

## **The forbidden Fruit**

To quote a veteran politician now out of stage from a recent article of his: ‘How is it that “We – the – people” remain intellectually and morally so timid as to invariably turn a blind eye to sordid heaps of degeneration that lie scattered all around us and do not realize that for cleaning the stagnant and stinking drains of our society, strong reformatory cultural current needs to be passed through it? Why is no one among us providing social, cultural and intellectual leadership which would look to ancient times when the Indian mind was pure, powerful and profound and her soul creative, calm and compassionate and rekindle that mind and reawaken that soul, and rebuild India on the strength of the forces emanating from such a rekindled mind and such an awakened soul?’

‘And how is it that “We-the-people” have all along been oblivious of what Swami Vivekananda had underlined about a century ago: “You may make thousands of societies, twenty thousand political assemblages, and fifty thousand institutions. These will be no use unless there is that heart that thinks for all. But where is the heart to build upon? Where are the foundations?”’

He continues, ‘It is we-at least a substantial number of us – who have first to acquire pure and sympathetic hearts, powerful and profound minds and ennobling souls.’ The Mahamandal thanks the author for understanding the first need and laments that no political leader thought on this line since the constitution, in the name of ‘we-the-people’, was given to the people. This organization has been working on this line at least for the last four decades, having noticed the lack of initiative on the part of those who sat at the helm of national affairs.

This is responsible for the incurable poverty in the land and starvation continues to take its toll, there is no health care, so to say, for the poor, and education is in the thin air in spite of huge expenditure of funds, corruption is almost universal. We feel elated at the growing GDP, but an expert of the UN Human Rights Commission has found extreme poverty in the USA in spite of high GDP. Who cares for Vivekananda’s warning? Our leaders have always looked to America (though once in a while they talk of looking to the East) for imitation and assimilation even of their worst things. Look to the crime chart of India. All obnoxious crimes are perpetrated through imitation of the West. Look to the media. They are all aping and copying the West. The test of their success is measured by the extent to which they copy the other side. A very small example which, if penetratingly looked into will speak a volume.

A PTI news item reads under the heading: “Minister’s AIDS cure!” (With a note of exclamation suggestive of a taunt) : ‘Meghalaya’s health minister ... today advocated a *unique (ital. ours)* method to check AIDS – to turn to moral education and live a moral life. “If all things fail, you have to turn to God. Follow the Holy Scriptures and your own religion, nothing will come on you.”’ There are many newspapers which have only one page number and that is ‘Page 3’, Electronic media are taking faster steps to demolish all that is old and stale. At the same time *timeyajnas* and *puja* are performed for players and film stars, perhaps to mock the old customs. The society is flowing rudderless. Temples dedicated to some politicians with statues have come up where regular *puja* is offered.

On the other side sermon is given to different countries on democracy, freedom of expression, and abandoning nuclear activities. Only the rich and mighty countries are entitled to keep and increase nuclear deterrents and other modern arsenals. At the same time without caring to participate in international obligations in respect of the environment, some of them are polluting the atmosphere of the Earth more and more to make more and more money. The Independent reports that Britain's leading scientist Lord May of Oxford, the President of the Royal Society, says that the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina is an example of the sort of extreme weather event that climate change can trigger. He compares such weather changes with 'weapons of mass destruction'. Lord May said, '...We have here a classic example of the problem or paradox of cooperation.' It is reported that carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas generated by man-made emissions, has risen to 380PPM today from 280PPM before the industrial revolution and is likely to rise to 500PPM by the middle of this century. The present question is not merely one community killing people of another community, but annihilation of mankind. We must stop to fall prostrate before the rich West and draw our peril nearer.