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**VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PRAKASHAN**

नमामि भक्तवत्सलं कृपालुशीलकोमलं  
भजामि ते पदाम्बुजं ह्यकामिनां स्वधामदम् ।  
तदेकमद्भुतं प्रभुं निरीहमीश्वरं विभुं  
जगद्गुरुञ्च शाश्वतं तुरीयमेककेवलम् ॥

○ Lord, I bow to Thee, who art compassionate, gracious and sweet. Thou alone, ○ Lord, art marvellous, selfless, mighty and omnipresent. Thou art the teacher of the world, eternal, transcendent, one and absolute. I worship Thy lotus feet that enable the selfless souls to attain to Thy eternal abode.

## Editorial

### Ramo Vighrahan Dharmah

The month of March brings Ramnavami. In many places the Ramkatha, study of Ramayana and the celebration of Ramnavami would be taking place. That is good to some extent. Some may not even remember that Ramnavami came and left. That is not so good. What is the purpose of celebrating Ramnavami? If we understand it then we shall see that this is a festival that is to be celebrated by all irrespective of what god they worship, irrespective of their creed. By saying that Ramnavami is just a religious festival we are missing the significance of Rama's life and thereby the great inspiration that we can get for a holistic living.

These are the days when the media, the educational system and many other forces working in our country have created an atmosphere of

doubting our cultural history. There are some who are bent upon saying that Rama did not exist and so what is the point in celebrating the birth of Rama who was just a product of a great poet's imagination. But we know that archaeology, literature, folk tradition, everything points to the historicity of Rama. As put forward by one well-known writer, "Did Rama exist? Yes, I am quite sure he did. Rama's life was a fact. His divinity is a matter of faith. To doubt the existence of Rama is to doubt all literature. There is no archaeological or epigraphic evidence for either Jesus Christ or Prophet Mohammed, who are known only from the Bible and Koran, respectively. Does it mean they did not exist? If Rama performs miracles such as liberating Ahalya, the Biblical story of Jesus walking on water or the Koranic tale of Mohammed flying to heaven on a horse are equally miraculous. Such stories reinforce divinity, not fact."

Saying so, the writer enumerates the sites that are associated with Rama and archaeology proves the historicity of Rama: "The Ramayana is geographically very correct. Every site on Rama's route is still identifiable and has continuing traditions or temples to commemorate Rama's visit. Around 1000 BC, no writer had the means to travel around the country inventing a story, fitting it into local folklore and building temples for greater credibility.

"...In 249 BC, Ashoka erected a pillar in Lumbini with an inscription referring to the visits by both Rama and Buddha to Lumbini. Ashoka was much nearer in time to Rama and would be well aware of his facts.

"Rama, Lakshmana and Sita left Ayodhya and went to Sringeripur — modern Sringeripur in Uttar Pradesh — where they crossed the River Ganga. They lived on Chitrakoot hill... Thereafter, the three wandered through Dandakaranya in Central India... The trio reached Nasik, on the River Godavari, which throbs with sites and events of Rama's sojourn, such as Tapovan where they lived, Ramkund, where Rama and Sita used to bathe, Lakshmankund, Lakshmana's bathing area, and several caves in the area associated with their lives in the forest.

"Rama then moved to Panchavati near Bhadrachalam (AP), where Ravana abducted Sita. The dying Jatayu told them of the abduction, so they left in search of Sita. Kishkinda, near Hampi,

where Rama first met Sugriva and Hanuman, is a major Ramayana site, where every rock and river is associated with Rama. Anjanadri, near Hospet, was the birthplace of Hanuman (Anjaneya); Sugriva lived in Rishyamukha on the banks of the Pampa (Tungabhadra); Sabari probably also lived in a hermitage there. Rama and the Vanara army left Kishkinda to reach Rameshwaram, where the Vanaras built a bridge to Lanka from Dhanushkodi on Rameshwaram Island to Talaimannar in Sri Lanka. While parts of the bridge — now known as Adam's Bridge — are still visible, NASA's satellite has photographed an underwater man-made bridge of shoals in the Palk Straits, connecting Dhanushkodi and Talaimannar. On his return from Sri Lanka, Rama worshipped Shiva at Rameshwaram, where Sita prepared a Linga out of sand.

"Sri Lanka also has relics of the Ramayana. There are several caves, such as Ravana Ella Falls, where Ravana is believed to have hidden Sita to prevent Rama from finding her. The Sitai Amman Temple at Numara Eliya is situated near the ashokavana where Ravana once kept her prisoner...

"All the places visited by Rama still retain memories of his visit, as if it happened yesterday. Time, in India, is relative. Some places have commemorative temples; others commemorate the visit in local folklore. But all agree that Rama was going from or to Ayodhya. **Why doubt connections when literature, archaeology and local tradition**

**meet? Why doubt the connection between Adam's Bridge and Rama, when nobody else in Indian history has claimed its construction?** (Incidentally, this bridge shown as Ramar Bridge on a 1788 map drawn by the botanist explorer Joseph Parks, was renamed as Adam's Bridge, in 1804, by J. Rennel, the First Surveyor General of the East India Company!) Why doubt that Rama travelled through Dandakaranya or Kishkinda, where local non-Vedic tribes still narrate tales of Rama? Why doubt that he was born in and ruled over Ayodhya? Rama's memory lives on because of his extraordinary life and his reign, which was obviously a period of great peace and prosperity, making Ramarajya a reference point."

In what way was Rama's life extra-ordinary? What does it mean by Ramarajya? We do not go deep in these questions because there is another category of persons, who say ok, Rama is historical but so what? His way of life, the values that he practiced are most obsolete. So what is the point in celebrating or remembering him?

The third category is of devotees of Rama. They accept Rama as incarnation and on special days like Ramnavami they would have Bhajan or Ramkatha. Thereby for most of them (but by no means for all) the responsibility ends. They do not think of the need of explaining Rama in today's language to the younger generation so as to make them also the ardent devotees and followers of Sri Rama.

As per our tradition this was part of Rishiyagna, that a householder should understand and study the vision of the Rishis, the objects of deep reverence. Not just study but he should understand the vision of the Rishis as well as the objects of reverence in the modern context and then should pass it on to the next generation. Rishiyagna is passing on the vision as well as practices so as to keep the continuity of tradition in a changed context. Such practice of Rishiyagna made our culture eternal. Occasions like Ramnavami are the opportunities to perform Rishiyagna.

In the era of individualism, the life of Rama might have appeared obsolete, who for the sake of his father's promise to his step-mother went to forest for fourteen years or who gave up his wife for the sake of the congenial atmosphere in the society. Rama verily appears outdated in the light of individualism.

But today, as science is progressing, our view or vision of the world is changing. Our world-view has undergone change. We do not say any more that it is survival of the fittest but we say that the universe is interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. We know that if nature is destroyed, man stands the risk of getting destroyed. Since the sub-atomic studies, study of ecology revealed this fact, there is a search by the modern but thinking man for that way of life which protects nature, which nurtures the society and family and which also helps the individual growth. All this is comprised in one word for us, and that is **Dharma**.

Dharma is not any set of dogmas to be believed in but it is a way of life based on eternal principles which give us the interpersonal norms of behavior so that integrated human development, and harmony in the family and society is achieved. Western education over the years has in a way hampered our understanding of Dharma. Therefore, unthinkingly Dharma gets translated as religion. But religion is different. Religion means a defined God, a revealed book and a prescribed way of prayers to pray to that God. Dharma is not a religion. Dharma is not what comes to you as a prescribed way of worship by someone. Dharma is not taught, it is sensed. Dharma is a matrix of values sensed by all human beings as value system and thereby accepted by all as the basis for interaction. Everyone knows what is wrong and what is right. Everyone knows what is being selfish and what is in the interest of the Whole. Dharma is doing right. Dharma is what you grow into with your initiative and efforts. Man has all the freedom to wreak havoc around. Dharma is the inner brake system to control and mould man so as to become the harmonious part of the whole. Thus a man's life is for the family, the family is for the society, the society is for the nation and the nation is for the whole creation.

Thus we can say that Dharma means holistic living. But because of the mechanistic, reductionist training that we have had, it becomes difficult for us to understand Dharma, and that is where the life of Rama is very useful. Rama is considered as Dharma personified. **Ramo Vighrahan Dharma.** The Ramayana starts with Valmiki asking Narada

who was the greatest man who ever lived on earth. Narada narrates the story of Rama, the King of Ayodhya. Rama was considered as Vighrahan Dharma. Dharma personified, because each and every action of Sri Rama was for the higher good, in the larger interest. He does not allow the selfish interests, personal attachments or likes and dislikes or false values of prestige to take precedence in choosing the action in the interest of the society.

