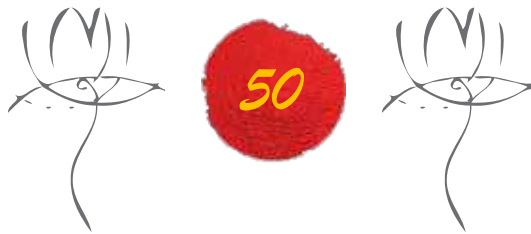




Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti

Golden Jubilee Souvenir

Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi



If you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; the whole world is your own.

Sponsored by:
*Dr. P. S. Krishnamurthy &
Mrs. P. S. Lakshmi
Mumbai*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the outset, we shall start with the words spoken by Revered Pravrajika Amalaprana Mataji, who could continue a philanthropic institute like this (Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti) for 50 years? Celebrating golden jubilee is no mean achievement! This is proof the blessings the Holy Trio have showered on this institution. A big thanks to the founding member trustees who sowed the seeds of this NGO Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti (RKSS)! Special thanks to Dr Suman Rajadhyaksha, age 90 years, a founding member, who continued the services sometimes single handedly till Ramakrishna Mission, Khar arranged a new set of Trustees in the Year 2007. Our thanks to all those who were trustees after 2007 but not anymore in Trusteeship, and to the current Trustees who not only ensured a smooth transmission of the seva-gene passed on to us by the founding members.

We acknowledge that setting up of RKSS and continuing to provide services to the poor in Mumbai slums for 50 years, was possible mainly because of the inspirational words spoken, and moral support provided, by the past Presidents of Ramakrishna Math & Mission, most revered Swamis Vireswaranandaji, and Ranganathanandaji and revered senior Vice President Swami Vagishanandaji; past Presidents of Ramakrishna Math, Khar Swami Sarvalokanandaji, and Swami Muktidanandaji as well as the current President Swami Satyadevanandaji. Srimat Swami Satyadevanandaji has not only agreed to participate in the Golden Jubilee celebrations but has allowed us to use Ramakrishna Math Khar as venue for the celebrations on Sunday 25th November 2018. Thanks to Swami Tattwarupanandaji (Ramakrishna Maharaj) for handholding the new set of Trustees (2007) till the Center stabilized in its operations. Also the monks of Sri Sarada Math and revered General Secretary Pravrajika Amalaprana mataji deserve a special thanks for attending and conveying their blessings in the Golden Jubilee celebrations on Sunday 9th December 2018, at RKSS center.

The engine of service needs two most important constituents to lend a helping hand; first the volunteers and secondly the donors who provide the wherewithal to support all the good work of serving the poor. We would like to mention a few of these two players: Dr. Parulekar, P. Natarajan, Ms. Wendy Stephenson, and architects Prasad Vaidya from Berkley Univ., Ms. Suchitra from Bengaluru, Ms. Nidhi Kapri, Mrs. Janaki Biren Anand, among the volunteers. Among the

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donors we thank Ambit-Oditi Foundation, Peter-Medlock Foundation, Illumine Knowledge Resources P. Ltd., Reliance group of companies, and though for lack of space we are not able to list all the names here we would certainly like to thank the countless volunteers, and large-hearted donors who supported us from time to time.

We are thankful to Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority (MHADA) for providing us land on a long lease that enabled us to have our own building 40 years ago. We expect their continuing support to improve and redevelop our infrastructure for further scale and expansion of service activities.

We are thankful to the untiring efforts of staff who work with us and contribute/offer their best, to the growth and development of the center in the 3 main divisions of Medical and health, Education, sports & culture, and Skill development. We are also thankful to the auditors, and bankers for their services.

The Golden Jubilee Souvenir compilation required several days of labor to not only transcribe and edit the speeches of monks but also follow up with authors of articles who contributed to its richness, and the donors who supported with sponsorship. This Souvenir s layout and design has no doubt come from the team at Illumine but Dr. Bharati Srinivas for her services to transcribe Hindi speeches, and Jeetendra Tatuskar in Illumine s team deserve our special thanks for their painstaking efforts for error-free production.

Last but not the least, we would like to thank Pravrajika Amitaprana Mataji, President of Sarada Math, Indore for kindly consenting to release the Souvenir at RKSS Center, Mumbai on Tuesday, 12th March. Her acceptance to release the Souvenir gives the entire team engaged in this long and arduous task of publishing the Souvenir, a big blessing!

Place: Mumbai

For and on behalf of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti

Date: 11-03-2019

Sd./- Vidya Raghu
Managing Trustee

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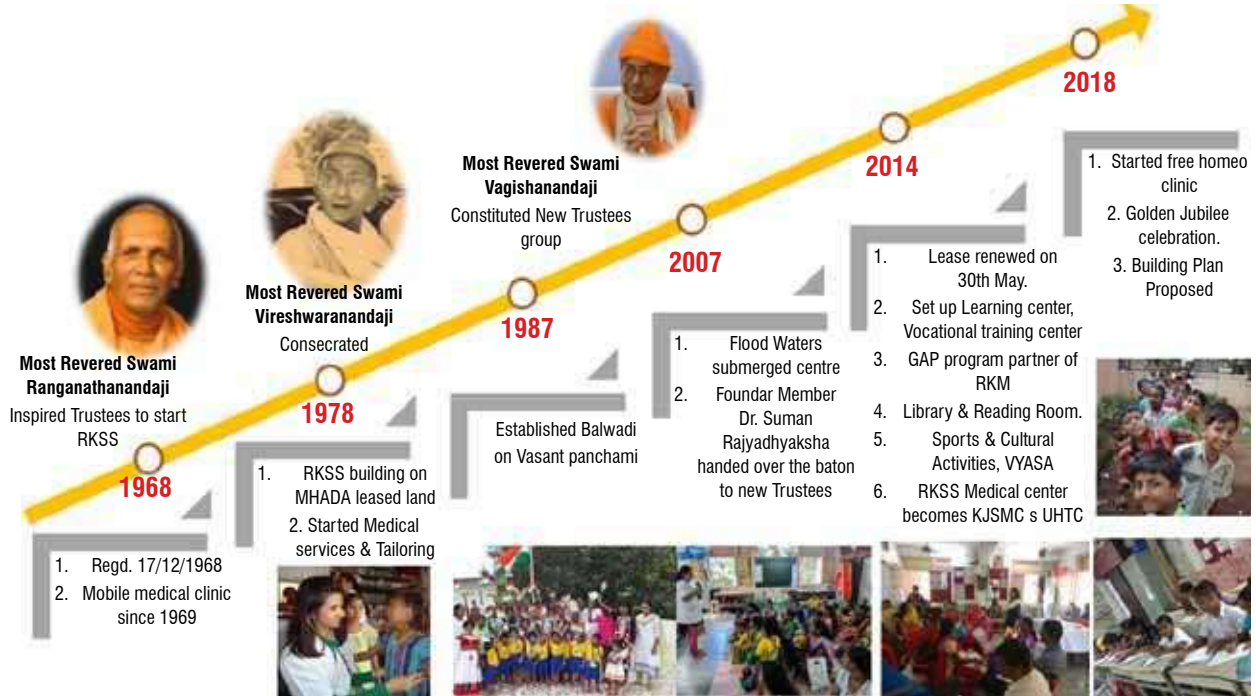
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1. SERVICE GENES - FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT

50 GOLDEN YEARS



FOUNDING MEMBERS



Smt. Mekhala Jha: Chairman
 Smt. Bhanumati Pradhan-Vice chairman
 Smt. Lila Mehta - Treasurer
 Smt. Suman Rajadhyaksha- Secretary
 Smt. Malati Pai- Asst Secretary

Smt. Malati Meghani- Member
 Smt. Ramni Rao- Member
 Smt. Sushila Birla- Member
 Smt. Shakti Talwar-Member
 Smt. Anu Shanker- Member



Mekhala Jha
 Chairman



Dr. Suman Rajadhyaksha
 (90 years), Secretary
(Handed over the baton to new Trustees)

Our inspiration is the Ramakrishna Mission & Sarada Math, and

The teaching of Sri Ramakrishna, "Shiv Bhava, Jeeva Seva" moves us...

SERVICE GENES - FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT

VISION AND IDEAL

VISION

Continue to serve the poor and underprivileged
Develop ideas and infrastructure to scale 360 degree community service
Reconstruct the building with adequate space that will enable next generation of trustees to run the service activities efficiently
Develop capacities of community women and youth to become self reliant, strengthen their moral values, and they should pay back to their communities.

IDEAL

No one is a stranger, make this whole world your own



CURRENT TRUSTEES OF RAMAKRISHNA SARADA SAMITI



Ms. Sujata Haldipur



Mrs. Vidya Raghu



Mrs. Bharati Srinivas



Mrs. Sheila Chowdhury



Mrs. Arpita Ghosh



Mrs. Raakhee Puri



Dr. Mamatha Venkatesh



Ms. Chhaya Sawant

2. ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM OF RAMAKRISHNA SARADA SAMITI



Dr. Usha Parulekar
Medical Administrator



Ms. Pratibha Mhatre
Office Supervisor



Teachers of Little Lamps Gammatwadi

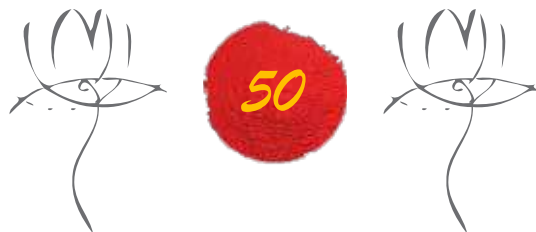


Admin Team



Women's Collective

Swami Smarananandaji



3. MOST REVERED PRESIDENT SWAMI SMARANANANDAJI MAHARAJ

BLESSINGS

PHONES PBX: (033)
2654-1144 2654-5700
2654-1180 2654-5701
2654-5391 2654-5702
2654-9581 2654-5703
2654-9681 2654-8494
FAX : 033-2654-4071
E-MAIL: president@rkmm.org
presidentoffice@rkmm.org



RAMAKRISHNA MATH

P.O. BELUR MATH, DIST. HOWRAH

WEST BENGAL : 711 202

INDIA

MESSAGE

I am glad to learn that Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, Mumbai, will be celebrating its Golden Jubilee on 25th November 2018 and a souvenir will be published to commemorate the event.

It is heartening to note that Samiti is engaged in the service of the poor and underprivileged since its inception in 1968 and all the activities are administered by dedicated women devotees as the Trustees of the Samiti. Through such services, many people are benefited and are able to fulfill their basic needs along with the ability to lead a normal life at par with others. In a lecture delivered in California, on April 1, 1900, Swami Vivekananda very elegantly enumerates the ideal of service of God in man thus, This world is a play. You are His playmates. Go on and work, without any sorrow, without any misery. See His play in the slumps, in the saloons! Work to lift people!... Serve the living God! God comes to you in the blind, in the halt, in the poor, in the weak, in the diabolical. What a glorious chance for you to worship!

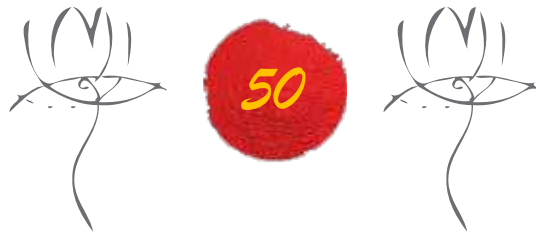
May by the grace of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda the celebration and publication be a grand success!

I convey my good wishes to all.

(Swami Smaranananda)
President

Belur Math
20th November, 2019

Pravrajika Bhaktiprana Mataji



4. MOST REVERED PRESIDENT PRAVRAJKA BHAKTIPRANA MATAJI

BLESSINGS



SRI SARADA MATH
DAKSHINESWAR
KOLKATA

Phone: (033) 25644388, 25645411
e-mail: srismath@gmail.com

4.12.2018

Message

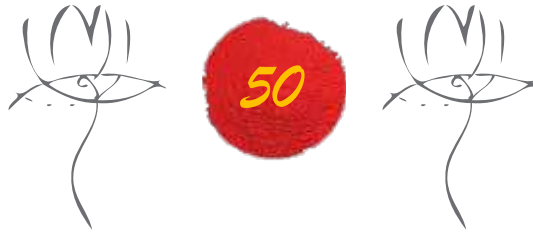
I am happy to know that Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, an organization dedicated to serving the poor in the slums of Mumbai, is to celebrate its Golden Jubilee event. In this connection a Souvenir is also to be published. I hope and pray that both these noble attempts may achieve a grand success.

Swamiji's ideal - Service to man is service to God may be applied in all the activities by all the members of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti. May Sri Ramakrishna Dev, Sri Ma Sarada Devi and Swamit Vivekananda shower their blessings on all is my earnest prayer.

Pravrajika Bhaktiprana

President
Sri Sarada Math and
Ramakrishna Sarada Mission

Swami Prabhanandaji



5.a Revered Vice President Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj

BLESSINGS

Phone PBX:
(033) 2654-1144 / 1180
(033) 2654-9581 / 9681
FAX : (033) 2654-4346
Email: mail@belurmath.org
Website: www.belurmath.org



RAMAKRISHNA MATH

(The Headquarters)

P.O. BELUR MATH, DIST. HOWRAH

WEST BENGAL : 711 202

INDIA

MESSAGE

20.11.2018

I am happy to learn from your email that the Ramakrsihna Sarada Samiti, an organization dedicated to serving poor in the slums of Mumbai, has completed 50 years of yeoman service to the people in the slums, and is going to celebrate the Golden Jubilee even in Mumbai. I understand that the Samiti, set up by the words of Revered Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, is doing excellent work. I also understand that the function will be held at Ramakrsihna Mission, Khar, Mumbai, on 25th November 2018. I also understand that a Grand Golden Jubilee Souvenir will be brought out to mark the occasion.

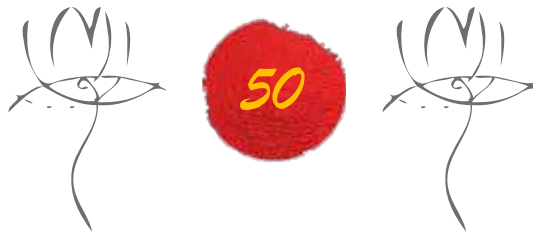
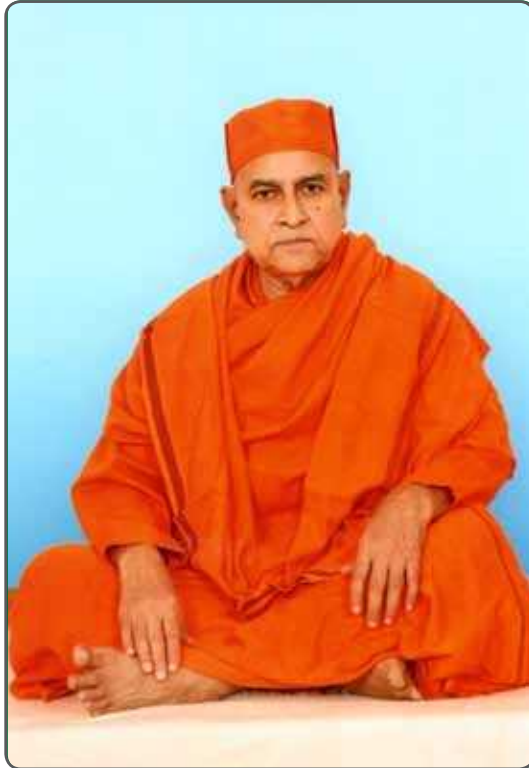
I am sure that by the grace of the Holy Trio the celebration of the Jubilee and the release of the Souvenir will be a grand success.

Yours affectionately

Swami Prabhananda
Vice President

Raghu Pilaka
Ramakrsihna Sarada Samiti, Mumbai

Swami Gautamanandaji



5.b Revered Vice President Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj

BLESSINGS



31, Ramakrishna Math Road
Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004
Ph: 24621110 (4 Lines); Fax: 2493 4589
email: mail@chennaiamath.org
website: www.chennaiamath.org

BENEDICTION

I am glad to learn that Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, Mumbai (RKSS), is completing 50 years of yeoman service to the underprivileged, is celebrating its Golden Jubilee on 25th November 2018 and that a commemorative souvenir is being brought out.

