



YUVA BHARATI

Voice of Youth

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Paush-Magh 5112

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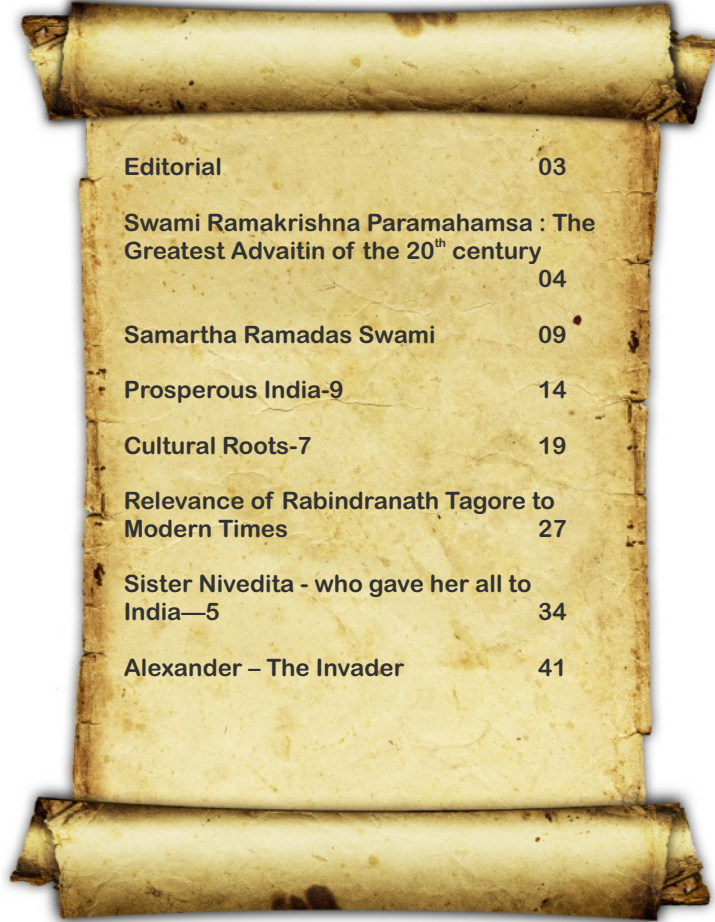
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Invocation



स्थापकायच धर्मस्य सर्वधर्म स्वरूपिणै ।

अवतार वरिष्ठाय रामकृष्णायते नमः ॥

sthāpakāyaca dharmasya sarvadharm svarupiṇai ।
avatāra variṣṭhāya rāmakṛṣṇāyate namaḥ । ।

O! Ramakrishna, founder of a faith which is embodiment of all variant faiths,
To Thee, the noblest of Divine Incarnations, I offer my salutation.



തമാശരതാ ജ്യോതിരഗതയാ...

The beginning of 19th century was a period when our nation was submerged in a delusion. Not sure whether to wage a war against the occupiers, the country witnessed sporadic outbursts whenever the aggressors tested the limits of tolerance of our countrymen by trampling the age old customs and traditions. But the society of that time had started drifting away from its glorious spiritual wisdom. Many obsolete customs were burdening the society which could not shrug these burdens. Ritualism and dogmatism were the norms where introspection would be labeled as rebellious. This dormant situation provided the fodder for the aggressors who tainted our culture as uncivilized. This perverted notion was taken as a credible one by a credulous generation molded by a new educational system.

Many movements came to revamp the society by removing the “evils” and these movements, mostly reactionaries, were gaining ground since they addressed the problems which our society faced, though they failed to diagnose the roots of the malaise. It was during this time Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa came and with him came the Philosophy of universal love and realization of god through service to mankind. These forgotten ideals were revitalised during his period.

When the entire society was swept by the waves of reforms and revolutions he sought to reinvent the ideals of Dharma. Unlike the learned “reactionaries” who were all educated under the debasing British educational system, here was an uneducated man who stood aloft and his shraddha made him delve deep into the traditions which were being decried by the new crop of educated Indians. His openness and earnestness in the search for divine made him more cosmopolitan than the educated elites who were gullible enough to swallow all those concocted Racial theories dumped on them. With these qualities he lived a life which is now a text book for those who want to know about the spiritual realm. His greatest contribution came in the form of his disciples. Among them Swami Vivekananda would have become an agnostic but for the persuasive efforts of Sri Ramakrishna. Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna clearly showed the way to the society that Religion is not just about Dogmas and Doctrines. He lived as an example to show that through love one can get the ability to discriminate and through true knowledge of Universal love one can live in this world amidst wealth and worldliness without getting attached to them, a sure way to be rid of sorrow and grief.

V.V.Balasubramanian

YB-ET

Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa : The Greatest Advaitin of the 20th century

Sqn.Ldr. Dr. P.Ramani

Sri Ramakrishna was born on August 16, 1886 at Kamarpukur, West Bengal in an orthodox brahmin family. His father Khudiram Chattopadhyaya and mother Chandramani Devi were simple, pious and religious people. It is believed that Chandramani Devi had a vision that Lord Shiva himself would be born to her as her son.

Sri Ramakrishna attended the village school as a Young boy. Soon he realized that the traditional schooling could yield him only 'breadwinning skills' Kamarpukur is located strategically on the route to Puri, the holy place. Sri Ramakrishna came in contact with the holy men, heard from them several religious accounts and became familiar with the *Puranas*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharatha* and the *Bhagavata Purana*.

First Spiritual ecstasy

Sri Ramakrishna was walking along the green paddy fields when he was six years old. He

was impressed by the greenery. Against this backdrop, he found a flock of white cranes flying. The thunderclouds were gathering. Sri Ramakrishna was over whelmed by this rare sight. He experienced a sense of joy subconsciously. He forgot himself outworldly

and was in a deep trance. Since then, Sri Ramakrishna underwent similar experiences in his childhood as he worshipped Goddess Kali and Visalakshi. Once, he adorned himself as Lord Shiva in a school cultural programme and he went into a trance. Even when he was in ten or eleven, he used to get into a trance every other day.

Sri Ramakrishna lost his father in 1843. The absence of his father drew him nearer to his mother. Apart from

the regular household chores and worship of family deities, he used to engage himself in the intensive study of the sacred epics of the land. His brother Ramkumar started a sankrit school in Calcutta in 1852 while serving as a priest in a



temple. Ramakrishna assisted his brother in his duties.

Ramkumar was appointed the priest of Dakshineswar Kali Temple. Ramakrishna and his nephew, Hriday assisted Ramkumar. In 1856, Ramkumar died and Sri Ramakrishna became the priest of the Kali temple.

Sri Ramakrishna believed Kali as his mother and the mother of the universe. He engaged himself in penances to have a *darshan* (vision) of Kali. He believed that idol of Kali was living and breathing. Some people thought that Sri Ramakrishna was an eccentric. His strong desire to have the vision of Kali was fulfilled by the divine Mother Kali. He had the experience of viewing 'an infinite shoreless sea of light'. He also experienced the shining waves moving one after another towards him.

Ramakrishna who was 23, was married to Saradamani Mukophadyaya in 1859. Ramakrishna influenced Sarada Devi in every way. Saradadevi became the chief disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. After his marriage. Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual fervor became stronger.

Equality and Equanimity

Sri Ramakrishna believed the high caste and low caste people are one and the same children of God. He would visit the living quarters of low caste people and clean their quarters with his hands. He started renouncing materialistic pleasures. The very presence of money would make him very uncomfortable.

Tantric Training

Bhairavi Brahmani, an ascetic, initiated Sri Ramakrishna into the cult of Tantrism which

focused on the worship of Shakti or Mahakali. Bhairavi believed Sri Ramakrishna an 'avatara', the incarnation of the Divine. He learnt the *Kumari Puja* and it made him worship Sri Saradadevi as his divine mother.

Sri Ramakrishna's experiences with Krishna

Sri Ramakrishna believed himself to be one of the Gopis and engaged himself in the practice of *madhura bhava*. He believed *Madhura Bhava* is practiced to root out the feelings of sex which act as a hindrance to the spiritual life. The Swami attained this experience of *madhura bhava*, the vision and union with Lord Krishna.

