

Re- orienting ourselves

In the corporate world many of us at various stages in our lives reach a stage of stagnation & the road ahead appears blurred. This could appear in our professional or personal life. How to move thereon? In this article I have taken Swami Vivekanand's one powerful expression, "**Arise, awake & stop not till the goal is reached,**" and tried to understand it through his thoughts & expressions during many of his discourses & writings.

The power of the word arise, comes from breaking free from inertia. We get so comfortable in who we are, what we know and in our engagement in our current circumstances, that we choose not to stretch. We shy from experimentation in the unknown, partially known and relooking at the known. At one time Swami Vivekanand said, "**Comfort is no test of truth, truth is often far from being comfortable.**" . To begin is the greatest of all challenges. For the first step to be taken so many forces hold us back -what if I fail? What if others ridicule me? Is it worthwhile to begin? Will I be able to take it forward thereon? Analyzing this it appears that the cause for not beginning appears to be this element of fear in us. And when we look at fear closely it is an enigma - fear is draining and yet powerful. It drains us of our vitality, potential, self belief – leaving us apprehensive.

Dr. Meera Kulkarni*

It has the power of drying the sap within us. He said, "**Anything that brings spiritual, mental or physical weakness, touch it not with the toes of your feet**". So overcoming fear seems to be the only way of dealing with it. Embrace the fear, engage with it & overcome it.

Being 'awake' is being aware, mindful and conscious of what is happening inside of you & around you. Living in the moment, in full awareness of the moment instead of stretching to the past & future, to be able to give attention & being aware of what is happening in the here & now is the state of being awake. Being awake means utilizing all our sensory, intellectual, conscious, sub- conscious & super-conscious process for our own understanding. He said I quote, "**Consciousness is a mere film between two oceans, the subconscious & the super conscious.**" We therefore have to gather, record & analyze what is happening within us in all these three domains.

On another occasion Swami Vivekanand said, "**You know but little of that which is within you. For behind you is the ocean of infinite power & blessedness.**" The grandeur that each of us has to attain in our life time is a

* The author is HOD, Management Programme, IMSCD & R, University of Pune. E-mail : meera631@rediffmail.com

personal responsibility we have to ourselves as a human being. The first step to this awakening is to have self-belief. Swamiji said, **“Whatever you believe, that you will be.....there is nothing to obstruct you.”** The entire human history is a witness to this – Socrates, Edison, Gandhiji, JRD, Phelm, Mittal, Ratan Tata, Dr. Kalam & Keller and so many many individuals. From belief & thoughts, feelings & behaviour manifests. This when sent to universal consciousness attracts that what we seek. So, it becomes imperative to know what we want in a full state of awareness. Swamiji said, **“I direct my attention to the individual, to make him strong, to teach him that he himself is Divine.”** **“Stand as a rock; you are indestructible. You are the self, the God of the Universe.”** So, when one feels powerful & strong this strength will manifest itself.

We see a lot of engagement with the outside, external, and the show- off quotient. Today it has reached ugly proportion & there lies a lot of confusion on how to tackle it. Our acquisitiveness has reached disproportionate dimensions. We know that this craving, longings, desires for the material is disturbing our mental peace & equilibrium. Are we not turning into self incriminators when we choose to be ruined than change? On two different occasions Swamiji has shown the path. He said, **“The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature.”** The true nature of man is to seek perfection & nobility, moving away from this is an aberration.

It is true that to attain this we need to integrate & harmonise our inner environment. **“We cannot see outside what we are not inside”.**

This is so liberating for now we have to seek within for all that we want. Swamiji said, **“The moment you fear, you are nobody. It is fear that is the greatest cause of misery in the world. It is fear that is the greatest of all superstitions. It is fear that is the cause of our woes, and it is fearlessness that brings heaven in a moment.”** So to achieve this all that we have to do is to live fearlessly. It is through self discipline & perseverance that this can be achieved. Our mind that has for so long been a slave to opinions of others, falling in line, choking our inner voice, all this is a part of a new beginning. And like any beginning & change it requires a lot of work. How did we lose sight of this truth? He says , I quote, **“Who makes us ignorant? We ourselves. We put our hands over our eyes & weep that it is dark.”** On another occasion he said, **“Go on saying ‘I am free’. Never mind if the next moment delusion comes & says ‘I am bound’. Dehypnotize the whole thing.”** So, to bring about this change it requires us to be awake and being gentle with ourselves. **“Work with the intrepidity of a lion but at the same time with the tenderness of a flower.”**

And work towards what? What is the purpose of my life? We search for something profound & grandeur to match the size of our big ego. In fact this search itself appears futile because nothing seems good enough. Our life looks so long & plain that we are unable to bring in form, colour, dedication, fun, enthusiasm & commitment in it. Swamiji says, I quote, **“Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life – think of it, dream of it, live on the idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, and every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the**

way to success". How do we choose this area of life - long passion? It is simply by being true to our real nature. We know what brings out the best in us, what keeps us alive & energetic. Working to achieve that goal will take us forward. He said, **"We reap what we sow. We are makers of our own fate. None else has the blame, none has the praise."** So, we have to make our lives. And to work towards this goal is going to be enjoyable, bringing out all that is within us. He says, **"To succeed you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. 'I will drink the ocean', says a persevering soul, "at my will mountains will crumble."** Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard & you will reach the goal."

There would be road- blocks, hiccups, obstacles, periods of dejection but then as we know, I quote **"Great work requires great & persistent effort for a long timeCharacter has to be established through a thousand stumbles"**. With all the trials & tribulations this is a life worth living. Swamiji said, **"Don't look back – forward, infinite energy, infinite enthusiasm, infinite daring & infinite patience is before you– then alone great deeds be accomplished."**

So despite what is your circumstance right now, I reiterate Swamiji's words, **"Arise, Awake & stop not till the goal is reached."** This as our mantra will help us professionally & personally.

Every saint has got a past; every sinner has got a future –

Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan

"Ratnakara an adopted son in a family of hunters took to robbing people to run his family. Once Ratnakara stopped a Sage, to loot him. The sage told that what he possessed could not be given but only be taken.

The sage then set Ratnakara thinking by saying that the performer alone is responsible for his actions and nobody could partake his sins. Ratnakara ran home to find if there would be anybody to partake his sins, but his family was not ready to share the burden of his sins. The sage comforted the disappointed Ratnakara and asked him to repeat the word 'Rama'. As Ratnakara could not, the Sage made him repeat the word "Mara Mara" which sounded as "Rama" when repeated continuously. Ratnakara closed his eyes and chanted the name with a totally focused mind and was lost in contemplation. Years passed by and an anthill was formed around Ratnakara and covered him. Since Ratnakara was reborn from an anthill that had formed around him while he was contemplating, he came to be known as Valmiki. Valmika in Sanskrit is an anthill.