

# स्मारिका – SOUVENIR

**125<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S RETURN FROM WEST &  
FOUNDATION OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION**



**Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora**

Vivekananda Corner, Almora, Uttarakhand 263 601, India

Email : [almora@rkmm.org](mailto:almora@rkmm.org) | Website: [almora.rkmm.org](http://almora.rkmm.org)

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# \* स्मारिका २०२४ \*



## **RAMAKRISHNA KUTIR**

Vivekananda Corner, Almora – 263601

+91 8445008469

[almora@rkmm.org](mailto:almora@rkmm.org), [almora.rkmm.org](http://almora.rkmm.org)

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Almora – 263601  
+91 8445008469  
almora@rkmm.org  
almora.rkmm.org

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***Photos on Cover Page:***

*From left to right- Syahi Devi, Patal Devi & Kasar Devi Temples*

*Below- Turiyananda Dwar of Ramakrishna Kutir, Vivekananda Corner*



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**Sri Ramakrishna**



**Sri Sarada Devi**



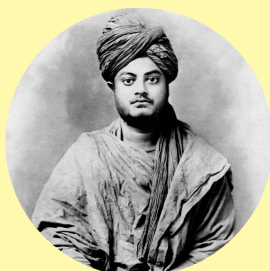


**Swami Vivekananda**



**Swami Turiyananda**

**Direct Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna  
who blessed Almora by their visits**



**Swami Vivekananda**



**Swami Turiyananda**



**Swami Shivananda**



**Swami Premananda**



**Swami Yogananda**



**Swami Niranjanananda**



**Swami Adbhutananda**



**Swami Saradananda**



**Swami Abhedananda**



**Swami Subodhananda**



**Swami Akhandananda**



**Swami Trigunatitananda**

**A Few Disciples & Followers of Swami Vivekananda  
Who Visited Almora**



Swami Sadananda



Swami Swarupananda



Sister Nivedita



J J Goodwin



Sister Christine



Sara Bull



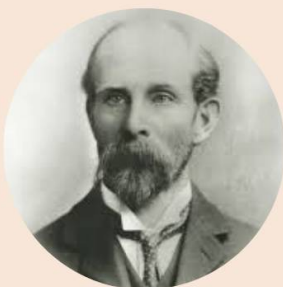
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James Henry Sevier



Henrietta Muller



ET Sturdy



Boshi Sen



Gertrude Emerson Sen



PHONES PBX : (033)  
2654-5391 2654-5700  
2654-8494 2654-5701  
2654-9581 2654-5702  
2654-9681 2654-5703  
E-MAIL : president@rkmm.org  
WEBSITE : www.belurmath.org



## RAMAKRISHNA MATH

P.O. BELUR MATH, DIST. HOWRAH  
WEST BENGAL : 711 202  
INDIA

### MESSAGE

I am happy to know that Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora organized various programmes to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the foundation of Ramakrishna Mission and the return of Swami Vivekananda to India. The concluding phase of these programmes is scheduled in May, 2024 and a souvenir will be released in observance of the event.

One of the most important messages conveyed by Swamiji is the power of self-reliance and the importance of individual effort. He believed that true success and happiness could only be achieved through the development of skills and talents, rather than depending on external factors such as wealth or social status. He encouraged people to develop their own inner strength and take responsibility for their own lives instead of relying on the guidance and support of others.

This message is especially relevant to today's youth, who are often under pressure to live up to society's expectations and strive for material success. In a world often focused on instant satisfaction and external appreciation, Swamiji's message of self-confidence and inner strength emphasizes the importance of developing one's character and values.

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

I convey my good wishes to all.

**Belur Math**

**06<sup>th</sup> September, 2023**

**(Swami Smaranananda)**

**President**

\*Most Revered Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj took over as the President of Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission on 24 April 2024 after the Mahasamadhi of Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj on 26 March 2024.





**Sri Ramakrishna Math**

31, Ramakrishna Math Road  
Mylapore ♦ Chennai - 600 004 ♦ ☎ 2462 1110 ♦ Fax: 24934589  
Email: mail@chennaiamath.org ♦ Website: www.chennaiamath.org

### MESSAGE

Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, commemorated the 125th anniversary of the foundation day of Ramakrishna Mission, and the return of Swami Vivekananda to India after his triumphant success in the World Parliament of Religions in the West by organizing various programmes from May 2023 onwards. The second and concluding phase of the celebrations include the publication of a souvenir which will highlight the ashrama's history, its activities and achievements and a 'Vivekananda Spiritual Circuit Tour' connecting the places associated with Swamiji in Almora district.

Almora is a place hallowed with the memories of Swami Vivekananda during his visit both before going to and after returning from the West. Swamiji had said in Almora, 'This is the Holy land where every ardent soul in India wants to come at the end of its life, and to close the last chapter of its mortal career...'. He wanted a monastery to be found here. Swami Turiyananda with the help of Swami Shivananda founded this centre in the Bright End Corner in Almora fifteen years later. In one of his letters Swami Shivananda refers to this place as secluded, calm, holy and with a healthy climate.

Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, apart from providing monks and devotees facilities for staying and doing spiritual practices in a secluded, calm, and picturesque setting, does welfare activities also for the underprivileged sections of the people and works towards spreading education and culture among the students there. The events conducted during this special celebration is noteworthy.

I pray to Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda to shower their special blessings on this centre for its development and for the success of the souvenir. My blessings for Swami Dhruveshananda, the Adhyaksha of Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, under whose guidance this centre is going forward for the 'good of many, for the welfare of many'.

Date: 23 March 2024

*Swami Gautamananda*

(Swami Gautamananda)

Vice President,

Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission

\*Most Revered Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj took over as the President of Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission on 24 April 2024 after the Mahasamadhi of Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj on 26 March 2024.

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



**RAMAKRISHNA MATH**  
Head Quarter :  
P.O. Belur Math, DIST. HOWRAH  
WEST BENGAL : 7711202  
INDIA

## MESSAGE

I am delighted to learn that Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, plans to bring out a Souvenir as part of the second and concluding phase of commemoration of 125th anniversary of the foundation of Ramakrishna Mission and Swami Vivekananda's visit to Almora.

Almora played a significant role in Swamiji's life. It was here that he unveiled the mystery of macrocosm and microcosm. At Almora, came a turning point of his reclusive life that made him into a determined man with a mission. Here he started his first Himalayan centre and expressed his desire to spend his end of days. It was at Almora that Sister Nivedita finally bested the hurdles to serve India. Almora was a sacred place for many other monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. The residents of Almora, especially Lala Badrilal Shah and his family, played a vital role in shaping the Ramakrishna Movement. All these combined makes Almora a land holier than it already was in puranic times.

I pray to Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda to shower their blessings on all.

22 September 2023  
Belur Math

(Swami Suhitananda)  
Vice President

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



## RAMAKRISHNA MATH

Head Quarter :  
P.O. Belur Math, DIST. HOWRAH  
WEST BENGAL : 7711202  
INDIA

### MESSAGE

To  
Swami Dhruveshanandaji,  
Head, Ramakrishna Kutir Vivekananda Corner  
Almora

Dear Dhruveshanandaji,

I am glad to know from your email 3 Sep 2023 that Ramakrishna  
Kutir,

Almora is going to bring out a Souvenir to commemorate the  
completion of the Centre's celebration of the 125th anniversary of  
Ramakrishna Mission.

I wish the souvenir and all those who are associated with it all success  
and offer prayers for the all-round welfare of all of them.

With love and best wishes,

Yours affectionately,

Bhajananda



**SWAMI GIRISHANANDA**  
VICE PRESIDENT

**RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION**

P.O. BELUR MATH DIST. HOWRAH,  
WEST BENGAL 711 202, (INDIA)

Phones PBX:(91) 33 – 2654 9581 /9681 /8494 /5391

Fax: (91) 33 – 2654 4346, E-mail: girishananda@rkmm.org



Date: 20-03-2024

To  
Swami Dhruveshananda  
Secretary  
Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora.

Dear Swami Dhruveshananda,

It is a matter of great joy and happiness to learn that a year long celebration has been organized by Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora to commemorate the 125th anniversary of foundation of Ramakrishna Mission, as well as the glorious event of Swamiji's return from the west and the same has been successfully completed with the blessings of our Divine Trio.

I have pleasure to note that you are also going to publish a souvenir to enshrine the glorious event. I heartily wish a successful and purposeful publication of the souvenir to spread our motto "**Atmano Mokshartham Jagaddhitaya Cha**".

I pray at the Lotus feet of the Holy Trio for all-round welfare and wellbeing of every individual concerned with the celebration and service to humanity.

With loves and blessings

Swami Girishananda.





## **RAMAKRISHNA MATH (YOGODYAN)**

(A branch centre of Ramakrishna Math, Belur)

7 Yogodyan Lane, Kankurgachhi, Kolkata 700 054, West Bengal

Phone: (033) 2320-2927

Mobile: +91 8017919056

E-mail: [rkmyogodyan@gmail.com](mailto:rkmyogodyan@gmail.com)

Website: [www.rkmyogodyan.org](http://www.rkmyogodyan.org)

### **Benediction**

I'm delighted to learn that Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, is going to publish a souvenir commemorating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of Ramakrishna Mission and Swami Vivekananda's return from the West. The souvenir will cover various thoughtful articles on the topics of different programs arranged by the Kutir from May 2023 to May 2024.

Swami Vivekananda harboured a strong desire to meditate in a Himalayan cave, surrounded by spiritually uplifting scenery. Vivekananda firmly believed that the atmosphere of Almora, nestled in the serene embrace of the Himalayas, provided the primary source of inspiration for spiritual seekers in their spiritual practices. Following his return from America, Swamiji remarked in his lecture at Almora in 1897, "This is the land of dreams of our forefathers, In which was born Pârvati, the Mother of India. This is the holy land where every ardent soul in India wants to come at the end of its life, and to close the last chapter of its mortal career."

Once at Dakshineswar Sri Ramakrishna asked Mahatma Ashwinikumar Dutta, a famous personality from Barisal, to meet Narendranath. They met but could not talk because Narendranath had a severe headache that day. Sri Sri Thakur's vision came true after a long gap of twelve years on this very Himalayan lap of Almora.

Another two memorable incidents from Swamiji's life keep Almora in high regard even today. In 1890, during his wandering days, he had a profound meditation at Kankrighat near Almora. He experienced the unity of the universal law operating in both the macrocosm and microcosm. At that time, Swamiji—an itinerant monk with neither money nor any food items—was so hungry that he was about to die. A Muslim boy named Zulfikar Ali saved his life with a cucumber.

The globally renowned journal, Prabuddha Bharata, founded at the urging of Swami Vivekananda, resumed publication in 1898 in Almora near our current Kutir. It was under the editorship of Swami Swarupanandaji, at the behest of Swamiji himself, in Thomson House. During that time, Swamiji was accompanied by his Western disciples—Sister Nivedita, Captain and Mrs. Sevier, Mrs. Ole Bull, Josephine Macloed, Mrs. Paterso and others.



## RAMAKRISHNA MATH (YOGODYAN)

(A branch centre of Ramakrishna Math, Belur)

7 Yogodyan Lane, Kankurgachhi, Kolkata 700 054, West Bengal

Phone: (033) 2320-2927

Mobile: +91 8017919056

E-mail: [rkmyogodyan@gmail.com](mailto:rkmyogodyan@gmail.com)

Website: [www.rkmyogodyan.org](http://www.rkmyogodyan.org)

Not only Swami Vivekananda, but a total of eleven monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna also visited Almora at different times. Their holy presence and spiritual practices made Almora vibrant at that time and continue to do so even today. The first seven of these eleven disciples undertook tapasya in various places such as the Kasardevi Temple, Pataldevi Temple, the homes of Ambadutta and Badri Shah, and other solitary locations here.

Swami Shivanandaji particularly admired Almora for its stunning natural beauty and pleasant climate. In 1915, he invited Turiyanandaji to Almora, and together they worked tirelessly to establish an ashram. Shortly afterwards, Shivanandaji left Almora to collect donations for the ashrama's establishment. Despite Turiyanandaji's serious illness, he monitored the daily progress of the work. Finally, in 1916, they successfully founded Ramakrishna Kutir. Thus Swamiji's dream came true. As he wrote to Lala Badri Shah in 1896, "I want to start a Math at Almora or near Almora rather. ... Do you know of any suitable place near Almora where I can build my monastery with a garden, etc.?"

So, this Kutir is not only a spot for spiritual practice but also enlightened with the love, blessings, and pure reminiscences of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. This place embodies the spirit of tapasya, alive day and night. I firmly believe that those who come to this serene environment and sincerely practice japa and dhyana will experience spiritual progress.

I earnestly pray to Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Srimat Swami Vivekananda Maharaj for the smooth execution of the souvenir publication, unhindered and dedicated to the Holy Trio.

Date : 07-07-2024

(Swami Vimalatmananda)

Vice President

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission,

Belur Math, Howrah, India

Adhyaksha

Ramakrishna Math, Yogodyan,

**Ramakrishna Kutir**

Vivekananda Corner

Almora-263 601

Uttarakhand, India



The Cossipore Udyanbati

## RAMAKRISHNA MATH, COSSIPORE

Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Dev Sarani

(90, Cossipore Road, Kolkata – 700 002)

Website: [www.rkmcudyanbati.org](http://www.rkmcudyanbati.org) ♦ Email: [cossipore@rkmm.org](mailto:cossipore@rkmm.org)

Mobile: 9433306107 ♦ Phone: (033) 2557-3605/ 2532-9348 ♦ Date : 01/07/2024

Srimat Swami Dhruveshanandaji Maharaj  
Adhyaksha  
Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora

### Sub : Message for Souvenir

Respected Swamiji,

We have received your mail of June 28.

I am very happy to know that Almora Centre is going to publish a Souvenir.

I believe that the Souvenir will be full of articles on the ideas and ideals of the Holy Trio.

Sri Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples had shown us how to live with God, the goal human life.  
These lives are light house showing us the path to proceed in spiritual life.

May the publication of the Souvenir be successful and far reading is my earnest prayer.

With best wishes and pranams,

Yours affectionately,

*Swami Divyananda*

(Swami Divyananda)

Vice President  
Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission  
Belur Math, Howrah - 711 202



सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री  
Prime Minister

**MESSAGE**

It is heart-warming to learn about the celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's return from the West and the founding of Ramakrishna Mission. Greetings and best wishes to everyone associated with Ramakrishna Mission, Almora.

Nestled in the midst of alluring Himalayas, Almora is renowned for its pristine beauty and beautiful environment which attract visitors of all hues. With more than 100 years of selfless service to the society, 'Ramakrishna Kutir', Almora has played a pivotal role in popularising the ideals of Ramakrishna Mission in the region.

From Kakrighat, Vivekanand Shila to Kasar Devi Cave, the entire area is a living manifestation of the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. It is against this backdrop that the thoughtful decision to inaugurate 'Vivekanada Dwar' at the entrance of Almora reflects the abiding connection between Swamiji and Almora. The construction of the hostel – 'Vivekananda Bhawan' for students from remote areas of Uttarakhand is a noble gesture that will serve youth.

Guided by the motto of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission - Ātmāno mokṣārthaṃ jagata hitāya cha, the organisations continue to serve humanity and society. It is against this perspective that the organisations have taken up the ideals of work as worship and service of humanity as service to God in various ways.

It is pertinent to recollect his renowned lecture, "My Plan of Campaign", wherein Swami Vivekananda urged the people to assert their soul-force – "My India, arise! Where is your vital force? In your Immortal Soul. Each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life, which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony." The 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Swamiji's return from the West is a proud occasion for every Indian – and for humanity.

May the publication being brought out on the occasion capture the significance and essence of the occasion.

(Narendra Modi)

New Delhi  
ज्येष्ठ 18, शक संवत् 1946  
08<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

पुष्कर सिंह धामी



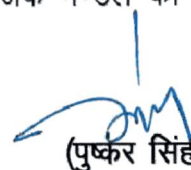
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देहरादून- 248001  
सचिवालय फोन: 0135-2716262  
0135-2650433  
फैक्स: 0135-2712827  
विधान सभा फोन: 0135-2665100  
0135-2665497  
फैक्स: 0135-2666166  
Email: cm-ua@nic.in

### संदेश

मुझे यह जानकर अत्यन्त प्रसन्नता हो रही है कि रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा द्वारा रामकृष्ण मिशन की स्थापना की 125वीं वर्षगांठ के अवसर पर एक स्मारिका का प्रकाशन किया जा रहा है। मुझे आशा है कि उक्त स्मारिका में रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा द्वारा वर्षभर किये जा रहे विभिन्न क्रियाकलापों एवं स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के जीवन से जुड़ी हुई अनेकों घटनाओं का समावेश होगा, जो निःसंदेह समाज के प्रत्येक वर्ग के लिए अत्यन्त ज्ञानबद्धक होगा। स्वामी विवेकानन्द के विचार न केवल भारत के युवाओं को बल्कि दुनियाभर के युवाओं को सकारात्मकता के साथ जीवनयापन करने के लिए प्रेरित करते हैं। स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के शैक्षिक विचार समाज को शिक्षित करने का कार्य करते हैं। भारत एक ऐसा राष्ट्र है, जिसने सदैव मानवता के लिए कार्य किया है। भारत में कई ऐसे महापुरुषों ने जन्म लिया है, जिन्होंने अपने जीवन को लोककल्याण के लिए समर्पित किया और हमेशा विश्व का मार्गदर्शन किया। ऐसे ही महापुरुषों में से एक स्वामी विवेकानन्द भी थे। उनके जीवन परिचय का अध्ययन करने से अवगत होता है कि उनकी गुरु के प्रति अनन्य भक्ति और निष्ठा थी, जो आज के युवाओं के लिए एक प्रेरणा का स्रोत है। उनके विचारों ने विश्व का नेतृत्व करते हुए युवाओं को सकारात्मकता का मंत्र भी दिया।

मेरी ओर से रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा को इस स्मारिका के सफल एवं उद्देश्यपूर्ण प्रकाशन के लिए सभी आयोजक मण्डल को हार्दिक बधाई एवं शुभकामनायें।

  
(पुष्कर सिंह धामी)



**भगत सिंह कोश्यारी**

पूर्व राज्यपाल, महाराष्ट्र व गोवा राज्य  
पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड राज्य

**BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI**

Former Governor of Maharashtra & Goa  
Former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand

Date : 11/01/2024

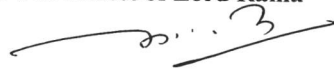
*Poojya Swami Ji*

It gives me immense pleasure to know that Sri Ram Krishna Math / Ramkrishna Kutir Almora is bringing a Souvenir on the occasion of 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ramkrishna Mission and Swami Vivekananda's return from the west .

Long long back the great Adi jagatguru Shankaracharya traveled whole of Bharat on bare foot and established four Mathas in four corners of the country and through these pilgrimages united our great Bharat. But Swami Vivekananda went beyond Bharat and for the first time in history travelled most of the present world. His inspiring and thrilling speech at the World Religious Conference in Chicago proved to be the fore runner of One World One Family the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Swamiji's calarion call to Hindu Nation brought back the faith , confidence and pride of Bharat to her son's and daughters .

We the people of Utatrakhand feel privileged that Swami ji not only visited Uttarakhand more than ones but established the unique Advaita Aohrama in Mryawat then in Almora District which is now in new Champawat District . I pray to Thakurji Sri Ram Krishna Bhagwan that Swami Ji's preaching, teaching and many time admonition to modern world bring peace, prosperity and harmony to the world. My heartiestyer prayer for the successful publication of the Souvenir.

**Ever your's in thefeet of Lord Rama**



**(Bhagat Singh Koshyari)**

**Swami Dhruveshananda Ji**  
**Adhyaksha ,**  
**Ramakrishna kutir Almora**

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B-187, Sector-4, Defence Colony, Dehradun (U.K.) - 248001  
Hotel Uttaranchal Deep, Naya Bazar, Near Bus Stand, Pithoragarh (U.K.)  
M.: +91 8126099999, 96072 00791

## सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय, अल्मोड़ा, उत्तराखंड

प्रो. सतपाल सिंह बिष्ट  
कुलपति

मो०- +91 7579138434  
ईमेल- vcssju@gmail.com



### संदेश

अत्यंत हर्ष का विषय है रामकृष्ण कुटीर, विवेकानंद कान्गर, अल्मोड़ा द्वारा रामकृष्ण मिशन और स्वामी विवेकानंद जी के पश्चिम से वापसी के 125वां वर्ष पूर्ण होने पर अल्मोड़ा में आयोजन किया जा रहा है। इस अवसर पर एक स्मरणीय दस्तावेज (सोविनियर) का प्रकाशन किया जा रहा है। स्वामी विवेकानंद जी ने भारत के आध्यात्मिक ज्ञान, वेदांत दर्शन को पश्चिमी देशों में प्रसार किया है। उन्होंने रामकृष्ण मिशन की स्थापना कर भारत की आध्यात्मिक चेतना, वेदांत दर्शन और युवाओं को राष्ट्र के प्रति जाग्रत करने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किए हैं। आज रामकृष्ण मिशन समाज के मध्य में जाकर महत्वपूर्ण कार्य कर रहा है, ऐसे में प्रकाशित किया जाने वाला यह स्मरणीय दस्तावेज युवाओं के साथ-साथ समाज का मार्गदर्शन करेगी।

मैं रामकृष्ण कुटीर, विवेकानंद कान्गर, अल्मोड़ा के द्वारा रामकृष्ण मिशन और स्वामी विवेकानंद के पश्चिम से वापसी के 125वें वर्ष पूर्ण होने पर प्रकाशित किए जाने वाले सोविनियर के लिए अपनी शुभकामनाएं देता हूं।

शुभमस्तु!

27.03.2024

(प्रो. सतपाल सिंह बिष्ट)  
कुलपति

## ***Foreword***

Almora holds a place of immense significance in the Ramakrishna Order. Few places have been blessed by the presence of twelve direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, including Swami Vivekananda who visited Almora three times. Considered a holy land since ancient times, Almora has been witness to the ***Sadhana*** of countless ***Sadhakas***. The spiritual vibrations of this places as well as the healthy climate of this place attracted Swamiji and his brother disciples, who spent months or even years engaged in intense Tapasya (spiritual austerities) in various locations, further sanctifying this sacred place.

Almora holds a particularly special place in the life of Swami Vivekananda due to the vast range of experiences he had here. As a ***Parivrajak*** (wandering monk), when in 1890, he arrived on the banks of the Koshi River at Kakrighat, little did he know that he would soon undergo one of the most significant moments of his life. It was here that the message of universal oneness, with which he would later inspire the West, was realized by him. '*I saw the entire Universe within an atom*'—as he would later relate about this profound experience.

During that same first visit, after three days of intense meditation at Kasar Devi, he received another powerful experience that propelled him to dedicate himself to working for his country and for the education of Indian women. Almora was also where he trained his Western disciples at Nivedita Cottage and blessed Sister Nivedita in 1898, dedicating her to the cause of India's revival.

From delivering his first lecture in Hindi to reviving the Prabuddha Bharata magazine, and from conceiving the idea of a Himalayan Ashram to penning a vast volume of letters – all while being lost in thought, gazing at the snow-capped peaks or riding horseback – it was Almora that churned the depths of Swami Vivekananda's being. This place became the source of his ideas, thoughts, and a surge of emotions.

In 1897, upon his triumphant return from the West, having reshaped the global perception of India and its people, Almora welcomed him like a returning son, akin to Rama's return to Ayodhya. Poet Sumitranandan Pant even captured this event in a poem, where he describes it through the eyes of a child witnessing a grand Diwali celebration. Lamps were lit in every house, auspicious rice showered from windows, a three-kilometer long red carpet laid out, and a band of men, women, and children from all walks of life united to welcome their very own – Almora's Vivekananda.

In reply to the welcome addresses, Swamiji spoke of Almora as "the land of dreams of our forefathers, the birthplace of Parvati, the Mother of India...where philosophy was born...this is the land of renunciation...Here, therefore, must be one those centers, not merely of activity, but more of calmness, of meditation, and of peace; and I hope someday to realize it." The establishment of Ramakrishna Kutir in 1916 by the joint efforts of Mahapurush Maharaj and Hari Maharaj fulfilled Swamiji's dream.

To commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his return & the foundation of Ramakrishna Mission, a souvenir is being published by Ramakrishna Kutir. The hope is that through these pages, more people will be inspired by Swami Vivekananda's life & teachings and come to know the sacredness of his beloved Almora.



Swami Dhruveshananda  
Adhyaksha,  
Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora

*"That you may catch my fire, that you may be intensely sincere, that you may die the hero's death on the field of battle— is the constant prayer of VIVEKANANDA."*

# ***Ramakrishna Sangha***

## ***- A Rare Spiritual Phenomenon***

**- Swami Shuddhidananda  
Adhyaksha, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati**

Ramakrishna Mission is celebrating its 125th anniversary. It is one of the twin institutions of the Ramakrishna Sangha (or Ramakrishna Order). The other institution is the Ramakrishna Math. Both Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, along with the group of nuns and lay devotees, who have subscribed to the Ramakrishna Bhāvadhāra or 'Sri Ramakrishna's view and way of life', together form the 'Ramakrishna Sangha'. This Sangha is unique—a rare spiritual phenomenon of the modern times.

### **What Makes This Sangha Rare and Unique?**

Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of the Vedas. He was Vedamurti. Sri Ramakrishna is the other name for the Vedic spiritual consciousness, and the Vedic view and way of life. His advent marks the revival of the eternal Vedic wisdom. With him has expedited the process of taking India back to her Vedic roots, which was 1,200 years ago initiated by Sri Shankaracharya. Unlike other spiritual institutions under the Vedic fold, which are great in themselves and important too, and which uphold a particular view or stance of the Vedas, Ramakrishna

Bhāvadhāra or 'Sri Ramakrishna's view and way of life' encompasses the entire gamut of Vedic wisdom.

Like Sri Shankaracharya's, it gives place to all the views and stances of the Vedas, that is, all the forms of worship, all the ways and methods to seek the ultimate Reality, and it caters to the needs of persons living at all levels of evolution, even the so-called those immersed in the world and busy in worldly pursuits. We need to remember that the original Vedic vision and way of life were meant for the entire human race and not only for the spiritual aspirants. It includes both karma-kāṇḍa as well as jñāna-kāṇḍa. Karma-kāṇḍa (which includes upāsana or meditation as well) is the method of gradually spiritualising the so-called secular and mundane activities of human beings. It is the way of transforming a brute being into a human being. Jñāna-kāṇḍa refers to the human being's focussed pursuit of the higher Spiritual Consciousness, which culminates in the experience of the Atman, the Advaitic Truth. Both together cover the whole ground of human life and existence. This is the real meaning and purpose of Hindu Dharma, vast as the sky and deep as the ocean. As



stated before, the process of taking India back to its Vedic roots was started by Sri Shankaracharya. It is now being carried forward by Ramakrishna Sangha. Ramakrishna Sangha is the latest blossom of the eternal Vedic Hindu Dharma, born to spread the fragrance of universal well-being for one and all.

One more point makes this Sangha unique. It translates the Advaitic vision into selfless action done in the spirit of worship. This action is meant for the well-being of all. Activity in Ramakrishna Sangha can be summed up as 'Brahman in action for the sake of Brahman'. It is only a fortunate few who get associated with this loftiest vision of life and action. For the generality of people, steeped in narrowness and selfishness, it is difficult to be a part of this Sangha. This is because, to be a part of this Sangha means to shed all selfishness and completely abandon oneself in the Supreme Reality. Such a thing is rare and difficult indeed.

### **Three Things Difficult to Obtain Bhagavan Sri Shankaracharya says:**

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद्देवानुग्रहहेतुकम्।

मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥

Birth in a human body, desire for liberation, and guidance of a Guru are difficult to obtain, and if one has these three, it is owing to the grace of Īśvara (Īśvara-anugraha).<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, we can say that:

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद्देवानुग्रहहेतुकम्।

रामकृष्ण-भक्ति रामकृष्ण-संघ-प्रवेश

रामकृष्ण-संघात्मा-भावः॥

Ramakrishna-bhakti or 'devotion to Sri Ramakrishna', Ramakrishna-sangha-praveśa or 'finding entry into Ramakrishna Sangha', and Ramakrishna-sanghātma-bhāva or 'complete identification with the Sangha, its ideology and activities', are durlabham, extremely difficult to obtain. If one has these three, it is devānugraha hetukam or obtained by the grace of Īśvara.

One may ask: how many people in this world, out of the seven-and-half billion, have devotion for Sri Ramakrishna? They can be counted on fingers. Out of this rare group, how many have been fortunate to find entry into the Ramakrishna Sangha, formally and informally? Still a smaller number. And finally, out of this small number, how many have become completely identified with the Sangha and its ideology and activities? Very few. This speaks volumes about the rarity and difficulty of getting associated with this rare spiritual phenomenon called the Ramakrishna Sangha, which encapsulates within itself the loftiest vision of life and existence. It is not easy. It is rare and difficult. It is

Īśvara's grace alone which makes this possible.

One needs to be cautioned here that 'Ramakrishna-bhakti' or 'devotion to Sri Ramakrishna' means 'devotion to the Vedic view of human being and the Ultimate Reality, and the numerous ways to progress in that direction'. It does not refer to the narrow view of Sri Ramakrishna as 'a person', though such a view may be useful for many in the beginning. Sri Ramakrishna is 'the Universal Principle'. He is the purāṇa-puruṣa, the 'Primordial Being', the tattva, the 'Supreme Reality', Brahman. Referring to Swami Vivekananda's view of Sri Ramakrishna, The Life of Swami Vivekananda says: 'It was the Swami, among all the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, who saw in the Master not a person only, but a principle.'<sup>2</sup> And Advaita Ashrama was Swami Vivekananda's dream creation, where it is the 'Principle' that is adored and sought, and not the person.

Thus, devotion for Sri Ramakrishna is difficult to obtain; to find entry into Ramakrishna Sangha is still more difficult; and even more difficult than that is to have complete identification with the Sangha, its ideology and activities. Every succeeding item is more difficult to obtain than the preceding ones. If one has all three, it is only owing to Īśvara's grace (Īśvara-anugraha).

Blessed indeed are those who have obtained all these three. In the last

125 years of Ramakrishna Mission's glorious existence, a few thousand monks, blessed with these rarest treasures which are difficult to obtain, dedicated their lives for their own spiritual enlightenment and for the good of the entire world, reflecting the original Vedic vision of total human welfare. While we celebrate the Mission's 125th anniversary, we devotedly pay our obeisance to all of them. OM TAT SAT.

### Reference

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2. His Eastern and Western Disciples, The Life of Swami Vivekananda, 2 vols (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2004), 2.250.



# ***Sri Ramakrishna, the ‘Soul-hunger’ Personified***

— Swami Atmashraddhananda  
Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

*Soul-hunger* or hunger of the soul is the intrinsic desire present in every human being for infinite life, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. But ignorant of its real source or how to get it, man searches for it in the world of senses and worldly pursuits. It is like the classic case of a musk deer which has musk in its navel but roams about the whole forest to find out the source of its intoxicating fragrance! As saint Kabir says, *‘jal bich meen piyasi, mohi sun sun avat hasi*, (the fish is thirsty in water, hearing this I smile)‘.

## **‘Senses Hunger’ Versus ‘Soul Hunger’**

Let us try to understand it further by examining our lives. Generally man seeks a comfortable, secure and pleasurable life. He wants to satisfy his senses. He wants to enjoy good, delectable food. What are all the kinds of food human beings desire and eat! From vegetables to cereals to animal food, human beings have a long list of cuisines both for taste and for health. Not only the sense of pallet, we have other senses like eyes, ears, smell and touch which crave for satisfaction. We feel a need to fulfil their craving. But when we examine them, we find that it is not the sensory experience

or sensual pleasure that we want; we seek happiness, *sukha*, from them. We want to experience a sense of happiness through enjoying the objects of senses (objects: like eyes want to enjoy beauty, nose want sweet smell, skin wants pleasurable sensation of touch, and so on). Everyone wants *sukha*, and no one wants *dukha*. It is a natural trait of all life.

However it is not just pleasure of senses that we seek; we want it again and again. We cannot experience the senses without getting trapped in an addictive feeling to have them ‘more and more’. A one-time experience, however memorable, does not satisfy us. We seek it again and again. Although with aging the sharpness of senses and sensory experiences (*jarayanti tejah as the Kathopanishad says*) is reduced and one feels hapless and helpless. The earlier intensity of happiness is not felt then. There is desire inside, often a burning desire, to enjoy the objects of senses but the senses have become weak and lost their power to experience the objects as earlier. Most people in their forties and fifties, having crossed the thralldom of sensory enjoyments of twenties and thirties, feel this strange inner emptiness which life inevitably brings. They know

their times have changed. Temporariness or evanescence of life and the changing nature of life's situations is a fact we all know, though we do not always remember it. Says Swami Vivekananda, 'We run after everything to make ourselves happy; we pursue our mad career in the external world of senses. If you ask the young man with whom life is successful, he will declare that it is real; and he really thinks so. Perhaps, when the same man grows old and finds fortune ever eluding him, he will then declare that it is fate. He finds at last that his desires cannot be fulfilled. Wherever he goes, there is an adamant wall beyond which he cannot pass. Every sense-activity results in a reaction. Everything is evanescent. Enjoyment, misery, luxury, wealth, power, and poverty, even life itself, are all evanescent.'

Then comes a time in man's life when he asks two questions: first, what is permanent or 'real' and second, how to get lasting happiness in life. These questions arise out of the recognition of the fact of change and the inability of all material things to satisfy us permanently. It is in response to these questions, man turns to what is called 'soul-hunger'. He has now journeyed from senses-hunger to soul-hunger. He is no longer satisfied with the temporary happiness and wants everlasting happiness. It is the journey of man from lower truth to higher truth. Life's ultimate fulfilment lies in finding the

Highest Truth. One cannot be satisfied with the small; only in finding the Infinite that he gets ever-lasting happiness (*bhumaiva sukham, na alpe sukhamasti* says the *Chandogya Upanishad*).

### **The Meaning of Soul-Hunger**

According to Hindu view of life, every human being passes through these two stages of life. The first stage is called *pravritti marga* or the path of engagement with the world and worldly experiences but within the ambit of righteousness and self-regulation. Most people are in this first stage of their spiritual growth. But as they experience the ups and downs of life, all types of successes and failures, praises and criticisms of their life and achievements, they outgrow this stage and qualify for the next stage called *nivritti marga*, or the path of abandonment. It is not a path of depression or frustration. Far from it, it is the path of finding what is lasting and truly satisfying.

Soul-hunger, though present in all, does not find its expression in the beginning. One has to pass through the initial course of enjoyment and suffering to reach this. There is an interesting analogy given in the *Mundaka Upanishad* in this regard and according to Swami Vivekananda it is also the essence of Vedas, the ancient scriptures of the Sanatana Dharma. He says, 'The whole of the Vedanta Philosophy is in this story: Two birds of golden plumage sat on the

same tree. The one above, serene, majestic, immersed in his own glory; the one below restless and eating the fruits of the tree, now sweet, now bitter. Once he ate an exceptionally bitter fruit, then he paused and looked up at the majestic bird above; but he soon forgot about the other bird and went on eating the fruits of the tree as before. Again he ate a bitter fruit, and this time he hopped up a few boughs nearer to the bird at the top. This happened many times until at last the lower bird came to the place of the upper bird and lost himself. He found all at once that there had never been two birds, but that he was all the time that upper bird, serene, majestic, and immersed in his own glory.' (CW, 7. *Inspired Talks*)

Soul-hunger therefore means our desire to find God, our longing for the Eternal Life and the Everlasting Joy. Swami Yatishwaranandaji (1889-1966), Vice President of the Ramakrishna Order and well-known for his spiritual insights, says: 'One day or other, in the life of every man must come a time when he feels the call of the spiritual ideal. When such a call comes he cannot but listen to it. . . This inner awareness and compelling urge to follow the higher ideal marks the beginning of spiritual life. . . . This change from following worldly ideals to following a spiritual ideal is called 'conversion'. Spiritual life begins with that. In the case of some people this conversion is sudden, in the case of some others, it is a gradual development.' (From *Meditation and Spiritual Life*, p.2).

## **Sri Ramakrishna: the Man and His Message**

In the light of above discussion, now let us turn to Sri Ramakrishna, his insights and wisdom. Before we delve into his teachings, a note about him would be helpful for the first-time readers. Sri Ramakrishna, one of India's greatest spiritual luminaries, was born in 1836 and passed away or attained *mahasamadhi* in 1886. He was born in a poor family of priestly class and had some preliminary education in his village school. His spiritual journey started even as a child when he experienced some extraordinary states of divine realisation but it attained its full manifestation when he was asked to worship in the temple of Divine Mother at Dakshineswar in the outskirts of Kolkata. His intense longing for the vision for the Divine Mother is an iconic story of our times and keeps inspiring millions who seek a lasting solution to the problem of pain and misery. Not only seeking God as Mother, Sri Ramakrishna undertook other spiritual practices prescribed in Santana Dharma like Tantras, Vaishnava and their various bhavas, and finally did Advaita sadhana. This he did under various teachers who came to him in mysterious ways and helped him attain the highest mystic experience through their path. He then felt curious as to what the followers of religions other than Sanatana Dharma like Christianity and Islam realise. Same Reality or something else? He undertook



the core practices of these religions and found that these paths too gave the same mystic experience of God as others. He thus concluded that anyone who seeks God sincerely will get Him. He declared, based on his own experience, that he who wants God, gets God. But the point is how much do we *want* God, and how much do we *want* from God!

Later, drawn by his spiritual attainments, many educated and commoners from Kolkata and elsewhere came to Sri Ramakrishna and sought his guidance. Chief among his monastic disciples was Swami Vivekananda, the great exponent of Vedanta and the first ambassador of Indian culture and spirituality to the West. There were many other monastic and lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who vouchsafed the authenticity of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. Mahatma Gandhi in his Foreword to the Life of Sri Ramakrishna published from Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, wrote: 'The story of Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion.'

### **Sri Ramakrishna's Essential Teachings**

Through his conversations and personal example, Sri Ramakrishna drove home the fact that God can be

experienced through leading a pure life and following spiritual practices. But what matters most is yearning, longing, *vyakulta*. Sri Ramakrishna said, 'One must have for God the yearning of a child. The child sees nothing but confusion when his mother is away. You may try to cajole him by putting a sweetmeat in his hand; but he will not be fooled. He only says, 'No I want to go to my mother'. One must feel such yearning for God.'

He further says, 'At the approach of dawn the eastern horizon becomes red. Then one knows it will soon be sunrise. Likewise, if you see a person restless for God, you can be pretty certain that he hasn't long to wait for His vision.'

Purity, the basic precondition which Sri Ramakrishna insisted for God-experience, means renunciation of lust and greed. He called it in his native Bengali, *kamini kanchan tyaga*. With regard to giving up lust, there is an insightful observation by Richard Schiffman, the author of *Sri Ramakrishna, a Prophet for the New Age*: If the Yogi (i.e. a spiritual seeker) renounces sex and other worldly pursuits, it is not because they are sinful or unlawful, but, simply put, because they do not deliver the goods. He renounces them because they are illusions holding out a false promise they can never hope to fulfil, trapping one in the chronic delusion that the pot of gold lies at the end of the next rainbow of

physical or mental conquest. By frittering away the vital energy in vain pursuits, they sap the inner being of the psychic fuel which alone can bring the seeker to God..

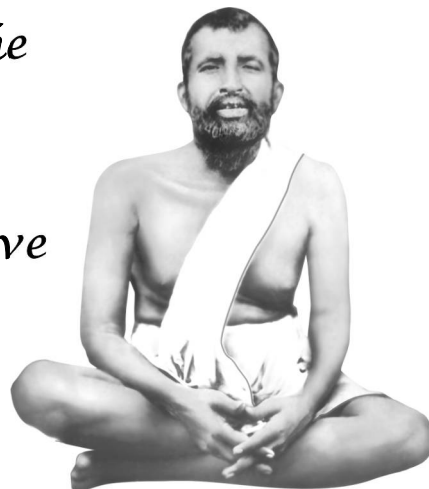
.. He would invariably counsel his young devotees that absolute purity in thought and act was a precondition for spiritual advancement. And he was very particular that they regard all women as mothers or sisters, or, ever better, as manifestations of the blissful Mother of the universe (pp.94-95). Apart from these two preconditions of giving up lust for the flesh and greed for money, Sri Ramakrishna also emphasized upon looking at others as manifestations of the divinity. He would say, "Can God be worshipped only through images made of metal, wood or other materials! Is not man, a God-made-image, a dwelling place of the divine!" Hence his message

was to serve others with the idea of 'service of God in Man'. He said that this too was an effective way to purify the mind. In fact, a pure mind has nothing to do except to serve others without any selfish motive.

In conclusion, let us reiterate the fact that man cannot be satisfied by material comforts and wealth alone. However we may try to find lasting happiness in the world of enjoyments and possessions, we find happiness eluding us like water seeping out between the fingers of our hand. If we want something everlasting, we have to turn to the Eternal Truth of our being, God Himself. And rightly said Sri Ramakrishna, 'Whosoever has ever wept for God even once, will come to me.' Of course, where else to go to find God than from this divine messenger of 'soul-hunger'!

*The goal of human life is the  
realization of the ultimate  
Reality which alone can give  
man supreme fulfilment  
and everlasting peace*

*This is the essence of all religions*



# निखिल जगत् माता

– स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानंद

अध्यक्ष, रामकृष्ण आश्रम, राजकोट

‘बेटा अमजद, पहले भोजन कर लो, बाकी काम बाद में करना’ श्री माँ सारदा देवी ने पुकारा। माँ का ममतामय आग्रह अमजद कैसे टाल सकता था ? उसे भोजन के लिए बैठना पड़ा। अमजद वैसे तो जयरामबाटी के पास ही के गाँव के मुसलमान डाकुओं में से एक था; परन्तु अब वह श्री माँ का भक्त बन गया था। इन मुसलमान डाकुओं को जब मकान बनाने के लिए रखा गया तब ग्रामवासियों ने भयभीत होकर इसका विरोध किया था; किन्तु तत्पश्चात् डाकुओं के स्वभाव में परिवर्तन देखकर उन्हें आश्चर्य हुआ और कहने लगे, ‘देखो तो, माँ के स्नेह-सिंचित जादू से डाकू भी भक्त बन गये।’

अमजद मकान का निर्माण कार्य छोड़कर भोजन करने बैठा। श्री माँ की भतीजी नलिनी दीदी परोसने लगीं। यह बात आज से लगभग अनेक वर्षों पूर्व की है, जब जाति-प्रथा के बन्धन बहुत ही सख्त थे। उस पर भी जयरामबाटी बंगाल का एक गांव तथा श्री माँ एक ब्राह्मण परिवार की विधवा। नलिनी दीदी जैसे दूर से खाना फेंक रही हों-इसी प्रकार अमजद को परोसने लगीं। यह देखकर श्री माँ ने कहा, ‘‘इस प्रकार परोसने से क्या किसी का पेट भर सकता है ? ला, मैं ही परोस देती हूँ।’’ इतना कहकर वे स्वयं परोसने लगीं और अमजद से कहा, ‘‘बेटा अमजद, पेट भरकर भोजन करना। भोजन पूरा होते ही माँ ने स्वयं ही जूठा स्थान साफ किया। यह देखकर नलिनी दीदी चिल्लाने लगी, ‘‘ओ फूफी, तुम्हारी जात गयी।’’ श्री माँ ने उलाहने भरे स्वर में कहा, ‘‘चुप रह, जिस

तरह शर्त् मेरा बेटा है, वैसे ही अमजद भी मेरा बेटा है।’’ श्री माँ के मातृहृदय के लिए श्री रामकृष्णदेव के अन्तरंग पार्षद तथा रामकृष्ण मिशन के प्रथम जनरल सेक्रेटरी शर्त् महाराज (स्वामी सारदानन्द) और एक मुसलमान डाकू अमजद एक बन गये।

१९१८ ई. ! श्री माँ दक्षिण भारत की तीर्थ-यात्रा करते हुए बंगलोर पधारी हैं। अनेक भक्त उनके दर्शन को आ रहे हैं। एक छोटी जाति का बालक भी श्री माँ के स्नेह-पाश में बंधकर हर रोज उनके पास आता है। उच्चकुल के भक्तों को यह पसन्द नहीं। किन्तु क्या करें ? श्री माँ मन में सबकुछ समझती हैं-किन्तु उनके लिए तो सभी बराबर हैं। एक बार भक्तों ने इच्छा व्यक्त की कि वे माँ के साथ बैठकर भोजन प्रसाद ग्रहण करना चाहते हैं। माँ ने इस अवसर का लाभ लेकर शर्त् रखी कि, अगर उस हरिजन लड़के के साथ भोजन लेने के लिए तैयार हो तो, मैं स्वीकारूँ। भक्तों को लाचार होकर शर्त् स्वीकारनी पड़ी। माँ ने सहर्ष उस हरिजन लड़के को बुला भेजा और उसके हाथ से ही भोजन परोसवाया।

उस जमाने में (गांधीजी ने हरिजनों के उद्धार का कार्यक्रम शुरू किया उसके बहुत समय पूर्व) यह एक अत्यन्त क्रांति कारी कदम था। श्री माँ इसी तरह किसी प्रकार के आडंबर रहित जाति-प्रथा को मिटाती थी। श्री माँ के मातृहृदय के पास ये जाति आदि के बन्धन स्वयमेव दूर हो जाते।

श्री माँ उद्धोधन भवन में निवास कर रही थीं। उनकी अस्वस्थता के कारण उस समय किसी को भी उनके दर्शन की अनुमति न थी। एक दिन एक पारसी युवक ने श्री माँ के दर्शन की जिद की। शरत् महाराज राजी नहीं थे। तब तक तो श्री माँ ने ऊपर से कहलवाया, “नीचे आये हुए व्यक्ति को ऊपर आने दो” अब क्या हो ? शरत् महाराज ने लाचार होकर युवक को ऊपर जाने दिया। कुछ देर बाद यह युवक प्रसन्नतापूर्वक नीचे उतरा। श्री माँ ने उसे केवल दर्शन ही नहीं दिया अपितु, मन्त्र दीक्षा भी प्रदान की। शरत् महाराज ने कहा, “माँ की इच्छा एक पारसी को शिष्य बनाने की हुई तब मैं रोकने वाला कौन होता हूँ?” यह पारसी युवक ही प्रसिद्ध फिल्म अभिनेता-निर्देशक सोहराब मोदी थे।

स्वामी विवेकानन्द जब विदेश से वापस आये तब अपने साथ भारत के लिए एक अमूल्य भेंट लाये थे - उनकी शिष्या भगिनी निवेदिता। अन्य कई विदेशी महिलाएँ भी साथ थीं - ओली बुल, मिस मैक्लाउड, आदि। स्वामी जी को चिन्ता थी कि रुढ़िवादी समाज में पालन-पोषण प्राप्त की हुई श्री माँ उन्हें स्वीकारेंगी कि नहीं, परन्तु प्रथम मुलाकात में ही श्री माँ ने उन्हें अपने स्नेहपाश में बांधकर अपना बना लिया। भगिनी निवेदिता ने श्री माँ के स्नेह का स्मरण कर अपने पत्र (११ दिसंबर, १९१०, में लिखा था- “माँ, माता, कैसा स्नेह छलकाती हैं आप ! और आपका यह स्नेह हमारे स्नेह की तरह न तो उच्छृंखल ही है और न ही उग्र। यह कोई पार्थिव प्रेम नहीं अपितु, एक सौम्य शांति है। सबका कल्याण करती, किसी का भी अमंगल न चाहने वाली, लीलामय स्वर्णिम आभा।

एक युवक जयरामवाटी में अक्सर आया

करता था। किन्हीं कारणवश वह चरित्र-भ्रष्ट हो गया। दूसरे भक्तों ने विनती की कि, अब उस युवक को अपने पास न आने दें। माँ ने करुणस्वर में कहा, “मैं माँ होकर सन्तान को मिलने से इन्कार कैसे कर सकती हूँ ?” श्री माँ कहतीं, “मेरी सन्तान अगर कीचड़ से सनी हो या उसे धूल चिपक गयी हो - तो उसे साफ करके अपनी गोद में लेने की जिम्मेदारी क्या मेरी नहीं ?” श्री माँ थीं पापी-तापी दुष्टों की भी माँ !

श्री माँ की माता जो श्यामासुन्दरी देवी ने एक बार खेदपूर्वक कहा था, “दामाद मिला भी तो ऐसा कि संसार करेगा नहीं और मेरी सारदा को सन्तान का सुख भी नहीं मिलेगा।” श्रीरामकृष्ण देव ने उन्हें कहा था, “आप चिन्ता न करें माँ, बाद में आपकी बेटी को इतने सारे लोग माँ- माँ कहकर बुलायेंगे कि वह हैरान हो जायगी।” सचमुच, कितने ही लोग माँ के जीवन-काल के दौरान उनके पास आकर्षित होकर आये ! और उनकी महासमाधि के बाद, खासकर उनकी जन्मशताब्दी (१२५३) के बाद तो माँ-माँ की पुकार चारों तरफ बढ़ ही रही है। लगता है निखिल विश्व के लोगों पर श्री माँ के मातृहृदय का जादुई असर फैल रहा है। ‘माँ-माँ’ की पुकार करने वालों में भारत के लोग हैं विदेश के भी हैं, साधु-सज्जन हैं, दुर्जन भी हैं, गरीब-दुःखी हैं, श्रीमंत हैं, उच्च जाति के हैं, नीच जाति के हैं, हिन्दू हैं, मुसलमान, पारसी, ईसाई हैं। अनगिनत लोग किस तरह मातृहृदय के स्नेहपाश में बंध रहे हैं। उसका अन्दाज लगाना मुश्किल है।

२० जनवरी, १९८७। रामकृष्ण मठ और मिशन के मुख्य केन्द्र बेलुड़ मठ का दर्शन करने के लिए रूस के विद्वान तथा वैज्ञानिक आये हुए हैं। उनमें

एक प्रसिद्ध विद्वान हैं डॉ. आर खिवेकोव । सभी विद्वान बेलुड मठ के विभिन्न स्थानों का परिदर्शन कर रहे हैं, परन्तु खिवेकोव तो पहुँच गये हैं श्री माँ सारदा देवी के मंदिर में । उन्हें वहीं पर अधिक समय बिताने में आनंद आता है। वे श्री रामकृष्ण के बारे में रूसी भाषा में एक वृहद् ग्रन्थ लिखने का विचार कर रहे हैं। किन्तु, उसका प्रारम्भ श्री माँ सारदा देवी से करना चाहते हैं। इसका कारण पूछने पर उन्होंने बताया था, “मैं श्री रामकृष्ण के बारे में लिखे जाने वाले ग्रन्थ का प्रारंभ श्री माँ सारदा देवी से करना चाहता हूँ क्योंकि वे वर्तमान जगत् के लिए श्री रामकृष्ण देव की श्रेष्ठ भेंट हैं । वे एक साधारण भारतीय ग्रामीण बालिका थीं परन्तु श्री रामकृष्ण ने उन्हें एक असाधारण विराट व्यक्तित्व में रूपांतरित किया है। मेरे लिए वे भारत वर्ष के प्रतीक के रूप में हैं। देवी होते हुए भी वे मानवीं थीं, साधारण नारी होते हुए भी वे महान संत साधिका थीं, उनके प्रति मेरा अनन्य आकर्षण है।

रामकृष्ण मठ के हॉलीवुड केंद्र में एक दिन एक अमेरिकन महिला आयी। वहाँ दीवाल पर टंगे श्री माँ सारदा देवी के चित्र को देखते-देखते रोने लगी । वहाँ के स्वामी जी द्वारा आश्चर्य से रोने का कारण पूछने पर उन्होंने बताया “इसी की खोज में तो मैं दूर अमेरिका में घूम रही हूँ। मैं उनका नाम नहीं जानती, परन्तु वो अक्सर मुझे दर्शन देती हैं, और अपनी संतानों से मिलने के लिए कहती हैं। क्या जादू है उनके इन दो नयनों में ! ओह, कैसा आनन्द होता है, मैं इसका वर्णन नहीं कर सकती ।

बांग्लादेश की बात है। रामकृष्ण मिशन के कई संन्यासी राहत कार्य के लिए भारत से वहाँ गये हैं। ढाका से जशोहर जाते समय उन्होंने एक चाय की दुकान के पास जीप रुकवाई । दुकानदार मुसलमान

था। चाय पीते-पीते संन्यासियों ने आश्चर्यपूर्वक देखा कि दुकान में श्री माँ सारदा देवी की छवि टंगी हुई है, अन्य कोई छवि नहीं । संन्यासियों ने दुकानदार से पूछा यह किसकी छवि है, जानते हो ? “ दुकानदार ने कहा, “ना । “तो फिर यह छवि यहाँ क्यों रखते हो ? उसके जवाब में दुकानदार ने कहा, “मैं जब चार वर्ष का था तब मेरी माँ गुजर गयी। बड़े होने पर दूसरों को मातृस्नेह मिलता देखकर मन में दुःख होता अकेले-अकेले ही रोता । कल्पना में मैं अपनी माँ की मूर्ति का निर्माण करता फिर स्वप्न में इसी मूर्ति को देखता । एक दिन अचानक एक कैलेंडर मिला उसमें यह छवि देखकर ऐसा लगा “यही तो है मेरी स्वप्न में देखी हुई माँ । दूसरे ही दिन छवि को मढ़ा दिया ।

उसे देखकर ही मेरी आत्मा को शीतलता मिलती है । मैं नहीं जानता कि किसकी है यह छवि ?

मैं इतना ही जनता हूँ कि यही हैं मेरी खोई हुई माँ । इतना कहते ही उसके नेत्रों से आँसू छलक पड़े ।

बहुत पहले की बात है, रामकृष्ण मिशन के पुस्तक विक्रय केंद्र में सुबह ११ बजे एक रिक्शा वाला एक बांग्ला पुस्तक खरीदने आया किन्तु पुस्तक का नाम वह जानता नहीं था । वह केवल इतना ही बोलता “थोड़ी देर पहले ही एक बहन यह पुस्तक खरीद कर गयी हैं उनके पास यह देखा है पुस्तक के मुख पृष्ठ पर एक नारी का फोटो है । उसे ‘शतरूपे सारदा’ नामक पुस्तक दिखाई गयी तो वह बोल उठा हाँ-हाँ यही है वो पुस्तक । मुझे खरीदनी है । परन्तु जब उसे पता चला की पुस्तक की कीमत ज्यादा है तो वह निराश हो गया क्योंकि उसके पास १० रुपये ही थे । विक्रय केंद्र के संन्यासी ने पूछा कि

आपको पढ़ना आता है ?

