



Dr. Vishwanath Karad

**MIT WORLD PEACE
UNIVERSITY | PUNE**

TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH, SOCIAL INNOVATION & PARTNERSHIPS

UPS2002A

**World Famous Philosophers,
Sages/Saints
and
Great Kings**

Faculty of Peace Studies

“No Peace, No Life. Know Peace, Know Life.”

From the founders...



Prof. Dr. Vishwanath D. Karad

*"I believe that peace would be established in the society through value based
‘UNIVERSAL EDUCATION SYSTEM’ which, inspires to give back to the society."*



Mr. Rahul V. Karad

"With the synergy of academia with technology, technology with research, research with industry, industry with economy, economy with social innovation and social innovation with Peace, we are committed to make MIT-WPU a world class space of intellectual excellence, where reason and rationality reigns, humanism rules, and learning becomes a great adventure. With this vision, the peace component in the curriculum and yoga practices have been quite thoughtfully added to the credit system."

Education for Peace

Education for Peace is a prime requirement for true progress and national integration. The opening sentence of the preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO states that-

“Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of Peace must be constructed”.

The basic purpose of peace is to equip individuals with values, skills and attitudes needed to develop as wholesome individuals capable of living in harmony with themselves and with others.

Mahatma Gandhiji has aptly said that, ***“If we are to teach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with children.”***

Contrary to popular belief, *peace and pace* are synonymous, so one can have a cutting-edge personality and yet be propagating peace. A research shows that 18% of children indulge in various acts of violence and initiate acts of unrest that creates a dire need for peace and peace studies. Many animated cartoons, films and video games are laced with aggressive values that deteriorates and degrades human thoughts and deeds. Many children are influenced by these sources of entertainment, making peace studies a vital element of our education.

Peer pressure, fierce unhealthy competition and unrealistic expectations, further leads to things like substance dependence. By imbibing peace, the students will not only become self-aware but also will spread the awareness amongst each other.

Our society is witnessing abusive and offensive personal and professional relationships. Our choices in general, of words, language and sometimes even emotions, thoughts and actions tend to be tinted with violence.

Faith in violence as a quick-fix problem solver is emerging like an epidemic, making people wrongly believe that violence under the name of faith is justified. Silent emotional violence is as damaging as physical violence. The problem is that, many of us do not really know what it means to be in peace.

Two significant factors of peace are *knowing peace and embracing peace*. In order to embrace peace, we should shift from consumerism to simplicity and advocate peace in all walks of life.

We need Peace at Different Levels:

1. Individual or Personal Level - experiencing holistic Peace of Mind and Self.
2. Interpersonal Level such as Valuing Differences among our peers and respecting each other.
3. Community Level- that is empathy and acceptance for others.
4. National Level- Committed to democratic Ideas, a sense of pride for our country, a feeling of patriotism and unity.
5. Global Level refers to affinity for the humanity, environment and compassion for animals.

The Core Value of Indian Culture & Philosophy is VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM” meaning “THE WHOLE WORLD IS ONE FAMILY”.

Pro-Peace Attitudes and Values:

1. Love and compassion
2. Truth
3. Justice
4. Righteousness
5. Positive outlook
6. Appreciation of diversity
7. Focusing on the positive in others
8. Self- reflection and listening to the inner voice.

Educators for Peace:

Swami Vivekananda
Saint Dnyaneshwara
Saint Tukaram Maharaj
Saint Kabir
Buddha
Mahavir
Lao-Tzu

Other Important Areas of Peace Education...

1. Spiritual Understanding/Knowledge
2. Universal Values and Principles
3. Constitution and Law
4. Management Strategies
5. Leadership Skills
6. Conflict Resolution
7. Yoga and Meditation
8. Emotional Intelligence
9. Empathic Communication Skills
10. Creative Cooperation & Team Work

“Peace is not absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means”- Ronald Reagan

Our sources of inspiration:

Swami Vivekananda



Saint Dnyaneshwara



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Philosophers:

1. Mahatma Gandhi
2. Swami Vivekananda
3. Adi Shankaracharya
4. Sri Aurobindo
5. Socrates
6. Plato
7. Aristotle
8. Karl Marx

Sages / Saints:

1. Saint Dnyaneshwara
2. Saint Tukaram Maharaj
3. Samartha Ramdas Swami
4. Saint Kabir
5. Mother Teresa
6. Saint Gadgebaba
7. Saint Tiruvalluvar
8. Raman Maharshi

Great Kings:

1. Raja Janak
2. Chandragupta Maurya
3. Samrat Ashoka
4. Maharana Pratap
5. Chhatrapati Shri Shivaji Maharaj

Syllabus:

Lecture No.	Topics to be covered in the course	Learning Outcome/Questions to elicit
1	Why Peace? Introduction to Philosophers, Sages/Saints and Great Kings	Understanding the scope of the subject Peace and overview of all modules
2	Raja Janak	Philosopher King from ancient India
3	Samrat Ashoka	Samrat Ashoka - Understanding the process of transformation of human being from violence to non-violence
4	Chandragupta Maurya	Chandragupta Maurya - Recall the idea of one nation one administration policy in Maurya empire
5	Maharana Pratap	Maharana Pratap- Students get to know His life, Bravery and glory
6	Chhatrapati Shri Shivaji Maharaj	Chhatrapati Shri Shivaji Maharaj - Motivate students to apply the values, understand administrative policies
7	Saint Tradition of Maharashtra –Saint Dnyaneshwara , Saint Tukaram Maharaj , Samartha Ramdas Swami - 1	Students are able to apply the knowledge of Dnyaneshwari, the knowledge of Gatha sutras, the knowledge of Dasbodh sutras in their lives
8	Saint Tradition of Maharashtra –Saint Dnyaneshwara , Saint Tukaram Maharaj , Samartha Ramdas Swami – 2	Students are able to apply the knowledge of Dnyaneshwari, the knowledge of Gatha sutras, the knowledge of Dasbodh sutras in their lives
9	Saint Kabir	Saint Kabir - Demonstration of Hindu-Muslim unity
10	Saint Tiruvalluvar and Raman Maharishi	Students get insights from Tamil poet-saint known as the author of the Tirukkural (“Sacred Couplets”), considered a masterpiece of

		human thought and Knowing Indian Spiritual legacy of India
11	Service to Mankind: Mother Teresa and Saint Gadgebaba	Knowing compassion, selfless work and service to human kind. Demonstrate students about dignity of labor and cleanliness
12	Film Appreciation	Film Appreciation - Helping the students to appreciate cinema by understanding its distinct language, its narrative complexity and the way films control and stimulate our thoughts and feelings. Explain how cinema as a visual medium, engages with us in constructing meaning.
13	Film Appreciation	Film Appreciation - Helping the students to appreciate cinema by understanding its distinct language, its narrative complexity and the way films control and stimulate our thoughts and feelings. Explain how cinema as a visual medium, engages with us in constructing meaning.
14	Swami Vivekananda	Swami Vivekananda - Explains students a relation between science and spirituality and thoughts for youth by Swamiji
15	Glimpse of Greek Philosophy : Socrates, Plato and Aristotle - 1	Recall the history of Greek philosophy
16	Glimpse of Greek Philosophy : Socrates, Plato and Aristotle - 2	Recall the history of Greek philosophy
17	Karl Marx	Karl Marx - Students are able to understand about socialism and Communism
18	Mahatma Gandhiji and his Philosophy	Mahatma Gandhiji (Philosophy) - Explains students about Mahatma Gandhiji's experiments with truth.
19	Adi Shankaracharya	Adi Shankaracharya - Recall the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta
20	Sri Aurobindo	Sri Aurobindo- Know the prominent thinker in Indian philosophy, a yogi, a guru, a poet, and nationalist
21	Presentations – Biography	Presentations – Students make individual presentation with the help of PPT explaining the outcome learnt from the biography read
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27	Presentations – Biography	Presentations – Students make individual presentation with the help of PPT explaining the outcome learnt from the biography read
28	Presentations – Biography	Presentations – Students make individual presentation with the help of PPT explaining the outcome learnt from the biography read
29	Learning from Subject (Assignment 1)	Learning from Subject (Assignment-1) - Importance of different qualities, values in life will be described by students in their own words.
30	Learning from Subject (Assignment 2)	Learning from Subject (Assignment-2) - Importance of different qualities, values in life will be described by students in their own words.

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Philosophy of Gandhiji



Gandhiji is universally known as the most renowned theorist, philosopher and also the practitioner of truth, love, non-violence, tolerance freedom and peace. He was a leader of his people, unsupported by any authority. He was very much concerned with the nature, poor deprived and the downtrodden and he has intended to alter the evil, political, social, and economic system of the people. His mission was to reconstruct India from below upwards a decentralized socio-political and economic order with India's myriad villages as its base. Mahatma Gandhiji is not merely a political philosopher; it is a message and philosophy of life. Gandhian philosophy is double-edged weapon. Its objective is to transform the individual and society simultaneously, in accordance with the principles of truth and non-violence.

For the individual self-transformation is attempted with carefully rather than with urgency. He viewed his own life as a process of development undertaken "one step at a time". He saw the need to continually "experiment with truth" in whatever field in order to come to see the truthful path.

Non-violence:

Gandhiji said "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of man-kind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by ingenuity of man". Non-violence means good will towards others doing well towards others. It is not a weapon of weak and coward. Ahimsa means the largest love, greatest charity. According to the Gandhiji non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer. It is the soul force or truth force. Non-violence is regarded as the highest law of human kind. It was the unique non-violent movement under his leadership that earned for India freedom from the colonial rule. In spearheading the campaign against the alien rule, Gandhiji adopted the innovative techniques of civil disobedience and social transformation, which had several exemplary features.

Truth:

He has experimented on truth and found that truth is as powerful as a weapon. Gandhiji said: "The Truth is far more powerful than any weapon of mass destruction." He took the concept of truth and God from Upanishads. The Upanishad says, "God is truth (Satyam)". Gandhiji asserted that "Truth is God".

Gandhiji chose the Bhagavad Gita's path of Karmayoga (path of action) as a means to the ultimate goal of realization of Truth and set as the ultimate goal in this life the achievement of a Sarvodaya society wherein each individual will be free from want, free from exploitation, free from envy and selfishness, free from pride or the ridicule of others, free from command problems and free from external control.

Satyagraha:

Satyagraha is nothing but the implementation of Truth and Ahimsa in the different walks of life. Truth and Ahimsa are virtues of the whole humanity. "In its origin, the term 'Satyagraha' is a compound Sanskrit word formed by Satya and agraha. 'Satya means truth' and 'agraha' means holding fast, adherence or insistence. The compound word, 'Satyagraha' means clinging to truth, holding fast to truth and Insistence on truth or firm adherence to truth. A Satyagraha campaign is undertaken only after all other peaceful means have proven ineffective. At its heart is non-violence. An attempt is made to convert, persuade or win over the opponent.

The purpose of Satyagraha is to fight against injustice and tyranny. Satyagrahi should have moral force; he makes understood by means of reason. There is no place for physical force. Truth or Satya is the most salient value of the Satyagraha action system. Gandhiji identified truth with God. He pointed out that Satyagraha involves resistance but not passivity. "Like passive-resistance, Satyagraha is not the weapon of the weak, the coward, the unarmed and the helpless. It is a weapon of the morally vigilant and the active.

Gramswaraj:

Mahatma Gandhiji had his own approach to the economic problem of India. He did not essentially believe in prompting large scale industrialization. Move towards villages was his slogan. Gandhiji was no revivalist as he wanted revolutionary changes based on the original system of the village life and its governance. It was very well reflected in his writings on an ideal village system. He depicted the picture of an ideal village of his dreams which would be self-sufficient and self-reliant in its very nature. He wrote: 'My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is necessary.

Decentralization in democracy:

Democracy depends upon the equality of all human beings; their right to participate in social and political transformation, to live in dignity. Political decentralization means dispersal of decision making powers, accompanied by delegation of required, authority to authority to individuals or units at all levels of organization.

Education system:

Education system proposed by Gandhiji is called as "Basic Education". He mainly aims at the education in mother tongue an education should be make the children skilled and independent. There must be a union of literary knowledge and Dharma. The type of education imported to the people must necessarily be related to the conditions of life in India. The surroundings of the school have to be clean healthy and conducive to promote good education with basic amenities such as good drinking water, pure air and peaceful atmosphere.

He advised that the students have to be trained in such a manner so as to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance. The system of basic education proposed by Gandhiji leads to the development of the mind, body and soul whereas the ordinary system of education cares only for the mind.

Concept of politics:

Gandhiji stands for people's politics and not party politics. For him politics opens the door of 'service' not for using power. He placed party less democracy. He resists injustice and exploitation and thus purifies the politics.

Gandhiji's Concept of Religion:

M. K. Gandhiji's philosophy of religion gives us a new way of thinking about religion. According to him, man's religion is that which transcends all religions, that which purifies man's soul and enables him to unite himself with his inner truth. He believes that no man can live without religion. For him, prayer is the vital part of religion. Ramnama is the supreme among all mantras because Rama, Allah and God are convertible terms. Gandhiji says, 'Ramnama is the other name of Khuda or God. I want my Muslim brothers to understand that God of the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and other communities of the world is one. To me, all religions are of equal status. 'He

believes in the unity of religions and tolerance. Gandhiji shows his religious tolerance and belief in all religions. According to Gandhiji service to man is the service to God only. The true religion of man is to serve humanity. By religion Gandhiji means self-realization.

Untouchability:

According to Gandhiji, the removal of untouchability does not mean only its removal from Hindu Society, Gandhiji stressed for its application in all walks of life and from all levels of society. Gandhiji said, "There should be not only no untouchability as between Hindus and Hindus, but there should be no untouchability whatsoever between Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Parsis and the rest. Gandhiji wanted to preach the message of truth to the entire world. Removal of untouchability for him was love for whole world and breaking of barriers between man and man and between the various orders of being

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Swami Vivekananda



“ One Infinite pure and holy – beyond thought beyond qualities I bow down to thee “

– Swami Vivekananda

(Narendranath Datta, Indian ; 12 January 1863 - 4 July 1902)

Swami Vivekananda’s inspiring personality is well known both in India and rest of the world as a spiritual genius of commanding intellect and power. A lot was achieved in his short span of 39 years, of which the major was done in his last ten years. His Absolute was a person’s own higher self; to labour for the benefit of humanity was the noblest endeavour. World remembers him as a great Spiritual leader and reformer in India who attempted to combine Indian spirituality with Western material progress, maintaining that the two supplemented and complemented one another. His vast knowledge of Eastern and Western culture as well as his deep spiritual insight, fervid eloquence, brilliant conversation, love and compassion, colourful personality, and handsome figure made an irresistible appeal to the many types of Americans who came in contact with him. People who saw or heard Vivekananda even once still cherish his memory after a lapse of more than half a century.

Born into an upper-middle-class family of the Kayastha (scribes) caste in Bengal, he was educated at a Western-style university where he was exposed to Western philosophy, Christianity, and science. He was a very brilliant student and his Principal was sure that he would make a positive impact on the world. Social reform became a prominent element of his thought, and he joined the Brahmo Samaj (Society of Brahma), dedicated to eliminating child marriage and illiteracy and determined to spread education among women and the lower castes. His spiritual quest led him to various people to whom he asked the question “Have you seen God?” He found such a person in Sri Ramakrishna who demonstrated the essential unity of all religions. Sri

Ramakrishna became his master, allayed his doubts, gave him God vision, and transformed him into sage and prophet with authority to teach.

After Sri Ramakrishna's death, Swami Vivekananda renounced the world and criss-crossed India as a wandering monk. His mounting compassion for India's people drove him to sharing the spiritual knowledge with them and the world.

Always stressing the universal and humanistic side of the Vedas, the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism, as well as belief in service rather than dogma, Swami Vivekananda attempted to infuse vigour into Hindu thought and presented Hindu spirituality to the West. He was an activating force in the movement to promote Vedanta philosophy (one of the six schools of Indian philosophy) in the United States and England. In 1893 he appeared in Chicago as a spokesman for Hinduism at the World's Parliament of Religions and so captivated the assembly that a newspaper account described him as "an orator by divine right and undoubtedly the greatest figure at the Parliament." Vivekananda won instant celebrity in America and a ready forum for his spiritual teaching. For three years he spread the Vedanta philosophy and religion in America and England. In America Vivekananda's mission was the interpretation of India's spiritual culture, especially in its Vedantic setting. He also tried to enrich the religious consciousness of the Americans through the rational and humanistic teachings of the Vedanta philosophy. In America he became India's spiritual ambassador and pleaded eloquently for better understanding between India and the New World in order to create a healthy synthesis of East and West, of religion and science.

On his return to India with a small group of Western disciples in 1897, Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission at the monastery of Belur Math on the Ganges (Ganga) River near Calcutta (now Kolkata). Self-perfection and service were his ideals, and the order continued to stress them. He adapted and made relevant to the 20th century the very highest ideals of the Vedantic religion, and, although he lived only two years into that century, he left the mark of his personality on East and West alike.

Exhorting his nation to spiritual greatness, he wakened India to a new national consciousness. In his own motherland Vivekananda is regarded as the patriot saint of modern India and an inspirer of her dormant national consciousness. To the Hindus he preached the ideal of a strength-giving and man-making religion. Service to man as the visible manifestation of the Godhead was the special form of worship he advocated for the Indians, devoted as they were to the rituals and myths of their ancient faith. Many political leaders of India have publicly acknowledged their

indebtedness to Swami Vivekananda.

He died July 4, 1902, after a second, much shorter sojourn in the West. His lectures and writings have been gathered into nine volumes.

Early Life:

Narendra Nath Datta, was born in an affluent family in Kolkata on 12 January 1863. His father, Vishwanath Datta, was a successful attorney with interests in a wide range of subjects, and his mother, Bhuvaneshwari Devi, was endowed with deep devotion, strong character and other qualities. A precocious boy, Narendra excelled in music, gymnastics and studies. By the time he graduated from Calcutta University, he had acquired a vast knowledge of different subjects, especially Western philosophy and history. Born with a yogic temperament, he used to practise meditation even from his boyhood, and was associated with Brahmo Movement for some time.

"I am indebted to my mother for the efflorescence of my knowledge." – Vivekananda's feelings for his mother.

He was an avid reader in a wide range of subjects, including philosophy, religion, history, social science, art and literature. He was also interested in Hindu scriptures, including the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. Narendra was trained in Indian classical music, and regularly participated in physical exercise, sports and organised activities. Narendra studied Western logic, Western philosophy and European history at the General Assembly's Institution (now known as the Scottish Church College). In 1881 he passed the Fine Arts examination, and completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1884. Narendra studied the works of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Baruch Spinoza, Georg W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill and Charles Darwin. He became fascinated with the evolutionism of Herbert Spencer and corresponded with him, translating Spencer's book Education (1861) into Bengali. While studying Western philosophers, he also learned Sanskrit scriptures and Bengali literature. William Hastie (principal of General Assembly's Institution) wrote, "Narendra is really a genius. I have travelled far and wide but I have never come across a lad of his talents and possibilities, even in German universities, among philosophical students." Some accounts have called Narendra a shrutidhara (a person with a prodigious memory).

Social reform became a prominent element of his thought, and he joined the Brahmo Samaj (Society of Brahma), dedicated to eliminating child marriage and illiteracy and determined to spread education among women and the lower castes. From 1881 to 1884 he was also active in Sen's Band of Hope, which tried to discourage youths from smoking and drinking. At the threshold of youth Narendra had to pass through a period of spiritual crisis when he was assailed by doubts about the existence of God. It was at that time he first heard about Sri Ramakrishna from one of his English professors at college. In 1881 Narendra first met Ramakrishna, who became his spiritual focus after his own father had died in 1884.

Narendra's first introduction to Ramakrishna occurred in a literature class at General Assembly's Institution when he heard Professor William Hastie lecturing on William Wordsworth's poem, *The Excursion*. While explaining the word "trance" in the poem, Hastie suggested that his students visit Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar to understand the true meaning of trance. This prompted some of his students (including Narendra) to visit Ramakrishna.

In November 1881, Narendra went to meet Sri Ramakrishna who was staying at the Kali Temple in Dakshineswar. He straightaway asked the Master a question which he had put to several others but had received no satisfactory answer: "Sir, have you seen God?" Without a moment's hesitation, Sri Ramakrishna replied: "Yes, I have. I see Him as clearly as I see you, only in a much intense sense."

They probably first met personally in November 1881, though Narendra did not consider this their first meeting, and neither man mentioned this meeting later. At this time Narendra was preparing for his upcoming F. A. examination, when Ram Chandra Datta accompanied him to Surendra Nath Mitra's, house where Ramakrishna was invited to deliver a lecture. According to Paranjape, at this meeting Ramakrishna asked young Narendra to sing. Impressed by his singing talent, he asked Narendra to come to Dakshineswar. In late 1881 or early 1882, Narendra went to Dakshineswar with two friends and met Ramakrishna. This meeting proved to be a turning point in his life. Although he did not initially accept Ramakrishna as his teacher and rebelled against his ideas, he was attracted by his personality and began to frequently visit him at Dakshineswar. He initially saw Ramakrishna's ecstasies and visions as "mere figments of imagination" and "hallucinations". As a member of Brahmo Samaj, he opposed idol worship, polytheism and Ramakrishna's worship of Kali. He even rejected the Advaita Vedanta of "identity with the absolute" as blasphemy and madness, and often ridiculed the idea. Narendra tested Ramakrishna, who faced his arguments patiently: "Try to see the truth from all angles", he replied.

Narendra's father's sudden death in 1884 left the family bankrupt; creditors began demanding the repayment of loans, and relatives threatened to evict the family from their ancestral home. Narendra, once a son of a well-to-do family, became one of the poorest students in his college. He unsuccessfully tried to find work and questioned God's existence, but found solace in Ramakrishna and his visits to Dakshineswar increased.

One day Narendra requested Ramakrishna to pray to goddess Kali for their family's financial welfare. Ramakrishna suggested him to go to the temple himself and pray. Following Ramakrishna's suggestion, he went to the temple thrice, but failed to pray for any kind of worldly necessities and ultimately prayed for true knowledge and devotion from the goddess. Narendra gradually grew ready to renounce everything for the sake of realising God, and accepted Ramakrishna as his Guru.

Apart from removing doubts from the mind of Narendra, Sri Ramakrishna won him over through his pure, unselfish love. Thus began a guru-disciple relationship which is quite unique in the history of spiritual masters. Under the guidance of the Master, Narendra made rapid strides on the spiritual path. Sri Ramakrishna instilled in these young men the spirit of renunciation and brotherly love for one another. At Dakshineswar, Narendra also met several young men who were devoted to Sri Ramakrishna, and they all became close friends.

In 1885, Ramakrishna developed throat cancer, and was transferred to Calcutta and (later) to a garden house in Cossipore. Narendra and Ramakrishna's other disciples took care of him during his last days, and Narendra's spiritual education continued. At Cossipore, he experienced Nirvikalpa samadhi. Narendra and several other disciples received ochre robes from Ramakrishna, forming his first monastic order. He was taught that service to men was the most effective worship of God. Sri Ramakrishna asked him to care for the other monastic disciples, and in turn asked them to see Narendra as their leader. Sri Ramakrishna died in the early-morning hours of 16 August 1886 in Cossipore.

Awareness of Life's Mission:

Under the leadership of Narendra, they formed a new monastic brotherhood, and in 1887 they took the formal vows of sannyasa, thereby assuming new names. Narendra now became Swami Vivekananda (although this name was actually assumed much later.) After establishing the new monastic order, Vivekananda heard the inner call for a greater mission in his life. While most of

the followers of Sri Ramakrishna thought of him in relation to their own personal lives, Vivekananda thought of the Master in relation to India and the rest of the world. As the prophet of the present age, what was Sri Ramakrishna's message to the modern world and to India in particular? This question and the awareness of his own inherent powers urged Swamiji to go out alone into the wide world. So in the middle of 1890, after receiving

the blessings of Sri Sarada Devi, the divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna, known to the world as Holy Mother, who was then staying in Kolkata, Swamiji left Baranagar Math and embarked on a long journey of exploration and discovery of India.

During his travels all over India, Swami Vivekananda was deeply moved to see the appalling poverty and backwardness of the masses. He was the first religious leader in India to understand and openly declare that the real cause of India's downfall was the neglect of the masses. The immediate need was to provide food and other bare necessities of life to the hungry millions. For this they should be taught improved methods of agriculture, village industries, etc. It was in this context that Vivekananda grasped the crux of the problem of poverty in India (which had escaped the attention of social reformers of his days): owing to centuries of oppression, the downtrodden masses had lost faith in their capacity to improve their lot. It was first of all necessary to infuse into their minds faith in them. For this they needed a life-giving, inspiring message. Swamiji found this message in the principle of the Atman, the doctrine of the potential divinity of the soul, taught in Vedanta, the ancient system of religious philosophy of India. He saw that, in spite of poverty, the masses clung to religion, but they had never been taught the life-giving, ennobling principles of Vedanta and how to apply them in practical life.

Thus, the masses needed two kinds of knowledge: secular knowledge to improve their economic condition and spiritual knowledge to infuse in them faith in themselves and strengthen their moral sense. The next question was how to spread these two kinds of knowledge among the masses? Through education – this was the answer that Swamiji found.

Decision to attend the Parliament of Religions:

It was when these ideas were taking shape in his mind in the course of his wanderings that Swami Vivekananda heard about the World's Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago in 1893. His friends and admirers in India wanted him to attend the Parliament. He too felt that the Parliament would provide the right forum to present his Master's message to the world, and so he decided to go to America. Another reason which prompted Swamiji to go to America was to seek financial

help for his project of uplifting the masses. Swamiji, however, wanted to have an inner certitude and divine call regarding his mission. Both of these he got while he sat in deep meditation on the rock-island at Kanyakumari. With the funds partly collected by his Chennai disciples and partly provided by the Raja of Khetri, Swami Vivekananda left for America from Mumbai on 31 May 1893.

He captivated the assembly at the Parliament that a newspaper account described him as “an orator by divine right and undoubtedly the greatest figure at the Parliament.” Vivekananda won instant celebrity in America and a ready forum for his spiritual teaching. For three years he spread the Vedanta philosophy and religion in America and England. In America, Vivekananda's mission was the interpretation of India's spiritual culture, especially in its Vedantic setting. He also tried to enrich the religious consciousness of the Americans through the rational and humanistic teachings of the Vedanta philosophy. In America, he became India's spiritual ambassador and pleaded eloquently for better understanding between India and the New World in order to create a healthy synthesis of East and West, of religion and science.

He returned to India in January 1897. In response to the enthusiastic welcome that he received everywhere, he delivered a series of lectures in different parts of India, which created a great stir all over the country. Through these inspiring and profoundly significant lectures Swamiji attempted to do the following:

- To awaken the religious consciousness of the people and create in them pride in their cultural heritage.
- To bring about unification of Hinduism by pointing out the common bases of its sects.
- To focus the attention of educated people on the plight of the downtrodden masses, and to expound his plan for their uplift by the application of the principles of Practical Vedanta.

Mahasamadhi:

In June 1899 he went to the West on a second visit. This time he spent most of his time in the West coast of USA. After delivering many lectures there, he returned to Belur Math in December 1900. The rest of his life was spent in India, inspiring and guiding people, both monastic and lay. Incessant work, especially giving lectures and inspiring people, told upon Swamiji's health. His health deteriorated and the end came quietly on the night of 4 July 1902. Before his Mahasamadhi he had written to a Western follower: “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 whole world shall know that it is one with God.”

Ramakrishna Mission:

unique type of organization known as Ramakrishna Mission, in which monks and lay people would jointly undertake propagation of Practical Vedanta, and various forms of social service, such as running hospitals, schools, colleges, hostels, rural development centres etc, and conducting massive relief and rehabilitation work for victims of earthquakes, cyclones and other calamities, in different parts of India and other countries.



The emblem of the Ramakrishna Order designed by Swamij is a unique and unparalleled work of art created by one of the richest minds in contemporary history in an exalted mood of spiritual inspiration. It is a profound symbol of harmony and synthesis for reverential meditation in this present age of conflict and disharmony. This symbol is the epitome of Swamiji's message of harmony and synthesis, leading to life's fulfillment. This is indeed the most eloquent expression of what he really preached, what he wanted every man and woman to be, to realize, either in the East or in the West. The goal is to realize, even in this very life, one's real Self, the self-effulgent Atman, the Swan in the emblem and through this realization to be free of all limitations, all bondages, all littleness. This spiritual freedom is one thing to be aspired for and achieved in this very life. It releases one from one's prison-house of limited individuality and confers upon him or her, the blessing of universal existence. He then becomes one with Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. 'Be free. This is the whole of religion' said Swamiji. The meaning behind this emblem, in the language of Vivekananda himself:

"The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of Karma, the lotus of Bhakti, and the rising- sun of Jnana. The encircling serpent is indicative of Yoga and awakened Kundalini Shakti, while the swan in the picture stands for Paramatman. Therefore, the ideal of the picture is that by the union of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga, the vision of the Paramatman is obtained."

Belur Math

In early 1898 Swami Vivekananda acquired a big plot of land on the western bank of the Ganga at a place called Belur to have a permanent abode for the monastery and monastic Order originally started at Baranagar, and got it registered as Ramakrishna Math after a couple of years. Here Swamiji established a new, universal pattern of monastic life which adapts ancient monastic ideals to the conditions of modern life, which gives equal importance to personal illumination and social service, and which is open to all men without any distinction of religion, race or caste.



Some of Swamiji Vivekananda's Lectures/Thoughts:

He left for posterity his four classics: Jnana-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, and Raja- Yoga, all of which are outstanding treatises on Hindu philosophy. In addition, he delivered innumerable lectures, wrote inspired letters in his own hand to his many friends and disciples, composed numerous poems, and acted as spiritual guide to the many seekers, who came to him for instruction. Swami Vivekananda once spoke of himself as a "condensed India." His life and teachings are of inestimable value to the West for an understanding of the mind of Asia. William James, the Harvard philosopher, called the Swami the "paragon of Vedantists." Max Muller and Paul Deussen, the famous Orientalists of the nineteenth century, held him in genuine respect and affection. "His words," writes Romain Rolland, "are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books, at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports, must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!"

Concentration:

These are Frank Rhodehamel's notes of Swami Vivekananda's lecture given in Alameda (California, USA) on April 16, 1900, and are reproduced here from his Complete Works, 6: 123-25. Being "notes"-and not a verbatim report, like his other lectures in the Complete Works-these

are sketchy and may not represent the exact words spoken by Vivekananda. But they give a fairly good indication of his ideas on the subject.

Some excerpt of the lecture notes is given below:

Concentration is the essence of all knowledge. Nothing can be done without concentration. Ordinary people waste ninety per cent of thought force and therefore they are constantly committing blunders. The trained mind never makes a mistake. When the mind is concentrated and turned backward on itself, everything within us will be our servant, not our master

Yoga means controlling the senses, will and mind. The benefit of its study is that we learn to control instead of being controlled. Mind seems to be layer on layer. Our real goal is to cross all these intervening strata of our being and find God. The end and aim of Yoga is to realize God. To do this we must go beyond relative knowledge, go beyond the sense-world.

The purer the body and mind, the quicker the desired result will be obtained. You must be perfectly pure. Do not think of evil things, such thoughts will surely drag you down. If you are perfectly pure and practice faithfully, your mind can finally be made a searchlight of infinite power. There is no limit to its scope. But there must be constant practice and non- attachment to the world

When we work with concentration, losing all consciousness of ourselves, the work that is done is infinitely better. Every one may have experienced this in their own lives.

The Utility of the Knowledge of Our Real Nature:

The body is not the Real Person; neither is the mind, for the mind waxes and wanes.

The Real Person, is one and infinite, the omnipresent Spirit. Atman, whatever it is, has neither form nor shape, and that which has neither form nor shape must be omnipresent. And it is only the Atman beyond, which can live forever. The Real Person, the Atman--being beyond cause and effect, and not bound by time and space--must therefore be free. The Real Person was never bound, and could not be bound. The apparent person, the reflection, is limited by time, space, and causation, and is therefore bound.

The body and mind are continually changing, and are in fact only names of series of changeful phenomena, like rivers whose waters are in a constant state of flux, yet presenting the appearance of unbroken streams. Every particle in this body is continually changing; no one has the same body for many minutes together, and yet we think of it as the same body. So with the mind: one moment it is happy, another moment unhappy; one moment strong, another weak; an ever-changing whirlpool. The mind cannot be the Atman, which is infinite. Change can only be in the limited.

