



Vivekananda Way

SPECIAL ISSUE

PULLOUT FOR REFERENCE

focus in this issue:

What we can learn from Swami Vivekananda's Plague Manifesto

- for our response to the Covid-19 crisis

A brief background about the Plague Manifesto:

In May 1898, when a plague epidemic broke out in Calcutta, large numbers of terror-stricken residents fled the city in panic. Swami Vivekananda, who was recuperating his health in Darjeeling, rushed to Calcutta to join in the relief work.

The first thing the Swami did was draft a plague manifesto in Bengali and Hindi, which was printed and freely distributed amongst the people, which considerably reassured them.

He also devised the plans and completed the arrangements for how the service was to be conducted – which included teaching sanitation and cleanliness to the people;

organizing segregation camps for housing patients in compliance with Government regulations; and using appropriate ways of nursing the patients (which do not offend the community).

When the plague appeared in Calcutta again the next year (1899), the Ramakrishna Mission plague service was promptly instituted on March 31, under the Swami's instructions, and did considerable work in a well-organised way.

Swami Vivekananda himself went to live in the slums to inspire courage in the people and cheer up the workers.

The whole management was placed in the hands of Sister Nivedita and Swami Sadananda, assisted by Swamis Shivananda, Nityananda and Atmananda.



“ **Come, let us give up this false fear and, having faith in the infinite compassion of God, gird our loins and enter the field of action.**

Let us live pure and clean lives.

Disease, fear of an epidemic, etc., will vanish into thin air by His grace.

Excerpt from the Plague Manifesto;
The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. 9

> *Turn overleaf for an action plan...*

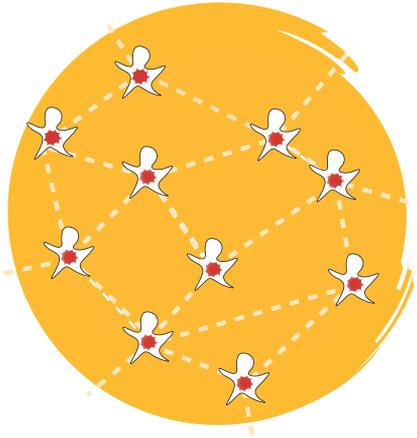


Key Messages from the Plague Manifesto which we can apply today

Note: All quotes in this Issue of Vivekananda Way are excerpts from *The Plague Manifesto*, written by Swami Vivekananda in 1898, available in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Volume 9.

1

When others suffer, each one of us suffers; when others are happy, we are happy – because we are all essentially One.



“ We feel happy when you are happy, and we suffer when you suffer. Therefore, during these days of extreme adversity, we are striving and ceaselessly praying for your welfare and an easy way to save you from disease and the fear of an epidemic.



“ If that grave disease – fearing which both the high and the low, the rich and the poor are all fleeing the city – ever really comes in our midst, then even if we perish while serving and nursing you, we will consider ourselves fortunate because you are all embodiments of God. He who thinks otherwise – out of vanity, superstition or ignorance – offends God and incurs great sin. There is not the slightest doubt about it.



All people serving at the frontline are serving embodiments of God

We can consider ourselves fortunate if we are able to use this opportunity to serve God in man.

2

3 **How should we act ?**

Rather than being bound by fear and a feeling of helplessness...

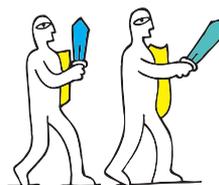
We should...



A] Depend on the God within

B] Calmly try to find the best solution possible

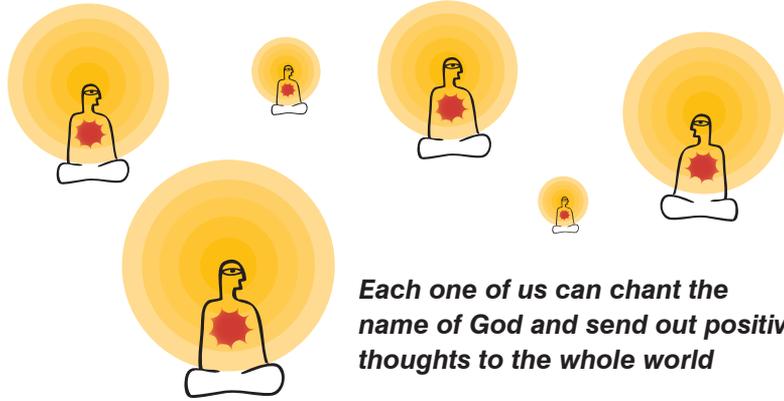
Or,
Join hands with others who are working to find answers...