Training in Advaita Vedanta

In 1865, Sri Ramakrishna was initiated into *sanyasa* by *Totapuri*, a monk. Tota Puri taught Swamiji Hindu philosophy and the *Advaita Vedanta*. Advaita Vedanta primarily emphasizes the non-dualism of a human beings. For eleven months, Sri Ramakrishna was under the direct guidance of his Guru, Totapuri. He practiced *nirvikalpa Samadhi* the highest state in spiritual realization. It is believed that he received a command from Mother Kali to remain in a state of *Bhavamukha* for the enlightenment and well-being of people. *Bhavanmukha* is a state of existence between *Samadhi* and *normal consciousness*.

He wanted the assimilation of Hindu polytheism into Brahmoism of Brahma Samaj. Sri Ramakrishna's disciples joined him between 1879-1885. Grihastas or the householders monastic disciples and a small group of women disciples took *Mantra Deeksha*. The chief disciple was Sarada Devi. By the time, Sri Sarada Devi joined him, Swami Ramakrishna had already embraced the monastic life of a Sanyasi. He performed the *Shodashi Puja* on Sarada Devi. He made her sit in the seat of

goddess Kali and worshipped her as Divine Mother. He addressed her as the Holy Mother.

Towards his last days, Swami Ramakrishna was affected by throat cancer. He was looked after by the disciples and Sarada Devi. It is believed that before his Samadhi Swami Ramakrishna transferred his spiritual powers to Vivekananda. He asked Vivekananda to look after his disciples. On August 16, 1886, he left his mortal coil in the early hours

attaining *Mahasamadhi*. The followers established the first Mutt on the banks of the Ganges. The Ramakrishna holy order was born. The Ramakrishna Mission has thousands of service and charitable institutions world over and they take care of the overall development to the body, the mind and the soul. Thus Sri Ramakrishna, an avatarapurusha and the greatest advaitin of the twentieth century has influenced millions of people world over.



Samartha Ramadas Swami

Satish Shamrao Chowkulkar

Bharatvarsha is not just a country or a state with a geographical entity. It is a spiritual and cultural entity. It is a *Dharma-Bhoomi*. Its emergence has been in response to the prayers of *Rishis* and *Munis* to the *Ishvar*—the projector of the *Srushti*, for providing a forum to do the *tapas* for sustenance of the *Dharma*. This purpose of its emergence makes it a *Tapo-Bhoomi* and *Karma-Bhoomi*. Therefore, whenever there are crises in the society, *Rishis*, *Munis* and *Saints* appear on the scene and take steps to restore the *Dharma*. In the same lineage one Narayana was born in the family of Suryajipant Thosar of Jamb (Dist. Aurangabad, Maharashtra). His mother Ranu Bai devoted lady had hell of a time in controlling this active son. Right from his childhood, he had the *Kripa Drishti* of saint Eknath Maharaj of Paithan (Maharashtra). No wonder right from his childhood, he was “a child with a difference”. He was watching the socio-cultural situation around, which was deteriorating day-by-day, due to misrule and the atrocities at the hands of Muslim ruler. He was also trying to find a solution for the inaction, insensitivity and indifference of the powerful *Sardars* and brave men who had kept their strength and bravery at the disposal of these arrogant and atrocious Muslim rulers. Silence of the strong, brave and capable persons was inexplicable. There was a dire need to arouse the spirit of *Swadharma* and self-confidence among the youth in particular, who only could have



salvaged the situation.

He therefore abandoned his home and hearth, just before he was being compelled to enter into the *Grihasthasrama*. He then took up the responsibility of the society on his shoulders. He first developed his own physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual strength through intense *tapas* at Panchavadi-near Nashik for 12 years. He then moved around the *Bharatvarsha* to take stock of the situation. He used spiritual

path for invoking the strength of the society by preaching the values lived by Sri Ramachandra and kindled the self-confidence in the youth by putting before them the role model of Hanumana. He therefore came to be known as Samarth Ramadas Swami.

During his travelling across the country, he used every occasion to rouse their spiritual power. On quite a few occasion people tested him. Some of these incidents are worth-knowing.

Once, in his early days Ramadas Swami was sought to be humiliated by a local rowdy by putting a garland of dirty and filthy leaves around his neck. He and his like-minded friends enjoyed the inconvenience caused to Ramadas Swami. After few years while passing through the same town Samarth saw this rowdy. Samarth called him from the crowd who had come to receive him and introduced the rowdy to others as his old and best friend. The rowdy recalled the incidence and felt ashamed of himself and fell at his feet.

Once, Ramadas Swami visited a town Shivoor. His disciple Bahinabai prepared food, offered it to Sri Rama as *Naivedya* and served *Prasad* to Swami. Swami appreciated and enjoyed the food. Afterwards when Bahinabai was taking food, she found the vegetable-ribbed gourd was fully bitter. She felt sorry and asked pardon. Samarth Swami laughed and said what you have served was

the *Prasad* of Sri Rama. It was delicious and how any one can find fault with *Prasad*? This was indication to one and all that food should be accepted with *Prasadbuddhi* and one should not find fault with it.

Samarth Swami travelled length and breadth of the Bharat. When he had been to *Badrinarayan* in Himalayas, Vedavyasa one of *Sapta-Chiranjeevas*, saw him. He first tested Ramadas Swami by intimidating him. As he did not budge, Vedavyasa gave him a boon—a power. Through this power like Narada Muni, Sri Dattatraya and Gorakshanath, Samarth Ramadas Swami became *Sarva-Sanchari*. He could move from anywhere to anywhere in no time, whether being seen or unseen by others. Whenever in calamity, he will get immense strength. He can acquire all the needful knowledge and can bless any one to fulfil their needs. Having given this boon he told Samarth that he should establish absolute *Jnana* of *Vedas* in very simple way and can integrate *Jnana Bhakti* for *Dharma Karya*. Rightly enough Samarth Ramadas Swami used this power i.e., the *Siddhi* for the same purpose.

He stirred up the spirit of seemingly common and ordinary men and made them Men with capital 'M'. He then infused the leadership to them through an upcoming youth, son of Shahaji Raje, a Sardar of Adil Shah (an atrocious muslim ruler). Yes! He is *Chhatrapati* Shivaji

Superior economic systems destroyed by colonialists

P.Kanagasabapathi

It is history that the European colonialists interfered with the native functioning systems in different parts of the world, after they entered their territories. As a result the political, economic, social and cultural systems that were functioning in different countries came under attack. India remained a unique country in the world, full of wealth and prosperity, sustained by superior economic systems functioning very successfully for at least five thousand years or more. So India was the “crown jewel” among all the colonies of the British with abundant resources and opportunities. One of their Viceroy, namely Curzon, made their intentions clear when he declared: “India is the pivot of Empire, by which I mean that outside the British Isles we could, I believe, lose any portion of the dominions of the Queen and yet survive as an Empire; while if we lost India, I maintain that our sun would sink to its setting”.

The East India Company, founded in 1600, gained its entry into India within a few years by establishing its trading post in Surat, through the rights granted by the ruling Mughal Emperor. Over the years the Company became richer and stronger and was able to take control of a few regions in the country. Robert Clive's victory in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 made the Company so powerful, that it ultimately became the ruler. The Company and its officials misused their

positions and plundered the resources of the country in every possible way. Widespread resentment against the attitudes and approaches of the Company led to mass uprisings, resulting in the First War of Independence in 1857. Soon India was brought under the British sovereign rule in 1858.

The biggest loss to the country under the British domination, initially through the Company and later through the sovereign Government, was the attacks on the time-tested and well-functioning systems nurtured over thousands of years of experience. The attacks were made continuously and systematically, especially targeting the economic systems. As a result all the different sectors of the economy had to face serious problems, leading to the loss of their original status, which in the process made India one of the poorest countries in the world.

The Indian farmers, who were known throughout the world for their outstanding knowledge of agriculture and abundant production, could not continue their vocation due to unbearable taxes and unfavorable conditions. Naoroji quoted the narrations of the British officials themselves to prove the pathetic condition of the Indian farmers. One of the officials by name Mr. Giberne who returned to India as a judge in 1840, saw the wealthy farmers in Gujarat becoming poorer in a period of just fourteen years. To quote: “I did not see so many of the more wealthy classes of the natives. The ryots all complain that they had

money at once, but they had none now." The attitude of the state was to collect as much revenue as possible even in difficult times, thereby pushing the farmers into debt and poverty. The following words taken from a letter written by John Bruce Norton, an official, to another official in 1854 mentions the condition of the farmers. "Now, it may certainly be said of almost the whole of the ryots,, that they are always in poverty and generally in debt."

