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PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis



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GLOBAL HUNGER LOOMS



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11

UKRAINE IS CURRENTLY UNABLE TO EXPORT ABOUT 90 MILLION TONS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, AS RUSSIA HAS BLOCKED ITS PORTS

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"WE HOPE THAT IN THE PROCESS OF GOVERNING, THE TALIBAN AND/OR SUBSEQUENT GOVERNMENTS CREATE SUCH A FUTURE."

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PROUT

A Vibrant Magazine that Informs & Inspires

PROUT

PROGRESSIVE UTILISATION THEORY

Propounded by - Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

PROUT - Cry of the Suffering Humanity

What is PROUT :

PROUT is an acronym for the Progressive Utilization Theory. Conceptualized in 1959 by Indian Philosopher Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, PROUT is a viable alternative to the outmoded capitalist and communist socio-economic paradigms. Neither of these approaches has adequately met the physical, mental and spiritual needs of humanity. PROUT seeks a harmonious balance between economic growth, social development and cultural expression.

Combining the wisdom of spirituality, the struggle for self-reliance, and the spirit of economic democracy, Proutist intellectuals and activists are attempting to create a new civilizational discourse. PROUT newsmagazine aims at conveying comprehensive and visionary goals of PROUT Philosophy.

PROUT magazine invites scientists, economists, politicians, artists, intellectuals and others to join us in the creation of a new, spiritually bonded society by propagating and popularising unambiguous elevating thoughts. Through Proutistic views and Neo Humanistic analysis, it strives to serve as beacon for the benighted civilization of our times.

Main principles of PROUT and Neo-Humanism



Neo-humanism : Neo-humanism expands the humanistic love for all human beings to include love and respect for all creation - plants, animals and even inanimate objects. Neo-humanism provides a philosophical basis for creating a new era of ecological balance, planetary citizenship and cosmic kinship.



Basic Necessities Guaranteed To All : People can not strive toward their highest human aspirations if they are lacking the basic requirements of life. PROUT believes that access to food, shelter, clothing, education and medical care are fundamental human rights which must be guaranteed to all.



Balanced Economy : Prout advocates regional self-reliance, cooperatively owned and managed businesses, local control of large scale key industries, and limits on the individual accumulation of excessive wealth.



Women's Right: PROUT encourages the struggle against all forms of violence and exploitation used to suppress women. PROUT's goal is coordinated cooperation, with equal rights between men and women.



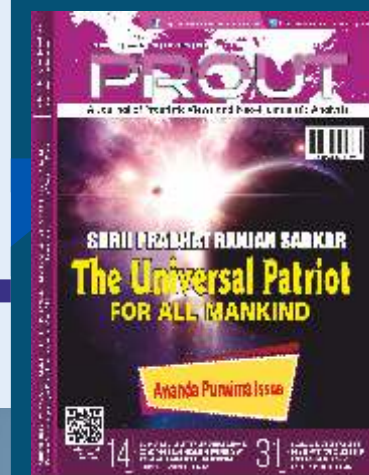
Cultural Diversity: In the spirit of universal fellowship PROUT encourages the protection and cultivation of local culture, language, history and tradition.



World Government: PROUT supports the creation of world government with a global constitution and a common penal code.

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“The guarantee of equal opportunity and minimum requirements of life for all is an essentiality for the well integrated elevation and evolution of the human personality.”

– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Fundamental Principles of PROUT

- 1 No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body
- 2 There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe
- 3 There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.
- 4 There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.
- 5 The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

WHY TURN FARMS INTO BATTLEFIELDS?

It is precisely what is happening in Ukraine today. Ukraine cannot export about 90 million tons of agricultural products as Russia has blocked Ukrainian ports – its Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told local media. The country produces a significant share of world food – about 27 per cent of its sunflower seeds, Five per cent of its barley, Three per cent of its wheat and rapeseed, and Two per cent of its corn. One of the biggest concerns is the harvest which puts Ukraine farmers in a situation where they may not be able to recover. Many farming families have been forced to flee. It is not so in the case of farmers in Russia.

In Ukraine, there are fields full of food without anyone to harvest it. And if the farm has been mined, it cannot be accessed. So, while farmers are doing all they can to produce, will they be able to get their produce out? That's a big question. It is one thing to grow and harvest food, but it's another thing to connect with global markets, especially if the infrastructure is under attack. So, the whole agricultural sector in Ukraine is at risk. Farmers here are finding alternative routes to export their food, but this is not at the same scale as before. In conflict zones, if you come under attack at a critical stage in the agricultural calendar, the ramifications can last up to nine months. So, if you miss the planting and harvest seasons, the consequences will be felt months later.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed concerns about widespread hunger as the Ukraine war threatens food security in different parts of the world. It has also sent global prices for grains, cooking oils, fuel and fertiliser soaring, which will worsen the food crisis in Africa. In addition, shipping in the Black Sea, a significant route for grains and other commodities, blocks exports from Ukraine and Russia. The Russian Navy, which controls the Black Sea, has refused to allow grain shipping unless economic sanctions inflicted on them by the West are lifted? Russia, the largest exporter of wheat in the world, can export grain, but it also faces problems due to sanctions and its requirements.

In this scenario, the World Food Program (WFP) has reached 1.3 million people in Ukraine and hopes to scale up to six million in the next three months, along with Three Lac people in neighbouring countries. Families receive ready-to-eat food rations, bread and cash for when they are on the move; by July, they hope to reach 2.8 million people with cash assistance. Russia and Ukraine account for 30 per cent of global wheat exports and 20 percent of global maize exports. Besides pushing up already high prices, the disruptions are threatening food security for millions of families worldwide.

Drought affected countries across the Horn of Africa are likely to be the hardest hit by the conflict, WFP. The cost of a food basket has already risen, particularly in Ethiopia (66 per cent) and Somalia (36 per cent), which depend heavily on wheat from Black Sea basin countries, and the disruption in imports further threatens food security. Shipping costs on some routes have doubled since January. In Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen, food prices have skyrocketed. As a result, the number of food-insecure people is soaring. Needs were already outstripping available resources before the war, and now the cost of buying and transporting food turns much more expensive.

It is a most unfortunate situation, and while there's food on the fields, the world faces the spectre of starvation. And the US continues to fight Russia firing from the shoulders of Ukraine. So the only logical answer would be for the world to ensure unhindered market access for food grains from Russia and Ukraine to control prices and prevent famine in Africa.

The world should do all it takes to avoid such a catastrophe looming on the horizon. ●



Specialities of Prout's Economic System

An excellent discourse of Prout's founder. These specialities need to be brought home door to door by Proutists worldwide.

- Tarangini Muthu, Kochi

The Universal Patriot

A very apt cover for the Ananda Purnima Issue. It is true that Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar is 'universal patriot' for all humankind.

- Kanu Behera, Cuttack

Legacy of Baba

The article by Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista explains clearly and concisely what a great legacy has been left behind by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti.

Futuristic visions, cosmic thinking and Prout based governance, may sound hackneyed, but they are all not without basis.

Only when society evolves to higher planes with expanding horizons of the mind through regular Sadhana and meditation and neo humanism is assimilated fully will people be able to grasp the full importance of these lofty principles.

- Damini Kadam, Warangal

Seizing the Opportune Moment

The opportune moment is now. The day the capitalism propelled

by greed collapses, which is not very far off, Proutists shouldn't be caught unprepared. The article clearly explains all that needs to be done. However, the practical aspects of implementing them need to be worked out beforehand.

- Arup Sen, Kolkata

Dynamics and Distribution

What an excellent piece. So clear, so concise. The illustrations augment the contents. Rational distribution of the world's resources is the only answer to narrow the present huge gap in an unequal society.

- Suvarna Sain, DehraDun

Needless Societal Disharmony

It is very true and deplorable that TV debates and commentaries dish out day in and day out about needless societal disharmony. Vested interests, on the other hand, thrive on such controversies. And society at large should guard against such tendencies. What is needed is a more objective and mature view of these unfortunate incidents.

- Rajan Sharma, Ghaziabad.

Right to Work

The article seems to be politically motivated without proper facts. Also, this article has no Prout solution for the unemployment problem.

A. "3.3 crores are openly jobless". In India, there is no accurate way of taking unemployment statistics. An Engineering graduate I know personally is earning teaching Keyboard/Guitar more than a lakh per month. Officially he is calculated as unemployed. Many jobs like Electrician, Plumber, Carpenter, Teaching private tuition etc., are earning better but were calculated as unemployed.

B. "Restore MNREGA". It is the most corrupt scheme, as everyone knows. There won't be development work, but people will be paid after commission deduction to contractors.

C. Everywhere, there is a shortage of skilled/unskilled workers. Please check with anyone doing agriculture or small or large business; no one is getting workers.

A few headlines from the newspapers - 1. India could face a shortage of 14-19 lakhs techies by 2026. - Business today, 2. India facing a shortage of 600,000 doctors, two million nurses: Study, 3. Labour scarcity and rising wages in Indian agriculture.

(Readers Name and City)

{The litany underscores the lack of employment planning in aligning Education/skills with the economy's demands. However, the scale of unemployment and underemployment - disguised or otherwise - is enormous and unprecedented. Both the Official and Other agencies confirm it as catastrophic. Right to Work is fundamental to Prout's vision of one hundred per cent Employment and guaranteeing Minimum and Growing Purchasing Power to all the members of society. The Author(s) is an activist intellectual whose laser-sharp analysis of "issues" are much sought after. - Eds.}

Giving Lost Languages a Voice

A very thought-provoking and informative article. Languages which are part of human culture and its evolution should not be allowed to die. Looking forward to the second part of the article.

- Swati Rao, Goa

THE GIRL WHO HOPS 1 KM TO SCHOOL

Seema, who lives in Naxal-hit Fatehpur village of Seema Khaira block in Bihar's Maoist-affected Jamui district, lost a leg in a road accident two years back. However, this did not stop her from going to school to study. Seema began hopping to school for 1km on one leg every day. Because of abject poverty, she did not have a tricycle or even crutches.

After a video of her hopping to school went viral on social media, showing the indomitable spirit of a stout-hearted girl, Seema won the hearts of all, and her plight came to notice. People came forward in support. Jamui DM Avaneesh Kumar Singh recently visited the 'kutchra' (mud) house where Seema lived and gifted her a tricycle. He said: "The district administration salutes the girl's courage and willpower. She is setting an example for girls. We have also taken her measurement to provide her with a prosthetic leg within a week. We

have given incentives collected from the community to Seema". As per media reports, Singh also promised her a pucca house. "We are going to organise camps for 'divyang' kids in other villages as well to provide medical support, housing, ration card and other schemes. After the Khaira block, we will cover the villages in Laxmipur block," he told a leading national newspaper. Responding to Seema's video, as reported by Dainik Bhaskar, Delhi's CM Kejriwal tweeted: "Seema's enthusiasm had made me emotional. Every child wants a good education...I know that every government has enough resources. It should be the mission of every true patriot to provide the best possible education to children like Seema; that is real patriotism."

Film actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood, who did good work during the Covid pandemic arranging buses for returning migrants, tweeted: "Now she will go to school by jumping on not one but both feet. I am making arrangements. The time has come to walk on both feet."

Seema's mother, Baby Devi, who works at a brick kiln, does not have enough money to buy books for her daughter. "Schoolteachers are providing everything," she said. Seema's father, Kheeran Manjhi, works as a labourer outside the state and sends money home for the family. Seema is a class IV student of Fatehpur Middle School, the second eldest among six siblings and teaches her younger brothers and sisters after returning from school. She is not only dedicated to her own studies but also teaches other girls in her village and encourages them to get educated.

Her teachers also praise her for never missing a single lesson or class. Her grandmother Laxmi Devi recalled how Seema exhibited courage after losing her left leg in a road accident. "She was unable to move outside after the accident. But one day she told me that she wished to study and will go to school. It is because of her courage that she overcame the trauma and started going to the school on one leg," Laxmi Devi said.

Seema dreams of becoming a teacher and says she wants to educate all the kids in her village. ●



Economic Self-Sufficiency for Bengal

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



For Bangalistan to be economically self-sufficient, there should be a production of the minimum requirements of life and large-scale production of cash crops and non-agricultural products.

The poorest districts of Bengal are Bankura and Purulia – the economic condition of these districts is the worst in the state. Here the people are so poor that they live on grass seeds for three or four months of the year. Other districts such as Nadia, Murshidabad, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Karimganj are better off economically.

Two things are important to make all of Bangalistan economically self-sufficient: self-sufficiency in the production

of the minimum requirements of life and the large-scale production of cash crops and non-agricultural products. Both are of paramount importance if the people of Bangalistan are to prosper. Minimum requirements include the provision of adequate food, clothing, housing, education and medical treatment. To guarantee these minimum requirements, there must be self-sufficiency in the production of staple food items, cloth, housing materials, educational equipment and medicines. In addition, we must

produce cash crops and non-agricultural products profitably. Let us discuss each item to examine how the people of Bangalistan can become economically self-sufficient.

Food Production

The main obstacles to self-sufficiency in food production in Bangalistan are the scarcity of rain in the winter and the drainage problem in the rainy season. Bengal often receives much rainfall during the monsoon, but only for six to eight weeks of the year. Due to large-scale

deforestation, the amount of rainfall has substantially decreased. In comparison to the needs of Bengal, there is now a shortage of rainfall that hampers the production of crops. The rivers do not have plenty of water, and the irrigation system does not function well. For want of rain in the winter, the winter and summer crops suffer terribly. Due to the defective drainage system, the river water is not utilized to produce food crops.

We must thoroughly overhaul the irrigation system to combat these kinds of adversities. Where there is a continuous scarcity of rainfall in Bengal, particularly in the Rárh area, there should be a maximum emphasis on shift and lift irrigation, tank irrigation and small-scale river-valley projects. Simultaneously, the rivulets and canals should be properly utilized, and the drainage problem should be completely controlled. If the

irrigation problem is solved properly, we can harvest abundant crops four times a year. For example, the aman, boro and áus varieties of paddy can be grown in rotation throughout the year. In ninety days, one rice crop can be grown.

In Japan, there is enormous population pressure. Tripura, Noakhali, Comilla, Chandpur and Brahmanbaria were overpopulated in British India. The population density in Japan today is much greater than in those areas at that time; nevertheless, Japan has been able to attain self-sufficiency in food production.

The sticky soil of Rárh can hold water for a long time, and such soil is ideal for constructing tanks, ponds, reservoirs and dams. Naturally, pisciculture can be developed because we can conserve water in the soil. Moreover, sticky soil is ideal for a

man paddy. In some places in North Bengal, there is sticky soil, while in other places, there is sticky sandy (doáns) soil, approximately one-third sticky and two-thirds sandy, as in Dinajpur district. Of all the districts in North Bengal, Dinajpur is the most ideal for the production of aman paddy. The soil of Bangladesh is generally sandy and is ideal for áus production. Sticky, sandy soil is suitable for áus and jute.

The climate in Tripura is very similar to that of Rárh, and although Tripura is a rain-shadow area, the amount of rainfall in Tripura is greater than in Rárh. The soil of Tripura is ideal for áus paddy, summer crops and potato. Jute may be grown, but there will not be an abundant harvest. Chilli can be grown in abundance and have a large market in Bangladesh. Rárh can produce abundant mustard seeds, whereas the other regions of Bengal can grow sesame seeds, from which many oil products can be easily made. Sesame is an ideal cash crop. There should be greater emphasis on sugarbeet production than on sugarcane because sugarcane cultivation occupies farmland for an entire year. Sugarbeet can be grown profitably in the Ayodhya Hills in Purulia district and the Shushunia Hills in Bankura district. We can easily process sugar from sugar beet and sweet potato (shákálu). North Bengal is ideal for cultivating tobacco, which needs black soil. Rárh has ideal soil for the cultivation of pulses and potato. Usually, a damp climate is not congenial for potato cultivation, which is why North Bengal and Assam get their potato supplies from the Birbhum district. Hooghly district supplies potato to Calcutta, Burdwan district does the same for Bihar, and Midnapore does the same for Madhya Pradesh. In the eastern portion of Rárh, potatoes grow quite well.



Although Tripura is a rain-shadow area, its hills receive substantial rainfall because there is less movement of water vapour in Tripura than in the rest of Bengal. The Cherapunji area of Assam gets the most rainfall in the world, but the adjacent rain-shadow area of Shillong receives much less rain. It is because water vapour condenses into rain in the Cherapunji Hills. Consequently, little moisture is left for Shillong, which is why the average amount of rainfall in the Cherapunji Hills is 900 inches a year, but the amount of average rainfall in Shillong is only 80 inches yearly.

