

## MAINTAIN PRESSURE

The situation along LAC seems to be critical as there was no breakthrough in the 14th round of talks between the militaries of India and China. Though India has anticipated for an amicable solution of the logjam, it seems that China has some other plans because the Dragon nation is not coming to terms thus leading to delay in the resolution of the issue. India has time and again said that it wants an early and peaceful resolution but things are not going as desired which can be gauged by the stalemate witnessed in the talks held between the two countries. It will be advisable for the country not to surrender before the Chinese aggression and maintain adequate pressure on Dragon to come to terms as early as possible. It is a known fact that China is an expansionist entity and it has expanded its boundaries by using all kinds of methods and the present situation along the LAC is also one among the same but this time the government in India is not soft, meek or chaotic rather it is the one with strong conviction and resolute will power and that is the reason behind this yearlong stalemate. The way the situation is being tackled by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government has no match in the past and for this the government deserves kudos. Although the 14th round of the talks was not successful, India has not lost anything as the two sides agreed to stay in close contact and maintain dialogue to work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest. This is a significant development and means that India has shown the much required stuff at the meeting. The main issue which is pending between the two countries is disengagement at Patrolling Point 15 (Hot Springs) in eastern Ladakh. It is good that India is hopeful of getting what the country wants and for this the people representing the country should not compromise. The talks which are being held after regular intervals show that both the sides have weight and that is the reason behind the delay. India at this juncture should remain pragmatic and maintain pressure on the Chinese side as the Dragon nation will have to come to terms in the days to come.

## OFF 'D' CUFF

**C**ultivating good thoughts is the first step in turning the 'difficult' into the 'inevitable'.

-HII Sudhanshuji Maharaj

Cultivate Positive Thoughts in the Mind

The power of thinking is an incredible power. It's a gift of God. Reflect upon it and you'll find that a human being is made up of nothing but thoughts only. You should try to bring only such thoughts to the mind that may give you more power. Read and listen to empowering thoughts only and for acquiring that, turn to your Guru- the ultimate source of good thoughts.

Move on the path shown by your Satguru. It will enrich your mind with positivity and keep you away from negativity that may cause great problems and hindrances in life. The teachings of your Guru sow seeds of positive thoughts in your mind and weed out the negativity from within.

Further, when the mind overflows with negative thoughts some people feel hopeless and helpless. Such people lose the ability to troubleshoot their own problems. They then come across so-called well-wishers who present them with mindless ideas like: change your name, change your house, rebuild your shop, change the direction of your kitchen, direction of the bed etc.

Understand that nothing is going to change your life; nothing is going to transform your fate unless your own thoughts and actions are transformed. Struggles, mistakes, bad decisions and failures are a part of life, but intelligent is the one who finds the path to victory through all these while cultivating wise thoughts in the mind.

Thoughts Shape your Life

Whether you are noticing it or not, your thoughts are constantly shaping your life. You should work on your beliefs and purpose of life as they decide the quality and direction of your thoughts. If you have taken a decision to remain happy, no matter what, you will react to circumstances and people accordingly.

Similarly, if you think that your relationships are more significant than your false ego, you will relate to family situations positively. So, check your beliefs and purpose, and modify them if required.

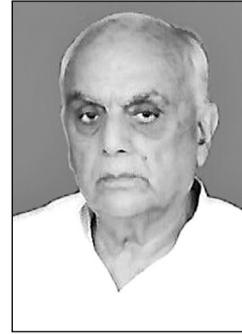
**Shri Sudhanshuji Maharaj**

All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.

-Swami Vivekananda

## EDITORIAL

## Swami Vivekananda: An apostle of Vedanta &amp; Hindutva



■ ER P L KHUSHU

**S**wami Vivekanand's original name was Narendranath. He was born on 12th January, 1863 at Kolkata (Swami's Jayanti i.e. birth anniversary is celebrated as the 'International Youth Day'). Right from childhood, two aspects of his behavior could clearly be noticed. One was his devout and compassionate nature and the other was his readiness to perform any act of courage. Since his whole family was spiritually inclined, he received an appropriate religious upbringing. Swami Vivekananda was admitted to the school founded by Mr. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar in 1870. While in school he focused both on studies as well as body building. He had great respect for his mother tongue. One such incident was when he had an English language class in school, he said, "I shall not learn the language of the white master." At least for 7 - 8 months he abstained from learning that language. Later he learnt English owing to compulsion. Swami Vivekananda stood first in his matriculate examination and added to the glory of his family and school. Then he joined the Presidency College in Kolkata and completed his MA in Philosophy.