RKSS was set up in 1968 to serve the poor in the slums of Mumbai at the behest of Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, the 13th President of the Order and the Building was inaugurated in 1976 by Swami Vireshwaranandaj Maharaj, the 10th President.

RKSS runs an Urban Community Health Center in partnership with K.J. Somaiya Hospital. The daily free OPD caters to thousands of patients with specialist services such as Medicine, Gynecology, Dermatology, Psychiatry, Pediatric, ENT, Ophthalmology, Blood investigation and Diabetes check-up. Nutrition, Hygiene and Adolescent workshops are held in RKSS and the local schools by Doctors and Social Workers.

The Little Lamps Balwadi provides free uniforms, study material and nutritious snacks everyday designed by the nutritionist. Children are monitored by the Health Center and parents attend nutrition awareness workshops held every month.


Vivekananda for Youth and Social Action conducts Summer Camps, Creative Workshops, Theatre, Arts and other programs for children to explore their potential and develop holistically.

Tailoring, Beautician and Computer Courses are held through the year to provide means of employment to local women and fight digital divide.

The Learning Center run by the Samiti is a sanctuary for children to learn in a non-threatening and inspiring environment. The children from the slum are given academic support daily in morning and afternoon batches. They are served milk and fruit. Some of these children become Balsevaks and help in RKSS activities.

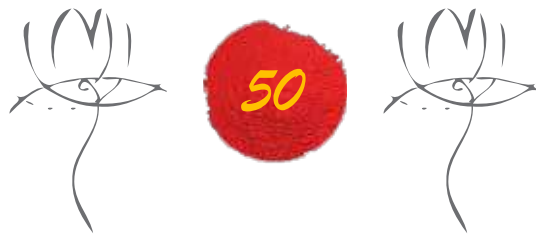
On the momentous occasion of the Golden Jubilee, I earnestly invoke the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda on all the office-bearers, member, well-wishers and beneficiaries of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti and for the success of the Celebrations.

Swami Subodhananda Jayanti
Tuesday 20th November 2018


(Swami Gautamananda)
Adhyaksha & Vice President,
Ramakrishna Math & Mission, Belur

To
Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti
Mumbai

Swami Shivamayanandaji



5.c Revered Vice President Swami Shivamayanandaji Maharaj

BLESSINGS

Phone: (033) 2320-2927/6000
E-mail: rkmyogodyan@gmail.com
Website: www.yogodyan.org



RAMAKRISHNA MATH (YOGODYAN)
(A branch centre of Ramakrishna Math, Belur)
7 Yogodyan Lane, Kankurgachhi
Kolkata 700 054, W. Bengal

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, Mumbai has reached its Golden Jubilee year having founded by devotees of the Holy Trio, i.e., Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, inspired by the words of Swami Ranganathanandaji in year 1968 and having served the poor in slums of Mumbai since that time.

Based on the material you sent, it is clear that Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti provides, after the ideals of service enunciated by Swami Vivekananda, educational and cultural instruction through its Balwadi, tuitions, skill development programmes, sports, music & dance training, and provides free doctor consultation & medicines.

I earnestly invoke the blessings of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda on the Organizers, the volunteers of the organization and the beneficiaries of their multifarious schemes and for the success of their undertakings and the Golden Jubilee Celebration.

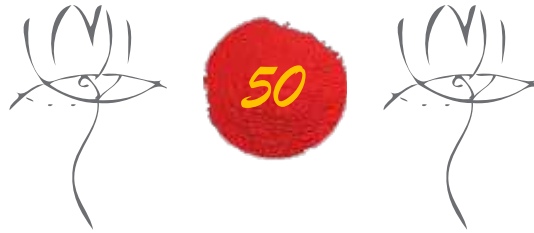
Yours in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda,

(Swami Shivamayananda)
Vice-President
Ramakrishna Math and Mission

22 November 2018

To:
Sri Raghu Pilaka
Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti
Flat 604, Dosti Orchid Building
Off S.M. Road, Wadala East
Mumbai 400037

Swami Suhitanandaji



4.d Revered Vice President Swami Suhitanandaji Maharaj

BLESSINGS

Phone PBX:
(033) 2654-1144 / 1180
(033) 2654-9581 / 9681
FAX : (033) 2654-4346
Email: mail@belurmath.org
Website: www.belurmath.org



RAMAKRISHNA MATH
(The Headquarters)
P.O. BELUR MATH, DIST. HOWRAH
WEST BENGAL : 711 202
INDIA

06.12.2018

Sri Raghu Pilaka
Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti
Mumbai

Received your email dated 19 November 2018. I am glad to learn that the Golden Jubilee of the Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, Mumbai, is being observed. I was happy to know that Revered Swami Vagishanandaji Maharaj graced the function as Chief Guest.

It is indeed a privilege to serve humankind in any form as manifestation of Divinity. As Swami Vivekananda says, It is a privilege to serve mankind, for this is the worship of God. God is here, in all these human souls. He is the soul of man.

I pray that may this motto be your guide forever.

(Swami Suhitananda)
Vice President

Pre-school & After School Education (At RKSS)

Balwadi (Pre-School) has been serving children from ages 2-6 years, at RKSS since 1987. It is now called Little Lamps Gammatwadi.



Little Lamps Gammatwadi, pre-school celebrates National Festivals: Independence Day, and Republic Day every year.

At Pre-School we train children both in-classroom and outside through field visits.



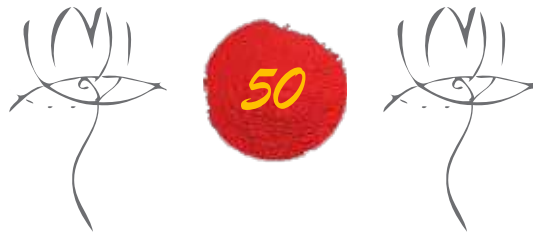
Little Lamps Gammatwadi annual day celebration held every year before senior batch passes out of 2 years of pre-school education.



Every smile is a blessing, every tuition class is a sweet endeavor, for Trustees. Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti (RKSS) is a community center in the heart of Mumbai slums at Sion. RKSS conducts education, recreation, sports, and cultural activities for children of the communities.



Swami Vagishanandaji



7. BENEDICTORY SPEECHES



Revered Swami Vagishanandaji Maharaj

Senior Vice President of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission

Dear Swami Vishnupadanandaji Maharaj, Swami Satyadevanandaji Maharaj, Ramakrishna Maharaj and so many swamiji s sitting before me, I extend my love and best wishes. There are so many devotees here present I also extend my love and best wishes to you all. We have just now seen the film presented by Raghu. These activities of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, I have personally seen many times. I have gone to their place I have seen those things and they are doing marvelous work. Really they are doing Thakur, Swamiji, and Holy Mother s work, they are really blessed ones! We have all assembled here in the celebration of the Sarada Samiti s 50th year of existence. Earnest initiative of a few devotees and blessings of senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order brought this organization into existence. Now gradually it is expanding and extending its range of activities.

Swamiji wanted to stay completely absorbed in the infinite samadhi but Shri Ramakrishna reproached him saying I thought you will be a great banyan tree and men will come to your shelter to get relief

from their sufferings, but you are asking for your own samadhi? Shri Ramakrishna just two days before his passing away infused all his powers to Narendranath and said, With this power you will work for the welfare of the world .

After the Mahasamadhi of Shri Shri Thakur, Swamiji travelled throughout India and found that that the cause of miseries, watching the activities of people from the royal palaces to the huts of the poor, is lack of education. In one of his letters, Swamiji wrote that the only service to be done for our lower classes is to gift them education, to develop their lost individuality. It is a great task for both our people and the rulers. Sadly, up to now nothing has been done in this direction; priests of power and foreign conquests have trodden them down for centuries and alas the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings! The poor have to be given these noble ideas, their eyes have to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man, every woman must work out their own salvation.

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Gift them ideas that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes, it is the law of nature. Our duty is to put the ideas in to the heart, they will do the rest.

It was also revealed to Swamiji that the cause of boundless misery of the people of India is want of food and money. For this purpose it is necessary to set up industries and create opportunities for employment. With this view in mind Swamiji left for the west. Tatas, a big industrial house now in India was founded by Jamshedji Tata inspired by Swamiji. Education according to Swamiji is that which will help man stand on his own legs, it is the real education which brings the courage of a lion in men.

Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti is working among the backward boys and girls of the society for their education, for their health, for the treatment of the common people and also for teaching the poor women different skills and handicrafts to make them self-sufficient, financially. Swamiji felt throughout his life about these poor and downtrodden people of India and always thought of them. He entrusted us to carry out his work for the poor.

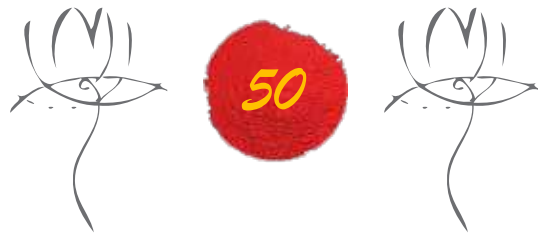
In Swami Vivekananda's words love is the only law of life, all selfishness is death and this is true here and hereafter. It is life to

do good, it is death not to do good to others. Ninety percent of human beings, are all dead and ghosts, for none lives my boy but he who loves. They live alone till my children, they feel for the poor, the ignorant, and the downtrodden. Feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad. Be not afraid my child, look not up in the attitude of fear towards the infinite starry world that it will crush you, wait and in a few hours more, the whole of it will be under your feet. Wait, money does not pay, not name, fame does not pay, not learning; it is love that pays, it is character that leads your way through the adamant walls of difficulties.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here but will give me eternal bliss in heaven. Phew! If India has to be raised the poor have to be fed, education has to spread, and evil priestcraft has to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny. More bread, more opportunity for everybody.

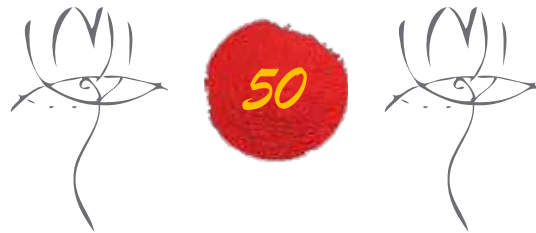
We shall be blessed by carrying those activities which Swamiji has entrusted on us. Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti will give more, keeping the ideas of Shri Shri Thakur Shri Shri Maa and Swamiji in their works. My salutation to all the Members of the Samiti, and to the dignitaries present here. Jai Sri Ramakrishna. ■ ■ ■

Sri Ramakrishna



When God is realised, the world never appears empty. He who has attained Him sees that the Lord Himself has become all these the universe and its creatures.

Pravrajika Amalaprana Mataji





Revered Pravrajika Amalaprana Mataji

General Secretary of Sri Sarada Math &
Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Dakshineswar

My dear sisters of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, I am really very happy to be with you all.

To see all this work that you are all doing for the last 50 years, it is really an achievement for the women devotees of Mumbai. Who could continue a philanthropic institute like this for 50 years? From the core of my heart on behalf of Sarada Math and Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, I pray to Holy Mother to bless you all in every endeavor and bring much more glorious achievements in the future. May Mother bless you all, the members of the Samiti in particular, and all those who are helping Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti. This is my earnest prayer!

Just now we saw the documentary film, Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti started in 1968, 50 years ago. How in the last 50 years gradually it has grown. Swami Ranganathanandaji's inspiring lectures are behind this Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti. He inspired the women to do work for the poor for the under privileged women and children. It is through his inspiration the founding members took up this work. Also Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, Swami Vagishanandaji Maharaj have also given

their blessings for this work, and through these blessings this work has gradually developed in such glorious ways.

Swami Vivekananda preached a new gospel for this age, *Siva Jnane Jiva Seva*. We must work for the poor and under privileged women but the guidance given by this gospel has got an entirely different meaning. Old ways of service was to give some money to the poor, throw some coins from your pocket. *Siva Jnane Jiva Seva, this means the giver is worshipping the divine being in that receiver, which is the attitude we should keep while serving the poor and underprivileged.* This is the mantra for the new age given by Swami Vivekananda, which originally came from Thakur, Sri Ramakrishna.

Once in Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna was sitting in his room and talking to devotees. The talk was about the Vaishnava way of worship. Under the Vaishnava tradition there are three important ways of worship. First, *naame ruchi*, feel the taste of the name of the Lord. Unless one feels the taste one doesn't feel like uttering the name of Lord again and again and again. Second, *jeeve daya*, compassion for all living

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beings. Third, serving the vaishnavas with reverential and loving attitude. These three are important in Vaishnava religion. When Sri Ramakrishna was explaining the second one, *Jeeve daya*, as soon as he uttered these words, Sri Ramakrishna went into ecstasy. Coming down from ecstasy, he said, What jeeva daya? Compassion for the human beings? No it should not be compassion, it is serving the Jiva (human being) as Shiva (Divine) . Service with all love and care, thus the attitude should be one of service and not compassion. All heard this including Naren, the future Vivekananda who alone got this gospel from the Master. Naren exclaimed, Oh! What a light I got, Sri Ramakrishna has shown me today how should we do service, service to man, helping the human being, in an entirely new way!

Vedanta religion was looked upon as dry discussion only, no connection with any loving service. No connection between Bhakti and Vedanta existed before. Beautifully, harmonious synthesis was shown by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda has established this new link between devotion and Vedanta through serving Jiva. What does vendanta declare?

Everyone in this world is bramhan. This dry vendanta is now mixed with loving service to the divine (Bhakti). Thus swamiji made service with this new attitude popular all over the world. He established the principle that service to Jiva means worship of the divine.

Shiva Jnane Jiva Seva, thus a new gospel came into being through teachings of Ramakrishna Math & Mission and Sarada Math, the whole world is embracing this new gospel. I hope and pray that by the work of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, many more Samitis will rise in future, not only in Mumbai but in various countries and all over the world. When you take up this great gospel or Mantra Shiva Jnane Jiva Seva you bring high beatitude and blessings to one and all. I pray to Sri Ramakrishna Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda that may the people get more and more inspiration to serving the poor in following this great ideal bringing along blessings to themselves and to the entire society.

May the Mother bless you all is my earnest prayer!



Public Health & Hygiene (At RKSS)

Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti (RKSS) Urban Health Training Center of KJ Somaiya Hospital is rendering yeomen medical services to the communities of the slums in Sion-Koliwada, Mumbai. 5 day clinic from 9am to 4pm includes visits to all the hutments/ slum dwellers either for under-5 clinic program, or well woman clinic program or other health workshops.



Gappa Goshti sessions/ Teacher mother interactions used to not only discuss about their child s developmental needs and status but also their family s positive health and nutritional habits.



