

Friday, December 13, 1996

Ambar, I received your recent e-mail, "long time no see" yesterday. Peggy called Rupa and relayed the contents to her and husband Sam.

America Online has changed their rate structure. Now it is unlimited time for twenty dollars per month. I will keep my old mci address. AOL has very good e-mail system.

Send me your next e-mail to me at --- gokul1@aol.com

I thought that goloka was the home planet of Krishna. But Rupa informs me that it was gokula. Evidently so because someone else has taken gokula by itself so I must add a "l" at the end. However, "gokulaone" is an easy to remember neumonic.

I will compose a good reply to you concerning your detailed letter. I want to give the reply much thought, however.

I will say that I agree with you that "nothing seems to work" in India. But, as an outsider I see India from a different perspective. I think I see many more assets than liabilities on the ledger sheet. I am optimistic for India's future - and for good logical reasons. I am viewing India more from the historical aspect than from the immediate. When I say "the future" I refer to a time 10 years hence, and then into the next century.

I see India's large population more as an asset, not as a liability. I think there are limits to population growth, and nature will correct large imbalances. It has always be so.

To believe as I do you have to believe that human beings are the solutions to our problems. You have to see human beings as social creatures whose happiness is best found in the intermingling with other human beings. You have to see the human being as the divine manifestation of the Creator.

If we view human beings as liabilities, as expendable resources, then in the long term our societies are doomed - to return to the "dark ages."

One of the reasons for the rapid moral and economic decay of the American society is because the the wealth centers are seeing and treating human beings, employees, as "expenses" and liabilities, rather than as assets.

They look for technological solutions to "bail them out" of difficulty. The old saying, "Employees are our most valuable asset" has become an expression of disdain and ridicule. And yet the phrase tells the truth. Employees are the most valuable asset a company can have. It is the human beings within the company that make it succeed. It is the human beings in the corporate organization who bear new fruit, new ideas, that bring renewed prosperity to the company.

This one thing I know for certain - about India: Indians (all of India) are too negative in their thinking toward their society and country. They keep looking for the worse and seeing the worse in everythings. They keep



comparing themselves with Western countries. This preoccupation with negative thinking has created a defeatist attitude throughout the entire society. India cannot and should not compare itself with Western society. This is a major error in the collective thinking of the society.

You must read the works of Vivekananda. He, better than I, has contrasted the two societies and has spoken in length on many of the problems and flawed attitudes that continue to exist today. In a way, nothing has changed that much. That is because in a span of 100 years the underlining character of Indians has not changed that much. Within that character profile there is one serious flaw, a character defect if you will. That defect is the predisposition of Indians (collectively speaking) to see themselves in an inferior light to the Western world, and to think too negatively about themselves.

The strength of the American society has been its positive "we can do it" attitude. We call it the pioneering spirit. It is the constant optimism and thinking that "things will get better." Ambar. You tell me all the things that are bad, or annoying about India and I will tell you all that is good.

It is a fundamental fact of human psychology that we always tend to move in the direction of our most prevalent thoughts. If our thoughts are constantly negative then we will move and act in the negative direction; and that will be a prescription for failure. If I think myself a failure - then I will become a failure - I will do and act in ways that will reinforce the preconceived attitudes that I hold.

Attitude is the way we view each circumstance in our life. Our attitudes to even the most difficult and trying situations will determine our response to the situations.

How we conceptualize a problem, how we see the problem in terms of our self, will determine how we respond to and how we resolve the problem. We become what we think about. We move in the direction of the most predominant thoughts. If our thoughts are of failure then we will create a climate and situations which will reinforce our thinking patterns. Likewise, if we are positive, if we see each new difficult situation as an opportunity, as a challenge to create positive change, change for the good, then we will move in the direction of success, into a win-win climate.

Let me conclude: there is hope. There is every reason for Indians to hold positive expectations for their future. The first step is to accent the positive in our life, to take on an "I can" attitude, to see each new day as an opportunity to extend that positive energy to others, be that through simply smiling and extending our warmth and respect to the most pitiful beggar, to taking on a large complex and difficult assignment with an attitude that no matter how difficult the work may be, no matter how trying and tiring, I will succeed and make things better.

To be positive toward our environment means to be able to hand the needy beggar a small gift as our heart commands, and to do it with an attitude of appreciation that I have been able to brighten the day just a little for that



individual, and concurrently, that I have been able to extend both my respect and my sympathy for that person of poor circumstance.

To be positive toward our environment means that though I ride in a crowded bus, sweltering with heat, I see it as an opportunity that I may meet a friend, or make a new friend, that I may make conversation with another and in so doing connect in a positive way with this other human beings.

Because, you see, happiness is the by-product of our interaction with other human beings. It is other human beings that give meaning and purpose to our life. And when I am deriving meaning in life, when I see a purpose in life, then my inner most self feels joy and happiness.

I may stand all day in the sweltering heat of Calcutta and never find happiness or inner fulfillment. But when I extend my true self to another, when I bring warmth and happiness to another human being, then I am able to feel that inner warmth that brings happiness and joy to my heart.

Good health to you and namaskar

Nenad