



# REACH

Newsletter of the Vedanta Centres of Australia

Motto:

*Atmano mokshartham  
jagad hitaya cha,*

**“For one’s own  
liberation and for the  
welfare of the world.”**

**Vedanta Centre of Sydney, 2 Stewart Street, Ermington, NSW 2115, Australia.**

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## Sayings and Teachings

### God alone is Real

“You have spent your whole life in the world. You have seen that it is hollow. God alone is real, and all else has only two day’s existence.”

--- Sri Ramakrishna

*Sri Ramakrishna: A Biography in pictures,*  
Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati; page 91.

### Patience - a great virtue

“You need patience like the Earth. How many atrocities are perpetrated on Mother Earth? Without any protest, she bears everything! Man should also be like that.”

--- Sri Sarada Devi

*The Compassionate Mother Sri Sri Sarada Devi* by Swami Tanmayananda;  
Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Sangha,  
Malaysia; page 333.

### Strength is the Key

“God is not to be reached by the weak. Never be weak. You must be strong. How else will you conquer anything? How else will you come to God?”

“We speak of many things parrot-like, but never do them; speaking and not doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause of that? Physical weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything; we must strengthen it. First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita.”

--- Swami Vivekananda

*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda;*  
Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata; page 11



### The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre of Victoria

**The Centre has moved to the newly acquired property at 5-7 Angus Avenue, Ringwood, Victoria (inset-statue of one of the two lions placed at the entrance)**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FROM JANUARY TO MAY 2012

Function	Centre	Date
Annual Function	Brisbane	Saturday, 9 June 2012
Guru Purnima	Brisbane	Saturday, 7 July 2012
	Melbourne	Tuesday, 3 July 2012
	Perth	Tuesday, 3 July 2012
	Sydney	Tuesday, 3 July 2012
	Auckland	Tuesday, 3 July 2012
Janmashtami	Brisbane	Thursday, 9 August 2012
	Melbourne	Thursday, 9 August 2012
	Perth	Thursday, 9 August 2012
	Sydney	Thursday, 9 August 2012

### Welcome

We welcome you all to the Ramakrishna - Vedanta Movement and invite you to attend our functions and actively participate in the propagation of the Universal message of Vedanta as epitomized in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda.



# News from and activities of the Vedanta Centres of Australia and New Zealand

## for the period from January 2012 to April 2012

### ADELAIDE CENTRE

#### Monthly activities:

a) Swami Sridharananda continued his three-days-a-month visit to Adelaide and delivered discourses on the *Bhagavad Gitā* and *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* at the Dulwich Community Centre, 14 Union Street, Dulwich SA 5065. The lectures are being recorded. For details of the ongoing monthly programmes please contact Dr. Raman Sharma, Secretary, on 08- 8431 9775 or Mrs. Pathma Iswaran on 08-8379 5336.

b) A 'reading from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*' was held every month on a prescheduled Sunday from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 33 Woodhouse Crescent, Wattle Park, SA 5066.

#### Celebrations:

a) The **Annual Celebration** of the Adelaide Chapter was held on Saturday, the 17th of March at the Dulwich Community Centre from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. A group of devotees sang bhajans while Swami Chandrashekharananda performed the traditional worship and then spoke on 'Sri Ramakrishna the Spiritual Guide'. Many devotees participated in the function and later enjoyed the *prasada*.

### BRISBANE CENTRE

#### Daily activities:

Morning worship, evening *ārati*, *bhajans*, and readings from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* are the regular activities at the Centre at **181 Burbong Street, Chapel Hill, QLD 4073**, (Phone no. 07-3720 0228). A resident volunteer looks after the day-to-day activities at the Centre.

#### Celebrations:

a) The **birth anniversary** of Holy Mother Sri Saradadevi was celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2012 at the Indooroopilly Senior citizen's club. Around 100 devotees participated. Swami Chandrashekharananda conducted the worship and gave a talk. Dr. Ashim Majumdar welcomed the devotees and spoke on Kalpataru Day. The local devotees presented devotional music.

b) The **birth anniversary** of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on the 5th of February at the Kenmore Uniting Church. Swami Chandrashekharananda conducted the worship and spoke on 'The teachings of Swami Vivekananda'. On the 4th of February a special *bhajan* session was organised in which about

30 devotees participated.

c) The **birth anniversary** of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March at the Chapel Hill State School. Mr. Mahalingam Sinnathamby welcomed the devotees and spoke about Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Chandrashekharananda conducted the worship and gave a talk on Sri Ramakrishna. The local devotees presented devotional music in presence of more than 130 devotees and a few children read about incidents from the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

### CANBERRA CENTRE

Swami Sridharananda conducted classes on the *Bhagavad-Gitā* twice a month at the Belconnen Community Meeting Room in Canberra. He also gave parlour talks based on the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* once a month. Contacts: Mr. J. Venkataraman, Secretary - 02-6258 7612 and Dr. Ian Doherty, Treasurer - 02-6247 8519.

### MELBOURNE CENTRE

#### Daily Activities:

Vesper service is held daily at the Centre from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. It includes set hymns, scriptural readings and meditation and occasional devotional singing.

The bookstall made available literature on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, Vedanta philosophy, and other spiritual topics in print, audio, and visual media throughout the period. For further information please contact Mr. Suresh Ravinutala, Secretary, on 03-9803 6154 or Mr. Mohana Krishnan on 03-9801 6174.

#### Weekly/Monthly Activities:

a) Swami Sridharananda continued to deliver monthly **discourses** on the



Adelaide—the annual day function at Dulwich Community Centre.



Brisbane Centre—the birth anniversary of Holy Mother and Kalpataru Day celebration (left) and the birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna (right) Inset—singing by devotees and the shrine.





**Melbourne Centre—inauguration Ceremony on 24th & 25th at 5-7 Angus Avenue, Ringwood.**

*Bhagavad Gītā* from Thursday to Saturday of prescheduled weeks at Monash University Clayton Campus of Law, Wellington Road (L. Theatre L1). The Thursday and Friday sessions were from 7:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. and the sessions on Saturdays were from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. The recordings of these discourses are available in Audio, Video and MP3 formats.

**b) Prayer Meetings** were conducted on the first Sunday of every month, from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. these included prayer, recitation of sacred mantras, singing of *kirtan* and *bhajans*, followed by selected readings from the scriptures and discussions on them by the participants. The meetings concluded with an *ārati* and the distribution of *prasād*.

**c) A Group study** on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* continued every alternate Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

**d) Group study** through viewing of the ‘*Mundaka Upanishad*’ lecture series on Video is held every Sunday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. and the ‘*Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*’ lecture series every Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

#### **Celebrations:**

**a) Kalpataru Day** was observed on the 1st of January 2012 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. with *bhajans* and readings.

**b) The birth anniversary** of Swami Vivekananda was observed on the 15th of January 2012. The programme started at 5 p.m. and concluded at about 7:30 p.m.

**c) The birth anniversary** of Sri Ramakrishna was observed on the 26th of February 2012. The programme started at 5 p.m.

and concluded at about 7:30 p.m. Swami Sridharananda delivered a talk on Sri Ramakrishna.

**d) Ram Navami** was observed on the 1st of April 2012. Swami Chandrashekharaṇanda gave a talk on *Adhyatma Ramayana*.

#### **Other Activities:**

The Centre shifted to 5-7 Angus Avenue, Ringwood from its earlier location on the 23rd of March 2012. A 2 day inaugural celebration was organised in which a large number of local devotees and a few interstate and overseas devotees participated. A special worship including *Ganapati Homam* was performed on the 24th of March and the worship of Sri Ramakrishna was conducted on the 25th of March 2012. Swami Sridharananda ji spoke on the occasion.

#### **PERTH CENTRE**

##### **Daily Activities:**

The Centre located at **51 Golf View Street, Yokine W.A. 6060** holds vesper service daily at 7 p.m. with *ārati*, readings from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, and meditation. The Centre maintains a small bookstall and a library. Contacts: Mr. Hiren Mukhopadhyay, Secretary - 0411478244, Mr. Parthiv Parekh, Asstt. Secretary - 0430511699.

##### **Monthly Activities:**

**a)** Swami Sridharananda visited the Centre every month from Thursday to Saturday on prescheduled weeks and conducted discourses on *Bhagavad Gītā*. About 50 devotees attend the discourses.

**b)** Monthly *satsangs* which include the singing of *bhajans* and readings from

*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and other inspiring books conducted on the first Sunday of every month from 11 a.m.

#### **Celebrations:**

**a)** The **birth anniversary** of Swami Vivekananda was held on the 15th of January 2012. The programme comprised reading from Swamiji and singing of *Bhajans*. It started at 11 a.m. and concluded at about 12 noon.

**b) Shivaratri** was celebrated on 20th February after evening prayer with worship and singing of *bhajans*.

**c)** The **birth anniversary** of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on 26th of February from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Swami Chandrashekharaṇanda conducted the worship and gave a talk and the local devotees sang *bhajans*.

#### **Other activities:**

Classes on *Kena Upanisad*, Sanskrit language and Meditation were conducted by Swami Chandrashekharaṇanda during his stay at the Centre from the 13th February to 9th March 2012. He also conducted *Ramanam Sankirtanam* and *bhajans*.

