



Foundation for Restoration of National Values

Newsletter - December 2015

Dear Friends of FRNV,

At a time when the entire country is debating the issue of Tolerance, it is important to understand and accept the diversity of our culture. Difference of language, belief, habit and religion are nothing at all, if our aims are identical and our hearts are open. The consequences of our actions done as a result of non acceptance and intolerance are so complicated, so diverse, and sometimes so dangerous, that predicting the future is a very difficult business indeed.

Today, more than ever, developing positive emotions such as Tolerance and Acceptance of others, is very important. In a world where people are low on tolerance and hell-bent on getting even, we might create more good by getting odd. It is odd to let go, and strange to not demand punishment. Yet sometimes it is the odd little flower in a city window box that reminds us that there is more to the world, than concrete.

It is time for us to introspect.

I, the citizen of India, need to Introspect!

Br. Prasanna Swaroopa

Instances of intolerance among groups or communities are growing at an alarming rate in our Country today. This is not a new phenomenon in our land where diversity is very pronounced in all possible dimensions. But it is certain that the anecdotes of intolerance, the associated protests and dialogues around these are more prominent than ever.

Enough of public discourse has already taken place, which has been sufficiently highlighted by the media. The whole issue has been debated extensively from the perspective of politics, religion, caste, and other communal divisions.

In such a backdrop, most of us would be actively indulging in discussions and arguments over this subject conveniently pointing a finger at others – individuals or groups.

Let us stop for a moment! Let us not forget that at the root of it all is the INDIVIDUAL.

It is time for each one of us to sincerely and deeply introspect over the problem, by looking into our own hearts and asking these questions: “Am I tolerant?”; “What is my attitude towards others around me – whatever community they belong to?”; “Do I heartily embrace others around me irrespective of their denomination?”; “Am I sincerely liberal?”

Let us examine two guiding texts, we as Indians are governed by – The Vedas, the most ancient Text in the world and the Constitution of our Land.

Here are some words from the Vedas that unequivocally highlight our ethos that has been the guiding light for every generation from the dawn of this civilization. Each one of us needs to remind ourselves that we belong to such a culture. These words are as relevant today, perhaps more, as they were thousands of years ago.

संगच्छध्वं संवदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सहचित्तमेषाम् ।
....

समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।

समानमस्तु वो मनोः यथा वः सुसहासति ॥

Rig Veda 10.191

Move in harmony. Speak in one voice. Let our minds be in agreement. ...Common be the prayer. United be the thoughts. United be the purpose. United be the hearts. United be the minds, so that a common objective unifies us all.

मित्रस्य मा चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षन्ताम् ।
मित्रस्याहं चक्षुषा सर्वाणि भूतानि समीक्षे
मित्रस्य चक्षुषा समीक्षामहे ॥

Yajur Veda 36.18

May all beings look on me with the eye of a friend. May I look on all beings in this world with the eye of a friend. May we look on one another with the eye of a friend.

जनं बिभ्रति बहुधा विवाचसं
नानाधर्माणम् पृथिवी यथौकसम्।
सहस्र धारा द्रविणस्य मे दुहां
ध्रुवेव धेनुर अनपस्फुरन्ती ॥

Atharva Veda 12.1.45

May the earth that bears people speaking varied languages, with various religions according to the places of abode, enrich me with wealth in a thousand streams, like a milch-cow that never fails.

Let us not forget, as Indians, we are inheritors of such a culture. We need to remind ourselves of this. Let us take it upon ourselves to reinforce these thoughts in our individual hearts to start with, followed by the hearts and minds of every individual in our family.

The rest will follow.

Now let us examine the Constitution of India, particularly the section on Fundamental Duties. Through the following points, the Constitution unambiguously put the responsibility on each citizen to:

- to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
- to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
- to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- to protect and improve the natural

environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures;

- to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;

There might be an immediate reaction from people saying “I am very law-abiding and good, it is the others”. Let us not dismiss it so easily. If each one of us were to sincerely abide by these (in thoughts, words and actions), where is the question of intolerance.

This is a time for introspection, for each citizen to root out from our individual hearts any iota of intolerance that might be present.

Let us remember that the above words from the Vedas and the Constitution of India apply to each and every citizen in this Nation – whatever be their position and status – economic, political or otherwise.

Stalling of Parliament – An Unpardonable Crime

Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha

[Editorial Article in The Pioneer]

Winter session of Parliament having begun on the 26th November, the same day 66 years ago the Constituent Assembly having adopted the Constitution, can we hope to witness Constitutionally approved deliberations in our highest legislative houses, in an atmosphere of lawfulness and peace?

Even after 6 decades, Parliament, the citadel of our sovereign, democratic Nation, is wrecked by its Members’ demonstration and protests, bordering criminality. Consequent stalling, a recurring feature of both Houses, has retarded Nation’s development. Every party occupying Opposition benches has resorted to stalling. Last session fully disrupted, the stalemate has become a fait accompli.

From 2009 to 2014, Lok Sabha lost 40% of its time. In Lok Sabha sessions 10 to 15, total time lost was 2162 hrs, resulting in a loss of over 3200

crores (2.5 lacs per minute) to National exchequer. The relentless plight has steeped the Nation in agony and utter distress.

15th Lok Sabha was disrupted frequently, making its productivity the worst in 50 years. Research (PRS Legislative Search) reveals disrupted Lok Sabha worked for 61% and Rajya Sabha for 66% of their scheduled time.