8. SPEECHES BY MONKS

Karma Yoga through Service Activities

Swami Satyadevanandaji,

President Ramakrishna Math, Mumbai

जननीं शारदा देवीं रामकृष्णं जगद्गुरुं। पादपद्मं
तयोः श्रित्वा प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः

परम पूजनीय श्रीमान स्वामी वागीशानंदजी महाराज, वाइस प्रेसिडेंट रामकृष्ण मठ रामकृष्ण मिशन, पूजनीय श्री विष्णुपादानंदजी महाराज, पूजनीय तत्त्वरूपानंदजी महाराज मेरे सामने बैठे हुए मेरे पूजनीय और प्यारे सन्यासी भाइयों, माताओं, भक्तजनों - मुझे कर्म के ऊपर कुछ बोलने के लिए कहा गया है। स्वामीजी अपने कर्म ग्रन्थ में कहते हैं - 'कृ' जो संस्कृत शब्द है, कर्म या कार्य ये शब्द इस 'कृ धातु' से आया है। हम लोग जो भी करें यानि कि बैठ कर अगर हम सोचेंगे, तो भी उसको कर्म कह सकते हैं, अर्थात वो भी कर्म के अंतर्गत आता है। हम लोग हाथ से काम करें वो ही कर्म होगा, ये बात नहीं है - हम बैठ कर अपने मन में विचार करेंगे, कुछ सोचेंगे तो भी वो कर्म हो जाता है। जो भी कर्म हम करते हैं, वो हमारे चरित्र के ऊपर एक दाग छोड़कर चला जाता है। स्वामीजी कहते हैं, हम लोग का कर्म करने का उद्देश्य है - ज्ञान लाभ करना, सुख मिलना नहीं। इसलिए सुख और दुःख ये दोनों जो हैं, ये हम लोग लिए शिक्षा है। जीवन में जितना सारा कर्म हम करते हैं, जो सुखदाई हो या दुःखदाई हो - उससे हम लोग को शिक्षा मिलती है। अगर हम लोग विचार करेंगे तो हम देखेंगे, कि वो जो दुःखदाई कार्य हैं, जो हम लोग के जीवन में हुआ है - उसी से हम

ज्यादा शिक्षा पाते हैं। ये कर्म जो है, हिन्दू फिलोसोफी में कहते हैं - कर्म फल - मतलब हम लोग जो आज हैं, मैं जो हूँ और जिस अवस्था में हम लोग आये हैं, इसके पीछे मेरा कर्म ही है। उस कर्म के फल स्वरूप मेरा ये देह मुझे मिला, मेरा परिवार मिला। इतना सब कार्य जो हम लोग कर रहे हैं, अपने पूर्व जन्म में और इस जन्म में भी जितना सारा कर्म हम करते आए हैं, उस कर्म का फल है - हमारी वास्तविक अवस्था। इसलिए शास्त्र कहते हैं, तुम बुरा कर्म मत करना, अच्छा कर्म करो क्योंकि अगर तुम अच्छा कर्म करोगे तो तुमको अच्छा फल मिलेगा, फल तो मिलेगा ही। ऐसा कोई आदमी नहीं है या ऐसा कोई कर्म नहीं है, जिसको फल नहीं मिलेगा। हम लोग गीता में भी देखते हैं - भगवान अर्जुन को कहते हैं, कि सबको कल फल मिलेगा ही मिलेगा।

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भुमा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

तुम अच्छा कर्म करते जाओ, फल की तरफ तुम ज्यादा ध्यान मत देना, अच्छा कर्म करते जाओगे तो अच्छा ही होगा और अगर बुरा कर्म करोगे तो बुरा ही होगा। इसलिए हमारे शास्त्रों में, हमारे हिन्दू धर्म में कहते हैं कि अच्छा कर्म करोगे तो तुमको अच्छा फल मिलेगा, तुम्हारा चरित्र जो तैयार होता है - ये कर्म के सहारे ही होता है, कर्मों से

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ही आता है। चरित्र कैसा होता है? ये हम जो कर्म करते हैं - एक ही कर्म बार बार करने से वो अभ्यास बन जाता है और जब अभ्यास और ज्यादा आगे बढ़ेगा, यानि जब हम और ज्यादा अभ्यास करेंगे - तो वो संस्कार बन जाता है। ये संस्कार हम लोगों का चरित्र बनाता है। तो आप लोग देख सकते हैं कि हम जैसा कर्म करेंगे उसी के अनुसार हमारा चरित्र गठित होगा। उसी के अनुसार आप ये भी कह सकते हैं कि हम लोग जो पूर्व जन्म में कर्म करते आए हैं, उसी का कुल योग [sum total] जो है, वही हमारा 'अदृष्ट' है। जिसे हम लोग 'भाग्य' या 'अदृष्ट' या 'प्रारब्ध' या जो भी कहें।

हम लोग अक्सर सब भगवान के ऊपर छोड़ देते हैं और भगवान को दोष देते हैं, कि भगवान ने हमारा ऐसा कर दिया, वैसा कर दिया। लेकिन हम लोग का जो कर्मफल-वाद है, इसमें कह गया है कि ये अदृष्ट हम ने खुद बनाया है - हमको अभी जो फल मिल रहा है - चाहे वो दुःख हो या सुख हो - ये हमने पूर्व जन्म में जो काम किए हैं, उसी के फलस्वरूप हमको मिल रहा है। उसके पीछे किसी भगवान का कुछ करना नहीं है या किसी आदमी को इसके लिए दोष देना बेकार है - ये सब मेरे कर्म का ही फल है। इसमें किसी का कोई दोष नहीं है। हमने खुद अपना गड़ढा खोदा है और उसी में हम गिर कर मर रहे हैं। तात्पर्य यह है, कि हम लोग जो कर्म करेंगे उसी के स्वरूप हमें फल मिलेगा और हमारा अदृष्ट बनेगा और आगे चल के हमें उसका फल भोगना पड़ेगा।

कर्म से ही हम लोगों का बंधन है, कर्म से ही हम लोगों की मुक्ति है। कर्म हम लोगों को बंधन में फंसा देता है क्योंकि आप जितना बुरा कर्म करते जायेंगे उतना ही

बंधन में फंसते जायेंगे। आप कह सकते हैं, कि यदि कर्म करके हम बंधन में फंस जाते हैं तो हम कर्म करेंगे ही नहीं, चुपचाप बैठे रहेंगे!! परन्तु तब तो आप और ज्यादा फंस जायेंगे। क्यों? क्योंकि आप पत्थर बन गए हैं। एक पत्थर जैसे कुछ नहीं करता, चुपचाप पड़ा रहता है ठीक उसी प्रकार आप भी पत्थर सामान हो गए हैं। आप के अंदर ज्यादा तमोगुण आ गया है। इसलिए कहते हैं कि तमोगुण से रजोगुण लाओ, रजोगुण से सत्वगुण लाओ। जितना आप अच्छा कर्म करोगे उतना ही आपके अंदर सत्वगुण आएगा और उसी के सहारे आप मुक्ति की ओर जा सकोगे।

शास्त्र यही कहते हैं, कि तुम अच्छा कर्म करो लेकिन कर्म तो करना ही है इससे हमारा छुटकारा नहीं है। अर्जुन अपना कर्म नहीं करना चाहते थे, वो युद्ध छोड़ कर भाग जाना चाहते थे। वे कहते कि मैं युद्ध नहीं करूंगा, मैं चला जाऊंगा, मैं सन्यासी बन जाऊंगा। इस पर भगवान कहते हैं, नहीं अर्जुन युद्ध तुम को करना ही है, पहली बात तो ये है, कि यह तुम्हारा संस्कार है तुमको युद्ध करना ही है, युद्ध छोड़ के तुम कुछ नहीं कर सकते हो, सारी जिंदगी तुम युद्ध करते आए हो और अभी कहोगे मैं सन्यासी बन जाऊंगा, तो यह नहीं होगा तुमसे।

“प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यसि”

तुम्हारी जो प्रकृति है, जो संस्कार बने हैं, वो ही तुम को चलाते हैं। सब प्राणी प्रकृति के अनुसार ही कार्य करते हैं; निग्रह क्या करेगा, अर्थात् तुम्हारा हठपूर्वक लिया गया यह निर्णय कि 'मैं युद्ध नहीं लडूंगा' यह फलदायी नहीं रहेगा। इसलिए हमारे पीछे जो कर्म फल है वो ही हम लोगों को चलाते हैं। वही कर्म हम लोगों को अच्छा

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करना है और भगवान कहते हैं - तुम निष्काम कर्म करो, क्योंकि

“कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन”

भगवान कहते हैं कि तुम कर्म के फल की तरफ मत देखो, निष्काम कर्म करते जाओ - तो निष्काम कर्म करने से क्या होगा, तुम बंधन में नहीं गिरोगे। ये जो हर एक कर्म हमें बंधन में गिराता है, कर्म बन्धन में फंसाता है - उसमें तुम गिरोगे नहीं। तुम सत्वगुणी बनोगे और उसके साथ तुम्हारा चित्त शुद्ध होगा और तुम मुक्त हो जाओगे। तो निष्काम करना पड़ता है। तो तुम निष्काम कर्म कैसे करोगे - भगवान कहते हैं अर्जुन को

“तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युद्धय च”

तुम युद्ध करो और साथ-साथ मेरा स्मरण भी करो और कहते हैं -

**यत्करोषि यदश्रासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥**

और जो भी कर्म तुम करते हो, वो सब कर्म मुझे अर्पण करो, तुम्हारा धर्म ये नहीं, ये जो हो रहा है - ये फल तुम्हें नहीं चाहिए, ये फल मुझे अर्पण कर दो तुम। अगर ऐसा करके तुम मुझे याद करते रहोगे और साथ-साथ ये सब कर्म फल मुझे अर्पण करते रहोगे- ऐसा करने से वो निष्काम कर्म हुआ। अपने लिए कर्म अगर करोगे तो वो तुम को बंधन में फंसाता जाएगा और दूसरों के लिए अगर कर्म करोगे तो तुम बंधन से अलग होते जाओगे। इसलिए तुम समझो और जो कुछ भी करो, मुझे सब अर्पण करते जाओ।

स्वामीजी ने मिशन में ये जो हम लोग का मोटो बनाया है

“आत्मनो मोक्षार्थम् जगत् हिताय च”

हम लोग जो सन्यास लेते हैं और आते हैं, ये कर्म करने के लिए नहीं आते हैं, हम लोग तो इस समाज के कर्मी नहीं हैं, हम लोग आते हैं - मुक्ति के लिए, आत्मा की मुक्ति के लिए। इस मुक्ति को पाने के लिए जितना सारा कर्म चल रहा है, रामकृष्ण मठ, मिशन में, सन्यासी लोग जो कर रहे हैं - ये सब निष्काम कर्म कर रहे हैं और हम लोग श्रीरामकृष्ण को अर्पण कर रहे हैं।

शास्त्र में कहते हैं, हम लोगों का चित्त जो है - वो शुद्ध नहीं है, अशुद्ध हो गया है - जैसे कि आईना जो है उसके ऊपर अगर मैल जम जाएगी तो हम अपना मुँह देख नहीं सकते हैं। हम लोगों का जो चित्त दर्पण है उसमें हम लोग को आत्म साक्षात्कार नहीं हो रहा है। क्यों? क्योंकि हम लोग ने जन्म जन्मांतर से जितने सारे कर्म किए हैं या करते आए हैं, जितना हम लोग दुष्कर्म करते आए हैं - उसी के फलस्वरूप जितना सारा मैल है, वो दर्पण के ऊपर जम गया है इसलिए हमें आत्म साक्षात्कार नहीं हो रहा है और जितना हम निष्काम कर्म करते जायेंगे उतना ही हमारा चित्त शुद्ध होता जायेगा। मन, बुद्धि, अहंकार चित्त होता है - ये मन, बुद्धि, अहंकार धीरे-धीरे साफ होता जाएगा और ऐसा करते करते जब चित्त शुद्ध होता जाएगा तब आत्म साक्षात्कार होगा।

‘आत्मनो मोक्षार्थम्’ - हम लोग तो मोक्ष के लिए आए हैं, लेकिन हम लोगों ने इसके लिए जो उपाय ढूंढा है - जो उपाय स्वामी जी हम को निर्देश करके गए हैं - वो उपाय है ‘निष्काम कर्म’। तुम निष्काम कर्म करो, इसी में तुम को मुक्ति मिलेगी। इसी निष्काम कर्म का बाय प्रॉडक्ट - एक बड़े कारखाने में जो बाय प्रॉडक्ट होता है, में प्रॉडक्ट के

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लिए कारखाना बनता है, तो वो में प्रॉडक्ट तो होता ही है, उसमें बहुत सारे बाय प्रॉडक्ट भी होते हैं, ठीक उसी प्रकार हमारा असल उद्देश्य तो है - आत्मा की मुक्ति, लेकिन इसी निष्काम कर्म का बाय प्रॉडक्ट है - जगत का हित।

इसलिए कहते हैं कि 'आत्मनो मोक्षार्थम्' आत्मा की मुक्ति के साथ, 'जगत् हिताय च' इसमें जगत का हित भी हो रहा है। लेकिन जगत का हित करना हमारा उद्देश्य नहीं है। स्वामीजी कर्म योग ग्रन्थ में कहते हैं - हम जगत का हित करेंगे, ऐसा सोचना ही गलत होगा। श्री रामकृष्ण, मल्लिक महाशय को कहते हैं, अगर भगवान तुम्हारे सामने आते हैं तो तुम उनसे अस्पताल और दफ्तर खाना बनाने के लिए बोलोगे या बोलोगे कि भगवान मुझे मुक्त करो? क्या कहोगे तुम? हम अगर सोचते हैं, कि हम लोगों का भला करेंगे और उनका उपकार करेंगे तो पहली बात तो यह है कि उपकार करने वाले तुम कौन हो? हम से पहले बहुत सारे लोग आये थे, इस जगत को बदलने के लिए, लेकिन हुआ क्या? जगत जैसे का तैसा ही रह गया।

स्वामीजी ने एक बहुत अच्छी कहानी बताई है - एक आदमी अपने गुरु के पास गया जाकर बोला कि मुझे एक मंत्र सीखा दीजिये, मुझे एक भूत चाहिए और उस भूत से मैं कामकाज कराऊँगा। गुरु ने उसको रोकने की कोशिश की, उससे कहा कि वो भूत जो है उसको तुम काम नहीं दे पाओगे, वो बाद में तुम को मार डालेगा। वह आदमी बोला नहीं नहीं गुरुजी - मुझे मंत्र चाहिए! गुरु ने उसको एक मंत्र दे दिया, वे बोले इस मंत्र का तुम जप करो, भूत आ जाएगा और तुम जो बोलोगे, वो करेगा। ठीक वैसे ही

हुआ, उसने मंत्र जप किया और भूत आकर बोला, बोलो मुझे क्या करना है? उस आदमी ने भूत से कहा तुम ये जो जंगल है, इसे साफ कर दो। भूत ने बस हाथ घुमाया और पूरा जंगल साफ हो गया। भूत फिर बोला - अब क्या करना है? उसने इस बार कहा यहाँ पर एक राजप्रासाद बना दो - हाँ लो बन गया तुम्हारा राजप्रासाद, भूत बोला। ऐसा करते करते उसने देखा कि वो जो कुछ भी बोलता, उसी क्षण भूत उसे पूरा कर देता। उसके मन में डर पैदा हो गया कि इस भूत को देने के लिए मुझे तो कोई काम याद ही नहीं आ रहा है, अब क्या करे तो ये मुझे मार डालेगा।

बस फिर क्या था, उसने दौड़ना शुरू कर दिया और वह भूत भी उसके पीछे दौड़ने लगा। दौड़ते दौड़ते वो गुरु के पास पहुंचा। गुरु उससे बोले क्या बात है? वह बोला गुरुजी मुझे बचाइए - ये भूत तो मुझे मार डालेगा। गुरु बोले - मैंने तुम को पहले ही बताया था, तुमने मेरा बात नहीं सुनी। उस आदमी ने कहा - वो जो भी हो गुरुदेव मेरी रक्षा कीजिये। गुरु बोले - ठीक है। इस बीच भूत भी वहाँ पहुंच गया और वह उस आदमी को जैसे ही मारने के लिए आगे बढ़ा, वे बोले ठहरो तुम्हें एक काम देता हूँ - ये सामने जो कुत्ता है, उसकी पूँछ को तुम सीधा करो। भूत ने कुत्ते की पूँछ को सीधा कर दिया। बोला ये लो सीधा हो गया पर वो फिर टेढ़ा हो गया। उसने जितनी भी कोशिश की वो टेढ़ा ही रहा, सीधा नहीं हुआ।

तो कहा जाता है, कि जगत भी ऐसा ही है। ये जगत जो है, ये टेढ़ा ही है। आप जितनी भी कोशिश करो, जितना भी भला करने की कोशिश करो वो फिर वैसा ही बन जायेगा। हम लोग बहुत कुछ करते आ रहे हैं, लेकिन फिर ऐसा ही हो जाता है। प्रश्न उठता है - तो क्या हम

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लोग कुछ नहीं करेंगे? जगत ये ऐसा है, ऐसा ही रहेगा क्या? नहीं! स्वामीजी कहते हैं, हम लोग करेंगे - जगत की भलाई के लिए, मनुष्य के हित के लिए, हम लोग जरूर कुछ करेंगे। क्यों? अपने लिए - मेरे अपने उपकार के लिए! जगत का भला हो या न हो उसकी चिंता तुम मत करो, तुम अपने भले के लिए करो। अगर हम जगत हित में अच्छा कर्म करते जायेंगे तो हमारा चरित्र बदलता जायेगा। मेरे निष्काम कर्म का जो फल है, उससे मेरा चित्त शुद्ध होता जायेगा। इसलिए जगत के हित के लिए कर्म करना ही है, लेकिन उस भाव से नहीं कि मैं जगत पर उपकार कर रहा हूँ। जगत पर उपकार होने वाला नहीं है, जगत जैसा का तैसा ही है, कुत्ते की पूँछ जैसा।

इसलिए हम लोग जो कर्म करते हैं, सिर्फ सन्यासी ही नहीं गृहस्थ जो हैं, भक्त जो हैं, आप भी अच्छा कर्म करते जाइए, इससे आपका चरित्र बदलता जायेगा, आपके बंधन खुलते जायेंगे। अपने चित्त को शुद्ध करने के लिए

हम लोगों को कर्म करना ही पड़ेगा - उस कर्म से दूसरे की जब भलाई होगी, उसमें आपका भी भला होगा। दूसरे की भलाई हो या न हो लेकिन आपका जरूर भला ही होगा। इसीलिए कहते हैं कर्म करते जाओ और तुम जो कर्म करते हो, उससे तुमको अहंकार नहीं होना चाहिए। स्वामीजी कहते हैं, तुम ऐसा मत सोचो कि तुम भिखारी को भीख दे रहे हो, या तुमने उसका उद्धार कर दिया। तुम ऊँचे मंच पर खड़े होकर भिखारी को बुला कर बोलोगे - भिखारी आओ भीख देता हूँ मैं तुमको। हालांकि वो भिखारी है, इसीलिए तुमको भिक्षा देने का जो अच्छा फल, पुण्यकर्म जो होता है, वो तुमको मिल रहा है। भिखारी की वजह से ही तुम्हारा भला हो रहा है, जिसके लिए तुम को उसके प्रति कृतज्ञ रहना चाहिए। हम लोगों को ऐसा सोचना चाहिए और कर्म करते जाना चाहिए। बस इतना ही।

श्री रामकृष्णार्पणमस्तु !



