are transgressed, I review the rules to see if they are unrealistic or inhumane. If they are not then I take action or else I amend the rules. If there is a fight or disagreement in the family or in my community, I give both sides many hearings. Often that alone resolves the matter. Generally, I succeed when I do not react immediately,” he said. And then he added softly,” Sometimes things go wrong too. Then, I have to accept that.” Slowing down reaction, he concluded, brought maximum chances of success. Failures are a part of life, they come anyway. They become our teachers.

More Valuable Than Diamond

Two brothers were fighting over their property. It was justly distributed between the two till all that remained were two rings. One was a diamond ring and the other a silver ring. Naturally, both of them wanted the diamond ring till the elder brother gave in and let the younger one have it. As time wore on, both brothers lost most of their riches. The elder had only the silver ring left. He looked at it carefully and read the words inscribed on it, 'This too shall pass.' It gave him confidence and he continued to work hard to regain his lost wealth. Eventually, he did just that. The younger

looked at his diamond ring and sold it to salvage the day. Soon he spent that money too and fell into great sorrow. He did not have anyone or anything to boost his morale and put him back on the road again.

Rise and fall are natural, just like the rising and setting of the sun. The secret is to never let your spirits fall. Keeping your inner peace or equanimity is more valuable than diamond. Wisdom helps to maintain it.

Positive Criticism

The founder of the Jain Terapanth community was Acharya Bhikshu. A story about Acharya Bhikshu goes like this: A devotee came to him and said, 'There is a man over there picking faults with you.'

Acharya Bhikshu replied, 'What is wrong with that? I became a monk simply to get rid of my imperfections. I am practicing austerities to be free of my defects. That man is my great benefactor, since he is aiding me in my task of removing my imperfections. I am grateful to him.'

Somehow, we have gotten the idea that only if we hit back can we show our strength. Much greater strength is required to maintain equilibrium even under provocation. Reaction introduces violence, disequilibrium, tension and obstruction in our circulatory system, and sometimes this blockage is so extreme that it causes hemorrhage. In fact, much of the increase in the ailments today may find their roots in psychological violence.”



Wisdom Waves: Navigating Spiritual Realms

*Acharya Mahapragya says equanimity is
your police, your guide*

Just as we have different levels at which our mind operates, there are different levels of our consciousness too. We live at the level of the senses. There is another special level at which intuitive powers are awakened. At this level one gets a whiff of the past, of things far away and of unknown objects too. An even more evolved stage of the mind is the access to extrasensory perception, *ati indriya gyan*. At this stage external stimuli no longer matter. We are able to awaken the font of our knowledge that rests in our soul. We do not experience negative emotions at any of the evolved levels. It is only at the level of the senses that we have ideas of remiss, wrong, guilt and evil doings. If circumstances are favorable, we have positive thoughts; else, negative tendencies come to the fore.

Yogashastra has dealt with these stages very well.

If we look at these two states - restlessness and equanimity - and assess a person's life based on these two, we will find that in the state of equanimity, not just tendencies to commit wrongful acts but all other kinds of problems can be arrested. When the mind is restless, one encounters problems, unmanageable situations, disagreements and fights, and is led along a troubled

route, ultimately getting entangled in them. It may even lead to us committing a crime. Restlessness is a big reason for crimes, huge or small. There are several levels of restlessness: slight, medium and extreme. The slightly restless mind does not cause itself much harm.

When restlessness is in the medium category, the doors to disputes and crime are opened and the restless mind either reacts impulsively or misinterprets easily, and so possibilities of indulging in undesirable activities increase. With extreme levels of restlessness, these possibilities turn into certainties.

How to attain inner calm? Intoxicants, it is said, also give inner bliss. It is the restless mind that becomes easy prey to the use of intoxicants. We have always blamed any given situation for falling into the vicious cycle of habit-forming use of drugs and intoxicants. Rather, it is the restless mind that is to blame.

Intoxicants lend a sense of well-being and ecstasy. Man has used them to appease himself, if only to escape from disagreements. When one lives in a society, human interaction is bound to lead to some disagreements, fault-finding, condemnation, poverty and strife resulting from sorrow, unfulfilled

expectations, depression and so on. These problems arise out of the tensions of the mind.

Man did not want to live a life of tension and so the solution he found was in intoxicants. They took him to a place where there were no problems, where worldly bliss could be experienced. But they leave behind horrible after-effects such as depression, dysfunction, laziness, distraction, a sense of being lost and so on.

In the Indian tradition, there have been two ways of looking at things: that which feels good in the beginning but does not yield good results, and that which is not so pleasant initially but is good in the long run. They are called *shreyas* and *preyas*, respectively. For an example, we may consider sugar and gooseberry. According to Ayurveda, sugar produces acidity and gooseberry purifies the system. In conditions of hyperacidity, gooseberry helps control it while sugar aggravates it. Sugar makes tasty sweets and desserts, while the gooseberry is quite sour to taste but good for the body in the long run. Intoxicants are those which are not known to produce even one good result for the body. But they give instant escape, not just from problems that exist but some that we may create for ourselves. They belong to the category of *preyas*.