By giving up his personal claim on the kingdom and the material enjoyment, Sri Rama went to the forest for maintaining the tradition of the family. Then, when it was required, he sacrificed his family joys in order to retain the moral values in the society; to nurture a value-based society. It was not the question of what was the truth about Sita's character, but it was the question of what was the perception of people. And when the perception of some in the society was of doubt about character, then in such a situation neither Sita nor their children could have grown in a healthy atmosphere. Thus his action turned out to be for the larger interest of the family too. The lesson from Sri Rama's life is that the human being contributes to expanding circles of consciousness. Expanding individual is a family, expanding family is a society, expanding society is a nation, and expanding nation is whole creation, the consciousness that pervades everywhere. The life of a human being should always be in the interest of the larger identity. If there is a clash between smaller identity, and the larger identity, the decision has to be in the interest of the larger identity. In such a decision the larger

interest of the small identity also gets taken care of. Thus harmony is achieved, the Ramarajya gets established. Study the life of Rama and one can know how to lead life so that one's actions contribute for the creation of an ideal society. And if one happens to be in the position of power as Sri Rama was, then he can create the ideal society – a Ramarajya.

Ramarajya has become a watchword for an ideal society. If we read the descriptions of Ayodhya in the Ramayana, then even by our present modern standard, we see that it was an ideal society. For Mahatma Gandhi, freedom struggle was for establishing Ramarajya in Bharat. It means, he expected to have such values in the society that everyone would look at the larger interest of the society and sacrifice his personal happiness. Sadly, though a section of the leaders quote and swear by Gandhiji, they would scream if the word Ramarajya is mentioned, if Dharma is given prominence. It would be called communal. And so, to be politically correct, when we do not any more refer to Ramarajya, then understanding and working for Ramarajya becomes still a far cry.

There was harmony in Ramarajya because Sri Rama did not divide the society into various communities like Nishadas (tribals), Vanaraas or Rakshasas and set one community at the throat of

the other. Even though distinct communities existed and even though some had harmed him, like the Rakshasas, he saw to it that all were united with each other in a higher vision of Dharma. Thus he hugs Guha as his own brother, he becomes friend of Sugreeva, and he gives refuge to Bibhishana and even promises him that he would not destroy the Rakshasas if they were not supporting Ravana. He even offers an opportunity for Ravana to set right the wrong. If only Sri Rama wanted, it would have been easier for him to take the help of Guha and fight with Bharat which Guha had offered to do. He could have set Vanaras against Rakshasas, but by accepting Bibhishana he impressed on the minds of the Vanaras that the fight was not with the Rakshasas as a community but with those who are Adharmik, who are breaking the norms of harmonious existence. The rulers and administrators in order to retain their power should not fragment the society but using their very power and their acceptance in the society should make the communities accept each other and thus bring cohesiveness. This is what Sri Rama did and so could develop an integrated and harmonious society. The celebration of Ramnavami is to take inspiration from Sri Rama's life to work for establishing an ideal society, striving for a holistic living – Dharma, by surrendering the selfish interest of the smaller identity for the sake of the bigger identity.

**-Su B.Nivedita**

# A FLAWLESS VISIONARY

K.Subrahmanyam

The Ramayana is a story and history not only of the past but the present as well. It is a story of every individual and institution, organization and nation. It is significantly a mirror of present day India. To a perceiving eye, it presents our problems and goals, ordeals and ideals, struggles and solutions. Only, we have to look at the epic with a scanning eye and the symbolic significance of the story will soon be visible to all.

The three main characters in the story are Rama, Sita and Lakshmana who together constitute every individual in general and India in particular. Rama is everybody's soul; Sita is mind and Lakshmana is the body striving and serving to keep them both together in peace, happiness and bliss. The soul of India is the Rama of spirituality. The mind of India is the Sita of simplicity, austerity, purity and single-minded devotion. Lakshmana is the entire country of hard working artisans, agriculturists and the countless sincere workers serving to keep India rich and prosperous for the glory of simplicity and spirituality, austerity and enlightenment, purity and peace. Sita (Mind), Rama (Soul) and Lakshmana (body) of India and Individuals have been peaceful for several years. But when the foreigner with his materialistic

mesmerism, appeared before the mind in the form of a false golden deer, in the form of trivial pleasures and fancies such as 7'o clock blade and Glasgow cloth, intoxicating alcohol and maddening perfumes, Indians fell a prey to the temptations. Sita (the Indian mind) was lured by the gambols of Mareecha's (alien's) mischief. She was stolen away by the villain Ravana. Indian mind was abducted by the self-centered multi-nationals of materialism. Ravana of ten heads captured the tender Sita and kept her captive in a foreign land. Materialism, Macaulayism, Marxism, Mareechas in the mask of Mlechcha missionaries and the ten headed monster Ravana as the many hooded Cobra of multinationals have enshrouded the Indian minds with their poisonous fumes to kill Indians and India by separating them from their soul and soil. Sita is temporarily separated from Rama and Lakshmana.

Then, there is the freedom struggle. The aliens are driven away. Ravana is done away with. Sita is released from the foreigner's hands. India is rid of foreign yoke. In 1947 we got freedom to be back in our soil, to be reunited with our spiritual soul. Sita has returned from Lanka to be united with Sri Rama. But Rama would not accept her. Why? Is it the fault of Rama or defect

of Sita? Milk can accept milk or water but not salty aqua. Spirituality can receive simplicity. Austerity is acceptable to Atman. The Sita of simplicity is welcome to Rama, but not the Sita in the ornaments and gorgeous costumes of materialistic aliens. In the austere robes of an ascetic pining for her lord, Sita ought to have arrived (returned) to the presence of Sri Rama. No doubt, he asked her to be back, bedecked in fineries. It is more to test her adherence to austerity than to provide a licence to anybody to be donned in alien clothes. Sita had been highly individualistic and assertive. She was very steadfast. She even defied Rama's order and insisted upon her accompanying him to the woods. She succeeded in persuading her husband to run after the false deer. She was not incapable of self-assertion. When Rama wanted her to return in the royal robes, she should have declined and stuck to her ascetic attire. Her simplicity for a while was clouded by materialism. Indian mind is polluted by materialistic thoughts of the West. In 1947 we got only political independence. Our thinking remained Western. Our judiciary, education, defence, medicine and even parliamentary system have been alien. The Sita of austere simplicity presented herself in the presence of Sri Rama not in the native ascetic attire, but in the alien ostentation. The freed Indian mind is no more ascetic. It has been under the spell of Western materialism. This is not in tune with Indian spirituality. Therefore, Rama spurned her. Sita understood him and came out unscathed in the flames of austerity. She stood pure and pious, simple and sincere in her natural and native cultural dignity and decorum. There

was nothing foreign in her. She was chaste and immaculate. She is united with Sri Rama. Indian mind has to be bright and pure once again to be united with her resplendent spirituality. It should resort to austerity, burning the borrowed materialism of the West in the fires of simplicity and native cultural heritage. We have failed to do so. Sita in the story did. We in the history did not do. Therefore we are unable to be fully free and shining. The efforts now should all be for purification of ourselves, ridding us of alien materialism.

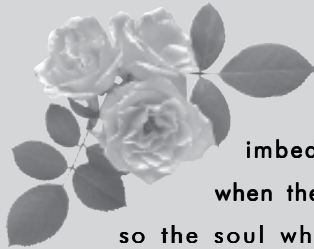
Sita is back in Ayodhya fully freed from the foreign yoke. She is pregnant. It is time for her to foster the children in the womb with our spiritual culture. She is ready to be a responsible and loving mother to ensure native culture to her future generations. But the people around her do not allow her to be completely devoted to the righteous bringing up of her offspring. The three mothers-in-law and the three sisters (the wives of her husband's brothers) pester her with questions about her stay in the foreign lands beyond the seas. They ask her to explain to them about Ravana and the Rakshasis, Lanka and her people of sense-indulgence. They go to the extent of pressurizing her to draw the picture of Ravana. Indians, even after several decades of foreign yoke, are unable to free themselves from the alien influences. We remember the West, imitate the West. Our planning, life and language are still Western. Instead of diving deep into our cultural heritage for its revival, we draw a blueprint of our future in the Western frames, in the Western ink, in the Western thought. What a shame! This



is not to the liking of many—to the soil of India, to the soul of India and to the very mind of India. Still we relentlessly ape the West. This has to be stopped. Therefore, Sri Rama removed Sita from the gossiping women and placed her among ascetics of spirituality, so that the future of his children is very much on the track of Indian heritage. Lava and Kusa of sterling character are true to their parents in being the custodians of our spiritual heritage.

