



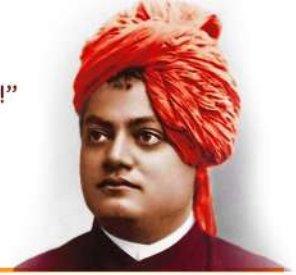
VOL No. 2. Issue No. 8 VIVA NEWSLETTER (ENGLISH MONTHLY)

## Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

### Practical Spirituality for All

“Freedom, O Freedom! Freedom, O Freedom!”  
is the song of the soul.”

Swami Vivekananda



#### LOOKING INWARDS (“Working in Freedom”)

After centuries of being enslaved, India woke to freedom around this time in 1947. Now our land is our own and we enjoy rights and have responsibilities to ensure that we remain free. Each one of us can awaken our inherent potential through the service of our motherland. Our freedom struggle was possible because several individuals collectively awakened their inner spirit. In VIVA, it is our endeavour to serve our nation through selfless work, devising programs for mindset transformation of citizens, facilitating character building and promoting man making education, all greased with love and the spirit of devotion. We hope to do our nation proud.

The Editorial Team

#### Freedom according to Swami Vivekananda, by Devasis Mukherjee from Gurgaon

The famous teaching of Swami Vivekananda which starts with the words “Each soul is potentially divine ...” ends with the three words “... and be free.” Freedom therefore according to Swamiji is the ultimate goal of life. But is absolute freedom even possible? The Theory of Relativity tells us that nothing can travel faster than light; Quantum Mechanics has established that even elementary variables such as position and momentum cannot be measured with absolute certainty; Godel’s theorem tell us that no framework of logic can prove all the Truths in the system. Where then is freedom in this phenomenal world of matter and thought? Swamiji was not unaware of this and that is why he had observed that “There is no freedom within Maya.”



There are however bondages in the phenomenal world which can be overcome. First, the bondage of our sense organs, then the bondage of the passions such as lust, anger, greed etc. It is a long and arduous process through which we transit from the “freedom of the senses and passions” to the “freedom from the senses and passions”. In other words, mastery of the senses and emotions is essential for freedom. Finally, there is the bondage of our ego – which binds us to the body-mind complex we call “I”, overcoming which is the final frontier.

How is this to be achieved? Sri Krishna at his laconic best answers this question in half a shloka – asanga shastrena dridena chhitwa” – by firmly chopping off the bondage of worldliness with the sword of Detachment. Swamiji in equally telling manner answers this as – “The goal of all nature is freedom, and freedom is to be attained only by perfect unselfishness.”

Ascending beyond our identity with our body and mind is to go beyond Maya and it is beyond the realm of Maya that we discover true freedom.

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#### FREEDOM'S ECHO

A poem contributed by Shatarupa Dutta from Faridabad

*From the sacred soil where struggles thrived,  
India's spirit in golden threads have revived,  
A nation's voice, united and strong,  
Awakening hearts, embracing the world to which we all belong.*

*In every breath, a call to introspect,  
To journey within, for our souls connect,  
For Swami Vivekananda's wisdom, lives on in hearts,  
With freedom unrestrained  
We are ready to play our part*

*He spoke of unity, the divine soul,  
That binds us all, igniting us whole,  
Beyond religions, castes, and creeds,  
Sowing a profound seed of oneness and courageous deeds.*

*For freedom, not just in battle won,  
But in breaking chains of ignorance, undone,  
To let the mind explore, discover and create,  
To embrace diverse thoughts, empower and liberate.*

*So let us carry the torch of liberty,  
Inspired by those who fought valiantly,  
With the sentiment woven in our hearts,  
We shall march forward and nurture freedom  
Hand in hand  
Let's start.*

2. Born in a Tamil family who went on to study MBBS at Madras Medical College. She aided wounded prisoners of war in Singapore and later joined the Indian National Army where she commanded the all-women's regiment, "Rani of Jhansi regiment".

3. Also known as Veeramangai or brave woman (in Tamil), she was the first Indian queen to wage war against the East India Company in 1780. She was trained in many combat methods including martial arts, horse riding, archery, and was a scholar in French, English and Urdu.

#### Decoding Freedom,

by Govind Singh Bisht from Faridabad

Do we stay bound because we are fearful of what people may say or think if we want to break free? Believe me, no one will question our wish for freedom because we are all in the same boat, craving to be set free. We are unconsciously terrified of losing our narrowly defined identity, which gives us a false sense of belongingness.

