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**DHARMA**

*Rise Dharma, like the sun to end communal strife.  
Unite all in ONE and to give us New Life  
- Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati*

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- ☞ What is religion
- ☞ The scope of philosophy
- ☞ Children's corner
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- ☞ Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- ☞ Why theocracies fail
- ☞ Karma
- ☞ Reflections
- ☞ A life to emulate
- ☞ Remedies for Maladies
- ☞ And many more....

***The New Year!***

*The months of January and February have seen a number of festivities celebrated in Malaysia.*

*Thai Pongal, the thanksgiving harvest festival of the Tamils, celebrated world over on 15th January, Thaipusam festival for Hindus on 8th February and the Chinese New Year, welcoming the year of the Mouse on the 25th & 26th of February.*

*Our hearty greetings to all our readers.*



**WHAT IS RELIGION**

*continued from previous issue*

**The Psyche**

**W**e cannot avoid talking about the psychic being when it comes to wholesome development. In the words of Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati (the Society's first patron), "health is not measured by weight. Health is an inner condition. A psychic well-being of the entire system".

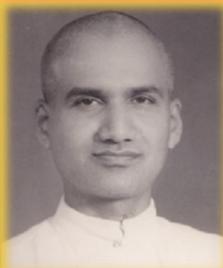
**H**e further goes on to say - "The doctor and the X-Ray machine may be able to penetrate the physical parts of our being but there are deeper secrets beyond the senses and the mind. There are foundations of cosmic energy in the psychic centers within us which are revealed only to the person of introspection. The cosmic energy which is the creatrix (feminine of creator) of the microcosm and macrocosm, runs through very subtle tubes called nadis or astralis.

**T**he energy is pent up in the glands and endocrines. It is buried deep in the psychic centers and nerve plexuses. Every physical movement and vital movement has an astral tube (nadi) behind it. According to the ancient metaphysicians there are about 72,000 astral tubes which move and spread out the cosmic energy and carry the psychic currents. They are charged with the positive and negative currents of the cosmic energy which are almost similar to the charge of electro - protonic forces in an atom. The secret of health is in the purity, virility and energy of the astral tubes. They must be clean and clear channels of the subtle psychic currents" (Unquote).

**T**o be able to make maximum use of the cosmic -

*Continued on page 4*

Cover page photo: Cherry Blossoms and fire crackers found in every home celebrating Chinese New Year and Pongal pot used during the Indian Harvest Festival.



### **From The Founder**

**Any education that separates man from man, brother from brother, that either directly or indirectly is the main cause for discord, intolerance, domination, persecution and butchery, cannot bring happiness or peace to man.**

**- Dr Swami Satyananda, JP, 1958**



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### **ॐ Productive 2020**

2020... *let's make it great*  
 2019 *will part today*  
 2020 *will greet tomorrow*  
*Bringing us back to glory*  
*Filling us with lots of story*

2019 *was full of politics*  
 2020 *will be full of feats*  
*Bridging vision of our nation*  
*Bringing us closer to admiration*

2019 *was filled with wrongs*  
 2020 *must move to bright things*

*Removing bigots from earth*  
*Culling hate speech mongers*

2020 *is here for betterment*  
*Surpassing our yesteryears*  
*Promising a fruitacious future*  
*Moving pains to gains*

*Let's work closely as one*  
*As no nation is secure*  
*When it works in silo*  
*Harvest is more thru unity*

*Let's respect each other & promote harmony*

*Let's exercise more & show gratitude*

*Let's care & appreciate than hate*

*Let's forgive and educate more*

*Good year or bad year*  
*It's a choice that we make*  
*You make it or break*  
*Let's Make the best of 2020!*

*- Ravindran Raman Kutty*

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The question we ought to ask ourselves -- is the world a better place for us being here? Apparently not, given what's going on around us. That, unfortunately is the reality even though there are individuals who are rising above themselves to make a difference, providing ideas and leadership that can only succeed if there's collective endeavour.

Fundamentally, there's a cry to change our habits to eco-friendly, rather than eco-fiendish, ones, given, say, our unbridled use of plastic once seen as a game-changer for packaging and getting rid of our refuse. Alas, our landfill means for disposal have shown itself to what it really is -- an environmental no-no.

With awareness comes an effort to mend our ways, but old habits die hard. But, if anything, it shows that if we are to save the environment, it has to be a collective effort that's more encompassing, meaning the more we co-operate and make it a done thing, the better.

We are seeing the effects of climate change. The fires, the droughts, the storms and the floods, all of which laid at the feet of global warming, are stark reminders that we have to mend our ways. Change or perish are words being underlined in red. To what effect, we must ask ourselves.

This is where we have to dive into our spiritual selves, that quintessential part of us that provides the moral compass to do the right thing. Religion, in its many forms, is the manual that's there to guide us, provided we turn to it, not just for its own sake, but to translate realisation to action that make us what we are meant to be, the highest life form on this planet with the power to perpetuate existence or consign it to extinction.

It's well and good to have intellectual discourses to address the problems, but unless we take heed and translate intent to action, we will fall backwards into the nothingness we seem headed for.

Religion, in its many forms that provide awakening, has to be seen in this light, not how many adherents we can boast about. What are numbers if they remain just that - - numbers. Transformation is the underlying purpose and since reality seems to indicate otherwise, what can we say? We have to make a more concerted effort individually and collectively.

Let's not look at others, but ourselves. What does our own report card say? Are we throwing our rubbish dumped into plastic bags, are we wasting water, are we polluting the air by keeping our engines running in our cars for our own comfort as we wait when we can just as easily switch them off, get out of the vehicle and wait nearby?

Little things are all we need to do and collectively. That has to be the end game, All the homilies that provide us with inspiration comes to nought if we don't follow through. Religion for religion's sake is not its purpose, shouldn't we say? Let's make it our New Year resolution. 

## WHAT IS RELIGION

*Continued from front cover*

energy, there are techniques in equalizing the breath, meditation, recitation of holy words.

**M**antras - deflections of the primordial sound, the word of God, physical postures which causes acupuncture (Mudras) which stimulates the different glands and increases the Life-force (pranic force) (Chi, in Chinese) and thereby help to raise our consciousness to a higher level and create in us a sense of well-being and mental poise.