What is the utility, the effect, the result, of this knowledge? In these days, we have to measure everything by utility--by how many pounds, shillings, and pence it represents. What right has a person to ask that truth should be judged by the standard of utility or money? Suppose there is no utility, will it be less true? Utility is not the test of truth. Nevertheless, there is the highest utility in this. Happiness, we see, is what everyone is seeking for, but the majority seeks it in things which are evanescent and not real. No happiness was ever found in the senses. There never was a person who found happiness in the senses or in the enjoyment of the senses. Happiness is only found in the Atman. Therefore, the highest utility for us all is to find this happiness in the Atman.

The next point is that ignorance is the great mother of all misery, and the fundamental ignorance is to think that the Infinite weeps and cries, that He is finite. This is the basis of all ignorance that we, the immortal, the ever pure, the perfect Atman, think that we are little minds, that we are little bodies; it is the mother of all selfishness. As soon as I think that I am a little body, I want to preserve it, to protect it, to keep it nice, at the expense of other bodies; then you and I become separate. As soon as this idea of separation comes, it opens the door to all mischief and leads to all misery. This is the utility that if a very small fractional part of human beings living today can put aside the idea of selfishness, narrowness, and littleness, this earth will become a paradise tomorrow; but it will never be with just machines and improvements of material knowledge. These only increase misery, as oil poured on fire increase the flame all the more. Without the knowledge of the Atman, all material knowledge is only adding fuel to fire, only giving into the hands of selfish man one more instrument to take what belongs to others, to live upon the life of others, instead of giving up his life for them.

Work and Thought:

There is a great tendency in modern times to talk too much of work and decry thought. Doing is very good, but that comes from thinking. Little manifestations of energy through the muscles are called work. But where there is no thought, there will be no work. Fill the brain, therefore, with high thoughts, highest ideals, place them day and night before you, and out of that will come great work. Talk not about impurity, but say that we are pure. We have hypnotized ourselves into this thought that we are little, that we are born, and that we are going to die, and into a constant state of fear.

There is a story about a lioness that was big with young, going about in search of prey; and seeing a flock of sheep, she jumped upon them. She died in the effort; and a little baby lion was born, motherless. It was taken care of by the sheep and the sheep brought it up, and it grew up with them, ate grass, and bleated like the sheep. And although in time it became a big, full-grown lion, it

thought it was a sheep. One day another lion came in search of prey and was astonished to find that in the midst of this flock of sheep was a lion, fleeing like the sheep at the approach of danger. He tried to get near the sheep-lion, to tell it that it was not a sheep but a lion; but the poor animal fled at his approach. However, he watched his opportunity and one day found the sheep-lion sleeping. He approached it and said, "You are a lion." "I am a sheep," cried the other lion and could not believe the contrary but bleated. The lion dragged him towards a lake and said, "Look here; here is my reflection and yours." Then, came the comparison. It looked at the lion and then at its own reflection, and in a moment came the idea that it was a lion. The lion roared, the bleating was gone.

You are lions! You are souls, pure, infinite, and perfect. The might of the universe is within you. "Why weepest thou, my friend? There is neither birth nor death for thee. Why weepest thou? There is no disease nor misery for thee, but thou art like the infinite sky; clouds of various colours come over it, play for a moment, then vanish. But the sky is ever the same eternal blue."



Religion and Science:

Reproduced from the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, 6: 81-82.

Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only source where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of people who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law.

Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sages

are often ignorant of physical science, because they read the wrong book-- the book within; and the scientists are too often ignorant of religion, because they too read the wrong book--the book without.

All branches of science have their particular methods; so has the science of religion. The science of religion has more methods than the other sciences, because it has more material to work upon. The human mind is not homogeneous like the external world. Different minds have different natures and so they must have different methods. As some special sense predominates in a person--one person will see more, another will hear more--so there is a predominant mental sense; and through this gate must each reach his or her own mind. Yet through all minds runs a unity, and there is a science that may be applied to all. This science of religion is based on the analysis of the human soul. It has no creed.

No one form of religion will do for all. Each is a pearl on a string. We must be particular above all else to find individuality in each. No person is born to any religion. Every person has a religion in his or her own soul. Any system that seeks to destroy individuality is disastrous in the long run. Each life has a current running through it, and this current will eventually take it to God. The end and aim of all religions is to realize God. The greatest of all training is to worship God alone. If all people chose their own ideals and stuck to it, all religious controversy would vanish.

On Fanaticism:

Fanaticism is a disease. Fanatics only make hatred. When you come out of the company of fanatics you may learn how to really love and sympathize. And the more you attain of love and sympathy, the less will be your power to condemn these poor creatures; rather you will sympathize with their faults

Swami Vivekananda's contributions to World Culture

“The book by Vivekananda is more than a pleasure; it is a broadening of the soul.”

—Leo Tolstoy

Making an objective assessment of Swami Vivekananda's contributions to world culture, the eminent British Historian A L Basham stated that “in centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world...”

1. New Understanding of Religion: One of the most significant contributions of Swami Vivekananda to the modern world is his interpretation of religion as a universal experience of transcendent Reality, common to all humanity. Swamiji met the challenge of modern science by showing that religion is as scientific as science itself; religion is the ‘science of consciousnesses. As such, religion and science are not contradictory to each other but are complementary.

This universal conception frees religion from the hold of superstitions, dogmatism, priestcraft and intolerance, and makes religion the highest and noblest pursuit – the pursuit of supreme Freedom, supreme Knowledge, supreme Happiness.

2. New View of Man: Vivekananda’s concept of ‘potential divinity of the soul’ gives a new, ennobling concept of man. The present age is the age of humanism which holds that man should be the chief concern and centre of all activities and thinking. Through science and technology man has attained great prosperity and power, and modern methods of communication and travel have converted human society into a ‘global village’. But the degradation of man has also been going on apace, as witnessed by the enormous increase in broken homes, immorality, violence, crime, etc. in modern society. Vivekananda’s concept of potential divinity of the soul prevents this degradation, divinizes human relationships, and makes life meaningful and worth living. Swamiji has laid the foundation for ‘spiritual humanism’, which is manifesting itself through several neo-humanistic movements and the current interest in meditation, Zen etc all over the world.

3. New Principle of Morality and Ethics: The prevalent morality, in both individual life and social life, is mostly based on fear – fear of the police, fear of public ridicule, fear of God’s punishment, fear of Karma, and so on. The current theories of ethics also do not explain why a person should be moral and be good to others. Vivekananda has given a new theory of ethics and new principle of morality based on the intrinsic purity and oneness of the Atman. We should be pure because purity is our real nature, our true divine Self or Atman. Similarly, we should love and serve our neighbours because we are all one in the Supreme Spirit known as Paramatman or Brahman.

4. Bridge between the East and the West: Another great contribution of Swami Vivekananda was to build a bridge between Indian culture and Western culture. He did it by interpreting Hindu scriptures and philosophy and the Hindu way of life and institutions to the Western people in an idiom which they could understand. He made the Western people realize that they had to learn much from Indian spirituality for their own well-being. He showed that, in spite of her poverty and

backwardness, India had a great contribution to make to world culture. In this way he was instrumental in ending India's cultural isolation from the rest of the world. He was India's first great cultural ambassador to the West. On the other hand, Swamiji's interpretation of ancient Hindu scriptures, philosophy, institutions, etc prepared the mind of Indians to accept and apply in practical life two best elements of Western culture, namely science and technology and humanism. Swamiji has taught Indians how to master Western science and technology and at the same time develop spiritually. Swamiji has also taught Indians how to adapt Western humanism (especially the ideas of individual freedom, social equality and justice and respect for women) to Indian ethos.

Swamiji's Contributions to India:

Swamiji gave Indians proper understanding of their country's great spiritual heritage and thus gave them pride in their past. Furthermore, he pointed out to Indians the drawbacks of Western culture and the need for India's contribution to overcome these drawbacks. In this way Swamiji made India a nation with a global mission.

Sense of unity, pride in the past, sense of mission – these were the factors which gave real strength and purpose to India's nationalist movement. Several eminent leaders of India's freedom movement have acknowledged their indebtedness to Swamiji.

“I have gone through Swami Vivekananda's works very thoroughly, and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold. ...His writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal.” --- **Mahatma Gandhiji**

Free India's first **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru** wrote: “Rooted in the past, full of pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present ... he came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind and gave it self-reliance and some roots in the past.”

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose wrote: “Swamiji harmonized the East and the West, religion and science, past and present. And that is why he is great. Our countrymen have gained unprecedented self-respect, self-reliance and self-assertion from his teachings.”

Swamiji's most unique contribution to the creation of new India was to open the minds of Indians to their duty to the downtrodden masses. Long before the ideas of Karl Marx were known in India, Swamiji spoke about the role of the labouring classes in the production of the country's wealth.

Swamiji was the first religious leader in India to speak for the masses, formulate a definite philosophy of service, and organize large-scale social service.

Swamiji's Contributions to Hinduism:

Identity: It was Swami Vivekananda who gave to Hinduism as a whole a clear-cut identity, a distinct profile. Before Swamiji came Hinduism was a loose confederation of many different sects. Swamiji was the first religious leader to speak about the common bases of Hinduism and the common ground of all sects. He was the first person, as guided by his Master Sri Ramakrishna, to accept all Hindu doctrines and the views of all Hindu philosophers and sects as different aspects of one total view of Reality and way of life known as Hinduism. Speaking about Swamiji's role in giving Hinduism its distinct identity, Sister Nivedita wrote: "... it may be said that when he began to speak it was of 'the religious ideas of the Hindus', but when he ended, Hinduism had been created."

Unification: Before Swamiji came, there was a lot of quarrel and competition among the various sects of Hinduism. Similarly, the protagonists of different systems and schools of philosophy were claiming their views to be the only true and valid ones. By applying Sri Ramakrishna's doctrine of Harmony (Samanvaya) Swamiji brought about an overall unification of Hinduism on the basis of the principle of unity in diversity. Speaking about Swamiji's role in this field K M Pannikar, the eminent historian and diplomat, wrote: "This new Shankaracharya may well be claimed to be a unifier of Hindu ideology."

Defence: Another important service rendered by Swamiji was to raise his voice in defence of Hinduism. In fact, this was one of the main types of work he did in the West. Christian missionary propaganda had given a wrong understanding of Hinduism and India in Western minds. Swamiji had to face a lot of opposition in his attempts to defend Hinduism.

Meeting the Challenges: At the end of the 19th century, India in general, and Hinduism in particular, faced grave challenges from Western materialistic life, the ideas of Western free society, and the proselytizing activities of Christians. Vivekananda met these challenges by integrating the best elements of Western culture in Hindu culture.

Takeaways: Selected Teachings of Swami Vivekananda:

- Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.
- Religion is nothing but to perform your duty- duty towards the mother, the father, the family, the nations and the whole world. – Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (World as one family)
- Union of Science and Religion/Spirituality alone will bring Harmony and Peace to Humanity
- My ideal, indeed, can be put into a few words, and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.
- We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.
- So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.
- Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be.
- If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty million of your mythological gods, ... and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what we need.
- Strength, strength it is that we want so much in this life, for what we call sin and sorrow have all one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes ignorance, and with ignorance comes misery.
- The older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new Gospel.
- Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success, and above all, love.
- Religion is realization; not talk, not doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes.
- Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.
- Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.
- They alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive.
- This is the gist of all worship – to be pure and to do good to others.

- It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe.
- You must feel for the millions of beings around you, and yet you must be strong and inflexible and you must also possess obedience man is he who is strong as strength itself and yet possesses a woman's heart.
- He alone is worshiping God who serves all beings.
- Be an atheist if you want, but do not believe in anything unquestioningly.

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ADI SHANKARACHARYA



At the time when religious and moral chaos and confusion were reigning supreme in the sacred Indian land of the greatest of rishis and sages, Adi Shankara, meaning the first Shankaracharya, also known as The Jagad Guru, meaning the world teacher emerged on the Indian scene. Adi Shankara was a genius par excellence, who combined all the attributes of a supernatural being – a supreme religious reformer, a theologian, an illuminated sage, a Yogi, a Jnani, a great mystic, a practical and comprehensive philosopher, a staunch devotee, a gifted poet, a stupendous writer, an unparalleled teacher, preacher and debater, an intellectual giant, a great ascetic, a remarkable exponent of Advaita Vedanta, and a very powerful spiritual force.

It is reported that Shankara had learnt all the Vedas, Upanishads and all the ancient Hindu scriptures; had mastered the philosophical system of Nyaya, Sankhya, Mimansa, Yoga Sutras of Patanjali; Buddhist, Jaina and Charvaka's Philosophy; learnt Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga and completed all Sadhanas by the time he was eight years old.

By the time he was sixteen, he wrote Bhashyas and commentaries on the principal Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Bhagavad Gita. In a short life span of 32 years, 6 months and 10 days, he single-handedly overpowered the numerous powerful forces opposed to Vedic Sanathana Dharma and restored Vedanta in the form of Advaita Vedanta. He convinced one and all who belonged to the opposing philosophies. He walked barefoot throughout India and defeated each and every opponent. He revived Hinduism and brought it back to its original glory and fame. He established the superiority of the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta over other religions of India in those times.

Early Life:

There are different opinions regarding his life period. Most agree that he was born during 8th Century (788 AD). He was born in a poor Nambhoodari Brahmin family in Kalady, a village in Kerala. His father Shiva Guru and mother Aryamba were devotees of Lord Shiva. For many years

they were childless. Hence, they went to Trichur in Kerala and worshipped lord Shiva in a famous Shiva temple. Soon, they were blessed with a son, whom they named ‘Shankara’ – the bestower (kara) of happiness (sam).

It is reported that once there was some argument among the children as to how many number of seeds are there in a water melon. Shankara told his friends that there would be as many seeds inside this water melon as there are as many Gods. When the water melon was cut open, there was only one seed inside. This means, even as a small child, Shankara knew that the ultimate, the supreme is only one.

It is said that Shankara started talking clearly when he was only one-year-old. By the age of two, he learned all the alphabets of his mother tongue (Malayalam). By the age three, he started learning Sanskrit alphabets and also started reciting all Kavyas, Puranas and other scriptures.

Shankara’s Intense Desire to Become a Monk:



Shankara wanted to be a Sanyasin even from his childhood; his mother nevertheless opposing the very idea all the time. One day, as the fate would have it, during taking bath in Poorna river near his house, a crocodile caught Shankara’s leg. Shankara tried hard, but, he could not free his leg of the firm grip of crocodile. His mother was there with him, helpless, as she could not do much to free his leg. Shankara told his mother that if she gave him permission to become a monk, at once the crocodile would leave its grip on his leg, and his life will be

saved. Just to save his life, Shankara’s mother had to yield to this proposal. And in a split second, the crocodile freed his leg and swam away.

After receiving his mother’s permission and blessings, Shankara at the age of eight became a wandering monk and began his search Northward in search of a Guru.

Meeting with Govinda Bhagavadpada:

After a long search, Shankara met his Guru GovindaBhagavadpada, who initiated Shankara into the Paramahansa order of Sanyasa, considered to be the highest order of Sanyasa. Sage Govinda asked Shankara to write commentary on PrasthanTraya – the major Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras, and the Bhagavad Gita. Guru Govinda told Shankara that to reconcile all the conflicting doctrines through commentaries on the PrasthanTraya into the all-inclusive Advaita Vedanta Philosophy was going to be his (Shankara's) mission on earth. He directed Shankara to spread Vedic truths through his writings. He asked Shankara to go to Varanasi for knowing his future course of action. Shankara was only eleven years old by then.

Shankara in North India:

Shankar came to Varanasi to spread his philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. At a secluded place in Varanasi (ManikarnikaGhat), he began his life's mission of writing commentaries on the PrasthanTraya. Many scholars started to visit him to clear their doubts and to gain knowledge. He also argued with spiritual leaders from various schools of thought and convinced them to his doctrine of Advaita Vedanta. Soon he began to attract more and more disciples there.

At the age of twelve, Shankara proceeded to Badrinath with his disciple Padmapada. At Badrinath, he continued to write his Bhashya on PrasthanTraya, and also wrote several treatises. At Sri Kshetra in Uttarakhand, Shankara visited the five Siddha Peeths or seats of enlightenment. There was predominance of Tantric methods in Siddha Peeths, wherein, performing human sacrifices in the name of religion was very common. There was a great

debate between these Tantrics and Shankara, and through his clarity of thinking, logical analysis and convincing ability; Shankara could change their views about religion and spirituality. Seeing the futility of human sacrifices, they agreed to put a total stop on these practices.

It is said that in Badrinath, Shankara had the vision of sage Vyasa in the guise of an old man. Shankara was only sixteen ten, and he pleaded to Vyasa to allow him to shed his human form, as he had completed his life mission on earth. However, Vyasa told him that it was not yet the right time for him to leave the world, as he was to revive Sanathana Dharma and make it available to everyone.

Famous Debate with Mandana Mishra:

Mandana Mishra was the greatest champion of Mimamsa doctrine which upheld the Vedic ritualism, the 'Karma Kanda' of the Upanishads, which include the Samhita and Brahmana portion of the Vedas that emphasized the Vedic Karmas or rituals and sacrifices. He was also known by the name Viswaroopa at Mahismathi (present day Bihar). It is said that even parrots discussed 'Shastra' in the house of Mandana Mishra.

Shankara went to Mandana Mishra's home at Mahismathi and invited him for a debate. Mandana Mishra accepted the challenge on condition that the loser should become the disciple of the winner of the debate. Mandana Mishra's wife, Ubhaya Bharati was the judge. She threw garlands around the neck of both her husband and Shankara and said, he, whose garland starts to fade first, should accept the defeat. The debate got started and went on and on for fifteen days. After fifteen days of continuous debate, finally, Mandana Mishra accepted the defeat.

But now, Ubhaya Bharati (who herself was an avatar of Goddess Saraswati) said that Mandana Mishra is only one half and she is the other half. So, to be declared as a winner, Shankara should defeat her as well. So, then, the debate started with Ubhaya Bharati. But, even after seventeen days she could not defeat Shankara. So, finally, Ubhaya Bharati decided to win him over through a debate on Kamasutra, the science of sex and love. But Shankara, being an ascetic, had no knowledge of this science. So, for knowing the subject, Shankara requested her to grant him some time.

Coincidentally, the king in that region Amaruka had just died. So, before his cremation, by Yogic powers, Shankara entered into the body of king Amaruka (parakayapravesh). The king's body immediately revived. Now, Shankara as the king acquired the knowledge of marital life, its obligations and duties.

Now, Shankara was in a position to argue with Ubhaya Bharati. But, by then, she declined to debate with Shankara. So, as agreed, Mandana Mishra became the disciple of Shankara with the name Sureshwaracharya, who later took charge of the Sringeri Mutt.

Shankara told Sureshwaracharya that later, he would be born as Vachaspati, and would write an extensive critical study of his commentaries on Brahma Sutras. True to his prophecy, in later reincarnation, Vachaspati Mishra wrote a sublime sub-commentary on Shankara's Brahma Sutras, and gave this work the name of his wife, Bhamati.

Death of Shankara's Mother:

Shankara knew through intuition that his mother was very sick, and so, he proceeded to his birthplace Kalady, in Kerala, where his mother was living. By the time Shankara reached Kalady, she was on her death-bed. Shankara sat by her side and composed a hymn on Lord Narayana, and his mother slowly breathed her last peacefully.

His relatives and the locals of Kalady objected Shankara from he himself performing his mother's funeral rites, as it was against the traditions of Sannyasins to take part in any rites. Hence, nobody took part in cremation. Villagers even prevented Shankara from collecting firewood for his mother's cremation. It is said that Shankara carried on his shoulders the dead body of his mother, collected dried plantain stems from the backyard of his house, and performed the last rites of his mother, all alone.

Establishments of Four Mutts:



After performing funeral rites for his mother, Shankara went on to 'Digvijaya' in all the four directions of India, won over the scholars from all the schools of thought like Sakthas, Bhairavas, Vaishnavas, Jainas, Madhyamikas, Lingayats, Pasupathas, Kapalikas etc., and established the supremacy of Advaita Vedanta.

Shankara established four Mutts in the four corners of India and appointed each one of his four chief disciples as the head of these Mutts (Ashrams/Peetham).

1 Shringeri Mutt / Sharada Peetham in South India: At Shringeri, Karnataka, headed by Sureshwaracharya (original name Mandana Mishra).

2 Dwaraka Peetham in Western India: At Dwaraka, Gujarat, headed by Padmapada.

3 Govardhana Mutt in Eastern India: At Puri, Orissa, headed by Hastamalaka (original name Sanandana).

4 Joshi Mutt in Northern India: At Badrinath, Uttarakhand, headed by Totakacharya (original name Anandagiri).

Shankara Ascending Sarvajna Peetham:

Shankara visited the Sarvajna Peetham, the throne of Omniscience in Kashmir (now located in POK). This throne of knowledge is in the temple dedicated to Goddess Sharada or Saraswati; the Goddess of knowledge. It is said that, only the wisest of the wise one, who has mastered all the branches of knowledge is entitled to ascend this throne. Shankara answered all the questions that were put to him by the followers of many other schools like Buddhism, Jainism, other non-Vedic doctrines, as well as, other Vedanta doctrines. After defeating all the scholars there, Shankara ascended the throne of Sarvajna Peetham or the throne of transcendental wisdom.

Shankara's Last Days:

There are many views regarding where Shankara spent his last days, and where did he leave his mortal remains. It is said that Shankara finally went to Kedarnath when he was thirty-two, visited several holy places including Goumukh and Gangotri, and then went to Kailash, where he merged with Lord Shiva. Some say that he attained mukti (liberation) at Kedarnath. There is one Samadhi Mandir of Shankara behind the Kedarnath temple.

Some say that Shankara spent his last days in Dattatreya Guha in Badrinath.

Still some other say that in the end, Shankara left for an unknown place which nobody knows of in 820 AD.

Shankaracharya and Vedant Philosophy:

Vedanta, however, is not a mere *view of Reality*; it is also a *way of life*—not ordinary life, but spiritual life. Its aim is to enable human beings to solve the existential problems of life, transcend human limitations, go beyond suffering, and attain supreme fulfilment and peace. Advaita Vedanta says the one unchanging Reality alone exists and that changing entities do not have Absolute existence, much as the ocean's waves have no existence in separation from the ocean. The waves rise within the ocean and there would be no waves without the ocean. In the same manner, the transient world rises within Reality and owes its existence to Reality. The world has no independent

existence from Reality and that is why it is said to be unreal.

Advaita Vedanta implies one and only one. The philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, the non-dual characteristic of the supreme Lord, the Almighty God Parmatman in Hinduism confirms that the Creator God does not have a dualistic nature.

What is changing must always be unreal. This phenomenal world of names and forms is ever changing. Names and forms are subject to decay and death. Hence they are unreal or impermanent. What is constant or permanent must always be ‘Real’. The Atman or the Eternal, all-pervading Self ever exists. It pervades all objects like ether. Even if the pot is broken, the ether that is within and without it cannot be destroyed. Similarly, if the bodies and all other objects perish, the Eternal Self that pervades them cannot be destroyed; it is the living Truth and only Reality. Just as a swan lives in water but its feathers are never soiled by water, similarly an Advaitin lives in the world but is untouched by its illusion.

Finally, Adi Shankara’s *Advaita Vedanta* philosophy can be summarised to just this one verse:

—*Brahma Sathyam Jagan Mithya, Jeevo Brahmaiva Na Aparaha*

Take away:

- Maximum utilization of human life for a mission
- Knowledge and courage
- Consistency despite Hardship
- Care and concern for mother
- Understanding of self and other
- Blend of Pravrutti and Nivrutti
- Dedication for mission

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Sri Aurobindo:



Introduction:

Sri Aurobindo, a modern Seer who belonged to the category of modern Rishis, had taken inspiration from ancient Vedic literature and analysed, interpreted and understood modern issues in its light. He had analysed Political, social, cultural and educational fields and suggested his own solutions to various issues. He was a person who had acquired modern Western education in the Western environment itself. But later on he studied Indian culture in detail and in that light changed his opinion on various issues of India and the world. Though purposefully denied access to Indian language and culture during his young age, after returning from England, Aurobindo quickly grasped the same and made significant contributions to Indian philosophy. He established new ideas and trends in the field of Indian education and imparted instruction through a blend of theory and practical. Sri Aurobindo has been widely acclaimed as a modern seer and a Vedic Scholar. He had headed the first National College of Education, at Calcutta, and had written extensively on the subject of education. His approach, 'Integral Education', is in itself a unique concept. Education of the body, mind and spirit are each expounded in his writings on education, but their integration is even more significant. He has also dwelt on the social and psychological aspects of education.

Education:

Sri Aurobindo had many authoritative contributions to make in the field of Indian education. In January 15th of 1908, Aurobindo made a speech on 'National education' at Girgaon in Bombay. Aurobindo was very worried about the Western form of education being implemented in India. He said: "We have accumulated a huge mass of knowledge through 'Yugas' of scientific effort. Yet, all this knowledge has become a burden on our shoulders as it is not inspired by the spark of strength. I just like our ancient knowledge, the new knowledge acquired from the West is also something which, for us, is difficult to digest. We can, if we wish, blindly

imitate England or Japan. But where will this blind imitation take us”? (Parameswaran.1977, p. 4).

Aurobindo vehemently opposed the westernization of education. Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on 15 August 1872. At the age of seven he was taken to England for education. There he studied at St. Paul's School, London, and at King's College, Cambridge. Returning to India in 1893, he worked for the next thirteen years in the Princely State of Baroda in the service of the Maharaja and as a professor in Baroda College. During this period, he also joined a revolutionary society and took a leading role in secret preparations for an uprising against the British Government in India.

In 1906, soon after the Partition of Bengal, Sri Aurobindo quit his post in Baroda and went to Calcutta, where he soon became one of the leaders of the Nationalist movement. He was the first political leader in India to openly put forward, in his newspaper *Bande Mataram*, the idea of complete independence for the country. Prosecuted twice for sedition and once for conspiracy, he was released each time for lack of evidence.

Sri Aurobindo had begun the practice of Yoga in 1905 in Baroda. In 1908 he had the first of several fundamental spiritual realisations. In 1910 he withdrew from politics and went to Pondicherry in order to devote himself entirely to his inner spiritual life and work. During his forty years in Pondicherry he evolved a new method of spiritual practice, which he called the Integral Yoga. Its aim is a spiritual realisation that not only liberates man's consciousness but also transforms his nature. In 1926, with the help of his spiritual collaborator, the Mother, he founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Among his many writings are *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Savitri*. Sri Aurobindo left his body on 5 December 1950.



Life sketch of Shri Aurobindo :

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on 15 August, 1872. In 1879, at the age of seven, he was taken with his two elder brothers to England for education and lived there for fourteen years. Brought up at first in an English family at Manchester, he joined St. Paul's School in London in 1884 and in 1890 went from it with a senior classical scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, where he studied for two years. In 1890 he passed also the open competition for the Indian Civil Service, but at the end of two years of probation failed to present himself at the riding examination and was disqualified for the Service. At this time the Gaekwar of Baroda

was in London. Sri Aurobindo saw him, obtained an appointment in the Baroda Service and left England for India, arriving there in February, 1893.

Sri Aurobindo passed thirteen years, from 1893 to 1906, in the Baroda Service, first in the Revenue Department and in secretariate work for the Maharaja, afterwards as Professor of English and, finally, Vice-Principal in the Baroda College. These were years of self-culture, of literary activity -- for much of the poetry afterwards published from Pondicherry was written at this time -- and of preparation for his future work. In England he had received, according to his father's express instructions, an entirely occidental education without any contact with the culture of India and the East. [1] At Baroda he made up the deficiency, learned Sanskrit and several modern Indian languages, assimilated the spirit of Indian civilisation and its forms past and present. A great part of the last years of this period was spent on leave in silent political activity, for he was debarred from public action by his position at Baroda. The outbreak of the agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905 gave him the opportunity to give up the Baroda Service and join openly in the political movement. He left Baroda in 1906 and went to Calcutta as Principal of the newly-founded Bengal National College.

The political action of Sri Aurobindo covered eight years, from 1902 to 1910. During the first half of this period he worked behind the scenes, preparing with other co-workers the beginnings of the Swadeshi (Indian Sinn Fein) movement, till the agitation in Bengal furnished an opening for the public initiation of a more forward and direct political action than the moderate reformism which had till then been the creed of the Indian National Congress. In 1906 Sri Aurobindo came to Bengal with this purpose and joined the New Party, an advanced section small in numbers and not yet strong in influence, which had been recently formed in the Congress. The political theory of this party was a rather vague gospel of Non-cooperation; in action it had not yet gone farther than some ineffective clashes with the Moderate leaders at the annual Congress assembly behind the veil of secrecy of the "Subjects Committee". Sri Aurobindo persuaded its chiefs in Bengal to come forward publicly as an All-India party with a definite and challenging programme, putting forward Tilak, the popular Maratha leader at its head, and to attack the then dominant Moderate (Reformist or Liberal) oligarchy of veteran politicians and capture from them the Congress and the country. This was the origin of the historic struggle between the Moderates and the Nationalists (called by their opponents Extremists) which in two years changed altogether the face of Indian politics.

The new-born Nationalist party put forward Swaraj (independence) as its goal as against the far-off Moderate hope of colonial self-government to be realised at a distant date of a century or two by a slow progress of reform; it proposed as its means of execution a programme which resembled in spirit, though not in its details, the policy of Sinn Fein developed some years later and carried to a successful issue in Ireland. The principle of this new policy was self-help; it aimed on one side at an effective organisation of the forces of the nation

and on the other professed a complete non-cooperation with the Government. Boycott of British and foreign goods and the fostering of Swadeshi industries to replace them, boycott of British law courts, and the foundation of a system of Arbitration courts in their stead, boycott of Government universities and colleges and the creation of a network of National colleges and schools, the formation of societies of young men which would do the work of police and defence and, wherever necessary, a policy of passive resistance were among the immediate items of the programme.

Sri Aurobindo hoped to capture the Congress and make it the directing centre of an organised national action, an informal State within the State, which would carry on the struggle for freedom till it was won. He persuaded the party to take up and finance as its recognised organ the newly-founded daily paper, *Bande Mataram*, of which he was at the time acting editor. The *Bande Mataram*, whose policy from the beginning of 1907 till its abrupt winding up in 1908 when Sri Aurobindo was in prison was wholly directed by him, circulated almost immediately all over India. During its brief but momentous existence it changed the political thought of India which has ever since preserved fundamentally, even amidst its later developments, the stamp then imparted to it. But the struggle initiated on these lines, though vehement and eventful and full of importance for the future, did not last long at the time; for the country was still unripe for so bold a programme.

Sri Aurobindo was prosecuted for sedition in 1907 and acquitted. Up till now an organiser and writer, he was obliged by this event and by the imprisonment or disappearance of other leaders to come forward as the acknowledged head of the party in Bengal and to appear on the platform for the first time as a speaker. He presided over the Nationalist Conference at Surat in 1907 where in the forceful clash of two equal parties the Congress was broken to pieces. In May, 1908, he was arrested in the Alipore Conspiracy Case as implicated in the doings of the revolutionary group led by his brother Barindra; but no evidence of any value could be established against him and in this case too he was acquitted. After a detention of one year as undertrial prisoner in the Alipore Jail, he came out in May, 1909, to find the party organisation broken, its leaders scattered by imprisonment, deportation or self-imposed exile and the party itself still existent but dumb and dispirited and incapable of any strenuous action. For almost a year he strove single-handed as the sole remaining leader of the Nationalists in India to revive the movement. He published at this time to aid his effort a weekly English paper, the *Karmayogin*, and a Bengali weekly, the *Dharma*. But at last he was compelled to recognise that the nation was not yet sufficiently trained to carry out his policy and programme. For a time, he thought that the necessary training must first be given through a less advanced Home Rule movement or an agitation of passive resistance of the kind created by Mahatma Gandhiji in South Africa. But he saw that the hour of these movements had not come and that he himself was not their destined leader. Moreover, since his twelve months' detention in the Alipore Jail, which had been spent entirely in practice of Yoga, his inner spiritual life was pressing upon him for an exclusive concentration. He resolved therefore to withdraw from

the political field, at least for a time.

In February, 1910, he withdrew to a secret retirement at Chandernagore and in the beginning of April sailed for Pondicherry in French India. A third prosecution was launched against him at this moment for a signed article in the Karmayogin; in his absence it was pressed against the printer of the paper who was convicted, but the conviction was quashed on appeal in the High Court of Calcutta. For the third time a prosecution against him had failed. Sri Aurobindo had left Bengal with some intention of returning to the political field under more favourable circumstances; but very soon the magnitude of the spiritual work he had taken up appeared to him and he saw that it would need the exclusive concentration of all his energies. Eventually he cut off connection with politics, refused repeatedly to accept the Presidentship of the National Congress and went into a complete retirement. During all his stay at Pondicherry from 1910 onward he remained more and more exclusively devoted to his spiritual work and his sadhana.