One of the main differences between Tripura and Rárh is that Tripura receives much more rain. The weight of one potato is nearly half a kilogram in Rárh, but in Tripura, it is much less; however, Tripura can grow many more potatoes than Rárh. Tripura can produce so many potatoes that it can supply Bangladesh and earn a lot of foreign exchange. Tripura can also grow a lot of mustard seeds that can be exported to Bangladesh. Bangladesh's sticky, sandy soil is not suitable for growing mustard seeds. In Tripura, the soil is heavier than in Rárh, so that Tripura can grow pineapples and bananas. Jackfruit does not require any particular soil and can be grown throughout Bengal. Tea can be grown in Tripura but not very well because it requires sloping hilly land, where water does not accumulate, and heavy rainfall. The amount of the tea harvest generally depends on the amount of rainfall.

Silchar, Karimgarj and Tripura can grow rubber, but the harvest will not be abundant. Jute requires heavy rainfall plus fertile soil to grow better in the Mymensingh district than in Tripura. Therefore, the Mymensingh district is called the "Dead Valley of Brahmaputra". A lot of wild arum can also be grown in Tripura.



For the cultivation of vegetables, there must be a constant supply of water, but not necessarily rainwater. Nadia and Kushtia districts can easily grow abundant vegetables. In these areas, cabbages and cotton (chás kápás and gách kápás) can also be grown abundantly. Nadia and Murshidabad can grow a lot of wheat. Cotton can also be grown profitably in Tripura. We can undertake rubber cultivation in that part of Tripura, which has a lot of rainfall.

Coconuts require saline water; hence in the coastal areas of South Bengal, many coconuts can be grown. For example, in the entire coastal region of South Bengal – 24 Parganas, Noakhali, Chittagong, Coxbazaar and other places – coconuts can be grown in abundance. This coastal area is called "Marine Bengal" and is the coconut belt. It can also be utilized in the shipbuilding industry. The Sanskrit equivalent of "coconut" is kalpataru brkśa. In Siliguri,

Coochbehar, Cachar and Karimganj the soil is ideal for the cultivation of betel nut. In the same soil, black pepper can also be profitably grown. The cultivation of betel leaf requires saline soil. The soil of the Tamluk subdivision of Midnapore is ideal for betel leaf, and it can supply the entire Indian market. All of South Bengal can grow betel leaves.

Except for jute, all these crops come within the scope of food items. Many other subsidiary industries can be developed from jute, such as paper, rayon and silk. We can produce paper from bamboo also, but it will be a little more expensive. We must do the economic planning of all of Bengal block-wise. The soil and climate of Rajganj in South Bengal are not the same as those of Malda and Raiganj in North Bengal. Hence the planning in the two areas must be different. Although the economic planning of Bengal must be on a large scale, there must still be block-level planning. ●

AS THE UKRAINE WAR DRAGS ON GLOBAL HUNGER LOOMS

Ukraine is currently unable to export about 90 million tons of agricultural products, as Russia has blocked its Ports

 Karunakshim Vatsalam



A

t the end of May, the war in Ukraine entered its 115th day of stalemate. The UN has said there could be no winner in this unequal war. Statistics compiled on the 100th day are grim. According to UNHCR, 6.8 million Ukrainians have been driven out of their homes, and 7.1 million children have been internally displaced. Regarding

casualties, nobody knows the exact numbers killed and wounded. However, it is estimated that 22500 Ukrainian and 3000+ Russian combatants have been killed. In Ukraine, 38000 residential buildings have been razed by aerial strikes, and 2,20,000 people have been rendered homeless. One thousand nine hundred educational facilities from kindergartens to grade schools to universities have

been damaged; 300 cars, 50 rail bridges, and 500 factories and as per WHO, 296 attacks were carried on hospitals, ambulances and medical workers that damaged around 500 hospitals.

The economic fallout has been equally, if not grimmer. Russia faces over 5000 targeted sanctions, more than any other country; some 300 billion Russian gold and Foreign Exchange

reserves are frozen in the West. Air traffic dropped from 8.1 million to 5.2 million passengers between January and March. Ukraine reports that the war has wiped out 35% of its GDP, and it cannot export 22 million tons of grain due to the naval blockade of Black Sea ports. In addition, the Russians have been accused of stealing half a million tonnes of grain from Ukrainian fields during the invasion.

Against this backdrop, US President Joe Biden and his Western counterparts are pushing their agendas of turning Russia's invasion of Ukraine into a war between Washington and Moscow. Several experts are seeing the horrific time when severe global hunger looms in which hundreds and thousands of people may suffer due to acute starvation. And Joe Biden does not show much inclination to solve this imminent crisis; instead, he focuses on intensifying the Ukraine war for domestic political reasons. He needs to somehow salvage his party's disastrous result during this November's midterm elections.

Ukraine cannot export about 90 million tons of agricultural

products as Russia has blocked Ukrainian ports, its Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told local media. The country produces a significant share of world food – about 27 percent of its sunflower seeds, 5 percent of its barley, 3 percent of its wheat and rapeseed, and 2 percent of its corn. At the same time, Russia is the world's largest wheat exporter. Although it can export grain, it also faces problems due to sanctions and its own requirements. Meanwhile, food prices worldwide have skyrocketed, and the West blames this on Russia's hybrid war strategy, saying it has turned the war against Ukraine into a 'grain war'. However, Moscow counters this by blaming Western sanctions, and they say prices are rising due to sanctions imposed by the collective West under pressure from the United States. Commenting on the forecasted cruel global hunger, Vladimir Kornilov wrote in Ria Novosti: "The world will look into the eyes of starvation because of the consequences of the crisis in Ukraine". The rise in prices for world products results from the ongoing war, so the West ironically

feels that they must continue supplying weapons indefinitely to Ukraine.

The impossibility of supplying Ukrainian grain provokes its shortage. Because of the actions of Russia, a terrible famine is inevitable in Ukraine itself. Therefore, exporting grain and food from Ukraine to the West is urgent. Russia blocked the grain supply by sea from Ukraine to Asia and Africa, which is threatened with a terrible famine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky repeatedly managed to include mutually contradictory theses on the topic of the food crisis. He is constantly crying about the unenviable fate of African countries, where Ukrainian grain allegedly blocked by Russia will not reach. But he immediately calls in his speeches: "It is necessary that all Europeans block the ports for all Russian ships." That is, the fate of starving Africa suddenly recedes into the background. Immediately after the conclusion of the G-7 summit, Zelensky decided to support their findings of the famine threatening the planet and said: "The world has already recognized that the



Grain in Odessa port, Ukraine

Russian blockade of our ports and this war is provoking a large-scale food crisis. Russian officials are also openly threatening the world that there will be famine in dozens of states. And what could be the consequences of such a famine? What kind of political instability, and what migration flows will it lead to? How much then will have to be spent to overcome the consequences? Packages against Russia? The G7 countries want to look for alternative ways of delivering grain from Ukraine to the world. But no tangible results can be seen.

Biden speaking to American farmers recently also blamed the rise in food prices on Russia and agreed that Ukraine is fighting for the opportunity to “feed those who are left hungry around the world because of Russian atrocities.” Judging by Biden, for the Kyiv regime, the goal in itself is to reduce world food prices -- the holy mission to feed the planet. It would be logical to call on the world to ensure unhindered market access for Russian goods in order to mitigate the price shock and prevent famine in Africa. But no, according to Biden, only Ukraine should feed the hungry, and in no case Russia, which is actually the absolute leader in grain exports. That's what the collective West is trying to do, coming up with schemes for the maximum export of Ukrainian grain abroad. Europe loudly announces plans to create “grain corridors” for Ukrainian agricultural products. Moreover, for the sake of this, she is ready to take an unthinkable step – the creation of such corridors through Belarus, for the transport blockade of which the same Europe called for long before the Ukrainian crisis. Only one thing stops them: the fear that Ukrainian grain, passing through Belarus, will end up not in Klaipeda, but in Russian ports. And it does not matter that further it will still achieve the holy



Scenes of hunger East Africa

goal declared by Europe, that is, it will feed the starving Africa.

As a result, the European Commission has devised an elaborate plan to create "Roads of Solidarity" (Solidarity Lanes) to maximise the use of EU infrastructure for the speedy transportation of Ukrainian grain to Europe. These efforts have especially intensified against the backdrop of concerns about the food security of the EU itself due to the drought in France. Quite capaciously and figuratively, the Russian military commander Alexander Kots commented on the initiatives of Europe: "The essence of these Solidarity Lanes ultimately boils down to the fact that the Ukrainians will be left without food and the government of the country with money".

Historical precedents show such an eventuality may not be entirely farfetched. In the spring of 1918, when Germans occupied Ukraine, echelons with grain moved westward, leading to a terrible famine in Ukraine. The same situation was repeated in 1941 when the Nazis captured the Ukrainian SSR. Then the Germans sought to take out not only grain

but also black soil. At that time, the Ukrainians were dying of hunger, but enlightened Europe never worried about the problems of the conquered people. From the tragic events of the famine of the years 1932-1933 in Ukraine, it is well known that the trading companies of the same West demanded that the USSR not reduce grain exports, knowing full well about the problems with food in that country.

Today we are again seeing how trains are moving westward, exporting grain from Ukraine, at a time when Western analysts recognize the real prospect of food shortages in that country. If the famine begins, none of them will remember the European Commission's plans for large-scale grain export or Biden's similar calls. Since the nation responsible for all the future troubles of Ukraine has already been declared – and this, of course, is Russia. Russians feel that no matter how much Ukrainian wheat leaves for the West and how much Moscow brings in humanitarian supplies with food, the West will still blame them for the famine.

Meanwhile, another aspect is the fallout of the war and

sanctions. Western banks are looking for asset swaps to exit Russia. It said, in an attempt to escape hefty write-downs on operations in Russia due to their exit from the sanction-hit country, UniCredit and Citigroup are exploring the possibility of swapping assets with Russian banks. FT reports, citing people with knowledge of the matter. The plan comes amid a mass exodus of foreign lenders from Russia due to Western sanctions imposed on the nation over its military operation in Ukraine. According to estimates revealed last week, European banks took a hit of nearly US\$10 billion, writing down assets and setting aside cash to protect themselves against the expected economic ramifications of anti-Russia sanctions. UniCredit is discussing selling its Russian business to several financial institutions that the West hasn't sanctioned; people briefed on the talks told the media.

While these economic power games and political blame games continue, countries affected by drought across the eastern Horn of Africa could be hardest hit by the Ukraine war. The combined effect of drought and other shocks has led to a significant deterioration in food security from 12-14 million people in the first quarter of 2022 to at least 15 - 16 million in the



second quarter as the drought conditions intensified. It is the stark reality. According to the World Food Program, the cost of a food basket has already risen, particularly in Ethiopia (66 percent) and Somalia (36 percent), which depend heavily on wheat from Black Sea basin countries, and the disruption in imports further threatens food security. Shipping costs on some routes have doubled since January. In Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen, food prices have skyrocketed. As a result, the number of food-insecure people is soaring. Needs were already outstripping available resources before the war, and now the cost of buying and transporting food has become much more expensive. In Yemen, 18 million could face starvation by the end of

the year. It needs to be addressed immediately by the rich countries – the world powers.

It is a sad state of international affairs. While there's food on the fields, the world faces the spectre of starvation. And the US continues to fight Russia firing from the shoulders of Ukraine. Russia fires missiles at Ukraine, and the US sends sophisticated pinpoint missiles to Ukraine for its defence. It is a 700 million dollar package. In the bargain, who gains but the capitalist arms manufacturers! The only logical answer would be for the world to ensure unhindered market access for food grains from both Russia and Ukraine to control prices and prevent hunger in Africa and Asia. Meanwhile, an unwinnable war drags on in a stalemate with no signs of it abating. ●





THE GREAT BENGAL FAMINE 1770

■ Arun Prakash

From 1765 to 1858, during the British Crown Rule, as per the report of the Famine Commission: "Bengal experienced 12 famines and four severe scarcities".

(Chhiattarer Manwantar the famine of Bengali calendar 1176)

Prologue

John Shore, who had just arrived in Bengal as a servant of the East India Company, was one eyewitness, and so deep was the impression that the famine made on him that nearly forty years later, after a long career in Indian affairs, he was moved to write: "Within a fortnight, as conditions deteriorated still further, "many thousands were falling daily in the streets and fields, their corpses mangled by dogs, jackals, and vultures. A hundred men were

employed by the Company and equipped with "doolys, sledges, and bearers" to carry the dead and throw them into the river Ganges. I counted from my bed-chamber window in the morning when I got up, forty bodies lying within twenty yards of the wall, besides many hundreds lying in the agonies of death for want, bending double with their stomachs quite close contracted to their backbones". It was hunger and death in the garden of plenty in an age when India was passing rapidly under

Europe's control.

Starvation in the Garden of Plenty

The famine also dealt a severe blow to the cotton weaving industry of Bengal. It similarly affected the silk winders and cocoon growers, saltpetre manufacturers and workers, and the flourishing salt industry of Medinipur. Many Europeans either witnessed the famine that devastated eastern India or wrote about it. It was the biggest calamity



Bengal village scene during normal times

of the eighteenth century regarding the enormous loss of life and the extent of human suffering involved. Historical details are sourced courtesy of Vinita Damodaran (University of Sussex, UK). The engravings and lithographs in this piece printed in English and other European magazines of that time also tell their story.

The core areas of central Bengal were devastated, including Murshidabad, Rajshahi and Hooghly. The most vulnerable were the landless labourers, artisans and boatmen who were without means of putting away grain stores. Scottish historian William Wilson Hunter (1840 – 1900), who researched famine records nearly a century later, wrote: "All through the summer of 1770, the people went on dying. The peasants sold their cattle; they sold their implements of agriculture, they devoured their seed grain, they sold their sons and daughters, till at length no buyer of children could be found, they ate the leaves of trees and the grass of the field, and in June 1770, the resident at the Darbar affirmed that the living were feeding on the dead".

In 1765, the authority over the Mughal provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was transferred to

the East India Company. By the 1820s, these provinces constituted the eastern wing of the great new empire in India. During the period 1765-1858, when the British Crown Rule began, as per the report of the Famine Commission: "Bengal experienced 12 famines and four severe scarcities. As more than two-thirds of the population was engaged in agriculture, which was almost wholly dependent on the monsoons. Bengal normally endowed with sufficient rain and bountiful crops, any deficiency in the rain meant reduced harvest for that year. The adverse effects of famines on a predominantly agricultural economy meant not only a reduced availability of

human labour because of starvation deaths but also a fall in the availability of drought power because of high cattle mortality". The drought of 1769 was the killer.

An exact number of deaths is almost impossible to ascertain. The East India Company, formally responsible for revenue collection, maintained little or no statistical records. Nevertheless, contemporary accounts give some indication of the scale of death. For example, Ghulam Husain Khan's Persian text noted that famine and smallpox both appeared in the month of Mohurram (May 1770) and rose to such a height. They raged so violently for a full three months together that entire multitudes were swept away. John Shore, an East India Company official, gave an eyewitness account on whom the famine made a deep impression. Another anonymous contemporary report recorded the following: "One could not pass along the streets without seeing multitudes in their last agonies, crying out as you passed 'My god! My god! Have mercy on me I am starving', whilst on other sides, numbers of dead were seen with dogs, vultures and other beasts and birds of prey feeding on their carcasses".

Before the end of May 1770, one-third of the population was



Bengal village scene during the famine

calculated to have perished. In June, the deaths were returned as six to 16 of the entire inhabitants, and it was estimated that 'one half of the cultivators and payers of revenue will perish with hunger. During the rains (July – October), the depopulation became so evident that the government wrote to the court of directors in alarm about the number of 'industrious peasants and manufacturers destroyed by the famine'. It provided some relief, but it came too late. People had left the villages, and fields were abandoned. They went into the forests to search for food.

Moreover, there was an outbreak of smallpox, which couldn't have come at a worse time. Due to the decomposition of numerous half-putrefied dead bodies which lay unburied or unburnt along the streets and in the empty houses, the air had been contaminated, and smallpox of a virulent type broke out. It killed millions!