**A**ll these nerve plexuses and astral currents are influenced by our physical movements which are in turn activated by our brain, heart and lungs. So we can see from this, the interaction of the psyche and its emotions with the physique and its component parts, the brain, heart and lungs.

### **Vital Energy**

**W**ith all the above possibilities within the reach of Man for wholesome development there is what is known as temptation which is Man's prerogative to conquer and not to yield.

**I**f Man is wise enough to understand that every action has a reaction, whether it be relating to himself or to others, and that greed, envy, hate, selfishness, anger and ego are the causes of self-destruction, he will make every effort to keep these sensual cravings under control, away from the urges of his VITAL self. As someone said, "The seeds of the past actions (Karma) cannot germinate if they are roasted in the fires of wisdom". However, we have to recognize the presence of the said negative emotions some of which are applicable in cer-

tain instances in life like anger, provided they are utilized for the good of the majority. An example of such situation is that which is mentioned in the New Testament, when Jesus had overturned the chairs and tables when he saw the Jews desecrating the temple, using it as a market-place.

**T**he purpose and sacredness of matrimonial life must be understood and realized. The art of transmutation of the creative energy towards creation in other fields had produced great thinkers, artists, musicians, writers, poets seers, scientists and outstanding builders of nations as well as beautiful children of quality.

**S**piritual Gurus all over the world have taught the same thing but their approaches were different. Broadly speaking, they have always stressed the importance of pure impulses in so many different languages and approaches, and pure impulses can be generated through our desires, will and action, if one's mind does not move away from the Divine Principle while at daily chores. This is what the Pure Life Society stands for.

### **Physical**

**F**inally, coming to the physical part of our being, it must be realized that the right selection of food is necessary for Man's wholesome development, for what goes in to the human body co-relates directly to the efficiency with which the brain functions.

**I**n this era of complex administration, we have people who have to use their brain more than their brawn.

There are exercises such as Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong and Silat which have a spiritual basis. To render physical service to the old, the sick and the needy can give unique satisfaction to the body, mind, psyche and spirit. The choice of service again relates to the degree of the mind's development.

Finally, with all our self-effort in every stage of wholesome self-development, we need what is known as Divine Grace, and THAT descends only when our ego is erased.

I wish to conclude by quoting the last verse in the Bhagavad Gita, which reads as follows:-

*Yatra yogesvarah krsno  
Yatra partho dhanurdharah  
Tatra srir vijayo bhutir  
Dhruva nitir matir mama - XVIII (78)*

Sri Radhakrishnan, the religio-philosopher, who became the 2nd President of India, says in his commentary on this verse:-

“Spiritual vision and social service should go together. The double purpose of human life - personal perfection and social efficiency - is indicated here.”

The need for personal perfection is the goal emphasized in the Hindu scriptures so that good governance can prevail. □

*- Datin Paduka Mother A Mangalam, 'A Discourse on good governance from the perspective of science and religion' at World Religion Day 2010, organized by the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'i of Malaysia*

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### **Timeless Frames**



Swami Satyananda with the children of PLS during an outing in the late 50's

## THE SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY

( An Address )

*From Dr Swami Satyananda, JP, the Founder of the Pure Life Society*

The word Philosophy is a somewhat modified form of the Greek word *Philosophia*, meaning literally “love of wisdom”. Philosophy is, therefore, often interpreted as a search for knowledge. From this perspective Philosophy has no limitation to the scope of its inquiries, and every thinker and writer who contributes to the fund of human knowledge, happiness and growth may be called a philosopher.

However, with the ever-widening knowledge and development of civilisation, new subjects of investigation have been constantly arising and eventually they have become the various exact sciences. Therefore, in its essential aspect, philosophy is a branch of learning that deals with the rational inquiry into, and discrimination between all the processes involved in perceiving, thinking and knowing.

In its utilitarian aspect Philosophy is wisdom in the conduct of affairs, disciplining life, possessing mental balance, calmness and equanimity in dealing with and envisaging the events and experiences of human life and promotion of the highest good, individually and collectively.

Here it may be pertinently asked **‘science, too, is doing cogent and systematic thinking - so what is outstanding about Philosophy?’** The answer is ‘nothing very particular’. Science is an objective instrument for the study and interpretation of part of a special aspect of the world; whereas Philosophy is speculative thought (as distinct from mere idle speculation), and it attempts to know the nature of the world as a whole. It is the science of sciences.

It never breaks entirely away from

experience. But it transcends experience only because it attempts to explain, to unify and to order experience. The task of philosophy is that of synthesising the first principles or the conclusions of the various exact sciences in order to reach a rational generalisation based upon scientific facts and theories.

One of its chief concerns is with man, his nature, his problems, his values and his destiny and his relationship to the world about him. These are dealt with by two branches of Philosophy, namely Metaphysics and Ethics or Moral Philosophy. Plato and Aristotle, Descartes and Kant, Bentham and Mill, Confucius and Rashdall, Chuang-Tzu and Ibn' Arabi, Buddha and Sankara, Bradley and Radhakrishnan have all dealt with these problems that concern man, in their unique and illuminating ways.

“Unexamined life is not worth living” said Socrates. To think is to live. There is an innate urge within man - predominant when he is in a reflective state - to know about the problems of life and death, the purpose of his existence, about the universe, his environment and so on.

Philosophy helps him to gain an insight into these matters rationally, or at any rate, satisfies his hankering after knowledge and truth.

Knowledge of the real is obtained in three ways, viz: through sense-experience (Empiricism) discursive reasoning (Rationalism) and intuitive apprehension (Mysticism). Sense - experience helps us to know the outer characters of the external world. Logical understanding is obtained by the method of analysis and synthesis. But

neither of these can give man an actual insight into the Ultimate Reality or the Immanent and Transcendent Level of all Beings.

Hence the necessity of intuition is intensely felt. Intuition literally means 'sense of sight' (intuitus). What we know by inference or hearsay is not intuitive knowledge. Intuition includes the testimony of the will and feeling and is never fully attained without intense intellectual discipline and strenuous ethical effort.