In today's rat race and materialism, it seems vacuous to talk of *shreyas*, that is,

what is good for the human being or society. The priority is only on making money. Instead of values influencing vocation, corruption of all kinds has influenced it. No intelligent person would break the law. But, today, the mind has become so restless that even the law seems to hold no barrier, no threat. What does crime mean? Any act that transgresses the limits of social coexistence and creates problems is a crime, like theft, robbery and murder, among others. These showcase the working of an unhealthy mind, a mind with some deformity. Is there an escape? A healthy mind will not think of committing crimes.

Improving our alertness is called mindfulness. Meditation can be practiced for an hour or two in a day, but one can be mindful every second of the day. To be mindful is to perform every action knowingly and deliberately. This single practice can change our consciousness and our mind.

The message is loud and clear: as long as we look for external commands, instructions or stimuli to keep our life in order, we will be nurturing a restless mind which will, at the slightest provocation, succumb to pleasure-giving short-term remedies. Our character is built by developing our inner stability or our equanimity such that we do not require outer compulsions to live our life in order. Resolve. Meditate. Be your own police and your own guide.

Pathways to Fitness



Healthy cooking

*The fast-paced life of this digital era has left us with a lot less time to cook and eat healthy. It is essential that we counter this harmful trend with slow, healthy cooking says **Prema Raghavan**.*

Attitude: Put a heart full of love into cooking

Cooking is more about following your heart than following recipes. Cooking is a therapeutic and meaningful activity. It demands attention, patience, and above all, respect for the gifts of the earth. It is a form of worship and gratitude. Like other hobbies, it should be done with love and creativity. In our Indian tradition, we take a bath before cooking and make it a sacred ritual by offering the cooked food to the Divine and then consuming it as *Prasad* – positively energized food that sanctifies our body and mind.

Ancient wisdom: food is elixir for body and mind

The food we eat affects both our bodies and our minds. Ayurveda states that every meal can be healing medicine if we cook consciously. The *Bhagavad Gita*, a sacred Hindu scripture, tells us that the intention of the person cooking the food is transferred to the food as positive or negative vibrations.

According to Ayurveda, foods are of three types - *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*, i.e. foods in the mode of goodness and balance, that of passion or aggression and that of ignorance or dullness.

When food feels like a holy blessing

Why is it that we feel happy and blessed every time we eat food from a holy place - such as sanctified water (*teertha*) or the *Prasad* (an offering of food to the deity that is later distributed to devotees) in Hindu temples – even when it is very simple and does not contain any special ingredients? It is because it is made and offered with love, positive vibes, prayers and blessings. So many of us can attest to this personal experience of the impact of positivity and good energy on us!

Happy cooking is healthy cooking

The simplest meal is often the healthiest meal if prepared with love. Whenever you cook in a happy and cheerful mood, your food will taste delicious, have healing powers and satisfy the consumer. But if you cook with anger or

any other kind of negativity, no matter how hard you try, the food will fail to satisfy.

Start by being aware of how you feel. Before you start cooking for your loved ones, focus and centre yourself, acknowledge any disturbing thoughts or negative feelings and try to let go of them. Focus on the present moment, put on good music that calms and elevates you, recall happy memories.

I found this beautiful prayer that you all can put up in your kitchens. Read it frequently and remind yourself that food made with love is a blessing.

Kitchen Prayer

*this kitchen be so filled with peace
that all who eat food prepared here
receive peace*

*May this kitchen be so filled with
happiness*

*that all who eat food prepared here
receive happiness.*

*May this kitchen be so filled with
goodwill*

that working here is a joy.

Bless this kitchen.

Bless all who work here.

Bless the food that is prepared here.

*May this kitchen and the work done here
be a blessing to all who live.– John*

Robbins, author of “May All Be Fed”.

Link between Energy & Food

Dr. Masaru Emoto, a Japanese author and researcher, studied the effects of different energies and thoughts on water. His findings show us that human energy and consciousness affect water's molecular structure.

Through the 1990s, Dr. Emoto performed a series of experiments observing the physical effect of words, music and environment on the crystalline structure of water. He took pictures of water after they were exposed to different kinds of emotions, both positive and negative.

The results of his experiments showed that positive thoughts, words and prayers produce harmonious crystal formations in the water, and even cleanses polluted water. In contrast, negative thoughts and feelings produce fragmented, disharmonious crystal formations.

As the well-known Hindi saying goes **जैसा अन्न वैसा मन** (jaisa anna, vaisa man). As is the food, so is the mind/thought (essentially, you are what you eat).

Healthy cooking tips

Cook slow: It is a myth that slow cooking destroys nutrients. Slow cooking at lower temperatures over an extended period of time actually pre-digests a good part of your food for you. This means the absorption of vitamins, minerals and amino acids into your system will be easier and in higher amounts. These nutrients are so important for cell repair, immune function, detoxification and energy that the more we absorb, the better our body functions.

Slow cooking also aids the preservation of the amino acid glycine which is naturally found in some foods. Glycine is essential for the production of

glutathione which is our body's most powerful antioxidant and is absolutely vital for proper digestion as well as DNA synthesis.

Avoid high heat: If you grill or pan-fry meat at high temperatures, chemicals known as heterocyclic amines (HCAs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) can form on the food. These chemicals can cause changes in your DNA and have been linked to cancer.