It was not till cultivation commenced in the following year, 1771, that the practical consequences began to be felt; it was then discovered that the surviving population was not enough to till all the arable land. The areas affected by the famine continued to fall and were put off tillage. Governor-General Warren



Meagre relief operations

Hastings 1772 wrote that one-third of the inhabitants died. The failure of a single crop, following a year of scarcity, had wiped out 10 million human beings. The monsoon was on time in the next few years, but the economy of Bengal had been drastically transformed for the next thirty years.

Meagre relief operations

Prout's founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, speaking on the economic exploitation of Bengal, disclosed: "As a result of the devastating famine of 1770, about ten million people died, including artisans, skilled labourers and farmers. Before India entered the

nineteenth century, all of Bengal's important industries had been destroyed. Dhaka, a most prosperous city, was a famous weaving and commercial centre. Still, it lost its pre-eminence, and the population declined because the people were uprooted from their traditional means of livelihood. The unemployed skilled labourers left Dhaka and travelled to the countryside in search of new occupations, and finally took to agriculture. Naturally, these new workers became landless labourers and the agricultural sector became overcrowded. This was how important industrial centres such as Murshidabad and Pandua lost their economic prosperity. Innumerable unemployed youth were created in the industrial sector of Bengal's economy, and they had no alternative but to resort to agriculture".

Twenty years after the famine, the population in Bengal was estimated at 24–30 million. Six in every 16 persons were officially admitted to having perished in 1770. The government relief measures were woefully inadequate amounting to a contribution by the Company of



Grain carrying boats on the Ganga

£4,000 for six months, but these methods were woefully limited. Districts where men were dying at the rate of 20,000 a month, received allotments of Rs 150. The provincial council sanctioned a grant of 10 shillings worth of rice per diem for a starving population numbering 400,000 souls. Local government agents were accused of carrying off farmers' grain in 1771 under the pretext of government regulation, stopping and emptying boats and even forcing them to sell the seed requisite for the next harvest. Remission of the land tax was not implemented though local officials urged it. In a year when 35 per cent of the whole population and 50 per cent of the cultivators perished, not Five per cent of the land tax was remitted, and Ten per cent was added to it for the ensuing year.

Hunter examined the reasons that compounded the devastation and noted that the famine's scale and extent were due to a lack of markets and transport. The Company issued orders prohibiting grain export from one district to another except to the city of Murshidabad. Similar orders were issued to the authorities at Chittagong, and they were asked not to export grain anywhere except to Calcutta. The government was reduced to forcing merchants to sell rice at restricted prices in the capital. The



Ox driven drought power for irrigation

restrictions also prevented traders from importing rice from other parts of the country into the famine-affected areas. The province also had no money to give in exchange for food. The dearth of money, especially silver coins, became so acute that private traders could not carry on their commercial transactions, and trade came to a standstill. The absence of means of importation and government policy to prevent grain movement meant that neighbouring districts that could have supplied the grain could not do so. Local transport methods, including boats, seem to have been affected by government measures of seizing boats and preventing importation, which had the effect of exacerbating the consequences of local famine. Sylhet district in north-eastern Bengal had reaped plentiful harvests in 1780 and 1781, but the next crop was destroyed by local inundation, and notwithstanding the facilities for importation affected by water-carriage; one-third of the people

died. The same was repeated in 1784 when two-thirds of the cattle perished.

Grain carrying boats on the Ganga

The eighteenth-century economist Abbe Raynal voiced criticism of this policy at the time. He wrote about the history of European enterprises in the East Indies and the Americas. He alluded that the famine of 1770 "had throughout Europe excited so much horror of the English". Adam Smith believed that intervening in the grain trade by the East India Company had helped exacerbate the food shortages. Moreover, it had the effect of deterring the British government, in future, from interfering in markets in the name of free trade, which had important and often negative implications for the famines of the nineteenth century.

French cartoon belittling the British for the famine

Unfortunately, despite the 1770 famine, recognised as a problem of distribution, they occurred with unflinching regularity throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, except for 1880 – 1895 in Bengal and adjacent provinces. Strangely enough, in famine prevention, public works' priority was not given to irrigation but railroad construction.

And in 1943, 'Calcutta's Black Death' happened while the Second World War raged in Europe and elsewhere in Asia, in which almost four million died due to hunger and starvation! ●



French cartoon belittling the British for the famine

To be continued

The Roles of MICROVITA

in the Cosmic Cycle of Creation

Dr Richard Gauthier

Microvita, emanated by the Cosmic Mind, are subtle, sub-atomic cosmic intelligence agents moving and accelerating the Cosmic Cycle of Creation forward at every stage.

In 1986, Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar introduced the subject of microvita, for the first time, in a discourse: "Microvitum —the Mysterious Emanation of Cosmic Factor". It was a fascinating new idea. He explained that microvita are subtle, subatomic living beings that move throughout the universe, creating minds and bodies and spreading diseases. He said they have positive and negative, as well as neutral, varieties and three different levels of subtlety. They move through physical and psychic media and play various roles in the evolution of life and the mind. In this article, I will examine some of the different roles that microvita play in the Cosmic Cycle of Creation. First, let's briefly review P. R. Sarkar's Cosmic Cycle of Creation, also called Brahma Chakra.

The Cosmic Cycle of Creation (Brahma Chakra)

1. Non-qualified Supreme Consciousness
2. Qualified Supreme Consciousness
3. Cosmic Mind
4. Microvita
5. The physical universe
6. Origin of life (individual protozoic minds and bodies)



8. Evolution of metazoic living beings, including human beings
9. Human minds merge with non-qualified Supreme Consciousness

The Cosmic Cycle begins with non-qualified Supreme Consciousness. The infinite creative power of Supreme Consciousness is there, but it is

unexpressed. When the non-qualified Supreme Consciousness starts to use its creative power to express itself, a portion of the infinite non-qualified Supreme Consciousness becomes infinite qualified Supreme Consciousness. This qualified Supreme Consciousness evolves the Cosmic Mind (with the successive feelings of "I exist", "I do", and "Done I". Consciousness (as Cosmic Mind) expresses cruder stages of Consciousness. The Cosmic Mind evolves further, evolving microvita and finally the physical universe. In the physical universe, there are different levels of subtlety of physical matter, from ethereal factor (empty Space) to aerial factor (dilute gases), to luminous factor (shining celestial bodies), to liquid factor (like the early molten Earth) and finally solid factor or solid matter (as when the Earth cools and solidifies. At the stage of solid matter, the Cosmic Cycle of Creation changed direction and expression. Consciousness starts to transform from cruder to subtler expressions. First, single-celled living beings are evolved with individual bodies and minds. Later, some of these single-celled

beings become multicellular and later evolve into less developed and then more-developed plants and animals. Some finally evolve to the stage of human beings and then to more advanced human beings, who are inspired and able to learn sadhana (spiritual practices). Human beings finally complete the journey of their individual minds and consciousnesses and merge into non-qualified Supreme Consciousness, from which they initially emerged, thus achieving the personal spiritual goal of human life.

What Are the Main Roles of Microvita in the Cosmic Cycle of Creation?

Some important roles of microvita in the Cosmic Cycle are listed below:

1. Formation of physical particles from energy
2. Formation of atoms from billions of solidified microvita
3. Evolution of individual minds by providing "I" feeling from microvita in atoms
4. Evolution of living bodies by awakened microvita released from atoms to become viruses

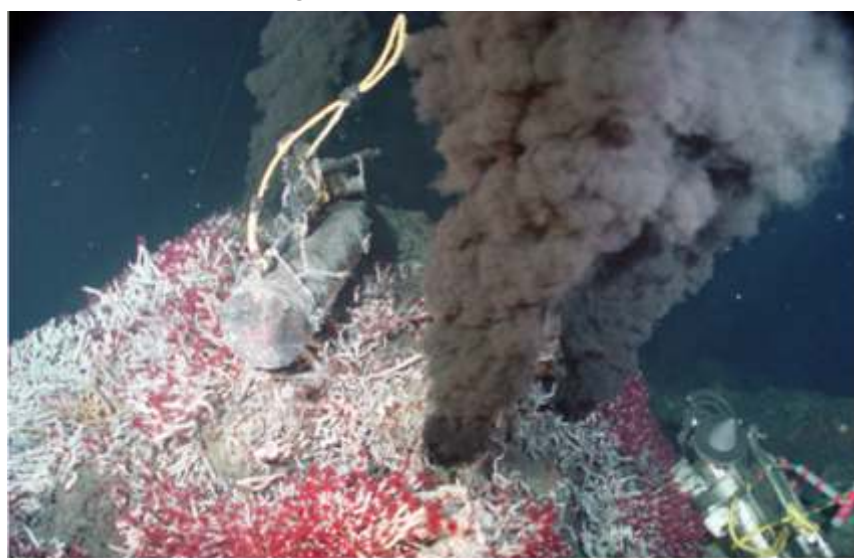
carrying the biochemical genetic codes of DNA or RNA

5. Evolution of plants and animals by providing more DNA and RNA
6. Evolution of human beings with still more DNA and RNA
7. Human beings return to Supreme Consciousness, with microvita as Divine Grace

Microvita, emanated by the Cosmic Mind, are subtle, subatomic cosmic intelligence agents that move and accelerate the Cosmic Cycle of Creation forward at every stage - providing what is needed to evolve human beings and, through sadhana, bring us back to merge with the Supreme Consciousness.

How do microvita fit into this Cosmic Cycle of Creation? First, let's take a look. Microvita, emanated by the Cosmic Mind, are subtle, subatomic living cosmic intelligence agents that move and accelerate the Cosmic Cycle of Creation forward at every stage, providing what is needed to evolve human beings and bring us back to oneness with the Supreme Consciousness by doing sadhana.

First, microvita created the physical particles of matter from energy during the Big Bang that produced our universe. Next, they formed from negative microvita, the electrons, protons, neutrons, and other physical particles that make up our physical universe. They are called negative microvita because they are "pro-matter". Energy, which is also a creation of the Cosmic Mind, is transformed into a material form by negative microvita. Then atoms are created by combining some of these physical particles into more complex atomic structures. Billions of microvita become "solidified" to form a carbon atom, for example. All other chemical atoms are formed from negative



A venting black smoker emits jets of particle-laden fluids. The particles are predominantly very fine-grained sulfide minerals formed when the hot hydrothermal fluids mix with near-freezing seawater. These minerals solidify as they cool, forming chimney-like structures. "Black smokers" are chimneys formed from deposits of iron sulfide, which is black. "White smokers" are chimneys formed from deposits of barium, calcium, and silicon, which are white.

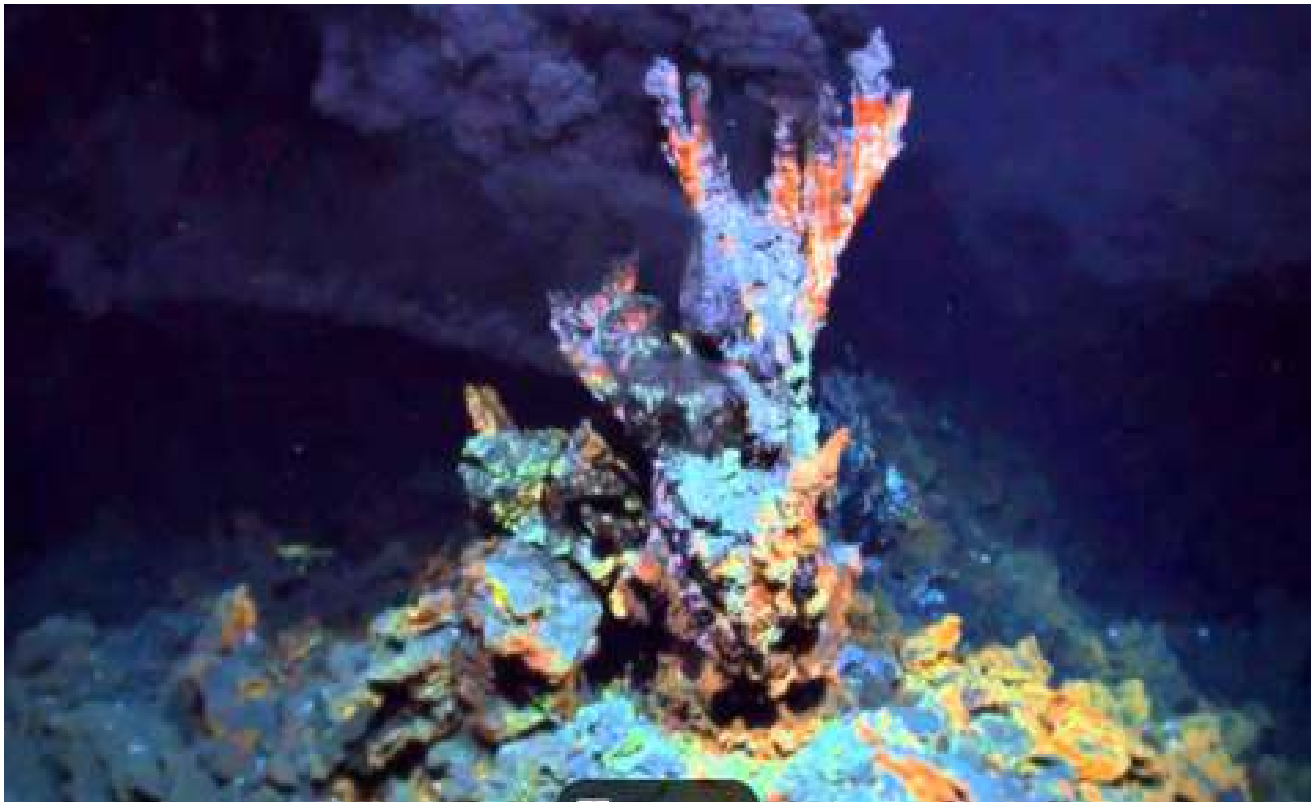


Figure 1. Hot, smoking hydrothermal vents at the bottom of oceans are thought to be one of the places where life first evolved on the Earth.

microvita that remain dormant or in a reduced activity level until they are awakened later for other jobs. In the next stage, life evolves when there is a "Jadasphota" or material explosion of some of these atoms in a chemical environment. Finally, negative microvita are awakened from the subatomic particles and expand to take up the physical forms of viruses. These viruses carry genetic molecules such as DNA or RNA, which carry the detailed chemical information codes for evolving biological life-forms and protein-forming amino acids. The microvita must have obtained these genetic codes for DNA or RNA from the Cosmic Mind when the microvita emanated within the Cosmic Mind into the physical universe.

These molecules create the first living cells and their intricate internal physical structures and processes. There is a very rudimentary "I" feeling associated with each carbon atom and other

atoms due to the microvita that composes them. These rudimentary "I" feelings of individual atoms combine and synthesise to become simple protozoic minds, as carbon atoms and other chemical atoms are organised into complex molecular structures by the action of microvita in what are called viruses but are actually awakened and enlarged negative microvita. Complex living cellular bodies are evolved that are associated with the evolved individual minds. Each mind is the controller and coordinator of the energies of its physical body. The first biological living beings or protozoa are formed. See Figure 1.

Then the evolution of living beings continues. Protozoa combine to form metazoa (multicellular living beings), creating plants and animals as further DNA or RNA is brought by additional microvita. This DNA and RNA develop the structures and functions of the multicellular

living beings that collectively desire to express more complex psychological instincts and mental propensities that grow and develop as living beings live and struggle in their local environments. This process of physical and mental development of living beings, stimulated by physical and mental clashes in the environment, is mediated by microvita and the new DNA and RNA that provides the needed physical and mental transformation up to the stage when the fully human beings, first emerged from our primordial pre-human ancestors.

Human societies were formed as human beings developed and lived in groups to help satisfy their individual needs for food and shelter. This process was also supported by microvita, which brought ideas to human beings to help form and develop their societies. The ideas associated with the invention of agriculture, dress, the wheel, and written script came to the minds of more

developed human beings who were expanding their mental powers through their efforts and desires to help their groups and societies develop and become more secure.

Although negative microvita brought diseases that challenged both the physical and mental health of human beings, these negative microvita also played a positive role in the Cosmic Cycle of Creation. Confronted with diseases of body and mind, human beings developed treatments for these diseases. And the treatments, supported by the application of positive microvita to fight and destroy the disease-causing negative microvita, were methods that strengthened and balanced their bodies and minds and even inspired human beings to make efforts for spiritual progress that would remove all their sufferings and lead to permanent happiness and peace. Finally, microvita brought direct inspiration to attain the spiritual goal of life by bring the media of Divine grace, giving individuals a taste of Divine bliss and awakening the desire to transcend all our individual mental limitations and merge again with



the Supreme Consciousness.