Spiritual insight or supramental experience is not anti-rational. It may go beyond reason but cannot be against reason. It is in fact integral knowledge. It is the crowning phase of human. Philosophy is the self-expression and self-realisation of the growing spirit of Man.

Man as a thinking social being is often confronted with questions such as, why do men so mismanage their affairs and cause complications and sufferings? Is it because they do not know their own good? Or is it because of the innate wickedness of man?

Will the injustices and fear from man to man be ever eliminated or will they continue in spite of themselves? These types of questions no thinking individual can avoid. To attempt to answer these posers methodically is the work of Social and Political Philosophy.

Some of us may say, "I do not want Philosophy nor do I want to think anymore of such disturbing ideas. I want to enjoy life to its plenty, with pomp and power, whether by means, fair or foul". This is very well if only it were possible but unfortunately it is not so. Man is not a mere animal like all other animals.

He is a thinking being. Philosophy as well as Science tells us that each individual is a distinct unit in society, and for that matter in the One Universal Existence, call it by any name you like.

What one is or does really affects others; and the law of action and reaction operates mutually on the individual as well as on the society. None can escape from it. "Man is as his thought is" is a fundamental truth of psychology and man is the maker of his destiny.

So the only choice is between correct and incorrect thinking. Let us hope that there is none among us who would want to think in the wrong way. To think correctly and rightly is to think critically, and clearly.

If we do not think for ourselves about our problems, whether domestic, social, political or spiritual, then the only other way is to take ready-made solutions formulated by market opinions, self-interested men, and such struggle and is the summit of the whole evolution.

We repeat: intellect and intuition are complementary to each other; therefore, philosophy is nothing but a search for truth (in Sanskrit, 'Darshana' seeing Truth), and as such it can have no geographical, national or pseudo-religious barriers. It is something Universal just as science is. We have to accept any school of philosophy that is rational. A true philosopher being a votary of truth is no doubt aware of the limitations of his knowledge, and he is prepared to learn but he is insistent on thinking for himself. □

*To be continued.....*

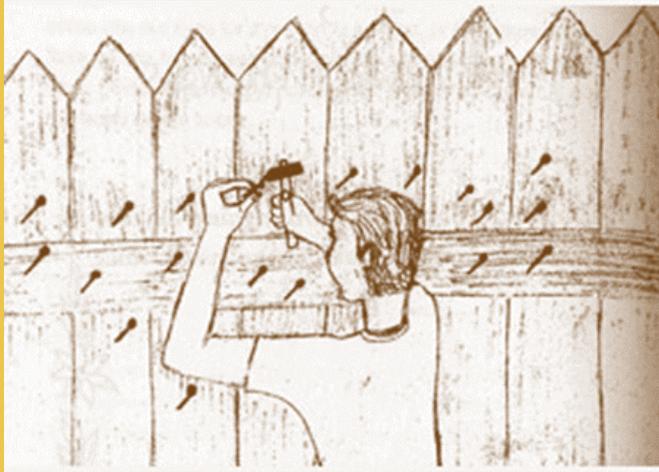
**- Literary Works of Dr Swami Satyananda, JP, published in Dharma Essays (1956)**



# Children's Corner

## Control Your Temper (Anger)

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the fence.



On the first day, the boy hammered **37 nails** into that fence.

The boy gradually began to **control his temper** over the next few weeks, and the number of nails he was hammering into the fence slowly decreased.

He discovered it was easier to control his temper than to hammer those nails into the fence.

Finally, the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all.

He told his father the news and the father suggested that the boy should now pull out a nail every day he kept his temper under control.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.

"You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there."



### Moral of the story:

Control your anger, and don't say things to people in the heat of the moment, that you may later regret. Some things in life, you are unable to take back. □

- Web Source

## THE MONK SRONAKOTIVIMSA

Buddha had a disciple named Sronakotivimsa. He came from a very well-to-do family, and he became a monk because he enjoyed hearing the dharma (Buddha's teachings). He was very ambitious. It seemed to him that many disciples were enlightened as soon as they heard the dharma and quickly rose to *arhathood*. He was from a good family and considered himself intelligent, so he was confident that he would be enlightened very quickly. In fact, he wanted to attain enlightenment before any other disciples did.

The monk began to think a lot about enlightenment and when it would happen to him. In fact, he began to worry about it, and then he found himself becoming more and more perplexed. For a while he made no progress at all. He didn't know where to start learning, and he didn't know how to make his mind act in accord with the dharma. He was very disappointed. "Since I can't understand the dogma, what's the use of being a monk? Why don't I just stay home and be a lay follower?"

Buddha knew what Sronakotivimsa was thinking, so he asked someone to bring the young monk to him.

When Sronakotivimsa came to Buddha, he felt both grateful and ashamed. He felt grateful because Buddha knew what he was thinking and cared about him. He felt ashamed because although he was a monk, he was unable to be enlightened quickly and repay Buddha's kindness.

Buddha knew what he was thinking and spoke to him kindly. "Sronakotivimsa, you come from a good family, so you had a very good education. You're especially familiar with musical instruments. Are you interested in the lute?"

"I'm not only interested in it, but I used to play it often."

"You know music theory quite well. The strings on a lute are plucked to produce sound. If you tighten up the strings, what kind of sound is produced?"

"The strings can't be too tight, or else it won't sound good and the strings will break easily."

"What if you loosen the strings?"

"No good either, because there won't be any sound at all."

"Your mind is just like a string that is too tight. It doesn't sound good and it'll break very easily. A lute string must be adjusted just right, not too tight and not too loose. It's the same with spiritual formation. If you try to rush too fast, you'll become excessively attached to the dharma, and you may become lost in its vastness.

You mustn't become careless or idle either, or else you'll become morally corrupt. You must advance at a natural speed, neither fast nor slow. This will allow your basic nature to return to its original, pure state. If you guard your six sense organs well in your daily life, you'll be all right."

Sronakotivimsa asked, "What are the six sense organs?"

"They are the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, body, and mind. If you guard them well, no anxieties will arise, and your mind will return to its original state of tranquility."

That was how Buddha taught his disciples. He stimulated lazy disciples and cooled down overly zealous ones.