Use steam: Use low-fat cooking methods like steaming or boiling. If you boil or steam food, you avoid the chemicals created by high temperatures and cut out extra fat, which helps you stay at a healthy weight. Steaming and boiling are moist-heat cooking methods that cook food relatively quickly. Since they do not involve agitation, they are gentler on food. Since they don't require the food to be submerged in water, they avoid the loss of nutrients through leaching.

Avoid reheating food. Plan your cooking schedule such that food is served fresh. Foods that take time to cook (such as pulses) can be put on the stove first, whereas those that cook fast can be prepared just before serving.

Avoid deep frying. Deep frying also causes carcinogens to form on your food. French fries and potato chips contain acrylamide which has been linked to cancer. They may be consumed once in a while to strengthen your digestion. Repeated use of the same oil

for frying also renders it impure. Putting a banana skin in the oil after taking it off the stove helps get rid of impurities in the oil.

Cook at home. Food has become a big business today. I know many families that order using food delivery apps and go out to eat on weekends. Food that is prepared with commercial considerations is likely to be unhealthy, since the cooks are under pressure to prepare tasty food as fast as possible and may use harmful ingredients. If you cook your food, you can ensure that your meal is healthy and can also save money.

Cook with basic ingredients. This means starting with whole foods like raw vegetables and fruits, proteins and whole grains. Antioxidants and phytochemicals in plant-based foods help your body fight diseases like cancer.

Minimize processed foods. Processed and packaged foods such as frozen meals or jars of pasta sauce usually contain more salt and sugar. Packaged foods also often have other chemical preservatives and additives.

Minimize added sugars and sweeteners. Sugar adds empty calories. That means it can increase your weight without giving you any useful nutrients.

Replace refined grains with whole grains. Whole grains like brown rice (rather than white/polished rice) and millets have more fibre, which can lower your risk for colorectal cancer. Your

body also digests them more slowly so you feel full for longer. Whole grains are an important part of a balanced diet and their consumption has been linked to reduced risk of diseases including Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Flavour with herbs, spices, onions, garlic and citrus. These ingredients result in flavour-packed food without any of the downsides of salt and sugar. Many of them also come with extra antioxidants which help your body fight disease.

Reduce salt intake. Excess salt is linked to Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Avoid fats, use water: Avoid using fats (oils, butter, margarine, and other solid fats) in the preparation of food; instead, use water as much as possible. If you must use fats while cooking, choose unsaturated fats such as cold pressed sesame, coconut and mustard oils which can help lower cholesterol levels.

Include glutamine in your diet: An amino acid named glutamine is vital for gut healing. It helps repair the gut lining and preserve its integrity. A resilient gut lining is your best line of defence when it comes to warding off unwanted visitors like bacteria and parasites.

Good utensils for cooking

Indian tradition, metals and clay utensils have been the most preferred and widely used utensils for cooking. Even today, Lord Jagannath's *mahabhog Prasad* is cooked in a clay pot and served on

leaves. Salt and spice boxes in the olden days were usually made of wood and grains were generally stored in bronze or copper vessels.

Copper

Research shows that the chances of metal leaching in copper utensils are very low. It is also found that copper utensils lower the risk of the spread of infection from harmful bacteria. Copper also helps increase the metabolic rate.

Bronze

It is the most ancient and the best kind of metal used in cooking. Meals cooked in bronze utensils are found to be beneficial in curing obesity and skin problems (such as dry skin, acne, irritation, etc). Bronze utensils are also recommended for people with Alzheimer's disease since it helps enhance memory. However, we should avoid cooking ghee in a bronze utensil.

Silver

Silver has preservative, medicinal and therapeutic powers. Greeks used silver vessels to store water and other fluids. Romans used to store wine in silverware to keep it fresh for a longer period of time. Silverware has also been found helpful in the prevention of plague.

Brass

It is the most commonly used metal in traditional cookware. Consuming water stored in a brass vessel helps increase strength and immunity. It rids water of germs within four hours.

Cast Iron

Using cast iron utensils to cook is the best way to add iron to our food. It is also safer to cook food at high heat in a cast

iron vessel. A well-seasoned cast-iron would require less amount of oil for cooking, making the food low-fat and healthier. One note of caution: do not let cooked food stay in a cast-iron skillet for a long time; instead, transfer it to a different utensil after cooking.

Clay

Clay utensils are most preferred for cooking in Ayurveda as clay makes the food healthier, more nutritious, easier to digest and more flavourful. The porosity and natural insulation of clay pots causes heat and moisture to circulate throughout the space within and allow nutrients from the clay to seep into the food.

Utensils to avoid

Utensils made of aluminium, neutralizes the vitamins and minerals present in the food.

Teflon-coated utensils. Teflon contains PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) or PTFE (Polytetrafluoroethylene), which can create toxic fumes when heated. These toxic fumes may cause what is known as polymer fume fever.

Plastic utensils, which are made from toxic substances such as pesticides, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Chipped, cracked or scratched utensils.

The right way to prepare vegetables for cooking :

Wash but do not soak: Do wash vegetables to clean them before cutting. However, soaking a vegetable for a prolonged period in water leads to a

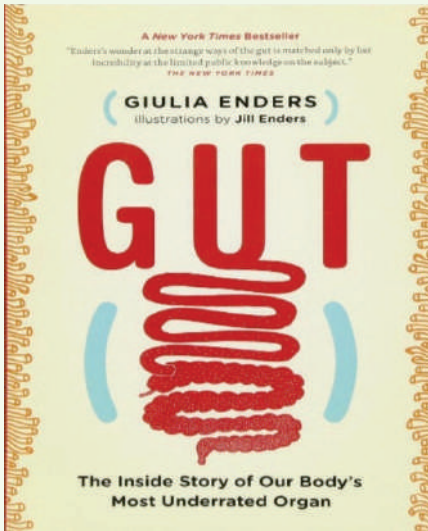
reduction in its Vitamin B and C content.

