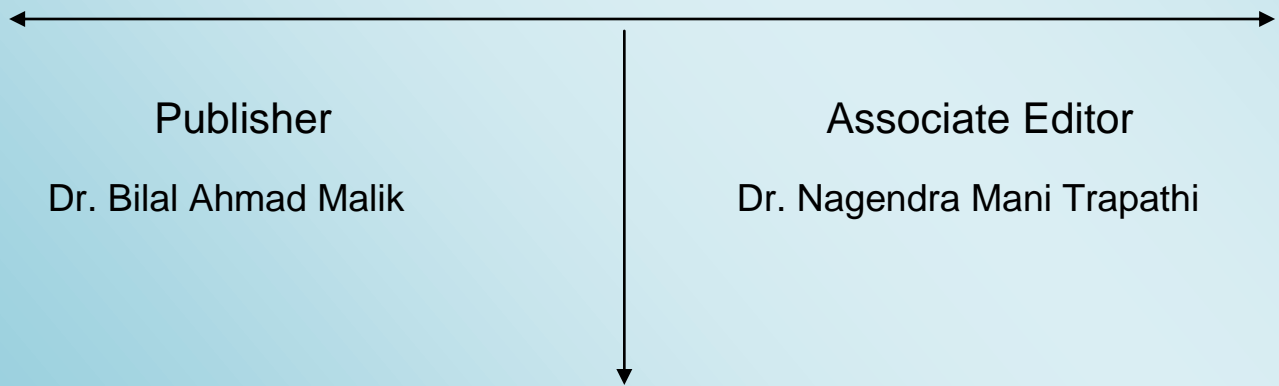


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A NOTE ON INDIAN TRADITIONAL VALUES

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The theme of the Seminar is concerned about human rights and good life. Since it is proposed by the organizers as an interdisciplinary one covering subjects like Philosophy, Social-science, Sanskrit, Psychology, Law and persons belonging to different strata of public affairs, the discussion would be from multi-disciplinary perspectives. Accordingly, I humbly propose to submit the following few lines briefly touching upon the different themes enlisted in the guide-lines (sent by the organizers) with special emphasis on what is said as traditional values depicted in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas of India.

Value based society must have to acknowledge the necessity of inculcating scientific temper and also to boost up open-mindedness as against closed one. In this connection, there can be a review of what is already accepted as good life in the past or any set modes of good life.

The norm of good life need not be judged by means of any set perennial values handed down to us by tradition or pre-fixed models, but to modify and transform the idea of value as per the needs and requirement of the present day socio human relationship.

While considering the human value or our investigation and inquiry it need not be opaque towards conservation of different plants and animals and ecological importance in general which are not opposed to the well-being of man.

So also any talk about ethical guidance can't but have to acknowledge the acceptance of framing of laws, rules and regulations etc. While adopting those, mutual coherency and consistency need to duly strengthen and any sort of conflict amongst them require to be avoided as far as possible.

General discrimination is found to be a slur in most of the traditional civilizational set up of the past.

It is needless to emphasize that they should be curtailed in any manner for the promulgation of human rights and good life.

The role of media in this connection is, of course, very important. Quite often it is found that media are publishing news-items not so much descriptively i.e. repository of matters as such, but such reports are unduly being sensitive with malicious intentions.

In Isa Upanishad it is mentioned that:

**Isavāsyam idam sarvam yat kim cajagatyām jagat
tena tyaktena bhunjithā,ma gradhah kasyasvid dhanam**

It means, all this, whatever moving or changing in the world, should be enveloped by the Lord. Therefore, by renunciation protect yourself. Do not covet the wealth of any one.

It appears that there is no logical relationship of necessity between the 1st part of hymn and the 2nd part. For the sake of argument even if we concede that God is pervaded every where it does not follow necessarily that one should be renouncing everything and is not at all to covet the wealth of others, if it urgently is necessary for certain human factors.

For the simple reason when one is hungry and is about to die out of hunger and if there is some food elsewhere (even if it does not belong to him) he is but to take that food and that can't be condemned as immoral or unethical.

Coming to the talk of traditional Indian values, we find that number of attempts made by some commoners and intelligentsia show that there are ample cases where human values are hinted and echoed in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas.

Sarve Bhabantu Sukhinah etc. Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih and certain puranic saying can be referred to in this regard. No doubt, those are quite interesting from the socio-human ethical angle. However, this is also needed here to point out that such expressions, need reappraisal.

So far as their respective sources are concerned, those are not either overtly or covertly evince any argumentative rational justification.

Any ethical norm or value, it is needless to say, that requires certain rational justification from the human point of view. Even the so-called ideal (often propagated as the ideal) which can't be either instantiated or insatiable in principle, it appears to us that such ideal ceases to be ethical for it is by its nature unworkable in the living human set-up.

In other words the ethical norm on value is bound to have relevancy in the human set-up, not at all embracing in any quixotic transcendental surmise. That is why, ethics as a study of social service with some form of philosophical foundation, can reasonably be traced out in any writing (ancient and modern) along with considerable amount of reasonable footing.

The slogan spiritualistic moral ideal, as propagated in certain circle as fully beyond logic and argument (*tarka*), simply carries no conviction. What we express here is not only applicable to traditional Indian religious values but to any religious set-up. Those are found to be mostly rooted on dogmas and prejudices sans ethical justification.

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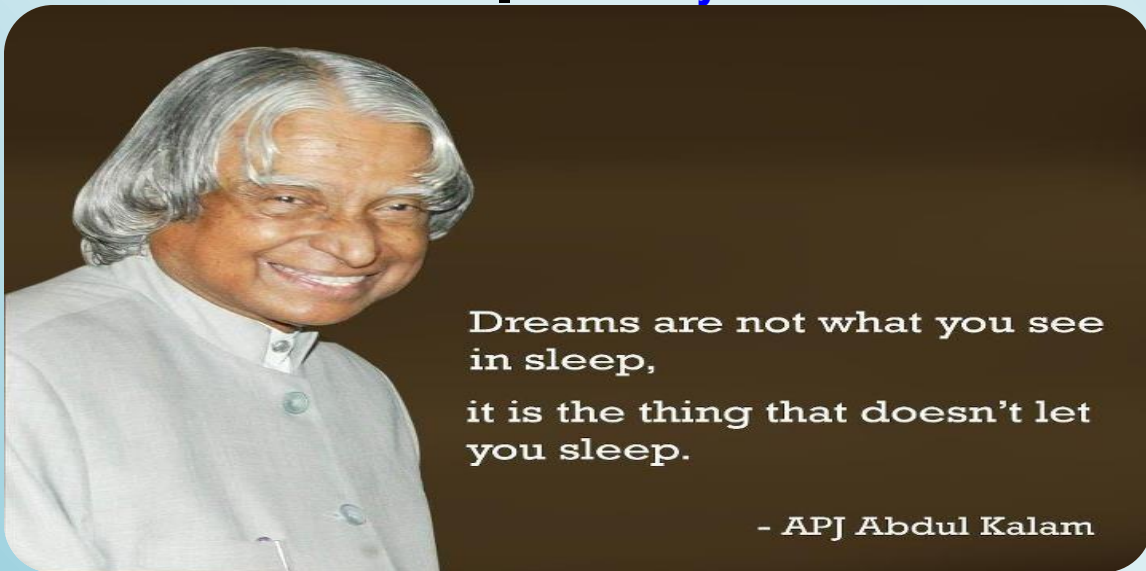
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Dreams are not what you see
in sleep,
it is the thing that doesn't let
you sleep.

- APJ Abdul Kalam