



VOL No. 2. Issue No. 6 VIVA NEWSLETTER (ENGLISH MONTHLY)

Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

Practical Spirituality for All

“The householder is the centre of life and society.”

Swami Vivekananda



LOOKING INWARDS (“The Critical Importance of a Father”)

Mothers are often praised for their tremendous love and nurturing care. Fathers are usually respected for their ability to provide material things to the family and also for protecting them from harm. In our opinion, a father can be as loving as a mother, even though due to conditioning, he may not express that love so readily through emotions. A father gives far more than financial stability, he builds atma-shraddha in the child by his every gesture and his everyday actions. We salute fathers who help their children stand on their own feet, single dads who take on the huge challenge of parenting on their own shoulders and father figures on whose shoulders, we stand and face the future with more confidence.

- The Editorial Team

Fatherhood – Instilling Values in Children (by Harshit Soni, from Delhi)

The role of a father is crucial in shaping the character and values of a child. Alongside the mother, a father plays a significant role in guiding, nurturing, and instilling important values in their children. Their presence and involvement contribute significantly to their child’s holistic development. Fathers serve as role models for their children — their actions and behaviour have a profound impact on their offspring. By consistently exhibiting values such as honesty, integrity, empathy, and respect, fathers demonstrate the importance of these virtues to their children.

Effective communication is vital for fathers to instill values in their children. By engaging in conversation, fathers can discuss moral dilemmas, ethical choices, and the consequences of actions. Additionally, fathers can encourage open dialogue, provide guidance on navigating complex situations and emphasize the importance of empathy, acceptance, and fairness. Active listening is equally important, as it enables fathers to understand their child’s perspective and address any questions or concerns the child may have about values and ethical dilemmas.

Swami Vivekananda said, “If I had a child I would from its very birth begin to tell it, “Thou art the Pure One”*. A father can guide his child to develop a deep understanding of his/her spiritual nature and help them to explore and connect with their inner self. This includes imparting knowledge about different spiritual traditions, encouraging self-reflection as well as promoting the values of love, compassion, and universal harmony.

Moreover, fathers can instill in their children the value of giving back to society and enable children to develop a sense of empathy towards others. By engaging in acts of kindness, serving the less fortunate, and promoting social justice, fathers can help their children become compassionate and responsible citizens.

*(Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda/Vol-3/Lectures from Colombo to Almora/Vedanta in its Application to Indian Life)

How well do we know our fathers? (A fun quiz, contributed by Vivek Patel, reader from Ranchi)

Answers on the last page

1. X was born on the west coast of India and studied at Alfred High School and Inner Temple. X is often regarded as one of the most influential people of the 20th century. We popularly know X as the Father of _____.

2. X is reverentially held in Hindu tradition to be a descendant of Dhanvantari. He lived 2000 years ago in the ancient city of Kashi. The _____ Samhita is among the most important ancient medical treatises and is one of the fundamental texts of the medical tradition in India. He is also considered as the Father of _____.



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Father of the Indian Renaissance (by Uma Kaikini, from Gurugram)

God sends his workers in the unlikeliest of times. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born in an orthodox Bengali family in 1772, at a time when India was gripped with a distorted understanding of its own religion and the British had steadily gained ground in the country by taking pride in highlighting what was wrong in our culture and tradition.

Can we imagine the scenario prevalent in the era of 1500 – 1700, when the custom of Sati (the burning of widows in their husband's funeral pyre) was still prevalent. There is a view that this practice first emerged in the Gupta dynasty around Nepal and later in Madhya Pradesh, spreading to Rajasthan and Bengal and other areas over the centuries. It was practiced in the royal families and amongst the Kshatriyas the custom was voluntarily taken up to preserve the chastity of the women of brave fallen soldiers to avoid humiliation at the hands of the enemy camp. With the passage of time, it soon lost its original intention and became the bane of an insensitive and cruel society.

It was Raja Ram Mohan Roy's active persuasion that led to the abolishing of Sati in the year 1829. He condemned polygamy, caste rigidity, child marriage and encouraged the remarriage of Hindu widows. He fought for the rights of women centuries ago and demanded they be given the right of inheritance of property.

It must have taken immense courage to stand up against an accepted custom of society and to bring an end to the Sati pratha. We bow down in reverence and gratitude to this divine soul who felt the pain of his fellow sisters and mothers and made restoring the dignity of women as well as the spread of education for the good of his country, his sole purpose in life.



Swami Vivekananda was an admirer of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He too opposed child marriage and cruelty towards women. He wanted Indians to reflect and reform themselves, not because the British thought Indian customs repulsive, but because we had fallen to tamasic and foolishly superstitious levels. Swami Vivekananda wanted "root and branch" reform by Indians through effective institution building. We, at the Vivekananda Institute of Values, hope to do him proud.

Quiz Continued.....

3. Born in an industrialist family in Ahmadabad, ___ completed his undergraduate and doctorate degrees from the University of Cambridge in England and returned to India in 1947. He played a major role in setting up organizations like INCOSPAR and IIM-Ahmedabad. He is remembered as the Father of _____.

4. ___ was born to a Syrian Christian family in Calicut. After completing his M.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Michigan, he returned to India in 1949 and headed to Gujarat where he envisioned something which would later make India the largest producer of ___ surpassing the United States. He is also known as Father of _____.

5. He was born to a prominent Parsi family in Bombay. He was the founding director and professor of physics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIRF). He is also regarded as the Father of the Indian Nuclear Program. He is _____.

6. Born in Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu, he went on to study at the University of Thiruvananthapuram and the University of Madras and moved to Indian Agricultural Research Institute in Delhi. He is the first recipient of the World Food Prize for his work in agriculture. He is also known as the Father of Green Revolution. He is _____.