Their taxation system was so oppressive that even a few of their own officials voiced their opinions against it. For example, Frederick John Shore of the Bengali Civil Service had recorded in 1837: "The fundamental principle of the English has been to make the whole Indian nation subservient, in every possible way, in the interests and benefits of themselves. They have been taxed to the utmost limit; every successive province, as it has fallen into our possession, has been made a field of higher exaction; The summary is that the British Indian Government has been practically one of the most extortionate and oppressive that existed ever in India --"

The native industries, that were admired and respected for their products of highest quality throughout the world, were killed by the British within a short period. India, that remained an exporter of textiles for centuries since the ancient times earning enormous surpluses to the treasury, was forced to import from Britain due to their one-sided policies. Even Karl Marx who otherwise supported the British rule in India noted in 1853: "It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian hand-loom and destroyed the spinning-wheel. England began with driving the Indian

cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindostan, and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons. From 1818 to 1836 the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in the



proportion of 1 to 5,200. In 1824 the export of British muslins to India hardly amounted to 1,000,000 yards, while in 1837 it surpassed 64,000,000 of yards. But at the same time the population of Dacca decreased from 150,000 inhabitants to 20,000. This decline of Indian towns celebrated for their fabrics was by no means the worst consequence. British steam and science uprooted, over the whole surface of Hindostan, the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry." As a result the local industries were wiped out leading to the "de-industrialisation" of the country. Millions of



artisan families with skills acquired through centuries of involvement in their vocation lost their livelihood and were pushed into land based activities and other menial jobs as there was no place for them to go. This, of course,

gave further pressure to the already struggling agricultural sector.

India was well known for exports since the ancient periods. Experts note that the country has a proud record of at least five thousand years in trade. The important point to be remembered is that India had maintained a favorable balance in international trade from the beginning, resulting in huge accumulation of gold and silver in the country. But all this changed with the entry of the British. India was made to become a net importer. Jawaharlal Nehru made the following observations on the trade practices of the British and their consequences in the country. "It was pure loot. The 'Pagoda tree' was shaken again and again till the most

Share of GDP of India and the UK in Global GDP

Year/ Country	1700	1820	1870	1913	1950
India	24.4	16.0	12.1	7.5	4.2
UK	2.9	5.2	9.0	8.2	6.5

The figures show that India's share of global GDP, which in fact was the highest in the world in 1700, came down to 4.2 per cent in 1950, about one sixth of what it was just before 250 years. At the same time, the share of the U K, whose GDP was less than one eighth of that of India's in 1700, overtook India in 1913. Studies undertaken during the past few years indicate that it was the stolen wealth from India which was mainly responsible for the "industrial revolution" in the U K.

The destruction of the native economic systems and the consequent difficulties led to the growth rates of per capita GDP of Indians to almost zero or negative, beginning from the nineteenth century till independence. The above rate during 1913-50 was a pathetic -0.22 per cent. So when India got her independence, she was a poor, illiterate and underdeveloped country. This was not due to any fault in her economic systems. India was made poor, illiterate and

terrible famines ravaged Bengal. This process was called trade later on but that made little difference. Government called this so-called trade, and trade was plunder. There are few instances in history of anything like it. And it must be remembered that this lasted, under various names and under different forms, not for a few years but for generations."

The destruction of all the critical sectors of the economy, namely agriculture, industry and trade severely affected the overall performance of the country. Besides the other services sector activities also suffered serious blows. The figures provided by Maddison show as to how the share of India in the global GDP went down drastically from the eighteenth century, while that of the UK had increased many times.

underdeveloped as the colonial rulers did not allow the home- grown systems to function, even while bleeding the country of all her resources and imposing alien systems that suited their self interests. As a result the most sustainable and effective economic system ever practiced in the history of mankind, which made India remain a superpower continuously for centuries had become extinct by time the British handed over the reins of the Government to the Indians.

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Freedom of Choice

Pramod Kumar

To Choose or Not to Choose!

Youngsters in India often rebel against rules and regulations in the name of 'freedom of choice' or 'freedom of expression'. "Colleges should not impose a dress code on students," some say, claiming that they are now grown up and capable of making their own choices. "Cell phones should be allowed in the campus," others say citing the need for latest technology. "Friendly ragging is not a crime," a few others argue, claiming that ragging is only a means to befriend and acquaint themselves with the juniors. "Parents should not impose career choices on us," is yet another often heard complaint. "Marriages need not be arranged in today's world and we should have a right to choose our life partner" etc. The list of their complaints is long and they all have one bottom line: "It's my life and I will do as I

wish."

It will be interesting to study this conflict of generations and culture from a Vedantic perspective. What do our Shastras say on this issue? Do they recommend freedom of choice

for individuals or are the Shastras morally rigid?



The Principle of Interconnectedness

"The entire universe is indwelt, enveloped, covered by the Supreme Being, whatever this world be - moving or non-moving, living or otherwise."

- Isha Upanishad

The principle of interconnectedness is the key to understanding the nature of freedom granted to every individual. This concept must be taught to our children from a young age so that they perceive the interconnectedness of all beings and grow up into mature human beings who

understand that freedom comes with great responsibility.

We are all interconnected. Therefore, what we think and what we do necessarily impacts everyone around us. To declare that “this is my life and I have the freedom to do what I wish,” is a cantankerous attitude and not conducive to our collective well-being. It is not a free for all as it has been made out to be in the public discourse and media frenzy for liberty.

A cursory glance at the crises humanity is witnessing today like global warming, terrorism, harsh economic disparities etc. are all a result of this fundamental error born of ignorance. Individuals and nations want to survive and grow at the expense of others, with gross disregard to this principle, not realizing that the world is round and what we do to others is eventually going to come back to us.

Every choice we make should therefore be evaluated with the principle of interconnectedness and only that freedom of choice which does not violate this principle can be considered to be beneficial. Any choice which violates others' freedom is to be considered harmful to oneself.

Freedom comes with Responsibility

The freedom we enjoy today as individuals, societies and nations is a fruit of the hard labour and sacrifice of our ancestors. Freedom must be earned by performing one's duty, through *seva* and *tyaga* as Swami Vivekananda would have put it. Even the international human rights discourse has begun to veer around to India's time tested emphasis on duties rather than rights.

Do we have the freedom to choose our duties? Duties are assigned to individuals according to their role and station in life. A duty well

performed gives us the privilege of enjoying a right which can then be considered well-earned. A soldier who leads his nation to victory in battle earns the honour and privileges which his countrymen proudly bestow on him. Will a killer who snatches away the inherent right to life of another human being deserve such honour even though both the soldier and the killer have committed the same act of killing, so to say?

Dharma is the foundation of Freedom

The above illustration shows that the multi-dimensional concept of Dharma is the foundation of the other three *purusharthas*: Artha, Kama and Moksha. Unless a man's pursuit of wealth and pleasure are rooted in dharma, he cannot attain freedom or moksha from the transmigration of birth and death.

Prof. Kapil Kapoor says, “Dharma is the one-word unwritten constitution of India.” Even an illiterate person in India has an ingrained understanding of dharma whereas even the most educated elite in this country may not have ever read the Constitution of India.

We must equip our youth to understand the inherent dharma of every situation so that they can make the right choices in life with clarity and conviction.

The Ramayana and Mahabharata are therefore considered as the two pillars of Indian Culture since they expound and elaborate on the intricacies of Dharma. The Mahabharata narrates the beautiful story of Dharma Vyadha and the housewife who attain moksha by diligent performance of their everyday duties. What an irony that a section of our youth consider it to be unfashionable to study the Ramayana and the Mahabharata today and there are politicians who question the very existence of Lord Rama and Krishna! No

wonder that our country is at the crossroads today and plagued by a multitude of cancers like corruption, naxalism and terrorism.

Shreyas and Preyas

The Kathopanishad is another rich source of inspiration and guidance for the youth on the tricky question of making a right choice. Swami Vivekananda advocated that all Indians should memorize the Kathopanishad and the story of Nachiketas, the young boy who faced even the God of Death with courage and *shraddha*. The Kathopanishad elucidates beautifully the principle of *Shreyas vs Preyas*.

Shreyas stands for what is right and beneficial for our own good and for others whereas Preyas stands for what is pleasurable. It is a well-known paradox of life that what is beneficial (shreyas) is often not pleasurable to the body and the mind and vice versa. For example, in the case of students, we can say that a disciplined lifestyle, good eating habits, physical exercise, diligent study, good company and respect for elders is what is right and beneficial for them (Shreyas). All distractions and cravings for entertainment, addictions, indulgence, and infatuation can be considered Preyas.