#### **SYDNEY CENTRE**

##### **Daily Activities:**

Daily worship, Chanting and meditation are held every morning from 6:45 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. at 2 Stewart Street, Ermington. The vesper service starts at 7 p.m. in the evening which includes devotional singing, a reading from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and meditation. Counselling, interviews and discussions with devotees are also conducted on a daily basis. The library is available to devotees for reference and research. The Centre maintains a bookstall which has a range of books on the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, Vedanta, Yoga, and other spiritual literature. Devotional songs, discourses on the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, *Mundaka Upanisad*, and other topics are also available in various media.

#### **Weekly/ Monthly Activities:**

The Centre conducted the following activities in Sydney:



**Perth Centre—worship on Shivaratri and on the birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna.**

a) Swami Sridharananda conducted **classes** on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* every Sunday morning from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Centre.

b) **Classes** on *Bhagavad Gītā* were also conducted by Swami Sridharananda at 1/11 Boyle Street, Balgowlah, NSW 2093 **Manly Beach** on Tuesdays from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

c) Some devotees availed themselves of **spiritual counselling** and guidance. The Swamis also visited the homes of devotees when required.

d) **Meditation** sessions were held at the Ermington Centre on Sundays from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

e) Classes on **Sanskrit language** were held on Saturdays and Sundays for varying levels of mature-age students.

f) Classes on **moral and spiritual lessons** and **drama and movement** were conducted for the children of **Bala Sangha** on Saturdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. at the Centre during the academic term. 25 children participated in the three-day long **holiday camp** conducted at the Centre from 10th to 12th of April 2012.

g) Classes on **moral and spiritual lessons** were also conducted for children at Eastwood Public School on Wednesdays from 9:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. during the academic term.

h) For the benefit of students, the Centre provided **English Language tutoring** on Tuesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. during the school term.

#### **Celebrations:**

a) The **birth anniversary** of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on the 15th of January 2012. The programme started at 9 a.m. and concluded at about 12:30 p.m. It included formal worship, *havan*, *bhajans*, floral offering followed by *ārati* and *prasād* distribution. The programme was attended by about 300 devotees. Swami Sridharananda delivered a talk on 'The life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda' after the evening *ārati*.

b) **Shivaratri** was celebrated on the

20th of February after the evening prayer with worship and singing of *bhajans*.

c) The **birth anniversary** of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 23rd of February 2011. The programme started at 9 a.m. and concluded at about 12:30 p.m. It included formal worship, *havan*, *bhajans*, floral offering followed by *ārati* and *prasād* distribution. The programme was attended by about 300 devotees. Swami Sridharananda delivered a talk on 'The life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna' after the evening *ārati*.

d) Ram Navami and Shankara Jayanti were celebrated on 1st and 26th April 2012 respectively after the evening prayer.

#### **Other Activities:**

a) A group of children presented *bhajans* on the 12th of January, the birth-day of Swami Vivekananda according to the Gregorian Calendar.

b) To commemorate the year long 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda the Bengali club of NSW organised a meeting on Saraswati Puja day at Concord High School on 27th January 2012. Swami Chandrashekharananda spoke on the occasion.

#### **Overseas Visit:**

Swami Sridharananda visited Auckland, New Zealand from 29th of February to 5th of March 2012. He also visited Malaysia from 21st to 25th of April 2012.

#### **Visiting Monks:**

Br. Nirvanachaitanya (Bob) of Hollywood Centre visited Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane centres from 2nd of April to 13th of May 2012.

Swami Aparokshananda of Nadi, Fiji also visited the above centres from 11th to 28th of April 2012.

### **AUCKLAND CENTRE**

#### **Daily activities:**

A vesper service is held daily at the Centre at 27 Arawa Street, New Lynn, Auckland from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. It includes

the singing of hymns and readings from the book *Portait of Sri Ramakrishna* followed by meditation.

#### **Monthly and annual activities:**

a) On the **second Sunday** of every month *satsang* programmes, which include singing of *bhajans*, discourse on the *Ramayana*, reading and discussion about the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and meditation were conducted from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

b) On the **last Sunday** of every month reading and discussion on the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, the life and teachings of Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda were conducted in addition to the above. Music and chanting classes were also held on these days.

c) Swami Sridharananda conducted *Bhagavad Gītā* classes from the 1st to the 4th of March 2012.

#### **Celebrations:**

a) **Kalpataru** Day was celebrated on the 1st of January 2012. The program started at 10 a.m. with chanting and some devotees talked on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. *Prasadam* was distributed at the end of the program which and concluded at 11:30 a.m.

b) The **birth anniversary** of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on the 15th of January 2012. The programme started at 8 p.m. after the evening *ārati* and included *bhajans* and talks on Swami Vivekananda. The programme concluded with the distribution of *prasād* after 9 p.m.

c) **Shivaratri** was celebrated on the 20th of February 2012 from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. It included singing of *bhajans*, meditation and distribution of *prasād*.

d) The **birth anniversary** of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 23th of February 2012. The programme started after the evening *ārati* and ended at about 9 p.m. It included readings from the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and singing of *bhajans*.



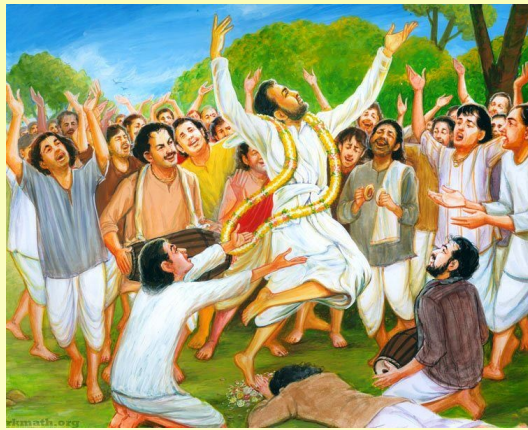
Sydney Centre—the Youth Day (left) and the birth anniversaries of Swami Vivekananda (centre) and Sri Ramakrishna (right).



## Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master: As the spiritual teacher

### Introduction

The Master used to say, “As soon as flowers blossom, bees come of themselves. They have not to be invited. When love for, and devotion to, God become truly manifested in you, all who have sacrificed their lives, or have resolved to do so in quest of God, that is to say, for the attainment of Truth, cannot but come to you under the influence of an inexplicable spiritual law.” So, quite naturally, it was the Master’s opinion that one should first of all realise God, and have His vision and grace. We are all, in truth, sailing in the same boat so long as we have not realised the Lord. Puffed up with pride or learning, we may consider ourselves superior to others, living all the while in this vain world with its round of birth, dotage, and death. We are living in the same dismal unbroken darkness of ignorance regarding eternal problems like: “Who am I? Why am I here? Where shall I go? What is the aim of this game of mine—a game in which I attempt to know the Truth with the help of those very five senses, mind and intellect, which in my external life deceive me at every step and lead me ever astray? Will it ever be possible to find out a way to liberation out of their clutches?” Everybody in this world lacks true knowledge and is ready to receive it. The Master moved along a path diametrically opposed to that of all others of the world. He lived his whole life in one place, calm, tranquil and free from anxiety, and practised to the fullest extent renunciation, detachment, self-control and other virtues, and thus converted himself thoroughly into a fitting instrument in the hands of the Divine Mother. Having realized the integral truth, he blazed the trail of work for the real benefit to the world. Having attained to Reality, he opened the store-house of his knowledge for distribution, and people thirsting for knowledge began to pour in uninvited, nobody knew from where. And purified by his divine look and touch, they considered themselves blessed; by spreading his



new ideas wherever they went, they became a source of blessing to others without number.

### Meeting with Bhairavi Brahmani

Master’s meeting with the Bhairavi Brahmani was an important event in his life. Before the Brahmani came, the Master’s extraordinary eagerness and love of God were regarded, to a great extent, as insanity and physical illness, and he was placed under the treatment of eminent physicians. A physician from East Bengal, himself a sadhaka, pointed out that his bodily symptoms were the extraordinary changes produced by the practice of Yoga but nobody took his statement seriously. All, including Mathur, were certain that they were the signs of insanity, though combined with the love of God. But the learned Brahmani, well versed in devotional scriptures, was the first to point out that all those symptoms were only extraordinary bodily changes corresponding to the mental states brought on by an uncommon love of God. She quoted chapter and verse from the devotional scriptures to show that such physical changes were due to supra-normal mental states and that they had appeared, from time to time, in the teachers and Yogis of the past. She then proved her statements by showing the similarity of the signs recorded in the scriptures with those manifesting in the Master’s body. When she did so, the Master began to rejoice like a boy strengthened by the assurance of his mother, while all the people of the Kali temple, including Mathur, were greatly astonished. And their

wonder knew no bounds when the Brahmani said to the Master, “Please bring Pandits well versed in the Sastras: I am ready to convince them of the truth of my words.” The words of Bhairavi Brahmani would have gone the way of those of the physician of eastern Bengal, failing to make any impression on Mathur and others, had the Master not made an eager request for verification, thus taking the issue to the next stage of development. The childlike Master said importunately to Mathur, “Good scholars must be brought and what the Brahmani says must be tested.” Cogitating this in his mind, partly out of curiosity and partly out of love for the Master, Mathur agreed to convene a meeting of Pandits at the Master’s request.