The independent India is now like Sita in Ayodhya amidst inquisitive women desirous of learning about the aliens. Should we not, being

free, strive to be fully Indian? Should we not try to be austere, simple and spiritual? If we don't resort to our native culture and restore our spirituality, our children will be Westernized. They will become materialistic, working for the very ruin of our culture and spirituality. Is Sri Rama then wrong in sending Sita to the woods of austerity? He did it in the interest of our nation, in the interest of our future generations. Let us learn from Sri Rama and keep our minds glued to our heritage. Else, India will be a land of uncultured, uncivilized materialists of selfishness, cunningness and cruelty. Let's strive to be simple, austere and spiritual. ■



**God is to man as magnet is to iron. Why does He not then attract man? As iron deeply imbedded in mud is not moved by the attraction of the magnet, so the soul deeply imbedded in Maya feels on the attraction of the Lord. But as when the mud is washed away with water, the iron is free to move, so the soul when by constant tears of prayer and repentance washes away the mud of Maya that makes it cling to the earth, it is soon attracted by the Lord. As a piece of lead thrown into a basin of mercury soon dissolves in it, so the individual soul melts away, losing its limitations, when it falls into the ocean of Brahman. The water and its bubble are one. The bubble has its birth in the water, floats on it, and ultimately is resolved into it. So also the individual ego (Jivatman) and the supreme Spirit (Paramatman) are one and the same. The difference is in degree; the one is dependent, the other independent.**

**—Sri Ramakrishna**

# Inspiring incidents from India's freedom movement

N. Krishnamoorti

**INTRODUCTION:** India's freedom movement is a turning point in world civilization. Some eighty countries freed themselves from Europe's colonial yoke, inspired by the shining example of India. For Mother Bharat's children themselves, the freedom movement was a period of consolidation of India's political, human and natural resources. Binding Indians together, great saints came on the scene. Ramakrishna Paramahansa led the procession. Romain Rolland wondered how a single nation could produce such a rich harvest of saints and leaders within a short span of 33 years (from Sri Ramakrishna in 1836 to Mahatma Gandhi 1869). It is then that Tagore came with that classic statement, "If you want to know India study Vivekananda. IN HIM EVERYTHING IS POSITIVE AND NOTHING NEGATIVE." Ostensibly, Tagore was talking about India itself.

The freedom movement brought out the best from Indians. As fighters, valour was their prime virtue. Tact, strategy, service, purity, devotion, honesty, skill-in-action were all seen in the men and women who fought for India's freedom, so that its future children may live in freedom. We list below some inspiring events and episodes in the freedom movement.

## 1) THE GITA AND THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Appropriately, the freedom movement was a spiritual quest with the Bhagawad Gita as its text book. Lokamanya Tilak wrote his wonderful "Gita Rahasya" in Mandalay jail. Lala Lajpat Rai wrote notes on the Gita from the same jail, when he was incarcerated there. Vinobaji delivered the Gita Pravachan (from the Dhulia prison in 1932) which has been published in all Indian languages. Gandhiji's writings on the Gita have come in the form of two slim volumes, Anasakti Yoga and the Message of the Gita. Kaka Kalelkar has compiled a dictionary of Gita terms. Sri Aurobindo had a vision of Sri Krishna in the prison and delivered his inspired talks on the Gita. Swami Vivekananda's talks and notes on the Gita are well known. Perhaps the largest number of translations, commentaries and printing editions of the Gita was then done in India to cater to the need of the freedom fighters.

## 2) A RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT

MADANLAL DHINGRA (1887 - 1909) who was sent to prison for shooting to death Sir Curzon Wylie, an advisor to the Secretary of State to India, spent his last days in the prison in England most peacefully. He showed no nervous debility even on his last day. He was reading

spiritual literature and mounted the gallows with admirable self-control. He said:

“As a Hindu, I feel that the wrong done to my country is an insult to God. Her cause is the cause of Sri Rama. Her service is the service of Sri Krishna. Poor in wealth and intellect, a son like myself has nothing else to offer to the Mother but his own blood and, so, I have sacrificed the same on Her altar.

“The only lesson required in India at present is to learn how to die, and the only way to teach it is by dying ourselves. Therefore, I die and glory in my martyrdom.

“My only prayer to God is that I may be reborn of the same Mother and I may re-die in the same sacred cause till the cause is successful and She stand free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God.”

### **3) LOKMANYA TILAK**

Tilak's claim to greatness lies, as Aurobindo Ghosh noted, in giving a truly national base to the struggle. To quote Aurobindo, “The Congress movement was for a long time purely accidental in its mind, character, and methods, confined to the English-educated few, founded on the political rights and European ideals, but with no roots either in the past of the country or in the inner spirit of the nation. Mr. Tilak was the first political leader to break through the routine of its somewhat academical methods, to bridge the gulf between the present and the past and to restore continuity to the political life of the nation.

We developed a language and a spirit and he used methods which Indianised the movement and brought into it the masses.”

### **4) MATA MAHA RANI TAPASVINI**

A contemporary of Rani Lakshmi Bai was Mata Maha Rani Tapasvini, who was also the niece of the famous Queen. She was the link between the First War of Independence of 1857 and the Revolutionary Movements of later days.

A child-widow, Mata Maha Rani stayed with her father, Narayana Rao. Endowed with a knowledge of the Scriptures, she had also acquired proficiency in physical training and martial arts. When her father died, she devoted her time to the development of the defence of his fort. The British, intent upon uprooting opposition, soon noticed this and put her in confinement at Trichy. After her release, she took to spiritual life and as the disciple of Gauri Shankar came to be known as Mataji Maha Rani Tapasvini. It was Mataji's fertile brain that was responsible for the idea of the Arms Factory in Nepal. She suggested it to Tilak when she met him in 1901 who sent his close and devoted friend K.P. Khadilkar in 1902 to Nepal to open negotiations with the Nepalese Commander-in-Chief, on the topic. It was agreed to open an Arms Factory in collaboration with the German firm 'Krupps' under the disguise of a tile manufacturing unit. Khadilkar stayed back in Nepal - registered as an innocent citizen under the name of Krishna Rao. But the plan floundered. Krishna Rao's identity was revealed and the scheme came to a dead end. No one

ever guessed that the brain behind the whole plan was Mataji.

## 5) JETHI BAI

The Portugese' atrocities in the Deev area near Gujarat was not restricted to religious conversion.

Near Kathiavad is the Deev Nagar, an important port, also famous for dyeing mull-mull cloths. A Kshatria had a large factory. His wife was Jethi Bai, a rare combination of compassion and courage. She would rush to help her suffering neighbours.

The Portugese rulers made a strange legal provision. Orphan girls and boys who were not yet of marriageable age were declared wards of the government, to be brought up by the Church. They would be converted to Christianity.

A boy lost his mother and after a few years his father too died. When he went to the cremation ground to perform the last rites of his father, a government official was waiting to take him under his wings. And he was converted.

Jethi Bai was anxious to stop this evil. One of the workers in her factory had lost his wife sometime back and his only son was 13 years old. The worker too died. The government official had reached the cremation ground ahead of the funeral party and was waiting for the rituals to be completed, so that he can claim the boy as his.

Jethi Bai came to know of the turn of events

and decided to forestall this stupid conversion. She searched for and located a suitable girl for this boy, persuaded her parents and organized them to come to the house of the worker who has died.

There, with the dead body lying in an adjacent room, Jethi Bai conducted the marriage of the boy with the help of a priest. When the government Subhedar came to know that the boy was now a family man, he went away disappointed, missing the catch.

Jethi Bai had to conduct quite a few such marriages so that orphaned children are not forcibly taken away and converted.

How long could this bride/bridegroom hunting go on! Jethi Bai came to know that Portugal was ruled by a queen.

She wrote a letter asking the queen, "How will you feel, if your innocent, adolescent son or daughter is forcibly taken away and converted?" She traced a Portugese - known lawyer, who drafted a letter in the queen's language and wrote it down on a piece of exquisite mull-mull cloth.

Armed with this letter, Jethi Bai set sail to Goa from Deev, a fourteen day voyage. She wanted to meet the governor at Goa and send her letter to the queen.

With a burning torch in one hand and sandal-wood box carrying her letter in the other, Jethi

Bai reached the governor's palace. She started raising alarm, "There is darkness and injustice in this territory."

The governor was forced to come out and receive the petition to be forwarded to the queen.

