

**Swami Vivekananda on**  
**Organization and**  
**Organized work**

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## **Publishers' Note**

Swami Vivekananda while in America expressed to a lady, one day, that he had had the greatest temptation of his life in America. The woman liked to tease him a bit and said 'Who is she Swami?'. Then he burst out laughing and said 'Oh! It is not a lady. It is *Organization*'.

In the States he saw how much could be accomplished by organizing work. The thoughts of organization were seething in Swamiji's mind. But before he left America, the way, the means and the method were clear in every detail.

He found that the freedom of America gives opportunity to masses of people. It makes for breadth, whilst the intensity of India means depth. After deeper and longer meditation on this problem, he found the solution - to keep the Indian depth and at the same time add breadth. This he expressed unequivocally in his letters and lectures from Colombo to Almora. Extracts from these books, form the material of this booklet, which we consider may help

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those interested in taking up the rebuilding of this Nation according to their capacity in an organized and systematic way. With this fond hope, we are publishing this booklet as an offering to Swami Vivekananda on his one hundred and twenty second birth anniversary.

Publishers

24th January, 1984

### **Preface to the Second Edition**

Copies of the first edition were sold out within a month of its publication, which indicates the need of this booklet. This second edition is revised with the latest works of Swami Vivekananda and some more additions and deletions, relevant to the subject have been made.

We hope this edition will also be recieved well by the public and institutions.

Publishers

10th April, 1984

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**Preface to the reprint  
of the Second Edition**

The Telugu translation of this booklet published in November, 2003 received very encouraging response. It is advised that the English edition may be reprinted which would also be of great use to the public.

We are happy to bring out the reprint of this small but great booklet.

A cover page similar to the one designed for the Telugu publication is used in this book also as honey bees symbolize the idea and the ideal of an Organization to the zenith.

Publishers

September, 2004

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## ORGANIZATION AND ORGANIZED WORK

### 1

## **ORGANIZATION**

An organized society is wanted.

Rig Veda Samhita says, "Be thou all of one mind, be thou all of one thought, for in the days of yore, the gods being of one mind were enabled to receive oblations." That the gods can be worshipped by men is because they are of one mind. Being of one mind is the secret of society.

In India the one thing we lack is the power of combination, organization, the first secret of which is obedience.

The success of your undertaking depends wholly upon your mutual love. To make a great future India, the whole secret lies in organization, accumulation of power, coordination of wills... That is the secret... accumulation of will-power, coordination, bringing them all, as it were, into one focus.

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We must organize our forces not to make a sect - not on religious matters, but on secular business part of it. A stirring propaganda must be launched out. Put your heads together and organize.

The term organization means division of labour. Each does his own part and all the parts taken together express an ideal of harmony.

The secret of success is there; to pay as much attention to the means as to the end.

Numbers do not count, nor does wealth or poverty; a handful of men can throw the world off its hinges provided they are united in - thought, word and deed; never forget this conviction.

So you must have a deep regard for your *Sangha*. There is no place for disobedience here. Crush it out without mercy. No disobedient members here, you must turn them out. There must not be any traitor in the camp. You must be free as air, and as obedient as this plant.

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## 2

### **LEADER**

You must have an all-sided intellect to do efficient work.

It is very difficult to take the role of a leader - one must be दासस्य दासः - a servant of servants - and must accommodate a thousand minds. There must not be a shade of jealousy or selfishness, then you are a leader.

He never becomes a leader in whose love there is a consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end, and never stops to consider high or low, has the whole world lying at his feet.

Be the servant if you will rule. That is the real secret. Your love will tell even if your words be harsh. Instinctively men feel the love clothed in whatever language.

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**3****WORKERS**

We want some - fiery young men - do you see? - intelligent and brave, who dare to go to the jaws of death and are ready to swim the ocean across - We want hundreds like that, both men and women. Try your utmost for that end alone.

Whether we be ten or two, do not care, but those few must be perfect characters.

Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning, it is character that can cleave through adamantine walls of difficulties. Bear this in mind.

The most trustworthy men are needed. Then, after the foundation is laid, let him who will, come and make a noise, there is no fear.

My brother, no good thing can be done without obstruction. It is only those who persevere to the end that succeed.