In this brief overview, we see than microvita, as agents of Cosmic intelligence, have played significant roles in every stage of the Cosmic Cycle of Creation, from the origin of the universe of physical particles to the merger of individual human minds with Supreme Consciousness. Microvita were cosmically

designed to help carry out the will of the qualified Supreme Consciousness. In an act of Supreme Love, the qualified Supreme Consciousness divided itself into infinite individual consciousnesses or individual souls, of which it is the collective Consciousness. It used its infinite creative power, creating a perfectly fine-tuned universe that would evolve individual lives and minds with infinite and colorful variety. Aided by microvita, the Cosmic Mind created conditions for the development of human beings through the media of physical clashes, psychic clashes and the attraction of the Supreme, to the stage of having the most highly developed or reflected individual consciousness in the universe. By expressing their own free wills and acting through their individual efforts, human beings are all eventually inspired to learn and practice sadhana, and finally merge with the infinite unqualified Supreme Consciousness that is our original source the original source of all Good and of all Love. ●

To be continued





Our Context

The futures presented are not radical; rather, they take a macro-historical – structural- view. Like others, we have been stunned by the speed of the Taliban victory. Now in mid-2020, we remain in despair at losing women's rights. We despair that outsiders have attacked Afghanis in this iteration since the Soviet invasion in 1979. We are surprised that earlier USA and Taliban peace talks did not include the government of Afghanistan. We are despondent by the politics of opium, used by each regime as a weapon against others and the world. Ultimately, while we engage in alternative futures thinking, we are transparent with our politics: we hope for a peaceful, inclusive, pluralistic, and prosperous future for the nation, particularly the rights of women, all tribes, and nature. We also write as concerned outsiders; none of us is from the nation. We hope that in the process of governing, the Taliban and/or subsequent governments create such a future.

What Next *for* Afghanistan?

■ Sohail Inayatullah, Satya Tanner, Roar Bjonnes, Jose Ramos, and Kiran Ahmed

"We hope that in the process of governing, the Taliban and/or subsequent governments create such a future."

Alternative Futures

What follows are five futures of Afghanistan for the next thirty to forty years. While current politics inform us, we are not beholden to the immediate, seeking longer-term historical patterns to create alternative scenarios. The first scenario derives from the work of Pitirim Sorokin (1957). The second is from the works of Shrii P.R Sarkar (1992). The third is from the historical narrative of the Afghanis. The fourth is from

technological and informational globalisation's linear and cultural narrative. The final is from a mixture of visions of progressive forces within and outside the Islamic world, inspired by the work of Zia Sardar, Johan Galtung (1980), and PROUT Economics (Sarkar, 1992). It moves from history as defining to imagination and possibility as leading.

As we think about the future and deep patterns, there are numerous uncertainties and

contradictions. First is the role of external players, all seeking to influence the nation. Second are the internal battles in the nation. It is being framed as the battle between the good and bad Taliban (this is partly about marketing). But equally important are the tensions between Kabul vs the regions; women and men; the Afghani and Pakistan Taliban; Sunni-Shia and Pashtuns, Hazaras and Uzbek and the role of Al-Qaeda and ISIS-K. Third, questions about the nature of the economy. Can the nation move beyond development assistance, terror funding, and poppy production - can new models of economy flourish that localise and are connected to the global economy? Fourth, will the Taliban become softer as they move from a military organisation to dealing with the daily protocols of bureaucracy? And will external pressures ensure that they become good global citizens? These uncertainties are touched upon in the futures below. However, the scenarios are not derived through this approach. Rather, we use the grand patterns of change – deep structures – to map out alternative futures.

1. The Endless Pendulum. In this first scenario, the long pendulum between secular (Kabul, modernist but generally focused

on the approval of the West) and religious (rural, command and control, conservative, man over nature and women) continues. It goes in one direction, moves toward the principal of limits, and then returns. This approach is derived from Pitirim Sorokin. He argued that systems reinforce particular views of social reality (truth is ideational or truth is material, with the midpoint of integrated).

It is more than an Afghanistan issue as in the region, from Iran to India to Myanmar, the right-wing rule resonates (as well as throughout the Western world). Bangladesh appears to be the exception so far. In this future, Afghanistan will join other conservative nations in the region. However, a swing is possible with youth and women leading a pluralistic cultural shift; that is, with external powers out, an endogenous development pattern can emerge that integrates the traditional and modern. A swing back to the modernist is also possible if the Taliban cannot create a unity government and if terrorist groups such as ISIL-K successfully undermine the Taliban (for being not pure enough, too international, and too soft). A swing is also possible, given that the Taliban is foundationally opposed to modern

medicine. However, there are signs now that they are taking COVID-19 public health responses seriously. What happens with the conflict with the Northern Alliance will be telling. On an optimistic note, the brother of the former President of Afghanistan, Hasmat Ghani, suggests integration is possible. He writes: "It is important to bridge divides in Afghan society, which means the Taliban finding a way to accept modern amenities and advancements, and younger Afghans and opponents of the group being able to engage with the Taliban, whom many of them had likely never seen up close until last week." "When you haven't been around certain kinds of people, appearances can be deceiving or even frightening," says Ghani.

2. Money Wins Over The Text And The Sword. This scenario is based on the macro-historical work of Shrii P.R. Sarkar. In Sarkar's perspective, there are four types of power; each taking turns establishing regimes of knowing. The workers give way to the warriors, who give way to the intellectuals (inclusive and dogmatic) and then to the capitalists. Human history is a narrative of this eternal cycle. In Afghanistan, the current phase in the cycle is run by intellectuals (conservative Islam) using warriors – the young Taliban to conquer others through ideas and military power. They use religious ideology and weapons to hold on to power. However, in the interaction with the world economy, to rise and continue to gain control, they need to embrace capitalism or other historical finance systems. This next stage is, as in India, capitalist. They will need to accumulate wealth to advance their economies, playing by global financial rules as we see in Qatar and the Emirates. The region retains its traditional



warrior tribal structure along with Islam as its ideological framework, but capital runs the show.

In Afghanistan, the current debate remains ideological, i.e., types of Islam and using ideas and weapons to challenge Western models of reality. However, as they become capitalist, they will need to ensure efficiency and productivity; thus, the rights of females and minorities will initially grow to give access to a larger labour market. Governance, predictability of law, and open markets will become far more important. Of course, given that the rest of the world is in an advanced stage of capitalism, Afghanistan could easily become a dumping ground of cheap products, i.e., continued peripheralisation with the resultant return of the old Taliban. As Ramos adds, hyper-capitalism dismembers traditional culture, so a backlash is inevitable. They will need to learn to regulate markets and police the internet to keep markets palatable to the old guard. Thus, the scenario could lead to a return to the past.

3. The Pawn That Roars. It is the scenario driven by geopolitics; the site of the great game – the endless battles between nations (Expansionist Russia and the expansionist USA; Iran and India; and Pakistan's need for strategic territorial depth to counter India). Thus, Afghanistan is the pawn that roars, playing a role in ending the Soviet Union and indeed playing a role in ending Pax Americana. In the mid-term future, is Pakistan next? Pakistan, knowing that possibility, is doing its best to control what it can. However, in Pakistan's view, they are the linchpins. Writes the former ISI director, General Hamid Gul: "When history is written, it will be stated that the ISI defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan with the help of America. There will be another sentence. The ISI, with the

help of America, defeated America." Afghanistan, sensing, indeed, creating palpable danger, uses its narrative as the graveyard of empires to maintain national identity and unity. Challenges to the Taliban come from the usual suspects. However, as Robert Jervis wrote in 1978, "The expansion of territorial power usually brings with it an expansion of responsibilities and commitments; to meet them, still greater power is required". ISIL-K, while at one level, challenges Taliban power at another level, it conveniently creates a good-cop bad-cop backdrop to give them the power they need to be the "least bad" rulers. Patriarchy, militarism and a hard Islam continue.

4. Selfies and Amusement Parks - The Rise of the Good Taliban. Following on from the quick viral videos of Taliban men enjoying amusement park rides after taking over Kabul, the good Taliban wins out. In this future, while the Taliban remain deeply conservative, i.e., with traditional tribal, feudal rules dominant (they burned down one amusement park days after the Taliban played in it) – they begin to integrate in surprising ways into the global cultural economy. Pakistan's foreign minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, suggests that we must be innovative, as previous ways of engaging with the Taliban have failed. However, given the need for vaccinations, the globalisation of news, the internet, the youthful demographics, financial capital, and survival based on adaptation, they join a changing world. Their skills at negotiation and influencing others over social media become more important than arms. Step by step, there are surprising changes. Generational change allows this shift, indeed, suggests Ramos; playfulness and irony create the door for new narratives. Of course, this is premised on a localised flourishing

economy outside of opium and developmental assistance. The trillions of dollars from minerals create an Islamic socialist state where basic needs are better met, as in Brunei, for example. Thus, Afghanistan begins to prosper. They slowly enter the world of international statecraft and step by step open. By 2031, Afghani soap operas will be the rage in the region. Amusement parks are rebuilt, and syncretic Islam emerges. Of course, in the mid-term future, especially through the lens of activities in 2022, this scenario appears unlikely, but it remains possible in the long run.

5. Localism, Soft Islam, and a Regional Confederation. As Galtung has argued, the battle is not between religions or civilisations but between the hard and soft in every religion/nation. In this future, the progressive soft dimensions of Islam lead, and a regional confederation emerges. It reduces costs, develops markets, and is a way to counter the threats from Russia, China, and others. As a result, a universal basic income, maxi-mini economic structures, and Islamic cooperative platforms develop.

In this future, the first step is to create a new agricultural economy. Bjornnes writes: "The new Kabul government needs a constructive plan to help the local economy to grow from a poppy economy to an economy growing wool, meat, milk, vegetables, and fruit, all of which the country has an abundance of already." However, the economy is nested in education, and thus, writes Bjornnes: "The education of girls and boys is critical. This can be done through a decentralised network of schools, so that most can remain in their local areas and be part of a more decentralised economy for the future. This means, according to Bjornnes, that the development of local, national, and global policies are aligned to:

- ✓ Avoid leakage caused by by-product imports and wealth extraction by non-local and international business interests.
- ✓ Increase the speed of money circulation between local producers, suppliers, institutions, and the public.
- ✓ Provide more local jobs through increased local production and services.
- ✓ Achieve better local economic stability as localities become more self-reliant.
- ✓ Move from an economy based on corporate greed toward an economy of need since local economies are much more effective at serving the local needs for housing, education, health care, food, and energy

With a more comprehensive plan, agro-industries can also be developed to export finished products, such as wool clothing, jams, canned and pickled foods, etc. There must also be implementable laws to ensure international corporations do not extract the nation's mineral deposits for export only. It is the local economy that needs to be the main beneficiary. Ultimately, writes Bjornes: "The nation's challenge to create a more localised economy in Afghanistan is formidable, and this cannot take place only from a top-down level. It must grow from the grassroots up and involve support for local culture through a growing sense of cooperation between more self-

sufficient regions and a stable nation.

Along with the localisation of the economy is the localisation of knowledge, particularly gendered knowledge. Critical in this reconstruction are the female warriors of Islam, the forgotten Queens, as Fatima Mernissi has argued. These include the fabled Malalai of Maiwand and latter-day leaders such as Fawzia Koofi, Zarifa Ghafari, or Salima Mazari. It becomes a counter-narrative. Jose Ramos imagines this as a Gaia of civilisations, even going so far as to see the development of eco-cultural tourism in the nation in the medium term. Continuing the move away from realism and toward idealism, author Kiran Ahmed moves from geo-politics to imagined futures. She writes: "Women from Pakistan who feel beleaguered by rising violence and slackness by the state join hands with women in Afghanistan. Access to the Internet and social media make these connections possible. Given the fear of backlash, they decide to co-create productions in the form of children's stories. These seem innocuous enough, so they stay under the radar. However, their messages overturn the US/them dichotomy by espousing selfhoods that go beyond identities of nationhood, gender, and religion. It results in an expansion of consciousness and identity towards a neo-humanist orientation that plugs the youth into the broader network of humanity. This narrative gradually

gains momentum, creating a niche, especially in the new generation of South Asians. States and reactionary forces realise their narrative of divisiveness is no longer 'sellable' to the youth and adapt, paving the way for regional cooperation." As Ramos argues, this is a mode of being beyond the battle of who is the purist. Instead of primordial purity (as we see in the USA and India), interconnectedness is defining.

This last scenario is our preferred one. However, we cannot answer the question of which future will result. And when? None of us knows. The uncertainties - not just the macro-historical structure - but the outcome of geopolitical battles between the nation and the external world; the religious battles within; the tension between the past and dramatic technological change; and between closed and open futures are far too great. However, the main intent of this essay is to loosen the straitjacket of history and imagine alternative futures. Afghanistan's future is far from being written in stone or blood. While every day for the many, the situation in Afghanistan worsens - reduced human rights and enhanced patriarchy. At the same time, unlike neighbours India and Pakistan, they have not acceded to Putin's imperialism, voting to denounce Russia at UN meetings. Therefore, the future can be surprising. Agency in creating alternative futures is far more critical than a daily commentary on current politics. ●



Drawing by Nafeesa Gulshan

Patriotism and Nationalism

Patriotism and nationalism are different and entirely antithetical to each other. French statesman Charles de Gaulle said, "Patriotism is when love of your own people comes first; nationalism, when hate for people other than your own comes first."

How selfish politicians fulfil their ambitions by using nationalism as an intoxicant puts a country and its people in deep trouble - the most prominent example today is Ukraine. A great difficulty with nationalists is that they don't learn from history.

The emphasis on the concept of social units or Samaj rather than nationalism is a more reasonable and creative vision. The world should be divided into self-reliant socio-economic societies, not political nations.

The rural areas are currently facing more inflation than the cities. Economic inequality is

POSITION and DIRECTION

Dr RP Singh

"Patriotism is when love of your own people comes first; nationalism, when hate for people other than your own comes first." - Charles de Gaulle



The concept of social units rather than nationalism is a more reasonable and creative vision.

increasing. Imitating the American private sector cannot work in India. The policy and intention should be suitable for fruitful improvement in the system.

Samaj and Cosmic Sentiment:

Lord Krishna created a great war for the establishment of Mahabharata and victorious dharma to rise above the day-to-day hassles and confrontations between each other due to selfishness and mental narrowness in the tribes' small kingdoms. So we can support nationalism only to the extent it resolves deadly clashes among regions of any country. But beyond this, we needn't promote it at the cost of universalism and humanity.



Neutral Ukraine as Buffer State

Russia, which enjoyed a more reliable relationship than NATO with many of its traditional friends, including India, Cuba, and Belarus, was made an enemy by the Ukrainian disavowal of neutrality between NATO and Russian backed alliances - misled by the NATO countries, including the United States, which have always been difficult to trust and whose job has been to create regional imbalances by luring and turning weak countries into battlefields. Nationalist leaders have repeated such mistakes.

A neutral Ukraine as a buffer state between NATO and Russian Blocs would have served to resolve the security concerns of Ukraine and the concerns of multinational confrontational blocs. When we recall nationalism, a new zeal, a new ego, and new energy are apparent, but at a superficial level. Nationalist leaders in overconfidence often make wrong decisions and then use the general public as tools to justify it. The entire country and its people have to bear the brunt of it.

The emphasis on self-reliant socio-economic units rather than

nations is a more reasonable and creative vision. Moreover, the whole world should be divided into societies, not nations. Beyond these things, nationalism and patriotism should not be a way to hide the system's inefficiencies.

Our State of the Nation

What is the current situation? What do the reports of the Reserve Bank of India and the Centre for Monitoring the Indian economy indicate?

The economy is tanking. At the same time, those at the helm of affairs are busy and engaged in correcting the biases of history based on an incomplete understanding.

The rural areas are currently facing more inflation than the cities. Economic inequality is increasing. Bureaucracy and capitalism have tightened their shackles on the system. Unemployment has more than doubled in the last few years. All these things are hurting the faith of the youth in the system.

Recently, the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE), in its report, said that more than ten million Indians had been rendered jobless due to the

second wave of Covid-19. Moreover, since the beginning of the Covid pandemic, the income of about 97 per cent of the households in the country has declined. As a result, the Indian economy is getting caught in a vicious cycle of stagflation, considered the most significant and delicate phase for any economy.

