



VOL No. 2. Issue No. 4 VIVA NEWSLETTER (ENGLISH MONTHLY)

Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

Practical Spirituality for All

**"Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning;
it is character that can cleave through
adamantine walls of difficulties."**

Swami Vivekananda



LOOKING INWARDS (In the Midst of Materialism)

For the average person, most of the days are spent in making ends meet. Even the well-to-do crave for more. Many have begun to love money for its own sake - we often forget that it is only an instrument to enable what we really want in life. Some money is required for our existential needs - else we cannot be free to pursue what our purpose is. The question is how much money is required for us to lead a meaningful and fulfilled life? Will a healthy bank balance ensure good health? Can money buy love? Is more money what our children want or is it our time and involvement? Perhaps we need to reflect deeply on what to do with our time on earth so that we leave feeling full.

- The Editorial Team

MONEY WISE – A TRUE STORY

FIRST MEETING WITH JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

(An excerpt from Madame Verdier's journal quoted in the New Discoveries, Vol. 1, pp. 487-88.)

[As told by Madame Emma Calvé, to Madame Drinette Verdier]

Mr. X, in whose home Swamiji was staying in Chicago, was a partner or an associate in some business with John D. Rockefeller. Many times John D. heard his friends talking about this extraordinary and wonderful Hindu monk who was staying with them, and many times he had been invited to meet Swamiji but, for one reason or another, always refused. At that time Rockefeller was not yet at the peak of his fortune, but was already powerful and strong-willed, very difficult to handle and a hard man to advise.

But one day, although he did not want to meet Swamiji, he was pushed to it by an impulse and went directly to the house of his friends, brushing aside the butler who opened the door and saying that he wanted to see the Hindu monk.

The butler ushered him into the living room, and, not waiting to be announced, Rockefeller entered into Swamiji's adjoining study and was much surprised, I presume, to see Swamiji behind his writing table not even lifting his eyes to see who had entered.

After a while, as with Calvé, Swamiji told Rockefeller much of his past that was not known to any but himself, and made him understand that the money he had already accumulated was not his, that he was only a channel and that his duty was to do good to the world — that God had given him all his wealth in order that he might have an opportunity to help and do good to people.



(Drawn by Hari Shankar, a volunteer from Bangalore)

Rockefeller was annoyed that anyone dared to talk to him that way and tell him what to do. He left the room in irritation, not even saying goodbye. But about a week after, again without being announced, he entered Swamiji's study and, finding him the same as before, threw on his desk a paper which told of his plans to donate an enormous sum of money toward the financing of a public institution.

"Well, there you are", he said. "You must be satisfied now, and you can thank me for it."

Swamiji didn't even lift his eyes, did not move. Then taking the paper, he quietly read it, saying: "It is for you to thank me". That was all. This was Rockefeller's first large donation to the public welfare.

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THE HEDONIC CYCLE...The Psychology Behind 'More'



One need is fulfilled, another one arises in its place.....

Need more money to maintain lifestyle or to match lifestyle of someone else.....

And the craving to possess MORE continues.....

What is it that we are searching for?

(Contributed by, Nupur, a volunteer and reader from Gurugram)

MY JOURNEY AS A VOLUNTEER (by Ms. Usha Ramani, Volunteer from Chennai)



My connection with the Ramakrishna Mission and ACP Program happened in the year 2013/2014. The ACP Program had just got launched in Chennai. My good friend Vrindha spoke to me about this initiative of the RK Mission, Delhi. I was immediately attracted to the program since it was connected to education which was always close to my heart.

It seems like yesterday when I first met with Swami Shantatmanadaji Maharaj at a Principals workshop at Chennai. That meeting was a turning point and my journey as a Volunteer for the ACP Program took shape. I remember participating in the teacher training as a facilitator which helped me decide that I could contribute my mite for a program that impacts young minds.