Swami Vivekananda was a versatile scholar and a spiritual guru as also a great missionary too, who was born with a mission for the cause of the revival of Hinduism. He was an Indian Hindu monk, a chief disciple of the 19th century Indian mystic Ramakrishna. He was a key figure in the introduction of the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world and is credited with raising interfaith awareness, bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion during the late 19th century. He was a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India, and contributed to the concept of nationalism in colonial India. He blended religion with nationalism, and applied this reinterpretation to various aspects of education, faith, character building as well as social issues pertaining to India. His influence extended also to the west, and he was instrumental in introducing Yoga to the west. Born into an aristocratic Bengali family of Calcutta, Vivekananda was inclined towards spirituality. He was influenced by his Guru, Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa, from whom he learnt that all living beings were an embodiment of the divine self; therefore, service to God could be rendered by service to mankind. After Ramakrishna's death, Vivekananda toured the Indian subcontinent extensively and acquired firsthand knowledge of the conditions prevailing in British India. He later travelled to the United States, representing India at the 1893 Parliament of the World Religions. He is best known for his speech which began, "Sisters and brothers of America, in which he introduced Hinduism at the 'Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893'. Swami Vivekananda conducted hundreds of public and private lectures and classes, disseminating tenets of Hindu philosophy in the United States, England and Europe. His work was more spread across the west. In his brief life span of 39 years, he achieved great successes in his mission both in the West as also in India. He is known to be a great world preacher and a spiritual ambassador of India, which he was probably preordained.

In 1881 Narendra first met Ramakrishna, who became his spiritual focus after his own father had died in 1884. Ramakrishna gradually brought Narendra to a Vedanta-based worldview that "provides the ontological basis for 'ivajñi?ne jñver sev?', the spiritual practice of serving human beings as actual manifestations of God. Swami Vivekananda along with Taraknath, another disciple of Ramakrishna, established the Ramakrishna Mission after Mahasamadhi of Shri Ramakrishna

Paramhansa. It began its activities from a dilapidated building at Varanasi, near Kolkata. Shri Ramakrishna had decided to give Narendra the responsibility of carrying on his incomplete mission. One day Shri Ramakrishna wrote on a piece of paper, "Narendra will perform the task of enlightening the masses." Somewhat hesitantly Narendranath replied, "I won't be able to do all this." Shri Ramakrishna immediately spoke with great resolve, "What? Won't be able? Your bones will perform this task?" Later Shri Ramakrishna initiated Narendranath on the path of Sanyas and gave him the name Swami Vivekanand.

Vivekananda played a major role in the growing Indian nationalist sentiments in the late 19th and the 20th century, encouraging many Indians with his success and appeal in the West. His example helped to build pride in India's cultural and religious heritage, and supported the Indian independence movement. Vivekananda participated in several of these movements, calling for Indian independence from British rule. Swami Vivekananda believed that India is the blessed Punyabhumi, the "land of virtue": the land where humanity has attained its highest towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality - it is India. According to Vivekananda, a country's future depends on its people, stating that "man-making is my mission. Religion plays a central role in this man-making, stating "to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life. It is coordinated willpower that would lead to independence, even with forty millions Britons ruling three hundred million people in India. According to Vivekananda, those forty million Britons put their wills together and that resulted infinite power, and that was the reason of their success. Vivekananda prescribed, to make a great future India the whole serest will lie in organization, accumulation of power, co-ordination of wills.

Vivekananda realized three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great, namely conviction of the powers of goodness; absence of jealousy and suspicion; and helping all who are trying to be and do good. Swami Vivekananda suggested trying to give up jealousy and conceit and learn to work unitedly for others. He told that purity, patience and perseverance overcome all obstacles. He suggested taking courage and work on. Patience and steady work, according to Swami Vivekananda, this is the only way to get success.