In 1914 after four years of silent Yoga he began the publication of a philosophical monthly, the Arya. Most of his more important works, The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga, Essays on the Gita, The Isha Upanishad, appeared serially in the Arya. These works embodied much of the inner knowledge that had come to him in his practice of Yoga. Others were concerned with the spirit and significance of Indian civilisation and culture (The Foundations of Indian Culture), the true meaning of the Vedas (The Secret of the Veda), the progress of human society (The Human Cycle), the nature and evolution of poetry (The Future Poetry), the possibility of the unification of the human race (The Ideal of Human Unity). At this time also he began to publish his poems, both those written in England and at Baroda and those, fewer in number, added during his period of political activity and in the first years of his residence at Pondicherry. The Arya ceased publication in 1921 after six years and a half of uninterrupted appearance. Sri Aurobindo lived at first in retirement at Pondicherry with four or five disciples. Afterwards more and yet more began to come to him to follow his spiritual path and the number became so large that a community of sadhaks had to be formed for the maintenance and collective guidance of those who had left everything behind for the sake of a higher life. This was the foundation of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram which has less been created than grown around him as its center.

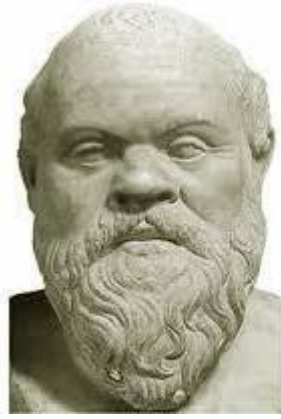
Practice of Yoga:

Sri Aurobindo began his practice of Yoga in 1904. At first gathering into it the essential elements of spiritual experience that are gained by the paths of divine communion and spiritual realization followed till now in India, he passed on in search of a more complete experience uniting and harmonizing the two ends of existence, Spirit and Matter. Most ways of Yoga are paths to the Beyond leading to the Spirit and, in the end, away from life; Sri Aurobindo's rises to the Spirit to redescend with its gains bringing the light and power and

bliss of the Spirit into life to transform it. But even in its darkness and nescience there are involved the presence and possibilities of the Divine. The created world is not a mistake or a vanity and illusion to be cast aside by the soul returning to heaven or Nirvana, but the scene of a spiritual evolution by which out of this material inconscience is to be manifested progressively the Divine Consciousness in things. Mind is the highest term yet reached in the evolution, but it is not the highest of which it is capable. There is above it a Supermind or eternal Truth-Consciousness which is in its nature the self-aware and self-determining light and power of a Divine Knowledge. Mind is an ignorance seeking after Truth, but this is a self-existent Knowledge harmoniously manifesting the play of its forms and forces. It is only by the descent of this Supermind that the perfection dreamed of by all that is highest in humanity can come. It is possible by opening to a greater divine consciousness to rise to this power of light and bliss, discover one's true self, remain in constant union with the Divine and bring down the supramental Force for the transformation of mind and life and body. To realize this possibility has been the dynamic aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo left his body on December 5, 1950. The Mother carried on his work until November 17, 1973.

Socrates



Socrates was a widely recognized and controversial figure in his native Athens. Although Socrates himself wrote nothing, he is depicted in conversation in compositions by a circle of his admirers—Plato and Xenophon first among them. He is portrayed in these works as a man of great insight, integrity, self-mastery and argumentative skill. Amongst many writings, ‘The Apology’ and ‘Crito’ written by Plato and ‘Apology’ and ‘Memorabilia’ written by Xenophon are the most famous ones.

Early life:

Socrates was born in Athens in 469 B.C. His father was Sophroniscus, a sculptor or stonemason. His mother was a midwife named Phaenarete. Socrates married Xanthippe, who is especially remembered for having an undesirable temperament. She bore for him three sons, Lamprocles, Sophroniscus and Menexenus.

Socrates was not much educated. He first worked as a stonemason. For a time, Socrates fulfilled the role of hoplite, participating in the Peloponnesian War—a conflict which stretched intermittently over a period spanning 431 to 404 BC. Several of Plato's dialogues refer to Socrates's military service.

In the monologue of the Apology written by Plato, Socrates states he was active for Athens in the battles of Amphipolis, Delium, and Potidaea. In the Symposium, Alcibiades describes Socrates's valour in the battles of Potidaea and Delium, recounting how Socrates saved his life in the former battle. Socrates's exceptional service at Delium is also mentioned in the Laches by the General after whom the dialogue is named. In the Apology, Socrates compares his military service to his courtroom troubles and says anyone on the jury who thinks he ought to retreat from philosophy must also think soldiers should retreat when it seems likely that they will be killed in battle.

Socratic Method:

The Socratic method is a form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presumptions. It is a dialectical method, involving a discussion in which the defence of one point of view is questioned; one participant may lead another to contradict themselves in some way, thus weakening the defender's point.

It is a method of hypothesis elimination, in that better hypotheses are found by steadily identifying and eliminating those that lead to contradictions. The Socratic method searches for general, commonly held truths that shape beliefs and scrutinizes them to determine their consistency with other beliefs. The basic form is a series of questions formulated as tests of logic and fact intended to help a person or group discover their beliefs about some topic, exploring definitions and seeking to characterize general characteristics shared by various particular instances.

In current times, according to experts, Socratic method is useful to teach students in the classroom. Many reputed business schools across the globe have adopted such interactive teaching method. According to recent studies, it is found that the brain activity of students during classroom lectures is very low and it can be increased with such methods of asking questions and invoking student's curiosity.

Philosophy of Socrates:

Socrates believed that philosophy should achieve practical results for the greater well-being of society. He attempted to establish an ethical system based on human reason rather than theological doctrine. He pointed out that human choice was motivated by the desire for happiness. Ultimate wisdom comes from knowing oneself. The more a person knows, the greater his or her ability to reason and make choices that will bring true happiness. Socrates believed that this translated into politics with the best form of government being neither a tyranny nor a democracy. Instead, government worked best when ruled by individuals who had the greatest ability, knowledge, and virtue and possessed a complete understanding of themselves.

For Socrates, Athens was a classroom and he went about asking questions of the elite and common man alike, seeking to arrive at political and ethical truths. Socrates didn't lecture about what he knew. In fact, he claimed to be ignorant because he had no ideas, but wise because he recognized his own ignorance. He asked questions of his fellow Athenians in a dialectic method (the Socratic Method) which compelled the audience to think through a problem to a logical conclusion. Sometimes the answer seemed so obvious, it made Socrates's opponents look foolish. For this, he

was admired by some and vilified by others.

During Socrates's life, Athens was going through a dramatic transition from hegemony in the classical world to its decline after a humiliating defeat by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. Athenians entered a period of instability and doubt about their identity and place in the world. As a result, they clung to past glories, notions of wealth, and a fixation with physical beauty. Socrates attacked these values with his insistent emphasis on the greater importance of the mind. While many Athenians admired Socrates's challenges to Greek conventional wisdom and the humorous way he went about it, an equal number grew angry and felt he threatened their way of life and uncertain future.

Courtroom trials:

Claiming loyalty to his city, Socrates clashed with the current course of Athenian politics and society. He praised Sparta, archrival to Athens, directly and indirectly in various dialogues. One of Socrates's purported offenses to the city was his position as a social and moral critic. Rather than upholding a status quo and accepting the development of what he perceived as immorality within his region, Socrates questioned the collective notion of "might makes right" that he felt was common in Greece during this period. Plato refers to Socrates as the "gadfly" of the state (as the gadfly stings the horse into action, so Socrates stung various Athenians), insofar as he irritated some people with considerations of justice and the pursuit of goodness. His attempts to improve the Athenians' sense of justice may have been the cause of his execution. Socrates's paradoxical wisdom made the prominent Athenians he publicly questioned look foolish, turning them against him and leading to accusations of wrongdoing.

The jury was not swayed by Socrates's defence and convicted him by a vote of 280 to 221. Possibly the defiant tone of his defence contributed to the verdict and he made things worse during the deliberation over his punishment. Athenian law allowed a convicted citizen to propose an alternative punishment to the one called for by the prosecution and the jury would decide. Instead of proposing he be exiled, Socrates suggested he be honoured by the city for his contribution to their enlightenment and be paid for his services. The jury was not amused and sentenced him to death.

Refusal to escape:

Crito was a wealthy friend of Socrates. In dialogues 'Crito' written by Plato, a day before execution of Socrates, Crito came early in the morning to meet Socrates. He was astonished by seeing Socrates into a deep sleep. After Socrates woke up, he argued with him and pleaded him to escape the prison as all the arrangements of the escape were done. Socrates turned down Crito's pleas. Xenophon and Plato agree that Socrates had an opportunity to escape, as his followers were able to bribe the prison guards. There have been several suggestions offered as reasons why he chose to stay:

1. He believed such a flight would indicate a fear of death, which he believed no true philosopher has.
2. If he fled Athens his teaching would fare no better in another country, as he would continue questioning all he met and undoubtedly incur their displeasure.
3. Having knowingly agreed to live under the city's laws, he implicitly subjected himself to the possibility of being accused of crimes by its citizens and judged guilty by its jury. To do otherwise would have caused him to break his "social contract" with the state, and so harm the state, an unprincipled act.
4. If he escaped at the instigation of his friends, then his friends would become liable in law.

The full reasoning behind his refusal to flee is the main subject of the Crito.

Execution:

Plato described Socrates's execution in his 'Phaedo' dialogue: Socrates drank the hemlock mixture without hesitation. Numbness slowly crept into his body until it reached his heart. Shortly before his final breath, Socrates described his death as a release of the soul from the body. In as much as Socrates drank hemlock willingly without complaint (having decided against fleeing), R.G. Frey (1978) has suggested in truth, Socrates chose to commit suicide.

Takeaways:

The greatest lesson from Socrates' life is that one should have a firm belief in his principles and values. He chose to die for his principles. He was a very humble and truthful person. His quotes are the best takeaways from his life.

1. True wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.
2. Be as you wish to seem.
3. Nothing changes until you do.
4. Virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue comes money and every other good of man, public as well as private.
5. Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's writings.
6. Those who realize that they have enough, are truly rich.

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Plato



Plato was a classical Greek Philosopher and is considered as the most important figure in the development of western philosophy. He was also the founder of ‘The Academy’ in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the western world. In addition to being a foundational figure for western science, philosophy, and mathematics, Plato is also considered as one of the founders of western religion and spirituality. Together with his mentor Socrates, and his student Aristotle, Plato provided the main opposition to the materialist view of the world represented by Democritus and Epicurus.

Plato was born in Athens between 429 and 423 BC. He belonged to a wealthy and politically influential family. He received education in grammar, gymnastics, music and philosophy from some of the most distinguished teachers of his time. Before he met Socrates, it is said that Plato had attended the courses of philosophy.

Early life:

Due to a lack of surviving accounts, little is known about Plato's early life and education. The philosopher came from one of the wealthiest and most politically active families in Athens. Ancient sources describe him as a bright though modest boy who excelled in his studies. His father contributed all which was necessary to give to his son a good education, and, therefore, Plato must have been instructed in grammar, music, gymnastics and philosophy by some of the most distinguished teachers of his era.

Birth and family:

The exact time and place of Plato's birth are unknown, but it is certain that he belonged to an aristocratic and influential family. Based on ancient sources, most modern scholars believe that he was born in Athens between 429 and 423 BC. His father was Ariston. Ariston traced his descent from the king of Athens, Codrus, and the king of Messenia, Melanthus.

Plato's mother was Perictione, whose family boasted of a relationship with the famous Athenian lawmaker and lyric poet Solon. Besides Plato himself, Ariston and Perictione had three other children.

Education::

Plato had quickness of mind and modesty as a boy, and the "first fruits of his youth infused with hard work and love of study". Plato has been instructed in grammar, music, and gymnastics by the most distinguished teachers of his time. Plato had also attended courses of philosophy; before meeting Socrates.

Later life:

Plato may have travelled in Italy, Sicily, Egypt and Cyrene. Said to have returned to Athens at the age of forty, Plato founded one of the earliest known organized schools in Western Civilization on a plot of land. The Academy was a large enclosure of ground about six stadia outside of Athens proper. One story is that the name of the Academy comes from the ancient hero, Academus; still another story is that the name came from a supposed former owner of the plot of land, an Athenian citizen whose name was (also) Academus. Many intellectuals were schooled in the Academy, the most prominent one being Aristotle.

Throughout his later life, Plato became entangled with the politics of the city. During his first trip Dionysius's brother-in-law, Dion of Syracuse, became one of Plato's disciples, but the tyrant himself turned against Plato. Plato almost faced death, but he was sold into slavery. Dion requested Plato return to Syracuse to tutor Dionysius II and guide him to become a philosopher king. Dionysius II seemed to accept Plato's teachings, but he became suspicious of Dion, his uncle. Dionysius expelled Dion and kept Plato against his will. Eventually Plato left Syracuse.

Founding the Academy:

Early records suggest that Plato may have travelled in Italy, Sicily, Egypt and Cyrene, and then returned to Athens at the age of forty. After his return, he founded one of the earliest known organised schools in western civilization and the prototype of later universities – The Academy (or Akademia) sometime around 385 BC. It taught a wide range of subjects like astronomy, biology, mathematics, political theory, philosophy etc. The philosophical school which Plato developed at the academy was known as Platonism (later known as Neo– Platonism). Many intellectuals were schooled in The Academy, the most prominent one being Aristotle, who would take his mentor's teaching in new directions. The Academy fostered research not just in philosophy narrowly conceived, but in a wide range of endeavours that today would be called mathematical or scientific.

Plato was bitterly disappointed with the standards displayed by those in public office, and his intention behind founding The Academy was to train young men in philosophy and the sciences, in order to create better statesmen, as well as to continue the work of his master, Socrates.

Plato's Writings:

Plato is perhaps the first philosopher whose complete works are available to us. He wrote no systematic treatises, but was the innovator of the written dialogues and dialectic forms in philosophy, a form which permitted him to develop the Socratic method of questions and answers. In his dialogues, Plato discussed a wide range of philosophical ideas including Ethics, Metaphysics, Political philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, Epistemology etc. The characters in the dialogues are generally historical, with Socrates usually as the protagonist. Plato's main intention in his dialogues was more to teach his students to '*think for themselves*' and to find their own answers to the questions of life, than to blindly follow someone's views.

Plato was greatly influenced by Socrates, Heraclitus (pre-Socratic Greek philosopher) and Pythagoras. He is cited as one of the most dazzling writers in the western literary tradition and one of the most penetrating, wide ranging and influential authors in the history of philosophy. His works contains discussions in aesthetics, political philosophy, theology, cosmology, epistemology and the philosophy of language. His main literary works include...

1. The Platonic Republic:

It is a Socratic dialogue, written around 380 BC concerning justice, the order and character of the just city/state, and the just man. It is Plato's best known work, and has proven to be one of the world's most influential works of philosophy and political theory; both

intellectually and historically.

2. Apology:

It is the Socratic dialogue that presents the speech of legal self-defence, which Socrates presented at his trial in 399 BC for impiety (the charge of not believing in the Gods of the State) and the charge of corrupting the young minds of Athens.

3. The Symposium:

It is a philosophical text by Plato depicting a friendly contest of extemporaneous speeches given by group of notable men attending a banquet. The men include the philosopher Socrates, a prominent Athenian statesman/orator, general Alcibiades, and the comic play write Aristophanes.

4. The Allegory of the Cave (Plato's cave):

This philosophical work resented by Plato to compare the effect of education and the lack of it on our nature. It is written as a dialogue between Plato's brother Glaucon and his mentor Socrates, narrated by the latter.

Death:

Mythos and logos are terms that evolved along classical Greece history. Plato, being a disciple of Socrates, and a strong partisan of philosophy based on logos, it seems that should have avoided the use of myth-telling. Instead he made an abundant use of it. This fact has produced analytical and interpretative work, in order to clarify the reasons and purposes for that use.

Plato, in general, distinguished between three types of myth. First there were the false myths, like those based on stories of god's subject to passions and sufferings, because reason teaches that God is perfect. Then came the myths based on true reasoning, and therefore also true. Finally, there were those non verifiable because beyond of human reason, but containing some truth in them. Regarding the subjects of Plato's myths, they are of two types, those dealing with the origin of the universe, and those about morals and the origin and fate of the soul.

It is generally agreed that the main purpose for Plato in using myths was didactic. He considered that only a few people were capable or interested in following a reasoned philosophical discourse, but men in general are attracted by stories and tales. Consequently, then, he used the myth to convey the conclusions of the philosophical reasoning. Some of Plato's myths were based in traditional ones, others were modifications of them, and finally he also invented altogether new myths.

Plato often discusses the father-son relationship and the question of whether a father's interest in his sons has much to do with how well his sons turn out. In ancient Athens, a boy was socially located by his family identity, and Plato often refers to his characters in terms of their paternal and fraternal relationships. A divine fatalist, Socrates mocks men who spent exorbitant fees on tutors and trainers for their sons, and repeatedly ventures the idea that good character is a gift from the gods. Socrates spreads the idea that knowledge is a matter of recollection, and not of learning, observation, or study.

Takeaways:

While all this discussion about the world of the forms vs. the sensible world and knowledge vs. opinion might seem fairly esoteric, it actually serves a fairly practical function in Plato's philosophy. You see, Plato was convinced that as long as human beings remained fixated on the sensible realm with impermanence and imperfections, there really was no hope that they'd ever attain true happiness in life. Only by using philosophical understanding could we break free of the illusions perpetuated by sensible things and grasp higher forms such as Beauty, Truth, and Goodness that are the source of both morality and happiness.

In a sense, what Plato was doing in his philosophy was building upon the insights of his intellectual mentor, Socrates. Socrates, as we have seen, believed that virtue was the key to the good life. Plato's insight—or mistake, depending upon how you view it—was to reason that true virtue was impossible as long as one was fixated on the transient goods of the sensible realm. The World of the Forms was his way of ensuring that virtue and goodness remained grounded in a Good that was beyond space and time and, therefore, eternal and incorruptible.

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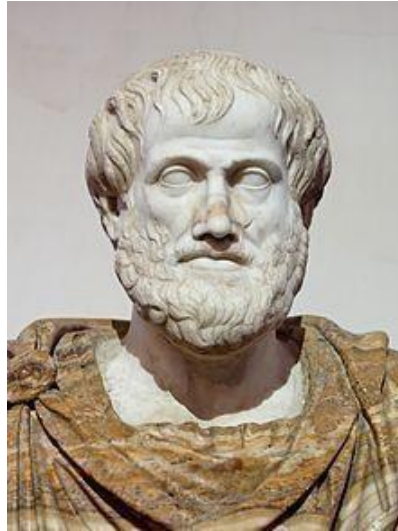
<https://www.iep.utm.edu/plato/>

Video

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Aristotle



Aristotle was an ancient Greek philosopher and scientist. Along with Plato, Aristotle is considered the "Father of Western Philosophy", who inherited almost its entire lexicon from his teachings, including problems and methods of inquiry, influencing almost all forms of knowledge. He was known for knowing everything that was known in his time.

Early life:

Aristotle, whose name means "the best purpose" in Ancient Greek, was born in 384 BC in Stagira, Chalcidice, about 55 km (34 miles) east of modern-day Thessaloniki. His father Nicomachus was the personal physician to King Amyntas of Macedon. Both of Aristotle's parents died when he was about thirteen, and Proxenus of Atarneus became his guardian. Aristotle's Philosophy have an influence of his father's profession. He later named his son as 'Nicomachus' and dedicated a book to him. This shows Aristotle's close relationship with his father during his childhood.

At the age of seventeen or eighteen, Aristotle moved to Athens to continue his education at Plato's Academy. He remained there for nearly twenty years before leaving Athens in 348/47 BC. The traditional story about his departure records that he was disappointed with the Academy's direction after control passed to Plato's nephew Speusippus, although it is possible that he feared the anti-Macedonian sentiments in Athens at that time and left before Plato died. Aristotle then accompanied Xenocrates to the court of his friend Hermias of Atarneus in Asia Minor. After the death of Hermias, Aristotle travelled with his pupil Theophrastus to the island of Lesbos, where together they researched the botany and zoology of the island and its sheltered lagoon. While in Lesbos, Aristotle married Pythias, either Hermias's adoptive daughter or niece. She bore him a daughter, whom they also named Pythias.

Aristotle and Plato:

For some 20 years Aristotle was Plato's student and colleague at the Academy in Athens, an institution for philosophical, scientific, and mathematical research and teaching founded by Plato in the 380s. Although Aristotle revered his teacher, his philosophy eventually departed from Plato's in important respects. Aristotle also investigated areas of philosophy and fields of science that Plato did not seriously consider. According to a conventional view, Plato's philosophy is abstract and utopian, whereas Aristotle's is empirical, practical, and commonsensical. Such contrasts are famously suggested in the fresco School of Athens (1510–11) by the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael, which depicts Plato and Aristotle together in conversation, surrounded by philosophers, scientists, and artists of earlier and later ages. Plato, holding a copy of his dialogue Timeo (Timaeus), points upward to the heavens; Aristotle, holding his Etica (Ethics), points outward to the world. Although this view is generally accurate, it is not very illuminating, and it obscures what Plato and Aristotle have in common and the continuities between them, suggesting wrongly that their philosophies are polar opposites.

Tutor of Alexander the Great:

In 343 BC, Aristotle was invited by Philip II of Macedon to become the tutor to his son Alexander. It is believed that Aristotle accepted this invitation against the freedom and development of his state. Aristotle was appointed as the head of the royal academy of Macedon. During Aristotle's time in the Macedonian court, he gave lessons not only to Alexander, but also to two other future kings: Ptolemy and Cassander. Aristotle encouraged Alexander toward eastern conquest and Aristotle's own attitude towards Persia was unabashedly ethnocentric. In one famous example, he counsels Alexander to be "a leader to the Greeks and a despot to the barbarians, to look after the former as after friends and relatives, and to deal with the latter as with beasts or plants". By 335 BC, Aristotle had returned to Athens, establishing his own school there known as the Lyceum. King of Macedon financed Aristotle to establish this school.

Differences in philosophy of Plato and Aristotle:

Here are three main differences between Aristotle's philosophy and Plato's philosophy.

1. **Forms:** For Plato, Forms are abstract objects, existing completely outside space and time. Thus they are knowable only through the mind, not through sense experience.

Aristotle rejected Plato's theory of Forms but not the notion of form itself. For Aristotle, forms

do not exist independently of things—every form is the form of something.

2. **Ethics:** For both Plato and Aristotle, as for most ancient ethicists, the central problem of ethics was the achievement of happiness. By “happiness” (the usual English translation of the Greek term **Eudaimonia**), they did not mean a pleasant state of mind but rather a good human life, or a life of human flourishing. The means by which happiness was acquired was through virtue. According to Plato, the completely virtuous person is the one whose soul is in harmony, because each of its three parts— Reason, Spirit, and Appetite—desires what is good and proper for it and acts within proper limits. For Aristotle, happiness is not merely a condition of the soul but a kind of right activity. The good human life, he held, must consist primarily of whatever activity is characteristically human, and that is reasoning. The good life is therefore the rational activity of the soul, as guided by the virtues. Aristotle recognized both intellectual virtues, chiefly wisdom and understanding, and practical or moral virtues, including courage and temperance.
3. **Politics:** The account of justice presented in Plato’s Republic is not only a theory of virtue but also a theory of politics. The political theory of Plato’s Republic is notorious for its assertion that only philosophers should rule and for its hostility toward democracy, or rule by the many. In political theory, Aristotle is famous for observing that “man is a political animal,” meaning that human beings naturally form political communities. Indeed, it is impossible for human beings to thrive outside a community, and the basic purpose of communities is to promote human flourishing. Aristotle is also known for having devised a classification of forms of government and for introducing an unusual definition of democracy that was never widely accepted.

Philosophy of Aristotle:

Four causes:

Aristotle suggested that the reason for anything coming about can be attributed to four different types of simultaneously active factors which he termed as "cause", but it does not always refer to temporal sequence; it might be better translated as "explanation".

1. **Material cause:** It describes the material out of which something is composed. It is not about action.
2. **Formal cause:** It is related to form. Plainly put, the formal cause is the idea in the mind of the sculptor that brings the sculpture into being. A simple example of the formal cause

is the mental image or idea that allows an artist, architect, or engineer to create a drawing.

3. **Efficient cause:** It is "the primary source", or that from which the change under consideration proceeds. It can be non-living or living, acting as the sources of change or movement or rest.
4. **Final cause:** It is its purpose, the reason why a thing exists or is done, including both purposeful and instrumental actions and activities. The final cause is the purpose or function that something is supposed to serve.

Examples of four causes:

1. Table

Material cause: Wood

Formal cause: Design, size, colour etc.

Efficient cause: Carpenter, carpentry tools

Final cause: Dinning

2. Song

Material cause: Sound waves

Formal cause: Pitch, tone, note, lyrics etc.

Efficient cause: Singer, instruments

Final cause: Pleasing

3. Human Being

Material cause: Flesh, bones etc.

Formal cause: DNA

Efficient cause: Parents

Final cause: ??? Write your own answer

Theory of Golden Means:

In Aristotle's 'Nicomachean Ethics', he held that happiness is the practice of philosophical contemplation in a person who has cultivated all of the intellectual and moral virtues over much of a lifetime. **Eudaimonia** is a Greek word which translates as 'happiness' but proposed more correct translation is 'human flourishing or prosperity'. According to Aristotle, people who achieve golden mean in their life are virtuous and they get Eudaimonia. According to theory of Goldenmeans, good virtues are defined as the balance of deficiency and excess of them. Aristotle believed that people who lack virtues in their life are not vicious rather they need proper guidance to achieve Eudaimonia and law can play an important role in guiding them.

Deficiency	Balance	Excess
Cowardice	Courage	Rashness
Insensibility	Temperance	Self-indulgence
Pettiness	Magnificence	Tastelessness
Shamelessness	Modesty	Shyness
Secrecy	Honesty	Loquacity
Sloth	Ambition	Greed
Boorishness	Wittiness	Buffoonery

Catharsis

This Greek word translates as purification or cleansing or purgation of emotions particularly pity and fear through art. This is also a term used by ancient Greek physician which means cleansing the body from toxic elements. It is believed that Aristotle coined this term due to influence of his father's profession on him. He has used this word in his work Poetics. There are two important terms used by him in Poetics:

Peripeteia – Sudden change of fortune in drama e.g. Titanic

Anagnorisis- A moment in a play when a character makes a critical discovery e.g. Sarfarosh

Rhetoric

Aristotle's Rhetoric is an ancient Greek treatise on the art of persuasion. According to him there are major three modes of persuasion:

1. **Logos:** It refers to logical appeal of the performance. It mostly attributes to the technical details of the performance. e.g. For a painting, painter's ability to paint, his expertise, uses of strokes, colours etc. will lead to logical appeal.
2. **Ethos:** It is ethical appeal. It is related to performer's credibility or character. e.g. A painter's physical appearance, the place of exhibition, his professional background like training school etc. will define the ethical appeal.
3. **Pathos:** It is related to emotional appeal. It depends on the surrounding, the clarity in the performance and its ability to connect with the audience. e.g. The painting drawn by the painter has an emotional connect or not will decide pathos.

Takeaways:

Aristotle's philosophy is deep but practical which makes it very useful in day-to-day life.

One important lesson one can learn from his life is being a favourite student of Plato, he had courage to differ in opinions from him and had his own philosophy of life. This is the greatest lesson to learn from this teacher-disciple duo. A famous quote by Aristotle is ***"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it"***. Not only Aristotle's philosophy but his notes on art are very useful for artist to learn tips and refine their art to become successful. His theory of golden means is useful for all to introspect and try to become virtuous to gain happiness and peace.

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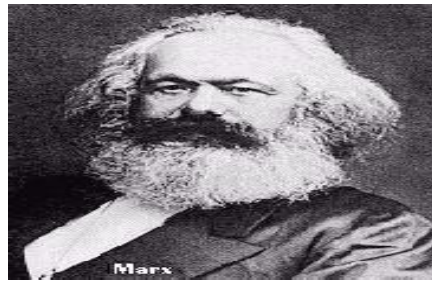
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Karl Heinrich Marx



Introduction:

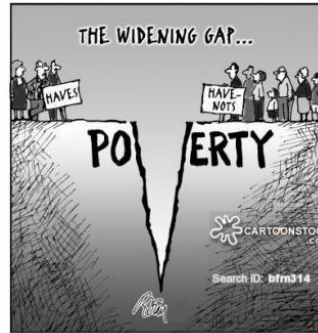
Karl Heinrich Marx was born on May 5th, 1818 in the city of Trier, Germany to a comfortable middle-class, Jewish family. As a student in Bonn and Berlin, Marx was greatly influenced by the philosophy of Hegel (The rational alone is real – reality can be expressed in rational categories). He ultimately found himself attracted to a group of students known as the "Young Hegelians." This group of young iconoclasts, including David Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Max Stirner, were inspired by Hegel but were determined to champion the more radical aspects of the old master's system. Marx turned to journalism where his radical politics attracted the attention of Prussian censors. The publication for which he worked was shut down for its politically incorrect commentary, and the frustrated Marx travelled to Paris.

Paris in 1843 was an international center of social, political, and artistic activity and the gathering place of radicals and revolutionaries from all over Europe. In Paris, Marx became involved with socialists and revolutionaries. Marx met Friedrich Engels, the son of a wealthy textile manufacturer in England who had become a socialist after observing the deplorable condition of workers in his father's factories. Together, Marx and Engels began to develop the ideas which became Revolutionary Proletarian Socialism, or, as it is better known, Communism. Eventually, Marx was exiled from France in 1845 at the behest of the Prussian government for antiroyalist writings.

After leaving Paris, Marx travelled to Belgium where he became involved with a group of artisans calling them the Communist League. In 1847 the Communist League commissioned

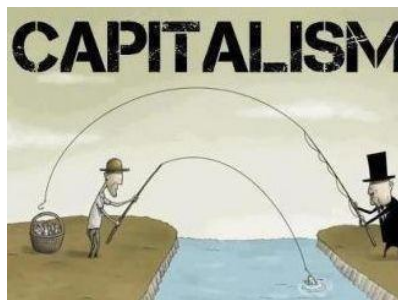
Marx and Engels to pen a statement of their beliefs and aims. This statement became the **Communist Manifesto**. Later, in London Marx realized that the revolution was not imminent, and he withdrew from his associations, burying himself in the British Museum to research the history of class conflict. The fruit of this research was Marx's great **Das Kapital**, the first volume of which was published in 1867.

Marx, the first one to talk to eradicate Poverty



The Marxist view is that inequality is inherent in the capitalist mode of production. Inequality is inevitably produced during the normal operation of capitalist economies, and cannot be eradicated without fundamentally altering mechanisms of capitalism. It is functional to the system, which means that power holders have a stake in preserving social inequality.

What is capitalism?



Capitalism is distinctive in this sequence of modes of production because its characteristic relations of production greatly intensify pressures to develop the forces of production. Capitalism as a mode of production emerges from small-scale commodity production when labour too becomes a commodity. This happens through a process of violent dispossession that deprives workers of alternative ways to access consumption or production resources, and that thus forces workers to exchange their capacity to work for a wage as if this capacity too were a commodity produced for sale on a market.

- Socialism - A society **run by the working class** (i.e., proletariat) rather than **the bourgeoisie** (i.e., capitalists). The state machine is used to defend working class interests against those who still have wealth or power and who will attempt to return society to the capitalist system and bourgeois rule.

- Communism - A *classless society* with no exploitation. No state machine used by one section of the population to oppress another section. No need for professional armies or police forces. No use of production for profit or exchange. Society runs in accord with the principle: *From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.*

Bolshevik Revolution:



The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 was initiated by millions of people who would change the history of the world as we know it. When Czar Nicholas II dragged 11 million peasants into World War I, the Russian people became discouraged with their injuries and the loss of life they sustained. The country of Russia was in ruins, ripe for revolution. The Provisional Government was formed to replace the void left by the deposed czar. This provisional government was made up of bankers, lawyers, industrialists, and capitalists. The provisional government was very weak and failed to live up to its promise of ending Russia's involvement in the war. They kept Russia in the war and just made things worse for themselves and for Russia.

