

Samaj Patra

This Issue: Holi Utsav flyer, Prithvi's column, Diwali Celebrations, and much more.....

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Holi Utsav Celebrations

Diwali and Holi are two major festivals celebrated in India. Diwali signifies the victory of good over evil. Holi encourages fellowship when animosity and ill-feelings are forgotten and new friendships are built. Celebration of Holi will be a tribute to the Indian community of New Hampshire.

NHAAI has organized a Holi pot luck supper on March 28, 1998 for the members and their guests (see flyer for details). There will be no formal cultural program but participants are encouraged to sing, dance and/or organize party games. The Association will provide tea, coffee, soft drinks, paper plates etc. It is requested each family bring one dish for twelve persons. There are no charges. Use of color in the hall (meeting place) is strictly prohibited. Rose water and chandan for tika will be available. Please attend and preserve your heritage.

V. K. Mathur

Association calendar of events

- **3.28.98 Holi Utsav Celebrations: See flyer**
- 5. 17. 98 General Body Meeting, Londonderry Lion's Club
- 10.17. 98 Diwali - Manchester (Place and Date Tentative) Future issue of Samaj Patra will carry more details
- 4.15. 98 Last date to submit articles to Samaj Patra.

NHAAI New Address

We request you to address all your future correspondence to, NHAAI, P.O. Box 3132, Manchester NH 03105.

Diwali Celebrations:

The NHAAI celebrated the 1997 Annual Diwali festival at Notre Dame College, Manchester, NH on October 18, 1997. The celebrations got off to a grand start with a welcome address by Dr. Padma Mathur, President of the Association, and a speech on "India's 50 years of Independence" by Tej Dhakar, Chair of the Board. This was followed by scintillating dance performances by students of the Aangikam Dance Academy of Nashua (choreographer: Jasmine Shah); Classical dances by Arya Shekhar, Usha Narayana and Rachana Rao (Artistic Director, Sri Devi Thirumalai); lilted music by Swathi Panda and Amit Kelker (vocal) accompanied by Pradip Shukla on the Tabla, and a song on the Beauty of Mother India performed by Renuka Bhartula. The Vote of Thanks was proposed by P.T. Vasudevan. Following the entertainment program, a lovely dinner was served. The program was well attended and all in all, the function was a huge success. We appreciate all those who volunteered to help out. Our sincere thanks to the volunteers, and to the artists who presented a very superior performance.

Prithvi's Corner

WILL POWER AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Twofold ideal of life:

Religious tradition teaches that human beings can have two commendable aspirations: (a) worldly prosperity and well-being and (b) spiritual illumination and freedom. For these both,

Dharma or righteousness is the basis. Prosperity that has not dharma as the basis crumbles down sooner due to internal hemorrhage. Furthermore, if prosperity is not directed and subordinated to, and utilized for attaining spiritual illumination it becomes self-destructive.

Will power: the secret of success

One thing we all definitely aspire for in life, is success. In whatever direction we proceed, whether secular or spiritual, this becomes our motto. But in real life situation, it is noticed that truly successful men are only a handful. Many attain only a moderate degree of success and more just fail. Whatever may be the factors in stories of successes and failures; there will be one factor involved in every single case and that is will power. The degree of a person's success in life is commensurate with the degree of will power he has attained.

How to develop will-power

Will power development should be part of our childhood upbringing. If we have not learnt how to develop it early in life, we should do so immediately. Self-improvement is almost impossible without the voluntary or involuntary exercise of will power. Will power can cause considerable changes in our lives for the better from very hopeless situations. Lives of Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill and Mahatma Gandhi are a few examples. "Will is a compound of the self and the mind" - says Swami Vivekananda.

Assert the divine and the devil will run out. Remove the dichotomy between the head and heart, the intellect

and emotion, the thinking and feeling. How do we do it? Only loving the truth of our being can do it. If we know for certain that we are divine, that we are the childhood of immortality with a great history behind and a great destiny ahead of us, we will hate to do things that are unworthy of us. Instead, we will be determined to do things expected of us. In other words, our thoughts and emotions will unite in order to enable us to do the best expected of us by ourselves. We must not be cowards nor hypocrites. We must be brave, take courage in both hands and follow the truth to its logical conclusion. "Go with truth wherever it takes us": this must be our determination.

Regrets about the past and worry about future are detrimental to the cultivation of will power because they undercut all positive thinking, creativity, and positive movements in our minds.

We can do so (a) by constant discrimination between the real and the unreal, (b) by keeping ourselves busy doing those things that we have decidedly accepted as beneficial, and (c) by avoiding idle curiosity about things which do not concern our main pursuit in life. We must follow what we have realized to be true and right. In ascertaining what is right and what is wrong, we must be extremely cautious, circumspect and also deep seeing. We must not impulsively jump to conclusions and then move ahead in a fanatical manner. That will harm the development of will power.

On the basis of whatever we have thus learnt and determined we should ourselves plan a simple routine for our daily life. This routine should be planned keeping in view that we are seeking daily self-preservation and self-improvement on all levels, physical, mental and spiritual. It should be so planned that our human relations, recreational need, ideals and aspirations - everything could be actualized through that routine. No matter what happens, we should follow that routine.

