

**Nandini**

ISSUE 4

JUNE 2009

***Voice For The Deprived***

Dedicated to the cause of marginalised and downtrodden

**VOL XIII**

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - Rs. 100/-**

**RS.10/-**

**Election has come and gone  
But corruption and nepotism  
remain undefeated**

# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA SPEAKS

Thoughts of Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest philosophers that India has ever produced, should guide the nation towards glory and happiness all the time.



## Practical patriotism

Practical patriotism means not a mere sentiment or even emotion of love of the motherland but a passion to serve our fellow countrymen.

I have gone all over India on foot and have seen with my own eyes the ignorance, misery and squalor of our people.

My whole soul is afire and I am burning with a fierce desire to change such evil conditions. Let no one talk of karma. If it was their karma to suffer, it is our karma to relieve the suffering.

If you want to find God, serve man. To reach Narayana, you must serve the *daridranarayanans* – the starving millions of India.



## “Meaningless teachings”

Swami Vivekananda spoke no harsh words against anyone; on the other hand he did not refrain from criticism when it was necessary.

For example, there was the pandit who asked him if there was any harm in giving up *sandhyavandana* (ritualistic prayers performed in the morning, noon and evening) because of lack of time.

“What!” exclaimed the swami, almost ferociously, “those giants of old, the ancient rishis, who never walked but strode, of whom if you were to think but for a moment they, sir, had time and you have no time!”

On that same occasion, when a Westernised Hindu spoke in a belittling manner of the “meaningless teachings” of the Vedic seers, the swami fell upon him with thunderbolt vehemence, crying out. “How dare you criticize your venerable forefathers in such a fashion! A little learning has muddled your brain. Have you tested the science of the rishis? Have you even as much as read the Vedas? There is the challenge thrown by the rishis! If you dare oppose them, take it up; put their teachings to the test.”



## Universal religion

If there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God.

It will preach and whose Sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahminic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these and still have infinite space for development. It will be a religion which have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be created in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature.



## Mass of thought

There is a mass of thought which is at the present time struggling to get expression. It teaches us that higher direction and not destruction is the law. It teaches us that it is not a world of bad and good, but good and better and still better. It stops short of nothing but acceptance. It teaches that no situation is hopeless and as such

accepts every form of mental, moral or spiritual thought, where it already stands and without a word of condemnation tells it that so far it has done good, now it is time to do better.

It above all teaches that the kingdom of heaven is already in existence if we will have it, that perfection is already in man if he will see it.



### End of all religions

The end of all religions is the realizing of God in the soul. That is the one universal religion. If there is one universal truth in all religions, I place it here – in realizing God. Ideals and methods may differ, but that is the central point.

There is that beyond all books, beyond all creeds, beyond the vanities of this world and it is the realization of God within yourself.



### Truth will preach itself

Individuality is my motto. I have no ambition beyond training individuals up. I know very little; that little I teach without reserve; where I am ignorant, I confess it as such and never am I so glad as when I find people being helped by Theosophists, Christians and Mohammedans, or anybody in the world.

I am a sannyasin; as such I consider myself as a servant, not as a master in the world. Truth will preach itself, it will not die for the want of the helping hands of me!

“Making happiness and misery the same, making success and failure the same, fight thou on” (Gita). It is that eternal love, unruffled equanimity under all circumstances and perfect freedom from jealousy or animosity that will tell. That till tell, nothing else.



### Plunge in the work

We must plunge heart and soul and body into the work. And until we be ready to sacrifice everything else to one *Idea* and to one alone, we *never, never*, will see the light.

Those that want to help mankind must take their own pleasure and pain, name and fame and all sorts of interests and make a bundle of them and throw them

into the sea and then come to the Lord. This is what all Masters *said* and *did*.



### Unity in variety

The whole universe is a tremendous case of unity in variety.

There is only one mass of mind. Different states of that mind have different names. They are different little whirlpools in this ocean of mind.

We are universal and individual at the same time. In reality, this unit is never broken. We always know truth, only our reading of truth is mistaken at times.



### Sanyasa

Sacrificing everything for the good of others – this is true sanyasa.



### Renunciation is the root idea

To one of his disciples, who was attending on him toward the end of his life, Swamiji remarked.

What is the use of giving way to sorrow, my boy? This body was born and it will die. If I have been able to instill into you all, even to a small degree, some of my ideas, then I shall know that I have not lived my life in vain!. Always remember that renunciation is the root idea.



### I shall not cease to work

It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body – to cast it off like a worn out garment. But I shall not cease to work! I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God!



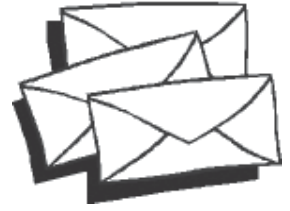
### “I am without form”

During one of the outdoor meetings, Swamiji in an inspired mood said;  
 “I am without form, without limit,  
 beyond space, beyond time;  
 I am in everything.  
 I am the basis of the universe –  
 Everywhere am I.  
 I am Existence Absolute.  
 Bliss Absolute. Knowledge Absolute.  
 I am It. I am It.”

