

ARTICLES

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article : Mission And Vision

Description : God alone does nothing. He is Akarta, Abhokta. Man must strive to improve the world. Man alone, also, would not be able to do anything. He needs the blessings of things which are called God—the blessings of nature. Even though spirituality and religion should not be organized they can be unfolded; spiritual vitality can be unfolded within-the bosom of man, only in perfect liberty and freedom. The world today has moved to a situation wherein nothing can be done without organization. Even to bless the society, to spread values of life, organization has become very important and necessary. The Hindu tradition is not in organization. In Vedic days, such organizations were not there. So, if you look for sanction for organized religion, the sanction of the Vedic books, you will find none. But as the number of people in society increased, when the problems of the community became multiplied, religion could no longer sustain the needs or answer the needs of the community. And thus, the Puranic days came when religion first started conforming itself in an organization, centered in the various temples in India. But even at that time, there were only a minimum number of them, Badrinath, Banaras, Rameshwaram and Dwaraka. Soon, five hundred years before Christ, organization became more urgently needed and the first Hindu who brought an organization in religion was Lord Buddha. Buddha had to organize his team of workers, uniformed as Bikhshus, through centers called Buddha Vihars. Within another six or seven hundred years, Buddhism flourished and decayed and became very decadent. And thus, the Indian spiritual atmosphere became very chaotic. Hinduism also decayed, Buddhism also decayed. Spiritual values decayed. It was at that time that Adi Shankara appeared on the horizon and brought about a certain amount of swift organization into Hinduism. More and more temples were made. Temples became prominent in society and these temples became community inspiration centers, from where spiritual ideas and thoughts were spread out into the community. Even these temples slowly in time could no longer inspire the members of the community and they also reached a point of decadence.

Again, in the 19th Century, Vivekananda tried to organize, and a Ramakrishna Mission came into being. Such Missions are organizations for the purpose of developing, perpetuating and spreading spiritual values and religious ideologies, moral ideals and ethical values. There are Christian Missions, Islamic Missions, Buddhist Missions, Hindu Missions, and World Missions, We view them as organizations, wherein inspired people come together to work and serve in the

society for the spread of the spiritual values and improve the tempo of life, the moral quality of the community. After Rama-krishna and Vivekananda's time, the great acharyas, whenever they appeared, got a number of followers who organized themselves for the purpose of their own self-development. Many missions came about. Each acharya was, in his lifetime, able to inspire a large number of people to organize themselves so that they were more effective in their work. These Missions have been created as a result of a lot of human effort, a lot of sincerity behind it, a lot of social sacrifices in creating edifices, temples, schools, hospitals, colleges, but after all that, as soon as the master goes away, the Mission collapses because our loyalty is to the personalities, individuals and not to the ideal. We are not inspired by the philosophy. We do not have the vision, but the mission's membership only. We are not inspired by the ideal that our teachers stood for. We have to change that attitude. Otherwise, we will never be able to organize ourselves for the development of our society. Missions can succeed if there is proper vision. Again, there are instances where a mission holds on to the old vision and is not prepared to change with the time and adapt the vision to the changed requirements of modern times. If that elasticity is not there in the vision, again that mission becomes redundant. It is not that the vision was wrong, but societies are constantly changing and if the mission and its vision are not elastic enough to accommodate new demands of the community, the mission again fails. This is not the quality of Hinduism. Hinduism has been constantly changing. Whenever there was a need in the society, it had embraced society's new dimensions. When cultural revolutions lose this elasticity, religion becomes a dead carcass and such religions are dropped from society. The Romans, the Greeks, the Egyptians—these cultures, all these religions had their own spiritual values. Their pattern of spiritual values was not wrong. They had served the societies in those periods of history, but when new throbs came, the old ideas could not change. They became inelastic and unyielding and therefore these cultures were dropped out.