The queen was touched by the letter, especially, the personal reference. She instructed the governor that 1) The injustice and stupid

conversion should be stopped forthwith 2) Jethi Bai should be treated with reverence as if she was the queen's own sister 3) Once a week, the government musical band should halt at Jethi Bai's doors and play in her honour. 4) All government officials should take off their hats and salute Jethi Bai when they meet her.

A great injustice was stopped because of the courage of one woman, Jethi Bai.

## Do you hear Swami Vivekananda saying:



**"Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desire of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost, for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen".**  
**Are you among those whom Swamiji had in mind? Come, dedicate yourself for the service of the nation as a fulltime worker of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari - a spiritually oriented service mission. It is not a career - but a mission. Your Yogakshema would be taken care of by the Kendra.**

**Send e-mail for details at:**

**ngc\_vkendra@sancharnet.in OR**

**Contact at the following address with full biodata and a postal order of Rs. 10/-**  
**General Secretary, Vivekananda Kendra,**

**Vivekanandapuram, Kanyakumari - 629702**

**For detailed information,**

**visit us at [www.vivekanandakendrakanyakumari.org](http://www.vivekanandakendrakanyakumari.org)**

## Calendar for Shibirs at Vivekanandapuram for 2007

Particulars	Period	Eligible Age Group	Donation
Spiritual Retreat (Eng)	6-12 February	40-70 years	Rs.1000/-
Spiritual Retreat (Hindi)	6-12 February	40-70 years	Rs.1000/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir(Eng)	6-20 May	20-55 years	Rs.1500/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir(Hindi)	6-20 May	20-55 years	Rs.1500/-
Spiritual Retreat (Eng)	6-12 August	40-70 years	Rs.1000/-
Spiritual Retreat (Hindi)	6-12 August	40-70 years	Rs.1000/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir(Eng)	1-15 December	20-55 years	Rs.1500/-
Yoga Shiksha Shibir(Hindi)	1-15 December	20-55 years	Rs.1500/-

## **A Letter from Assam**

*Dear Sisters and Brothers,  
Jai Krishna! Hare Krishna!*

*Why does not the media give coverage to positive things in Assam? The entire country is being filled with negative news about Assam. About the recent killings in Tinsukia, news was splashed in captions throughout the day about the "Red color of Assam". Many of you rang us up every day inquiring about the situation and our welfare.*

*But, did you read or hear about the recent Srimanta Sankardeva Sangh Adhiveshan held in Nalbari? You would not have. More than 5 lakh Hindus had gathered for the event. Not a single news agency or media covered it and naturally no one came to know about it. Had you read about it, you would have asked for more details from me.*

*I am writing this to apprise you of my wonderful experience in this Adhiveshan.*

*We all - Dipankarda, Sujathadidi, Rupesh bhaiya and I - reached the outskirts of Mahapurush Madhav Deva Kshetra on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007 at 11.00 p.m. The atmosphere was charged with enthusiasm and "KRISHNA" was the only sound we could hear from every body. Nearly 1.5 lakh of people were gathering there and at the Kshetra, Sri. Hariprasadji Hazarika, was waiting for us in Mula Karyalaya (Main administrative office). After an ANTARANG ALOCHANA (an interactive session), we were offered refreshments and tea at the back of the huge stage, Mukhya Sabha Mandapa .*

*Then we were invited to the dais. What a big stage they had erected? What a big pandal? I could count 356 big teak wood posts held the huge hall wherein 18,000 bhagats could sit comfortably at a time. Sri Hariprasadji conducted the program. Besides us, four other representatives were present. We were asked to tell about the KARYAKSHETRA and we complied. In between we watched how the entire proceedings were being conducted in a disciplined manner without any supervision. All of them were so well self-disciplined!*

*We were then introduced to Sri. Bhupenchandra Hazarika, one of the Joint General Secretaries elected by 80 representatives from 45 districts. The local members at subdivision level elect 80 representatives.*

*He took us to show the Vyavastha part of the Adhiveshan after our lunch in "Vishesh Shibir" where Niwas Vyavastha of Adhikaries and Guests was done. First we went Namghar where Akhanda Naam was going on along with uninterrupted prasad distribution.*

*Next we went to see Bikhek (Vishesh) Manch where the elections and other important business of the Adhiveshan were held.*

*Then Sri Hazarikaji took us in Seva Vahini Shibir. That was the time of change in the shift. The Karyakatas were coming in to take charge and new batch was getting ready to go. What a big camp! 7000 brothers and sisters! Separate vyavastha for Sisters and Brothers. Systematic arrangement for residence. Paddy straw for bedding and G.I. sheets for walls. Good water arrangements.*

*Courtesy in dealing with one another and the commitment to the cause seemed to be unique quality of each karyakarta. Everyone was chanting the holy name of 'Krishna, Krishna' everywhere and without our knowledge, we also started chanting 'Krishna, Krishna'.*

Next we went to see the Bhojan Vyavastha. Huge vessels welcomed us with divya naam of SRIKRISHNA. 200 stoves, 900 cook! The food was cooked day and night. Nobody would go without partaking the sumptuous Prasad. The systematic arrangements attracted our attention. Women were cutting vegetables. Water from tube wells was placed nearby to wash and trays for the washed vegetables. Nearly 75 stoves were burning bright continuously for cooking vegetables alone. Same Vyavastha for Dal and Bhat. Large trays for prepared dishes and serving carts for carrying it. There was a large dining hall to serve 12000 bhagats at a time. Dhan bharal was very big. Every thing was just varnanatit (beyond description) - a Mega affair.

Then, we saw the accommodation provided to the Pratinidhis, district wise.

There were stalls in plenty for food items, books, calendars etc.

We could not see Bhaona (dance drama) manch where every night Bhaona was performed.

After overnight stay, we witnessed the next morning 'Dharma Pataka arohana' ceremony. A 60 ft. high platform was erected for Dharma Stambha. Five lakhs of people were there well in advance, singing devotedly naam kirtan with Dhola Khol and Bortaal. At 8.45 a.m. everything became suddenly quiet. Then the Padadhikar (Head of the Srimanta Sankardeva Sangh) reached the venue. After performing three pradakshinas to the Platform, he hoisted the flag and gave an inspiring Prabodhan for 45 minutes.

The second day was still more inspiring. Mananeeya Rekhadidi represented Vivekananda Kendra at the dais where the Chief Minister of Assam, many ministers and MLA's including 4 Muslims were sitting. The C.M. praised Vivekananda Kendra for its work in the field of education through VKVs in Assam. Mananeeya Rekhadidi spoke on the Srimanta Sankardeva's contribution and role of Vivekananda Kendra in North East in general and Assam in particular.

Sri. Satya Sankar Borah, a small child, also spoke on the occasion. He began his speech with Naam Ghosha, addressing everybody - the public - who assembled there as "Naranarayana". He said that he could see Krishna, Prahlad, Dhruva, Uddhava, Arjuna, and others like them everywhere. Then he said, 'I am frightened like Bal Dhruva when he too saw God Himself standing before him. Now I am also frightened like him as I can see PRATYAKSHASH BHAGAVAN in front of me.' Then he uttered a beautiful hymn from BHAGAVATAM and narrated many stories from Bhagavatam. It was so nice!

We left the place at 5 p.m. with a great sense of satisfaction and a bit of sadness for parting from such a nice Adhiveshan. What surprised us most was that we did not find a single policeman anywhere else other than some security personnel with and for the Chief Minister.

Such a major event without any disturbance occurred in a place reported to be virtually a disturbed area. But the media that sensationalize and magnify even minor events into major ones could not find this great and positive event worthy to bring to the attention of the people of the country. There was everything positive, energetic and encouraging and confidence building and nothing negative. Yes, nothing negative. Not an iota of it. If media fails to bring to the notice of the society the positive happenings then let us start doing that! No points in crying over how the media is or things are around us. Let us take the lead to spread the positive happenings in the society. And so this letter for you all.

Dharma is awake. Let's only do our Duty,  
With prayers to Lord Krishna and regards to all,  
Yours sincerely  
Meera

# Aksharaanaam Aakaarosmi

Satish Chowkulkar

I was eager to meet Shiva Swarupananda, after our last interaction, because he had promised to discuss the most interesting subject – Nature of God and our relationship with Him. I was trying to locate him at his usual haunts. After this exercise in futility, I spotted him in a Yajna Shala – the venue of Athi-Rudra Yaga being performed under the supervision of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Thiruvanmiyur in Chennai.

