

Dharma Beej

A Quarterly Published by Malhotra's Dharma Beej Endowment



DHARMAVIJAY

The biggest victory for the Hindu Dharma was the participation of Swami Vivekananda in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. Since then our country and our Sanatana Dharma inspite of various attacks and difficulties is being victorious. Thus in the first issue of Dharma Beej we narrate about the Dharma Vijay of Swami Vivekananda.



Swami Vivekananda was born as Narendranath Dutta on 12 January 1863 at Calcutta. A well-read and intelligent youth, his intense search for the experience of God led him to the feet of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Once Sri Ramakrishna told Narendra that 'You have to be like banyan tree under which many suffering souls would come to take refuge. You have to do mother's work.' But he did not tell what the work was. After Sri Ramakrishna's Mahasamadhi, Swami Vivekananda went round the country to discover the mission of his life. He crossed mountains and rivers, forests and deserts, stayed with pundits and poor, with princes and farmers, in palaces or huts as and where he was invited. The poverty and sufferings of the millions, the loss of self-confidence in the youth pained him. He asked himself, "To alleviate their sufferings what should I do for them?" At last he reached Kanyakumari. On 25, 26, 27 of December 1892 he meditated at the mid-sea Rock at Kanyakumari.

What a unique meditation it was. Though a sanyasi, he was not meditating for his own peace or God-realization but for bringing up the poor and the suffering people of his country. He saw that the degeneration had set in India because we had forgotten the life-giving principles. To restore the confidence of Indians, sitting on the rock at Kanyakumari he took the decision to participate in Parliament of religions at Chicago, USA to represent Hindu Dharma. Imagine in those days of poor communications he went to a country almost 10,000 miles away without any support, any person known to him there.

After Swamiji reached US he found that the Parliament of Religions was postponed and the registration for the Parliament closed. He had to suffer for the want of food. He was humiliated as nigger, black dog. At times he had to pass the nights on railway platforms. But the love for his people was so great that he put up with all difficulties. Gradually those who came in his contact realized how learned he was. Prof Wright of Harvard University gave him the letter of introduction for participation in Parliament of Religions in which he had written that, '...here is a man whose knowledge is more than the knowledge of all the professors put together.'

Swami Vivekananda started his speech on 11 September 1893 with "Sisters and Brothers of America ...". Immediately all rose and started clapping for Swami Vivekananda. He became famous overnight. With enthusiasm people put up his posters, in the city, the news papers wrote pages after pages, people thronged to listen to him wherever he went. Just to see him or to touch his robes people waited for hours. The doors of the wealthy and the eminent people opened for Swamiji. But even on the first night of his momentous victory, Swami Vivekananda could not sleep in a palatial house. On the background of the wealthy Chicago, pain of the sufferings of poor and the deprived people in India became more intense. Next day morning when the host of the house came inside he found Swami Vivekananda not on the cot but on the carpet with tears streaming down his cheeks. He asked, "Swami what happened" Swamiji told, "I remembered my people". (contd. on page 2)



Listening to his exposition of Hindu Dharma, the news papers there wrote, "It is wrong to send missionaries to India. India should send to us the missionaries like him." Many followed him.

Whether as an unknown sanyasi or as a well known world teacher his thought was for the people of India. His exposition of Indian culture made west realize the greatness of Vedanta - of Oneness of existence - of spiritual wisdom of India. India regained her self-confidence and also purpose of her existence. He told the West that "The Truth does not pay homage to society whether ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to the truth or perish." As the whole universe is interconnected, interrelated, interdependent the exclusive approach of 'my religion alone is true' would lead to more violence and bloodshed. He reminded that we were not born sinners but we are the children of immortality. The Atman is deathless and full of all power and divinity and the goal of life is to manifest the divinity within.

When he returned India the people gave him unprecedented welcome. From Columbo to Almora wherever he went people took him in processions, decorated the route with Rangolis, banana leaves festoons lamps etc and gathered in thousands to listen to him. His message was electrifying. He told that Hindu Dharma is the life of Bharat.



**“Wake up
Bharat !
Enlighten
the
World”.**

He gave the rousing call to India, "Wake up Bharat! Enlighten the World." Youth took inspiration from him and worked for the freedom of India and for nation-building through various service organizations etc. Even after his Mahasamadhi in 1902 many persons like Swami Ramtirth, Jamshetji Tata, Subhash Chandra Bose, Rajaji, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru took inspiration and many more

continue to take inspiration from Swamiji to work for the nation. This year is his 150th Birth Anniversary. Let us all celebrate it grandly and also decide to protect our Dharma and also to work for its success.

Dharmakatha

**Whom will Bhagawan Siva love ?
Jeeve Jeeve Sivaswaroopam**

"He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Shiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Shiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples.