When V. I. Lenin arrived from exile in the spring of 1917, he joined the Bolshevik Party in Russia whose goal was to overthrow the Provisional Government and set up a government for the waged people. In July 1917, the workers challenged the Provisional Government and ended up defeated, with their leader jailed and Lenin going into hiding. Late in August, the soldiers of the Provisional Government began to fall away from their support of the Provisional Government and began to support the workers. In early October, Lenin convinced the Bolshevik Party to form an immediate insurrection against the Provisional Government. I. Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks, announced his attempt to construct the socialist order in Russia. This new government made up of Soviets, and led by the Bolsheviks. By early November, there was little doubt that the proletariats backed the Bolshevik motto: "All power to the soviets!"

Marx and his best principles we must acknowledge:

- **Ability and need formula (unique formula)**

Marx develops his theory of the capitalist economy on the simplifying assumption that all products exchange at their values. This empowers the labour-power. Firms pay workers a wage in exchange for the use of their ability to work – their labour-power. In principle if not always in practice, firms pay workers the value of this service, which is determined, as is the cost of any commodity, by the socially-necessary labour time enquired to produce it, which is expressed in the cost of the daily consumption required for workers and their families as well as in their expenses for training and education.

“Upstairs / Downstairs” Life



- **Class Struggle: Unite thou laborers (his heartfelt appeal to all working classes)**

“The history of all until now existing society is the history of class struggle” According to Marx, society has always been divided into the “haves” and the “have nots” – and these two classes have always fought each other.

- **Surplus Value**

Marx believed that the bourgeoisie basically bought the products of the laborers at a cheap price, and then sold those same products back to them at a high price, in effect stealing the *surplus value* as their profit.

- **Capital is dead labor (no accumulation of wealth)**

Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks.”

Marx characterizes these relations of production as “exploitation” not because the worker does not receive the wages representing the full value of the day’s labor: on the contrary, Marx celebrates the great progress in productivity that allows for the creation of surplus, just as he honors the need to reinvest that surplus. He sees this as exploitation because control over the surplus is in the hands of the capitalist, not the whole collectivity. The

collected capital is dead because it does not cater to common people and therefore it is dead itself. (Black money)

- **Demolish individual wealth**
- **Religion is opium of masses** (religion... is the opiate of the *masses*.)

Marx was making a structural functionalism argument about religion, and particularly about organized religion. Marx believed that religion had certain practical functions in society that were similar to the function of opium in a sick or injured person: it reduced people's immediate suffering and provided them with pleasant illusions which gave them the strength to carry on. Marx also saw religion as harmful, as it prevents people from seeing the class structure and oppression around them, thus religion can prevent the necessary revolution.

- **Machine would make masses lazy**
- **Marx's Concept of Alienation and Its Impacts on Human Life**

Alienation is a state in which a person feels one-self alone, estranged, worthless and meaningless. This may be the result of socio- political setup or due to capitalist surroundings but it is accepted fact that a person who suffers this has to bear a psychological agony. For Karl Marx it is a material and social process. In a capitalist society he elaborates, the workers are bound to sell their power, strength, expertise and skills to the capitalists. Consequently, the workers have no control over their product of labour and on the labour itself which is their life activity and this becomes only a means to an end of the capitalist. So they got estranged from it and fall a prey to alienation. Due to these circumstances the workers became separated from their own-self and their own-nature on the one hand and also alienated from other human beings as well as from their work.

He thinks that the Primitive Man was alienated due to the hostile Nature but Modern Man's Alienation is caused by the hostile environment created by him-self e.g. Nuclear weapons, economic circumstances, industrial and technological development etc. Civilized man has become a helpless puppet in the hands of the environment of his own making.

(Talk about commodities created by humans is separated from the real purpose and the commodity alienates them. People who produce milk, grains and eatables have no control over its price and usage. They are victim of alienation even today as such systems are influenced by capitalist people.)

Take away from his life:

- Humanist approach towards working class
- No accumulation of wealth by exploitation of any
- Lending a hand to poor and needy
- Efforts for equality by all means
- Not to fall prey to capitalistic exploitations
- Logical and scientific understanding of religion
- Questioning self and others for betterment

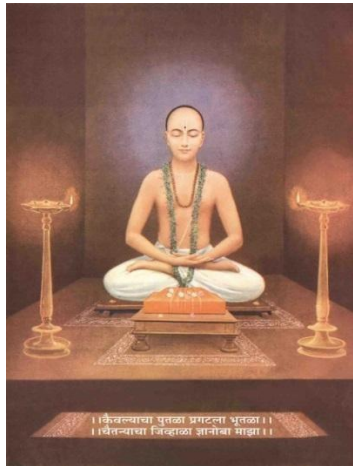
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- The Grundrisse (1857)
- Das Capital (1867)

Saint Shri Dnyaneshwar



Title: Dnyandev or Mauli (1275–1296) was a 13th-century Marathi saint, poet, philosopher and yogi of the Nath tradition

Birth: 1275 on the auspicious day of Krishna Janmashtami

Birthplace: Apegaon, village on the bank of Godavari river near Paithan in Maharashtra

Parents: Vitthalapant and Rakhumabai

Death: Sanjeewan(alive) samadhi in 1296 CE at the age of 21

Religion: Hinduism

Philosophy: Advaita, Varkari, Hinduism

Guru: Nivruttinath (elder brother)

Literary Work: Dnyaneshwari, Amrutanubhav, Changdev Paasashti, Haripath,

abhang devotional poetry

Introduction:

Dnyaneshwar (IAST: Jñāneśvar meaning Lord of Jnana or knowledge), also known as Dnyandev or Mauli (1275–1296) was a 13th-century Marathi saint, poet, philosopher and yogi of the Nath tradition whose Dnyaneshwari (a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita) and Amrutanubhav are considered to be milestones in Marathi literature.

Dnyaneshwar was born in 1275 (on the auspicious day of Krishna Janmashtami) in Apegaon

village on the bank of Godavari river near Paithan in Maharashtra during the reign of the Yadava king Ramadevarava. Dnyaneshwar would later criticize the religious degeneration of the day in his magnum opus Dnyaneshwari. Dnyaneshwar emerged as the first original philosopher who wrote in the Marathi language, in this era.

The date of composition of his work Dnyaneshwari 1290 CE, however is undisputed. According to the more accepted tradition on Dnyaneshwar's life, he was born in 1275 CE and he attained Sanjeevan(alive) samadhi in 1296 CE.

In the thirteenth century, Saint Dnyaneshwar who was bold enough to go against the traditions of his times of writing in the Sanskrit language and to use Marathi as the vehicle of his preaching. Dnyaneshwar was so very sure about the power of the Marathi language that he writes in Dnyaneshwari that, his highly appreciative readers will surely say that Marathi Language is even sweeter than nectar.

Early Life:

Dnyaneshwar's father Vitthalapant was the Kulkarni (hereditary accountant, usually Brahmin, who maintained land and tax records in villages) of a village called Apegaon on the banks of the Godavari River in Maharashtra, a profession he had inherited from his ancestors. He married Rakhumabai, the daughter of the Kulkarni of Alandi. Even as a householder, Vitthalapant longed for spiritual learning. His disillusionment with life grew as a result of the death of his father and because he had no children from his marriage. Eventually, with his wife's consent, he renounced worldly life and left for Varanasi to become a sanyasin (renunciate).

Vitthalapant was initiated as a sannyasin by his spiritual teacher, RamaShrama. When RamaShrama discovered that Vitthalapant had left his family behind to become a monk, he instructed Vitthalapant to go back to his wife and perform his duties as a householder. After Vitthalapant returned to his wife and settled down in Alandi, Rakhumabai gave birth to four children—Nivruttinath (1273 CE), Dnyaneshwar (1275 CE), Sopan (1277 CE) and Muktabai (1279 CE).

Orthodox Brahmins of the day saw renunciation and returning to life as a householder as hereby; Vitthalapant and his family were persecuted because of this. Dnyaneshwar and his brothers were denied the right to have the sacred thread ceremony, which in Hinduism symbolises the right to read the Vedas.

Vitthalapant eventually left the town for Nashik with his family. One day while performing his daily rituals, Vitthalapant came face to face with a tiger. Vitthalapant and three of his four children escaped, but Nivruttinath became separated from the family and hid in a cave. While hiding in the cave he met Gahaninath, who initiated Nivruttinath into the wisdom of the Nath yogis. Later, Vitthalapant returned to Alandi and asked the Brahmins to suggest a means of atonement for his sins; they suggested giving up his life as penance. Vitthalapant and his wife gave up their lives, within a year of each other by jumping into the Ganges in the hope their children might be able to lead lives free of persecution. Other sources and local folk tradition claim that the parents immersed themselves in the Indrayani River. However, orthodox Brahmins of the town still refused to accept the children as pure and suggested that they obtain a certification of atonement (shuddhi) from the Priest of Paithana, which was a centre of orthodox learning. Ongoing to Paithan, they recited the Vedas before the Brahmins, but were stopped as they were not entitled to recite the sacred Vedas owing to their father's wrongdoing.

To prove that anybody could recite the Vedas, Dnyandev makes a buffalo continue to recite the Vedas from the point where Dnyandev was asked to stop! Struck with wonder and recognizing their spiritual learning and greatness, the Brahmins give them the required certificate of purification.



Facts :

After Dnyaneshwar had written Amrutanubhav, the siblings visited Pandharpur where they met Namdev, who became a close friend of Dnyaneshwar. Dnyaneshwar and Namadev embarked on a pilgrimage to various holy centers across India where they initiated many people into the Varkari sect; Dnyaneshwar's devotional compositions called Abhangasare believed to have been formulated during this period. On their return to Pandharpur, Dnyaneshwar and Namadev were honoured with a feast in which, many contemporary saints such as "Goroba the potter, Sanvata the gardener, Chokhoba the untouchable and ParisaBhagwat the Brahmin" participated.

After the feast, Dnyaneshwar desired to enter into sanjeevansamadhi, a practice to sum up the life

after entering into a deep meditative state. Preparations for the Sanjeevan Samadhi were made by Namdev's sons. Regarding Sanjeevan Samadhi, Dnyaneshwar himself has emphatically talked about relation between higher awareness and light or pure energy in the form of electromagnetic radiation. On the 13th day of the dark half of the Kartik month of the Hindu Calendar, in Alandi, Dnyaneshwar, then was twenty one year old entered into sanjeevansamadhi. His samadhi lies in the Siddhesvara Temple complex in Alandi. Namdev and other bystanders grieved his passing. According to tradition, Dnyaneshwar was brought back to life to meet Namdev when the latter prayed to Vithoba for his return.

Many miracles came to be associated with Dnyaneshwar's life –

1. During Dnyaneshwar's visit to Paithan, to obtain a certificate of purification, he was confronted with a man who violently lashed at an old buffalo. When Dnyaneshwar expressed concern for the animal he was ridiculed by Brahmins for being more concerned about a beast than the teachings of the Vedas. Dnyaneshwar retorted that the Vedas themselves held all life to be sacred and a manifestation of the Brahman. The outraged priests pointed out that his logic implied that beasts should be able to learn the Vedas as well. An undeterred Dnyaneshwar then placed his hand on the buffalo's forehead and it started reciting a Vedic Mantras.
2. Dnyaneshwar was challenged by Changdev, an accomplished yogi who rode on a tiger with his magical powers, to replicate this feat. Dnyaneshwar humbled Changdev by riding on a moving wall. Dnyaneshwar's advice to Changdev was given in 65 verses called the ChangdevPasasthi. Changdev became a disciple of Dnyaneshwar's sister Muktabai.
3. In Alandi there was a Brahmin named VisobaChati. He was very orthodox and used to ridicule the Sadhus and sages. Once Nivrattinath expressed his desire to Muktabai to eat "Mande" which are required to be baked on a frying pan. So Muktabai went round the village for buying a pan; Visoba, who was wicked, had informed all the potters in the village not to give the pan to Muktabai and hence she could not get it in the whole village. She came home empty-handed and was sobbing, because she thought that Nivrattinath, her eldest brother, would get annoyed at this. When Dnyaneshwar knew about this he consoled Muktabai and by the power of Yoga, he kindled the fire inside his stomach and told Muktabai to bake the "Mande" on his back which was as red hot as the frying pan.



Work :

The Priests of Paithana were struck by the spiritual learning and intellect of the four siblings and awarded them the certificate of purification. While returning to Alandi from the journey, the children halted at Nevase, where Dnyaneshwar composed Dnyaneshwari in the year 1290, a commentary on Bhagavad Gita which later became a fundamental text of the Varkari sect. His words were recorded by Sacchidananda, who agreed to become Dnyaneshwar's amanuensis. Dnyaneshwari was written using the Ovi; a meter, which was first used to compose women's songs in Maharashtra, of four lines where the first three or the first and third lines rhyme and the fourth line has a sharp and short ending. Dnyaneshwar was sympathetic towards issues of the common people. He chose the new vernacular Marathi language, as opposed to the classical Sanskrit language, as a means of expression so that spiritual learning could reach the masses who weren't well versed in Sanskrit.

According to tradition, Nivruttinath was not satisfied with the commentary and asked Dnyaneshwar to write an independent philosophical work. This work later came to be known as Amritanubhava. Dnyaneshwar's devotional compositions called Abhangas are believed to have been formulated during his pilgrimage to Pandharpur and other holy places when he got initiated in to the Varkari tradition.

1. **“Dnyaneshwari”** is as good as an independent work, though technically speaking it is a commentary on Bhagwatgeeta.
2. **“Pasaydana”** means a donation of basket full of grains. It's written as if Dnyaneshwara is asking God for a simple gift/blessing. In reality it's the biggest thing anyone could ever ask God, happiness for entire mankind.
3. Dnyaneshwar wrote the **"Amritanubhava"** or **"Anubhavamrit"** in which he has stated his experiences in Yoga and Philosophy, whereby we can get the experience of nectar.
4. One more book in Ovi form under the caption of [Yoga Vashishtha] goes as a work of Dnyaneshwar.

5. There are about 1200 Abhangas said to be composed by Dnyaneshwar.

Teachings / Philosophy:

The Mahanubhava sect and the Nath Yogi tradition were two prominent movements during Dnyaneshwar's time that influenced his works. Mahanubhavas were devotees of Krishna who disregarded the caste system, the Vedas and the worship of the deity Vitthala. Dnyaneshwar differed significantly from Mahanubhava's religious precepts. His thought was founded on the philosophy of the later Vedic texts such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, and devotion to Vitthala formed the cornerstone of the egalitarian Varkari sect founded by Dnyaneshwar. However, the literary style adopted by Mahanubhava writers influenced Dnyaneshwar's works.

Dnyaneshwar was initiated into the Nath Yogi tradition by his brother Nivruttinath, sometime after the death of their parents; Sopana and Muktabai were initiated into the tradition by Dnyaneshwar himself. Founded by Gorakshanath, the Nath Yogi sect had introduced the system of Hatha Yoga, which emphasized on yogic poses and physical fitness. Gahaninath, a disciple of Gorakshanath, had initiated Nivruttinath into the Nath Yogi tradition. Dnyaneshwar's non-dualistic philosophy (Advaita), usage of a vernacular language in his writing and an emphasis on yoga and oneness of Vishnu and Shiva were his inheritances from the Nath Yogi tradition.

The values of Universal brotherhood and compassion espoused in his works came from his interactions with the devotional Vitthala sect, a tradition which was already in existence during Dnyaneshwar's time.

Dnyaneshwar takes up the examination of being or Brahman in Amrutanubhava. He considers being to be the substratum of thought which enables thought and cognition. Since being is prior to thought and concepts, it is distinct from Kantian categories, and methods of thought such as epistemological analysis cannot be applied to it. Dnyaneshwar believes that reality is self-evident and does not require any proof. It antedates dualistic divisions into knower and known, existence and non-existence, subject and object, knowledge and ignorance.

Dnyaneshwar highlights the limitations of the traditional epistemological methods (Pramanas) used in Indian philosophy. He points out that any perception is validated only by another deeper understanding, while in establishing the rationality of reason, reason itself is transcended. Dnyaneshwar even cautions against reliance on scriptural testimony, which is accepted as a valid source of knowledge by philosophers of Vedanta.

Ethics:

Dnyaneshwar's moral philosophy comes out in his exposition of the 13th chapter of Bhagavad Gita, in his commentary on the book Dnyaneshwari. He considers humility; non-injury in action, thought and words; forbearance in the face of adversity; dispassion towards sensory pleasures; purity of heart and mind; love of solitude and devotion towards one's Guru and God as virtues; and their corresponding moral opposites as vices. A pessimistic view of one's life is considered as a necessary condition for spiritual growth in Dnyaneshwari. Dnyaneshwar writes that saints do not perceive distinctions and are humble because they identify all objects, animate or inanimate, with their own Self.

The doctrine of Karma Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita is resurrected in Dnyaneshwari and its utility as a means of achieving non-action through action and in establishing a harmony between these two aspects with detached awareness. In the fourth chapter, the ideal karma yogi's actions are compared to the apparent movement of the Sun, which while appearing to rise and set is actually stationary; similarly, a karma yogi, though appears to act, doesn't really act. Performance of one's duties, acting without egoism, renunciation of the fruits of one's actions and offering one's actions to God are four ways which, according to Dnyaneshwar, result in non-action and Self-realization. Dnyaneshwar's metaphysical conclusion that the world is a manifestation of the divine, and not an illusion, also creates an ethical framework which rejects renunciation and recommends performing one's duties and actions in the spirit of worship.

Dnyaneshwar is in agreement with tradition; he believes that divine order and moral order are one and the same and are inherent in the universe itself. He, therefore, recommends that all social institutions be protected and preserved in their totality. However, when it comes to the institution of caste, his approach becomes more humanitarian and he advocates spiritual egalitarianism.

Takeaways / Life Skills to Be Learnt:

To meet the God in panch-tatwa (Five elements Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space) he took SANJIVAN SAMADHI... It taught us that for meeting the God and for being free from all the worries and live in divine spirit there is NO AGE...

The temple in ALANDI is nothing but the PAVITRA SANJEEVAN SAMADHI

The Nirvikalpa or Sanjivan Samadhi is well explained by the greatest yogi, Dhnyaneshwar. In his treatise, Bhavarthadeepika or Dhnyaneshwari, Dhnyaneshwar has emphatically talked about relation between higher awareness and light or pure energy in the form of electromagnetic radiation. Saint Dhnyaneshwar Maharaj belong to a family of saints which believed in

"advaitavada" i.e. oneness of body and soul. So, obviously these saints did not believe in worldly pleasures and thus wanted their soul to set free from the body.

Purpose of his life was to show common people a path of Adhyatma which was somehow restricted to supposedly learned people of 'higher' caste, Brahmins. If we see his life, and his siblings', we see that they fought the injustice thus inflicted by hierarchical caste system to those who are below it.

So Dnyaneshwar's destiny was to free spirituality from clutches of hierarchical esotericism and make the knowledge available to the masses. Hence, he translated BhagvadGita, which is considered as solution of all the material bondage and beacon to all those who wish to rise above, from Sanskrit to Marathi. That apt and really beautiful translation is known as Bhavarthadeepika or Dnyaneshwari. So after he translated it, his work was done, his destiny fulfilled. Hence, he chose to be united with the supreme soul, Paramatma, through Sanjeevansamadhi.

Is There Cosmic Energy at Alandi?

Dr. Raghunath Narayan Shukla, a retired IAS officer and scientist, proved the existence of cosmic energy at the Samadhi by using detecting instruments like Scintillation and Bolometer. The former detects and measures Gamma rays to X-rays and later detects ultraviolet and infra- red in terms of temperature.

Shukla placed these instruments 50 feet away from the Samadhi to detect and measure Gamma to radar frequencies by covering the Samadhi with gold, silver and zinc filters. "I got different readings for each cover. Surprisingly I observed highest frequency when the Samadhi wasn't covered at all. Whereas, the frequencies decreased from gold to silver and silver to zinc," he says. "The different frequencies suggests that there is a presence of cosmic energy at the Samadhi," Shukla says.

This was later confirmed by Klice Nobel who had visited Alandi to attend an international religion and science symposium. "Soon after the function, Klice, along with other five Nobel laureates, told me to arrange a trip to Alandi next morning. We hired a taxi and went there. As soon as Klice and other laureates saw the Samadhi, they rushed to the spot and embraced it. Later they embraced and even talked to two sacred trees in the temple premises," Shukla recollects.

When Shukla asked as to why he embraced the Samadhi, Klice replied: "It had been for six- long years that my foundation had been working on a project identifying cosmic energy spots around

the world. We identified 162 such spots in India and Alandi was one of them. Therefore I was eager to visit Alandi.”

Why did Saint Dnyaneshwar take a Sanjeevan (alive) Samadhi (temple commemorating the dead, similar to a mausoleum) at such a young age of 21?

Ans :

Saint Dnyaneshwar (1275- 1296 AD) achieved enlightenment at a very young age of around 16yrs. Not only that, he achieved something that is evasive to many, complete dissociation (निर्विकल्पावस्था). Even from his mortal body.

What should I do with anything, that is pleasurable like Amrut (divine elixir), but doesn't quench my thirst for more? And, so he became one with the absolute, the Brahman. Like fire burns camphor completely leaving behind only a sweet smell, and then both (fire and camphor) disappear, Saint Dnyaneshwar surrendered himself completely and dissolved into the absolute. The fragrance of this divine knowledge is still lingering through his works like Dnyaneshwari, Amrutanubhav etc.

- 1) The Nirvikalpa or Sanjivan Samadhi is well explained by the greatest yogi, Dhnyaneshwar. In his treatise, Bhavarthadeepika or Dhnyaneshwari, Dhnyaneshwar has emphatically talked about relation between higher awareness and light or pure energy in the form of electromagnetic radiation. In the book 'Swara Yoga', Swami Muktibodhananda has clearly elaborated the correlation between electromagnetic radiations and consciousness on the basis of explanations given by the all time great physicist, Albert Einstein
- 2) Saint Dhnyaneshwarmaharaj belong to a family of saints which believed in "Advaitavada" i.e. oneness of body and soul. So, obviously these saints did not believe in worldly pleasures and thus wanted their soul to set free from the body.



The Advaitavadis say-

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं, पुनरपि जननी जठरे शयनम् ।

इह संसारे बहुदुस्तारे, कृपयाऽपारे पाहि मुरारे ॥२१॥

Born again, death again, birth again to stay in the mother's womb! It is indeed hard to cross this boundless ocean of samsara. Oh Murari! Redeem me through Thy mercy.

Saint Dhnyaneshwar was born to translate Shrimadbhagwadgita in Prakrit Marathi to open the doors to Bramhadhnyana for everyone. After he utilized his body for the supreme cause he did not feel like indulging in Mithya anymore.

Dhnyaneshwar Maharaj is still awake (jagrut) which can be proven by the fact that he gave a message to one of the veteran saint in his dreams that the roots of a nearby tree are troubling him and need to be curbed.

Dhnyaneshwar Maharaj is referred as "Mauli" (Mother) in Marathi and you can say he is everywhere even in you when someone in Alandi calls you "Ahomauli!" (Mother!) irrespective of your gender.

2. What do you mean by Samadhi?

Ans : Samadhi, in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and yogic schools refers to a state of meditative consciousness. It is a meditative absorption or trance, attained by the practice of dhyana. In Samādhi the mind becomes still.

3. Meaning of Pasaydan

Marathi Lines	English Meaning
Aata vishwatmadeve, yene vagyanye toshavey, toshoni mazdyave, pasaydaan hey...	Now the lord of the universe, consume this sacrificial offering made in the form of words, and consuming thus, grant me your blessing.
Jey Khalanchi vyankati saando, tayaa satkarme rathi vaadho, bhootan paraspary jado, maitra jeevanche	May the evil shed their wickedness. May their minds be driven to good deeds. May all living beings be linked with bonds of kinship.

Duritanche timir javo, vishwa swadharma surye paho, jojeyvanchil to teylahopraanijaat...	May the darkness surrounding the ignorant pass away, may the universe be lit by the sun of conscious divinity present in everyone. May every being get what they desire.
Varshat sakal managali, ishwarnishtanchi mandiyali, anavarat bhumandali, bhettu bhoota...	Shower everyone with your grace. May the world fill with those who believe in the goodness of the divine. May these earthlings filled with love meet you ceaselessly...
Chala kalptarunche aarav, chetana chintamaninche gaav, bolatey je arnav, piyushanche...	May the world be filled with groves of wish granting trees. May there be colonies of enlightened people by the radiance of Chintamani (jewel that grants wishes), And may these enlightened people speak words sweet like heaven's nectar.
Chandrame jey alanchhana, martanda jey tapahina, tey sarva hi sada sajjana, soyarey ho tu....	May the moon be without the spot and sun without the heat. May those who are kind to all find your love.
Kimbahuna sarvasukhi, purnahovoni tihiloki, bhajijo aadipurushi, akhandit...	May people in all the three worlds be gratified in all ways. May they perpetually sing the praises of the first and only god, the creator.
Aani granthopjiviye, visheshi lokiye, drushta-aadrushtvijaye, hoaaveyji	May those who follow these scriptures religiously guide the people. May they find victory
	over the tangible and intangible.
Yeth mhaney shrivishveshwara ho, ha hoyil daanpasavo, yene varey dnyanadevo, sukhiya zaala...	And here the lord of the universe says, "This will be the most charitable gift, the gift of divine grace. And this is what will make Dnyaneshwar's life blissful too.

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Saint Tukaram Maharaj



Introduction and Work :

Tukaram Maharaj , also referred to as Saint Tukaram Maharaj , Bhakta

Tukaram Maharaj , Tukaram Maharaj Maharaj, Tukoba and Tukobaraya, was a 17th- century poet-saint of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra. He was part of the egalitarian, Varkari devotional tradition. Tukaram Maharaj is best known for his devotional poetry called Abhanga and community-oriented worship with spiritual songs known as kirtans. His poetry was devoted to Vitthala or Vithoba, an avatar of Hindu god Vishnu.

About hundred years before Tukaram Maharaj, his ancestor, Vishwambhar, was living at Dehu. The whole family owed its religious allegiance to Lord Vithoba. The Pandharpurwari (pilgrimage) during the holy months of Aashadh and Kartik had been a long tradition in the family of Vishwambhar since his forebears. It was his unwavering and steadfast devotion that compelled the Lord to rush from Pandharpur to Dehu just as the devotion of Pundalik had earlier attracted Him over from Vaikunth to Pandharpur.

(‘Venerable are the families and venerable the land in which God’s disciples are born.’)

Tukaram Maharaj ’s family belonged to the Kshatriya (warrior) caste. His family was very pious, cultured and religious. Worship of Lord Vithoba had been its tradition for generations together and so was annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur. The family also had the distinction of being Mahajans (money- lenders). They owned farmland and engaged in money-lending or trade. They were called kunbis (farming) because they engaged in agriculture and vanis (because of trading). The vaishya (trader) community had come to be included among the shudras (the lowest in the social scale)

about the time during Dnanadev, the Kshatriyas were also being counted among the shudras. Only two castes (Varna) had remained: the Brahmins and the shudras. Thus Tukaram Maharaj also came to be called a shudra.

Prevailing Political, Social and Religious Situation

The Muslim reign was firmly entrenched in the south at that time. The Portuguese ruled Goa. The three main Muslim rulers – Adilshah of Bijapur, Nizamshah of Ahmednagar and Kutubshah of Golconda – were perpetually at loggerheads with each other, the upshot being that villages were being looted recklessly and rendered barren while the rulers themselves were enjoying to the hilt all the perquisites of royalty. The subjects were living in abject conditions.

‘The Brahmins had given up their pious deportment, the Kshatriyas were bleeding the Vaishyas and forcible conversions were the rule of the day,’ noted Tukaram Maharaj. Anarchy prevailed in every sphere. The undesirable had usurped the place of the desirable and the saints had been robbed of their place of honour. The society had become split at many levels. Religion held no attraction for anybody and ignorance ruled the roost. People were looking forward to a new sunrise and such a sunrise was witnessed at Dehu.

Early Life:

Tukaram Maharaj was born to a great devotee, Bolhoba, and his wife, Kanakai, in 1609. His childhood was spent in great comfort and luxury, because the family was prosperous. He was initiated into education by the Pantoji (the non-formal village teacher). He learnt the alphabets with the help of pebbles that gave form to each letter.

As far as his initiation into the temporal and spiritual life was concerned, Tukaram Maharaj did so at the knee of his father, Bolhoba. When Savji (Tukaram Maharaj's elder brother) refused to take up the family business and money lending, Tukaram Maharaj was asked by his father to take upon him the responsibility. He received lessons in business while working under the guidance of his father at the Mahajan's Wada (shop) in the marketplace. Marriage came about at the age of 13 and soon Tukaram Maharaj began looking after the family business independently. He became successful in both trade and money lending. Plaudits came his way from the public. Everyone praised him. He successfully transferred the atmosphere of piety prevailing at home to his workplace. Since Tukaram Maharaj's first wife was chronically afflicted by asthma, a second wedding was arranged with Jijabai (Avalai), the daughter of Appaji Gulwe, a famous money-lender in Pune. It was an alliance between two affluent families that marked the pinnacle of prosperity

for Tukaram Maharaj 's family. The house was always well-stocked with grains.

Tukaram Maharaj was only seventeen when his father and spiritual mentor, Bolhoba, passed away. No sooner had he managed to overcome this grief than his mother, Kanakai, departed from the world the very next year. Soon thereafter, when Tukaram Maharaj was still eighteen, the wife of his elder brother, Savji, passed away. As it was, Savji had shown little interest in matters temporal. He left home for pilgrimage after his wife's death and never came back.

Tukaram Maharaj was just twenty-one when the whole region found itself in the grip of an unprecedented famine. There was belated rainfall in 1629 and ultimately, crops were lost due to a surfeit of rain. However, people still held on to their hopes. The next year, 1630, was one of drought. The next year (1631), which marked the culmination of natural calamity. It was a year of tremendously excessive drought, because of which all crops were vanished away. Life everywhere was thrown into disarray. The family of Tukaram Maharaj suffered very much in this time of great adversity. He lost all his cattle. The money-lending business was lost. Tukaram Maharaj 's first wife, Rakhumabai, and his beloved, son, Santoba, fell prey to the famine.

However, Tukaram Maharaj was not a heartless businessperson to insist on repayment when people were suffering untold misery. On the contrary, keeping aside his personal grief, he came forward to help the famine-hit population generously.

Life Stories:

It was with great courage and resilience that Tukaram Maharaj faced the bereavement of his near and dear ones and the blows dealt by natural calamities and the family's dwindling fortunes. He faced them all, did not run away from them. He never was an escapist. He was desirous of conquest in the work-a-day life and also wanted to cull the elixir of it all.

He set out for the Bhandara Mountain in search of truth. No coming back till he found the immortal truth. That was his determination. Wild animals attacked him and reptiles troubled him, but Tukaram Maharaj remained undeterred. His perseverance reached fruition.

He asked Kanhoba to bring over all the documents pledged to them by their borrowers. These were the promissory notes taken from the borrowers. Tukaram Maharaj divided these into two. Half of them he gave back to Kanhoba and consigned the remaining half to the waters of the Indrayani. This was an act of supreme sacrifice on the part of this money-lender, who, by destroying the promissory notes, absolved his borrowers of their bounden responsibility at a time when his own

monetary affairs were in great disarray! He showed the world that he had renounced the business of money-lending. It was true socialism!

Instead of attending to his worldly affairs, Tukaram Maharaj decided to renovate the Family owned temple that had suffered the ravages of famine. Tukaram Maharaj re-built the temple to do keertan and began going up the Bhandara Mountain to prepare for these discourses in an atmosphere of complete solitude. He would get up early in the morning, offer prayers to Vithoba- Rakhumai. His abhangs encapsulated the essence of ancient Shrutis and Shastras in a very lucid manner. Tukaram Maharaj used to do keertan at the gate of Dnyandev's abode at Alandi. The great scholar RameshwarBhat happened to listen to those sweet compositions. He was surprised to find the essence of the Bhagawad-Gita and the Bhagawat in the Prakrit language and with such lucidity! He was scandalized and denounced this novel happening. He said, 'You are a Shudra. Your Abhangs elucidate the essence of the Vedas, which is not your right. It is sacrilegious to listen to it from your mouth. Who incited you to undertake such an enterprise?' Tukaram Maharaj said, 'It is not my own speech, it is God speaking through me.'

RameshwarBhat was far from mollified. He ordered Tukaram Maharaj to sink his verses in the river. If indeed these were the outcome of a divine order, God would save them from perishing, he said.

Tukaram Maharaj collected all his Abhang books, tied a heavy stone to the bundle and consigned it to the Indrayani, in much the same manner as he had sunk his borrowers' promissory notes earlier. That was a matter temporal, this time it was matter spiritual.