Students often fall for what is pleasurable at the cost of what is beneficial because preyas gives short term happiness but takes on a path of degeneration and weakens us in the long run, leading to misery. Shreyas may look boring and uninteresting to the young minds in the beginning but ultimately contribute to our success in materialistic pursuits and progress in spiritual pursuits. Sri Krishna also says in the Bhagavad Gita that 'Sattva guna' is often characterized by a bitter beginning and a sweet end whereas 'Tamo guna' is all that appears to be sweet but leads to sorrow. Drug

addiction would be the best example to illustrate this. Drug abuse which sounds so tempting and pleasurable to some youth ultimately leads to a complete physical and nervous collapse.

This is perhaps the most critical value conflict that our youth experience today in every walk of life. Our youth must learn to imbibe this wisdom of choosing Preyas over Shreyas every time. This requires mental discipline and training which must begin at an early age before the mind gets addicted to pleasure seeking.

Scriptures are the Manuals of Life

In order to have the clarity and confidence to make the right choices in all situations, an individual must have knowledge of the scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Yoga Sutras and the Dharma Shastras. Our seers have condensed the wisdom of Vedanta and their life experiences in these scriptures and hence they can guide us through many a crises which we are bound to encounter in life.

While the Shrutis like the Upanishads deal with the eternal higher truths of life and endow us with wisdom to understand the mystery of life, the dharma shastras give us clarity in conducting day to day affairs. There is a deplorable trend today to give less importance to the dharma shastras by calling them outdated etc. This would be a serious error. A sincere study of dharma shastras like the much maligned Manu Smriti would reveal that while a minute portion of these shastras may not be applicable to today's lifestyle, yet a majority of the rules & regulations suggested by them are still valid and applicable to us.

Life Counselling for the Youth

Our youth have great potential and a promising future. But they need a friendly guide who can give them the right guidance at the right time.

Unfortunately, most of the counsellors are trained and rooted only in western psychology and have a poor understanding of the Indian milieu. This becomes glaring when one reads the sexual counselling columns in newspapers and magazines. The advice given by these counsellors is short sighted and at complete variance with the rules and regulations laid down by our scriptures. Such counsellors often encourage students on the degenerating path of Preyas with least regard for consequences. Nor do they take responsibility for what happens to the youth who follow their blinkered advice. We need a new breed of counsellors who are also trained in yoga, meditation and Vedanta who can give holistic ideas to the youth instead of misguiding them.

Educational institutions in particular should exercise caution while employing counsellors and ensure that they are given a suitable orientation to understand the value systems of their schools or colleges.

Swami Vivekananda's Dream of a Young India

Swami Vivekananda had great faith in our youth and often dreamt of a glorious Mother India reinstated in her pristine glory by her patriotic children. Swami Ranganathananda too advocated the concept of enlightened citizenship, of citizens who would live not just for themselves but for the larger good of society. Let us lead our youth from attachment to Preyas to faith in Shreyas by practice and precept.

VIVEKANANDA KENDRA - KANYAKUMARI

SHIBIR CALENDER - 2011 (for General Public)

NAME OF THE SHIBIR	DATES	AGE	CAMP DONATION
Spiritual Retreat (Eng)	08-14 Feb	40 +	Rs. 1500/-
Spiritual Retreat (Hindi)	08-14 Feb	40 +	Rs. 1500/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Eng)	05-19 May	18+	Rs. 2000/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir (Hindi)	05-19 May	18+	Rs. 2000/-
Spiritual Retreat (Eng)	08-14 Aug	40+	Rs. 1500/-
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Fax: 04652-247177 / Phone: 247012

Vivekananda Kendra, Vivekanandapuram,
Kanyakumari - 629 702. www.vkendra.org

VK SAMACHAR

Kodungallur

SURYA KIRAN – 2011

Suryakiran, a Samuhika Surya namaskar programme was successfully held on Sunday, 9 January 2011, at the massive ground of Gurusree Public School. Fifteen schools in and around Kodungallur were approached and 11 schools responded. A total of 730 school children including 16 children from our Jai Srma Samskar varg participated. The programme started at 7.30 am with invocation by Ku. Radhika. Mananeeya Lakshmi Didi welcomed the gathering. Sri Hanumanth Rao ji, All India Treasurer, Vivekananda Kendra,



Students performing Surya Namaskar



Master AMAR LAL WITH MANANEeya LAKSHMI DIDI AND SRI HANUMANTA RAO AND DR VIJAYAN ARE ALSO SEEN

Kanyakumari was the Chief Guest. He graced the programme by lighting the lamp and also addressed the gathering. Our close well-wisher Dr. N.M Vijayan gave a short benedictory address. Sri Sangameswaran, the Secretary of the Guru Sree Public school, Kodungallur

where the programme was held and Sri Vinod Kumar, Chairman, Parents & Teachers association were also present on the occasion. Master Amar Lal who won the fifth position in yoga Olympiad programme organized by SVYASA, Bangalore was also honoured on the occasion. All the schools who had shown keen interest in sending the children for the Surya Kiran were given a small memento as a token of appreciation.

A gathering of 200 parents and teachers were also present to witness the programme. The two hour programme was much appreciated by all and was covered by the Local TV channels.

Brahmapur

Samartha Bharat Parva - 2011

VK Brahmapur, Odisha Vivekananda Jayanti on 12 organisations from together for this Swabhiman, Chinmaya Society, Gayatri Shakti Sarada Seva Sangh, Sangh, Swami Vidya Mandir, Vishwa Vivekananda Shiksha Seva Samiti also joined



Shri Kishore Ch. Raut, Swami SriKrishnanandaji and Shri. Hayagreeva Tripathy

celebrated Swami January 2011. This year 11 Brahmapur town came celebration. Bharat Mission, Divine Life Peeth, Ramakrishna Rashtriya Swayamsevak Vivekananda Shishu Hindu Parishad, Kendra, Yoga Vedanta their hands.

A rally was organised at morning hours from Khallikote College Ground to Lingraj Hall, passing through old bus stand, Annapurna Market, Mayuri towers area. 200 students from 4 schools and karyakartas of these organisations joined the rally. Tahasildar Shri. Shatrughna Kar flagged off the rally.

A public meeting was organised at Diamond Jubilee Town Hall at evening. Swami Srikrishnanandaji Maharaj, Adhyaksha, Rama Krishna Math, Puri was present as Chief Guest and Shri. Hayagreeva Tripathy, a noted scholar from Brahmapur was the Chief speaker for the occasion.

Uttishthata! Jagrata! Yuva Shibir

A three day residential Uttishthata! Jagrata! Yuva Prerana Shibir was organised on 28, 29 and 30 December 2010 at Sanjaya Memorial Institute of Technology (SMIT), Ankushpur wherein 49 youth from 5 districts of Odisha youth were selected after

Yuva Pratiyogita in which from degree colleges The shibir was Bhagaban Gantayat, topics like *Yuva Jage Bharat- Swarnima Bharat, Sangathit Karya Ki Yuva Bharat* were sessions by Shri. Laxmi



Samartha Yuva- Samartha Bharat –
Surya Namaskar Practice.

Chhatoi, Prof. Kishore Ch. Raut, Mananeeya Bhanudasji and others.

Yoga Pratiman *Pariksha De Haste! Haste!* was introduced in morning Yoga sessions. Shri. Bhagaban Padhi, a leading Chartered Accountant and noted Social worker from Brahmapur, shared his experiences in *Vijay Kshan* with participants.