# Readers' forum

Readers' forum provides space for the enlightened readers to give expression to their views on a variety of socio economic issues that is of relevance to the society.

Further enrichment of the journal with your thoughtful inputs would certainly go a long way in promoting the cause that the journal seeks to espouse.



## Curbing unauthorized building menace..

Dear Sir,

To prevent unauthorized construction of buildings, filing of approval of building plan may be made mandatory while registering undivided share of land in the case of apartments.

While granting approval to new layouts, 1/3 rd of the total land area should be reserved for water conservation and forest purpose.

Likewise, while granting special building plans for apartments, 2/10<sup>th</sup> of the total land area should be left vacant without cement plastering to conserve water / water harvesting purpose.

Chennai

R.Krishnan



## Horror shows on television

Dear Sir,

I agree cent percent with the observations of Dr.K.Thiagarajan titled "Horror shows on television" ( 2009 issue).

He has highlighted as to how without giving room for any moral values, the promoters of mega serials in television imprint horrors in juvenile minds causing tremendous negative impact in their lives.

The appearance of ghostly characters, ugly creatures, superhumans performing impossible action scenes and stuffs such as these, pave way for the disappearance of child like innocence, making them all the more arrogant with characteristics similar to that of the devil as is shown.

No doubt, there are some good aspects in the visual media. However, they are but drops in the ocean. Who will do the censoring?

Perhaps, there may be no sense in pleading with the promoters of the television channels but it is high time, the parents and children sit down together in finding a solution to this issue.

Chennai

Esther S.S.Robinson

## Pension problem

Dear Sir,

I am a disabled person. I have sent many representations to various VIPs to help me in getting the disability pension. But all vain.

I have been getting only Rs.339/- per month as pension from public sector undertaking, where I worked. Nothing can be done in these days with this paltry sum.

Chennai

S.Aravamudhan

## Let the political parties quit Government before election

Dear Sir,

Rajaji's suggestion that the ministers, etc ought to resign six months before election is the finest advice.

Once the election proposal is made out and agreed upon, the political authorities must step down. They can not also be a care taker government. The politicians should be away from the administration and power centres.

The administration ought to be run by the Advisory Council consisting of retired chief secretaries, retired DGPs, retired commanders or generals.

Chennai

K.V.Doraisamy



## Noble Venture

Dear Sir,

It gives me much pleasure to wish N.S. Venkataraman every success and God Blessings in his noble venture of entering in the Parliamentary Elections. Men of substance is what we need to deliberate and regulate the future course of our country. Knowing his sustained efforts to reach out and help the downtrodden makes me feel good and so also many more like me.

His close association with opinion makers and decision makers has groomed him well for the mighty task. I wish him inspiration from Bapuji in all his endeavors.

Although Bapuji remains in the depths of the Yamuna, his influence will live on undying to inspire future generations of mankind and lead them on through the paths of peace, tolerance and service to mankind.

Chennai

Frankpet Fernandez

### Child needs support for ear surgery



Master C. Bala Iyyanar, age 4 years has been diagnosed to have bilateral profound hearing loss. He is advised to undergo cochlear implantation (ear surgery). The estimated cost of the surgery and imported equipment is Rs.10,91,000/-

Sri. M. Chandrasekar, the father of the child, requests kind hearted persons for financial help.

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Madras ENT Research Foundation Charitable Trust, A/C. Master C. Bala Iyyanar and sent to the following address:

Sri. M. Chandrasekar, No.16, 1<sup>st</sup> Street,  
Bharathi Nagar, Korukupetai, Chennai-600 091.



### Need sewing machines



❖ Mrs. S. Prabhavathi and her husband are unskilled labourers. She has studied upto 9<sup>th</sup> std. She has undergone six months duration tailoring course.

❖ Ms. S. Devi is a poor mentally ill girl. She has studied upto 10<sup>th</sup> std. She has undergone six months duration tailoring course.

❖ Mrs. S. Prabhavathi and Ms. S. Devi request kind hearted persons for donation of sewing machines.

Contact address: Mrs. S. Prabhavathi,  
W/o. Sri. Sankaran, 82, Kuzhakadai Bazaar  
Thenkasi (Tk), Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu



Ms. S. Devi  
D/o. Sri. Sakthivel  
1, Bharathi Nagar  
5th Street, Melagaram  
Thenkasi, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu

## Desperate Calls

You can enjoy your prosperity only if you share your income with the deprived and thus discover the satisfaction that it provides.

### Child needs support for heart operation



Master K. Isaki, age 8 years, studying 3<sup>rd</sup> std in Sri Sankara Middle School, Krishnapuram, Kadaiyanallur is suffering from heart disease.

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology, Trivandrum advised him to undergo heart surgery.

Due to financial problem, the operation is being delayed

The Patient's father Sri. K. Krishnasami is an unskilled labourer. He requests financial help from philanthropists.

For further details, please contact:

Sri. K. Krishnasami,  
S/o. Sri. Ganesan, 31/51, Krishnapuram, Kadaiyanallur,  
Thenkasi (Tk), Tirunelveli,  
Tamil Nadu.