Tukaram Maharaj then launched a protest in front of the temple with great determination. The do-or-die spirit in him had been fully aroused. Thirteen days passed and yet nothing happened. Here at Dehu the Lord God paid a visit to Tukaram Maharaj in a child's garb on the thirteenth night and told him that He had safeguarded Tukaram Maharaj's Abhang books underwater for thirteen days and that these would re-surface the very next day. Some of the devout at Dehu also received similar divine messages and accordingly, went to the bank of the Indrayani the next day. Lo and behold, all the books of Tukaram Maharaj's verses were seen floating on the water surface! The good swimmers among them immediately plunged into the river and brought all the books ashore. The surprising fact was that all the books were completely untouched by water!

Accompanists, Followers and Disciples:

Mention is found at many places in Mahipati's (1715-1790) writings that there was fourteen accompanists to Tukaram Maharaj's keertan. They used to recite the dhrupad during his keertan.

They were as follows:

1. **Mahadjipant Kulkarni:** He was the Kulkarni of village Dehu and is also mentioned by Bahinabai Sioorkar in her writings. He also supervised the construction of the temple at Dehu
2. **Gangadhar Mawal:** He was a resident of the neighbouring Talegaon. He also wrote abhangs and documented evidence are there of his being in the service of Tukaram Maharaj
3. **Santaji Teli Jagnade:** He was a resident of Chakan. He also wrote abhangs of Tukaram Maharaj
4. **Kanhoba:** Tukaram Maharaj's brother
5. **Malji Gade:** Tukaram Maharaj's son-in-law
6. **Kondopant Lohkare:** A resident of Lohgaon
7. **Gawarsheth Wani:** A resident of Sudumbare
8. **Malharpant Kulkarni:** (A resident of Chikhli)
9. **Abajipan :** Lohgaonkar
10. **Rameshwar Bhat Bahulkar.**
11. **Kond patil:** Lohgaon
12. **Navji Mali**(Lohgaon)
13. **Shivba Kasar**Lohgaon
14. **Sonba Thakur:** He used to accompany Tukaram Maharaj on the mridang

The Departure of Tukaram Maharaj

Tukaram Maharaj said to all,

आम्ही जातो आ पुर्या गावा । आ म चाराम राम घावा ॥ १ ॥

तुमची आ मची हेचि भेटी । येथुनियां जन्म तुट्टी ॥ २ ॥

आतां असो द्यावी दया । तुमच्या लागतसे पायां ॥ ३ ॥

येतां निज धामी कोणी । विठ्ठल विठ्ठल बोलावाणी ॥ ४ ॥

रामकृष्ण मुली बोला । तुका जातो वेंकुंठाला ॥ ५ ॥

Bid thee farewell to me now and each return home now. It's time for me to leave now and beseech all for their blessings. Vithoba has come true for me at the end and Tuka will now disappear bodily.'

Thus Tukaram Maharaj bodily disappeared while reciting the name of the Lord. A mention of this is found in historical documents. Baloji Teli Jagnade in his notes writes, 'Tukaram Maharaj attained Vaikunth in his own body.'

The Teachings of Tukaram Maharaj :

- No human being would ever attain happiness in life till there was a place for God in it.
- No happiness would be possible till mortals are a part of our life.
- It was destiny that led Tukaram Maharaj 's worldly affairs to destruction. It was through divine benediction that he attained a great spiritual height. Whereas destiny was uncontrollable, God had to abide by the restriction put by the love of the devotee.
- Love is abundant wherever saints live. A perpetual give-and-take of love forms a part of their whole enterprise. Otherwise, no one, including even scholars and the knowledgeable, have no idea of the bliss offered by devotion. It is such love that binds the whole society together and does away with all differences and discrimination. It is such love that makes man's life happy and prosperous. This heavenly love is obtained from remembering the Almighty and from association with the saints. It transforms unhappiness and happiness and indeed, transforms life itself.

Takeaways:

- Uplifting the downtrodden is the greatness of saint Tukaram Maharaj
- Make money through honest means only and amass it with a detached mind.
- It may be seen that the teachings of Tukaram Maharaj centre around good thought, impeccable deportment and equality.
- He never hesitated in calling a spade a spade while disseminating messages for the benefit of human welfare.
- He never was an escapist. He was desirous of conquest in the work-a-day life and wanted to cull the elixir of it all.

Books:

- 'Says Tuka' (4 volumes) (By Dilip Chitre.)
- 'The poems of Tukārāma' : translated and re-arranged, with notes and an introduction. (By J. Nelson Frazer and K. B. Marathe)
- 'A complete collection of the poems of Tukārāma, the Poet of Maharashtra (2 Volumes) By VishniParshuramShastriChiplunkar, Shankar PandurangDikshit, JanardanSakharamHegde.

Films:

- *SantTukaram Maharaj* (1936) – this movie on Tukaram Maharaj was screened open-air for a year, to packed audiences in Mumbai, and numerous rural people would walk very long distances to see it.
- *Santa Tukaram Maharaj* (1963), in Kannada
- *SantTukaram Maharaj* (1965), in Hindi
- *Tukaram Maharaj* (2012), in Marathi

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Video Links :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvk2->

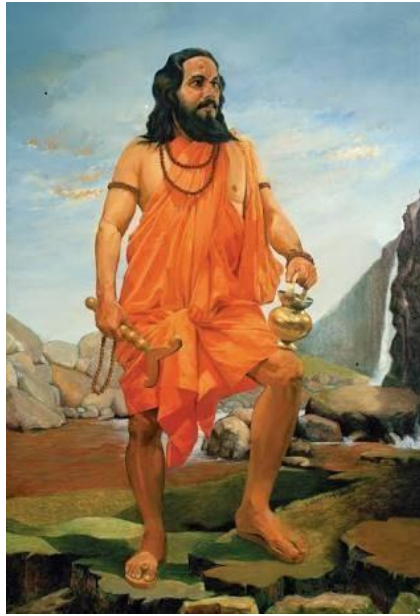
[C56Nw8&list=PL9gWViBOMLmSJm_B6QNXpSz9p7l4a8qAI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FR7nY1RPz9A&t=8651s)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FR7nY1RPz9A&t=8651s>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQOOJGBI_8E&t=26s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoebKceFt5o&t=65s>

Shree Samartha Ramdas



1. Introduction:

Shree Samartha Ramdas was a noted 17th century saint and spiritual poet of Maharashtra. The birth name of Samartha Ramdas Swami was Narayan Suryaji Thosar. He was born on Ramnavami (in the month of Chaitra) in 1530 (Shalivahana era), 1608 CE, in Jamb village, Ambad taluka, Jalna district, on the banks of the river Godavari in Deshastha Rugvedi Brahmin family of Jamadagni Goatra. His parents were Suryaji Pant and Ranubai; his elder brother was Gangadhar Swami. All generations in the family were ardent worshippers of Surya (Sun) and Lord Ram.

He was a firm believer in God and stood by his own ideologies and principles. He is most remembered for his Advaita Vedantist text, the Dasbodh. Samartha Ramdas was a devotee of Lord Hanuman and Rama.

Religion: Hinduism

Philosophy: Advaita

Born: Narayan Suryaji Thosar April,
1608, Ramnavmi, 1608

1530 Shaka era

Jamb Village, Jalna district, Maharashtra

Died: 2 February 1681

1603 (Shaka era)

Sajjangad ,Satara,Maharashtra

Guru: Bhagwan Ram

Literary works: Dasbodh, Manache Shloka, Asmani Sultani, Parachakraniroopan

2. Early Life:

Samartha Ramdas was eight when his father died, turning him into an introvert. He was immersed in the thoughts of God and tried to explore the existence of God. Samartha Ramdas attained enlightenment at the age of eleven, and as advised by Lord Rama, he started a new sector on the banks of the River Krishna.

At the age of twelve, during his marriage ceremony, Narayan heard the Brahmins chanting wedding mantras that included the word 'Savadhan', while he was standing on the podium. This word has other meanings, including "Beware!" Immediately after hearing this word, he knew what it meant. As marriage and family were not his priorities, Narayan escaped the scene and went to the holy city, Nasik, where he started his relentless worship of Lord Ram, which lasted for 12 years. Lord Ram appeared to him and advised him to count the 13 lettered Ram Tarak Mantra, (*Shriram Jairam jai jai Ram*) 108 times at least once a day. Then Lord Ram accepted him as his disciple, naming him Ramdas. Soon people forgot his original name 'Narayan' and started calling him 'Samartha Ramdas.' Ramdas means loyal devotee of Lord Ram.

During childhood, Narayan was fond of vigorous physical activity. He had a well- built body and loved to exercise. His exercise used to consist of 'Surya Namaskars', (Sun salutation) a series of positions each of which involved prayers to the Sun. He used to stand in chest deep water in the river and chant "Shri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram". He was a firm believer of God and stood by his principles. His persona shone with devotion for Lord Hanuman and Lord Ram. He felt compassion for the common people. From his childhood, he was thinking about the welfare of common man and how to relieve the masses.

3. The Samarth Sect:

Samartha Ramdas started the Shree Samarth religious sect to work for the liberation of India and for the renewal of true spirituality. His followers were neophytes (the beginners), who had not been corrupted by politics. He supported Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who was trying to overthrow the Muslim rulers. He established Math (Holy places where like-minded religious people could reside and work) at many locations. He chose leaders of the Maths who were multifaceted, spiritual, set high moral standards and were able to work for the welfare of the society at large. Samarth was of the opinion that saints who sit quietly in the midst of suffering were a shame on mankind and unfit to be saints. He proclaimed this to the heads of the Math. He thereby blended spirituality, social work and politics. In the end, his movement was successful.

4. Pilgrimage and Movement:

In 1554 (Shalivahana shaka era) or 1632 CE, Samartha Ramdas left Takli (village near Nashik, where rivers Godavari and Nandini meet) to start his spiritual journey and his movement. He journeyed for 12 years throughout India, observing the people. The society had become unstable and was on the path of destruction due to the frequent floods and famines as well as indiscriminate attacks by Muslim rulers. Based on these experiences he wrote two books, *Asmani Sultani* and *Parachakraniroopan*, detailing his observations. These are the only two books in Indian Saint literature that record the conditions of those times.

During Shree Samarth's period the repercussions of the authoritarian rule from outsiders who were ruling India, were devastating. The Brahmans and the warrior caste had joined with the foreign rulers. The Indians themselves were following in their footsteps for petty gains and regime opponents were executed. The traders worked with the bureaucrats to flourish their business. Shree Samarth was very much distressed with the plight of the people and decided to do what he could to assist the people.

Ramdas moved around quite a lot and used several Ghal (Marathi: औ), small caves used for meditation. The famous ones include:

1. Ramghal, on Sajjangad, Maharashtra
2. Morghal, at Morbag village near Sajjangad, Maharashtra
3. Tondoshi Ghal, North of Chaphal, Maharashtra
4. Taakli, near Nashik, Maharashtra
5. Chandragiri, opposite Vasantgad, near Karad, Maharashtra
6. Helwak, near Helwak village, Maharashtra
7. Shiganwadi, near Chandragiri, Maharashtra
8. Shivthar Ghal, near Mahad, Maharashtra
9. Chafal was the centre of his movement, Maharashtra

Ramdas established Aadya Chafal Math first and then in year 1648 founded Shree Ram Mandir, Das Maruti Mandir and Veer Maruti Mandir.

5. Administrative and Religious Policies:

After finishing the pilgrimage and observing the people and plight of the society, he returned to Mahabaleshwar. Then, at Masur, Satara district, Samarth Ramdas initiated the celebrations for festival of 'Birth of Lord Ram' (Ram Janmotsava) with fanfare. He gathered people to advance his goal of returning the Hindu religion to its original form after its decline during hundreds of years of Muslim rule. He later found statues of Lord Ram in the river Krishna near Angapur. Ramdas chose the village of Chafal and initiated his mission in 1566 (Shalivahana shaka era), or 1644 AD. He built a temple at Chafal and installed Lord Ram's idol (Murti) ceremoniously according to the Hindu tradition, to celebrate the birth day of Lord Ram that year at the newly built temple. He also established a temple of the Goddess Pratap Durga at the Pratapgad Fort. His teachings of courage, patience and faith in the face of adversity helped people.

He chose Hanuman, who was extremely strong and well-known for his valor to face enemies and emerged victorious, as a role model for the common man to combat murderous opponents. Lord Ram, the great archer, who killed Ravana and helped the gods who were captured by him, was another role model. Samarth Ramdas felt that the teachings and worship of Lord Rama and Hanumana would indeed bring a massive transformation in the

thoughts of common man.

He established temples of Hanuman in towns and villages and preached the message of exercising regularly for strength. Out of hundreds of these Hanuman temples, eleven temples are specially mentioned by him as 11 Maruti.

The Hanuman Temples established by him are found in most of the part of India such as Jaipur in Rajasthan, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Tanjore in Tamil Nadu and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. On reaching Tanjore, he was received by Vyankojiraje, the brother of Shree Shivaji Maharaj, the King of Tanjore. Shree Samarth accepted him as his disciple. At Tanjore, revered religious figure, Pandit Raghunath, became his disciple.

Samartha Ramdas preached the following principles of life:

1. He highlighted the warriors' role of establishing the rule of righteousness.
2. An individual should give primary importance of looking after the family's needs and that societal demands were secondary.
3. He encouraged women to participate in religious work and gave them equal status in positions of authority. He had 18 female disciples. Vennabai managed the study center at Miraj and Akkabai at Chafal and Sajjangad.
4. He strongly resisted distinctions based on caste and creed, preaching that all human beings were equal. He stood for the abolition of social classes and for the promotion of worship.

Role and Contributions for humanity/country/world:

Samartha Ramdas Swami offered an outstanding contribution to the society in the form of 'Dasbodh', which is a guide for meaningful living by human form of life. It guides one to utilize a rare opportunity to employ his living between birth and death meaningfully and achieve the mission of human life. The scriptures address developing a balanced life between material progress and spiritual well-being. The 'Dasbodha' explains multiple facets of this world and variety of creatures and guides a human being through 'Bhakti Marg', the path of Devotion to the God. It advises on the life force 'within' and 'everywhere'.

The book "SHREE MANACHE SHLOKA", was written by Shri Samartha Ramdas. It comprises of 205 Shlokas or verses. Each Shloka or verse comprises of 4 lines each line having about 4 to 5 words. The word Manache means "For the Mind". The 205 Shlokas or

verses give advice or guidelines for the mind. They advise the mind how to be quiet, peaceful and how to behave in the society. Some examples Shlokas are detailed as below:

Let us follow the path of honesty and devotion. This path will lead us to Shri Hari. Let us shun everything that is condemned and do everything that is commendable with the full devotion of mind.

Let us remember Lord Rama every morning. Let us start all our work by chanting Shri Ram. Let us always stick to the good behavior. Only the person of good action is held in esteem in this world.

Shree Samarth produced volumes of output. These include a condensed version of the *Dasbodha*, *Karunashtakas*, *Sunderkand* and *the Yuddhakand* of *the epic Ramayana*, many *Abhangas* and *Owis*, *Poorvarambh*, *Antarbhav*, *Atmaram*, *Chaturthman*, *Panchman*, *Manpanchak*, *Janaswabhawgosavi*, *Panchsamasi*, *Saptsamasi*, *Sagundhyan*, *Nirgundhyan*, *Junatpurush*, *Shadripunirupan*, *Panchikaranyog*, *Manache Shlok*, *Shreemat Dasbodha* and many unpublished works. His explicit and simplified writings even made the illiterate understand his teachings when read out loud. He took a straightforward, forceful and unhesitating approach. He used to write or dictate quickly and used Hindi, Urdu, Arabic or Sanskrit words so long as his writing remained simple. He introduced new words to these languages. Many of his sentences have become used in Marathi.

He produced considerable literature in verse form in Marathi:

- *Shri Manāche Shlok*, advises ethical behavior and love for God
- *Dasbodh*, provides advice on both spiritual and practical topics
- *Shri Māruti Stotra*, a poem in praise of Hanuman,
- *AatmaaRaam*
- *11-Laghu Kavita*
- *Shadripu Nirupan*
- *Maan Panchak*
- *Chaturthmaan*
- *Raamayan (Marathi-Teeka)*

His most popular composition is the Marathi Aarti to Lord Ganesha, recited at the beginning of any auspicious pooja, 'Sukhakarta Dukhaharta'. He also composed several other Aartis such as Satrane Uddane Hunkaar Vadani to Lord Hanuman and Panchanan haivahan surabhushan lila to Lord Khandoba. He has written Aarti of the prominent Indian languages. Ramdas died on the ninth day of Magh, 1603 (Shalivahana era), 1681 CE at Sajjangad at age 73. He was continuously chanting the taraka mantra "Shriram Jay Ram Jay Jay Ram" in front of Ram's Murti which was brought from Tanjore. The Samadhi shrine was built by Chatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj.

5. Takeaways/Life Skills to be learnt:

The teachings of Samarth Ramdas helped all types and group of persons to obtain their 'Spiritual Upliftment' above material welfare. The various scriptures and teachings in Dasbodh enable a person to faithfully and vigorously pursue his aims in life through ethical and appropriate actions, to achieve the ultimate truth. This imbibes a positive elevation in the attitude and outlook of a person towards life. It helps every one with full satisfaction and freedom from Bondages and EGO. Most important aspect of Dasbodh is that it is applicable to all segments of human beings, irrespective of their castes, creeds, religions, residences, styles of living.

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Video links:

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Saint Kabir



(Indian Poet and Saint; 1440-1518CE)

"I searched for the crooked man, but failed to find one...

But when I searched within myself,

I realised there was none more crooked than me!" – Saint Kabir

Early Life:

Kabir was born in Kashi, Varanasi in 1440. He was born in a Hindu family, but brought up in a Muslim household. The Hindu family was extremely poor, thus could not bring up the child and left him near a lake in Varanasi. He was found by a Muslim weaver and grew up with him. While engaged in weaving, Kabir composed Hindi songs that were so inspiring that later Rabindra Nath Tagore translated them into English.

He could not attain formal education because of poverty, but gained knowledge and wisdom through learned men, across societies. He was a disciple of the Hindu bhakti leader Ramananda. His reasoning and understanding are often compared with those of Shakespeare, because like Kabir, Shakespeare also had a no formal education. Kabir travelled extensively across India, learning different languages and dialects.

Little is known about Kabir's married life. Some scholars say he married twice and had two sons and daughters.

Kabirji's Work:

Kabir is considered as one of India's greatest poets and saints. His writings influenced the Bhakti Movement and his verses found mentions in Guru Granth Sahib. Kabir's poetry is popular because of its mystical feeling and simplicity.

The central point of his teachings was love, devotion and unity. He emphasized that, one could find God only through these three ways of life.

Kabir was the first philosopher who tried to create a spirit of harmony between Hindus and Muslims, by giving a universal path, which could be followed by both sects. He gave importance to the inner virtues of man, and appealed both Hindus and Muslims to abolish their blind faith in the Vedas and Kuran. He rejected both religions for a direct relationship with God.

He also strongly opposed the caste system, by asserting that as God's creations, we are equal in all respects. He opined 'moksha' is the process of uniting two divine principles: 'Jivatma' and 'Paramatma'. He preached *through* sermons, inclining his followers to relinquish the insensitive practices of untouchability and class. He also did not believe in the worship of idols, religious rituals and ceremonies or pilgrimage to holy places.

“If by worshiping stones one can find God, I shall worship a mountain....

If by immersion in the water salvation be attained, the frogs who bathe continually would attain it.

As the frogs, so are these men, again and again fall into the womb” - Saint Kabir

Kabir disapproved pride and selfishness. He said that pride, anger, enmity and ego create differences and disrupt communal harmony.

He preached God is one, so is religion. God stays in the heart of each true devotee and one does not have to visit temples or mosques to find him. Kabir suggested that the way to reach the *Lord* is to follow the *path of righteousness*. He considered all living beings as his own self, and was detached from worldly affairs and charms.

I am neither at Kaaba nor at Kailash

Neither am I in rites and ceremonies

Nor Yoga nor in renunciation

Lamp burns in every house, O blind me,

And you cannot see them.....

Your Lord is near, you are climbing

The palm tree to see him

Yoga and the telling of beads

... These are naught to me” – Saint Kabir

He did not constitute any separate religion. Both Hindus and Muslims were his disciples and were known as Kabirpanthis.

Kabir's oral sermons were compiled in a book called Bijak by his disciples. Kabir composed Dohas which became extremely popular for their mystical beauty and simplicity of ideas. Some of the other notable works of Kabir include Kabir Granthawali, Anurag Sagar and Sakhi Granth.

Death:

Kabir is said to have died in Maghar in 1518. Upon his death, his Hindu and Muslim disciples had a disagreement over the possession of his body and on the manner in which he should be cremated. When they lifted the shroud from the body, they are said to have found flowers beneath. Half of the flowers were buried by the Muslims disciples at Maghar while the other half were burnt by the Hindus disciples in Varanasi.

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Mother Teresa



"By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus."

Early Life

Mother Teresa was born Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu (Albanian) on 26 August 1910 into a Kosovar Albanian family in Skopje (now the capital of the Republic of Macedonia), Ottoman Empire. She was baptized in Skopje, the day after her birth. She later considered 27 August, the day she was baptised, her "true birthday".

She was the youngest child of Nikollë and Dranafile Bojaxhiu (Bernai). Her father, who was involved in Albanian-community politics in Macedonia, died in 1919 when she was eight years old.

In the aftermath of her father's death, she became extraordinarily close to her mother, a pious and compassionate woman who instilled in her daughter a deep commitment to charity. Although by no means wealthy, Drana Bojaxhiu extended an open invitation to the city's destitute to dine with her family. "My child, never eat a single mouthful unless you are sharing it with others," she counseled her daughter. When she asked who the people eating with them were, her mother uniformly responded, "Some of them are our relations, but all of them are our people."

According to a biography by Joan Graff Clucas, during her early years Mother Teresa was fascinated by stories of the lives of missionaries and their service in Bengal; by age 12, she was convinced that she should commit herself to religious life. Her resolve strengthened on 15 August 1928 as she prayed at the shrine of the Black Madonna of Vitina-Letnice, where she often went on pilgrimages.

Mother Teresa left home in 1928 at age 18 to join the Sisters of Loreto at Loreto Abbey in Rathfarnham, Ireland, to learn English with the view of becoming a missionary; English was the language of instruction of the Sisters of Loreto in India. She never saw her mother or her sister again.

Work in India and rest of the World

She arrived in India in 1929 and began her novitiate in Darjeeling, in the lower Himalayas, where she learnt Bengali and taught at St. Teresa's School near her convent. Teresa took her first religious vows on 24 May 1931. She chose to be named after Thérèse de Lisieux, the patron saint of missionaries because a nun in the convent had already chosen that name, Agnes opted for its Spanish spelling (Teresa).

Teresa took her solemn vows on 14 May 1937 while she was a teacher at the Loreto convent school in Entally, eastern Calcutta. She served there for nearly twenty years, and was appointed its headmistress in 1944. Although She enjoyed teaching at the school, she was increasingly disturbed by the poverty surrounding her in Calcutta. The Bengal famine of 1943 brought misery and death to the city, and the August 1946 Direct Action Day began a period of Muslim-Hindu violence

On 10 September 1946, Mother Teresa experienced what she later described as "**the call within the call**" when she travelled by train to the Loreto convent in Darjeeling from Calcutta for her annual retreat. "**I was to leave the convent and help the poor while living among them. It was an order. To fail would have been to break the faith.**" Joseph Langford later wrote, "Though no one knew it at the time, Sister Teresa had just become Mother Teresa".

She began missionary work with the poor in 1948, replacing her traditional Loreto habit with a simple, white cotton sari with a blue border. Teresa adopted Indian citizenship, spent several months in Patna to receive basic medical training at Holy Family Hospital and ventured into the slums. She founded a school in Motijhil, Kolkata, before she began tending to the poor and hungry. At the beginning of 1949 Teresa was joined in her effort by a group of young women, and she laid the foundation for a new religious community helping the "poorest among the poor".

Her efforts quickly caught the attention of Indian officials, including the prime minister. Teresa wrote in her diary that her first year was fraught with difficulty. With no income, she begged for

food and supplies and experienced doubt, loneliness and the temptation to return to the comfort of convent life during these early months.

On 7 October 1950, Teresa received Vatican permission for the diocesan congregation which would become the Missionaries of Charity. In her words, it would care for **"the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone"**. By 1997 the 13-member Calcutta congregation had grown to more than 4,000 sisters who managed orphanages, AIDS hospices and charity centers worldwide, caring for refugees, the blind, disabled, aged, alcoholics, the poor and homeless and victims of floods, epidemics and famine.

In 1952, Teresa opened her first hospice with help from Calcutta officials.

She converted an abandoned Hindu temple into the Kalighat Home for the Dying, free for the poor, and renamed it Kalighat, the Home of the Pure Heart (Nirmal Hriday). Those brought to the home received medical attention and the opportunity to die with dignity in accordance with their faith.. "A beautiful death", Teresa said, "is for people who lived like animals to die like angels—loved and wanted." She opened a hospital for those with leprosy, calling it Shanti Nagar (City of Peace). She was Fluent in five languages – Bengali, Albanian, Serbian, English and Hindi – she made occasional trips outside India for humanitarian reasons.

Some Information about International Work:

In 1982, at the height of the Siege of Beirut, Mother Teresa rescued 37 children trapped in a front-line hospital by brokering a temporary cease-fire between the Israeli army and Palestinian guerrillas. Accompanied by Red Cross workers, she travelled through the war zone to the hospital to evacuate the young patients.

By 2007 the Missionaries of Charity numbered about 450 brothers and 5,000 sisters worldwide, operating 600 missions, schools and shelters in 120 countries

Death

Mother Teresa had a heart attack in Rome in 1983 while she was visiting Pope John Paul II. Following a second attack in 1989, she received an artificial pacemaker. In 1991, after a bout of pneumonia in Mexico, she had additional heart problems. Although she offered to resign

as head of the Missionaries of Charity, in a secret ballot the sisters of the congregation voted for her to stay and she agreed to continue.

In April 1996 she fell, breaking her collarbone, and four months later she had malaria and heart failure. Although Teresa had heart surgery, her health was clearly declining.

On 13 March 1997 Teresa resigned as head of the Missionaries of Charity, and she died on 5 September. At the time of her death, the Missionaries of Charity had over 4,000 sisters and an associated brotherhood of 300 members operating 610 missions in 123 countries. These included hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis, soup kitchens, children's- and family-counseling programmes, orphanages and schools. The Missionaries of Charity were aided by co workers numbering over one million by the 1990s. Mother Teresa lay in repose in St. Thomas, Calcutta, for a week before her funeral. She received a state funeral from the Indian government in gratitude for her service to the poor of all religions in the country. Her death was mourned in the secular and religious communities

What Others said: Some are listed below:

Analysing her deeds and achievements, **Pope John Paul II said:** "Where did Mother Teresa find the strength and perseverance to place herself completely at the service of others? She found it in prayer and in the silent contemplation of Jesus Christ, his Holy Face, his Sacred Heart.

K.R. Narayanan (Former Indian President):

"Though she was a world citizen, she was particularly Indian in the true spirit of our culture. Such a one as her rarely walks upon the earth."

Mr. Kofi Annan (Secretary General of the United Nations):

She leaves behind a shining example of charity, service and spiritual fortitude

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, "She is the United Nations. She is peace in the world.

Ronald Reagan (Late President of the United States):

So many have been led by the light of your love And I want to thank you for something, Mother Teresa. Your great work and your life have inspired so many Americans to become personally

involved, themselves, in helping the poor. So many men and women in every area of life, in government and the private sector, have been led by the light of your love, and they have given greatly of themselves. And we thank you for your radiant example.

Jimmy Carter (Former President of the United States):

Her sense of mercy and humility, were beacons of light in this world "Her great humanitarian work, her tireless and selfless devotion to others, her sense of mercy and humility, were beacons of light in this world. Our best homage to her can be to seek and cultivate the goodness within ourselves and others."

Significance of Dress:

The white color of their sari represents truth and purity while the three blue borders each signify the vows that the nuns of the Order take:

- the first band represents Poverty
- the second Obedience
- third broad band represents the vows of Chastity and of Wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor

Novices wear white saris without the three blue stripes. When they are ready to take vows after four years of formation, they receive the blue-striped sari of the Congregation. Each sister possesses only three saris.

Gradually, as the Society grew, it became very difficult to get these saris in large numbers. So in 1958 when the Missionaries of Charity began the Gandhijiji Prem Niwas at Titagarh for leprosy patients and since they found that many of them were out of work, they bought them looms and assigned them to weave saris for the nuns. The leprosy bacillus does not survive outside human flesh, hence there is no risk of the disease spreading. Since then the saris are being woven at Titagarh and sent to Sisters the world over. The inmates there work with human dignity under medical supervision and the Missionaries of Charity pay them for this work besides providing them with food, clothing and medical care.

Recognition, Rewards

- She has received numerous National and International awards. Some are listed below
- Padma Shri in 1962
- Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 1969.
- Bharat Ratna (India's highest civilian award) in 1980.
- Ramon Magsaysay Award for Peace and International Understanding, given for work in South or East Asia, in 1962.
- **Noble Peace Prize :**

In 1979, Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize "for work undertaken in the struggle to overcome poverty and distress, which also constitutes a threat to peace". She refused the conventional ceremonial banquet for laureates, asking that its \$192,000 cost be given to the poor in India and saying that earthly rewards were important only if they helped her to help the world's needy. When Teresa received the prize she was asked, "What can we do to promote world peace?" She answered, "Go home and love your family." Building on this theme in her Nobel lecture, she said: "Around the world, not only in the poor countries, but I found the poverty of the West so much more difficult to remove. When I pick up a person from the street, hungry, I give him a plate of rice, a piece of bread, I have satisfied. I have removed that hunger. But a person that is shut out, that feels unwanted, unloved, terrified, the person that has been thrown out from society—that poverty is so hurtful and so much, and I find that very difficult."

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of her birth, the government of India issued a special ₹5 coin (the amount of money, Teresa had when she arrived in India) on 28 August 2010.

Summary:

Mother Teresa, founder of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation of women dedicated to helping the poorest amongst the poor. She was considered as one of 20th Century's greatest humanitarians. She was canonized as Saint Teresa of Calcutta in 2016 Nun and missionary Mother Teresa, known in the Catholic church as Saint Teresa of Calcutta, devoted her life to caring for the sick and poor. Born in Macedonia to parents of Albanian-descent and having taught in India for 17 years, Mother Teresa experienced her "call within a call" in 1946. Her order established a hospice; centers for the blind, aged and disabled; and a leper colony. In 1979 she received the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work. She died in September 1997

and was beatified in October 2003. In December 2015, Pope Francis recognized a second miracle attributed to Mother Teresa, clearing the way for her to be canonized on September 4, 2016.

In 1950 the Missionaries of Charity that was founded, a Roman Catholic religious congregation had over 4,500 sisters and was active in 133 countries in 2012. The congregation manages homes for people dying of HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis; soup kitchens; dispensaries and mobile clinics; children's- and family-counseling programmes; orphanages, and schools. Members, who take vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, also profess a fourth vow: to give "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor".

Takeaways

- Mother Teresa was selfless, always working to help the people who were suffering, unwanted or uncared for. What really made her work for the whole of humanity?
- One can study her quotes which gives insights into her belief, values and if one inculcates these, one can develop the selfless service attitude, love and compassion for the whole world
- She had the courage and skill to reach out to national /international leaders, all people in general to solve complex issues, and create a better world

Mother Teresa's Quotes: Lets learn and get inspired from her Quotes

- My Secret is simple – I Pray
- We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty."
- No matter who says what, you should accept it with a smile and do your own work
- Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person
- Each one of them is Jesus in disguise
- Everybody today seems to be in such a terrible rush, anxious for greater developments and greater riches and so on, so that children have very little time for their parents. Parents have very little time for each other, and in the home begins the disruption of peace of the world."
- Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful

thing.

- I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world.
- I want you to be concerned about your next door neighbor. Do you know your next door neighbor?
- If you judge people, you have no time to love them.
- It is easy to love the people far away. It is not always easy to love those close to us. It is easier to give a cup of rice to relieve hunger than to relieve the loneliness and pain of someone unloved in our own home. Bring love into your home for this is where our love for each other must start."
- Our life of poverty is as necessary as the work itself. Only in heaven will we see how much we owe to the poor for helping us to love God better because of them.
- We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass- grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls."
- Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies
- We can do no great things, only small things with great love

Summary

- **Selflessness**
- **Love and Compassion for the whole world**
- **Belief in Almighty**
- **Seeing Almighty in people**
- **Continuous Learning**
- **Communication & Negotiation Skills**
- **Courage to achieve the goals**
- **Power to Inspire, Influence, Motivate**
- **Leadership Skills**
- **Determination, Patience, Perseverance**
- **Self Control, Discipline**
- **Wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor**

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Saint Gadagebaba



Introduction and Work:

Gadge Maharaj was a saint and social reformer from the Indian state of Maharashtra. He lived in voluntary poverty and wandered to different villages promoting social justice and initiating reforms, especially related to sanitation.