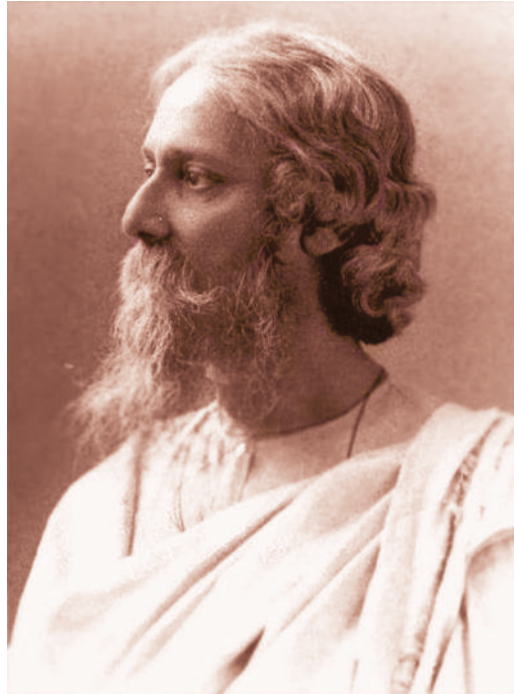
participated. These *Uttishthata! Jagrata!* more than 600 youth participated.

inaugurated by Shri. President, SMIT. The *Rashtra Jage, Sanatan Samartha Bharat, Avashyakata, Utho Jago* discussed in lecture Narayanji, Prof. Basudev

RELEVANCE OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE TO MODERN TIMES

Subhrendu Bhattacharya

Rabindranath is ever memorable, he is always with us. His 150th birth anniversary is being observed almost everywhere in India and elsewhere, particularly Bangladesh. The Government of India, the Government of our State and even the Government of Bangladesh as well as a host of Rabindra-centric organizations have taken up different cultural programmes to celebrate this solemn occasion in befitting manner not only to pay homage to the great poet but also to remind us of his variegated achievements. Besides, Sanskriti (Cultural) Express, fully air-conditioned five coach Exhibition Train, depicting the life and works of the universal poet is travelling all over India to make people aware of his versatile creations. This apart, as proposed by Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the Railway Minister in collaboration with the Govt. of India as of late decided to run Sonartari Express, after the name of one of Tagore's great works, between Kolkata and Dhaka. All this happens to be a



happy augury to all Rabindra-admirers as well as other people. Simultaneously, all such activities justify amply that Tagore is not forgotten by us, he can never be forgotten.

However, how Tagore deserves to be a man, relevant to our present age, is the main concern of this article. In this respect, it is perhaps very difficult to do justice to him, as Chinmohan Sehanavis observed:

How relevant is Rabindranath today to India? It is not easy to answer this question, particularly in regard to as multi-faceted as personality as Tagore's. For while he was primarily a great artist – poet,

composer, short-story writer, novelist, playwright and painter – he was also a thinker who wrote innumerable articles and delivered lectures and addresses, and educationist – a practical man – who founded and ran institutions

like Shantiniketan and Visva Bharati. He was also a social worker who alongside Shantiniketan organized co-operatives, the Sreeniketan and a Palli Charcha Kendra (Centre for Study of Rural Work and Development). And he never hesitated to intervene in the political turmoils of India when matters came to a head and demanded his attention.

Keeping all this fully in mind, I intend to put forward Tagore, in order to show his relevance to modern times, through the following specific heads for discussion.

Patriot, Nationalist and Humanist : Our heart throbs in pride and glory when the Tagore song *Jana gana mana*, recognized as our national anthem, is sung and listened to by us all standing in national and international gathering and forums. Actually, it reverberates in our mind a strong sense of national spirit, and this brings home to the poet's patriotic fervour instilled in his mind. It was also a source of inspiration to the freedom fighters of our country, as Hiren Mukherjee observed :

....Tagore's own song *Jana gana mana* was adopted by free India as its anthem, used to be sung first, all standing at national gatherings, and whose first two words Hail Motherland were the battle-cry of our people during more than three decades of struggle.

Besides, even now it is reckoned as a prayer song, sung by students of many educational institutions and this will remain so in the years to come. How popular is the national anthem to one and all!

Though not directly involved in the political happenings of his time including the freedom

movement of the country, he was not oblivious of national interest and sentiment. In 1905 Lord Curzon, a shrewd diplomat and the Governor General of India, declared arbitrarily the bifurcation of Bengal into two parts – East Bengal and West Bengal – for the sake of good administration. But the real intention of Curzon was to bring about schism between the Hindus and the Muslims, and thereby causing disunity between them. As a result, all sections of people – Hindus and Muslims – came over to the street to protest vociferously against the partition of Bengal. Tagore did not remain silent; as a true nationalist and patriot, he himself joined the procession of Rakhi Bandhan (occasion of tying emblem of fraternity), conducted by the people in large number. This was a step towards maintaining unity between the Hindus and the Muslims and to show strong resentment against the imperialistic design of the British.

Again in 1919 Tagore came to the forefront as a great patriot as well as a true humanist. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre of the innocent people at Amritsar in the Punjab on 6 April 1919 shocked him so profoundly that the true self in him urged him to do something for his countrymen. What the British imperialists did under the supervision of General Dyer was nothing but the barbaric perpetration, committed to the innocent human beings. Tagore's reaction to this incident was forthright; he in his letter to the then Viceroy of India dated 30 May 1919 stated his decision to quit his Knighthood, conferred on him by the British government earlier to devoid himself of all special distinctions and to stand by the side of his innocent countrymen who had to succumb to the bullets aimed at them by the nefarious British soldiers. To him it was a great ignominy and even to all Indians irrespective of caste, creed, religion and language as well as to humanity at large. So Tagore's relevance to modern times is found to be rooted in his noble virtues like patriotism, nationalism and humanism which are perennial by nature.

Nature-Lover and Environmentalist : Here

stress will be laid on the impact of nature on Tagore and his role as an environmentalist. Admittedly, Tagore in his childhood days, as we know, could hardly have any freedom to enjoy the beauty of his surroundings, for he had to pass most of his time in a cloistered room of the outhouse of his ancestral home at Jorasanka under the surveillance of domestic servants. But his imaginative faculty was very sharp and he made attempts to compose small poems looking at the sky, pond and trees outside his room. Time passed by and when he became young he was sent to Silaidaha in the district of Kustia (now in Bangladesh) to look after the ancestral estate. There he came in close contact with the bounties of nature the impact of which was so profound that he could not but express his feelings in a naïve way. He said:

...When I was about 25 years I used to live in utmost seclusion in the solitude of an obscure Bengal village by the river Ganga in a boathouse. The wild ducks which came during the time of autumn from the Himalayan lakes were my only companions, and in that solitude I seem to have drunk in the open space like wine overflowing with sunshine and the murmur of the river used to speak to me and tell me the secrets of nature.

In this way and fashion Tagore felt in the depth of his heart a perpetual touch of nature and thus became a worshipper of nature as William Wordsworth, Romantic poet of English literature. His interaction William Wordsworth, Romantic poet of English literature. His interaction with nature became deepened when he came to Shantiniketan in Bolpur in the district of Birbhum in 1901 and started a school there which eventually became a university, named Visva Bharati, in 1921. Here it is pertinent to note that though he was born and brought up in Calcutta he did like to live

in a secluded place amidst natural surroundings, far away from the madding crowd and the din and bustle of the city life. The choice of founding his school at Shantiniketan was largely due to the natural ambience. Trees here and there, laden with flowers of different hues and sizes are a treat to watch. Classes are held in the open under the shadow of trees, because it is incumbent on the part of the learners to come in direct touch with nature. Bereft of nature education is incomplete, for the learners have to suck out the resources which nature offers, and thereby supplementing and enriching the course of studies. In the midst of nature the mind may have its fearless freedom to dream its own dream and create new things. Tagore's deep love for nature reminds us of our stark indifference to her. Here it is apt to quote what Tagore thought of our indifference:

Man is extravagant in his attitude to nature. So long as he was attached to her, his interaction with her was full of cordiality. As time passed by, he became city-centric and thus lost his tenderness to her.

Furthermore, Tagore's own creation, Sreeniketan still seems to be an epitome of greenery, free from environmental pollution. Though Visva Bharati has lost much of its former luster, still one may find peace in mind in its natural surroundings. Willy-nilly man has now become selfish, and for that matter he is found to be forgetful of nature's gifts, bestowed on us. Recently we have come to know that the trees in the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans were felled indiscriminately and thereby causing much damage to its ecology. This proves how cruel man can be towards nature. To counter this, we must take lessons from Tagore. Interestingly, he was much ahead of his time; tree plantation is not a passion, rather a reality. So to him, tree-plantation is a part of our life. What he did for

this was to earmark a particular day in the year as the day of tree-plantation (Briksharopon day) and the learners at Shantiniketan were instructed to plant saplings so that a sweet rapport between man and nature could be established. Further, as Tagore believed in the maxim 'Cleanliness is next to godliness', he advised his pupils to maintain cleanliness in every aspect of life. So he, as a naturalist as well as environmentalist, showed us the way as to how to lead healthy life, free from environmental contamination.

Social Worker: Paradoxical though it seems to be, Tagore was a social worker par excellence and obviously in his own inimitable way. Here social work does not mean social reformation, rather it relates to what is rural upliftment. Undoubtedly, Tagore had gathered vast experience about the problems of rural people by associating himself with his own people i.e. subjects of Silaidaha estate and the villagers living adjoining to Shantiniketan after he had come there. What he realized first was that for the improvement of their economic condition they would have to work unitedly and methodically under someone's guidance.