My Reminiscences of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti

Swami Tattwarupanandaji,

President Ramakrishna Math, Ulsoor

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः ।
 भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
 स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवागँसस्तनूभिः ।
 व्यशेम देवहितं यदायूः ।
 स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः ।
 स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
 स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः ।
 स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
 ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

(Meaning is provided at the end of the lecture) 1.

Most revered, senior Vice President Shrimat Swami Vagishanandaji Maharaj, Shrimat Swami Vishnupadnandaji, Swami Satyadevanandji, other monks in front of the dais and dear devotees. Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti (RKSS) is celebrating the Golden Jubilee after a successful 50 years of service. It is a historic occasion where we recall our association, our efforts, and milestones; how it came through, how we can improve and also provide more and more services to the downtrodden and under privileged sections of our society.

As you know Swami Vivekananda gave the twin ideals of *aatmanomokshartham jagadhitaycha* (for the liberation of oneself and for the benefit of the world). How it has to be practiced? Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj who was also associated with the founding of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti, the then President of Ramakrishna Order, used to give a very beautiful illustration of sugar factory, to convey the meaning of *aatmanomokshartham jagadhitaycha*; the purpose of sugar factory is to produce sugar but in the course of processing sugar we get the by-products like alcohol, molasses, and some residue, they are also useful but our purpose was not to produce alcohol or by-products, our purpose was to make sugar! Similarly he used to tell that our purpose is to mindfully offer to divinity, how we can become divine, how we can ourselves become the best instrument in the hand of God. That is the purpose of our life.

In the course of life, the things that we do, community services like these, they are just by-products, they will have their own value but we should not forget the main purpose.

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That s why while continuing our service activities we must keep in mind our main purpose, which is to become divine.

Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti (RKSS) was inspired by the senior monks of our Ramakrishna Order and the founding members, some of you must be knowing them, were from the elite class of our society. Dr Mrs. Suman Rajadhyaksha and other founding members at that time were very well placed in the society. Swami Ranganathanandaji inspired them to do service to the poor people because Maharaj was very particular about helping the downtrodden and poor people. Even though he was high intellectually, and also well-versed in the philosophy of life, at the core of his heart he used to feel for the upliftment of poor in the society. Thus Ranganathanandaji requested them, and the founding members thus inspired, started Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti in 1968. They were enthusiastically doing wonderful service in the field of medical, educational, and vocational training. During the course of their endeavor, they either died or became aged, and they were just looking for support on how to pass the baton. They made a mistake as they didn't induct some youngsters, if they had planned carefully to induct youngsters into their team they could have carried on well. But they didn't think in that line and they were very much hopeful the work will continue.

Then the founding members of RKSS approached Shrimat Swami Vagishanandaji

Maharaj on how to continue the services in their absence since they were becoming old. On the advice of Vagishanandaji we invited Raghu, and some of the doctors from the rural health services (at Sakwar) to take up voluntary medical services at RKSS. We also introduced one or two volunteers who could take up the Balwadi and vocational training classes. Like this it went on and thus slowly RKSS could recoup its activities. At that time RKSS had another problem relating to land lease renewal. The founding members never thought that they were working from a leased land, the property could go out of their hand if lease was not renewed. Again, Raghu with the help of some people worked it out and got the lease renewed, and during that process involved Mrs. Vidya Raghu because their family was anyway associated with our ashram.

Mrs. Vidya Raghu is an architect and we took her help in Mumbai Ramakrishna Mission's rural project at Sakwar for planning new buildings and related activities. Then we asked Mrs. Vidya Raghu to support RKSS because they live nearby and they can take up this endeavour and continue. Mrs. Vidya readily agreed and with the support of Raghu they took up the activities. They raised resources in trying to re-establish the activities of the Samiti. There were so many rowdy persons all around RKSS, and they were doing lot of mischief in the area, the building exteriors were damaged but these things were slowly corrected, and they made it an ashram type service.

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Things were going on and are going on now also, afterwards some more trustees have been inducted and they are very much interested and they are all our own devotees and very sincere and we hope that they will be able to carry on this service very well and may the blessings of Shri Ramakrishna, Shri Saradadevi, and Swami Vivekananda be on them. These service activities must continue with a sense of dedication but persons should not feel egotistic about it because this ego alone hampers our spiritual growth. Ego alone makes us not to progress, there is a small story how ahankar always keeps us away from the ideal.

This is how the story goes, Vyas Maharshi compiled the vedas into four vedas and also gave us the eighteen puranas. After such scholarly writings, one day, he was very sad. Then his disciple Vaishampayana, found out his guru was sad in spite of doing such yeomen service to the society, giving his valuable writings to the people. To his question, Vyas replied that he had given all this but people were not able to practice them, and also because of their ego they are not progressing, which is making him sad. Then his disciple asks him whether Vyas wanted to add more to his writings in the way of advice to his readers. Vyas replied that the attitude of service to others should be developed by one and all. Sins get accumulated by injuring others that is papala para peedanam, and by doing satkarma you add to your punya. That's why the idea of serving others was prescribed by Vyas.

As you all know, Swami Vivekananda in his letter to Mysore Maharaja wrote, they alone live who live for others rest are more dead than alive. So that idea which swamiji gave has been coming to us from the times of Vyas Maharshi. That's why when in our life span if we are able to be useful for some of our people in the society or some of our brothers and brethren it will not only be helping us but will also help improving others lives also. Tyaga and Seva, these are the twin ideals coming from our vedic times and Swamiji reiterated the message by saying, The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in these channels, and the rest will take care of itself.

We must understand the meaning of the word tyaga, merely giving up what you are possessing is not tyaga. Swamiji says that real tyaga is the giving up of ego, aasha, aakash, dvesha, irsha, nindya; these things if you can give up that is real tyaga. Swamiji says, Three things make an individual or a nation great, the first is Conviction of the powers of goodness; second is absence of jealousy and suspicion; third is to help all who are trying to be and do good. That's why through tyaga we must give up all the things that hamper our progress like ego, hatred, jealousy and conceit if you are able to give up, this is real tyaga.

You know what is the meaning of service? Swami Vivekananda received this great mantra of service from Shri Ramakrishna,

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Shiva Bhave Jiva Seva. Serve another individual as the embodiment of God. So in our own home or to our own kith and kin if we do service we must do with the attitude that they are the embodiments of God, they are the children of God, as if God is residing in them. Whatever you do in this way first it makes your mind peaceful and calm, serene. Just a thought will do, such a thought is called auto-suggestion or sankalpa.

This auto-suggestion works very wonderfully, you must tell to yourself that the person with whom you are interacting or whom you are serving is really the embodiment of God. Simply one should think even if really persons are not God externally that they are the embodiments of God, that idea itself will make your mind pure, make your mind calm, quiet and serene. This is the first benefit you will get by keeping such an attitude in service. Second benefit is to the person whom you give any kind of service or goods like a patient getting food, water and medicine, the person becomes satisfied and in that comfort he gives his blessings something like, may God bless you . That is why we must do service. Especially in providing community service, first and foremost thing is rising of ego. Try to soften

this ego then only you will be able to become divine. First is the benefit to yourself when you soften your ego. That is the purpose of service activities as directed by Swamiji, and Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti is wonderfully doing all these service activities, and may God bless them so that they can prosper and make an ideal institution.

Thank you

¹Meaning of Bhadram Karnebhih

Aum! O gods, may we hear auspicious words with the ears;

While engaged in yagnas,

May we see auspicious things with the eyes;

While praising the gods with steady limbs,

May we enjoy a life that is beneficial to the gods.

May Indra of ancient fame be auspicious to us;

May the supremely rich (or all-knowing) Pusa (god of the earth)

Be propitious to us;

May Garuda, the destroyer of evil,

Be well disposed towards us;

May Brihaspati ensure our welfare.

Aum! Peace! Peace! Peace!



Role of Householders in Service Activities

Swami Vishnupadanandaji,

President Ramakrishna Math, Aurangabad

**जननीं शारदा देवीं रामकृष्णं जगद्गुरुं। पादपद्मं
तयोः श्रित्वा प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः**

परम पूज्यनीय श्रीमान स्वामी वागीशानंदजी महाराज, स्वामी तत्वरूपानंदजी महाराज, स्वामी सत्यदेवानंदजी महाराज, मेरे सम्मुख बैठे सभी monks and devotees, पचास साल किसी संस्था के लिए बड़ी उपलब्धि है। so I congratulate all the members of श्री रामकृष्ण शारदा समिति and they have performed excellently for these fifty years. ये सेवा कार्य आप लोगों ने जो किया है इतने साल तक, एक बड़ी उपलब्धि है और हम लोग यहाँ उसका स्मरण करने के लिए उपस्थित हैं, कि अगले पचास सालों में ऐसे ही आप लोगों के द्वारा सेवा होगी। मेरा subject है, Role of Householders in service activities. इस विषय पर मैं अपने कुछ विचार आप के सम्मुख रखना चाहूँगा। यहाँ जो कार्यक्रम सूचि है, उसमें सब से नीचे लिखा हुआ है,

“यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः”

जो कि मनुस्मृति का बहुत ही प्रसिद्ध श्लोक है। तात्पर्य है, जहाँ नारियों की पूजा होती है, वहाँ देवता वास करते हैं, अर्थात् देवता उस कार्य को सफल करते हैं। वहाँ

असफलता नहीं होती है। यह आधा श्लोक है, इसका दूसरा भाग अधिकतर लोगो को मालूम नहीं होता है, वह है -

“यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः”

पूरा श्लोक बहुत ही सुंदर है। यहाँ पूजा की बात की गई है।

‘यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते...’, जहाँ नारियों की पूजा होती है, यहाँ पूजा का मतलब वस्तुतः पूजा से है, जिस प्रकार से हम मन्दिर में देवता की पूजा करते हैं जिस श्रद्धा भाव से, जिस प्रेम से, जिस भक्ति से हम पूजा करते हैं, उसी भक्ति के साथ नारियों की पूजा होनी चाहिए, ऐसा मनुजी कहते हैं।

जहाँ ऐसा नहीं होता है – ‘सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः’, समस्त कर्म अफल हो जाते हैं, उसका फल नहीं मिलता है। तो ये शारदा समिति की जो सभी महिलाये हैं, वे पूजा के पात्र हैं, क्योंकि उनके माध्यम से ये तो श्री माँ की पूजा है। आपके सामने श्री माँ का आदर्श है, और माँ ने जो सेवा की है - वो सेवा अत्युत्तम, अति उच्च दर्जे की थी। रामकृष्ण शारदा समिति की सभी महिलाओं को इसका स्मरण करना है कि श्री माँ ने जो सेवा की थी, वो सर्वोत्तम दर्जे की थी।

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श्री रामकृष्णदेवजी ने, स्वामी विवेकानंद जी ने जो सेवा की है, वो highest quality की सेवा है। सभी संतो ने, सभी महात्माओं ने, सभी साधुओं ने, सभी सज्जनों ने जो सेवा की है, वो highest quality की है और वह सेवा सबसे अधिक महान फल देती है। अवतार पुरुष जो सेवा करते हैं, भगवान श्रीकृष्ण हैं, भगवान रामजी हैं जिन्होंने सेवा का आदर्श हमारे सम्मुख रखा है, वो सबसे महान आदर्श रखा है, सेवा का। उन्होंने जो सेवा की है, वह हमारे लिए मानो दीपस्तम्भ के समान है। वह सब समय हमारी आखों के सामने रहना चाहिए और उनके दिखाए पग पर ही हमें चलना चाहिए, क्योंकि हमें उपदेश देने का, मार्ग दर्शाने का जो अधिकार होता है, वो उनके पास ही है। केवल अवतार पुरुष ही, संत पुरुष ही हमें मार्गदर्शन कर सकते हैं।

हमारे जीवन का लक्ष क्या है और वो कैसे जीवन में उतारना चाहिए, उसके सम्बन्ध में जो बातें हैं, मार्गदर्शन है, उपदेश हैं, केवल वे और वे ही बता सकते हैं। इसलिए आप लोग जो सेवा कर रहे हैं, सब समय आप देखिए कि माँ ने किस प्रकार से सेवा की है। श्रीरामकृष्णदेव ने किस प्रकार की सेवा की है। किस प्रकार से स्वामीजी ने, उनके गुरु भाइयों ने और अभी जो सेवा चल रही है, रामकृष्ण मठ और रामकृष्ण मिशन के माध्यम से, वह सेवा का आदर्श आप सब लोगों के सामने है। तभी वह समस्ता फलवान होगी नहीं तो अफल होगी।

‘यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः’, भारत में हमें उतनी सफलता नहीं मिली है। हजार साल तक हम पराभूत जीवन जीए हैं, गुलामी का जीवन जीए हैं और अभी भी हम कोशिश तो कर रहे हैं, आगे बढ़ने

की। शासन भी कर रहा है, प्रत्येक व्यक्ति भी कर रहा है, समाज भी कर रहा है। लेकिन जो फल मिलना चाहिए, वो हमें उस मात्रा में शायद नहीं मिल रहा है। यदि मनुजी की बात कहे, मनुस्मृति की बात कहे - इसका कारण क्या हो सकता है, स्त्रीत्व की पूजा होनी चाहिए, स्त्रियों की पूजा होनी चाहिए, स्त्रीभाव की पूजा होनी चाहिए, स्त्रियों के आदर्श की पूजा होनी चाहिए, मातृत्व की पूजा होनी चाहिए।