### Poor lady needs support for heart operation



Mrs. D. Sushila, age 30 years is suffering from heart disease. The Madras Medical Mission advised her to undergo open heart surgery. The estimated cost of the surgery is Rs.2,15,000/-

The cheque may be drawn in favour of The Madras Medical Mission, Chennai and sent to the following address.

Mrs. D. Sushila  
W/o. Mr. Devendran, NO.21,  
Kaliyaman Koil Street,  
Kottur Block-2, Theni Dist-625534,  
Tamil Nadu.



**Visually impaired girl needs support for education**

Ms.Sanathi, age 11 years is a poor visually impaired girl.

Ms.Sanathi's father Sri.P.Madasami requests kind hearted persons for financial help for his daughter's education.

Contact address:

Sri.P.Madasami, S/o. Sri.Paramasivan,  
19-A, West Malampettai Street,  
Krishnapuram-627 759, Kadaiyanallur,  
Thenkasi Tk, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu



**Needs support for setting up petty shop**

Ms.M.Sarala is a disabled girl and she has studied ITI training course. Her parents are unskilled labourer.The family is running with their meager income.

Ms.M.Sarala requests kind hearted persons for financial help to set up petty shop

Contact address:

Ms.M.Sarala, D/o.Sri.A.Murthi,1/87,  
Pillaiyar Koil Street, Palaiya Karuvatchi  
(PO), Villupuram,Tamil Nadu.



**Needs support for open heart surgery**

Mr.Sadananda Pal, age 58 years is suffering from heart disease. The doctors advised him to undergo open heart surgery. The estimated cost of the surgery is Rs.1,20,000/-

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Mallya Hospital, Bangalore and sent to the following address:

The Secretary, Save Poor Lives, No.22,  
Perumal Koil Street,Aminjikarai,Chennai-  
600 029



**Needs support for education**

Mr.Muthuraman Yadav is a fruit merchant. His two children Ms.Muthulakshmi and Mr.M.Rajakumaran are studying XI std , and IX std in Sri Sankara Vidhyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School, East Tambaram, Chennai

Fees structure for the year 2009-10

XII std Rs.19,815/-

X std Rs.12,040/-

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Sri Sankara Vidhyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chennai and sent to the following address:

Mr.Muthuraman Yadav, No.14, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cross Street  
Araganathapuram, West Tambaram,Chennai-600 045



**Need support for surgeries**

Ms.Pavitra, age 16 years is suffering from rheumatic heart disease with severe mitral regurgitation. She has been advised to undergo open heart surgery. The estimated cost of the surgery is Rs.1,05,000/-



Baby Moni Kishore, age 5 months is suffering from moderate PAH, mild pulmonary arterial hypertension. He requires to undergo PDA device closure. The cost is Rs.90,000/-



The cheque may be drawn in favour of Sri Ramachandra Hospital, Chennai and sent to the following address:

The Secretary, Women's welfare  
Syndicate, 8/2, Avenue Road,  
Nungambakkam, Chennai-600 034.



**Need support for surgeries**

Ms.Sahana, age 13 years is suffering from thalasaemia major, She has to undergo stem cell transplantation, The cost of the transplantation is Rs.8,00,000/-



Master Tirakala Venkata Subash, age 11 months is suffering from wiskott Aldrich syndrome. Stem cell transplantation would be curative for this condition. The cost of the transplantation is Rs.8,00,000/-



The cheque may be drawn in favour of Apollo Speciality Hospital, Chennai and sent to the following address:

The Secretary  
Women's welfare Syndicate, 8/2, Avenue  
Road,  
Nungambakkam, Chennai-600 034



**Child suffering from cancer**

Ms Bisakha Das, age 7 years is suffering from osteogeniesarconia (a type of cancer) and she is taking treatment in Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. The approximate cost of chemotherapy is Rs,1,50,000/-

The cheque may be drawn in favour of Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai and sent to the following address:

Ms Bisakha Das,  
C/o.Swami Prashantananda,  
Bharat Sevashram Sangha,  
Home of Cancer Patients,  
263, Swamy Pranavanandaji Marg,  
Vashigoan,  
Navi Mumbai-400 703.

# CONTESTING IN ELECTIONS INITIATIVES OF CONCERNED CITIZENS

Contributed by Dr. Susheela Kaushik  
Former Professor, Political Science, Delhi University

Elections are a time when sane voices go unheard. But this is also the strategic time, when the people, frustrated by the way politics and governance are directed, look for an alternate that is wholesome and committed to basic issues.

Most of them joined and initiated citizens' movements in various metro cities and brought up issues in the form of citizens' charters. The 2009 elections witnessed this type of charters in increasing numbers.

The Hindustan Times and Times of India and TV channels among others, brought together the thinking persons into an activist role and crystallized the issues and lobbied for clean and committed candidates.

Disgusted with all parties, major and minor, their no holds barred type of campaigning based on muscle and money power, violence and unaccounted money, many sane and committed individuals took up issues and directly contested in the elections. They did not get much votes and many even lost deposits, but they feel that there is no other way to save democracy and the nation.