रिक्षे वाले ने कहा नहीं बाबाजी ! मेरा बेटा दसवीं कक्षा में पढ़ता है वह मुझे पढ़कर सुना देगा ।

संन्यासी ने पूछा, “आपको पता है कि यह पुस्तक किसके बारे में है और फोटो किनकी है ?”

रिक्षावाले ने कहा, “नहीं बाबू जी, मैं कुछ नहीं जानता । उस बहनजी को रिक्शा में ले जा रहा था तब यह पुस्तक देखी थी । पुस्तक के ऊपर का फोटो देखने के बाद मेरा मन आकुल-व्याकुल हो गया है। फोटो देखकर लगा, जैसे यह मेरी माँ की तस्वीर है। मेरे बचपन में ही मेरी माँ चल बसी थी इसलिए पता नहीं कि मेरी माँ देखने में कैसी थी । किन्तु यह फोटो देखकर लगा जैसे मेरी माँ ही हैं। इसलिए उस बहनजी को पहुंचाकर तुरंत यह पुस्तक खरीदने यहाँ आया किन्तु मेरे पास तो मात्र दस रुपये ही हैं।

ऐसा कहते ही वह रो पड़ा । संन्यासी ने उसे कहा, “चिंता न करो । तुम्हें यह पुस्तक उपहार के रूप में दे रहा हूँ । इसकी कोई कीमत नहीं देनी पड़ेगी ।

परन्तु रिक्शेवाले ने मुफ्त में पुस्तक लेने से इन्कार किया। अपनी तरफ के दस रुपए देकर पुस्तक तथा संन्यासी का दिया श्री माँ का फोटो लेकर वह आनन्दपूर्वक चला गया ।

इस प्रकार न जाने कितने लोगों को श्री माँ अपनी तरफ आकर्षित कर रही हैं इसका अन्दाज लगाना मुश्किल है। देश के विभिन्न प्रांतों में तथा विदेशों में – बांग्लादेश, जापान, जर्मनी, इंग्लैंड , फ्रान्स, स्विट्जरलैंड, पोलैंड, कनाडा, अमेरिका,

अफ्रीका, रशिया, आदि देशों में भी श्री माँ का मातृस्नेह बरस रहा है। ऊँच-नीच, गरीब अमीर, सज्जन-दुर्जन, शिक्षित-अशिक्षित, हिंदू-मुसलमान ईसाई, पारसी सब पर समान रूप में बरस रहा है निखिल जगत की माता का यह मातृ-स्नेह । श्री माँ का यह अद्भुत मातृत्व जाति आदि के भेदभाव स्वयमेव दूर कर देता है। कौमी एकता, राष्ट्रीय एकता का तथा विश्व-बन्धुत्व का मार्ग स्वयं प्रशस्त कर देता है।

श्री माँ ने कहा था, “ईश्वर के मातृत्व भाव के प्रचार के लिए ही रामकृष्ण मुझे छोड़ गये हैं ।” श्री माँ ने स्वीकारा है, “मैं सब की माँ हूँ, असत् की भी माँ हूँ, पशुपक्षी की भी ।

एक अन्य प्रसंग में एक भक्त को उन्होंने कहा था, “मैं मात्र कहने के लिए ही माँ नहीं, सिर्फ गुरुपत्नी नहीं, सौतेली माँ नहीं, तुम्हारी अपनी सच्ची माँ हूँ।” रामकृष्ण मठ तथा मिशन के छोटे परमाध्यक्ष स्वामी विरजानन्द जी महाराज श्री माँ के बारे में कहते – “मेरी जन्मजन्मान्तर की माँ ! श्री माँ अभय प्रदान करती हुई कहती हैं- “जब तुम विपत्ति में हो, दुःख में हो तब, बस इतना याद रखना कि तुम्हारी एक माँ है।” श्री माँ की सन्तानों के पास बस एक ही अपेक्षा है कि सन्तान उन्हें याद रखें, माँ माँ कहकर बुलाएँ । श्री माँ से हमारी यह आन्तरिक प्रार्थना है “माँ, तुम्हारी तो हमारे पास बस एक ही अपेक्षा है कि हम तुम्हें याद रखें, तुम्हें पुकारें, परन्तु माँ ! इतना भी हम नहीं कर पाते। अबोध शिशु को माँ ही माँ-माँ कहना सिखाती है न ! माँ, तुम्हीं हमें माँ माँ कहना सिखा दो ।”



# Reminiscences of Swamiji

— Srimad Ram Maharaj

*(Translated from the original Bengali, first published in the book  
Swamijir Smriti-Sanchayan (সামিজির স্মৃতি-সংচয়ন) by Swami Nirlepananda,  
published by Karuna Prakashani in 1967)*

*[Almora's Ram Maharaj was deeply influenced by Swamiji. He remained a lifelong Naisthika Brahmachari and did not take Sannyasa. He was initiated by Swami Brahmananda. His younger brother, Swami Shyamananda, founded the Rangoon Sevashrama. He says—]*

Our home was in a small lane near Chaitanya Library on Beadon Street, Kolkata. I used to work in a tailor shop of the Banerjee Mallik's during that time. The shop was then (1899) on the opposite footpath of Beadon Garden on Chitpur Road. The epidemic of plague had struck the city for the first time then. Following Swamiji's direction, the monastic workers of Belur Math took up the task of cleaning the city's garbage. Nivedita too was among them.

As per the prevalent custom of chanting the name of the Lord at times of crises all around the country, the citizens of Kolkata too took up to performing *harinam kirtan* in every neighbourhood. I used to love the name of God. After finishing work at the shop, I would join the chanting of the Lord's name with other people. One day I became engrossed in a particular line of a song - "So what if the heart be rigid like a stone, O Lord, your name will melt it". The song had another line - 'Whether anything is accomplished or not, may you be pleased by my taking your name'—and so on.

During that time, due to the awakening of my religious feelings, relatives would come and ask various questions. It would irritate me much. Ultimately, the situation forced me to observe silence. Swamiji's was a household name by that time. My elder brother (Apurba Dutta, a bachelor lawyer), thought it best to take me to him to help decide my course of action. My brother further knew that some young men from respectable families were living as monks under Swamiji at Belur Math. It was therefore expected to get sound advice from him regarding this matter.

At first, the two of us went to Bagbazar to find Swamiji at Balaram Babu's house. Upon arrival, we were told he was at Belur. The previous year, I had gone to see the birthday celebrations of Paramahansa Dev (Sri Ramakrishna) at Belur. It was a huge gathering. Swamiji was very well known at that time. Everyone was eager to see him. That was the first time I saw him. He was wearing a white full-sleeve shirt, holding a playful hookah, and chewing a *paan*.

Eager to gain spiritual insight, the next time I went to Belur with my brother, I was observing a vow of silence. I wrote to Swamiji on a slate — 'If you wish, I am ready to speak.'

He asked me to speak. I expressed all my thoughts. He inquired— 'Do you know anyone here?'

I replied, 'Yes, Kanai and Nandalal, we studied together.' He said, 'Kanai is now in Madras. And look, occasional sadhana will not suffice; it must be pursued with steadfastness. A little bhava, a fleeting state of ecstasy—these things, even the Americans experience.'

He asked whether I eat fish or meat. I said, "I've given up meat. I eat fish."

To that, he said— 'Don't eat meat.' Since then, I have not eaten it.

We had the good fortune to have him as a customer in our shop once. He had ordered a thin flannel shirt. We delayed in delivering it. One day he himself came over in a horse carriage (perhaps after completing some other work). He sat in the carriage. And his attendant Nadu came to inform us. We rushed to him with the shirt. We were very apprehensive. He, however, spoke very sweetly— 'Is it done, my son?'

I've sometimes seen him traveling on the road in a carriage. The moment he would see me—he would

raise his hand and inquire about my well-being. Occasionally, during this period, I would go to Belur on Saturdays and spend the Sundays there. Likewise, I went there once. He was about to start milking a goat. Forthrightly he said—'Keb!\*' hold the goat, I will milk it. He started milking, just as one pumps. He had addressed me as 'Keb!' He spontaneously remarked—it's just a name, like Vivekananda—it's just a name. Now it seems he said that to make sure I wouldn't feel disheartened.

Two boys from Salkiya - a village near Belur, used to come to Swamiji; they were students then. The group those boys were part of, had popularised a song. On hearing the song, Swamiji was much pleased. The song was composed by Devendra Majumdar—

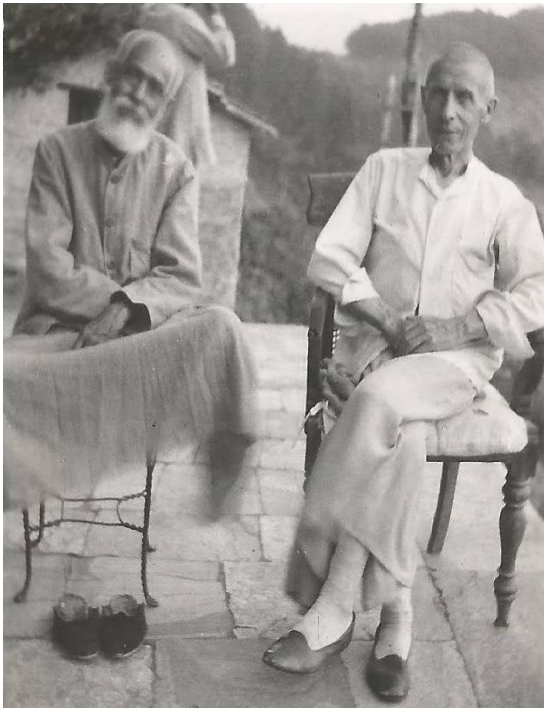
*'I am sitting graciously  
in the open for you all,  
A new man has arrived,  
come, if you want to see'*

Later, when Swamiji returned from his second visit to the West, I continued to visit him till the very end. One day some people asked him— 'Sir, what is our duty?'

He replied, 'It is best to do nothing. However, since one cannot do that, it is better to work for a noble cause' On another occasion, I had gone to Belur. It was drizzling. He said—'Son, can you go to the market once?' - 'Yes, sir'

Then he called the pantry man and said – 'He will go. Give him the list.' He sent me for some bitter gourds and two or three other vegetables. Hari Thakur used to do the cooking during that time. Swamiji, after being seated for the meal, learned that the said dish had not been prepared as per his instruction with the vegetables he had asked for. He said in a grave voice— "I asked the gentleman's son to fetch the items, and you did not cook?" – At his words, all noise ceased immediately. Everything fell silent.

*\*Kebla is a Bengali slang which roughly translates to 'fool'.*



**Ram Maharaj with Swami Atulananda  
(Gurudas Maharaj) at  
Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora**



**Atul Krishna Datta (Ram Maharaj)** was born in Kolkata in 1871. In 1903, he joined the Ramakrishna Order at Belur Math. Due to the presence of multiple individuals named 'Atul' at the Math, Swami Premananda (Baburam Maharaj) affectionately renamed him 'Ram.' On August 8, 1915, he was sent to Almora, where he assisted Swami Turiyananda in constructing the Ramakrishna Kutir, which was officially established on May 22, 1916. After Swami Turiyananda's departure in December 1916, Ram Maharaj took charge of the Ashrama, a responsibility he faithfully fulfilled for thirty years. Known for his extreme austerity, he spent most of his monastic life at the Almora Ashrama, where his devotion and sweet temperament left a lasting impression. Ram Maharaj passed away in Varanasi on December 18, 1947, journeying to the Ramakrishna Loka at the age of 76.

# स्वामी विवेकानन्द की कुमारी पूजा और रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा में यशोदा माई द्वारा पूजित माँ दुर्गा का चित्र

—स्वामी ध्रुवेशानन्द

अध्यक्ष, रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा

\*विवेक ज्योति, अक्टूबर 2023, से साभार

दुर्गापूजा सनातन हिन्दू धर्म की एक प्राचीन परम्परा है। परम्परानुसार भारत के एक-एक क्षेत्र में किसी एक विशेष देवता की पूजा में व्यापक रूप से एक बड़ी जनसंख्या की भागीदारी देखी जाती है। वैसे तो पृथ्वी के कई देशों में अब दुर्गापूजा मनाई जाती है, किन्तु विशेष रूप से इस पूजा में लोगों की भागीदारी सबसे अधिक भारत के पश्चिम बंगाल और बांग्लादेश में होती है। इन दोनों बंगाल की जनता वर्ष भर प्रतीक्षा करती रहती है कि माँ दुर्गा पुनः कब आएंगी! स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने स्वयं रामकृष्ण मठ-मिशन में दुर्गापूजा प्रारम्भ की थी। मठ-मिशन की दुर्गापूजा में लम्बे समय से कुमारी - पूजा की संयुक्ति हो चुकी है।

यह भी सनातन धर्म की एक और प्राचीन परम्परा है। जम्मू के वैष्णोदेवी मन्दिर में आज भी प्रतिदिन तीन बालिकाओं की मातृभाव से कुमारी-पूजा की जाती है। मठ-मिशन के प्रारम्भ में भी स्वामीजी ने वराहनगर

के उस भग्न भवन में पट में दुर्गापूजा की थी और बेलूड़ में प्रथम प्रतिमा में दुर्गापूजा के समय स्वामीजी की उपस्थिति में ही कुमारी पूजा हुई थी। स्वामीजी ने परिव्राजक जीवन में भी स्वयं ही कई बार कुमारी-पूजा की थी।



वर्ष १९०१, बेलूड़ मठ में स्वामीजी ने एक दिन अचानक राजा महाराज को बुला कर कहा - चलो हमलोग दुर्गा-पूजा करते हैं। आश्चर्य की बात यह है कि उससे कुछ दिन पहले ही राजा महाराज ने स्वप्न देखा था कि 'माँ दुर्गा आ रही हैं! उसके बाद से ही राजा महाराज के मन में आया था - कुछ दिनों बाद माँ आ रही हैं, दुर्गापूजा करने से कैसा रहेगा ? किन्तु

खुलकर यह बात बोल न सके। कारण कि इतना रुपया-पैसा कहाँ, कौन करेगा इतनी व्यवस्था ? तभी तो, जब स्वामीजी ने ऐसा कहा, तो राजा महाराज भी काफी प्रसन्न हुए। इसके बाद बाबू राम

महाराज को बुलाया गया। उन्होंने कहा, पूजा तो आ रही है, किन्तु इस समय मूर्ति कहाँ से मिलेगी? स्वामीजी ने कहा, ढूँढ़कर देखो, अवश्य मिलेगी। बाबूराम महाराज चिन्तित हो गए, कैसे इतनी बड़ी दुर्गा-पूजा होगी, इतने कम समय में कैसे यह सब आयोजन करना सम्भव होगा ?

कुम्हार टोली में प्रतिमा खोजने के लिए लोग भेजे गए। वहाँ उन्हें एक मूर्ति मिली, वह भी एक संयोग ही था। जिस व्यक्ति ने मूर्ति बनवाई थी, वह लेने नहीं आया। इतना ही नहीं, उसने ऑर्डर के बाद भी कोई सम्पर्क ही नहीं किया। शिल्पकार ने कहा, इसीलिए मूर्ति पड़ी हुई है, आप लोग इसे ले जा सकते हैं। तब उसे ही बेलूड़ मठ में लाया गया था। स्वामी निर्भयानन्द आदि संन्यासियों ने कृष्णलाल व अन्यान्य ब्रह्मचारियों के साथ नौका पर प्रतिमा लायी।

स्वामीजी ने अपने प्रिय बिल्ववृक्ष के नीचे बैठकर देवी का आह्वान 'गिरि गणेश आमार शुभकारी गान गाकर किया था। उस पूजा में समस्त उपकरणों का संग्रह स्वयं स्वामी ब्रह्मानन्द जी ने किया था। ब्रह्मचारी कृष्णलाल थे पूजक व स्वामी रामकृष्णानन्द जी के पितृदेव श्रीयुत् ईश्वरचन्द्र भट्टाचार्य महाशय थे तंत्रधारक। बेलूड़ मठ में इस प्रकार से प्रथम दुर्गा-पूजा आरम्भ हुई।

उस समय बेलूड़ मठ अथवा रामकृष्ण मिशन के पास इतना रुपया-पैसा नहीं था। स्वामीजी की समाधि के पश्चात् तीन-चार वर्ष और पूजा हुई थी। किन्तु इसके बाद तीन-चार वर्ष कई कारणों से पूजा नहीं हो सकी। किन्तु घट (कलश) में पूजा प्रतिवर्ष ही हुई थी। तीन-चार वर्ष के बाद पुनः प्रतिमा में उसी प्रकार से पूजा प्रारम्भ हुई, जो आज भी



बेलूड़ मठ में कुमारी पूजा

अनवरत चल रही है। केवल बेलूड़ मठ में ही नहीं, अपितु मठ-मिशन के अनेक केन्द्रों में भी अब दुर्गापूजा हो रही है। उस समय राजा महाराज जहाँ भी जाते थे, विशेषकर जिस जगह पर वह पूजा के समय रहते थे, वहाँ दुर्गापूजा करने की चेष्टा करते थे। वे जब हरिद्वार आये थे, तब वहाँ दुर्गापूजा की। जब वे पूजा के समय चेन्नई में थे, तो वहाँ भी उन्होंने दुर्गापूजा की थी। चेन्नई एवं हरिद्वार में दुर्गापूजा (मूर्ति में) कुछ वर्षों से बन्द हो चुकी है।

बांग्लादेश में प्रायः सभी केन्द्रों में दुर्गापूजा होती है। भारत के पश्चिम बंगाल में रामकृष्ण संघ के अनेक केन्द्रों में दुर्गापूजा होती है। बंगाल के बाहर वाराणसी, मुम्बई, लखनऊ, पटना तथा अनेक केन्द्रों में कई वर्षों से दुर्गापूजा होती चली आ रही है। रामकृष्ण मठ-मिशन में दुर्गापूजा में सर्वत्र ही माँ सारदा के नाम से संकल्प होता है। माँ सारदा की माँ ने जयरामवाटी में जगद्धात्री पूजा प्रारम्भ की थी। आज भी प्रतिवर्ष उनकी पूजा होती है। मठ-मिशन के अनेक केन्द्रों में शक्तिरूप में इसीलिये जगद्धात्री पूजा की जाती है। जयरामवाटी एवं कामारपुकुर में भी दुर्गापूजा प्रतिवर्ष होती है। दुर्गापूजा के साथ ही साथ अब अनेक केन्द्रों में कुमारी-पूजा भी होती है। सामान्यतः किसी ब्राह्मण परिवार की कन्या ६-७ वर्ष की कुमारी को जगन्माता का रूप मानकर उसकी पूजा की जाती है।

बेलूड़ मठ की प्रतिष्ठा के पूर्व विभिन्न समय में जब स्वामीजी भारत भ्रमण कर रहे थे, तब उन्होंने कई बार कुमारी-पूजा की थी। ऐसी दो तीन घटनाएँ विभिन्न स्रोतों से विशेष रूप से ज्ञात होती हैं, जैसे एक बार गाजीपुर में, एक बार कश्मीर में और एक बार कन्याकुमारी में उन्होंने कुमारी पूजा की थी। कश्मीर में

जिस बजरा अथवा नौका में वे थे, उसी के माझी की बेटी को स्वामीजी ने दूर से ही मातृरूपा देखा था। उनके मन में एक विशेष भाव उत्पन्न हुआ। उन्होंने कहा – मैं इस कन्या की कुमारी-पूजा करूँगा। उनके साथ निवेदिता और कुछ अन्य लोग भी थे। उपस्थित सभी लोगों ने कहा ठीक है, ऐसा किया जा सकता है। किन्तु, स्वामीजी जब बाहर आए, तब वहाँ उपस्थित स्थानीय ब्राह्मणों ने कहा – आप इसकी कुमारी पूजा कैसे करेंगे? यह तो मुसलमान लड़की है! स्वामीजी ने कहा, उससे क्या होता है? मैं तो एक संन्यासी हूँ, मेरे पास कोई जाति-भेद भी नहीं है और प्रत्येक नारी या नारी-जाति में माँ दुर्गा हैं। इसके पश्चात् उस कन्या को क्षीर भवानी माता के मन्दिर में ले जाकर स्वामीजी ने कुमारीपूजा की। ठाकुर श्रीरामकृष्ण देव ने भी कुमारी-पूजा की थी। रामकृष्ण-मठ-मिशन में जहाँ भी शक्ति-पूजा होती है, साधारणतः एक दिन, विशेष रूप से अष्टमी अथवा नवमी को वहाँ कुमारी-पूजा अनुष्ठित होती है।

सन् १८९० की जनवरी के अन्त या फरवरी के प्रारम्भ में गाजीपुर में स्वामीजी ने जिस कुमारी का पूजन किया था, उसके साथ एक साध्वी का पूत जीवन और अल्मोड़ा स्थित रामकृष्ण कुटीर में पूजिता माँ दुर्गा के पट के साथ एक ऐतिहासिक सम्बन्ध है। जनवरी, १८९० के अन्त में उत्तर भारत की यात्रा के उद्देश्य से स्वामीजी गाजीपुर पहुँचे। उन्होंने अपने बालसखा सतीशचन्द्र मुखोपाध्याय के घर पर आतिथ्य ग्रहण किया। मणिका के पिता श्रीमान् गगनचन्द्र राय गाजीपुर के एक स्वनामधन्य प्रवासी बंगाली थे। गाजीपुर में धर्म और सांस्कृतिक जगत् के क्षेत्र में उनकी काफी प्रसिद्धि थी। गगनचन्द्रजी के घर पर बीच-बीच में धार्मिक चर्चाओं का आयोजन होता था और उन सभाओं में साधु-संत और विशिष्ट

जन निमंत्रित किए जाते थे। स्वामीजी के आगमन की बात सुनकर गगनचन्द्र एक दिन आग्रहपूर्वक और यथोचित आदर के साथ उनको अपने घर पर ले गए। उस दिन गगन बाबू के घर की सभा में जो लोग उपस्थित थे, वे हमेशा की तरह वीर संन्यासी विवेकानन्द के अनलवर्षी भाषण और सुमधुर संगीत से अभिभूत हुए थे। सभा के अन्त में स्वामीजी ने अचानक गगनचन्द्र की नौ वर्षीय बेटी को देखा।

स्निग्धकान्तिवाली उस कन्या का सौन्दर्य असाधारण उज्ज्वल था और उसकी तिरछी आँखें अत्यधिक दीप्तिमय थीं। गगनचन्द्र ने देखा, स्वामीजी एकदृष्ट होकर उनकी कन्या को देख रहे हैं। आनन्द से अभिभूत होकर गगन बाबू आगे आकर बोले – स्वामीजी यह हमारी बेटी मणिका है। आप इसे आशीर्वाद प्रदान करें।

स्वामीजी ने कहा – 'इस कन्या को मैंने बहुत पहले ही आशीर्वाद दे दिया है। अब मैं इसे मातृरूप में पूजा करना चाहता हूँ। गगनचन्द्र आश्चर्य और हर्ष से व्याकुल हो उठे। स्वामीजी मुस्कराए और बोले – 'तुम्हारी बेटी अत्यन्त विशुद्धसत्त्व है अर्थात् बड़ी ही पवित्र है। उसे देखते ही मैंने जगन्माता मानकर उसकी पूजा करने का संकल्प किया है। आप पूजा का आयोजन करें।' दूसरे दिन ही आनन्दित गगनचन्द्र ने अपने घर पर कुमारी-पूजा का आयोजन किया। स्वयं स्वामी विवेकानन्द के द्वारा कुमारी मणिका जगन्माता के रूप में पूजित हुई। पूजा के अन्त में स्वामीजी उस दिन आन्तरिक शान्ति में गहरे ध्यान में लीन थे। उस दिन की पूजा ने मणिका के अन्तर्मन को कितना प्रकाशित किया था, इसका अनुमान हम नहीं लगा सकते। परन्तु नौवें वर्ष की वह बालिका मणिका, जिसे स्वामीजी ने पूजित किया था, आगे

चलकर बनी और उनके सान्निध्य में अन्य बहुत-से लोग अध्यात्म के प्रकाश से प्रकाशित हुए। श्रीयुत गगनचन्द्र राय की कन्या मणिका शैशव काल से ही अत्यन्त ही सरल और भक्तिमती थी। मणिका यथासमय विवाह के योग्य हुई। उसका विवाह श्री ज्ञानेन्द्रनाथ चक्रवर्ती से हुआ। वह कुमारी मणिका से श्रीमती मणिका देवी (१८८२-१९४४) हो गयी। उनके पति राय बहादुर श्री ज्ञानेन्द्रनाथ चक्रवर्ती बाद में सन् १९२० में लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय के प्रथम कुलपति नियुक्त हुए। शांडिल्य गोत्रीय यह चक्रवर्ती ब्राह्मण-परिवार काफी धनी था और तत्कालीन बनारस शहर में उनका तीन मंजिला मकान था। निष्ठवान ब्राह्मण परिवार की संतान होने के बावजूद भी ज्ञानेन्द्र की शिक्षा बनारस के मिशनरी स्कूल, कलकत्ता विश्वविद्यालय एवं प्रयागराज की म्यूर सेंट्रल कॉलेज (Muir Central College) में हुई थी, जहाँ से उन्होंने एम.ए. और एल.एल. बी. की डिग्री प्राप्त की थी। उन्होंने प्रथमतः बरेली कॉलेज में, फिर क्रमशः इलाहाबाद की म्यूर कॉलेज में एवं तत्पश्चात् इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय में गणित का अध्यापन किया था।

उन्होंने कोर्ट में वकालत भी किया था। अंग्रेजी रहन-सहन में पले-बढ़े होने के बावजूद भी उन्हें अपने धर्म और शास्त्रीय ग्रंथों का पांडित्यपूर्ण ज्ञान था। वे पूरी निष्ठा के साथ अपने 'धर्मानुसार आचरण-अनुष्ठान करते थे, जिससे अंग्रेज और भारतीय सभी उनका समान भाव से आदर करते थे। वह प्रतिदिन प्रातः ३.०० बजे से लेकर ६.०० बजे तक नियमित रूप से जपध्यान करते थे। लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति होने बाद अधिकांश समय वे लोग लखनऊ में ही रहते थे। मणिका देवी उस समय लखनऊ शहर की फर्स्ट लेडी थी। उल्लेखनीय



बात यह है कि सन् १८९३ में एनी बेसेन्ट आदि अन्य लोगों के साथ ज्ञानेन्द्र नाथ चक्रवर्ती भी शिकागो धर्म-महासम्मेलन में भाग लेने गए थे। वहाँ पर वे भी सबके साथ स्वामीजी के विश्व विजयी व्याख्यान को सुनकर मुग्ध हुए थे एवं यह बात उन्होंने मणिका देवी को पत्र लिखकर बतायी थी। मणिका और ज्ञानेन्द्र की चार सन्तान थीं। उन्होंने लगभग चालीस बच्चों को शिक्षा-दीक्षा देकर उनका पालन-पोषण किया। बचपन से ही मणिका सांसारिक व भौतिक जीवन के प्रति उदासीन थी। धार्मिक विचारधारा के पति के सम्पर्क में आने से मणिका का आध्यात्मिक ज्ञान और ईश्वरप्राप्ति की इच्छा दिन-प्रतिदिन तीव्र होती गई। उनका घर ही मानो आश्रम बन गया था। उनके घर पर कई लोग आते थे, जिनमें से एक लखनऊ

विश्वविद्यालय के प्रोफेसर

रोनाल्ड निक्सन (१८९८-१९६०) थे, जिन्होंने बाद में यशोदा माई के शिष्य के रूप में श्रीकृष्ण प्रेम नाम ग्रहण किया और उनकी सेवा में आजीवन स्वयं रहे।

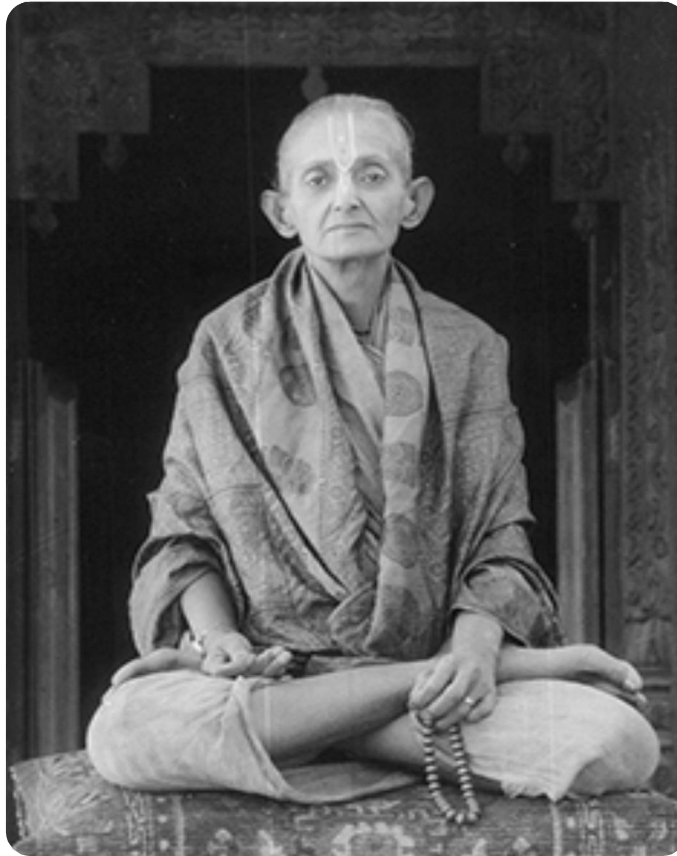
चक्रवर्ती दम्पती की एक कन्या का विवाह तत्कालीन आई.सी.एस. अधिकारी के साथ तय

हुआ था। उन दिनों की प्रथानुसार विवाह के पूर्व लड़कियों को उनके विवाह के विषय में कुछ बताया नहीं जाता था। इसके साथ भी ऐसा ही हुआ। इधर जब कन्या को पता चला कि उसका विवाह ठीक हो गया है, तब उसने कहा कि मैं विवाह नहीं करूँगी। माता-पिता ने कई प्रकार से समझाया, किन्तु वह किसी प्रकार भी राजी नहीं हुई। अन्त में निरुपाय हो चक्रवर्ती बाबू ने अपन किसी सम्बन्धी की कन्या के साथ उन

आई . सी . एस . अधिकारी का विवाह करवा कर प्रतिष्ठा बचायी थी।

मणिका देवी के मन में आध्यात्मिक जीवन यापन करने एवं साधन-भजन कर जीवन काटने की इच्छा सदैव ही थी। दिन के अधिकांश समय में वे साधन-भजन ही करती थीं। एक दिन उन्होंने अपने पति से कहा - मैं अब और अधिक संसार में नहीं रहूँगी।

मैं संसार से दूर जाना चाहती हूँ और शेष जीवन साधन-भजन के द्वारा बिताना चाहती हूँ। स्वाभाविक रूप से चक्रवर्ती बाबू प्रारम्भ में यह चाहते थे कि संसार से अधिक दूर न जाकर वह उनके वाराणसी स्थित घर के ही ऊपर मंजिल पर रहें और स्वेच्छानुसार साधन-भजन करें। प्रयोजनानुसार ऐसी व्यवस्था कर



यशोदा माई

दी जाएगी, जिससे वह स्थान अन्य लोगों की पहुँच से विच्छिन्न हो एवं वहाँ कोई भी उनकी साधना में विघ्न न डाल सके। आश्रम-जीवन के लिए जैसा प्रयोजन हो, वैसी व्यवस्था वहाँ कर दी जाएगी। किन्तु वे अपने सिद्धान्त पर अटल थीं। वे संसार में रहकर साधन-भजन नहीं करेंगी। दिनोदिन उनकी यह इच्छा और मानसिक बल अत्यधिक प्रबल होने लगा। मणिका देवी अपने पति को पुनः संन्यास ग्रहण करने की इच्छा बताई। अन्त में दोनों लोगों की सम्मति से सन् १९२८ में वृन्दावन में गौड़ीय वैष्णव मतानुसार उनकी आनुष्ठानिक संन्यास दीक्षा हुई। श्रीमती मणिका देवी ने अपने मस्तक का मुंडन कर संन्यासी जीवन ग्रहण किया और उनका नाम हुआ श्री यशोदा माई। यह निर्णय लिया गया कि वे वृन्दावन में ही रहेंगी। अब उनकी छोटी-बेटी 'अर्पिता' जो मति रानी के नाम से बाद में अधिक परिचित हुई, उन्होंने कहा कि वह भी माँ के साथ जाएँगी। माँ ने समझाया, पिता ने समझाया, तुम यहीं से साधन-भजन करो। किन्तु वे राजी नहीं हुईं। अन्ततः वे माँ के साथ ही संसार त्यागकर निकल पड़ी प्रारम्भ में वे लोग वृन्दावन में थे। किन्तु वहाँ का गर्म वातावरण यशोदा माई की शारीरिक स्थिति के लिए एकदम ही अनुकूल नहीं था, इसलिये वे लोग अल्मोड़ा चले गए। अल्मोड़ा हिमालय के कुमाँऊ अंचल में समुद्र तल से प्रायः साढ़े पाँच हजार फुट की ऊँचाई पर अवस्थित है। यशोदा माई एवं उनके साथी प्रारम्भ में अल्मोड़ा स्थित रामकृष्ण कुटीर के समीप में थोड़े नीचे जहाँ पर अभी होटल मैनेजमेंट इंस्टिट्यूट बना है, वहाँ पर थे। वह लाला ब्रदीशाह का घर था। उसी घर में एक समय स्वामी तुरीयानन्द जी एवं स्वामी शिवानन्द जी महाराज ने कुछ दिन तपस्या की थी। यशोदा माई के लिए उस घर को भाड़े पर लिया गया। चक्रवर्ती बाबू ने ही यशोदा माई के लिए यह सब व्यवस्था की थी।

उस समय आश्रम का ही एक भक्त परिवार जो वहाँ था, उनमें से एक व्यक्ति का नाम था श्री अनिल अडयी। श्री अनिल अडयी के माता-पिता महापुरुष महाराज से दीक्षित थे एवं वे स्वयं विशुद्धानन्द जी महाराज के द्वारा दीक्षित थे। उनकी पत्नी की दीक्षा स्वामी माधवानन्द जी से हुई थी। इनके भाई-बहन में कई लोग स्वामी वीरेश्वरानन्द जी महाराज से दीक्षित थे।

सन् १९९३ में उनके माता-पिता अल्मोड़ा से महाराज की चिट्ठी लेकर बेलूड़ मठ गए थे एवं महापुरुष महाराज से दीक्षित हुए थे। दीक्षा के समय अनिल एवं उनके बड़े भाई भी माता-पिता के साथ गए थे। उस समय अनिल अडयी की आयु मात्र ३ वर्ष की थी। माता-पिता के दीक्षा के समय दोनों भाई बाहर ही थे। महापुरुष महाराज ने अपने सेवक को एक संतरा देकर बोला, था - इसे बाहर खड़े दोनों बच्चों को खाने के लिये दे दो, नहीं तो वे लोग रोना-धोना शुरू करेंगे।! इस प्रकार उनके माता-पिता की दीक्षा हुई थी। बड़े भाई का देहान्त काफी पहले ही हो चुका है और दो-तीन वर्ष पहले ही अनिल अडयी भी परलोक सिधार गए हैं। उनके साथ मेरा काफी परिचय था एवं सन् २००४ में लोग एक साथ ही कैलाश मानसरोवर के परिभ्रमण को गए थे। किशोरावस्था में वे अल्मोड़ा में ही थे एवं यह सब बात उनके द्वारा ही बताई गई है। उन्होंने मुझे कहा था, जिस समय यह घर भाड़े पर लिया गया था, उस समय घर में नौकर-चाकर दरवान आदि सब ज्ञानेन्द्र चक्रवर्ती बाबू द्वारा रखे गये थे और ऐसी व्यवस्था की गई थी, जैसे घर के अंदर कोई रानी-महारानी हो, किन्तु घर, के भीतर श्री यशोदा माई अति साधारण संन्यासिनी की भाँति जीवन यापन करती थीं। उनके अंग्रेज भक्त श्री कृष्ण प्रेम अर्थात् प्रोफेसर रोनाल्ड निक्सन जिन्होंने यशोदा

माई से ही संन्यास ग्रहण किया था, वह भी इसी घर में रहते थे और उनकी देखभाल करते थे। किन्तु इस घर में धीरे-धीरे भक्तों की भीड़ बढ़नी शुरू हो गई। इसके पश्चात् उन लोगों ने यहाँ से और ३०- ३५ किलोमीटर दूर पिथौरागढ़ के मार्ग में मीरतोला नामक स्थान में स्थाई आश्रम बनवाया। स्कूल में पढ़ने की अवस्था में अनिल एवं उनके बड़े भाई छुट्टी के दिनों में मीरतोला जाते थे। यशोदा माई को भी वे लोग दादी माँ (ठाकुर माँ) कहकर ही सम्बोधित करते थे। वे भी इन दोनों भाइयों को बहुत प्रेम करती थीं एवं मीरतोला आने के लिए उनके लिये कभी-कभी घोड़ा भी भेज दिया करती थीं। श्री यशोदा माई के पास दुर्गा माँ का श्रीरामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा में एक ऑयल पेंटिंग किया हुआ चित्र था, जिसे वे अपने ही कमरे में रखकर उसकी पूजा किया करती थीं। अपने शरीर त्याग के पूर्व ही उन्होंने अपने सेवकों को कहा था, मेरे देह त्याग के पश्चात्तब दुर्गा माँ के चित्र को रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा में भेज देना। सन् १९४४ में मीरतोला आश्रम में ही उनका शरीर-त्याग हुआ था। इसके बाद से ही रामकृष्ण कुटीर के मन्दिर में वह चित्र रखा हुआ है और इसी चित्र में ही रामकृष्ण कुटीर में नवरात्रि की दुर्गापूजा होती चली आ रही है।

इस घटना को व्यतीत हुए काफी समय हो गये हैं। उल्लिखित माँ दुर्गा के चित्र का विवरण न होते हुए भी उस पर समय की छाप पड़ी है। २ वर्ष पहले पुनः लगाने के लिये मैंने उस चित्र के प्रेम को खोला था। तब देखा कि वह छवि सन् १९३० में बनायी गई थी। जितना कुछ पढ़ा जाना सम्भव था, उसमें देखा कि डी. बोस नामक एक चित्रकार ने उस चित्र को बनाया था। जिनका हस्ताक्षर वर्ष के साथ चित्र के नीचे अंकित है। सुना है कि स्वयं यशोदा माई भी अच्छा चित्र बनाती थी। इसलिये हम लोगों में से कई

लोगों की यह धारणा थी कि यह सब उनके ही द्वारा अंकित है। किन्तु चित्र के प्रेम को खोलने के पश्चात् ही सटीक धारणा हो पाई। फिर भी यशोदा माई के द्वारा अंकित कुछ चित्र भक्तों के गृहों में एवं मीरतोला स्थित आश्रम में हैं।

स्वामीजी ने मणिका नामक जिस कुमारी की मातृभाव से पूजा की थी, परवर्तीकाल में वही यशोदा माई बनी, जिनके द्वारा पूजित दुर्गा माँ के चित्र की पूजा अब अल्मोड़ा में स्थित रामकृष्ण कुटीर में नवरात्रि के प्रारम्भ से सप्तमी अष्टमी एवं नवमी तक की जाती है। जो भी व्यक्ति माँ दुर्गा के चित्र को देखता है, वह अभिभूत हो जाता है, इतना सुन्दर चित्र है, जैसे जीवन्त माँ दुर्गा बैठी हुई हैं। दुर्गा माँ के चित्र के साथ स्वामीजी भी परोक्ष रूप से जुड़े हुए हैं और इसे देखने के साथ ही स्वामीजी का स्मरण आना स्वभाविक है। भक्त लोग कई बार इस विषय को सोचकर आह्लादित होते हैं। निश्चय ही जो हुआ है अथवा जो हो रहा है, उसमें स्वामीजी की इच्छा और आशीर्वाद विद्यमान है; तभी तो स्वामी विवेकानन्द पूजित कुमारी मणिका, संन्यासिनी यशोदा माई और उनके द्वारा पूजित माँ दुर्गा का पट आज भी अल्मोड़ा स्थित रामकृष्ण कुटीर में संरक्षित एवं पूजित है। जय माँ जय माँ दुर्गा।

# ***Swami Vivekananda in the Himalayas***

**-Swami Atmaprabhananda  
Secretary, Ramakrishna Math & Mission, Bhubaneswar**

From time immemorial, the Himalayas have been the object of great attraction to the thousands of monks and sages for spiritual practices and also for writing scriptures. The Kailash Parvat is said to be the abode of Sri Sri Mahadeva. Even today, some people with spiritual bent of mind imagine that Lord Siva is lying in the lap of the Himalayas. None can deny that the great mountain Himalayas, which stands to the north of our country touching the sky, is a source of peace and tranquility to those who want to take refuge in it. That tremendous attraction to the Himalayas has not diminished by an inch even today. We find that the monks and recluses in great numbers have been constructing innumerable Ashramas and hermitages in remote corners of the Himalayan Mountains.

We know, Swami Vivekananda, the chief disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Deva and a patriot-prophet of modern

India, had fostered in him a dormant will to set up an Ashrama in the lap of the Himalayas whenever his mind was withdrawn from material world. Sometimes he used to suffer from a conflict between his duty to motherland and a serene life of spiritual practices, away from the din and bustle of the social life.

Swamiji visited several places in the Himalayas in three phases during the years from 1890 to 1900. We can divide Swamiji's visit to the Himalayas into two phases, once before his Chicago address in 1893 and twice after his world famous address at Chicago Parliament of Religions. During his pravajya life in 1890, Swamiji went to the Himalayas as an unknown wandering monk starting from Kankhal, Haridwar. Swamiji was accompanied by his Gurubhai Swami Akhandanandaji. They reached Almora and met Lala Badri Shah sometime in August 1890.

Here at Kakrighat the famous incident of a 'revelation' of Swamiji occurred under a big peepal tree. The tree has been named as "Jnana Vriksha" i.e. Knowledge Tree. On this occasion Swamiji had a revelation in a sudden flash. During his meditation, he clearly realized that whatever we find in macrocosm (Brahmanda) the same things can be found in microcosm (Anu). The dying tree is now survived by a new sapling as a result of relentless efforts of some Botanists & Scientists led by Dr. Ayappan, the then Director of ICAR.

Moving back to Lala Badri Shah's House, gradually some other monks assembled there. The small group consisted of Swami Akhandananda, Swami Saradananda and Swami Kripananda. They were scheduled to visit Badrinath Dham but Swami Akhandananda fell indisposed on the way and they had to drop their idea of Badrinath visit. Ultimately Swamiji alone reached Delhi after sometime visiting different places in that area.

After his grand success in the famous Chicago Parliament of Religions, Swamiji visited Almora & the Himalayas twice. Once in the year 1898 AD in course

of his lectures from Colombo to Almora and next in the year 1900 AD. Shortly after 1898, Swamiji set up an Ashrama at Mayavati with the help of Captain Sevier and Mrs. Sevier. During this journey his companions were Swami Turiyananda, Swami Niranjanananda, Swami Sadananda, Swami Swarupananda, Mrs. Ole Bull, Mrs. McLeod, Sister Nivedita and Mrs. Patterson, the wife of American Consul General in Calcutta. After some time he came back to Almora after visiting Syahi Devi. Swamiji's last visit to the Himalayas was in the year 1900. When he was at Belur Math, immediately after his second visit to the West, he heard the sad news of Captain Sevier's death at Mayavati Ashrama. So Swamiji felt an urge to go to Mayavati in order to console Mrs. Sevier who had lost her husband. Swamiji was anxious about the future of the newly set up Ashrama at Mayavati & Prabuddha Bharata Patrika. But when he reached Mayavati after a lot of trouble on the way, he had a great relief to see that Mrs. Sevier had overcome the grief to a great extent and she was also committed to complete the project of her deceased husband.

Swamiji entered into

Mahasamadhi in 1902. Since then, time has rolled on. Swamiji's Advaita Ashrama has taken a big shape as the main centre of a vast publishing house of English religious books and a monthly journal named "Prabuddha Bharata". Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, a branch Centre of Ramakrishna Math is working on a large scale with multifarious philanthropic works. Even a branch of Sarada Math is engaged in charitable works near Kasar Devi temple in Almora. Another Ashrama at Shyamla Tal is working nicely for the downtrodden people of that area. Shyamla Tal was a favourite place of Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, the 6th President of our Sangha.

Very recently in May'23, a massive project with cultural & religious programmes were taken up by the Almora Ramakrishna Kutir on the occasion of 125th year of Foundation of Ramakrishna Mission and Swamiji's Return from Chicago. The one - month long programme included seminars, cultural competitions, lectures and spiritual retreat arranged at different places in Uttarakhand.

The most attractive phase of the entire programme was the 'Vivekananda Circuit Parikrama' which started from the organising centre, Almora Ashrama. The Parikrama team consisting of nearly 50 sadhus and 50 devotees in about 25 cars touched the places sanctified by Swami Vivekananda during his sojourn in the Himalayas. The holy places covered by the pilgrims were – Mornaula, Mayavati, Shyamla Tal, Tanakpur, Brahmadev Temple in Nepal, Haridwar, Kankhal, Rishikesh, Rajpur & Dehradun. At the forefront there was a well decorated portrait of Swami Vivekananda. The pilgrimage ended on 3rd June at Dehradun with a concluding function in the temple. Apart from the different states of India, some devotees came and joined this mega event from Bangladesh also. From Dehra Dun the participants dispersed and went to respective destinations. All the participants left with the sacred memories of Swamiji embedded deep within their hearts.

# ***Subahur Pala***

Transcribed by Thakur Sri Ramakrishna  
Humble attempt to translate in English the First 3 Stanzas (42 Lines)

**- Santi Kumar Ghosh**  
**A devotee from Mumbai**

## **Introduction**

'Subahur Pala', a poetic narration of religious tale, was transcribed by Thakur Sri Ramakrishna when He was only 13 years old. Thakur transcribed altogether five 'Palas' viz.,  
'Harishchander Pala' ('হরিশ্চন্দ্রেরপালা'- 'হরিশ্চন্দ্রেপালা'),  
'Mahiravaner Pala' ('মহিরাবণেরপালা'- 'মহিরাবণেরপালা'),  
'Yogadya Pala' ('যোগাদ্যাপালা'- 'যোগাদ্যাপালা'),  
'Subahur Pala' ('সুবাহুরপালা'- 'সুবাহুরপালা') and 'Parijat Haran' ('পারিজাতহরণ'- 'পারিজাতহরণ').

All the five 'Palas' were written on stained yellowish paper made of cotton pulp meant to be used in olden days in Bengal and Eastern India for handwriting of the historical and religious events in prose or poetic style. In these 'Palas', Thakur had put His signature everywhere as 'Sri Gadadhar Chattopadhyay', except for one place where He had signed as 'Sri Ramakrishna'. Thakur Sri Ramakrishna was known in His village as 'Gadadhar'

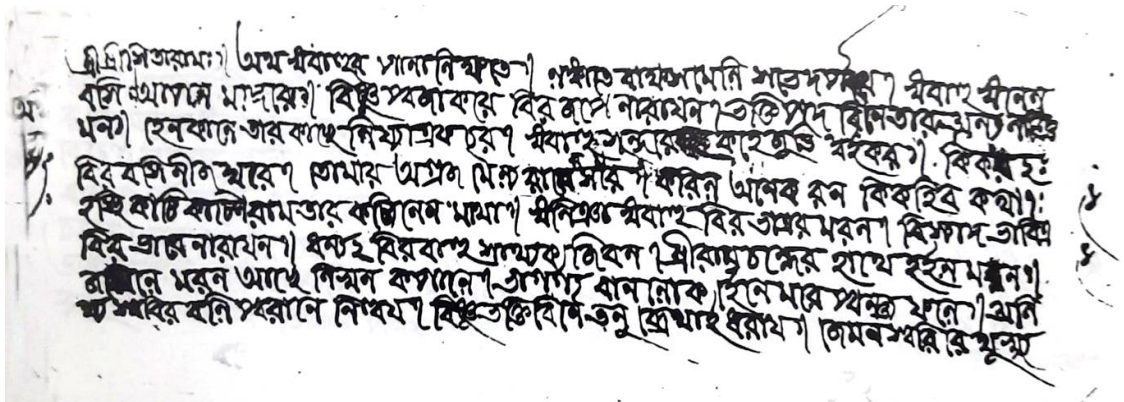
or 'Gadai' and not so much by His first name 'Ramakrishna'. 'Subahur Pala' originally of 22 pages was completed by teen-ager 'Gadadhar' on Tuesday 3rd July 1849 by adding 3 more pages for title, concluding remarks etc. Tender-aged 'Gadadhar' was only 13 years and 4 months old on the day of completion of transcribing this timeless tale of 'Subahu' the great devotee of Lord Rama and younger brother of Birbahu the son of multi-headed demon king Ravana.

## **References :**

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Divine Handwriting of Thakur Sri Ramakrishna  
(3rd Stanza of 'Subahur Pala')

Acknowledgement: Bengali book 'Punthi' ('পুঁথি' - 'পুঁথী') published by  
Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Kolkata.

**Subahur Pala**

Oh Lord Rama!

Writing Thy tribute in hymns.

I worship you Oh Ganapati

The son of Goddess Gauri,

Whose thoughts with devotion

Remove all obstructions.

With the nine planets

To worship Thee,

Oh Sun God! I submit

Myself on your Lotus Feet.

Oh KrishnaChandra

Glory to you Lord Krishna,

I pray to Thee

The glorious son of Daivaki.

Oh, the supreme God of all,

On your feet,

with my prayers I fall,

I worship you, the wise!

Oh Trilochan, the God with three eyes.

Hara or Hari though

appearing as two

Are inseparable and that is true,

Inexpressible though, Thou art

Not two but one in my heart.

I worship Thee

Oh Mother of Universe AdyaShakti,

Sixty four Yoginis along with her

I pay homage with full honour.

§§§

Gaya as well as Mother Ganges

And all the other

places of pilgrimages,

Prayag, Mathura and Kashi

Everywhere I pray to Thee.

With the unfailing arrow on right

And the divine bow on the left,

Oh Rama!

your heavenly body in blue,

Wholeheartedly I worship you.  
 I worship you the son of Aja  
 Oh the king Dasharatha,  
 Son of yours,  
 captivating the world  
 I worship you  
 Oh Ramachandra, my lord.  
 Oh divine mother Sita  
 The daughter of king Janaka,  
 I worship Thee  
 Wholeheartedly.  
 I worship you  
 Oh Dasharatha's queens  
 Seven hundred and forty nine times.  
 Kaushalya and Sumitra  
 Two queens of Dasharatha,  
 Incarnated as her son  
 Oh Ramchandra, you were born.  
 SreeRama and Laxmana,  
 Bharata and Shatrughna,  
 Who all turned  
 To be saviour of this world.  
 I worship you oh son of Pavana  
 The attendant of Lord Rama,  
 By whose bravery,  
 Was tamed the mighty sea.

§§§

Oh Sri Sri SitaRama!  
 Here I compose 'Subahur Pala'.  
 In the kingdom of Lanka,  
 the demons  
 Are intoxicated with ego and arrogance,  
 Subahu listens to all,

Sitting in his own temple.  
 Worships Lord Vishnu, his deity  
 Or mutters prayer for Narayana silently,  
 Except for their Lotus Feet,  
 his devotion,  
 Never sways to any other direction.  
 An informer, in the meantime  
 Coming near to him,  
 With folded hands and being respectful  
 Said to Subahu the graceful.  
 Oh, the great warrior  
 While you are here,  
 Your elder brother has died by an  
 arrow  
 Shot from Rama's bow.  
 The way he fought fiercely  
 In words I can describe hardly,  
 His arms were chopped  
 Before Rama had him decapitated.  
 The news that Subahu receives  
 Of his valiant brother's demise,  
 Distressed though the braveheart  
 Thinks of Narayana the God.  
 Oh Birbahu you are blessed  
 Your life has been made sacred,  
 Since the cause of your death  
 Is Sri Ramachandra the great.  
 Life has to come to an end  
 Written at birth on your forehead,  
 Only the one who is fortunate  
 As reward of piety gets such death.