श्रीरामकृष्णदेव ने स्वयं श्री माँ की, जिस प्रकार से मंदिर में देवता की पूजा होती है, उपचार के द्वारा, विधि के द्वारा, उस प्रकार से पूजा की थी। पूर्णतः, मानो श्री माँ सामने बैठी हैं, वो उनकी पत्नी नहीं हैं, वो तो साक्षात् देवी हैं। साक्षात् देवी बोध से श्रीरामकृष्णदेव ने श्री माँ की पूजा की थी, क्योंकि माँ के माध्यम से ही आगे होने वाला कार्य जो है, रामकृष्णा मठ और रामकृष्ण मिशन का, वो होने वाला था। श्रीरामकृष्णदेव तो हमारे सम्मुख हैं ही, ये तो आदर्श है ही, लेकिन श्रीरामकृष्णदेव ने जो आदर्श रखा है, उसका समूचा रूप सेवा का, हम श्री माँ के जीवन में जैसा का वैसा देखते हैं। स्वामी विवेकानंदजी के जीवन में वैसा का वैसा देखते हैं।

स्वामीजी कहते हैं, he lived the life, I interpreted it. श्रीरामकृष्ण ने जीवन किस प्रकार से जीना चाहिए, वह हमें दर्शाया है और मैंने क्या किया?, स्वामीजी कहते हैं, मैंने केवल उसकी व्याख्या की है। जिस प्रकार से श्रीरामकृष्णदेवजी ने आदर्श जीवन बताया और जीए, ये उसी को स्वामीजी ने हमें व्याख्या करके बताया है। तो आप सब लोगों के सामने श्रीरामकृष्ण शारदा समिति में तो श्रीरामकृष्ण और शारदा का नाम है ही, तो आप को

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सब समय यह देखना पड़ेगा कि श्रीरामकृष्णदेव जी ने , श्री माँ ने किस प्रकार से सेवा कार्य किया है। उस प्रकार से आप और हम लोग नहीं कर सकते हैं, क्योंकि हमारी क्षमता वह नहीं है, संभव नहीं है। लेकिन यह हमें याद रखना पड़ेगा कि वह सर्वोत्तम सेवा है, सर्वोत्तम उपकार है। उनकी सेवा के माध्यम के द्वारा सर्वोत्तम उपकार होता है।

कितनी प्रेरणा लेकर हम आए हैं। यदि उनकी प्रेरणा न होती, हमारे द्वारा कुछ भी न होता, हम कुछ भी कार्य न कर पाते। और उनकी प्रेरणा जब होती है तो हमारे कार्य का अलग दर्जा होगा। अलग प्रकार से हम लोग कार्य करेंगे। जिस प्रकार से बाहर सेवा होती है, जिसको सोशल सर्विस कहा जाता है - लायंस क्लब है, रोटरी क्लब है और बहुत से क्लब हैं, विवेकानंद केंद्र वगैरे ये भी सेवा करते हैं। बड़ी अच्छी बात है, उपकार होता तो है ही लेकिन उनके सामने श्रीरामकृष्ण और स्वामीजी की जो सेवा है, वह आदर्श - जिस प्रकार से हमारे सामने है, श्रीरामकृष्ण शारदा समिति के सम्मुख है - उस प्रकार का आदर्श उनके सम्मुख नहीं होता है। हमारे सम्मुख वह आदर्श है, कि किस प्रकार से सेवा होनी चाहिए। तो हम लोग जो कार्य कर रहे हैं, रामकृष्ण मठ द्वारा मिशन द्वारा वो भी सर्विस एक्टिविटी है। सेवा ही है, लेकिन वह सेवा पूजा है। हम श्रीरामकृष्णदेव की पूजा कर रहे हैं। हम श्री माँ की पूजा कर रहे हैं। उन्होंने जो बताया है, कि लोगों का मन उस सेवा के द्वारा शुद्ध होना चाहिए। लोगों का उपकार होना चाहिए, लेकिन जो उपकार करने वाला होता है, उसका भी उपकार होना चाहिए।

यदि लोगों का उपकार होता है हमारे द्वारा, हमारे सेवा

कार्य से, और हमारा उपकार नहीं होता है, हमारा चित्त अशुद्ध होता है, हो सकता है कि हमारे द्वारा लोगों का चित्त शुद्ध हो जाए। उनका अहंकार चला जाए। चित्त की शुद्धता का अर्थ होता है, अहंकार का नाश, वासनाओं का नाश और आसक्ति का नाश। आप श्रीरामकृष्णजी का जीवन देखेंगे उन्होंने जीवन भर क्या किया? उन्होंने अपने अहंकार को दबाके रखा। उसको उठने ही नहीं दिया। आवश्यकता नहीं है उसकी। वे तो निरहंकारी हैं ही, हमारे लिए उन्होंने आदर्श दिया है। कभी भी उन्होंने अपने अहंकार को उठने ही नहीं दिया। आसक्ति को उठने नहीं दिया, वासना का समूचा त्याग कर दिया। त्याग का अर्थ क्या है, श्रीरामकृष्ण त्यागमूर्ति थे, उसका अर्थ क्या है - उन्होंने अपने अहंकार का त्याग किया, वासनाओं का त्याग किया, आसक्ति का त्याग किया, मोह का त्याग किया। उसको त्याग कहा जाता है।

अपने लिए कुछ भी नहीं, 'माँ आम्ही देह सुख चाइना, आम्ही लोकमान्य चाइना, आम्ही किच्छू चाइना' मुझे कुछ नहीं चाहिए, देह सुख नहीं चाहिए, लोगों की मान्यता नहीं चाहिए, 'माँ तोमार पादपद्मे शुद्ध भक्ति दाओ', माँ आम्ही तोमार शरणागत' - माँ मैं तुम्हारे चरणों में शरणागत हूँ।

जब तक हम अहंकार का त्याग नहीं करते तब तक हम शरणागत नहीं हो सकते हैं। अहंकार का जब त्याग होता है, तभी हम शरणागत होते हैं। श्रीरामकृष्ण ने बड़ा सुन्दर उदाहरण दिया है, बिल्ली का। बिल्ली का बच्चा, वो शरणागत होता है। माँ जैसा रखेगी, माँ जैसा करेगी वो उसको मान्य है। उसकी अपनी कोई इच्छा नहीं होती है। श्री रामकृष्णदेव कहते हैं, जब उसे परेशानी होती

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है तो केवल मिऊ मिऊ करता है और माँ जहाँ भी वो तो तत्काल आकर उपस्थित हो जाती है। वचनामृत में इसका बहुत सुन्दर वर्णन है, आप उसे पढ़िए। वह मिऊ मिऊ करना मतलब - प्रार्थना है, और शरणागत का अर्थ है - उसे कुछ भी मालूम नहीं है। जो जानना है, जो ज्ञान है - वो माँ को ही जानना है। माँ सब कुछ जानती है, मैं कुछ नहीं जानता हूँ, माँ जो करती है - वही सही है, वही ठीक है। मैं मेरे अहंकार को लेकर करता हूँ - वह सही नहीं है, वह ठीक नहीं है - उसमें दोष है।

इसलिए वह शरणागति, वह प्रार्थना, ये वो हमारी सेवा कार्य का केंद्र होना चाहिए। सेवा कार्यो के भीतर वह भाव होना चाहिए - इस शरणागति का और प्रार्थना का। सब समय मन में वो प्रार्थना होनी चाहिए, सब समय वह शरणागत का भाव होना चाहिए। जब हमारे द्वारा कुछ होता है - लोग उसकी प्रशंसा करते हैं - हम तो सामान्य लोग हैं, सामान्य व्यक्ति हैं, तो लगता ही है कि हम कुछ कर रहे हैं। लेकिन उसी समय हमारी परीक्षा होती है कि हम वास्तव में श्री रामकृष्ण शारदा समिति या हम रामकृष्ण मठ और रामकृष्ण मिशन के साधु सन्यासी हैं, क्या हम सेवा कार्य करते हैं - जो अभिप्रेत है श्री रामकृष्ण को, स्वामी विवेकानंद को, माँ को? उनको जो अभिप्रेत है - वह ये है कि हम कुछ नहीं कर रहे हैं। जो कुछ कर रहे हैं, श्री रामकृष्णदेव कर रहे हैं। जब हम नाम-यश आदि की आशा करते हैं, जब नाम-यश से हमारा चित्त अशुद्ध हो जाता है, नाम-यश की आकांक्षा को लोकेषणा कहा जाता है शास्त्र में, उससे हमारा चित्त अशुद्ध हो जाता है, तब हम सत्य की ओर आगे नहीं बढ़ते हैं, पीछे जाते हैं। विरुद्ध दिशा में जाते हैं। हमारी जब आसक्ति बढ़ते ही अहंकार बढ़ता है, हमारी वासनाएँ बढ़ती हैं। तब हम

हमारी मुक्ति की ओर अग्रसर नहीं होते हैं, हम लोग बंधन की ओर अग्रसर होते हैं - पीछे हटते हैं। इसलिए जो सेवा कार्य है, वो बहुत ही महत्व का है। इसका मूल्य कभी भी कम नहीं किया जा सकता।

लेकिन वह तभी सही होगा, तभी यथार्थ होगा जब हम, जैसे कि मैंने प्रारम्भ में कहा कि उन्होंने किस प्रकार से किया है - श्रीरामकृष्णदेव ने सेवा कार्य किस प्रकार से किया है। हम यह न समझे कि हम लोग हॉस्पिटल चला रहे हैं, डिस्पेन्सरी चला रहे हैं, बच्चों को शिक्षा दे रहे हैं और वह सेवा कार्य है। सेवा कार्य तो है जो रामकृष्णदेवजी ने किया है, स्वामी ने किया है, माताजी ने किया है। इतना बड़ा कार्य किया है जो चल रहा है और चलता रहेगा। इसलिए हमारे सेवाकार्य की परख होनी चाहिए, परीक्षा होनी चाहिए।

जैसे स्वामीजी कर्मयोग में कहते हैं कि इससे हमारा क्या लाभ होता है, स्वामीजी कहते हैं - you do not help others, you help yourself. आप दूसरों की मदद नहीं करते, आप स्वयं की मदद करते हैं। इसलिए अध्यात्म दान ही सबसे बड़ा दान होता है, इससे बड़ा दान दूसरा नहीं होता है और यह दान सबसे श्रेष्ठ है। लेकिन सभी लोग यह नहीं कर सकते हैं। इसलिए उसके बाद आता है विद्यादान, पढ़ाना। अपने पैरो पर खड़ा करना। तीसरा दान आता है प्राणदान - लोगों के प्राण संकट में हैं, कुछ हुआ है उनको, उनको रोग हुआ है, उससे उनको बाहर निकालना है और तीसरा दान आता है अन्नदान। भूखा व्यक्ति बहुत कष्ट पाता है। उसको अन्न दो, उसकी भूख मिट जाती है। वो सुखी हो जाता है। लेकिन, फिर से उसको भूख लगेगी, रोगमुक्त होने बाद भी फिर से वो

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रोगी होगा, शिक्षा का तो कोई अंत ही नहीं, जिसको हम भौतिक शिक्षा कहते हैं। लेकिन स्वामीजी कहते हैं, अध्यात्म दान ही ऐसा दान है, सब समय के लिए हमारी सारी अपेक्षाओं का आशाओं का, वासनाओं का और हमारे जीवन का – सही अर्थ में पूर्णता आती है हमारे जीवन में। तो आप जो ये कार्य कर रहे हैं, ये बहुत ही महान कार्य हैं। लेकिन यह रामकृष्ण और विवेकानंद और माताजी ने जो सांचा बनाया है, उसके अंतर्गत होना चाहिए। तभी उसकी सही रूप में सार्थकता होगी।

तो ये हुआ सर्विस एक्टिविटी। उसको हम सर्विस एक्टिविटी कहते हैं लेकिन बाहर के लोग सर्विस एक्टिविटी देते हैं उस प्रकार से नहीं। तो सर्विस एक्टिविटी मतलब सेवा - ईश्वर की सेवा, समाज की सेवा नहीं, ईश्वर की सेवा और गृहस्थ जो है - घर में रहता है इसलिए वो गृहस्थ है, इंग्लिश में उसको हाउस होल्डर कहा जाता है। घर को पकड़ता है वह। जैसे पांच दस बच्चे हैं - अरे ये बच्चा किसका है, माँ दौड़ के आती है और बच्चे को पकड़ती है। तो ये मेरा बच्चा है - जहाँ मैं पन होता है, उसी प्रकार से घर ये मेरा है, बच्चा मेरा है, पति मेरा है, पत्नी मेरी है, पैसे मेरे हैं, ये बहाव गृहस्थ में बहुत अधिक होता है। ये प्रवृत्ति मार्ग है, इसमें बहुत अधिक होता है। लेकिन निवृत्ति मार्ग में ये नहीं होता है - हमारा घर नहीं है, परिवार के लोग नहीं हैं, हमारा कुछ भी नहीं है। यदि गृहस्थ ध्यान करे, तपस्या करे और कहे कि मेरा घर नहीं है, घर तो अन्दर है बाहर थोड़े ही है, रहेगा ये। इसलिए वो अध्यात्म दान नहीं कर सकता। वो अन्नदान कर सकता है, विद्यादान कर सकता है, प्राणदान कर सकता है। लेकिन उसका मूल्य अध्यात्म दान से कम नहीं है। फल वही है, जो अध्यात्मदान से होता है - ऐसा श्री रामकृष्णदेव कहते हैं।

**सन्न्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसन्न्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥**

‘सन्न्यासः’ मतलब निवृत्ति और ‘कर्मयोगश्च’ यह प्रवृत्ति है, ‘निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ’ का अर्थ है - मुक्ति प्रधान करने वाला, ‘उभौ’ का अर्थ है - दोनों। दोनों ही मुक्ति प्रदान करने वाले हैं, आत्मज्ञान देने वाले हैं। ‘तयोः तु कर्मसन्न्यासात्’ लेकिन दोनों में कर्म को छोड़ना - निवृत्ति से ‘कर्मयोगः विशिष्यते’ - कर्मयोग की विशेषता है। Inactivity should be avoided by all beings - स्वामीजी कहते हैं, अकर्मण्यता का सब तरह से त्याग करना चाहिए, गृहस्थों को कर्मरत रहना चाहिए, सब समय काम में लगे रहना चाहिए। वो ध्यान-भजन करेगा, उपासना करेगा, पूजापाठ करेगा, सब कुछ करेगा लेकिन - सेवा करेगा, घरवालों की सेवा करेगा, समाज की सेवा करेगा। वो सेवा नहीं है? जिस प्रकार से यह सेवा होती है - अध्यात्म दान के द्वारा, उसी प्रकार से उसी स्तर की वो सेवा होती है।

श्रीरामकृष्ण बड़ा सुन्दर कहते हैं, वे कहते हैं - अरे जो घर छोड़ के आया है, घर के बाहर निकल के परिवार को छोड़ा है, वो तो करेगा ही, जप-ध्यान तो करेगा ही, भगवान का स्मरण तो करेगा ही। लेकिन, जो व्यक्ति इतनी ज़िम्मेदारियों के होते हुए भी - घर की ज़िम्मेदारी है, ऑफिस की ज़िम्मेदारी है, बिज़नेस की ज़िम्मेदारी है, फिर प्रलोभन के भीतर रहता है वह, चारों ओर प्रलोभन हैं, जैसे श्रीरामकृष्णदेव कहते हैं, जिस कमरे में आचार है, आचार का नाम सुनाने से मुँह में पानी आ जाता है, इमली का नाम सुनने से मुँह में पानी आ जाता है, सब प्रलोभन आसपास हैं, और सब समय हमारे पाव डगमगा

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जायेंगे, कभी भी आ सकता है ऐसा विचार, जिससे हम अपने आदर्श से दूर चले जा सकते हैं - इतना होने के बावजूद भी जो मेरा एक बार भी स्मरण करता है, अपने जीवन में उस आदर्शों को लाने की चेष्टा करके भगवान पर प्रेम करता है। ईश्वर पर प्रेम करना ऐसी अवस्था में बहुत कठिन है, क्योंकि संसार सब समय पूरी ताकत के साथ हम को खींच रहा है। श्री रामकृष्ण कहते हैं, ऐसे में इतना बोझ उठाते हुए भी जो मेरा स्मरण करता है, भगवान उसके ऊपर बहुत प्रसन्न होते हैं। वो कहते हैं, अरे इतना कठिन है, इतना मुश्किल है, फिर भी मेरा वो स्मरण कर रहा है। भगवान प्रसन्न होते हैं और वही फल देते हैं वो जो सन्यासी को मिलता है।

