

## **Swamiji on Organization**

True organization, as the word suggests, is an organic entity, not a mechanical construct. It is not just a combination of some humans, but a coordination of their minds directed to a defined objective. As it grows and unfolds its hidden possibilities, it gives a blueprint, which may be compared with the genetic code laid out in details in the first nucleus of an organism. The first nucleus holds its whole future in its lap. The first leadership, in case of an organization, thus embodies in their conception and character the ideal the organization will strive for. Any deviation from these fundamental principles may become as dangerous as the genetically modified (GM) crops.

All parts of a complex and big organization will work with vitality for the common purpose only if it has a strong brain, that is, a defined set of right ideas and a central organization, and a communication network continually working around it. Each part of the organization does its own work and is combined in a marvellous harmony with the whole. 'The term organisation means division of labour. Each does his own part, and all the parts taken together express an ideal of harmony', said Swami Vivekananda. Such harmony is based on commonality of purpose and plan, obedience, and discipline. So, Swamiji asserted, 'No centralisation is possible unless there is obedience to superiors. No great work can be done without this centralisation of individual forces.' While emphasizing obedience for the sake of organization, discipline, and learning, he never compromised on the ideal of freedom of thinking: 'Cultivate the virtue of obedience, but you must not sacrifice your own faith.' How do we reconcile these two opposites? Answered Swamiji: 'First obey and then argue.'

With a martial spirit, he wrote, ' "Ours not to reason why, ours but to do and die." Be of good cheer and believe that we are selected by the Lord to do great things, and we will do them. Hold yourself in readiness, i.e. be pure and holy, and love for love's sake.' Here perhaps he expressed the most basic principle of the type of organization he wanted. *Love is the soul of such an organization. Purity of character is its strength.*

He said, 'Why is it that organisations are so powerful? Do not say organisation is material.' And he went on to show its psychological explanation in coordination of will. Will is power, and when the wills of many combine to serve a single purpose, the result is a synergy that surpasses the sum total of all of them. 'The grass when made into a rope by being joined together can even chain a mad elephant.' So he said, 'The conviction has grown in my mind after all my travels in various lands that no great cause can succeed without an organisation.' He was aware that 'Organisation has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done.'

He saw through its negative possibilities clearly, only to pre-empt them. He studied the history of organizations between the lines and analysed them thoroughly. Especially, the growth and decay of the Buddhist movement in India provided him with great insight. He asked us to be very cautious from the beginning: 'I do not want to start with any initial mistake. One little mistake made then will go on multiplying; and if you succeed, in the long run that mistake will have assumed gigantic proportions and become hard to correct.'

He was sure that external obstacles to an organization are nothing compared to the internal. 'The moment you form yourselves into an organisation, you begin to hate everybody outside of that organisation.' There are other problems like dishonesty, lethargy, and jealousy. He wrote to one of his young disciples, Alasinga, 'You must organise a society which should regularly meet, and write to me about it as often as you can. In fact, get up as

much enthusiasm as you can. Only, beware of falsehood. Go to work, my boys, the fire will come to you! The faculty of organisation is entirely absent in our nature, but this has to be infused. The great secret is – absence of jealousy. Be always ready to concede to the opinions of your brethren, and try always to conciliate. That is the whole secret. Fight on bravely! Life is short! Give it up to a great cause.’

In another letter written to him from Chicago he instructed on the exact line of work he wanted, ‘Act on the educated young men, bring them together, and organise them.... Train up a band of fiery young men. Put your fire in them and gradually increase the organisation, letting it widen and widen its circle. Do the best you can, do not wait to cross the river when the water has all run down.’ And he himself was ‘born to organise these young men’.

The Mahamandal is for exactly this work. We want to bring about lasting and fundamental changes in our society for the good of all. Therefore, we concentrate on character-building of the youth, in whom lies all hope for the future, on a nation-wide scale. That is certainly not possible without an organization. But there was no such organization anywhere. So, out of a historical necessity the Mahamandal was formed, following Swami Vivekananda’s advice and leadership. It is imperative for those who join this work to understand the import of this effort. Its training programme for young men must reach every corner of the country to make ‘men’ of them. We must work hard to widen and widen its circle. But let us always remember: ‘You may make thousands of societies, twenty thousand political assemblages, fifty thousand institutions. These will be of no use until there is that sympathy, that love, that heart that thinks for all...’