Tagore, in order to introduce village self-government, divided his estate into three subdivisions – (i) Shajadpur (Pabna – now in Bangladesh), (ii) Kaligram (Rajshahi – now in Bangladesh) and (iii) Birahimpur (Nadia – West Bengal). As usual, Silaidaha remained as Headquarters. In each of the three subdivisions, Hitaishi Sabha (Welfare Organization) was instituted, headed by the Pradhan (Headman) who was selected by all the villagers as members. To defray expenses towards management of the Sabha and welfare schemes, a Common Fund was constituted with the collection of membership subscription and to add to this, Tagore as manager of his estate, contributed Rs.2000 as exgratia. The main functions, however, were (i) improvement of economic condition (ii) opening of schools and health centres, particularly for eradication of malaria and (iii)

road construction. Encouraged and empowered, the villagers began their multifarious activities.

Significantly, within three years from the inception of the Hitaishi Sabha the villagers showed spectacular results. With the joint effort, the villagers were able to found some pathshalas (primary schools), some minor schools and a high school at Patisar. Some health centres were also set up. Provided the Common Fund could not afford to bear the expenses towards the construction of school and hostel buildings, Tagore would allot necessary amount of money from his estate.

Besides, Tagore thought agriculture could not be the sole income of the villagers, so he encouraged them to resort to handicrafts such as pottery, weaving, umbrella-making etc. to earn supplementary income. Even he believed that they could use modern means of farming like tractors, husking machines etc. for better agricultural output, which was possible through the formation of co-operative farming and in that case villagers would be equal sharers as members. Further, the villagers were entrusted with the task of digging ponds, constructed a concrete road from Silaidaha to Kustia, the sub-divisional town, by them and obviously with his own expense. Sreeniketan, his own creation, is still an eye-opener to all so far as modernization of agriculture is concerned. Even for informal and adult education, he started a Night School to impart education to the adult and the female members. All this apart, Tagore, to avoid litigation to which the villagers were prone, set up two arbitration courts at Kaligram and Birhimpur to try the cases arising out of all kinds of disputes. Pradhans, with the inclusion of senior members of the villages, were given power to try cases for settlement of disputes to the satisfaction of all concerned. With the decisions of the courts one might not be satisfied, and for that matter one could appeal to the zamindar of the estate. In that situation, Tagore himself would go through the proceedings of the case and deliver his judgement to mitigate the sufferings of the

victims. In this respect, one can find a clue to the institution of Lok Adalat, much in vogue in modern India.

Thus Tagore proved himself to be a pioneer in setting up the village self-government and for that matter it is heartening to note that the Balwantri Rao Mehta Commission which recommended after independence to the Government of India for the introduction of the present three-tier Panchayati Raj System throughout the country had to take Rabindric-model of village self-government into due consideration. Hence Tagore's concern for the rural upliftment still holds water.

Tagore – an optimist : Finally, Tagore like Swam Vivekananda did not lose faith in his countrymen, as he anticipated far in advance that India would emerge as a free country sooner or later – the British would have to quit India. To fulfil this vision or dream, as we may call so, he had reposed full faith in his countrymen who had been subject to all sorts of harassment and humiliation, meted out to them by the British Government. In this respect, what Tagore remarked in his 'Crisis in Civilization' is a case in point.

The wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian Empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? As I look around, I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. But yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from the horizon, from the East where the sun rises.

Tagore, versatile genius, was a great phenomenon in the horizon of the East as well as of the West. He was, as if, a beacon light not only to Indians but also to mankind for he was able to show true path for us to tread on towards progress. Before I conclude, I repeat the very first sentence of this article – Rabindranath is ever memorable, he is always with us.



God is in all men, but all men are not in God; that is why we suffer.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Sister Nivedita – Who Gave Her All to India – 5

'Realisations'

Anirban Ganguly

While it is true that Swamiji spoke of the universality of mankind and repeatedly expounded on the harmony of religions and cultures it also bears reminding that this universality and harmony was not and was never meant to be a one way flow or a process of unilateral acceptance in his scheme of things. In his first public lecture in London during his second visit in 1896 Swamiji did speak of doing away with, 'All...narrow, limited [and] fighting ideas of religion'. 'As the human mind broadens, so its spiritual steps must broaden' he observed, and as the physical world was growing nearer and so too the future religions of the world have to become universal and wide.¹ But there was also a clear demand made as a condition of this universality, 'What is needed,' said Swamiji, 'is a fellow-feeling between the different types of religion...and not the condescending, patronizing, niggardly expression of goodwill unfortunately in vogue at the present time with many.'² It is this second condition, this second demand that is forgotten and almost always deliberately omitted by those in the habit of pontificating ad nauseam on the virtues of unity of religions and secularism.

The 'condescending' and 'patronising expression of goodwill' towards India, her religion, her people and her problems was something that no cell of Sister Nivedita's body contained. Such an attitude was wholly



alien and abhorrent to her being; it was rather with an attitude of the servitor that she approached her adopted land and her people. Rabindranath Tagore, poet laureate, whose observations on Sister Nivedita we shall have occasion to discuss in detail later, had caught the essence of her dedication to India. In his tribute to her, Tagore wrote that 'She was indeed a *Lokmata*, a mother to the people. We are familiar with the mother's role in a family; but the image of a mother whose love enfolded a whole people was something we had never seen before...So genuine was Sister Nivedita's

love of the people that those who had observed it could easily see the difference between her love and our concern for the people...³ It is a national pastime today to mostly fete and commemorate those who, playing to the galleries, condescended to serve India and her people in a patronising yet subtly disguised expression of goodwill and to relegate or marginalize those who dynamically but silently reflected through their lives, work, sacrifice and suffering the poet's eloquent assessment. When it comes to Sister Nivedita, the marginalizing silence is only too deafening!

Swamiji once said the he had poured maximum time and energy in preparing Sister Nivedita.⁴ Looking at the second European period – 1896 – one sees this preparation proceeding apace. Lyrically expressing this process of preparation and her growing perception of the country she was to serve as part of her Master's ordained work, celebrated Bengali writer Mohitlal Majumdar (1888-1952) in his discussion of Sister Nivedita's life, wrote, 'a lotus is doubtless a big flower; but still it does not blossom without sunlight. Swamiji was the sun that blossomed the lotus called Nivedita. She loved India and dedicated her whole life to its service...Swamiji made Nivedita see India with the eyes with which he had seen this great country. It is almost as if he had implanted his own heart within her bosom.'⁵

While the ignition for the Indian work proceeded, the work of preparing the spirit continued with full vigour. Sister Nivedita gave expression to this preparatory process [1896 in London], as discussed earlier, in her immortal '*The Master as I Saw Him*' considered by Sri Aurobindo to be the greatest book on Swami Vivekananda.⁶ Even a brief immersion

in some of these thoughts of Swamiji as expressed by his 'spiritual daughter' is indeed a liberating experience.

'Destruction of local mythologies': An interesting thought that preoccupied Swamiji, as Sister Nivedita read it during this period, was the need for the Indian thought to preserve and survive 'that destruction of local mythologies which is an inevitable result of all world-consolidations.'⁷ It was on this that he constantly dwelt and expounded. Such a concern expressed by Swamiji then in an era of political empires assumes greater relevancy today when a process of rapid and irreversible globalization is ushering in an era of forced cultural uniformity destroying diversities of religion, culture and lifestyles. Destruction of local mythologies had to be prevented in order to ward off the spectre of a mono-cultural existence starkly contradictory to a true and essential universality.

'Thou art He, O Man! Thou art He!': Describing the growth of the religious idea and its evolution in the spiritual growth and unfolding of the individual Swamiji or as Sister Nivedita addressed him 'the Swami' spoke of the goal being at first far and without and the need for it to be brought near and closer until 'the God of Heaven becomes the God in Nature, till the God in Nature becomes the God who is Nature, and the God who is Nature, becomes within this temple of the body, and the God dwelling in the temple of the body becomes the temple itself, becomes the soul of man...' The Centre, Him who has been sought through the ages 'is in our own hearts. Thou art He, O Man! Thou art He!'⁸ There was to be no rejection of matter but instead its recognition of divinity.

'Cover this reality with a mist': His efforts on describing the concept of Maya were striking.