Our culture has this living vivacity to answer the new throbs of society. Hinduism has been constantly changing according to the needs of the society. The vision of the Rishis always kept expanding and reflected the needs of the people; therefore, they were able to accommodate and reorganize to suit new throbs, and ambitions and inspirations of the community. During the Vedic period, there was a culture. A time came, when the Vedic society changed. Population increased and power politics brought new customs and rituals during the Puranic age. Even that had changed during the Buddhist time. By Adi Shankara's time, it made new dimensions. By Ramakrishna's time it changed further. Again, in Mahavira's time it changed. The fundamental remaining the same, its application changed from time to time, according to the needs of the community. Then in the 19th century, Swami Vivekananda came and according to the needs of the society, the great master, in his splendid wisdom, decided to go to America and preach Hinduism to Hindus from America. Let us not forget that Vivekananda did not go to teach Americans; he went to America to talk Hinduism for the Hindus, because, Hindus here, the intelligentsias were looking to the west. Because everybody was looking towards the west, the master decided, "I will go to the west and preach Vedanta from there." That was necessary as India was under foreign rule for a long period of time. I am telling you the historicity of the development to point out that there is a throbbing liveliness in our Indian culture and that is the simple reason why Hinduism has

lived so long in spite of the tremendous cataclysm of history that has passed through it. In spite of political break up, economic strife, in spite of underdevelopment and all that, the culture of India has not yet gone. In spite of secularism, in spite of saying that there is no religion, in spite of everything, corruption, immorality and characterless-ness, individually even today, the Hindu culture has not gone. Under these circumstances, if today's Masters want to sustain the work in the community, and when a large number of people are following them, what else can they do but to start missions? But we, as members of it, can serve our Master only when our vision is clear. You must remember the principles that are being inculcated by the Master. You should keep the vision in your heart. Only then, the mission can serve the society. A mission without a vision is a sheer waste of time and human energy. We must develop an attitude that we must serve our fellow men, through schools, hospitals or dispensaries or any other organized institutions and social welfare centers. So long as this vision is not clear, the mission loses its effectiveness in the community.

The world around is not organized by you or me. The circumstances that you and I find are not ordered by us. It is contributed by various factors. We have to adjust ourselves in such a way that we are efficient and capable to meet these challenges. We have only the freedom to tune ourselves in the world around. This tuning and adjusting and conditioning are not possible and easy unless there is complete integration within ourselves. Thus we develop a faith in a higher reality, God, and thereafter the ideal, the goal, becomes more and more clear. This ideal, the picture of the ideal is a concept of God for a devotee; supreme love, supreme kindness, supreme mercy, beauty of beauty, strength of strength. When this concept of the ideal is maintained in our mind, we are able to understand how far we are going away, deflecting from that ideal in our physical behavior, in our emotional feelings or in our intellectual judgment. When I compromise with the ideal, I act immorally, but when the mind returns, my own intellect questions my mind, "Fool, why did you do it?" My mind has no answer to this pang of self-accusation, my own wisdom I have insulted. This angle of vision is called the conscience prick so, to live in devotion to an ideal, this self-discipline in yourself, is the true backbone of all religions. Whoever does it, he is the true member of any mission. A mission can sustain itself and endure and serve the society only when the members are tenderly holding on to that vision. This idea has completely gone out of the society, not only in Hinduism, but in all religions of the world. To that extent, reverence among the youngsters has also been lost. They think it is only another organization with vested interests.

Learn to keep a vision. Learn to have an ideal. Discover it in yourself. Nobody else can give it to you.

True heroism is in living uncompromisingly to your ideal. The world may threaten you. The community will not easily leave you free. But he is the hero who defiantly stands, firmly rooted in his own conviction. It is that one, even a single individual who inspires the entire population that is the true hero and inspires the entire generation and generations hereafter. This uncompromising heroism of living up to the ideal is the very core of our Avatars. Whether it is Krishna or Rama, what is that we glorify in them. They had heroism in their life. Otherwise

they were like other human beings. We worship them; we revere them because they had heroism to live up to their ideal. Living up to their ideals was not easy. In our own times, two thousand years ago, the Jesus who tried to live his life was put on the Cross. Mahatma Gandhi was killed with bullets. But what does it matter? One day everyone has to die. You have not taken a contract that you will die in a hospital bed, surrounded by wife and children. Once you have found the joy and glory why not die living up to your ideal? That consciousness can arise in you when the vision is clear. He who has got a vision, he rises to the highest. That vision is not in paper, it is not written in a constitution. It must be enshrined in the hearts and minds of everyone. And where there is a vision, if even a single member has developed and cultivated this courage, this heroism to live up to the vision, that mission cannot die. It is such a mission that can serve the society, the community and the world at large.

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