### Pandits Vaishnavacharan and Gauri

Vaishnavacharan had at that time a great reputation in the community of the Pandits of Calcutta. There was another Pandit famous for his uncommon power and rare scholarship—Gauri of Indes. Mathur resolved to invite both of them. This was how Vaishnavacharan and Gauri happened to come to Dakshineswar.

Vaishnavacharan was not only a scholar but was also known to the public as a devout spiritual aspirant too. His love of God and his deep understanding of philosophy and scriptures—especially those dealing with devotion made him a leader of the whole Vaishnava community. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mathur resolved to bring Vaishnavacharan for ascertaining whether the condition of the Master was due to excessive devotion or due to some physical disease.

In the meantime, the Brahmani gave one important proof of the truth of her opinion on the condition of the Master, which brought as much joy to herself as surprise to others. Some time before the Brahmani arrived, the Master had been suffering terribly from an intense burning sensation all over his body. Treatments of many sorts were administered. According to the Master, the pain, starting with sunrise, went on increasing as the day advanced, till it became unbearable.

ble by midday, when he had to keep his body immersed in the water of the Ganga for two or three hours, with a wet towel placed on his head. No sooner had the Brahmani come to know of it, than she found a surprisingly new explanation of this ailment. She said that it was not a disease but a spiritual phenomenon, resulting from his intense love for God. She went on to say that such physical counterparts of the mental changes arising from extreme eagerness for the realisation of God, had very often been seen in the lives of Sri Radharani and Sri Chaitanya. The medicine for curing this so-called 'disease' was also extraordinary, that is, to adorn the patient with garlands of sweet-smelling flowers and to smear his body with fragrant sandal-paste. The person of the Master was accordingly adorned with sandal-paste and garlands of flowers following the Brahmani's prescriptions; and, to the astonishment of all, the burning sensation of the Master's body completely disappeared in three days.

Shortly after, the Master was affected by what people considered another 'disease' which, according to the Master himself, was cured in three days by following a simple prescription of the Brahmani. The Master said, "I began to feel an inordinate hunger at that time. I could not feel satisfied however much I ate. Immediately after taking my fill, I felt hungry again, as if I had not eaten anything. I felt the same hunger, whether I took food or not. Night and day that hunger continued without cessation. I thought, 'Can this be a new disease?' I spoke about it to the Brahmani. She said, 'Fear not, my child. Such states, it is written in the scriptures, come from time to time, upon the travellers on the path to the realisation of God. I will cure you of it.' So saying, she asked Mathur to keep arranged in a room, stacks of all kinds of food, from flattened and parched rice to Luchi, Sandesh, Rasgolla and other edibles. Then she told me, 'My child, remain in this room day and night, and eat whatever and whenever you like.' I remained in that room, walked up and down, looked on those stacks of food and handled them, now something from one stack, now from another. Three days passed

in this way, when the inordinate hunger left me, and I felt relieved."

#### **With Pandits at Dakshineswar**

Mathur sent an invitation to Pandit Vaishnavacharan to come to Dakshineswar and advise him whether there was an element of physical ailment in the Master's spiritual states. A meeting of scholars was arranged. The discussion started. The Brahmani described the Master's state as she saw it. Comparing the Master's present state with what was recorded in the scriptures as experiences of the ancient teachers of the devotional path, she gave her opinion that his was the same state as theirs. Just as a mother stands with the pride of a heroine to protect her child, the Brahmani, as if strengthened with some divine power, came forward to support the Master's case. Vaishnavacharan heard and heartily approved whatever the Brahmani said about the Master's condition. He also remarked with amazement that all the signs of the nineteen kinds of spiritual moods—the co-existence of which has been called in the devotional scriptures as the 'Mahabhava', the great mood, and had been observed only in the lives of Sri Radha, the embodiment of spiritual moods, and in Sri Chaitanaya—were seen manifested in the Master. If at all the Mahabhava manifested a little in a Jiva due to unprecedented good fortune, only two or three of these nineteen moods would find expression in him. No Jiva in the past could sustain the tremendous impact of all of them, and no Jiva in the future too will be able to do so according to the scriptures. Mathur and the others present were altogether dumbfounded to hear the words of Vaishnavacharan. And the Master also said to Mathur in joy and astonishment, "Ah, what does he say! After all I am glad to be assured that it is not a disease."

Vaishnavacharan held the Master in high regard and had genuine devotion for him. From that time on, he came very often to Dakshineswar for the purpose of enjoying the bliss of the Master's divine company and sought his opinion on his own Sadhanas. Sometimes, he took the Master for a visit to his fellow devotees of his sect treading the same path, so that

they also might become acquainted with the Master and be blessed like himself. Mixing with them and knowing their lives and secret Sadhanas, the god-like Master, the picture of immaculate purity, got the opportunity to understand their Sadhana. He realised that if one practises as Sadhana, actions blameworthy and condemnable in ordinary eyes, while cherishing in one's heart the sure and sincere conviction that one is doing it for the realisation of the Divine Lord, then, instead of meeting with downfall on this account, one gradually becomes fit for renunciation and self-control, and goes forward on the path of religion, and attains devotion to God. But, when at first he heard of those practices and saw a little of them, there arose in his mind such ideas as, "These people talk tall; why do they at the same time indulge in such low practices?" He changed his opinion at last for he saw that those amongst them who were sincere and had faith in God made spiritual progress. In order to remove hatred for the followers of those paths, the Master expressed his convictions about them thus, "Ah, why should you indulge in hatred? Know that that is also one of the paths, but a dirty one. Just as there are several doors—the main gate, the back door, and the one for the sweeper to enter the house in order to clean the dirt there—so also know that there are several approaches to the mansion of God and that this also is one, though an unclean way. Through whatever door people may enter the house, they reach the goal all right. Still, are you to act like them or mix with them? No, you should not. But you must not also entertain any hatred for them."

Vaishnavacharan was very impressed by the Master's strength of character and also by his purity and devotional ecstasy. Consequently his devotion and reverence for him increased so much day by day that he never hesitated at last to admit, in the presence of all, that the Master was an incarnation of God.

#### **Pandit Gauri of 'Indes'**

Shortly after Vaishnavacharan began visiting the Master, Pandit Gauri of Indes also came to Dakshineswar. He was an eminent Tantric Sadhaka. On his first visit to the Dakshineswar



temple, an amusing event happened as recalled by the Master. He said that Gauri had a miraculous power acquired through his austerities. Whenever he was invited to a scriptural controversy, Gauri entered the house or hall fixed for it with the loud recitation of some verse, preceded by the startling shouts of certain syllables like 'Ha-re-re!', inciting a mood of challenge and heroism. The Master said, "The hearts of all were startled with an indescribable fright when they heard from Gauri's mouth those syllables expressive of the heroic mood together with the part of that stanza from the hymn to the Devi by Acharaya Shankara uttered in a voice deep and sonorous like the rumbling of a cloud. Two results were achieved by this. First, by virtue of that sound, the power in Gauri became fully awakened; and, secondly, he stole away the strength of the adversaries by startling and charming them with it. Loudly uttering that sound and slapping his left arm with the right like wrestlers, Gauri entered the meeting and sat down with his legs folded and his knees joined together in front and the feet behind, in the fashion of the courtiers of the emperors of Delhi, and engaged himself in the debate." The Master said that it was then impossible for anyone to defeat him.

The Master had no previous knowledge of that power of Gauri. But, as soon as he entered the Dakshineswar Kali temple and uttered loudly the syllables 'Ha-re-re!', the Master felt prompted by some power from within him to exclaim those very syllables more loudly than Gauri. Thereupon Gauri repeated the syllables again in a louder voice than the Master. Excited at that, the Master uttered 'Ha-re-re!' far more loudly than he. The Master used to say smilingly that a terrific uproar was created, like the din made during inroads by dacoits, on account of the louder and yet louder utterance of those syllables by both the sides. With sticks, cudgels etc. the gate-keepers of the Kali temple ran hurriedly towards the place from where the noise came. All others were beside themselves with fear. The noise of this vocal contest subsided only when Gauri could not raise his voice any more. He was thus silenced. In a somewhat dejected mood, he

then entered the Kali temple, laughing loudly to cover his defeat. The Master said, "The Divine Mother afterwards revealed to me that great secret of Gauri's life—the way in which he disarmed his opponent of all his powers and himself became invincible. It was also revealed that he would no longer have that power. The Mother attracted that power 'here' (into the Master) for his good." And it was seen that, day by day, Gauri was more and more charmed by the ideal of the Master and became completely obedient to him.