The number of independent men and women, of the NGOs and organizations like youth for contesting actively has increased this time. The women's groups like Power Connect, the Citizen's Group called Association of Concerned and Informed Citizens of Mysore, the National Election Watch were chasing the criminal, corrupt, communal and financial background of the candidates.

The candidature of Meera Sanyal [Bank official], Mallika Sarabhai [famous dancer] and Sangeetha Tomar [ex-Army Officer and MBA from IIM, Indore]. Bandhu Sampatrao Sane [Trustee of NGO KHOJ of Amravati] N.S.Venkataraman [Trustee of NGO Nandini Voice For The Deprived, Chennai] etc. show this frustration with parties.

The purpose of the above candidates is to focus on the failure of the parties. These candidates are the public spirited men and women. Their campaign strategies were

above board and unusual. They sought the approvals of the urban educated youth and women citizens.

Having watched helplessly the callous behaviour of the political parties and its leaders over the past five years, the people have begun to act on their own. The political parties are no longer what the political pundits talk of and their aims and functioning have gone through much changes. The leaders come nowhere near the stature of the leaders of yester years. Moulded in the nationalist movement's vision and idealism, keen to build a modern, secular nation, the leaders in the fifties and sixties, the politicians, utilized the elections as an occasion of nation building and not of personal aggrandizement or family power build up. The leaders then were tall Today there are no such leaders at all.

Every metro city witnessed this kind of citizens' lobbying. This has led to their campaigning for a candidate or putting up independent candidates. Not that such candidates won the elections and this would be a miracle in a country where money and muscle, caste and religion decide the outcome. But elections are also an educative/learning process. It is also a time when the parties hear and respond to the citizen's views.

Did the sane, educated, urban voters participate as eagerly as the rural citizens and turn the politics of the day?

# MY ELECTION CAMPAIGN WITHOUT MONEY POWER AND MUSCLE POWER

Contributed by N.S.Venkataraman, Trustee, Nandini Voice for the Deprived.

I was the candidate for South Chennai Parliamentary Constituency nominated by Desia Padhukaappu Kazhagam.

I am a Chemical Engineer and Trustee of Nandini Voice for The Deprived, a Chennai based NGO.

I carried out the election campaign without money power and muscle power and with great dignity , scrupulously adhering to the guidelines provided by the Election Commission of India. My theme of campaign was to restore probity in public life and Gandhian standards in the national agenda.

Whatever may be the outcome of the election, I am happy that the Gandhian principles was effectively highlighted in my election campaign as the need of the day and to my knowledge no other political party or candidate has done this anywhere in India.

Apart from others, a number of differently abled persons and visually impaired persons belonging to lower income group campaigned for me without expecting any rewards and this is a highly satisfying aspect of my campaign.

At the outset, I desire to congratulate the Election Commission and the police for the exemplary manner in which they conducted themselves in organising this election under extremely tough conditions. I have absolutely no complaints and my respect for police and Election Commission have gone up several folds after completion of the campaign.

May I describe my experience below in the campaign.

I was allotted the election symbol only on 27th April and I could effectively start the campaign only on 29th April, with the handbills printed with election symbol.. Therefore, the candidates of small parties like me and independents were left with hardly thirteen days for effective election campaign.

The Election Commission banned campaign through SMS which effectively prevented the low cost election campaign method to reach individual voters. I do not understand the logic of banning SMS message during the election campaign, The Election Commission could have exempted the cost towards SMS message in the election expense statement of the candidates. While several candidates and political parties did send SMS

message in defiance of the directive of the Election Commission, I did not do so and might have lost some advantages due to my strict adherence to the directives of the Election Commission in this regard.

Door to door campaign became extremely difficult for any candidate , since general public , particularly the middle and the upper income group, appear to be averse to receive the campaigners at their door step , which may be due to security reasons or the image associated with an average politician in the country today.

The kalyana mandapams and several other meeting halls refused to provide the premises for election campaign for political parties , possibly due to the fear of any unpleasant happenings. Election Commission also issued some sort of directives to kalyana mandapams not to allow the premises to hold political meetings . This effectively prevented space for holding campaign meetings where some sort of interactive discussions could take place .

Several housing complexes refused to allow small campaign meetings in their premises and insisted that the handbills should be delivered only at the gate , possibly due to the poor image of the politicians and political parties.

There is no space to hold public meetings in many places due to traffic congestion. Police earmarked specific places for holding public meeting which might not have suited the political parties in several cases.

Many TV channels are owned by several political parties Smaller parties and independents who do not own such TV channels were at a great disadvantage.

The telecast facilities in Doordarshan and the broadcast facilities in AIR were not provided to the smaller parties and independents.

## MY ELECTION CAMPAIGN WITHOUT MONEY POWER AND MUSCLE POWER

Under the circumstances, the options available for me were to spread message by word of mouth, by opening website, by emails, inserting pamphlets in newspapers and carrying out street campaign and holding small group meetings, wherever possible. Some of the newspapers also insisted that campaign handbills should not be inserted in their newspapers.