§§§

# श्री रामकृष्ण के द्वितीय दर्शन में ही ब्रह्मविद्या का रहस्योद्घाटन

—रितुल कुमार

एम.एस.सी— बॉटनी, सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय, अल्मोड़ा

श्रीरामकृष्ण वचनमृत में श्री महेन्द्रनाथ गुप्त जब श्रीरामकृष्ण के द्वितीय दर्शन हेतु जाते हैं उस समय ठाकुर और मास्टर महाशय के बीच की बातें आध्यात्मिकता का मूल हैं, यही वह आधार है जिसके कारण अन्य साधक-भक्त सहज रूप से ही श्रीरामकृष्ण की ओर आकर्षित होते हैं ; आध्यात्मिक गूढ़ तत्व कैसे सहज ही श्री ठाकुर की वाणी द्वारा सरलता पूर्वक सम्मुख साधक के मन में उन तत्वों का प्रकाश कर देता है, और उसे ईश्वर की ओर प्रेरित कर देता है यह प्रसंग दर्शनीय है।

श्री रामकृष्णवचनमृत में जब मास्टर महाशय (महेन्द्रनाथ गुप्त), ठाकुर (श्रीरामकृष्ण) के द्वितीय दर्शन करते हैं, उस समय ठाकुर ने जो उपदेश दिये हैं वही उपदेश गृहस्थों के लिए सार स्वरूप हैं । असल में भगवान की ओर गति के लिए एक गृहस्थ को जिन-जिन साधनों एवं सावधानियों की आवश्यकता है उसे मास्टर महाशय के श्रीरामकृष्ण के द्वितीय दर्शन में देखा जा सकता है। द्वितीय दर्शन के घटनाक्रम का सावधानीपूर्वक अवलोकन किया जाए तो यहाँ एक सामान्य मनुष्य की मनःस्थिति का भी दर्शन किया जा सकता है। अग्रलिखित पंक्तियों में हम एक सामान्य मनुष्य की मनःस्थिति के अनुरूप मास्टर महाशय के इस द्वितीय दर्शन पर दृष्टि डालेंगे।

**मास्टर का तिरस्कार तथा उनका अहंकार चूर्ण करना**

मानव अपने पूर्वज्ञान, अहंभाव, विभिन्न मत-मतान्तरों एवं सम्बन्धों से पूर्णरूप से प्रभावित होता है, एवं ठाकुर इस भाव को पकड़कर सर्वप्रथम प्रहार इस अहंकार पर ही करते हैं। वर्तमान में शिक्षित समाज में यही धारणा है कि कोई पढ़-लिख ले तो मानो ज्ञानी हो गया । परन्तु ज्ञान क्या है ? इसके उत्तर में हम पाते हैं कि ईश्वर को जानना ही ज्ञान है और न जानना अज्ञान ।

साकार-निराकार के द्वन्द्व में उलझा मानव मूर्तिपूजा के सम्बन्ध में कभी यहाँ-कभी वहाँ इस प्रकार के दोनों विरोधी भावों में फंसा हुआ है, इस समय दोनों ही सत्य हैं । यह पुस्तकों के अगोचर बात को जानकर कुछ और पूर्वसंस्कार का हास एवं कुछ तर्क बुद्धि उसमें शेष रह जाती है।

किंचित् मात्र एवं थोड़े ज्ञान के साथ मानव अब भी तर्क एवं अपने मत का फैलाव, लेक्चर देना चाहता है, पर ठाकुर इसे भी सही स्थान पर ले आते हैं। जीव अब अहंकार चूर्ण हो अपनी वर्तमान स्थिति का अवलोकन करता है एवं पाता है कि ये जो कह रहे हैं वह ठीक ही तो है। मुझे दूसरों को समझाने की क्या जरूरत ? क्या मैंने ईश्वर को जान लिया है या मुझमें उनके प्रति विशुद्ध भक्ति उत्पन्न हुई है ? इस प्रकार

अहंभाव के पूर्ण निस्तार को प्राप्त हुआ जीव अब ईश्वर सम्बन्धित चर्चा हेतु प्रस्तुत होता है।

#### भक्ति का उपाय -

अब विनीतभाव को प्राप्त हुआ जीव सर्वप्रथम यह जानना चाहता है कि ईश्वर में मन किस तरह लगे? अभी तक विभिन्न प्रकार के मत एवं भावों इत्यादि से ढका हुआ मानव प्रकट हो जब इन भावों से निस्तार पाता है तो ईश्वर पर अपने चित्त को स्थिर करने का उपाय जानना चाहता है। श्रीरामकृष्ण कहते हैं-“सर्वदा ईश्वर का नाम गुणगान करना चाहिए- बीच बीच में भक्तों और साधुओं से मिलना चाहिए। संसार में दिनरात विषय के भीतर पड़े रहने से मन ईश्वर में नहीं लगता। कभी कभी निर्जन स्थान में जाकर ईश्वर की चिन्ता करना बहुत जरूरी है। प्रथम अवस्था में बीच बीच में एकान्तवास किए बिना ईश्वर में मन लगाना बड़ा कठिन है। पौधे के चारों ओर से बाड़ लगाना पड़ता है, नहीं तो बकरी चर लेगी।”

ठाकुर बड़े ही सहज रूप से बताते हैं कि संसार में कैसे रहना चाहिए। वे कहते हैं सब काम करना चाहिए परन्तु मन ईश्वर में रखना चाहिए। साधक इसे समझ नहीं पाता तथा और स्पष्टीकरण चाहता है एवं ठाकुर कहते हैं- “किसी धनी घर की दासी जिस प्रकार उसके घर का कुल काम करती है, किन्तु उसका मन अपने गाँव के घर पर लगा रहता है। मालिक के लड़कों का वह अपने लड़कों की तरह लालन-पालन करती है, उन्हें मेरा मुन्ना मेरा राजा कहती है, पर मन ही मन खूब जानती है कि ये मेरे कोई नहीं हैं।” और आगे कहते हैं कि भगवद्-भक्तिरूपी तेल हाथों में लगाकर संसाररूपी कटहल के लिए हाथ बढ़ाओ। यदि भक्ति प्राप्त करनी है तो निर्जन में

रहना होगा। निर्जन में ही ईश्वर चिन्तन करने से यह मन भक्ति, ज्ञान और वैराग्य का अधिकारी होता है। एवं साथ ही साथ विचार भी खूब करना चाहिए; काम-कांचन अनित्य हैं एवं ईश्वर ही एकमात्र नित्य हैं, इसे ही विचार कहते हैं।

#### ईश्वर दर्शन के उपाय-

द्वितीय दर्शन का यह प्रश्न ही साधकों हेतु अत्यन्त हृदयस्पर्शी है, साधक की श्रेणी में अहंकार रहित, ईश्वर प्राप्ति के उपाय, भक्ति के उपाय जानकर अब वह यह जानना चाहता है कि ईश्वर दर्शन वास्तव में हो सकते हैं? श्रीरामकृष्ण उत्तर में मास्टर महाशय से कहते हैं- हाँ, हो सकते हैं। बीच बीच में एकान्तवास, उनका नाम-गुणगान और वस्तु विचार करने से ईश्वर दर्शन होते हैं।

इस प्रकार ईश्वर दर्शन सम्बन्धी प्रश्न का उत्तर पा कर सन्तुष्ट साधक आगे बढ़कर और प्रश्न करता है- कैसी अवस्था हो तो ईश्वर दर्शन होते हैं? ठाकुर इस प्रश्न के उत्तर में कहते हैं- खूब व्याकुल होकर रोने से उनके दर्शन होते हैं। बात यह है कि ईश्वर को प्यार करना चाहिए। विषय पर विषयी की, पुत्र पर माता की और पति पर सती की जो प्रीति है, उसे एकत्रित करने से जितनी प्रीति होती है, उतनी ही प्रीति से ईश्वर को बुलाने से उस प्रेम का महा आकर्षण ईश्वर को खींच लाता है।

इस प्रकार श्रीरामकृष्ण हमारे सम्मुख इस स्वाति की बूँद को प्रकट करते हैं जिसे ग्रहण कर अब सीपी की भाँति ही हम गहन सागर तल में प्रवेश कर सकते हैं।

# ***The New Way To Advaita***

**-Swami Vedanishthananda  
Designated Spiritual Head of the Vedanta Centre in Geneva,  
Switzerland**

|                                       |                                            |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Advaita !</b>                      | <b>The Prophet then came ,</b>             |
| <b>The One ! Above all !</b>          | <b>A new way was foretold.</b>             |
| <b>The Everest of Realisations,</b>   | <b>That Truth can be realised,</b>         |
| <b>Of the Himalayas spiritual.</b>    | <b>In our lives in this world.</b>         |
| <br>                                  |                                            |
| <b>The sages of the Upanishads,</b>   | <b>Let us expand ourselves,</b>            |
| <b>Realised The Consciousness,</b>    | <b>Casting off me and mine.</b>            |
| <b>The One that pervades through,</b> | <b>Then that which is will manifest,</b>   |
| <b>And transcends all many-ness.</b>  | <b>The Reality that is Divine.</b>         |
| <br>                                  |                                            |
| <b>In the search of That,</b>         | <b>All that exists,</b>                    |
| <b>Many renounced their all,</b>      | <b>Is nothing but God !</b>                |
| <b>Not this, not this,</b>            | <b>Let us worship Him always,</b>          |
| <b>Was their perennial call.</b>      | <b>Through our body, mind, &amp; word.</b> |
| <br>                                  |                                            |
| <b>But the one whose life,</b>        |                                            |
| <b>Is busy all the time.</b>          |                                            |
| <b>As if he was kept away,</b>        |                                            |
| <b>From this search sublime !</b>     |                                            |

# ***Tying the Advaita Jnana in the hem of one's cloth***

**- Anonymous**

***"Yes, one may reach Him by following the path of discrimination too: that is called jnanayoga. But it is an extremely difficult path... the path of bhakti is best for the people of the Kaliyuga. It is an easy path."***

***"First tie the nondual knowledge in the corner of your cloth; then do whatever you like."***

How do we reconcile the above two teachings of Sri Ramakrishna?

Let's try an analogy:

- Every human needs protein to sustain their body.
- Proteins can be extracted in their pure form, but they are not found in nature in this isolated state. Protein purification typically requires specialized equipment and a well-trained specialist.
- Hence, the more practical method is to fulfil the protein requirement by eating something which has, among other things, a substantial amount of protein.

- There are many sources of protein, but not all of them may be suitable for everyone.
- Hence, select your source of protein wisely and keep the body healthy.

Imagine someone who doesn't know that it is protein we are seeking through all these sources of food. One might get obsessed with a particular source of protein to which they are accustomed. They might even get fanatical about it, condemning everyone else who derives protein from other sources.

Some may, on the other hand, spice up their protein-rich meals so much that it does more harm than good. Some overzealous ones may overcook their proteins, burning them in the process, making it toxic. Some might, not knowing that everyone's constitution is unique, consume certain kinds of protein-rich foods in quantities that could adversely affect their systems.

A rare individual might insist on extracting pure protein and ingesting only that to meet their protein requirement, but this would indeed be

the rarest instance. So let the non-vegetarian have meat, fish, and eggs, the vegetarian have milk, yogurt, and paneer, the vegan have beans, oats, and almonds, and those who like none of these have protein shakes and protein bars. Let the diabetic not sweeten her milk, let those with high cholesterol refrain from red meat, let the lactose intolerant drink soy or almond milk, and those who can afford it have the exorbitantly priced whey protein supplements.

But how does this resolve our initial conflict? Well, the knowledge of protein as the body-building nutrient, knowing that protein is, in a way, the very essence of life and its absence from our diet will make us perish, is akin to the advaita jnana, which is small enough to

be tied in the hem of our clothes. But to infer that protein can only be ingested in its purest form is an irrational conclusion.

Rather, to enjoy our matar paneers and cheese omelettes is the wiser choice, albeit with a little less chili powder in it! That is the understanding that while advaita jnana is indispensable, advaita sadhana (or jnana yoga) might not be most suitable for all; sadhana can also be done, and preferably so, through bhakti.

"My god is the only true god and my path the only true path" is as absurd as the ilish-eating Bengali saying to an American that tuna is not even a fish! As for the rest, a word to the wise is enough.



Sri Ramakrishna painting Out to Keshab Chandra Sen the harmony of religions - a painting commissioned in 1882



# विद्यार्थियों के आदर्श स्वामी विवेकानन्द

– डॉ.चंद्र प्रकाश फुलोरिया

संग्रहालय प्रभारी, इतिहास विभाग, सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय, अल्मोड़ा  
संयोजक, स्वामी विवेकानन्द – महात्मा गांधी आध्यात्मिक पर्यटन परिपथ, अध्ययन केंद्र

ऐसा बिलकुल नहीं हैं कि स्वामी विवेकानन्द का जीवन केवल विद्यार्थियों के लिए ही प्रेरित करने वाला है अपितु विद्यार्थी जीवन में यदि छात्र-छात्राओं ने स्वामी विवेकानन्द के द्वारा कही गयी बातों का स्मरण रखा और इन बातों पर अमल कर लिया तो उनका समग्र जीवन सफल हो जायेगा।

विश्व में भारत ही एकमात्र ऐसा देश है जहाँ संत महापुरुषों की समृद्ध परंपरा प्राचीन काल से ही विद्यमान रही है। इसी परंपरा को स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने जब शिकागो विश्व धर्म सम्मेलन से उद्घाटित किया तो यह पश्चिम के देशों के लिए जिज्ञासा का विषय बन गया। स्वामी विवेकानन्द के अंतःकरण में जो अद्भुत दिव्यता विराजमान थी उसी का ही प्रतिफल था कि भारत की परतंत्रता के बावजूद भी भारत को विश्व विरादरी में अत्यन्त सकारात्मक भाव से देखा जाने लगा। पश्चिम के देशों में शिक्षा का जो प्रसार स्वामीजी ने अनुभव किया साथ ही विविध दृष्टान्तों के साथ बालक-बालिकाओं के बीच शिक्षा के सन्दर्भ में जो समानता वहाँ उनके द्वारा देखी गयी उससे स्वामीजी के मन में भारत में शिक्षा का प्रसार खासकर बालिका शिक्षा को लेकर चिंता का भाव उजागर हुआ।

स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने शिक्षा के सन्दर्भ में कहा है कि शिक्षा मनुष्य के अन्दर निहित पूर्णता का विकास है। इसी पूर्णता को वर्तमान परिप्रेक्ष्य में

समझने की नितांत आवश्यकता है, जिसमें आंतरिक शिक्षा भी है और बाह्य शिक्षा भी। इसके अलावा स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने सांसारिक शिक्षा के साथ आध्यात्मिक शिक्षा को भी शिक्षा की पूर्णता के लिए आवश्यक बताया है उन्होंने शिक्षा को किताबी शिक्षा से ऊपर उठकर देखने की बात कही है। केवल बहुमुखी ज्ञान को भी उन्होंने पूर्ण शिक्षा नहीं माना है। उन्होंने कहा है शिक्षा वास्तव में एक ऐसा प्रशिक्षण है जिसके द्वारा संकल्प शक्ति की अभिव्यक्ति को और उसके प्रभाव को स्वयं के साथ-साथ अन्य लोगों के लिए भी लाभप्रद बनाया जा सके।

स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने एक विशेष कालखण्ड (उन्नीसवीं शताब्दी के आखिरी दशक) में जिस तरह भारत के शिक्षार्थियों /विद्यार्थियों हेतु शिक्षा की महत्ता को उजागर किया है वह शिक्षा की आज की परिस्थितियों में और अधिक प्रासंगिक रूप से देखा एवं समझा जा सकता है। स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने भारत में शिक्षा की आवश्यकता, समानता एवं मनुष्य के अंदर निहित पूर्णता के विकास हेतु जो बहुमूल्य बातें जिस कालखंड में कही हैं तब और अब की परिस्थितियों में हर तरह से अंतर स्पष्ट दृष्टिगोचर होता है। वास्तव में तब हमारा देश परतंत्र होने के कारण ढेरों परेशानियों से जूझ रहा था जबकि आज हम अपने देश को श्रेष्ठ/सर्वश्रेष्ठ बनाने के लिए शिक्षा का वृहद एवं प्रभावी स्वरूप विकसित कर सकने में सर्वथा सक्षम एवं सामर्थ्यवान हैं फिर भी हम

अपने ही देश में स्वामी विवेकानन्द के विचारों के अनुरूप उस शिक्षा को प्रतिस्थापित कर सकने में किंचित् सफल नहीं हो पा रहे हैं जो हमारे बालक-बालिकाओं के शिक्षित होने के बाद उन्हें पूर्णता का अनुभव करा सके।

यहाँ स्वामी विवेकानन्द द्वारा प्रत्येक मनुष्य, विशेषकर विद्यार्थियों को जीवन में सुखी एवं सफल होने के लिए जो असंख्य सूत्र बताये हैं उनमें से केवल दो विषयों की यहाँ संक्षिप्त चर्चा करना समीचीन होगा। पहला सूत्र जो केवल विद्यार्थियों के लिए ही नहीं अपितु सभी लोगों तथा हर स्तर के व्यक्ति की सफलता के लिए स्वामीजी ने बताया – उठो जागो और तब तक मत रुको, जब तक अपने लक्ष्य को प्राप्त न कर लो। अर्थात् किसी भी परिस्थिति में और किसी भी स्थिति में अपनी आगे बढ़ने की रफ्तार को रुकने मत दो। यहाँ समझने योग्य बात यह है कि यदि हम निरंतर आगे बढ़ने की इच्छा को कम या अधिक जितना भी हो विराम दे देंगे तो फिर मंजिल तक पहुँच पाना कठिन हो जाएगा। मतलब यही है कि मंजिल तक पहुँचने के लिए निरंतरता की आवश्यकता है। यह सूत्र हमेशा ही विद्यार्थियों के लिए उनके द्वारा अपनी मंजिल हासिल करने के उद्देश्य से अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण है।

स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के द्वारा बताया गया दूसरा महत्वपूर्ण सूत्र जो हमें हमेशा ऊर्जावान बनाकर रखता है वह यह है – “बल ही जीवन है और निर्बलता मृत्यु के समान है।”

हमें यह बात हमेशा ही स्मरण रखनी चाहिए कि जितना आवश्यक जीवन जीने के लिए शारीरिक बल है उतना ही जरूरी मानसिक बल भी है। शारीरिक

एवं मानसिक रूप से हमें अपनी ताकत बनाकर रखनी पड़ेगी तभी हम जीवन की हर परिस्थिति में स्वयं को स्थापित कर पायेंगे। यदि शरीर को तंदुरुस्त रखने के लिए कसरत आवश्यक है तो मस्तिष्क को दुरुस्त रखने के लिए स्वाध्याय महत्वपूर्ण है। स्वामीजी ने यहाँ केवल शारीरिक रूप से स्वस्थ या फिर मानसिक रूप से ज्ञानी होने की बात नहीं की। उन्होंने कहा है ‘बल ही जीवन है और जिस दिन शरीर की ताकत कम हो गयी और मानसिक रूप से हमारी ताकत में भी कमी आ गयी तो समझा जा सकता है कि जीवन मृत्यु के समान हो गया।’

विद्यार्थियों के लिए स्वामी विवेकानन्द के उपदेश हमेशा ही प्रेरणादायी रहेंगे। स्वामीजी के बताये मार्ग पर चलने वाले विद्यार्थी जिन्होंने स्वामी विवेकानन्द को अपना आदर्श माना है उन्होंने स्वयं भी यह अनुभव किया है कि उन्होंने विद्यार्थियों से जो अपेक्षा की है वह भारतीय सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों के अनुरूप ही है। वर्तमान परिस्थितियों में हमारे बालक-बालिकाओं को जिंदगी की भागदौड़ में स्वामी विवेकानन्द जैसा मार्गदर्शक मिल गया तो मानो कि केवल विद्यार्थी जीवन ही नहीं अपितु सम्पूर्ण जीवन ही सफल हो जाएगा।



शिक्षा वही है जो आपके अंदर की ताकत को बाहर लाती है, न कि केवल पुस्तकों का ज्ञान।

# ***Why Are We Still Crying For Swami Vivekananda's Teachings?***

**- Mohit Prodhan**

**PhD Researcher, Stephen F. Austin State University (UT System), Texas, USA**

Swami Vivekananda, the renowned spiritual leader, epitomizes moral development. He has the highest ethical conduct and spiritual integrity standards, and his teachings reflect the same. His unwavering commitment to moral principles and his relentless efforts toward the betterment of humanity profoundly impacted individuals and society. He was a towering figure in spirituality and philosophy, and his teachings offer timeless wisdom and insights that remain relevant even today. Swami Vivekananda's legacy continues to inspire and resonate in the modern world, and his teachings are a guiding light in addressing the challenges and complexities of contemporary society.

In today's fast-paced world, marked by constant technological advancements and an increasingly interconnected global community, the importance of moral education cannot be overstated. Moral education is a crucial aspect of personal development that equips individuals with the necessary ethical principles and values to navigate the complexities of contemporary life. Moral education is developing empathy and compassion

towards others. Through moral education, individuals learn to appreciate the diversity of cultures and beliefs and develop a broader perspective on life. It also helps them to understand the importance of social responsibility and encourages them to become active and engaged members of their communities.

Furthermore, moral education plays a vital role in shaping the character of individuals, as it helps to instill positive character traits such as honesty, integrity, respect, and fairness. These traits benefit individuals in their personal and professional lives and contribute to the betterment of society. Moral education is essential to personal development in today's rapidly evolving world. It empowers individuals with the ethical principles and values necessary to navigate contemporary life's complexities while fostering empathy, social responsibility, and positive character traits.

We face numerous ethical dilemmas in this age of rapid technological advancement and scientific breakthroughs. These issues range from artificial intelligence and

genetic engineering to environmental degradation and social inequality. Consequently, individuals are often confronted with moral quandaries that demand careful reflection and ethical judgment. To tackle these complex challenges, moral education is essential. It equips individuals with the moral compass to navigate these complex issues and make informed, ethical decisions.

Swami Vivekananda's life is a shining example of personal integrity and moral rectitude. He always practiced what he preached, demonstrating honesty, sincerity, and selflessness in all his actions. His unwavering commitment to truth and righteousness earned him respect and admiration from people of all walks of life, establishing him as a model of moral virtue. Swami Vivekananda emphasized the universality of spiritual truths that go beyond the confines of any religion or dogma. His teachings promote harmony and understanding among various faiths in the modern world, characterized by religious diversity and pluralism. Swami Vivekananda's message of tolerance, respect, and recognizing the divine in all beings is essential for fostering interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence in a globalized world.

Swami Vivekananda placed great importance on self-realization and self-development as the core of human existence. In our current fast-paced and

materialistic society, his teachings remind individuals to turn inward, discover their true potential, and strive for inner growth and fulfillment. Swami Vivekananda's emphasis on meditation, self-discipline, and the cultivation of inner strength resonates with modern movements that stress mindfulness, well-being, and personal development. He taught that compassion and service to others are essential to spiritual growth. For Vivekananda, true spirituality is demonstrated through selfless service to humanity, particularly to those who are marginalized and disadvantaged. His founding of the "Ramakrishna Mission" as a vehicle for social service is a testament to his commitment to alleviating human suffering and promoting the welfare of all beings.

Even today, Swami Vivekananda's message of serving humanity without selfish motives is relevant. In a society plagued by social inequality, injustice, and environmental degradation, Swami Vivekananda's teachings inspire individuals to work selflessly for the betterment of others and society. His "Practical Vedanta" concept emphasizes the significance of transforming spiritual ideals into tangible actions for social upliftment and empowerment. This is similar to contemporary movements for social justice and activism.

Swami Vivekananda believed in education as a powerful tool for transforming individuals and societies.

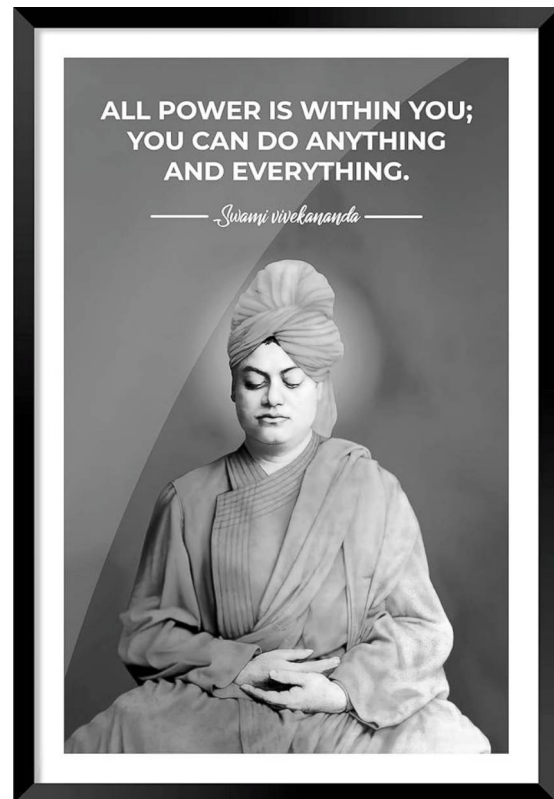
He emphasized the importance of holistic development, including intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth. In today's world, where education is considered a fundamental human right, Swami Vivekananda's teachings on education as a means of empowerment and social change are still highly relevant. His emphasis on imparting practical knowledge, critical thinking skills, and moral values resonates with current efforts to reform education systems and promote lifelong learning in the 21st century.

Swami Vivekananda believed the youth had great potential to bring about positive societal change. In his famous speech at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, he addressed the audience as "Sisters and Brothers of America," exemplifying his vision of leveraging the energy and idealism of young people for the greater good. Today, with youth activism and movements for social change on the rise, Swami Vivekananda's teachings inspire young individuals to become agents of transformation and ambassadors of peace and harmony.

Swami Vivekananda's teachings went beyond religious boundaries and emphasized universal values such as love, compassion, tolerance, and respect for all living beings. He visualized a world where people from different backgrounds would come together in peace and harmony, recognizing the

inherent divinity in one another. Even today, Swami Vivekananda's message of universal brotherhood continues to impact the globalized world, promoting intercultural understanding and harmony.

The life story of Swami Vivekananda is a source of inspiration for numerous individuals who aspire to develop moral excellence and spiritual depth. His transformative journey from a young seeker seeking truth to a revered spiritual luminary inspires people to strive for moral development and self-transformation. Swami Vivekananda's teachings guide ethical living and spiritual growth, empowering individuals to lead meaningful and purposeful lives.



# ***Swami Vivekananda & Swami Dayananda***

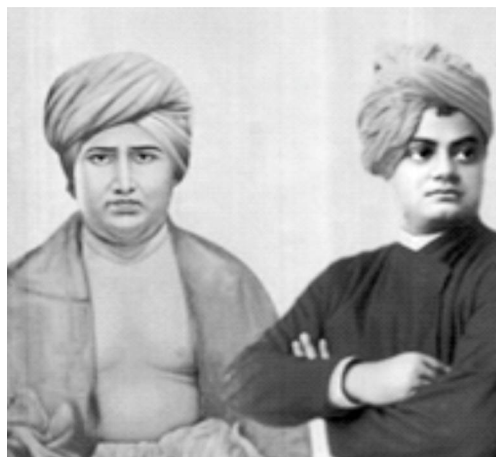
**— Aseem Paul  
Devotee from New Delhi**

During my interaction with several youngsters over the decades in the course of promoting Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, I found that many of them mistake Swami Vivekananda for Swami Dayananda, especially those who have grown up in DAV Institutions and whose memory has grown hazy with the passage of time. This is the genesis of the present write-up, a humble attempt to shed light on the great contributions of these two stalwarts of the Indian Renaissance.

Swami Dayananda and Swami Vivekananda were contemporaries in the sense that both of them were heroes of the nineteenth century and created cultural upheaval, thereby making Indians conscious of their glorious heritage contributing to spirituality. Swami Dayananda preceded Swami Vivekananda, and his work contributed to the receptivity of the Indian mind to appreciate Swami Vivekananda's mighty contribution in bringing glory to India on the international forum by expounding the message of Vedanta in a scientific manner.

Swami Dayananda was born in Kathiawar in Gujarat in the year 1824

and lived for 59 years until the year 1883. Swami Vivekananda was born in



the year 1863 in Calcutta, Bengal, and lived until the year 1902, a mere 39 years. Swami Dayananda was born in a Brahmin family and, by the time he was fourteen, he had gained knowledge of Yajurveda and hymns from other Vedas. Later on, he studied Nighantu (a glossary of Vedic words), the Nirukta (etymologies of Vedic words), the Purva Mimamsa (an inquiry into the ritual portion of the Vedas), and the treatises on ceremonial and sacrificial rites.

Swami Vivekananda was born into an aristocratic family in Calcutta and was rooted in Indian culture by the influence of his pious mother. He also had exposure to Western philosophy,

European history, and classical music when he graduated in Arts in the year 1884.

Swami Virajananda Dandee, also known as the Blind Sage of Mathura, was the celebrated teacher of Swami Dayananda. He was a scholar and teacher of Sanskrit Grammar and Vedic Literature. Swami Dayananda had exemplary Guru-Bhakti. One day, Swami Dayananda cleaned the floor of the Guru's Ashram and collected the garbage on one side. Swami Virajananda chanced to come to that side, and his legs touched the heap of garbage. This irritated him, and he became angry, started beating Swami Dayananda with a stick, and continued beating him till he was exhausted. Not caring for his own pain, Swami Dayananda began to massage his Guru's hands, saying, "Gurudev, my body is rough and tough, but your hands are soft and must have got tired." What unparalleled devotion to the Guru!

Swami Vivekananda's Guru was Sri Ramakrishna, the illiterate priest of Kali Temple, the sage of Dakshineswar, who had made his body a laboratory to experiment with different types of Sadhana and had succeeded in proving that God not only exists but can be talked to and approached in myriad ways. When Narendranath (Pre-monastic name of Swami Vivekananda) came to him in December 1881, he was full of questions. He tested the Great Master at every step and even ridiculed his realizations as hallucinations of his own

mind. Sri Ramakrishna encouraged him and bore with him patiently, guiding him on the path of Sadhana and molding his mind to make it a fit receptacle of the highest realization. Swami Vivekananda's Guru-bhakti was also remarkable. When Sri Ramakrishna was diagnosed with Throat Cancer around September 1885 and the illness showed no signs of abatement, his young disciples joined together in their efforts to nurse him, and Narendranath was their inspiration. One day, he found them hesitant about approaching the Master. They had been told that the illness was infectious. Narendra insistently took them to the Master's room, where a cup was lying in a corner. It contained a part of the gruel, which Sri Ramakrishna could not swallow. It was mixed with his saliva. Narendra seized the cup and swallowed its contents. The shining example of Guru-bhakti brought an end to controversy. No wonder it transformed young Narendranath into illustrious Swami Vivekananda in the years to come.

Swami Dayananda accepted the Veda as the basis of his view of life. His major contribution lies in his interpretation of Vedas as a scholar of Sanskrit. According to him, the Vedic hymns are chanted to the One Deity under many names, names which are used to express His qualities and powers. This view is in conformity with the Rig Veda Statement "Ekam Sat Viprah Bahuda Vadanti," meaning thereby that



the Truth is One, sages call it by different names. Swami Dayananda also affirmed that the truths of modern physical science are discoverable in the hymns. This view is also supported by the recent research on Vedas in India and abroad. Swami Dayananda found in the Vedas the law of life given by God to a human being, the secrets of creation, and the law of Nature by which the Omniscient governs the world. This view of Swami Dayananda was quite refreshing and in stark contradiction to the prevalent view of European scholars, who dubbed Vedas as a book of mythology and rituals. Sri Aurobindo, in an article entitled 'Dayananda And The Veda' published in 'Vedic Magazine', summed up the then prevailing position as under :-

"But there has always been this double and incompatible tradition about the Veda that it is a book of ritual and mythology and that it is a book of divine knowledge. The Brahmanas seized on the one tradition, the Upanishads on the other while Western scholarship, extending the hints of Sayana, seemed to class it forever as a ritual liturgy to Nature-Gods. The genius of the race looking through the eyes of Dayananda pierced behind the error of many centuries and received again the intuition of a timeless revelation and a divine truth given to humanity."

"In the matter of Vedic Interpretation I am convinced that whatever may be the final complete interpretation, Dayananda will be

honored as the first discoverer of the right clues. He has found the keys of the doors that time had closed and rent asunder the seals of the imprisoned fountains."

Swami Vivekananda also held great respect for the Vedas and declared in the Paris Congress on September 7, 1900, that the Vedas are the common source of all the various stages of Hinduism. He further disapproved of the shallowness in the approach of Western scholars in their Indian research. The traditions of India, he said, were true, and Western scholars should try to discover their hidden truths instead of writing fanciful articles. Swami Vivekananda realized that the Vedas had fallen out of vogue in Bengal and studied Panini's grammar to gain full proficiency in the Vedic language to restore the Vedas to Bengal. He was convinced that the regeneration of India required exposing the masses to the eternal truths of the Vedas and Upanishads. According to him, no man can be called a Hindu who does not admit the supreme authority of the Vedas, and the only point where all sects agree is that they all believe in the Vedas. The Vedas are vast, and to bring about transformation quickly, the keynote of his teaching was the Upanishads or Vedanta. As he himself said, "So I preach only the Upanishads. If you look, you will find that I have never quoted anything but the Upanishads. And of the Upanishads, it is only that one idea - strength. The quintessence of

Vedas and Vedanta and all lies in that one word."

Though Swami Vivekananda taught Vedanta in the West, he emphasized Karma-Yoga in the East along with Vedanta. He knew that studying the Vedas earnestly was necessary to gain the right interpretation of the Vedas, and he was keen on it until the very end of his life.

On the day of his Mahasamadhi, July 4, 1902, Swami Vivekananda asked Swami Shuddhananda to fetch the Shukla-Yajur-Veda from the library. When the latter had brought it, the Swami asked him to read the Mantra beginning with the words, "Sushumnah Suryarashmih," with the commentary on it. The disciple read the Mantra together with the commentary. When he had finished a part of it, Swamiji remarked: "This interpretation of the passage does not appeal to my mind. Whatever may be the commentator's interpretation of the word 'Sushumna,' the seed or the basis of what the Tantras, in later ages, speak of as the Sushumna nerve-channel in the body, is contained here, in this Vedic Mantra. You, my disciples, should try to discover the true import of these Mantras and make original reflections and commentaries on the Shastras." On the same day, he took a class of Brahmacharins for three hours on Sanskrit grammar. Some time later, Swamiji, accompanied by his brother-disciple Swami Premananda, went out

for a long walk and told him about his proposed scheme of founding a Vedic College in the monastery. To Swami Premananda's question, "What will be the good of studying the Vedas, Swamiji?" Swami Vivekananda replied, "It will kill superstitions."

Swami Dayananda established Arya Samaj in 1875 with the prime idea that all actions should be performed for benefiting mankind. Swami Dayananda was the first to give the call for 'Swarajya' --- 'India for Indians' in 1876, later taken up by Lokmanya Tilak. Arya Samaj aims at teaching the Vedas and prohibits idol-worship, animal sacrifice, child-marriage, and discrimination against women. Arya Samaj also established a chain of DAV Institutions.

Swami Dayananda wrote many books, with his major contribution being 'Satyarth Prakash,' which means The Light of Truth. It was originally written in Hindi and is divided into two parts. The first part gives the positive side of Vedic Religion, and the second part analyzes falsities of other religions. Swami Dayananda advocated the Doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation.

Swami Vivekananda established Ramakrishna Mission on May 1, 1897. Renunciation and Service are the twin National Ideals of modern India, according to Swamiji. The Institution that he started was to preach this ideal in its national and international aspects.

The main objects of the Mission were training of the monks for Self-realization and for service of the world in all possible ways. According to Sister Nivedita, Swami Vivekananda was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his motherland. He said, "I will go to hell cheerfully a thousand times if I can rouse my countrymen, immersed in Tamas (Inertia), and make them stand on their own feet and be Men, inspired with the spirit of Karma-Yoga."

It would perhaps be apt to conclude by quoting Sri Aurobindo from his another article 'Dayananda The Man and His Work' published in Vedic Magazine, 1915, in which he has paid a scintillating tribute to Swami Vivekananda also: "Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if there ever was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, "Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the soul of her children."

"Very different was the manner of working of Dayananda. Here was the one who did not infuse himself informally into the indeterminate soul of things, but

stamped his figure indelibly as in bronze on men and things. Here was one whose formal works are the very children of his body, children fair and robust and full of vitality, the image of their creator. Here was one who knew definitely and clearly the work he was sent to do, chose his materials, determined his conditions with a sovereign clairvoyance of the spirit and executed his conception with the puissant mastery of the born worker. As I regard the figure of this formidable artisan in God's workshop, images crowd on me which are all of battle and work and conquest and triumphant labor. Here, I say to myself, was a very soldier of Light, a warrior in God's world, a sculptor of men and institutions, a bold and rugged victor of the difficulties which matter presents to spirit. And the whole sums itself up to me in a powerful impression of spiritual practicality. The combination of these two words, usually so divorced from each other in our conceptions, seems to me the very definition of Dayananda."

We can imagine his soul crying still to us with our insufficient spring of manhood and action, "Be not content, O Indian, only to be infinitely and grow vaguely, but see what God intends thee to be, determine in the light of His inspiration to what thou shall grow. Seeing, hew that out of thyself, hew that out of Life. Be a thinker, but be also a doer; be a soul, but be also a man; be a servant of God, but be also a master of Nature!"

# ***Icon for the Youth: Swami Vivekanandaji***

**-Dr.Meenu Sodhi Sharma**

**Author and Ex-Lecturer S.M.J.N.P.G College, Haridwar**

Swami Vivekananda Ji was a pragmatic, magnetic, and charismatic personality. He was much ahead of his time and an orator par-excellence. The impact he made on his listeners was deep and thought-provoking, leaving a lifelong impression not to be erased by the passage of time. His ideals were crystal clear, with no grey areas anywhere. Being young, bright, and forceful in his ideas, he had the power to influence young minds in a very positive way, steering them towards virtuous influences.

He directed the youth to work towards a moral and spiritual way of life, imparting clear-cut and simple instructions for their personality development, spiritual, moral, and ethical enhancement, along with fostering faith in themselves and their ability to do good for people and their country. Swami Vivekananda Ji wanted the youth to follow the path of unselfishness, love, honesty, and truthfulness. Bravery was the watchword in his disciplined life, as weakness was akin to death according to him.

He urged the youth to hold onto their moral, ethical, and spiritual ideals

without fear and to march on the path of success, progress, and heroism. Their faith in their capabilities should not falter at any point because their strong character could support them to be upright, bold, and truthful at all times and under all circumstances.

Swami Vivekananda Ji's vision was quite futuristic about the path that the young generation had to take to reach their goals in life. His clarion call to the youth was,

***"Arise, Awake and stop not till the goal is reached."***

This famous quote highlights the importance of empowering young people to play an active role in the development of the country, eliminating poverty, and discrimination among many other things. He wanted the youth to rise up, wake up, and realize the power they had within themselves. That's why his birthday, falling on 12th January, is celebrated as National Youth Day. The government of India declared his birth anniversary as 'National Youth Day' in 1984, and since 1985, the event is celebrated in India every year to honor and inspire the dynamic energy and potential of youth, fostering a sense of

responsibility and leadership among the younger generation.

Swami Vivekananda Ji was a great believer in the potentiality of youth and wanted them to choose their steps and path with utmost care and deliberation. He emphasized the power of thoughts, saying,

***"We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think."***

Based on Swami Vivekananda Ji's wisdom, one can infer that one should not believe in fighting and warring because it does not obliterate tomorrow's troubles but takes away today's peace. He deeply believed in the power of exchanging good ideas, making people richer in their way of thinking.

It is also imperative to mention that he had an abiding faith in the divinity of each soul. He believed that each one of us could change our destiny by our hard work, dedication, honesty, optimism, virtue, and total control over ourselves. He also believed that we can achieve any goal in our life in a much disciplined way. Therefore, for people who have control over themselves, there is no slavery anymore.

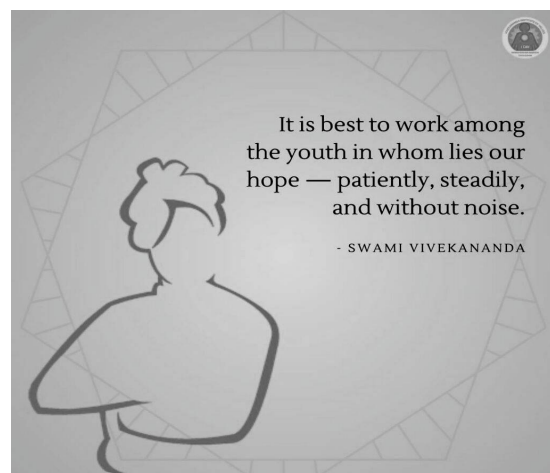
He also believed intensely in **giving happiness** to others because by making others happy we gain for ourselves the happiness and satisfaction that are long-lasting. So, helping others

should be our chief aim in life.

It is also pertinent to mention that he also instilled the **feeling of fearlessness** in the hearts of the youth as according to him, the whole secret of existence is to have no fear. The youth can achieve all their goals only if they inculcate the feeling of fearlessness.

Swami Vivekananda ji was a key figure in the introduction of Hindu philosophy of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world, and he is credited with bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion during the late 19th century. **Swamiji symbolizes the best that our ancient culture and tradition have to offer.** That is the reason for his relevance in the past, present, and future times to come. He will always remain the epitome of all the best that our country has to showcase and an inspiration for all times to come.

Therefore, to conclude, Swami Vivekananda ji and his ideas will remain immortal for all times to come.



# ***Conversations with Mother***

## ***(Excerpts from the poems of Swami Vivekananda)***

— Dr. Neeta Das

### **My Play is Done**

*(Spring, 1895, New York)*

Oh! I am sick of this unending force;  
these shows they please no more,  
This ever running, never  
reaching, nor e'en a distant  
glimpse of shore!

How I long to get beyond the crust  
Of name and form! Ah, open the gates;  
to me they open must.

Open the gates of light, O Mother, to me  
Thy tired son.  
I long, oh, long to return home!  
Mother, my play is done.

### **The Cup (Mother)**

This is your cup — the cup assigned  
to you from the beginning.  
Of fault and passion,  
ages long ago,  
In the deep years of yesterday,  
I know.

This is your road — a painful  
road and drear. I made the stones  
that never give yourest.  
But you, My child,  
must travel here.

### **No One to Blame**

*(16th May, 1895, New York)*

Each day my life I make or mar,  
Each deed begets its kind,  
Good good, bad bad,  
the tide once set,  
No one can stop or stem;  
No one but me to blame.

I cast off fear and vain remorse,  
I feel my Karma's sway  
I face the ghosts my deeds have raised—  
Joy, sorrow, censure, fame;  
No one but me to blame.  
I give up hate, I give up love,  
My thirst for life is gone;  
Eternal death is what I want,  
Nirvanam goes life's flame;  
No one is left to blame.

### **The Cup (Mother)**

This is your task.  
It has no joy  
nor grace,  
But it is not meant for any  
other hand,  
And in My universe hath  
measured place,  
Take it. I do not bid you understand.  
I bid you close your eyes to  
see My face.

### **My Play is Done**

(Spring, 1895, New York)

Take me, O Mother,  
to those shores where  
strifes for ever cease;  
Beyond all sorrows,  
beyond tears, beyond e'en  
earthly bliss;

Let never more delusive  
dreams veil off Thy face  
from me.  
My play is done; O Mother,  
break my chains and  
make me free!

### **Hold on yet a while, Brave Heart (Mother)**

(Written to H.H. The Mahārājā  
of Khetri, Rajputana)

If the sun by the cloud is  
hidden a bit, If the welkin  
shows but gloom,  
Still hold on yet a while, brave heart,  
The victory is sure to come.

Though the good and the wise  
in life are few, Yet theirs are  
the reins to lead,  
With thee are those who see  
afar, With thee is the Lord of  
might,

All blessings pour on thee,  
great soul, To thee may all  
come right!"

### **Kali the Mother**

(Written in Kashmir, houseboat  
in Dal Lake, after visiting Kshir  
Bhavani Temple, 1898)

The stars are blotted out, The  
clouds are covering clouds.  
Are the souls of a million  
lunatics, Just loosed from the  
prison-house,

Of Death begrimed and black-  
Scattering plagues and sorrows,  
Dancing mad with joy,  
Come, Mother, come!  
For terror is Thy name,  
Death is in thy breath,

Thou Time, the All-destroyer!  
Come, O Mother, come!

Who dares misery love,  
To him the Mother comes.



# पुष्प विकसित करने की कथा : ओकले हाउस से निवेदिता बोल रही हूँ

– प्रो. कल्याणमय सरकार,  
अवकाश प्राप्त अध्यापक (ढाका, बांग्लादेश)

– अनुवादक : डॉ. शैल पाण्डेय  
अवकाश प्राप्त प्राध्यापक, इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय

पूर्व कथा : रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा द्वारा आयोजित जपयज्ञ में भाग लेते समय निवेदिता कॉटेज (पुराना ओकले हाउस) के दिन थे—स्वप्न की तरह! हाउस के सामने खड़ी निवेदिता की मूर्ति और उसी के समीप विशाल देवदारु वृक्ष के तले लेखक की खण्डित भावनाएँ ‘निवेदिता की जुबानी’ पठित ग्रंथ के आलोक में, इस लेख में पुनर्गठित की गयी हैं। विभिन्न ग्रन्थों से ज्ञात होता है, अल्मोड़ा आगमन के बाद निवेदिता के मन में एक भयंकर द्वंद्व उठा था और उसका अवसान एक अप्राकृतिक अतीन्द्रिय अनुभव में हुआ था।

हे आचार्य, उत्ताल तरंगों के विपुल आंदोलन में यह कहाँ बही जा रही हूँ मैं! एक अनिर्णायक मानसिक पीड़ा क्रमशः तीव्रतर होकर मुझे प्रतिक्षण सैकड़ों टुकड़ों में विभक्त कर रही है प्रतीक्षा में रहती हूँ— नए प्रभात की, नए किसी संदेश की। तभी दूसरी ओर से और एक आँधी आकर मुझे हजारों मील दूर उड़ा ले जाती है। मैं अनुभव करती हूँ — मेरी जड़ें आज भी उसी यूरोप की मिट्टी में गुंथी हुई हैं, जो इस भारत भूमि की प्राचीनतम माटी में नवीन पत्र — पुष्पों में विकसित होने को उन्मुख है। प्राचीनभूमि के नए आवास में आपने मुझे जितना ही संयुक्त करना चाहा है— पुराने आवास के घनीभूत

संस्कारों ने नित्य नई दीवार खड़ी करके उसे रुद्ध करना चाहा है। नहीं जानती, इस युद्ध में कौन जीतेगा— दुर्विनीत शिष्या का अहंकार या एक उत्तम आचार्य का शिक्षण कौशल!

हे आचार्य, पिता-पितामह का क्रांतिकारी तेज और धर्मयाजक की विनम्रता— समान भाव से मेरी धमनी में प्रवाहित है। फिर भी, इस सब—खोने के खेल में मुझे जीतना ही होगा। ईसाई धर्मालय में प्रचलित पद्धतियों की सीमाबद्धता में मैं जड़वत् हो गयी थी। अकस्मात् ईश्वर के आशीर्वाद स्वरूप आपने आकर मुझे सुनाया था— सभी सीमाओं से ऊपर एक अनंत का आह्वान— विशाल के समक्ष आत्मसमर्पण— आत्मा की मुक्ति की वार्ता! मैं उसी सुदूर अमृत की प्यासी हूँ।

जनवरी (१८९८) में कोलकाता आई थी; अब मई महीना है कई दिन हुए, हिमालय की देवभूमि इस अल्मोड़ा नगरी में हमलोग आए हैं। मेरे ऊपर ‘विशेष कार्य का भार अर्पण करेंगे’— हे प्रभु, भारत के वृहत्तर कर्मयोग में स्वयं को उत्सर्ग करके मैं धन्य होऊँगी। ऋषि कण्ठ के गुरु गंभीर उत्थान—पतन में आपके युक्तिपूर्ण प्राणग्राही वर्णन में भारत का प्रत्येक धूलिकण पूत—पवित्र महार्घ्य हो जाता है। मैं



अवाक्, विस्मय से देखती रहती हूँ, नित्य नव आलोक से मेरी असीम शून्यता की डाली पूर्ण होती रहती है। फिर भी क्यों द्विधा मैं हूँ मैं! पाश्चात्य में आपको देखा था, बुद्ध की तरह प्रशांत मुद्रा में, “त्याग, मुक्ति-पिपासा, बंधनक्षय, अग्नितुल्य पवित्रता, साक्षीस्वरूप होने का आनंद, निराकार में साकार का पर्यावसान” – इन्हीं सब में रत। वर्तमान में भारतमाता की उन्नयन भावना में वे उच्चतर भाव क्या दूर हो गए? ये दोनों भाव परस्पर समान्तराल-सम्मिलन में अनुसरण किए जाते हैं – यह अद्भुत बात पाश्चात्य में तो किसी ने नहीं कहा था! इन सब नवीन बातों से मैं प्रतिक्षण चमत्कृत होती हूँ!

कितना सौभाग्य है मेरा, इस देवभूमि में गुरु सान्निध्य पाया है। सुदूर अतीत के किसी तपोवन में मानो शिष्यों से परिवेष्टित ऋषि का सान्निध्य – जिसे जितना, जिस रूप में आवश्यकता हो – उसी रूप में ग्रहण करो। भारतवर्ष में उच्चतर भाव संपद के विस्तार की यही पद्धति है। रूपहीन वह भाव संपद व्यक्ति विशेष के भावों में प्रकट होता है। शिक्षण काल में आचार्य एक अलौकिक पुरुष थे! उन्हें कोई ‘प्रभु भाव से’, ‘भ्राता भाव से’, ‘सखा भाव से’, अथवा कोई देखता है ‘संतान भाव’ से। अध्यात्म भाव विस्तारण की इस धारा में आप हैं मेरे ‘आचार्य’, मेरे ‘गुरु’, मेरे ‘पिता’। धन्य हूँ मैं – आपने मुझे कन्या के सम्मान से सम्मानित किया है। कितनी नासमझ थी मैं – भारतवर्ष में आने के पूर्व इस संपर्क का रसायन मेरे सामने सुस्पष्ट नहीं था। ईश्वर को धन्यवाद, कोलकाता में आपकी ही संन्यासी संतान स्वरूपानन्द जी ने मुझे ये सब सिखाया था। उनकी बातों से मैं वैराग्य जीवन में आत्मत्याग के महत्व की उपलब्धि कर पायी हूँ। उन्होंने कहा था – मनुष्य की हीनमन्यता, स्वार्थपरता, दूसरे के दुःख की उपेक्षा और उपहास

करना – इन सभी के अवसान से ‘सिंहासन पर बैठे ईश्वर के चरणों में नतजानु मनुष्य’ – यह एक आत्म प्रवंचना मात्र है। जगत में, सभी में अपने अस्तित्व का अनुभव ही स्वार्थपरता से ऊपर उठने का सोपान है एवं ‘चरम एकत्व का साक्षात्कार या मुक्तिलाभ’ ही स्वप्नमय जगत से छुटकारे का उपाय है।

हे आचार्य, लंदन में आपकी बातों से लगता ‘आध्यात्मिक जीवन सुनिर्दिष्ट एक उपलब्धि की वस्तु है जो केवल कुछ उपायों के अवलंबन से प्राप्त की जाती है। देवभूमि में आकर अनुभव कर रही हूँ, “भगवान के प्रति आकुल प्रेम” – प्रबल उत्कण्ठा से अनंत का अन्वेषण ही इसकी मूल बात है। प्रतिदिन प्रातः के सूर्य के साथ आपकी सौम्य उपस्थिति मुझे आत्मविभोर कर देती है। समग्र पृथ्वी के पुराण, दर्शन, इतिहास – ढूंढकर लाई हुई कथाओं से मैं समृद्ध होती हूँ इसी के बीच कभी यूरोपीय धर्म, संस्कार, स्वजातिबोध के अहंकार पर चोट खाकर मैं आपके साथ निर्विघ्न वितर्क करती हूँ मैं जानती हूँ, यह गंगोत्री मुख पर बालू के समान है। मैं स्वस्तिहीनता से मुरझा जाती हूँ जब आपके तीक्ष्ण वाक्यवाण मेरी इस स्वस्तिहीनता की अग्नि में पुनः घृत डालते हैं तो मैं क्लान्त – अवसन्न अनुभव करती हूँ। फिर जब याद आता है, आप तो केवल निर्देश देकर शांत हो जाने वाले साधारण गुरु नहीं हैं! तब यूरोप की जमीन पर दर्प से चलने वाली मिस मार्गिट नॉबल मेरे भीतर से दूर होकर भी अपने पदचिह्न छोड़ जाती है।

आप शिवतुल्य हैं – अपने में ही आपका विचरण है! जब जहाँ गयी हूँ, भारतभूमि से परिचय कराने के लिए – आपने उस स्थान के प्रत्येक विषय को विधेयात्मक और अत्यंत उत्कृष्ट रूप में हमारे सामने रखा है। जब चमकती आँखों में मग्नता लिए

आपने आवेगपूर्ण कण्ठ से वर्णन किया था— पटना में प्राचीन पाटलिपुत्र की कथा, काशी की माहात्म्य कथा के साथ गंगा के घाटों का सौन्दर्य, लखनऊ के शिल्प और विलास की वस्तुएँ, आर्यावर्त के विस्तीर्ण प्रांतर के कृषि क्षेत्रों में फैली प्रेम की प्रगाढ़ तन्मयता, अखण्ड भारतवर्ष के मनुष्यों की भाषा, खाद्याभ्यास, कृषि, गृहिणी जीवन के दिन भर के परिश्रम और अतिथि परायणता की बात—तब आपका परिव्राजक जीवन मेरे सम्मुख प्रत्यक्ष हो उठा था।

हे महान, आपकी महानता से विगत ११ मार्च का दिन मेरे जीवन में भी स्मरणीय रहेगा कोलकाता के स्टार थियेटर की भारी सभा में उस दिन 'मिस मूलर' और 'एनी बेसेण्ट' का नाम जोड़कर आपने कहा था— 'इंग्लैंड ने हमें और एक उपहार दिया है— मिस मार्गरेट नोबल इनसे हमलोगों को बहुत आशा है मैं अधिक बात न करके आपलोगों से मिस नोबल का परिचय करा रहा हूँ' इतने उच्च भावों से समन्वित यह परिचय जितना गौरवमय है, उससे कहीं अधिक कठिन है— उसकी मर्यादा की रक्षा करना सर जगदीश चंद्र बसु, माननीय आनंद चार्लु आदि विज्ञानियों के सम्मुख सभी भय—उत्कण्ठा की उपेक्षा करके 'इंग्लैंड में भारतीय आध्यात्मिकता का प्रभाव' विषय पर लंबे व्याख्यान के बाद मैंने अनुभव किया था, अनजाने में ही भारत—भूमि को मैंने अपना मानना आरंभ कर दिया था।

ब्राह्मणवाद से पिष्ट (पिसा हुआ) भारतवर्ष में किसी पाश्चात्य महिला या भिन्न धर्मावलम्बी के हिन्दुत्व ग्रहण और फिर आध्यात्मिक जीवन में प्रवेशाधिकार रुद्ध हो गया था। हे महान संस्कारक, विगत २५ मार्च को भारत के आध्यात्म आंदोलन के इतिहास में एक दुःसाहसिक कदम के रूप में आपने

हिंदुओं द्वारा अनुसरित त्याग मंत्र में अपनी इस गुणहीन कन्या को दीक्षित किया, 'निवेदिता' नाम से उसे अभिषिक्त किया पूजा के अंत में भगवान बुद्ध के नाम पर आशीर्वाद दिया— "जिन्होंने दूसरों के लिए जन्मग्रहण किया था। एवं बोधिलाभ के पूर्व पाँच सौ बार अपना जीवन दूसरों के लिए उत्सर्ग किया था, उन्हीं बुद्ध के अनुसरण के लिए ही हो तुम्हारी अभियात्रा !" इस कन्या के प्रति कितना अधिक विश्वास और आस्था— 'अपने दायित्व के स्मारक इस काव्यात्मक 'निवेदिता' नाम की मर्यादा वह अक्षुण्ण रखेगी।

इससे भी पहले विगत ३१ मार्च (१८९८) इस भिन्नदेशीय मार्गरेट के जीवन का वह परम सौभाग्यमय पवित्रतम दिन था। उसी दिन पहली बार मैं शंकित मन और कंपित हृदय से परमाराध्या श्री श्री माँ सारदादेवी के पास गयी थी। "आओ बेटी" कहकर शंकाहारिणी माँ ने मुझे प्रेम से अपने पास बैठाया, खिलाया और परम करुणा से स्नेह करते हुए 'खोकी' नाम से पुकारा। मैं यह सब देखकर विस्मित हुई थी—मेरे जीवन में ऐसा दुर्लभ मुहूर्त भी अपेक्षा में था!

