



VOL No. 2. Issue No. 2 VIVA NEWSLETTER (ENGLISH MONTHLY)

## Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

### Practical Spirituality for All

"In hurting anyone I am hurting myself,  
in loving anyone I am loving myself."

Swami Vivekananda



#### LOOKING INWARDS (Universal Love – Feeling Oneness with the Universe)

How do you describe love? Whoever we love, we feel connection and oneness with. The big question, though, is whether the love we feel came first and oneness next or whether the sense of oneness came first and love next? We love our beloved, our parents, our children, our family and friends. Notice how the word 'our' precedes 'love'. Swami Vivekananda said that most people think they love others but actually they love what the other is in relation to them. Such possessive love can lead to misery. True strong love is when we love the other because we know that we are one. In such love, giving and taking become one and the same. Can we dare to tread behind the giant footsteps of Swamiji and live with the understanding that the measure of my love for myself is the love that I can give all others?

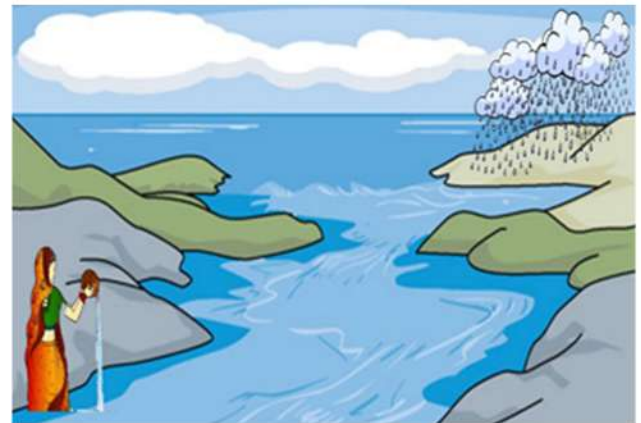
-The Editorial Team

#### NOTES ON LOVE

##### *We are all ONE*

A drop of water looks different when it is a dew drop on a lotus or a tear drop from the eye. Water looks different when it is in the ocean, in a glacier, in a gutter or in a waterfall. Nevertheless it is all water and the properties of water are there in all forms of water. This is equally true of human beings. Though outwardly different to the casual observer, realized souls have been able to see the oneness of all human beings. The spirit which resides in each of us is the same. Those who have realized this have found it easier to accept different perspectives and to forgive those who have harmed us. Hate, contempt, ridicule, fear etc. are replaced by universal love, understanding and an expanded sense of oneself.

Swami Vivekananda always emphasized the point that Expansion is life – Contraction is Death. Once during his wanderings in the Himalayas, he sat for meditation under a Peepal tree and vividly experienced the oneness of the universe. He saw clearly how each human being is a miniature universe.\* He was able to clearly feel the pain of others. When an old Bhutia woman slipped on a mountain slope, Swami Vivekananda watching from afar, felt the pain deeply and could not move.\*\* On another early morning (around 2 AM), he was seen pacing to and fro because he felt that a major disaster had taken place and several people had died. True enough the next day, the news came of a major volcanic eruption near Fiji islands. According to his brother disciple Swami Vijnanananda, Swami Vivekananda's nervous system was more responsive to human misery than a seismograph.\*\*\*



Drawing by Hari Shankar, a volunteer from Bangalore

When we see the oneness between us and the universe, we are likely to be more collaborative than competitive, less likely to resent giving to those who are needy and in general, feel less isolated and more connected. Feeling oneness is not easy, but it is certainly worth striving for.

\* Swami Chetanananda's God Lived with them Page 40, 6th edition

\*\* Swami Sadashivananda in Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda, Page 150, 5th edition

\*\*\*Swami Vijnanananda in God lived with them, Pg 600, 6th edition



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Meghna Dixit, a 12 th grade, AACT\* student, writes on unconditional love, beautifully and insightfully:

"If you can look at everything lovingly, the whole world becomes beautiful in your experience". What is love? For some people it is indeed an emotion, a feeling or the care, affection and attachment they feel. Everyone has his/her own perspective.

I feel that, it isn't something you do, it's something you become. Love should be unconditional. For example, "if you are good with someone just because they are good to you, your behaviour will change as they change but if you are good to someone because you are good you will not change if they change". This means you weren't expecting anything from them in return - it was unconditional.