While a lot of noise were made in the street campaign by every political party including myself, some with special gimmicks to attract the attention of the passers by, I do not know as to how effective such street campaigns are in spreading the message, since large number of voters are not on the streets all the time and those on the streets often appear to be lost in their own thoughts.

I carried out my election campaign just spending around Rs. 2 LAKHS. My campaign style was to print

2.5 lakhs handbills and distribute it across the constituency by inserting in newspapers and distributing with the help of supporters. In addition, a website was designed by several software professionals which became very popular.

I addressed several small group meetings in addition to the street campaign for twelve days for a period of four hours on each day. I could not meet many many voters in person since the effective campaign time available for me was hardly thirteen days. I largely relied on spreading my campaign message through word of mouth and handbills. I relied on the power of truth, which is my election theme, to spread by itself.

On the whole, I am thoroughly satisfied with the style and quality of my campaign. This style of campaign may look much different from that of other candidates and political parties but this is how it should be.

## WHY POOR PEOPLE DEMAND MONEY FOR VOTING ?

One often heard reports that poor people these days openly demand money for voting for any particular candidate. Such reports have also repeatedly appeared in the press.

Discussions with the cross section of poor people clearly indicate "their logic" for demanding money for voting.

There appears to be high level of political consciousness and awareness amongst the lower income group and they seem to understand many issues clearly. They are well aware of the level of dishonesty and corruption in public life, government machinery and amongst political leaders. While less than five percent of the lower income group are firmly committed to any political party, the others largely remain unattached and have no particular inclination to any political party or leaders.

In recent years, people particularly in the lower income group largely do not anymore vote on the basis of worth and credibility of the candidate, since they seem to feel that there is nothing much to choose between the candidates. Therefore, the focus has gone to the leaders of the political parties rather than the individual candidates nominated by the party. Many seem to feel that even amongst the political leaders, there is no significant difference in caliber and commitment.

Such people seem to think that their voting for one party or the other would not make much difference, since there is nothing much to choose between them.

Many of the poor people also seem to believe that politicians are in the electoral fray not so much for serving the society and the common man but largely for getting into positions of power and authority and amassing wealth in a limited period even by adopting unethical methods.

"Why should I vote for any particular candidate or party if it would only benefit them and not the common man?", ask the poor citizens.

They think that the political parties and candidates are "investing huge money" only to benefit themselves in the long run. They seem to think that the elected representatives would not do much for them after getting elected and would not even meet them and therefore they should get whatever it is possible before the election.

"When this is the ground reality, why should we vote for anyone without demanding money for ourselves?" This seems to be the new trend.

There is enormous cynicism amongst the people about the politicians and their role which reflects on their demanding money with contempt.

In the days of great patriots and leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, people sacrificed their time and comforts for the sake of the cause but this is no more the situation today. This is a dangerous trend and could lead to devaluing the concept of political franchise itself.

# ELECTION COMMISSION VERSUS CRIMINAL ACTS

Contributed by Dr. Susheela Kaushik  
Former Professor , Political Science, Delhi University

The Election Commission of India is getting more and more duties to perform and more and more issues to deal with.

The Election Commission had been trusted by the Constitution of India to conduct a fair and free democratic election and get the new government elected. But today, the Election Commission has the role of defending the system itself from the 3 criminal acts namely communalism, criminality and corruption – issues that the government of the day should have been preventing and dealing with, throughout the five years preceding the election and after.

The failure of the administration and their impact on the conduct of elections have added to the dimensions of “fair and free election”.

Mere goondaism, booth capturing and threat by the influential and powerful in the extended and castiest rural hinterland of India are the input of the three criminal acts that have overshadowed the typical constitutional process of electing a government. The elections have gone through a metamorphic change and along with that the role and functions of Election Commission too.

Can Election Commission of India do it? Have they got the powers, authority and the machinery to do it? Obviously, the Election Commission, though it is putting up a brave face, has its limitations.

On communalism, the rise of hate campaigning openly, blatantly and defiantly undertaken by many candidates is depressing. What can or will the Election Commission of India do when the candidates recognize that the impact of their campaign is many times more than the punishment that the Election Commission can give.

The many utterances of persons like those of Varun Gandhi, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Rabiri Devi, Uday Thackeray, Sanjey Dutt and umpteen others went unpunished, despite the appeals to the commission. This shows the powerlessness of the latter. When years back, Bal Thackeray was barred from contesting, the judgment came from judiciary and not from the Election Commission.

Election Commission of India’s powers to debar the candidates from elections seem to be also very limited, as even those candidates arrested for some reason or other, come out on bail and continue with the campaigning

or file nomination. Varun, Lalu and many others came out on bail.

Even the notorious criminals in or out of jail cannot be prevented from contesting unless they were convicted. This power also increasingly belongs to the judiciary. Whether it was Sanjay Dutt or Pappu Yadav, it is the judiciary and not Election Commission that stopped them.