The six sense organs are important. Most of us look at the world with our physical eyes, so we tend to be confused by our desire for what we see. Those who follow Buddha should open up the eyes of their hearts and close their physical eyes. Then everything they see will be natural, pure and carefree. □

*- Dharma Master Cheng Yen  
(Translated by Lim Sen-shou),  
The Master Tells Stories*

## **DIETRICH BONHOEFFER – THE GERMAN PASTOR WHO TRIED TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM THE NAZIS**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (4 February 1906 – 9 April 1945) was a German pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident, and key founding member of the Confessing Church.

He completed the combined Bachelor and Masters degree at the Protestant Faculty of Theology of the University of Tübingen and went on to complete his Doctor of Theology degree at Berlin University in 1927.

Still too young to be ordained, at the age of twenty-four, he went to the United States in 1930 for postgraduate study and a teaching fellowship at New York City's Union Theological Seminary. Although he found the American seminary not up to his exacting German standards, he had life-changing experiences and friendships.

After returning to Germany in 1931, he became a lecturer in systematic theology at the University of Berlin.

### **The Rise of Nazi Germany & Nazi Christians**

His promising academic and ecclesiastical career was dramatically altered with the Nazi ascension to power on 30 January 1933. He was a determined opponent of the regime from its first days. Two days after Hitler was installed as Chancellor, he delivered a radio address in which he attacked Hitler and warned Germany against slipping into an idolatrous cult of the *Führer* (leader), who could very well turn out to be *Verführer* (mis-leader, or seducer). He was cut off the air in the middle of a sentence.

In April 1933, he raised the first voice for church resistance to Hitler's persecution of Jews, declaring that the church must not simply “bandage the victims under the wheel, but jam the spoke in the wheel itself”.

However, there was a growing schism within the church, with Nazi-supported nationalistic German Christians (*Deutsche Christen*) gaining power.

In September 1933, the national church synod under the control of *Deutsche Christen* passed a resolution to apply the Aryan paragraph within the church, meaning that pastors and church officials of Jewish descent were to be removed from their posts. And in November 1933 the *Deutsche Christen* demanded the removal of the Old Testament from the Bible, which was seen by many as heresy.

At the end of 1933, with the Nazi-leaning takeover of the German churches, he accepted a two-year appointment as a pastor of two German-speaking Protestant churches in London. Although he was accused of running away from the problem at home, he did not go to England simply to avoid trouble; he hoped to put the ecumenical movement to work in the interest of the Confessing Church. In international gatherings, he rallied people to oppose the *Deutsche Christen* movement and its attempt to amalgamate Nazi nationalism with the Christian gospel.

### **Pacifist & Non-Violent Resistance**

In 1935, he was offered a well-sought-after opportunity to study non-violent resistance under Gandhi in his ashram. However, he had to return to Germany instead, where he was the head at an underground seminary for training Confessing Church pastors. As the Nazi suppression of the Confessing Church intensified, his authorization to teach at the University of Berlin was revoked after he was denounced as a “pacifist and enemy of the state” by the Nazi leaders.

Thereafter he was confined to teaching at the underground seminary only, with the help of some benefactors. However, by August 1937, the Nazis decreed the education and examination of Confessing Church ministry candidates illegal.

In September 1937, the Gestapo closed the seminary, and by November arrested 27 pastors and former students. It was around this time that he published his best-known book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, a study on the Sermon on the Mount, in which he not only attacked "cheap grace" as a cover for ethical laxity, but also preached "costly grace".

He spent the next two years secretly traveling from one eastern German village to another to conduct "seminary on the run" supervision of his students, most of who were working illegally in small parishes.

### Joining the Anti-Nazi Resistance

He was known for his staunch resistance to Nazi dictatorship, including vocal opposition to Hitler's euthanasia program and genocidal persecution of the Jews.

Since February 1938, he had made contact with members of the German Resistance when his brother-in-law introduced him to a group within the German military intelligence service (*Abwehr*) seeking Hitler's overthrow.

Incredibly, with the help of the German Resistance, he was able to join the *Abwehr* with the pretext that his wide ecumenical contacts would be of use to Germany, thus protecting him from conscription to active service.

In the face of Nazi atrocities, the full scale of which he learned through the *Abwehr*, he concluded that "the ultimate question for a responsible man to ask is not how he is to extricate himself heroically from the affair,

but how the coming generation shall continue to live."

With this commitment, he fully utilized his position in *Abwehr* to try to save the world from the Nazis.

Under cover of the *Abwehr*, he served as a courier for the German Resistance movement to reveal its existence and intentions to the Western Allies in hope of garnering their support, and, through his ecumenical contacts abroad, to secure possible peace terms with the Allies for a post-Hitler government. His visits to Norway, Sweden,

He was known for his staunch resistance to Nazi dictatorship, including vocal opposition to Hitler's euthanasia program and genocidal persecution of the Jews.

Denmark and Switzerland were camouflaged as legitimate intelligence activities for the *Abwehr*. In May 1942, he made contacts with

the British foreign minister.

He was also involved in operations to help German Jews escape to Switzerland.

It was a matter of time that his activities were suspected by the Nazis. On 5 April 1943, he was arrested and imprisoned.

### Imprisonment & Execution

While in prison, he continued his work in religious outreach among his fellow prisoners and guards. Sympathetic guards helped smuggle his letters out of prison and these uncensored letters were posthumously published in *Letters and Papers from Prison*. One of those guards even offered to help him escape from the prison and "disappear" with him, and plans were made for that end. But he declined it, fearing Nazi retribution against his family.

After the failure of the 20 July Plot on Hitler's life in 1944 and the discovery in September 1944 of secret *Abwehr* documents relating to the conspiracy, he was accused of association with the conspirators. He was quickly tried, along with other accused plotters and then hanged on 9 April 1945 as

the Nazi regime was collapsing. Just 21 days later Adolf Hitler committed suicide. A week after that Germany surrendered.

His student and trusted friend Eberhard Bethge wrote what a doctor who witnessed the execution said: "I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer... kneeling on the floor praying fervently to God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer.

At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the few steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God."

### His Legacy

His life as a pastor and theologian of great intellect and spirituality who lived as he preached, and his being killed because of his opposition to the Nazi National Socialism exerted great influence and inspiration for Christians across broad denominations and ideologies, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the anti-communist democratic movement in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, and the anti-

Apartheid movement in South Africa.