Mathur Babu invited a few more scholarly aspirants like Vaishnavacharan and convened a meeting a few days after Gauri arrived at Dakshineswar. The purpose of the meeting was a debate between the newly arrived Pandit Gauri and the other scholars on scriptural evidence in order to ascertain, as before, the spiritual condition of the Master. It was convened in the morning in the music hall in front of the temple of the Mother Kali. Seeing that Vaishnavacharan was late in coming from Calcutta, the Master started for the place of the meeting with Gauri. Before entering the meeting, he went into the temple of the Divine Mother Kali, saluted Her with devotion and worshipped Her feet. As soon as he came out of the temple staggering in Bhava-samadhi, he saw Vaishnavacharan fall at his feet and salute him. No sooner had the Master, inspired by spiritual emotion and love of God, seen him than the Master went into Samadhi, and sat on Vaishnavacharan's shoulders. The latter felt blessed and was beside himself with joy. He recited a hymn to the Master in Sanskrit, composed extempore by himself. Seeing that gracious and bright form of the Master in Samadhi, and hearing that graceful recital of the hymn by Vaishnavacharan with his heart overflowing with joy, Mathur and the others present were standing motionless on all sides with their eyes steadfast and hearts filled with devotion. The Master's Samadhi came to an end shortly afterwards, when all went along slowly with him and sat down in the place of the meeting. Now began the proceedings of the meeting. But, Gauri first of all said

suddenly, "As he (the Master) has bestowed so much grace on the other Pandit, I will not enter into a discussion with him today. Even if I did, I am sure to be defeated; for he is armed with divine grace today. Moreover, I find he is a person holding the same view as mine. A debate is therefore useless in this case." The meeting came to an end after a little conversation on other scriptural topics. Gauri refrained from a debate not due to any fear of the scholarship of Vaishnavacharan. The main reason was the conversion that had already come on him. Seeing the Master's way of life and his venerable personality, he, with the help of his keen insight born of his Tapas, felt in his heart of hearts, even in the short period of his stay at the Dakshineswar temple garden, that the Master was not an ordinary man but a great soul. For, sometime afterwards the Master said to him with a view to testing his mind, "Look here, Vaishnavacharan calls this (himself) an incarnation of God; can that be so? Please tell me what you think of this." Gauri replied seriously, "Does Vaishnavacharan call you an incarnation only? I should consider his estimate very low. My conviction is that you are He, from a part of whom the Incarnations come down to the world from age to age to do good work to humanity, and with whose power they accomplish that work of theirs." The Master said with a smile, "Ah, You go even beyond him! Will you tell me why you think so?" Gauri said, "I say so on the evidence of the scriptures and from my own experience. If anyone takes up the opposite view and comes to challenge me, I am ready to prove my conviction." The Master thereupon said like a boy, "Well, it is you who say so. Who knows what it is all about? I know nothing about it." Gauri replied, "Quite right. The scriptures also say, 'Thou dost not know Thyself.' So, please say how others can know you. If you have compassion on anybody and allow him to know the truth, then only he can know it." The Master smiled on hearing the Pandit's words expressive of his strong faith. Gauri's attraction for the Master grew with the passing of days. In the Master's divine company, the Pandit's knowledge of the scriptures

and the merits of his Sadhana were attaining fruition, and they manifested as intense detachment from the world. He was daily losing his relish for scholarship, honour, miraculous powers etc. and his mind was withdrawing itself to the lotus feet of God. Gauri thus spent day after day and month after month in the blessed company of the Master and in meditation on God.

The Master mentioned, many times, various incidents from the lives of Vaishnavacharan and Gauri. Again, sometimes in the course of discussing some topics, he would mention what opinion these learned Pandits had expressed on that topics. One day while advising a devotee, the Master said, "Only when one develops the firm conviction that the Chosen Deity dwells in every person will one realise God. Vaishnavacharan used to say, 'One attains full knowledge when one believes that God plays as human beings.'"

### Conclusion

It is well known that the great incarnations of God bring to the religious world the gospel of a new path, quite in keeping with the authority of the ancient scriptures and in no way contrary to their doctrines. This can be understood by studying the life of any incarnations of God. Sri Ramakrishna's discovery of the new great spiritual truth "As many faiths, so many paths" has charmed the world. All doctrines were accorded by the Master, the god-man, a respectable position as genuine paths to the realisation of the Divine Lord and prescribed for persons according to their particular inclinations and capabilities. One should not condemn any method practised by a person who genuinely believes in his heart of hearts that that method will enable him to realise God. The spiritual attitude of no one should be interfered with. For any attitude, genuinely understood and sincerely followed as a Sadhana, will lead an aspirant to the Divine Lord, who is the centre on which all attitudes converge. But stick to your own attitude and continue calling on Him. Never condemn anybody's attitude, nor try to make another's attitude your own." Saying so, the ever-blissful Master would

begin forthwith to sing now and again:

***Remain, O mind, in yourself, do not go to anyone else's place***

***If you make search in your heart, you will get without any effort whatever you want.***

***That philosopher's stone, the supreme treasure, can give whatever you ask for!***

***How many are the gems lying scattered at the backdoor of that Supreme Being***

***Do not, O mind, become restless to take painful journeys to places of Pilgrimages.***

***Why don't you joyfully bathe and cool yourself in the confluence of the three streams at the basic centre?***

***What do you hold, O Kamalakanta? All is unreal magic in the world.***

***You do not recognise the magician who dwells in this body.***

### Some Spiritual Treasures On Sri Ramakrishna

At Gaya, Khudiram (Sri Ramakrishna's father) had a wonderful dream. A divine effulgence filled the temple. The Lord looked affectionately at Khudiram, beckoned to him to approach, and said, "Khudiram, your great devotion has made me happy. The time has come for me to be born again on earth. I shall be born as your son."

"The time was ripe for one to be born, who in one body would have the brilliant intellect of Shankara and the wonderfully expansive, infinite heart of Chaitanya; one who would see in every sect the same spirit working, the same God; one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the outcast, for the downtrodden, for everyone in this world, inside India and outside India; and at the same time whose grand brilliant intellect could conceive of such noble thoughts as would harmonise all conflicting sects, not only in India but outside of India, and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence. Such a man was born. He was a strange man—this Sri Ramakrishna."

- - - Swami Vivekananda

"With the exception of Sri Ramachandra and Lord Buddha, all the divine incarnations were born in poverty and hardship. If we think deeply, we find that there is a subtle connection between that condition of poverty and the future life of the incarnations. For, unless they had from their early years known and sympathised with the lot of the poor, the oppressed, and the miserable, how could they have, in later years, wiped the tears of those people and brought them solace? It is in the huts of the lowly and not in the palaces of the rich that this intimate knowledge can be gained."

- - - Swami Saradananda

"Is it possible to understand God's actions and his motives? He creates, he preserves and he destroys. Can we ever understand why he destroys? I say to the Divine Mother, 'O Mother, I do not need to understand. Please give me love for Thy lotus feet.' The aim of human life is to attain Bhakti. As for other things, the Mother knows best. I have come to the orchard to eat mangoes. What is the use of counting the number of trees, branches and leaves? I only eat the mangoes; I don't need to know the number of trees and leaves."

- - - Sri Ramakrishna

"God made me pass through the disciplines of various paths. First according to the Puranas, then according to the Tantra. I also followed the disciplines of the Vedas. At first I practised Sadhana in the Panchavati. I made a grove of *tulsi*-basil plants and used to sit inside it and meditate. Sometimes I cried with a longing heart, "Mother! Mother!" Or again, "Rama! Rama!" While repeating the name of Rama, I sometimes assumed the attitude of Hanuman and fixed a tail to the lower end of my backbone. I was in a God-intoxicated state. At that time I used to put on a silk robe and worship the Deity. What joy I experienced in that worship."

- - - Sri Ramakrishna

### Sources:

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## The Charm of The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

This is a transcript of the Talk given by Swami Prabhananda, the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission at the Vedanta Centre of Victoria, 7 Judy Court, Vermont, on the 30th of July 2011.

### Introduction

Dear Swamis and dear devotees,

In the Ramakrishna Vivekananda literature we have two Gospels, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and *The Gospel of the Holy Mother*. I am going to talk on the subject of 'the Charm of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*'. It is one of the most popular books, so much so that it has been described by some scholars as *the world Bible*. The reason being that it has not discussed only the Hindu way of life; rather, we find that the universal teachings of Sri Ramakrishna are the main contents of this holy book. Now, about this book I should draw your attention to the fact that with the passage of time it has been translated - either the entire book or an extract of the book - in so many languages. When we were young boys, much importance was not attached to this particular book compared to several other books on Sri Ramakrishna like *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master*. In English, Romain Rolland and several other persons have authored many books but nowadays you find that *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* is pretty much in demand and it is being interpreted and reinterpreted by different persons.

### Swami Vivekananda and M

Those of you who have read the basic books on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda know that Swami Vivekananda was practically officially appointed with the responsibility of propagating the vision as well as the mission of Sri Ramakrishna. On the other hand, we also find from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* that Sri Ramakrishna was practically preparing M to serve as the propagator of his thoughts and teachings during his last phase of life. M or Mahendranath Gupta did not like to disclose his identity. So in the book itself you will find that he has not used his name and has tried to hide himself behind the letter 'M' and as many as 11 pseudonyms. Among them there are four important characters like M,



Master, Mohini, Bhakta, etc. These are, however, the four aspects of the one personality of M.

He has presented before us the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and we find that he could complete four volumes in Bengali and later two months after his passing away the fifth volume was published. In fact, he himself had written in the introduction to the fourth volume that he had so much of material in his diary that he wanted to write another four or five volumes. Finally he wanted to write a comprehensive biography based mostly on the statements he had heard from Sri Ramakrishna himself. But he could not complete this particular idea of his.

