

Plastic waste poses threat

The issue of pollution, particularly caused by plastic waste, poses a significant threat to ecosystems and human health globally. Plastic pollution has become a pervasive problem due to its durability and widespread use. Plastic bags, in particular, are a major contributor to this issue due to their prevalence and slow decomposition rate.

Plastic bags, often used for convenience in shopping and packaging, have a detrimental impact on the environment. Their improper disposal leads to littering in urban areas, clogging drains, polluting water bodies, and posing threats to wildlife. Moreover, the production of plastic bags consumes significant amounts of resources, including fossil fuels, and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.

Addressing the plastic pollution problem requires a multi-faceted approach. Governments, industries, communities, and individuals all have roles to play in reducing plastic usage, promoting recycling, and investing in alternative materials and sustainable practices.

There are significant concerns about the continued use of plastic bags, especially for packaging hot food items, and the potential health risks associated with it. The proposal to enforce a ban on packing hot edible items in plastic bags and harmful containers, particularly in cities, is aimed at mitigating these risks.

Government will notify Rules of CAA before General elections

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

The much controversial citizenship Amendment Act which has been passed in year 2019 by both the houses of parliament and had also got the assent of the president and has become a law .But the irony is this that despite of its passing by the both houses of parliament and it became a law and still government has failed to notify the rules concerning with the important Act and it stands to be dumped into the dust bin .However the union home minister Anit shah has made it crystal that the rules concerning to CAA will be notified before the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and this has been said by no less than by the home minister Amit Shah the other day while answering the question concerning with the CAA and it is so good that the MEA has declared that the rules concerning with the CAA will be notified shortly before the general elections .It is the irony of this country that each and every thing is politicized here and same is the case with CAA's notification with the result that it has not been notified despite it becoming a law in 2019.Unnecessarily the much needed and important piece of legislation has been politicized by the cunning politicians for their personal benefits ,with the result that it could not become a law .Better late than never ,centre likely to notify CAA rules before Model Code of Conduct imposition .The ministry of Home Affairs is set to announce the regulations for the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 before the imposition of MCC in the country for the Lok Sabha elections .The CAA aims to grant Indian Citizenship to the West Pak refugees and to be specific persecuted non Muslim migrants from Bangladesh ,Pakistan ,and Afghanistan. Thus centre could notify the rules for the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act -CAA before the Election Commission of India implements the MCC before the Lok Sabha elections .Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently asserted that the CAA would be notified before the Lok Sabha polls and reiterated that the Act does not take away anyone's citizenship as it lacks such a provision .Shah said, "Our Muslim brothers are being misled and instigated against CAA. The CAA is only meant to give citizenship to those who came to India after facing persecution in Pakistan ,Bangladesh and Afghanistan .It is not for snatching anyone's Indian citizenship. He also stated that the CAA was a promise of the congress government and accused them of backtracking on their assurance to provide Indian citizenship to refugees persecuted in Pakistan ,Afghanistan and Bangladesh .It is likely that the code of conduct might be implemented any time in March .The regulations are ready and an online portal for the entire procedure ,which will be carried out digitally ,is ready in place. Applicants will be required to state the year they entered India without any travel documents and no further documentation will be needed .As usual Asaduddin Ovasi of AIMIM chief has reacted on expected lines in response to home ministers candid reply that CAA rules and regulations will be notified before the general elections and even before the imposition of MCC in the country and said that law is to trouble Muslims. The home minister Amit Shah has categorically stated that no power can stop the country to enforce the CAA as it has already become a law of the land .Amit Shah further said," The regulations are prepared and online portal is already set up for the entire process ,which will be conducted digitally .Applicants will need to disclose only the year of their entry to India without any travel documents .No additional documentation will be required from the applicants. "The CAA ,proposed by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government ,intends to offer Indian citizenship to oppressed non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh ,Pakistan and Afghanistan who came to India prior to December 31,2014.The CAA 2019 aims to amend the citizenship Amendment Act 1955 to provide a fast-track pathway to Indian citizenship for non-Muslim migrants from Afghanistan ,Pakistan and Bangladesh who entered Indian on or before 31st December 2014.Earlier there was unnecessary hullabaloo ,hue and cry and the unprecedented protests in Shahin Bagh Delhi and other places in the country forcing the government to put the law into hold .However the MHA will notify the rules and regulations in this regard and the law will be notified before the general elections and it is a good thing as it provides for equality between citizens as the refugees will be treated and offered Indian citizenship and discrimination with these migrants will cease .It is in the fitness of things to note that the Citizenship Amendment Act became a law in December 2019 ,but has not been functional for the last four years as the Ministry of Home Affairs sought repeated extensions to frame rules under it .The rules under CAA under works ever since the Act was passed at the end of 2019-are now ready and will be notified before 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The CAA was passed in the lower house on December 10,2019 and in the upper house two days later after it was introduced in the upper house by union home minister Amit Shah .The move drew heavy criticism from politicians and citizens alike for ostensibly singling out Muslims and excluding them from its purview .The Act aims to provide citizenship to Hindus ,Sikhs ,Jains, Parsis ,Christians ,Buddhists purportedly fleeing persecution from India's Muslim -majority neighbors' ,namely ,Pakistan ,Afghanistan and Bangladesh .The notable absence of Muslims from the provisions of the legislation ,irrespective of whether or not they are being persecuted in their countries ,as well as the unconstitutional nature of the legislation when coupled with National Register of Citizens -NRC ,had drawn widespread protests from thousands of citizens across the country .Despite the protests and violence that ensued ,the government notified the law in January 2020.Yet,the rules have remained unwritten until now ,four years later ."All things are in place and yes ,they are likely to be implemented before the elections .Over the last few years, BJP leaders have brought up the CCA multiple times in rallies and promised that the Act will soon be functional .Most recently ,Amit Shah said at a rally in West Bengal last week ,"Didi (west Bengal chief minister Mamta Banerjee) often misleads our refugee brothers regarding CAA .Let me make it clear that CAA is the law of the land and no one can stop it. Everybody is going to get citizenship .This is our party's commitment .A bench of petitions challenging the legal validity of the CAA are pending before supreme court .In October 2023,the union government submitted an affidavit in the court defending the law and calling it a "benign piece of legislation." (The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.