He is commemorated in the liturgical calendars of several Christian denominations on the anniversary of his death, 9 April. In 2008, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, which does not enumerate saints, officially recognized him as a "modern-day martyr".

He was a great scholar, a tireless preacher and a prolific writer. His writings on Christianity's role in the secular world have become widely influential, and his book *The Cost of Discipleship* has been described as a modern classic.

The world must know about this great personality who was steadfast in his beliefs; lived by his convictions against all odds; put the interest of humanity ahead of nationalism; had absolute trust in God; and sacrificed his life for us. □

*May his soul rest in Peace.*

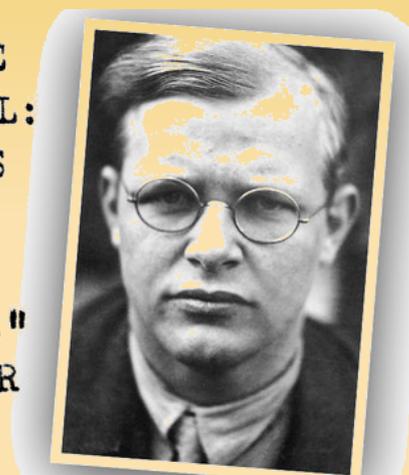
*[Adaptation & excerpts from Wikipedia]*

*Dr Amir Farid Isahak, Chairperson,  
INSaF*

"SILENCE IN THE FACE  
OF EVIL IS ITSELF EVIL:  
GOD WILL NOT HOLD US  
GUILTLESS. NOT TO  
SPEAK IS TO SPEAK.  
NOT TO ACT IS TO ACT."  
- DIETRICH BONHOEFFER



THE PATRIOT POST



## WHY ALL THEOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS EVENTUALLY DIE

Some religious leaders will now and then make assertive pronouncements that the system of theocracy will ensure best governance for our country.

Their influence on followers underlines the widespread romance with this fantasy of “rule by God” despite strong evidence that it is used as a justification for absolutist political control.

Theocratic governance sounds convincing to voters with shallow knowledge of history, but the growing acceptance of this fantasy reveals more the failures of democracy than the merits of theocracy.

Convulsing in the feverish sickness of poisonous partisan politics, many disenfranchised voters desire the antidote of theocracy; it may be a fatal wish.

King Gilgamesh of Sumeria is credited with establishing the world’s first theocracy around 3000 BCE, proclaiming his divinity while simultaneously being human. The unchallengeable autocratic kingship of Gilgamesh was legitimized by religion.

Theocracy was also firmly established in ancient Egypt as the pharaohs were divine sons, and no one could hold this position who wasn't of divine lineage.

When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, he got the country’s most respected oracle to make a declaration that he was indeed the son of God and thereby deserving to be pharaoh.

Roman Caesars also traced their lineage to God. Although not divine, the kings of Israel were designated as the first-born sons of God (first-born in this case means highest ranking). No emperor in ancient times would be so politically naïve as to disclaim the “rule by God”, as that would undermine his legitimacy.

Theocratic governance was a political necessity in forging the mass urban societies that replaced nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes that each comprised no more than 500 related individuals. If a society expanded its boundaries to include thousands of strangers, ethnic and cultural homogeneity would be diluted.

No emperor in ancient times would be so politically naïve as to disclaim the “rule by God”, as that would undermine his legitimacy.

Where then is the superglue to hold everyone together? This was the grand spot for theocracy - newly emerging civilizations needed the superglue of absolute religio-political control that demanded unquestioning obedience.

The most well known theocracies were Jewish theocracy in Israel (which began with Moses and ended with the Roman conquest in the hundred years before Jesus) and Roman Catholic theocracy in Western Europe (which began after the fall of Rome and ended with the 1618-1648 Thirty Years’ War), both lasting more than a thousand years interspersed with temporary losses of power.

The Ottoman Caliphate emanating from Turkey managed almost 600 years of unbroken rule before it ended after World War One.

All theocracies shared the same fate: they eventually died. Theocracy is an early civilizational ‘crank-up-the-motor’ slow crawl vehicle for governance that has no place in today’s high-speed societies that face challenges totally unknown in theocratic times. As a rudimentary type of mass governance, it has severe limitations and its fruitful days are gone.

There are three reasons for the inevitable death of any theocracy, once its time runs out:

First, absolutist control is sustainable

only within the context of a newly emerging civilization when the imperative is to forge a totalitarian homogeneity out of the vast diversity of ethnic groupings that has come under the civilizational umbrella. But as society gets more complex, so will the day come when people demand their participation in decision-making.

Theocratic rule, however, sets up a form of government that is characterized by intolerance of viewpoints other than those of the dominant religious sect.

Second, a theocracy must necessarily elevate one religion to the pinnacle of control, and such exclusivism alienates all other religions. Pluralism is not tolerated, as it will erode the homogeneity so desired to maintain a totalitarian grip.

Theocrats doggedly maintain the view that only their favored religion has a complete teaching for all humanity and will unhesitatingly push other religions to the side.

The third reason for the inevitable death of any theocracy is that it imposes *rigor mortis* upon itself. *Rigor mortis* is a medical term that means rigidity. All deathbed doctors are familiar with it. Theocrats depend on fatal logic that spins like this: God is perfect and therefore His laws for the governance of humanity must also be perfect.

Perfection is a state of immutability and unchangeability; therefore divine laws are also immutable and unchanging. They are also above all forms of secularism and hence there is no necessity to comply with any secular law.

This logic is flawed and fatal because it creates a dualism between the sacred and the secular, as if there are two substantial realities co-existing side by side - God and the world. Jurists argue over the source of

law: is this law of divine origin and hence superior, or is this law enacted by Parliament and hence inferior? The argument is a polemical trick to grant certain laws the status of divine edict that places them above questioning.

In dynastic China, none but the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* in Mandarin) who ruled with the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*) was empowered to change any law deemed to be sacred. But for the Son of Heaven (the emperor) to amend a sacred law would carry the implication that he had no confidence in the sacred laws to deal with all circumstances. Eventually every dynasty suffered *rigor mortis* and died.

