

A Life of Dynamism

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I think this is a topic of interest to everyone. The word dynamism is such that the moment we hear it, we feel kindled within. When we see a person who is overactive or hyperactive, we feel he is dynamic. Even when we observe little children, we find them very hyperactive and their parents call him a dynamic child. Here mere action is labeled as 'dynamism'. When someone walks very fast, we think his gait is suggestive of his dynamism. About Ravana, it is said, '*chalata dasanana, dolata avani*'. When he walked, the earth trembled. Sometimes when one speaks with terrific force, we say, he is very dynamic person. So, it is seen, that if you speak loudly, people get very impressed. All you have to do is speak loudly and if you have a loudspeaker, all the better! So, walking briskly, talking loudly, or doing something with terrific speed, smartness, all these are considered as signs of dynamism.

In contrast to this there are some static people too. If you give them a book on dynamism, they read it and become static very soon! Now, when we say we have to live a life of dynamism, does it mean we have to speak loudly or walk thumping the ground or perform many things simultaneously? Living a fashionable life, doing fashion shows till late night and getting up the next day at 2:00 PM, is this what you would call dynamism? Some people term it as 'forward-lifestyle'. Many a time, I have heard people saying, "There's no night life here, it's very dull." Is this the sort of life that we want to live? It can be enjoyed, no doubt, but not for a very long time. It can prove to be most exhausting, tiring and draining, in the end, it leaves you painful and miserable. As long as one is young and healthy, it may be possible to live this kind of life; but a time comes when wear and tear will tell on the body. At that time the person cannot fulfill his desires and when he cannot live his kind of life, he goes into utter depression; he feels very lonely and subsequently he faces many problems in the old age.

Loneliness is one of the problems of old age. Those who live a very active life, without giving a single thought to quietude, contemplation, one day, suddenly wake up to this fact that they have retired and have nothing to do, as they had never planned for it before. They age very fast, feel very lonely, the sorrows of old age are many more.

For instance, there are many unfulfilled desires in a person's mind and there is no energy left in his body to fulfill his desires, so he feels all the more frustrated. Also, one day, the old man, who has been climbing a ladder, suddenly realizes that the ladder was on the wrong wall and moans, saying, "I never wanted to reach here." This is major kind of problem, which gets unfolded too late in life.

Another major sorrow of old age is that, the old man has answers to all questions, but nobody asks him any! He wants to share all his knowledge and experiences on the struggle of his life; but people ask him to keep everything to himself, as the times have changed and they are living in the IT age. This man thinks, "IT means income tax", and then he says, "There is nothing new about this IT, in our times even we used to pay IT (income-tax)". "Maharaj, your days are gone, we are talking of a different IT."

Then, what is dynamism? What is life? Is merely existing called as life? Many people say they are living because they are not yet dead! There is no purpose in their lives; they just live a vegetable life, as if in coma. We also come across lazy people; they too don't want to do anything. They lead a life of sheer indolence, inertia. Then there are drug addicts, alcoholics, as opposed to all these are people who live a highly ambitious life. They have a great desire for more money, power or individual success. They lead a life of ambition, where a lot of energy is consumed for pleasure, power or money. These kinds of people are driven to do a lot of action. For instance, there people will not take to automatic cars, they prefer manual ones, only when they move the gear, they feel they are driving; they just need to do something.

Whenever we hold the study classes particularly for the youth, we observe that they just don't like to sit at one place and read or study or contemplate. They have the strong urge to do something. Then we have to tell them, "It is good to do something, but what is that 'good' that you want to do?" In a carpentry class, one boy was doing something. The teacher asked him what he was making. He said he was making a portable. "What kind of portable?" The teacher asked. To this he replied, "I have not decided on that, but I've made the handle of the portable. A thought came to my mind to make something portable, so I have started on that." This proves there are people who merely do something without any rhyme or reason. They justify their meaningless activity by saying, "Doing something is better than doing nothing." Then there are other who live just to fulfill their natural urge. When their desire becomes strong it becomes an ambition, ambition becomes an obsession and the person acts vigorously.

We all know that nature is very strange. One of its laws is that we cannot keep up the same momentum of action throughout; there comes a time, when we cannot just keep up the pace; we get tired, withdraw from everything and rest. So action alone is not life, rest and sleep too have a role in mental rest and relaxation. He seeks various kinds of entertainment; he feels the need for a change, for a vacation. Now-a-days the expression used for this is to 'chill-out'. A person went on a vacation to forget everything and when he opened his suitcase, he found that he had forgotten all his clothes, his check book and his credit cards as well!

Here let us think of another aspect of life – contemplation. It may be forced on us because of the force of the events and happenings in our individual lives, due to some tragedies or at a universal level like an earthquake, a war, a cyclone, or air attacks. When these events shake us up, then we start contemplating.