If you become an embodiment of love, the whole world will seem to be loving and beautiful. Love isn't a small dimension related to any particular person or thing. Love is when you can look at a plant just as you look at your own child. It's in everything the almighty has created, it is His blessing, and one just needs to feel it.



\*Awakened Ambassadors for Community Transformation or AACT is an initiative by VIVA to engage with students who have completed the Awakened Citizen Program (ACP) and want to contribute in nation-building through service and leadership. To know more please visit <https://theawakenedcitizen.org>

#### MOVEMENT – VIVA Events



Group photograph with teachers attending the Awakened Citizens Program (ACP) with the VIVA team and the session in progress

Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Mumbai region organised ACP Year-1 and Year-3 trainings for KV schools of a region at KV-1 AFS Lohegaon, Pune. The venue school made good arrangements for delegates/teachers and welcomed everyone in a traditional Marathi way.

Delegates were also happy with the training, especially on the second day as they got to practice the learnings which would be needed in their role as a facilitator





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#### Inspiring children in schools

Our resource persons are often invited by principals to motivate and inspire children in school. On 23rd January, on the invitation of the principal Dr. Ratna Chakravarty, bright young minds of the 9th and 11th classes of Maxfort School, Rohini, Delhi got an opportunity to interact with Dharmendra Pandey, our Implementation Lead. As usual when the students entered the hall, they occupied the back benches, keeping the first two rows empty. Soon however, they were listening with undivided attention to Dharmendra Sir's motivational words with many of them noting down relevant points and asking mindful questions about overcoming barriers and responding to life with courage and strength. Such was the interest, that the students were seen discussing the topics in the corridor outside the classroom even after the session was over.

(If any school would like us to address their children, on any specific topic, we may be contacted at the email address given below).



An 'Awakening' Training Workshop was inaugurated by Shri. Nagendra Goyal, Deputy Commissioner, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan on January 28, 2023 for the Delhi Region KV Schools. 237 teachers participated enthusiastically in the program.

Swami Shantatamanada gave a rousing speech on the importance of 'Atma Shraddha' detailing the reason why 'Awakening' could be the most important foundation in values education for primary school children. In an interactive session, the teachers conducted mock sessions to better understand the unique value propositions of the Awakening Program.

(To know more please visit <https://awakenedchild.in/> and reach out to us at the email address given below.)





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#### ASK SWAMI SHANTATMANANDA

##### *A reader writes:*

"I know I should love my relatives. I find that I am unable to tolerate many of them. This makes me feel guilty. What should I do?"

##### *Swami Shantatmananda replies:*

The fact that you recognize and even feel guilty about your inability to tolerate some of your relatives shows that you are on the spiritual path. Ideally you must now engage in vichara (deep enquiry) and try to understand why you feel this way. We are all part of the same Prakriti (Nature) and hence it helps to understand the oneness and unity of all creation. One way to bring about this feeling of unity, is to focus on some quality of your relatives, which you can appreciate. This may require deliberate application of mind. Another way is to understand and forgive others because they may be ignorant of a better way to behave and are acting according to their samskaras (psychological imprints). Either way, hatred, contempt, rejection etc. must be avoided as these emotions and actions do not help us to understand the oneness of our being and will continue to cause unrest in our minds.

#### ANSWER TO READER'S SECTION FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE



##### ABOUT THE PICTURE:

The cactus is an unusual looking plant with thick stems and pointy thorn like leaves usually found in dry places. Suddenly, when least expected, it flowers leaving us spellbound.

**Manosi Chaudhuri from Noida writes:** This one brings me fond memories of Baba and his love for cacti. He had collected so many varieties from various locations, which were part of our lawn, backyard and terrace garden at Allahabad. Whoever heard that cacti also have flowers would find it difficult to believe us, before they saw it with their own eyes. So we used to click pictures and invite people to see the flowers themselves whenever they bloomed. Only then they agreed that thorns and flowers can co-exist.

**Rashmi Lodha from Gurugram writes:** Reminds me of life - one cannot find the beauty and immense opportunities unless one finds thorns (struggles) along the way.

#### READER'S SECTION

We invite our readers to look at the picture below and share with us what they feel. Please title the email 'Answer to Reader's Section'.