It is hence doubtful whether the Election Commission can do much by way of preventing corruption or criminalization of elections. Its moral code of conduct has definitely reduced the scope of expenditure, public nuisance and the “official” cost of candidates. But, it could not go beyond this

It looks like that the Election Commission has become an efficient and effective manager and conductor of Elections of India, which by itself is a very massive exercise. However, it looks that it’s moral codes and stipulations are more of administrative measures and are effected more through the administrative machinery than the political parties. Any reforms it seeks to bring about in the political parties and their choice of candidates gets stuck by the judiciary as they require powerful laws, which the politicians are refusing to pass.

Who bells the cat then? Obviously the people/voters. Unless they oppose strongly the three criminal acts and defeat the candidates, the election process cannot be cleansed and value based true democracy cannot be brought back.

Can we go back to the fifties, when people chose individuals rather than parties? Will the parties, then, select good leader like individuals, than the winning candidates (based on muscle and money power)?

# MAHATMA GANDHI

## – ETERNAL PILGRIM OF PEACE AND LOVE

---

A poignant occasion was Gandhiji's benediction on September 2, 1946, at the Bhangi Colony, New Delhi, to the team of Ministers designate of the Interim Government.

Three of the Ministers designate – Sardar Patel, Rajendra Babu and Shri Jagjivan Ram – were staying in Birla House. In the morning, *pooja* and *bhajan* were conducted, Smt. Sharadadevi Rameshwardas Birla performing *aarti* and Shri Amrut Deshpande singing *bhajans*. Thereafter, these leaders motored down to Gandhiji to take his *ashirvad*, before proceedings to the Viceregal Lodge for the official swearing in ceremony. Panditji and others also arrived soon thereafter. Gandhiji was then sitting in a chair in the courtyard talking with a group of I.N.A. Officers who were squatting on the floor.

Gandhiji applied *kum kum* with his own hands on heads of all the Ministers designate. To him, it was a relentless heart searching. Soon after the morning prayers; he drafted a note for Pandit Nehru, setting out the duties of the new Government in that supreme hour.

Gandhiji congratulated and thanked the British Government for having made up its mind to resolve an age old issue between Britain and India by peaceful settlement and in a civilized manner, resounding to the credit of both. He appealed to all for a constructive, positive approach. He pleaded to give up reviving bitter memories or indulging in mutual bickerings. He beseeched all to forget and forgive and take to live and let live.

He then hailed the formation of the Interim Government as a red letter day. He, however, cautioned that it was only a major step towards the goal of Poorna Swaraj, which would certainly if



“Pandit Nehru and his colleagues worthily did their part”.

Suddenly, he closed his eyes for a minute or two and took a deep pause. His eyes were moist. In a voice choked with emotion, in deliberate, soft and slow accents he said: “Today, for the first time in 200 years, we are assuming the reins of power in the Central Government. This is an auspicious day. This is an important milestone in our pilgrimage to freedom. To me, freedom is not mere replacement of Britishers by Indians. To me, freedom will have meaning only if the man in the street feels the glow of it and his lot improves.

“Let us not delude ourselves as having undergone great sufferings and made big sacrifices. Think of the lakhs and lakhs of ordinary men and women of rural India, some known but the majority unknown, who have silently suffered and sacrificed their all without recognition or expectation of reward. I do not think our sacrifices are *nishkama karma*, as described in the *Gita*. Have we all not got sufficient in return in the shape of leadership and popular adoration? I do not know how many of us would have continued in the struggle in the absence of recognition in such – abundant measure. Let us be completely honest in thought, word and deed”.

## MAHATMA GANDHI – ETERNAL PILGRIM OF PEACE AND LOVE

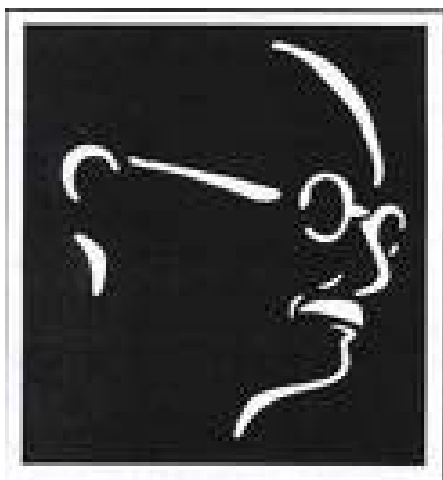
---

Within a month after the Interim Government assumed office Gandhiji left the “politics” of Indian independence. He first went to Noakhali and other interior villages of East Bengal, then to Bihar and Calcutta, to wipe the tears of his frightened and innocent brothers and sisters, victims of senseless violence.

This phase of his illustrious life, this deliberate renunciation of the limelight and voluntary embracing of self-exile; his *padayatra* from village to village, echoing Tagore’s song of poignant isolation – “If they answer not thy call, then walk alone. If they do not hold up their lamps when the night is troubled with raging storm, ignite thine own heart and let it burn alone”.

This historic mission of mercy of the Lonely Pilgrim who, in the words of the then Governor-General, Lord Louis Mountbatten was a “one man boundary force, more effective than all the armed forces the Government could have deployed,” undoubtedly signified the great unfolding and full emergence of the real Gandhi. It was the finest hour of his luminous life.