Parliament's monsoon session was from 21 July to August 13. Awaiting discussion were 11 pending bills and 9 new bills, including Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, rehabilitation and Resettlement (Second Amendment) Bill 2015 and Constitution (122nd Amendment) Goods & Services Tax Bill 2014, among others. But no valid business could be transacted.

Successive Parliamentary sessions have been stalled for days together, endangering Nation's interests and retarding our progress. Parliament is no place for demonstration or obstruction. Members enter there to occupy their seat and conduct business. They can either speak or cast their votes. Any attempt to do anything else takes away the Member's right to be there. Acts which are criminal and punishable outside the House cannot be otherwise inside. Law makers cannot be law breakers, by any norm.

Repeated demonstrations, obstructions and adjournments have downgraded India before the world. While a set of persons alone cause this plight, the whole Nation is looked down upon. Can the plight be more deplorable! Those meant to make the country adorable, continue to render it infamous!

Parliament is formed by people's will and wish, under the Representation of the People Act 1950, solely for deliberating Nation's affairs and passing laws for people to live peacefully. Even a minute of inaction or obstruction in Parliament is unlawful, in contravention to the very purpose for which Parliament is convened. The immunity of the Members is only to ensure the smooth functioning of the House, not to disrupt it. To think of indulging in disturbing acts, by word or otherwise, under this immunity is a grave delusion and cannot be condoned by the Speaker, the lord of the House.

Constitution does not give freedom to stall Parliament. Articles 105 (3), 118 & 122 (1) of

Constitution, do not provide immunity to members for stalling proceedings, by barging into the well of the House, or obstructing other members in any manner. Stalling of Parliament cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be regarded as legal. It virtually causes the death of the very Institution. Stalling falls neither within dissent nor censure.

In U. K. and United States, such stalling is not acceptable. In U.S. Congress members enjoy parliamentary privilege, including freedom from arrest in all cases except for treason, felony and 'breach of peace'. Obstructing the work of Congress is a crime, known as contempt of Congress. The individuals concerned are pursued as in any normal criminal case, and if found guilty, may be imprisoned up to one year. Thus there is clear punishment for breach of peace caused within the Parliament.

Ethics Committees constituted by each of our Houses has singularly failed in containing unruly behavior, resulting in stalling the entire proceedings. All this retards the Nation's progress.

A Public Interest Litigation by Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV), which has very eminent persons on its Board, filed in August this year, seeking Supreme Court's guidelines, was turned down, saying Parliamentarians are intelligent and should know their right conduct. SC had added that they will not cross the 'lakshman rekha' in the matter.

For any crisis within the boundaries of India, not resolved by Executive and Parliament, instead being caused by them, what or who except the SC can be the refuge for people? Nonetheless, SC turned down the people's plea for justice and succour, raising a big question as to where else can the people turn for redress? Incidentally, SC soon denounced MPs' 'intelligence', by striking down the NJAC bill. It is a grave dichotomy, for SC to have disregarded Parliament's prudence with such grave contrast!

Constitutionally, it is indisputable that no Member has right to stall Parliament. Members breaking law are admittedly giving tacit permission and encouragement for people to indulge in graver violations. Whether the unlawful conduct of people is not a reflection of what they see in Parliament, as mass media cover the scenes widely, is a crucial question. It is high time that

people as well as those elected by them make a fresh evaluation of the democratic malady.

Meanwhile the people, democratic lords of the Members, have to gird up their loins and express their views and emotions on Parliament stalling, so that their collective expression will be heeded by those, whom they alone have sent to the Parliament.

What are the options then before us?

1. Seek intervention of the President, as he is the 'Head of the Parliament'.
2. A citizen's uprising on a mammoth scale. Democracy survives only with the eternal vigil from people. Our Constitution was given by and to the people. Parliament came into existence only afterwards. Vigil warrants people to register their timely demand and protest. Only then the Executive and Parliament can take note of it and provide the necessary redress and safeguard.
3. Wait until such time as we can again move the Supreme Court, who will feel compelled and empowered to eke out a proper redress.

FRNV and Vishal Nagrik Sangathan have appealed to the Speaker and Chairman of both houses of the Parliament to frame appropriate guidelines and rules, under the Constitution, to regulate the conduct of the Parliamentarians and prevent obstruction in the running of the Parliament. This will ensure that the legislative business and public interest do not suffer.

Letters to this effect have been submitted by both



organisations last week. A demonstration under the aegis of Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha, was carried out by members of Vishal Nagrik Sangathan, at Jantar Mantar, on December 1.

Speaking on the occasion, Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha said, people of this country repose great faith in the Parliamentarians and send them as their representatives, but for their vested political



interests, running of the Parliament is repeatedly stalled causing huge loss to the political exchequer and setback to the Democratic process.

Anupama Jha (CEO, FRNV) was invited by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) to speak on 'Good Governance, Integrity & Values' during Vigilance Awareness Week-2015" at their headquarters in Khursheed Lal Bhawan, Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, she emphasised the



importance of laws and regulations for ensuring integrity, but also the importance of living mindfully and being guided by inner, moral compass.

We are inviting applications for the position of Program Officer for FRNV's Value Based Education project. The Program Officer will be responsible for overseeing the development and execution of project deliverables and will report to the CEO. Interested candidates may write to us at iadavis@valuefoundation.in, before 15th December 2015.