A rich man had a garden and two gardeners. One of these gardeners was very lazy and did not work; but when the owner came to the garden, the lazy man would get up and fold his arms and say, "How beautiful is the face of my master", and dance before him. The other gardener would not talk much, but would work hard, and produce all sorts of fruits and vegetables which he would carry on his head to his master who lived a long way off. Of these two gardeners, which would be the more beloved of his master? Shiva is that master, and this world is His garden, and there are two sorts of gardeners here; the one who is lazy, hypocritical, and does nothing, only talking about Shiva's beautiful eyes and nose and other features; and the other, who is taking care of Shiva's children, all those that are poor and weak, all animals, and all His creation. Which of these would be the more beloved of Shiva? Certainly he that serves His children. He who wants to serve the father must serve the children first. He who wants to serve Shiva must serve His children -- must serve all creatures in this world first. It is said in the Shastra that those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants. So you will bear this in mind."

So our practice of religion should not be limited to just going to temple, doing pooja etc. all that should be done as that is required to improve the self-control. But the real worship of God is helping others, is doing our work with all sincerity. Let us live and practice the true Dharma.



Agnishikha

**"We do not worship stone or wood.
We worship God!"**

When Swami Vivekananda was in Alwar, Rajasthan the Dewan to the Maharaja of Alwar, chanced to hear of the Swami's presence in the city, and invited him to his house. On better acquaintance he came to feel that the Swami would be a good influence on the Maharaja, Mangal Singhji, who had become much anglicized in thought and manners. When Maharaja met Swamiji he asked, "Well, Swamiji Maharaj, I have no faith in idol worship. What is going to be my fate?" The Swami answered, "Well, I suppose every man should follow the religious ideal according to his own faith." The devotees of the Swami were perplexed at this reply, for they knew that the Swami sanctioned image worship. But the Swami had not finished; his eyes spotted a picture of the Maharaja which was hanging on the wall. He asked for that picture. Holding it in his hand he asked, "Whose picture is this?" The Dewan answered, "It is the likeness of our Maharaja." Swami commanded the Dewan and other couriers, "Spit on it." All persons gathered there trembled with fear when they heard it. Swamiji continued: "Any one of you may spit on it. What is it but a piece of paper? What objection can you have against doing so?"

The Dewan was thunderstruck, and all eyes glanced in fear and awe from King to Swamiji and Swamiji to King. But the Swamiji continued to insist, "Spit on it, I say. Spit on it." The Dewan cried out, "What, Swamiji! What are you asking me to do? This is the likeness of our Maharaja! How can I do such a thing?" "Be it so," said Swamiji; "but the Maharaja is not bodily present in this photograph. This is only a piece of paper. It does not contain his bones and flesh and blood. It does not speak or behave or move in any way as the Maharaja does; yet all of you refuse to spit on it, because you see in this photo Maharaja. Indeed, in spitting on the photo, you feel that you insult your master, the Maharaja himself."

Turning to the Maharaja Swamiji continued, "See, Your Highness; though this is not you in one sense, in another sense it is you. That was why your devoted servants were so hesitant when I asked them to spit



on it. It is a shadow of you; it brings you into their minds. One glance at it makes them see you in it; therefore they look at it with as much respect as they would have in looking at your own person. Thus it also is with the devotees who worship stone and metal images of gods and goddesses. It is because an image brings to their minds their *Ishta*, or some special form and attributes of the Divinity which pervades everywhere and which responds to the prayers. They do not worship the stone or the metal as such. I have travelled in many places, but nowhere have I found a single Hindu worshipping an image, saying, 'O Stone, I worship Thee. O Metal, be merciful to me.' Everyone, Maharaja, is worshipping the same one God who is the Supreme Spirit, the Soul of Pure Knowledge. And God appears to all according to their understanding and their representation of Him."

Mangal Singh, who had been listening attentively all this time, said, with folded hands, "Swamiji, I must admit that looking at image worship in the light you have thrown on it, I have never yet met anyone who worshipped stone, or wood, or metal. Before this I did not understand its meaning. You have opened my eyes."



Quotes of Swami Vivekananda

ON MOORTIPOOJA

- ❑ Two sorts of persons never require any image—the human animal who never thinks of any religion, and the perfected being who has passed through these stages. Between these two points all of us require some sort of ideal, outside and inside.
- ❑ The Christians think that when God came in the form of a dove it was all right, but if He comes in the form of a fish, as the Hindus say, it is very wrong and superstitious.
- ❑ The Jews think if an idol be made in the form of a chest with two angels sitting on it, and a book on it, it is all right, but if it is in the form of a man or a woman, it is awful.
- ❑ The Mohammedans think that when they pray, if they try to form a mental image of the temple with the Kaaba, the black stone in it, and turn towards the west, it is all right, but if you form the image in the shape of a church it is idolatry. This is the defect of image worship.
- ❑ We may worship anything by seeing God in it. He is everything. God in the image is perfectly right. There is no danger there. This is the real worship of God.



- ❑ Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and the Hindu has recognized it. Every other religion lays down certain fixed dogmas, and tries to force society to adopt them. It places before society only one coat which must fit Jack and John and Henry, all alike. If it does not fit John or Henry, he must go without a coat to cover his body.
- ❑ The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be realized, or thought of, or stated, through the relative, and the images, crosses and crescents are simply so many symbols— so many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on. It is not that this help is necessary for everyone, but those that do not need it have no right to say that it is wrong. Nor is it compulsory in Hinduism.