On September 7, 1947, he revisited Delhi to quench with soul force the soulless communal flame enveloping the capital and also to restore harmony amongst the captains of the Ship of State.



The virulence of the communal poison at the time in the capital was such that, after four months of unremitting labour, Gandhiji was impelled to undertake a fast for an indeterminate period – in the words of the famous French Journal, *Le Mond*, his “Secret Weapon” – to bring about the reunion of hearts of all the communities. He embarked upon this, his last fast, on January 13, 1948. However, at the initiative of revered Babu Rajendra Prasad, over 100 leading representatives of all the communities went to Gandhiji on January 18, 1948 and solemnly pledged that, come what may, they would ensure complete friendship between the communities. Thereupon, Gandhiji ended the fast.

To make up for the few minutes overspent in discussing national affairs with two of his closest colleagues – Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel – Gandhiji was rushing to his people for his daily common communion with God. A fanatic paid obeisance and then at point blank range fired a bullet on Gandhiji’s chest. The great Messiah of modern India sank to the ground bleeding.

The date was January 30, 1948. The day was Friday – the good day when other great pathfinders before him like Socrates and Jesus were, in a like manner, done to death by their compatriots for whose regeneration they tirelessly toiled.

Came thus the Great Culmination – Gandhi’s martyrdom.

What a glorious end, what an enviable death at the age of 79, in full possession and vigorous exercise of all God-given faculties, at the zenith of his glory venerated by 400 millions of his countrymen as the Prophet who led them by the world at large, as the greatest revolutionary who fought and won freedom’s battle with the unique weapons of truth and non-violence.

*Courtesy: Mahatma Gandhi - Eternal Pilgrim Of Peace And Love*

# BHAGAWAN RAMANA MAHARSHI

## THE SONG OF INDIA

*This is an extract from chapter sixteen of The Song of India by Frank Clune, first published in Australia in 1946. The first Indian edition, 1947; published by Thacker & Co. Ltd., Rampart Row, Bombay*

*The author of this engaging travel piece was prolific and popular in Australia during the 1930s-50s. It is obvious that he little understood who Bhagavan was, but in the best tradition of amateur adventurers, he was willing to try anything once. Though naïve at times, he does nonetheless make some perceptive observation and realized there was more than what meets the eye.*

*Courtesy: Mountain Path, January-March 2009*

My next pilgrimage was to the Ashram of Shri Maharshi, the 'Saint of Tiruvannamalai', about 70 miles from Pondicherry.

I stayed a day and a night in this Ashram and had a talk with the Saint, who is not a silent one, like the Yogi of Pondicherry. In fact, Shri Maharshi is a likeable old chap, very human and approachable. Born in the South of India about 70 years ago, he began having 'visions' in his Dreams and obeying a 'voice' he went to Tiruvannamalai, where he has been ever since.

Not highly educated in book learning, he has attracted disciples and established an Ashram, solely by the extreme spirituality of his personality and 'by the simplicity of his teachings, which are taken down in the Tamil Language' by his disciples, translated and printed as 'Gospels'. Great is his fame and he is venerated by the multitude. People come from all over India just to see him. He gives his blessing free to everybody who asks for it. In some queer way, that is all his own, he 'radiates' spiritual peace and joy.

Shri Aurobindo is a 'learned' saint, while Shri Maharshi is a 'simple' saint – but both have arrived at the same goal of self-purification by the spiritual discipline of Yoga, the Indian system of Mind control.

The aim is 'ecstasy', to be attained through meditation. The Christian saints down the ages have also achieved ecstasy, or 'union with God', by prayer and meditation and by monastic spiritual discipline, becoming revered for their purity of Soul which works miracles. This may be the same things as 'Yoga' but under a different name.

India is the land where holy men still strive to be saints of the non-Christian variety. They are revered as Truth seekers and Truth finders. In our hustling, money crazed modern civilization, we are inclined to jeer at saints, both Christian and non-Christian – but it may be

that the saints seeking and finding peace, inner peace, can well afford to smile benignly at those who mock them.

India's message to the western world – and even to modern Christianity – is that Life without Religion is incomplete. Whatever form the religion may take, what name of God be invoked, the devotee who seeks the Truth sincerely will find at least something more than he who never seeks at all.

\*\*\*\*\*

Before leaving the Ashram, I attempted to interview the Saint – but he turned the tables and interviewed me for half an hour, quizzing me about my adventures in many lands. What interested him most, I think, was my mention of the Stone Age aborigines of central Australia and of the giant stone named 'Oolere' [Uluru] – Ayer's Rock – the biggest gibber [desert stone] in the world, an aboriginal place of pilgrimage.

I got only one good question in, asking him the meaning of the tiger skin on which he sat. "It is a symbol of my fierceness to protect my religion," was his smiling reply.

"But what is your religion?" I innocently asked.

"Seeking the truth," was his prompt reply.

So ended my pilgrimage to the Saint of Tiruvannamalai. I think it is not so much his actual teaching as his calm and serene atmosphere which attracts disciples.