गंगा के उस पार उसी पुराने घर में श्रीमती ओली बुल (धीरा माता, श्रीमती मैकलाउड (जया) के साथ मैं भी रहती थी। आपने कहा था 'धीरा माता का पूरा घर ही स्वर्गीय प्रेम से भरा है। भोर में ही आप आकर उमा—महेश्वर, अथवा राधा—कृष्ण की कथा एवं गीत सुनाते। इनके साथ जुड़े रहते— प्राचीन इतिहास, उपकथा, समाज—संस्कृति, जातिभेद और लोकाचार की अद्भुत परिणति और असंगति की कहानी। भारतमाता मानों आपके ही मुख का अवलंबन करके अंतिम और श्रेष्ठ पुराण रूप में स्वयं

प्रकट होतीं। फिर जब भारतीय भाव राशि के साथ विभिन्न पाश्चात्य विषयों की समानता सामने लाते, तो मुझे लगता-आप ही प्राच्य-प्रतीच्य के सेतुबंधन हैं ! वही धर्मोपदेशक, समन्वयकारी, वेदांतकेसरी विवेकानंद ही इस समय अपनी वाणी के रूपायन में प्रवृत्त दृढ़ प्रतिज्ञ कर्मयोगी हैं-और मैं उनके महान कर्मयज्ञ में एक अत्यंत लघु अर्घ्य कण मात्र हूँ कालिमायुक्त सती प्रथा को दूर करने वाले राजा राममोहन, विधवा विवाह को कानून सम्मत बनाने वाले विद्यासागर एवं विज्ञानमनस्क समाज गढ़ने वाले निरीश्वरवादी डेविड हेयर- इनकी कहानियाँ मुझे समझाई हैं - मैं किसी धारावाहिकता का परवर्ती भाग होने चली हूँ।

मुझे अब यूरोप के मेघाच्छन्न आकाश से रौद्र आलोकित भारतभूमि की उत्सर्गित जीवन धारा में उतरना होगा। हे महान अभिभावक, आपने जान लिया है- मार्गरेट के स्वजाति बोध की दीवार को चूर्ण करके निवेदिता के अंकुर के उद्गम के लिए केवल कोमल हाथों से वारि - सिंचन ही पर्याप्त नहीं है। वह जो, आपको ही अपना सर्वस्व समझकर, समुद्र पार कर आई है और जिसने विश्वास किया है- 'भारत की सामाजिक एवं धार्मिक रीति-नीति, आचार-विचार आध्यात्मिकता पर ही प्रतिष्ठित है और इस भारत को समझने के लिए नेत्रों में आध्यात्मिकता का अंजन लगाना होगा। तब भी क्यों हे पिता, इस अबोध कन्या के हृदय में घनीभूत द्वंद्व और मान-अभिमान का इतना प्रभाव है!

हे महान कर्मयोगी, मैं समझ गयी हूँ-मनुष्य के कल्याण के लिए आत्मत्याग ही धर्म है, वहाँ अपना शरीर अत्यंत तुच्छ है! ३० मार्च को अपने स्वास्थ्य की उन्नति के लिए दार्जिलिंग यात्रा के पूर्व

मुझे कार्य-संपादिका बनाकर 'प्लेग सेवा कमेटी' आप बना गए। किन्तु, प्लेग ज्यादा फैल गया है, यह सुनकर खाना-पीना और विश्राम छोड़कर आप कोलकाता लौट आए। हम नगर की गली-गली, घर-घर की सफाई में उतर पड़े। मनुष्य का मनोबल बढ़ाने के लिए, आपके निर्देश पर पर्चे बनाकर घर-घर बाँट आई, जिसका मर्मार्थ था- 'रामकृष्ण मिशन जनगण के पास खड़े होकर मनुष्य की सेवा में अर्थ और सामर्थ्य को निःसंकोच लगाएगा। आपके पवित्र हाथों से ही मानव सेवा यज्ञ में मेरा अभिषेक हुआ।

कृपामयी श्री श्री माँ के आशीर्वाद से कुछ दिनों में ही प्लेग का उत्पात कम हो गया किन्तु अनथक परिश्रम से आपका शरीर और दुर्बल हो गया। हिमालय के आह्वान की अब और उपेक्षा करना उचित नहीं था। ११ मई (१८९८) को हावड़ा से ट्रेन में तुरियानंदजी, निरंजनानन्द जी, सदानन्दजी, स्वरूपानन्द जी, श्रीमती ओली बुल, श्रीमती पैटर्सन, श्रीमती जोसेफिन मैकलाउड के साथ दयावश इस कन्या को भी साथ ले लिया। यात्रा पथ में अनेक शहर-नगर, विस्तृत मैदान, दूर-दूर तक फैले खेत-खलिहान और उनसे जुड़ा ग्रामीण भारत-यह मेरा प्रथम प्रत्यक्ष दर्शन था। हे ऋषि श्रेष्ठ -यात्रा मार्ग में आपसे भारतीय मूल्यबोध, आध्यात्मिकता, संस्कृति, जीवनयात्रा, जीव वैचित्र्य- इन सभी के वर्णन में मैंने अनुभव किया-वैचित्र्यमय वृहत् इस महान भारतवर्ष को आपने एक और अखण्ड रूप में अनुभव किया है। जो भारत, पाश्चात्यवासी तो दूर की बात है, सामान्य भारतीय की धारणा से भी परे है।

१३ मई को काठगोदाम स्टेशन पर उतरकर नैनीताल की ओर ऊर्ध्वमुखी यात्रा आरंभ हुई

हिमालय पर्वत पर यह मेरा प्रथम आरोहण था—कभी पैदल तो कभी तांगे में। आप थे डांडी पर। पर्वत से सटकर कभी खड़ी चढ़ाई और कभी ढाल पर, संकीर्ण फिसलन भरे रास्तों पर विशाल-विशाल वृक्षों की छाया—दिन के प्रकाश में भी संध्या का अंधकार! मशालधारी आगे-आगे चल रहे थे, मार्ग में बाघ-भालुओं का भय था। आप निर्लिप्त, निर्विकार भाव से शिव महात्म्य वर्णन में मग्न थे! हे वीरेश्वर, ‘अतिदूर पर्वत शिखर पर मौनी महादेव की निःसंगता की आकांक्षा और अनंत ध्यान तन्मयता के वर्णन’ सुनते हुए मुग्धभाव से पथ की क्लांति की उपेक्षा करते हुए चार दिन बाद हमलोग हिमालय की साढ़े पाँच हजार फुट ऊँचाई पर अवस्थित इस अल्मोड़ा नगरी में पहुँचे थे। हे महात्मन्, यात्रा के मध्य नैनीताल में आपके प्रिय भक्त राजा अजीत सिंह के साथ आकस्मिक भेंट हुई, अपांक्तेय (जिनके साथ एक पंक्ति में कोई बैठना नहीं चाहता) बाई जी\* लोगों के साथ भी आपका वार्तालाप एवं एक मुस्लिम भक्त की वह मार्मिक उक्ति—“स्वामीजी, भविष्य में यदि लोग आपको अवतार कहने का दावा करें, तो स्मरण रखिएगा कि मैं मुसलमान\*\* होकर भी उन सबमें अग्रणी रहूँगा”।—ये तीनों अलौकिक स्मृतियाँ मेरे मन में अविस्मरणीय रहेंगी।

अल्मोड़ा में आपलोग ‘थॉम्पसन हाऊस’ में ठहरे थे और हमलोग वहाँ से प्रायः आधा मील दूर स्थित ‘ओकले हाऊस’ में रुके थे। उस ओकले हाऊस का वातावरण बड़ा ही रमणीय था। पंक्तिबद्ध सजे हुए पहाड़ों के शिखर पर यह अतिथिशाला है। लंबे भवन के बरामदे और कक्ष भी बहुत प्रशस्त हैं। चारों तरफ सदियों पुराने पाइन, देवदारु, ओक और उदयपद्मों की छाया है। प्रातः काल सामने के शिखरों पर नौकाकृति पात्रों में मक्खन सदृश मेघ जमे

रहते हैं। दाएँ, बाएँ, सामने जिधर भी दृष्टि जाती है, ऊँचे से ऊँचे पर्वत शिखर पर खुला आकाश दिखाई पड़ता है। कहीं मेघों की चादर से ढँका हुआ तो कहीं श्वेत-शुभ्र तुषार मुकुट से सुशोभित; सुबह-शाम उन्मुख होकर निहारती रहती हूँ—पूर्वराग अथवा अंतराग की छटा से वह मुकुट कब स्वर्णोज्ज्वल हो उठेगा और उसकी आभा से उससे अधिक उज्ज्वल गैरिक गर्मजोशी लिए हमारे आचार्यदेव का शुभागमन होगा। प्रतिदिन प्रातः काल में शास्त्रालोचना—कलकत्ते का वही अभ्यास!

देवभूमि में गुरु का सान्निध्य जैसे दुर्लभ था वैसे ही असहनीय थी—अप्रत्याशित द्वंद्वजात मेरी मर्म पीड़ा! आपकी शिक्षा पद्धति के साथ मेरे अहंकार की टकराहट से मैं दुविधाग्रस्त थी। भारतीय रमणीय इष्ट देवता के प्रति श्रद्धा भाव, जिस प्रकार लंबे समय के शुभ संस्कार का परिणाम है, अंग्रेज-सजातिबोध भी ठीक उसी प्रकार मेरी नस-नस में विद्यमान था। भारत के प्रत्येक स्थावर-जंगम, अणु-परमाणु को जब आप पूत-पवित्र कहते हुए उनकी प्रतिष्ठा में व्यस्त रहते तब मेरी धमनियों में बहता हुआ यूरोपीय नील रक्त पुनः उबल उठता। इसीलिए कटाक्ष करते हुए कह बैठती—“एक जाति में सभी देवता हैं।” आपके लिए इस अहंकार प्रदर्शन का अर्थ था—‘धृष्टता’। मैं स्वयं को रोक नहीं पाती! संचित संस्कार प्रायः ही चिंतन जगत में झंझावात की तरह उमड़कर मुझे अस्त-व्यस्त कर देते हैं।

हे महान शिक्षक, पृथ्वी पर जिस विषय में जो श्रेष्ठ है—आप द्विधाहीन कण्ठ से उसकी प्रशंसा करते हैं। धर्म, शिल्प, राज्य संचालन इत्यादि उच्च भाव एवं सभ्यता-संस्कृति के जनक रूप में यूरोप आपकी दृष्टि में महान है। मध्यम प्रकाश में सौन्दर्य

बिखेरता आगरे का ताजमहल एवं सिकंदरा के अनाच्छादित समाधि के वर्णन में आपके कण्ठ के भावुकतावश अवरुद्ध हो जाने पर मैं भी दुःखी हो जाती। आपने बताया, आर्यों का नेतृत्व विचार जरा भी आसान नहीं है। मैंने यह भी जाना— भारतीय सभ्यता में क्षत्रियों के जोश, स्पर्धा एवं उदारता ने ही विकास एवं अनुशासन प्रसार में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है क्योंकि ब्राह्मण सदा से ही परंपरागत आचार—विचार के पोषक रहे हैं रामचन्द्र, श्रीकृष्ण, भगवान बुद्ध—युग प्रयोजन हेतु इनमें से किसी ने भी ब्राह्मण कुल में जन्म नहीं लिया था!

हे योगिवर, सूर्योदय के समय अंगुली से दूर निर्देश करते हुए आपने कहा था— “यह श्वेत तुषारवृत शिखर ही शिव हैं, और उस पर प्रसारित जो स्वर्णिम आलोक है वही जगज्जननी हैं ईश्वर जगत् के भीतर या बाहर नहीं है, जगत् ही ईश्वर एवं ईश्वर ही जगत् है।” बुद्ध के त्याग एवं दया की बातें बताते हुए आपकी देहकान्ति में भाव—भक्ति की दिव्य आभा जब उज्ज्वल हो उठती तब मैं रोमांचित होकर सोचने लगती—यह किस शिव शक्ति की कृपा मुझ पर हुई है! सिर उठाए हिमालय शिखर की भांति शांत मन से ‘अहं वेद्मि शुको वेत्ति व्यासो वेत्ति न वेत्ति वा’—इस शिव वाक्य का उच्चारण करते समय आपके मुख पर विराजित अपूर्व ज्योति देखकर मैंने अनुभव किया—आपकी निरीक्षण क्षमता की सीमा अनन्त आनंद समुद्र की अतल गहराई जितनी है!

इतने पर भी संदिग्ध मन से मैं पूछ बैठी—‘आप क्या ईसाई धर्म से प्रभावित हैं?’ आपने अद्भुत उदाहरण देते हुए नेतिवाचक उत्तर दिया—ईसाई धर्म के प्रचारक, आपके उदार शिक्षक प्रोफेसर हेस्टी ने ही आपको ‘श्रीरामकृष्ण देव’ के पास भेजा

था एवं स्कॉटलैंड लौटने के पूर्व उन्होंने बार—बार आपसे कहा था—“हाँ बेटा, तुमने ठीक कहा था! तुमने ठीक ही कहा था! वास्तव में सब ईश्वर है!”

देवभूमि के पवित्र वातावरण में स्वर्गीय आनंदधारा प्रवाहित हो रही थी मेघाच्छन्न आकाश क्षण भर बाद ही रौद्र उज्ज्वल हँसी से प्रसन्न हो उठता था। घनी हरियाली से ढँके दूर स्थित पर्वतों को छूकर धवल मेघों का मायावी मेला उड़ता हुआ आगे बढ़ जाता। इन सबके बीच ही कभी—कभी शिव—शुभ्र पर्वत शिखर की झलक दिखाई पड़ जाती। मंद—मंद बर्फीली हवाओं से हिलते पाइन—पल्लवों से उत्पन्न सुर—संगीत मन को उस शांत वातावरण में एकाग्र कर देने वाला था। पर, मेरे स्नायु केन्द्र के तुमुल झंझावात में यह स्वर्गीय आयोजन क्या सम्पूर्ण विफल हो जाएगा? कहाँ, इसका अंत कितनी दूर है?

हे गुरुदेव, आपको नितान्त एक विदेशी धर्मयाजक मानकर मैं वही लंदन की मार्गरेट निजी सीमित ज्ञान को मिलाने के प्रयास में प्रतिदिन कहीं स्वयं सीमाबद्ध तो नहीं होती जा रही हूँ! ‘चीनवासी असत्य परायण’ होते हैं—मेरे ऐसा कहने पर मेरे अहंकार को दूर करने के लिए आपने कहा था—“अंग्रेज़ क्या सदा उचित स्थान पर दुःख एवं सुख का अनुभव करते हैं?” सत्य के स्वरूप उन्मोचन के लिए ऐसे कठोर वाक्यों का प्रयोग ही आपकी शिक्षा—पद्धति है। सफ़ेद वस्तु आपके वर्णन से कभी भी धूमिल नहीं हो सकती! आपकी दृष्टि में, व्यक्तिगत आनुगत्य की अपेक्षा आदर्शवादी आनुगत्य का स्थान बहुत ऊँचा है। इसीलिए मैंने भी दृढ़ निश्चय किया है—‘जितनी भी प्रतिकूलताएँ क्यों न उपस्थित हों, मनुष्य की सेवा में उत्सर्गित यह जीवन उसकी सेवा—संकल्प से कभी पीछे नहीं हटेगा’ ”अकस्मात् अंध

विश्वास अथवा भावप्रवणता की वेदी पर आत्मबलिदान' नहीं - श्रद्धा भक्तियुक्त उस पराजय में भी मेरी ही जीत होगी

मेरी यह सब मर्म पीड़ा साथियों की दृष्टि में अब और उपेक्षित नहीं थी। विशेषतः धीरा माता, जो शिक्षण काल में इस कठोरता के कारण मेरे व्यर्थ मनोरथ हो जाने की आशंका से भविष्य में अनाकांक्षित समय की बातें सोचकर शंकित थीं। मैं नहीं जानती, इस बीच आपके साथ उनकी क्या बातें हुई थीं। आप आज शाम को भी हमारे ओकले हाऊस वाले निवास पर आए थे। उदासी की छाया से मेरा हृदय-मन चाहे जितना भी घिरा हो-आपका शुभागमन, हे प्रभु, मेरे लिए सदा प्रतीक्षित था!

प्रशस्त बरामदे में उस समय सभी उपस्थित थे। दूर पर्वतों की हरियाली क्रमशः घनी काली होकर संध्या के अंधकार में विलीन हो गयी थी। आकाश में शुक्ल पक्ष का शिशु चाँद मुस्कुरा रहा था। उसके मंद प्रकाश में हाऊस का आँगन आज विशेष रूप से आलोकित हो उठा था। मंद-मंद बहती हवा से हिलते हुए देवदारु और पाइन की डालियाँ सामने के आँगन में आलोक-छाया के मायावी दृश्य पटल की रचना कर रही थीं। मेरे हृदय आकाश में भी उसी आलोक-छाया का प्रतिबिम्ब था! मैं नहीं जानती कि आप मेरे लिए क्या पुरस्कार या तिरस्कार लेकर आए थे! हो सकता है, उसके सदमे से आकाश के ये स्वप्नमय नक्षत्र म्लान-निष्प्रभ होकर हिमालय की किसी गिरि कन्दरा में विलीन हो जाएंगे अथवा, महाकाल सापेक्ष क्षण भर के लिए ही इस भारतीय आकाश में विवेक ज्योति बनकर दैदीप्यमान हो जाएंगे! शुक्ला चाँद के मद्धिम आलोक में मैं स्पष्ट देख सकी- आपकी सदा प्रसन्न मुखमुद्रा वास्तव में

किसी नए समाचार की अपेक्षा में थी!

गंभीर और शांत स्वर में आपने धीरे-धीरे बोलना आरंभ किया- “.....मैं अकेला जंगल की ओर जा रहा हूँ; निर्जन वास की इच्छा है और जब लौटूँगा, शांति लेकर आऊँगा”। तब भी उन बातों का गूढ़ रहस्य मेरी समझ में स्पष्ट नहीं था। आनंद-वेदना का सम्मिश्रित अनुभव हुआ- दीर्घ दिनों से पिंजड़ाबद्ध पक्षी का असीम आकाश में उड़ने का स्वप्न, जैसे मुझे बुलाते हुए पुनः असीम नीलिमा में विलीन हो गया। मेरी हृदयतंत्री में एक अस्पष्ट अनिवर्चनीय सुप्त सुर रेतीली लहरों की तरह तेजी से उमड़कर पल भर में क्या सागर की गहराई में विलीन हो गया! उस सुर को समझने से पूर्व ही सुनाई पड़ा- दिव्य आवेगपूर्ण कण्ठ से स्निग्ध चाँदनी जैसे मधुमय आपका आह्वान-“...आओ, हम भी इस नवीन चंद्रमा के साथ नवजीवन आरंभ करें”। ...सामने आपकी दोनों बाहें प्रसारित थीं। अचानक कोई अदृश्य शक्ति मुझपर क्रियाशील हुई- भारतीय रीति से अनभ्यस्त आपकी यह अबाध्य कन्या न जाने कब मोहाविष्ट होकर यंत्रचालित सी गुरु के सम्मुख हाथ जोड़े नतमस्तक होकर श्री चरणों की वंदना में मग्न हो गयी थी! मेरे सिर पर आपके पवित्र हाथ थे और हृदय के अंतस्तल से निकली स्वर्गीय वाणी का वर्षण मुझपर हो रहा था। पल भर में मेरे तन-मन में बिजली सी दौड़ गयी। अज्ञानता से उत्पन्न समस्त विद्रोह का अवसान हुआ और स्वप्न से जागने जैसा अनुभव हुआ- मैं जैसे समस्त आनंद-वेदना, सुख-दुःख, हास्य-रुदन से ऊपर कोई नवजात सत्ता थी। जीवन के, समस्त संशय-द्वंद के सहसा अवसान के इस नाटकीय मुहूर्त के कुछ क्षण पहले यह सब स्वप्नातीत था। अपूर्व माधुर्यमण्डित उस मिलन मुहूर्त के आच्छादन में स्मरण हो आया- बहुत-बहुत वर्ष पूर्व

श्रीरामकृष्ण ने अपने शिष्यों से कहा था—“ऐसा दिन आएगा, जब उनके प्राणप्रिय ‘नरेंद्र’ में स्पर्श मात्र से ज्ञानवान करने की जो जन्मजात शक्ति है, उसका विकास होगा”। “मैंने अनुभव किया, मैं एक अनंत सत्ता में विलीन हो गयी हूँ और उस गहन सत्ता का स्वरूप अहंपूर्ण विचार के द्वारा मैं कभी जान नहीं पायी”

(\* संभवतः इन्हीं बाई जी लोगों में ही किसी ने खेतड़ी राज्यसभा में “प्रभु मेरे अवगुण चित न धरो/ समदर्शी है नाम तुम्हारो / चाहे तो पार करो! यह गीत गाकर स्वामीजी की भ्रांति को दूर कर दिया था।

\* \* १० जून को लिखे गए स्वामीजी के एक पत्र के अनुसार अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है कि वे थे— मुहम्मद सरफराज हुसैन)

स्वप्न पुनर्गठन में सहायक ग्रंथ –

१. स्वामी गंभीरानंद रचित ‘युगनायक विवेकानंद’।
२. भगिनी निवेदिता रचित ‘स्वामीजी के जे रूप देखियाछी’।
३. भगिनी निवेदिता रचित ‘स्वामीजी सहित हिमालये’।
४. स्वामी अनीशानन्द रचित ‘विवेकानंदर स्वप्नभूमि’।
५. रामकृष्ण कुटीर से प्रकाशित ‘अल्मोड़ा श्रीरामकृष्ण कुटीर: एकटि इतिवृत्त’।
६. गर्ट्रूड एमर्सन सेन रचित ‘आलोकक्षेत्र अल्मोड़ा’।
७. रामकृष्ण मिशन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ कल्चर से प्रकाशित ‘परिव्राजक स्वामीजी’।

🌀 बांग्ला भाषा से हिंदी में अनुवाद



भगिनी निवेदिता को आशीर्वाद देते हुए स्वामी विवेकानंद

# विवेकानंदमय बोशी सेन का व्यावहारिक योग

डॉ. दिवा भट्ट

पूर्व प्राध्यापक, कुमाऊँ विश्वविद्यालय, नैनीताल

उस बालक की स्मरण शक्ति, प्रखर बुद्धि, सत्य निष्ठा, नैतिकता तथा विद्यालय में उसकी शैक्षिक प्रगति को देखते हुए उसके पिता प्रसन्न थे कि परिवार की शिक्षण परंपरा को आगे बढ़ाकर वह उनका सपना पूरा करेगा। वे उसे सादगी, नैतिकता आदि चारित्रिक गुणों की शिक्षा के साथ-साथ हृदय से आशीर्वाद भी देते रहते थे। ऐसे स्नेहिल और चरित्रवान पिता की आकस्मिक मृत्यु ने 12 वर्ष के उस बालक के सामने एक विकट प्रश्न खड़ा कर दिया कि अब क्या होगा? परिवार का आर्थिक आधार टूट चुका था। आगे पढ़ाई कैसे होगी? उस समय तो बालक का एकमात्र जीवन लक्ष्य पढ़ना ही था। भीतर से उसे लगता था कि एक विद्वान पिता का पुत्र होना ही काफी नहीं है; पिता की आत्मा तो उनके पदचिह्नों पर चलकर उनके सपनों को पूरा करने से ही सुखी होगी। मन ही मन अनेक उपाय सोचने के पश्चात् अंत में उसने अपनी दीदी के ससुराल जाकर आगे पढ़ने का विचार पक्का कर लिया। विवाहित बहन के घर पर रहना सामाजिक दृष्टि से अनुचित था, किंतु यह पढ़ाई छोड़ने से कम बुरा था। मां को इसका पता चलता तो वह रोने लगतीं और वह जा नहीं पाता। एक दिन सुबह जब मां जल्दी उठकर रसोई में नाश्ता तैयार कर रही थी; तब बालक ने खिड़की से अंतिम बार मां के दर्शन किए और चुपके से चल दिया।

रामेश्वर सेन और प्रसन्नमई के घर पर 22-09-1887 को जन्मा यह होनहार बालक भविष्य

का सुविख्यात वैज्ञानिक डॉक्टर बोशी सेन था; जिसका अनेक वैज्ञानिक शोधों के अतिरिक्त भारत की कृषि क्रांति तथा देश को खाद्योत्पादन में आत्मनिर्भर बनाने में बहुत बड़ा योगदान रहा।

कोलकाता के सेंट जेवियर्स कॉलेज में पढ़ते समय एक दिन बोशी के एक मित्र विभूति घोष उन्हें अपने साथ बेलूर मठ ले गए। वहां वे एक लगभग नग्न अवस्था में पड़े हुए साधु के कक्ष में पहुंचे; जो मधुमेह और दमे की बीमारी से अत्यधिक ग्रस्त थे। साधु ने उनको आलोचनात्मक दृष्टि से देखा और उनके बालों, कपड़ों और चप्पलों आदि पर तीखी टिप्पणी करते हुए उन्हें टोका; “तुम्हें नहीं मालूम कि यह स्थान विवेकानंद के अपने खून से निर्मित हुआ है?”

यह थे स्वामी सदानंद; स्वामी विवेकानंद के प्रथम दीक्षित शिष्य। परित्राजक के रूप में भारत भ्रमण करते समय स्वामी विवेकानंद की हाथरस रेलवे स्टेशन पर वहां के स्टेशन मास्टर शरत चंद्र गुप्ता से प्रथम भेंट हुई थी। शरत चंद्र स्वामी जी के तेज और ज्ञान से प्रभावित होकर उनके साथ चल पड़े थे। उनके अनुनय पर स्वामीजी ने उन्हें दीक्षा दी और उनका सन्यासी नाम स्वामी सदानंद रखा। आगे जाकर रामकृष्ण मिशन के उद्देश्यों को आगे बढ़ाने में सदानंद ने बहुत बड़ा योगदान दिया। सन् 1909 में जब विद्यार्थी बोशी सेन उनसे मिले; तब तक वे रोग की तीव्रता के कारण शारीरिक रूप से अत्यंत और



दुर्बल हो चुके थे। उनसे प्रथम भेंट में ही कटु आलोचना मिलने के बाद भी जब दूसरी बार उनके मित्र ने उनसे बेलूर मठ चलने के लिए कहा तो वह तैयार हो गए। वहां बातचीत के बीच सदानंद ने अचानक पूछा; “क्या तुम धूम्रपान करते हो?” “हां।” बोशी ने कहा।



स्वामी सदानंद

उन्होंने बोशी को अपना हुक्का पीने को दे दिया। जाते समय उसकी आंखों में झांकते हुए बोले; “मेरा जो कुछ भी है; वह तुम्हारा है।”

बोशी को अपने पूरे शरीर में सिहरन महसूस हुई। गर्मियों की छुट्टियों में जब वह घर गए थे; तब एक दिन अचानक उन्हें भगिनी निवेदिता का तार मिला। लिखा था; “क्या तुम स्वामी सदानंद की सेवा कर सकते हो?”

उन्होंने हां तो कह दिया, लेकिन आर्थिक

आधार कुछ भी नहीं था। फिर भी मन में सोच लिया कि कहीं से भी मांगना पड़े या उधार लेना पड़े; करना है। उन दिनों रामकृष्ण मिशन के पास इतनी सुविधा नहीं थी कि वह अपने ही किसी बीमार साधु की भी देखभाल और इलाज कर सके। सदानंद की गंभीर स्थिति से सभी चिंतित थे कि उन्हें कहां रखा जाए और कौन उनकी सेवा करेगा। इस समस्या पर चर्चा चल ही रही थी कि उन्होंने स्वयं ही कह दिया कि “मेरी देखभाल बोशी करेगा।”

सदानंद भगिनी निवेदिता के गुरु भाई थे। जब वह पहली बार भारत आई थीं तो स्वामीजी के निर्देश पर सदानंद ने ही उन्हें बांग्ला भाषा सिखाई थी और व्याख्यान इत्यादि हेतु विभिन्न स्थानों की यात्रा में उनको सहयोग और मार्गदर्शन दिया था। निवेदिता इस समय कलकत्ता में बालिकाओं तथा बाल विधवाओं के लिए विद्यालय चला रही थीं। उन्होंने सदानंद के लिए कलकत्ता में 20 प्रति माह किराए पर एक छोटा-सा घर लिया। उसी में सदानंद के साथ बोशी और उनके छोटे भाई ताबू (मोतेश्वर) रहने लगे। दोनों भाई पढ़ाई के साथ-साथ बारी-बारी से गुरु की सेवा भी करते थे। गुरु का स्वभाव और व्यवहार अत्यंत अस्थिर और अनिश्चित था। कभी वे बहुत प्रसन्न होते, खूब प्यार से बातें करते तो कभी एकाएक अत्यधिक उत्तेजित होजाते। छोटी - सी बात पर चिल्ला उठते। उनकी बात न मानने पर एक बार उन्होंने पलंग के नीचे से पेशाब का बर्तन उठाकर बोशी पर फेंक दिया। बाद में अपने इस आचरण पर स्वयं प्रतिक्रिया देते हुए उन्होंने कहा था; “तुम जानते हो; मुझे अपनी छाती चीर कर तुम्हें यहां अपने हृदय में बिठाना है? लेकिन तुम्हें सरल और सुखकर रास्ते से आगे ले जाने का समय मेरे पास नहीं है। मुझे तुम्हें धक्का देकर सीधे उच्च स्तर तक पहुंचाना है।”

प्रत्येक प्रसंग पर बोशी को समझाते हुए उन्होंने उसे जीवन-व्यवहार की छोटी-छोटी बातों से लेकर आध्यात्मिक जीवन के रहस्यों तक का समस्त ज्ञान दिया था। वे कहते थे कि ईश्वर को अनुभव करने के लिए साधु बनना या संसार के कर्तव्यों का त्याग करना आवश्यक नहीं है। उनको स्वामी विवेकानंद के विषय में जो भी अनुभूतियां होती थीं; वह सब उन्होंने बोशी को दे दीं। वे कहा करते; “मैं तुम्हें स्वामी जी के पास ले जा सकता हूं बस।” 1909 से 1911 तक दोनों भाइयों ने जिस समर्पण भाव से उनकी सेवा की; वह चकित करने वाला था। इस अवधि में गुरु ने भी कठोर प्रशिक्षण देकर उन्हें आध्यात्मिकता के उच्च शिखर पर पहुँचा दिया।

सन् 1911 में गुरु सदानंद के देहत्याग के बाद बोशी सेन रामकृष्ण मिशन के सन्यासी बनने की आकांक्षा लेकर सारदा माँ के पास गए; तो उनके कुछ कहने से पहले ही माँ के मुँह से निकल पड़ा; “बोशी को किसी दीक्षा की आवश्यकता नहीं।” वस्तुतः माँ पहले ही जान गई थीं कि बोशी के गुरु ने अपने आचरण, विभिन्न उदाहरणों और उपदेशों से उन्हें पहले ही सब कुछ बता रखा है। अपनी बुद्धि का विकास आध्यात्मिक मार्ग पर चलकर करते हुए बोशी समझ चुके थे कि बुद्धि एक सीमा तक सहायक होती है। उसके आगे फिर वह एक कमजोर साधन बन जाती है। जीवन के प्रत्येक प्रसंग पर वे विवेकानंद के द्वारा दिए गए मानकों पर ही सत्य की कसौटी करते थे। स्वामी जी कहा करते थे कि “जो भी वस्तु तुम्हें शारीरिक, बौद्धिक या आध्यात्मिक रूप से कमजोर बनाती है; वह सत्य नहीं हो सकती। उसका विष की भांति त्याग करो।”

साधु बनने की आकांक्षा लेकर कुछ समय

पश्चात् बोशी पुनः बेलूर मठ जाकर रामकृष्ण मिशन के प्रथम अध्यक्ष स्वामी ब्रह्मानंद जी से मिले। ब्रह्मानंदजी रामकृष्ण परमहंस की अंतरंग शिष्य मंडली में विवेकानंद के गुरु भाई थे। उनके पास पहुंचते ही उन्होंने बोशी से पूछा; “विज्ञान में अद्यतन क्या चल रहा है बोशी ?” बोशी बताते चले गए। उन्हें बीच में ही रोक कर ब्रह्मानंद जी बोले; “तुम इसमें ही लगे रहो बोशी, तुम्हें सब कुछ अपने विज्ञान से मिल जाएगा।”



स्वामी ब्रह्मानंद

उस क्षण बोशी को सब कुछ पा लेने की अनुभूति हुई। वस्तुतः किसी भी तत्त्व, विषय या कार्य के प्रति पूर्ण निष्ठा, लगन और एकाग्रता ही सत्य की परम खोज है; यह तथ्य बोशी के भीतर समा चुका

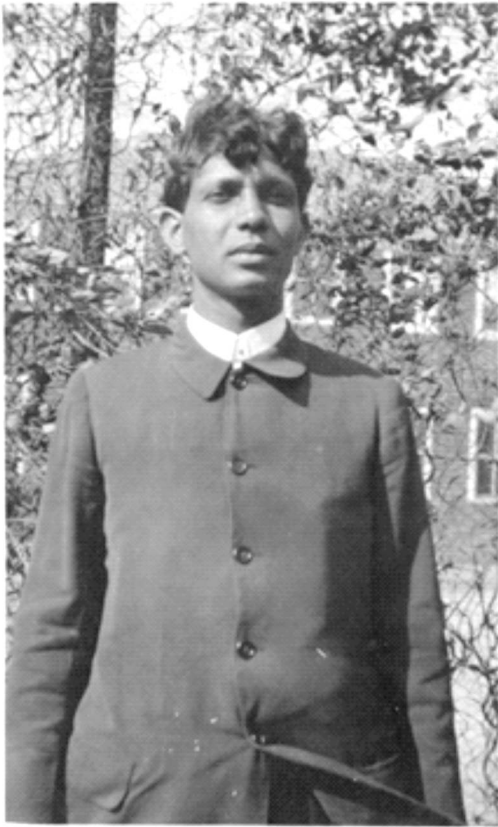
था। फिर भी उनके मन में साधु बनने की अभिलाषा निःशेष नहीं हुई थी। कुछ समय पश्चात् एक बार उन्हें दर्शन हुआ कि वे नदी के किनारे बेलूर मठ के लिए नाव की प्रतीक्षा कर रहे हैं। एक नाव किनारे से आगे को बढ़ी जा रही है। उसमें कुछ साधुओं के साथ स्वामी विवेकानंद भी बैठे हैं। बोशी चिल्लाए; “रुको, रुको, मुझे भी आना है।” स्वामीजी ने कहा; “नहीं, तुम उस पार ही रहो।” तब से बोशी को सदैव यह अनुभव होता रहा कि उन्हें विज्ञान के क्षेत्र में कार्य करने का दृढ़ आदेश दिया गया है।

तत्पश्चात् बोशी ने 12 वर्ष तक सुप्रसिद्ध वैज्ञानिक सर जगदीश चंद्र बोस के साथ काम करते हुए उनके महत्वपूर्ण शोध कार्यों में उन्हें अभूतपूर्व सहयोग दिया। बोशी को लगने लगा था कि भारत के पास पर्याप्त तत्व ज्ञान है, किंतु जब यह देश स्वतंत्र होगा तब उसे समृद्ध होने के लिए अपनी वैज्ञानिक शक्ति बढ़ानी होगी। यहां के लोगों तक आधुनिक विज्ञान पहुंचाने की प्रबल आवश्यकता है। पूरे देश में अनेक छोटे-छोटे वैज्ञानिक केंद्र होने चाहिए। इस विचार से प्रेरित होकर उन्होंने सन् 1924 की 4 जुलाई; को कलकत्ता में अपने किराए के छोटे- से घर में प्रयोगशाला की स्थापना की और उसका नाम रखा; ‘विवेकानंद लैबोरेट्री।’ वे विवेकानंद से प्रत्यक्ष तौर पर कभी नहीं मिले थे; फिर भी अपने गुरु सदानंद के गुरु स्वामी विवेकानंद को अपने भावी कार्यों के साथ जोड़ने के लिए उन्होंने एक पत्र लिखकर उनसे अनुमति मांगी थी। इस गोपनीय पत्र की जानकारी उनके अतिरिक्त अन्य किसी को नहीं थी। सन् 1971 में अल्मोड़ा में उनके देहावसान के पश्चात् उनके कागज-पत्रों के बीच यह पत्र प्राप्त हुआ। पत्र में लिखा था; “स्वामी जी महाराज, मैं इस अनुबंध के साथ आपका नाम जोड़ने का साहस कर रहा हूं कि

आप जानते हैं कि मैं क्या कर सकता हूं और क्या नहीं कर सकता। मेरे गुरु के प्रिय शुभचिंतक, मेरे परम प्रिय गुरु, मैं आपसे प्रार्थना करता हूं कि मैं आपके अच्छे नाम पर अपयश का दाग न लगने दूं। यदि ऐसा करूं तो उससे पहले ही आप मुझे मिटा दें।”

इसके साथ ही उन्होंने अपने आप से भी प्रतिज्ञा की कि उन्हें अपनी शक्ति और सामर्थ्य के अनुसार उत्तम से उत्तम कार्य करना है। इस निष्ठा के साथ कि जिस वस्तु की भी आवश्यकता होगी; उसकी पूर्ति की व्यवस्था विवेकानंद स्वयं करेंगे। (उसकी नहीं; जो वे चाह रहे होंगे; बल्कि उसकी; जिसकी सचमुच आवश्यकता होगी।) उनके जीवन में ऐसे अनेक उदाहरण मिलते हैं; जिनमें यह वचन सत्य सिद्ध हुआ। 4 जुलाई को प्रयोगशाला के उद्घाटन के समय उनके पास पर्याप्त उपकरण तैयार नहीं थे, फिर भी प्रयोगशाला तो प्रारंभ करनी थी। बाहर उस समय वर्षा हो रही थी। बोशी ने लिटमस पेपर लेकर पत्तियों पर गिर रहे वर्षा-जल का पी एच नाप कर अपनी प्रयोगशाला का परीक्षण कार्य आरंभ किया। वे कहा करते थे कि छोटी चीजों से ही महान चीजें विकसित होती हैं।

कोलकाता के एक छोटे- से रसोई घर में प्रारंभ हुई इस प्रयोगशाला में अनेक सफल शोध कार्य हुए। 1926 से वे गर्मियों में प्रयोगशाला को अल्मोड़ा ले आते और सर्दियों में कोलकाता ले जाते थे। 1936 में यह प्रयोगशाला अल्मोड़ा में स्थाई रूप से स्थापित हो गई। स्वामी विवेकानंद के विचार उन्हें हमेशा प्रेरित और निर्देशित करते रहते थे। स्वामी जी कहते थे; “अपने आरामों का, अपने सुखों का,



बोशी सेन

अपने नाम-यश और पदों का, इतना ही नहीं; अपने जीवन तक का त्याग करो और मनुष्य रूपी श्रृंखला से ऐसा पुल बनाओ जिस पुल पर से करोड़ों लोग इस संसार सागर को पार कर जाएं। जब तक करोड़ों मनुष्य भूखे और अशिक्षित रहेंगे, तब तक मैं उस प्रत्येक आदमी को विश्वासघातक समझूंगा जो उनके खर्चे पर शिक्षित हुआ है, परंतु जो उन पर तनिक भी ध्यान नहीं देता।”

विवेकानंद की इन बातों को व्यावहारिक बनाने के लिए तथा साथ ही सन् 1943 के बंगाल अकाल से उद्बलित होकर ही संभवतः बोशी सेन ने तीव्रता से यह अनुभव किया कि इस देश की पहली आवश्यकता भोजन है। देश में खाद्यान्न की कमी को

देखते हुए तब उन्होंने अपने बुनियादी विज्ञान के शोध कार्य को विस्तार देकर व्यवहारिक कृषि विज्ञान की ओर मोड़ दिया। इस उद्देश्य की पूर्ति हेतु उन्होंने अनेक प्रयास किये। यूरोप-अमेरिका आदि कई देशों से विभिन्न फसलों के बीज मंगा कर उत्तराखंड के पर्वतीय वातावरण के साथ-साथ देश के मैदानी क्षेत्रों में भी उनकी उत्पादन क्षमता के परीक्षण किये। इसके फलस्वरूप अल्मोड़ा की प्रयोगशाला से ही देश को पहला संकर मक्का 54 प्राप्त हुआ। इसके साथ ही देश को फसलों के संकर बीजों के विकास को एक नई दिशा मिली। विवेकानंद प्रयोगशाला में उसके बाद अनेक संशोधित बीजों और फसलों के अनुसंधान सफल होते रहे। बोशी के कार्यों को राष्ट्रीय और अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर उल्लेखनीय सफलता मिल रही थी। इसके लिए उन्हें अनेक पुरस्कार भी मिले; जिनमें अमेरिका का वाट्सन पुरस्कार और भारत सरकार का पद्म विभूषण सम्मान सर्वाधिक हैं। परंतु बोशी पुरस्कारों को महत्व नहीं देते थे। उन्हें लगता था कि इससे मैं कहीं उन्हीं में न खो जाऊं और मेरा शोध कार्य प्रभावित हो जाए। विवेकानंद भी कहा करते थे कि हमारा काम मानवता की भलाई करना है; अपने नाम का ढोल पीटना नहीं। बोशी को केंब्रिज, हॉलैंड तथा रूस आदि से सम्मानजनक पदों पर कार्य करने के लिए भी आमंत्रण मिले, किंतु उन्होंने उन्हें यह कहकर अस्वीकार कर दिया कि “पश्चिम में अनेक वैज्ञानिक हैं, लेकिन भारत में अपेक्षाकृत बहुत कम हैं। इसलिए मैं सोचता हूं कि मैं थोड़ा बहुत जो कुछ भी जानता हूं उससे मुझे अपने देश की सेवा करनी चाहिए।”

उन्होंने अल्मोड़ा के जिस कुंदन हाऊस में प्रयोगशाला स्थापित की वह रामकृष्ण कुटीर के बहुत निकट है। उसी के आसपास “थॉमसन हाऊस” और

‘ओकले हाऊस’ भी हैं; जहां अल्मोड़ा प्रवास के समय स्वामीजी के भारतीय तथा विदेशी शिष्यों ने निवास किया था। उन में बोशी के गुरु स्वामी सदानंद भी सम्मिलित थे। 1897 में इन्हें अब क्रमशः ‘जनार्दन पॉलिटेक्निक कॉलेज’ और ‘भगिनी निवेदिता कॉटेज’ के रूप में जाना जाता है। संभवतः उन्होंने अपने निवास तथा कार्यस्थल के लिए सोच समझ कर ही इन स्थलों के बीच स्थित कुंदन हाऊस का चयन किया होगा। कुंदन हाऊस के एक कक्ष में प्रयोगशाला, दूसरे कक्ष में कार्यालय और उसी के दूसरे हिस्से में बोशी सेन और उनकी धर्मपत्नी गट्बूड इमर्सन सेन का निवास था। गट्बूड ने यहां रहते हुए विभिन्न विषयों; विशेष रूप से भारतीय दर्शन और संस्कृति पर कुछ पुस्तकों एवं अनेक लेखों की रचना की।

इसमें एक अतिथि कक्ष भी था; जिसमें रवींद्रनाथ टैगोर, पंडित उदय शंकर, जवाहरलाल नेहरू, इन्दिरा गांधी, मोरारजी देसाई, सिस्टर क्रिस्टीन, प्रसिद्ध वैज्ञानिक नोबल लोरिएट, ग्लेन एंडरसन और एम एस स्वामीनाथन सहित देश-विदेश के अनेक अतिथि आया करते थे। प्रयोगशाला के साथ-साथ यह भवन एक साधना केंद्र भी था। बोशी प्रतिदिन सुबह-शाम ध्यान-साधना करते थे। उनका ध्यान कक्ष आज भी संस्थान का पूजा कक्ष बना हुआ है। बोशी के समय में रामकृष्ण कुटीर में आने वाले साधु और भक्त यहां आकर सेन दंपति के साथ सत्संग करते थे।

अनेक श्रद्धालु आज भी इसके दर्शन करने भी आते हैं। सन् 1971 में बोशी सेन तथा 1982 में गट्बूड सेन की मृत्यु तक यही उनका निवास रहा। विवेकानंद पर्वतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान का

प्रथम कार्यालय और प्रयोगशाला बना यही भवन उसके बाद से अब तक संस्थान का निदेशक आवास बना हुआ है। आवश्यकतानुसार सरकार से भूमि लेकर क्रमशः प्रयोगशाला का क्षेत्र विस्तार होता गया। अब यह भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद का एक महत्वपूर्ण संस्थान बन गया है और इसके अधिकांश शोध और प्रशासनिक कार्य अल्मोड़ा नगर से 13 किलोमीटर दूर हवालबाग नामक विस्तृत क्षेत्र में संपन्न होते हैं। यह संस्थान आज पश्चिमी हिमालयी राज्यों एवं पूर्वोत्तर के पर्वतीय राज्यों में कृषि संशोधन का प्रमुख केंद्र बना हुआ है। सातवें दशक में संपन्न हुई भारत की हरित क्रांति की सफलता में बोशी सेन तथा इस प्रयोगशाला का भी महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहा। हरित क्रांति के बाद देश में श्वेत क्रांति (दुग्ध उत्पादन) तथा नील क्रांति (मत्स्य उत्पादन) भी सफल हुईं और भारत में भोजन की समस्या का बहुत बड़ा समाधान हुआ। स्वामी विवेकानंद की प्रेरणा और आशीर्वाद से यह संस्थान आज भी निरंतर उत्तम कार्य कर रहा है। अल्मोड़ा विवेकानंद के सर्वाधिक प्रिय स्थानों में से एक है। बोशी सेन ने इसी को अपनी कर्मस्थली बनाया और यहां पर अध्यात्म और विज्ञान को व्यावहारिक जीवन से जोड़ कर विश्वस्तरीय वैज्ञानिक शोध कार्यों के द्वारा मानवता की सेवा करते हुए भगवद्गीता के कर्मयोग के सिद्धांत का प्रत्यक्ष उदाहरण प्रस्तुत किया।



हवालबाग केंद्र

# ***Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement its Services in Bangladesh***

**– Dr. Milton Kumar Dev,  
Professor, Department of History, University of Dhaka**

The history of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement can be determined from the later half of the seventies of the nineteenth century, when after twelve long years of sadhana, Sri Ramakrishna decided to preach the fruits of his varied experiments, the main being the message of the harmony of religions. The realisations of Ramakrishna soon attracted the people from all walks of life; his total absorption in the worship of the Divine Mother and his undergoing of the divine visions impressed the mind of the luminaries of the Bengal Renaissance. People started to visit him at the temple garden of Dakshineswar, near Calcutta. Sometimes he himself intended to meet the major personalities of his time; thus he had a touch with Devendranath Tagore, Vidyasagar and Keshab Chandra Sen, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, and many others. A group of educated, energetic, spiritual minded young boys too gathered around him, and slowly they formed the Ramakrishna Order. We may recall that in a way the Ramakrishna Math was founded by Sri Ramakrishna himself. Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, once explained -

It was the Master (Ramakrishna) who brought it (Math) into being during his illness. At that time he instructed Swamiji (Vivekananda) and others as to how this Order (Math) was to be organised and conducted.

Still it was Vivekananda who gave Ramakrishna's ideas a concrete shape. He founded Ramakrishna Mission on 1 May 1897. So, we get Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission as twin institutions. In a general report, published from the headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission, it is mentioned that the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission are twin institutions which form the core of the worldwide Ramakrishna movement (Vedanta movement), which aim at the harmony of religions, harmony of the East and the West, harmony of the old and the new, and all round progress of human faculties without any distinction of creed, caste, gender, race, religion and nationality.

There were many traditional institutions during the British colonial rule in Bengal. Among these, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission set themselves the task of

bringing socio-economic development of the weaker sections of the society. The motto of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission (RKMM) is 'Atmano Mokshartham Jagaddhitaya Cha', which means, for one's own salvation and for the good of the world. Ramakrishna Math is a monastic order and Ramakrishna Mission is a service oriented institution. The ideals of Ramakrishna find expression through their multifarious services. These services cover the sectors of social welfare such as education, health, rural development, women's welfare, interfaith understanding, moral life, and relief to victims of calamities.

During the foundation of Ramakrishna Mission in 1897, the following were the main points stressed by Vivekananda,

1. An association is to be founded after the name of Sri Ramakrishna who is the main inspiration.
2. Its aim is to preach the truths which Ramakrishna spread for the cause of humanity, preached by the example of his own life, and to help others to put them into practice in their lives for their temporal, mental and spiritual benefit.
3. Its duty is to direct in a fitting spirit the activities of this movement, inaugurated by Ramakrishna 'for the establishment of fellowship

among the followers of different religions, knowing them all to be only so many forms of one undying Eternal Religion.'

4. Its methods of action are (a) to train men so as to make them competent to teach such knowledge of sciences as are conducive to the material and spiritual welfare of the masses; (b) to promote and encourage arts and industries; and (c) to introduce among the people in general Vedantic and other religious ideas as elucidated in the life of Ramakrishna.
5. It was to have two branches of action: the first was to be Indian Math (monasteries) and Ashrama (Convents for retreat) which were to be established in different areas of India for the education of monks and householders. The second was to send members of the Order to countries outside India for founding spiritual centres and for creating a close relationship and spirit of mutual help between the foreign and Indian centres.
6. The aims and ideals of the Mission being purely spiritual and humanitarian, it would have no connection with politics.

In India, the first work of the RKM began with relief work done by Swami Akhandananda in Murshidabad, where a famine had broke out in an epidemic



form. Now RKM has 274 centres all over the world.

In Bangladesh, it has 16 centres. Here In East Bengal (now Bangladesh) Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement started when two monks named Swami Virajananda and Swami Prakashananda deputed by Vivekanandna visited Dhaka in 1899.

The educational services run by the Ramakrishna Mission are spread over many parts of Bangladesh with schools, students' homes, orphanages, training centres, which can be easily distinguished by their sense of discipline and ideal of all round progress of personality. The educational service rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission in Bangladesh is growing steadily in size. There is great public appreciation of the work. There is also tremendous demand for more centres, more schools, students' homes and so on.

Relief and rehabilitation work is another important sphere of service rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission and it has been always found to be at the front in rendering help during natural calamities like flood, cyclone, earthquake, drought, fire, etc. A few of the memorable relief and rehabilitation works conducted by Ramakrishna Mission in Bangladesh in the past few years are :-

(a) Flood relief (1988-89, 1998, 2004)

(b) Tornado (1989-90) and Tidal surge relief (1990-91)

(c) Cyclone relief (1997-98)

(d) Sidr and Aila relief (2007-08), about ten crores of taka had been spent for all its work conducted above.



**Relief work by Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka during Covid-19**



**Flood Relief at Sunamganj, Bangladesh by Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka in June 2022**

In the field of literature and journalism also, the Ramakrishna Mission has some distinct contributions. A huge number of books and periodicals have been published in various languages on the cultural heritage of undivided Bengal in the light of the lives and teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. The teachings of Vivekananda has found a deeper relevance in present times. Great Bengali personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Ramesh Chandra



Majumder, Dr. Muhammad Sahidullah, Dr. Anisuzzaman and many others have all paid their gratitude to Vivekananda and described him as a torch-bearer for the present and upcoming generations. As Sri Ramakrishna had always showed deep respect for all the preachers of the religions of the world, we can see the Ramakrishna Order's centres observing spiritual celebrations honouring the various Deities of Hinduism and also the Incarnations and Prophets of other religions.

Besides, one can find in the architecture of Ramakrishna Temple, contemplated by Vivekananda, a blending of Hindu temple, Muslim mosque and Christian church. If anyone visits the temple of Ramakrishna Mission Dhaka, one will find that the emblem of six major religions are established over the temple. This is why the temple is called the Universal temple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Both Ramakrishna and Vivekananda were ready to adapt themselves with the changing needs of the society. They possessed a modern outlook in every sphere of life. Most of the monastics in the institution are well educated, coming from cultured background, trained both in the ancient scriptures and the modern system of education.

Besides, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, as I firmly believe, added a dimension to the present day democratic

discourse. Democracy is all about pluralism in all spheres of life. Much has been talked about and written for political pluralism as an element of democratization. But nothing or little has so far been said of religious pluralism as another element in the democratization process. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have provided the recipe for religious pluralism. To say that this was only a recipe for religious harmony would be doing an inadequate justice to these two proponents of extraordinary perception and farsightedness bearing on the issues and problems of the contemporary world. In Bangladesh and all over the world, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement, being a spiritual movement aiming at the 'total uplift of humanity', has proved its relevance during the last 125 years by its noteworthy contributions to humanity at all levels. The 21st century needed an institution like the Ramakrishna Order which is capable of instilling higher values of life in people from all walks of life, from the poorest to the richest, without being dogmatic and sectarian in nature, and which will be capable of giving wisdom, strength and peace of mind to all. We have already entered the new millennium. People of this new era are looking for global values, a global religion and a global civilization. Ramakrishna Order's teaching of character-making and man-making education, and universal love have the potential to usher us into a new civilization in this 21st century.