It is extremely important to remember that in developing will power, the greatest help will come from concentration or single-mindedness that we have already attained. In fact, these two always go together. One helps and supplements the other. Men of powerful will are men of few words. They are not pining to the interesting or exciting. They live with a purpose, for an ideal. They are immensely dynamic, but they are poised, intense but not tense. We must never take failures seriously. They should be accepted as a part of the whole game, as steps to mount the pedestal of success. These steps when followed rightly will surely help us in developing the will power.

When we discover in a situation that after doing all these to the best of our ability, our will power is not yet sufficiently strong, we should stop, think and analyze the whole situation. Then we will be able to find that the cause is due to translation of the wrong thought into action. We must develop that right will power which will result in good rather than in evil and not bondage and miseries.

Conclusion

It is the will of the pure mind that is invincible. Through the help of such a will, one can attain even the highest, which is GOD.

Humor

Contributed by Prithvi

Justice Department Accusations

REDMOND, Wash. - Oct. 21, 1997

In direct response to accusations made by the Department of Justice, the Microsoft Corp. announced today that it will be acquiring the federal government of the United States of America for an undisclosed sum. "It's actually a logical extension of our planned growth", said Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, "It really is going to be a positive arrangement for everyone". Microsoft

representatives held a briefing in the oval office of the White House with U.S. President Bill Clinton, and assured members of the press that changes will be "minimal". The United States will be managed as a wholly owned division of Microsoft. An initial public offering is planned for July of next year, and the federal government is expected to be profitable by "Q4 1999 at latest", according to Microsoft president Steve Ballmer. In a related announcement, Bill Clinton stated that he had "willingly and enthusiastically" accepted a position as a vice president with Microsoft, and will continue to manage the United States government, reporting directly to Bill Gates. When asked how it felt to give up the mantle of executive authority to Gates, Clinton smiled and referred to it as "a relief". He went on to say that Gates has a "proven track record", and that U.S. citizens should offer Gates their "full support and confidence". Clinton will reportedly be earning several times the \$200,000 annually he has earned as U.S. president, in his new role at Microsoft. Gates dismissed a suggestion that the U.S. Capitol be moved to Redmond as "silly", though did say that he would make executive decisions for the U.S. government from his existing office at Microsoft headquarters. Gates went on to say that the House and Senate would "of course" be abolished. "Microsoft isn't a democracy", he observed, "and look how well we're doing". When asked if the rumored attendant acquisition of Canada was proceeding, Gates said, "We don't deny that discussions are taking place".

Microsoft representatives closed the conference by stating that United States citizens will be able to expect lower taxes, increases in government services and discounts on all Microsoft products. Founded in 1975 (NASDAQ "MSFT"), is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers, and democratic government. The company offers a wide range of products and services for public, business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage

of the full power of personal computing and free society every day. About the United States Founded in 1789, the United States of America is the most successful nation in the history of the world, and has been a beacon of democracy and opportunity for over 200 years. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the United States is a wholly owned subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation. "The United States of America" and "Microsoft" are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation.

The Great Betrayal

Contributed by Tej Dhakar

Prithvi Nandy, former editor, The Illustrated Weekly of India and one of the best known faces in Indian journalism, begins a new column.

Every columnist I read these days has one complaint. Our leaders have betrayed us. It is a complaint that the foreigners have also picked up. So, even as they write huge encomiums to India's fifty years of freedom and democracy, they make snide remarks about rampant corruption, nepotism, rising crime, violence against women, economic backwardness, and our terrible record of human rights violations. Every tribute is laced with irony and sarcasm and a surging sense of disappointment. Every assessment ends with what India could have been, if only we had better people to rule over our destiny.

The target is always the same: our leaders. We empathize with this argument because we also feel exactly the same. We feel that we could have grown, prospered, matured as a nation if we had better people to lead us. Some say that modern India needed a Sardar Patel, not a Nehru. Others claim that Subhas Bose would have been best. What they are all trying to say is that we deserved better. Certainly better than what we have. Laloo Prasad and Kalpnath Rai. Satish Sharma and Sukhram. Jayalalitha and Mayawati. And now, history sheeters like Taslimuddin and Arun Gawli.

Point. But the question is: Have we ever paused to ask ourselves how we got these leaders? How did these men and women, who embarrass us today, come to power in the first place? If we did, perhaps we would find a few important clues out there. Our leaders are voted to power. Even the ugliest crook has come up, using the electoral mechanism. Democracy, in other words. Every time people like you and I do not go to vote, someone else votes for us. Every time you pick up a magazine that runs a huge, glorious interview with some stupid, ugly, desperate criminal who imagines he is Robin Hood, you encourage the media to glorify yet another rogue who will use that process of glorification to politically launch himself. Every time you buy a movie ticket in the black market or ask someone to get your moron son into college for a few hundred thousand rupees, you are strengthening the forces of corruption and crime to further your own short term interest.