- Swami Vivekananda

"Mahashivratri" and Shiva: The Lord of Compassion

■ I.D SONI

Mahashivratri, as the name indicate- "the great night of Lord Shiva" is celebrated in honour of Lord Shiva- the Most Gullible of the Gods, the Destroyer in the Hindu Trinity.

Who is Lord Shiva? He is Rudra, the Mighty. He is blue-throated, because he drank the poison (churned from the milky ocean), Which otherwise would have destroyed the human race. He is considered both the Creator and Destroyer of men: he destroys the ignorance that holds men in its thrall. He is so simple that it is said that he can be easily deceived. So we call him Bholanath- the Lord who is gullible and often misled. Yes, he permits himself to be misled that he may lead us on to Truth, to Beauty, to Goodness, to Holiness- to Himself. For victory always belongs, to him.

Dear to his compassionate heart were the lowliest of the low, the disinherited and the dispossessed, the untouchables and the outcasts. Of all the creatures in world he chose a shabby old bull-Nandi as his constant companion. And because the whole world runs away from snakes, he garlanded them round his neck. The blind and the lame, the hideous and the hunch-backed, the lepers and the insane, he regards as his very own. And they that are friendless and forsaken of the world have only to cry out to him in their loneliness and anguish, and he will come running to them to offer them his wealth of love.

He is the great Giver who gives and gives and ever gives out of his inexhaustible abundance. He gives alike to the rich and the poor; the young and the old, the good and the bad. He is like the sun that shines on all, denying to none its life-giving warmth and light. Let us, therefore, come out of our closed rooms if we want to receive the rays of the sun. Come out of our ego-centric selves, if we

want to receive the bounties of Lord Shiva.