Theocrats argue that the divine laws governing humanity can never change. They may not have a proper understanding of what 'law' means.

Only the laws of nature qualify to be unchangeable. Even so, these laws are only relatively unchanging. Every natural law in the universe is also subject to change.

Carlo L. Lastrucci in *The Scientific Approach: Basic Principles of the Scientific Method* emphasizes the point that all things hold true only for a period of time. "The concept of the permanence of nature is... relative rather than absolute. What it refers to essentially is a general feature or common tendency, not an inviolable, never-changing fact," he wrote.

Every belief system is a product of an era and civilizational paradigm; don't be locked inside the box. Upgrade your beliefs to stay relevant in constantly evolving conditions. □

- Joachim Ng

## KARMA

### *WHAT IS KARMA? WHY AM I SUFFERING? HOW CAN I CLEAR THIS BAD KARMA?*

For the Law of Karma, both in East and West; there is a correct interpretation and approach to the idea of rebirth and reincarnation and its close connection with the Law of Action and Reaction, Cause and Effect.

In the Orient, most people believing in the Law of Karma accept that they are who and where they are because of their actions in a previous life, which is true; but, unfortunately, they think they can do nothing about changing their particular situation, which is not true.

In the West, they tend to think that they are totally in control of their destiny, which they are to some extent, but that there is no greater law governing our destiny, which is not true.

There are now many techniques, authentic or otherwise, advertised and used to take people back into an experience of their past lives: hypnosis, rebirthing, and so on. The work of Professor Ian Stevenson and others is adding much evidence pointing to the likelihood of the fact of reincarnation. There is nothing to prevent the poor from transforming their lives except the acceptance that their poverty is due to their misdeeds in former lives.

#### **The Law of Cause and Effect: Karma**

This is the basic law governing our existence in this solar system. Every thought, every action that we have and make, sets into motion a cause. These causes have their effects. These effects make our lives, for good or ill. We are now, have been, and will go on, making our lives from moment to moment. Sooner or later, the causes set into motion by our thoughts and actions will produce effects which will rebound on us; and we will experience that as good karma or bad karma.

When it is uncomfortable we call it bad kar-

ma. And when it is good karma, when life is comfortable, easy, we do not notice it. We take it as our right, our due, because that is what we expect life to be like. People only talk about karma when they really mean bad karma. It is important to realize and remember that we have more good karma than bad karma.

#### **Lords of Karma**

The ultimate aim is to live life in such a way that we make no personal karma. We can do that either by being perfect or being dead. Since being perfect is much more interesting than being dead, most people accept the premise of trying, more or less, to achieve the soul's purpose and staying to the last possible moment to do so. Thus, we work with this burden which we have ourselves created in the present and in past lives.

We try, consciously or unconsciously, to become perfect. We have no control over the events of life. The only thing we can control is our reaction to these events. So the aim is to achieve such a measure of detachment from events that we can control ourselves. In this way we cope with the burden of karma in any given incarnation. This is not a case of just sitting, so that we do nothing and therefore create no karma.

What we can do, in every event, in every situation, is to distance ourselves from that event - looking at the event as out there, and us here, and not react. Just Observe - be a Spectator!

In this way we gradually create impersonality in relation to life, a detachment in relation to events, where we become indifferent to whether our karma is good or bad.

#### **Renunciation Leads to Self-Mastery**

As the soul progresses in its reincarnational experience, so its reflection, - the man or woman in incarnation; receives a heavier and heavier burden of ancient karma until in

the last incarnation of all, in which the person will be a fourth-degree initiate, the burden is at its heaviest.

It is for this reason that the fourth initiation is called, in the West, the Crucifixion and, in the East, - the Great Renunciation. In that experience; all the lower aspects, are being renounced in favor of the higher spiritual reality. That is why the life of the fourth-degree initiate is usually, from the world's point of view, painful, heavy indeed.

People imagine that, as a man or woman progresses in evolution, they should become freer and freer of karma. The opposite is true. Not only that, but as a man or woman becomes a disciple, becomes initiate, a spiritual server "*Irai sayvagar*", they take more and more of the weight of world karma. They are the upholders of the world. Their shoulders are, and need to be, broad.

Imagine a bridge over a river, and the river is the world and its karma, and the disciples and initiates are the pillars of the bridge, and the spaces between are the masses of people. Where there are spaces, the water flows easily through. It is the pillars of the bridge that take the force of the flood; of the water.

In a very real sense, the disciples and initiates of the world support the world. That is one reason why the life of a disciple is, from the average man's point of view, a very difficult life to lead but a fast way to break free from the Karma cycle. But, of course, he is governed by the great Law of Service.

### **Law of Service**

Under this law, disciples and initiates come very frequently into incarnation to serve the world and to finish off this Earth experience as quickly as possible - Not to get it over with, but to serve the better.

The more advanced a person is, the more he can serve, the more useful he can be to the

world.

When a certain level is reached - that of the third-degree initiate - the relationship to the Law of Cause and Effect changes.

Gradually the law is manipulated by the person himself. As a conscious divine soul working in the world, he becomes really the pilot of his own plane. He may have a co-pilot, his Master- Guru, but he is the pilot. It is not an automatic thing, but gradually this point is achieved. He takes an active part in his own evolution, consciously working with the Law of Karma, under the control of his soul.

Then it may come to pass that his previous lives will open up before his inner eye. As this happens, also the karma of that time becomes open to him on the physical plane, which, of course, increases the burden of the initiate.

The aim is that by the time the person is ready to take the fifth initiation and become a Master, all karma will have been resolved, burned up, taken back to the source from which it came.

### **Service - "Irai Pani" : The Best Method for Resolving Karma.**

How do you get rid of Karma?; How do you deal with it?

Well, you cannot give it away. It is too heavy, nobody wants it. There is no sale for excess karma; everyone has enough of their own. So what do you do, how can you cope with this burden that limits your activity, your joy and happiness? There is a very simple method. It is called Spiritual service – "*Irai Pani*". Service is the way par excellence for getting rid of karma.