According to Swami Vivekananda, "faith in ourselves and faith in God- this is the secret of greatness". Swami Vivekananda observed the history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves, and it is faith which calls out divinity within. So he told, if people have faith in three hundred and thirty millions of Hindu mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and still have no faith in themselves, there will be no salvation. To Vivekananda, religion was not mere theory, but an actual practice to be applied in life, raising the brute into man, and man into God, stating "it is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes. He hated the religious rituals that were in practice during that time. Vivekananda also noted that meditation in isolation won't suffice. Swami Vivekananda shines at the World Parliament of Religions He had a premonition regarding the visit to Chicago. Swami Vivekananda was half asleep on one night, he saw a miraculous dream. Shri Ramakrishna's blazing form was moving ahead over the seas and beckoning Swamiji to follow him. Swami Vivekananda opened his eyes. His heart was filled with indescribable ecstasy. At the same time he heard very clearly a divine voice saying, "Go". Then he resolved to go abroad and completed all arrangements within a day or two. Swami Vivekananda left the Indian shores, aboard the ship, 'Peninsular' on 31st May, 1893. He reached Vancouver port in

Canada on 15th July. From there he travelled by train to the famous city of Chicago in America. He came to know that a World Parliament of Religions was going to be held on 11th September. Swami Vivekananda did not have the invite required to participate in this conference. Further even the date to register as a representative had lapsed. Yet, wherever he went people were attracted to him. On the very first day he met Prof. J.H. Wright, who was teaching Greek at Harvard University. The two of them conversed for almost four hours. The professor was so impressed by Swami Vivekananda's talent and intellect that he accepted the responsibility of giving Swami admittance to the World Parliament of Religions as a representative.

Swami Vivekananda proved to be a true representative of Hinduism as he made his fervent appeal for tolerance to the whole world from the dais of the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 11th September, 1893. It must have been the divine plan to allow this saint to introduce the world to the great Hindu Dharma. This conference was inaugurated with the Chanting of Hymns by the various religious heads. It was a melodious beginning the conference. On the dais, at the centre, was the religious head of the Roman Catholic Sect of America. Swami Vivekananda was not the representative of any particular sect. He had arrived at the conference as the representative of the Sanatan Hindu Vaikiki Dharma of all Bharatavarsha. The conference was attended by almost 6 to 7 thousand ladies and gentlemen. As per the instructions by the chairperson, each representative on the dais was reading out his pre-prepared speech. Swami Vivekananda had not prepared any written speech. Finally he stood up from his seat having sent a silent prayer to his Guru. He addressed the conference with the words, "Sisters and brothers of America". These words had such miraculous strength in them that those thousands gathered stood up and there was continuous applause. The emotional appeal in those compassionate words had stirred every heart. It was the first time ever that any orator had referred to the whole of mankind as 'Sisters and brothers'. Further he entranced all present with his brilliant and powerful oration. Swami Vivekananda felt that the Hindu Samaj has the potential to become the spiritual teacher to the world. After centuries someone had again shown to the Hindu society its own wide horizons. Yet Swami ji did not criticize any religion. He did not degrade any religion. He only wiped the dirt that had accumulated on the Hindu Dharma owing to its ill-treatment and affronts at the hands of its invaders. Swami Vivekananda showed Hindu Dharma its own irradiant self and placed it on the highest pedestal of the World Parliament of Religions. When speaking about Hindustan, he says that it is a sacred land, a land with a divine purpose. Hindustan is the abode of spirituality and introspection. Right from the ancient ages, founders of religious tenets were born here. They satiated the scorched earth with the cooling waters of the Eternal truth - Sanatan Satya. It's the only land where one can experience not only tolerance but also affection for other religions.