Remove the stalk: When the stalk of a vegetable is removed, the subtle gas that is concentrated there could lead to augmentation of the undesirable *Tamasic* component is expelled into the environment.

Follow the right cutting direction: A vegetable should always be cut from the stalk downwards. It helps in the immediate dissipation of the downward-moving grossness - indicated by waves generated by the sound of cutting - into the earth.

Do not cut vegetables very fine. Cut vegetables proportionately into medium sized pieces – neither too big nor too small, so that the juice from the leaves (in case of leafy vegetables) does not ooze. Cut vegetables just before cooking; avoid buying cut or frozen vegetables. The three factors that lead to nutrient loss are heat, oxygen, and light. The interiors of uncut produce are protected from oxygen and light but exposed when cut. The nutrient that suffers the heaviest hit in cut fruits and vegetables is probably vitamin C, although some vitamin A and vitamin E suffer losses as well.

In conclusion, with healthy lifestyle choices and eating habits, you can improve your energy levels, reduce risk of chronic disease and enjoy a longer, happier life. By practising mindful eating, you can achieve holistic health and overall well-being.



BOOK REVIEW

The Gut Feeling

*R. Dasarathy reads a book
which says your nature draws
from your gut health.*

At one level, eating and sleeping are among the simplest things that we do and at another level, these processes are complex and consist of numerous coordinated activities – some conscious and others unconscious. Therefore, there is every chance of some component going wrong or some components working at cross-purposes.

Specifically, the process of absorption of food is one of the most interesting activities, that is essential for our survival. Being aware and understanding this process will re-assert the truism “Knowledge is Power”. We can also be more sympathetic and understanding owners of our bodies (including its kinks).

The book “The Gut: The Inside Story of our body's most underrated organ” provides us this knowledge and the latest research in this area. The author, Giulia

Enders was a medical student, when she was confronted with basic questions about the gut. The answers she discovered fascinated her. In the book, she cannot hold back her wonder of the human body, specifically the digestive system – hence the sub-text in the title “body's most underrated organ”. The young author's writing style is engaging and almost every page evokes a chuckle from the reader! No wonder that the book is a best-seller and translated from the original German (published first in 2014) into multiple languages.

A healthy gut leads to a happy disposition and an active and sharp brain. Something our mothers and grandmothers knew instinctively! On the other hand, recent evidence points to psychological issues due to a diseased gut. What would however surprise them is that the healthy gut is actually a result of a diversity of bacteria present in the gut, which helps in digestion, fight diseases and keep us happy.

The book begins rather dramatically with the process of pooping (dropping of faecal matter). The two gateways at the end are explained simply – the internal

gateway and the external gateway coordinating the exit of the faeces “discretely and hygienically”. We get an entertaining tour of the journey from the mouth (front end) to the back end. We know that the digestive process begins in the mouth – chewing and mixing with the saliva. What we may not know is that there are immune cells in the mouth, so the process filtering and sieving starts right away. The mouth is also a very sensitive place with the maximum number of nerve endings (as we know from our experience - when a small seed gets lodged in the mouth).

From the mouth, the food travels through the oesophagus to the stomach. The oesophagus connection into the stomach is at a 'clever angle', so that water can pass through faster and solids can be digested partly in the stomach before they pass on to the small intestine. Most of the absorption of food takes place in the 20 feet long small intestines – whose surface area is further increased by protrusions called 'villi'. And finally, the large intestines – which is an object of immense interest currently, as it is home for millions of bacteria. Therefore besides preparing to excrete the undigested matter, the large intestines absorb nutrients like minerals, secrete hormones including the 'feel-good' hormone serotonin, contain two-thirds of the immune system, ...

Interestingly, while the carbohydrates and proteins are absorbed by the walls of the small intestine and transferred to the blood stream, the fats are carried by the

lymphatic system (network of the immune system) to the heart and from there to the liver. It is important to note that 'good' fat is essential for multiple processes of the body. In this book, the author is a little worried about meeting the protein requirements of vegetarians and vegans. Though the other benefits of a vegetarian and vegan have been established by practical experience. The adequacy of lentils and dairy products for meeting the protein requirements, however, needs to be established by research.

Research also includes experimenting and knowing our own body type and the diet that works for you and what does not. During the course of reading this book, I discovered, for instance that I had an intolerance for raw peanuts – something which had been consuming all these years. Avoiding it has given me relief from breathlessness. It would therefore be useful to be aware of one's intolerances/ allergies and avoid/ reduce their consumption. Simultaneously a case is made for having variety in the diet (which is reducing over the years). And this in turn increases the diversity in the gut flora, reducing thereby intolerances. The book explains likely origins of some commonly found intolerances Gluten, Fructose, Lactose etc. and that it is possible to control their impact.