Shiva and Shakti go together: we cannot think of one without the other; Shiva is Light, knowledge. Wisdom: Shakti is the Primal Force, which expresses itself in the beauty and grandeur; the power and majesty of the universe around us. So in pictures and parables, Shiva is accompanied by Parvati also called Uma, Sati, Kali, Durga.

She is Gauri, the Golden One, fair and pure as the snow that falls on the Kailash, which is their home. There they dwell in beauty and blessing- Shiva, the Great God and Parvati, his devoted disciple, ever gazing at the Beloved of her heart.

There are pictures in which Lord Shiva is seen sitting in the "Lotus Pose"- Wrapt in the immensity of silence which pervades the snow-peaked Kailash mountains. And it is said that with each breath that he exhales, worlds are created: and with each breath that he draws in, worlds are destroyed. Yet he is the Eternal Fakir; possessing nothing, desiring nothing. Nothing in all the universe can tempt him to claim it. He has but one desire- to destroy the ignorance that holds in its thrall. For that he knows that men quarrel and commit crimes and slip into sinfulness because "they know not what they do." The darkness of ignorance must be dispelled. This is the task of Lord Shiva. Whatever be our fault and failing, he comes to reveal to us its cause that we may not grope in darkness. He is the Master of Infinite Compassion, Infinite Mercy, Infinite Love.

Sometimes- perhaps, very often- the cause of our ignorance is something, someone, very dear to us. And the great God will not hesitate in removing the barriers that stand in the way of our enlightenment. And when the time comes, he will rise with sword in hand to slay our best beloved before our very eyes.

In worldly matters, may be, we can never mis-

lead him. So is he called Rudra, the Terrible. And in the aarti which his bhaktas offer him they address him as "The sweetest of the sweet, the Most Terrible of the Terrible.

SHIVA- THE LORD OF COMPASSION:

We love to gaze and gaze at the picture of Lord Shiva, clothed in the mendicant's garb. His body is sneared with ashes. His head is crowned with coils of matted hair: In one of his hands is a begging-bowl and in the other a tall staff with the trident. The king of all the world moves as beggar; from door to door, asking for alms. Such is the humility of the Eternal One, the Ancient of the ancients. He stands at the door of our heart, asking for alms of love. He waits there outside, in sun and rain, asking us to open the door: Alas! We are busy chasing the shadow shapes of wealth, pleasure and power: We hear Him not. If we will but be still, if we will but enter into the depths of silence, we, too, may hear his voice.

"How long will we wander thus. It is time to hear him. Shiva is humble and compassionate, ever kind and loving to all who turn to Him for help and healing, in this world of tragedy and tears. Ringing across the centuries, since the dawn of creation, cometh His call: O ye that are tired, tattered, torn! O ye that feel forsaken and forlorn! Come unto me!

It is the call of Him who speaks not only to his bhaktas (devotees) but to the weary and unhappy; the heavy-laden and heart-broken ones. He is so simple that he can easily be deluded.

It is not what we give that counts, it is the spirit with which we give it. Howsoever costly be our gift, if it is empty of love, it can be of no Value to Him, who is the Lord of all the worlds and suns and stars. But a little gift of no material value is precious to Him if it carries within it the love of pure, devoted heart. The gift is but the container;

the outer vessel.

Does it carry within it, egoistic thoughts or a desire for self-glorification? Or; does it contain the aspiration of a humble heart: "May I be unto thee, a Sacrifice!" A king built a house of worship made of marble at a cost of Several millions. He said to himself in the pride of kingship, "What a beautiful building I have built unto the Lord! Generations unborn will look at it in wonder and awe!" His offering was infected with a sense of "I"-ness: it was not accepted by the Lord. But He accepted the humble offering of a poor widow who, took from her mattress a piece of straw and gave it. to the oxen who drew the marble from the ships. The way to Shiva is not paved with "big" offerings or pompous ceremonies, but with self-giving which is symbolised by little offerings made in love and longing. The offerings Shiva readily accepts are those of bel leaves and water and a little parched rice. He accepts them in whatever from they are offered.