Swami Vivekananda returned back to Kolkata to a grand welcome after projecting Bharat in its deserved glory. 'The Plan of my movement', 'Vedanta in everyday life of Bharat', 'Our duty for the day', 'The great sons of Bharat', 'Future of Bharat' were some of the subjects on which he started delivering lectures. His language at all times remained resplendent throughout all his speeches. His incisive thoughts had a great impact on both Indian as well as foreign minds. He could spread the message of Vedanta all around the world. This speaks about his spirit of 'Hindutva' (Indian-ness) through the medium of Vedic scriptures which teach tolerance, brotherhood and equality amongst all the humans.

(The author is a Chartered Consultant Civil Engineer who has fascination for his Motherland the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir).

## Rural Health sector still primitive in J&amp;K

■ SHAFQAT SHEIKH

**J**ammu & Kashmir government is running Public Health Centres (PHCs) and Sub Centres in some parts of the Kishtwar district in violation of staff requirement norms and has been operating these from rented accommodations with damaged and old infrastructure for since long. Despite tall claims of Health Ministry and legislators to provide better medicare facilities at the doorsteps of every nook and corner of the State through numerous State and Centrally Sponsored Schemes, due to the lack of doctors and even para-medical staff in the rural Health care centres of Kishtwar district, people have no other option but to travel 200 Km to Jammu even for the treatment of common ailments. PHC Nali in Bunjwah region of Kishtwar district is the worse example of the pathetic attitude of the Govt towards medicare facilities in the Bunjwah region where other Health Sub Centres in far-flung areas including Kither, Buddha, Suranga, Patnazi, Kewa, Pashalla, and Balgran are opened only once in a week or twice in a month. Now a days, patients are treated in the open sky which is enough to tell the apathetic attitude of the concerned authorities sitting at the helm of affairs that shows the real image of PHC Nali which faces a shortage of space, staff, lack of residential quarters, paramedical staff and other necessary types of equipment, etc.

Starting many years ago, PHC Nali in Bonjwah Tehsil of District Kishtwar has not progressed till date. As a result, the PHC still operates within the same infrastructure as it had before being opened in some rooms. Despite knowing the poor condition of hospitals across the state, Former Ministers of

the Jammu and Kashmir Health Department vowed development in the Health Department, narrating their working style in public meetings and before State/ Union leaders but the reality differs from his fictions. Acute space shortage has badly hit services at Primary Health Centre Nali Bunjwah where health employees and doctors are finding it difficult to cater to the increasing patient rush. PHC Nali with a capacity of few patients, admits patients from across Bonjwah Tehsil but is deficient in space, besides nursing and other paramedical staff. The hospital beds are regularly occupied by two to three patients as I visited several times there. A source informed that in the Health sector Bunjwah there are own rules established by doctors as they are performing duties turn by turn from week to week among which few are performing their honesty and dedication. Besides the shortage of doctors in Sub Centres in Buddha, Suranga, Kither, Kewa, Pashalla, and Balgran had hit the life of common masses badly as these centres are opened only once a week or twice a month. Source added that PHC Nali only has five rooms in which there is One Medical Officer office, a labour room, Lab section, a dental section and an emergency room.

A patient said, "This is the same PHC that I had seen when I was a child, today I brought my child to the PHC, Nali for treatment but it is unfortunate that for the last so many years neither this PHC has been upgraded nor the condition improved. "With the current strength of staff, and accommodation of PHC it is impossible to run the same during late-night hours," said an official. It is pertinent to mention that "Due to shortage of doctors and paramedical staff in the far-

flung region of Bunjwah, PHCs, sub-centres, and dispensaries, people have to travel long distances to either visit district hospitals or hospitals in Jammu and Srinagar. While Jammu is about 250 Km from here, Srinagar is more than 300 Km. Healthcare in remote Bunjwah area, having a population of about 35,000 people, is worst affected. The area is not getting any government attention. "Some health centres still operate from rented accommodations with poor infrastructure," an eyewitness said. In Bunjwah, only one PHC has been running at Nali for many years. The government had now opened Sub Centres, Dispensaries in the darling area of Bunjwah along with a new type of PHC at Patnazi. As these Sub Centres and dispensaries were still not up to the mark as they face a shortage of staff results whole population of Bunjwah became dependent on PHC Nali, which too was devoid of modern facilities, sources alleged, saying that due to shortage of staff, doctors were finding it difficult to cater to the increasing rush of patients. A senior doctor of PHC Nali said, "We are having few rooms and we face it very tough in catering to the huge rush of patients. Patients are also facing difficulties as PHC lacks hospital beds. It also does not have a separate OPD block." He said it was unfortunate that for the last so many years, neither PHC was upgraded to CHC nor the conditions had improved. Sources informed that some years ago land was acquired for the construction of separate blocks but to date, nothing was visible on the ground.

