

Vivek-Jivan, August 2008

Editorial

Who Will Listen? Anybody?

A few days before the recent anniversary of India's Independence Day the caption of an article from the pen of a person who teaches philosophy in a university caught the eyes. It read, 'Development of Despair is what freedom has come to signify.' It stirred the mind up to its depth, and after regaining a sort of composure, it appeared that it was the pithiest description of a fact, the veracity of which was so palpable that all the razzmatazz of the showbiz would fail to hide the truth.

Lung power energizes the speaking power, and during the last 61 years in India this has had its full play. We have talked, talked, and talked, mostly repeating what the West has said.

The author writes, 'There is deep nexus of political opportunism and neo-liberal economic gains, be it within the nation-state or beyond it. Witness the praise for such a model of development....'

'Have we developed sensible ears to listen from below over the past 61 years of independence? Or has time gone by in such a manner that below the daze and rattle of mega dams, superhighways, swanky malls and staged beauties, the rants of the flooded, the maimed, butchered, and displaced – ... fade into oblivion? Is it a renewed Darwinism that pits every form of identity as an instrument of domination? Does freedom to choose and articulate mean a self-enclosed, self-serving and arrogated sense of the self that undercuts any attempt to understand the other?'

India of the past was rich in studies of mathematics, science, medicine, and, of course, politics. Before the advent of Jesus Christ, Chanakya wrote treaties on politics and economics. He was a kingmaker and his administration was a wonderment to a Chinese traveller. Corruption was unknown. He himself set examples like saving government money by paying for oil for a lamp when lit up for his personal work.

Look at the incidence of corruption today, almost universal! We may only take pride that we may not be the best like Finland (the least corrupt country in the world), but not the most corrupt like a neighbouring country, which formed a part of India in the past.

'Chiaroscuro' reappears after a long time. But behind this, the Olympics of China, understanding of the importance of 'national interest' by a party boss and superimposition of the voice of one on the face of another to present the 'Ode to the Motherland', are all there. India would do well to decipher what is of 'national interest' in the rigmarole of confusing ideas and jugglery of words, not understood either by the speakers or by the listeners.

Education, health care, housing have become good business for investment by moneybags. Let the environment rot to help making money, culture is being crushed with the bulldozer of modernism, and responsible media also are not reluctant to help in sullyng it. Security is in the hands of supernatural powers, if there is any. Honesty may still be in a fool's dictionary. Democracy is for dominating those who do not tow in line

with one's 'politics', which may change its spelling a little – 'poly-tricks', to send democracy to its doomsday. Justice has to cry for justice.

There is no satiety in society today. 'The first curse upon man is that he must earn his livelihood in the sweat of his brow!' But how many may avail of a situation even if one is ready to sweat blood?

And who are the people? If all of them die of hunger and disease, whom shall we rule? If they are very weak, who will raise throaty slogans to help us win elections? So, all of them should not die out. They are our necessary tools to govern the country.

The sad moaning of Swami Vivekananda to rouse the nation fell on deaf ears. Subhas Bose gave his all for the country, but he was silenced and forgotten by the nation. Is there nobody left in the country today, who can come up resolutely to rebuild India, healing her up from the cancer of politics, by listening to the unforgettable call of Swami Vivekananda? – 'Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen who are gradually sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance.'