Why do you complain later when the very people you had used to get your way grow into bigger criminals and come back to haunt your life? Our filmmakers borrow easy cash. Our stock brokers cut raw deals. Our drivers ignore the traffic lights. Our families ask for dowry. Our politicians come to power on hot money. Our heroines flaunt their underworld connections. There is a simple nexus between all these. You cannot say that bribing the motor vehicle department to get your under-age son a driving license is not a crime but killing Gulshan Kumar is. Both stem from the same insouciance towards law and order. Both reflect the same malady: a nation so desperate to get ahead that it is ready to break every rule. Not realising that short cuts breed crime at every level.

You can breed the deadly anopheles by staying beside a filthy lake. Or by even keeping a bucket of dirty water in your bathroom. You cannot complain about where we are going if you want to resort to short cuts yourself. That is the first lesson. You will get precisely the kind of government, the kind of leaders you deserve. If you bribe to get your child into nursery, that money will go

towards breeding precisely the kind of political leadership that will corrupt the educational system you have subverted. If you use your neighborhood goons to drive out your tenants, those very goons will come back to blackmail you a few years later in the guise of your local corporator or your MLA. By that time, they will be too big, too tough for you to handle.

If you borrow hot money, for however short a while, for however noble a cause, the lender will return to harass and intimidate you. You cannot complain then. Because it is you who uncorked the bottle and created your own genie. It is no use blaming Subash Malhotra or Ronnie Mendonca. It is no use claiming that the cops and the criminals have a nexus of their own. Of course, they do. You are the nexus. You corrupted the cops. You grew the criminals. You corrupted the cops when you paid them to look the other way when you broke a minor traffic law. You grew the criminals when you asked them for a small favour to impress your friends and neighbors. How can you complain now?

Democracy is a dangerous, double-edged sword. You cannot have two sets of laws in a free society. One for yourself, the other for the rest. This is the privilege of those who live in authoritarian nations. In a free country, every wrongdoing has a ripple effect. No man is an island. Crimes may go unnoticed but they always impact the society, the world you live in.

Every cigarette you smoke acts up your old mother's asthma, quickens your son's lung cancer, exacerbates your wife's chronic bronchitis. You are welcome to invite your own death.

But it is unfair to hurt others just because you are selfish enough to believe that your own wrongdoing will go unnoticed. That is the problem with India. You.

You, me, us. Politicians are our creations. Every time we cheered and clapped watching Deewar, we encouraged the hero worship of crime, we taught our children to glorify wrongdoers in the name of social justice. Today, Mayawati is doing the same. So is Laloo. So are Veerappan, Phoolan Devi,

Arun Gawli. Why are we blaming them? We made heroes out of them, we are responsible for vanishing the thin line between justice and vendetta, between fighting back the wicked and becoming a victim of wickedness ourselves. It is we who taught our children that they could break the law with impunity if they managed to get away with it. It is we who bribed their teachers to get them pass marks when they failed. It is we who bought them expensive gifts in cash, without paying our taxes. It is we who taught them to flaunt their attitude and ignore what is right for what is expedient.

It is this that has caught up with us. It is no use blaming Gandhi and saying that Nehru failed us. It is no use yearning for Sardar Patel or Subhas Bose in the fiftieth year of our Independence and hoping that someone will come from somewhere to rescue us, lead us from darkness into light. In a free, democratic society we are stuck with what we have, with what we do. The garbage you throw out of your window will clog your sewers and flood your streets. It is not the municipal corporation's fault. It is not even the poor civic worker's fault. You are to blame.

You cannot complain that your forests are dying, your lakes are drying up, your tigers are vanishing and yet, at the same time, hang up animal trophies on your wall. Just as you cannot breed nine children and then say women are not getting a fair deal in our society or that over population is at the root of all our problems. Everything you and I do directly impacts the society we live in. If you pay black money the next time you buy a flat, that black money will eventually go towards funding your coffin or your funeral pyre. There are no free lunches, no short cuts for which you do not eventually pay.

Arun Gawli is in police custody today. Laloo, in judicial custody. Someone else may be in CBI custody. Others, under TADA, FERA, MISA, COFEPOSA. But the laws of the land, however strong or stringent they may be, cannot replace the responsibility of every citizen towards making his or her own nation strong, free, incorruptible. The buck stops with you.

That is why you need to give up this killing cynicism, this belief that nothing can change unless we get a bet-

for self help. We have forgotten Gandhi, rejected Nehru, hated his daughter, accused her son of vile corruption, called V P Singh a crackpot, Chandra Shekhar an opportunist, Narasimha Rao a crook, Vajpayee a fundamentalist. We have ridiculed Deve Gowda as a self declared humble farmer, and now we are readying to write off Gujral as a weak, effete prime minister unable to cope with a nation on the skids.

In the fiftieth year of Independence, it is time to stop pointing fingers at others and take responsibility for our own destiny. Otherwise, fifty years later, we will be making the same charges against others and bemoaning our own fate.

Email addresses:

We are in the process of updating the email addresses of all our members. Please send email to the Editor P.T.Vasudevan (email address: ptv@cisunix.unh.edu). This will enable us to include your name for future mailings of Samaj Patra or other important notices by email. Thank you.

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Membership Renewal:

It's time to renew your membership! For your convenience, a membership form is attached.