The Brahmin offers Him the pure water of the Ganges: more precious to Him are tears of a repentant or a yearning heart. Sivaprakasa was a learned Brahmin, proud of his knowledge and scholarship. Every day he offered Lord Shiva the pure water of the Ganges: it was not accepted by the Lord. But He accepted the "impure" water which a lowly untouchable hunter brought in His mouth: for in the heart of the man was deep humility and love.

Mahashivratri- the great night of Shiva-is celebrated all over India with religious fervor and ardor in order to help us to remove the barriers that stand in the way of enlightenment of every one who has full faith in His compassion, clemency; pity and forgiveness.

(The writer is President Home of Aged & Infirm, Ambphalla, Jammu).

Modern Agricultural Technologies for Rural Upliftment

■ DR BANARSI LAL

Agriculture is the most important sector in the Indian economy. This sector contributes immensely to employment, foreign exchange, food and many other sectors. Agricultural sector is the basic catalyst and accelerator of growth and development of the industrial and services sectors. It is no longer possible to mitigate the needs of the increasing population and to achieve the food security objectives by expanding the areas under agriculture. But this problem can be solved by increasing the agricultural productivity by utilizing the yield increasing modern technologies. Agricultural research and technological improvements are therefore crucial to increase agricultural production and productivity and thus can reduce the poverty and meet the demands of food without irreversible degradation of natural resources. Modern technologies play a crucial role in agricultural production and productivity. Technological uses are influenced by the technical trainings, meetings, campaigns, demonstrations, trials, oral transmission and credibility on technician and belief level on technology. Adoption of new technologies varies differently for the progressive, young and educated farmers.

Generally the farmers are having positive perception of technologies but they face lot of problems in technology adoption due to lack of capital, guidelines and compensation policy. State and Central Governments are providing facilities to the farmers in increasing their crops yields through the use of various technologies and schemes. An increase in agricultural productivity is a prevailing motive for the Indian farmers and a driving force in India's agricultural policy.

The success of modern technologies can be obtained by knowing how to apply fertilizers, pesticides and take care of plant for its healthy growth. A farming system is the result of a complex interaction of a number of interdependent components such as soil, water; crops, livestock, labour and other resources within an environmental setting. The total environment can be divided into two elements: technology and human. Technology determines the type and

physical potential of different enterprises and includes the physical and biological factors that can be modified. The human element is characterized by exogenous and endogenous factors which can be controlled by the farm household. It is the household which ultimately decides whether to adopt a new technology or not. The decision of use of technologies is dependent on how farmers perceive the technology.

After independence, India has made tremendous progress in agricultural development. There has been substantial increase in available food-grain per capita. Before mid 1960s, India relied on imports and food aid to meet domestic requirements. Severe drought in 1965-66 compelled India to reform its agricultural methods. India adopted significant technological reforms and focused on the food grain self-sufficiency. This ushered in India's Green Revolution. Superior high yielding and disease resistant wheat varieties in combination with better farming practices to improve production and productivity were adopted. A hectare of Indian wheat farm that produced an average of 0.8 tons in 1948 produced 4.7 tons of wheat in 1975 from the same piece of land. Such fast growth in farm productivity enabled India to become self-sufficient in the food grains. By 2000, Indian farmers adopted wheat varieties capable of yielding 6 tons of wheat per hectare. With Green Revolution success in wheat and rice was exceptionally obtained. Benefits of improved farming technologies now largely depend on whether India develops infrastructure such as reliable irrigation network, electricity production, flood control systems, transportation facilities and competitive buyers of produce from the Indian farmer. Agronomically the package of technologies may seem attractive but the farmer may not accept due to the financial risk.

