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VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

మన సంస్కృతి

Mana Sanskriti (Our Culture)

Chief Editor: Dr. Sreenivasarao Vepachedu, Esq.

The Four Noble Truths

Recently, Vanderbilt anthropologist and World Health Organization wellbeing adviser Ted Fischer had a big realization because he thought for a long time that money was the answer for a good life.

As we keep *rediscovering* the wheel of human happiness, we found it several times before, only to forget; as we pass our New Year resolutions, only to forget:

There are four paths for the realization of direct experience of the union between the individual consciousness and the universal consciousness, the *Yoga: Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, and Raja Yoga*ⁱ.

About 6000 years ago, Lord Krishnaⁱⁱ lectured Arjuna in the Kurukshetra battle field regarding duty, and how to overcome his sorrow. He preached happiness or moksha lies in the performance of one's duty (Karma) according to a moral code and the legal tenets of the time (Dharma), without aspiration and fear of failure.



कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥ २-४७

Karmanye vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana,
Ma Karmaphalaheturbhurma Te Sangostvakarmani

Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2, Verse 47.ⁱⁱⁱ

(You have to aspire to perform your duty but never to its fruits; and never take up or abandon your responsibility (duty or action), in view of results.^{iv} Note: Inaction is an action of omission or abandonment, which will also cause a result. Hence, there is no escape from action or its result. This is Karma Yoga).

About 2,500 years ago, Prince Siddhartha Gautama^v renounced his empire in search of happiness or panacea for sorrow (*dukkha*). Gautama, after an extensive research throughout his empire and meditating on the collected data under a banyan tree,

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discovered that aspiration or want (*kama*) was at the root of sorrow (*dukkha*), laid down four noble truths to eliminate sorrow, and became the Buddha, the enlightened. The four noble truths are 1) the suffering or realization/experience of sorrow (*dukkha*), 2) the cause (*samudaya*) of suffering 3) the cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering, and 4) the way (*magga*) to cessation of suffering.

In 2014 AD, Ted Fischer reports, aspiration seems to be at the root of the human misery, which cannot be quenched by money, in “the Good Life: Aspiration, Dignity and the Anthropology of Wellbeing,” published by Stanford University Press^{vi}. At root, all humans, rich or poor, are strikingly similar and crave for the same thing. He lays down four noble truths in his book:

1) **Aspiration**: All humans, rich or poor, have aspiration. They want to improve their lots, and they want their children to have better lives than they had.

2) **Opportunity**: Aspirations, if not realized, lead to frustrations and societal upheaval. Aspirations cannot be realized without adequate opportunity to realize them.

3) **Dignity**: The desire to live with dignity is universal. Dignity is the state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect, a sense of pride in oneself or self-respect. Violation of dignity results in violence.

4) **Purpose/conviction**: Being able to live according to a greater purpose, aligned with realizable aspirations with dignity, is the final component of the good life.

The truth is eternal, but its presentations and representations may differ, as we keep **reinventing** the wheel of human **happiness**; and let us lay down new rules and pass new resolutions to realize that eternal truth^{vii}.

Happy New Year 2015!

"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed." - Mahatma Gandhi
Hinduism is a way of life, with diversity of religion, and Indian teachings share the importance of seva (service).

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Om! Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma Amritamgamaya, Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!
(Aum! Lead the world from wrong path to the right path, from ignorance to knowledge, from mortality to immortality, and peace!)

Bibliography:

ⁱ The Four Paths of Yoga: <http://www.sivananda.org/teachings/fourpaths.html>

ⁱⁱ Lord Krishna: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/323556/Krishna>

ⁱⁱⁱ Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2, Verse 47: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ror8QCAez18>

^{iv} Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2, Verse 47: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ror8QCAez18>

^v Siddhartha Gautama: http://www.ancient.eu/Siddhartha_Gautama/

^{vi} As another year (2014) draws to a close and we start to consider what changes we want to make in the coming year (2015) to realize the eternal truth, whatever it may be: The Four Keys To A Good Life Go Beyond Money: <http://www.biospace.com/News/the-four-keys-to-a-good-life-go-beyond-money/359458>

^{vii} As another year (2014) draws to a close and we start to consider what changes we want to make in the coming year (2015) to realize the eternal truth, whatever it may be: The Four Keys To A Good Life Go Beyond Money: <http://www.biospace.com/News/the-four-keys-to-a-good-life-go-beyond-money/359458>

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