So we see that there are two important persons—there is Swami Vivekananda who was propagating the mission and vision of Sri Ramakrishna and at the same time, there was M to serve as the propagator of Sri Ramakrishna's thoughts and teachings. Some of you might know of a very well-known author in the Kannada language - Mr. Kuvempu. He has written a very beautiful introduction to the Kannada edition of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. There, he has made a beautiful comparison between Swami Vivekananda and M and he writes - 'While Swami Vivekananda blazes like the sun, M is like an oil lamp which shines in every nick of the home of the rich and the poor. This light does not dazzle our eyes. It is unobtrusive but

at the same time sheds its cool and comforting light over the cottages and mansions alike. It is like the proverbial flower which is content to hide itself behind the leaves but is known all around by its fragrance'. In this way, not only he but several others have tried to make a comparison between Swami Vivekananda and M.

### Important contributions of M

M played a very important role in the propagation of high ideas and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna as he lived long after both Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda left their earthly home. Sri Ramakrishna passed away in 1886 on the 16th of August. Swami Vivekananda passed away on the 4th of July 1902 and M passed away in 1932. During this period, though he completed the four volumes in between 1902 and 1910, he perhaps completed the fifth volume toward the last part of his life. But, during this period he was the most popular messenger of Sri Ramakrishna. He was not only an inspiration to the householder devotees but also to the youth - many of whom joined the Ramakrishna Order later. So he played a very important role. Just by way of illustration, I refer to a very interesting incident. The reminiscences of M are recorded in 16 volumes by Swami Nityatmananda. In those 16 volumes, particularly from the 1st to 9th volume, many new and important issues have been discussed by M himself. As for example, 'G' was a teacher and he used to visit M frequently. One day he asked M 'what was the special attraction of Sri Ramakrishna? What was His greatness? M said that by coming in contact with him and living in his company, we have acquired burning faith in God. Further, we now have a specific clear-cut idea about the purpose of life. Sri Ramakrishna has given us both of these.

### Sri Ramakrishna as M saw Him

M had to defend his writing about Sri Ramakrishna and his teachings occasionally because there were a good number of persons who questioned

the authenticity of the material. As for example, a great scholar questioned the difference about how Swami Vivekananda presented Sri Ramakrishna as an Advaitin (non-dualist), whereas M presented Sri Ramakrishna as a Vishistadvaitin (qualified dualist). So he went on asking question after question. There are several letters by this scholar in our archives. Finally, M made a very beautiful statement. He said “I have sincerely presented Sri Ramakrishna as I have understood him”. This is a wonderful statement.

If one tries to compare the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna received from different sources, one will find some differences and this can be explained by the fact that everyone has presented Sri Ramakrishna according to their own understanding. For example, the largest numbers of teachings were presented by a gentleman who was originally a follower of the Brahmo Samaj. He published 6 volumes of small books containing altogether 980 teachings. As against this, during Sri Ramakrishna's lifetime, Kesav Chandra Sen and a few other Brahmo leaders who were very much impressed by Sri Ramakrishna, had published 84 teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. If you go into details, you will find that there are differences, but the basic idea remains the same - so this is something very interesting.

When a person like Romain Rolland decided to write the biography of Sri Ramakrishna, he started collecting materials from different sources. He also tapped the resources lying with M and they had regular correspondence. I will just mention one incident where M wrote to Romain Rolland on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1928. It reads: “Many thanks for your kind and affectionate greetings and your holy message, a message which has kept us meditating upon our loving Master with a beaming smile on his sweet radiant face - the God-Man Sri Ramakrishna. He did not learn either from the scriptures or from any divine teachers. He interpreted the scriptures by himself - for he had realized God and what he interpreted was from his own experience. Sri Ramakrishna was a divine interpreter of the Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantras, the Bible and the Koran, as well as of Christ,

Buddha and Chaitanya and also of other God-men. Thus as the Master taught, the God-man shakes himself free from the influence of that (Maya) which almost overpowers ordinary mortals. So he was not influenced by the viewpoint of others (who are under the control of Maya). The God-man, the Son of God, is from the Kingdom of Heaven (quoting from a portion of the Bible)”.

Now not only did M try to satisfy Romain Rolland but he presented a viewpoint which we find was a quote by Swami Vivekananda. He says “Sri Ramakrishna was a wonderful man. He did not attend schools - traditional schools - and he did not have a formal education. In spite of this, he has given some original thoughts to the world and has sorted out some serious problems which were plaguing the followers of the different religions, in those days. He, from his own experience, narrated all those wonderful ideas and did not depend on any book, any persons, contacts or any other source.” But whenever Sri Ramakrishna got some idea, he mentions the source of that idea. Swami Vivekananda says: ‘As for me, I have attended schools, colleges etc., read a lot of books, so whatever I say, I say by quoting Mr Jack or Mr Jill. They are the ideas of other people. But Sri Ramakrishna was an original man, an original thinker and whatever he has done, whatever he has mentioned, you will find that it has a special strength. His expressions are full of power’.

### Harmony of Religions

We have to remember that Sri Ramakrishna not only tried to understand the followers of different races, different sects among the Hindus, but also Islam and Christianity in general. He tried to understand all those ideas from their standpoint. Nowadays we often hear about the introduction of the study of Comparative Religions in many Universities. In our case, if I am a Hindu, I read the Bible the Koran and other scriptures from my own perspective. But Sri Ramakrishna did not do that. Whenever he practised something, he tried to understand the basic ideas and basic practices and based on that, gave out his own ideas, his own

opinions. As a result of this particular approach, Sri Ramakrishna did not disturb the basic values of any religion. At the same time, he tried to sort out the misunderstanding between the followers of different religions. This is a big contribution. The expression ‘harmony of religions’ that we often come across is subject to different interpretations. Attempts have been made to eliminate all other religions or treat them as belonging to a lower category just to assert one's own religion. Sri Ramakrishna asserted, based on his own experience, that every religion— every historical religion— has, at its core, certain ideas which are very important and if we pay attention to that, we shall attain the same goal, the same goal which Hindus are expecting to reach, which Muslims are aspiring to reach, as are the followers of other religions. Based on this, Swami Vivekananda, in his very first lecture at the Parliament of Religions, mentioned that every such religion has produced men of excellence, they have produced saints. They have produced men who have dedicated themselves to the cause of all other people. Since every religion has the potential, let us pay attention to that. We may give different names to that goal. Some may call Him God, some Allah, and some Yahweh and so on. In a beautiful Sanskrit verse it has been mentioned there are many names but they all refer to the same Truth – *ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*.

### Religion must be Practical

The second point that Sri Ramakrishna raised is that religion is something which is not confined to talks or reading the holy texts and discussing them. Religion demands that you must put into practice what you are trying to believe in; based on that, try to live one's life. It is a very practical point. Swami Vivekananda repeatedly asserted in his talks, particularly in the United States, that unless the religion is put into practice and verified in the life of an individual, it can have no significance whatsoever. This is the reason why Swami Vivekananda introduced the gospel of service of humanity from this standpoint.

### The Charm of the Gospel

Now my main topic is ‘The Charm of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*’.



Besides other things, we should take into consideration of the language used in the text. M tried his best to put the words of the Master in his own language and we are surprised that Sri Ramakrishna used colloquial Bengali language. The language is apparently not scholarly. As a result, there was some criticism in the Brahmo literature about the use of such a language. But Swami Vivekananda approved this medium of expression. He said 'my ideal of language is my Master's language, most colloquial and yet most expressive. When I think of that man (Sri Ramakrishna), I feel like a fool because I went on to read books and he never did; he never ever wanted to lick the plates after people had eaten from there. That is why he was his own book.' Therefore, whatever he taught is based on his own experiences. He accepted all challenges. When Narendranath went to him and asked, "Well Sir, have you seen God?" He said, 'Certainly I have seen Him; not only that - if you so wish, I can also guide you to have the vision of God'.

### **The Master Enlightened People**

In every instance, he accepted the challenge. If you study carefully his interactions with the Brahmo leaders, you will find that Sri Ramakrishna took a very important stance. Brahmos, in their prayers, used to describe the glories of God - 'Oh God you have done this, you have done that, you are so great you are so kind etc.' Sri Ramakrishna said, 'what is the use of describing all this? Is He really expecting that you all will praise Him? That the speaker will be able to raise His worth by all this kind of praise? Not at all. Why don't you try to realize God directly and after that He will let you know the details about his qualities or attributes.' So, the attention should be directed towards the final goal. What is the final goal? The final goal is the realization of God. According to the Hindu belief, you expect to attain the realisation one day - if not in one birth, it may happen after several births. This is the ultimate goal - but Sri Ramakrishna says that there is an primary goal. What is that? It is to intensify your spiritual life. You will find this idea in the different pages of

the *Kathamrita* or *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. If you are able to improve the quality of your spiritual life, you will experience that you are endowed with some strength, endowed with some power and you can do something positive for improving the quality of your own life as well as the quality of the life of your neighbours.

### **The Master An Incarnation of God**

Another aspect of Sri Ramakrishna that M presents through the Gospel is that Sri Ramakrishna was against using the term *avatar* referring to him. In the Gospel, we come across the passage where some of the devotees were trying to convince others that the Master was an *avatar* - an incarnation of God, as was Jesus Christ, as was Sri Krishna, as was Sri Chaitanya etc. So, one day Sri Ramakrishna remonstrated saying, "one of them is a doctor (that means he was attached to the medical college chemistry department) and the other is the manager of a theatre. They come here and call me an *avatar*; they think by doing this, they add to my prestige and make me appear great in the eyes of the world; but do they understand what it means to be an *avatar*? Long before they came, many great scholars came here and called me an *avatar* - many persons who spent their whole life in the study of this subject (the theory of incarnation of God). Some of the pundits were specialists in this particular subject. They came here and declared me an *avatar*. I am sick of hearing this particular word, this particular expression calling me an *avatar*. What will they add to me by addressing me as an *avatar*?" So the Master himself was not happy with that.