He appears, in some indefinable way, to have entirely purged his soul of evil and to emanate Goodness in a kind of aura. To our westernized minds, the whole rigmarole has its funny side, when reduced to descriptive words – but actually Shri Maharshi is not funny at all. He is immensely dignified and convincing as a kind personality. Some Christian bishops have also this quality – but I doubt whether they could radiate it, sitting clothed only in a loin cloth, on a tiger skin.

# VOICE OF RAJAJI

## THE URGENT NEED TO ENFORCE PROHIBITION

It is now widely believed that atleast 30% of the national population has taken to drinking habit, whether at high level or moderate level. It is said that even boys at the age of 12 have taken to drinking, A teacher in a Government School in Tamil Nadu recently said in a private discussion that there are cases when boys studying even in 9<sup>th</sup> standard have come to school drunk. What causes even more concern is that even women are gradually falling to drinking habits. Where would the country go from here?

It is very depressing that the Gandhian call for prohibition have been ignored by the present day politicians, whose understanding and acceptance of Gandhian philosophy appear to be at very low level.

The widespread liquor habit is sucking the vibrant and positive energy amongst the citizens, particularly in the lower income group, causing enormous sufferings amongst women and affecting the education and future of the children.

The irresponsible politicians in the Government and the opposition remain unconcerned. A national struggle to impose prohibition is the need of the day.

Rajaji pleaded for prohibition at any cost.

### **Is not moral persuasion better than legal prohibition of the liquor traffic?**

The place of moral persuasion in temperance reform is large and important. But persuasion is to be brought to bear upon individuals in order to secure personal abstinence. It has no relevance in dealing with a social and economic problem which the liquor traffic constitutes. We have no right to place continual temptations before weak people. Prohibition by legal enactment is the only way to stop the liquor traffic. Educative propaganda and prohibition of the traffic should go on side by side, each helping the other.

### **Is it right to interfere with the personal liberty of people?**

A man's right to drink what he pleases is subject to his family's right to a fair share in his income.

Liberty is not unrestricted licence to act according to one's own will. Liberty must be regulated by law. The State has a right to determine what trade shall be permitted and what shall not be permitted as being prejudicial to the public good.

If we are to have government and order, laws must be based on the principle of the greatest good to the

greatest number. The law has just as much right to prevent the drink traffic from placing pit falls before weak people and to make me a teetotaler against my will, as it has to make me send my children to school or to keep to the left on the public highway.

'The liquor trade has become a menace to the public life of the country and it corrupts politics,' said Ramsay Macdonald.

Prof.Scharffenburg has stated that alcohol and other narcotic drugs are the most dangerous enemies of personal liberty.

We should help the people towards getting a square meal and feeding their women and children, by shutting up the toddy and arrack shops. The money that a workman pays for his drink is generally more than the cost of a good meal for him and often quite enough for a good meal for the whole family. The best and immediate service we can do for these miserable people is to save this waste by removing the temptations. The comfort they derive from drink kills their souls and prevents effort and emancipation.



GMR ADVT.

Regd No. TN/CC(S)Dn/205/09-11 LICENCED TO POST WPP NO.TN/CC(S)Dn/123/09-11  
REGD. WITH THE REGISTRAR OF NEWSPAPER FOR INDIA UNDER R.No.63900/96



# Compassion for the poor and deprived is the urgent need of the day

**PLEASE SUPPORT NANDINI VOICE FOR THE DEPRIVED**

Nandini Voice For The Deprived, provides you a meaningful forum to help the cause of the deprived.  
Please subscribe for the journal and support the efforts.

*Thanks*

**N.S. VENKATARAMAN**, Chief Editor

**Annual Subscription : Rs.100/- for twelve issues**

**Advertisement tariff :**

<b>Full Page</b>	<b>Half Page</b>	<b>Quarter Page</b>
<b>Rs.1500/-</b>	<b>Rs.1000/-</b>	<b>Rs.700/-</b>

**Discount** 40% for twelve consecutive insertions  
and 25% for six consecutive insertions

***We look forward to your support and encouragement.***

DD should be drawn in favour of :

**NANDINI VOICE FOR THE DEPRIVED**

and sent to: M60/1, IV Cross Street,  
Besant Nagar, Chennai - 600 090.

Tel : 2491 6037 Fax.:(044) 2496 1346

E-mail : nsvenkat@md4.vsnl.net.in

Website : nandinivoice.org

**Nandini Voice For The Deprived**

If undelivered, please return to

**PUBLISHERS**

**Nandini Institute of Chemical Industries**  
M-60/1, 4th Cross Street, Besant Nagar, Chennai - 600 090.

Edited and Published by N.S. Venkataraman on behalf of **Nandini Institute of Chemical Industries**, M60/1, IV Cross Street, Besant Nagar, Chennai - 600 090.  
Phone : 24916037 and Printed by Mervena Printers, No. 14, (Old 23), T.M.M.Street, Thiruvanniyur, Chennai-600 041. Editor : **N.S. Venkataraman**