The interesting point about the digestive system is that, it has its own nervous system (Enteric Nervous system) and therefore coordination is required

between the two nervous systems i.e. the Brain and the Gut. The process of vomiting, constipation, acid reflux, laxatives, ... are explained very interestingly.

The shape and colour of the stools has its own interesting story to tell, which definitely adds to our diagnostic skills! Science is discovering now, what was known to humans across cultures, for centuries – that the seat of the feelings and emotions is in fact the gut e.g. fear, happiness, motivation. The gut is right there in the thick of action and the brain on the hand is its 'ivory tower'. Experiments on mice have shown that mice with enhanced flora in the gut, have greater motivation as compared to normal mice. There is constant exchange of information between the Brain and the Gut – sharing both good news and not-so-good news. During periods of stress, the brain seeks extra energy from the gut and the gut diverts some energy from digestion. If this happens all the time – the gut suffers from a depletion of energy and cannot complete its function properly. That is why stress is bad and the effort is ongoing to limit the brain from passing its stress to the gut. Among other things, psychotherapy helps the

brain to become more resilient and not pass on the stress to other organs. Similarly, meditation will also help the brain to relax and accept the situation, thereby inducing the nerves and other organs to return to normal.

The 'good' bacteria in the gut join the immune cells in the gut and gets rid of the 'bad' bacteria. By the age of seven or so, a child develops a varied gut flora – which can digest most foods and fight diseases. Not all bacteria are 'good' – some are indeed parasites and cause diseases like gastritis. Recently there have been hypothesis linking conditions like obesity, cholesterol, ... to the gut bacteria. Cleanliness and hygiene are useful – though not to overdo it and kill all bacteria.

The bacteria in the gut, referred to as the microbiome is a complete ecosystem by itself comparable to an Amazonian rain forest containing millions of bacteria. The nature of the microbiome seems to determine many characteristics of the host - his nature, his body type, his emotions, his health, This area of study is still in its infancy and we can expect more interesting knowledge here, as a lot of research is ongoing.

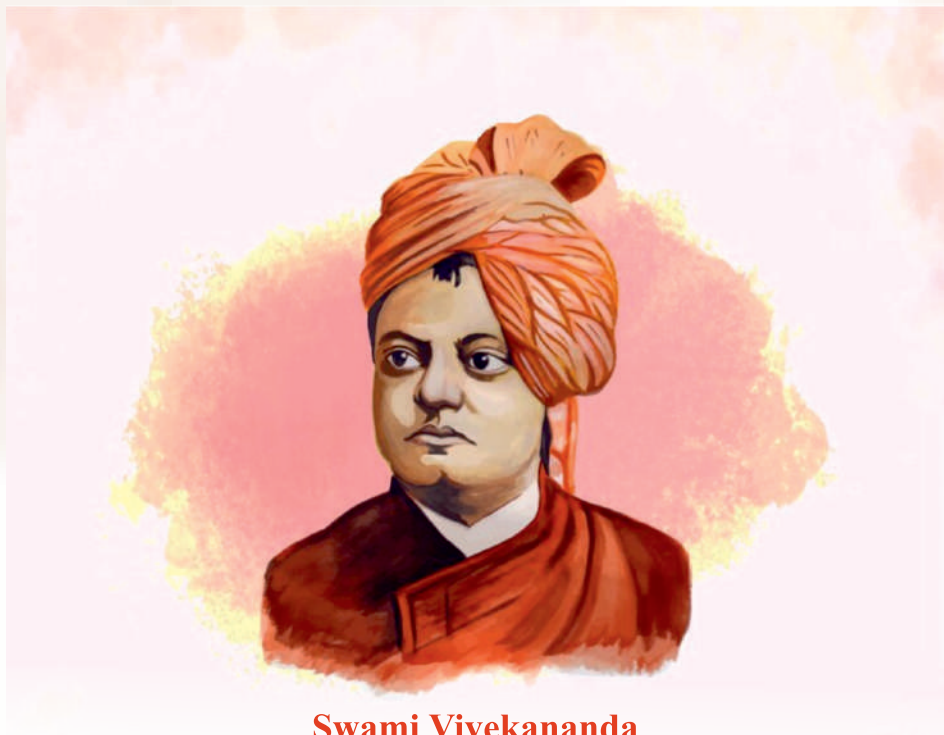
Name : Gut: The Inside Story of Our Body's Most Underrated Organ

Author : Giulia Enders

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Swami Vivekananda

The Universal man

A Centre for Spirituality

S. Regunathan

Thus far: The story is of a young man who was drawn to Sri Ramakrishna. Soon he became his ardent disciple but time took his master away. Donning saffron and emerging as a leader after his master left his bodily abode, Narendranath began to institutionalize his master's legacy. This episode continues to tell us how.--

Narendranath wanted to change his name to Ramakrishnananda. But then, considering the devotion of another disciple called Shashi, the name was given to Shashi. Shashi was actually like a mother figure who took care of the needs of all his guru bhaiyas in the Bara Nagore Mutt, and attended to daily worship rituals of Sri Ramakrishna. It is worth describing the atmosphere in the Mutt in those days. There was infectious

spiritual effervescence. The guru bhaiyas would lose themselves in singing kirtans and conducting prayers. Whenever they finished, whenever they came back to the mundane, Shashi would be waiting for them with their hot meal.