Yet, M represented the Master as an Incarnation of God. As a result, there were several protests against M questioning him why he had repeatedly mentioned this particular concept of *avatar*. M, out of his respect for the Master, definitely used the term consciously.

### **Assurance from Holy Mother**

During Sri Ramakrishna's lifetime, M did not write anything. But, first of all, M wrote some of the Bengali dialogues that he heard from the Master directly, in English. Four

papers of M were published in English. There were protests from different corners questioning why M did not use the language of the Master. Thereafter he started writing in Bengali. This immediately became so popular that his writings were published in as many as 17 Bengali journals. There were so many journals in those days: some bimonthly, and some monthly, some weekly. The different Brahmo groups were very much interested in publishing these articles. Although M was confident that Sri Ramakrishna wanted that he should propagate His ideas and ideals, M became somewhat hesitant before publishing these. So he would seek some kind of assurance from the Holy Mother. Though She has been mentioned very rarely here and there in the Gospel, the Holy Mother was the pole star of M's life during that entire period. There are, in our possession, some letters by the Holy Mother to M written at this juncture. The Holy Mother used to dictate the letter which one of the disciples would write. This is how Holy Mother went on inspiring him through Her letters. And when Holy Mother unequivocally proclaimed that the Gospel indeed contained the very words of the Master, M was extremely happy.

Thus, he became confident and he went on writing. The first volume was published in 1902 and the fourth volume in 1910. The fifth volume was published a couple of months after the passing away of M. M sometimes used to present his papers in Bengali at the meetings of the Ramakrishna Mission that used be held every Sunday at Balaram Mandir.

### **Kathamrita the name**

Another point to be mentioned is about the name (title) of the book. In the beginning, he did not use this title to the book. He introduced this new concept of Kathamritam and it was immediately liked by others. Besides, it was supported by a beautiful verse found in the Srimad Bhagavatam. The Gospel clearly supported the idea which impressed M and, therefore, he assigned the name and used it. We notice that from the very first day of M's meeting with Sri Ramakrishna (it was on a Sunday in the year 1882), M saw a number of people

gathered in Sri Ramakrishna's room. The Master was talking to them and M was quite impressed. But, he decided to go around the place to see the surroundings and in the evening, after the *aratrikam* in the Kali Temple, he, with the permission of the maid, entered the room of Sri Ramakrishna and found that the Master was a changed man, as it were. He saw that when questions provided he was not paying any attention to answer them. He also observed that the Master was becoming unmindful too very frequently. Later he discovered that that was the general state of mind of Sri Ramakrishna and that particular state of mind has been described by a technical term as Bhavamukha. So, it is a higher state. According to the interpretation given by Swami Tapasyanandaji, it was the border between the world of senses and the transcendental Realm. So his mind used to remain at that level. Whenever he was asked, he would say, well, what I say is dictated by the Mother; it is not from my own understanding or from my own intellectual argument. I receive direct instructions from the Mother and I do as She makes me do. Sri Ramakrishna would occasionally quote his nephew Hridayram who used to say, 'Uncle, you talk too much. Do not repeat the same thing again and again; if you do so, people will not come to you'. The Master replied to him, "Do not worry about that. Whenever I find that my ideas are getting exhausted, it is the Divine Mother who supplies me with ideas." All these have been recorded systematically by M.

#### A guide book

Beside other things, the Gospel is a very important book to guide our lives, irrespective of whether one is a Sannyasin or a householder. In essence, Sri Ramakrishna's final advice was this - try to understand that the world in which we live is nothing but the Divine. The goal of life is to realize the Reality which is nothing but God. What we see all around is, in fact, a conjecture of our understanding, because our understanding capacity is very limited. If you go deep into it, either through meditation or through reasoning, you will find that this creation is manifested God. When you see your father or your wife, it is

God who has appeared before you in that form. Try to understand this - not only to understand, but realise it, feel it from the core of your heart, that it is nothing but God. In the first part of the Isa Upanishad we read that 'whatever one sees all around is nothing but God'.

#### To Be a Ascetic Householder

But it is not a very easy path to follow. Therefore, Sri Ramakrishna has given us another alternative. We find in the second meeting that M had with Sri Ramakrishna, the Master is advising him to lead the life of an ascetic householder. He says that if you follow this particular path, you have to lead the life in the manner of a maidservant in a rich person's house. She takes care of the child of her master and treats the child in such a way that people, particularly outsiders, feel that it is perhaps her own child - but she knows in her heart of hearts that her own child is in a far away house in the village. Therefore, the Master says that if you are in the world, follow the second approach. You try to understand that God is the master of the family, you are but an agent and in this way you can win over your own basic nature. In his own language, one has to convert the unripe ego into the ripe ego. That is possible if you follow this path. Another example is also very apt. He says: 'The tortoise lays its eggs on the banks of the river. While it is moving in the water, its mind is always riveted to the eggs it has laid down. Likewise, do your duty perfectly well but keep your mind fixed in God. Sri Ramakrishna has left behind these wonderful messages recorded by M and if we want to benefit by them, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* is like a practical handbook for leading a life full of bliss.

I know some persons who read the Bible and insert page marks meant for particular situations. When they find themselves in some difficult situations, they take out that particular section and receive inspiration. Similarly, I have also seen some devotees of Sri Ramakrishna making use of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* in a similar manner. When you lose your cool, and behave in a rather unusual manner, please read some marked portion

from the Gospel itself. You will find that under such situations you can immensely benefit by following the advice of Sri Ramakrishna. I am very happy to see that you are taking so much interest in Sri Ramakrishna and the Movement. I believe that Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda - The Holy Trio - the Three in the One and the One in the Three. You can meditate on any one of them and be blessed. I believe they are living. I pray to them sincerely to bless every one of you and to bless us also. Thank you.

#### Letters to M on Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita

Dear Child,

Whatever you had heard from him (Thakur) is nothing but the truth. You need not feel any diffidence about it. At one time it was he who had placed those words with you. And it is now he who is bringing them to the light of the day according to the needs of the time. Know it for certain that unless these words are published, man will not have his consciousness awakened. All the words of his that you have with you everyone of them is true. One day when you read them out to me I felt as if it was he who was speaking.

Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi  
Jairambati, (4th July, 1897)



Antpore, 7 Feb. 1889

Thanks! 100,000 Master! You have hit Ramakristo in the right point.

Few alas, few understand him!

My heart leaps in joy and it is a wonder that I do not go mad when I find anybody thoroughly launched into the midst of the doctrine which is to shower peace on earth hereafter.

Narendra Nath



Rawalpindi, October, 1897

Dear M.,

*C'est bon mon ami* - now you are doing just the thing. Come out man. No sleeping all life. Time is flying. Bravo! That is the way.

Many many thanks for your publication - only I am afraid it will not pay its way in pamphlet form... Never mind - pay or no pay. Let it see the blaze of daylight. You will have many blessings on you and many more curses. But that is always the way of the world, Sir. This is the time.

Yours in the Lord,  
Vivekananda.



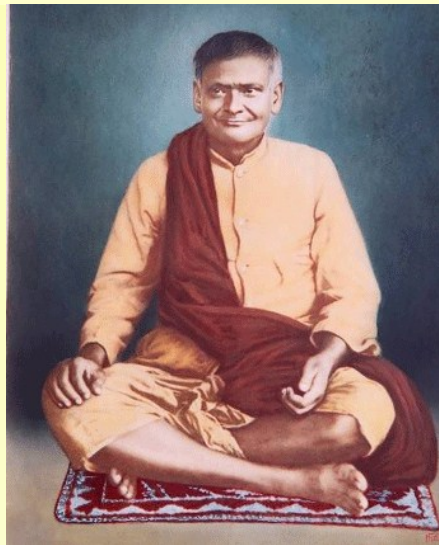
*According to the Vishuddha Siddhanta Almanac Swami Subodhananda's birthday celebration was observed on Monday, the 7th of November, 2011.*

### **The coming of the Disciples**

As Sri Ramakrishna's contacts with Keshab Chandra Sen and others grew, more and more people from the city of Calcutta began visiting him. In many cases it was mere curiosity that brought them and not the spirit of religious enquiry. Ramakrishna had been shown in visions that many disciples would come to him, but those who were coming disappointed him. He was tired of their worldly mentality. Where were the pure souls that the Divine Mother had assured him would be coming? He yearned intensely for them then, and he would say, "The thought that another day had gone and they had not come oppressed me! When during the evening service the temple resounded with the ringing of bells and the blowing of conch-shells, I would climb to the roof of the building in the garden, and writhing in anguish of heart, cry at the top of my voice, "Come, my boys! Oh, where are you? I cannot bear to live without you!" A mother never longs so intensely for the sight of her child, nor a friend for his companion, nor a lover for his sweetheart, as I did for them. Oh, it was indescribable."