Early Life:

His original name was Debuji Zhingraji Janorkar. He was born in Shendgaon village in Anjangaon Surji Taluka in Amravati District of Maharashtra to a Dhobi (Washerman caste) family. A public teacher, he travelled from one place to another wearing his food pan upturned on his head and carrying his trademark broom. Wherever he went, he would instantly start cleaning the gutters and roads of the village. He also told the citizens of the village that their appreciation would have to wait until his work was done. Villagers gave him money, babaji used that for the progress of physical and mental health of the society. From this obtained money, Maharaj built educational institutions, dharmashalas, hospitals and animal shelters.

He conducted his discourses in the form of "Kirtans" in which he would emphasize values like service to humanity and compassion. During his Kirtans, he would educate people against blind faiths and rituals. He would use Dohas (couplets of a song) by Saint Kabir in his discourses. He exhorted people to stop animal sacrifice as part of religious rituals and campaigned against vices such as alcohol abuse.

He tried to embody the values that he preached: hard work, simple living and selfless service to

the poor. He abandoned his family (a wife and three children) to pursue this path.

Maharaj met the spiritual teacher Meher Baba several times. Meher Baba indicated that Maharaj was one of his favourite saints and that Maharaj was on the sixth plane of consciousness. Maharaj invited Meher Baba to Pandharpur, India, and on 6 November 1954 thousands of people had Maharaj and Meher Baba's darshan.

Family:

Gadge Baba was born on Feb 23, 1876 in Shengaon, by the side of Bhulawari river. He was named as Debuji. His father was a village washerman. In Debuji's childhood days Shengaon was like any other village in this part of the country-drab and dusty and steeped in backwardness. The villagers were mostly farmers with a few washerman amidst them. Debuji's father Zingraji was a washerman & farmer. Zingraji was married with Sakhubai, daughter of Hambirao Kolaskar of Dapure, from a neighbouring village. The days immediately after their marriage were happy and joyful, for Zingraji and Sakhubai. A social custom among the rural people was that for a woman to bear child, the gods had to be propitiated by offering a goat in sacrifice. Also friends and relatives had to be entertained at a party with drinks and the flesh of the sacrificial goat. Following this practice, Zingraji held a big feast for the villagers, where liquor flowed copiously. This proved to be a turning point in Zingraji's life, for he tested liquor for the first time. Later this became his addiction and destroyed him completely. His family became poor. A depraved man, he now often beat his wife and started stealing money and things from his own house to buy a drink. A day came when Zingraji, his wife and their young son Debu were thrown on the road.

They wandered to the village Kotegaon on the opposite bank of the river Bhulawari, where Zingraji's cousin took pity on them and gave them temporary shelter. Zingraji's untimely death came as a cruel blow to wife Sakhu. Their future was completely blank. A few days later when the news of Zingraji's death reached Hambirao, he sent his son Chonderbhan to Kotegaon and brought his bereaved daughter and grandson Debu over to Dapure. In her father's house Sakhu felt secure. Debu and his friends played Sur-Parambi, hututu and other games. In the afternoon they would wrestle in the sands on the river bank sing songs and bhajans and would enjoy their lunch together. Debu had a fine, resonant voice and he would sing along with his playmates. On the river bank there was one open shrine under a peepal tree. It was Shiva's Pindi. Debu would go to this shrine and offer his worship to Shiva. Soon after his night meal he would go and join the bhajan party in the village temple.

Hambirrao told Debu that he could work in the farm. Debu trained himself in ploughing harrowing, sowing, weeding plant and every other farm operation. The next two seasons saw Debu undertake cultivation on his own. Debu married Kunta. Over a period of time Debu was seen engrossed in his work and would not talk with any body, the people at home thought that something was wrong with him. He kept mum. They would not know that he was undergoing a spiritual transformation. In the meantime, Debuji's wife Kunta gave birth to a daughter. Sakhu rejoiced the birth of her grand-daughter. As per the custom, the friends and relatives of the family had to be entertained at a party on the naming ceremony of the new born where liquor and meat were served to the guests. Debu had come to love animals, birds and even insects who were all gods creations as were human beings, and he would not agree to their slaughter on his own account. He was a strict vegetarian. He would break the old custom. In the course of the next four years, Kunta gave birth to two more children, Kalawati and the son Mudgal. But once again fate struck him with a hard blow and after a short illness the boy died Debuji again reverted to his sullen moods and went back into his shell. The general opinion in the village was that Debuji had committed more than one sin against god for which he was punished.

One day he went to Runmochan, a place of pilgrimage on the banks of the Purna, not far from Dapure. There he had a dip in the river, when a rupee coin tucked at the waist in his loin- cloth dropped into the water. Try as he would, he could not recover the coin which had slipped under the sand on the riverbed. It was a trifling incident but it set Debuji meditating. Sitting on the river bank he saw before him the water flowing down in a tireless succession which changed his perspective.

One such venerable personality is Sant Gadge Baba (1876-1956). This peripatetic mendicant- saint from Maharashtra, one of the greatest modern-day social reformers in India, worked for, and among, the poorest of the poor. (In 2010, the Maharashtra government launched a campaign for clean villages called the Sant Gadge Baba Gram Swachhata Abhiyan.) For 50 long years, from the time he left his home and family in 1905 until his death, he wandered from village to village, from town to town, with a broom in hand, his only other worldly possession being a small earthen pot he used to beg for food.

Baba, an illiterate scholar who studied in the "University of Life", was a preacher par excellence. He sang bhajans composed by Bhakti saints, Sant Tukaram Maharaj being his favourite. Cleanliness is godliness, he would retort when some people ridiculed him for mixing bhajans with broom-work. The first thing he did after entering a village was to sweep the streets, especially the

streets of “untouchables’ quarters”, singing songs interspersed with his signature slogan, “Gopala! Gopala! Devakinandan Gopala!” (Gopal is another name of Lord Krishna, son of Devaki.) People would join him and very soon the village would wear a clean look. Thereafter, usually after a common, contributory meal that people of all castes and communities ate together, he would gather the villagers for an interactive kirtan session of two-three hours at night.

His kirtans had a mesmerising, and also belief-shattering, effect on the audience. For, he would boldly challenge religious orthodoxy and people’s entrenched beliefs and behavioural modes on what constituted cleanliness and impurity, morality and immorality, faith and blind faith. (He is at his unorthodox best in his last kirtan, delivered in Mumbai on November 8, 1956, just a month before his death; it is available at [youtube.com/watch?v=9N5v6eBizw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9N5v6eBizw).)

Baba, who was born into the caste of washermen (parit), questioned discrimination on the basis of caste and gender. “If God is the Father of all human beings, and if He is kind and all- loving, how can He be unkind towards some castes and kind towards others?” he would ask. Selfless and compassionate service of those in need is the highest form of religion, he preached. “God does not reside in temples, masjids, idols and places of pilgrimage. He resides in the dwellings of the poor and the grief-stricken.” Free of all metaphysical debates about god, his simple message, delivered in the culturally rich native language of the common people, was that “Dharma means food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, clothing for the naked, shelter for the homeless, care for the sick, education for the children of the poor, love and protection for animals and birds, hope for those in despair.” Above all, he insisted, dharma means dissolution of the ego, a precondition to experiencing the divinity in humanity.

As behoves any true saint, his deeds matched his words. Like Saint Francis, he lived a life of voluntary poverty of an extreme kind. The shirt he wore was a patchwork of pieces of torn old clothes used by others. He had absolutely no attachment to money or life’s material comforts. Yet, donors, small and big, poured money into his charitable projects. He built numerous dharamshalas, goshalas, schools and hostels for poor students, and homes for destitute children in different parts of Maharashtra.

He fiercely attacked greed, corruption, exploitation through money-lending, alcoholism, superstitions, animal sacrifice as a religious rite and other personal and social ills. Ridiculing godmen who claimed to perform miracles, he would say, “Man himself is a great miracle! Injustice

in society is also a miracle. How is it that the farmer, who harvests gold in the form of food from the land, has to starve? This, indeed, is the strangest miracle!”

Thus, the holistic ideal of cleanliness he propagated had physical, ethical, spiritual and social-reformist dimensions. In this, he had much in common with Mahatma Gandhiji. Like Gandhiji, he treated patients of leprosy, a dreaded and stigmatised disease those days. He greatly respected the Mahatma, describing him in his kirtans as a “devdoot” (an emissary of God). The respect was mutual.

Significantly, Baba was also highly respected by B.R. Ambedkar. The two met several times. Baba handed over a dharamshala he had established in the temple town of Pandharpur to Ambedkar for his care. Once, in 1949, Ambedkar, who was India’s law minister then, came to know that Baba was unwell in Mumbai. He rushed to see him. Baba told him: “Why did you take the trouble of coming? Each minute is precious. I am just a fakir. You are the one occupying a position of high authority.” Ambedkar’s reply is significant: “My authority as a minister, Baba, is short-lived. Once the ministership goes, the person has no authority. Your authority as a saint is everlasting.” It is not for nothing that the common people in India reverentially describe saints as “maharaj”.

Thus, Baba is more popularly known as Sant Gadge Maharaj. It is the unique greatness of Indian culture that the words baba and fakir are regarded as synonymous with “king”, one who continues to rule over the hearts of common people long after he is dead.

To sustain the fervour of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and convert it into a successful social force, we should seek inspiration from the lives of India’s venerated and most beloved saint- reformers like Gadge Maharaj. Modi should popularise and project them as the icons of “swachh Bharat”, and not celebrity brand ambassadors, many of them men and women of straw who hanker after fame and fortune and leave no transformative influence on people.

Also, following the footsteps of GadgeBaba and Gandhiji, the PM should expand the scope of Swachh Bharat to mean not only clean streets but also clean hearts, clean minds, clean institutions, clean politics and clean governance. After all, many ills in our society, including the lack of outer cleanliness, are due to the growing lack of inner cleanliness.

Death:

Maharaj died on 20 December 1956 on his way to Amravati, on the banks of river Pedhi near Walgaon. The Government of Maharashtra started the Sant Gadge baba Gram Swachata Abhiyan project in 2000-01 in his honour. This programme awards prizes to villagers, who maintain clean villages. In addition, the Government of India instituted a National Award for Sanitation and Water in his honour. The University of Amravati has also been named in his honour.

Role and contribution towards humanity/country/world:

As behoves any true saint, his deeds matched his words. Like Saint Francis, he lived a life of voluntary poverty of an extreme kind. The shirt he wore was a patchwork of pieces of torn old clothes used by others. He had absolutely no attachment to money or life's material comforts. Yet, donors, small and big, poured money into his charitable projects. He built numerous dharamshalas, goshalas, schools and hostels for poor students, and homes for destitute children in different parts of Maharashtra.

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Takeaway:

There are a lot of things we can learn from Saint Gadage Maharaj and his life. A few of them are:

1. Leadership qualities – how to lead by example and take everyone along with you. He always worked for the betterment of people
2. Religious – He respected all the religions equally.
3. Courage – He had the courage to speak the truth till his last breath.
4. Respect for all.
5. Administration abilities and strategies.
6. Love and respect for animals
7. Giving utmost importance to values and virtues.
8. Dedication and persistence towards goal of life
9. Swachha Bharat Mission:

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Saint Thiruvalluvar



Introduction:

India, the ancient land of Aryavarta, has been the birthplace of many a poet, philosopher, saint and sage of universal repute. Though these Great Beings lived and moved in the far past, yet today we can contact them through their teachings, in the hearts and minds of the holy Tathagatas. One such noble soul, who incarnated in Mylapore, Madras, is known to us today as "Valluvar" or, as he is more commonly known, 'Thiruvalluvar', which only means, 'the devotee of the Valluva caste'. Valluvas are Pariahs and their vocation was proclaiming the orders of the king by beat of drum.

Thiruvalluvar was born at Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas. He was regarded as an Avatara of Brahma. His wife Vasuki was a chaste and devoted lady, an ideal wife, who never disobeyed the orders of her husband, but always carried them out implicitly. Thiruvalluvar showed people that a person could lead the life of a Grihastha or householder, and at the same time, lead a divine life or a life of purity and sanctity. He showed people that there was no necessity to leave the family and become a Sannyasin to lead a divine life of purity and sanctity. All his wise sayings and teachings are now in book form and known as 'Thirukkural'.

Thiruvalluvar was a celebrated Tamil poet who wrote the Thirukkural, a well known ethical work in Tamil literature. He is claimed by both the Tamils who practice Hinduism and the Tamils who practice Jainism as their own. Thiruvalluvar has been considered to be a Jain citing internal textual evidence from Thirukural.

Thiruvalluvar, the scholarly poet had advocated a life of discipline, self-control, chastity, non-violence, temperance and devotion. He was a visionary of future with 'Universal Society' as the core theme. The values he advocated were specific, particular and yet universal and hence, eternal.

His set of codes stipulated in his creation Thirukkural are still applicable to all sections of the world societies

with a modern outlook and a democratic autonomy with ultra-modern living comforts and very far advanced science and technology of the third millennium. It was acclaimed by many as a Universal Code of Ethics. He was considered as a Sagacious Saint, which was evident from his name itself. It consists of two words “Thin/’ meaning holy, sacred, honourable, excellent, beautiful, etc. and “Valluvar” representing his sub-caste of occupation of weaving. Thiruvalluvar, the discriminating highly learned scholarly poet had boldly advocated a life of discipline, self-control, chastity, non-violence, temperance and devotion. He was a visionary of future with ‘Universal Society’ as the core theme. The values he advocated were specific, particular and yet universal and hence, eternal.

In his first Thirukkural, through the phrase 'Aadhi Bhagavan' Thiruvalluvar had asserted that the Omnipotent and Omnipresent God was Universal. Since, every religion advocated some form of worship of the same, the scholars from various religions such as Saivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, claimed that Thiruvalluvar had followed one such religion of their faith - which was their stretch of imagination.

Thirukkural:

Thiruvalluvar composed Thirukkural, an ancient treatise on the Code of Ethics and Universal Human Values, in Tamil. Opinions are divergent regarding the age of Thirukkural, yet, majority concurs to that of, between 1st century BC and 2nd AD. Thirukkural has a concept that is far higher, nobler and philosophical incorporating a value system called ‘Aram’ the ‘Dharma’. It had adopted many prevailing approaches of its era like Arthashastra and Manu; yet, it had its own original basis on Dharma, which did not take place in Arthashastra. Like the name Thiruvalluvar, Thirukkural is also a combination of two words Thiru and Kural. ‘Thiru’ corresponds to the Sanskrit ‘Sri’ and means “sacred, excellent. The uniqueness of Kural is to attain Moksha (Veedu) through the other three elements and by following married life based on Dharma, and hence it is called down-to- earth treatise. It uses the shortest type of couplets to convey the universal truths and practical wisdom. Covering a whole gamut of occupations from a householder to a politician, from a businessman to a monk, Thirukkural has it all for anybody and everybody.

Thirukkural is divided into three sections, section one deals with Aram, good ethical behavior with conscience and honor, while section two discusses Porul, the right manner of conducting worldly affairs; and section three dwells on Kaamam, love between men and women. The first section has 38 chapters, the second 70 chapters and the third 25 chapters. Each chapter consists of 10 couplets or kurals, for a total of 1330 couplets. Although two sections, Aram and Inbam, are devoted to the private life of an individual more than half the couplets in Thirukkural are grouped under Porul which discusses ethics in public life. Thus Thiruvalluvar gives more importance to righteous living in public life.

Wisdom from Thirukkural:

- “The fool who does not know His own resource, his foes, His duty, time and place, Who sets a reckless pace, Will by the wayside fall, Will reap no fruit at all.”
- There is no greater wealth than Virtue, and no greater loss than to forget it.

Seven Economic/Social Ideas of Thiruvalluvar:

The following points highlight the top seven economic ideas of Thiruvalluvar. the economic ideas are: 1. Factors of Production 2. Agriculture 3. Public Finance 4. Poverty and Begging 5. Wealth 6. Ethics 7. Welfare State.

1. Factors of Production:

Thiruvalluvar has made many passing references about the factors of production viz., Land, Labour, Capital, Organization, Time, Technology etc. He says, “Unfailing harvest, competent body of men, group of men whose wealth knows no diminution, are the components of an economy”, (Kural 61). Further he says, “Executing the work at the proper time is sure to deliver goods (wealth)”, “Nothing is impossible if done with the help of time and technology”.

Finally, he says, “anyone who executes at the appropriate time with appropriate technology, he can conquer the world.” From this we can understand the importance given to factors of production by Thiruvalluvar. He has also emphasized the importance of capital formation. He has insisted on the need for savings. He says, “Profit cannot be had without capital”.

2. Agriculture:

According to Thiruvalluvar, agriculture is the most fundamental economic activity. They are the axle-pin of the world, for on their prosperity revolves the prosperity of the other sectors of the economy, “The ploughmen alone”, he says, “live as the freemen of the soil; the rest are mere slaves that follow on their toil.”

Thiruvalluvar believed that agriculture is superior to all other occupations. “Husbandmen are the lynch -pin of society, for they support all those that take to other work, not having the strength to plough.” He goes on to say,” who ploughing eat their food, they truly live. The rest to others bend subservient, eating what they give. Thiruvalluvar considered the agriculturists, “the intellectuals” and ‘the capitalists’ are the important ingredients of an economy.

3. Public Finance:

Thiruvalluvar elaborately explained Public Finance under the headings Public Revenue, Financial Administration and Public expenditure.

He has stated these as:

- (1) Creation of revenue
- (2) Collection of revenue
- (3) Management of revenue, and
- (4) Public expenditure.

Thiruvalluvar was against the method of collecting tax compulsorily. He compared a king who collected taxes by force to a highway robber.

The three main sources of revenue are:

- (1) Wealth that comes by itself;
- (2) Customs duties;
- (3) Tributes paid by the defeated kings, i.e., 'reparation'.

It should be noted that Thiruvalluvar did not mention land revenue which was the main source of revenue in those days.

Public Expenditure:

Thiruvalluvar recommended a balanced budget. "It is not a great misfortune for a state if its revenues are limited, provided the expenditure is kept within bounds." He gave certain guidelines for a budgetary policy. "Budget for a surplus, if possible, balances the budget at other times, but never budget for a deficit."

Thiruvalluvar advocated the following main-items of public expenditure:

- (1) Defence,
- (2) Public Works and
- (3) Social Services.

External Assistance:

Thiruvalluvar was against seeking external assistance. According to Kural 739, countries seeking external assistance are not to be considered as countries at all. In other words, he advocated a self-sufficient economy.

4. Poverty and Begging:

Thiruvalluvar considered freedom from hunger as one of the fundamental freedoms that should be enjoyed by every citizen. According to him 'poverty' is the root cause of all other evils which would lead to ever-lasting sufferings.

Thiruvalluvar considered it foolish to redress the ills of poverty by begging. He condemned poverty and begging as the greatest curses of a society. It is wrong to say that some were made to beg by fate. If people

were to live by begging, he said, “May the creator of the universe who has decreed so, go begging and perish.”

5. Wealth:

Thiruvalluvar regarded wealth as only a means and not an end. He said, “Acquire a great fortune by noble and honorable means.” He condemned hoarding and described hoarded wealth as profitless richness. To him industry is real wealth and labour is the greatest resource.

6. Ethics:

The entire teaching of Thiruvalluvar was based on ethics. He was against unlawful and illegal methods of realising the objectives. There should be ethics not only in objectives, but also in realising those objectives. He considered drinking, gambling and prostitution as evils that did harm to the socio-economic life of a society.

7. Welfare State:

Thiruvalluvar was for a welfare state. In a welfare state there will be no poverty, illiteracy, disease and industry.

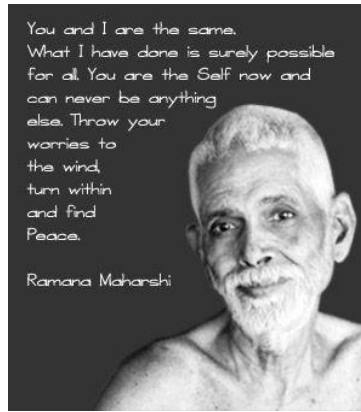
The important beautifying elements of a state are:

- (1) Perfect health of the people without disease
- (2) Abundant wealth
- (3) Good crop
- (4) Prosperity and happiness and
- (5) Full security for the people.

Finally, one of his kurals shows the main characteristic features of a peaceful state. “It is that country which can be called a good country wherein there are no several parties, where there are no internal dissensions; where there are no internal enemies.”

Tiruvalluvar’s teaching, values and ideals and his couplets in the Tirukkural has become the backbone for the moral and religious philosophy of several South Indians. Some of the most prominent teachings include slogans like “Adversity is nothing sinful, but laziness is a disgrace” and “Wine cheers only when it is quaffed, but love intoxicates at mere sight.” Despite Tiruvalluvar’s reasonable tone, many of his ideas were revolutionary. He dismissed the caste system, saying “One is not great because of one’s birth in a noble family; one is not low because of one’s low birth.” The poet maintained that goodness is its own reward and should not be regarded as a mere means to a comfortable afterlife.

RAMANA MAHARSHI



Introduction and early life:

Ramana Maharshi was a guru of international renown from southern India in the first half of the twentieth century. He was born in 1879 near Madurai, Tamilnadu. His father was a farmer. He was the second of three sons. He belonged to a religious family that often gave ritual offerings to deities and visited temples.

It is said that a wandering monk who was refused food by a family member once cursed his family. The monk decreed that in every generation, one child in the family would renounce the world to lead a religious life.

As a child, Ramana was largely disinterested in school and was absent-minded. However, he had a marked inclination towards introspection and self-analysis. He used to ask fundamental questions such as "Who am I?"

He was always seeking to find the answer to the mystery of his own identity and origins. One peculiar aspect of Ramana's personality was his ability to sleep soundly. He could be carried from one place to another while asleep, and would not wake up.

In the summer of 1896, Ramana went into an altered state of consciousness which had a profound effect on him. He experienced what he understood to be his own death, and later returned to life.

He also had spontaneous flashes of insight where he perceived himself as an essence independent of the body. During these events, he felt himself to be an eternal entity, existing without reliance on the physical body or material world.

Along with these intuitions came a fascination with the word "Arunachala" which carried associations of deep reverence and a sense that his destiny was closely intertwined with this unique

sound. At the age of sixteen, Ramana heard that a place called Arunachala actually existed (the modern town's name is Tiruvannamalai) and this brought him great happiness.

Ramana was nearing the end of high school when a careless criticism describing him as a person, not fit to be a student jarred him into making a final decision to leave school. He had been reading a book on famous Tamil saints and resolved to leave home and lead the life of a religious seeker. Naturally, he planned to go to Arunachala, the place which was the focal point of all his religious ideals.

When he was seventeen years old, Ramana left for Arunachala, arriving after four days of mostly train travel. He went directly to the central shrine at the temple and addressed the Shiva symbol (linga) stating he had given up everything and come to Arunachala in response to the god's call.

Ramana spent ten years living in temples and caves meditating, and pursuing spiritual purification, keeping the disciplines of silence and non-attachment. At this point, his reputation as a serious teacher (he was called Brahma Swami) began to grow and other seekers began to visit him. His disciples, some of whom were learned individuals, began to bring him sacred books. He became conversant with the religious traditions of South India written in the different regional languages.

Early disciples had a difficult time learning about Ramana's background and even his native language because he was silent and refused to speak. As time passed he ceased his ascetic phase and began to live a more normal life in an ashram setting. Many people came to visit him with a variety of problems, from both India and abroad.

Ramana's disciples constructed an ashram and temple and a space that could accommodate many visitors. All ate the same food and Ramana sat with the rest of the people during meals and did not expect special treatment. The ashram was a sanctuary for animals and Ramana had great fondness for the cows, monkeys, birds, and squirrels that inhabited the grounds.

Ramana continued to practice the method of inquiry into the nature of the self best expressed by the question "Who am I?"

Ramana was not a guru in the classic sense of a teacher who gives instruction on a regular basis or gives mantras during initiation. In fact, if the seeker wanted to practice repetition of a mantra rather than the "Who am I?" method of self inquiry, he recommended repeating the pronoun "I" or the phrase "I am" rather than repeating sacred Sanskrit words or the names of gods. This focused the person's mind on "being itself" or the mystery of their own awareness rather than an external object or word.

However, Ramana did give informal initiations using a special glance, or touch, or in dreams. Lex Hixon writes:

... although the Guru , or teacher is within everyone as primal awareness, an illuminated sage can push us in the direction he described as inward in the sense of being more primary, or primal. Ramana could give this initiatory push by touch or by glance. Seated in silence, he would suddenly turn, fix one with an intense gaze, and the person would become directly aware of the right-hand Heart (the spiritual center of one's awareness) and its vibrant current of primal awareness. Those who experienced the power of Ramana's gaze have reported that the initiation was so clear and vivid that they could never again seriously doubt that the Guru was none other than their own primal conscious being.

(Coming Home, The Experience of Enlightenment in Sacred Traditions by Lex Hixon, Jeremy P. Tarcher - Martin's Press, New York, 1989, p. 46)

A Danish saint Sunyata was invited to come to India by Rabindranath Tagore, the poet and artist who received the 1916 Nobel Prize for literature. Tagore, while visiting Europe, recognized Sunyata's extraordinary stillness and meditative frame of mind and thought he would find India a welcoming place. Once in India, Sunyata lived as a hermit in silence for almost five decades in the Himalayas with neighbors like Lama Govinda and Dr. Evans- Wentz. Those who knew him in that area would sometimes send seekers from the West to meet with him and experience his presence.

Late in life, Sunyata was invited by some visitors to move to the United States. He began traveling around visiting seekers and giving informal talks on meditation. He had gone several times to visit Ramana over the years while in India. Describing his first meeting in 1936, he wrote about his experience of Ramana:

Never before had I awared [become aware of] such integral Self-Radiance in any human form, such light of Silence. One was being fed just awaring him. At the first sight of him, I felt no excitement or even awe, no solemnity or ecstasy, simply a calm recognition, a glad contentment, and gratitude in his darshan.

During his brief talk, Sunyata described Ramana's special communication to him that occurred during a later visit in 1940. Sunyata was sitting quietly in meditation when he became aware of a powerful message from Ramana seemingly directed especially at him. Suddenly out of the silence came a burst of light and the following telepathic message in English:

We are always aware of Sunyata:

The experience had such a profound effect on him that he adopted the name Sunyata and used it for the rest of his life. Curiously, Ramana used the Buddhist term sunyata which is sometimes translated as the Buddhist Void or emptiness rather than a Hindu term closer to his own cultural tradition. Sunyata also denotes the illusory or insubstantial nature of phenomena.

The idea that we are always aware with some portion of our being of the ultimate reality is a common view in many yogic traditions. It takes silence, focused awareness, and a process of

sifting through and in the language of the phenomenologist bracketing out one's myriad thoughts and impressions to become aware of this underlying reality. Ramana was simply emphasizing this fact to Sunyata by creating a powerful mental impression that would affect him for decades.

Such was the power of Ramana's presence that he could have a profound impact on visitors and change the course of their lives in an instant. Ramana also initiated people in dreams by gazing intently into their eyes, and he would sometimes travel in the subtle body to visit people. He would appear to disciple hundreds of miles away as a luminous figure, and the person would recognize his appearance in that form. He noted that one's waking life and one's dream life were both a kind of dream each with different qualities of awareness. He referred to them as "dream 1" and "dream 2". He therefore did not make a big distinction between appearing to a waking disciple and a dreaming disciple since he considered both spheres of existence to be dreams.

Ramana recommended renunciation of enjoyment of physical and mental pleasures as a means of entering into a state where the oneness of the self and cosmos could be perceived. He also felt that a person who is not attached to the results of his actions can live in the world like an actor that plays his or her part but is immune to emotional disturbance, because he realizes he is only play-acting on the stage of life.

Ramana was able to demonstrate his own non-attachment when thieves broke into the ashram and he counseled the disciples and visitors to let them have anything they wanted. He remained calm during the incident even when struck by one of the thieves. He also displayed no loss of equanimity at the death of his mother, who had come to live at the ashram after selling the family home.

Ramana developed cancer and when his devotees voiced concern about losing him, he responded with the statement "I am not going anywhere, where shall I go? I shall be there where I am always." This is the statement of an enlightened sage - a person where the conflict between life and death is felt no more.

He died in April, 1950, sitting in lotus position. The final word that passed from his lips was the sacred syllable OM.

The French photographer Cartier-Bresson was visiting Ramana's ashram as Ramana neared death. He noted the following astronomical event, which appeared in the night sky over the sacred mountain Arunachala as Ramana, died:

I saw a shooting star with a luminous tail unlike any I had ever seen before moving slowly across the sky and reaching the top of Arunachala, the mountain, disappearing behind it. We immediately looked at our watches. It was 8:47. We raced to the ashram only to find that the master had passed in to Mahanirvana at that exact minute. Not all this experience only documented by a select few ... All the English and Tamil papers which arrived this morning from Madras referred to the meteor which had been seen in the sky over the entire state of

Madras at 8:47 on the night of April 14 by a large number of people in different places. These eyewitnesses had been struck by its peculiar look and behavior.

Ramana who often circumambulated the sacred mountain as an act of worship seemed to be making his final arc around the mountain as a blazing light in the night sky.

Many Westerners who practice the devotional traditions of Judaism and Christianity may see this focus on being itself in yoga as alien or unrelated to their traditions. However, when Moses asked God to identify himself in Exodus 3:15 when he encountered him as a burning bush, God replied, "I am that I am". In the Hebrew, this is YHVH (Yod Hey Vav Hey, the Tetragrammaton, or the "4 letters"), and its variations later became the "names" Yahweh, Jehovah, and G-d.

These are not proper names but instead refer to the highest quality of God which is being. Being is primary and all other qualities and attributes of God depend on this attribute which is so holy that Jews do not mention it directly. Words like Adonai (my Lord) and Hashem (the Name) are used to refer to God's name which is transcendent, ineffable, and is too holy to ever be spoken.

So it is appropriate that the devotion in these Western traditions be directed towards the most sacred aspect of God which is his existence as expressed by the phrase "I am". This phrase was used twice by God in answering Moses' question when God was asked to identify himself.

When these Western religions evolved into traditions of devotion and the ritual worship of God as creator, judge, and savior with new prophets, revelations, texts, and incarnations, the emphasis on divine being became less important. However, many Eastern Yoga traditions such as Jnana Yoga continued to focus on this divine attribute of being as a divine quality present in all life. Being is

something that human beings share with the creator or ultimate reality. This effort to directly perceive the pure attribute of divine awareness and discover the essence of being independent of matter, thought, and other qualities is something Ramana encouraged. In spite of changes to Western religion, this method of seeking to encounter Being (or God's essence) directly as Moses did in the desert is arguably something Westerners can relate to and respect as a religious practice because of their Judaic and Christian roots.

Encountering being in its pure form whether it is symbolized as the deeper Self or as God's essence is the goal of yoga, and is not so different from the goals of these Western religious traditions.

Interesting facts about Raman Maharshi:

1. Who is Ramana Maharishi?

An awe inspiring sage whose presence graced the renowned, the sacred Arunachala hill of Thiruvannamalai, in Tamilnadu during the first half of 20th century. He was known throughout as a silent sage whose peaceful presence and powerful gaze changed the lives of many.

2. Encouraged people to look within and decide whether they were actually the body or the changeless eternal self within.
3. Born on December 30, 1879 seemingly as an ordinary mortal at a certain point of his life in an instant of realization that he grasped that his inmost awareness was actually that of the universal self. There was no struggle for self awareness.
4. Sri Ramana Maharshi December 30, 1879 – April 14, 1950 born Venkataraman Iyer, was an Indian sage. He was born to a Tamil Hindu Brahmin family in Tiruchuzhi, Tamil Nadu. After having attained liberation at the age of 16, he left home for Arunachala, a mountain considered sacred by Hindus, at Thiruvannamalai, and lived there for the rest of his life. Early years: Born in Tiruchuzhi, Tamilnadu, near Madurai. Named as Venkataraman in Madurai, lived with his uncle and attended Scott's Middle school.
5. The Awakening, July 17, 1896. In 1892 Venkataraman's (Age 12) father Sundaram Iyer died at the age of 42. He contemplated on the subject of death, how his father's body was still there but the "I" was gone.
6. The Awakening, July 17, 1896.
- At age 16, on 29th Aug 1896 Venkataraman had a life changing experience. He spontaneously initiated a process of self enquiry. Dramatized death. The body is dead. Am

I dead? Is the body I? I am the spirit transcending the body.