According to Sister Nivedita the Swami felt these to be 'his greatest intellectual achievement during this period.'⁹ The following of the Swami's words, as heard and recorded by Sister Nivedita, were a milestone in the description of the concept, 'Because we talk in vain, and because we are satisfied with the things of the senses and because we are running after desires, therefore we, as it were, cover this reality with a mist.'¹⁰ In her interpretation of the word *Maya* through the words of the Swami Sister Nivedita observed that the word did not merely describe the Universe as seen through the sense but also 'describes the tortuous, erroneous, and self-contradictory character of knowledge.' 'This a statement of fact, not a theory,' Sister Nivedita records Swamiji as saying, 'that this world is a Tantalus' hell, that we do not know anything about this Universe, yet at the same time we cannot say that we do not know. To walk in the midst of a dream, half sleeping, half waking, passing all our lives in a haze, this is the fate of all sense knowledge. This is the Universe.'¹¹ True existence, true vision had to be lived and sought beyond the senses. But yet it is in that state of *Maya*, in that perpetual state of flux that most of our days and actions emerge and pass – a perpetually fleeting state of half-existence. This is how Margaret grasped the essence, 'By *Maya* is thus meant that shimmering, elusive, half-real, half-unreal complexity, in which there is no rest, no satisfaction, no ultimate certainty, of which we become aware through the senses, and through the mind as dependent on the senses. At the same time - "... *That* by which all this is pervaded, know *That* to be the Lord Himself!'"¹²

'Transference of the centre of gravity' and **'Renunciation'**: Thus actual spiritual growth

and spiritual evolution in the individual had to be preceded by a 'gradual transference of the centre of gravity, as it were, out of the one into the other, - out of *Maya* into the Self.'¹³ For a true living, this bondage of *Maya* – this half and confused existence had to be broken. This breaking of bondage into true living was 'freedom', '*Mukti*'. The 'would be breaker of bondage' had to seek this 'freedom' through 'renunciation' and not through 'enjoyment.'¹⁴ But it was in his definition or perception of 'renunciation' that Sister Nivedita felt that the Swami differed from most other teachers; he saw 'every kind of mastery as a form of renunciation'. Any supreme mastery was achieved after a mighty renunciation and yet Sister Nivedita saw in the Swami's spirit and definition of renunciation the fire of a conquest as characterized by his own life. Supporting his description of 'renunciation' the Swami pointed out that 'it was by renunciation, that is to say, by sustained and determined effort, by absorption in hard problems through lonely hours, by choosing toil and refusing ease, that Stephenson, for instance, invented the steam-engine.'¹⁵ It was an example that his London audience understood well. There was no place for a passive-renunciation; it had to be dynamic and goal-oriented and in this Sister Nivedita's life itself can be said to be a perfect expression of Swamiji's definition of the term.

What then was the process that Sister Nivedita underwent living through the second visit and attending these classes and lectures? Each of these vibrant sessions were spiritual nurseries opening up the directions of a new life and were not mere periods of intellectualisations to solely stimulate the mind. Describing these as such she wrote, 'In the meantime as I look back upon the time, I feel that what we all really entered upon in the Swami's classes was not so

much an intellectual exposition, as a life of new and lofty emotions, - or, as they would be called in India, 'realisations.'¹⁶

The realisations served to prepare the servitor. The transference of the centre of gravity preceded the beginning of the ignition of the Indian work. We shall next see how the Indian work was ignited and what initial role Margaret played in sustaining it.

1. Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West – New Discoveries – The World Teacher*, vol.4, (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 16th imp., 2007) p.212.
2. Ibid.
3. Tagore's tribute to Sister Nivedita translated by Kshitis Roy and Krishna Kripalani and cited in an English rendering of Mohitlal Majumdar's 'Sister

Nivedita Swami Vivekananda's Spiritual Daughter' written for the Golden Jubilee issue of *Udbodhan*. Source: *Vedanta Kesari*, Vol.95, No.7, July 2009, p.256.

4. Sankari Prasad Basu, *Nivedita Lokmata*, vol.1 (Beng), (Kolkata: Ananda Publishers, 5th imp, 1406 (Beng. era), p.3.
5. *Vedanta Kesari*, Vol.95, No.7, op. cit., p.258.
6. Sankari Prasad Basu, op.cit., p.3.
7. Sister Nivedita, *The Master as I Saw Him – being pages from the Life of Swami Vivekananda*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1910) p.24.
8. Ibid., p.25.
9. Ibid., p.25.
10. Ibid., p.26.
11. Ibid., p.27.
12. Ibid., p.28.
13. Ibid., p.28.
14. Ibid., p.29.
15. Ibid., pp.29-30.
16. Ibid., p.37.

Alexander – The Invader

Continued from December '10 issue

Dr. K. M. Rao

'Mutiny in Alexander's Army

“Thereafter Alexander pushed on Hyphasis (River Beas) near somewhere Gurudaspur. Here his army mutinied and refused to go further. They were tired. The rains had told heavily on them and they had been shaken by the severe fighting on the Jhelum and at Sangala. Reports received from emissaries said that across the Beas there were another Aratta people (possibly Mahlava and Ashwaka people) with a contingent of innumerable number of very large and brave elephants: after their terrifying experience with elephants in war at Jhelum with Purushottam, they had no courage to meet those elephants so trained in warfare... they had understood the conquest of Persia, but now they did not know what they were doing or where they were going; they wanted to go home. It was a severe blow to Alexander. True, he could not have gone much further in any case; only half his army was on his communications with Taxila and he was trying to use the troops of Purushottam for garrison.

History speaks eloquently the tragic plight of the Greek soldiers through these lines, “they had no desire to meet those elephants. They had understood the conquest of Persia, but now they did not know what they were doing or where they were going; they wanted to go home”.

Greek soldiers understood they were giving up their lives not to annex new lands for Greek empire but for Purushottam's (Porus') Kingdom. The revolt in rank and file of Army certainly had the backing of their respective commanders. Alexander being in predicament, torn by two opposing pulls—right demand of his soldiers

and the compulsive situation—had shut himself for three days, in his camp to win over the resentful army.

Chapter III

The Sixth Battle of Malli-Ashwaka

Alexander has set out to sail down the Jhelum to Arabian sea and soon learnt Mahlava (Malli) and Ashwaka (Oxydracae) were preparing to oppose him. He met the Malli (Mahlava) near the confluence of Jhelum and Chenab. Curtius and Diodorus speak of a people Sibi that inhabited in that area.

What was the fate of Alexander's Battle against the Malli and Ashwaka people?

Alexander 'fought a battle at the 'FORD', and shut up some of them (Malli-Mahlavas) in a town on the west of river. The town was easily taken, but the Mahlavas retired to the citadel; the Macedonians hung-back, and Alexander snatched a storming-ladder went up the wall himself, followed by his shield-bearer, Peucestus and Leonnastus, Abreas—a corporal-mounted another ladder; then both ladders broke, leaving

Alexander and the three on the wall. He went down into the citadel, and fought single-handed with his back to the wall till the three joined him; Abreas was killed and Alexander was shot through corselet and breast by a long arrow. Peucestus covered him in front with the holy shield of Illium and Leonnastus on one side; a tree prevented attack on the other; they kept the enemy off till the army broke in and killed every living creature there. Alexander was carried out fainting due to heavy bleeding; Perdiceas cut the arrow with his sword and he finally fainted and lost consciousness. The report went forth to his



dwindling army that he was dead. As soon as he could be moved, had himself carried on a ship and shown to the army.

Among Alexander's battles, this is ghastliest in its dreadful record of gruesome slaughter. The explanation probably is that the army lost its morale and frustrated. They hated it; they had no wish to fight, but as they had to as if by force, they took no chance and indulged in slaughter to quell a fresh rising, so that they will not be turned back from their way-home. Twice Alexander had to mount the wall, first to get his soldiers follow; it was indeed time for the tired army to go home. Indirectly, this the least of his military campaigns was to cost him his life, for the wound left him weakened.

The Greek soldiers did not believe that he was alive even seeing him laid. Alexander had to raise his head to show he was alive. The Mahlava and Ashwaka were 'Aratta', i.e., Araja kingless people – i.e., Gana Rajya. They were freedom-lovers and valorous. It is said that the Dogra warriors of Jammu region too participated in this battle. In the meanwhile, Abhsaresh, king of Rajouri, Bhimber of Jammu joined the army of Purushottam.