He was chanting the Anuwakas of the Rudra Prasna alongwith the priests, who were officiating the Yajna – a mass chanting with a gathering of more than 70,000 people. He was fully merged with the vibrations of the chants. I reached him after the Yaga concluded. He smiled and reciprocated my greetings and said “we are meeting at a most appropriate location! I remember we are to discuss the nature of God and our relation with him.” He signalled me to a place a little away from the crowd and we settled ourselves for our deliberations.

I opened the topic – “We are always being told that God is everywhere and is present in everything. Last time you also referred to the ‘Vibhuti Yoga’, chapter 10 of Srimad Bhagwad Gita”.

He smiled and said, “This time I will add one more dimension to that- **Everything is in God.**” Because God is in every thing and every thing is in God, it implies that God is everywhere”.

Obviously, my face was *confusion incarnate*. Shiva Swarupananda, as though, he read my face, said, “this is not just an intellectual inference. We can experience this when we orient our efforts in proper direction.” I asked, “Will you please elaborate on this?”

Shiva Swarupananda proceeded, “Whatever we see around us needs space for positioning itself. This space is everywhere – unbroken. In physics there is a dictum – *Two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time*. This rule applies to all objects – Solids, Liquids and Gases. They have to give space to each other by displacing themselves. But the space is Absolute – space does not have to move itself to accommodate other objects. In fact all the objects move in the space. The space is everywhere, and everything needs space to exist. This spiritual ace is an expression or manifestation of the — Ishwara.” In our parlance the space is called Aakaash. He paused for a while to see if the clouds of confusion on my face were clearing away. I pondered over the idea and said, “Ok! What next?”



“This Aakaasha, the expression of the Ishwara gets manifested further in its less subtle dimension – the sound or shabda. This sound is the primordial sound called *Pranav Naad* i.e. Omkar. This sound is the tangible expression of the Ishwara in the Aakaash. Patanjali Maharshi expresses in the Yoga Sutras as **“Tasya Vachaka Pranavah”** (Samadhi Paad Sutra no.27) This primordial sound Pranava i.e. Omkara has three ingredients, sounds, namely **Aa, U** and **Ma**. Recalling to the Vibhuti Yoga (chapter 10) of Srimad Bhagwad Gita, Bhagwan Sri Krishna asserts “Aksharaanaam Aakaarosmi... (Sloka No.33) I am the syllable **Aa** among all the syllables.

Omkar spurts from the Aakaasha, beginning with Aa-Kara, then the resonance is retained with the U-kara and it merges back into silence in the Aakaasha through Ma-kara.” “Well then what was the status of the Ishwara when the Aakaasha was in its own? I mean Pre-Pranava state.” I gave vent to my curiosity. “The unexpressed form of Ishwara in pre-Omkar state was the – **Ni-Shabda**. This state is the *Existence, par-Excellence*, full of bliss, positive and potential creativity. This silence is Ishwara – the God and wherever the space pervades, that is everywhere, the Ishwara is pre-present.” Shiva Swarupananda was trying to put the Absolute knowledge in most simple words. “How come Patanjali Maharshi, the exponent of Yoga Darshan – dealing with Chitta and Vrittis, tells about this?” I asked.

Sage Patanjali is an authority in Vyakarana i.e. grammer for Vacha, Yoga Sastra for Chitta and

Aushadha Sastra for physical well being, i.e. for Kaya, Vacha, Manas. These three faculties are inter-related for total well being of an individual. The source of all these three disciplines, i.e. Yoga, Vyakarana and Vaidya Shastra, is Shiva.

Shiva as Yogishwara is a source of Yoga Sastra, Shiva as Vayteeswara is a source of Ayurveda and Shiva as Nataraja is a source of Shabda and Vyakarana. The sounds of Nataraja’s Damaru and Anklets during his dance – Ananda Tandava, the Sound manifested and also the rules governing the sound and words i.e. Vyakaran – Grammer emerged. Patanjali had prayed to Shiva for displaying the Tandava and through it the Sastra of sounds. Nataraja danced for the devotees— Patanjali and Vyaghrapada.

It is believed that Nataraja Shiva performed this dance at a place called Chidambaram in Tamilnadu. The place is also known to have an invisible *Aakaash Linga* by the side of Nataraja’s Garbha Griha. This is known as *Chidambara Rahasya*. Interestingly, at a right angle position to this shrine there is a shrine of Sri Krishna as Maha Vishnu, observing Shiva’s Tandava Nritya – a play of Shabda and Ni-Shabda.

In order to stress this fact, almost all the major Shiva temples in Southern Bharat, a place is marked for Nataraja’s Nritya Sabha.” “Yes!” I said, “I have also seen in the Sabhas statues and pictures of Patanjali and Vyaghrapada. – a saint with tiger’s feet. But how it is related to the statement that Ishwara is everywhere?” I asked. “Well! now you know that the word, the

expression of the Ishwara, is ensourced in the Aakaasha and this Aakaasha is everywhere and every thing is, as though, suspended in this Aakaasha. Ishwara is therefore everywhere and everything is in Ishwara". Vedantic statement *Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma...* (everything around is verily the Brahman) can be understood. The Brahman mentioned herein pre-exists the Aakaasha. The Panch-Maha Bhutas namely Prithvi, Aapah, Vayu, Tejas and Aakaasha have emanated from Brahman. Everything cognitive around is made out of mixing of the Pancha Maha Bhutas, in different proportions. So Brahman, i.e. Ishwara is present in everything." Shiva Swarupananda looked up to me for response.

"That's OK!" I conceded. "But one thing! what you are telling can be understood by an analytical mind. How this Truth can be experienced by the general people?"

The main attribute of Ishwara is **Blissful silence even while in the state of intense activity**. If you see the idol or picture of Nataraja, you will experience this. All the activities involve intense movements, regulated sound patterns, and variety of expressions and emotions i.e. Bhava. Sangeet and Mantras involving all sound patterns ultimately merge back into the silence from which they had emanated. All Rituals and Nritya involving physical activity finally lead to activity-free state i.e. **Sthabdha** and all the emotions and expressions ultimately result in **Ananda**, i.e. Bliss. So the Ishwara or Brahman to be experienced is **Sthabdha**, **Nishabda** and **Ananda** - a balanced state - **Samatva**. All the

spiritual activities are aimed at achieving this state. So the common, non-analytical, people can experience this Ishwara through the rituals, the performing arts and the other creative activities like writing stories of God, sculpturing; poetry, discourses on Puranas and Itihasas, etc. In the Hindu way of life, therefore, there are rituals associated with every activity like getting up (Suprabhatam), taking bath (Abhishekas), nitya karmas (Panchopachara Puja), taking food (Naivedya and Prasad), serving food (Anna Daan), sweeping and cleaning (Kainkarya), gardening (Sthanu-Upasana), and every other mundane work. Everything is spiritual and nothing is secular—ungodly." Shiva Swarupananda again looked at me.

"What is this mass ritual Athi-Rudra, you were participating in? Apart from being a ritual what is its social and cultural significance?" I asked, "Because I came to know that this Athi Rudra was being performed for 11 days and for 6 hours in the morning – 5 to 11 a.m. and 4 hours in the evening – 4 to 8 p.m." This was attended by more than seventy thousand people for 10 hours per day for 11 days i.e. 110 hours per person involving more than 77 lakhs of man-hours. How can we justify this 77 lakh man-hours' utility?" I asked like a journalist with a sarcastic tinge. Shiva Swarupananda smiled, acknowledging the sarcasm, and said, "I will have to tell you the whole thing – Spiritual, Cultural, Social and also the Political impact of such rituals. "Now that we have seen that Ishwar is silence and that the Shabd – Omkar is Shabd Brahman, we can experience the Ishwar by chanting his name,

taking any Mantra or Nama. In the Vedic period, all the forces of Nature – being a part and parcel of Srushti and therefore expression of Brahman, were contemplated as Gods – for example, Agni, Vayu, Indra, Varuna, Rudra, etc. Suktas and Chants for these Gods form part of all the four Vedas. Anyone can chant these and generate the Shabda and ultimately dwell on the immanent silence – intermittent to the Shabdas and ultimate merger in it. *Rudra Prasna* is one such powerful chant. One who chants this feels the all pervasive, as well as experience it deep within. The Late Swami Ranganathanandaji, President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, described this experience as *Externally Supreme and internally Divine*. When these chants are done collectively and repeated number of times the experience multiplies in time and space – qualitatively as well as quantitatively. This process has been standardized as follows - chanting of the eleven Anuwaks of the Rudra Prasna eleven times and the Chamaka's eleven anuwaks once is called a *Rudra Awartana* – Chanting it 121 times is called *Rudraikadashni*, chanting it 1331 times is called Maharudra. When Maharudra is chanted 11 times (the number of Rudra chants then becomes 14641); it is called Athi Rudra. In the present mass chanting programme, 121 persons chanted the Rudra 11 times i.e. numbering 1331, for 11 days, taking the number to the Athi Rudra i.e. 14641 chants.