7. It is also said that one attains salvation by merely thinking about Thiruvannamalai. The beautiful hill is said to be the abode of sages. Located 187 Km from Chennai, Tiruvannamalai, at the foot of Arunachala, is a town of medium size, 120 miles southwest of Chennai, an ancient village with a large and splendid temple. Yearly festivals draw large crowds of pilgrims to Tiruvannamalai from all over South India. This is especially so at Karthigai (known also as Deepam), which usually falls in November. On this occasion a beacon light of clarified butter (ghee) is lit at nightfall on the summit of the mountain.

8. Think of Arunachala, you get liberation is expressed in the old Tamil saying: “To see Chidambaram, to be born at Tiruvarur, to die at Banaras or even to think of Arunachala is to be assured of Liberation.” “Even to think of” because in the case of the direct path physical contact is not necessary. Hence, it was no accident that the Maharshi made Tiruvannamalai and its sacred Arunachala Mountain his home.

9. Arunachala Venkataraman meditated in many caves although was disturbed by local children often. Gurumurtam, Virupaksha cave, Patala Lingam vault, where he spent days in samadhi. Finally, for 17 years he moved to Virupaksha cave. A sadhu named Palaniswami had his first darshan of swami and since then stayed with him serving him.

10. In December of 1898 his brother and mother begged him to return home. Venkataraman’s response “In accordance with the prarabdha of each the one whose function is to ordain makes each to act. What will not happen will never happen, whatever effort one may put forth. What will happen will not fail to happen, however much one may seek to prevent it. This is certain. The part of wisdom is to stay quiet.”

11. Ramana’s first teachings in 1902: A government official Sivaprakasam Pillai with writing slate in hand asked “how to know one’s true identity?” The 14 questions put to young swami and his answers were Ramana’s first teachings. Widely known eventually published as “Nan Yar?”

12. How the Maharishi got his name:?

Several visitors came to him. Kavyakantha Sri Ganapati Sastri, a vedic scholar came to see him in 1907. After receiving instructions from him he proclaimed him as Sri Ramana Maharishi. He lived the life of a renunciate.

15. The Westerners discover Ramana:

In 1911 Frank Humphreys discovered Ramana and wrote articles on him in The International Psychic gazette in 1913. Paul Brunton published the first book “A Search of Secret India “

16. Power of silence:

Sri Ramana was noted for his belief in the power of silence and his relatively sparse use of speech and lack of concern for fame or criticism. His life style remained that of a renunciate. He never travelled outside.

17. Final Years:

In November 1948, a cancerous lump developed in Maharishi’s arm and was removed in Feb of 1949. After three operations on the evening of 14th April 1950 while his disciples were chanting “Arunachala siva Arunachala siva”, Bhagavan was in radiant joy, at 8.47 PM breathing stopped.

Bhagavan’s demise at 8.47 on 14th April 1950, all over India there were independent reports of seeing a bright light rising into sky.

Bhagavan’s demise as reported by Henri Cartier- Bresson. It is a most astonishing experience. I was in the open space in front of my house when my friends drew attention to the sky where I saw a vividly luminous shooting star with a luminous tail coming from the south moving slowly across the sky. We raced to the ashram only to find our premonition had been only sadly true.

18. Urged people to practice self enquiry:

Directed people to look inward rather than seeking outward for realization. The true Bhagavan resides in your heart as your true self. This is who I truly am. He viewed all who came to see him as the Self rather than lesser beings. (“The Jnani sees no one as an ajnani. All are only Jnanis in his sight”)

19. Maharishi’s love for animals:

Sick animals were brought to Bhagavan. He felt that even animals could get salvation or Moksha.

20. Teachers in his tradition:

Considered his own Guru to be Self in the form of sacred mountain Arunachala, Did not publicize himself as a Guru, Never claimed to have disciples and never appointed any successors.

21. Teachings:

Encouraged study of Ashtavakra Gita, Yoga Vashishta, Tripura Rahasya, Kaivalya Navaneetam, Ellam Onre. Unlike traditional Advaitic School, discouraged most who came to him from adopting

a renunciate life style.

Encouraged Path of Knowledge (Jnana Marga) consistent with Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta, however gave his approval to a variety of paths and practices.

22. Method of teachings:

He charged no money, and was adamant that no one ever ask for money or anything else in his name. He never promoted or called attention to himself. Instead Ramana remained in one place for 54 years, offering spiritual guidance to anyone of any background who came to him and ask nothing in return. He considered humility to be the highest quality. That equality towards all was a true sign of liberation, and that a true Jnani did was always for others, not themselves.

23. Grace and Guru:

A Guru need not always be in human form. First a person thinks that he is inferior and that there is a superior, all-knowing, all powerful God who controls his own and the world's destiny and worships him or does Bhakti. When he reaches a certain stage and becomes fit for enlightenment, the same God whom he was worshipping comes as Guru and leads him on. That Guru comes only to tell him that 'God is within yourself. Dive within and realize.' God, Guru and the Self are the same.

24. Essential Message:

Who Am I? For all thoughts the source is the 'I' thought. The mind will merge only by Self- enquiry 'Who am I?' The thought 'Who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts and finally kill itself also.

25. Ramana's teaching: "If a man considers he is born he cannot avoid the fear of death. Let him find out if he has been born or if the Self has any birth. He will discover that the Self always exists, that the body which is born resolves itself into thought and that the emergence of thought is the root of all mischief. Find where from thoughts emerge. Then you will abide in the ever- present inmost Self and be free from the idea of birth or the fear of death."

Raja Janak



यथा राजा तथा प्रजाः ॥

राज्ञ धर्मिणी धर्मिष्ठाः पापे पापाः समे समाः ।

राजानमनुवर्तन्ते यथा राजा तथा प्रजाः ॥

"as is the king, so are the subjects": people follow the example of leaders

Philosopher King, a concept more than often critically evaluated in terms of its practicality and too utopian in nature changed how the western world looked at leaders. Closer home King Janak was the to be identified as a Philosopher king. Indian culture had responsive form of governance wherein kings were answerable to the Rishi's and ruled by the law of the Vedas & Upanishads. Philosopher king as a concept dreamt of a perfect society, a society which grew towards perfection not only materially but also spiritually.

Traces of Philosopher king in Plato's Writing:

Premises of Plato, to understand his concept of Philosopher king, starts with morality within an individual person. Plato believed to understand why & how of society's functioning, one must look towards the king or the leader. According to Plato, the element that makes a city corresponds to the human soul. For Plato there is no set of moral order for the individual and other for the leaders, for he believed in such case no one of the entire political and social system would work for the other and entire state would be fall in a state of chaos. His political philosophy was an extension of his philosophy of tripartite soul (he described human soul to be formed of three elements i.e. human Reason, spirited element & bodily appetites). His philosophy described a state having three parts namely producer class, military class and the governing class or the guardians. Each of these three classes performs inter alia pre-defined set of duties to achieve perfection in the society.

King Janak was famously known to be – the philosophical king in whose court were held annual spiritual conferences encouraging intellectual debates between not just between rishis but women seers who challenged and questioned their male counterparts.

In an age, where kings prayed for sons and performed special yagnas, King Janak was an exception. His first daughter Sita was an adopted child followed soon by the birth of his second daughter Urmila. Both were raised as daughters of a raj-rishi as King Janak was famously known to be – the philosophical king in whose court were held annual spiritual conferences encouraging intellectual debates between not just between rishis but women seers who challenged and questioned their male counterparts. It was in such an ambience, the girls grew up – where education and knowledge were implements of thought and expression of choice. Where their beliefs about themselves and others was shaped in this world of freedom, free thought and free will in sharp contrast to the world of Ayodhya – the kingdom of the princes they were to marry.

The first feminist father:

Janak could well be called the first feminist father. King Janak of Videha never yearned for a son like most royal heads but was the happy father of two daughters – Sita and Urmila. He taught his daughters to lead. None of the girls were discouraged from speaking up or take the lead, unafraid to voice their opinions and choice. If an undaunted, defiant Sita is seen venturing into the forbidden forests, arguing with Ram to take her with him in his fourteen-year exile, Urmila holds fort in the palace of Ayodhya. Later, she is the only one who questions Ram of his decision of banishing her sister.

Though a king, he remained a simple, frugal man, his thinking closer to that of a sage. Passionate about knowledge and learning, he is considered to have debated with luminaries like Rishi Ashtavakra and Rishika Sulabha as recorded in ancient texts of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

During the late Vedic period (c. 900 – c. 500 BCE), Videha became one of the major political and cultural centers of Ancient India, along with Kuru and Pañcāla. Late Vedic literature such as the Brahmanas and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad both mention Janaka, as a great philosopher-king of Videha, renowned for his patronage of Vedic culture and philosophy, and whose court was an intellectual centre for Rishi (sages) such as Yajnavalkya. Raychaudhuri suggests 8th- to 7th-century BCE range, while Witzel suggests c. 750 to 500 BCE for the Brahmanas and Upanishads composition period in Videha. The Vedic school of Aitareyins probably moved to Videha and other centers of scholarship, during the late Vedic period.

The region and culture of Videha is often mentioned in Hindu literature. The texts mention the idea of royal dynasty and the tradition of philosopher-kings who renounce, with examples including Nami (or Nimi in some texts), Janaka and other kings. Their stories are found in ancient surviving Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina texts, suggesting that renunciation by kings was a respected tradition before the birth of Buddha, and that this tradition was also broadly accepted in regions other than Videha, such as in Pancala, Kalinga and Gandhara.

King Nimi or Nami of Videha is included as the 21st of the twenty-four Tirthankaras in Jainism (not to be confused with closely spelled Nemi, the 22nd Tirthankara)

‘Janak’ means ‘pitha’:

Janaka was an ancient Indian king of Videha, approximately in the 8th or 7th century BCE,. The rulers of the Videha kingdom were all called Janakas. He later appears as a character in the Ramayana. His original name was Seeradhwaja and he had a brother named Kushadhwaja. His father name Hroshhoroma. King Nimi was the first ruler of Videha kingdom. Then king Mithi, supposed the name Mithila came after him. His son king Janaka(1st), he was the first janaka. Then after three successor came king Devraat and after Devraat the 15th successor was Hroshhoroma.

‘Janak’ means ‘pitha’ or ‘father’ or ‘fatherly figure’ and those dutiful rules who won the heart of his subjects were called as Janak. Thus, Janaka is a term used in Hindu scriptures to refer to an ideal monarch – an ascetic king – rajarishi.

Janaka is revered as being an ideal example of non-attachment to material possessions. He was intensely interested in spiritual discourse and considered himself free from worldly illusions. His interactions with sages and seekers such as Ashtavakra and Sulabha are recorded in ancient texts. His relationship with adopted daughter Sita led her to be called Janaki Mata. The city of Janakpur is named for him and daughter Sita. The Videha (or Mithila) kingdom was located between east of Gandaki River, west of Mahananda River, north of Ganga river and south of Himalayas.

Late Vedic literature such as Shatapatha Brahmana and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad mention a certain King Janaka (c. 8th or 7th century BCE) as a great philosopher-king of Videha, renowned for his patronage of Vedic culture and philosophy and whose court was an intellectual center for Brahmin sages such as Yajnavalkya, Uddalaka Aruni, and Gargi Vachaknavi. Under his reign, Videha became a dominant political and cultural center of the Indian subcontinent.

Janaka is the father of Sita, the wife of God Ram in the Hindu epic Ramayana. His conversation with Ashtavakra is recorded as Ashtavakra Gita, wherein he is depicted as one realised and this tested by the sage Ashtavakra. Many spiritual teachers have referred to this writing often translating and deducing its meaning.

Woman in the court of King Janaka:

Gargi Vachaknavi and other women participated in the philosophical discussions in the court of King Janaka. Challenging Sage Yajnavalkya, Gargi Vachaknavi asked a series of complex questions relating to Brahman

and other allied matters in the court of King Janaka.

Jnani King:

Raja Janaka was a full-blown Jnani though he worked in the world. His Jnana was tested. He was in the Durbar hall when a messenger brought the news that there was fire in the city. Janaka said: “My wealth is unlimited, and yet I have nothing. Even if the whole of Mithila is burnt, yet nothing is lost to me.”

Sage Ashtavakra and Janaka:

Sage Ashtavakra’s father Sage Khagodara had to perform Jal Samadhi after he was defeated by Vandina, a scholar in the court of Janaka. Sage Ashtavakra learned about his father’s death and arrived at the court of Janaka to face Vandina in philosophical discussion. When Ashtavakra arrived at the court of King Janaka, the courtiers started laughing seeing his deformed body.

Immediately Ashtavakra started laughing more loudly. The courtiers were silenced by his laughter.

Curious Janaka wanted to know the reason why Ashtavakra was laughing loudly. Ashtavakra said that he laughed because the King was leading a court of cobblers. The courtiers are only interested in skin (not the soul). This impressed Janaka. Janaka gave permission for the debate and Ashtavakra easily defeated Vandina. But Ashtavakra did not allow the scholar to perform Jal Samadhi as he considered that knowledge should not be used as a weapon to end the life of any living being. Janaka then banned Jal Samadhi in his kingdom.

Glimpse of Ashtavakra Gita:

॥ प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

जनक उवाच ॥

कथं ज्ञानमवाप्नोति कथं मुक्तिर्भविष्यति ।

वैराग्यं च कथं प्राप्तं एतद् ब्रूहि मम प्रभो ॥ १-१ ॥

Janaka: How is knowledge to be acquired?

How is liberation to be attained?

And how is dispassion to be reached? Tell me this, sir.

अष्टावक्र उवाच ॥

मुक्तिं इच्छसि चेत्तात विषयान् विषयत्यज ।

क्षमार्जवदयातोषसत्यं पियुषवद् भज ॥ १-२ ॥

Ashtavakra: If you are seeking liberation,
my son, shun the objects of the senses

like poison. Practise tolerance, sincerity,
compassion, contentment and
truthfulness like nectar.

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Chandragupt Maurya



(340-298 BCE)

Indian Emperor Chandragupta Maurya lived from 340-298 BCE and was the first ruler of the Mauryan Empire. He ruled from 322-298 BCE; he was the father of Emperor Bindusara and grandfather of Emperor Ashoka, who was the third Mauryan ruler and under whose reign the Mauryan Empire reached its full power and became the largest empire ever in the Indian subcontinent and one of the world's largest empires at that time.

Before the time of Chandragupta, India was mostly composed of a number of small independent states, with the exception of the Magadha kingdom, a reign that controlled most of Northern India, which was ruled by the Nanda dynasty. Chandragupta began a process that would unify India for the first time in history.

The Liberation of India:

During 326 BCE, while fighting his way into India, Alexander the Great came across the army of King Porus, the ruler of the local state of Paurava, located in modern day Punjab. After fighting to his last breath, King Porus surrendered to Alexander, who was impressed by the courage and stature of his enemy. Alexander made Porus his ally and turned him into king of all conquered India as a Macedonian tributary. Shortly after this, Alexander's army refused to go any further into Asia; his men mutinied and thus the Macedonian army turned back and left India. Chandragupta was a noble member of the Kshatriya caste (the warrior-ruler caste) and the main proponent for removing all fragments of Macedonian influence from India. He was related to the Nanda family, but he was in exile. Ironically enough, Chandragupta was a fugitive in the camp of Alexander the Great during the time of his exile, and it is possible that he personally met Alexander the Great.

With the help of his wise chief advisor and future prime minister Kautilya Chanakya, Chandragupta raised a small army. The military strength lacked by Chandragupta's force was balanced out by the cunning strategies used by Kautilya Chanakya. Chandragupta entered the capital of the Magadha kingdom, Pataliputra, where he triggered a civil war using Kautilya Chanakya's intelligence network. In 322 BCE he finally seized the throne putting an end to the Nanda dynasty, and he established the Mauryan Dynasty which would rule India until 185 BCE. After this victory, Chandragupta fought and defeated Alexander's generals located in Gandhara, present day Afghanistan. Following these successful campaigns, Chandragupta was seen as a brave leader who defeated part of the Greek invaders and ended the corrupt Nanda government, thus gaining wide public support.

Chandragupta's courage, coupled with Kautilya Chanakya's intelligence, soon turned the Mauryan Empire into one of the most powerful governments at that time. Pataliputra remained the imperial capital, and the initial territory controlled by Chandragupta extended all across Northern India from the Indus River in the west to the Bay of Bengal in the East.

After the death of Alexander, the Great in 323 BCE, the Eastern territories controlled by the Macedonians fell into the hands of General Seleucus, including the region of the Punjab, which today is part of Northern India and Eastern Pakistan. Seleucus was busy enough with what was happening on the western borders, so Chandragupta saw a tempting opportunity and launched an attack on Seleucus and captured a big portion of what today is Pakistan and Afghanistan. In 305 BCE, Chandragupta signed a treaty with Seleucus in which both rulers established borders, and the Punjab was given to Chandragupta in return for 500 war elephants.

The Government of Chandragupta & Imperial Expansion:

During the government of Chandragupta, we find the Greek Magasthenes, an ambassador of Seleucus, who lived in the court of Pataliputra from 317-312 BCE. He wrote many different reports about India and although his original work is lost, we can piece together some information found in subsequent works. Magasthenes also reports that Pataliputra was nine miles in length and about two miles in width. Chandragupta's palace was full of luxuries and all type of ostentatious possessions. He managed to extend his empire westwards and became the master of all Northern India. According to the reports of Magasthenes, Chandragupta's army was composed of 600,000 foot soldiers, 30,000 horses, and 9,000 war elephants.

After becoming the master of all Northern India, Chandragupta began a campaign to conquer the southern half of the Indian subcontinent. Battle after battle, the Mauryan forces absorbed most of the independent Indian states until eventually, in 300 BCE, the borders of the Mauryan Empire extended southward into the Deccan Plateau. Chandragupta, however, failed to annex the small kingdom of Kalinga in present day Odisha in central-eastern India, on the Bay of Bengal. This pending conquest would be completed in 260 BCE by Emperor Ashoka.

Abdication & Death:

In 298 BCE, Chandragupta voluntarily abdicated the throne in favour of his son Bindusara, who became the new Mauryan emperor. What we know after this point seems closer to legend than an actual historical account. It is said that Chandragupta turned into an ascetic and follower of Jainism. Jain tradition claims that Chandragupta migrated south and, consistent with the beliefs of Jainism, he starved himself to death inside a cave. This event supposedly took place in Sravana Belgola, a city about 150 kilometers away from Bangalore, which is one of the most important places of pilgrimage in Jainism.

Takeaways / Life skills to be learn:

1. Setting Vision & Strategic Planning:

Chanakya had very clear vision of “Akhand Bharat”. During that Alexander time, he knew that “Akhand Bharat” concept could save the country from foreign invasion. To achieve his vision, he used following strategy:

a) To establish strong center:

As per this strategy, there should be strong administrative center which could have its writ all over India. He established strong mauryan empire and expanded it to the west.

b) To establish rules of law: -

Chanakya brought rules of Law system. Most of the laws were in writing. There was clear principle that justice should be given to all citizens irrespective of caste, creed etc.

c) To have people Welfare state:

He was the great economist of his time. He developed the country economically. Even

in modern age, his economic principles are not only admired but also followed. The major decisions were taken keeping welfare state concept in mind.

2. Viability & Acceptability:

It is very clear that leader can do only those things which are in the thoughts (i.e. active or remote) of his people. A leader should have the ability to work on the good predominant thoughts of his people. Thus before setting his vision, Chanakya studied logically its acceptability. He knew that Indian people wanted to unite in order to save themselves from foreign invasion. He also studied long term benefits of his vision. We, as a strong country, are surviving because of his vision otherwise the contemporary civilisations of that times are no more.

3. Communication:

To achieve his vision, first and foremost important work was to defeat Nanda King. With meticulous planning, he was able to garner the support of people of Nanda's dynasty and made Nanda to resign handing over power to Chandragupt Maurya. Thus he used the tool of communication to bring the corrupt practices of Nanda King in the knowledge of people.

4. Hawk Eye & control:

Chanakya had hawk eye on the persons who wanted to destroy Mauryan's empire. He always put his or empire's enemies at ease, calm without giving them any knowledge that he had any doubt on their working. He always tried to reach the real culprit behind all this.

5. Leadership:

On establishment of Mauryan empire, Chanakya did not have any problem in choosing leader. Chandragupt Maurya was made "Samrat". As Chandragupt Maurya was part of his team during the struggle period, he knew what was expected of him and how he could manage and regulate the country. Moreover, Chanakya nurtured these qualities in him.

6. Team Building:

Chanakya had unique capability to build team from the scarce resources. He recognised the good leadership qualities in Chandragupt Maurya when he was child. He had the largest team of spies who were ready to sacrifice their lives for their goals. One interesting thing is that he established goals of each department in tandem with the main objective. In addition to working culture and ethos, human aspects were also taken care of.

7. Threats to opportunities:

Veer Khurasan was the Chief of Army Staff during Bindusara's rule. There was doubt on him that he was working to meet his objectives instead of kingdom's objectives. He was made exposed and put in to jail. But before doing this, Chanakya ensured that there should not be any revolt within Army. He appointed capable person who could succeed Veer Khurasan at appropriate time. He exposed Veer Khurasan deeds before Army. Thus takeover was without risk and peaceful.

8. Trust in God:

Chanakya had immense faith in God. But he did not leave any execution matter on God to perform. He had very clear concept i.e. do the karmas with your intelligence and after covering all the material aspects and then leave the matter to God. Thus this was the method of attracting supreme positive energy in your favour. This is known as surrender to God. But it does not mean that one should not do planning and execution matter. It only means that after performing all requisites, one should surrender the result of action to God. On achieving result, whatever it may be, one can plan subsequent strategies.

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Samrat Ashoka



(Mauryan Dynasty , (304-232 BCE)

Title: Devanam Priyadarshi ("*Beloved-of-the-Gods, He Who Looks On With Affection.*")

Birth: 304 B.C.

Birthplace: Pataliputra (modern day Patna)

Dynasty: Maurya

Parents: Bindusara and Devi Dharma

Reign: 268 –232 B.C.

Symbol: Lion

Religion: Buddhism

Spouse: Asandhimitra, Devi, Karuvaki, Padmavati, Tishyaraksha

Children: Mahendra, Sanghamitra, Tivala, Kunala, Charumati

Introduction:

Ashoka was the third ruler of the illustrious Maurya dynasty and was one of the most powerful kings of the Indian subcontinent in ancient times. He ruled a truly massive kingdom that stretched from the Hindu Kush to the Bay of Bengal. It was India's first great empire. It is not just that Ashoka ably ruled this huge empire but the quality of social justice that he brought to his already strong administration. His reign between 268 BC and 232 B.C. was one of the most prosperous periods in the history of India. Ashoka's empire consisted most of India, South Asia and beyond, stretching from present day Afghanistan and parts of Persia in the west, to Bengal and Assam in the east, and Mysore in the south. Buddhist literature document says, Ashoka as a cruel and

ruthless monarch who underwent

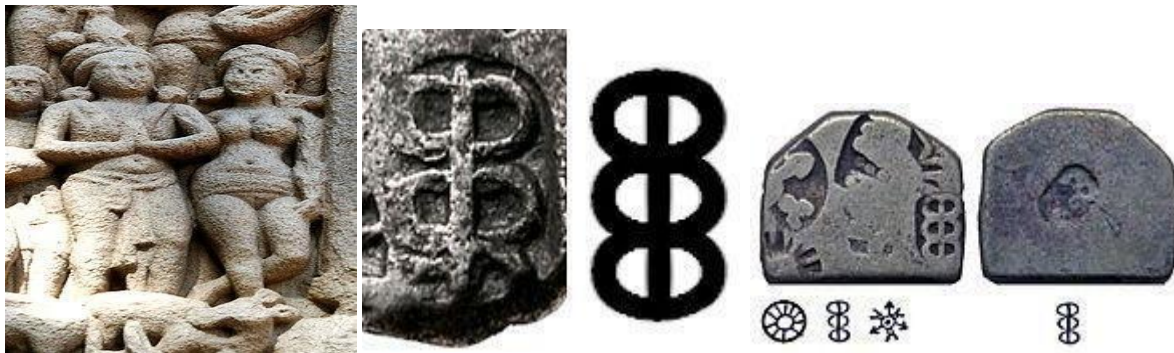
a change of heart after experiencing a particularly gruesome war, the Battle of Kalinga. After the war, he embraced Buddhism and dedicated his life towards dissemination of the tenets of the religion. He became a benevolent king, driving his administration to make a just and bountiful environment for his subjects. Owing to his benevolent nature as a ruler, he was given the title '*Devanam Priyadarshi*'. Ashoka and his glorious rule is associated with one of the most prosperous time in the history of India and as a tribute to his non- partisan philosophies, the Dharma Chakra adorning the Ashok stambh has been made a part of the Indian National Flag. The emblem of the Republic of India has been adapted from the Lion Capital of Ashoka.

Remorseful after his bloody campaign and conquest of Kalinga, Ashoka embraced Buddhism. Thereafter reverence for life, tolerance, compassion and peaceful co-existence were the cornerstones of his administration. Under him the earliest known bans on slavery and capital punishment as well as environmental regulations came into place.

Then in the nineteenth century there came to light a large number of edicts, in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These edicts, inscribed on rocks and pillars, proclaim Asoka's reforms and policies and promulgate his advice to his subjects. The present rendering of these edicts, based on earlier translations, offers us insights into a powerful and capable ruler's attempt to establish an empire on the foundation of righteousness, a reign which makes the moral and spiritual welfare of his subjects its primary concern.

Early Life:

Ashoka was born to Mauryan King Bindusara and his queen Devi Dharma in 304 B.C. He was the grandson of the great Chandragupta Maurya, the founder emperor of the Maurya Dynasty. Dharma (alternatively known as Subhadrangi or Janapadkalyani) was the daughter of a Brahmin priest from the kingdom of Champa, and was assigned relatively low position in the royal household owing to politics therein. By virtue of his mother's position, Ashoka also received a low position among the



princes. He had only one younger sibling, Vithashoka, but, several elder half-brothers. Right from his childhood days Ashoka showed great promise in the field of weaponry skills as well as academics. Ashoka's father Bindusara, impressed with his skill and knowledge, appointed him as the Governor of Avanti. Here he met and married Devi, the daughter of a tradesman from Vidisha. Ashoka and Devi had two children, son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra. According to Roman historian Appian, Chandragupta had made a "marital alliance" with Seleucus; An Indian Puranic source, the Pratisarga Parva of the Bhavishya Purana, also described the marriage of Chandragupta with a Greek ("Yavana") princess, daughter of Seleucus.

Emperor Ashoka and his Queen at the Deer Park. Sanchi relief, Coins and Symbols. (Courtesy/Source for image: Wikipedia)

The ancient Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain texts provide varying biographical accounts. The Avadana texts mention that his mother was queen Subhadraṅgī. According to the Ashokavadana, she was the daughter of a Brahmin from the city of Champa. She gave him the name Ashoka, meaning "one without sorrow". The Divyāvadāna tells a similar story, but gives the name of the queen as Janapadakalyānī. Ashoka was given royal military training. He quickly grew into an excellent warrior general and an astute statesman. His command on the Mauryan army started growing day by day. Ashoka's elder brothers became jealous of him and they assumed him being favoured by King Bindusara as his successor to the throne. King Bindusara's eldest son Sushima convinced his father to send Ashoka far away from the capital city of Pataliputra to Takshashila province. The excuse given was to subdue a revolt by the citizens of Takshashila. However, the moment Ashoka reached the province, the militias welcomed him with open arms and the uprising came to an end without any fight. This particular success of Asoka made his elder brothers, especially Susima, more insecure. In 262 BCE, eight years after his coronation, Ashoka's armies attacked and conquered Kalinga, a country that roughly corresponds to the modern state of Orissa. The loss of life caused by battle, reprisals, deportations and the turmoil that always exists in the aftermath of war so horrified Ashoka that it brought about a complete change in his personality. It seems that Ashoka had been calling himself a Buddhist for at least two years prior to the Kalinga war, but his commitment to Buddhism was only lukewarm and perhaps had a political motive behind it.

Accession to the Throne :

Susima started inciting Bindusara against Ashoka, who was then sent into exile by the emperor. Ashoka went to Kalinga, where he met a fisherwoman named Kaurwaki. He fell in love with her

and later, made Kaurwaki his second or third wife. Soon, the province of Ujjain started witnessing a violent uprising. Emperor Bindusara called back Ashoka from exile and sent him to Ujjain. The prince was injured in the ensuing battle and was treated by Buddhist monks and nuns. It was in Ujjain that Asoka first came to know about the life and teachings of Buddha. In the following year, Bindusara became seriously ill and was literally on his deathbed. Sushima was nominated successor by the king but his autocratic nature made him unfavourable among the ministers. A group of ministers, led by Radhagupta, called upon Ashoka to assume the crown. Following Bindusara's death in 272 B.C., Ashoka attacked Pataliputra, defeated and killed all his brothers, including Sushima.

Among all his brothers he only spared his younger brother Vithashoka. His coronation took place four years after his ascent to throne. Buddhist literatures describe Ashoka as a cruel, ruthless and bad-tempered ruler. He was named 'Chanda' Ashoka meaning Ashoka the Terrible, due to his disposition at that time. He was attributed with building Ashoka's Hell, a torture chamber manned by an executioner to punish offenders.



Ashoka's empire stretched from Afghanistan to Bengal to southern India. Several modern maps depict it as covering nearly all of the Indian subcontinent, except the southern tip (Courtesy/Source for image: Wikipedia)

After he became the emperor, Ashoka launched brutal assaults to expand his empire, which lasted



for around eight years. Although the Maurya Empire that he inherited was quite sizable, he expanded the borders exponentially. His kingdom stretched from Iran- Afghanistan borders in the West to Burma in the east. He annexed the whole of Southern India except Ceylon (modern day Sri Lanka). The only kingdom outside his grasp was Kalinga which is the modern day Orissa.

Distribution of the Edicts of Ashoka, and location of the contemporary Greek city of Ai-Khanoum., Buddhist proselytism at the time of king Ashoka (260–218 BCE), Ashoka Chakra is a depiction of the Dharmachakra (the Wheel of Dharma). The wheel has 24 spokes which represent the 12 Laws of Dependent Origination and the 12 Laws of Dependent Termination (Courtesy/Source for Wikipedia)

The Battle of Kalinga and Submission to Buddhism:

Ashoka launched an assault to conquer Kalinga during 265 B.C. and the battle of Kalinga became a turning point in his life. Ashoka personally led the conquest and secured victory. On his orders, the whole of province was plundered, cities were destroyed and thousands of people were killed. The morning after the victory he went out to survey the states of things and encountered nothing except burnt houses and scattered corpses. Having brought face to face with the consequences of war, for the first time he felt overwhelmed with the brutality of his actions. He saw flashes of the destruction that his conquest had wrought even after returning to Pataliputra. He experienced an utter crisis of faith during this period and sought penance for his past deeds. He vowed never to practice violence again and devoted himself completely to Buddhism. He followed the directives of Brahmin Buddhist gurus Radhaswami and Manjushri and started propagating Buddhist principles throughout his kingdom. But after the war Ashoka dedicated the rest of his life trying to apply Buddhist principles to the administration of his vast empire. He had a crucial part to play in helping Buddhism to spread both throughout India and abroad, and probably built the first major Buddhist monuments. Ashoka died in 232 BCE in the thirty-eighth year of his reign. Thus Chandashoka morphed into Dharmashoka or the pious Ashoka.

Administration of Ashoka :

The administration of Ashoka after his spiritual transformation was focused solely on the well-being of his subjects. The emperor was at the helm of the administration following the established model put forward by Mauryan Kings before Ashoka. He was closely assisted in his administrative duties by his younger brother, Vithashoka and a group of trusted ministers, whom Ashoka consulted before adopting any new administrative policy. The most important members

of this advisory council included the Yuvaraj (Crown Prince), the Mahamantri (Prime Minister), the Senapati (general), and the Purohita (priest). Asoka's reign saw introduction of a large number of benevolent policies as compared to his predecessors. He adopted a paternalistic view on administration and proclaimed "*All men are my Children*", as evident from the Kalinga edict. He also expressed his indebtedness to his subjects for bestowing with their love and respect, and that he considered it his duty to serve for their greater good.