Here, both budgetary policy and monetary policies cease to work. On the one hand, there is a deepening crisis of jobs and, on the other hand, a decrease in per capita income. According to the CMIE, India's unemployment rate from January to April 2022 was 17.79 per cent among graduates compared to 7.43 per cent in general. It is a matter of great concern. In principle, the rate should be no more than Three to Four per cent.

There has been some relief from the reduction in tax on petroleum products. But how long can it be continued when fuel prices are rising worldwide. Moreover, the inflation rate in villages is much higher than in cities. For example, in April 2022, rural retail inflation was 8.38%, while in cities, the figure was





7.09%. These things are a clear indication of the rise in multi-faceted economic inequalities.

Here, the Reserve Bank of India has expressed grave concern over domestic fraudsters' nearly 80% increase in fake notes of 500 and 2000 in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21, even as the mainstream media ignored them and indulged in debating frivolous and emotive issues to divert attention from the failures of the economy.

Rewriting History and Promotion of Sycophants

The attempt to correct the wrongs of history based on a superficial understanding of ruling politicians is full of perils. Instead, attention needs to be drawn to how to eliminate the system's inefficiencies, eliminate the tendency to commit public appointments with nepotism and corruption and put the resulting inefficiency on the shoulders of reservation policy. For example, the auction-sale of posts from top to bottom in government appointments has risen in the last 14 years and has grown exponentially over the previous

five years despite tall claims of transparency.

There have been appointments of people in higher educational institutions such as universities where the appointees, despite repeated notices, are shying away for years from making their CV / bio-data public on institutional websites. Inefficiency has been laid in the very foundation of the public sector, and the false ground for closing or privatising them has been prepared. The extent to which the bureaucracy-politics-capitalism nexus has weakened the system with its multi-layered corruption. Its far-reaching effects are not going to be good.

Nepotism and corruption were also prevalent in the days of Congress and other predecessors. But as of now, by backdoor pushing corruption forward, paths have been paved for the sale of public institutions by making them incompetent. However, this innovative experiment is ultimately self-defeating.

Imitating the American private sector cannot work in India. The American corporations

easily conceal their inefficiencies and failures in the veil of their loot of the developing countries; capturing the mass media and people's psychology; hijacking and manipulating scientific research; and lobbying in the corridors of governments.

A case in point is the role of the world sugar lobby in the sixties, promoting sugar consumption by delinking it from diabetes and obesity. They conducted fake research and propagated again, proving its strong linkage with diabetes and heart disease nowadays, to promote sugar-free products at high prices.

Similar are the cases of first demineralising water through water purifiers, then selling mineral and food supplements, and now the ongoing debates on booster doses for infections/ diseases/ radiations). Is this comfort available to the resource and time scarce Bharat? Both the policy and the intention should be suitable for fruitful improvement in the system. ●

The author is Professor at the University of Gorakhpur.

Mind – body interaction mechanism – key to preventive and curative Behavioral medicine

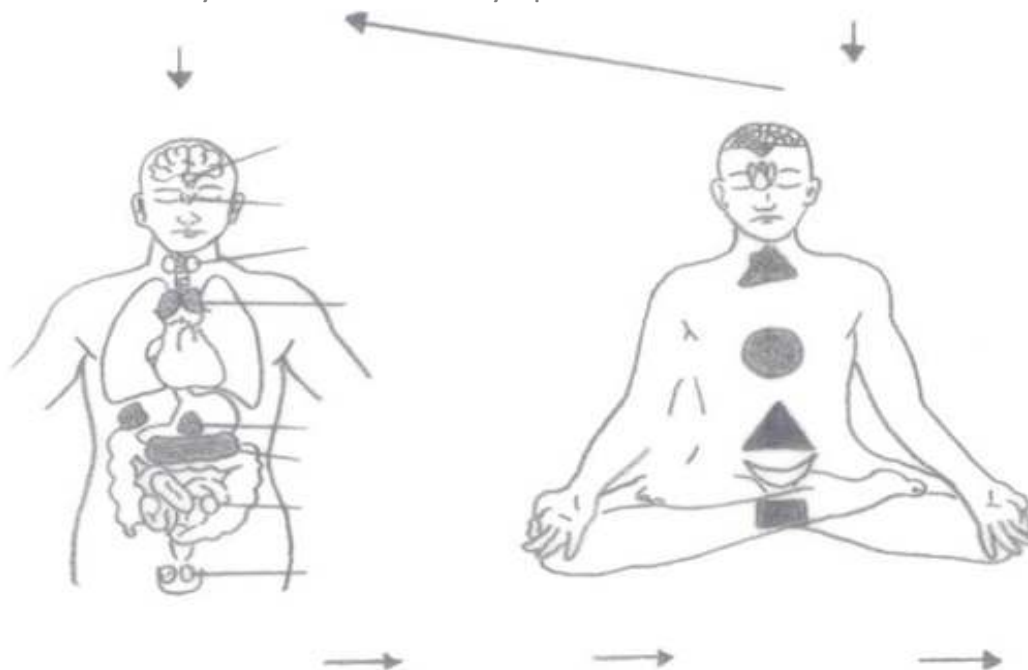


Figure 1. Cakras or Energy Centres and their association with the Endocrine Glands

1 Meditation: Ideating on Consciousness, promoting Psycho-Somatic Health and Wellbeing

1. Energy Centres (or Cakras) and Endocrine Glands, Linking Mind and Body

Linking the mind and the physical body (or the organ systems) are subtle psychic energy centres or chakras (depicted in Figure 1), which control our mental propensities and behavioural expressions (as well as the body through the endocrine glands, as indicated later). The cakras are connected by subtle energy channels (or nadis), through which the vital (bioplasmic) energy (or prana) is conceived to reach every part of the body. The cakras are associated with and control specific endocrine glands, as depicted in Figure 1. In addition, the cakras regulate organ function through these glands by stimulating their hormonal secretions; this is how the cakras influence the body.

The uniqueness of the ANANDA MARGA SYSTEM OF MEDITATION

Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista



In this era of increased mental involvement and preoccupation, psychic ailments, neurological diseases, and mental depression are growing.

In the human mind, various thoughts are constantly emerging and dissolving. Behind these psychic phenomena are the underlying propensities (formed according to the past-psychic impressions on the mind). The propensities are expressed by the vibrational expression of the cakras, which in turn affect the endocrine glands through their hormonal secretions (Figure 1).

Both the expression as well as the control of these propensities is dependent upon the cakras. Emotional stresses (such as

anxiety and insecurity) are co-responsible for diseases such as coronary heart disease and even schizophrenia. When subject to stress, the endocrine glands release hormones into the bloodstream, which affect blood vessel calibre, digestion, metabolism, etc. For instance, when a person becomes extremely afraid, it affects the Anahata Cakra (refer to Figure 1), which results in palpitations, inability to act decisively and even a heart attack.

Both mental and physical health and the individual's behavioural response depend on the proper energy balance between the cakras and the endocrine glands to which they are related. The disease is caused by an imbalance in the energy flow to and from one or more cakras.

2. Mental Pain and Organ Dysfunction

In this era of increased mental (as opposed to physical) involvement and preoccupation, psychic ailments, neurological diseases, and mental depression are increasing. Just as excessive mental interactions and endeavours stress the corresponding physiological system, extreme mental interactions and endeavours also stress the portions of the mind that perceive and do the work of perception. The ego associated with the "I exist portion" of the mind makes the "doer" portion of the mind perform actions, which can result in either painful or pleasant outcomes and subsequently disappointing.

The mind always has to have something to ideate on; it has to have objectivity. However, in daily life, the objectification of the mind resulting from harsh interactions and painful situations produces deformations of the mind. At times, these situations persist. The resulting feeling of helplessness at being unable to alleviate or cope with the resulting painful deformations of the mind produces

mental pain and psychic ailments (due to an imbalance in the energy states of the chakras). It also results in the dysfunction of certain organ systems (due to imbalanced secretions of the endocrine glands).

So then, what is the remedy for the acute and chronic pain states of the mind, and concomitant physiological ailments, resulting from adverse interactions?

3. Psychic Forces on the mind

The human mind can be divided into three layers: that which perceives, that which does the work of perception, and that which gives the feeling of existence. The psychic force on the mind, causing deformations of the mind, is thought to result from its interaction with the environment and also due to the reactive momenta of the impressions of the mind caused by one's past interactions and behaviour.

These deformations and impressions lend a conditioning property to the mind, which influences the mental/ emotional/ behavioural make-up of a person, and dictates the nature of the response to a certain stimulus from the environment. This response creates additional impressions on the mind and creates a centrifugal psychic force on the mind. Such impressions and preoccupations of the mind (such as arrogance of success and disappointment of failure) preclude the mind from being receptive to the attractive centripetal force of Consciousness on the mind.

4. Influence of Consciousness on the Mind

By effacing the previously acquired psychic impressions on the mind and preventing the formations of new impressions, the mind becomes more amenable to the attractive influence of Consciousness. How? The erasing of past impressions (or samskaras)

can be affected by ideating on Consciousness from the Ista cakra employing the Ista Mantra, as illustrated in Figure 2.

5. Making meditation personalised and realistic, for self-realisation

(i) **Meditation is termed Dharana**, meaning the concentration of the mind at a specific point. For the basic lesson of Tantric meditation, it is important to recognise and become continually aware of the pervading presence of the Divine Entity (or God or Brahma or Cosmic Consciousness) all around us and everywhere. It enables the meditator to have direct contact with the Divine Entity. Next, you withdraw your mind from your body (from the bottom upwards, cakra by cakra) and bring your mind to your Ishta Cakra, your spiritual and psychic nucleus. Then with your Ishta Mantra, you ideate on the Divine Entity around you. With the Ishta Mantra, you are appealing to the Divine Entity to put divine energy into your mind, thereby expanding the mind and literally lighting it up. This ideation purifies the mind by removing the embedded impressions in the mind (namely, samskaras) and (iii) making one divine and enlightened. It is what can be ascribed as personalised meditation.

Through this process, over some time, one's mind gets cleared from its embedded impressions formed by one's actions and interactions. As a result, it relieves stress and verily brings a peaceful feeling of oneness with divinity known as enlightenment or self-realisation (realising the divinity within oneself).

(ii) **How to prevent new psychic impressions?** If the perceiving portion of the mind were to ascribe Consciousness to the object of its perception, and if the 'doer' portion of the mind also ascribes the 'doer' activity to Consciousness, then the

mind does not acquire new impressions (which are essentially painful because they are only temporarily pleasant).

Thus, the attractive force of Consciousness is felt in mind by extinguishing accumulated psychic impressions and preventing an influx of new psychic impressions on the mind. It now starts moving centripetally in the ectoplasmic field of Consciousness. (as schematically shown in Figure 2.) It provides transcendence to the mind, rejuvenates the mind, and constitutes the basis of the mind's psychic expansion (or evolution), progressing to enlightenment.

(iii) This recognition and manifestation of the Divine presence all around us make the five lessons of spiritual practice natural and realistic.

For example, it makes Guru Mantra automatic.

Then in Pranayama, the Divine Entity is bringing prana (vital life energy) into the body to purify the body: making the life energy flow freely through the Nadis; harmonising the two hemispheres of the brain, resulting in a balanced physical, mental and emotional well-being; detoxifying the lungs and providing the body with an increased level of oxygen; stimulating the digestive system and improving the nutrient absorption; improving the immune system, and making the mind more peaceful.

In the fifth lesson Cakra Shodhana, the Divine Energy can enable energising the cakras and their effects on body, mind, and spirit.

II. Physiological Characterisation of the "Meditative State" by EEG and its Therapeutic Value

(1) Meditative State

States of rest, sleep and mental activity have been characterised through the

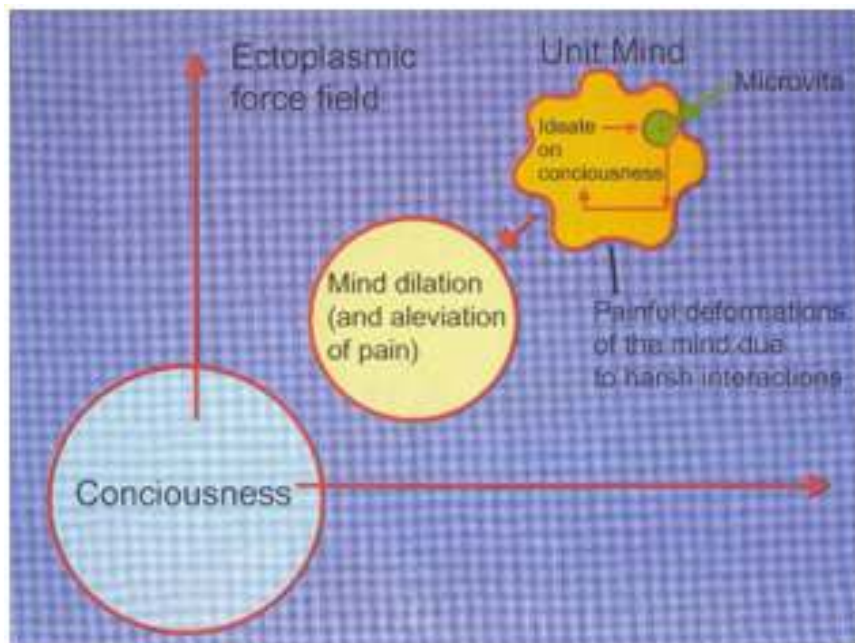


Fig. 2: The Consciousness field and the presence or location of mind in it. It is schematised that when a person ideates on Consciousness by Meditation, the mind dilates, i.e., develops in ectoplasmic density. Correspondingly, it enhances the Consciousness-field force and alleviates mental pain. Concomitantly, the mind keeps dilating until it merges into Consciousness to attain enlightenment leading to salvation or nirvana.

frequency analysis of electroencephalographic (EEG) data [1,2]. Characterisation of subjective states of feeling indicates that (i) lack of alpha activity is interpreted as indicating states of alertness, attention, orienting and anxiety, and (ii) the 'beta' state is associated with worry, anger, fear and frustration, (iii) the alpha state has been noted to be associated with pleasant feeling, wellbeing, tranquillity, relaxation, (iv) abundance of alpha-wave activity is considered to represent a state of rest (not sleep), relaxation and relief from concentration, (v) progressive lower frequency states (from beta to alpha and more pronounced increased alpha-activity shift to lower frequency alpha states) are associated with increased relaxation and tranquillity, culminating in a deep 'internalised' state (of warmth, love and contentment) in the theta state, (vi) the 'theta' state is characteristic of the meditative state [3,4]. We will now present some physiological characterisations of the meditative state.

In the Ananda Marga system of Meditation or Intuition Practice (IP), the practitioner concentrates on a particular cakra and mentally incantates a 2-syllable mantra (which has the connotation of uniting one's unit mind with Consciousness), synchronous with his breathing. Both the cakra and mantra are specific for a subject and correspond to his rhythm and psychic state.

(2) EEG Response Characterization of the Meditative State

During our experiments [5, 6], the subjects sat quietly in an electrically shielded room. We used an 8-channel Grass EEG machine for recording outputs from the scalp electrodes and, further, used the first six channels to record bipolar signals in the order of FP2-C4, C4-O2, T4-O2, F1-C3, C3-O1 and T3-O1; and the seventh channel was used for recording the ECG, and the eighth for the oculogram.

For each subject, the EEG was recorded for 15 minutes with

the subject in a relaxed but mentally active state, with the eyes closed. Then, the subject was asked to 'meditate' or 'concentrate' (as the case may be), and his EEG was recorded during this period, which generally lasted for 30 minutes. We also recorded the post-meditative or post-concentration period for 15 minutes. Finally, we performed frequency spectral analysis of the EEG data to determine the percentage of waves corresponding to each frequency band as histograms.

The EEG analysis of an IP practitioner subject 1 (a regular practitioner of meditation) is provided in Figure 3.

(3) Results

EEG Response:

Since, in general, the occipital leads show variations in alpha activity prominently, the frequency analysis was carried out for the C4-O2 leads only for this. As a result, the EEG analysis results of subject 1, shown in Figure 3, depict a pronounced shift to a lower frequency spectrum during meditation. In contrast, for a subject who does not practise meditation, the frequency spectrum in a normal state was in a higher frequency band than that of regular meditators.