# रामकृष्ण कुटीर : स्वामी तुरीयानन्द एवं स्वामी शिवानन्द की भूमिका

– रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा

सुन पुकार हर-गौरी के सुत  
तारक और हरिनाथ;  
गिरिराज के कूर्माचल में  
आन तपें दोउ साथ ।  
भिक्षा में भाजी तंदुल  
शीतल झरने का नीर;  
तन ढकने को जामा-जोड़ा  
कफ़न चरगजी-चीर ।  
त्याग और वैराग्य धरे तनु  
जप-तप सेवा-दीन;  
हरिचर्चा सत्संग भजन  
मन मगन है साधन-लीन ।  
ध्वनित हुई यतिराज की आज्ञा  
बनकर मन्द समीर;  
बहती रहे सदा यह गंगा  
निर्मित किया 'कुटीर' ।

अल्मोड़ा की पावन भूमि कुल तीन बार,  
सन् 1890, सन् 1897 एवं सन् 1898 ई. में स्वामी  
विवेकानन्द के चरण-रज से धन्य हुई। विश्वविजयी  
स्वामी जी जब सन् 1897 में अल्मोड़ा आए तो  
लगभग तीन हजार अल्मोड़ा वासियों ने उनके  
अभिनन्दन में पलक-पाँवड़े बिछाए तथा उन्हें यह  
मान पत्र भेंट किया;

“ महात्मन् ...! हमें यह जानकर बड़ी  
प्रसन्नता हुई कि यहाँ हिमालय की गोद में एक मठ

स्थापित करने का आपका विचार है। हमारी ईश्वर से  
यह प्रार्थना है कि आपका यह उद्देश्य सफल हो।  
शंकराचार्य जी ने भी अपनी आध्यात्मिक दिग्विजय  
के पश्चात् भारत के प्राचीन हिन्दू धर्म के रक्षणार्थ  
हिमालय में बदरिकाश्रम में एक मठ स्थापित किया  
था । इसी प्रकार यदि आपकी भी इच्छा पूर्ण हो जाए  
तो इससे भारतवर्ष का बड़ा हित होगा।..... हम  
कुमार्यु- निवासियों को बड़ा आध्यात्मिक लाभ  
होगा आपके शुभ प्रयत्नों से यह प्रदेश पुनः अपने  
प्राचीन धर्म गौरवको प्राप्त हो जाएगा। ”

इस मान-पत्र के उत्तर में स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी ने  
कहा:

“इस पवित्र देश के निवासी बन्धुओं,  
गिरिराज हिमालय वैराग्य एवं त्याग के सूचक हैं तथा  
वह सर्वोच्च शिक्षा जो हम मानवता को सदैव देते रहेंगे  
त्याग ही है। जिस प्रकार हमारे पूर्वज अपने जीवन के  
अन्तकाल में इस हिमालय पर खिंचे चले आते थे,  
उसी प्रकार भविष्य में पृथ्वीभर की शक्तिशाली  
आत्माएँ इस गिरिराज की ओर आकर्षित होकर चली  
आएंगी।... यह जानकर अनेक व्यग्र आत्माएँ यहां  
आएंगी कि यह संसार एक धोखे की टट्टी है यहां सब  
कुछ मिथ्या है और यदि कुछ सत्य है तो वह है ईश्वर  
की उपासना- केवल ईश्वर की उपासना।

मित्रों, यह तुम्हारी कृपा है कि तुमने मेरे एक  
विचार का जिक्र किया है और मेरा वह विचार इस

स्थान पर एक आश्रम स्थापित करने का है।.....  
 यहाँ पर एक आश्रम की स्थापना क्यों की जाए तथा  
 संसार में अन्य सब स्थानों को छोड़कर मैंने इसी स्थान  
 को क्यों चुना है, जहाँ से इस विश्वधर्म की शिक्षा का  
 प्रसार हो सके ? कारण स्पष्ट ही है कि इन  
 पर्वतश्रेणियों के साथ हमारी हिन्दू जाति की सर्वोत्तम  
 स्मृतियाँ जुड़ी हुई हैं। यदि यह हिमालय धार्मिक भारत  
 के इतिहास से पृथक् कर दिया जाए तो शेष बहुत कम  
 रह जाएगा। अतएव यहीं पर एक केन्द्र होना चाहिए—  
 जो कर्म प्रधान न हो वरन् शान्ति का हो, ध्यान—  
 धारणा का हो, और मुझे पूर्ण विश्वास है कि एक न  
 एक दिन ऐसा अवश्य होगा। ”

उल्लेखनीय है कि उस समय अनेक प्रयासों  
 के बावजूद इच्छित स्थान आस-पास न मिलकर  
 वर्तमान चम्पावत जिले के मायावती नामक स्थान में  
 मिला और वहाँ 'अद्वैत आश्रम मायावती' की  
 स्थापना हुई किन्तु अल्मोड़ा नगर में आश्रम का स्वप्न  
 प्रतीक्षारत ही रहा।



स्वामी शिवानन्द

उक्त स्वप्न भी एक न एक दिन पूरा होना ही  
 था और उसके निमित्त बने स्वामी शिवानन्द एवं  
 स्वामी तुरीयानन्द महाराज। कनखल हरिद्वार में  
 तपस्यारत स्वामी शिवानन्द 16 जून 1913 ई. को  
 अल्मोड़ा आए तथा यहाँ चिल्कापेट हाऊस, वर्तमान  
 (इंस्टिट्यूट आफ होटल मैनेजमेंट) में प्रायः डेढ़ वर्ष  
 लगातार तपस्यापूर्वक रहे।



चिल्कापेट हाऊस,

6 नवम्बर 1913 ई. को वे काशी अद्वैत आश्रम में  
 आए और वहाँ गुरुभाई स्वामी तुरीयानन्द जी से  
 उनका मिलना हुआ। जो बहुत दिनों से बहुमूर्त रोग  
 भोगने से भग्न स्वास्थ्य और अशक्त हो गए थे। उनके  
 स्वास्थ्य सुधार के लिए महापुरुष जी बहुत उद्दिष्ट थे।  
 किसी स्वास्थ्यप्रद शीतल स्थान में वायुपरिवर्तन से  
 उनके स्वास्थ्य की उन्नति हो सकती है, यह सोचकर  
 स्वामी तुरीयानन्द को अल्मोड़ा लाए। यहाँ रहते हुए  
 गुरुभाई को स्वस्थ करने के लिए उनके यत्न की सीमा  
 नहीं थी।

अनेक वर्ष पूर्व स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी ने  
 महापुरुष महाराज को हिमालय में आश्रम स्थापन के  
 लिए कहा था।\* इस बार अल्मोड़ा आने के बाद  
 स्वामी जी के आदेश को कार्यरूप में परिणत करने  
 की इच्छा महापुरुष महाराज के प्राणों में बलवती हुई

और धीरे-धीरे वे इस कार्य में लग गए। स्वामी तुरीयानन्द जी ने भी इसका समर्थन किया। उन्होंने अनुभव किया कि काशी हरिद्वार आदि की तरह शास्त्रीय प्रसिद्धि न होने पर भी अल्मोड़ा 'हर-पार्वती' का स्थान है। इसके अतिरिक्त विदेश से लौटकर पहलीबार स्वामीजी ने कोलंबो से अल्मोड़ा तक वेदान्त का प्रचार किया और उन्हीं की इच्छा से 'प्रबुद्ध' भारत का कार्यालय अल्मोड़ा में पुनः प्रतिष्ठित हुआ। अतः स्वामीजी की स्मृतियों से परिपूर्ण अल्मोड़ा में आश्रम का होना स्वागतयोग्य कदम था। स्थानीय लोग भी इस प्रस्ताव से बहुत उत्साहित हुए।

सभी के समवेत प्रयास से कुछ ही दिनों में सड़क के किनारे पहाड़ की ढाल पर 2-3/16 नाली जमीन खरीद ली गई। अक्टूबर 1915 में स्वामी शिवानन्द आश्रम की नींव रखकर, स्वामी तुरीयानन्द के हाथों में आश्रम निर्माण का दायित्व देकर तथा आर्थिक सहायता का वचन देकर काशी चले गए और इच्छा होने पर भी वे पुनः न आ सके। परन्तु समय-समय पर निर्माण हेतु मार्गदर्शन, अन्य सामग्री एवं धन भेजा करते थे।

स्वामी तुरीयानन्द अल्मोड़ा आए तो थे स्वास्थ्य-सुधार हेतु वायु परिवर्तन के लिए लेकिन आश्रम का निर्माण हुआ उनके शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य की कीमत पर। वे बुखार, अतिसार, बहुमूत्र एवं घुटने के दर्द से पीड़ित होते हुए भी आश्रम निर्माण की देखरेख के लिए प्रतिदिन चिल्कापेटहाऊस से आते और धूप में खड़े रहकर भी निरीक्षण करते रहते। निर्माण हेतु धन की भी चिन्ता उन्हें रहती थी। वे विस्तार से निर्माण कार्य की जानकारी भक्तों को पत्रों के द्वारा सूचित करते। जिससे धन की व्यवस्था होती। जबकि अर्थ-



**स्वामी तुरीयानन्द**

भिक्षा उनके स्वभाव के विरुद्ध था।

धीरे-धीरे अनेक कठिनाईयों से गुजरते हुए आश्रम भवन के चार कमरे, कर्मचारी भवन और एक शौचालय निर्मित हुआ। स्वामी तुरीयानन्द जी ने 22 मई 1916 ई. को पूजा एवं हवन सम्पन्न करके 'रामकृष्ण कुटीर' का उद्घाटन समारोह किया और कहा कि अल्मोड़ा में ठाकुर जी का स्थान उनकी कृपा से सम्पन्न हुआ और मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि इससे अनेक लोग लाभान्वित होंगे। सचमुच ही तब से अबतक निरन्तर यह सेवा-सरिता बह रही है और हम उसमें स्नान कर विभिन्न रूपों में लाभान्वित हो रहे हैं।

\* शिवानन्द चरित पृष्ठ संख्या - 97

# हिमालय की घाटियों में विवेकानन्द के आध्यात्मिक स्पन्दन का स्वरवाहक रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा

– स्वामी प्रपत्त्यानन्द,  
संपादक, 'विवेक ज्योति'

रामकृष्ण मिशन विवेकानन्द आश्रम, रायपुर

भगवान शिव की पावन भूमि हिमालय अपनी महिमा और गौरव के लिये विश्वप्रसिद्ध है। एक ओर जहाँ हिमालय की श्वेत हिममय श्रृंखलाएँ मानो मानव को जीवन के उत्कर्ष की ओर इंगित करती हैं, उसे जीवन की उत्कृष्ट वस्तु परमोपलब्धि की ओर आकर्षित करती हैं, तो दूसरी ओर उसके नीचे-ऊँचे टेढ़े-मेढ़े वक्रगति से गतिशील मार्ग यह संदेश देते हैं कि हमारे जीवन में जितनी भी विषम परिस्थितियाँ क्यों न आ जायें, हमें कितने भी जटिल मार्गों से क्यों न गुजरना पड़े, लेकिन हमें सावधान होकर संशयहीन, भ्रमरहित होकर निरन्तर अपने उत्तुंग लक्ष्य की ओर अग्रसर होते रहना चाहिये। हिमालय की घाटियों में शिव का ओंकार नाद गूँजता रहता है। हिमालय की घाटियाँ शिव-सूत्र-जाल की अभिव्यंजना करती रहती हैं। हिमालय की वायु में आध्यात्मिक स्पन्दन है, ईश्वरीय सौरभ है, शक्तिमयी माँ पार्वती की कृपा-सुवास है। तभी तो जीवन में परम श्रेय के जिज्ञासुओं को, आर्त-साधकों को हिमालय में शिव के द्वार खटखटाने पड़े। वहीं जाकर उनके जीवन की गुत्थियों का, उसके जीवन की जटिल समस्याओं का और आवागमन के चक्र का निराकरण हुआ। हिमालय अनादि काल से मानव जीवन के परम श्रेय को मुक्तहस्त होकर उन्हें मुक्ति

और शान्ति प्रदान करता चला आ रहा है। हिमालय के वृक्ष, पत्ते, तृण, मनुष्य, जीव-जन्तु सभी उस आध्यात्मिकता के स्पन्दन से संयुक्त हैं, आवश्यकता है, हमें अपने हृदय द्वार पर अध्यात्म-ज्योति जलाकर आर्तभाव से ईश्वर से प्रार्थन करने की। ऐसी महिमा है हिमालय की।

## स्वामी विवेकानन्द की हिमालय में मठ-स्थापना की हार्दिक अभिलाषा

स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने हिमालय में एक मठ की स्थापना करने की इच्छा व्यक्त की थी। उन्होंने अपने मित्रों से कहा था – “अहा ! मेरे मन में हिमालय में एक मठ बनाने की अभिलाषा होती है, जहाँ मैं अपने जीवन-श्रम से मुक्त होकर शेष दिन ध्यान करते हुये व्यतीत कर सकूँगा। वह कर्म और साधना का केन्द्र होगा, जहाँ मेरे भारतीय और पाश्चात्य शिष्य एक साथ निवास करेंगे और मैं उन्हें अपने कर्मियों के रूप में प्रशिक्षित करूँगा। मेरे भारतीय शिष्य वहाँ से वेदान्त-प्रचारक के रूप में पाश्चात्य देशों को जायेंगे और पाश्चात्य शिष्य अपना जीवन भारत की सेवा में लगा देंगे।”

परवर्तीकाल में स्वामीजी की अभिलाषा पूर्ण हुई और अद्वैत आश्रम, मायावती की स्थापना मार्च, १८९९, विवेकानन्द आश्रम, श्यामलाताल में आश्रम की स्थापना १९१५ और रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा की स्थापना १९१६ में हुई।

### रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा

रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा की स्थापना स्वामी विवेकानन्द के गुरुभाई स्वामी तुरीयानन्द जी महाराज ने २२ मई, १९१६ में की थी। कुमायूँ क्षेत्र स्वामीजी के चरण-रज से पावन और दिव्य अनुभूतियों से संयुक्त है। उनमें अल्मोड़ा ऐसा भाग्यशाली स्थान है, जिस पावन भूमि पर हमारे श्रद्धास्पद जगद्गुरु स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के पावन चरण पड़े थे और उन्होंने कई बार अल्मोड़ा यात्रा की, वहाँ निवास किया। अल्मोड़ा में ही स्वामीजी ने अपने शिष्य-शिष्याओं को विभिन्न प्रकार के प्रशिक्षण दिये, अपनी योजनाओं को साकार करने का यन्त्र निर्माण किया। भगिनी निवेदिता को नव-जीवन प्रदान किया इत्यादि। स्वामी विवेकानन्द के चरण-रज से पवित्र अल्मोड़ा के साथ स्वामीजी की बहुत-सी स्मृतियाँ हैं, जिसे रामकृष्ण कुटीर ने सँजोकर रखा है और हिमालय की उन दुर्गम घाटियों में स्वामी विवेकानन्द के उदात्त और उच्च आध्यात्मिक विचारों को जन-जन तक पहुँचाकर जनता को लाभान्वित करने का प्रयास कर रहा है।

अल्मोड़ा से २४ किलोमीटर दूर काकड़ीघाट नामक स्थान पर एक विशाल पीपल के वृक्ष के नीचे स्वामीजी को अणु-ब्रह्माण्ड और विश्व-ब्रह्माण्ड की एकता का बोध हुआ था। रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा से लगभग २

किलोमीटरकी दूरी पर विवेकानन्द शिला है। जिस पर स्वामीजी भूख-प्यास से त्रस्त होकर लेट गये थे। तभी सामने की झोपड़ी से जुल्फिकार अली नामक मुस्लिम ने देखा। उसने आकर हिचकते हुये खीरा लाकर स्वामीजी को खाने को दिया। उसे खाकर स्वामीजी को प्रसन्नता का अनुभव हुआ।

रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा से ९ किलोमीटर की दूरी पर कासार देवी मंदिर है। यहीं मंदिर के नीचे की गुफा में स्वामीजी ने १८९० में ३ दिन तक ध्यान किया था और अपनी भावी योजनाओं का संकेत प्राप्त किया था।

इसी यात्रा में कहीं पर अपने सहयात्रियों को स्वामीजी ने यह भी बताया था कि उन्होंने स्वर्णाक्षरों में मन्त्र का दर्शन किया है। विभिन्न देवताओं के मन्त्र और उनके अर्थों को भी स्वामीजी ने समझा दिया था। भगिनी निवेदिता को स्वामीजी ने बताया था कि उन्होंने संस्कृत में मन्त्र-पाठ की प्राचीन प्रणाली का दर्शन किया है। स्वामीजी ने कहा “सन्ध्या हो गयी है। आर्यगण अभी-अभी सिन्धु-नद के तीर पधारे हैं। यह उसी युग की सन्ध्या है। मैंने देखा विशाल नदी के तट पर एक वृद्ध बैठे हैं। अन्धकार की तरंगें उन पर पड़ रही हैं। वे ऋग्वेद से पाठ कर रहे हैं। तदनन्तर मैंने सहज अवस्था प्राप्त की और उसकी आवृत्ति करने लगा। अत्यन्त प्राचीन काल में हमलोग जिस सुर का प्रयोग करते थे, यह वही सुर था।”

१० जून, १८८९ अल्मोड़ा से ही स्वामीजी ने मुहम्मद सरफराज हुसैन को वह ऐतिहासिक पत्र लिखा था, जिसमें रचनात्मक धर्म-समन्वयवादी दृष्टिकोण का उल्लेख किया था - हम मनुष्य जाति को उस स्थान पर पहुँचाना चाहते हैं, जहाँ न वेद है, न

बाइबिल है, न कुरान है, परन्तु वेद, बाइबिल, कुरान के समन्वय से ही ऐसा हो सकता है। मनुष्य जाति को यह शिक्षा देनी चाहिये कि सब धर्म उस धर्म के, उस एकमेकवाद्वितीय के भिन्न भिन्न रूप हैं, इसलिये प्रत्येक व्यक्ति इन धर्मों में से अपना मनोनुकूल मार्ग चुन सकता है। हमारी मातृभूमि के लिये इन दोनों विशाल मतों का सामंजस्य

– हिन्दुत्व और इस्लाम वेदान्ती बुद्धि और इस्लामी शरीर, यही एक आशा है।

स्वामी विवेकानन्द के काल के लोग अब वहाँ जीवित नहीं रहे, लेकिन उनकी उपरोक्त आध्यात्मिक अनुभूतियों का साक्षी अल्मोड़ा अभी भी सिर उठाये सप्रेम उन्मुक्त हृदय से सभी तत्त्वजिज्ञासुओं, साधकों का आह्वान कर रहा है। हिमालय की शुद्ध दैवी वायु और वहाँ के वे दिव्य स्थल, पेड़-पर्वत, शिला, नदी-तट, पथ-रज आदि आज भी स्वामीजी की आध्यात्मिक अनुभूतियों के साक्षी हैं। आज भी शुद्धचित्त साधकों को हिमालय की आध्यात्मिकता और स्वामी विवेकानन्द के आध्यात्मिक स्पन्दनों की अनुभूति होती है।

रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा एक आध्यात्मिक साधना कुटीर के रूप में वर्षों तक रहा, किन्तु इसका सेवा-क्षेत्र बहुत सीमित था। स्थानीय लोग इससे बहुत परिचित नहीं थे। किन्तु १९९३ में जब स्वामी विवेकानन्द के ऐतिहासिक शिकागो-व्याख्यान की शताब्दी मनाई जा रही थी, तो रामकृष्ण कुटीर के तत्कालीन अध्यक्ष पूज्यपाद स्वामी सिद्धिदानन्द जी महाराज और स्वामी मुनीश्वरानन्द जी महाराज के निर्देशन में तथा पूर्व राज्यपाल भैरवदत्त पाण्डे, कुमायूँ विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति, स्वामी विवेकानन्द के सहयोगी लाला बट्टी साह के वंशजों

और अन्य गणमान्य लोगों के सहयोग से अल्मोड़ा, रानीखेत, नैनीताल, हल्द्वानी आदि कई जिलों में विभिन्न प्रतियोगिताएँ और सर्वत्र बहुत-सी सार्वजनिक सभाएँ हुईं, जिसमें संघ के वरिष्ठ सुवक्ताओं पूज्यपाद स्वामी पीताम्बरानन्द जी महाराज, स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानन्द जी महाराज आदि ने रामकृष्ण संघ के भावादशों और कुमायूँ से स्वामी विवेकानन्द के सम्बन्ध के बारे में जनता को अवगत कराया।

तत्पश्चात् स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के भावों को हिमालयीय युवाओं और प्रबुद्ध नागरिकों में सम्प्रेषित करने एवं उनके भावादशों से उन्हें अवगत कराने हेतु आश्रम के इतिहास में पहली बार वर्तमान रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा के अध्यक्ष स्वामी ध्रुवेशानन्द जी महाराज के निर्देशन में स्वामी विवेकानन्द की शिकागो से भारत वापसी और रामकृष्ण मिशन की १२५ वीं वर्षगाँठ के उपलक्ष्य में रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा के द्वारा १० अप्रैल, २०२३ से २ जून, २०२३ तक विविध कार्यक्रम व्यापक स्तर पर आयोजित किये गये, जिसकी संक्षिप्त रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत है

### रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा द्वारा व्यापक स्तर पर कार्यक्रम आयोजित हुए

स्वामी विवेकानन्द की शिकागो से भारत वापसी और रामकृष्ण मिशन की स्थापना की १२५ वीं वर्षगाँठ के उपलक्ष्य में रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा में १० अप्रैल, २०२३ से २ जून, २०२३ तक विविध कार्यक्रम आयोजित किये गये। १० अप्रैल को आर्मी पब्लिक स्कूल, अल्मोड़ा, ११ अप्रैल को शारदा पब्लिक स्कूल, अल्मोड़ा, १२ अप्रैल को सोबन सिंह

जीना विश्वविद्यालय, अल्मोड़ा में सेमिनार हुये, जिसमें मुख्य वक्ता प्रो. मिहिर कान्ति दास, अतिथि प्रोफेसर, गतिशक्ति विश्वविद्यालय, बड़ोदरा थे।

१ मई, २०२३ से १५ मई तक चित्रकला, भाषण, निबन्ध, पाठ-आवृत्ति आदि विभिन्न प्रतियोगितायें आयोजित हुईं। रामकृष्ण मिशन आश्रम, कानपुर के सचिव स्वामी आत्मश्रद्धानन्द जी के ५ मई से १० मई तक शिवानन्द हॉल में आत्मबोध पर और ७ मई को ६ बजे कैन्टोमेन्ट ऑडिटोरियम में स्वामी विवेकानन्द का संदेश पर व्याख्यान हुए। १२ मई से १७ मई तक शिवानन्दहॉल में रामकृष्ण मठ, बेलूड़ मठ के स्वामी वेदनिष्ठानन्द के कठोपनिषद पर प्रवचन हुए। १८ मई को फलहारिणी काली पूजा हुई।



**कैन्टोमेन्ट आडोटोरियम (गोरखा हॉल) में जवानों एवं अन्य साधु-ब्रह्मचारियों के संग स्वामी आत्मश्रद्धानन्द**

१९ मई को कैन्टोमेन्ट मन्दिर और २० मई को शिवानन्द हॉल में रामकृष्ण मठ, भुज के अध्यक्ष स्वामी सुखानन्द जी के श्रीरामचरितमानस पर प्रवचन हुए। १९ मई से २१ मई तक आध्यात्मिक शिविर आयोजित हुई, जिसमें अद्वैत आश्रम, मायावती के अध्यक्ष स्वामी शुद्धिदानन्द, स्वामी सुखानन्द, स्वामी राघवेन्द्रानन्द ने व्याख्यान दिये। संध्या में एम. एस. युनिवर्सिटी, बड़ोदरा के छात्र सुरेश गढ़वी, विशाल शर्मा और यश पटेल ने भक्ति-संगीत का गायन किया।



**आध्यात्मिक शिविर**

२१ मई को १० से ४ बजे तक जी.बी. पन्त विश्वविद्यालय में सेमिनार हुआ, जिसमें रामकृष्ण मठ, राजकोट के अध्यक्ष स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानन्द, डॉ. एम. एस. चौहान, कनखल के डा. स्वामी दयाधीपानन्द, स्वामी वेदनिष्ठानन्द, डॉ. एस. के. कश्यप, डॉ. सलिल तेवारी ने व्याख्यान दिये।

२२ जून को शासकीय नर्सिंग कालेज, अल्मोड़ा में एक संगोष्ठी हुई, जिसमें स्वामी वेदनिष्ठानन्द जी और स्वामी दयाधीपानन्द जी ने सभा को सम्बोधित किया और छात्राओं के प्रश्नों के उत्तर दिये।



**सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय में व्याख्यान देते स्वामी वेदनिष्ठानन्द**

२३, २४ मई को सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय में १० से ५ बजे तक दो दिवसीय सेमिनार हुआ, जिसमें स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानन्द, स्वामी वेदनिष्ठानन्द और सोबन सिंह विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति प्रो. जगतसिंह बिष्ट, प्रो. भीमा मनराल



और डॉ. चन्द्रप्रकाश फुलोरिया, पद्मश्री डॉ. ललित पाण्डेय ने सभा को सम्बोधित किया। रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा के अध्यक्ष स्वामी ध्रुवेशानन्द जी महाराज ने स्वागत भाषण दिया और देवभूमि उत्तराखण्ड और अल्मोड़ा के वैशिष्ट्य पर प्रकाश डाला।



**सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय में व्याख्यान देते स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानन्द**

आज ही रामकृष्ण मठ-मिशन के उपाध्यक्ष पूज्यपाद श्रीमत् स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज का रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा में शुभागमन हुआ। २४ मई को श्रीरामकृष्ण देव की विशेष पूजा, हवनार्चना हुई। साधु-भंडारा हुआ। प्रस्तावित विवेकानन्द भवन का पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज ने भूमि-पूजन किया। सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय में आयोजित सेमिनार के समापन दिवस में मुख्य अतिथि पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री और राज्यपाल श्री भगतसिंह कोश्यारी, रामकृष्ण मिशन, दिल्ली के सचिव स्वामी सर्वलोकानन्द, रामकृष्ण अद्वैत आश्रम, वाराणसी के अध्यक्ष स्वामी विश्वात्मानन्द, रामकृष्ण मिशन, नरोत्तमनगर के सचिव और न्यासी स्वामी अच्युतेशानन्द, विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति जगतसिंह बिष्ट आदि ने सभा को सम्बोधित किया।

शाम ४ से ६ बजे तक कैंटोन्मेन्ट आफिसर्स मेस में पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज,

स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानन्द जी, स्वामी अच्युतेशानन्द जी ने व्याख्यान दिये।

शाम ७.३० बजे शिवानन्द हाल में रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा के नये वेबसाईट का लोकार्पण और फुट स्टेप्स आफ स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी इन देवभूमि उत्तराखण्ड डॉक्यूमेन्ट्री का विमोचन पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज ने किया। इसके बाद उसी सभाकक्ष में साधु-सम्मेलन हुआ, जिसमें रामकृष्ण अद्वैत आश्रम के अध्यक्ष स्वामी विश्वात्मानन्द, स्वामी अच्युतेशानन्द, स्वामी सर्वलोकानन्द, स्वामी विवेकानन्द पैतृकनिवास के सचिव और न्यासी स्वामी ज्ञानलोकानन्द, स्वामी ध्रुवेशानन्द, रामकृष्ण मठ-मिशन के सहायक महासचिव स्वामी बलभद्रानन्द, पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज ने साधु-जीवन पर उत्कृष्ट व्याख्यान दिये।



**विवेकानन्द द्वार के भूमि पूजन के दौरान श्रीमद् स्वामी सुहितानन्दजी महाराज, भगत सिंह कोश्यारी एवं अन्य साधुगण**

२५ मई को प्रातःकाल पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज ने ठाकुर की मंगल आरती की। उसके बाद सन्तों ने ठाकुर मंदिर की परिक्रमा करते हुये उषा-कीर्तन किया। ९.३० बजे करबला में विवेकानन्द द्वार का शिलान्यास पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी, स्वामी बलभद्रानन्द जी और उत्तराखण्ड के पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री और महाराष्ट्र के

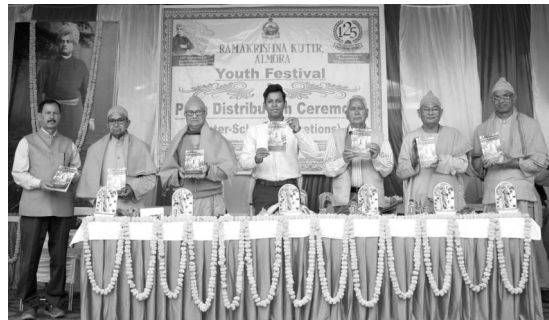
राज्यपाल श्री भगत सिंह कोश्यारी जी ने किया। ११ बजे काकड़ीघाट ज्ञानवृक्ष का दर्शन और व्याख्यान हुआ, जिसमें पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज और स्वामी बलभद्रानन्द जी महाराज ने प्रेरक प्रवचन दिये। गवर्नमेन्ट मेडिकल कालेज में ४ से ६ बजे तक सेमिनार हुआ, जिसमें स्वामी ज्ञानलोकानन्द और स्वामी दयाधीपानन्द ने व्याख्यान दिये।



**निवेदिता कॉटेज में गिरीश शाह के परिवार के संग श्रीमद् स्वामी सुहितानन्द एवं अन्य साधु-भक्त गण**

२६ मई को निवेदिता काटेज (ओकले हाऊस) में सन्ध्या ४.४५ बजे ज्ञानयज्ञ की समापन संगोष्ठी हुई, जिसमें सर्वप्रथम पूज्य पाद प्रेसीडेंट महाराज स्वामी स्मरणानन्द जी महाराज के आशीर्वचन को स्वामी ज्ञानलोकानन्द जी महाराज ने पढ़कर सुनाया। पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज, स्वामी अच्युतेशानन्द, स्वामी चन्द्रकान्तानन्द, विनोद साह ने व्याख्यान दिये। स्वामी ध्रुवेशानन्द जी ने स्वागत और निवेदिता शाह ने धन्यवाद दिया। आज ही ज्ञानवृक्ष का पुनरुत्थान नामक हिन्दी पुस्तक का विमोचन पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज, स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानन्द जी, स्वामी ज्ञानलोकानन्द जी, स्वामी अच्युतेशानन्द जी, अल्मोड़ा के प्रमुख विकास अधिकारी और

नगरपालिका अध्यक्ष अल्मोड़ा के द्वारा किया गया।



२७ मई को गवर्नमेन्ट इंटर कालेज, अल्मोड़ा में युवा शिविर और पुरस्कार वितरण समारोह आयोजित हुआ, जिसमें स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानन्द, स्वामी ज्ञानलोकानन्द और स्वामी अच्युतेशानन्द जी ने युवकों को सम्बोधित किया। आज ही सन्तों, भक्तों को प्रातः कसार देवी, पाताल देवी और शाम को दोनागिरी का दर्शन कराया गया।

२८ मई को पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज ने दीक्षार्थियों को आश्रम में दीक्षा प्रदान की। प्रातः ८ बजे विवेकानन्द उत्तराखण्ड परिक्रमा के क्रम में मायावती हेतु सन्तों और भक्तों ने २७ गाड़ियों से प्रस्थान किया। सबसे आगे एक गाड़ी में स्वामीजी की मूर्ति थी। २९ मई को मायावती आश्रम, ऑडिटोरियम में सभा हुई। स्वामीजी से सम्बन्धित स्थानों का परिदर्शन हुआ। १२ बजे विवेकानन्द आश्रम, श्यामलाताल हेतु प्रस्थान किया गया। २९ मई को १२ बजे गवर्नमेन्ट इन्सटिट्यूट ऑफ होटल मैनेजमेन्ट, अल्मोड़ा में एक सेमिनार आयोजित हुई, जिसकी अध्यक्षता पूज्यपाद सह-संघाध्यक्ष स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज ने की। स्वामी विश्वमयानन्द, स्वामी चन्द्रकान्तानन्द और स्वामी ध्रुवेशानन्द जी ने सभा को सम्बोधित किया।

३० मई को १० बजे से १ बजे तक सभी

सबको नेपाल स्थित ब्रह्मदेव मन्दिर का दर्शन कराया गया। टनकपुर में युवा-सम्मेलन हुआ। इसमें स्वामी विश्वात्मानन्द, स्वामी सर्वलोकानन्द, स्वामी ज्ञाननिष्ठानन्द, आर.सी. पुरोहित आदि ने सम्मेलन को सम्बोधित किया। परिक्रमा यात्रा ३१ मई को रामकृष्ण मिशन सेवाश्रम, हरिद्वार पहुँची।



#### टनकपुर में आयोजित सार्वजनिक सभा

१ जून को हरिद्वार-भ्रमण हुआ और रामकृष्ण मिशन, कनखल में सभा हुई, जिसमें आश्रम की स्थापना और कार्यों के सम्बन्ध स्वामी सौम्यानन्द जी ने बताया।

२ जून को १० से १२ बजे तक ऋषिकेश में माँ गंगा का भव्य-दर्शन और चन्द्रेश्वर शिव का दर्शन किया गया। उसी परिसर में जहाँ स्वामीजी ने तपस्या की थी, अब उस गुफा में स्वामीजी की मूर्ति स्थापित है। भोजनोपरान्त देहरादून हेतु प्रस्थान किया गया। वहाँ लगभग ३ बजे बावड़ी शिव मन्दिर का दर्शन सबने किया, जो स्वामी तुरीयानन्द जी, शिवानन्द जी की तपस्थली है और स्वामीजी जाकर उनसे भेंट किये थे। सन्ध्या ७.३० बजे रामकृष्ण मिशन, देहरादून आश्रम में सार्वजनिक सभा हुई, जिसमें आश्रम के सचिव स्वामी असीमात्मानन्दजी महाराज ने स्वामीजी की उत्तराखण्ड में गढ़वाल यात्रा के बारे में विस्तृत रूप से बताया।

अन्त में अल्मोड़ा के अध्यक्ष स्वामी

ध्रुवेशानन्द जी महाराज ने इस सम्पूर्ण कार्यक्रम में आगत अतिथियों, स्वयंसेवकों और सहयोगियों को धन्यवाद दिया। सन्तों ने यात्रा की सुसम्पन्नता पर रामकृष्ण शरण गाते हुए मन्दिर में ठाकुर के सामने आनन्द से नृत्य किया। इस प्रकार इस परिक्रमा यात्रा के साथ यह महोत्सव सुसम्पन्न हुआ। लगभग एक महीने से चल रहे इस महोत्सव में विद्यालय-प्रतियोगिताओं में २२०० छात्रों ने, कालेज और विश्वविद्यालयों में सेमिनार में १३०० छात्र और शिक्षकों, ९१ साधुओं, कनाडा, कैलीफोर्निया, जापान बांग्लादेश और भारत के विभिन्न स्थानों के ८५ भक्तों, स्थानीय ८०० भक्तों, कुल ४४७६ लोगों ने भाग लिया।

सभी कार्यक्रम श्रीश्रीठाकुर, श्रीश्रीमाँ और श्रीस्वामीजी की असीम कृपा और आश्रम के अध्यक्ष श्रीमत् स्वामी ध्रुवेशानन्द जी महाराज के निर्देशन, उद्यम और उनके सहयोगी सन्तों और स्वयंसेवकों के अथक परिश्रम से बड़े ही सुन्दर और व्यवस्थित ढंग से सुसम्पन्न हुए।

समय की आवश्यकतानुसार रामकृष्ण कुटीर की गतिविधियाँ केवल आध्यात्मिक साधना केन्द्र तक ही सीमित नहीं रहीं। अब आश्रम युगावतार भगवान श्रीरामकृष्ण द्वारा उद्घोषित और युगाचार्य स्वामी विवेकानन्द द्वारा विश्वप्रचारित शिवभाव से जीवसेवा के क्षेत्र में विभिन्न सेवाकार्यों द्वारा जनता की भौतिक और आध्यात्मिक पिपासा को शान्त करने में प्रमुख भूमिका निभा रहा है।

## रामकृष्ण कुटीर अल्मोड़ा की गतिविधियाँ

१. शीत राहत कार्य – अल्मोड़ा ठण्ड-प्रदेश है। इसलिये आश्रम वहाँ प्रतिवर्ष गरीब अभावग्रस्त लोगों को कम्बल और वस्त्र का वितरण करता है।



२. वर्षा राहत कार्य – अल्मोड़ा पहाड़ी क्षेत्र है, वर्षा ऋतु में वहाँ घनघोर वर्षा और भू-स्खलन होता रहता है, जिससे लोगों के मकान क्षतिग्रस्त हो जाते हैं। आश्रम उन गरीबों को मकान की सामग्री प्रदान कर उनके भवन निर्माण में सहायता करता है।

३. राशन किट वितरण – संकटकालीन स्थिति में आश्रम राशन किट वितरण कर भोजन सामग्री प्रदान करता है।



४. आर्थिक सहायता – जरूरतमंद मेधावी छात्र-छात्राओं की शिक्षा हेतु, अनाथ कन्याओं के विवाह हेतु और गरीबों की चिकित्सा हेतु आश्रम धन भी प्रदान करता है।



५. सेमिनार का आयोजन – छात्र-छात्राओं के सर्वांगीण विकास हेतु विभिन्न कॉलेजों, विश्वविद्यालयों में – सेमिनार और सभाओं का आयोजन आश्रम द्वारा किया जाता है।

६. प्रतियोगिताओं का आयोजन – अल्मोड़ा जिले में अन्तर्विद्यालयीन, महाविद्यालयीन और विश्व-विद्यालयीन प्रतियोगिताओं का आयोजन किया जाता है। गत वर्ष ३३ विद्यालय और महाविद्यालयों के २५०० छात्रों ने भाग लिया था।

७. ज्ञानवृक्ष का पुनरुद्धार – काकड़ीघाट में जिस पीपल वृक्ष के नीचे स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी ने ध्यान किया था, उसका पुनरुद्धार कार्य किया गया है और वहाँ सेवाकार्य संचालित है।

८. आध्यात्मिक शिविर और प्रवचन – विभिन्न स्थानों पर आध्यात्मिक शिविरों और ध्यान तथा आध्यात्मिक प्रवचनों का आयोजन किया जाता है।

९. युवा शिविरों का आयोजन – नैतिकता का विकास एवं चरित्र-निर्माण हेतु बीच-बीच में युवा-शिविरों का आयोजन किया जाता है।

१०. स्वामी तुरीयानन्द पुस्तकालय – यह पुस्तकालय लगभग १०० वर्षों से संचालित है,

जिसमें ५००० दुर्लभ पुस्तकें हैं।

११. छात्रावास – विद्यार्थियों के लिये एक छात्रावास है, जिसके विस्तार और नया भवन का निर्माण प्रस्तावित है।

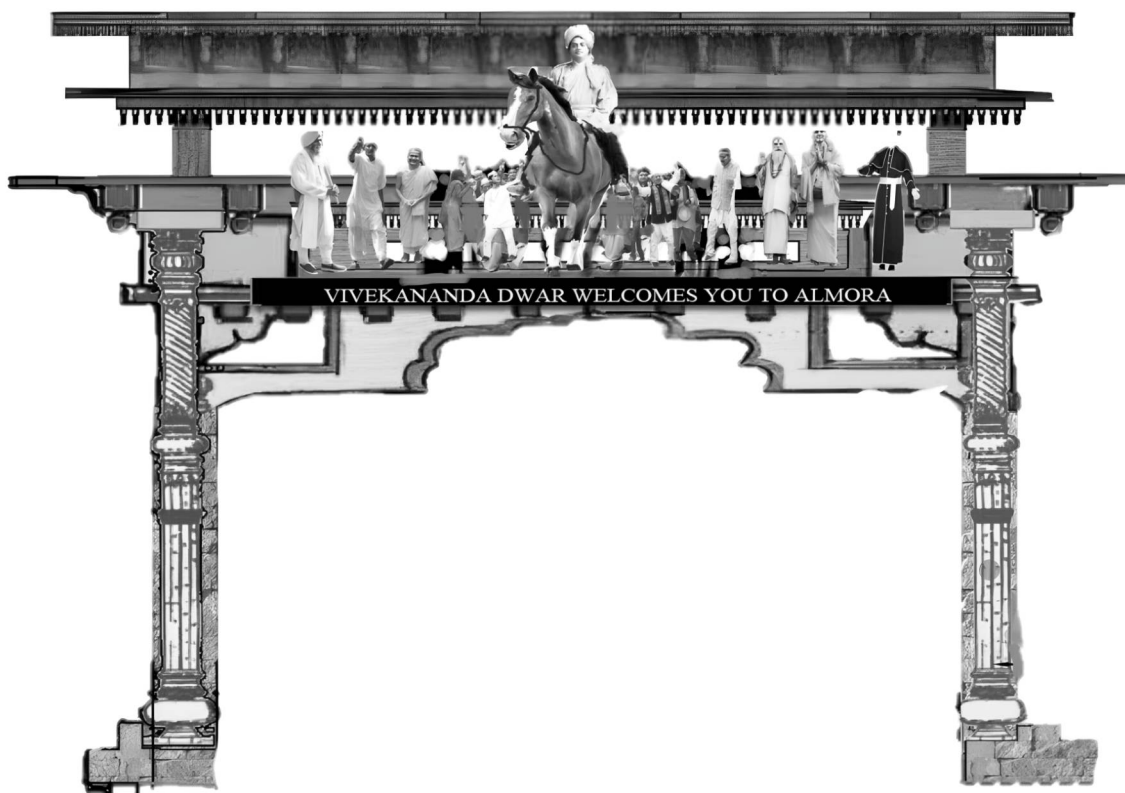
१२. विवेकानन्द द्वार – लगभग रु. ४० लाख के व्यय से अल्मोड़ा नगर में प्रवेश के पहले एक विशाल विवेकानन्द द्वार का निर्माण कार्य प्रस्तावित है। इसका शिलान्यास रामकृष्ण मठ और रामकृष्ण मिशन के परम उपाध्यक्ष पूज्यपाद स्वामी सुहितानन्द जी महाराज और पूर्व मुख्यमन्त्री श्री भगतसिंह कोश्यारी ने मई, २०२३ में किया।

स्वामीजी के आध्यात्मिक स्पन्दनों और लोककल्याणकारी विचारों को 'शिवभाव से जीवसेवा' की भावना से जन-जन तक पहुँचाने में प्रयत्नशील है। यदि वैसी दृष्टि हो, तो स्वामी विवेकानन्द की उद्दीपना अल्मोड़ा के कण-कण में होगी, क्योंकि शिव का वास-स्थान हिमालय है और शिवावतार स्वामीजी अपने परमधाम हिमालय के साथ एकाकार हैं।

१. विवेकानन्द एक जीवनी : स्वामी निखिलानन्द,  
पृ. २१३

इस प्रकार रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा

२. बांग्ला, वाणी और रचना, ९/२८८



प्रस्तावित विवेकानन्द द्वार



# रामकृष्ण कुटीर अल्मोड़ा के अद्यतन क्रियाकलाप

– डॉ. जगदीश चंद्र भट्ट

पूर्व निदेशक, विवेकानन्द पर्वतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान, अल्मोड़ा

स्वामी विवेकानंद जी का जन्मदिन 12 जनवरी पूरे भारत में राष्ट्रीय युवा दिवस के रूप में मनाया जाता है। प्रत्येक वर्ष इस दिन देश के विभिन्न भागों में युवाओं के व्यक्तित्व विकास एवम् जनचेतना के अनेक कार्यक्रम आयोजित किए जाते हैं। उनकी सवा सौवीं जयंती के उपलक्ष्य में देश के विभिन्न राज्यों में सामाजिक चेतना और जन जागृति के लिए विवेकानंद रथ यात्रा निकाली गई थी। अक्टूबर 2013 में इस रथ के अल्मोड़ा आगमन पर रामकृष्ण कुटीर के तत्कालीन अध्यक्ष स्वामी सोमदेवानंद की अगुवाई में अल्मोड़ा के स्कूलों व कॉलेजों के विद्यार्थियों, विभिन्न विभागों के कर्मचारियों, विवेकानंद संस्थान के निदेशक एवं वैज्ञानिकों, नगर पालिका परिषद के अध्यक्ष एवम् कर्मचारियों तथा अनेक गणमान्य नागरिकों ने कीर्तन-गायन, ढोल-नगाड़ों के वादन तथा स्वामीजी के जयघोष के साथ रथ का भव्य स्वागत किया था। रथ पर विराजमान स्वामीजी की भव्य मूर्ति तथा नागरिकों का उत्साह देखकर ऐसा प्रतीत होता था मानो अल्मोड़ा में स्वामीजी का साक्षात् सदेह आगमन हो रहा हो। रथ का रात्रि विश्राम कुमाऊं विश्वविद्यालय के अल्मोड़ा परिसर में कराया गया था, जिसे दूसरे दिन सड़क से पूरे नगर की परिक्रमा करवाई गई। अल्मोड़ा की समस्त जनता ने पुष्प वर्षा करके यात्रा को अविस्मरणीय बना दिया। स्वामी विवेकानंद द्वारा स्थापित रामकृष्ण मिशन के साथ-साथ इसके समस्त केन्द्रों में भी विवेकानन्द-जयंती

विशुद्ध सिद्धांत के अनुसार मनाई जाती है। रामकृष्ण कुटीर अल्मोड़ा में हर वर्ष की भांति इस वर्ष 2024 में भी उनकी 162 वीं जयंती हर्षोल्लास के साथ मनाई गई। प्रातः साधु जनों ने मंगल आरती और वैदिक मंत्रोच्चार के साथ जन्मोत्सव का शुभारंभ किया। दिन भर के पूजन, हवन, कीर्तन इत्यादि कार्यक्रमों में अनेक भक्तजन सम्मिलित हुए। विवेकानंद के प्रभावशाली विचारों को आत्मसात् करने के आह्वान के साथ सबके आध्यात्मिक विकास और देश तथा दुनिया में खुशहाली की प्रार्थना की गई। कुटीर के अध्यक्ष स्वामी ध्रुवेशानंदजी ने कहा कि स्वामी विवेकानंद के विचार मानव सेवा के पथ पर चलकर आध्यात्मिक विकास की प्रेरणा देते हैं। इस अवसर पर स्वामी विवेकानंद के कुमाऊं आगमन पर आधारित डॉक्युमेंट्री रामकृष्ण कुटीर के यू ट्यूब चैनल पर हिंदी तथा अंग्रेजी दोनों भाषाओं में लोकार्पित की गई। कुटीर के अतिरिक्त विवेकानंद पर्वतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान अल्मोड़ा में भी प्रत्येक वर्ष विवेकानंद जयंती के अवसर पर विभिन्न कार्यक्रम किए जाते हैं; जिनमें स्वामीजी के संदेशों तथा उद्धोधनों को आत्मसात् और प्रचारित करने का प्रयास किया जाता है। इस दिन प्रसाद के रूप में गरीबों को भोजन भी कराया जाता है। इसमें संस्थान के निदेशक, वैज्ञानिक तथा सभी कर्मचारी उपस्थित रहते हैं।

स्वामी विवेकानंद के उद्देश्यों को जन-जन

तक पहुंचाने के उद्देश्य से पिछले कुछ वर्षों में अल्मोड़ा में अनेक कार्य संपन्न हुए हैं। रामकृष्ण कुटीर के समीप अल्मोड़ा के ब्राइटन कॉर्नर का नाम अब विवेकानंद कॉर्नर रख दिया गया है। 16 जुलाई 2019 को यहां पर स्वामी विवेकानंद की आदमकद मूर्ति स्थापित की गई। साथ ही भवाली-अल्मोड़ा मोटर मार्ग पर काकड़ीघाट के समीप, विवेकानंद पर्वतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान के अल्मोड़ा परिसर एवं हवालबाग प्रक्षेत्र तथा राजकीय इंटर कॉलेज अल्मोड़ा में भी विवेकानंद जी की मूर्तियां स्थापित की गई हैं।



राजकीय इंटर कॉलेज, अल्मोड़ा में  
स्वामीजी की मूर्ति का अनावरण

जिस ओकले हाऊस में भगिनी निवेदिता (मार्गरेट नोबल) सहित स्वामी जी के देशी-विदेशी शिष्य रहे थे और जहां पर स्वामी जी ने निवेदिता को दिव्य साक्षात्कार की अनुभूति कराई थी; उसका नाम भगिनी निवेदिता कॉटेज पहले ही रख दिया गया था। 2014 में वहां पर निवेदिता की मूर्ति भी स्थापित की जा चुकी है।

स्वामी विवेकानंद बचपन से ही हिमालय – प्रवास के लिए बहुत उत्सुक रहते थे। उनके द्वारा की गई अल्मोड़ा की यात्राओं का विवरण श्रीमती गर्ट्रूड इमर्सन सेन द्वारा 1963 में लिखित “ स्वामी

विवेकानंदाज श्री विजिट्स टू अल्मोड़ा” नामक पुस्तिका में संकलित किया गया था। यह पुस्तिका तथा इसका हिंदी अनुवाद दोनों अनुपलब्ध हो गए थे। 2022 में रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा द्वारा इस पुस्तिका का पुनः प्रकाशन किया गया। विवेकानंद के अल्मोड़ा आगमन से संबंधित आसपास के महत्वपूर्ण स्थलों की जानकारीयां सम्मिलित करते हुए प्रोफेसर दिवा भट्ट ने इसे संपादित किया; जिसका प्रोफेसर एस. ए. हामिद द्वारा अंग्रेजी में अनुवाद किया गया।



निवेदिता कॉटेज में भगिनी निवेदिता  
की मूर्ति का अनावरण

सन् 1890 में पहली बार अल्मोड़ा आने के बाद स्वामीजी भावनात्मक रूप से सदैव के लिए इससे जुड़ गए। उन्होंने इच्छा जताई थी कि “यहां एक ऐसे केंद्र की स्थापना होनी चाहिए; जो कर्म प्रधान न हो, वरन शांति का हो, ध्यान धारणा का हो और मुझे आशा है कि एक दिन मैं ऐसा कर सकूंगा।” स्वामी जी के जीवन काल में यह सपना साकार नहीं हो सका, लेकिन उनके देहावसान के उपरान्त उनके गुरु भाई स्वामी तुरीयानंद और स्वामी शिवानंद ने सन् 1916 में अल्मोड़ा के ब्राइटन कॉर्नर के समीप रामकृष्ण कुटीर के नाम से एक साधना केंद्र की स्थापना की। 2016 में रामकृष्ण कुटीर अल्मोड़ा का शताब्दी समारोह बेलूर मठ सहित देश के विभिन्न आश्रमों एवं

मठों से पधारे संन्यासियों की उपस्थिति में भव्य रूप से मनाया गया। हाल के वर्षों में इस केंद्र के क्रियाकलापों में काफी गति आई है। साधना के साथ-साथ यहां समाज सेवा एवं सामाजिक जागृति के कार्यक्रम भी संपन्न किए जाते हैं। श्रीश्री मां सारदा देवी, पूज्यपाद श्रीमत् स्वामी विवेकानंदजी तथा भगवान श्री रामकृष्ण देव की जयंती प्रत्येक वर्ष मनाई जाती रही है। पिछले वर्ष से श्रीमत् स्वामी तुरीयानंदजी की जयंती भी मनाई जा रही है। यह सभी कार्यक्रम आश्रम प्रांगण में हर्षोल्लास के साथ मनाए जाते हैं, जिसमें भक्त गण श्रद्धा पूर्वक भाग लेते हैं। गर्मियों के मौसम में रिट्रीट कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत बाहर से आए हुए विद्वान साधुओं के द्वारा प्रवचन, दीक्षा एवम् श्रेष्ठ गायकों के भजन के कार्यक्रम संपन्न होते हैं। प्रत्येक एकादशी को रामनाम संकीर्तन एवं भजन का आयोजन होता है।

इन कार्यक्रमों में स्थानीय तथा बाहर से आए श्रद्धालु एवम् अतिथि भी सम्मिलित होते हैं। पर्वतीय भूभाग में ठंड अधिक पड़ने के कारण अनेक स्कूलों में गरीब बच्चों को गर्म स्वेटर आदि का वितरण किया जाता है। अनाज और कंबल आदि देकर गांवों के निर्धन परिवारों की सहायता की जाती है। आपदा के समय आपदा ग्रस्त परिवारों की सहायता भी की जाती है।

स्वामीजी ने 1890 में जब अपने गुरुभाई अखंडानंदजी के साथ कुमाऊं की प्रथम यात्रा की, तब अल्मोड़ा-मार्ग के काकड़ीघाट नामक स्थान पर कोसी नदी के किनारे पीपल-वृक्ष के नीचे ध्यान लगाने पर उन्हें विश्व ब्रह्माण्ड का साक्षात्कार हुआ था। ध्यान से लौटने के उपरान्त उन्होंने अपने गुरु भाई अखंडानंद जी से कहा था; “अभी-अभी मैं अपने

जीवन के एक महत्वपूर्ण चरण से गुजरा हूं। इस पीपल वृक्ष के नीचे मेरे जीवन की एक महत्वपूर्ण समस्या का समाधान हो गया है। मैंने सूक्ष्म ब्रह्मांड और वृहत् ब्रह्मांड के एकत्व को अनुभव किया है। जो कुछ ब्रह्मांड में है वही इस शरीर रूपी पिंड में भी है। मैंने संपूर्ण ब्रह्मांड को एक परमाणु के अंदर देखा है।”