His kingdom was divided into Pradesha or provinces which were subdivided into Vishyas or subdivisions and Janapadas, which were further subdivided into villages. The five chief provinces under Ashoka's reign were the Uttarapatha (Northern Province) with its capital at Taxila; Avantiratha (western province) with its headquarters at Ujjain; Prachyapatha (eastern province) with its centre at Toshali and the Dakshinapatha (southern province) with its capital as Suvarnagiri. The central province, Magadha with its capital at Pataliputra was the administrative centre of the empire. Each province was granted partial autonomy at the hand of a crown prince who was responsible for controlling the overall law enforcement, but the emperor himself retained much of the financial and administrative controls. These provincial heads were altered from time to time to prevent any one of them exerting power over a long period of time. He appointed several Pativedakas or reporters, who would report to him the general and public affairs, leading the king to take necessary steps.

Although Ashoka built his empire on the principles of non-violence, he followed the instructions outlined in the Arthashastra for the characters of the Perfect King. He introduced legal reforms like Danda Samahara and Vyavahara Samahara, clearly pointing out to his subjects the way of life that is to be led by them. The overall judicial and administration were overseen by Amatayas or civil servants whose functions were clearly delineated by the Emperor. The Akshapataladhyaksha was in charge of currency and accounts of the entire administration. The Akaradhyaksha was in-charge of mining and other metallurgical endeavours. The Sulkadhyaksha was in charge of collecting the taxes. The Panyadhyaksha was controller of commerce. The Sitadhyaksha was in charge of agriculture. The emperor employed a network of spies who offered him tactical advantages in diplomatic matters. The administration conducted regular census along with other information as caste and occupation.

Religious Policy: Ashoka's Dharma:

Ashoka made Buddhism the state religion around 260 B.C. He was perhaps the first emperor in history of India who tried to establish a Buddhist polity by implementing the Dasa Raja Dharma or the ten precepts outlined by Lord Buddha himself as the duty of a perfect ruler. They are enumerated as:

1. To be liberal and avoid selfishness.
2. To maintain a high moral character.
3. To be prepared to sacrifice one's own pleasure for the well-being of the subjects.
4. To be honest and maintain absolute integrity.
5. To be kind and gentle.
6. To lead a simple life for the subjects to emulate.
7. To be free from hatred of any kind.
8. To exercise non-violence.
9. To practice patience.
10. To respect public opinion to promote peace and harmony



Based on these 10 principles preached by Lord Buddha, Ashoka dictated the practice of Dharma that became the backbone of his philanthropic and tolerant administration. Dharma was neither a new religion nor a new political philosophy. It was a way of life, outlined in a code of conduct and a set of principles that he encouraged his subjects to adopt to lead a peaceful and prosperous life. He undertook the propagation of these philosophies through publication of 14 edicts that he spread out throughout his empire.

The Elephant represents the Buddha's idea in reference to the dream of Queen Maya of a white elephant entering her womb. The Bull represents desire during the life of the Buddha as a prince. The Horse represents Buddha's departure from palatial life. The Lion represents the accomplishment of Buddha.

Ashoka's Edicts:

1. No living being were to be slaughtered or sacrificed.
2. Medical care for human as well as animals throughout his Empire
3. Monks to tour the empire every five years teaching the principles of dharma to the common people.
4. One should always respect one's parents, priests and monks
5. Prisoners to be treated humanely
6. He encouraged his subjects to report to him their concerns regarding the welfare of the administration at all times no matter where he is or what he is doing.
7. He welcomed all religions as they desire self-control and purity of heart.
8. He encouraged his subjects to give to monks, Brahmins and to the needy.
9. Reverence for the dharma and a proper attitude towards teachers was considered better than marriage or other worldly celebrations, by the Emperor.
10. Emperor surmised that glory and fame count for nothing if people do not respect the dharma.
11. He considered giving the dharma to others is the best gift anyone can have.
12. Whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought "*Let me glorify my own religion,*" only harms his own religion. Therefore, contact (between religions) is good.
13. Ashoka preached that conquest by the dhamma is superior to conquest by force but if conquest by force is carried out, it should be 'forbearance and light punishment'.
14. The 14 edicts were written so that people might act in accordance with them.

He got these 14 edicts engraved in stone pillars and slabs and had them placed at strategic places around his kingdom.

Role in Dissemination of Buddhism:

Throughout his life, 'Asoka the Great' followed the policy of non-violence or ahimsa. Even the slaughter or mutilation of animals was abolished in his kingdom. He promoted the concept of vegetarianism. The caste system ceased to exist in his eyes and he treated all his subjects as equals. At the same time, each and every person was given the rights to freedom, tolerance, and equality. The third council of Buddhism was held under the patronage of Emperor Ashoka. He also supported the Vibhajjavada sub-school of the Sthaviravada sect, now known as the Pali Theravada. He sent missionaries to far off places to propagate the ideals of Buddhism and inspire people to live by the teachings of Lord Buddha. He even engaged members of the royal family, including his son and daughter, Mahendra and Sanghamitra, to carry out duties of Buddhist missionaries. His missionaries went to the below mentioned places - Seleucid Empire (Middle Asia), Egypt, Macedonia, Cyrene (Libya), and Epirus (Greece and Albania). He also sent dignitaries all over his empire to propagate his ideals of Dhamma based on Buddhist philosophy. Some of these are listed as follows: Kashmir - Gandhara Majjhantika, Mahisamandala (Mysore) - Mahadeva, Vanavasi (Tamil Nadu) - Rakkhita, Aparantaka (Gujarat and Sindh) - Yona Dhammarakkhita, Maharattha (Maharashtra) - Mahadhammarakkhita, "Country of the Yona" (Bactria/ Seleucid Empire) - Maharakkhita, Himavanta (Nepal) - Majjhima, Suvannabhumi (Thailand/ Myanmar) - Sona and Uttara, Lankadipa (Sri Lanka) - Mahamahinda

Demise and Legacy:

After ruling over the Indian subcontinent for a period of approximately 40 years, the Great Emperor Asoka left for the holy abode in 232 BC. After his death, his empire lasted just fifty more years. Buddhist Emperor Asoka built thousands of Stupas and Viharas for Buddhist followers. One of his stupas, the Great Sanchi Stupa, has been declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath has a four-lion capital, which was later adopted as the national emblem of the modern Indian republic.

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Maharana Pratap (Pratap Singh)



Introduction:

Popularly known as Maharana Pratap, Pratap Singh was the Rajput king of Mewar (now known as Rajasthan), in north western India. Maharana Pratap was the son of Udai Singh and Jayvanta bai. He came from the dynasty of Sisodiya Rajputs. Maharana Pratap was the eldest of twenty-five sons and hence given the title of Crown Prince. He was the 54th ruler of Mewar, in the line of the Sisodiya Rajputs. He was succeeded by Amar Singh I.

A man of strong Rajput character, Maharana Pratap was far more brave and chivalrous. His kind heartedness and just decision making won the hearts of even his enemies. He is the only ruler of India that did not give in to the Mughal rule, and for that he is the most celebrated ruler of the country to this day.

Early life:

Maharana Pratap was born on 9th of May 1540, in Kumbhalgarh Rajasthan. His younger brothers were Shakti Singh, Vikram Singh and Jagmal Singh. Pratap also had 2 stepsisters: Chand Kanwar and Man Kanwar. He was married to Ajabde Punwar of Bijolia.

After the death of Udai Singh in 1572, Rani Dheer Bai wanted her son Jagmal to succeed him but senior courtiers preferred Pratap, as the eldest son, to be their king. The desire of the nobles prevailed. Self-respect and virtuous behavior were the main qualities of Pratap Singh. Maharana Pratap was bold and brave right from his childhood and everyone was sure that he was going to be a very valiant person as he grew up. He was keenly interested in sports and learning to wield weapons rather than general education.

Important battles:

The battle of Haldighati was the most significant battle fought by Maharana Pratap. The Siege of Chittorgarh in 1568 had led to the loss of the fertile eastern belt of Mewar to the Mughals. However, the rest of the hilly kingdom was still under the control of the Rana. The Mughal emperor Akbar was intent on securing a stable route to Gujarat through Mewar; when Pratap Singh was crowned king (Rana) in 1572, Akbar sent a number of envoys entreating the Rana to become a vassal like many other Rajput leaders in the region. When the Rana refused to personally submit to Akbar, war became inevitable.

Akbar tried his best to bring Maharana Pratap under his clutches; but all in vain. Akbar got angry as no compromise could be arrived at with Maharana Pratap and he declared a war. Maharana Pratap also started preparations. He shifted his capital to Kumbhalgad in the Aravalli range of mountains which was difficult to access. Maharana Pratap recruited tribal people and people dwelling in forests in his army. These people had no experience of fighting any war; but he trained them. He appealed to all Rajput chieftains to come under one flag for Mewar's independence.

The Battle of Haldighati was fought on 18 June 1576 between Maharana Pratap and Akbar's forces led by Man Singh I of Amber. The Mughals were the victors and inflicted significant casualties among the Mewaris but failed to capture Pratap, who escaped. The site of the battle was a narrow mountain pass at Haldighati near Gogunda in Rajasthan. Maharana Pratap fielded a force of around 3,000 cavalry and 400 Bhil archers. The Mughals were led by Raja Man Singh of Amber, who commanded an army numbering around 5,000–10,000 men. After a fierce battle lasting more than three hours, Pratap found himself wounded and the day lost. While a few of his men bought him time, he managed to make an escape to the hills and lived to fight another day. Maharana Pratap and his faithful horse named 'Chetak' also became immortal in this battle. Chetak risked his own life to save Maharana. The strong Maharana mourned and cried inconsolably over the death of his faithful horse. Later he constructed a beautiful garden at the place where Chetak had breathed its last.

Then Akbar himself attacked Maharana Pratap but even after 6 months of fighting the battle, Akbar could not defeat Maharana Pratap and went back to Delhi. Akbar then sent another great warrior General Jagannath in the year 1584 with a huge army to Mewar but even after trying relentlessly for 2 years, he too could not catch Rana Pratap.

Haldighati thus was a futile victory for the Mughals, as they were unable to oust Maharana Pratap. While they were able to capture Gogunda and nearby areas, they were unable to hold onto them for long. As soon as the empire's focus shifted elsewhere, Pratap and his army came out of hiding and recaptured the western regions of his dominion

Few interesting facts about Maharana Pratap:

- The great warrior Maharana Pratap stood at 7 feet 5 inches and weighed around 110 kilograms.
- The Rajput warrior had 11 wives of which Maharani Ajabde Punwar was his favourite. It is said that the reason he married to many Rajput princesses was to strengthen the Rajput unity.
- The heroic Battle of Haldighati fought in June 1576 witnessed about 22,000 Rajput warriors fighting against more than two lakh Mughals. Despite of numeric strength on their side, Mughals could not imprison Rana as he fled through a 40-kilometre long pass.
- Maharana Pratap is the only Rajput who did not surrender in front of the Mughal Emperor Akbar and continued to fight to save his homeland.
- Apart from the Rajput King, his faithful horse named Chetak also became immortal as he jumped over a big canal to save Rana Pratap. In fact, Chetak had blue eyes and that is why Maharana is often referred known as 'Rider of the Blue Horse'.
- Maharana Pratap rebuilt his capital and spent most of his life there. Because of his fight for freedom against the Mughals, Maharana is widely regarded as India's first native freedom fighter.
- He upheld the dignity of women. One occasion Amar Singh had taken some Muslim women as trophy hostages after a battle. Maharana Pratap rebuked his son for doing so. The women were freed and sent home with dignity.
- Maharana Pratap effectively used guerilla warfare tactics. Up against a much better equipped and powerful army, Maharana Pratap, with just a few soldiers, caused much damage to the Mughal forces. The guerrilla tactics he used proved very successful in checking the advance of enemy forces as well as in keeping the flag of freedom flying over large territories of Mewar throughout his lifetime.
- He lived with an unbreakable oath to free the homeland.
- His spear weighed 81 kilograms, the armour of his chest weighed 72 kg and the overall weight of Maharana's spear, armour, shield and two swords weighed up to 208 kilograms!
- He fought with his enemies upfront. Once, Maharana Pratap received information through

a tribal spy that Mughal army commander Raja Man Singh along with a few hundred soldiers were out hunting in the jungle and could easily be defeated during his hunting spree. Rana Pratap decided not to attack Raja Man Singh. He told his forces that he would prefer to face Raja Man Singh in the battlefield than to backstab him when he is unaware of the danger.

Administrative and religious policies:

Maharana Pratap was called the light and life of the Hindu community. He was an able administrator. His administrative organization was well structured. Pratap's associates included Jhala Maan, Bhilu Raja, Bhama Shah and Hakim Khan Soor.

He was noted for being benevolent towards his subjects. He respected all religions. Pratap Singh was a patron of arts. Padmavat Charita and the poems of Dursa Ahada were written during his reign. His love of architecture could be noticed from the places at Ubheshwar, Kamal Nath and Chavand. He was extremely patriotic and secular. He had sworn himself to the freedom and betterment of his homeland.

Role and contribution towards humanity/country/world:

Maharana Pratap kept the spirit of Rajput & Hindu Pride intact by sacrificing his own comfort & life. He was the emperor that never gave in to the Mughal rule. His biggest contribution to the country and humanity was the virtue of patriotism and the will to stand up for your freedom. He was an amazing king who led by example. He contributed to humanity by protecting the interests of the people of Mewar, before his. His war strategies and techniques (guerilla techniques) have proven to be inspirational to many.

Takeaway:

There are a lot of things we can learn from Maharana Pratap and his life. A few of them are:

10. Leadership qualities – how to lead by example and take everyone along with you. He was a democratic leader and always gave priority to people of Mewar .
11. Secularism – He was completely secular and unbiased. He respected all the religions equally.
12. Courage – Maharana Pratap never gave in to the Muslim rule and protected his kingdom till his last breath.
13. Loyalty- Although, his brothers went and allied themselves with the Muslim rule, he

always was integrated to his homeland.

14. Respect for women.
15. Administration abilities and strategies.
16. Love and respect for animals - he loved his horse Chetak the most.
17. Giving utmost importance to values and virtues.
18. Being just and fair, even with the enemies.
19. Dedication and persistence towards your goal.

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Chhatrapati Shri Shivaji Maharaj



Shivaji Maharaj was a benevolent ruler, a liberal and a constructive administrator. He could carve out an independent kingdom against formidable enemies because of his dauntless courage and persistent pursuit of a high objective, military foresight and diplomacy.

Shivaji Maharaj was religious; but he was not a fanatic. Although iron hearted, he was not cruel. He was daring, yet not impulsive. He was practical; but not unambitious. He was a dreamer who dreamt lofty aims and had the firm capacity to convert them into reality.

Shivaji Maharaj believed that Afghans, Turks, Uzbeks, Persians, Abyssinians and other foreign had no right to rule this land, its people and decide its fortunes. This does not mean that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj wanted power for personal gain only. His soldiers fought for the ideal of Swarajya. For Shivaji Maharaj, Swarajya was always bigger than himself. This is the main reason that the Marathas could fight for 27 long years against the mighty Mughal Empire after his death, and later blossom into the Maratha Empire.

2. Early life

- **Rajmata Jijau**

Rajmata Jijau got married to the most heroic general of the Sultan's army, Shahajiraje Bhosale. Thereafter, she lived in Pune. Shivaji Maharaj Bhosale was born on February 19, 1630 to Shahaji Bhosle and Jijabai in the fort of Shivneri, near the city of Junnar of the Pune district. Shivaji Maharaj's father Shahaji was in service of the Bijapuri Sultanate - a tripartite association between Bijapur.

She united the Bhosales' and Jadhavs'. Jijau would tell Shivaji Maharaj about the lives of Shriram, Maruti, Shrikrishna and also from Mahabharat and Ramayana to make him pious and patriotic. Thus, she moulded

him into an ideal ruler by sowing seeds of devotion to the nation and Dharma. She was a major source of inspiration for Shivaji Maharaj. Jija Mata instilled in him a strict sense of right and wrong. She was known to be an influential and determined woman, who was an embodiment of self-respect and virtue. She passed down her quality traits to the growing Shivaji Maharaj, and instilled within him a sense of duty, courage and fortitude to overcome any hardship arising. Under her guidance and care, Shivaji Maharaj developed within him a human touch that saw him harbor a great respect for all women, religious tolerance, and justice, along with the love for his country, his religion and his quest for freedom of Maharashtra. Shivaji Maharaj owes his greatness to the inspiration of his mother who dedicated her life to bringing up her son to become one of the greatest rulers of the Maratha Empire.

Shivaji Maharaj turned out to be a born leader from a very young age. An active outdoorsman, he explored the Sahayadri Mountains surrounding the Shivneri forts and came to know the area like the back of his hands. By the time he was 15, he had accumulated a band of faithful soldiers from the Maval region who later aided in his early conquests.

- **Beginning of Swarajya with Torna**

In 1646, King Shivaji Maharaj captured this fort at the age of sixteen, thus making it one of the first forts of the Maratha Empire. He renamed the fort "Prachandagad" as Torna, and constructed several monuments and towers within it.

Geographically it is a strong fort. Torna is also called as Prachandagad. In Marathi it means 'huge'. Locals say when Shivaji Maharaj was building the fort, Maharaj got a hidden treasure from which he rebuilt Fort Rajgad in the same region.

3. Important Battles

Shivaji Maharaj was a great military warrior and had inherited an army of 2000 foot soldiers. He increased this fleet to 10,000 in his lifetime and needed to strengthen the protection of his country by gaining control over the seas.

By 1645, Shivaji Maharaj acquired control of several strategic locations from under the Bijapur Sultanate around Pune – Torna from Inayat Khan, Chakan from Firangoji Narsala, Kondana from Adil Shahi Governor, along with Sinhagad and Purandar.

Battle of Pratapgad: (An example of psychological warfare and politics)

Shivaji Maharaj vanquished Afzal Khan in the battle of Pratapgad which was fought on 10 November 1659. The battle is known for the manner in which Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj killed Afzal Khan. It was agreed that the two would meet unarmed however Afzal Khan had hidden a small dagger and Shivaji Maharaj wore armor underneath his clothes with a concealed weapon in one hand.

Battle of Pavan Khind:

Adil Shah sent Siddi Jauhar to Panhala in 1660. In this battle Adilshahi and Mughal forces jointly attacked Marathas from all directions. Shivaji Maharaj positioned himself at Panhala fort, near present-day Kolhapur. Over 200 Marathas died in the battle yet they combated 1,400 enemy soldiers. During the escape from Panhala to Vishalgad, Bajiprabhu Deshpande occupied Ghod Khind, blocked the path of the pursuers, and made a determined stand against them. He was severely wounded but fought for hours, as he possessed a deep sense of mission. The battle raged for hours, with the valiant defenders standing firm on their positions, rapidly depleting in numbers. Only a handful of Marathas survived, and around over a thousand soldiers of the Adilshahi army was slain.

Five hours later, the cannon fire announcing Shivaji Maharaj 's return to Vishalgadh was heard. Hundreds of Marathas had laid down their lives by then. Baji Prabhu was fatally wounded and died. The dying hero was however jubilant.

Sacking of Surat:

In the Battle of Surat, Shivaji Maharaj challenged the Mughal Fauzdar of Surat. The town was attacked and put under sack for nearly 3 weeks, in which the Maratha army looted Mughal and Portuguese trading centers.

It is necessary to understand why Shivaji Maharaj decided to undertake such a risky campaign. In the years preceding 1665, Mughal generals Shaiste Khan and Daud Khan had swooped down on the Pune-Supa region and reduced it to ashes. Entire villages had been burnt to the ground and countless people had been killed. Shaiste Khan had occupied the Lal Mahal at Pune and plundered whatever he could. It had been Aurangzeb's dream to subjugate the Deccan and he aimed to start it by unleashing Mughal armies on the unsuspecting people of Pune and Supa.

Shivaji Maharaj, after cutting off the fingers of Shaiste Khan in a daring raid decided to hurt the Mughals by aiming for their richest town – Surat. By feigning that he was headed elsewhere, he lulled the Mughals into being complacent and soon, appeared with his armies at Gamdevi, thirty miles from Surat. His intentions were clear, and he made them public too – his fight was against the Mughal emperor, not the people of Surat.

So Shivaji Maharaj sent a message to Inayatullah Khan, the faujdar of Surat asking him to bring the three richest merchants of the city. They would compensate him for the losses suffered by the invasions of Aurangzeb. Not only did Inayatullah Khan refuse to settle the matter with Shivaji Maharaj, he refused to defend the town and fled. But with the talks with Inayatullah Khan having failed, Shivaji Maharaj took the only route available – sacking of Surat.

Battle and Treaty of Purandar (1665):

The Battle of Purandar was fought between the Mughal Empire and Maratha Empire in 1665. The Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, sent his generals Dilir Khan and Jai Singh to besiege Shivaji Maharaj's fortress at Purandar. After Mughal forces killed Maratha General Murar Baji Prabhu on June 2, 1665, Shivaji Maharaj surrendered and gave up 23 of his forts. On June 11, 1665, the Treaty of Purandar was signed between the Rajput ruler Jai Singh I, the commander of the Mughal Empire, and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Jai Singh found the way around the Purandar fort and Shivaji Maharaj had to sign an agreement. Shivaji Maharaj then offered to surrender the fort in order to prevent the useless slaughter of his men.

Following are the main points of the treaty:

1. Shivaji Maharaj kept twelve forts, along with an area worth an income of 100,000 (1 lakh) huns.
2. Shivaji Maharaj was required to help the Mughals whenever and wherever required.
3. Shivaji Maharaj's son Sambhaji was tasked with the command of a 5,000-strong force under the Mughals.
4. If Shivaji Maharaj wanted to claim the Konkan area under Vijapur's control, he would have to pay 4 million (40 lakh) huns to the Mughals.
5. He had to give up his forts at Purandar, Rudramal, Kondhana, Khandagla, Lohagad, Isagad, Tung, Tikona, Rohida fort, Nardurga, Mahuli, Bhandardurga, Palaskhol, Rupgad, Bakhtgad,

Morabkhan, Manikgad, Saroopgad, Sakargad, Marakgad, Ankola, Songad, and Maangad.

Along with these requirements, Shivaji Maharaj agreed to visit Agra to meet Aurangzeb for further political talks. Next day (12th June), according to the agreement, 7,000 men and women, (of whom 4,000 were combatants), left Purandar.

Battle of Sinhagad:

One fort on the outskirts of Pune, Kondana, was still under the control of a Mughal general. On 4 February 1670 Shivaji Maharaj deputed one of his most senior and trusted generals, Tanaji Malusare, to head a mission to capture Kondana. In the Battle of Sinhagad, the fort was scaled during the night, but victory was secured with loss of Tanaji. (mention story of war)

Miraculous escape from Aurangzeb's court:

Shivaji Maharaj reached Agra on June 11, 1666, accompanied by his son and a small force. At Agra a grand durbar was being held in the magnificent Diwan-i-Am in honor of Aurangzeb's birthday. Shivaji Maharaj and Raje Sambhaji attended the durbar to pay their respects to the Emperor. But Aurangzeb treated Shivaji Maharaj with marked coldness and placed him in the rank of the commanders of 5,000 horsemen. The Maratha hero, who had so often humbled the pride of the Moghuls, took this insult to heart. He complained bitterly in open durbar about Aurangzeb's breach of faith. The next day a strong guard of Moghul soldiers was placed round his house, and Shivaji Maharaj became the Emperor's prisoner.

An ordinary man would have given way to despair in such a situation. But Shivaji Maharaj's wonderful resourcefulness came to his rescue. He feigned sickness and began to send regular presents of fruits and sweetmeats to Brahmins and other holy men in large wicker baskets, each of which was covered with flowers and was carried on a pole by two men. The soldiers guarding the house got used to seeing these baskets pass in and out of Shivaji Maharaj's house. They examined the baskets very carefully for some days; Shivaji Maharaj and Sambhaji concealed themselves in two of the baskets and slipped out of the gates of the house and out of the walls of Agra.

After reaching Mathura, the father-son and their followers shaved off their usual beard and mustache and applied ash on their face, posing like beggars. From Mathura, they proceeded to Prayag (Allahabad) and then to Bundelkhand (Madhya Pradesh) and then to Golconda (Andhra Pradesh) and with a journey of 60 days reached Raigarh in October 1666.

Southern Conquest:

At the end of 1676, Shivaji Maharaj launched a wave of conquests in southern India with a massive force of 50,000 (30,000 cavalry & 20,000 infantry). He defeated and captured the forts at Vellore and Jinji in modern-day Tamil Nadu. He also signed a friendship treaty with the Kutubshah of Golconda. These victories proved quite crucial during future wars. Jinjee served as Maratha capital for 9 years during 27 years of war.

Few facts

- **Guerrilla warfare-**

Shivaji Maharaj fought the Mughal army with guerrilla tactics. He would, with his band of soldiers move away into the Western Ghats and attack the imperial army only at a place and time of his choosing. He learnt the importance of terrain in guerrilla war in his early years and never confronted the enemy in open combat. Shivaji Maharaj very early realised the importance of intelligence. Shivaji Maharaj had a full-fledged department of spies who provided vital information of political, military and social nature. He had a well-oiled system of horsemen and runners to disseminate information at the earliest.

- **“He Swarajya whave hi shreenchi iccha” :**

Shivaji Maharaj , in a departure from the past, put an ideal” Swarajya” above everything else. He never claimed “Shivaji Maharaj ’s Swarajya” — “he Swarajya whave hi shreenchi iccha” . Creating Swarajya is God’s will.

- Proper Planning:**

Shivaji Maharaj used to perform steady work. He never celebrated victories victoriously. Right after killing Afzalkhan his army had organized a massive attack. Netaji Palkar and Moropant's attack on the crossing and a comprehensive approach and proper planning is to strike Kolhapur provinces as fast as possible followed by Kolhapur, hitting Kudal and killing Vijapur province, and using it to loot and double the army by defeating 12,000 troops in the next 18 days, and this is the military skill to win maximum of all the territory till Adilshahi.

- **Tax system:**

Firstly, Shivaji Maharaj 's expertise as a General is, of course, undisputed. But, besides that, he was also an excellent Governor. He believed that the welfare of the subjects was a responsibility of the ruler. Even though he fought so many battles, he never laid extra taxes on his subjects. Under the rule of Shivaji Maharaj the system surveying of land was changed. One of his Peshwa name Annaji Datto was appointed to survey land, in the state & decide upon the land revenue. In case of dry land rate of land revenue was not fixed per bigha but on the value of the produce. This was for the benefit of the cultivator because if, the rate of the land revenue was fixed as per bigha, the cultivator was required to pay land revenue.

- **Abolishment of the Deshmukhi system**

Till the advent of Shivaji Maharaj, much of the land was cut into little fiefdoms belonging to various families such as Shirkes, Ghorpades, Jedhe, More etc etc. These feudal lords would rule from their forts atop mountains and this had been going on for generations. He got rid of the hereditary rights held by these Deshmukhs or Watandars. In English word this is called Feudalism. They were masters of their own fiefs and defended their fief unto death. But a watandar's vision never went beyond his fief. Shivaji Maharaj abolished this, and forbade fortifying any hill or village without his permission.

1. Good governance (Administrative and Religious policies)

Under his reign, the Maratha administration was established where Chhatrapati was the supreme sovereign and a team of eight ministers were appointed to oversee the proper enforcement of various policies. These eight ministers reported directly to Shivaji Maharaj and were given a lot of power in terms of execution of policies formulated by the King. These eight ministers were –

- (1) The Peshwa or Prime Minister, who was head of general administration and represented the king in his absence.
- (2) The Majumdar or the Auditor was responsible for maintaining the financial health of the kingdom

(3) The PanditRao or Chief Spiritual Head was responsible for overseeing the spiritual well-being of the kingdom, fix dates for religious ceremonies and oversee charitable programs undertaken by the king.

(4) The Dabir or Foreign Secretary was entrusted with the responsibility of advising the king on matters of foreign policies.

(5) The Senapati or Military General was in charge of overseeing every aspect of the military including organization, recruitment and training of soldiers. He also was the strategic advisor of the king in the time of a war.

(6) The Nyayadhish or Chief Justice saw formulations of law and their subsequent enforcement, civil, judicial as well as military.

(7) The Mantri or Chronicler was responsible for keeping elaborate records of everything the king did in his daily life.

(8) The Sachiv or Superintendant was in charge of royal correspondence.

2. Role and contributions for humanity/ country/ world

Farfetched vision, forts

- Shivaji Maharaj had set aside reserve funds to be used when the inevitable clash with the Mughals happened. This was 1,25,000 hon (A hon was equal to approx five rupees.) reserve for the men on forts and a further 1,75,000 hon for repairs and renovation which would have to be undertaken in war time with little or no option to raise money from elsewhere
- Water tanks. Most forts have huge water tanks which could supply hundreds. Many tanks predate Shivaji Maharaj, but many were dug by him too. Even today, they are the only source of potable water on many forts.
- **Father of Indian Navy: Sea Forts:**

Shivaji Maharaj recognised the importance of the sea and built a chain of coastal forts. Aware of the need for naval power to maintain control along the Konkan coast, Shivaji Maharaj began to build his navy in 1657 or 1659. Marathi chronicles state that at its height his fleet counted some 400 military ships, though British chronicles counter that the number never exceeded

160 ships. With the Marathas being accustomed to a land-based military, Shivaji Maharaj widened his search for qualified crews for his ships, taking on lower-caste Hindus of the coast who were long familiar with naval operations (the famed "Malabar pirates") as well as Muslim mercenaries. Noting the power of the Portuguese navy, Shivaji Maharaj hired a number of Portuguese sailors and Goan Christian converts, and made Rui Leita Viegas commander of his fleet. Viegas was later to defect back to the Portuguese, taking 300 sailors with him.

Shivaji Maharaj fortified his coastline by seizing coastal forts and refurbishing them, and built his first marine fort at Sindhudurg, which was to become the headquarters of the Maratha navy. The navy itself was a coastal navy, focused on travel and combat in the littoral areas, and not intended to go far out to sea.

The establishment of the Maratha navy was another revolutionary act of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. He recognised that the coastline of Maharashtra was very well suited for building numerous docks and ports. Outlying islets were converted into strong forts – eg Jaigad Padmadurg, Suvarnadurg, Sindhudurg. It led to the rise of a seasoned admiral like Kanhoji Angre. The Maratha navy enabled a stout defense of the coast

Takeaways / Life skills to be learnt:

- **Dreams and expansion of the same:**

The kingdom established by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj known as “Hindavi Swaraja” (Sovereign Hindu state) grew and spread beyond Attock in Northwest India (now in Pakistan) and beyond Cuttack in East India in course of time, to become the strongest power in India. After the death of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj & his son Sambhaji, their prime ministers or ‘the Peshwas’ became the rulers. The Peshwas and the Maratha Sardars like Shindes of Gwalior, Gaekwads of Baroda & Holkars of Indore contributed to the growth of the Maratha Confederacy. The history of India is incomplete without the history of Marathas and Shivaji Maharaj is the nucleus of Maratha history. Shivaji Maharaj has been a source of inspiration and pride to the past generations and will continue to inspire generations in future.

- **Honour of women**

Shivaji Maharaj was a dependable supporter of women and their honour. He opposed all kinds of violence, harassment and dishonour against women. Anyone under his rule caught violating woman's rights was severely punished. In fact, women of captured territories were also released unharmed and with integrity.

- **Leadership with Liberal Religious policy:**

Shivaji Maharaj was a cultured and a tolerant ruler. He proclaimed to be the protector of the Hindus. He showed respect to religious texts of all religions. He did not destroy a single mosque. He protected Muslim ladies and children even during the course of war.

When Aurangzeb issued a fresh order reemploying the jizya on all the Hindu population, it was an open challenge as much to Shivaji Maharaj as to many Rajput chiefs. Shivaji Maharaj wrote a strong letter of protest to Aurangzeb. He wrote “God is the Lord of all men. Islam and Hinduism are only different pigments used by the Divine Painter to picture the human species.” He respected the personal honour of Muslim.

Shivaji Maharaj was able to empathise with his people. He intermingled with his people across the hierarchy and was with them during their hour of need. He could feel their pain and wanted to do his best to elevate the status of his subjects. He was able to combine the brilliance of a well-developed strategic mind with true and genuine human feelings, thereby establishing a chord of oneness. It was this emotional chord that was instrumental in making his people follow him readily with utmost trust and faith.



(The glory of this Mudra of Shahaji’s son Shivaji Maharaj will grow like the first day moon. It will be worshiped by the world & it will shine only for well being of people)

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