I have experienced even in my insignificant life, that good motives, sincerity, and infinite love can conquer the world. One single soul, possessed of these virtues can destroy the dark designs of millions of hypocrites and brutes.

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Don't allow egoism to enter your minds, and let love never depart from your hearts.

Even if you are at your last breath, be not afraid. Work on with the intrepidity of a lion but at the same time with the tenderness of a flower.

Even the greatest fool can accomplish a task if it be after his heart. But the intelligent man is he who can convert every work into one that suits his taste. No work is petty. Everything in this world is like a banyan-seed, which, though appearing tiny as a mustard-seed, has yet the gigantic banyan tree latent within it. He indeed is intelligent who notices this and succeeds in making all work truly great.

Many a little makes a mickle. When a great work is being done, when the foundations are laid or a road constructed, when super-human energy is needed - it is one or two extraordinary men who silently and noiselessly work through a world of obstacles and difficulties. When thousands of people are benefited, there is a great tomtoming and the whole country is loud in notes of praise. But then the machine has already been set agoing, and even a boy can work it, or a

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fool add to it some impetus. Grasp this that, that benefit done to a village or two, and those two or twenty workers - all these are enough, they form the nucleus, never to be destroyed. From these, hundreds of thousands of people will be benefited in time. Now we want half a dozen lions, then excellent work will be turned out by even hundreds of jackals.

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### **MANAGEMENT**

We Indians suffer from a great defect, viz., we cannot make a permanent organization - and the reason is that we never like to share power with others and never think of what will come after we are gone.

If one man dies, another - why another only, ten if necessary - should be ready to take it up. Secondly if a man's interest in a thing is not roused he will not work whole-heartedly; all should be made to understand that every one has a share in the work and property; and a voice in the management. Give a responsible position to

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everyone alternately, but keep a watchful eye so that you can control when necessary, thus only can men be trained for the work. Set up such a machine as will go on automatically, no matter who dies or lives.

Skilful management lies in giving every man, work after his own heart.

The best work is only done by alternate repose and work.

Whenever you promise to do any work, you must do it exactly at the appointed time or people lose their faith in you. Money matters require a speedy reply.

Business is business.... One should keep the clearest account of everything in one's charge - and never, never apply the funds intended for one thing to any other use whatsoever - even if one starves the next moment. This is business integrity. Next, energy unflinching. Whatever you do let that be your worship for the time.

Be always ready to concede to the opinions of your brethren, and try always to conciliate. That is the whole secret.

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**5****PITFALLS**

Brother, we can get rid of everything, but not of that cursed jealousy... That is a national sin with us, speaking ill of others, and burning at heart at the greatness of others. Mine alone is the greatness, none else should rise to it.

In spite of the greatness of the Upanishads, in spite of our boasted ancestry of sages, compared to many other races, I must tell you that we are weak, very weak. First of all is our physical weakness. That physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. We are lazy, we cannot work; we cannot combine, we do not love each other; we are intensely selfish, not three of us can come together without hating each other, without being jealous of each other. That is the state in which we are - hopelessly disorganized mobs, immensely selfish, fighting each other.

Three men cannot act in concert together in India for five minutes. Each one struggles for

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power and in the long run, the whole organization comes to grief.

Quarrelling and abusing each other are our national traits. Lazy, useless, vulgar, jealous, cowardly and quarrelsome - that is what we are... Any one who wants to be my friend must give up these.

Among these Western nations, with such a high spirit of independence, the spirit of obedience is equally strong. We are all of us self-important - - which never produces any work. Great enterprise, boundless courage, tremendous energy and, above all, perfect obedience - these are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration. These traits are altogether lacking in us.

We are so devoid of strength that our whole energy is exhausted if we undertake to discuss anything, none is left for work.

We would do nothing ourselves and would scoff at others who try to do something - this is the bane that has brought about our downfall as a nation. Want of sympathy and lack of energy are at the root of all misery, and you must

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therefore, give these two up.

You must not throw cold water on anybody's project. Give up criticism altogether. Help all as long as you find they are doing all right, and in cases where they seem to be going wrong, show them their mistakes gently. It is criticising each other that is at the root of all mischief. That is the chief factor in breaking down organizations.