काकड़ीघाट में जिस पीपल वृक्ष के नीचे ध्यान करते हुए स्वामी जी को विश्व ब्रह्मांड के अभिन्नत्व का साक्षात्कार हुआ था, सौ वर्षों के उपरान्त जीर्ण होजाने के कारण उसके तनों में बीमारी लगने लगी तथा कुछ शाखाएं भी सूखने लगी थीं। 1993-94 में रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा के तत्कालीन अध्यक्ष स्वामी सिद्धिदानंद जी के मार्गदर्शन में काकड़ीघाट के आसपास के गांवों के किसानों-युवकों की एक समिति बनाई गई तथा परिसर में कुछ बैठकें भी की गईं, जिनमें अल्मोड़ा-नैनीताल के कुछ प्रबुद्ध जन भी सम्मिलित होते थे। इसका उद्देश्य इस क्षेत्र को जागरूक और विकसित करना था। उस बीच पीपल वृक्ष के रोग-कीट ग्रसित भागों का दवा से उपचार भी किया गया, परंतु उसकी आयु अधिक हो जाने के कारण धीरे-धीरे उसकी अनेक शाखाएं सूख गईं। उनमें कुछ अन्य परजीवी पौधे पनप गए और वृक्ष जीर्ण-शीर्ण अवस्था में पहुंच गया। सन् 2012-13 में रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा तथा कुछ भक्तों ने इस पीपल वृक्ष के बचाव हेतु गंभीरता से विचार किया अगले तीन-चार वर्षों में भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद के तत्कालीन महानिदेशक डॉ एस अयप्पन के निर्देशानुसार विवेकानंद पर्वतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान, अल्मोड़ा; केंद्रीय कृषि वानिकी अनुसंधान संस्थान, झांसी तथा गोविंद बल्लभ पंत कृषि एवम् प्रौद्योगिकी विश्वविद्यालय, पंतनगर ने इस पीपल



वृक्ष के बचाव पर कार्य किया। अंततः पंतनगर में मूल वृक्ष के प्रतिरूप (क्लोन) बनाकर नवीन पौधे तैयार किये गये। इसी पौधे को रामकृष्ण कुटीर, अल्मोड़ा के अध्यक्ष स्वामी सोमदेवानंद जी, भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद नई दिल्ली के पूर्व महानिदेशक डॉ एस अयप्पन, रामकृष्ण मिशन के विभिन्न केन्द्रों से पधारे सन्यासियों, विवेकानंद संस्थान एवं पंतनगर विश्वविद्यालय के प्रतिनिधियों जिला अधिकारी अल्मोड़ा, नगर पालिका परिषद अल्मोड़ा के साथ-साथ अनेक स्थानीय नागरिकों की उपस्थिति में बेलूर मठ, कोलकाता से पधारे स्वामी बलभद्रानंद जी महाराज द्वारा 15 जुलाई 2016, को 'ज्ञान वृक्ष' के रूप में रोपित किया गया। वर्तमान में यह वृक्ष स्वस्थ है और इसकी वृद्धि संतोषजनक है। इससे संबंधित विस्तृत विवरण श्री शांति कुमार घोष द्वारा लिखित व रामकृष्ण कुटीर अल्मोड़ा द्वारा 2024 में प्रकाशित पुस्तक 'ज्ञान वृक्ष का पुनरुत्थान' जो कि बांग्ला, अंग्रेजी व हिंदी भाषा में उपलब्ध है, में दिया गया है।



ज्ञानवृक्ष का रोपण करते  
श्रीमद् स्वामी बलभद्रानंदजी महाराज

वर्तमान में काकड़ीघाट में नवयुवकों की 'विवेकानंद सेवा समिति' नामक पंजीकृत संस्था विवेकानंद तपस्थली के रखरखाव तथा ज्ञान वृक्ष की

देखभाल के साथ-साथ विद्यार्थियों के व्यक्तित्व विकास एवं आसपास के गांवों में सामाजिक उत्थान के अनेक कार्य करती है। यहां पर एक साधना कक्ष व पुस्तकालय की स्थापना भी हो चुकी है। काकड़ीघाट के विकास में स्वामी जी के भक्त श्री शांति कुमार घोष का उल्लेखनीय योगदान प्राप्त हो रहा है।

स्वामी विवेकानंद ने सन् 1893 में 11 से 27 सितम्बर तक शिकागो में सरल, मधुर तथा युक्तिसंगत भाषा में छह भाषण दिए थे। 11 सितंबर का उनका प्रथम भाषण इतिहास में शिकागो भाषण के नाम से प्रसिद्ध हुआ। यह आधुनिक मानव के चिंतन एवं बौद्धिक इतिहास की एक अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण घटना है। स्वामी ध्रुवेशानंद जी के अनुसार इस संबोधन से धर्म, दर्शन तथा मानवता के प्रति धर्म गुरुओं के साथ-साथ जन सामान्य को भी एक नया दृष्टिकोण प्राप्त हुआ। उनके द्वारा की गई प्राचीन भारतीय तत्व दर्शन की व्याख्याओं ने भारत तथा भारतीय धर्म के प्रति समग्र विश्व की धारणा ही बदल दी। केवल और केवल स्वामी विवेकानंद के व्याख्यानों के कारण ही शिकागो धर्म सभा विश्व मानस पटल पर सदैव के लिए अंकित हो गई। उनके जन्म दिन के साथ-साथ शिकागो- भाषण का दिन भी विश्व भर में अमर हो गया। उसमें दिए गए भाषण को जन जागरण के रूप में विशेष याद किया जाता है। विश्व के विभिन्न धर्मावलंबियों को प्रभावित करने वाले इस भाषण की 125वीं जयंती के अवसर पर रामकृष्ण कुटीर द्वारा नवयुवकों के व्यक्तित्व विकास के अनेक कार्यक्रम आयोजित किए गए। स्वामी ध्रुवेशानंद जी के निपुण निर्देशन में डॉ चंद्र प्रकाश फुलोरिया इत्यादि अनेक भक्त जनों के सहयोग से कार्यक्रमों के विवरण तथा महत्वपूर्ण

लेख रामकृष्ण कुटीर द्वारा 2022 में प्रकाशित स्मारिका में दिए गए हैं। इन कार्यक्रमों में 28 एवं 29 सितंबर 2019 को राजकीय इंटर कॉलेज अल्मोड़ा; जहां स्वामी विवेकानंद ने अल्मोड़ा की दूसरी यात्रा के समय 27 जुलाई 1897 को पहली बार हिंदी में भाषण दिया था; में विद्यार्थियों के लिए व्यक्तित्व विकास संगोष्ठी का आयोजन किया गया। इस संगोष्ठी में अल्मोड़ा व इसके निकट के विद्यालयों के कक्षा 9 से 12वीं कक्षा के छात्र-छात्राओं ने भागीदारी की तथा “स्वामी विवेकानंद एवं व्यक्तित्व विकास: युवाओं के विशेष संदर्भ में” विषय पर अपने विचार प्रस्तुत किए। इस अवसर पर माउंट एवरेस्ट में सात बार तिरंगा लहराने वाले पद्मश्री लवराज सिंह धर्मशक्तु ने युवाओं के सम्मुख प्रेरक और उत्साहवर्धक बातें रखीं उन्होंने 42 विद्यालयों के 1200 से अधिक छात्र-छात्राओं को संबोधित किया। 29 सितंबर को आयोजित संगोष्ठी में शिक्षकों तथा शोधार्थियों ने “स्वामी विवेकानंद के विचारों की वर्तमान में प्रासंगिकता” विषय पर अपने विचार एवं शोधपत्र प्रस्तुत किए। इसी क्रम में 30 सितंबर को कुमाऊं विश्वविद्यालय, नैनीताल तथा बिड़ला इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ़ अप्लाइड साइंसेज, भीमताल में विद्यार्थियों के समक्ष रामकृष्ण मिशन राजकोट के स्वामी निखिलेश्वरानंद जी, मायावती आश्रम लोहाघाट, चंपावत से आए स्वामी शुद्धिदानंद जी, तथा प्रबुद्ध भारत के संपादक स्वामी नरसिम्हानन्द जी ने मानव-व्यक्तित्व-विकास तथा राष्ट्र-निर्माण के संदर्भ में स्वामी विवेकानंद के विचारों की व्याख्या की। इन कार्यक्रमों में स्वामी ध्रुवेशानंद जी, डॉ के एस राणा, कुलपति, कुमाऊं विश्वविद्यालय नैनीताल; सुश्री राधा बहन भट्ट, लक्ष्मी आश्रम कौसानी; डॉ बीएस बिष्ट, निदेशक, बिड़ला इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ़ एप्लाइड साइंसेज;

भीमताल तथा अनेक गणमान्य प्रबुद्ध जनों ने विद्यार्थियों, शोधछात्रों, अध्यापकों तथा उपस्थित समुदाय को संबोधित किया। अल्मोड़ा के साथ स्वामी जी के प्रगाढ़ संबंधों को देखते हुए शिकागो भाषण की 125 वीं जयंती के कार्यक्रमों के निष्कर्ष स्वरूप आगे के लिए तीन कार्य सुनिश्चित किए गए:

1- पहली बार अल्मोड़ा पहुंचने पर स्वामी जी जिस मार्ग से नगर में श्री बद्रीलाल साह के भवन तक गए थे; उसका ‘विवेकानंद मार्ग’ के रूप में नामकरण।

2- काठगोदाम से अल्मोड़ा मार्ग में नगर के प्रवेश स्थल पर विवेकानंद द्वार का निर्माण तथा

3- जिस विद्यालय में स्वामी जी ने प्रथम बार हिंदी में भाषण दिया था; उस राजकीय इंटर कॉलेज के प्रांगण में स्वामी विवेकानंद की मूर्ति एवं सभागार में उनके विशाल चित्र स्थापित करना।

कोविड-19 की विश्वव्यापी महामारी के कारण 2020 से 2022 के मध्य इन कार्यों की प्रगति में व्यवधान हुआ, फिर भी ये तीनों कार्य 2023 तक पूरे कर लिए गए। इनको संपन्न करने में नगर पालिका परिषद, अल्मोड़ा के तत्कालीन अध्यक्ष श्री प्रकाश चंद्र जोशी; जिला प्रशासन एवम् नागरिकों के साथ ही भक्तजनों का पूर्ण सहयोग रहा। 13 मई 2022 को विवेकानंद मार्ग के उद्घाटन के अवसर पर बेलूर मठ के उपाध्यक्ष माननीय स्वामी सुहितानंदजी तथा रामकृष्ण मिशन के विभिन्न आश्रमों व केन्द्रों के अध्यक्ष, सन्यासी एवं जन समुदाय पैदल चलकर रघुनाथ मंदिर के पास पहुंचे। वहां रघुनाथ मंदिर के समीप नगर वासियों के साथ एक गोष्ठी का आयोजन

किया गया। लाला बट्टी साह के उस भवन तथा कक्ष; जहां स्वामी विवेकानंद रहे थे; का दर्शन करके सभी ने स्वयं को धन्य अनुभव किया। तदुपरान्त सभी सम्मानित स्वामी जनों ने स्वामी विवेकानंद के परम अनुयायी डॉ बोशी सेन द्वारा स्थापित विवेकानन्द संस्थान का भ्रमण करके इसके वर्तमान कार्यकलापों की जानकारी ली एवं बोशी सेन की लगनशीलता तथा संस्थान के विकास में योगदान देने वाले वैज्ञानिकों और कर्मचारियों की कर्मठता की सराहना की। एक पौध शरीर क्रिया विज्ञानी बोशी सेन को पौधों की जीवित कोशिकाओं में किए जा रहे अपने अन्वेषण बहुत ही सृजनात्मक और आकर्षक प्रतीत होते थे। अत्यन्त लगनशीलता के साथ किए जा रहे उनके इस शोध के परिणाम अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर भी सराहे जा रहे थे, परंतु स्वामी विवेकानंद की ब्रेड अर्थात् रोटी की बात उनके मन-मस्तिष्क में हमेशा गूँजती रहती थी। स्वामीजी कहते थे कि यदि एक कुत्ता भी भूखा हो तो मेरा प्रथम धर्म इसको भोजन कराना होगा। संस्कृत की पुरानी कहावत है; “बुभुक्षितः किम न करोति पापम्” अर्थात् एक भूखा व्यक्ति कोई भी पाप कृत्य करने में कैसे हिचकिचायेगा? भारत के लाखों लोगों की भूख की इस आवाज़ को बोशी कभी नहीं भूल पाए। विवेकानंद के विचारों, सिद्धांतों एवं हिमालय के प्रति उनके लगाव (यह हमारे पूर्वजों के सपनों की भूमि है, यह ऋषियों की भूमि है, हिमालय दृढ़ता और वैराग्य का शाश्वत संदेश देता है) और विशेष रूप से अल्मोड़ा के प्रति उनके प्रेम को देखते हुए बोशी सेन को अपनी प्रयोगशाला के लिए अल्मोड़ा सर्वोत्तम स्थल प्रतीत हुआ। स्वामी विवेकानंद के विचारों की गहन प्रेरणा और बोशी सेन की कड़ी मेहनत एवम् दूरदर्शिता का ही परिणाम है कि संपूर्ण राष्ट्र में आज अल्मोड़ा स्थित विवेकानंद पर्वतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान भारतीय

कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद के एक श्रेष्ठ संस्थान के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित है। इसे 2002 व 2007 में दो बार भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद का सरदार बल्लभ भाई पटेल सर्वोत्तम संस्थान पुरस्कार मिल चुका है तथा यहां के वैज्ञानिकों को उनके द्वारा किए गए शोध कार्यों के लिए राष्ट्रीय व अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार भी मिल चुके हैं। परिषद के 100 से अधिक संस्थानों में एक यही संस्थान है; जिसका नाम एक विशिष्ट व्यक्ति ‘स्वामी विवेकानंद’ के साथ सम्बद्ध है। (अन्य सभी संस्थानों के नाम वहां हो रहे शोध के विषयों पर रखे गए हैं।)

स्वामी विवेकानंद के शिकागो धर्म महासभा में अभूतपूर्व भाषणों एवं तत्पश्चात् मातृभूमि भारत लौटने के उपरान्त अल्मोड़ा आगमन एवं रामकृष्ण मिशन की स्थापना करने के 125 वर्ष पूर्ण होने के उपलक्ष्य में रामकृष्ण कुटीर अल्मोड़ा द्वारा 2019 से 2023 के बीच अल्मोड़ा में शैक्षिक एवं आध्यात्मिक जागरूकता के विविध कार्यक्रमों के आयोजन किए गए। इन कार्यक्रमों के क्रम में कुमाऊं विश्वविद्यालय नैनीताल में स्वामी विवेकानंद पीठ की तथा सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय अल्मोड़ा में विवेकानंद अध्ययन केंद्र की स्थापना की गई। अल्मोड़ा के विभिन्न विद्यालयों एवं कॉलेजों में स्वामी विवेकानंद के विचारों को केन्द्रित कर विविध प्रकार के स्पर्धात्मक तथा सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों का आयोजन किया गया। कुटीर में शिवानंद हाल का निर्माण किया गया; जिसका उद्घाटन 12 मई 2022 को स्वामी सुहितानंदजी महाराज, उपाध्यक्ष रामकृष्ण मठ एवं रामकृष्ण मिशन, बेलूर द्वारा किया गया। यहां देश-विदेश से आए भक्तों के लिए आध्यात्मिक शिविर एवं वैदिक शास्त्रों पर कक्षाएं भी आयोजित की जाती

हैं। अनेक साधुजनों व नागरिकों की उपस्थिति में स्वामी सुहितानंदजी द्वारा कुटीर परिसर में विवेकानंद भवन का भूमि पूजन भी किया गया। इसी क्रम में स्वामी सुहितानंद जी; श्री भगत सिंह कोश्यारी; पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखंड, तथा स्वामी बलभद्रानंदजी सहायक सचिव; रामकृष्ण मठ एवं रामकृष्ण मिशन बेलूर मठ एवम् अन्य मठों से आए हुए साधुओं की उपस्थिति में 25 मई 2023 को कर्बला में 'विवेकानंद द्वार' की आधारशिला भी रखी गई। 30 सितंबर को 'भारत की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में स्वामी विवेकानंद के विचारों का समावेश' विषय पर शिक्षा संकाय सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय अल्मोड़ा में एक अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेमिनार का आयोजन किया गया। इन सभी कार्यक्रमों में 5000 से अधिक लोगों ने भाग लिया। सवा सौवीं जयन्ती के समापन समारोह के अंतर्गत सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय अल्मोड़ा; गोविंद बल्लभ पंत कृषि एवं प्रौद्योगिकी विश्वविद्यालय पंतनगर; मेडिकल कॉलेज, अल्मोड़ा आदि विभिन्न संस्थानों में युवा संगोष्ठियां, आध्यात्मिक कक्षाएं एवं गणमान्य अतिथियों के व्याख्यान आयोजित किए गए। इन अवसरों पर वेदांत सोसाइटी न्यूयॉर्क के प्रभारी स्वामी सर्वप्रियानंदजी, रामकृष्ण मठ नागपुर के अध्यक्ष स्वामी राघवेंद्रानंदजी, रामकृष्ण मिशन आश्रम कानपुर के सचिव स्वामी आत्मश्रद्धानंदजी आदि अनेक साधुजनों ने अल्मोड़ा आकर अपने प्रवचनों से स्वामी जी के संदेशों को लोगों तक पहुंचा कर उनका ज्ञानवर्धन किया। 15 सितंबर, 2023 को श्रीमत् स्वामी गौतमानंद जी महाराज; जो कि रामकृष्ण मठ और रामकृष्ण मिशन के उपाध्यक्ष तथा रामकृष्ण मठ चेन्नई के अध्यक्ष हैं; ने तुरियानंद पुस्तकालय के लिए एक लिफ्ट निर्माण की आधारशिला रखी। अल्मोड़ा नगर के दक्षिणी ढलान पर बने रामकृष्ण

कुटीर के टेढ़े-मेंढ़े रास्ते से ऊपर- नीचे आने-जाने में बुजुर्ग भक्तों और संन्यासियों को अत्यंत कठिनाई होती है। इसी कारण कई श्रद्धालु ब्राइटन कॉर्नर तक पहुंच कर भी आश्रम और मंदिर के दर्शन करने से वंचित रह जाते हैं। इसे ध्यान में रखते हुए यहां पर लिफ्ट निर्माण का सुझाव आया।

उत्तराखंड के पर्यटन विभाग ने स्वामी जी के भ्रमण स्थलों को "विवेक मार्ग" के नाम से एक रोड सर्किट के रूप में विकसित किया है। इसके अंतर्गत अल्मोड़ा, कर्बला, कसार देवी, काकड़ीघाट, मोनोला, मायावती, श्यामला ताल, टनकपुर, हरिद्वार, ऋषिकेश, तथा देहरादून आदि उन समस्त स्थानों को जोड़ा गया है; जिन स्थानों का उन्नीसवीं सदी के अंतिम दशक में स्वामीजी के चरणों ने स्पर्श किया था। उपर्युक्त कार्यक्रमों के क्रम में इस सर्किट की परिक्रमा भी की गई तथा विभिन्न स्थानों पर नागरिकों तथा छात्र-छात्राओं को स्वामी विवेकानंद के दर्शन एवं विचारों से अवगत कराया गया। स्वामी ध्रुवेशानंद जी, अध्यक्ष रामकृष्ण कुटीर अल्मोड़ा के मार्गदर्शन तथा कार्यक्रमों से जुड़े भक्तों की सहायता से सभी कार्यक्रम सुनियोजित ढंग से संपन्न हुए।



लिफ्ट की आधारशिला रखते हुए  
श्रीमद् स्वामी गौतमानंद जी महाराज

# SWAMIJI'S ALMORA

- Mihir K Das

Guest Professor, GATI Shakti University, Vadodara

The name of Almora town (a district headquarters) started ringing in my ears from 1984-85. I was in a central government job that time and was seriously looking for a change in my job to a serene location with hills and forests. In India there are many such locations – but this name kept on ringing in my ears, albeit silently. I applied for an administrative position in the VPKAS and as ill luck would have it, the letter for interview reached me quite late and it was beyond any correction, under the then circumstances. However I continued with my job but the call of Uttarakhand (then UP) brought me to the Ramakrishna Kutir in 1999-2000. Since then, I never lost contact with this hallowed organisation, till this day.

However, receiving initiation from Swami Gahananadaji Maharaj a couple of years later cemented my relations with the Ramakrishna Mission and some of its other centers. The acquaintance with the Present Adhyaksha, Dhruveshananda-ji, is another blessing that enables me to remain in physical and virtual contact with Ramakrishna Kutir quite frequently.

Let me state in the very beginning that I have culled the information from many published sources like *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* – by His Eastern & Western Disciples, *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*, *Swami Vivekananda's Three Visits to Almora* by Gertrude Emerson Sen and some well-known sources. Additionally I have consulted some authentic websites (incl. that of Ramakrishna Kutir) for adding some lively facts. This effort is somewhat of an offering to the devotees of Thakur-Ma-Swamiji. If the readers feel more interested in Almora and love reading this – this would justify my efforts of restating why Swami Vivekananda of all places came to this place repeatedly and also chose this town to brief the sincere western disciples about the Indian culture, religion and society including a host of challenges existing in India during that time.

Publication is often compared with “*brihad mridanga*” – meaning that the sound of the (percussion) instrument (the messages in print) remain reverberating across the centuries after these are first communicated. At the behest of Swamiji, *Prabuddha Bharata* (the longest running journal) was started from

Madras. The name (English: Awakened India) was given by Swamiji him self. Throughout ***Prabuddha Bharata's*** journey, lack of funds was compensated by an abundance of noble motivation and love for Swamiji. After two years of continuing, its editor Rajam Iyer passed away suddenly. Swamiji, then resting in Almora after his nation awakening tour from Colombo, asked his English disciples, Captain Sevier to revive the journal. The Captain had a press, type and ink transported from Kolkata. The journal, which had missed a number, was now brought out from Thompson house in Almora town, with Swamiji's disciples, Swami Swarupananda, as the editor. At a later stage, it was shifted to Mayavati.

Here are some details that would reveal why this place was accorded so much importance by Swamiji, in as much as he visited this place thrice. I have often thought with wonder how a godly soul like him got a rarest revelation under the peepul tree at Kakrighat that is hardly 25 kilometer away and also he remained steeped in deepest contemplative state for more than 2 days in Kasar Devi temple. I would now take you back many centuries before. But before that let us recapitulate once again how Swamiji felt about the place in his own words – when he gave a touching reply to the august audience (residents of Almora) who assembled to felicitate him on his return from the West.

*“This is the land which, since my very childhood, I have been dreaming of passing my life in, and as all of you are aware, I have attempted again and again to live here; and although the time was not ripe, and I had work to do and was whirled outside of this holy place, yet it is the hope of my life to end my days somewhere in this Father of Mountains where the Rishis lived, where philosophy was born. Perhaps, my friends, I shall not be able to do it, in the way that I had planned before—how I wish that silence, that unknownness would be given to me—yet I sincerely pray and hope, and almost believe, that my last days will be spent here, of all places on earth.*

*Inhabitants of this holy land, accept my gratitude for the kind praise that has fallen from you for my little work in the West. But at the same time, my mind does not want to speak of that, either in the East or in the West. As peak after peak of this Father of Mountains began to appear before my sight, all the propensities to work, that ferment that had been going on in my brain for years, seemed to quiet down, and instead of talking about what had been done and what was going to be done, the mind reverted to that one eternal theme which the Himalayas always teach us, that one theme which is reverberating in the very atmosphere of the place, the one theme the murmur of which I hear even now in the rushing whirlpools of its rivers — renunciation! — “Everything in this life is fraught with fear. It is renunciation alone*

*that makes one fearless." Yes, this is the land of renunciation."*

### **Almora – its coordinates:**

In the Indian mind the whole of Uttarakhand is considered as the land of the Gods (*Devbhumi*). According to the Skanda Purana – Vishnu took the form of Kurma as *Kurmavatar* on the Kurma Parvat and the whole of **Champavat** was named as Kurmanchal. With time, the local dialect has changed the Kurmanchal to Kumaun. This place is also linked to the Pandavas – who during their incognito exile also came to live in Champavat. The '**Ghatku**' temple possibly can be related to Ghatotkach from the *Mahabharata*. There are other numerous temples in the region which can possibly be dated to this era.

While we often look at the spirituality and the divine aura of the region – it might be equally interesting to discover the social and historical significance of the place with its multi-dimensional aspects.



**Kurma Mandir at Kurmanchal**

The following description is culled from the records of the U.P. State Government Archives. Coming back to our old town Almora, it is one of the three districts of the Kumaun (old spelling) Division. The district is named after the headquarters town of Almora, situated in the southern part. According to a local tradition, the earliest grantees of Almora were the family of Tiwaris who were required to supply **sorrels** daily for cleaning the vessels of the **Sun Temple at Katarmal**. Sorrel is locally called **Lamora** (Sanskrit: Amla) which in course of time, got corrupted into Almora and gave its name to the Khagmara hill on which it has grown.

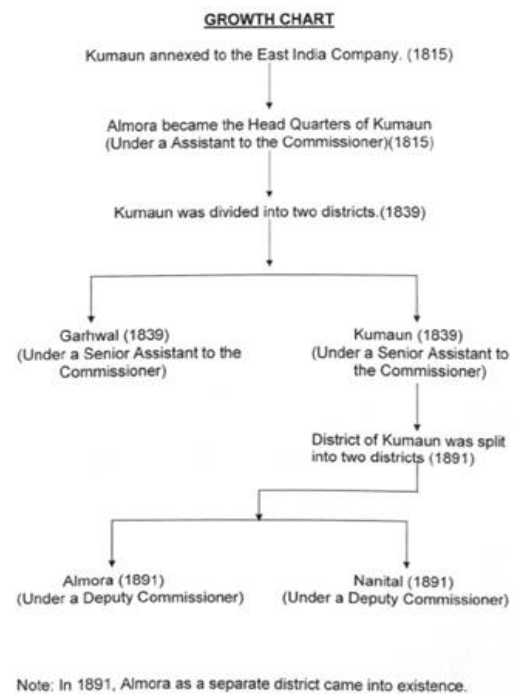
The district occupies the middle portion of the Kumaun Division. It is bounded on the North by Chamoli District and on the West by Garhwal, on the South by District Nainital and in the East by district of Pithoragarh, and the Territory of Nepal, which is separated by river Kali. In the early descriptions Kumaun denotes the tract of the country lying along the left bank of the river Kali, and that was not till after the Chands had established their capital at Almora about 1663 AD, and the name Kumaun was applied to the area now covered in the limits of the Almora and Nainital districts and Kali Kumaun was restricted to its original significance. Towards the end of the 18th century, Kumaun was invaded and captured by the Gorkhas and later it passed into the hands of the British in 1815 and remained as the

district bearing the same name till 1891. The treaty by which Kumaun was ceded to the British was concluded on December 1815 and was ratified on March 4, 1816. Almora became the Head Quarters of Kumaun on July 8, 1816. G.W.Trail was appointed as an Assistant Commissioner at Almora.

In 1838, the province of Kumaun was placed under the control of the Sudder Board of Revenue in fiscal matters. This commissioner was declared to have the same powers as a collector in the plains and a Junior-Assistant with the powers of a Deputy-Collector. In 1839, the Province of Kumaun was divided into Garhwal and Kumaun districts, each under the charge of a Senior-Assistant-Commissioner, having the same powers as a collector in the plains. A chart is provided which reveals how the posts of Dy. Commissioners were created for Almora and Nainital in 1891. To us these years have special significance from the point of view of Ramakrishna Vivekananda movement.

Swamiji first arrived at Almora after the passing of Sri Ramakrishna. This was a part of his India-wide tour and in 1890 he had taken a strenuous journey by foot (from Kathgodam to Almora – via Nainital) with his brother-disciple Swami Akhandananda, who knew, even on those days, the Himalayan trails, as the back of his palm. Today a fine motor road brings the traveler from

Kathgodam, the railway terminus at the foot of the hills, to Almora within a few hours. In 1890, travellers had to come by horseback, palanquin or on foot, along a rough bridle-path. Vivekananda, accompanied by Akhandananda, set out carrying only *a danda* (staff) and *a kamandalu* (sacred water pot). From Kathgodam they walked to Nainital and thence on to Almora, begging their food



along the way. On the third day, the hallowed feet of Swami Vivekananda touched the blessed soil of **Kakrighat**, a place nestling on the banks of the river Kosi (actually a confluence of *Kosi and Sirota*). They were fatigued, and needed some rest. The place was so enchanting that Swami Vivekananda turned to his companion, saying, "what a charming place this is and so wonderful for



meditation!" Swami Vivekananda bathed in the flowing Kosi River and sat down for meditation underneath a Peepal tree and was soon immersed in a deep trance of meditation. When he emerged from his meditation, he was a changed man. He addressed Akhandananda saying, *"Oh, Gangadhar! I have just passed through one of the greatest moments of my life." "Here, under this Peepal tree, one of the greatest problems of my life has been solved. I have found the oneness of the macrocosm with the microcosm, in the microcosm of the body, everything that is there in the macrocosm exists. I have seen the whole universe within an atom"*. Today a robust Peepal tree which is a clone of the original tree stands at the very spot that Swami Vivekananda meditated more than 100 years ago.

It was in late August or early September, 1890 that Vivekananda first arrived in Almora. Swami Vivekananda, Swami Akhandananda and other disciples stayed in respected Lala Badri Shah's house during their wandering days. After returning from the West, he again visited Almora on 11th May 1897 and stayed in this house. It is only a few steps away from Sri Raghunathji Temple. There is a marble plaque fixed on the outside wall of the house commemorating this occasion. This is approximately two kilometers away from Ramakrishna Kutir.

Incidentally the family of Lala

Badri Shah has supported directly and indirectly many ways of flowering of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Movement in the Kumaon (later that spread to the whole of Uttarakhand) by searching for a land for the Advaita Ashrama, taking care of the 'cyclonic monk' whenever he was coming to the state, even in harsh snowy weather and at odd hours. This practice was maintained by generations in his family and even today we find the same attitude towards any endeavour by the Ramakrishna Mission there.

Swamiji and Akhandananda joined the two monks already staying as guests of Badri Shah. While he was staying at the house of Badri Shah, a curious incident happened. A man became "possessed", and Badri Shah was asked to come and see him. Vivekananda went along, and the crowd, seeing his ochre cloth, begged him to cure the sick man who was tossing in a frenzy and frothing at the mouth. "Who am I, my brothers? I am only a Sannyasin. The Lord will take care of him." Yet since he was pressed to do so, he laid his hand on the head. Almost instantly he grew quiet and in a short time became quite normal again.

Here is a small but important piece of communication that Swamiji made while he was in Switzerland that will show the amount of trust and confidence that he had on Lala Badri Shah:

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To Lala Badri Sah,

C/O. E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,  
High View, Caversham, Reading,  
5th August, 1896.



**Lala Badri Sah**

**DEAR SAHJI, (Lala Badri Sah.  
The letter was actually written from  
Switzerland.)**

***Many thanks for your kind greetings. I have an inquiry to make; if you kindly forward me the information I seek, I would be much obliged. I want to start a Math at Almora or near Almora rather. I have heard that there was a certain Mr. Ramsay who lived in a bungalow near Almora and that he***

***had a garden round his bungalow. Can't it be bought? What is the price? If not to be bought, can it be rented?***

***Do you know of any suitable place near Almora where I can build my monastery with a garden etc.? I would rather like to have a hill all to myself. Hoping to get an early reply, I remain, with blessings and love to you and all the rest of my friends in Almora,***

***Vivekananda***

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***(Spellings kept as it is)***

Another place is Amba Vatika (or Amba Dutt's garden) that is famously associated with Swami Vivekananda as he used to come there early in the morning (when he was travelling in Kumaon Himalayas in 1890) and spend long hours.

After remaining a few days with his kind host, Swamiji felt an irresistible urge to be alone, to plunge into that deep meditation for which his soul thirsted. He walked to a solitary cave overhanging a small mountain village. The exact location of this cave has never been determined. He spent several days meditating in a cave on a hill close to the Kasar Devi temple. Of late many theories of the position of the temple on the Van Allen belt (powerful magnetic effect) is discussed seriously amongst people especially wanting to acquire intense meditative states. It may be observed

that both these places (Kakrighat & Kasar Devi) are very close to Almora. There's another spot – Oakley House (Now renamed Nivedita Cottage). Swamiji again visited Almora in the summer of 1898. He was accompanied by his western admirers, including Sara Ole Bull, Josephine MacLeod, Sister Nivedita and Mrs. Patterson (wife of the American Consul General), who stayed at Oakley House.

Here Swamiji would talk on Indian history and culture. At Oakley House, he blessed Nivedita under a tree as she had complained that she could not properly meditate due to distractions. With Swamiji's blessings, her concentration power increased. The stay in Almora became a pleasant experience for the western disciples as Swamiji trained them and helped them understand Indian society to intensify their love for India.

### **Social evolution and internal conflicts:**

Almora, initially was a small town in the foothills of the Himalayas. It was, and remains, a town of modest proportions. The population of Almora numbered around 6,000 in 1872, and fewer than 9,000 people lived there in 1901; by 1931 that number rose to 10,000 and as per census figures of 2011 it is 622506. The past social structure that has now been reshaped by the winds of modernisation – has a complex evolutionary past.

It was by occupying Almora and taking over the palaces for their own use that the British demonstrated their conquest of Kumaon from the Gurkhas in 1815. Almora was never a British "hill station." Almora's character that was significantly different from even nearby Nainital (the British summer capital for the province) or other hill stations. It was an important center for British administrators in Kumaon, and also the headquarters for local operations of the LMS (London Missionary Society [estd: 1851]).

But, despite the British presence, Almora retained an ambience quite distinct from the British-dominated hill stations. Its stone-flagged market street, market homes with elaborate wood carvings, and dominance by distinct neighborhoods (*mohallas*) marked by caste and clan gave it a living-past feel. Those who would like to stroll around the mall - can still have this feel. Incidentally, certain Brahmin families were prominent among the elites of Almora. Their descendants proudly point out the past legacy, even today. Rather these Brahmins claimed descent from immigrants invited to settle in Kumaon by the Chand rulers possibly from the tenth century onwards.

In return for their support of the new regime, no doubt, these Brahmins—some of whom came from as far away as Maharashtra—were given the rights to collect revenue from

significant grants of land. Over time, many of these immigrant Brahmin families became important courtiers, then king makers, in Kumaon. When the Chands, their patrons moved their capital to Almora in the 1560s, the Brahmin courtiers followed and settled down in mohallas close to the royal palaces. These mohallas, such as Jhijar, Selakhola, Galli, Danya and Kasoon, were named after the villages where the Brahmins had initially settled. The names also became markers of various Brahmin clans and were the locations from which some Brahmin families then proceeded to play a very significant role in the politics of the capital and the larger kingdom, sometimes as the de-facto rulers of the kingdom.

While these descendants of the kingmakers and courtiers in Kumaon lamented their decline in status, they were still in a position to be quite influential in a small, provincial town such as Almora. Their traditional status, both as Brahmins and as former courtiers, stood them in good stead. Many of these families retained *zamindari* rights over villages and continued to receive a share of the produce from the land. Having their ancestral homes and a steady income apparently they were quite affluent. Beyond that, Kumauni Brahmins, could also quickly adapt to the restructured social demands.

Some of them were finding new ways to demonstrate their influence in

Almora. Armed with cultural capital, old and new, they were successful in normalizing their representations of the town and region. In the writings of Ira Pande it is found that Almora of the 1950s was not a town with streets and lanes but as *"a sea of islands named after families and family homes."* Needless to say, these islands were the *mohallas* of the Brahmin families. The rest of the town—other castes, clans, markets, and workers — was simply part of a vast, unknown, and most significantly, unnamed sea."

The LMS had no plans to establish a mission in Almora. That came about as a result of a meeting and good personal chemistry between Reverend J. H. Budden (who came to town in 1850 to recuperate from illness and exhaustion) and the then assistant commissioner of Kumaon, Henry Ramsay. From the very beginning, the Almora mission's focus was more educational than evangelical. This may reveal why today Almora remains an education hub.

Defending his preference for education over other efforts at proselytization, Budden pointed out that missionary education brought about "the seething of new and great principles and the progress of tremendous change in the native mind." As right-thinking individuals who remain nominal Hindus, Budden argued, they would have a better chance to influence a larger body of opinion. Budden's preference for

"heretical Hindoos" over potentially unfaithful Christians was to have some interesting social implications in the Kumaon region.

The Brahmin elite realized the value of missionary institutions as vehicles of upward mobility in the British era, but they preferred to limit their relationship with the missionaries to professional or educational matters. At times when conversions transgressed these limits with the right opportunity the Brahmins' resentment of the missionaries' efforts came into the open and consequentially led to some serious disturbances in Almora.

However, the Almora missionaries lauded their upper-caste students' efforts, whether it was in securing jobs or when the first generation of graduates set up a library, a debating society, and even a newspaper—*the Almora Akhbar*—in the town. This newspaper was however closed down on charges of sedition when the newspaper started strongly criticizing the rulers.

Unintentionally, mission activities contributed significantly to middle-class formation in Kumaon. It was through public-sphere institutions such as newspapers, presses, and debating clubs that the products of the mission school emerged as a new middle class in colonial Almora. The traditionally literate upper castes were

the natural clientele for missionary educational institutions. Building on the cultural capital acquired through generations of service at the courts of the Chand rulers, and then (briefly) with the Gurkhas, the upper castes now sent their children to the mission schools to acquire the knowledge that would allow them to perform the same functions for the British rulers. But in the changed circumstances, they became more than just a class of courtiers. Rather, they saw themselves as a "middle class" seeking to represent the interests of the public to the rulers.

In between there were incidences of conversion like the case of Tara Dutt Pant and Victor Mohan Joshi, the latter being a staunch nationalist who wanted to unfurl a national flag removing the Union Jack and he was severely beaten up and subsequently died at the age of 40. However Tara Dutt and his family – wife and children were amply prized – son becoming a senior administrator in the United Provinces and daughter became a lady doctor from the United Kingdom.

### **The birth of the Ramakrishna Kutir**

It was April of 1915. Swami Shivananda (Mahapurush Maharaj) decided to do penance / perform austerities in Almora, from Belur Math. During this period, Swami Turiyananda (Hari Maharaj) was residing at Varanasi since long. He was suffering from blood

sugar and his health was quite damaged; naturally he was very weak. His doctor advised him to stay at a cool place. Being worried about his condition, Swami Shivananda earnestly requested him to come to Almora for a change in place. Hari Maharaj accepted such a warm and earnest invite and so he started for Almora along with Kanai (Swami Nirbhayananda) on the 8th April 1915. Both of them started living in an outhouse of "Chilkapeta House"

had higher spiritual vibrations and this brought him to Almora on four earlier occasions; once in 1889, then 1893, followed by 1897 and 1913 and he had spent more than two years in austerities here. Though he spent one and half years, the thought of establishing a centre (*ashrama*) never came to his mind. But this time he observed with reverence the intense and tireless austerity of Hari Maharaj while appreciating the impact of the health giving climate. This



**A modern view of the Chilkapeta house**

belonging to Lala Badri Shah who was known to Swami Shivananda from before. It was in the western part of the town, situated on an incline amongst a forest of chir trees. Under the care of Swami Shivananda, Hari Maharaj's health gradually improved.

Swami Shivananda really enjoyed the sylvan surroundings and temperate climate of the place. The place evidently

strengthened his wish for establishing an *ashrama* here. He could remember Swami Vivekananda's instructions for setting up an ashrama here and this immediately strongly motivated him to act.

It was a history of intense efforts, hard work, accepting the harsh weather, managing fund shortage and mind it Sw. Turiyananda was not in the best of his health - rather we can say he was

'recuperating'. Swami Brahmananda while at Belur – actively encouraged them all along. It remains a history that shows the invisible hand of God making good the extreme fund shortage when some person from Rangoon comes and donates a large amount that speeded up the construction and finally reaching the culmination.

On the day of opening, i.e. on 22 May 1916, Swami Turiyananda performed Puja and *Havan* (*sacred fire offering*) in the Ashrama. Swami Turiyananda was joyful at the completion of the work and wrote to one of the devotees- "There wasn't any place for Sri Thakur in Almora. Through Swamiji's grace, Almora has become famous. It was necessary for the Mission to have a centre here. With the blessings of Sri Thakur, this has been made possible. I feel that many people would benefit from this". In another letter, he wrote to Swami Premananda- "Mohanlal and others worked really hard. If they didn't show so much enthusiasm, this work wouldn't have been completed"

Those who have seen the city of Kanchi can imagine that it has got a temple possibly at every crossings and those have a heritage attached to it. No doubt it is called the city of temples. From the above narration one can easily imagine, that most of the important places in Almora has Swamiji's virtual footprints; it requires a touch of reverence sprinkled with love for the

saint, having a heart as large as an ocean, to feel them even now. Today, Almora has changed. It is a busy hill station with a lingering aura of silence. This silence enriches us in realizing the futility of our burdens, even Swamiji looked forward to it in the lap of Himalayas

We only need to come here and visit the places where Swamiji lived to enjoy never-ending peace and gather new strength to craft a more meaningful life.



**The original bed stead used by Swami Turiyananda and a potriat of him in the garbhagriha of temple at Ramakrishna Kutir**



# *Devatatma Himalaya and the Moving Monk*

- Senjuti Das,  
first year student, M.A. in English  
Bhairab Ganguly College, West Bengal State University



Uttarakhand, Swamiji's "land of dreams", is a land of emotion and experience. The many-scattered holy huts allude to its sacredness. The river Ganges and Yamuna, making their way through it, have bestowed a bustling spot for the pilgrims, like a reservoir of migratory birds. The 'soul' of Uttarakhand lies in its pilgrimage. The land being nest to numerous temples, from ancient times, several monks, devotees, spiritual seekers come to this place for divine pursuit; amongst them many have achieved sublimity. In ancient times, when science and technology were not as advanced as they are today, people often had to traverse long distances in search of suitable places,

akin to quests, where they could meditate in solitude. Swami Vivekananda, during his lifetime, visited Uttarakhand four times. In his quest for spiritual fulfillment, he was consistently drawn to Almora, where he felt a recurring vibration that resonated deeply with him, akin to a long-awaited dream. With each visit, he became increasingly immersed in the enchanting atmosphere of the place. He was like a human incarnation of "Shiva," seeking to unite with the ultimate reality.

**Almora:** Nestled in the lap of the Himalayas, the town of Almora offers breathtaking views of snow-capped peaks, meandering rivers crossing



verdant valleys, deep lush green forests, cascading waterfalls, pristine lakes, and ethereal glaciers, enhancing its natural beauty. Founded by Raja Kalyan Chand of the Chand dynasty in 1568, the town was initially named 'Rajapur'. Almora's vistas also encompass grand views of Mt. Kamet, Nanda Devi, and Trishul. Additionally, the town, adorned with ancient temples and heritage buildings, showcases the rich cultural history of the region. The scenery of Almora is truly a feast for the eyes. Swamiji, as a wandering monk, visited Almora thrice: first in 1890, then in 1897 and 1898. The place holds several unforgettable memories of Swamiji during his sojourns in the Himalayas, both before and after his visit to the West.

#### **Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora:**

The Ramakrishna Kutir in Almora was established on May 22, 1916. While residing in Almora, Swamiji, captivated by the mesmerizing views of the Himalayan ranges, expressed a desire for a convenient place where devotees could practice meditation and rejuvenation amidst the mountains. He conveyed his long-cherished wish to establish an Ashrama in this area to his *gurubhais*. However, this dream remained unfulfilled during his lifetime. Later, two of his brother-monks, Swami Shivananda and Swami Turiyananda, took on the responsibility of building a Math in the midst of the 'Vishnu Kshetra'.

Both Guru-bhais supervised the construction of the Ashrama while

staying at the Chilkapeta out-house of Lala Badri Shah.



***Shrine of Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora***

However, a few days after construction had begun, Swami Shivananda had to leave for Calcutta, from where he continued to raise funds. Lala Badri Shah, along with his younger brothers, Mohanlal Shah and Gangi Shah, provided ample financial support and assistance for the construction work. After the opening ceremony of the temple, accompanied by certain inaugural-rituals, the overjoyed Swami Turiyananda expressed his heartfelt gratification in a letter written to a devotee saying, *"There wasn't any place for Sri Thakur in Almora. Through Swamiji's grace, Almora has become famous. It was necessary for the Mission to have a centre here. With the blessings of Sri Thakur, this has been made possible. I feel that many people would benefit from*

this.” Today, the Ashrama, located at the Vivekananda Corner (Bright End Corner), stands as the spiritual heaven of the Kumaon hills. Devotees visiting Ramakrishna Kutir offer their tributes to The Holy Trio in the form of social service, participating in and contributing to different spiritual and welfare activities. Through these they try to contemplate on & find the meaning and purpose of life. The Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, with the mission of Swamiji's 'Man-making' and 'Character-building' & its 'Mool Mantra' of **“Atmano Mokshartham Jagat Hitaya Cha”**, is working as the pathfinder to the needy and unprivileged, inspiring and encouraging them in the light of Swami Vivekananda and his Vedantic teachings.

Swamiji's journeys over the Kumaon region forms the 'Swami Vivekananda Spiritual Circuit' of Uttarakhand. Let's take a walk along these paths blessed by the footprints of Swami Vivekananda.



***Vivekananda Shila, Karbala***

**Karbala** — Karbala, located 2 kilometers away from Almora, is a Muslim cemetery where, on August 30, 1890, Swamiji, accompanied by Swami Akhandananda, nearly lost consciousness after a grueling three-day journey from Nainital, feeling starved and exhausted. It was a Muslim fakir named Zulfikar Ali who saved his life by offering some cucumbers. The spot where Swamiji had fainted is known as the **Vivekananada Shila**. The place is now under the care of Zulfikar Ali's descendants.



***Vivekananda Memorial Rest Hall, Karbala.***

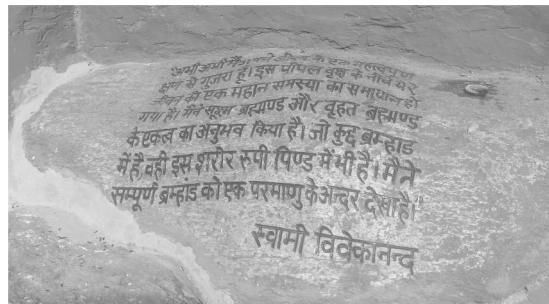
A little further down from the main road, there is a little entrance. At the right hand side is the Vivekananda Memorial Rest-Hall. The hall was established in 1971 with the help and inspiration of Swamiji's ardent devotee

The Vivekananda Shila is right next to the memorial rest hall, standing as a testimony to Swamiji's message of Universal '**oneness**': By addressing the bewildered Fakir as "brother", Swamiji established a cordial relationship with him, elevating it to the level of 'universal brotherhood' and 'oneness'. The cemetery, indicating 'death' or the end of a being, also suggests the shedding of one's identity, transcending which the '**Atman**' meets the infinite '**Paramatman**'. With death, the '**body**' becomes free from all ties of caste and religion, name and form. Later, Swamiji, after his return from Chicago, having attended the rousing welcome arranged by the local people, called the Fakir and gave him a special honour introducing him as his 'saviour' to the excited crowd.

Situated at the confluence or 'Sangam' of the rivers Kosi and Sirota, Kakrighat is where Swamiji, on August 29, 1890, unravelled “one of the greatest problems” of life and the highest truth of the universe meditating under the Peepal tree or 'Jnana Vriksha'.



He realized the identity of the universe with its smallest element, i.e. the atom: “the oneness of macrocosm with the microcosm”. The Vivekananda Taposthali where the 'Jnana Vriksha' is located, is next to the Baba Bhairav Nath temple in Kakrighat. This realization of Swamiji also echoed one of the timeless verses uttered by the one and only Ramakrishna Paramhansa, “Jā āchē bhāndē, tā'īāchē brahmāndē”.



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The original Peepal tree, which was degenerated by the winds of time, has been restored with a clone from one of its branches and now stands firmly on its roots, with its head high and branches spread in all directions inviting the whole world under its shade to engage in the pursuit of the realisation of *Atman*.

**Kasar Devi** — The hill-top of Kalmatia or Kasar Devi in the Kumaon hills of Uttarakhand is located about 8.5 km away from Almora. Its picturesque surroundings and peaceful tranquil ambiance attracts people from all over the country and even from various parts of the world, especially those interested in meditation, yoga and spirituality, making it an ideal place for self-introspection.



*The Kasar Devi Temple*

The place is famous for the Kasar Devi Temple, dedicated to Goddess Kaushiki, the Goddess of power and prosperity. The Kasar Devi Temple is one of the most ancient temples in the Kumaon hills, believed to be over 2,000 years old. Steeped in history and

heritage, the temple is associated with art and spirituality. The Kushan kings of Western Asia are believed to have built it sometime in the second century AD. Swami Vivekananda visited the temple in the late 19th century. One fascinating detail about the temple is its location near the Van Allen Belt. This positioning is believed to contribute to the temple's powerful spiritual energy. Visitors often report feeling a sense of peace and calmness while visiting. While the Van Allen Belts were discovered and mapped in the late 1950s by James Van Allen, Swami Vivekananda's experience in 1890 suggests his sensitivity to the powerful energy at the site. At the bottom right of the temple, inside one of the hanging rocks, is the cave where Swamiji is believed to have performed deep meditation and contemplation during his visit to Kasar Devi. This cave, resembling a balcony, offers a breathtaking 180-degree view of the Kumaon hills, carpeted with tall pine and deodar trees. While Swamiji was in deep meditation here, a telegram arrived from his brother, Mahendranath Dutta, bearing the tragic news of his younger sister Yogendrabala's death. However, the telegram couldn't reach him in the cave and was taken back to Badri Shah's house. Swamiji, with a heavy heart, overcame the personal tragedy and his thoughts turned to the deeper roots of suffering, particularly the suffering of women.

Historically, women have been

subjected to oppression. Men, taking advantage of perceived feminine helplessness, relegated them to a powerless and unfulfilling existence, defined solely by their reproductive roles. The issues of gender discrimination and inequality remain ongoing problems in 21st-century India. Swami Vivekananda, however, offered a different perspective on the ideal of womanhood in his discussions on "The Problems of Women" in the book *My India, The India Eternal*. He challenged societal norms by urging women to remember the ideals embodied by figures like Sita, Savitri, and Damayanti - strong female characters from Indian mythology. *"Forget not that the ideal of womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti."* Anjana Gangopadhyay, in her book *'The Way to Women's Freedom According to Swami Vivekananda'*, argues that Vivekananda viewed education as the key to women's liberation. She further writes-*"The disease of 'men as rulers of women' has sunk deep into the collective psyche of the society."* Swamiji believed that women's education would dismantle the societal belief in male dominance and empower women to find their "true identity and freedom." Swami Vivekananda emphasized education for women, urging men to "bring their women under the broad light of education" and "leave them to themselves" for "Liberty is the first condition of growth." He famously declared, "With five hundred men, the conquest of India might take fifty years:

with as many women, not more than a few weeks," highlighting the potential of empowered women. Vivekananda believed in equality, stating, "To the women of this country I would say exactly what I say to the men" that "There is no distinction of sex in the soul." This reflects his commitment to equal treatment and opportunity for both genders.

**Oakley House** — Located just about 0.8km from the Ramakrishna Kutir in Almora, Oakley House, also known as Nivedita Cottage, holds memories of Swami Vivekananda's third visit to Almora in 1898.



*The Oakley House*

During this stay, Swamiji, along with his brother-monks and other Western disciples, visited the place. Sister Nivedita, in her book *'The Master as I Saw Him'*, recounts her memories of Almora with Swamiji. She describes them "as a series of pictures, painted like old altar-pieces, against a golden background of religious ardor and simplicity." As Sister Nivedita mentions



in her book, a "party of four Western women" accompanied Swamiji, including Mrs. Ole Bull of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Mrs. Patterson, and Josephine Macleod. Swamiji's brother-monks on this visit were Swami Niranjanananda, Swami Turiyananda, Swami Sadananda, and Swami Swarupananda. While Swamiji and his party stayed as guests of Mr. and Mrs. Sevier at Thompson House, thanks to Lala Badri Shah's hospitality, his Western disciples were welcomed to stay at Oakley House.



*Lala Badri Shah's House near Almora Main Bazaar*

Swami Vivekananda used to visit the cottage every morning for discussions on Vedanta & India in general. Here, under the holy witness of the sacred Deodar tree, Margaret Noble was blessed by Swamiji. By naming her Nivedita, meaning "the one dedicated and committed to service", Swamiji entrusted her with the future of India. Swamiji's inspiration, likened to the "Agnimantra" (fire hymn), empowered her to become a woman of towering authority with a motherly heart. Today,

Oakley House is cared for by the successors of Lala Badri Shah and operates as "Hotel Deodar Holiday Inn." A small museum at the house contains a collection of Swami Vivekananda's handwritten letters and belongings. A rare picture of Swami Vivekananda takes center stage, and devotees often find their thoughts and feelings evoked upon seeing it. The house recently celebrated the 125th year of Swami Vivekananda's return from the West.

**Lala Badri Shah's House** — Lala Badri Shah, the wealthy landowner and a close disciple of Swami Vivekananda, was a sincere and devoted follower. Swamiji stayed as Badri Shah's honored guest during his visits to Almora. Badri Shah was a blessed man with a generous heart. He was always available to the Swamis and served them wholeheartedly. Swami Vivekananda, as well as many of his brother disciples, found shelter in his house during their stays in Almora. Swami Akhandananda was the first to receive Badri Shah's warm welcome and hospitality during his first visit here. In one of his unpublished letters to Badri Shah, Swami Akhandananda expressed his expectation of Swamiji's arrival in Almora. He requested Badri Shah to "receive him warmly" and "accommodate him in a comfortable place." However, Swamiji was unable to visit Almora at that time. Badri Shah's joy was renewed upon Swamiji's second visit, after attending the Parliament of

Religions in Chicago. Upon his return, the enthusiastic Badri Shah arranged a grand welcome for Swamiji, starting from Lodhia. Swamiji was made to mount a splendid white horse, leading the procession through the main bazaar of Almora. From then on, whenever Swamiji visited Almora, he stayed as Badri Shah's guest. Situated in the old and busy locality of Khajanchi Mohalla, adjacent to Sri Raghunath Temple, the house of Lala Badri Shah holds countless priceless memories within its walls. Here, in this three-storied house, Swamiji left his holy footprints on the topmost floor.