To say more about the Mutt, many visitors used to come to the mutt to participate in the spiritual activities. It

would be different for different people with their different inclinations; sometimes there would be long discussions with the visitors and among the guru bhaiyas, sometimes there would be inspired kirtans and so on. The leader of all these activities was Narendranath who would talk to the guru bhaiyas on western philosophy as also the various Indian spiritual traditions.

Occasionally, Christian missionaries could come to the mutt to argue with the monks. A healthy and cheerful argument would ensue. Narendranath, who had immense respect for Christ knew his subject well and so would confidently and convincingly present his point of view which would often be contrary to the points presented. After having set the stage by refuting and demolishing their arguments, Narendranath would then begin to unravel the greatness of Christ and his teachings.

Another interesting aspect of the discussions with his guru bhaiyas would be that sometimes Narendranath argued that there is no god and sometimes he vehemently insisted that there is god. So, one of the young monks once asked, "Sometimes you say god exists and sometimes you say there is no god quoting Charavaka philosophy and other philosophers. Please tell us clearly what is your stand."

Narendra answered him calmly saying, "You do not seem to have understood chemistry at all. Hydrogen and oxygen

do unite to form water and other compounds, but that needs a catalyst; either the intervention of human intelligence or some other intelligence. There has to be some intelligent force guiding all the combinations; an Omniscient being directing this phenomenal Universe. Therefore, there is a higher power in which we should have faith." Further, he said that the master (Sri Ramakrishna), always said that all human beings, however great or small, have two sides of their personality. One is good and the other one is dark. Whenever ego and desire predominate the personality becomes dark and keeps questioning even the existence of god. But when in an equanimous mood one would realise there is definitely a higher power. One should have faith and continue to develop this faith. Saying this he would often sing the praise of god and everyone would become spell bound.

The mutt was thus full of spiritual fervor, each monk trying to realise the Truth at the earliest. Narendranath would always tell them that they should intensify their sadhana and not attempt to realise Truth through shortcuts. He would always be watchful of his guru bhaiyas and guide them to be on the path of spirituality without practicing severe austerities or deviating from the path.

Thus the mutt became a spiritual centre for many devotees reverberating, as it did, with the spirit and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Children's Corner

The Tale of Bhalu and Tara

Gayatri K. Diggi



In a lush green valley where a soft wind was blowing from the foothills of a snowy mountain from where a river flowed down like liquid silver, Sahi, a fisherman, was seated with his fishing rod by the riverside, patiently awaiting the day's catch. Pulu, his wife, infused the air with a lilting song as she washed their clothes and their son, Tara, joyously watched his paper boats floating down the river. There was a sense of peace and harmony.

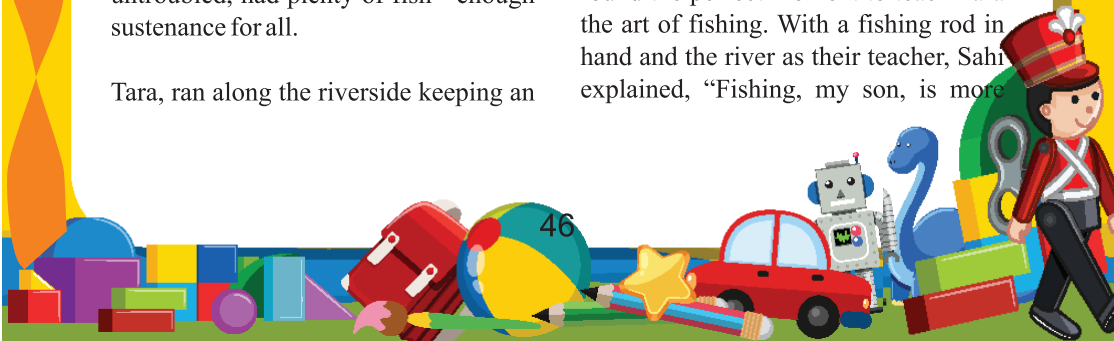
It was a beautiful day with birds calling out sweetly. Across the river, was a big dense forest from where bears came out to catch fish. The river, generous and untroubled, had plenty of fish - enough sustenance for all.

Tara, ran along the riverside keeping an

eye on his fleet of paper boats. His mother shouted "Don't go far my son!" Tara smiled and waved his hands. Suddenly, he tripped on a stone and fell on something. Looking down, he saw a tiny furry bear cub. Tara called out to his mother and she came running wondering what was wrong. She lifted the tiny bundle and wrapped it gently in her shawl. They named the cub Bhalu.

Seasons change and the monsoon rains brought a ferocity to the river. Bhalu spent his time playing around the house with a wooden ball. Meanwhile, the mother of the cub looked across the river. She had seen the humans feeding her cub and playing with him but the river was rough and she would have to wait for spring to come. Time passed and the winter was so cold and bitter that they all stayed in the house with the fire burning. Bhalu slept a lot and grew bigger.

Then Spring came and it brought with it a renewal of life and the gentle call of the river. One day Sahi said, "Come to the river side it's safe now and we can catch fish." Amidst this idyllic setting, Sahi found the perfect moment to teach Tara the art of fishing. With a fishing rod in hand and the river as their teacher, Sahi explained, "Fishing, my son, is more



than just waiting for the fish to bite. It's about understanding the rhythm of the water, the silence of the wait, and the excitement of the catch. It requires a heart that is steady and a mind that is clear. Patience and equanimity are your true companions in this art."