“तयोस्तु कर्मसन्न्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते” सबको एक ही दिशा की ओर जाना है, और वो है मुक्ति - आत्मज्ञान। कर्मयोग का आप पुस्तक खोलेंगे - भगवद्गीता के ऊपर इतनी सुन्दर किताब मेरे विचार से कहीं और नहीं है। भगवद्गीता समझने में बहुत मुश्किल है, लेकिन आप कर्मयोग का अभ्यास कीजिए, उसको ठीक से पढ़िए उस पर चिंतन करिए। भगवद्गीता क्या है आपको समझ में आएगी। पहले ही पृष्ठ पर स्वामी लिखते हैं, कि भारतीय दर्शन ने हमारे सामने केवल एक ही आदर्श रखा है, और वो है - मुक्ति का। दूसरा कोई भी आदर्श नहीं रखा है - हमें मुक्त होना है, मूर्खता से, अज्ञान से, मोह से, बंधन से मुक्त होना है। उसको मुक्ति कहा जाता है और जब मुक्त होता है, तब आदमी स्वतंत्रता का अनुभव करता है, वो आत्मा का लाभ करता है, ईश्वर का लाभ करता है। यही एकमात्र आदर्श रखा है। तो आप सब लोग जो कर रहे हैं, बहुत ही महान कार्य कर रहे हैं। इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं है। बहुत ही बड़ा कार्य कर रहे हैं और ईश्वर की इच्छा से

कार्य आपका चलता रहेगा। कुछ कठिनाइयाँ तो होती हैं। प्रश्न उपनिषद में 6 गृहस्थ हैं - उनको महाशाला कहा है, वे महागृहस्थ हैं। वे कैसे है -

ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः, ब्रह्मपराः, ब्रह्मज्ञानपरायणाः, ब्रह्मान्वेषमाणाः - याद रखिए, गृहस्थ का अर्थ घर में रहेगा और गृहस्थी करेगा ये नहीं है, ये गृहस्थाश्रम है। वह ब्रह्मपरा होगा - ब्रह्म ही उसका आदर्श है, ब्रह्मनिष्ठ होगा, ब्रह्मज्ञानपरायणाः - परायणता उसकी ब्रह्म में है और ब्रह्मान्वेषमाणाः - ब्रह्म की खोज करेगा। वो महान गृहस्थ है, प्रश्न उपनिषद में पहला ही मंत्र है - वे जाते हैं, उपदेश प्राप्त करते हैं, धन्य होते हैं, कृतार्थ होते हैं और अपने गुरु से बिदा लेते हैं। अंत का जो मंत्र है वो बहुत सुंदर है। जहाँ प्रश्न उपनिषद समाप्त हो जाता है -

“ते तामर्चयन्तस्त्वं हि नः पिता यो
अस्माकमविध्यायाः परं परं तारयसीति”

सुनिए, उन छह महान गृहस्थों ने अपने गुरु की पूजा की, अर्चना की - ‘ते तामर्चयन्तः’, अपने गुरु की प्रार्थना की और अब प्रणाम करके कहते हैं - ‘त्वं हि नः पिता’ आप हमारे पिता हैं। कैसे पिता हैं? पिता तो हमारा भला करता है। कितना भला पिता करता है, उतना कौन कर सकता है? लेकिन, वो पिता और माता हमारा भौतिक भला करते हैं। हमारे जीवन को धन्य, कृतकृत्य, कृतार्थ नहीं कर सकते हैं। उस अर्थ में पिता नहीं कहा है - जो गुरु है, वह अज्ञान का नाश करता है। ‘त्वं हि नः पिता’ - पिता क्यों कह रहे हैं? वे महा गृहस्थ कहते हैं ‘यो अस्माकमविध्यायाः परं परं तारयसीति’ आप हमें विद्या से अविद्या के पार ले गए हैं, इस दृष्टि से पिता हैं। इसलिए यहाँ जो सभी भक्तगण बैठे हैं, मैं ये विचार देता हूँ - ये

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विचार मेरा नहीं है, रामकृष्ण, विवेकानंद, उपनिषदों का विचार है, गीता का विचार है, ब्रह्मनिर्वाण तंत्र में बहुत सुंदर जिसका उल्लेख स्वामीजी ने कर्मयोग किया है - गृहस्थ को ब्रह्मनिष्ठ होना चाहिए। आप जो भी कर्म करेंगे जो भी सेवा कार्य करेंगे, यह पूजा है, अर्चना है। श्री माँ के चरणों में ये आपकी पूजा, आपका सेवा कार्य समर्पित होगा, मानो पुष्प हैं और इस प्रकार से ईश्वर ही हमारे जीवन का लक्ष है - श्रीरामकृष्ण बार बार कहते हैं, श्री माँ बार बार कहती हैं। उसकी ओर हम छोटे छोटे पग डालकर क्यों न हो आगे बढ़ेंगे। ये हमारा आदर्श हमारे आखों से कभी भी ओझल न हो, इसकी दक्षता, इसका ख्याल हम सदैव रखेंगे, तभी ये श्रीरामकृष्ण शारदा समिति है और उनका जो सेवा कार्य पचास साल आपने बड़ी सफलता के साथ ये कार्य किया है, ये आदर्श आपको मालूम ही

है। यही आदर्श आपके हृदय में सब समय ज्योति के समान जलता रहे -

“नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता”

गीता में भगवान कहते हैं, मैं उनके अज्ञान का नाश करता हूँ और ज्ञान प्रदीप के समान भासमान होता हूँ, ऐसा यह ज्ञान आपके हृदय में सब समय जलता रहे।

आप धन्य हो जाएँ, कृतार्थ हो जाएँ, सबको धन्य करें, कृतार्थ करें - इसी प्रार्थना के साथ मैं आपसे बिदा लेता हूँ।

नमस्कार!



Skill Development & Women s Empowerment (At RKSS)

Tailoring : Ambit Oditi Foundation s free sewing machine distribution,
with 6 month training certificate



**Nursing Aide Program
2015- 2017 : Partners -**

**Ramakrishna Sarada
Samiti (RKSS), Ambit Oditi
Foundation, and Urban Health
Center K. J Somaiya Hospital
at RKSS**

Tailoring collective



Workshop for Women

Workshop for Women



Yoga Class for Women is a perfect example of Voluntary Women s collective committing to provide training in Yoga, for health and well-being in the Community.



Skill Development for Women is regularly provided through basic and advanced classes in Terracotta and Jewelry making, Tailoring, and Beutician training.



Handicrafts produced by the women s collectives

Handicrafts that are produced at RKSS by the women s collectives, in skill development classes or otherwise, are sold at annual fairs, festival stalls and special invitation stall by industry and businesses. The sale proceeds are shared with the collective.



8. ARTICLES BY TRUSTEES

Seeds Sown at Belur Math Garden blooms at Pratiksha Nagar



Mrs. Sheila Shantanu Chowdhury

An International Youth Convention was organized by Ramakrishna Mission at Belur Math, Kolkata in December 1985, where youth from all over the World participated and imbibed the spirit of serving humanity as taught by Swami Vivekananda.

Being charged by the inspiring talks and messages of stalwarts of the Ramakrishna Order including Swami Gambhiranandaji, Bhuteshanandaji, Ranganathanandaji, Smaranandaji, Atmasthanandaji & others, an army of young soldiers of Swamiji was formed, determined to serve the society after returning to Mumbai.

Within a couple of months, a Balwadi for tribal children was organized at Sakwar Village (Thane District) at the Rural Health & Welfare Centre of Ramakrishna Mission Mumbai. This was a dream and desire of Most Rev. Swami Vireswaranandaji to take education Door to Door in the tribal villages in and around Sakwar. Over a period of time 4 other Balwadis were also started in far-off remote villages.

Dr. Mrs. Suman Rajadhakshya, Founder member and Chairperson of Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti visited the Sakwar Centre on a Sunday morning during the summer of that year and upon seeing the Balwadi of tribal children in action, she immediately expressed her desire to start a Balwadi at the Pratiksha Nagar Centre at RKSS for the local children from the neighboring slum area.

Accordingly, on Saraswati Puja day, 2nd February 1987, the Balwadi was started at RKSS Centre with just 5 little students and one teacher. Slowly the number of students started increasing and this activity started gaining importance along with the medical services for which the Centre was always looked upon.

Since the little students used to be busy in their classroom activity, mothers of these children would wait outside chatting and socializing among themselves.

Having noticed this, the thought of doing something constructive with these

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ladies came up and self-employment proficiency courses like tailoring etc. were started. Gradually, this activity also gained momentum and so also a Mahila Mandal was initiated, where health and hygiene, good habits, periodic medical check-ups and general well being of people residing in the neighboring area became a part of this Centre.

After a period of 3 decades today, the activities continue in full force besides so many additional activities which have been added by the dynamic younger generation Trustees in keeping with changing times.

May the Holy Trios blessings keep pouring on this unique welfare and humanitarian Centre started way back in 1968 under the inspiration of Most Rev. Ranganathanandaji Maharaj the 13th President and Rev. Vireswaranandaji Maharaj the 10th President of the Ramakrishna Order, who would have certainly visualized these Golden days of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of RKSS.

(The Authors of this Article were Delegates at the Belur Math Youth Convention, 1985 and Founder-members of the Balwadis)



Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti A Community Center in Urban Slums

(Setting up a community center that focuses in working proactively for the welfare of the community is only the first step in a thousand mile journey for improving the quality of lives in urban agglomerations, and the so called slums in particular)



Mrs. Vidya Raghu

Early Years

Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti established in the year 1968 has been working in slums, first at Kherwadi Bandra and for the past 40 years at Sion Koliwada. The NGO was set up as a community center for disadvantaged communities by educated women householders who decided to use their education and time to provide medical health services to slum communities in a spirit of Seva Bhav , or service. They dedicated their time, effort and networks for the benefit of needy, inspired by Swami Ranganathanandaji and his ideas on seva. It also provided a space for other householder devotees to have the opportunity of volunteering and seva. These ideas of service form the basis of all activities in the Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti (RKSS) center even today.

The existing buildings foundation was laid in 1976 and since 1978 RKSS, was run by the volunteer trustees thrice a week providing free milk, biscuits and medicines

in the health clinic. Understanding the problems of women, and counselling them was an important service RKSS started with, and soon the women of the area began to perceive RKSS as their own space. The need for a preschool was felt since women needed a safe place to leave their children while at work as maids, and in response, RKSS set up a balwadi in 1987, and tailoring training was provided so that women could learn basic skills and work from home for supplementary wages.

RKSS into Community Practice

As the city has grown, so has the migrant and slum population leading to new problems, and the scale of complexities has increased manifold since RKSS started. Slums are man-made indeed and so we owe them dignified living, which is a basic right of human beings. Municipalities, Governments, and institutions engaged either in social studies or social welfare should adopt welfare oriented community practice to better the

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lives of under privileged, which if ignored could cause socio-political tensions and demographic disaster.

Community practice has been defined as engaging to develop local leadership, initiatives, and capacities to work towards progressive change and betterment in their social, political, economic, and personal conditions. Spatial constraints being at the center of urban agglomeration, and lack of access in spite of being urban, have ensured perpetuation of the challenges slum dwellers faced. These include minimal or no space for reading, writing, and, playing for children; lack of right medical advice and treatment at doorstep especially for women, children, and senior citizens; and, inadequate counselling or hand holding to self-organise and promote leadership and entrepreneurship within the members of the community.

The solution was to develop and maintain a community centre that provides enabling infrastructure to address the felt needs of the community and through proactive community practice focus on creating the sense of belonging, citizenship values, attitudinal change, leadership, and self-esteem building; through small, big, short term, and long term interventions designed across many segments of the under privileged community.

Community Practice A 360 degree Approach

To design appropriate interventions means we needed to have first-hand information

and knowledge of the problems to address the myriad challenges and issues in the everyday existence of disadvantaged and dispossessed urban sections. By design therefore we eschewed a large scale, unidimensional, top down, expert/technocratic approach. Rather we opted a more contexted, immersive, deep engagement view that kept relationships with people at the center and looked at nuanced, appropriate, and sometimes proactive support, to enable people find their own solutions.

The 360 degree approach to community service that RKSS has evolved from the experience of 50 years on ground is that healthcare, education and skill building for livelihood, all are deeply inter linked and need to be addressed holistically to stem intergenerational socio-economic divide. The socio-spatial dimensions of inequality and disadvantage are equally important because slums by very definition are degraded, unliveable environments. The impact of poor living environment, crowding, lack of efficient sewage systems, toilets, dumps etc. are directly linked to disease, stress and criminality.

RKSS has consciously kept the scale of activities at the locality level, and has focussed on long term enablement which reaches out to the poorest of the poor in these localities. Right from preschool to 10th grade, a child can come to RKSS at no cost, and through those years, the center is available, accessible, safe and provides

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support in school learning, sports such as malkhamb, pottery etc and through interventions designed to improve self-esteem, confidence and faith in oneself can evolve into a self-confident, aware person who can stand on her own feet. The RKSS alumna on an average has been with RKSS since grade 2 and continues to be associated as a volunteer after schooling.

Inside- out change of the person becomes the pivot on which any kind of physical transformation in communities is possible. RKSS has been evolving interventions, small and long term across age groups through programs that link education, digital literacy and attitudes. To truly participate in the processes of the city, to articulate needs and effect change in physical conditions, the next generation of adults who lead communities have to be aware, have positive values and be at ease with new modes of communication in a digital world.

Outlining below a few of the grass root level programs we designed to make our community centre relevant and our community practice successful.

Twinning Program with Kids

Twinning program design was intended to link environmental awareness, overcoming learning hurdles and citizenship principles. This program is one of the many interventions but proved very effective. The twinning program connected disadvantaged school children from Bristol and the school

children in the slums at RKSS. Over 4 years they twinned and worked on projects designed jointly on themes related to culture and environment and share the learnings through digital media, skype and internet. The 3 month sessions held every year through internet, helped RKSS children to broaden their world view, learn through projects and hands on workshops, shed their fear of technology and learnt to respect differences while celebrating their own culture.

The students who took part in the project, a few years later, have turned out to be very confident, and went on with their changed lives to become actors, choreographers, some pursued BA in English literature and took to teaching, Most of the twinning participants pursued college education, understanding the value of becoming educated, rather than be branded as a school drop-out, which is the normal thing among kids in slums.

Balwadi Teachers as Change Makers

Teachers at RKSS are more than employees, they are community change makers. They are women from the community who are trained in EECD (Early Education and Child Development) and have been exposed to principles of social work and the ideal of Seva. They are respected by people of the community. Through meetings and regular monthly Gappa Goshti sessions at RKSS with mothers of the Gammatwadi, create awareness and strength in the community. These informal sessions look at creating a community of women with shared concerns.

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Issues such as parenting, health, hygiene, learning disabilities, family nutrition, drug abuse etc. are discussed with experts and teachers. The mother is discussed as the pivot of the family, the new Durga, with the inherent power to nurture and transform the conditions of her family. Spiritual talks by monks and matajis, value education, and yoga are encouraged at RKSS so that the mother or woman of the family, moulds her whole family constructively.

The formal Gammatwadi School is more than a school. It is a safe, friendly, nurturing space where children can grow unfettered by their living conditions. Respect for one another, cooperation, politeness, sharing etc are values that are primarily taught in the school through play, storytelling sessions, puppetry, and games. All educational material is customised and made by the teachers. Regular under- five clinics, well-woman clinics (for mothers of balwadi kids), nutritional status check, and mapping to counter malnutrition, counselling, etc are part and parcel of the school activities.

Empowerment of Women & Girls

Through skill development women feel empowered to step out of the home and share the responsibilities of urban life, creating better opportunities for their children. The difference at RKSS is that the trainee is not seen as a student of the course but as a potential entrepreneur, capable of changing the conditions of her household. The women who take all the skill building programs each

year are given tailoring machines or kits to start their own small set up.