**Sri Raghunath Temple:** Located near the house of Lala Badri Shah, the Raghunath Temple stands as another eyewitness to Swamiji's holy journeys in Almora. During his second visit from the West, at the insistence of the local townspeople, Swamiji delivered a heart-felt lecture in front of a massive crowd of four to five thousand people gathered opposite the temple. Swami Vivekananda's visit to the "Devatatma" Himalayas and Uttarakhand will



***The White Horse, Which Carried Swamiji from Lodhiya to Almora***



***Sri Raghunath Temple  
inside Almora Main Bazar***

The establishment of the Ramakrishna Kutir in Almora, a dream conceived by Swamiji himself, stands as a testament to his enduring legacy. As long as the world endures, so will the Ashrama. It will serve to protect our ancient religion from being gradually lost, allowing people to experience its unparalleled spiritual offerings.

# ज्ञानवृक्ष के साथ पल्लवित होता काकड़ीघाट

—अभिनव परिहार

एल.एल.बी - द्वितीय वर्ष, कैंपस लॉ सेंटर, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

यात्रा मानव जीवन व सभ्यता का एक महत्वपूर्ण अंग रही है, पहले मनुष्य जीवन यापन के लिए यात्रा करता था फिर सभ्यताएं विकसित हुई तो सभ्यता के विस्तार के लिए और जब मानव का मस्तिष्क विकसित हुआ तो ज्ञान के आदान प्रदान के लिए यात्रा करता था। मनुष्य फिर और विकसित हुआ तो उसने बाह्यजगत से अन्तर्जगत की यात्रा प्रारम्भ की। यहाँ हम बाह्यजगत और अन्तर्जगत दोनों यात्राओं की बात करेंगे। भारतीय संस्कृति व हिन्दू धर्म के सार्वभौमिक तत्त्व एवं दर्शन को प्रथम बार विश्व पटल के सम्मुख रखने वाले महान संत स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के जीवन में उनके द्वारा कई यात्राएँ की गईं जिसने उनके जीवन में अनेक अनुभवों द्वारा अमिट छाप छोड़ी। जिसमें उनके द्वारा की गई तीन यात्राएँ महत्वपूर्ण हैं पहली उनकी अपने सन्यास जीवन में पदार्पण करने के बाद की गई भारत यात्रा, दूसरी पाश्चात्य जगत की यात्रा जिसमें विश्व प्रसिद्ध शिकागो भाषण उनके द्वारा दिया गया और तीसरी जब वे विश्व प्रसिद्ध होने के बाद भारत लौटे और मातृभूमि की सेवा व भारतवासियों को ध्येय प्रदान करने के लिए यात्रा की।

सन्यासी जीवन में पदार्पण करने के बाद उनकी पहली भारत यात्रा में उन्होंने सम्पूर्ण भारत भ्रमण किया जिसमें विशेषतः उनकी हिमालय की ओर जाने की इच्छा थी। अगस्त १८९० ईस्वी में यह इच्छा भी मूर्त हुई और वे अपने गुरुभाई स्वामी

अखण्डानन्द जी (जिन्हें हिमालय में यात्रा का पहले से अनुभव था ) के साथ अल्मोड़ा के लिए अपनी यात्रा प्रारंभ करते हैं और उनकी पैदल यात्रा प्रारम्भ होती है कुमाऊँ के द्वार काठगोदाम से जहाँ से पैदल चलते हुए वे सबसे पहले पहुंचते हैं नैनीताल में स्थित माँ नैना देवी के मन्दिर और अल्मोड़ा को अपनी यात्रा जारी रखते हैं।

अल्मोड़ा की राह पर तीसरे दिन स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी अपने गुरुभाई स्वामी अखण्डानन्द जी के साथ रात्रि-यापन हेतु घाटी में स्थित नदी तट पर एक रमणीय स्थान पर ठहरे। इस स्थान पर एक पनचक्की और एक विशाल पीपल का वृक्ष था और प्राचीन शिल्पकला से निर्मित एक शिव मन्दिर जिसको स्थानीय ग्रामवासियों द्वारा लगभग ५०० से ६०० वर्ष पुराना बताया जाता है। इस स्थान का नाम था काकड़ीघाट जो अल्मोड़ा से २२ किमी की दूरी पर दो नदियों के संगम पर स्थित है।

इस स्थान के बारे में एक अन्य महत्वपूर्ण बात यह है कि यह स्थान पुराणों में निर्मित काषाय पर्वत की तलहटी पर स्थित है जहाँ कोसी और सिरौता नामक दो नदियाँ मिलती हैं। इस संगम पर स्थित प्राचीन कालीन कर्कटेश्वर महादेव मंदिर के प्रांगण में स्थित पीपल वृक्ष के गर्भ में बटुक भैरव देवता का मंदिर है जिसके प्रति स्थानीय जनों की विशेष आस्था है। इसी प्रांगण में स्थित तीन योगी-सन्यासियों की





### हल्द्वानी-अल्मोड़ा राजमार्ग से विवेकानन्द तपस्थली काकड़ीघाट का विहंगम दृश्य

जीवित समाधियां इस स्थान को दिव्य और अद्भुत बनाती हैं। कर्कटेश्वर महादेव मन्दिर से लगभग ५०० मी की दूरी पर स्थित है विराट वट वृक्ष, जो साधना स्थली रही एक नागा साधु की, जिन्हें सब सोमवारी बाबा के नाम से जानते हैं और कुछ समय बाद बीसवीं सदी में ही एक और दिव्य पुरुष नीब करौरी महाराज जी द्वारा यहाँ पर हनुमान मन्दिर की भी स्थापना की गई। कई संतों और योगियों की तपोभूमि काकड़ीघाट में जब स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी अपने गुरु भाई स्वामी अखण्डानन्द जी के साथ पहुँचे तो अपने गुरुभाई से वे बोले, “यह स्थान आकर्षक है। ध्यान के लिए कितना आनंददायक है।” कोसी और सिरौता नदियों के इस संगम पर स्थित पीपल वृक्ष की छाँव में स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी अन्तर्जगत की यात्रा के लिए ध्यानमग्न हुए। कल-कल बहती कोसी नदी जिसकी मधुर ध्वनि मानो बाहर की सभी अनावश्यक ध्वनियों को रोक दे और मानव के मन मस्तिष्क को भी धाराप्रवाह बना दे। साथ ही तपस्वी और योगियों की आभा आज भी इस स्थान में विद्यमान है। और पास ही में स्थित श्मशान जहाँ धधकती अग्नि आज भी जीवन की क्षणिकता का पल पल अनुभव कराती है। ध्यान के लिए ऐसे उपयुक्त स्थान में स्वामी विवेकानन्द जल्द ही गहन ध्यान में डूब गए व

समाधिस्थ हो गए और उनके गुरुभाई उनकी सहजावस्था में लौटने की प्रतीक्षा करने लगे।

काफी देर बाद उनकी प्रतीक्षा का अंत हुआ स्वामीजी अपनी सहजावस्था में लौटे और गुरुभाई से बोले, “देखो गंगाधर इस वृक्ष के नीचे एक अत्यन्त शुभ मुहूर्त बीत गया। आज मेरे जीवन कि एक बड़ी समस्या का समाधान हो गया। मैंने जान लिया की समष्टि और व्यष्टि (विश्व ब्रह्माण्ड और अणु ब्रह्माण्ड) दोनों एक ही नियम से परिचालित होते हैं। स्वामी जी ने डायरी में लिखा, “सृष्टि के आदि में शब्द ब्रह्म था।” उन्होंने अखण्डानन्द जी की नोटबुक में आगे लिखा – “जिस प्रकार व्यष्टि जीवात्मा एक चेतन शरीर द्वारा आवृत्त है, उसी प्रकार विश्वात्मा भी चेतनामई प्रकृति या दृश्य जगत् में स्थित है। यह कोई कल्पना नहीं है। इसी एक (प्रकृति) के द्वारा दूसरे (आत्मा) का आलिंगन मानो शब्द और अर्थ के संबंध की भांति है। वे दोनों अभिन्न है और केवल मानसिक विश्लेषण के द्वारा ही उन दोनों को पृथक् किया जा सकता है। शब्द के बिना विचार करना असंभव है। अतः हम लोग जिस जगत् को देखते हैं। यह शाश्वत निराकार और शाश्वत साकार की मिली-जुली अभिव्यक्ति है।”

उनकी अभिव्यक्ति को निम्न शब्दों में उल्लिखित किया गया है -

‘अभी-अभी मैं अपने जीवन के एक महत्वपूर्ण क्षण से गुजरा हूँ। इस पीपल वृक्ष के नीचे मेरे जीवन की एक महान समस्या का समाधान हो गया है। मैंने सूक्ष्म-ब्रह्माण्ड और बृहत्-ब्रह्माण्ड के एकत्व का अनुभव किया है। जो कुछ ब्रह्माण्ड में है, वही इस शरीर रूपी पिण्ड में भी है। मैंने सम्पूर्ण ब्रह्माण्ड को एक परमाणु के अंदर देखा है।’

आध्यात्मिक ज्ञान तक पहुँचने की दो सीढ़ी है पहले तत्व को समझना या फिर सरल भाषा में कहें तो विचार को जानना और फिर दूसरा उसको अनुभव करना, उस ज्ञान की स्वयं अनुभूति होना तो उसकी सत्यता सिद्ध करता है और स्वयं को अनुभूति होने से बड़ा प्रमाण कुछ भी नहीं। इस अनुभूति को हम अगर सारगर्भित रूप में प्रस्तुत करें और वैदिक भाषा में प्रस्तुत करें तो वह होगा - “यथा पिण्डे तथा ब्रह्माण्डे” जिसका अर्थ है जैसा सूक्ष्म जगत है वैसा ही असल जगत् है, जो पिण्ड में है वही ब्रह्माण्ड में है। भविष्य में स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी ने इस वाक्य के बारे में तो उल्लेख नहीं किया परंतु उनके द्वारा भविष्य में दिए गए महत्वपूर्ण भाषणों में उन्होंने इस अनुभूति की व्याख्या की है जिनमें से मुख्य है उनका १९ जनवरी १८९६ को न्यूयॉर्क में “विश्व : बृहत् ब्रह्माण्ड” पर दिया व्याख्यान व २६ जनवरी १८९६ को न्यूयॉर्क में ही “विश्व : सूक्ष्म ब्रह्माण्ड” पर दिया उनका भाषण। इस अनुभूति को ज्ञानयोग की आधारशिला कहना अतिशयोक्ति नहीं होगा। जिस पीपल वृक्ष के नीचे बैठकर स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी ने ध्यान किया था वह २०१४ तक सूख कर जीर्ण हो चुका था, इसलिए उसे रामकृष्ण कुटीर अल्मोड़ा

और बेलूर मठ के प्रयासों से काटा गया और उसकी लकड़ी को रामकृष्ण मिशन द्वारा मिशन से जुड़े सभी आश्रमों तक पहुँचाया गया। कहते हैं न कि अन्त ही प्रारंभ है उसी प्रकार पुराने पीपल वृक्षका अन्त एक नए प्रारम्भ के रूप में प्रस्फुटित हुआ। १५ जुलाई २०१६ को भाकृ अनुप - विवेकानन्द पर्वतीय कृषि अनुसंधान संस्थान व गोविंद बल्लभ पन्त कृषि एवं प्रौद्यौगिकी विश्वविद्यालय, पंतनगर के तत्वावधान में क्लोनिंग प्रक्रिया द्वारा निर्मित प्रतिरूप पीपल के पौधे का रोपण रामकृष्ण मठ एवं मिशन के सह सचिव स्वामी बलभद्रानन्द जी की गरिमामयी उपस्थिति में आदि पीपल वृक्ष के मूल स्थान में किया गया और प्रतिरूप पौधे को स्थानीय ग्रामवासियों द्वारा ‘ज्ञानवृक्ष’ का नाम दिया गया।

वह दिन है और आज का दिन जिस तरह पीपल वृक्ष (ज्ञानवृक्ष) बढ़ रहा है व पल्लवित हो रहा है उसी प्रकार काकड़ीघाट भी पल्लवित हो रहा है और साथ ही भौतिक एवं आध्यात्मिक उन्नति की ओर अग्रसर है। वृक्ष के रोपित होने के बाद काकड़ीघाट में रामकृष्ण मिशन व मठ के कई संन्यासी आते रहते हैं व बार बार योगियों व संन्यासियों के रज स्पर्श से यह भूमि धन्य हो जाती है। आज मन्दिर प्रांगण में ज्ञानवृक्ष के समीप ही ‘विवेकानन्द भावकेंद्र’ स्थित है जिसमें ‘ध्यानकक्ष’ एवं ‘अखण्डानन्द पाठ-कक्ष एवं संग्रहालय’ को संचालित किया जाता है। शिलालेख भी भारतीय सभ्यता और परम्परा का एक महत्वपूर्ण अंग रहे है कर्कटेश्वर महादेव मन्दिर के मुख्य द्वार पर ही स्थित है विवेक शिलालेख जहाँ शिला पर स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के काकड़ीघाट अनुभव के वाक्य को उकेरा गया है। आदि पीपल वृक्ष से ज्ञानवृक्ष की इस यात्रा को अंग्रेजी में पुस्तक Resurrection of Jnanavriksha नाम से रामकृष्ण कुटीर द्वारा

प्रकाशित किया गया है जिसका अनुवादित हिन्दी एवं बंगाली संस्करण भी प्रकाशित है। अल्मोड़ा के तत्वावधान में मन्दिर के निकट एक भवन में “स्वामी विवेकानन्द काकड़ीघाट बाल परामर्श केंद्र” प्रकल्प द्वारा प्रत्येक दिन प्राथमिक विद्यालय के विद्यार्थियों को नैतिक उन्नयन व व्यक्तित्व विकास की शिक्षा दी जाती है।

१८९० की वह अनजानी यात्रा आज मूर्त रूप ले चुकी है व सम्पूर्ण भारतवर्ष व विश्व को



आदि पीपल वृक्ष और प्राचीन भैरव मन्दिर



#### मूल स्थान पर स्थित ज्ञानवृक्ष

काकड़ीघाट व स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी की अनुभूति से भिन्न करा रही है। उस समय की परिस्थिति से आज के समय का आकलन करना अनुचित होगा आज यह स्थान यात्रियों एवं दर्शनार्थियों के लिए सुगम व सुलभ है परंतु जब स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी काकड़ीघाट आए होंगे तब वे जंगलों के बीच पैदल मार्ग से काकड़ीघाट तक पहुँचे होंगे। आज काकड़ीघाट निकटतम रेलवे स्टेशन काठगोदाम से राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग द्वारा ६० किमी की दूरी पर स्थित है। वर्तमान में स्वामी विवेकानन्द जी के अनुयायी एवं मुमुक्षु बड़ी संख्या में इस स्थान के दर्शनार्थ आते रहते हैं व आध्यात्मिक अनुभूति से आह्लादित होते हैं।



अपने काकड़ीघाट भ्रमण के दौरान विवेकानन्द तपस्थली काकड़ीघाट के प्रांगण में रुद्राक्ष का पौधा रोपित करते हुए रामकृष्ण मठ एवं मिशन के सह संघाध्यक्ष श्रीमद् स्वामी सुहितानंदजी महाराज

# ***Dengue Fever: What to Know***

**-Dr Abhishek Bhadra  
General Physician and Public Health Specialist  
Ramakrishna Mission Medical Service Center, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

## **Introduction**

Dengue is a mosquito-borne, acute febrile illness that is a major public health problem in the tropics and subtropics worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), dengue is now endemic in over 100 countries. As many as 3.6 billion people, or 40% of the world's population, reside in dengue-endemic areas. Annually, an estimated 400 million people are infected with dengue virus, 100 million become ill with dengue, and 21,000 deaths are attributed to dengue.

Dengue is not a new disease; the first epidemic of a fever with similar symptoms was reported in China in 992 AD (described as 'water poisoning'). Over time, it has spread globally, with notable occurrences in regions like the French West Indies, Panama, Cairo, Batavia, and Philadelphia. In recent decades, Dengue Fever (DF) and Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF) have surged, driven by factors such as rapid population growth, urbanization, poor waste management, water supply issues, and ineffective mosquito control. Today, approximately 4 billion people live in dengue-risk areas, with up to 400 million infections annually, resulting in 100

million cases of illness and 40,000 deaths from severe dengue.

## **How dengue spreads**

Dengue outbreaks occur mainly during the rainy season and continue until winter. But in recent years, dengue patients have been found throughout the year. Dengue fever is caused by the dengue virus, which usually enters the human body through the bite of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. However, in some cases, this disease can also be spread by the bite of an *Aedes albopictus* mosquito. If a dengue-carrying mosquito bites a person, the person becomes infected with dengue fever within 4 to 6 days. Now, if a sterile *Aedes* mosquito bites this infected person, that mosquito also becomes an infected mosquito that carries the dengue virus. In this way, dengue spreads from one person to another by the bite of *Aedes*. Usually, the prevalence of these mosquitoes is higher in urban areas. However, over time, people living in slums or villages have also been infected by dengue fever.

There are four types of dengue virus: Dengue-1, Dengue-2, Dengue-3 and Dengue-4. Therefore, a person can be infected by dengue fever four times.

Usually, people are not infected by the same dengue virus serotype twice. But people infected with dengue fever are at risk of having severe dengue the next time they get it.

### **Clinical symptoms of dengue**

Whenever Aedes mosquito bites, you may not get sick. About one in four people infected with dengue gets sick or becomes symptomatic. Dengue symptoms can be mild or severe. Severe dengue, also called "Dengue hemorrhagic fever", can be life-threatening within a few hours and often requires care at a hospital.

Mild or "Classic Dengue Fever" begins with a sudden onset of fever, chills, and severe body pain. Skin rash, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea are also common among other symptoms. Muscle, bone and joint pains are seen to be more common; pain behind the eye is a typical sign of dengue fever. Mostly, the pain is so intense that patients often call it 'breakbone fever'. Eruption of rashes was typical in dengue fever; however, in recent years, rash in dengue patients have not been so familiar. The fever in dengue lasts 2-7 days and may reach 105°F. Most people will recover after about a week. A fever that lasts longer than ten days probably is not due to dengue. Recovery from dengue is complete but slow, with fatigue and exhaustion often persisting for around a month.

"Dengue hemorrhagic fever" is a severe complication that a dengue patient may face when their fever starts to subside. In this phase, most patients and their caregivers often make mistakes. They think as the fever subsides, the patient has become well. But the main fact is that the chance and risk of developing dengue hemorrhagic fever starts from or around this time. Warning signs include abdominal pain, restlessness, altered mental states, low body temperature, and a drop in platelet count, which can indicate the onset of dengue hemorrhagic fever. Patients may experience plasma leakage, bleeding from injuries, gastrointestinal bleeding, and blood in the urine. Abdominal pain, vomiting, febrile seizures (in children), and decreased consciousness can also occur.

Without treatment, dengue hemorrhagic fever can progress to "Dengue shock syndrome". Signs of impending shock include abdominal pain, vomiting, and restlessness. Patients may also show symptoms of circulatory failure if the condition worsens. Seeking medical attention is crucial to manage and prevent these severe complications.

### **What tests need to do**

Dengue fever usually does not require much testing. Blood platelet count starts to decrease 4 or 5 days after the onset of fever, so blood CBC and platelets should be checked after 4 or 5

days. If the test is done earlier, the report may show normal, and thus confusion may arise. The patient and even the doctor may think that the report is good, so no further tests are needed. Many people do platelet counts two to three times a day and from multiple laboratories simultaneously, which is unnecessary. Also, dengue NS-1 antigen can be done after 1-2 days of fever, and anti-dengue antibody can be done after 4 to 6 days. These tests help in diagnosis but have no role in treatment. If the doctor thinks it necessary, blood sugar, liver function test, abdominal ultrasonogram, and chest x-ray can be checked for complications.

#### **How to take care of an infected person:**

There is no specific treatment for dengue fever. This fever usually gets better on its own, even without treatment, within 7-10 days. But, a doctor must be consulted to prevent the complications of dengue, which may be life-threatening. As dengue is viral, treatment is given according to the symptoms. So, after consulting with a doctor, a patient of classic dengue fever can be managed at home with general care by the family member.

#### **Home care for the patient:**

- Proper Hydration : Drinking plenty of fluids is the key treatment for dengue fever. Oral Saline, fruit juice, soup or even only fresh water should be given to the patient. However, in the case of

diabetic patients, sweet drinks should be avoided.

- Bed rest : Take rest as much as possible.
- Medication : If you have a fever, you can only take paracetamol; no other pain medication such as aspirin, diclofenac, or ibuprofen should be taken. Taking painkillers will increase the risk of bleeding.
- Prevent mosquito bite: A dengue patient should always be kept under a mosquito net so that no mosquito can bite further.
- If any danger signs appear, consult a doctor immediately without neglecting them.

#### ***Warning Signs of Dengue Fever***

- low or dropping platelet levels
- bleeding from any part of the body, e.g., nose, gums, vomiting out blood, blood in the stool, per vaginal bleeding in females, etc.
- decreased urine output
- Pale, cold, or clammy skin
- severe abdominal pain
- Vomiting (at least 3 times in 24 hours)
- Feeling tired, drowsiness, restless, or irritable
- Difficulty in breathing
- Severe dengue is a medical emergency. It requires immediate medical care at clinic or hospital. Look for a doctor or go to the Hospital emergency department immediately if you develop any warning signs.



## How to Prevent dengue fever:

Prevention is better than cure — the ultimate truth for any disease management. There is no vaccine for dengue. Since there are four types of dengue virus, no vaccine that works against all four viruses has been discovered. Therefore, the key to preventing dengue fever is to prevent the spread of Aedes mosquitoes and prevent these mosquitoes from biting.

### Personal Protection:

- Sleep under a mosquito net, whether it is daytime or night.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, socks, and shoes to cover exposed skin.
- Use insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, etc., to prevent mosquito bites.
- Use mosquito nets or screens on windows and doors.

### Mosquito Control:

- Eliminate or reduce mosquito breeding sites by emptying and cleaning water containers such as flower pots, tyres, and buckets.
- Use larvicides to treat standing water where mosquitoes breed, and use insecticides to kill mosquitoes in and around your home.

### Travel Precautions:

- If travelling to dengue-endemic areas, avoid mosquito bites using insect repellents and protective clothing.

- Be aware of the local dengue situation and follow the advice of health authorities.

### Public awareness and engagement:

- It is an effective idea to create public awareness, educate people about dengue prevention, and arrange community-based mosquito control programs.
- Aware people to seek medical care promptly if they develop symptoms of dengue fever, such as high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes (retro orbital pain), joint and muscle pain, rash, and mild bleeding.
- Early detection and appropriate medical care can help prevent complications of dengue fever.



*Dengue awareness programme  
organised by Ramakrishna Mission  
Vivekananda Centenary College, Rahara*



*Awareness Programme on  
Dengue & Typhoid by  
Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira*



# ***My Experience as a Volunteer at the Initiation Ceremony***

**- A devotee**

The initiation day, also known as diksha divas, is the day when the guru imparts the sacred mantra in the disciple's ear and accepts all his sins. The disciple is then said to have a new birth into the spiritual life.

As a volunteer, the day starts at around 4.30 am. After getting freshened up, and wearing an Indian saree (a compulsory attire for all female volunteers), I reached the Ashrama at 5.30 am.

The temple was vibrating with spiritual vibes. The deity inside the garbh mandir felt like a living God seated right in front of us, looking at us with all the love and listening to all our prayers. The monks and devotees had all dived deep into a higher meditative state. The atmosphere felt like a different world altogether, away from the everyday hustle bustle- completely different and unattached from the worldly life.

After the mangla arati and meditation, we went down the prayer hall below the main temple to make arrangements for the diksharthis. The assistant to the Guru Maharaj himself came to make sure everything was in the

right place and that no diksharthi faced any inconvenience. He personally checked that every volunteer knew their duty well, ensuring that the diksharthi was guided at every step—from purifying with gangajal to preparing their basket, providing anything the diksharthi lacked, securing their valuables in a safe place, and finally reaching the main temple. With the guidance of the assistant Swamiji and senior monks, the whole procedure was completed smoothly.

After the diksharthis went to the temple, the volunteers arranged everything in place and went to the ashrama kitchen for breakfast. The kitchen has a big photo of Sri Maa (Sarada Devi), and it always feels like Sri Maa's children are having their breakfast (or lunch/dinner) right in front of her. It feels like she's watching her children being satisfied with tender motherly love.

After breakfast, we went back to the hall below the temple to do other duties. We cut fruits for one basket and organized sweets in other baskets, all the while listening to senior devotees talk about their experiences of leading a

spiritual life centered around the holy trio.

The best part about working together for any celebrations or diksha mahotsav is that all volunteers work together while talking about the holy trio's lives. This is particularly helpful for novices as it reinforces the feeling that we are truly serving and doing the work of Thakur, Maa and Swamiji at that moment. We can genuinely feel the presence of Thakur, Maa and Swamiji.

While doing all these works, the other senior devotees were constantly chanting and amidst such an environment, it becomes difficult to think about things other than spirituality.

After other arrangements were properly done, all the devotees were seated at their assigned duty places. At this time, I took a stroll in the temple garden. The barefoot stroll helped me absorb the pure vibrations of the temple ground. The touch of earth made me feel like one with the nature. It felt like the tress, plants, flowers and all the greenery surrounding me was deeply absorbed in remembering God and serving its own purpose just like the Vrindavan forest was engrossed in remembering Krishna and serving him.

While strolling, I saw the main gate from far. Outside the gate people were rushing from home to schools,

colleges or offices. I wondered how many among them (including us all in regular days) really remember God in such a hectic schedule. That moment made me realise how lucky I was that God chose me as one of his children, gave me his name and blessed me to serve him. I felt extremely grateful in that moment.

Next, just after the mantra was given, the doors of the temple opened, and the diksharthis came out to freshen up. We served them fresh lemon water to energize. Despite being hungry the whole day, their faces were glowing with spiritual vibrations. Afterwards, they went back to the temple to complete the remaining procedures.

Finally, after all the procedures were over, the temple doors were opened for the volunteers to come and receive the blessings of the holy trio and Sri Gurudev. The moment the door opened, it felt like we were entering a sea of spirituality. It felt like we would get drowned in an ocean of those vibrations. The vibrations engulfed us, and there was not even a single drop of desire to get out of it.

The serene environment, the pin-drop silence, the presence of Gurudev and all the monks, the intense vibrations of the living God inside the garbha mandir, and the heartfelt chanting in the minds of every single devotee present there raised the vibrations to a higher level. I felt beyond grateful to have lived

that moment, and even if I got to live it again and again, I would not be satisfied. It felt like home to the soul. The peace experienced in that moment cannot be expressed in words. That moment was worth trading everything for.

I literally got goosebumps when Gurudev looked right into each and everyone's eyes and gave his blessings. It

felt like our real parents were assuring us that we are safe, under his guidance, and that one day he will lead us by hand to his realm. Finally, we received Gurudev's blessings, and thus the ceremony ended. The whole day and the next passed in those spiritual vibes. It encouraged me to keep chanting more and more. What a blessed weekend it was!



**Temple of Shri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot**



# स्वामी विवेकानंद-महात्मा गांधी आध्यात्मिक परिपथ का उद्घाटन: एक नई पहल

-डॉ. ललित चन्द्र जोशी 'योगी' एवं डॉ. चन्द्र प्रकाश फुलोरिया  
स्वामी विवेकानंद-महात्मा गांधी आध्यात्मिक परिपथ एवं अध्ययन केंद्र

अल्मोड़ा, उत्तराखंड - सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय, अल्मोड़ा में स्वामी विवेकानंद-महात्मा गांधी आध्यात्मिक परिपथ का उद्घाटन समारोह धूमधाम से संपन्न हुआ। स्वामी विवेकानंद एवं महात्मा गांधी दोनों महापुरुषों ने ही अपने आध्यात्मिक उर्जा से इस भूमि को आप्लावित किया है। इस परिपथ का उद्देश्य कुमाऊं क्षेत्र में स्वामी विवेकानंद और महात्मा गांधी की आध्यात्मिक यात्रा को उजागर करना और उनके संदेशों को समाज के विभिन्न वर्गों तक पहुंचाना है।

दिनांक 30.09.2023 को आध्यात्मिक परिपथ एवं अध्ययन केंद्र के मानचित्र का लोकार्पण हुआ। दिनांक 14 से 17 दिसम्बर, 2023 के मध्य रामकृष्ण कुटीर के अध्यक्ष स्वामी ध्रुवेशानंद जी एवं सोबन सिंह जीना विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति प्रो० सतपाल सिंह, अध्ययन केंद्र के संयोजक डॉ चन्द्र प्रकाश फुलोरिया एवं सहसंयोजक डॉ ललित चन्द्र जोशी के मध्य इस सन्दर्भ में कई बैठकें हुईं और सर्टिफिकेट कोर्स संचालन, राष्ट्रीय स्तर की गतिविधियों के संचालन आदि विषयों पर विस्तार से वार्ता हुई।

## प्रेरक व्याख्यान

दिनांक 18.12.2023 को अध्ययन केंद्र का पहला व्याख्यान विश्वविद्यालय के गणित विभाग के सभागार में हुआ जिसमें मुख्य वक्ता स्वामी ध्रुवेशानंद

जी थे तथा दूसरा व्याख्यान 'महात्मा गाँधी के प्रेरक जीवन दृष्टान्त' विषय पर इतिहास विभाग के सभागार में हुआ जिसमें मुख्य अतिथि डॉ धाराबल्लभ पाण्डेय ने गाँधी जी के जीवन और दर्शन पर विस्तार से जानकारी दी।

## अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठी

21-22 मई, 2024 को आयोजित इस दो दिवसीय अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठी का उद्देश्य 'स्वामी विवेकानंद की विचारों के आलोक में शिक्षक, विद्यार्थी एवं शिक्षण संस्थान' पर विचार-विमर्श करना था। कार्यक्रम का उद्घाटन एक भव्य शोभायात्रा से हुआ, जो विवेकानंद की प्रतिमा से शुरू होकर अल्मोड़ा के प्रमुख स्थलों तक पहुंची। इस शोभायात्रा में स्थानीय विद्यालयों के छात्र-छात्राओं ने उत्साहपूर्वक भाग लिया, जिन्होंने स्वामीजी की शिक्षाओं को दर्शाने वाली तख्तियां हाथ में ली थीं।

इस अवसर पर कई विद्वानों और गणमान्य व्यक्तियों ने स्वामी विवेकानंद के जीवन और विचारों पर अपने विचार प्रस्तुत किए। स्वामी सर्वप्रियानंद जी ने विवेकानंद की शिक्षाओं की प्रासंगिकता पर जोर दिया, विशेष रूप से शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में उनकी उपादेयता पर प्रकाश डाला। उन्होंने कहा कि स्वामी विवेकानंद की शिक्षाएं आज भी युवाओं के लिए प्रेरणा का स्रोत हैं और समाज को सही दिशा देने में सहायक हो सकती हैं। उन्होंने आगे कहा कि भारतीय

व्यक्तिगत रूप से विश्व स्तर पर उत्कृष्टता प्राप्त करते हैं परन्तु हमें मिलकर समूह में कार्य करने की कला में भी महारत हासिल करनी चाहिए। डॉ राधाकृष्णन पिल्लुई ने संस्कृत सीखने के महत्व पर जोर दिया – उन्होंने कहा कि भारतीय संस्कृति के संरक्षण में इसकी मुख्य भूमिका है। सेमिनार के दूसरे दिन 22 मई को तकनीकी सत्र में विभिन्न विश्वविद्यालयों के शोध छात्रों द्वारा 27 शोध पत्रों का वाचन हुआ।

### तीर्थ यात्रा और स्थलों का महत्व

संगोष्ठी के साथ-साथ, प्रतिभागियों के लिए एक तीर्थ यात्रा का आयोजन किया गया, जिसमें कुमाऊं के विभिन्न महत्वपूर्ण स्थलों का भ्रमण शामिल था। काकड़ीघाट, कसार देवी, और स्याही देवी जैसे स्थानों पर स्वामी विवेकानंद की आध्यात्मिक उपस्थिति को महसूस किया गया। जिनमें क्रमशः डॉ दिवा भट्ट, प्रव्राजिका प्रसन्नप्राणा माताजी एवं स्वामी आत्मश्रद्धानन्द जी ने प्रेरक व्याख्यान दिए तथा स्वामीजी की गहन साधना और ध्यान की कहानियाँ लोगों के बीच साझा की गई।

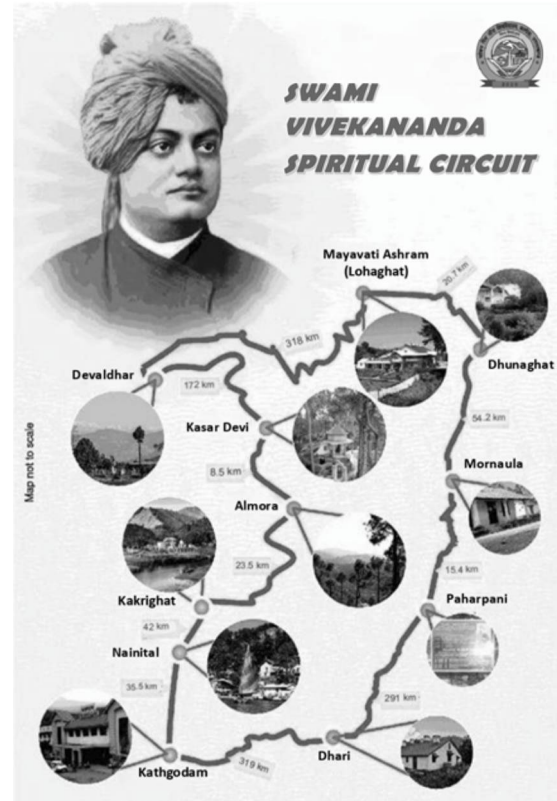
### भविष्य की योजनाएँ

इस आध्यात्मिक परिपथ की स्थापना का उद्देश्य केवल ऐतिहासिक महत्व को उजागर करना ही नहीं है, बल्कि यह एक स्थायी अध्ययन केंद्र के रूप में भी विकसित होगा, जहाँ स्वामी विवेकानंद और महात्मा गांधी के विचारों का गहन अध्ययन और प्रचार-प्रसार किया जाएगा। विश्वविद्यालय प्रशासन की योजना है कि इस पहल को राष्ट्रीय और अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर विस्तार दिया जाए, जिससे युवाओं को स्वामी विवेकानंद के विचारों से प्रेरित किया जा सके।

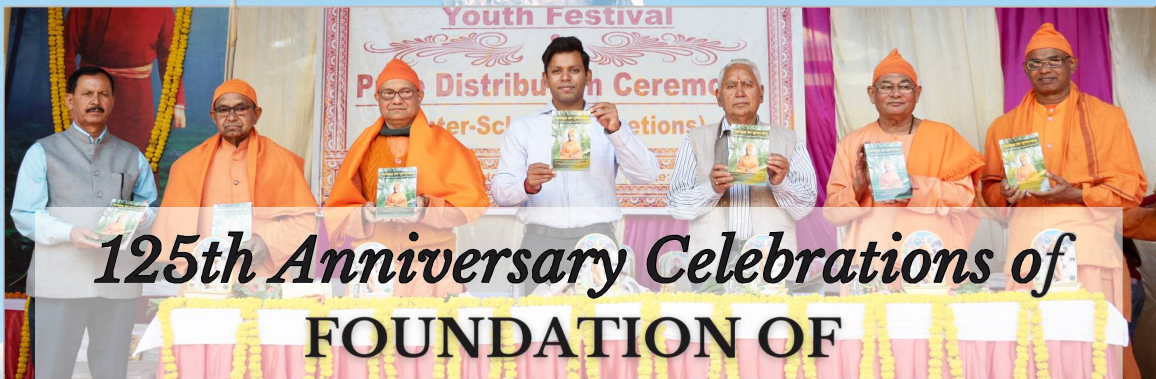
### उपसंहार

इस परिपथ के माध्यम से उत्तराखंड में आध्यात्मिक और सांस्कृतिक पर्यटन को बढ़ावा मिलेगा, जिससे स्थानीय रोजगार के अवसर भी सृजित होंगे और पलायन की समस्या पर भी अंकुश लगेगा।

स्वामी विवेकानंद – महात्मा गांधी आध्यात्मिक परिपथ के उद्घाटन ने न केवल कुमाऊं क्षेत्र के लिए, बल्कि पूरे भारत के लिए एक नई आध्यात्मिक दिशा की शुरुआत की है, जो आने वाले वर्षों में और भी व्यापक रूप लेगी।







*125th Anniversary Celebrations of*  
**FOUNDATION OF  
 RAMAKRISHNA MISSION &  
 SWAMIJI'S RETURN  
 FROM THE WEST**







## Swami Vivekananda's Footprints In & Around Almora



**Ramakrishna Kutir**

Vivekananda Corner, Almora, Uttarakhand-283 601

+91 8445008469

almora@rkmm.org

almora.rkmm.org





# Memorable Moments



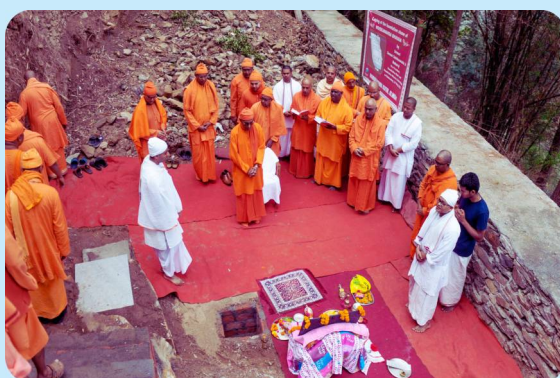
Monks from all over came for the Vivekananda Circuit Parikrama



Srimad Swami Suhitananda with Sri SK Ghosh & other monks under the Jnanavriksha at Kakrighat



Vishesh Puja & Homa on the occasion of Phalaharini Kali Puja



Srimad Swami Suhitanandaji Maharaj laying the foundation stone for Vivekananda Bhavan



Srimad Swami Suhitanandaji Maharaj inaugurating the Ram Maharaj Smriti Bhojan Kaksha



Pravrajika Prasannaprana Mataji addressed monks & devotees at Kasar Devi during the Parikrama

# ***Footprints of Swami Vivekananda in & around Almora***

**Text edited with the help of SK Ghosh; Map drawn by Aritra Srimani**

## **1. Kathgodam Railway Station**

Swami Vivekananda visited Almora three times and Mayavati once and passed through Kathgodam Railway Station all the four times in 1890, 1897, 1898 and 1900.

## **2. Nainital**

Swami Vivekananda visited Nainital twice: in August 1890 as a wandering monk accompanied by Swami Akhandananda and again in May 1898 with brother disciples, disciples and the Western followers. During the second visit, a Muslim devotee by the name Md. Sarfaraj Hussain addressed Swamiji as an Avatara.

## **3. Kakrighat**

On way to Almora on 29th August 1890, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Akhandananda rested for the night under a peepul tree in Kakrighat located at the confluence of rivers Koshi and Sirota. Swamiji meditated under this peepul tree and had the realization of oneness of macrocosm with microcosm. The peepul tree later came to be known as 'JnanaVriksha'.

## **4. Vivekananda Shila, Karbala**

On his way to Almora on 30th August 1890 Swami Vivekananda, after three

days of hunger and exhaustion, almost fainted on a flat rock opposite a roadside Muslim cemetery. Zulfikar Ali, keeper of the cemetery nursed Swamiji back to consciousness and fed cucumber to a Hindu monk, after Swamiji, the champion of universal brotherhood assured him, "Are we not all brothers?"

## **5. Amba Dutt's Garden**

On their way to Lala Badri Sah's house from Karbala, Swamiji rested at Amba Dutt's garden. Here, Swamiji explained to Krishna Joshi the glory of renunciation - the ideal of all religions.

## **6. Lala Badri Sah's House**

Lala Badri Sah had always served Swami Vivekananda and his disciples and brother disciples with utmost dedication and devotion. His house has been sanctified twice (in 1890 and 1897) by stay of Swami Vivekananda and also by the other monks at different times.

## **7. Kasar Devi Cave**

Swamiji went to Kasar Devi cave and meditated intensely for 2/3 days in the first week of September 1890. At the very climax of his spiritual exercises, he suddenly felt that he had a mission of awakening and serving mankind on earth and ignoring personal bliss

returned back to work for fulfilling the same.

### **8. Lodhia - Vivekananda Dwar**

After his triumphant return from the West, Swami Vivekananda on way to Almora reached Lodhia on the afternoon of 11th May 1897 and was received by a large crowd. At their request, he mounted a handsomely decorated white horse and was taken in a procession to the reception place near Raghunath Temple.

### **9. Raghunath Temple**

On 11th May 1897, the triumphant procession with Swami Vivekananda was led to the town center, a section of the bazar street where more than 3000 residents of Almora organised an unprecedented public welcome near Raghunath Temple next to Lala Badri Sah's house.

### **10. Dewaldhar Estate**

During his second stay in Almora in 1897, Swami Vivekananda spent a total of 46 days at the Dewaldhar Estate in two stints: from May 18th to June 19th and from July 11th to July 23rd. He enjoyed riding horseback within the estate's grounds, taking in the beautiful scenery, especially the sunrise over the snow-capped mountains. From Dewaldhar, he wrote many letters to his gurubhais, disciples, and others.

### **11. Binsar Dak Bunglow**

In between the two trips to Dewaldhar,

Swami Vivekananda went to Binsar Dak Bunglow and stayed there for 2/3 days in early July, 1897.

### **12. Government Inter College, Almora**

Swami Vivekananda delivered for the first time in his life a lecture in Hindi in the Hall of Government Inter College. The date was 27th July 1897 and the subject of his lecture was 'Vedic Teaching in Theory and Practice'. The oratorical skill displayed by Swamiji in his Hindi speech drew admiration from everyone in the audience. He delivered another lecture here on 31st July in English.

### **13. The English Club**

At the request of the English residents of Almora, Swami Vivekananda gave a lecture at the English Club on 28th July 1897. Ms. Muller who was present in the audience, wrote, "It seemed as though the Teacher, his words, his audience, and the spirit pervading them all, were one."

### **14. Thompson House**

Swami Vivekananda stayed with his brother disciples and disciples at Thompson House from 17th May to 11th June 1898 as guests of Captain and Mrs. Sevier. 'Prabuddha Bharat' was published from Thompson House from August 1898 to March 1899.

### **15. Oakley House (Nivedita Cottage)**

Sister Nivedita, Ms. Josephine MacLeod, Mrs. Ole Bull and Mrs. Patterson stayed at the Oakley House (Nivedita Cottage) in 1898. Every morning Swamiji would



visit Oakley House for breakfast when he used to spend hours to converse on all conceivable subjects with his Western followers. Sister Nivedita was blessed by her Guru Swami Vivekananda under a Deodar tree in this house on 25th May 1898.

#### **16. Syahi Devi**

Swami Vivekananda went to Syahi Devi on 25th May 1898. He used to spend in the silence of the forest about ten hours every day during this period. After spending three days he returned back to Almora on 28th May 1898.

#### **17. Mornaula Dak Bungalow**

Swami Vivekananda on his way to Mayavati spent very cheerfully the first day of Twentieth Century 1st January 1901 in Mornaula Dak Bungalow, enjoying the snow covered hills and scenic beauty of the place.

#### **18. Mayavati Advaita Ashrama**

Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati was established on 19th March 1899 to fulfill Swamiji's dream to have a monastery in the Himalayas where pure Advaita will be practiced with no external worship in any form. Swamiji visited Mayavati in January 1901 and stayed for a fortnight here (3-18 Jan.), which coincided with his 38th birthday.

#### **19. Vivekananda Ashrama , Shyamlatal**

By the moral and financial support of Mother Sevier, Swami Virajananda, a

disciple of Swami Vivekananda, established this Ashrama on 21st May 1915 and practiced intense spiritual disciplines here.

#### **20. Ramakrishna Kutir**

On 11th May 1897, Swami Vivekananda, in reply to the welcome address presented by the residents of Almora, expressed his wish to establish an Ashrama in this serene hill town in the lap of the Himalayas, to serve as a centre of calmness, meditation and peace. To realize his dream, his brother disciples Swamis Shivananda and Turiyananda established Ramakrishna Kutir nineteen years later on 22nd May 1916.

#### **21. Turiyananda Taposthali**

Swamis Shivananda and Turiyananda stayed at the 'Chilkapeta Outhouse' (now, Govt. Inst. of Hotel Management) during 1915-16. The brother monks immersed themselves in spiritual practices in this tranquil place overlooking the pine forest. Swami Turiyananda supervised the construction of Ramakrishna Kutir while staying here.

#### **22. Patal Devi Temple**

Dedicated to one of the 9 forms of Durga, Patal Devi temple is more than 200 years old, where Swamis Akhandananda, Shivananda, Turiyananda, Saradananda and Kripananda are believed to have performed spiritual practices.

# ***A visit to Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora - A Pilgrim's Heaven***

**-Swami Achyuteshananda  
Trustee, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission and  
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission School, Narottam Nagar**

Swami Vivekananda used to tell a very interesting story from the Mahabharata. It is about a golden mongoose that was trying to roll on and on, in almost all places wherever great sacrifices used to take place. He was in search of a repeat episode of the greatest yajna that he had ever seen. Sri Ramakrishna too used to narrate another exciting story. It is about Ravana's mother Nikasa, who was trying to run away from her own near and dear ones, to live lot longer irrespective of what may happen to her family members, to be able to understand God's play better.

Places associated with Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Maa Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and their disciples are new Teerthas - modern places of pilgrimage. Though we visit some of such Teerthas, most of those visits are like that of a tourist. As we grow internally, there comes an urge to have a first-hand idea of the growth of the centres of Ramakrishna Order in various places, to take note of the penetration of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideology in the surrounding areas. There are of course a few who strive for something beyond.

How it would feel to walk on the same path, trek on the same hills, and sit in meditation on the same locations where the great Swami Vivekananda had done similar things some 125 years back? Would it give a feeling that you were getting charged with some spiritual vibration? Would it transport you to a different world where you feel you are witnessing the enactment of that very play happening in front of your eyes? Does Swami Vivekananda's walking on those roads and staying in those places still reverberate in the minds of the descendants of the men and women, who came in contact with him? Do his thoughts still permeate the soil and water that he had touched? Is it tangible even today for ordinary Sadhakas?

According to Sri Ramakrishna, 'God hears even the jingles from the ant's anklets. He takes note and fulfils even the smallest of wishes! The present author was privileged to have his wish fulfilled almost in no time. The first such opportunity came in the form of Gujarat TeerthYatra in Feb 2023. This TeerthYatra in turn, led to another one in Uttarakhand which we are going to present here. This is how it all happened:

It was 7th Feb 2023. More than a hundred monks were moving in several vehicles from Somnath to Porbandar - courtesy - Gujarat TeerthaYatra - a nine-day long pilgrimage organized by Ramakrishna Ashram, Rajkot to mark Swami Vivekananda's visit to Gujarat during 1891-92.

The temptation of touching the blue waters of the Arabian Sea could be resisted no more. Most of the visiting monks got down at Madhavpur Sea beach. Some sipped green coconut water, some rode on decorated camels and some recorded the beautiful ocean free from the crowd. When the joy was so heavenly, a very senior monk came closer and told this writer 'See, you must come to Almora and join Parikrama of Vivek Marg scheduled from 25 May to 3rd June 2023.'

The senior monk was speaking from his heart, as if asked by Sri Ramakrishna to help a monk gain some new insights. The said senior monk was Swami Dhruveshananda Ji Maharaj – more than seventy-five years old but jovial like a child. He is the foremost servitor of Sri Ramakrishna at 6000 feet high hilly terrains of the Himalayas - named Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora.

It was almost like an invitation from the Himalayas! A much-awaited opportunity to re-live those great moments, to bask in the glory of touching the soil sanctified by Swami

Vivekananda. The invitation was accepted with all humility.

The journey started from a remote place in Arunachal Pradesh on the evening of 20th May. There was a bit of a rest after reaching Guwahati by train on 21st May. From Guwahati, there was a flight to Delhi the following day. After reaching Delhi on 22nd May afternoon, the author found a sweet invitation waiting – he has to join revered Swami Jnanalokananda Ji Maharaj, the head of Swamiji's Ancestral House in Kolkata and a trustee of Ramakrishna Order to a Study Circle in Karolbag, New Delhi. Mr. Anil Sana and his family did their best to ensure that the disruption of electricity (due to a fallen tree in the area) didn't hamper the program. It was a wonderful audience to have. A mix of beautiful children and their ever-enthusiastic parents made the evening worth remembering.

### **Delhi to Almora**

The next morning, on 23rd May, as arranged by Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora authorities, the convoy of Revered Swami Suhitananda Ji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission started from Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi. It was a great feeling not only because of the honour to be part of the revered Vice-President Maharaj's entourage but also to find that revered Swami Sarvalokanandaji Maharaj, Head of



Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi was there to guide with Swami Jnanalokananda ji and Swami Achyuteshananda - the other two co-travellers in the same car.

Delhi to Almora was almost a day-long journey. Revered Vice-President Maharaj was very jovial. Snacks, lunch, and other arrangements at different places on the way were prearranged after checking the same by a team led by Swami Ishtamayananda Ji Maharaj - the head of Ramakrishna Mission, Vadodara and the chief escort of Revered Vice-President Maharaj for Delhi-Haldwani leg of the journey. Before reaching Almora in the evening, it was great to see Swami Dhruveshanandaji reaching up to Haldwani, near Nainital. A private monk there at the Ramakrishna Dham garlanded Revered Swami Suhitanandaji, narrated the story of his struggles and sacrifices to preserve and protect the Ashrama from land-grabbers and submitted a petition that Belur Math authorities should take over the Ashrama for its proper upkeep.

From Haldwani, it took us about three hours to reach Almora. It was a sight to see when scores of monks - some of them quite senior like Vishwatmanandaji from Varanasi, Nikhileswaranandaji from Rajkot, Atmaprabhanandaji from Bhubaneswar, and others descended on the steps of Ramakrishna Kutir, offered Arghya and flowers at Swamiji's statue followed by

offering of flowers at main shrine to Sri Sri Thakur, Maa and Swamiji. Quite a number of devotees from different places of the country and some from Bangladesh had already arrived; some were already camping there for weeks.



***Offering flowers at the feet of Swami Vivekananda's statue at the Vivekananda Corner***

It was an ambitious marathon programme organised by Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora to mark 125 years of Ramakrishna Mission. The programme in the form of classes and discourses were going on for several days. 24-27 May 2023 were reserved for the grand finale. It won't be a bad idea to share with our readers that organising any programme at Almora is not an easy task. The demography, the terrain, and the climate - all are much different from Bengal or any other part of mainland India where the Ramakrishna Movement has made strong inroads.

It won't be out of context to mention here that the scope of this article is not aimed at presenting a report on the various programmes organised to mark the occasion. However, for the sake of smooth visualization, a few important programmes directly observed by the present author are mentioned briefly.

### **Special Worship, Building Inauguration and Meet of the Monastics**



***Vishesh Puja (Special Worship)  
on the occasion of Phalaharini Kali Puja***

On the 24th of May forenoon, there was special worship of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Chandi-Path, the inauguration of a dinning hall and a Sadhu Bhandara. In the afternoon, it was a very symbolic function at Almora Officers Mess - thanks to the effort of Commandant Vinay Yadav. It was at the very place where Swami Vivekananda had addressed during his stay in Almora. For security reasons, it is a place out of bounds for commoners these days. There were only some officers and their better halves in the audience. It was a very short program of about an hour's duration where apart from Revered Swami Suhitanandaji, Swami's

Dhruveshanandaji, Nikhileswaranandaji and Achyuteshananda spoke connecting the dots of Chicago, Colombo, Gujarat, Shillong and Almora. The Swamis and the cantonment authorities expressed their hope that organising this meeting would lead to some concrete efforts so that Swami Vivekananda is firmly embedded in the minds of the cantonment's residents.

In the evening, there was a program at the Ashrama's Shivananda Hall, restricted to monks of the Ramakrishna Order. This was more on introspection, some analysis and soul-searching by the monks assembled. Very useful discussion was made regarding the challenges faced and the opportunities available as the organisation celebrates 125 years of the establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission.

### **Archway Foundation and Kakrighat**

In the morning, the foundation for an Archway was laid some two kilometres before Almora where apart from Swami Suhitanandaji, many eminent persons of the district administration and high-profile public figures were present. Everyone felt it was a historic occasion to be associated with, a milestone for Ramakrishna Kutir to etch in the memories of all travellers passing through the important road.

This was followed by a visit to Kakrighat where Swamiji had realized

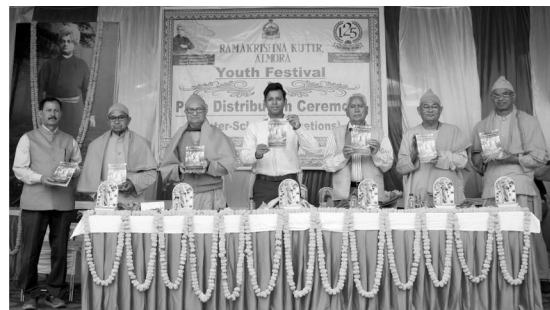
the truth behind microcosm and macrocosm. The traditional welcome by the locals in nice costumes was very pleasing. The broken temples and the resurrected Peepul tree where Swami Vivekananda during his wandering days had rested on 29th August 1890, had found the oneness of macrocosm with the microcosm were indeed found to be great places for meditation. Little away, near the entrance, the devotees have constructed two rooms very close to the rivulet with wonderful scenic beauty and very serene ambience. After having a cup of tea there, we had to proceed for a program of some very important lectures. It was on microcosm and macrocosm and was delivered by great speakers like revered Swami Suhitanandaji , Swami Balabhadranandaji (Asst. Genl. Secy) and Dr. SK Ghosh. But because it was rained a bit, had to be in a single-room school where the audience was mostly a few small children. The delegates accompanying had to stand outside. The visiting monks were so happy to have simplest of the foods, sitting on the floor in a nearby building. While returning from Kakrighat, most of the monks and delegates visited the Muslim cemetery where the then caretaker, Mr. Zulifikar Ali, had fed cucumber to a starving unknown monk who later became world-famous as Swami Vivekananda.