Tara listened intently, absorbing his father's words. He learned to sit in silence, to watch the water without expectation. The art of fishing became a



meditation, a practice of equanimity that would stay with him for life.

One sunny day Tara and Bhalu splashed and tried to catch fish with their hands. They both managed to catch small ones. Bhalu ate them up happily enjoying the treat. Hearing Tara's laughter and Bhalu's bear noises, Sahi smiled and looked towards them then, suddenly, he became serious as he saw a huge bear swimming across the river coming towards them. He quickly dropped his

fishing rod and ran towards Tara shouting, "Tara come back!" Tara saw the big bear and ran towards his father but stopped when he saw Bhalu looking at the bear and not moving. The big bear called out and the cub responded and went towards it. Tara tried to stop him but Sahi gently held him back and told him to let Bhalu go. The cub ran towards the big mother bear who hugged him lovingly and then she walked towards the water asking him to follow. The cub walked with his mother then turned back and looked at Tara, torn between two worlds. Tara, with a gentle smile said, "Go, to your mother Bhalu. She is waiting." He hugged him and nodded towards the big bear. The cub called out and followed his mother as she swam across the river. Sahi and Tara watched them cross to the other side and go into the deep forest. They felt a deep sense of calmness and warmth as they returned home slowly knowing that Bhalu was now with his mother and were finally united.



Children's Corner

Winner All Through

Anita Rao



When Rachna won the inter school elocution contest, many of her schoolmates were angry and upset. Rachna was the youngest amongst them. She was in class 8. Arya, Akshay, Anshuman, Vikram, Mira and Myra were all from class 12. Sanjana, Devina, Mridula, Saurabh and Vijay were from class 11.

"I think it is a clear case of favouritism," wrote Myra on their Elocution group on whatsapp.

"Rachna is also part of the group," wrote back Devina

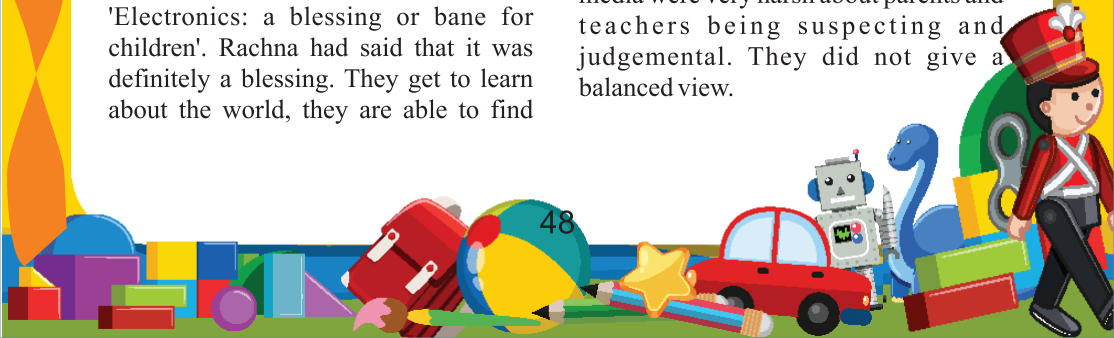
"So what, do I care? Truth is truth," replied Myra.


"She spoke well," said Saurabh."And she was the only one who offered some solutions, so I think she deserves it."

The topic for elocution was: 'Electronics: a blessing or bane for children'. Rachna had said that it was definitely a blessing. They get to learn about the world, they are able to find

information on any topic, they are able to watch movies, watch historical clippings and even listen to songs. They are able to keep in touch with family and friends across the globe and whatever happens in the world is known within a few seconds of its happening. "Anything, even if it is nectar, is poisonous if it is taken in excess. So is the electronic media. It has to be regulated, children should be taught discrimination so that they choose wisely on what to watch. Here is a chance to make your child mature as well as knowledgeable," Rachna finished. She went on to say, "At home, there should be a time when no electronic media should be used by anyone in the family. Parents pour into their phones, even if it is for work, and tell us to stay away. It cannot work that way. Teachers give projects and assignments that require google and the internet. Every second or third project should be people based so that the answers are not available online...." Rachna gave a few more points.

Everyone cheered. The host school's children were delighted. They gave her a standing ovation. The other speakers who spoke against the use of electronic media were not convincing. Some others who spoke of the need to use electronic media were very harsh about parents and teachers being suspecting and judgemental. They did not give a balanced view.





“Ah Saurabh you are interested in Rachna,” wrote Sanjana

“Haha,” laughed Mridula

“One can be friends...just because I say a few nice words does not mean 'interest',” shot back Saurabh.

“”Hey come on Saurabh, there was nothing great about that kid's speech,” wrote Vikram. Mira and Myra added a thumbs up sign.

“She must be that teacher's pet,” wrote Aanya

“Somebody told me one of the teachers is her aunt,” added Sanjana.

“Must be one who looks like...thin and short,” wrote Vikarm

All of them laughed. They went on in this strain being mean about Rachna.

Rachna was happy she had won and she called her mother from her teacher's phone and informed her..

“Great Rachna...so happy my dear,” said her mummy. Rachna could hear her younger sister screaming with joy in the background.

The contest had been held and hosted by the Royal Academy School. Rachna brought the trophy she had won, the certificate and even a cash prize. Her family was thrilled and made much of her.