Know that talking ill of others in private is a sin. You must wholly avoid it. Many things may occur to the mind, but it gradually makes a mountain of a molehill if you try to express them. Everything is ended if you forgive and forget.

Let me write down something for you all:

\* Know partiality to be the chief cause of all evil. That is to say, if you show towards anyone more love than towards somebody else, rest assured, you will be sowing the seeds of future troubles.

\* If anybody comes to you to speak ill of any of his brothers, refuse to listen to him in toto. It is a great sin to listen even. In that lies the germ of future troubles.

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\* Moreover, bear with everyone's shortcomings. Forgive offences by the million. And if you love all unselfishly, all will by degrees come to love one another. As soon as they fully understand that the interests of one depend upon those of others, everyone of them will give up jealousy.

You will have to take charge of the whole movement, not as a leader, but as a servant. Do you know, the least show of leading destroys everything by rousing jealousy?

Do not try to lead your brethren, but serve them. The brutal mania for leading has sunk many a great ship in the waters of life. Take care especially of that, i.e., be unselfish even unto death, and work.

Be the servant of all, and do not try in the least to govern others. That will excite jealousy and destroy everything... Nobody will come to help you if you put yourself forward as a leader... Kill self first if you want to succeed.

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**6****TRAINING IN WORK**

Do not figure out big plans at first, but begin slowly, feel your ground and proceed, up and up... Harmony and peace... Let things slowly grow. Rome was not built in a day.

Do only what is possible under existing circumstances. Gradually the way will open to you.

We want the greatest possible good work permanent from the least outlay.

Now you see, you must try to think out original ideas - else, the whole thing will tumble to pieces. For example, you hold a meeting to consider, "How we can reap the best permanent results out of the small means at our disposal."

The most important thing I have to say is, that the work should be started on a scale which would be commensurate with the results desired.

Do not open out your mind, unless you feel it will be positively beneficial. Use agreeable and wholesome language towards even the greatest enemy... everything proceeds slowly by degrees.

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No great idea can have a place in the heart unless one steps out of his little corner. It will be verified in time. Every great achievement is done slowly.

No great work can be achieved by humbug. It is through love, a passion for truth, and tremendous energy; that all undertakings are accomplished. 'तत्कुरु पौरुषम्' - 'Therefore manifest your manhood'.

The work is spoiled if plans are not kept secret... A work can be judged by its results only.

Be perfectly pure in money dealings... so long as you have faith and honesty and devotion, everything will prosper.

Isn't it man that makes money? Where did you ever hear of money making man? If you can make your thoughts and words perfectly at one, if you can, I say, make yourself one in speech and action, money will pour in at your feet of itself, like water.

Calm and silent and steady work, and no newspaper humbug, no name-making, you must always remember.

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Take care of these two things - love of power and jealousy. Cultivate always "faith in yourself."

"श्रेयांसि बहु विघ्नानि" - "All noble undertakings are fraught with obstacles." It is quite in the nature of things. Keep up the deepest mental poise. Take not even the slightest notice of what the puerile creatures may be saying against you.

...Bear in mind - the eyes are two in number and so the ears, but the mouth is but one.

Let us know that all that is negative, all that is destructive, all that is mere criticism, is bound to pass away; it is the positive, the affirmative, the constructive that is immortal, that will remain forever.

Always bear this in mind that we are now standing before the gaze of the world, and that people are watching every one of our actions and utterances. Remember this and work.

Each work has to pass through these stages - ridicule, opposition and then acceptance. Each man who thinks ahead of his time is sure to be misunderstood.

Push on with your work independently. "Many

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come to sit at dinner when it is cooked." Take care and work on.

Be positive, do not criticize others. Give your message, teach what you have to teach and there stop.

## 7

### **COURSE OF ACTION**

We, as a nation, have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and **raise the masses**.

Spread ideas - go from village to village, from door to door - then only there will be work.

Without *Shakti* (women power) there is no regeneration for the world. Why is that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries? - Because *shakti* is held in dishonour there (in India).

There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.

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In every attempt there will be one set of men who will applaud, and another who will pick holes. Go on doing your own work, what need have you to reply to any party?