So we see that it is not only action, but rest too that is essential. If someone is resting or contemplating it does not mean he is not a dynamic person. Let us now discuss a life of contemplation, meditation. Have you observed that all great religious movements sprang only from meditation and contemplation? All the great spiritual masters used to meditate, have revelations and from there originated the spiritual teachings. Later, many rituals, activities, customs and traditions sprang up, but the original message of knowledge got completely lost and that is the reason why in temples nowadays we find everything except devotion to God and in the schools and colleges we find all faculties, except love for knowledge. How sad! That which is the theme of life itself is lost.

Meaningless activities without any foundation of vision, knowledge and understanding can lead only to fever and so the phrase "feverish activity". This kind of activity leads to stress, what people perpetually succumb to these days. Then they attend various seminars on 'stress – free life'. But the one who organizes the workshop is under stress, as to whether the seminar will be a success or not! This is because we give importance only to action not the vision. So we end up assimilating a life of action, without vision, in short, a life of dynamite (not dynamism). Bombs explode here, there and everywhere.

A life of dynamism is one where there is a combination of great vision and action, which comes from quietude, contemplation, and inspiration. All great masters lived a great part of their lives in solitude, what they did during that period is unknown to us. History is replete with such examples. For eg: the life of Shankaracharyaji, was it not dynamic? His Guru Govinda Bhagavadpada who inspired him spent all his life meditating on the banks of Narmada. Swami Vivekanandaji's life was very dynamic where as Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, his Guru sat at one place – a Kali temple. Our Gurudev's life was very dynamic but his Guru, Swami Tapovanji spent a major part of his life in the Himalayas. But do you mean to say that the *shishyas* were dynamic while the *gurus* were not? No, the *gurus'* dynamism was far above normal activity.

Swami Vivekanandaji, got inspired on a rock at Kanyakumari and he went on to achieve things that are praiseworthy. Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi stayed at one place, lived the life of a

true hermit and just by his mere presence inspired millions. All this shows that real dynamism is different from what we usually perceive it to be.

A life of true dynamism is a life of vision, of inspiration and when these two are manifested in action, it becomes a source of inspiration for millions of people. Here I'm prompted to quote Gurudev, who once said "You are born therefore you must die, but don't die while living, live after you are dead".

What kind of life are we living today? The fact is while living we seem to be dead and when we die, we are stone-like anyway!

I am not talking only about spiritual field, but even in other fields, like science, art, literature and music, all the lives of the great masters were full of contemplation and dynamism. That is precisely why they continue to inspire even after their death. The mere utterance of their names inspires so many people even today.

Therefore it is said:

*yasmin ĩivati jĳivanti bahvah sotrajĳivati
vayāmsi kim na kurvanti cancavā svodarapuram.*

"The person, whose life becomes an inspiration to millions of people, to lead a noble life, that person alone is said to be living. In contrast to this, we see others who live like birds to fill their bellies." There was a lady who crossed a century. On her 105th birthday, reporters went to interview her. "What is the secret of your long life?" one of them asked. She said, "The secret of my long life is that I am not dead, and I don't know why I am not yet dead." There cannot be a sadder thing for a person to say or show, except a long life span.

When we hear of a person's demise, we generally ask, "How did he die?" We never ask, "How did he live?" Our focus should be what kind of life he lived. Did he live a life of inspiration or perspiration? There are some people who believe in giving maximum sorrow, to maximum people in minimum time. There is no vision, no noble inspiration. When we look into the lives of great missionaries from different walks of life, we see that they have lived life in its true sense.

Even today when earthquake has struck Gujarat, it is found that people hesitate to donate to Government agencies. They have more faith in spiritual organizations, isn't this a victory of spirituality? Isn't it a victory of those people who live with a selfless attitude? Whether they are religious organizations or social institutions or spiritual organizations, once they have gained sufficient credibility, people feel the money donated there will reach the proper place and will serve the right cause. It is sad if the government of a nation loses that credibility. What is it that people ultimately respect? They judge the person, by what he actually is and not just what he does. When 'being' and 'doing' are harmonized then he becomes man of honor and respect.

Therefore, what is this life of dynamism? This is most beautifully pointed out in the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gītā*, particularly in the last *sloka*. Sanjaya comments:

*yatra yogeshvarah krshno yatra pārtho dhanurdharah
tatra shrĳrĳvijayo bhūtirĳdhruvā nĳtirmatirmama*

Only where Lord Yogeshwar Sri Krishna and where *dhanudhari* Arjuna, i.e. the bow-wielding Arjuna (not the one who has discarded the bow) are together, then alone there is wealth (*shrĳrĳ*), victory (*vĳjaya*), and expansion (*bhūti*). A businessman wants the expansion (*bhūti*), i.e. greater development, prosperity. Where there are abiding values of life, only then will there be prosperity.