There has been a learning experience in each training that I participated. I have learned to listen and see situations from an outside perspective. Senior Resource Persons and others encouraged and opened up avenues for doing my best. Thanks to ACP and Awakening my time during the Covid years was put to productive use.

Working as a volunteer has brought a sense of fulfilment that my contribution may indirectly help bring about a change. A sense of discovery that I can at this age do something that is of help to others. A feeling of satisfaction that my time is being put to good use. A spiritual connection that has been fulfilling and I look forward to spending many more happy years to take this journey forward.



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WHY VOLUNTEER (by Ms. Nabanita Sikidar, Volunteer from Gurugram)

Does anything get done by one person? Maybe/maybe not. But if a few people gather together with good intent, there might be a little change happening in the world. Volunteering one's time, skills, and resources may be one way to make a difference. Personally, what is the outcome?

- Creating meaningful relationships with others,
- Stepping outside the comfort zone,
- Engaging in team activities,
- Feeling a growing desire to contribute,
- Getting to know people one wouldn't get to meet otherwise,
- Learning from those who come from different walks of life, of varying age and experience helping become a more understanding person, and
- Developing better social skills.

Every opportunity to volunteer presents its own set of requirements, forcing us to learn new skills all the time. Volunteering comes with its own challenges and when one receives appreciation from others, one feels better emotionally and mentally.



MOVEMENT – VIVA Events and Updates



(Lighting of the lamp by Swami Anuragananda, Secretary Ramakrishna Mission, Sohra)



Recently, training workshops for the Awakened Citizens Program (ACP) Year 1, Year 2 and Awakening were organized at the Ramakrishna Mission at Sohra, Meghalaya, from February 28 to March 4, 2023. The preparations for each and every step of organizing the workshop (such as checklists, requisition lists, MIS updates) were made with utmost care which ensured that the chances of mistakes were minimized. In addition, the provision of an alternate resource person (RP) at each phase eliminated the possibility of any interruptions to the conduct of the workshop. The junior RPs were encouraged and learnt freely throughout watching the senior RPs facilitating the training. Finally, in the experience sharing session, mentors spoke about the transformation in students and how ACP is a game changer in their students' lives. Most RPs report that delivering the ACP alone brings about a change in how they function in their lives as they imbibe Swamiji's values of seeking perfection and move towards excellence in every step of their work.

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ASK SWAMI SHANTATMANANDA

A reader writes:

Why should we try to be spiritual? Why is this world of matter as we see and live in not enough? Maybe spirituality is for cowards unable to participate in the world as it is.

Swami Shantatmananda replies:

Most people think that whatever is perceived by the senses is all that is worth pursuing. These are gross pleasures and can lead to much sorrow as they are temporary. Such people have endless desires and they chase a mirage. Spirituality means going beyond the body or matter and seeking the subtle bliss that comes from meditation, selfless service, devotion etc. Those who have tasted this, live life at a higher level and are able to overcome sorrow. So spirituality is not for cowards but for the wise.

ANSWER TO READER'S SECTION FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE



Mitali Chaudhuri from Mumbai writes:

The flowing river takes in her stride several things including small and big stones as well as chisels and polishes several other rocks while flowing past them. It teaches us how we need to flow through life's situations while taking several things and people (good/ bad/ugly) together with us and in this process help them better themselves (shine and polish them) and reach our own destination too... and life goes on.

Abha Yadav from New Delhi writes:

Despite the hurdles in its way the river keeps flowing, it is dirtied, polluted, its course changed by human intervention but it keeps doing what Mother Nature intended for it to do i.e. flow. Without any expectations, simply carrying on its karma. When adversity hits, find another pathway just as the river meanders across rocks, trees and mountains. Find your path and flow, life is to be lived to the fullest..... when we stop flowing, we stop living.

READER'S SECTION

This beautiful illustration from Disney depicts Pooh's head stuck in the honey pot. An oft repeated theme in Pooh's life. Does it speak to you about a general theme in our lives too? Please send in your responses to the email below and titled 'Answer to Reader's Section'.