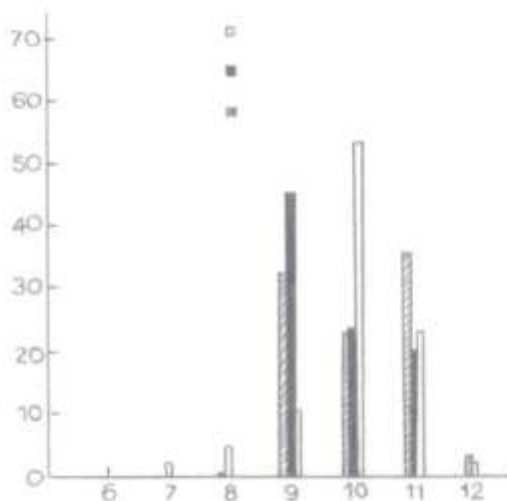


Figure 3. The relative abundance of Waves at various frequency bands of subject 1, a regular practitioner of IP, before, during and after meditation. Note the shift in the frequency distribution to a predominantly low-frequency state during meditation.

For IP practitioners (of meditation), we noted that the amplitude/frequency distribution p130 eaked at a lower frequency band during an IP session compared with the distribution before the IP session. Now a shift of the EEG energy state to a lower frequency band is associated with a decreased mental tension and increased relaxed state and tranquillity [3, 4]. Further, the metabolic rate also decreases, according to our data. Therefore, the transformation of the EEG state during meditation, resulting in an energy predominance in the lower frequency band, is an index of the efficacy and therapeutic value of Ananda Marga's Intuitional Practice (IP) meditation.

III. Significance of Ananda Marga System of Meditation (based on Ista cakra and mantra) into Higher Consciousness

Physiological characterization of the 'meditative state' during intuitional practice - (Published in Medical and Biological Engineering, March 1976): - It depicts how mantra/cakra-based meditation into higher consciousness can cause a shift of the EEG energy state from beta to alpha frequency band, associated with a decreased mental tension and increased relaxed state and tranquillity.

Then for long-time practitioners, meditation even exhibits EEG theta frequency associated with intuition development. It was the first such journal paper on meditation.

Now, on the auspicious occasion of Baba's birthday centennial celebration, I am proposing that we teach meditation at medical clinics and the patients. Moreover, it will enable us to publish papers on the physiological and medical impact of the Ananda Marga system of meditation. But, most importantly, the medical doctors and their patients will benefit from it. Hence, we are obligated to arrange to 'initiate' them in the practice of meditation.

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"Governments feel that culture is all about song and dance. We want to change that and expand the definition of Sanskriti to include languages."



Giving Lost Languages a Voice

{Continued from the previous issue}

■ Avantika Bhuyan

A broadcast to save Asuri

Run by the residents of two villages in Jharkhand, Jobhipat and Sakhuapani, Asur Adivasi Mobile Radio hopes to protect the language, classified as definitely endangered, and create awareness about ancestral forest and land rights. Its shows, usually broadcast in the weekly market of Koteya Bazar, Netarhat, are expected to return soon after a nearly two-year pandemic break. "We will tell you the news, songs and latest happenings of the world and our happiness and sorrow," goes a statement from the Asur Adivasi Wisdom Akhra (AAWA), a community organisation that runs

the service along with the Jharkhandi Bhasha Sahitya Sanskriti Akhra (JBSSA).

The JBSSA was formed in 2003 to protect the economic and cultural diversity of the state's many tribes. "There are 32 tribes in the state, of which eight, such as the Asurs, are primitive. No one would talk about conserving their language and culture, often misrepresenting them as part of the Munda language cluster. The lack of institutional support has added to the woes," says Vandana Tete, hailing from Jharkhand's Kharia community. She started working with the Asurs in 2004, and She makes it clear that they are not

working in some "maseehaye" (saviour) role, only supporting the community's efforts.

"Governments feel that culture is all about song and dance. We want to change that and expand the definition of Sanskriti to include languages as well. People should be able to read their language and also be able to translate it into Hindi," she says. The radio service was started in 2019 to convey messages from the city or neighbouring villages to the forested mountains of Netarhat. The community found it could connect people from different villages and keep the language relevant. Schoolchildren began to

take interest and were trained in news reading and anchoring. Today, a core team of 15 runs the radio. "Young girls and boys send in songs and poems in Asuri. What better way to keep a language going," says Tete.

The community kept this initiative going during the pandemic, albeit in a different form: documenting stories and songs that might be disappearing. They have identified elders in various districts who might be repositories of traditional knowledge and are contacting them via phone. They have also been in touch with people from the community who might be living in other parts of the state for work, urging them to send in their songs. The entire focus has been to keep the community connected.

A Champion for Sirmauri

Vidyanand Sarek is always on the move, walking miles, going to baithaks and literary gatherings in and around his village of Deothi Majhgaon in Sirmaur's Rajgarh district in Himachal Pradesh. These days, the octogenarian is inundated with congratulatory calls and visits. He has just been awarded the Padma Shri for his

work in conserving the folk culture and language of Sirmaur.

A conversation with him evokes the feeling of balmy evenings spent listening to myths and legends narrated by an elder. "Sirmauri has no script and is written in Devanagari. Although it was considered a boli (dialect), it has its own rich repository of folk songs, dance, stories and oral literature," says Sarek, who pegs the origin of the language to the "Sat yuga".

A lot of folk literature in Sirmauri focuses on the Mahabharat—it is believed that soldiers from the Kaurava and Pandava camps came to the region after the 18-day war and settled there. However, they continued to fight, and the folk song tradition of Harul focuses on this. "Though some people still speak Sirmauri in its original form in parts of Mandi, Kullu and Sirmaur, the youth is forgetting its folk song and story traditions due to the influence of Western-style music. So I have tried to collect as many songs and gaatha geet about Lok Ramayan and Mahabharat," he says.

Though he has worked on a bilingual dictionary, he has to

organise and standardise the language further. "If the government sets even one question in a school exam in Sirmauri or makes it part of some competition, there would be some awareness among the youth about it. They will be motivated to learn it," says Sarek, who has been performing on stage as a singer since the age of four. Besides writing books about the cultural heritage of Sirmaur, he has also translated 51 poems by Rabindranath Tagore, from Hindi to Sirmauri, as part of a Union government project.

The Music of Tarao

Akhu Chingangbam, the Manipur-based musician of Imphal Talkies and The Howlers, a folk-rock band, shares an image of Ch Lamtachao Tarao, chief of Heikakpokpi village, who is the last custodian of folk music traditions in the Tarao language, classified as critically endangered. He learnt of the Tarao community in December 2020 while researching the folk music of tribes in Manipur for his project. A Native Tongue Called Peace, in which he works with children from different ethnic backgrounds—both from the hills and the valley—and teaches them songs from each other's languages. "With globalisation, we are losing the sounds and sights we grew up with. There has been a lot of conflict between the hill and valley tribes in Manipur. We try to bridge this gap through folk music," he says.

He believes minorities worldwide have been subjugated by primary religions and have lost their roots, including folk music and traditions. "The same thing has been happening here in Manipur," he says. So in 2019, Chingangbam started the Foothills Community Centre just outside Imphal to document folk music, collaborate with musicians and create a museum of indigenous folk music. Then he learnt of the Tarao tribe in Leishokchong, where he met



Manipuri tribals

Pabung Morre and realised just 830-850 speakers of the language were left in four villages of Chandel district.

Morre was wary of researchers who wanted to understand the history of the language without trying to conserve it. Chingangbam proved to be different. In February last year, he raised funds for a workshop on Tarao folklore. He has also documented the life and wisdom of Lamtachao, who is around 70, and will be showcasing some instruments at the Foothills museum.

On the phone from Leishokching, Morre says he would like to see more workshops. "Covid-19 put an abrupt end to the session last year. It was supposed to last for three days but we had to end it after two," he says. Lamtachao is willing to take classes to pass on knowledge of the music and instruments, not just to the village youth but also to anthropology and linguistics students. However, organising such sessions, even on a small-scale, requires funds.

"We are not in a financial position to be able to put these together. Most people in the community work as labour or they make baskets and crafts," says Morre. Everyone has been so

caught up in survival that they haven't been able to put in that extra time or effort to document the costumes, songs and language in an organised manner. Earlier this week, though, Morre convened a meeting in his village to drive home the need to document their cultural practices before they go silent.

As Chingangbam puts it: "You can't separate folklore, folk music and language. These fragments of the past contain clues to our identity. Once the music and language disappear, our roots vanish."

Taking Birhor to the Children

Linguist Bikram Jora sends screenshots of the trilingual dictionary containing 2,748 words in Birhor, classified as critically endangered. It starts with simple words like *_aba_*, or father, and moves on to phrases like *aben bar hor k*" atir ("for you both"). A project coordinator for the South Asia region for the US-based non-profit Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages, Jora has been working on Documenting the Fragile Knowledge Domains of the Birhor People, an initiative funded by the Zegar Family Foundation, since 2018. Since he belongs to Jharkhand's Munda tribe, he understands the complexities of indigenous

language and identity within the state well.

His team and he have published *Abun Ari-Re*, the first children's book in Birhor, to try and make words about regular activities part of local parlance, as well as a survey of the community's ethnobotanical knowledge and an online dictionary. Though the published material is free, the copyright rests with the Birhor community.

Birhor, spoken by a nomadic tribal community of rope makers, has less than 10,000 speakers. And only 4,000 know it fluently. "The very aged are fluent. The middle-aged have stopped using the language in the home domain and the young are not interested in learning their mother tongue. This demographic moves to nearby towns and cities for work and can't use Birhor there. They speak it only when they come home on holiday," says Jora. So, they start borrowing from Hindi, Sadri or any other language that is dominant in their work area.

Migration, he says, has been forced by government policies on forest protection that cut off the community's access to natural resources. "This has an impact on the language," says Jora. "When they see that Birhor doesn't get them a good job and salary, they don't bother with it." He feels these years are critical to save the language and break the notion that their mother tongue is not inferior.

Keeping the sound of Nihali alive

The Nihal community lives in the foothills of the Satpura mountain range in the Jalgaon-Jamud tehsil of the Buldhana district in Maharashtra. Though people refer to their language as Nihali, the community identifies it as *kalto* and its tongue as *kalto mandi*. The first details of the language appeared in Vol. IV of the Linguistic Survey Of India, published in 1906.



Munda tribals

Linguist Norman Zide says: "It is, perhaps, the only remnant in India of an ancient pre-Munda, pre-Dravidian, pre-Indo-Aryan language family, with no living relatives, but, perhaps, a sister language of the language the Bhils spoke before they lost their language and it was supplanted by the various Indo-Aryan Bhilis."

Today, Nihali is critically endangered, spoken by just 2,000-3,000 people. Its initial documentation is being carried out by Shailendra Mohan, now director of the Central Institute of Indian Languages. In 2012, he was awarded a grant from the Endangered Languages Project (ELDP) by the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Over the years, he has collected narrations and songs to preserve the language and place these in the context of the history of human civilisation. The Nihali vocabulary is now available in the Endangered Languages Archive; the grammar writing is still in progress.

Several factors have contributed to Nihali's plight: first and foremost, speakers of the language are few, and most of them are bilingual/multilingual in Korku, Marathi, Hindi and dialects of Gondi. So it's a wonder that the language has survived at all.

"The Nihali language speakers used to be hunters and foragers," says Mohan. "Today, they work as agricultural labour in different villages and have shifted to those neighbouring languages."

Songs of the Andamans

*Dal koronge longe jara taikhdunya
ila do jara taikhdunya, ila do jara
taikhdunya....*

*(The Earth is shaking as the tree
falls with a great thud)*

In this song, Boa Sr describes the day the December 2004 tsunami struck the Andamans. Her ancestors had told her that when the earth shakes, one should take bamboo and hit the earth several times to stop it from shaking.

This story is documented in Anvita Abbi's *Voices From The Lost Horizon*. The linguist first visited the islands in 2001 to conduct a pilot survey of the languages. First, she spent time with the Jarawa and Onge tribes and, later, with the Great Andamanese. "I realised that Jarawa and Onge were sister languages, although geographically and culturally, the tribes have been living apart. However, Great Andamanese is distinctive," she says. When Abbi presented her findings at the Max Planck Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, linguists urged her to drop other projects and document the Great Andamanese languages. So she applied to the Endangered Languages Project and got started. Since then, she has published seven books.

She met Boa Sr, the last speaker of Bo, at a relief camp after the tsunami. It was paradoxical that Bo was singing past songs in such an atmosphere. "She felt some of her sorrow was diminishing in the process. She gave us 66 songs, of which we published 42. The same thing happened with Nao Jr. In the beginning. He said, 'I haven't heard any stories in the last 40 years. What will I tell you?' But once he started recalling, there was no stopping him," she recalls.

Abbi writes in her preface that of 10 stories in *Voices From The Lost Horizon*, only four were narrated in Great Andamanese and Andamanese Hindi. The rest were narrated to her solely in Andamanese Hindi. It is, however, the first time that the Great Andamanese songs have been transcribed and translated into English. On the phone from Port Blair, 25-year-old Lephay, or Tamtam, daughter of Leecho, the last Sare speaker, says her maternal grandmother is alive but doesn't

speak much. "I know a few words," she says. "But almost everyone has forgotten their mother tongue and is interested in Andamanese Hindi. Will the old days return? We will have to see."

The Rare Institutional Support

Very few institutions, such as the Mysuru-based Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), are also working in the language conservation field. At the moment, as prepared by Abbi and her team, plans are to publish a dictionary and grammar of Nicobarese languages such as Luro and Sanenyo. Besides these, seven other endangered languages dictionaries are ready to be published. It is part of the scope of activities of the Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL) initiated by the ministry of human resource development (now ministry of education) in 2013.

It was done keeping in mind the census figures of 1961, which stated that there were 1,652 languages/mother tongues in the country. Of these, about 550 languages were spoken by less than 500 speakers. "SPPEL started with a short-term goal of providing a grammar, dictionary and ethnolinguistic sketch for 117 languages that have 10,000 or fewer speakers and a long-term goal of covering around 500 languages in the future," elaborates Shailendra Mohan, director, CIIL.

The documentation process of the vulnerable languages involves the collection of texts, narration, documenting songs and lifestyle, grammar writing, making dictionaries in bilingual-trilingual formats, and more. The centre is currently working on around 44 languages from the North-East, such as Atong, Bawm, Koirang, Liju, Newari, Lamgang, Singpho, Dirang Monpa and more. ●

Humanity is at a crossroads when it comes to managing drought, and accelerating mitigation must be done urgently, using every tool we can, according to a new report from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

GLOBAL DROUGHT IN NUMBERS, 2022

Global Drought

The report, an authoritative compendium of drought-related information and data, helps inform negotiations of one of several decisions by UNCCD's 196 member states issued on 20 May.

"The facts and figures of this publication all point in the same direction: an upward trajectory in the duration of droughts and the severity of impacts, not only affecting human societies but also the ecological systems upon which the survival of all life depends, including that of our own species."

says Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD.

Highlights of the Report:

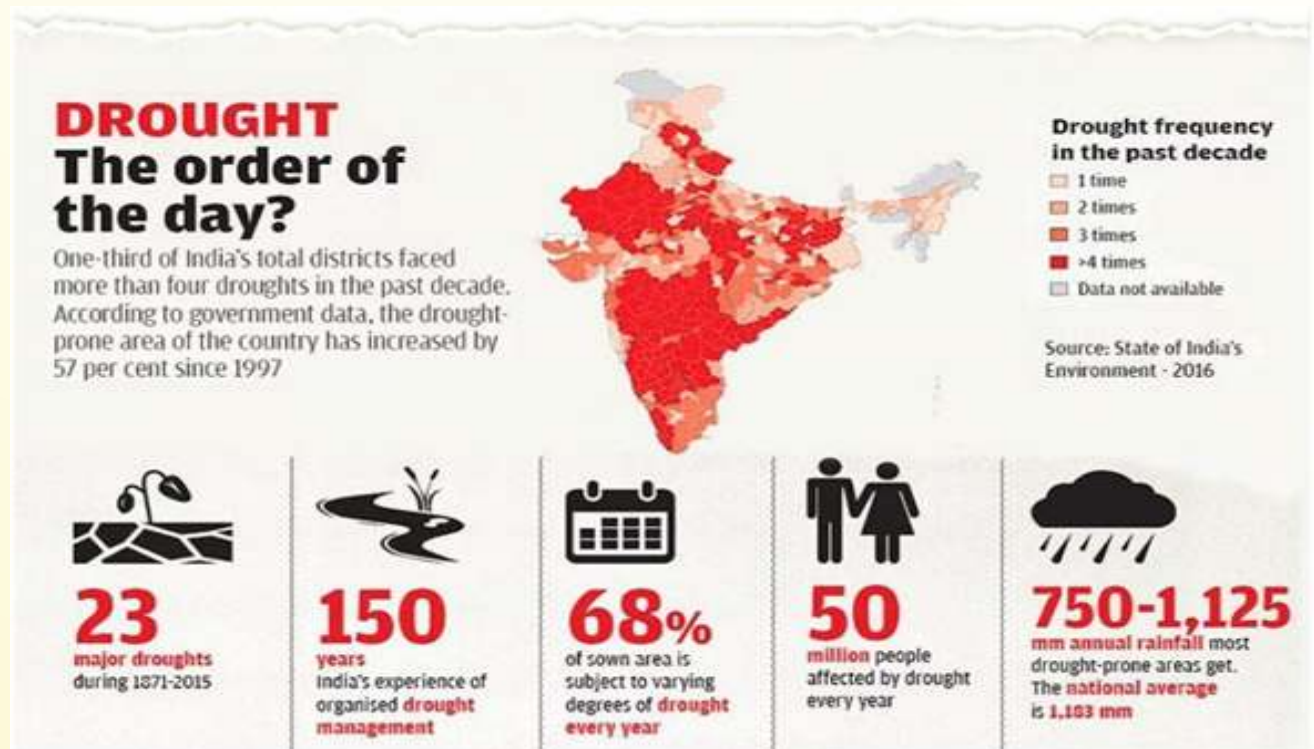
The frequency and duration of drought have been increasing at an alarming rate worldwide since the onset of the 21st century. As a result, an entirely new generation is growing up being "water-scarce".