Alexander's command on his army was gravely diminishing day by day. When he saw his orders and commands yielded no spell on his army, he –'Alexander saw his men falter, impetuously seized a ladder and planted it against the wall and mounted it crouched under his shield', aptly shows his command on his army had already been lessened. Strangely enough, none of his Generals was there by his side, nor any-led the forces, nor any cavalry, was there. Alexander fought as a foot-soldier, though Craterus, Hephaestion, Ptolemy, Seleucus, Philip, Nearchus etc. Generals were there with the army. The revolt in the army was so strong that Coenus, the spokesman for the army, had said bluntly to Alexander: "Do not lead us now against our will for then thou will no longer find us the men in regard to dangers, since free—will be wanting to us in the contests". This speech shows what a sea-change happened in Greek army following the devastating defeat in the Jhelum war with Purushottam. Coenus was

proved correct when Alexander was mortally wounded. One very important fact needs to be looked into at this cross-currents of events.

Right before this Malli (Mahlava) battle, Alexander was sailing down the Jhelum in November 326 BCE, to leave Bharat by waterways. Purushottam who used to send his army to garrison and annex the land so gained by Alexander, did not send his army in this journey. It means, he knew Alexander was not in a position to take the risk to return from Bharat along the land route (by road) through which he had come because those people whom he had subdued while coming were now in arms in rebellion to take revenge on Alexander; even Ambhi of Takshasile (Taxila) and the people of Gandhar were now about to rebel.

So Alexander preferred to go southward through Makran (Gedrosia) of Sindh to reach the mouth of Indus and to set sail therefrom. Aman, Nearchus and Curtius have given a full description of how he had prepared for the same.

"The order of March" was as follows:

While Alexander with the hypaspists, Agrianians, cretan archers and the agema of companions sail down the Jhelum, the rest of the army was to march in three columns:

one under Craterus on the right bank;

a second under Hephaestion on the left bank;

and a third under Philip, Satrap of Gandhara, three days march in the rear.

Nearchus was given command of the fleet. But this design has crushed on the dock, 'before the advance of fleeing army reached the confluence of Chenab and Jhelum news was received that the Malli and Ashwaka (Oxydracae) were preparing to attack it.

The Malli-Ashwaka battle was qualitatively different. Here Alexander did not storm them to conquer their land but the Malli-Ashwaka army fought to drive Alexander out of their land. The outcome of this last and final battle in which Alexander was mortally wounded has been stated

earlier.

After the disastrous defeat of Malli-Ashwaka battle, all the battle plans of Alexander fell into pieces. It is historically crucial to know how the Greeks fled from Bharat in 325 BCE.

All Greeks fled from Bharat in aberrant and bizarre route as if different authorities had given them different orders.

- (1) Craterus was sent with three battalions of the phalanx, some archers, battered soldiers and men unfit of further service with heavy baggage and limping horses by way of Mulla pass.
- (2) Nearchus was the head of ship voyage. Arrian states all other commanders refused Alexander's order to head the voyage except Nearchus. The voyage was of 10 to 15 tiny ships, having 10 days ration, five days water provision for crews, some archers, mercenaries and catapults. It started in late September, 325 BCE.

And Alexander's escape from Bharat, it is said, began from Patala (at the mouth of Indus, wherefrom Nearchus set for sail) through Makran having with him four battalions of the phalanx, the hypas Agrianians, the archers and all the Macedonians of the companions and the horse archers. It is said that he moved southward along the coast to dig wells for water and store foodstuff in wells for Nearchus' sailing people as the ships were not suitable to carry more than ten-day ration and five days water.

And then 'as there was no shore route, he was then compelled to travel inland along the track which connects Makran and Sind. The country through which he supposedly marched was devoid of water for long stretches and the heat was so intense that the retreating army had to march by night. After all the baggage had been lost-the transport animals either died or were eaten-the army again reached the coast at Pasni and Gwadur struck the road which led to Persia. The non-combatant forces almost all perished and army suffered great loss in this arduous journey.

Some true points of circumstantial evidence of Alexander's death

1. Was this abhorrent, brazenly selected route at all led by Alexander? Why should he follow such a route and his General Craterus preceded him along a more sensible route through Mulla pass leaving him mortally wounded behind enemy lines in a hostile land of powerful enemies?
2. Was not Alexander already dead in Bharat and his Generals after Malli-Ashwaka battle in which he died shortly after decided amidst themselves to escape in three routes under three generals as they could not agree, who should be the supreme commander in case all moved along the same route?
3. Nowhere in the escape route 'cavalry' was mentioned. Was that because cavalry was completely decimated in the Jhelum battle?
4. Alexander while in the escape route was digging wells in seashore to store food and water for Nearchus's voyagers was simply a fictional narration to suppress who led actually the third route of escape. The third route took elephants with it. Given Seleucus's and Ptolemy's liking for elephants, was it Seleucus and Ptolemy who led the third route of escape and not Alexander?
The names of Ptolemy and Seleucus were found nowhere in the third escape route records. Arrian followed Ptolemy fragmented writings after 400 years. Did Ptolemy suppress their names and put Alexander's name instead. Alexander's name may be a later interpolation.
5. Many of the satraps appointed by Alexander to administer various parts of Persian Empire and Greek State including Macedonia were murdered in 324 and 323 BCE in the name of Alexander. Were those done by a handful of his major generals who partitioned his vast empire amidst themselves just to wipe out resistance to their designs? They kept his death in Bharat suppressed

till they themselves could have reached to Babylon and settle the partition of empire amidst themselves and then declared Alexander's death in Babylon? Philip whom Alexander had appointed as satrap of Gandhara and western Upaganastan (Afghanistan) was murdered when Greeks were retreating from Bharat.

6. Alexander's mother, wife and son were murdered by Cassander, Alexander's companion General who, after Alexander's death became the king of Macedonia and master of Greece as per agreement amidst his Generals who gathered at Babylon for the partition of his empire.

Alexander's defeat, death and epitaph

What were the fettle and form of Alexander's health mind prior to and right after Malli-Ashwaka battle i.e., in his last combative days in Bharat?

"He left his arrangements in Bharat, an unfinished sketch, to be sponged off the canvas the moment he died. He meekly handed over all the country upto Beas to Purushottam after his defeat, and who in spite of his, Abhisaresht did not come to him, he accepted his excuses, confirmed him in his Kingdom as a tributary prince and gave him authority over the neighbouring ruler of Hazara. This clearly shows that Alexander had lost all authority over what happened at East of Jhelum".

The Epitaph

A doleful, melancholy, resigned Alexander his nemesis catching him up will be the apt lines of Epitaph on his grave.

History has got a way of its own to take revenge.

Alexander's Defeat : Martial and Spiritually

Alexander was defeated martially in Bharat. He agreed to be a covenant of subsidiary alliance while Purushottam annexed all his lands conquered so far and ascended the throne. He faced revolt from his disgruntled and battered

army. He was mortally wounded, lost the fighting spirit and became doleful. He died, all circumstantial evidences, press to conclude, in Bharat in 325 BCE because of being mortally wounded in the Malli-Ashwaka battle.

Alexander once wished to meet a yogi Sadhak. In his arrogance, Alexander sent men summoning the saint to meet him, saying "if he meets, he will be rewarded with gifts, if not will be put to death". The yogi sitting on his seat made of leaves and grass, smiled and said that Alexander had nothing worthy to offer to him as the yogi got the bare needs from God—the light, the sky, the forest and the river sufficed his needs, if killed, his soul would go back there wherefrom it had come. Hence he felt, he had no necessity of meeting Alexander. Alexander could not fathom the meaning of the words of the saint and his blissful smile. Alexander felt humbled by the wisdom of the detached words uttered by the saint.

QED: Had Napoleon invaded England would the British people call him, 'Napoleon the Great? Never. Alexander should properly be called Alexander the Invader instead of Alexander the great in our History Text books.

Megasthenes who came and stayed in Bharat shortly after Alexander's death commented:

"That we have never been attacked by others nor had themselves attacked others".

Alexander had no geographical knowledge of Bharat. He had no idea of the vastness of Bharat, her main land, mass of continental proportions and huge roaring rivers and world's highest mountain ranges extending over thousands of miles. Alexander's invasion was only marginal on the borders of Purushottam's Kingdom. In those days in Northern Bharat, Pataliputra, the capital of Chandragupta of Maurya dynasty 324 BCE was the principal imperial power. Alexander was one thousand five hundred miles away from the seat of this most powerful cogent political cum martial command in Bharat.

Concluded