There are two kinds of lives; one is the life of 'values' and the other is a life of 'valuables'. When people start giving too much importance to valuables then the values are left aside and when values are ignored, the person is devalued. When a person is rich, but without values then that person may have million dollars, but he'll still be a worthless person.

What does Sanjaya mean when he says, "Where Lord Krishna and Arjuna are present?" Before the Mahabharata war, both Duryodhana and Arjuna went to Bhagavan Sri Krishna for help. At that time, the Lord said, "Now I will divide myself in two ways, on one side will be my army and on the other side I'll be there (without weapons). If required, I will give advice. Now who wants what?" Duryodhana opted for the army, for he thought during war what was most needed were weapons. He was sick of listening to advice since childhood, not that he followed any; so he thought to himself "Enough of advice, now is the time for action". Arjuna on the other hand happily agreed to have Bhagavan on his side. Later we see that whenever Arjuna was in a dilemma on the battlefield, he did not need an army as much as he needed right vision and right advice, which is what Bhagavan Sri Krishna blessed him with. Sri Krishna gave him that vision which was all encompassing, not a lop-sided or an isolated one.

Therefore we see when Krishna spoke to Arjuna from the spiritual standpoint; the religious, the social and the worldly standpoints were also taken into account; this is called wholistic vision. "Look at your life as a whole and live a whole life", this was the vision which Bhagavan Sri Krishna gave to Arjuna. When we say, "Where Krishna is", it means where the spiritual vision is and there must be a man of action to translate this supreme vision into action. Otherwise, there will be just vision and no action. Without an action, the vision is just an imagination, a concept; and if there is only action without vision, then it leads to feverish activity. So where the Lord's spiritual vision and Arjuna's action are present, only then the real wealth exist; otherwise the wealth that one has not fulfilling. For example, India is called as a rich country with poor people. The country is rich; but the people are poor, because the wealth is in the hands of a few people. This is not prosperity. In our country the rich become richer and the poor become poorer, there is total imbalance; when there is all round prosperity then alone can we say that there is real wealth.

Now wealth does not mean only money but values as well. We sometimes look for great credentials in a person, even when we appoint a servant in our house we look for his credentials; we make sure that he is honest. His credentials along with his skills are considered as wealth.

What is victory? It does not mean getting wealth or conquering the world alone. Such a victory is not an abiding one. The question is whether we have conquered our own minds. If our mind is the ruler and all the time it controls us then we are living a life of defeat. E.g. when I say, I should get up in the morning at 5 o'clock the mind says, "Why should you get up so early? Even birds get up early in the morning, but what do they achieve? So go to sleep!" If you say okay then you are defeated. One little thought defeats you. When a person addicted to cigarette or some other thing, that one little object defeats him completely. He becomes weak, that addiction becomes his weakness. Victory in the true sense is one where a person gains victory over himself. This kind of victory is an abiding one; any external or physical victory is only temporary one. It will be here today, gone tomorrow. Sometimes it doesn't take more than a fraction of a second to vanish.

Tatra shrīrvijayo bhūtiḥ means expansion, development, all round development as we call it. *Dhruva nīti* means firm policies. *Nī* means to lead; so that policy, which leads you to the real higher goal, where the concept is not only more and more, but higher and higher alone is *Dhruva nīti*. There are so many kinds of *nītis*: *arthanīti*, *rājnīti*, *kūtilanīti*, etc. *Nīti* means that which leads you somewhere; it can lead one either to disaster or to the destination that depends on which *nīti* one follows.

To sum up, a life of dynamism need not be full of feverish activities. In nature too, we see how silently the sun rises; how it illumines, energizes so much so when we don't see the sun

for a few days, we feel depressed. It is so inspiring and in spite of seeing it every day we don't get bored. The secret of the sun's charm is in its dynamism.

Again when the plant germinates from a seed; does it make a lot of noise or advertise its arrival? One fine morning we see a few green leaves, then a small flower blossoming and then the first set fruit; so we see nature works silently.

Do we visit the valley of flowers or a bird sanctuary only on invitation? How quietly the flowers charm us; how elegantly the birds fly; how efficiently they work; we must observe nature and get inspired by its silent proficiency. Therein lies its beauty. When we show off too much or boast about our achievements, then nature shows us our limitation in contrast to its power. I have already cited the examples of great souls like, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi and Swami Tapovan Maharaj.

A great vision therefore emerges from silent contemplation. When a noble vision and action combine in a human being or beings it becomes a blessing to the entire humanity, absence of such a vision spells doom and destruction, both to a single soul and the totality at large.

Ravana appeared very dynamic, but in the end destroyed himself and the entire Lanka too. On the contrary Rama appeared to be mild and gentle, but His was a real life of inspiration, of vision, of dynamism and was a blessing to himself and others. This is called the real life of dynamism. May God and Gurudev bless us all with such a vision.