The sound energy generated from out of these chants works on the chitta of persons covering a very large geographical area – say the whole of Bharat Varsha. Therefore, the Sankalpa made

for the Yajna was “for the welfare of all positively oriented persons– Aasthika Bhaktas residing Aa-Sethu Kailasachal – i.e. whole of Bharat Varsha. Such rituals unite all the positively oriented people for good social cause. The person presiding over these rituals becomes an effective Leader – to deal with the problems of the society. The Sankalpa and the sound energy emanating from such rituals ensures health, self confidence, healthy interpersonal relations, capacity to resolve the conflicts leading to peace and prosperity for the masses. It is the process of evolution of Vyashti to the Samshti and then to Srushti also, as the Rhythm generated by these vibrations corrects the imbalance in the forces of nature. When programmes of this magnitude are held – the discipline, system, method and order get ingrained in the participants and the organizers. Cultural changes do come in the conduct and behaviour of the masses – Samuhik Samskar. When such a disciplined, determined social force is generated, politicians of all hues and colours also have to take cognisance of it. Their atheistic, pseudo-secular, irreligious policies will then get a back seat. As Swami Vivekananda says, all the *scattered spiritual forces will get unified and their “hearts will beat to same spiritual tune”*. In modern times, the saints like Sri Sathya Saibaba and Mata Amrithanandamayi have got done many stupendous works in the fields of academic and professional education, medicine and health-care, housing, relief works during calamities like Tsunami, social reforms to unite the society, problems of women, and above all, providing Abhaya—fearlessness — to millions and millions

of people. These processes of the rituals have been kept alive by Pandits and Purohits so that these can be systematically implemented in the changing times". Shiva Swarupananda took a pause. "Well, the Ishwar in the Aa-kara has gone minutely all over around and this Godwardness only will purify the contaminations in all walks of life." I responded. I said, "I am recalling what the Late Ma.Eknathji, founder of Vivekananda Kendra, had written in the editorial of Yuva Bharati, way back in September 1973, (Reprinted in Vivekananda Kendra's Publication 'Call of the Millennium Page No.69-70)

The remedy for the ills of our country, therefore, lies in launching a mighty movement of right thought flooding the entire country. It has to be a two-pronged move. It is to be aimed, on the one hand, at (1) transforming our people's inherent God-wardness into right spiritual urge rising out of the Vedic teachings, namely, (i) each soul is potentially divine and (ii) faith in God, in turn, means faith in one's self, i.e. in one's potentiality to rise to divine

heights. On the other hand, it is (2) to convert the spiritual fervour thus released into works of national reconstruction.

This idea forms the very core of Vivekananda Kendra.

"So! now you have seen one more dimension of Srikrishna's expression in the Vibhuti Yoga – Aksharaanaam Aakaarosmi.....Let us know that God and his name are one, let us not look down on the people who silently conduct the rituals and do Nam Japa to feel God. Let us not lament unnecessarily over the so-called loss of manhours. Let us understand that such people are a source of strength for the society. In fact, such saints only are providing themselves as conduits for the Ishwara's force, like a Hydel Dam on a perennial mighty river, which will regulate the water for irrigation and power generation besides quenching the thirst of the masses". Shiva Swarupananda then took me to the prasadam counter and we left after taking prasadam. The real prasada was the assurance of Sri Krishna, that He is with us as Shabda Brahman through the Nama and the matching Karma. ■

**After so much austerity, I have understood this as the real truth—God is present in every *jiva*; there is no other God besides that, 'Who serves *jiva*, serves God indeed.' You cannot help anyone, you can only serve; serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself , if you have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help and one of His children, blessed you are; do not think too much of yourselves. Blessed you are that that privilege was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as a worship.**



—Swami Vivekananda

# A SUPERIOR RATIONALIST

K.P. Shivkumar

Sri Ramakrishna was able to see a mother in every woman; the lesser ones see a woman in every mother. It means a world of difference in outlook. It's a matter of one's own evolution.

Rationalists put forward their own arguments to defend their beliefs. They say they are justified in erecting the statue of an atheist in front of Hindu temples. In their view, a well-clad statue of an atheist is less harmful than some of the nude sculptures within the temple. Are some stray nude sculptures the be-all and end-all of temples? Is there nothing good in temple culture? The Tamil poet-saint Avvaiyar sang : *Kovil illaath ooril kudi irrukka vendaam*. (Live not in a place where there is no temple). Temples are interwoven with the life of the people of India. They have been promoters of various arts like dance, drama, music; propagators of spiritual knowledge, Vedas, Puranas, etc. Millions of families live on various ancillary trades related to temples, temple festivals, etc. The money generated through several of the big temples is used for various constructive activities such as schools, colleges, Paadasalas, dispensaries, poor feeding, etc. There are Devaswam Boards and Religious Endowment Boards recognized by the government. Why should Hindu temples be spited, despised,

condemned and insulted? The reference was to nude sculptures in temples.

There were two sannyasis waiting to cross over to the other bank of a river. A young woman came to them asking them to help her cross over to the other bank. As the water current was somewhat swift, one of the sannyasis lifted her in his hands, crossed the river and safely landed the woman on the bank. She thanked the sannyasi and went away. The other sannyasi was a little disturbed. He asked the fellow-sannyasi, "How come that being a sannyasi, you lifted that young woman in your hands?" the latter was surprised. He said, "O my dear, I had no sensual thoughts as you seem to harbour in your mind. My whole thought was centred on safely carrying her to the other side of the river, whereas your thought was centered on the person of the woman. Are we not supposed to rise above such sensational thoughts?"

Sri Ramakrishna narrated a story. There lived a prostitute. Somehow forced into that way of living, she had no other go. Every night someone or other would go to her on business.

But the woman sincerely repented for her way of life. At other times she would earnestly pray

to God for forgiveness and bless her with purity. This coming and going of men, a sannyasi used to watch regularly from a distance so much so that it became his pastime. The mind having become polluted, prayer and meditation became less and less important for him. On the other hand, the woman's mind was most of the time fixed on God. The time came for both of them to leave the mortal coil. The woman went to heaven. The so-called sannyasi had his place in hell.

Therefore, bringing down the level of temples to museums housing nude sculptures does no good even to the rationalist way of thinking, leave aside the question of belief or no belief.

The poor poet in me struggles to pen a few lines seeking some self-satisfaction. Here are the lines:

*See the Deity, but not the nudity,  
See the sculpture, but not the vulgar,*

*See the beauty in the Rose, but not the thorn  
around,*

*See the art, but not in parts,*

*See the effects, but not the defects,*

*See life as a whole, but don't dig a hole,*

*See the Gopuram and grow taller in spirit,*

*But not the dwarfs sculpted to get stunted in  
spirit,*

*See the saint-singers, but not the vain sinners,*

Remember:

*Life itself is nude*

*Without the grace to shed thoughts crude.*

Swami Vivekananda was also a rationalist. But his was not the rabid rationalism of blindly criticizing and condemning anything and everything Hindu. In fact, he called himself a 'proud Hindu'. When he says "Religion is not in books, nor in theories, nor in dogmas, nor in talking, not even in reasoning", I see in him a rationalist of a much superior order. ■

## RESIDENTIAL KANNADA YOGA SHIKSHA SHIBIR (15 Days)

Period : From 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007- 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007

Place : Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya, Kallubalu PO, Jigani, Bangalore.

Ph. 080-27826267

Age : 20 – 50 years

Shibir Donation : 1200/-

for further details contact Ph no : 080-27826267 E-mail : vkendra@bgl.vsnl.net.in

# Shivaji Maharaj – the master Strategist

Kum. Vandana Pandey

In the camp, Shaishta Khan was talking complacently with Kartalab Khan.

Pulling at his hookah, Shaishta Khan boasted. "We have conquered the fort of Shakan. It clearly shows that Shivaji's forts collapse like a pack of cards".

Kartalab Khan blew his own trumpet. "I knew that for a long time, I knew Shahaji, Shivaji's father personally. Both father and son, live in a fool's paradise and admire their so called 'impregnable' forts". For some time, both of them contemplated in silence. Then Shaista Khan slowly said, "I have another idea. How do you like making a surprise raid on the coastal areas of Konkan?"

Kartalab Khan stroked his beard in a pensive mood. "A good idea; with the conquest of Konkan; my prestige will get enhanced in the Darbar in Delhi."