But, if we truly want to be free, what is holding us back? Societal restrictions or our own conflicted thoughts. To come closer to freedom, we need to let go of our comfort zone. And only peace can lead to freedom. The ongoing fight in our brains caused by self-doubt and ignorance impedes our tranquillity and prevents us from accepting and confronting the reality of our own slavishness. Let us question ourselves if we truly require such freedom. If so, let us endeavour to break free from all mental shackles and "sail away from safe harbour, get rid of the fear of drowning in the sea, and feel the freedom." And investigate the immense opportunities that await us.

The freedom that allows us to fly with birds over the sea - let us experience that too. May this Independence Day work as a small reminder that freedom is not merely a physical state but also a state of mind as well.

Quiz on lesser-known freedom fighters, by Vivek Patel from Ranchi. Identify them and learn of their quiet and inspiring contributions.

1. He was a teacher by profession and was popularly known as Mater Da. He was an alumnus of the Berhampore College and best known for leading the Chittagong armoury raid of 1930.



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4. Born in present-day Andhra Pradesh, he was also known as Manyan Virdu or Hero of Jungles who was involved in armed campaigns against the British and led the Rampa Rebellion.

5. He was the youngest freedom fighter and martyr who was shot by the British after refusing to ferry them across the Brahmani River on his boat. Name this brave heart who died at the age of twelve and is immortalized in the poem "Boatman" by Sachidanand Routrey.

#### MOVEMENT – VIVA Events and Updates

1. VIVA has launched the 'Foundations of Citizenship Program (FCP)' in Bangalore on 7th July 2023 with the conduct of a Facilitators' Development Program for 25 middle-school teachers from 14 private schools. FCP is a one-year structured program, based on Swami Vivekananda's concept of man-making and character-building education. The program envisions the outcome of an awakened citizen, an individual full of Atmashradhha or self-belief and a contributor to the nation's progress.

2. A Principals' Orientation program was held at the VIVA, Gurugram on Saturday, the 15th of July for the private schools in Gurugram. The objective of the program was to spread awareness about the various initiatives undertaken by the Institute and also to intimate schools in the area with its principles and purpose. A number of schools desirous of knowing about VIVA and its activities as well as some schools which have been long-time partners in its endeavours attended the function.



*Images from the Principals' Orientation Programs held in Bangalore and Gurugram.*

3. An Awakening training for primary school teachers was held online on July 22, 2023, where 56 participants indicated that the program was the need of the day.

4. Teacher trainings for the Awakened Citizen Programs (ACP) were held at Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kolkata for private and defence schools; for the Kendriya Vidyalayas at Jaipur and Bhopal, and for many JNV schools at various states in the country. There were online trainings too that accommodated private and defence school teachers from various states.

*Answers to quiz:*

1. Surya Sen; 2. Lakshmi Sahgal, also known as Captain Lakshmi; 3. Rani Velu Nachiyar; 4. Alluri Sitarama Raju; 5. Baji Rout.



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#### ASK SWAMI SHANTATMANANDA

##### A reader writes:

Why is Swami Vivekananda considered a true patriot?

##### Swami Shantatmananda replies:

Swami Vivekananda literally shed blood for his motherland. His patriotism had two different aspects – one before going to the west and one after coming back from the west. During his intense parikrama of nearly five years (1888 – 1893) throughout the country, he deeply understood that what Indians need is to get out of their slavish mentality through the right kind of education. After his return from the west, he realized that India has so much to offer to the world provided we shake off the shackles of foreign rule and go back to what was best in our spiritual traditions. His writings deeply influenced freedom fighters of our country. For Swamiji, India is not a mere geographical entity rather he felt that Indian ideas are a source of inspiration for the well-being of all humanity.

#### WISDOM FROM THE PARABLES – “The Root of all Troubles”

A kite snatched a fish from the pond. Immediately it was followed by a thousand cawing crows. Never knowing any rest and frightened by the confusion the fish fell off his beak. The crows left the kite alone and flew on their way towards the falling fish.

Relieved of its worries, the kite sat on the branch of a tree and thought: “That wretched fish was at the root of all my troubles. I have now got rid of it and therefore I am at peace.”

As long as people have the fish, that is, worldly desires, they must perform actions and consequently suffer from worry, anxiety, and restlessness. No sooner do they renounce these desires that the activities fall away and they enjoy the peace of the soul. In other words, actions unattached by worldly desires lead to freedom.



#### READER'S SECTION



Inspired by the Rathayatra at Puri, Meghna shared this image of a model of Lord Jagannath that she made with “lots of devotion and some clay”.

Meghna is member of the Awakened Ambassadors for Community Transformation (AACT), an initiative by VIVA to form a community of students who have completed the ACP for the purpose of greater sense of service and participation with the world around them. The mission of AACT is also to help the students in their onward journey in life.

We invite our readers to send us pictures of original works of art depicting our culture.

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