Of course it does not get rid of it, but it burns it up! □

*To be continued .....*

**- VA Kumaar, Divine Light, A Compilation of Mathaji Shantiekumar's Spiritual Experiences**

## *Remedies for Common Maladies-My Experience*

Viruses are a common feature in the environment. Today it is the Covid-19 virus which is rampant. The entire population is affected by it. People get affected only if their innate defenses don't come into play. In medical language, it is known as one's immunity. How do we strengthen our immunity?

The word 'immunity' is derived from 'immune' that is we are immune to any external 'attacks' or in other words, we are strong enough to be able to resist any attack. A human being may look robust with muscles developed but there is a very important organ in a living being and that is the stomach and the intestines.

The stomach is the organ that receives what we take in and gets the matter digested which means the goodness is absorbed and the waste matter sent to the intestines to be expelled. But if it is not expelled or in other words, there is no complete elimination of the stools, that is the area that attracts the viruses/bacteria, through the nose and the mouth.

Viruses can never be killed. The only way is to reduce its population by antibiotics which has to be taken until the course is completed. Otherwise we can get an outbreak of fever or diarrhea. Water is a great healer. We need to take a liberal amount of water to be able to get rid of any waste matter.

The following recipes may help:

### **Milagu Rasam**

#### ***Ingredients:***

Black pepper	- 1 tbsp	Curry Leaves	- 3 sprigs	Lime	- to taste
Cumin	- 1 tbsp	Dried Chilly	- 1		
Mustard seeds	- 1 tsp	Asam Keping	- 1		
Asafoetida	- ½ tsp	Ghee	- ½ tbsp		
Garlic	- 1 clove	Salt to taste			
Tomato	- 2	Coriander leaves			

#### ***Preparation:***

- Cut tomatoes into 4.
- Pound garlic, pepper, cumin and curry leaves coarse.
- Coriander leaves to be lightly smashed on cutting board.
- Separate the pips from the clove of garlic and smash same.

#### ***Method:***

- Put asam keping and smashed garlic into 4 cups of boiling water and add the pounded ingredients. Put the tomatoes into the pot. Add salt.
- Have the contents on a slow boil. Shut fire after 20 minutes.
- In a wok, heat 1 tsp of ghee.
- Once ghee heats up, put in the whole dried chilly, mustard seeds, cumin seeds, asafoetida and curry leaves.
- Allow ingredients to sputter. Shut fire and pour contents into the rasam. Squeeze lime juice into it. Add in the smashed coriander leaves.



## *Remedies for Common Maladies-My Experience*

### **Curry Leaf Chutney**

#### ***Ingredients:***

- Well grown curry leaves - 8 sprigs
- Tomato - 2 (medium sized)
- Ginger - 2 (thumb-sized)
- Lime - To taste
- Salt - To taste



#### ***Method:***

- Grind curry leaves, ginger, tomatoes and salt in blender.
- Remove from blender.
- Squeeze lime juice to taste.

**(Pepper Curry (Milagu Curry) - The recipe was published in the last issue)**

### **Herbal Drink**

#### ***Ingredients:***

- Coriander Seeds - 1 tbsp
- Ginger - 2 (thumb-sized)
- Lemon Grass - 3 stalks
- Rock Sugar/malt - To taste



#### ***Preparation:***

Put all three ingredients to boil in sufficient water on a slow boil for ½ an hour. Strain. Add rock sugar/malt to taste.

### **Barley Drink**

#### ***Ingredients:***

- Barley - 2 tbsp
- Daun Pandan
- Sugar - To taste (optional)

#### ***Preparation:***

- Wash the barley and put to boil.
- Add daun pandan by tearing the leaves and making it into a knot before immersing it into the water. Slow boil for ½ an hour. Strain.
- Add sugar to taste (optional)



*- Mother A Mangalam*

## A LIFE TO EMULATE

To many, he is Datuk Seri N.S. Selvamany but to his former students, he is fondly known as sir, uncle or master.

Such was the closeness between this long-time teacher and his students whom he considered as his children.

Yeong Sek Yee, 72, described Selvamany as a helpful person, who was also passionate about causes, as he often stressed on national unity and equal treatment.

“He also went out of his way to help students who were in need.

“There was one poor student from Chemor who cycled to and from school.

“When master found out, he fought for the student to be placed at the school hostel so that he could have more time to study, ” he added.

Another former student, Yap Shek Seng, 72, said Selvamany once helped his late wife pay for her Form Six fees.

Selvamany, 93, the former teacher of SMK Anderson, Ipoh, and headmaster of SMK Idris Shah and SMK Seri Teja in Gopeng, passed away at his home in Persiaran Anderson, Ipoh last Tuesday (29.10.2019).

During his funeral on Saturday, family and friends as well as students lined up along Persiaran Anderson to give him a final send-off.

Among those present were former Singapore Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong, former Speaker of Perak State Assembly, Datuk Seri SK Devamany, Gopeng Museum Curator Phang See Kong and Datuk Mohammad Nor Khalid, famously known as Lat.

Lat, an old boy of SMK Anderson, said Selvamany’s memory was good as he remembered all of his students’ names. “Usually students look for their teachers after completing their education, but with master, he looked for us. It was some time in 1971 when I was working as a journalist, and not known yet when he spotted me in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman in Kuala Lumpur. He called out to me and we spoke,” said Lat, adding that Selvamany was a lovable teacher. Lat’s last meeting with his beloved teacher was at a school function last year.

Devamany said he met Selvamany through community work and has great respect for him. “He was a great philanthropist, an inspiration for teachers everywhere. He was a man of harmony and managed to raise thousands of ‘children’ in prolific places, ” he recalled.

Former Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) chief executive officer Datuk Merlyn Kasimir, 71, said Selvamany was a father figure to him. “I had transferred to Anderson from SMK Clifford to do my Form Six and it was a big adjustment for me, from a small town like Kuala Kangsar. “He gave me a lot of advice on coping with studies,” he said.

Hailing from Batu Gajah, Selvamany was also a former schoolmate and close friend



of the late Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Shah. Both of them studied at SMK Sultan Yussuf in Batu Gajah (formerly known as Government English School), that was started by Selvamany's grandfather K. Malaiperumal Pillay.

He was named Tokoh Guru Perak and Tokoh Guru Kebangsaan in 1996 and 1997, respectively. Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Shah and Raja Permaisuri Perak Tuanku Zara Salim sent a wreath, expressing their condolences.