A few days later a vast Mughal army set out towards the sea. The army included many important personalities including a lady named Rai Bagan.

Before the Mughal army marched, Rai Bagan warned Kartalab Khan, "Do you realize the

repercussions of your actions. It will be almost impossible for us to take these heavy guns across the Sahyadris. Moreover our soldiers are totally unfamiliar what that region". Kartalab Khan

scoffed at her apprehensions and swaggered. "By the grace of Allah, we will vanquish the infidels. The sight of our formidable army will send a chill down Shivaji's spine. Moreover he has no idea about our destination".

Contrary to the idyllic assumptions of Kartalab Khan, each and every movement of his army was being reported by Shivaji's spies to Netaji Palkar. The Marathas waited patiently for their foes to fall in their trap.

Slowly, heavily the Khan's huge army and heavy artillery wended its way up and down the tortuous paths of the Sahyadri mountains.



The Mughal soldiers were overwhelmed by the difficulties faced by them and were always seized by panic that Shivaji's soldiers will strike like lightning, ambushing them.

Finally the inevitable occurred. As the panting Mughal forces were staggering through the inhospitable terrain, a shrill whistle echoed through the hills around them and showers of arrows rained on them.

'Ya Allah' they screamed in a petrified manner, not understanding from where their death was coming. Before they could recover from their stupor the familiar Maratha war cry 'Hara Hara Mahadeva' rent the skies from every boulder and rock. The Maratha warriors pounced on the Mughals, their swords flashing brightly in the sun.

The Mughal soldiers were completely overpowered by the Marathas and a large number of them got slaughtered.

Kartalab Khan was himself at a loss to understand what to do, and kept on shouting hoarsely at his soldiers, "Fight men, fight". He cursed himself, when he saw those big cannons lying useless in the mountain pass.

The Maratha warriors athletically jumped from boulder to boulder, giving finishing touches to the carnage executed by them.

The scenario was being witnessed by two mounted men-Netaji Palkar, the commander of the Maratha army and Shivaji Maharaj, from an elevation.

Rai Bagan also witnessed the humiliation of the powerful Mughal army. She reminded Kartalab Khan of the advice she had rendered to him before the expedition and now counselled him to surrender to Shivaji. The Khan also realized that there was no other alternative except eating the humble pie. He beckoned to one of his generals and handed him a large white handkerchief. He directed him, "Go to Shivaji as our emissary, we want to talk peace". As the handkerchief began to flutter in the mountain wind, the Marathas ceased to fight and the man was allowed to go to Shivaji.

The emissary began, "The Khan wishes to apologise for his audacity in transgressing Shivaji Maharaj's territory. Please forgive us, please take into consideration the fact that the Khan is an old acquaintance of your venerable father".

In a short while, a huge amount of valuables piled up near Shivaji's feet. Then the Khan's gunner left their guns, muskets, swords and beat their ignominious retreat. Shivaji Maharaj looked admiringly at Netaji Palkar and said softly, "The credit of this victory is all yours", Netaji bowed happily. ■

**All that man has to do is to take care of three things: good thought, good word, good deed.  
—Swami Vivekananda**



# Festival of Sri Ramanavami

## Shanmishtai

The most popular and common form of greeting Ram Ram or Jai Sita Ram; the frequent Parayana of Sundarakanda of the Ramayana for realizing our desires; holding of popular discourses on the Ramayana in various parts of the country; the erection of temples big and small: the staging of dance-drama of Ramayana and the celebration of various festivals in honour of Lord Sri Rama—all these go to show that Sri Rama's worship is most popular throughout the length and breadth of the country. Our great leader Gandhiji desired that Ramarajya characterized by peace, plenty and prosperity should be established in our country, and he worked all through his life chanting the sacred name "Ram Ram".

The story of Rama, is the subject matter of the great epic Ramayana. Sri Rama, king of the solar dynasty, son of Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya, is the most popular avatar of Vishnu. Ramayana consists of 24,000 sloka lines and its authorship is attributed to Valmiki, the Adikavi. It is divided into seven Kandas of unequal parts. Before this story was committed to writing, it was popular and passed on from singer to singer and this accounts for various versions. This epic had indeed such a tremendous influence over the masses. As a literary piece, it is unparalleled and no wonder, it is unparalleled and no wonder, it is even translated

into several foreign languages. In India a vast literature grew up on the Rama theme, but the most important being poet K a m b a n ' s **Ramayana** and Tulsidas's **Rama Charitmanas**.



The main characters of this great Epic, Sri Rama and Sita are the ideal man and woman for every Hindu and also the model spouses. More than all these it has stressed and shown that truth, benevolence, mercy and righteousness triumph over greed, lust, love anger, egoism and so on. No wonder, its influence is felt not only in India but also in South-East Asian countries like, Indonesia, Java and Borneo which came in close contact with the Indian culture.

The Ramayana is indeed a matchless treatise in poetry and also a treasure house of information on various subjects like rhetoric, medicine, geology, botany and geography, besides throwing light on various aspects of ancient civilizations and institutions. The various charming

and descriptive passages of this epic, have indeed inspired thousands of sculptural panels, murals and miniatures starting from Gupta period of the early centuries of the Christian era to the Modern period in North India and from the Satavahana period to the Vijayanagar time in South India.

Sri Rama in the course of his long journey in search of his beloved wife, Sita, traversed almost the entire country and no wonder that several places and sites are associated with Him and temples have come up in those spots. To mention the most important places associated with Him and His worship are Ayodhya, Tiruchirapalli, Rameswaram, Hampi, Nasik, Bhadrachalam and the temples in those places have beautiful sculptures and paintings depicting themes from the Ramayana.

The monkeys laying the bridge over the sea, the council of war between Rama and monkeys and the relief panel of Rama in the Dasavatara temple of the Imperial Gupta, at Deogarh, Hanuman meeting Sita on one of the pillars of the Vishnuva kundins at Mogalrajapuram; Putrakama sacrifice by Dasaratha, birth of Rama, Sita's Swayamvara and other bas-reliefs of the Western Chalukyas at Pattadakal, Rama shaking the Kailasa, fight between Vali and Sugriva, Ravana being attacked by Jatayu at Ellora; the note-worthy carvings depicting the scenes from Ramayana of the Vijayanagar at Hampi and Penukonda; several beautiful and delicate carvings of the Nayaks at Tanjore and Kumbhakonam are some of the best examples of sculptural representations depicting Rama's story.

The important scenes from Ramayana in paintings are those illustrating a meditative hymn from the Ramayana at Tiruvanjikulam; battle of Rama and Ravana at Padmanabhapuram Palace; a series of excellent murals at Mattancheri. Palace and Rama's coronation at Lepakshi.

The most beautiful, imposing and interesting Panchloha images of Rama are seen in Kumbakonam. Vadakkuparayar, Rameswaram, and Tirumala-Tirupati, Ramnad and other places. Beautiful images in ivory and of sandalwood are made in Karnataka and Kerala.

According to sacred texts on iconography, the images of Rama should be in Tribhanga pose (with three bends in the body) with Kirita Makuta.

The right hand is lower and slightly bent to receive arrows, while the left hand is lifted up and bent so as to hold the top of the bow. Goddess Sita is to be standing to His right, hand hanging down, while the left is in Kataka Pose, where the tip of the fingers loosely applied to the thumb for inserting fresh flower. Lakshmana should resemble Rama in all respects but should be to His left. Finally, the most dutiful and over ready monkey messenger. Hanuman should be to the right of Rama. His left hand should rest upon the thigh, while the right hand is placed upon the mouth expressing his loyalty and willingness to receive and carry out the order of the master.

Ramanavami, the festival of Rama is celebrated on the ninth day in the bright half of the month of Caitra. It is the birth anniversary celebrations of

Sri Rama, the seventh Avatar of Mahavishnu and it is observed for prosperity, long life, happiness and wisdom. It is celebrated with fasting, special prayers and keeping awake throughout the night, singing hymns in praise of Him. Tithitattva, Kalatattvavivecama, Vrataraja, Niranya sindhu and several other texts speak of the procedure to be followed for observing this.

India has produced several saints and sages who devoted their lives in singing in praise of

Rama and the names of Bhadrachala Ramdas, and Tyagaraja are well known.