Later in the evening, she checked whatsapp on her mother's phone. Her mother said she was too young to have a phone of her own. Rachna had told her everyone in her class had a phone.

“That is an exaggeration,” her mother had replied. “I know everyone does not. Anyway in my opinion you are too young to have a phone and there the matter ends.”

So when there were events like this elocution contest and they formed whatsapp groups to share information, Rachna's mother let her use the whatsapp on her phone. It was then that she saw the nasty comments by her school mates. Rachna's mother said, “Do not worry Rachna, I think they are jealous.”

“But mama, maybe there is some truth in what they are saying. Maybe Vikram and Arya did speak better than me. Of course they are saying nonsense about an aunt of mine being there etc., but...” said Rachna as she continued to read all the messages. They hurt.

Before going to bed Rachna asked her mother for her phone again and wrote, “Guys I enjoyed the day...not just because I won the prize but because I learnt a lot from Vikram's talk...he gave so many facts and figures...what an amazing memory he has. Arya was brilliant in her quotes. Listening to Sanjana was like listening to poetry...” and she went on paying one compliment or other to each participant. Finally she wrote, “I was told by the principal of Royal Academy that they selected me because I was the only one who had some solutions to offer. Looking forward to our next chance to meet.”

The next day in the school assembly, her whole team came on stage and cheered her. “Sorry Rachna, our disappointment made us mean...” whispered Vikram in her ears.





Photos: Courtesy Monica Lalzad and Vikram Bhalla

FRNV NEWS AND EVENTS

Values Based Education Workshop

Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV) organized half-a-day workshop on Values Based Education on Monday, the 27th May 2024 at Richmond Global School, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi. About 55 teachers from the School participated in the workshop.

Dr. Sharda Kumari, Head, Values Based Education Task Force, FRNV conducted the workshop. Shri Ashwani Kumar, General Secretary/FRNV, Dr. Renu Bhatia, former Deputy Director (Education) & Life Member/FRNV and Dr. Anushree Ghai, Psychotherapist addressed the participants. Smt. Poonam Jha, Principal, Richmond Global School welcomed and emphasized the importance of values based education in the country.



Shri Ashwani Kumar, General Secretary/FRNV



(L-R Dr. Sharda Kumari, Dr. Renu Bhatia and Smt. Poonam Jha)



Dr. Anushree Ghai, Psychotherapist addressing the participants

SEMINAR ON VALUE BASED EDUCATION JOINTLY ORGANISED BY FRNV, ODISHA CHAPTER & KIIT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL ON 29/6/2024 AT KIIT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL.

The Seminar was held as scheduled at KIIT Higher Secondary School, Bhubaneswar under the Chairmanship of Dr Arun Kumar Rath, Chairman, FRNV, Odisha Chapter. Dr Chitta Ranjan Mishra, Director, KIIT Higher Secondary School was the Guest of Honour.

At the outset, Dr Uday Shankar Acharya, Principal of the school welcomed the Guests, Students and faculty, Dignitaries/Members of FRNV, Bhubaneswar Chapter. Dr Arun Kumar Rath delivered the key note address on Value Based Education through his PPTs on the various aspects of VBE. He also showed a video clip on the thoughtful and thought provoking conversation between the legendary teen Nachiketa and Yama, the God of Death citing the highest level of humility and sacrifice by Nachiketa which floored Yama and forced Yama to answer the question of Nachiketa on the after-death phenomena and how to attain salvation. He also narrated to the audience the Krishna-Karna story while explaining the essence of Dharma and ethical values.

Dr Chitta Ranjan Mishra, Director KIIT Higher Secondary school and a life member of FRNV exhorted the students to adhere to human values alongside the studies and curricula to be better human beings.

The two Technical Sessions were **Education for universal human values & Duty to Society and Nation.**

Speakers deliberated on these topics through lives and philosophies of iconic leaders. Students were made to understand human values through stories and anecdotes. Also they were explained how nutrition plays a key role in their mental growth and physical and cognitive resilience.





Participants

Life Members joined since 2nd April 2024

Name	Membership No.	From
Shri Rajendra Kumar Das Odisha Chapter	FRNVFRNV/LM/088	15.05.2024
Smt. Sujata Praharaj Odisha Chapter	FRNVFRNV/LM/089	24.05.2024
Shri Raj Kumar Jalan Delhi Chapter	FRNVFRNV/LM/090	11.06.2024
Shri Prakash Chandra Das Odisha Chapter	FRNVFRNV/LM/091	27.06.2024

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may be emailed to: frnv@valuefoundation.in or frnvindia@gmail.com.
Bank QR Code is also available on our website
www.valuefoundation.in/contributions.



The image shows a promotional graphic for the Bank of Baroda's BHIM Baroda Pay UPI service. At the top is the Bank of Baroda logo with the text 'बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा' and 'Bank of Baroda'. Below this is the 'BHIM Baroda Pay' logo, which includes a stylized 'B' and 'HIM' text. The central text reads 'SCAN TO PAY WITH ANY BHIM UPI APP'. A large QR code is positioned in the center. Below the QR code, it specifies 'Merchant Name : FRNV' and 'vpa : found95996@barodampay'. At the bottom, there are logos for UPI, BHIM, and BharatPe, along with the text 'paytm'.



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