(The author is a freelance Journalist Columnist and Socio-Political Activist).

## YOUR COLUMN

## Child marriage-a bane

Dear Editor,

Child marriage, a result of deeply rooted traditional and customary practices, remains a widespread phenomenon worldwide, including in India. While both boys and girls are at risk of becoming the victims of child marriage, the ratio of girls being married earlier far outweighs that of boys. Many girls had been married before they turned 18. However, this figure does not take into account many girls committed to marriage without their consent before they reach the age of 18. It is quite common for fathers, grandfathers, and the elderly to fix their daughters' marriages after they are born or before they reach the age to give their consent to a marital contract. A deep-rooted religious and cultural belief that 'good' girls leave their marriage decisions to their elders still holds ground even among well-educated families. The majority fails to realize that marriage is a union of two people as partners, which requires physical maturity, critical thinking, and sound decision-making skills by both parties to make the right decision for themselves. Most families consider a girl child as a guest in their homes since the day she is born, and their ultimate goal is to prepare her to settle at her in-laws' home. A girl is considered to be a burden on her parents. Most parents prefer marrying off their daughters as early as possible to get rid of their social obligation and gain social acceptance. They

think that they are doing their girl a favor by marrying her at the "right time," while in reality, they are signing her off for many physical and psychological struggles that she is to face all on her own. Even in the 21st century, the masses fail to understand the consequences of child marriage. They do not realize how a child marriage robs girls of their childhood and better future prospects. Girls married at an earlier age are less likely to attain higher education and are more at risk of domestic violence and psychological and health issues. Young married girls are more at risk of dying from complications faced during childbirth than women in their 20s. According to a World Health Organization report, complications during childbirth continue to be a major cause of death among 15- to 19-year-old females, while pregnancy and childbirth-related complications are fairly low among 20- to 24-year-olds. Moreover, early marriage deprives girls of their autonomy and the ability to make critical life decisions. Many families prefer bringing a young girl for their son because it is easier to control someone who lacks agency, voice, and decision-making abilities than an adult who understands her rights and is more likely to stand up for herself if she is treated unfairly. Girls marrying younger are more likely to be deprived of their freedom, including the choice to complete their education and the liberty to visit their own family and relatives in some cases. They are treated as commodities whose fate lies in the hands of others who can control them and manage their lives according to their desires. Besides, as soon as a young girl is married, society starts treating her as an adult. She is expected to take all household responsibilities when she herself needs support,

guidance, and protection. She is deprived of the carefree childhood days and is overburdened with responsibilities and never-ending societal expectations. Such girls are more at risk of facing psychological issues, such as depression. Their education is jeopardized, affecting their career prospects, intellectual and personal development, and their ability to reach their true potential later in their lives. The majority fails to realize that marriage is a union of two people as partners, which requires physical maturity, critical thinking, and sound decision-making skills by both parties to make the right decision for themselves. On the other hand, early age marriages violate the concept of consent. Still, many people fail to understand that consent is a prerequisite for entering into a marriage. It requires both parties to be independent enough to accept or refuse a proposal as per their choice. Since a child is not mature enough to decide what is good or bad and acceptable or unacceptable, child marriage deprives an individual of their basic right to choose their life partner. Although the government has taken serious steps to fight child marriage, there still exist loopholes in monitoring the implementation of the laws. While the government is playing its part, it is the mindset that needs to change. It is high time we realize that instead of committing young girls to marry at an early age, we can do society a greater favor by letting them continue their education, become financially and intellectually independent, and decide for themselves. We must understand that girls who grow up to become independent, educated, physically and psychologically fit, and happy individuals can play a better role in society.

Mool Raj