Till the time tailors become skilled to take on jobs, RKSS gives work. The little handholding and the assurance that the center is always there to help gives a push to womenpreneurs, and encourages them to continue to struggle, work and succeed in getting jobs and supplemental income. Similar programs in beautician training, English speaking, computer training, and Jewellery making have been or continue to make big difference in the lives of students who pass out these courses. Thanks to corporate sponsors like Ambit Oditi Foundation, Peter Medlock Foundation, Illumine, and K J Somaiya Hospital, to name a few. Our work in community outreach for improving slum conditions is also undertaken by RKSS to address specific community needs. Here are some case studies.

Case Study Dump the dump!

For several years the slum community faced health problems and children faced life hazard from a large dump yard in the neighbourhood. Doctors of the community center traced the spread of rampant malaria, dysentery, dengue, and other diseases to the dump yard amidst them. However, there seemed to be no solution in sight for a decade and more. With efforts from RKSS, and with help from local leaders the dump yard was finally cleaned up in 2014, giving place to another community center in the neighbourhood.

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This involved mapping the areas by RKSS kids, making a representation to the municipal authorities and more importantly creating awareness in the community of the linkages between spatial conditions and their health. This also reinforces the need for the practice of community that can create and maintain social ties, reinforce informal networks and make explicit the spatial intelligence of the informal to ensure shared knowledge for effective access to services. Collective action comes with awareness, advocacy and more importantly reimagining oneself as a citizen who is part of the larger empowered community.

Proactive interventions through community practice at RKSS whether in the areas of health, education, spatial issues, or advocacy are all aimed at improvement in human quality of life and welfare. But end of the day, invoking ontological shifts for deep change is needed. More important is to ensure that community service is guided by the ideal of Seva Bhav.

Case Study Risk of Fire Hazard

In the case of Almeida Compound, a slum locality in Pratikshanagar where RKSS works, a fire in an electric repair shop on the outer edge of the locality created huge panic before the fire was doused, fortunately no one was hurt. Every year in Mumbai's informal settlements/ slums these fires are common. In another incident narrated by one of our women students in the community centre's vocational classes, a

fire broke out in her basti (in 2018) because agarbatti spark fell on the nearby wires causing short circuit in the dwelling leading to fire. Following this incident, at RKSS we were determined to know the risks faced by slum dwellers due to fire hazard. A group of students of architecture did a study under this author, in mapping a small zone of slum with a population of 5000, near the main access road, using satellite images and conducted surveys on the ground to generate a map. The focus of the study was to understand if in the event of a fire whether communication protocols, basic fire-fighting, and access routes for a fire engine are available to reach all or any part of the slum area covered by the study. Also the group studied the response mechanisms the slum dwellers use to deal with events such as fires and flooding.

Surveys and detailed mapping of community groups, social networks and identification of real and perceived boundaries and nodes within the slum revealed multiple neighbourhoods, distinct network figurations with different political or religious leanings, and markers in the built environment that were universally identifiable by residents. Nearest to the road are either owners of the informal dwellings, or well to do shops; sweat shops, shared tenants, and poor migrants who come in but typically move on after 2 to 3 years lived in the interior stretches. In case of fires, interviews revealed that most people of the slum had no idea of whom to call. The large percent of migrant population

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had only acquaintances and hardly any deep social ties with neighbours, so they could not identify community leaders or people trained as wardens who they could approach for help.

There is access on one side, large enough for the Fire engine to enter but up to 100 mts inside. This meant that for 75 % of the slum dwellers there is no access to a fire engine or an ambulance in the event of a fire. Interviews with fire personnel revealed that single most important issue faced during fires in informal settlements is effective communication and reaching an unmapped area in time to save lives and property. The main issues are the lack of representation formally in maps and lack of a common nomenclature for spaces inside slums with clearly defined identifiable landmarks identified as safe-shelters within the slum. In addition, the obvious problem of lack of roads for fire engines to enter inside informal settlements needs to be addressed to ensure that basic emergency services reach the informal dwellings and the poor. Now RKSS is gearing up to engaged with local municipality and relevant institutions to do a pilot for fire risk mitigation in the slum.

Conclusion

To sum up, the inefficiency of the existing municipal mechanism is evident in the state of our cities and the inadequacy of traditional

social, urban management and planning theories call for new understanding of community practice. There is a substantial need, an increased requirement in India for more and more community centres in urban agglomerations, to provide enabling support of the kind offered by Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti both as a community centre providing simple spatial, educational, health, and skill support and also as a centre designing enabling solutions for the welfare of the community, through active engagement, which we call as welfare oriented community practice.

Deep impact and change takes time and sustained engagement with communities over long periods. A participatory approach needs an attitude of openness and willingness to listen, engage and wait for solutions to evolve and emerge. However the massive size of our urban problems and challenges faced by disadvantaged communities need interventions that can be scaled quickly and effectively. This is one of the big challenges that presents itself to RKSS. With increased connectivity, access to smart phones, internet, Apps, social media, modes of community engagement are also transforming and offer new ways of addressing those challenges. Thus welfare oriented community practice with smart scale could bring forth demographic dividend rather than demographic disaster in the 21st century India.



Sports & cultural activities (At RKSS)

Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti (RKSS) is a community center in the heart of Mumbai slums at Sion. RKSS conducts education, recreation, sports, and cultural activities for children of the communities. Every smiling face here is a blessing to the world and for RKSS Trustees in particular.



Malkhamb demonstration by students of RKSS at Ramakrishna Mission, Khar, Mumbai.

Terracotta workshops



Urban gardening- Workshop for children of the Community at Nature Park, Mumbai; and at RKSS (picture below).



Revered Pravrajika Amalaprana Mataji, General Secretary of Sri Sarada Math & Ramakrishna Sarada Mission with monks of the Order, at RKSS Center.



Class on Values at RKSS Center.



Swami Sarvalokananda, then President of Ramakrishna Math, Khar along with monks of the Order.

Most Revered Senior Vice President of Ramakrishna Math & Mission, Swami Vagishanandaji Maharaj with Trustees of RKSS.



**JAI SRI RAMAKRISHNA!
JAI MA SARADA!!
JAI SWAMI VIVEKANANDA!!!**

9. ARTICLES BY RKSS SUPPORT GROUP

Service to man is service to God



Dr. P S Krishnamurthy

It was my good fortune that I saw Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji, the X President of Ramakrishna Math & Mission when he visited Rajahmundry, a town where I had started my medical practice in the 1950s. Swami Vireswaranandaji's lectures on Vedanta influenced not only my brother Dr P Deekshitulu and several others like Dr Duvvuri Veerabhadra Rao, the donor of land for Ramakrishna Math, Rajahmundry, but profoundly impacted my thought and actions towards service of the poor. Throughout my career as a practicing Homeopath I have not only followed his teachings but also subsequently became an initiated disciple of this great Swami. My wife Mrs. Lakshmi and I have taken initiation from Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj and served many Swamis of the Order unconditionally thereafter.

The name of Swami Ranganathanandaji deserves a special mention among the Swamis I served in my life. I later shifted my medical practice from Rajahmundry to

Hyderabad in the 60s, and there I met this wonderful Swami in the 70s. Since then our family has been greatly devoted to this Swami, and learnt at his feet about Vedanta the principles on which Ramakrishna Mission stands today *Aatmano Mokshartham Jagat Hitayacha!*

By happenstance, in 2017, my wife and I moved to Mumbai, thus getting in touch with Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti (RKSS), which we learnt was set up by the devotees of Ramakrishna Mission inspired by the lectures and exhortations of Revered Swami Ranganathanandaji. Since 1978, allopathic doctors were providing free consultation and medicines for the poor from this center at Sion-Koliwada. The Managing Trustee of RKSS is my daughter-in-law, Mrs. Vidya Raghu. She felt that the slum dwellers needed exposure to, and relief from, alternative systems of medicine like Homeopathy. And Vidya would have felt who better than her father-in-law who is the recipient of the prestigious Dhanvantari Award for Medicine.

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I jumped at the offer, and since 2018, at 91 years, I started the free Homeopathic clinic for the poor women, children, and old people of the slums offering free consultation and medicines sponsored by me. It is a privilege indeed to work for the poor, and I believe so, coming from the school of thought propounded by Ramakrishna Mission.

The Year 2018 is also the Golden Jubilee Year of RKSS, which was celebrated with pomp and splendor both at the slum and in Ramakrishna Mission, Khar Mumbai. May Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada, and Swami Vivekananda bless the working Trustees, the donors, and members associated with RKSS and I pray for its growth in manifold ways bringing welfare to the poor and needy in urban slums.



Swami Ranganathananda s Philosophy of Enlightened Citizenship



Mr. Srinivas Venkatram,

CEO & Lead Research

Illumine Knowledge Resources Pvt. Ltd.

Swami Ranganathananda, over a series of lectures spanning decades, articulated a philosophy he called Enlightened Citizenship .

Enlightened Citizenship he said, comprises of six key building blocks or axioms:

BUILDING BLOCK 1

Each individual is capable of infinite possibilities that connects the fact of divinity within each of us with our constant evolutionary struggle to become more than what we are.

BUILDING BLOCK 2

This constant evolutionary struggle is not towards biological evolution, which has reached a stable homeostatic state, but towards a psychosocial evolution.

Psychosocial evolution is a dual evolution one, a going deeper into one s own consciousness discovering more and more profound possibilities within, and two, an expansion of one s consciousness so that we include in our sense of self not only ourselves but also the wider collectives to which we belong (self, community, country)

This dual evolution depth within and expansion outside results in a vast canvas or space of manifestation , through which our human possibilities reveal themselves and convert into products of the human consciousness that benefit all other beings. This depth evolution means we innovate more, and due to the widening of ourselves, we innovate for the purpose of the larger good. (What we call today social innovation, is thus, one of the products of this dual evolution.)

BUILDING BLOCK 3

Swami Ranganathananda believed that human beings must view this psychosocial evolution not as a product or a side-effect of our endeavors, but as the primary purpose of all our endeavors.

When we see psychosocial evolution as the goal of our life, then we view ourselves not as beings trapped in our individual web of personal, interpersonal, mental and social contexts, but, instead, as evolutionary adventurers (yogis) who see the struggle of psychosocial evolution in much the same way that great adventurers view their

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journeys lacking material comfort, but full of excitement, hope, growth and strength.

BUILDING BLOCK 4

Swami Ranganathananda went further to provide strategies for living this evolutionary adventure called our lives.

He referred constantly to the Bhagavad Gita in this respect. Arjuna, at war, Krishna as guide and charioteer, Fight , says Krishna (in our language struggle on) if you win, you get all that the world has to offer, if you lose the war, or even your life you still gain because you have gained tremendously through the transformation of your consciousness.

Thus Swami Ranganathananda exhorted all to take this heroic view of life, combined with a deep obedience or surrender to a great purpose, or ideal, or vision which in the Bhagavad Gita is embodied in the person of Sri Krishna and in Arjuna's fight for righteousness.

Thus Swami Ranganathananda, added yet once more, a second dimension to an earlier Western ideal tremendous heroism with dedication to a great purpose, combined with a recognition that the ultimate prize is not success or failure in the battlefield, but the transformation psychosocial evolution of our consciousness, and the manifestation of our extraordinary human possibilities.

BUILDING BLOCK 5

Seen in the context of a nation or a society, this vision translates into the formula, which Swami Ranganathananda called enlightened citizenship work for the good of all but do so while evolving yourself. On one side, the sense of social and interpersonal concern will lead to happier living and a healthier, more humane society. On the other side, the focus on evolving yourself diving deeper into your own personality combined with embracing and adopting a deeper and wider vision of existence, will lead to newer, more powerful & humane solutions for society, while unleashing greater possibilities within oneself.

Thus, enlightened citizenship is a formula for how citizens, not only in India, but in all countries of the world could view their role in society.

Your own evolution leads you to greater freedom and greater capacity for responsibility. The work you do, the quality of your interpersonal relationships, the concern you show for the larger good, will lead to others benefiting from the fruits of your inner evolution.

BUILDING BLOCK 6

This leads to us to the last but perhaps most important point for all of us how does this vision of human development and service translate into new practices and engagements within our political, social, and economic system?

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Swami Ranganathananda proposes the principle of enlightened self-interest as the governing paradigm for society.

A selfish society transactional, focused on acquisition at the cost of others, and built on self-interest alone may be the foundation of economies and societies today, but has not resulted in human beings in society meeting their core outcomes basic social and economic well-being, a safe and peaceful society, and an unfoldment of deeper human potential (over and beyond job related skills).

A society based on enlightened self-interest will lead to individuals and institutions connecting

organizational wellbeing with societal wellbeing, individual wellbeing with organizational wellbeing, and inner wellbeing with social wellbeing at an individual level, leading to completely new solutions for society.

This paradigm of enlightened self-interest will become the trigger for a new wave of social, commercial, and individual transformation when it is understood and scaled in society. This will mean social innovation at a scale never seen before in the history of man.

Swami Ranganathananda's philosophy of Enlightened Citizenship is a set of ideas whose time has come.

Swami Ranganathananda's Philosophy Of Enlightened Citizenship

1 Axiom about ourselves	Recognizing the infinite possibilities within each of us.
2 Purpose of life	Seeking a dual evolution depth within and expansion outside.
3 Reframing our identity	Viewing ourselves not as entrapped victims (samsarins) but as evolutionary adventurers (yogis)
4 Strategy for living	(i) Combining great heroism with complete dedication to a higher purpose (ii) measuring success in terms of transformation of consciousness and manifesting our possibilities.
5 Role in society	Playing the role of enlightened citizens in society, where your own evolution leads you to both greater inner freedom, and greater responsibilities on behalf of society.
6 Space of contribution	Adopting/ developing practices and engagements as enlightened citizens that lead institutions and society from narrow self-interest to the highest collective interest.

Karma Yoga In the words of Sri Ramakrishna*

*This article is unique, every paragraph in it and every word in a para, was uttered by The Great Master *Only compiled by the Author.*



Mr. Raghu Pilaka

Vice President
Reliance Retail Ltd.

What is Karmayoga?

According to Sri Ramakrishna¹, to remain somehow united with God, there are two ways (among others): Karmayoga and Manoyoga. Householders practise yoga through karma, the performance of duty. There are four stages of life: brahmacharya, garhasthya, vanaprastha, and sannyas. Sannyasis must renounce those karmas which are performed with special ends in view; but they should perform the daily obligatory karmas, giving up all desire for results. It doesn't matter what kind of action you are engaged in. You can be united with God through any action provided that, performing it, you give up all desire for its result. Karma becomes a cause of bondage unless it is performed in a spirit of detachment.

What is karmayoga?² Its aim is to fix one's mind on God by means of work. If a householder performs his duties in the world in a spirit of detachment, surrendering the results to God and with devotion to God in his heart, he too may be said to practise karmayoga. Further, if a person performs

worship, japa, and other forms of devotion, surrendering the results to God, he may be said to practise karmayoga. Attainment of God alone is the aim of karmayoga. It is extremely difficult to perform one's duties in a spirit of detachment, without craving for the result. One cannot work in such a spirit without first having realized God. Attachment to the result somehow enters the mind, though you may not be aware of it.

What is motiveless work?

If a householder³ is a genuine devotee he performs his duties without attachment; he surrenders the fruit of his work to God his gain or loss, his pleasure or pain and day and night he prays for devotion and for nothing else. This is called motiveless work, the performance of duty without attachment. A sannyasi, too, must do all his work in that spirit of detachment; but he has no worldly duties to attend to, like a householder.

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If a householder gives in charity in a spirit of detachment, he is really doing good to himself and not to others. It is God alone that he serves God, who dwells in all beings; and when he serves God, he is really doing good to himself and not to others. If a man thus serves God through all beings, not through men alone but through animals and other living beings as well; if he doesn't seek name and fame, or heaven after death; if he doesn't seek any return from those he serves; if he can carry on his work of service in this spirit then he performs truly selfless work, work without attachment. Through such selfless work he does good to himself. This is called karma yoga. Therefore I say, he who works in such a detached spirit who is kind and charitable benefits only himself.