Since 2000, there has been a 29 per cent increase in the frequency and duration of droughts worldwide.

Drought is considered a slow onset disaster, thus giving enough time to prepare for it. But in recent decades, drought has emerged as one of the biggest drivers of human life loss and economic loss among weather-related disasters.

Water Scarcity and Drought in India

India has featured in the assessment as one of the severely drought-impacted countries. Nearly two-thirds of the country suffered drought during 2020-2022.





Geographically, India's drought vulnerability compares with that of sub-Saharan Africa.

The effect of severe droughts was estimated to have reduced India's gross domestic product by 2-5 per cent over the 20 years from 1998 to 2017.

India's drought-prone area has increased by 57 per cent since 1997.

One-third of India's districts have faced more than four droughts over the past decade, and 50 million people are affected by drought every year.

Some 97.85 million hectares — nearly 30 per cent of the country's land — underwent land degradation during 2018-19.

Drought impacts India's dominantly rainfed agriculture, accounting for 60 per cent of the sown area on average.

The report creates a compelling call for global action. Foreexample:

- ✓ Since 2000, the number and duration of droughts have risen by 29%
- ✓ From 1970 to 2019, weather, climate and water hazards accounted for 50% of disasters and 45% of disaster-related deaths, mostly in developing countries

- ✓ Droughts represent 15% of natural disasters but took the largest human toll, approximately 650,000 deaths from 1970 to 2019
- ✓ From 1998 to 2017, droughts caused global economic losses of roughly USD 124 billion
- ✓ In 2022, more than 2.3 billion people will face water stress; almost 160 million children will be exposed to severe and prolonged droughts
- ✓ Unless action is stepped up:
- ✓ By 2030, an estimated 700 million people will be at risk of being displaced by drought
- ✓ By 2040, an estimated one in four children will live in areas with extreme water shortages
- ✓ By 2050, droughts may affect over three-quarters of the world's population, and an estimated 4.8-5.7 billion people will live in water-scarce areas for at least one month each year, up from 3.6 billion today. And up to 216 million people could be forced to migrate by 2050, largely due to drought and other factors, including water scarcity, declining crop productivity, sea-level rise, and overpopulation.

- ✓ One of the best, most comprehensive solutions in land restoration, which addresses many of the underlying factors of degraded water cycles and the loss of soil fertility. We must build and rebuild our landscapes better, mimicking nature wherever possible and creating functional ecological systems.”
- ✓ Beyond restoration, he adds, is the need for a paradigm shift from 'reactive' and 'crisis-based' approaches to 'proactive' and 'risk-based' drought management approaches involving coordination, communication and cooperation, driven by sufficient finance and political will.

Needed As Well

- ✓ Sustainable and efficient agricultural management techniques that grow more food on less land and with less water
- ✓ Changes in our relationships with food, fodder and fibre, moving toward plant-based diets, and reducing or stopping the consumption of animals

- ✓ Concerted policy and partnerships at all levels
- ✓ Development and implementation of integrated drought action plans
- ✓ Set up effective early-warning systems that work across boundaries
- ✓ Deployment of new technologies such as satellite monitoring and artificial intelligence to guide decisions with greater precision
- ✓ Regular monitoring and reporting to ensure continuous improvement
- ✓ Mobilise sustainable finance to improve drought resilience at the local level
- ✓ Invest in soil health
- ✓ Work together and include and mobilise farmers, local communities, businesses, consumers, investors, entrepreneurs and, above all, young people

The new UNCCD report notes that 128 countries have expressed willingness to achieve or exceed Land Degradation

Neutrality. And nearly 70 countries participated in the UNCCD's global drought initiative, which aims to shift from reactive approaches to drought to a proactive and risk-reducing approach.

Mr Thiaw underlined the importance of promoting public awareness about desertification and drought and letting people know the problems can be effectively tackled “through ingenuity, commitment and solidarity. We all must live up to our responsibility to ensure the health of present and future generations, wholeheartedly and without delay.”

The COP15 decision on drought is expected to touch on five interrelated areas:

- ✓ drought policies
- ✓ early warning, monitoring and assessment
- ✓ knowledge sharing and learning
- ✓ partnerships and coordination, and
- ✓ drought finance

Drought around the world (1900-2022)

- ✓ More than 10 million people died due to major drought events in the past century, causing several hundred billion USD in economic losses worldwide. And the numbers are rising
- ✓ Severe drought affects Africa more than any other continent, with more than 300 events recorded in the past 100 years, accounting for 44% of the global total. More recently, sub-Saharan Africa has experienced the dramatic consequences of climate disasters becoming more frequent and intense
- ✓ In the past century, 45 major drought events occurred in Europe, affecting millions of people and resulting in more than US\$0.3 in 27.8 billion in economic losses. Today, an annual average of 15% of the land area and 17% of the population within the European Union is affected by drought
- ✓ In the U.S., crop failures and other economic losses due to





drought have totalled several hundred billion USD over the last century – USD 249 billion alone since 1980

- ✓ Over the past century, the highest total number of humans affected by drought was in Asia
- ✓ Impacts on human society
- ✓ Over 1.4 billion people were affected by drought from 2000 to 2019. It makes drought the disaster affecting the second-highest number of people after flooding. Africa suffered from drought more frequently than any other continent, with 134 droughts, of which 70 occurred in East Africa
- ✓ The effect of severe droughts was estimated to have reduced India's gross domestic product by 2-5% over the ten years 1998 to 2017
- ✓ As a result of the Australian Millennium Drought, total agricultural productivity fell by 18% from 2002 to 2010
- ✓ Greater burdens and suffering are inflicted on women and

girls in emerging and developing countries in terms of education levels, nutrition, health, sanitation, and safety

- ✓ The burden of water collection – especially in drylands – falls disproportionately on women (72%) and girls (9%), who, in some cases, spend as much as 40% of their calorific intake carrying water
- ✓ Droughts have deep, widespread and underestimated impacts on societies, ecosystems, and economies, with only a portion of the actual losses accounted for.
- ✓ The percentage of plants affected by drought has more than doubled in the last 40 years, with about 12 million hectares of land lost each year due to drought and desertification
- ✓ Ecosystems progressively turn into carbon sources, especially during extreme drought events, detectable on five of six continents

- ✓ The carbon uptake of terrestrial ecosystems offsets one-third of global carbon dioxide emissions, yet their capacity to sequester carbon is susceptible to drought events
- ✓ 14% of wetlands critical for migratory species, as listed by Ramsar, are located in drought-prone regions
- ✓ The mega drought in Australia contributed to 'mega fires' in 2019-2020, resulting in the most dramatic loss of habitat for threatened species in postcolonial history; about 3 billion animals were killed or displaced in the Australian wildfires
- ✓ Drought-induced peatland fires in Indonesia resulted in decreasing biodiversity, including both the number of individuals as well as plant species
- ✓ Photosynthesis in European ecosystems was reduced by 30% during the summer drought of 2003, which

resulted in an estimated net carbon release of 0.5 gigatons

- ✓ 84% of terrestrial ecosystems are threatened by changing and intensifying wildfires
- ✓ During the first two decades of the 21st century, the Amazon experienced three widespread droughts, all of which triggered massive forest fires. Drought events are becoming increasingly common in the Amazon region due to land use and climate change, which are interlinked.
- ✓ If Amazonian deforestation continues unabated, 16% of the region's remaining forests will likely burn by 2050

Predictable Futures

Climate change is expected to increase the risk of droughts in many vulnerable regions of the world, particularly those with rapid population growth, vulnerable populations and challenges with food security.

Within the next few decades, 129 countries will experience an increase in drought exposure mainly due to climate change alone – 23 primarily due to population growth and 38 mostly



due to the interaction between climate change and population growth. Suppose global warming reaches 3 degrees Celsius by 2100, as some predict. In that case, drought losses could be five times higher than they are today, with the largest increase in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic regions of Europe.

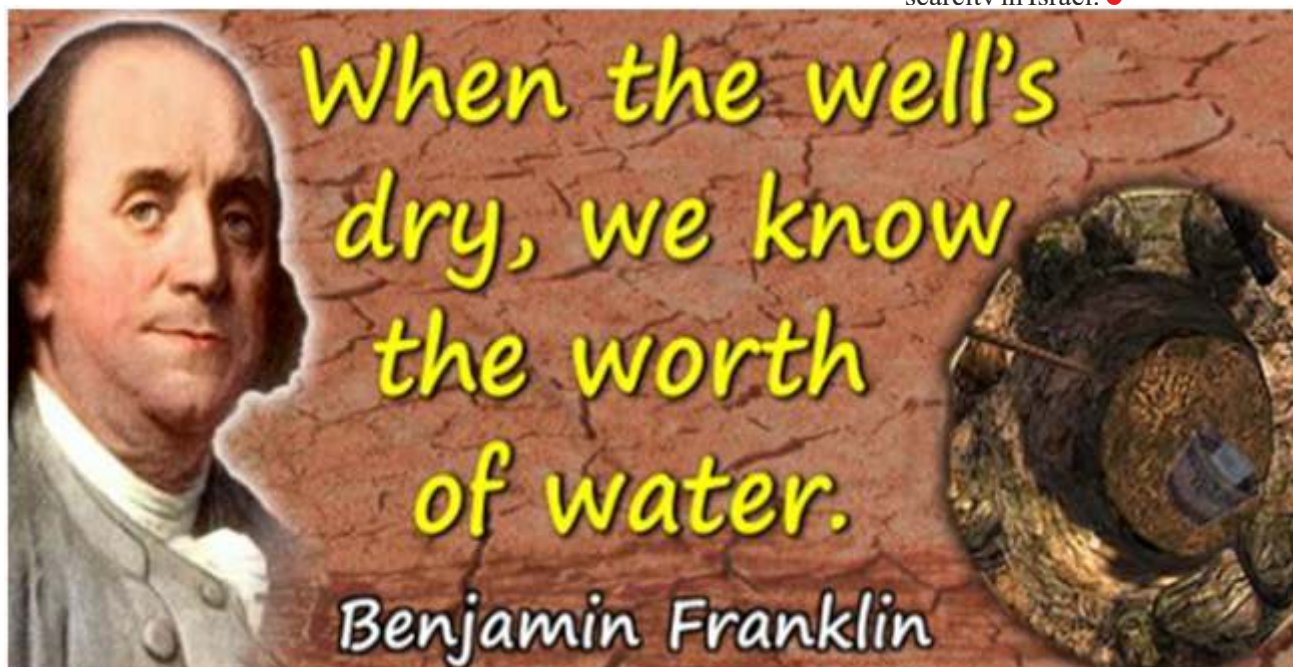
In Angola, more than 40% of livestock, a significant livelihood source accounting for 31.4% of the agricultural GDP, is currently exposed to droughts and is expected to rise to 70% under projected climate conditions.

In the E.U. and U.K., annual losses from drought are estimated to be around EUR 9 billion and

projected to rise to more than EUR 65 billion without meaningful climate action.

Successful business cases. By adopting drip irrigation, small-scale vegetable farmers in drought-prone provinces of VietNam (Binh Phouc), Cambodia (Prey Veng and Svay Reing), the Philippines (Lantapan and Bukidnon) and Indonesia (Reing and Bogor, West Java; Rembang, East Java) were able to increase water use efficiency by up to 43% and yield by 8-15%

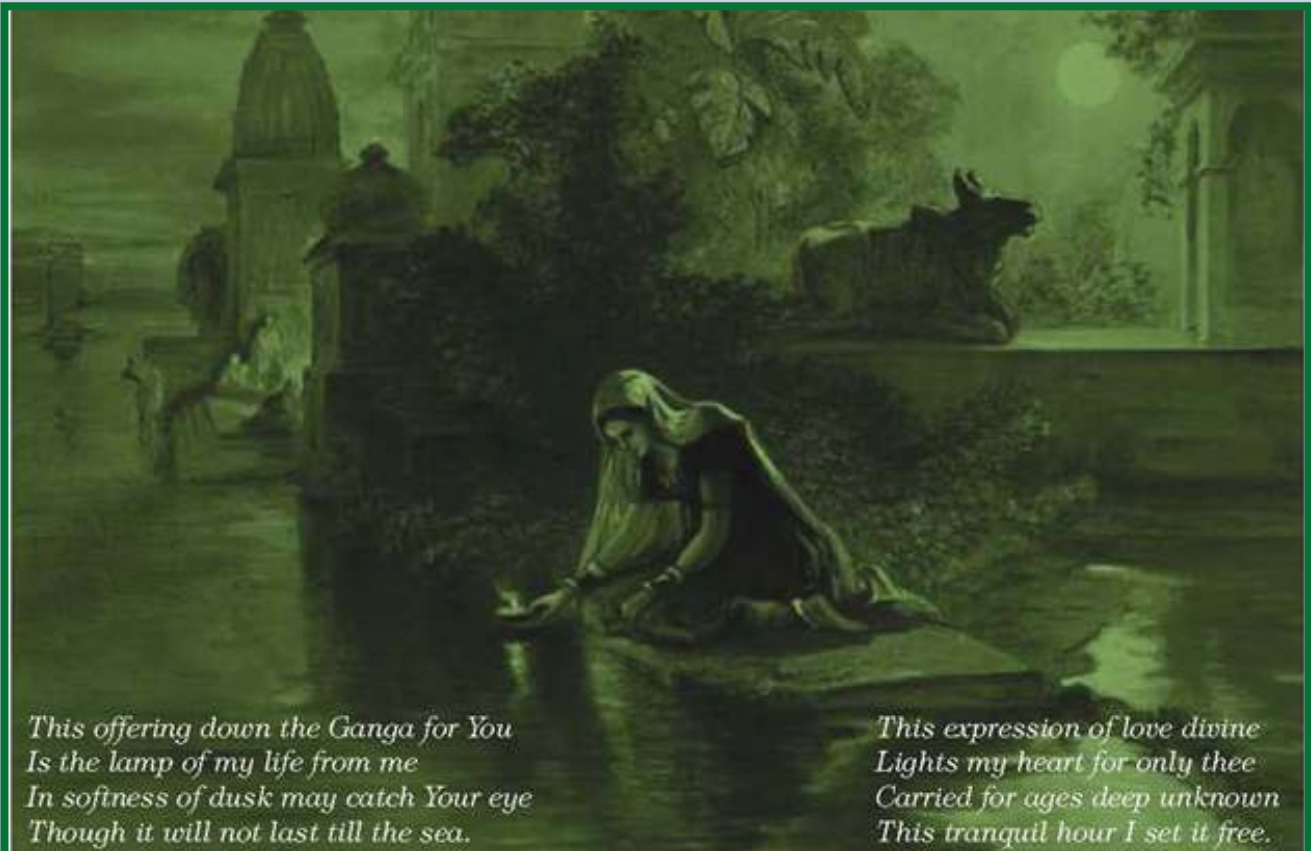
With the highest water efficiency rate in agriculture, reaching a 70-80% rate, drip irrigation has helped solve the problem of water scarcity in Israel. ●



Varanasi, Benares of yore is very much in the news today due to Gyanvapi related social conflicts. Here we present a poem by Sri Ravidas, who writes about what he calls Begumpura.