In response to his call, as it were, they soon began to come—those who would become disciples later, both lay and monastic. These thirsty souls who found their way to Dakshineswar had all sorts of doubts. Sometimes they went with the idea of testing the Paramahansa. Some were taken by storm and forever at their first meeting; others were conquered more gradually. These most serious disciples were interspersed in a steady stream of people of all classes making their way to him all day and every day, leaving him hardly any rest.

From his very boyhood, Subodh was very frank and open-minded. What he felt he would say clearly without mincing words. One day Sri Ramakrishna asked Subodh, "What do you think of me?" The boy unhesitatingly replied, "Many persons say many things



**Swami Subodhananda**  
(One who enjoys the bliss of  
Spiritual Intelligence)  
(1867 -1932)

about you. I won't believe in them unless I myself find clear proof." However, as he came in closer touch with the Master, the conviction gradually dawned upon him that the Master was a great saviour.

Subodh (later, Swami Subodhananda) was a guileless divine child. Sri Ramakrishna used to call him 'Khoka', "little boy"; he behaved like a boy all through his life and became a great mystic.

### **Birth of Subodh Chandra**

Subodh Chandra Ghosh was born on 8th November 1867 at 23 Shankar Ghosh Lane, Calcutta. His father, Krishnadas Ghosh, and mother, Nayantara, were devout Hindus, and his family owned the Siddheswari Kali Temple of Thanthania. (When Sri Ramakrishna first came to Calcutta in 1852, he often visited this temple as he stayed nearby.) Although Krishnadas was a traditional Hindu, he was closely associated with the Brahmo Samaj, a socio-religious organisation. He would take his children to the Brahmo Samaj services and buy religious books for them. In the evening Subodh's loving mother would tell him stories from the Bhagavata, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata; these stories created a

religious inclination in him from his very childhood. "When I was young, I used to read the biographies of holy people and would observe how their lives were transformed," Subodh said later.

### **Childhood and Education**

When Subodh was a young boy, he was afraid of riding in a boat because he did not know how to swim. He was also afraid of the dark, so he would sleep in his grandmother's room. However, he had a premonition that he would not live at home and would travel alone like an itinerant monk. He therefore tried his utmost to conquer this fear of darkness. One dark evening Subodh and other children of the family were playing noisily in their bedroom. To stop the noise, Subodh's mother covered herself with a blanket and came into the room to frighten them. When they all cried out, she removed the blanket. When Subodh saw that it was his mother, he resolved that he would never again be afraid of the dark.

From childhood Subodh was calm, simple and sweet. At the same time, he was quite outspoken. He was sent to Albert Collegiate School where he was recognised as a brilliant student; he was gifted in mathematics and scored high marks in the class. After being promoted to the seventh grade, he joined the Hare School. When he was in the eighth grade, his father suggested that he should marry. Subodh's family was rich, and at that time it was quite common for boys and girls to get married in their teens. However, Subodh said to his father, "Please don't insist that I get married." "Why?" his father asked. "Study well and get good results in your examination. Then we shall arrange your marriage with a girl from an aristocratic family." Subodh protested, "If you force me to marry, I shall obey you. But I will leave home; family life is not for me. Please don't entangle me." His father replied, "All right, let us not talk about it now." Subodh realised that if he received good marks on the examination, his father would arrange his marriage.

Accordingly, Subodh did not try very hard, and fervently prayed to God that the examination results would be bad. And he actually did get poor marks. The teachers suggested that he stay in eighth grade another year, but Subodh moved to Vidyasagar's School where M., the recorder of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, was the headmaster.

### Inspired by Sri Ramakrishna

His failure in the examination had the desired result: His father lost interest in Subodh's marriage. Sometime in 1885 Krishnadas told his son about Sri Ramakrishna and his meeting with Keshab Chandra Sen. Subodh had read about the Master in the Brahmo journals. One day Krishnadas presented a book to him, *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamser Ukti* (The Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna) compiled by Suresh Chandra Datta in December 1884. Subodh was so deeply impressed with the book that a great desire arose in his mind to meet Sri Ramakrishna. When he told his father of this desire, he was promised a trip to Dakshineswar on a holiday with the rest of his family.

### In the Company of Sri Ramakrishna

Subodh became restless to see the Master. He could not wait for a holiday. So one morning in August of 1885 he started for Dakshineswar with his friend Kshirod Chandra Mittra. However, they did not know where Dakshineswar was, except that it was situated on the bank of the Ganges and north of Calcutta. They walked quite a distance and lost their way. Subodh was worried because he had not gotten permission from his family, but Kshirod asked him to be patient. They arrived at Ariadaha and asked a man the way to the Dakshineswar temple garden. The man pointed out a short-cut over the ridges of a paddy field, and soon Subodh and Kshirod reached Dakshineswar.

Subodh thought that a paramahansa was some sort of a magician. He had never before spoken to a sadhu or monk, so he said to Kshirod, "You must go first and talk to the holy man. I don't know the proper etiquette." Kshirod agreed. They entered the room and saluted Sri Ramakrishna with folded hands. Kshirod went to the Master, who was seated on his

bed. Subodh remained at the threshold. "Where do you come from?" asked Sri Ramakrishna. "From Calcutta," Kshirod replied. Pointing to Subodh the Master said, "Why is that gentleman standing so far away? Come nearer." This encouraged Subodh to move closer. "Do you not belong to the family of Shankar Ghosh?" asked the Master. Subodh was surprised and said, "Yes, sir, but how did you know it?" "When I was staying at Jhamapukur," said the Master, "I often visited your home as well as your Kali Temple at Thanthania. That was before you were born. I knew you would come. Well, the Divine Mother sends here those who will attain spirituality. You belong to this place." "Sir, if I belong to this place, why did you not call me earlier?" asked Subodh. The Master replied, "Look, everything happens at the right time."

Sri Ramakrishna held Subodh's hand and closed his eyes for a few minutes. At last he said, "You will attain the goal. Mother says so." He asked Subodh to sit on his bed. "No, sir," said Subodh, "I can't sit on your bed. This is my school clothing; it is not fresh. Moreover, I have touched people on the way and my feet are dusty." The Master forced him to sit on his bed, saying, "You are my very own. What does it matter whether your cloth is clean or not?" After a while Subodh sat on the floor. Immediately the Master asked his nephew Ramlal to spread a carpet for the boys and then inquired, "How have you come to Dakshineswar?" Since the Master's loving care and affection had removed Subodh's shyness and uneasiness, he promptly replied, "We have come on foot." "My goodness! You have covered such a distance on foot?" the Master asked, surprised. "How did you find out about me?" Subodh replied, "I am impressed by reading your teachings. They are really remarkable. You are such a great man and so famous! Therefore, we have come to see you."

These words brought on a sudden change in Ramakrishna's mood. With a humility that amazed the boys, he said, "Ah, I am lower than a worm. Name and fame! Ridiculous!

Really, I am more insignificant than a worm." After a while the Master said to Subodh, "Mother sends here those who will receive Her grace. Come here on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Many people from your part of town come here on those days. Come with them." Subodh said, "No, sir, that will not do; my relatives will find out that I am coming here. Please tell me now what you want to say to me." "I cannot take back my words, my child," said the Master. "If I say I shall go to a certain place on such and such a day, I must do so in spite of rain or thunderstorm. Even if I don't like it, Mother drags me there. I have said those words, so do come on Tuesdays and Saturdays."

Subodh agreed, and finding it was getting late, asked leave to go home. "Have some refreshments," the Master said. "It is not necessary, Sir. We shall eat at home," Subodh replied. "No, have some sweets and water, and then go," said the Master, and he asked Latu to serve them. When they finished their refreshments, the Master again said, "Your home is quite a distance from here; moreover, you are too young to walk. Why don't you go by boat or share carriage? I shall give you the fare."

Subodh replied, "I don't know how to swim. We can't go by boat." Sri Ramakrishna said, "Then go by carriage." Subodh responded, "No, sir, we shall walk." Sri Ramakrishna said, "Look, my child, you will be tired from covering such a distance." Subodh insisted, "Sir, we are young [he was seventeen]; if we do not walk now, then when shall we walk? Moreover, you are a holy man; where will you get the money?" Sri Ramakrishna responded (with a smile), "Some people donate money for this place. You will not have to worry about that. Please take some money and go by carriage." Since Subodh was inexorable, the Master said to Kshirod, "You take the money and go by carriage." But Subodh interrupted and told his friend, "Don't accept the money. We shall go on foot." Without insisting further the Master said, "Come again either on Tuesday or Saturday." Both took the dust off the Master's feet and left for home.



In his home, Subodh's parents had not seen him since that morning and they had become extremely anxious. They had told their friends and relatives that Subodh was missing and they had all begun to search for him. When Subodh returned home in the afternoon, he learned of the commotion he had caused. His grandmother brought sweets for him and the women of the family bombarded him with questions. He told his weeping mother that he had been to Dakshineswar to meet Sri Ramakrishna.

On the following Saturday Subodh and Kshirod fled from school and hurried to Dakshineswar. The Master's room was crowded with visitors. Peeping through the door, the boys saluted Sri Ramakrishna with folded hands. When he caught sight of them he raised his hand as a signal for them to stay outside. The Master asked the audience to wait and then went out to greet them.