“ We humbly pray to you – please do not panic due to unfounded fear. Depend upon God and calmly try to find the best means to solve the problem. Otherwise, join hands with those who are doing that very thing.



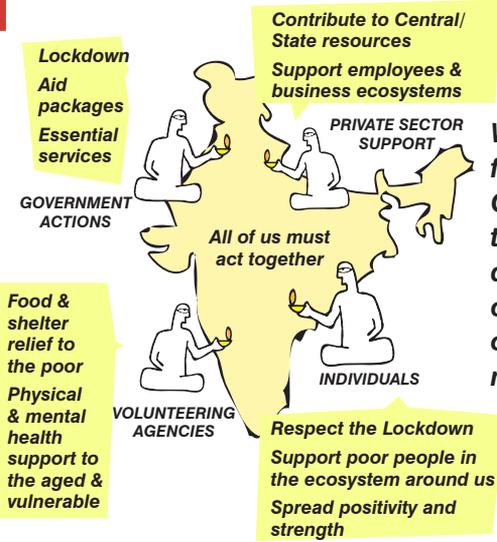
“ In order to remove the fear of the epidemic, you should sing Nâma Sankirtanam [the name of the Lord] every evening and in every locality.



4

Each one of us can chant the name of God and send out positive thoughts to the whole world

5



What is there to fear? Through Collective Action the effects of the disease in our country and on our people can be mitigated.

“ What is there to fear? The terror that has entered people's hearts due to the occurrence of the plague has no real ground. Through God's will, nothing of the terrible form that plague takes, as seen in other places, has occurred in Calcutta. The government authorities have also been particularly helpful to us. So what is there to fear?



“ Come, let us give up this false fear and, having faith in the infinite compassion of God, gird our loins and enter the field of action. Let us live pure and clean lives. Disease, fear of an epidemic, etc., will vanish into thin air by His grace.



6

Arise! Awake!
 – Give up false fear
 – Have faith
 – Enter the field of action
 – And live correctly.

Disease, fear of an epidemic, etc. will disappear with the Lord's grace

Guidelines for Action



1. Keep the environment clean

“ Always keep the house and its premises, the rooms, clothes, bed, drain, etc., clean.



2. Strengthen your body and your immune system
(*build physical strength*)

“ Do not eat stale, spoiled food; take fresh and nutritious food instead. A weak body is more susceptible to disease.



3. Strengthen your mind through positive thoughts
(*build mental strength*)

“ Always keep the mind cheerful. Everyone will die once. Cowards suffer the pangs of death again and again, solely due to the fear in their own minds.



4. Strengthen yourself by trying to be as ethical as you can
(*build character strength*)

“ Fear never leaves those who earn their livelihoods by unethical means or who cause harm to others. Therefore, at this time when we face the great fear of death, desist from all such behaviour.



5. Sustain and strengthen your psychic energy

“ During the period of epidemic, abstain from anger and from lust – even if you are householders.



6. Try to follow reliable sources of information – *don't fall prey to WhatsApp and false news*

“ Do not pay any heed to rumours.



“ The Mother of the Universe is Herself the support of the helpless.
The Mother is assuring us: "Fear not! Fear not!"

THE SERVANTS OF SHRI RAMAKRISHNA ARE READY TO SERVE

“ Brother, if there is no one to help you, then send information immediately to the servants of Shri Bhagavan Ramakrishna at Belur Math. There will be no dearth of help that is physically possible. By the grace of the Mother, monetary help will also be possible.



You can contact any of the Ramakrishna Mission centers near you...

Or Visit BELURMATH.ORG