In the condolence message, Sultan Nazrin wrote that the nation has lost a remarkable man who dedicated his life to the cause of better education for the nation.

“We are deeply saddened by the loss of Selvamany who was a dear friend to my late father, Sultan Azlan Shah, since their school days in Batu Gajah,” he said.

Sultan Azlan Shah also launched a biography titled Selvamany: More Than A Teacher, written by Selvamany's former student, Dr Rokiah Talib, in 2012.

***- Sultan Nazrin Shah, 'To Sir, with love', The Star Online, 06<sup>th</sup> November 2019***



Dato Seri Selvamany with his former pupils during a visit to PLS in 2012

*PS. I am glad I had the opportunity to stay in Dato Selvamany's house for a day, as a break during my travels North to Penang. I was amazed to note the simplicity of his life-style and that of his wife, in many aspects—Mother A Mangalam*

*Saying it  
in Pictures.....  
Activities @  
Pure Life*

CSR by staff of Cypher-  
Tech



Pongal (Harvest  
festival for the Hindus)  
celebration at the PLS  
grounds

Yoga & Self Develop-  
ment Camp held at the  
PLS grounds



## Who is your life partner?

Mom ?  
Dad ?  
Wife?  
Son?  
Husband ?  
Daughter ?  
Friends...?

not at all !

Your real life partner is Your Body.

Once your body stops responding no one is with you.

You and your body stay together from Birth till Death. What you do to your body is your responsibility and that will come back to You.

The more you care for your body, the more your body will care for You.

What you eat, What you do for being Fit, How you deal with stress, how much rest you give to it; will decide how your body will respond.

Remember your body is the only permanent address where You live.

Your body is your asset/liability, which no one else can share. Your body is your responsibility. Because, You are the real life partner.

Be Fit forever. Take care yourself. Money comes & goes. Relatives & Friends are not permanent.

Remember no one can help your body other than you.

Pranayama - for Lungs  
Meditation - for Mind  
Yoga-asanas - for Body  
Walking - for Heart  
Good food - for Intestines  
Good thoughts - for Soul  
Good Karma - for World

- Sri Sri Ravishankar

## Reflections

### *Salient Thought for the Day*

Steadfastness, love, unselfish devotion and unfaltering loyalty to the Ideal - these are the blessed qualities essential to spiritual attainment.

### *Lines to Memorize*

Thou alone canst save us from the  
tyranny of self  
And restore unto us selfless love,  
Whose fragrance bringeth life and  
healing.

### *Lesson*

The small concerns of the little self are all detrimental to a man. Try to cultivate self-less love, steadfastness and loyalty and a new world will open before you. These qualities cannot flourish in the soil of selfishness. They do not come to one who is a slave of himself. They are to be found only in one who has learned to turn within and listen to the inner voice of the soul.

### *Prayer*

O' Thou infinite Being, make Thy  
Presence felt in my soul,  
That I may know Thee as the em-  
bodiment of all blessedness.  
Inspire me with love and holiness.  
Cleanse my nature of all vanity  
and self-interest.  
Unfold my spiritual insight that I  
may realize Thee both within and  
without.  
Free my heart from all in harmony and  
keep me ever in Thy peace.

- Swami Paramananda



## The Malaysian Speaks

Nation-building falters if there is no genuine acceptance of all cultures and faiths as part of our social, economic and spiritual existence.

- Prof Dr Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi, 'My 'sixth' Rukunegara principle, Over the Top, The Star, 18th February 2020

If a belief gets frozen in your mind and stays unchanged, you will never find the deeper truth. Your fear of being cast as an unbeliever prevents you from making necessary improvements in your religious thinking.

- Joachim Ng, 'The virus of belief vs unbelief', Connecting Faiths, The Sun, 19th February 2020

Genuine acceptance of our diversity brings about unity, the social glue that helps us to create an inclusive society. Ideally, our leaders must focus on practicing the principles of justice, accountability and fairness.

- Sze Loong Steve Ngeow, 'Strive to be bridges to unity, Your Opinion, The Star, 19th February 2020

Trust between Malaysians of all backgrounds is not only critical for the country to fulfil its true potential, but essential in building a nation where everyone feels a sense of purpose and belonging.

- Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin, 'Expectations of MY government', The Star, 6th March 2020

## Great minds of Yesteryears

Your own self-realization is the greatest service you can render the world - Sri Ramana Maharishi

## May Peace Prevail on Earth

On behalf of humanity, we offer this prayer for peace.

May all human beings live in peace and harmony, transcending the differences among them.

Wars between nations, human rights violations, and the plight of refugees-  
*When we listen closely, we hear our planet crying out in pain.*

These cries come from global warming, acid rain, desertification, and the depletion of the ozone layer, which result from humanity's destruction of nature, through deforestation, environmental pollution, nuclear testing, and the production of harmful substances.

We also hear the screams of many animals – animals who are in danger of extinction, due to the harmful activities of human beings, and animals killed in experiments and through people's extravagant lifestyles. All these problems we cause when human beings lose sight of the essential oneness of humanity.

May we uplift our consciousness, and deepen our sense of oneness with others, May we all show gratitude and respect for the Earth and all living things, and abandon our selfish behavior, so that all form of struggle and conflict will naturally disappear, and lasting peace will become manifest on Earth.

We pray with united hearts that people around the world will awaken to their true nature and create a world filled with love and understanding.

## May Peace Prevail on Earth.



*The above piece was read by  
Mother A Mangalam, At the Symphony of  
Peace Prayers (SOPP) 2007 at  
Fuji Sanctuary, Japan*

தீயினாற் சுட்டபுண் உள்ளாறும் ஆறாதே  
நாவினாற் சுட்ட வடு - குறள் 129

A wound caused by fire will heal inside;  
a scar caused by the tongue never heals.

- Thirukkural

When restraint and courtesy are added to  
strength, the latter becomes irresistible

- Mahatma Gandhi

## Be a part of Dharma....

Dharma Quarterly  
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harmony. We would love  
to have your contributions,  
whether ideas or articles.

Come, be a part of us.....



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RIGHTEOUSNESS &  
CULTURE

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ONE WORLD  
ONE RACE

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