

Addressing the audience in a VSC meeting

October 9, 2014 (5:30 pm), at ICSR Auditorium, IIT madras

Poojaneeya **Swami Sarvapriyananda**, other Swamijeas, Faculty colleagues, Students and Friends,

I am very happy and honoured to be invited to speak a few words on this occasion of a special lecture by **Swamy Sarvapriyananda** on the topic **Investigating Happiness - Insights from Vedanta and Positive Psychology**.

Although the interpretations on “happiness” vary from the point of view of the people who attempt to do that, for common man, it is the essence of his existence. He strives the whole life to be happy. Also, he wanted the happiness to be permanent – whatever it may mean to him.

Thus the topic is very important not only to spiritually inclined people, but also for common man. To my understanding Swami Vivekananda contributed a lot in bringing Vedantic principles to the realm of common man by explaining them in simple and commonly understood language.

My interest in **Vivekananda** started at very early stages of my life – from school days onwards. I was aware that the construction of “**Vivekananda Rock Memorial**” at Kanyakumari started in the year 1963, the birth centenary of Swami, by the efforts of **Shri Eknath Ranadeji**, on the advice of **Guruji Golwakar** (Madhava Sadasiva Golwakar). After the completion of the memorial, the work on “**Vivekananda Kendra**” began in the year 1970. As a Pre-Degree student in 1973, I could also contribute to that great cause by donating rs. 4/- in the form of two coupons – **I still preserve those coupons as a souvenir**.

I have not read Vedanta per se – though heard many discourses in which the speakers elucidated vedantic principles. However, I remember an incident occurred during my college days.

I generally used to take books from library to read during my 45 minutes bus journey from my village Udumala to Kasaragod Govt. College. The books are usually of poems or of philosophic nature. The reason for it was that I need not have to finish reading them in one or two weeks. It was on one such occasion that I asked for a book on Vivekananda. The librarian (**Mr. Manikkam**) immediately got me the first volume of “**Complete Works of Vivekananda**”. Although I did not read it completely, I took some of the later volumes also, and read here and there – in any case my conditions at home were not conducive for sitting long time and read books. I found that, in his addresses, Vivekananda spoke nothing but Vedanta in simple terms, and brought home its significance to day to day life.

On another occasion, I went to library and just stood in front of the table for asking for some books. Mr. Manikkam went directly to a bookshelf and got me a

book: **"Sarvavedantasarasamgraham"** by **Shankara!** I was happy to see the book – looks very new; not many touched the book. I went home started flipping the pages. It was very hard for me to understand the abstract Vedic hymns and their interpretations – much more difficult than learning "Abstract Mathematical Analysis".

In any case, my spiritual inclination took shape in those days - during my Pre-Degree years, and I feel that, to some extent, I sustained the spiritual leanings by reading books by spiritual souls (**Vivekananda, Dayananda Saraswati, Ramana Maharshi, Mata Amritandamayi, Sri Sri Ravishankar et. al.**) and listening spiritual discourses whenever I get a chance. I got opportunity to listen to the discourses by **Swamy Chinmayanda, J. Krishnamurthy, Sudhananda, Dayanada Saraswati, Swami Bhoomananda Thirtha,** and many lectures arranged by VSC at IIT-M for the last 15 years.

Most of my spiritual thoughts were contained in some of my poems that I used to write in those days. Now, I do not write poems; but write some "Notes"; specifically after my morning walk. I would like to read one such note now on "Happiness in Life" as it is the theme of today's discourse.

May 30, 2007

HAPPINESS IN LIFE

(TO WHOMEVER TO BE BENEFITED)

The whole purpose of life is - to have a happy life - to see near and dear ones to be happy. This purpose becomes selfish, if one has only that purpose, whereas if one can go beyond this, extend this purpose to others also, then the above purpose becomes unselfish.

Not only that, one gets the dividend of being more and more happy.

But, how can the purposes gets fulfilled?

The whole world is striving to find that. - Some think that it can be done by material advancements alone; - Some think that it should be done both materially and spiritually, and - some think that it should be done totally spiritually.

To me the way seem to be "to enjoy the life in this material world by being part of it but at the same time not being slave to it".

To attain this stage, - one has to look not only what are seen, but also those unseen, - not only open our eyes outwardly, but also inwardly.

Material facilities should be only to the extent that it should increase/facilitate our peaceful coexistence.

Unhappiness results often as the result of the perception that events do not occur the way "I" want. In other words, outside world does not react the way I think it should. This perception can change once one realises that "I am the one to be changed" not others. Before pointing fingers to others, look oneself, ask if "I am free of errors". Is "right" in my opinion is "really right"? As and when one finds something is wrong in others, take that occasion to cleanse oneself - take woe to be devoid of such wrong things in oneself!