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7. He is known as the father of Ayurveda and also considered as the father of the ancient Indian science of medicine. He wrote a very famous book on medicine and the name of the book has his name. He was designated as the Raj Vaidya under Kanishka. In his book _____ Samhita, he mentioned about 340 plant types and about 200 animal types. He is _____.

8. He was the first Indian to play international cricket and played for England from 1896 to 1902. He was regarded as one of the greatest batsmen of his era for his class. The first-class cricket championship in India is named after him. He is also known as the father of Indian Cricket. He is _____.

9. He started his career as a photographer and later worked as a draftsman with ASI. He then started his own business. However, at the age of 40, he decided to make movies after watching a silent film "The Life of Christ" which was met with opposition from his family members. He did not lose hope and kept on going and in 1913, he released India's first-ever full-length feature film named Raja Harishchandra. He is known as father of Indian Cinema. He is _____.

10 He was an Indian industrialist who set up India's first steel plant, India's first power plant, India's own institution for advanced scientific education and research and he envisaged India's first luxury hotel. He is also known as the father of Indian Industry for his pioneering works. He is _____.

Fatherhood according to my Understanding (by Sandhya Iyer, from Singapore)

Fatherhood depicts sacrifice, love and nurturing. Fatherhood, done right, plays an important role in the child's upbringing. A father re-lives his life and looks forward, sometimes unmindfully to fulfill his dreams through the child. He then begins to see his child as an investment towards his lifelong support. However beyond this limited understanding, when a father holds, protects, spends his time and attention on the child, the fortunate child grows up to be an adult, who eventually plays the role of a good friend to him and protects the father as his own son. Swami Vivekananda said "You cannot make a plant grow in soil unsuited to it. A child teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. You can take away the obstacles, but knowledge comes out of his own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it, see that it may not be killed by anything and then your work stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is a manifestation from within its own nature." A father who follows this guidance can be a great inspiration and a role model in the child's life.

MOVEMENT – VIVA Events and Updates

1. We are delighted to announce that the VIVA office has started functioning formally from May 1, 2023 and ever since, in a short span of a month has been dotted with events and ceremonies. We kick started workshops for women- 'Kalyani – The Awakened Woman' and for senior citizens 'Svarat – Living in Ananda', and plan to continue the weekly sessions through June. (To know more, please write to us at values.viva@gmail.com)





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2. Revered Swami Shantatmanandaji, addressed the public of Gurugram in two public meetings organized on May 20 and May 21, 2023 where he oriented the people on the values related programs undertaken by VIVA. The response has been effective with more people enquiring about the programs and volunteering their time to the cause. (To know more, please visit our website @<https://viva.rkmm.org/>)



3. NTPC School Principals' workshop was successfully held at PMI Noida. Our team led by Revered Swami Shantatmanandaji had a wonderful interaction with principals at the workshop. The meeting for the renewal of the MOU went off well and our team at VIVA is looking forward to implementing ACP and Awakening programs with fresh rigour this year.



4. A review meeting was held by the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI) for an annual review of the work done by the REI partners. Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) has an MoU with the (Rajasthan Council of Secondary Education (RCSE) for implementation of The Awakened Citizen Program in over 450 RCSE schools in Rajasthan. The meeting was chaired by Hon'ble Minister of State for Education Ms. Zahida Khan. The VIVA team, led by Mr. Dharmendra Pandey presented a progress report and also informed the reviewing panel of the hurdles VIVA, RKM was facing in the smooth implementation of the project. The meeting led to an action plan to ensure better implementation of the program in Rajasthan.





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ASK SWAMI SHANTATMANANDA

A reader writes:

I am unable to cope with the stress of my work, the ill-health of my parents, a nagging wife and an autistic child. I often question whether there is a God at all. Kindly advise.

Swami Shantatmananda replies:

Spirituality or faith in God will not solve all our existential problems. Spirituality will help us develop resilience and understand the evanescence or the impermanence of life. Even in German concentration camps those with a spiritual bent of mind could cope better. One can think calmly, accept life as such and try to be as positive and constructive as possible. Depending upon age it is easy to figure out what life is all about. Trying to take care of sick parents and the autistic child with a true spirit of service would result in peace and joy. Regarding the job you have to figure out why it is stressful. You can sit and discuss calmly with your wife to improve the relationship. The ultimate solution lies in taking to spiritual life more seriously. The world will not change but we can change our world view.

ANSWER TO READER'S SECTION FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE



Malavika Ghosh from Delhi writes: The picture of a mother deer and a fawn standing in such a posture shows a mother's affection for her kid and the kid's love for her mother. The mother is protecting her kid. In turn, the tall trees surrounding them provide a protective shade for the survival of the animals. I see layers of protection and we can all join hands to help those who are weaker than us and live together happily.

Sandhya Iyer from Singapore writes: The picture of deer connects me to the caring love and protection of parents to their children that I always felt from my parents and after them from Swami Shantatmananda ji.

Uma Kaikini from Gurgaon writes: The mother and calf in total wilderness ... The calf is full of trust and loving submission to its mother for its survival and learning skills from her. The mother oozing care and love in total responsibility for its young one. We shared the same feelings with our physical parents and now with passage of time, with the Divine.

Answers to the Quiz in Reverse Order:

10. Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata
9. Dadasahib Phalke
8. Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji II, Maharaja of Nawanagar
7. Charaka
6. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan
5. Homi Jehangir Bhabha
4. Dr. Verghese Kurian, Milk, Father of the White Revolution
3. Vikram Sarabhai, Father of Indian Space Program
2. Sushruta, Father of Surgery
1. Father of the Nation

READER'S SECTION

Do you know of any remarkable dad? Would you like to share why you think he is special? Please send in your responses to the email below with the header 'Answer to Reader's Section'.

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