It was about 3 p.m. Sri Ramakrishna asked Rakhal to bring some Ganges water, with which he washed his hands. He then took the boys to the stairs leading to the Shiva temples at the south of his room. He sat cross-legged on the floor, and asked the boys to sit down also. He then bade them unbutton their shirts and stick out their tongues. The Master first wrote something with his finger on Kshirod's tongue and stroked his body from the navel to the throat. He did the same to Subodh, saying, "Awake, Mother, awake!" Then he told them to meditate.

The Master's magic touch awakened Subodh's latent spirituality. No sooner had he begun to meditate than his whole body trembled, and he felt a current rushing along his spinal column to his brain. An ineffable joy overwhelmed him, and he saw a strange light within him in which the forms of numerous gods and goddesses flashed. His meditation deepened, and the boy lost all sense of personal identity. When he regained consciousness he found the Master stroking his body in the reverse direction, from the head downwards. "Well," he said, "have you practised meditation at home?" "Very little, sir," replied the boy. "I used to think a little of gods and goddesses since I heard of them from

my mother." "Ah," said the Master, "that's why you could concentrate so easily." Then he asked Kshirod if he had seen or felt anything. When the boy replied in the negative, the Master said, "All right, you will do so later on."

Sri Ramakrishna then told them to go to the Panchavati and meditate while he returned to his room. They did not know where the Panchavati was, so they went to the Kali temple for meditation. Afterwards, they went to the Master's room. When they took leave of him they were given some refreshments; he again asked them to take carriage fare, but they declined. The Master said to Subodh, "There is a teacher who lives near you named Mahendra [M.]. He often comes here and is a good man. Go to see him now and then, and also come here." Subodh made no reply because he was not certain that he would be able to see M.

Like a child, Subodh would freely discuss his personal problems with the Master. One day, when Subodh informed the Master about his fear of ghosts, Sri Ramakrishna pressed his thumbnail between Subodh's eyebrows. From then on he would see a soft light over his forehead and that permanently destroyed his fear of ghosts. As he was close to his mother, he told her about his vision of light. She said, "My son, you are fortunate, but don't divulge it to others. You will lose it if you do so." (Tradition says that one should not divulge one's spiritual experiences to anyone except the guru, otherwise one may not have the experience again.) But Subodh answered, "What harm could it do to me, mother? It's not the light I want, but That which it comes from."

Subodh lost interest in his studies. He preferred to be with Sri Ramakrishna and to spend time in meditation, prayer, and repeating the name of God. Some days he was late in returning from Dakshineswar, and his private tutor had to wait for him. One day the tutor indignantly said to Subodh, "You are neglecting your studies. If you are not punctual, the next time I shall report it to your father." Subodh replied, "What will my father do? He does not read; it is I who am supposed to read. If I don't

have the desire, none can force me to read. But please come as usual. I shall study whenever I have time and the inclination." The tutor was surprised, and out of duty, reported the incident to Krishnadas. The anxious father remarked, "It is a matter of concern; but it is better not to put too much pressure on him. I have noticed that whatever he reads, he reads attentively."

#### **Interaction with other disciples**

M. visited the Master at Dakshineswar on the 31st of August 1885, and Sri Ramakrishna said to him, "Two boys came here the other day. One of them was Subodh. He is Shankar Ghosh's great-grandson. The other, Kshirod, is his neighbour. They are nice boys. I told them I was ill and asked them to go to you for instruction. Please look after them a little." M. replied, "Yes, sir. They are our neighbours." After returning home, M. sent a letter of invitation to Subodh; the boy, however, did not go, thinking it meaningless to receive spiritual instruction from a householder.

After a few days, Subodh went again to Dakshineswar and the Master introduced him to Shashi and Sharat. He also asked them to visit each other so that his young disciples would know each other well. Subodh said to them, "I shall visit your homes, but you should not come to our house. That may make my father mad at me." The Master was extremely careful not to upset his boys' parents, because that might disrupt their mental peace. However, he was impressed with Subodh's frankness and common sense.

Later Sri Ramakrishna had been diagnosed as having throat cancer. As it developed he could not speak much, so he asked Shashi and Sharat to introduce Subodh to Narendra whom he had made the leader of the young group.

After some time the Master asked Subodh, "Mahendra's house is very close to yours, then why did you not call on him?" Subodh replied, "He hasn't been able to renounce his family. What could I learn about God from him?" Immediately the Master said with a laugh, O Rakhal, did you hear what this rascal Khoka said?" He was pleased to see Subodh so stern in his renunciation; but he said, "He won't

talk about himself; he will only tell you what he has learned from me. Don't hesitate to go to him." After a couple of days when Subodh finally went to see M., he relayed this conversation in his blunt way. M. said humbly, "It is quite true. I am nobody, but I live beside the ocean of knowledge and bliss, and I keep a few pitchers of that water with me. When a guest comes, I offer that to him. What else am I to talk about?"

M. continued talking and sharing his experiences with his young students. "You see, after I met the Master, all my university education became insignificant. When I got my degrees, I felt I had learned everything in this world. But after I talked to the Master, I realised that all my academic knowledge was nothing but ignorance. 'That knowledge is true knowledge which removes ignorance and helps one to attain Brahman.' This one sentence of the Master's removed my pride of learning. I wondered how people could become proud of these trivial university degrees!" After some pleasant hours Subodh took his leave. Thus did Sri Ramakrishna seal the bond of friendship and love among his disciples.

### **The Master and the disciple**

Sri Ramakrishna was finishing his divine play at the temple garden of Dakshineswar. He put all his energy into training the young boys. Sometimes Subodh would arrive at Dakshineswar at noon, having walked all the way from school in the hot sun. He had a strong desire to serve his guru. While fanning the Master, he would feel that all his fatigue had gone. The Master could not bear for Subodh to fan him while standing, so he asked him to sit on his bed and fan him. Like a loving father, at times the Master took the palm leaf fan himself and fanned Subodh. Sometimes he would talk to Subodh about japam, meditation, celibacy, and would also test his faith and devotion. On one occasion the Master touched Subodh's body and blessed him, "Today I have taken away the lust from your mind."

In the beginning Subodh did not accept the Master as an *avatar*, or divine incarnation. One day the Master asked him, "What do you think of

me?" Subodh replied, "People say many different things about you. I won't believe any of them until I find clear proof." At this the Master, who was egoless, said, "Very well. As a money changer checks a coin, likewise accept me after testing." In a letter written many years later, Swami Subodhananda said of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother, "If they don't want to reveal themselves, who can recognise them?" As he grew closer and closer to the Master, his conviction in Sri Ramakrishna's divinity gradually gained strength. One day when the Master advised Subodh to practise meditation, he replied, "Sir, I won't be able to do that. If I have to practise meditation, why should I come to you? I may as well go to some other guru." Understanding his inner feeling, the Master said, "All right, you will not have to practise meditation. But think of me in the morning and evening."

It was not easy to live with Sri Ramakrishna. He could see the inside and outside of his disciples like a person sees books inside a glass book-case; none could hide anything from him. The Master would correct their shortcomings and guide them along the right path. He taught them how to do household duties as well as how to see God everywhere. His room was always neat and clean. Though his belongings were very few, they were nicely arranged in their respective places. The garden paths outside his room were also swept regularly.

One evening Subodh observed the devotees dancing and singing *kirtan* in the Master's room at Dakshineswar. They were overwhelmed with devotion. Sri Ramakrishna himself joined them and his ecstasy surcharged the whole place with heavenly bliss. The devotees were beside themselves with joy. Some were crying, some laughing, some dancing. Others were transfixed like motionless statues, and some began to roll on the floor. Subodh was very sceptical about this kind of emotional display. Still, he waited there to know the truth from the Master. When all the devotees had left, the Master came to Subodh and asked, "Hello! It is late and you are still here?" "Sir, I have a ques-

tion," said Subodh. "Who had real ecstasy in the kirtan today?" The Master thought a while and then said, "Today Latu alone had the fullest measure of it; others had sprinklings."

Subodh learned from Sri Ramakrishna various aspects of spiritual life, which he later related to the devotees: "One day, I asked the Master, 'I have read about Gods and Goddess in books and heard about them from various people. Can one really see them?' Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'One can see God as one sees two persons talking together or walking. But one should call on God from the bottom of one's heart. Pray and cry for him. Demand His vision from Him as children demand toys from their parents with loud cries. Remove all worldly desires from the mind. Always remember: I have a Mother and I am Her son.' " On another occasion the Master said, "Those who shall attain spiritual experiences will feel comfortable with my ideas and teachings...He who has faith in me, has faith in God; and, again, he who does not have faith in me, does not have faith in God either." Although Subodh did not live with Sri Ramakrishna at all times like some of the other disciples, he observed the Master's life minutely and served him whenever he got the opportunity.

### **Sources:**

1. *God Lived with Them* by Swami Chetanananda, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata. pages 529—556.
2. *Ramakrishna and His Disciples* by Christopher Isherwood, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata Pages 218-235.
3. *Sri Ramakrishna: A Biography in Pictures*; Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, pages 69-83.

**(To be continued in the next publication of Reach)**

"It is good and very grand to conquer external nature, but grander still to conquer the internal nature of man. It is grand and good to know the laws that govern the stars and planets; it is infinitely grander and better to know the laws that govern the passions, the feelings, the will, of mankind. This conquering of the inner man, understanding the secrets of the subtle workings that are within the human mind, and knowing its wonderful secrets, belong entirely to religion."

- - - Swami Vivekananda