



Newsletter ~ Vallabh Vidya Mandir ~



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An Expression...

Recently, one of my favorite and learned aunty/friend (Mrs. Neelima Chawathe) send me Nobel Prize winner, Rabindranath Tagore's poem. This poem made me think and inspired me to write this month's newsletter. What is patriotism? What makes us a better citizen? How do we take pride in our nation? A freelance writer, Pranay Rupani wrote in one of his articles - 'For any self-respecting nation, patriotism of its citizens is its heartbeat. If it is there, not only is the nation's continued existence across centuries and millennia guaranteed, but its progressive evolution is also ensured. If it is not there, the nation suffers decline, debility and eventual doom.'

India is fondly called 'Bharat' by its people. The name goes back to its epic past, whose beginnings have defied determination. Hence, India evokes a sense of timelessness. Of course, India has been changing perpetually ever since antiquity. It has also suffered similar vicissitudes of history that pushed several other ancient

nations and civilizations into extinction. How then has India faced all these internal changes and external assaults, and yet managed to remain alive as a vibrant and ascendant nation in the 21st century? The answer is: **Patriotism** - the common emotion and self-awareness that unites our people in spite of the unmatched diversity they exhibit.

Dr Rabindranath Tagore's poem illustrates this vividly...

*"Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been
broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from
the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches
its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the dreary
desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by
thee into ever-widening thought
and action-
Into that heaven of freedom, my
Father ,let my country awake."*

"GEETANJALI"

"In a general way, patriotism means love of country — love of one's country, one's homeland — a very simple emotional attachment to the place where you're from," says Jack Citrin, professor of political science at the UC, Berkeley. Freedom is not the license to do whatever you desire. It is the opportunity to become who you are.

An American returned from India and was asked by his Indian friend - how did you find my country? The American said - it is a great country with solid ancient history and immensely rich natural resources. The Indian friend persisted – how did you find Indians? The American responded - Indians? Who Indians? I didn't find a single Indian there in India...

What nonsense...who else could you met in India then??

..VVM Annual Show

May 23rd 2010, 3 – 5 PM

Mark your calendars!!!

**Pls Invite Friends & Family
All are Welcome**



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The American replied – In Kashmir I met a Kashmiri, in Punjab – a Punjabi, in Bihar - a Bihari, in Maharashtra – a Marathi, ...then I met a Muslim, a Hindu, a Christian, a Jain and many more but not a single Indian did I meet!!

How serious is this joke?

We don't want to become a collection of nation states as some regional anti-national politicians want. Each citizen should feel "I am an Indian".

But where do we go now to rekindle that feeling of love for our country and for all the citizens?

Patriotism is more than the love for one's country. It's accepting individual responsibility. You don't have to be a hero to be a patriot. The average person can be a patriot by doing the extra things that make our country a better place in which we live. Registering to vote, educating yourself about public issues, supporting and voting for the best candidate and encouraging others to do the same are the actions of a patriot. The same applies to obeying laws and volunteering to help others.

Principals everywhere are

honoring personal achievement, respecting the rights of others, helping neighbors, inspiring good, and magnifying love of one's country. Patriotism has existed in all ages and among most people. Evidence of patriotism can be found in the art, literature, and music of many countries. Patriotic songs and slogans have helped unite citizens in support of their country during periods of war, revolution, or development.

Schools help develop patriotism by creating an appreciation for common memories, hopes, and traditions. Through the study of history, for example, many students learn to love their country and admire its heroes.

For us immigrants', becoming American was a choice, marked by sorrowful partings and tough new beginnings.

What keeps an immigrant going is the faith in his new country and love for his "home country". This might not always look like patriotism because it doesn't take the familiar forms--Fourth of July picnics, the fluttering of the Stars and Stripes. Instead it's likely to show itself in a quiet dedication to work, family and friends. We can

say that we are blessed to have "Holi" picnic as well as "4th of July picnic", pride in Gandhi as well as Martin Luther king!!

Phalguni Kikani

The March is On..

"For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack"

~Rudyard Kipling

What exactly did Kipling mean when he said this? And, what can we...humans, learn from these beautiful creatures of the wild?

Twyman Towery spent many years in research, seeking the answers to this question. What he learned could help human organizations accomplish a great deal if they lived by these principles?

No other mammal shows more spirited devotion to its family, organization or social group than the wolf. The members of the wolf pack hunt together to insure survival of the group, but they also play, sing, sleep, scuffle and protect each other. A wolf's purpose for existing is to insure the survival of the pack.



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A wolf pack is made up of parents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, half brothers and half sisters - it is truly an extended family organization. And though generally only the Alpha male and Alpha female produce pups, every member of the pack participates in the nurturing and education of the young. Each pack member assumes responsibility for the food, shelter, training, protection and play where the pups are concerned, for the pack realizes that the young are their future.

The loyalty exhibited between wolves is well known and documented. But a Montana man who has used his summers for years to study wolves in Alaska gave me a different view of wolf loyalty. He told about a couple he knew who lived in an extremely remote area with their two sons in a log cabin they had made by hand. This family also included two wolves they had raised from earliest puppyhood, rescuing them from their den after their mother had been indiscriminately shot and the pups left to die. This was the only family the wolves had ever known, having only lived with humans as their pack mates.

One day the parents were cutting wood about a mile from home when one of the boys accidentally turned over a kerosene lamp (there was no electricity), and a raging fire began to consume the wooden structure. The two wolves immediately dashed toward the flaming cabin where the boys were trapped inside, immobilized by smoke and fear. The parents were far behind, so the wolves gnawed and fought their way into the cabin and pulled the boys outside to safety. Though both wolves were badly burned, their loyalty to their "pack" meant the difference between life and death for these two members of their "pack."

The Wolf credo written by Del Goetz truly captures what the wolf is all about:

Respect the elders * Teach the young * Cooperate with the pack.

Play when you can * Hunt when you must * Rest in between.

Share your affection * Voice your feelings * Leave your mark.

(Source – Simple Truths)

Sureshbhai Patel

..Volunteer Opportunity at VVM

**Volunteers for
Teaching
Support Staff
Occasional Help**

**Call Phalguni Kikani
832-640-3994
Or
e-mail at kikanis@earthlink.net
or
Sureshbhai Patel 832-603-1850**

VVM Carnival..

VVM Carnival was held on March 13th 2010. The day was beautiful, the festivities fabulous and kids were fantastic. Enjoy a few pictures of the day.





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