It is very easy to point out the defects of the institutions, all being more or less imperfect, but he is the real benefactor of humanity who helps the individual to overcome his imperfections under whatever institutions he may live. The individual being raised, the nation and its institutions are bound to rise.

The whole difference between the West and the East is in this: They are nations, we are not, i.e., civilisation, education here is general, it penetrates into the masses. The higher classes in India and America are the same, but the distance is infinite between the lower classes of the two countries. When one of our great men dies, we must sit for centuries to have another; they can produce them as fast as they die... because they have such a bigger field of recruiting their great ones, we have so small.

The time is passing and all our energies will be frittered away in vain talking. Arise and Awake!

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Let minor things and quarrels over little details and fights over little doctrines be thrown aside, for here is the greatest of all works, and here are the sinking millions.

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### **WORK AMONG MASSES**

You must give your body, mind and speech to "the welfare of the world." You have read - "मातृ देवो भव, पितृ देवो भव" - "Look upon your mother as God; look upon your father as God - but I say, "दरिद्र देवो भव, मूर्ख देवो भव" - "The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted" - let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

A nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses...

My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest; the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves... "Liberty of thought and action is the condition of life, of growth and

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well being." Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down.

The real nation who live in cottages have forgotten their manhood, their individuality. Trodden under the foot of the Hindu, Musalman or Christian, they have come to think that they are born to be trodden under the foot of everybody, who has money enough in his pocket. They are to be given back their lost individuality. They are to be educated.

I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor.... Think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly - the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a Mahatma (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratma (wicked soul)... My heart is too full to express my feeling; you know it, you can imagine it. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men, who strut about their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for these two

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hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages!

How many people really weep for the sorrows and sufferings of the millions of poor in India? Are we men? What are we doing for their livelihood, for their improvement. We do not touch them, we avoid their company! Are we men? ...The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower classes to get their legitimate rights.

Train up a band of fiery young men. Put your fire in them and gradually increase the organization, letting it widen and widen its circle... actual work, my boys, even if infinitesimal, is better than eternal scribbling and talking.

Lay your greatest stress, for the present, on that work department, and try heart and soul to augment the utility of that alone. Organize a number of boys to go from door to door, let them fetch... whatever they can get - money or worn out clothes or rice and eatables or anything. Then distribute them. That is work, work indeed. After that people will have faith and then do what they are told.

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Our mission is for the destitute, the poor and the illiterate peasantry and labouring classes, and if after everything has been done for them first, there is spare time, then only for the gentry. Those peasants and labouring people will be won over by love...

Teach some boys and girls of the peasant classes the rudiments of learning and infuse a number of ideas into their brains. Afterwards the peasants of each village will collect funds and have one of these in their village. उद्धरेत् आत्मनात्मानं (one must raise oneself by one's own exertions) - this holds good in all spheres. We help them to help themselves.... The moment they will come to understand their own condition and feel the necessity of help and improvement, know that your work is taking effect and is in the right direction.... Then leave the peasants and labourers to look to their own problem, to grapple with and solve it.

All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village, if the people are not taught to help themselves. Our work should be mainly **educational**, both moral and intellectual...

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Try to have their eyes opened as to what has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this world is like, and so forth. You have got lots of poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time - and open their eyes. Books etc. won't do - give them oral teaching. Then slowly extend your centres.

If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor cannot come to education, education must reach them at the plough, in the factory, everywhere.

What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful (and by which one can stand on his own feet) is called education.

Go and advise them how to improve their own condition and make them comprehend the sublime truths of our *shastras* by presenting them in a lucid and popular way. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmins. Also instruct them in simple words

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about the necessities of life and in trade, commerce and agriculture etc.

We have to follow the plan laid down by our ancestors, that is, to bring all the ideals slowly down among the masses. Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart even secular knowledge through religion... Also let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects - specially history.

Those who are believers are heroes. They will manifest tremendous power. The world will be swept before them. "Sympathy and help to the poor"; "Man is God, he is Narayana"; "In Atman, there is no distinction of male or female, or Brahmin or Kshatriya and the like" - "All is Narayana from the creator down to the clump of grass".

Every action that helps a being manifest its divine nature more and more is good, every action that retards it is evil. The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by helping others to do the same.