Even to this day, the Rama legend still retains its lustre and purity and His worship continues without any degeneration and by this, the words of Lord Brahma in the Ramayana have been proved "so long as mountains and rivers have place on earth, the story of Ramayana will be told in the world." ■

## YUVA BHARATI *Subscription Renewal - An Appeal*

Dear Subscribers/Readers,

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# THE SANCTITY OF HOLI

Mukesh Advani

No sooner do we hear the word 'Holi', we get mentally transported into a world of ecstasy and feel all the pomp, joy and mirth that accompany it. From times immemorial, we, the children of 'Bharat Mata', have been celebrating this festival. If only we had the ability to perceive, we would have found out that our sacred Matrubhumi has been eternally singing the immortal divine song of 'Holi hai'. Right from the inception of the world, India has been the epitome of all whatever is sacred and consecrated in the entire cosmos.

On the Holy day of 'Holi' the entire creation of the Divine Mother participates in this rejoicing. The creator of the whole Universe embraces it in spirit of revelry and evokes all the frolic, colour, gaiety, dance and music, a total merry making to the core—making the ambience exuberant. Hence, it is not surprising that people from all spheres of life—men, women and children young and old, get together in that 'Divine Oneness' forgetting all the apparent differences existing among them. We are reminded that behind the entire Divine play the creator is playing his role effectively. The whole creation is His 'play' or 'Lila'. The sublime aspect of 'Dharma' portrays the creation as the creator's 'sport' or 'play' with all its share of sorrows and sufferings. Similarly life also gives us its doses of joy and mirth. If one

cannot partake of that 'merry making' he was to blame himself only. Why does one hesitate to plunge into that ocean of 'joy' which Holi symbolizes? It is due to one's self-incarceration in the cell created out of one's inflated ego, prejudices, negative whims and fancies, anger, jealousy, suspicion, etc and these feelings inhibit you from rejoicing. At the time of Holi, some people develop a tendency to become an 'untouchable' of themselves—Nobody should touch us or smear us with colours. Thus the 'Ego' prohibits the nectar of Bliss from entering into our heart and deprives us of immense joy and happiness. This Ego is our greatest enemy and makes the E(nergy) go. Energy is 'Shakti' that transforms a 'Shava' into 'Shiva'. A man with an inflated ego is tantamount to a corpse (shava). Hence for transmuting one's entire life into a perennial 'Holi', he should abandon his or her selfishness and gradually become altruistic. Only when 'unselfishness' develops in us, we become true human beings. The main cause of our suffering is our tendency to confine our real divine nature to our narrow ghettos of selfishness. As we disentangle ourselves from our ulterior motives and negative emotions, our 'Real Self' begins to get embedded in us. So, next time if someone smears our face with colour we shall not frown in indignation but allow our countenance to be suffused with joy. Certainly, we should not

forcibly overpower anyone or cross the limits of decency. The revelry should not make us blind to human dignity. We should thank providence on that day. We should take the plunge voluntarily and throw away all our inhibitions to the winds. We should never seek a dull, vapid, morose and lucklustre 'Holi' day for ourselves. We should widely open all the doors and windows of our heart, discard all our grudges, grumbles, groanings and mournings and make a bonfire of all our kleshas in the 'Kama Dahan'. After the

kama dahan, we will get purified, fortified and rejuvenated, Yes! We will electrify the surroundings with renders of 'HOLY HAI' and dance to the tune of harmony, peace, joy and bliss drinking the 'nectar' of immortality.

'Yes!' India is eternal because India is one! India is one because India is Divine! India is Divine because India is sacred! Hence, it is appropriate to say 'Holi' is truly Holy in India.

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## Swami Vivekananda Writes

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA  
18<sup>th</sup> April, 1900

My Dear Joe,

Just now I received yours and Mrs. Bull's welcome letter. I direct this to London. I am so glad Mrs. Leggett is on the sure way to recovery. I am so sorry Mr. Leggett resigned the presidentship.

Well, I keep quiet for fear of making further trouble. You know my methods are extremely harsh, and once roused I may rattle A——too much for his peace of mind.

I wrote to him only to tell him that his notions about Mrs. Bull are entirely wrong.

Work is always difficult; pray for me, Joe, that my work may stop for ever, and my whole soul be absorbed in Mother. Her works She knows.

You must be glad to be in London once more; the old friends—give them all my love and gratitude.

I am well, very well mentally. I feel the rest of the soul more than that of the body. The battles are lost and won. I have bundled my things and am waiting for the great deliverer.

"Shiva, O Shiva, carry my boat to the other shore."

After all, Joe, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature; works and activities, doing good and so forth are all super-impositions. Now I again hear his voice; the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking, love dying, work becoming tasteless, the glamour is off life. Now only the voice of the Master calling. "I come Lord, I come". "Let the dead bury the dead, follow thou Me." "I come, my beloved Lord, I come."

Yes, I come. Nirvana is before me. I feel it at times, the same infinite ocean of peace, without a ripple, a breath.



*I am glad I was born, glad I suffered so, glad I did make big blunders, glad to enter peace. I leave none bound. I take no bonds. Whether this body will fall and release me or I enter into freedom in the body, the old man is gone, gone for ever, never to come back again!*

*The guide, the Guru, the leader, the teacher, has passed away; the boy, the student, the servant, is left behind.*

*You understand why I do not want to meddle with A—. Who am I to meddle with any, Joe? I have long given up my place as leader—I have no right to raise my voice. Since the beginning of this year I have not dictated anything in India. You know that. Many thanks for what you and Mrs. Bull have been to me in the past. All blessings follow you ever. The sweetest moments of my life have been when I was drifting; I am drifting again, with the bright, warm sun ahead and masses of vegetation around, and in the heat everything is so still, so calm, and I am drifting languidly, in the warm heat of the river. I dare not make a splash with my hands or feet—for fear of breaking the wonderful stillness, stillness that makes you feel sure it is an illusion!*

*Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance the thirst of power. Now they are vanishing and I drift. I come, Mother, I come; in Thy warm bosom, floating wheresoever Thou takest me, in the voiceless, in the strange, in the wonderland, I come—a spectator, no more an actor.*

*Oh, it is so calm! My thoughts seem to come from a great, great distance in the interior of my own heart. They seem like faint, distant whispers, and peace is upon everything, sweet, sweet peace, like that one feels for a few moments just before falling into sleep, when things are seen and felt like shadows—without fear, without love, without emotion. Peace that one feels alone, surrounded with statues and pictures. I come, Lord, I come.*

*The world is, but not beautiful nor ugly, but as sensations without exciting any emotion. Oh, Joe, the blessedness of it! Everything is good and beautiful; for things are all losing their relative proportions to me—my body among the first. Om That Existence!*

*I hope great things to come to you all in London and Paris. Fresh joy—fresh benefits to mind and body.*

*With love as ever to you and Mrs. Bull.*

*Yours faithfully,  
VIVEKANANDA.*

# Vivekananda Kendra Samachar

## MANGALORE

Samaratha Bharat Parva culminating with Swami Vivekananda Jayanti on 12<sup>th</sup> January was observed enthusiastically. Around 300 people attended Swami Vivekananda Jayanti celebrations. Sri Yogish Bhoi MLA, Sri Balkrishna Bhat MLC and Sri Shivkumar, the manager of Karnataka Milk Federation were the chief guests.

## BARIPADA

Vivekananda Jayanti was celebrated enthusiastically on 12<sup>th</sup> January. On that day, there were various competitions pertaining to elocution, quiz, creative art, and singing of patriotic songs. Nearly 50 students took part in those celebrations.

## AJMER

Kalpatru Diwas was observed with great reverence on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007.

The Samartha Bharat Parva culminated on Swami Vivekananda anniversary on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Patriotic songs and a short skit were presented by the Karyakartas. Shri Yagna Dhutta Ginghasu, Principal of Dayananda Maha Vidhyalaya was the Chief Guest.

## KANYAKUMARI

The Silver Jubilee celebration of VKV

Kanyakumari was held on 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2007. The function was inaugurated with the lighting of the lamp by Nivedita Didi, the Vice-President of Vivekananda Kendra. The Chief Guest of the function was Lt.Col S.Mohan, who showered praises on the school for providing the man-making, character building education envisaged by Swami Vivekananda.

## PORT BLAIR

Swami Vivekananda Jayanti was celebrated on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Saraswati Puja was held in VKV Port Blair and in all other VKVs in Andamans. Homams and Bhajans were performed. Prasad was distributed to 6000 people.

## ITANAGAR

Samartha Bharat Parva culminating in Swami Vivekananda Jayanti was observed from 25<sup>th</sup> December '06 to 12<sup>th</sup> January 07. Bharat Mata Poojan was held daily and a speaker elaborated on what India has achieved in various fields of activity.

## GUWAHATI

The foundation day celebrations of VKIC were held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007. Lt.Gen (Retd) S.K.Sinha, the former governor of Assam was the Chief Guest. He exhorted the audience to endeavour to preserve the unique culture of Assam.