The provision of appropriate credit facilities may sufficiently reduce the risk element to make the package more attractive. The reasons for poor adoption of modern technologies are as :(1)If the farmers are illiterate or less educated. (2) If the technology is new to the farmers then generally they will not believe on it. (3)They might not have seen the demonstration fields of the technology.

SCIENCE VERSUS DHARAM

and day out, sources of energy are depleting at a very rapid pace. Age-old social order is slipping into awful disarray. Surge in technological advancement has been propping up a new kind of mindset, Self centred attitude and approach, monotonous and lifeless culture, Man finds himself in a very troubled, perilous and horrible state after having been caught up in the mechanical stranglehold of this neo culture. It appears as if the modern man has fallen prey to the predominant presence of machines in every walk of life. It shall be no exaggeration to say that being overwhelmed by the outstanding achievements of science, so called modern man has developed a tendency to treat Dharma as an adversary and grossly inimical to science and the Supreme being as non-existent entity. It is, therefore, significant to note that by doing so, man has tremendously lost that blissful spirit which kept him afloat during the most challenging and adverse times, sustaining his mental soundness and zest for life. Let us dive deep into the subject matter to embrace the truth.

DEHARAM

Mind it pl, Dharam and Science are not sworn enemies but provide strength and perfection to each other. Dharama is a medium which facilitates self Realization which becomes possible by virtue of one's meeting with Inner self (Atmasakshaatkar) . It also assists man in recognizing his own latent divine values and evolving them to perfection in order to cultivate a mellowed approach to society. Professor Abdus Salam, Nobel Prize recipient in physics believes that religion enriches Science with sanskar/culture. It is logically imperative that cultural values and traits in scientist impact his thought process and working.

Therefore, a scientist with a religious bent of mind would certainly desist from making of weapons of mass destruction like Neutron bomb. It is on record that neutron bomb can completely annihilate life on this planet with its lethal power without harming concrete structures and buildings. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the then president of Pakistan did request to Prof. Abdus Salam to make atom bomb for Pakistan but the latter being a religious person at heart not only refused but persuaded the President to drop the plan. Albert Einstein

was initially associated with the first atomic bomb making project of the world but shortly he withdrew from it. Admittedly religion and science appear to be at loggerheads especially when religion exalts God as creator, Regulator and Supreme power and emphasises upon its followers to repose faith in His uniqueness. Even the core essence of religions which signify such notions as existence of heaven, hell and Avatar are not endorsed by the philosophy of science. Interestingly, reason for it is that it goes against the principle or religion of science itself. Science has its own religion which comprises intensive and experiment based study of every peculiar incidence or object in order to bring out the truth in a conclusive and comprehensive manner.

In the science based observation and opinion of EINSTEIN there undoubtedly exists a supreme intellect in nature. It indicates once again the presence of some Godly or divine power. We also observe that Hindu spiritual thinkers have always believed Nature and the God are two sides of the same coin. GOETHE, a German writer, poet, statesman and also a scientist too stated that nature is pulsating with life and its expanse is from an unfamiliar centre. It is this unfamiliar centre which is considered as vague acknowledgement of existence of God in scientific terms. In fact, in 16th century, when new social order based on scientific knowledge was taking shape, there happened a split between science and religion on account of scientist's lack of foresight and prudence with regard to the significance of cultural and moral values well cultivated in the scientists right from the early childhood. In consequence thereof, the progress achieved by virtue of scientific pursuits turned out to be not only very discouraging and impassive but also demonic to a greater extent.

CONCLUSION

The only remedial course for the distraught human race today is that we must draw inspiration from our scriptures like VEDAS and our Spiritual Scientists Bhardwaj, Augustya etc. along with scientist-thinkers like Goethe, Albert Einstein and Abdus Salam to impart Sanskars/ values to science for desired results.

