

MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH

– B.K. Anand Mohan Hans,
Paschim Vihar, New Delhi

Have we ever considered what experiments are for? Evidently to arrive at the truth in a jumble of several possibilities. In fact, till our last breath we spend time in searching for the truth or what we really want or expect from life. It is a story of opportunities, availed of and chances missed, of adjustments made and positions compromised, and of failures faced and successes celebrated.

My story is not different as it ran on the same pattern. I had a normal childhood, like that of a member of any middle class family. Being from a family of illiterate farmers living in villages, my outlook on life from very childhood was as vast as the fields I was brought up amongst. My father, who was made of rather different mettle from others of his kin, went for higher studies after passing his matriculation and studied law at Government Law College, Lahore (at present in Pakistan). As he was a broad-minded person, I also grew up with

respect and regard for all sects and religions.

I was a student of tenth class when the country was partitioned and we were driven out of our homes and hearths literally without any bag or baggage. I passed my matriculation in 1948; my troubles started soon thereafter. My life took a turn for the worse after I joined college and started living in the hostel, away from home. I was just 15 years of age and quite a greenhorn and a dreamy adolescent; I took to ways which were certainly far from conducive to hard work and serious studies. The years I spent in college thus were all gone waste with the result that I could not make any mark during that period except that I was able to obtain a B.A. degree and then a certificate in teaching.

I managed to get the job of a teacher in a higher secondary school in Delhi but soon realised that I was not at all cut out for that work. As the parents now lay great stress on giving good

education to their children, teaching has become a respectable and lucrative job these days. But in those days as it was given a low priority, teaching was a meagrely-paid job; low in the graph of social esteem. Besides, all my friends who had landed themselves in government jobs made mockery of me by calling me “Master Ji”. Since I was a refugee from Pakistan, I enjoyed age concession, so I availed myself of the last chance of appearing in government competitive examinations. I took two competitive examinations; one I passed but could not make it in the interview, and the second I passed and was selected because it had no interview part.

But misfortunes, like good friends, did not desert me. Though the feeling that I had cleared two All India Competitive Tests one after the other within a span of two or three months gave some boost to my confidence and self-esteem, I could not overcome the remorse I felt over wasting the formative years of my life achieving nothing as compared to some of my friends. This remorse was all the time nibbling at my heart depriving me of any happiness which my inner-self was yearning for.

The young boys and girls of the pre-independence India did

not know much about career building unlike the youth of today. As the life we lived then was very easy and plain, we never thought of beyond getting married one day and raising a family like everybody else was doing.

Competitive examinations, interviews, general knowledge books and magazines, and student counselling were terms unheard of in those days. They became known only within a period of ten years or so after independence, and that was the time I grew up from boyhood to adolescence and then to adulthood.

Such depressing thoughts bothered me all the time and consequently, it took me time to pick up the work in my new job. The truth is that I did not at all like the government work as it gave little or no opportunity for self-expression and creative activity. It was so boring and mechanical that at one point of time I felt like leaving everything behind me to some remote corner of the world far removed from any human civilisation. Sometimes I felt like crying my heart out till there were no tears left in my eyes.

But, thank God, they were only momentary feelings. I was to continue with my new job since before joining it, I had got

married and, therefore, had to earn a livelihood for myself, my wife and our first child who was on the way. Willy-nilly, I continued with my job. But all the factors, past and existing at that time, had their toll which I had to pay in the form of chronic depression and tension.

One fine morning instead of reaching my office, I found myself in a park all by myself. Thereafter, I did not go to office for one month applying for leave on weekly basis. But how long could this continue? One day, I received a notice from my office to join duty within a week or report myself to the hospital for check-up by a medical board. I got panicky and even thought of giving up my job or ending my life. These alternatives being out of question, I turned seriously and earnestly towards God for succour. I believed in God but that far He had done nothing to ameliorate the mental agony I was silently going through. I would sit for hours together in a gurdwara, holding one of the legs of the wooden stand on which they keep the Holy Granth and pleading: if you were at all there, to come to my help or otherwise, I said to myself, I would consider all this *bhakti* as a farce.

In the meantime, I had started consulting a doctor in the

government hospital since I had to keep pretence of being not well to be able to get a medical certificate for reason of my absence from work if not for any medical treatment. On my second visit to him, the doctor prescribed me some medicine to calm my nerves and gave me another medical certificate extending my leave for seven days. It was on my fourth visit to him, a day after my soliloquy in the gurdwara that the doctor prescribed me sleeping pills, obviously to numb my senses.

I told him, "Doctor Sahib, perhaps you think my body is ill. No, it is not my body; it is my soul which needs the treatment." As if the doctor was waiting for this cue from me, he at once said, "So you need treatment of your soul! O.K, then, be ready at six in the evening today. I will come and take you to the hospital where they treat souls." Perhaps God had listened to my monologue on that day in the gurdwara. The doctor who offered to take me to the hospital for souls was a Brahma Kumar.

I still remember vividly the day, the time and the moment when accompanied with my wife, I entered a Brahma Kumaris Centre for the first time. It was a Thursday; the date was September 11, 1981; the

time, in the evening at 6:30 p.m. It was there that we came to know of the term “Brahma Bhojan” for the first time. The teacher-in-charge of the Centre asked us if we would care to join them in partaking Brahma Bhojan. It was more out of sheer curiosity to find out what Brahma Bhojan was all about, rather than any desire to eat, that prompted us to say “yes” to the invitation.

The Brahma Bhojan turned out to be a simple everyday meal, not the multi-course meal as it is commonly known, but what a taste! Even now, after 32-odd years, the very thought of it titillates my taste buds making my mouth water. It was much later after listening to a few Murlis that I came to know of the real significance of Brahma Bhojan which had already worked its magic on me the very first day. I would say that it was the Brahma Bhojan which was instrumental in cementing my spiritual relationship with God and the Brahmin family.

Since then, I have not looked back at my past. I was a new person. My friends and colleagues were surprised to see a sudden and drastic change in me. Gone were the days of battling with my own self and with my work. I cannot forget till my death three happiest occasions of my life. The first was the moment when in the period immediately after partition our train from Pakistan steamed into Amritsar Railway station bringing us alive from the jaws of death. The second was when I retired from the government service. And the third was the day when I first stepped into a Brahma Kumaris centre. The memory of the first two occasions might have dimmed with the passage of time but that of the third has grown stronger each day.

I am no longer experimenting with Truth; I am experiencing it, relishing it. ●

ETERNAL LAWS

Whatever is new, must become old. Everything passes through this process.

I look back into time. In a second or less, my thoughts take me to a place far away both in time and space; for a moment, I relive the scenes of the past, and then I come back to the present, with a smile on my face. The smile quickly changes, and I sigh when I realise how different the present is. “What has happened? Why couldn’t it be like that still?”

There is a simple law which states, “Whatever is new, must become old”. It is always good to know the laws. I may not think that they make much sense, I may even disagree with them; but some laws just cannot be changed, so I learn to live with them and follow them. There is no point in asking questions as to why, how, when, where and what.

It doesn’t matter. The point is that I should understand the laws of living and take benefit from them. Here are three such laws that won’t change and are worth remembering:

1. Whatever I sow, I will reap.
2. Whatever is new will become old.
3. Whatever I don’t use, I lose.

– From the Book ‘Just A Moment’