

India Erupts

Anna Hazare has triggered a spontaneous nationwide wave of anger against corruption. City after city, town after town and village after village found people, young and old, willing to raise their voice for the welfare of the society and the country. Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "I have no sense of defeat in me and the hope in me that this country of ours is fast marching towards its goal is burning as bright as it did in 1920." Our country, India, had to slip into a political and economic turmoil in the past few years as the people let go all that was good and ethical. This new awakening, seen in the past few months, has sent shockwaves in the corridors of power. Just when the administrators thought that ethics was dead and buried and those feeble voices which rose now and then could be silenced, the movement has erupted into a mega pan India wave. Those who talked about ethics were not dispirited and the movement was not in disarray.

Ethics in every walk of life has been the mantra of Rotary. The vocational service of Rotary lays emphasis only on ethical conduct of business. Every Rotarian was expected to become a walking model of Rotary and carry with them the responsibility of realising the ideals of Rotary. When we follow the 4-Way Test and work with the highest standards of morality expected from Rotarians, there is certainty of the final triumph. Our lives and those around us will be prosperous.

It is said that charity begins at home. Every Rotarian must set an example. They must fight anything that is immoral or unethical in their business and profession. There must be honesty in their dealings with everyone. People can see those who are ethical and those who are not. The image of being an unethical person will not only harm you in the long run but will also harm the movement. It is said that people



will judge the cooked rice in a huge bowl by touching and feeling just one cooked grain. If you are seen as unethical, the entire organisation can get an unfair image.

If anyone had thought that India was too divided to fight against corruption or injustice, the recent events must prove to be an eye-opener. Following good ethical practices at home is not a tall order. If you tremble at the thought of doing anything that is unjust, then your life becomes simple and straightforward. How you make your decisions, recruit employees, do business with clients, move with family members, friends and relations are all areas in which you can follow strict ethical standards every day.

In India we think we know Mahatma Gandhi. No face is more familiar. We think we also know what he stood for. Was he a saint? Or was he another normal timid person? How did he awaken India to fight for freedom? What did he think about business? Gandhiji viewed business as a form of service to the society. Rotarians are leaders in their business and profession. Do you consider your vocation as a service to the nation? If so, should it not be run totally

on ethical patterns that Rotary emphasises? This eruption may stop corruption. But what you do today in your life will shape the destiny of India. Gandhiji said that one of the roots of violence is commerce without morality. The words of N.R. Narayana Murthy, chief mentor of Infosys expresses similar views: "If you want to build a million dollar enterprise, one can take all the short cuts; but if you are keen on building a billion dollar enterprise, there is no other way than to run your business rightly. Honesty has to be accepted as an axiom, which is the only way to do business. It gives you mental and moral strength and the ability to do it the right way." If India should not erupt again against corruption the task on hand is to promote ethics in vocational service. That should start in your home.



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