*The regal realm with the sorrowless name:
they call it Begumpura, a place with no pain,
No taxes or cares, none owns property there,
no wrongdoing, worry, terror, or torture.
Oh my brother, I've come to take it as my own,
my distant home where everything is right.
That imperial kingdom is rich and secure,
where none are third or second – all are one;
They do this or that, they walk where they wish,
they stroll through fabled palaces unchallenged.
Oh, says Ravidas, a tanner now set free,
those who walk beside me are my friends.*

Sri Ravidas was a disciple of Sant Kabir who brought a great change in Varanasi - the bastion of casteism and the ancient land where Lord Shiva first established social equality (sama-samaja) of all races and castes.



*This offering down the Ganga for You
Is the lamp of my life from me
In softness of dusk may catch Your eye
Though it will not last till the sea.*

*This expression of love divine
Lights my heart for only thee
Carried for ages deep unknown
This tranquil hour I set it free.*

Benares, chromolithograph by William Simpson, circa 1867

- Arun Prakash

Move Along the MACROCOSMIC FLOW

- Shrii Shrii Ānandamúrti

To count beads or practice ritualistic worship without directing one's mind towards the Supreme Entity is of no use. Likewise, to pretend to be virtuous outside while harbouring sinful thoughts within is absolutely meaningless. Such hypocrisy carries no value.

The beginning, the middle and end of dharma sádhaná is to rush towards Him, to channelize all the positive and negative propensities of the mind toward Him. Spiritual aspirants will not destroy the six ripus (not even káma or physical longing) but will utilise them for their benefit. They will do no further harm when utilised as aids for spiritual progress. So-called jñānis may fight the propensity of krodha (anger), but devotees will utilise it to fight staticity. They will shatter the meanness and pettiness of the mind through psychic strength and fearsome temper. So-called jñānis claim that the propensity of greed (lobh) is harmful, but devotees disagree – they nurture greed to attain Him. Jñānis abhor vanity or pride (mada), but devotees say that the only object of pride in their lives is Parama Puruśa. Jñānis detest the propensity of blind attachment (moha), but devotees say, "I am already in love with Him. I have a blind attachment for attaining my Lord". The propensity of jealousy (mātsarya) as a ripu is very bad, but a spiritual aspirant will never consider it harmful. In this way, spiritual aspirants keep their vision fixed on Brahma. Those who fail to focus their entire entitative existence on Him, those who do not flow towards the Macrocosmic Nucleus of the Cosmic Cycle, realise one day that everything in their lives has become futile.

On seeing the ostentatious practices of religion, the popular ideas of a Sufi saint are likely to arise in the mind of a sádhaka:

Andhakárer minár hate moyájjiner kańtha pái

Múrkha torá kámya toder hetháy hothay kotháo náí.

[I listen to the muezzin's voice from the minaret in darkness. I say you are all fools – where is your God? He is neither here nor there.]

In the past, the svarasa (divine flow) of Brahma was expressed through Maháprabhu Caitanya, causing people to madly run after him, dancing, crying, singing and laughing in ecstatic joy. Brahma's svarasa was also expressed in the flute sound of Shri Kṛṣṇa, which resonated with such divine sweetness that people ran towards it, madly forgetting their family, culture, prestige, lineage, and so on. The gopiis of Brindávan, leaving the privacy of their homes, also danced, sang and burst into laughter to the tune of the flute.

In Ananda Marga, this divine flow of Brahma is embedded in different lessons of spiritual meditation. Thus, those who practice this meditation, whether in the present or the future, whether within time or beyond, will certainly cry, sing and dance with exquisite spiritual joy, and advance steadily towards the blissful Macrocosmic stance.

Advancing thus, establishing oneself in Yama and Niyama, and becoming a true sadvipra, one will attain oneness with the Supreme Entity. Developed human beings will have to move along this Macrocosmic flow of Brahma. One who tries to remain aloof from this divine flow does not deserve to be called a human being. One should bear in mind that the highest fulfilment in life lies in movement in the Cosmic flow. The path along which this movement takes place is called the path of bliss, the path of Ānanda Márga. ●

Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team Work



Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team and Students of Suryasen College, Siliguri are doing good relief work among Hojai flood victims in Assam. They are providing cooked food, dry food, fruits, biscuits and other essential commodities to the flood affected people. Students of Suryasen College are working under National Service Scheme (NSS) a central government project.



ACTIVITY



Ananda Purnima Celebrations Kolkata



To mark the 101st Holy Birth anniversary of Shrii Shrii Anandamurtijii, Ananda Marga Pracharak Samgha has observed His birth anniversary in devotional atmosphere at VIP, Nagar, Tiljala, Kolkata. The program began with singing of Prabhat Samgiita and 12 Hours Baba Nama Kevalam Akhand Kirtan and collective meditation. Ananda Vanii path was also read in 25 different Languages. Acharya Sarveshvarananda Avadhuta explained the essence of Ananda Vanii. He further elaborated that movement or activity is the essential part of human progress.

Saris were distributed among poor women.

Renaissance Universal (RU) and Renaissance Artists & Writers Association (RAWA), the intellectual and cultural wing of Ananda Marga Pracharak Samgha has organized National Symposium on Shrii Shrii Anandamurtijii's contributions to humanity and lively cultural program based on Prabhat Samgiita on 16/5/2022.

Acharya Bhaveshananda Avadhuta, General Secretary, Ananda Marga Pracharak Samgha has chaired the session. Prof. Sirajul Islam, Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion, Vishva Bharati, Shantiniketan





ACTIVITY

and Dr. Sindhu Poudyal, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tripura University Central were the Chief speakers. Prof. Sirajul Islam lauded that Shrii Shrii Anandamurtijii was a great intellectual. His contributions are like ocean which can be experienced but not that easy to comprehend. It is very difficult to understand His contributions without going through all the literature. However he focused on scientific interpretation of Dharma and Religion according to Shrii Shrii Anandamurtijii. Dharma unifies all human beings in synthetic form whereas religion tries to divide human beings in groups in analytical form.

Dr. Sindhu Poudyal, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Central University Tripura spoke on Neo-humanism said it means spiritual universalism. She also related Neo-humanism alongside trans-humanism and post-humanistic theories. Dr. Druba Roy Choudhary, Assistant Professor, Department of Music, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata sang three Prabhat Samgiita. Dhruba institute of Dance, directed by Sayani Ckakroborty and their students Puja Das, Sayani Pakhira, Mohua Singha, Sangita Banerjee, Mayuri Shom, Atasi Karmakar Subhangi Das, Debanwita Das, Soumashree Mukherjee, Deepmala Singh and Sraddhasree Brambho performed group dance based on Prabhat Samgiita. Ananda Marga Children Home, Narendrapur, Kolkata also performed group Dance based on Prabhat Samgiita.

Scientific Basis of Shrii P.R. Sarkar's Yaogic Cikitsa

Society for Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine (SMRIM), Udaipur organized a virtual talk on "Scientific Basis of Shrii P.R. Sarkar's Yaogic Cikitsa" with special reference to Heart disease and Hypertension on 22nd May, 2022 on Zoom platform. Program which was conducted by Dr. Urvansh Mehta started with Prabhat Samgiita No. 5008, 'We love that Great Entity from the core of our Heart'. Secretary, SMRIM, Dr. Vartika Jain introduced the theme of the talk saying that Yaogic Cikitsa is one of the most valuable contributions of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. Dr. Urvansh Mehta introduced the keynote speaker Dr. S. K. Verma, currently Professor Emeritus and Director, Dept. of Medicine, Pacific Medical College and Hospital, Udaipur.

Dr. S. K. Verma addressed the theme of the talk in detail through his PPT presentation. He told that Shrii P. R. Sarkar's "Yaogika Cikitsa aor Dravya Guna" is an exemplary compendium for the treatment of common diseases for the spiritual aspirants. It is a simple, harmless, easily available and affordable remedy, with its rigid discipline of system, stepwise application, and above all the innermost theme of "Sarve Santu Nira'mayah" meaning let everybody be free from diseases. It is a right combination of science with spirituality, matter with intuition, electron with ectoplasm and a practical application of the microvita concept. He discussed that the science of Yoga is based on Na'di system (Ida', Pingla', Susumana'), the endocrine glands and sub-glands (Cakras) and the vital forces (Va'yus) etc. In this system, the concept of disease generation is suggested to begin in the mind through the disturbances of hormonal secretions from many glands and sub-glands. Therefore, he has given a concept of 'Brain overrides the heart' and that is what now-a-days scientists are putting it under a new medical speciality- "Neuro-cardiology". Shrii Sarkar has also recommended some dietary alterations which include some additions and some deletions in diet.

For treatment of Hypertension, Shrii Sarkar has recommended small cardamom and Bhumikushmanda powder and for heart disease big cardamom and Bhumikushmanda tuber. Dr Verma displayed the results of scientific studies carried out on these three plants. He told that both Small Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*) and Bhumikushmanda (*Ipomoea digitata*) have significantly reduced blood pressure at the end of 12 weeks of administration in patients with stage one hypertension along with increase in fibrinolytic activity and total antioxidant status. Overall both favorably modify the risk factors associated with cardiovascular disorders. Big cardamom (*Amomum subulatum*) has also shown significant reduction in swimming stress induced by adrenaline demonstrating adaptogenic effect. Among the dietary recommendations, Dr Verma has shown results of scientific evaluation in vitro thrombolytic activities of Punarnava and Beto sag further suggesting their inclusion in diets of patients with heart disease.

Dr Verma told that it is not an exaggeration to say that Shrii Sarkar has the vision of science, the heart of human welfare with pockets suitable to all including disciplines of Tantra and Vaidyaka Shastra.

More than 50 participants attended the program held on Zoom platform with live streaming on YouTube from all over the country. Queries of all the participants were also resolved by Dr. Verma in the question and answer session. Program was smoothly conducted with active support of Rajesh Sharma and Bhavika Kunwar. In the end, Dr. Urvansh proposed a vote of thanks to Dr. Verma, all the participants, and the entire organizing team.



AMURT Holds Medical Camps in Chandigarh and Gorakhpur

Chandigarh: On May 22, Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team in association with Omaxe Cassia Resident Welfare Association organized a free medical camp of Homeopathy and Physiotherapy at Omaxe Cassia, New Chandigarh (Mullanpur) from 9 AM to 1 PM.

Dr. Navtinder Singh, Medical Officer, Homeopathy Hospital, Chandigarh and Dr. Sonia, MD, Homeopathy Hospital, Chandigarh and Physiotherapists Dr. Sakshi Singla and Ashish Kant were available at the camp to render their services. More than 60 people benefited from this camp. The patients received free medicines besides free consultation.



The camp was organized by Ravinder Thakur, Mamta Thakur, Yashpal Singh, Jasbir Singh, Dharamvir Ahuja, Chanchal Bhatia, Prem Kant, Omaxe Cassia Residents' Welfare Association's president Surinder Sharma, Bhupinder Singh, Vijay and Arun. Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team will be holding many such camps every month at different places in Punjab.

Gorakhpur : A medical camp was organized by Gorakhpur unit of Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMART) on 11th June at Panchayat Bhawan in Domingarh village, Gorakhpur. It is a big and densely populated village, with hardly any medical facilities. The residents are poor and can't afford the cost of medication at the nearby private hospitals.



Aimed at providing some relief to the poor villagers, AMURT organised the medical camp and invited Dr. Ranjana Bagchi and Dr. Soham Bagchi, both eminent Dermatologists of Delhi, to head its relief operations in the area. Both of them, along with their assistants, were present at the camp to render their services.

The president of Ananda Marga's Gorakhpur unit, Sudhir Kumar Dev, alongwith Udayan Mukherjee, Shailesh Pandey, Vivek Tripathi, Alok Srivastava and Parnika Bagchi made valuable contributions in making this camp a success. All health check-ups of the patients were done free of cost in the camp. Besides, essential medicines were also distributed free of cost. A large number of villagers benefited from the camp.

PBI Persuades Regional Parties to Work for Economic Democracy



Proutist Bloc, India (PBI) organized a daylong all-party meeting at Prout Bhavan, Malviya Nagar, Delhi on 11 June. Several regional political parties and non-political organizations were invited to participate. The delegates from Rashtriya Nirman Party, Mazdoor Ekta Sangh, Aam Aadmi Parivartan Party, Bhartiya Veer Dal and Loktantrik Morcha attended the event, besides PBI's office-bearers.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss various social, political and economic issues such as poverty, corruption, unemployment, casteism, communalism etc, and explore the ways to work together to find solutions through a well-thought-out and unanimously-accepted plan based on the common points.

Welcoming the delegates, PBI's national convener Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta said, "Society is going through tough times. There is a crisis in every arena of life. And the root of this crisis is the complete absence of right leadership." He said, "The existing leadership is immoral and ideologically bankrupt, and therefore, unable to pull the country out of this cimmerian darkness and lead it towards light."

He outlined the qualities of an ideal leadership and talked about Prout's concept of Ameerikha (ceiling on wealth), which, he said, holds the key to unlock the solutions to our major problems. He called upon the participants to sincerely try to chalk out a plan to work together in the interest of society.

Speaking on this occasion, Delhi state president of Aam Aadmi Parivartan Party Satdev Jain said that only if we address the concerns of all people irrespective of their caste, class, religion, region, language etc, only then can we win the trust of all and truly unite the people. This process, although slow, will yield results and bring about desired changes.

Dr. Kuldeep Nagar of Bharatiya Veer Dal expressed his concern about Denotified Tribes, the communities that were 'notified' as being 'born criminal' during the British regime under a series of laws starting with the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. He said that even today there is a stereotype against Denotified Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) in police, media, society and even some judges. Every member of this community is considered a criminal by the virtue of birth and this stigma continues till they die.

Another delegate representing Ekta party, A.R. Khan, said that since 2014, the country has been witnessing a steady polarization between hindu and muslim communities, for which the present government is responsible. He said that traditionally Indian society has been an example of unity in diversity, and despite sporadic communal riots over the years, common Indians, by and large, have remained united. But the during present regime, the ruling party and the government are openly and shamelessly ripping apart the social fabric by inciting the majority community against the minority.

A Padamshree awardee, Dr. Brahma Dutt said it is high time we forgot our petty interests and differences, and fight unitedly against the fissiparous forces of casteism, communalism, linguism etc. He clarified, "Although nationalism is supposed to be a great sentiment, but I am not a desh bhakt (nationalist) because I believe whole world, entire universe is one entity. We are all interdependent; no country can survive, let alone progress, without the cooperation from other countries."

Another eminent personality, who graced the event with his presence, was social worker, thinker and writer Acharya Dr. Satyapriya. He spoke on the need of a cultural and spiritual regeneration of society. He suggested ways and means to accomplish this goal.

Other speakers included Vijay Pal Kasana, Mamta Bhati, Suresh Kaushik, RK Kasana, Dr. Amit Nagar and Vinay Pracha.

The meeting concluded with an affirmation of the priority to work for economic democracy and communal harmony. And a resolution to work together towards this end was also passed with applause.

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



Everything for Humans

MÁNUŚÁ JENO MÁNUŚÉR TARE
SAB KICHU KARE JÁY

May humans keep doing
Everything for humans.

E KATHÁO JENO MANE RÁKHE
PASHU PÁKHI TÁR PAR NAY
TARUO BÁNCITE CÁY

This too they must remember
Animals and birds
Are also their own
Even plants wish to live.

ANDHAKÁRE PATH HÁRÁIYÁ
KENO BÁ MÁNUŚÁ MARIBE KÁNDIYÁ
ÁMÁDER ÁSHÁ JATA BHÁLOBÁSÁ
KÁCHE TÉNE NEVE TÁY

Losing their way in darkness
Why should humans desperately cry
Our hopes all our love
That's why He shall draw us close.

ANASHANE ASHIKSÁTE
DAGDHA BHÁLER VAHNI JVÁLÁTE
SABÁRE NIYE ÁSHRAYA DIYE
RACIBO E ALAKÁY

Starving and uneducated
Luckless forehead burning
Gathering all providing refuge
We shall create a paradise.

MÁNUŚÁ JENO MÁNUŚÉR TARE
SAB KICHU KARE JÁY

May humans keep doing
Everything for humans.



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