Do you know⁴ the meaning of dharma and adharma? Here dharma means religious acts enjoined by the scriptures, such as charity, sraddha, feeding the poor, and the like. The performance of this dharma is called the path of karma.

To Work is Your Nature, But Work is Not the Goal

It is not in England alone⁵ that one sees attachment to worldly things. You see it everywhere. But remember that work is only the first step in spiritual life. God cannot be realized without sattva love, discrimination, kindness, and so on. It is the very nature of rajas to involve a man in many worldly activities. That is why

rajas degenerates into tamas. If a man is entangled in too many activities he surely forgets God. He becomes more and more attached to woman and gold.

But it is not possible for you to give up work altogether. Your very nature will lead you to it whether you like it or not. Therefore the scriptures ask you to work in a detached spirit, that is to say, not to crave for the work's results. For example, you may perform devotions and worship, and practise austerities, but your aim is not to earn people's recognition or to increase your merit. To work in such a spirit of detachment is known as karmayoga.

Therefore one should pray: O God, make my duties fewer and fewer; and may I, through Thy grace, do the few duties that Thou givest me without any attachment to their results! May I have no desire to be involved in many activities! It is not possible to give up work altogether. Even to think or to meditate is a kind of work. As you develop love for God, your worldly activities become fewer and fewer of themselves. And you lose all interest in them. Asks Sri Ramakrishna, Can one who has tasted a drink made of sugar candy enjoy a drink made of ordinary molasses?

Law of karma⁶

The truth is that one must reap the result of the prarabdha karma. The body remains as long as the results of past actions do not completely wear away. Once a blind

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man bathed in the Ganges and as a result was freed from his sins. But his blindness remained all the same! It was because of his evil deeds in his past birth that he had to undergo that affliction. The thing is that everyone must reap the result of his past-karma. One must admit the influence of tendencies inherited from past births and the result of the prarabdha karma. Further⁷, good produces good, and bad produces bad. Don't you get the hot taste if you eat chillies?

Say with force: What? I have uttered the names of Rama and Kali. How can I be in bondage anymore? How can I be affected by the law of karma? Faith! Faith! Faith! Once a guru said to his pupil, Rama alone has become everything. When a dog began to eat the pupil's bread, the pupil said to it: O Rama, wait a little. I shall butter Your bread. Such was his faith in the words of his guru. Worthless people do not have any faith. They always doubt. But doubts do not disappear completely till one realizes the Self.

Work how long?

How long⁸ must one do one's duty? Sri Ramakrishna says, The blossom drops off when the fruit appears. One doesn't have to do one's duty after the attainment of God, nor does one feel like doing it then. If a drunkard takes too much liquor he cannot retain consciousness. If he takes only two or three glasses, he can go on with his work. As you advance nearer and nearer to God, He will reduce your activities little by little.

Have no fear. Finish the few duties you have at hand, and then you will have peace. When the mistress of the house goes to bathe after finishing her cooking and other household duties, she won't come back, however you may shout after her.

The world is the field of action⁹. Through action one acquires knowledge. The guru instructs the disciple to perform certain works and refrain from others. Again, he advises the pupil to perform action without desiring the result. The impurity of the mind is destroyed through the performance of duty. It is like getting rid of a disease by means of medicine, under the instruction of a competent physician.

Do your duty¹⁰ with one hand and with the other hold to God. After the duty is over, you will hold to God with both hands. Do your duty in the world but remember that the pestle of death will some time smash your hand. Be alert about it.

Pestle of Death¹¹

In Kamarpukur Sri Ramakrishna saw the women of carpenter families making flattened rice with a husking-machine. One woman kicks the end of the wooden beam, and another woman, while nursing her baby, turns the paddy in the mortar dug in the earth. The second woman is always alert lest the pestle of the machine should fall on her hand. With the other hand she fries the soaked paddy in a pan. Besides, she is talking with customers; she says: You

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owe us so much money. Please pay it before you go. Likewise, do your different duties in the world, fixing your mind on God. But practice is necessary, and one should also be alert. Only in this way can one safeguard both God and the world.

Go forward

I say again that work is only the first step. It can never be the goal of life. Devote yourself to spiritual practice and go forward. Through practice you will advance more and more in the path of God. At last you will come to know that God alone is real and all else is illusory, and that the goal of life is the attainment of God.

Therefore Sri Ramakrishna says that, whatever you may do, you will find better and better things if only you go forward. You may feel a little ecstasy as the result of japa, but don't conclude from this that you have achieved everything in spiritual life. Work is by no means the goal of life. Go forward, and then you will be able to perform unselfish work. But again I say that it is most difficult to perform unselfish work. Therefore with love and longing in your heart pray to God: O God, grant me devotion at Thy Lotus Feet and reduce my worldly duties. Please grant me the boon that the few duties I must do may be done in a detached spirit. He reiterates, If you go still farther you will realize God. You will see Him. In time you will converse with Him.

The story of the wood-cutter

Once upon a time a wood-cutter went into a forest to chop wood. There suddenly he met a bramhachari. The holy man said to him, My good man, go forward. On returning home the wood-cutter asked himself, Why did the bramhachari tell me to go forward? Some time passed. One day he remembered the brahmachari's words. He said to himself, Today I shall go deeper into the forest. Going deep into the forest, he discovered innumerable sandal-wood trees. He was very happy and returned with cart-loads of sandal-wood. He sold them in the market and became very rich.

A few days later he again remembered the words of the holy man to go forward. He went deeper into the forest and discovered a silver-mine near a river. This was even beyond his dreams. He dug out silver from the mine and sold it in the market. He got so much money that he didn't even know how much he had.

A few more days passed. One day he thought: The bramhachari didn't ask me to stop at the silver-mine; he told me to go forward. This time he went to the other side of the river and found a gold-mine. Then he exclaimed: Ah, just see! This is why he asked me to go forward.

Again, a few days afterwards, he went still deeper into the forest and found heaps of diamonds and other precious gems. He took these also and became as rich as the god of wealth himself.

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How to perform our duties?¹²

Practice Discrimination

You must practise discrimination. Woman and gold is impermanent. God is the only Eternal Substance. What does a man get with money? Food, clothes, and a dwelling-place - nothing more. You cannot realize God with its help. Therefore money can never be the goal of life. That is the process of discrimination.

Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all - with wife and children, father and mother - and serve them. Treat them as if they were very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you.

A maidservant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her Master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as my Rama or my Hari. But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all.

The tortoise moves about in the water. But can you guess where her thoughts are? There on the bank, where her eggs are lying. Do all your duties in the world, but keep your mind on God. If you enter the world without first cultivating love for God, you will be entangled more and more. You will be overwhelmed with its danger, its grief, and its sorrows. And the more you think of worldly things, the more you will be attached to them.

First rub your hands with oil and then break open the jack-fruit; otherwise they will be smeared with its sticky milk. First secure the oil of divine love, and then set your hands to the duties of the world. But one must go into solitude to attain this divine love. To get butter from milk you must let it set into curd in a secluded spot; if it is too much disturbed, milk won't turn into curd. Next, you must put aside all other duties, sit in a quiet spot, and churn the curd. Only then do you get butter. Further, by meditating on God in solitude the mind acquires knowledge, dispassion, and devotion. But the very same mind goes downward if it dwells in the world. In the world there is only one thought: lust and greed.

The world is water and the mind milk. If you pour milk into water they become one; you cannot find the pure milk any more. But turn the milk into curd and churn it into butter. Then, when that butter is placed in water, it will float. So, practise spiritual discipline in solitude and obtain the butter of knowledge and love. Even if you keep that butter in the water of the world the two will not mix. The butter will float.

Practice Renunciation

You must also remember¹³ another thing. By constantly hearing about renunciation one's desire for worldly objects gradually wears away. One should take rice-water in small doses to get rid of the intoxication of liquor. Then one gradually becomes normal.

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It is not possible to acquire renunciation all at once. Renunciation does not mean simply dispassion for the world. It means dispassion for the world and also longing for God.

The more you rid yourself of upadhis¹⁴, the nearer you will feel the presence of God. Rain-water never collects on a high mound; it collects only in low land. Similarly, the water of God's grace cannot remain on the high mound of egotism. Before God one should feel lowly and poor. One should be extremely watchful. Even clothes create vanity. There are men who spout English whenever they put on high boots. And when an unfit person puts on an ochre cloth he becomes vain; the slightest sign of indifference to him arouses his anger and pique.

To conclude¹³, an aspirant entitled to the Knowledge of God is very rare. It is said in the Gita that one in thousands desires to know God, and again, that among thousands who have such a desire, only one is able to know Him. The knowledge of a worldly person, the knowledge of a devotee, and the Knowledge of an Incarnation are by no means of the same degree. The knowledge of a worldly person is like the light of an oil lamp, which shows only the inside of a room. Through such knowledge he eats and drinks, attends to household duties, protects his body, brings up his children, and so on.

The knowledge of a devotee is like the light of the moon, which illumines objects both inside and outside a room. But such light does not enable him to see a distant or a very minute object. The Knowledge of an Incarnation of God is like the light of the sun. Through that light the Incarnation sees everything, inside and outside, big and small.

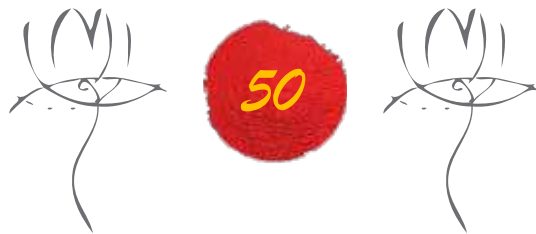
Practice Karma Yoga, EGGIYE JAO Go Forward.

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1. Chapter 30 *The Master in Various Moods*
2. Chapter 24 *Pundit Shashadhar*
3. Chapter 34 *Bankim Chandra*
4. Chapter 31 *Advice to Ishan*
5. Chapter 23 *Festival at Surendra's House*
6. Chapter 13 - *The Master and M*
7. Chapter 11 *With the Devotees at Dakshineswar (I)*
8. Chapter 4 *Advice to Householders*
9. Chapter 8 *The Master's Birthday Celebration at Dakshineswar*
10. Chapter 5 *The Master and Keshab*
11. Chapter 22 *Advice to an Actor*
12. Chapter 1 *Master and Disciple*
13. Chapter 26 *Festival at Adhar's House*
14. Appendix A - *Keshab at Dakshineswar.*

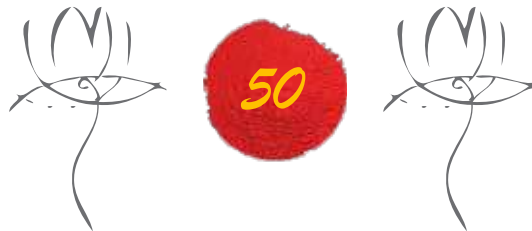
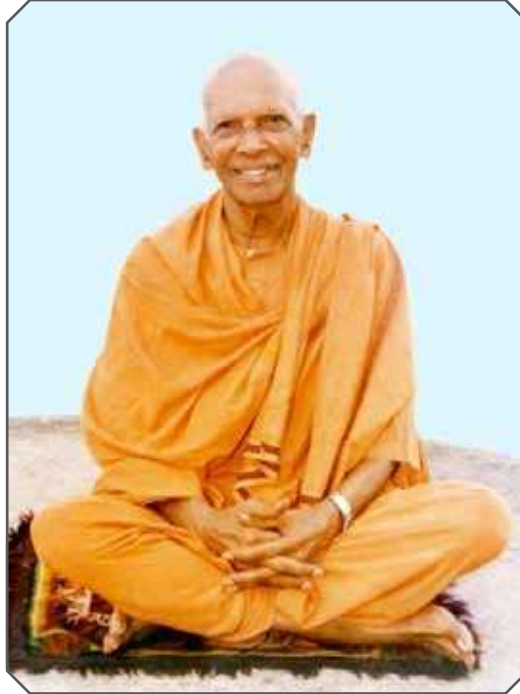


Swami Vivekananda



Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. All power is within you; You can do anything and everything. Arise, Awake and Stop not till the goal is reached.

Swami Ranganathanandaji

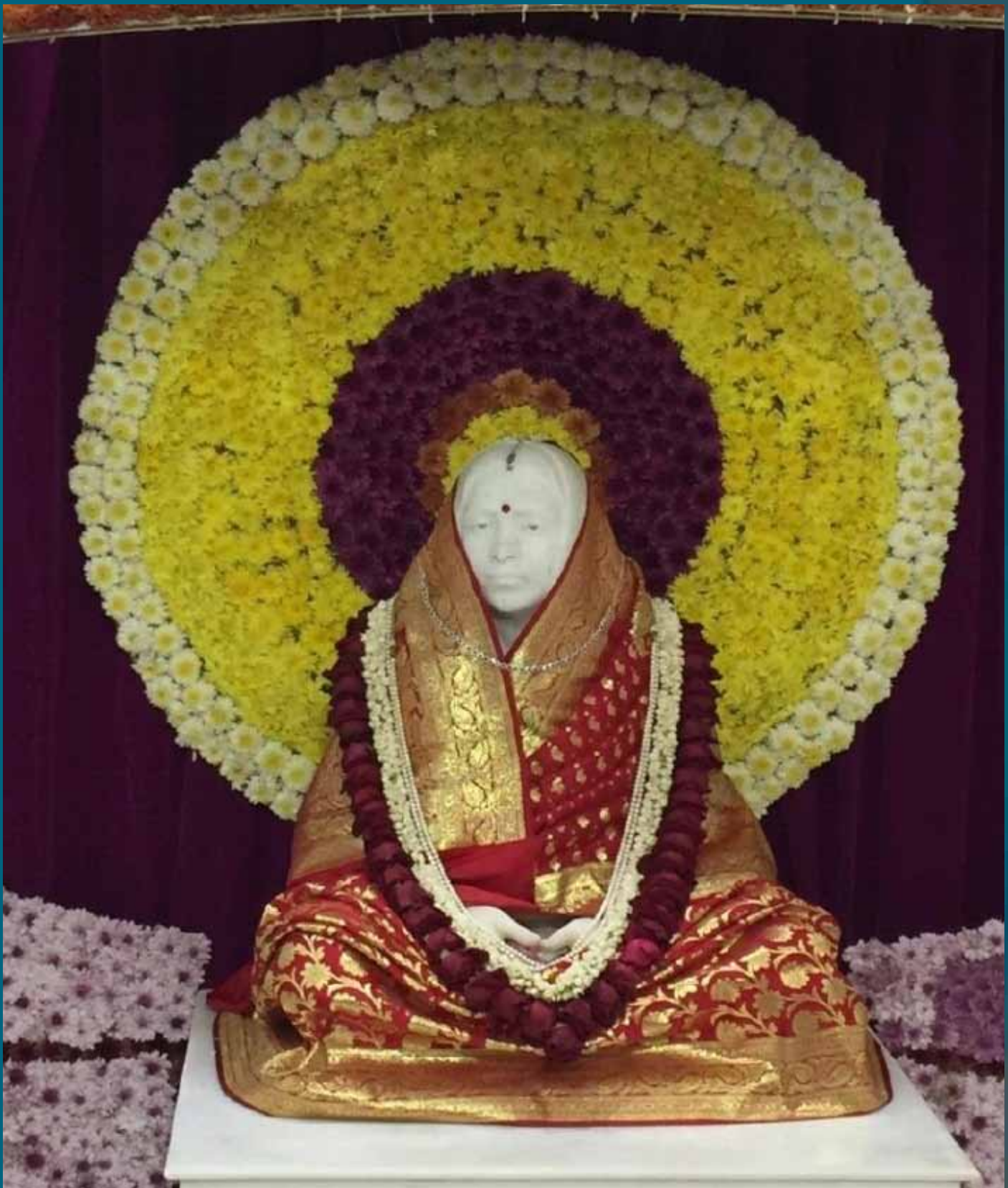


*Are you growing spiritually? Can you love others?
Can you feel oneness with others? Have you peace
within yourself? and do you radiate it around you?
That is called spiritual growth, which is stimulated
by meditation inwardly, and by work done in a spirit
of service outwardly.*

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