### **Meetings at Govt. College and House of Lala Badri Sah**

On 26th May there were two big

programmes. In the forenoon, it was in the Govt. College where Swami Vivekananda had lectured twice in July 1897 (then known as Zilla School), one in Hindi and the other in English. A beautiful statue of Swamiji has been installed there in July 2021. The venue was chosen as the Prize Distribution Ceremony for the Inter School Competitions organized by Ramakrishna Kutir to mark 125th Anniversary of the Ramakrishna Mission. A good number of boys and girls showcased their talent.

Apart from Dhruveshanandaji, Nikhileswaranandaji, Jnanalokanandaji, and Achyuteshananda, a few important persons of the region including the CDO of the area spoke during the function.



***Release of the book "ज्ञान का पुनरुत्थान" at GIC, Almora by CDO & Other Monks***

The last public function was perhaps an unforgettable experience. It was in the same place where even today some of the articles used by Swami Vivekananda are preserved. It was arranged on the roof by the family members of Lala Badri Sah – the great host of Swamiji and some of his brother disciples during his wandering days.

Almora City has undergone too many changes. Fortunately, Lala Badri Sah's descendants have kept their property intact. Apart from revered Swami Suhitanandaji, Swamis Dhruveshanandaji, Jnanalokanandaji, Achyuteshananda, Chandrakantananda, Ms. Nivedita Sah (great grand daughter of Lala Badri Sah) and others spoke. It was well attended by several local admirers and visiting delegates. Swami Suhitanandaji was visibly transported to a different sphere as he was witnessing the setting sun from the very location where Miss Margaret Noble was transformed to Bhagini Nivedita.

#### **At Kasar Devi and other places**



***Swami Achyuteshananda & other monks meditating at the Kasar Devi temple***

Kasar Devi temple is well known in Uttarakhand for its great spiritual value corroborated with scientific analysis including that of NASA. The hilltop temple, the caves nearby and the real Himalayan feel is so supportive for meditation and prayer. On 27th May, it was time to visit the famous temple of Kasar Devi. It was so charming that a few monks went back to be there again after

everybody left. The monks and other delegates went to see other nearby places associated with Sadhana Sthal of Swami Turiyanandaji and others.

#### **The Takeaways**

Like every other good thing, our stay at Ramakrishna Kutir was coming to an end. On the morning of 28th May, cars lined up to take the monks and delegates to the remaining places of Parikrama like Mayavati, Shyamlatat etc. Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora authorities had left no stone unturned to ensure a comfortable stay, delicious food, an elaborate arrangement of conveyance and generous packets of gifts for the participants. Volunteers from near and far who were rendering all possible seva all these days carried the entire load from hundred-plus steps below to the motorable road. Swami Dhruveshanandaji was quick to add his feelings – 'I understand you had to undergo this trouble of climbing up and down so many times, but please do come again. We are trying to put a lift soon so as you can have a more comfortable stay next time.'

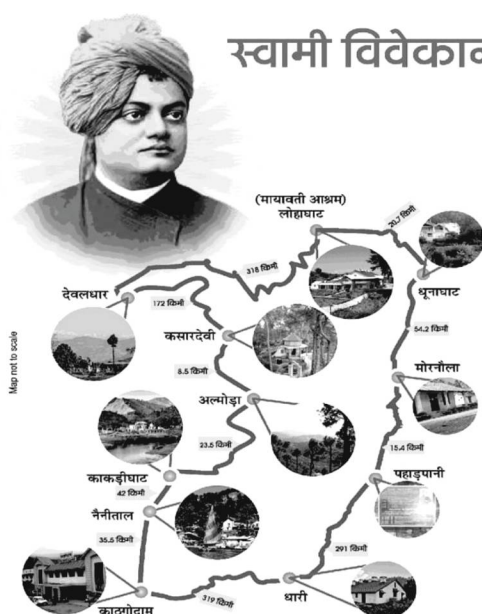
Many couldn't fathom how this elderly man serves here in the bitter cold, where every step is either climbing up or going down, where there would be hardly any devotees once the festivities are over. Some were perplexed to observe the daring act of inviting so many people to such a remote location

and to organise a programme on this scale. How was it all possible? What made so many monastics and civilians leave their comfort to volunteer, to make everyone else comfortable? What makes the high officers of the region look at the Swamis with so much reverence?

The answers to these questions would vary depending on one's state of mind and is better left to the readers. The author would love to know their answers from the participants and readers. However, just a hint here through a quote from Swami Vivekananda -You need not write in the newspapers, you need not go about lecturing; your very face will shine. If you live in a cave, your thoughts will permeate even through the rock walls, vibrating all over the world for hundreds of years, maybe, until they will fasten onto some brain and work out there. Such is the power of thought, of

sincerity, and of purity of purpose."

Before we conclude let's not forget the uniqueness of Almora where sages and Rishis did enough Tapasya to sustain spirituality for ages to come. Swami Vivekananda, Swami Shivananda, Swami Turiyananda, Sister Nivedita, and many of their companions chose this very soil to enact important episodes of their play on this earth. With the passage of time, many Teerthas have become tourist places today, many spiritual institutions have been socialised. Fortunately, in spite of all the onslaughts, Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora and places associated with Swami Vivekananda in Uttarakhand continue to remain places of pilgrimage. Let the Golden Mongoose and Mother Nikasa in us successfully discover the joy of being in heaven, the heaven of the pilgrims.



## स्वामी विवेकानन्द पर्यटन सर्किट

### उत्तराखण्ड नैसर्गिक सौन्दर्य में बसती हैं स्वामी विवेकानन्द की स्मृतियां

- स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने की उत्तराखण्ड की पाँच बार यात्राएँ।
- नैनीताल : 19 से 25 मई 1898 तक नैनीताल का प्रवास किया।
- काकाड़ीघाट : इस स्थान पर अमृत ब्रह्मचर्य और परमाणु का ज्ञान अर्जित किया।
- कर्बला : वर्ष 1890 में जब अल्मोड़ा आए तो कर्बला के पास कठिन मार्ग में गयी और व्यास से मुहल्ले हो गए, तब पास के कश्मिलान की चौकीदार ने पहाड़ी ककड़ी खिलाकर उन्हें चेतन किया।
- अल्मोड़ा : सात वर्ष बाद शिकोरी विषय धर्म सम्मेलन में अपने व्याख्यान से प्रसिद्धि पाकर जब स्वामी की अल्मोड़ा लीं तब उनके सामान में अलौकिक सगरौड़ में न केवल उस चौकीदार व्यक्ति को पहचाना, बल्कि रंग में बुलाकर कहा कि "यदि ये भाई न होते तो आज ये विवेकानन्द भी न होता"।
- धारी गांव : 29 दिसम्बर, 1900 को काठगोदाम के रेलवे स्टेशन पहुँचे, 30 दिसम्बर को धारी गांव आए, वहाँ उन्होंने राजि विद्यास किया।
- पहाड़पानी : 31 दिसम्बर, 1900 को पहाड़पानी की एक चाय की दुकान पर राजि विद्यास किया।
- मोरनीला : 1 जनवरी, 1901 में मोरनीला में अग्रिम प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य के चयन प्रवास किया।
- धुनाघाट : 2 जनवरी, 1901 में ये धुनाघाट में रुके।
- मायावती : 3 जनवरी, 1901 में ये लोहाघाट के समीप मायावती के शक्ति पुंज पहुँचे।
- कसार देवी : इस स्थान पर लेखन, पत्राचार के साथ-साथ पुस्तकालय भी करते थे।
- देवलधार : इस स्थान पर लेखन, पत्राचार के साथ-साथ पुस्तकालय भी करते थे।
- उपरोक्त की अतिरिक्त राजपुर देहादुब - शिवालिक पहाड़ी की सुंदरता में शिव बाबड़ी मन्दिर में की साधना।
- चंद्रेश्वर मंदिर, बलिकेश : रंग के तट पर मंदिर की एक छोटी सी गुफा में योग ध्यान किया।



शिकोरी विषय धर्म सम्मेलन

स्वामी विवेकानन्द पर्यटन सर्किट

- रहस्य और रोमांच की अनुभूति • योग ध्यान शिथिल के आरंजन हेतु श्रेष्ठ स्थल
- खर-छत्राओं हेतु वैयक्तिक धर्म के लिए उत्तम गन्तव्य

तो आइये, सर्किट के अलौकिक सौन्दर्य-रोमांच, अद्वैत एव शांति का करें अहसास

# ***Days at Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora***

**- Somnath Chattopadhyay,  
A devotee from Barisha, Kolkata**

Remembering the famous saying of Gita's Dhyana- '***Mukam Karoti Bachalam Pangum Langhayate Girim***', I am trying to write something regarding my stay in Almora Kutir from May 10th to May 19th, 2023. It is needless to mention the scenic beauty of the place. Sitting on a bench at Vivekananda Corner and watching the sunset is truly worthy. The sudden disappearance of the sun behind the hills reminds us that one day is debited from our tenure of stay, and that we should try to utilize the remaining days fruitfully. So, we chalked out a plan with valued guidance from Adhyaksha Maharaj and other monks to visit the places where Swamiji set foot in 1890 and later on.

We were overwhelmed by the gestures shown to us by the Maharajas and other staff members. From day one, Maharaj inquired about our health, and the facilities provided to us were adequate. The food provided to us was excellent and palatable. Here, the style of distribution of Prasad is unique. Everyone is provided with the same Prasad irrespective of class, creed, and religion. We did not observe any special arrangements being made for the VIPs during our stay. As renovation and new construction were going on in the Math,

about 25 to 30 workers who were associated with the renovation / construction were also provided with Prasad for breakfast and snacks along with other devotees in the same hall, sitting side by side without any discrimination. Even a Muslim family (sons and wife) of a mason was also provided with Prasad, treating all as Narayana. This gesture reminded me of the line from Aaratrik Bhajan, "Premarpana samadarsana jago jana dukha jay." Here, we saw the practical demonstration of this line.

In the morning, while going to attend Mangal Arati in the mandir, I had the opportunity to observe the behavior of infant monkeys and kittens, which we often see in Thakur's dialogues. Here, in the surroundings of the math, a number of monkeys are seen, which is why the guest house entry gates are properly fenced to prohibit their easy access. I was suddenly reminded of one of Thakur's teachings concerning the behaviors of baby monkeys and kittens and I was really astonished by how Thakur observed such details minutely in a tiny, thinly populated village like Kamarpukur during his childhood.

Inspired by the behavior of infant

monkeys and kittens, we can observe two distinct attitudes: 'sharanagati,' total surrender to God, and 'purushakar,' relying on one's own competence. While the kitten indicates total surrender to God, the infant monkey learns from the very beginning to rely on one's own competence by clinging itself tightly to its mother to avoid falling during movements. This indicates 'purushakar,' where sharanagati is totally absent. We often boast about our purushakar and give little importance to God or any other superpower. However, as we journey through life, we experience that only purushakar is not sufficient; the grace of God also plays a very important role in our journey. Even a very small task, despite utmost sincere effort, cannot be accomplished as per schedule. As Thakur frequently said, "Tarichha chhara gacher pata o narena," implying that without the grace of God, even a leaf of a tree cannot move. However, Swamiji told us that all power is within us and we can do anything and everything even without anyone's guidance. This might seem contradictory, but here we try to manifest the inherent power within us which is actually a gift or grace of God.

Let's turn our attention back to Almora, where we had come to attend a course on 'Kathopanishad'. After attending the classes from 9 am to 5 pm, we were free to move here and there. But most of the important places were too far to reach easily without conveyance. That made us explore nearby remarkable

places on foot initially. One day our class was rescheduled to attend chanting of Ramnam. During Ramnam, suddenly, we heard the sound of monkeys hopping over the corrugated roof of the temple. After the chanting, we saw a herd of monkeys looking towards the mandir as if they were eager to attend Ramnam !



***Classes on Kathopanishad***

After Ramnam, we visited Thompson House, from where "Prabuddha Bharat" was published for a few months. At present, an Industrial Training Centre operates here. The house is more or less maintained. On the same day, we also visited Lala Badri Shah's house where Swamiji stayed for a few days. The room where Swamiji stayed is well maintained; even the table and hurricane which were used by Swamiji are as maintained as if they are still in use. We also went to the Oakley House (Nivedita cottage), where Sister Nivedita had stayed. A statue of Nivedita adorns the place now.

One day we hired a car for visiting important places where Swamiji set foot. First of all, we visited "Karbala," where



sitting on a flat stone, hungry and tired Swamiji accepted a cucumber from a Muslim named Zulfikar Ali. That small cucumber saved the precious life of Swamiji. After conquering America, during his second visit to Almora, Swamiji delivered a lecture at the market place and after the lecture Swamiji spotted that Muslim fellow in the crowd, called him near and announced to the audience that this man saved his life otherwise it might not have been possible for him to be here. The courtesy shown to this poor man teaches us to honor a person from whom we have received any help/cooperation in times of our distress, even if he or she is very insignificant. The place where Swamiji was fed cucumber is now maintained as a memorial. In Karbala, we had the opportunity to meet the grandson of Zulfikar Ali, who takes care of the site. His elder son, who sings really well, sometimes sings Bhajans at the Almora Math also. They feel happy to be associated with the Math.



***Jageshwar Dham Temple***

After that, we visited the famous Jageshwar temple, where we saw a grand

Shiva lingam, which in a way also fulfilled my desire to visit the Kedarnath temple, where I failed to reach twice despite making all arrangements. Here also I remembered the famous saying "Tar ichha chhara gacher pata o narena". In this very temple we also saw a Deodar tree, which drew our attention for its exceptionally thick trunk.

Next day we visited Kasar Devi temple, where in a cave Swamiji had meditated for a few days. Kasar Devi temple is a very old temple of 'Shakti'. Here, we noticed that the priest was a lady and remarkably the face of the deity had resemblance with the face of the priest. This overwhelmed us. Later on, we saw the famous cave and lit an agarbatti (incense stick) there. The surrounding area of this famous temple has a strong geomagnetic field, and as a consequence, this region is endowed with cosmic energy. Here, during meditation, Swamiji felt the need to help others who genuinely needed it, especially the downtrodden, illiterate, and physically sick. His Guru's famous saying "Shiva jnane Jiva Seva" echoed to Swamiji during his meditation.

After climbing a fleet of stairs, we reached a Shiva temple which is just above Kasar Devi temple. It is also a very old temple and well-maintained. Whenever any devotee comes to visit Kasar Devi, they definitely visit the Shiva temple as well. After taking rest for a few minutes, we visited the Sarada Math,

which is very close to Kasar Devi temple. The Sarada Math has a beautiful garden as well. The temple is also good, but unfortunately, I was not allowed to enter inside as males are not allowed inside the temple.

The next day, we visited the very sacred place called Kakrighat. Adhyaksha Maharaj assigned us with a small job of carrying a bunch of books for distribution purposes to be given to the caretaker of the place. He was kind enough to provide a conveyance for the job. Kakrighat is a solitary place surrounded by hills and deep forest at the confluence of two rivers, Koshi and Sirota. The setting of the place is ideal for meditation. Here, we sensed a spiritual fragrance, which I believe blows all the time. Lord Shiva usually prefers to be at a high altitude, which is why we found Karkateswar Shiva temple here as well. During his journey in 1890 from Nainital to Almora on foot, Swamiji stayed here one night along with Gangadhar Maharaj (Swami Akhandananda). Both were impressed by the setting of the place, ideal for Dhyan (meditation). Swamiji took a bath in the holy river Kosi and meditated under this ancient Peepul tree. The original tree, as it was in 1890 is no more. It has been replaced by a cloned Peepul tree created from the branches of the original tree by the sincere efforts of agro-scientists belonging to various institutes. While meditating here, Swamiji realized the oneness of the macrocosm with the microcosm. He

shared his feelings with his fellow monk, Gangadhar Maharaj, and we came to know about Swamiji's realization from a note of Gangadhar Maharaj. A meditating hall has been built here. We meditated for about half an hour and sitting on a time machine, tried to imagine the setting of the 1890s. We presumed that the area was full of wild animals, snakes, etc., but that was not a threat to them; rather, they might have enjoyed the place because they were brave monks, disciples of "Thakur."

We also participated in Phala Harini Kali Puja at the Almora Ashrama and quite enjoyed it. A large number of local people had also come to participate. Matrisangeet and Kali Kirtana were performed by various Maharajas. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that for celebrating 125 years of Swamiji's return from Chicago, many Maharajas from different Math and Mission centres came to make the month-long program a grand success. We also had the opportunity to have the holy company (sadhu sanga) of these learned monks.

In conclusion, we tender our respectful pranaams to all the Maharajas. We are grateful to all the staff members, including volunteers, for their courteous service. We will remember all of them in the future.

# ***Holy Pilgrimage with the Monks***

**- Tapas Das**  
**Devotee from California, USA**

It was early in 2023 when I first heard about the 125th year celebrations plan, surrounding Swami Vivekananda's return from Chicago. I was in California and without any second thoughts or wasting any time I reached out to Swami Dhruveshananda ji at Ramakrishna Kutir Almora and registered my earnest interest for participating in the celebrations. In due course my request was accepted, and I made my travel plans to India and then Almora. I was very excited to do the Vivekananda Parikrama along with the Monks of the order, following the Holy footsteps of Swamiji in Uttarakhand.

The Parikrama group comprised of 40 Ramakrishna Mission Monks who had assembled at Almora from different Ashramas in India and Bangladesh. There was a select group of 30 devotees from India, Bangladesh, and US (myself). The Parikrama started from Almora in a car procession led by Swamiji's statue in a truck, and travelled to places visited by Swamiji in Almora, Mayavati Advaita Ashrama, Shyاملatal, Rishikesh, Kankhal, Haridwar and Dehradun. The entire logistical arrangement of this big group was managed by Ramakrishna Kutir Almora under the leadership of Swami Dhruveshananda ji. Local

housing, Prasad Meals and the transportation was very well organized by the Ashrama office, as is very typical of Ramakrishna Mission. Every Ashrama we visited took extremely warm care of the group.

I travelled from Kolkata to Delhi & then to Pant Nagar by air. A pre-arranged driver picked a few of us from the airport and drove us to Almora in about 4.5 hours. My lodging was pre-reserved at a nearby hotel, at a walking distance from the Ashrama. The Ashrama entry is at the road level, and we had to take about 150 steps down hill through a winded staircase to reach the main temple. At the entrance of the Ashrama, a majestic statue of Swami Vivekananda stands tall on a terrace with magnificent views of the hills. The temple has a cozy setting, a nearby office, dining hall and monks' quarters at the back. The Ashrama campus along the staircase has several accommodation rooms. A library is also near the top entrance with a few thousand rare books. There is a vista terrace along the walkway near the temple that offers vast serene views of the mountains. This was a place where one's thoughts are instantly transported towards the infinite. You just want to sit there for hours.

The Parikrama event started May 23 at Almora and ended on Jun 3rd in Dehradun for me. There were other events in Almora that had started even earlier, and many devotees attended those as well. We spent the initial few days in and around Almora and visited Sister Nivedita Cottage, where Ms. Josephine McCleod, Mrs. Ole Bull and Mrs. Patterson stayed, where Swamiji had blessed Margaret Noble, later known as Sister Nivedita. We also visited Lala Badri Shah's house, where Swamiji stayed; Raghunath Temple in the main bazar where he had addressed the town gathering; Kakrighat, where Swamiji had meditated under a Peepul tree and had a profound realization of oneness of the macrocosm with the microcosm. It was a divine feeling to visit the Vivekananda Shila near a cemetery where he had fainted in hunger and exhaustion and was offered a cucumber by a Muslim Fakir named Zulfikar Ali and Kasar Devi temple and the cave where Swamiji meditated. These places took me back to those moments and filled me with thoughts of Swamiji. Lala Badri Shah's house had many articles used by Swamiji, placed in a small room. At the Nivedita Cottage also housed many artefacts that Swamiji used. We also visited the Mornaula Dak Bungalow, around 50 kms from Almora where on Jan 1st, 1901, Swamiji had spent a night along with Swami Shivananda and disciples Swami Sadananda and Swami Virajananda. The Dak Bungalow today is not in a good condition. I had

goosebumps when Monks of the order started singing in front of the Dak Bungalow paying their respect and homage in remembrance of Swamiji.

In Almora we also visited Paatal Devi Temple and saw the few huts where Monks and Yogis stay & meditate. Swami Shivananda and other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna had performed Tapasya in one of these huts. The history, and the real stories around these places left an indelible mark on me. We also visited the beautifully located Sarada Math on the Kasar Hills.

Our stay in Almora was memorable with daybreak Mangalarati and evening Arati at Ramakrishna Kutir. The Ashrama staff, volunteers and Swamis provided us warm hospitality. Revered Swami Suhitanandaji and Assistant General Secretary Swami Balabhadranandaji spent a few days with the Monks and devotees at Ramakrishna Kutir. We were all lucky to receive their blessings and hear from them during this visit.

We also witnessed the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Vivekananda Dwar, an entry gate to the city of Almora. The occasion was graced by Revered monks of Ramakrishna Order, Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, Government officials, and many other dignitaries. Revered Swami Suhitanandaji and Swami Balabhadranandaji graced the occasion along with Sri Bhagat Singh

Koshyariji, the ex-governor of Maharashtra and the ex-chief minister of Uttarakhand. It was a great feeling to be there amidst all the revered monks.

The Parikrama took us to Mayavati from Almora, then to Shyاملataal, Hrishikesh, Haridwar (Kankhal) and finally Dehradun. We spent a night at Mayavati soaking in the spiritual essence of the place and its pristine nature and quietness. It was such a blessing and honor to sit in the meditation hall where Swamiji had stayed. We stayed at Shyاملataal for 2 nights and at the Dehradun Ashrama for 2 nights, where we participated in the Ashrama activities. At Rishikesh we visited the famous ancient temple of

Bharat Mandir. This temple finds reference in Vishnu Purana, Mahabharata and Vaman Purana. At Rishikesh we also visited the Chandreswar Mahadev Temple where Swamiji meditated in a cave.

The trip finally came to an end on June 3rd at Dehradun, and I flew back to Kolkata from there. The entire trip from Almora to Dehradun was done in private cars. This was a great personal experience where I forgot everything routine for 11 days, remained fully engrossed on the Holy Trio, touched the holy places blessed by Swamiji's footprints, and met so many revered monks and devotees. Jai Thakur, Jai Ma, Jai Swamiji.



***Monks & Devotees at The Mornaula Dak Bungalow***

# *An Experience to Remember*

**-Ms. Sudipti Dasgupta  
Devotee from Kolkata**

Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora organized various programmes in and around May 2023 to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the foundation of Ramakrishna Mission and the return of Swami Vivekananda to India after his triumph in the West. Out of the wide variety of programmes organized, I had the opportunity to be a part of the "Kathopanishad" sessions by the grace of Thakur, Ma and Swamiji.

I was in Almora from 12th to 17th May 2023. Nestled between charming hills, the ashrama fills the heart with peace and serenity. The entire event was very well-organised. I would specially like to express my sincere gratitude and pranaam to Swami Dhruveshanandaji Maharaj for giving me the chance to be a part of such a beautiful experience.

The Kathopanishad sessions, which were conducted by Swami Vedanishthananda Maharajji (Tamal

Maharaj), was another experience in itself. He explained each verse so beautifully, taking references from Kathamrita - and made it very easy for us attendees to grasp the inner meaning of the mantras. It is an art to be able to explain something with such deeper meanings in such a simplistic manner. There is just one word to describe the experience: spectacular.

At my age, this experience has given me new hope. I thoroughly enjoyed each and every bit of my stay at Almora - immersing myself in the new learnings that I gathered from the sessions and the people I met. It is difficult to explain in words the satisfaction and immense joy this experience has blessed me with. I couldn't be more grateful for this.

I hope to be a part of such events in the future, and with that, I hope to be back in Almora, a place that now holds a special place in my heart.

# ***Almora's Tapestry of Self-Discovery: Climbing Mountains and Wisdom at 63***

**-Ms. Iti Saha  
Devotee from Hridaypur, West Bengal**

May 19th to 22nd, 2023. Dates etched not just on a calendar, but on the tapestry of my soul, woven with vibrant threads of nature, devotion, and introspection in the sacred space of Ramakrishna Kutir Almora. Here, amidst the verdant symphony of whispering pines and sun-dappled meadows, my 63-year-old journey found a resonance deeper than any I had known.

On one of the pre-planned journeys around Ramakrishna Kutir Almora, a quiet afternoon found me drawn to a secluded spot overlooking the majestic Himalayas. The crisp air, fragrant with pines and wildflowers, washed away the city's cacophony. As I settled on a moss-covered rock, the mountain's serenity enveloped me, starkly contrasting the urban rhythm thrumming within. In that stillness, the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda bloomed anew, resonating with the wisdom of years lived. The interconnectedness of life, the fleeting nature of materialism, and the profound call to selfless service whispered through the rustling leaves, reminded me of the tapestry's true design.



***Kasar Devi Temple, May 2023***

But Almora's awakening was not just confined to the mind; it pulsed through my very being. Each day, around 108 steps became my pilgrimage, my 63-year-old legs carrying me towards the darshan and pranam of Thakur Shree Shree Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Holy Mother Sarada Devi and their prasad, a reward earned with each deliberate climb. It was a microcosm of life's journey, each step echoing Swami Vivekananda's "arise, awake," a daily reminder that taking care of my body was not just a necessity, but a spiritual act. Those stairs tested my endurance,



nurtured my muscles, and mirrored the uphill battle we all face on our spiritual paths. A climb up the steep path to Kasar Devi Temple, where Swami Vivekananda himself once meditated, brought me breathtaking views and a profound sense of inner peace. Sitting in the cave resonated with his teachings on self-discovery, and I returned with a renewed commitment to my spiritual practice.

These experiences were not isolated threads; they were intricately woven into the tapestry of my Almora journey. Culturally enriched discussions on Swami Vivekananda's encounters with diverse cultures resonated with my travels, reminding me of the universality of spiritual truths. The story of Swami Vivekananda and Zulfikar Ali is a powerful testament to the enduring message of interfaith harmony and universal brotherhood. It reminds us that despite our differences, we are all connected and can find common ground through compassion, service, and understanding. The collective energy during communal meditations mirrored the quiet camaraderie I found during a solitary walk amidst the mountains, both experiences highlighting the inter-connectedness of our journeys. Almora was not just a celebration of anniversaries; it was a celebration of my potential, woven into the tapestry of nature's embrace, faith's resonance, and introspection's guidance.



***Vivekananda Shila, Almora:  
A symbol of interfaith harmony.  
The story of Swami Vivekananda and  
Zulfikar Ali resonates, reminding  
us of our interconnectedness and  
the power of compassion, service, and  
understanding to bridge differences;  
May 2023***

I returned home not just with renewed faith, but with a deeper understanding of self. The mountains' whispers became a song in my heart, the 108 steps a symbol of resilience, and Kasar Devi Temple's silence a reminder of the eternal quest. At 63, I know more than ever – the tapestry of life, physical and spiritual, is a beautiful work in progress, and each thread, however small, contributes to the richness and meaning of the whole. I carry this tapestry, woven in Almora's vibrant embrace, as a reminder that the journey upwards, both physical and spiritual, is worth every step, every breath, every moment.

# *A Heavenly Opportunity*

- Utpal Das

**Devotee from Haldwani**

To celebrate the 125th year of Swamiji's return from the West and establishment of "RAMAKRISHNA MISSION", a well-managed "Retreat" program was held in May- 2023 at 'Ramakrishna Kutir', Almora.

I along with my family had got the heavenly opportunity to be there and participate in most of the programs. We started our devotional journey through lessons on "KATHOPANISHAD" by Swami Vedanishthanandaji and surprisingly learnt a lot through his speech. He being a good speaker cum narrator, made all devotees understand properly.

Then we went further into spirituality with Swami Shuddhidananda Ji. The sessions came out to be a boon as the devotees were blessed with a clear understanding of the various aspects of Advaita philosophy. Honestly, what I experienced was immensely soulful and for me that will be always beyond explainable limits.

The teachings on meditation by Swami Raghavendrananda Ji was another surprise in this retreat. Thinking and creating 'Prakash' in one's own heart and spreading the same 'Prakash' slowly

around one's surroundings and going on thinking with heart and soul until one achieves the enlightenment was the essence of the meditation sessions.

The classes on RAMACHARITAMANAS by Swami Sukhananda Ji was a magical inclusion in this retreat. All of us devotees relished a lot as he narrated the facts joyfully and cheerfully through 'Chants' and 'Shlokas'.

All the other related programs including Puja, Mantra chanting, Seminars, Sadhu Sanga, Parikrama etc. was well managed and commendable.

Laying of foundation stone of "Vivekananda Dwar" at Karbala was another remarkable event by revered Swami Suhitananda Ji and we all had a scope to learn a lot from his speech.

We all devotees are whole heartedly grateful to Swami Dhruveshananda Ji for organizing this heavenly well managed program and hope to experience the same in coming days. Before concluding, I express my deep devotion to SRI SRI THAKUR, MAA and SWAMIJI and seek blessings to progress in our spiritual lives.

# ***The Precious Gifts of the Adhyatmic Shibir***

**- Nandini Raha  
Devotee from New Delhi**

I am a humble devotee from Delhi, sharing some spiritual experiences during my stay for Adhyatmic Shibir at Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora during the end of May, 2022.

I was fortunate to get accommodation within the premises of Ramakrishna Kutir, witnessing the natural splendors of the Himalayan foothills. As a participant of the 3-day seminar, our days used to start with Mangala Arati and chanting, followed by breakfast at the ashram premises. It was the grace of The Divine Trio which enabled me to grasp some of the life-changing thought processes given by Swamijis who happened to grace the occasion from various parts of India and abroad.

These eminent personalities were not only heads of various Ramakrishna Ashramas but also pioneers of the spiritual heritage of the Ramakrishna Order. Swamijis from Ujjain, Kanpur, and Mayawati were there to grace the occasion. We had only seen them on stage or read their names in books; but now they were seated so near to us, lecturing and teaching us guided meditation. It was indeed a life-changing experience in itself. They were readily available for our question & answer

sessions at the end of every lecture. After a short afternoon break, some interesting talks of devotees on 'Leela Prasanga', 'Kathamrita', followed by elaborations on how to incorporate this knowledge into day-to-day life used to be given by Swamijis. Tea breaks included amalgamation of discussions of Swamijis with participants belonging to various schools of thought from various parts of the country. Their interactive sessions were rich with tips on meditation and Thakur's teachings. The day used to end with Aarti and concluding messages by Swamijis for the following day. That's how we were made to get ready to face life as it comes, that too happily.

Meanwhile, throughout our stay, especially at meal times, we enjoyed the Almora Ashrama's Adhyaksha Maharajji's warm gestures, almost forcing us to over-eat the splendid menu. As the day came to part our ways back home, what we carried was something that can't be summarized in words. Besides meditation, Swami Vivekananda's school of thought to revolutionize the society we live in was something that we received as a return gift. At the end of the program, I felt that we were all set to face the war called life, that too with a smile.

# ***A Journey of Spiritual Discovery: Embracing Vivekananda's Legacy in Almora***

**-Mahesh Sowani**

**3rd Joint Civil Judge Senior Division and  
Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Nanded**

After reading Vivekananda's literature, I decided to make a trip to the Ashramas of the Ramakrishna Order in Almora, Mayawati, and Shyاملatal. I wrote to these ashrams seeking permission to stay in the Ashrama. While Mayawati and Shyاملatal replied immediately and confirmed my booking, nothing was heard from the Almora Ashrama.

When I called them, they told me that they were having a ceremony to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the foundation of Ramakrishna Mission and the return of Swami Vivekananda from his first visit to the West, and hence they couldn't accommodate me. At the same time, they wrote stating that they could help me book a room in nearby hotels and asked me firmly to enjoy the meals at the ashrama only.

My flight tickets were already booked. I received an email regarding the yatra to all the places where Vivekananda visited in Uttarakhand. Had I known it earlier, I would have loved to join this yatra. I repented not being able to make it for the yatra. Nevertheless, I decided to visit the Almora ashram. It was my good fortune that I was going to visit it at the time of these celebrations.

My initial plan was that I would visit the ashram for a day and then visit Kausani because I was a little

disappointed with the idea of staying in a hotel. I visited the ashram, and it was the first day of the celebration. Volunteer Gore from Maharashtra received us with great love. The vibes ensured that I canceled my trip to Kausani and attended the event for three days.

These were undoubtedly the most memorable days of my life. My time was well spent listening to the lectures, reading books, watching the sunset from the statue of Vivekananda, and contemplating. Not to forget the delicious meals with sweets which were served with great love and affection. The volunteers served us as if they were feeding their own child. I felt that it was Divine Mother who was making me sit on her lap and feeding me.

I also visited Kasardevi and meditated in the same cave where Vivekananda had meditated. The very thought of sitting at the same spot where such a spiritual giant had meditated itself was overwhelming. But I was transported into another world when I sat there and meditated. I wish there was no constraint of time, and I could have stayed there forever. But Divine Mother has her own plans.

I planned my Almora trip without knowing about the celebrations and partook in my share in it as desired by Divine Mother.

# *Vivekananda, Vedanta & a Voyage through time*

A short report on the Concluding Ceremony at Almora in May 2024



In 1890, after three days of deep meditation, Swamiji experienced the pinnacle of spiritual practice, where the individual soul merges with the infinite, losing all sense of identity with oneself or the samsara. Yet, something unexpected happened. Reflecting on this experience at Kasar Devi, he later said, "Nothing in my whole life ever so filled me with the sense of work to be done. It was as if I were thrown out from that life of solitude, to wander to and fro in the plains below."

From the heights of the Himalayas & the heights of his

meditative state, driven by this unknown force, the young Naren journeyed across the country. He found shelter at the homes of pariahs and in kings' palaces alike, encountering the ignorant and the superstitious, as well as high intellectuals. It was as if he met face to face with the very soul of India, feeling its problems as his own. But where was the solution? None could offer an answer that satisfied his soul until he reached the very tip of the Indian peninsula, at what is now known as Vivekananda Rock in Kanyakumari.

There, seated on the rock, he

again meditated for three days—not amidst the stillness of the Himalayas, but at the tumultuous shore of the ocean, mirroring the turbulence within. This time, he found the answer. The journey was complete. Vivekananda realized he must go to the West and act as a bridge between East and West, past and future. This time, he didn't take a leap but crossed the ocean by ship.

After four years of spreading the highest wisdom and conquering the West with Indian spirituality, only half the job was done. In 1897, he returned to India. His journey began from the shore of Colombo and culminated in the Himalayas at Almora. From Colombo to Almora, Swamiji, with his powerful speeches, awakened the sleeping masses of India and roused the giant within them. It was in Almora, upon hearing of the passing of his disciple Goodwin, that Swamiji declared his days of public speaking were over. How poetic that it ended where it all began!

Now, 125 years later, the hero's return to Almora is commemorated. The townspeople, who view him not as a guru or God but as one of their own, had in 1897 organized a 3 km long procession, bringing him to the main bazaar where Swamiji had shared his vision of establishing a center in Almora. This center, now known as Ramakrishna Kutir, stands as a testament to Swamiji's legacy. For 108 years, it has unwaveringly served the purpose he

designated: a place of calmness, a retreat.



***Top View of the Temple Shikhara***

Swamiji always placed his highest hopes on the youth for the revival of this country. He believed that the new rishis would surpass the old ones in greatness. Therefore, any celebration linked with Swami Vivekananda in Almora would be incomplete without the active engagement of the youth.



***Garbhagriha at Ramakrishna Kutir***

To honor this, a Vivekananda Inter-school competition was organized from April 25 to May 25, encompassing students from classes 1 to 12. Various competitions were held, including an art



competition on "Swamiji & My Dear Almora," a quiz and comprehension on Swamiji's life & teachings, essay and speech contests on Swamiji's ideas for the youth & present times, as well as Gita recitations and cultural programs featuring folk songs and dances. It was a celebration of Swami Vivekananda and the India he so dearly loved.



***Prize Distribution Ceremony & Cultural Program at GIC, Almora***

The entire month, steeped in his thoughts, inspired everyone involved. A class 11 student aptly reflected, "For the last few weeks, I have only been reading and thinking about Swami Vivekananda. Sometimes, I would try to find a fault in him, but to my bewilderment, I couldn't find anything. Everything about him was positive and energy - giving. "The celebration concluded with a grand program on May 25 at GIC, Almora, where Swamiji had delivered two speeches, including the first Hindi speech of his life. The place still reverberates with his presence. Swami Atmashraddhanandaji, Secretary of Ramakrishna Mission Kanpur, and Prof.

Dr. Jagat Singh Bisht, Ex-Vice-Chancellor of SSJ University, were present to hand out prizes to the winners and motivate them with their speeches.

When Swamiji ventured to the West, he was famously referred to as the "Cyclonic Hindoo Monk" for the significant disruption he caused in the usual way of thinking among Westerners. Both he and his message were embraced with open arms, but Swamiji sought to establish his work on a firmer footing. His vision for a permanent center led to the establishment of the Vedanta Society of New York, the first ashrama in the West.

During the ceremony in Almora, we were honored to have Swami Sarvapriyananda, the minister in charge of that very same center, with us. It felt as though a circle was being completed. The same message that Swamiji had carried to the West was now flowing back to India, with people ready and eager to receive it—the grand message of Vedanta!

Every morning, the day began with Mangala Arati at 6:00 AM. Delegates from all over the world, including Japan, Bangladesh, the USA, Canada, and various parts of India, slowly gathered in the temple. After breakfast, they convened at the Shivananda Hall, which was imbued with a meditative atmosphere. As the deep, sonorous Vedic chants by Swami Shankarehsananda



echoed through the hall and the lights dimmed, everyone steadied their minds to receive the highest wisdom.



***Swami Raghavendrananda & Swami Sarvapriyananda at the Spiritual Retreat***

The morning session commenced with a guided meditation by Swami Raghavendranandaji, Adhyaksha of Ramakrishna Math, Nagpur. A senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and a prolific speaker, Maharaj has been blessing Almora for the past few years with his discourses filled with insights on practical spirituality based on the lives of Thakur, Ma & Swamiji. This year, he spoke on the topic of "What is Spirituality and How to Manifest It." Over three days, he delved into the teachings and lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, respectively. His talks set a profound tone for the rest of each day.

Swami Sarvapriyananda conducted two sessions each day- one in the morning and one in the afternoon. In one of his talks, he emphasized the importance of being fully present, stating, "Don't think that once this lecture is over, you will retire to your

rooms and temples and then begin your sadhana. This, what we are doing now, is verily sadhana itself." His words encouraged participants to view their engagement in the sessions as an integral part of their spiritual practice.

On another occasion, Swami Sarvapriyananda recounted an encounter with a sadhu from Uttarakhand, who told him, "Mahatma Ji, jo aapko wahan samajh nahi aayega wo yahan aa jayega," meaning, "What you can't understand in the plains, you will be able to grasp in the Himalayas," referring to the profound spiritual insights that often come in the land blessed by the sadhana of countless sages over centuries.



***Dr. Subhadra Desai at the Bhajan Sandhya***

The delegates and monks alike felt blessed to have the rare fortune of listening to him expound timeless wisdom through the verses of Aparokshanubhuti. Swami Sarvapriyananda's teachings provided deep insights into the nature of self-realization and the direct experience of the ultimate truth. His ability to convey complex philosophical concepts in an

accessible and engaging manner left a lasting impact on all attendees.

A documentary was shown each day during the mid-day break. On the 18th and 19th respectively, Dr. Subhadra Desai and Dr. Ravi Joshi, with their devotional music, enthralled everyone during the Bhajan Sandhyas after the Sandhya Arati. On the evening of the 20th, a short talk was delivered by Dr. Radhakrishnan Pillai, an internationally renowned speaker and author, and an expert on Chanakya. He spoke on the concepts of 'vridhdha' and the need to learn as an apprentice under the tutelage of an expert master, akin to the ancient gurukul system. He also emphasized the tradition of vaad-vivaad (debate) being reintroduced to our dining tables by parents with their children. It was an insightful half-hour packed with practical wisdom.



***Dr. Radhakrishna Pillay being felicitated during the Spiritual Retreat***

Earlier, during a feedback session, the participants opened their hearts about what the retreat meant to them. This was followed by a captivating vote of thanks, delivered in the form of a heartfelt poem written by Swami

Vedanishthananda himself.

*"Let this Concluding Ceremony,  
Begin a new chapter in our life,  
Let the Truth manifest,  
Within our joys and strife."*

The poem resonated deeply with everyone present. The retreat seamlessly transitioned into the Parikrama. The same Vedanta that was like snow at the summit of the mountain now flowed like many streams in the form of Swamiji's journey—his experiences and teachings. The morning of May 21st was aglow with the bright faces of Swami Vivekananda's admirers. The energy and devotion in the air were palpable, both in the young and the old.

The shobha yatra, flagged off by Swami Sarvapriyananda and other senior monks, began at the feet of Swamiji's statue at the Vivekananda Corner and proceeded to the Government Inter College, Almora. The procession was led by a group of young girls from a local school playing in an uplifting band, followed by 100 high school students holding placards displaying Swamiji's teachings. Numerous saffron flags bearing the Ramakrishna Mission's logo were carried by an enthusiastic throng of devotees and monks, while a tuk-tuk played inspiring songs dedicated to Swamiji. Every now and then, shouts of "Swami Vivekananda ki jay" echoed through the streets.

At the Government Inter College



### ***Devotees & Monks Attending the Spritual Retreat***

(GIC), three young and dynamic guides awaited the procession. Rajesh, a residential student at Ramakrishna Kutir who also holds a guide license from the Uttarakhand Tourism Department; Harshit, who has created a documentary titled 'Swami Vivekananda ki Himalay Yatra'; and Abhinav, who has been associated with Swamiji and his teachings since childhood, courtesy of his birth and upbringing at Kakrighat, the site of Swamiji's profound realization of oneness. These guides would be instrumental in bringing Swamiji's journey and teachings to life for the participants. The Parikrama, as it would be seen, symbolized not just a physical journey but a spiritual one, as participants connected with Swamiji's life and message on a deeper level. As the procession moved through the streets, it was clear that Swami Vivekananda's

spirit was very much alive, guiding and inspiring everyone involved.



***A local school band playing at the shobha yatra from Ramakrishna Kutir to GIC, Almora***

Offering flowers at Swamiji's statue at the Government Inter College (GIC), everyone gathered under the same roof where Swamiji's inspiring words had once echoed almost 125 years ago. The guides took the participants through a passage of history, transporting them to the times of Swamiji. The gathering then joined in a chorus singing of "Vivekananda tum nara roopi Narayan," inundating the

entire place with feelings of awe and devotion.

The group then proceeded to the auditorium of SSJ University, where a two-day international seminar was hosted on the topic of **"Students, Teachers, and Educational Institutes through the Lens of Swami Vivekananda's Ideas."** The new vice-chancellor- Prof. Dr. Satpal Singh Bisht, immediately after assuming his office, announced the formation of the Swami Vivekananda Spiritual Circuit and Study Centre. This initiative aimed to disseminate Swami Vivekananda's ideas among the youth of the region and to promote awareness among the locals about Swamiji's deep connection with Uttarakhand, especially Kumaon and particularly Almora.

The seminar, as well as the Parikrama, were organized by Ramakrishna Kutir in association with the newly formed centre at Almora University. At the inaugural ceremony of the seminar, Dr. Radhakrishnan Pillai spoke on the importance of learning Sanskrit, emphasizing its integral role in preserving our *Sanskriti*. He illustrated the impact of Indian thought leaders like Chanakya and Swami Vivekananda, describing them as Yuga Purushas, whose influence transcended national boundaries to shape global thought. Dr. Pillai's recounting of how Vivekananda inspired the industrialist Rockefeller to embrace philanthropy brought the

narrative to life.



*Public Meeting at Kakrighat*

Swami Sarvapriyananda delivered a compelling talk on holistic education. His serene yet authoritative voice conveyed the necessity of training the head, heart, and hands. "Indians excel globally," he acknowledged, "but we must also master the art of working with our hands and collaborating effectively." He further emphasized Swami Vivekananda's belief that education's greatest goal is to cultivate empathy and compassion. "The heart must be trained to feel for others," he stated, a message that resonated deeply with the audience. Swami Raghavendrananda, Prof. Dr. Satpal Singh Bisht, Prof. Dr. Milton Dev from University of Dhaka and other eminent speakers also delivered inspiring talks.

In the afternoon, two buses adorned with banners displaying Swamiji's inspiring quotations set off for Kakrighat. Upon arrival, participants were greeted by the serene, picturesque setting of a true Indian village. Under the shade of a large tree, the villagers as well as the delegates had gathered, where the children from neighbouring villages

performed a beautiful cultural program, their voices and movements weaving a tapestry of local tradition and youthful exuberance.

Swami Sarvapriyananda then addressed the gathering, his words drawing everyone into a profound reflection. He spoke of Swami Vivekananda's lecture on the cosmos given in New York in 1896, reading excerpts that echoed the natural surroundings of Kakrighat. As he drew parallels between the microcosm and macrocosm, the rivers, trees, and mountains around them seemed to echo Swamiji's words, as if these landscapes had left an indelible mark on his mind.



*Swami Sarvapriyanandaji felicitating Dr. Diwa Bhatt at Kakrighat in presence of Swami Atmshraddhanandaji & Dr. Radhakrishnan Pillay*

Swami Atmashraddhananda followed with a discourse on the inner and outer journeys of devotees to Kakrighat, highlighting the sense of fulfilment that such pilgrimages bring. Earlier, Dr. Diwa Bhatt captivated the audience with tales of the region's powerful Devis—Kasar Devi, Syahi Devi, and Vanari Devi. She spoke of their divine

energies and how they intersected with the three rivers, Kosi, Suyal, and the immiscible Gupta Ganga. Her stories of the ancient rishis who practiced austerities in this sacred land added a layer of historical depth, painting a vivid picture of Kakrighat's spiritual legacy.

As the sun began to set on the banks of the Kosi River, the time for Sandhya Arati arrived. The devotees gathered at Swami Vivekananda Dhyan Kaksha, the temple precincts filled with the collective singing of Khandana Bhava Bandhana. The melodious chants and the shimmering reflection of the moon in the waters created a magical, spiritual ambiance that enveloped everyone present. As people made their way back, their hearts were full and their voices quiet, each person lost in contemplation of the holy memories created during this beautiful afternoon.



*Program at Patal Devi & Kasar Devi Temple*

The second day began with a serene visit to the Patal Devi Mandir. After the darshan, the group embarked on their journey to Kasar Devi Temple. At Kasar Devi, a function was held where Pravrajika Prasannapranamata ji delivered an insightful lecture, highlighting the importance of Kasar Devi as a pivotal place of pilgrimage in

Swami Vivekananda's life. It was subsequent to his experiences here that he firmly resolved to do something for the Education of Indian women. Sri Sarada Math, established just next to the Kasar Devi Temple has been tirelessly working for the uplift of women for 25 years. Earlier Dr. Dharavallabh Pandey provided an informative lecture on the history of Kasar Devi. He traced its roots from ancient Puranic times to its role in the 1960s counter-culture movement, showcasing the temple's long-standing cultural and spiritual relevance. The program concluded with a powerful and resonant chorus recital of the Mahishasuramardini Stotram by about 100 monks and devotees. The recital echoed through the geo-magnetically and spiritually charged surroundings of Kasar Devi, invoking the divine presence of the Mother.



***Debjani Banerjee & Indrani Roy performing devotional songs at Vivekananda Memorial Rest Shelter, Karbala***

As the time for the afternoon session approached, a torrential downpour began. Uncertainty loomed over the plans, but everyone waited patiently. The rain, after washing away the dirt and cooling the atmosphere,

subsided in about an hour. The next stop was Karbala, the place where Swami Vivekananda's life was saved by a Muslim fakir. The descendants of Zulfikar Ali continue to stay at the very same place, now also looking after the stone and the Vivekananda Rest Shelter created in the 1970s by Boshi Sen and Gertrude Sen. Niyaz Ali, the great-grandson of Zulfikar Ali, performed a bhajan. Everyone huddled up in the small rest shelter, now keenly waiting to listen to Akhtar Ali, Zulfikar Ali's grandson. Akhtar Ali shared his close acquaintance with the Sen couple and recounted his visions of Swamiji. He also spoke about the help rendered to his family by the Ramakrishna Kutir. His candid and evocative interview captivated the audience.

The group then visited and paid homage to the stone where Swamiji had collapsed. After a short tea break, they quickly boarded the buses and headed straight to the Raghunath Temple. In the middle of Almora's main bazaar, the group gathered to hear descriptions of Swamiji's heroic welcome in 1897 after his return from the West. Harshit vividly narrated these moments, bringing history to life. Sumitra Nandan Pant, a famous poet from the region, had written a poem about this event where a child asks his mother if it's Diwali because so many lamps have been lit. Rajesh recited the poem soulfully. Excerpts from the addresses presented to Swamiji by the people of Almora were read out,



followed by his powerful reply, read out by Abhinav, in which Swamiji referred to Almora as Devbhoomi, the land of renunciation, and expressed his wish to set up an Ashrama here.

After a darshan at the Raghunath Temple, everyone waited their turn to visit the room in Lala Badri Shah's house where Swamiji had stayed in 1890 and 1897. The room, still housing many objects used by him, had a deep meditative atmosphere. Immersed in Swamiji's presence, the group returned to the buses through the old bazaars of Almora as the sun set behind the distant Himalayan peaks.



***Rajesh Giri guiding the devotees at the Turiyananda Taposthali***

The final day of the Parikrama began at Turiyananda Taposthali, the birthplace of Ramakrishna Kutir. Swami Shivananda and Turiyananda had spent months here, immersed in Tapasya, hidden from everyone inside a kutiya amidst the pine forests. The hut, now restored with the help of eminent conservation architect Dr. Neeta Das, was open for darshan for the first time. The inspiring natural surroundings and

the spiritual vibrations of the place transported everyone to a contemplative realm.

Rajesh lucidly narrated the life of harsh austerities and high spiritual attainments of the two gurubhais during their stay here, as well as the extreme hardships encountered by Hari Maharaj in establishing the Ramakrishna Kutir. Inspired, moved, and awestruck, the group prepared for a long journey to Syahi Devi.

As the bus moved through the Himalayan zigzag roads, the guides engaged the pilgrims with a quiz on Swamiji's life and his visits to Almora. Time passed quickly, and soon the group began their walk to the Syahi Devi temple. Through wooded, unpaved roads and cool winds, everyone reached the Syahi Devi temple, where the temple committee had set up a pandal to welcome the devotees.

After the puja of the Mother, everyone sat on beautiful carpets laid in the mandir precincts, some meditating, some simply absorbing the palpable energy. A short program commenced, with Dr. Hem Bahuguna, a social worker, narrating interesting incidents from Almora's history, especially about the Devis and their magical aura protecting the people of this place. Debjani Mukherjee and Indrani Roy lent their beautiful voices to sing a Ramprasadi song. They performed at three other locations as well. Harshit



and Abhinav recited "Kali the Mother," a poem of mystic feelings written by Swamiji. Swami Raghavendranandaji and Swami Atmashraddhanandaji spoke about the background and circumstances that inspired Swamiji to come to Syahi Devi Cave and practice austerities from July 25th to July 29th in 1898. They recounted how Swamiji, harsh on Nivedita in trying to wean her away from her pride in the Union Jack, found peace at Syahi Devi after Ms. Macleod intervened.



***Program at the Syahi Devi Temple***

Everyone relished the prasada of daal- chawal, aloo ki sabzi, and delicious jalebis. Rejuvenated, they made their way back to the buses, reflecting on the spiritual journey they had undertaken. The bus stopped at the foot of Thompson House, a place Swamiji once wanted to convert into his Himalayan Ashrama. Here, he had stayed as a guest of the Sevier couple in 1898, revived his magazine, Prabuddha Bharata, but also received the heartbreaking news of his beloved Goodwin's death. Harshit narrated the time Swamiji spent at Thompson House, the people he met, and Abhinav, with a tone of poignancy, recited the poem "Requiescat in Pace,"

which Swamiji had written to Goodwin's mother after his demise. It was here, staring at the snowy peaks, that Swamiji, upon receiving the sad news, said, "My days of public utterances are over."

With that sombre note, everyone proceeded toward Nivedita Cottage, just as Swamiji used to every morning to have breakfast with Nivedita and other Western followers. They made a pit stop to view Kundan House from above, the residence of Boshi and Gertrude Sen, where Boshi had blessed M.S. Swaminathan with Swamiji's relics. for success in his wheat project, paving the way for the Green Revolution.



***Interview of Lala Badri Shah's family members at Sister Nivedita Cottage***

At Nivedita Cottage, descendants of Lala Badri Shah's family—Girish Shah, Vinod Shah, and Sharad Shah—were interviewed by Harshit. They recounted many stories about their association with Swamiji, their recollections of the early days of Ramakrishna Kutir, funny anecdotes, and instances where Vivekananda manifested his physical presence to help the family in trying situations. The audience revelled in these memories.

The great-granddaughter of the Badri Shah family, named Nivedita, welcomed the devotees and the Swamis from Ramakrishna Kutir. She recalled how her grandfather survived World War II by keeping Vivekananda's letter to Badri Shah in his pocket. Sri Vinod Shah recalled that no monk allowed his father to make pranams, as Swami Shivananda had played with him by making him sit on his shoulders. "Jinko Mahapurush Maharaj ne apne kandhe pe bithaya, unhe hum kaise pair chhune de sakte hain?" Sri Girish Shah, another grandson of Badri Shah's brother, recalled how, at the instance of Shri Buddhadev Bhattacharya, the then CM of West Bengal, during their visit to the house, the name was changed from 'Oakley House' to 'Nivedita Cottage.'

Swami Atmashraddhananda spoke about the sacrifice and contribution of Swamiji's Western followers in Swamiji's mission and nation - building . Swami Raghavendranandaji also spoke of the sanctity of Nivedita Cottage, emphasizing that even the tree under which Nivedita was blessed by Swamiji shall be liberated—highlighting the immense spiritual significance of the place where they were all sitting. After offering flowers at the feet of Sister Nivedita's statue, everyone visited the room where Swamiji met his Western disciples. The room, containing rare photographs and portraits of Swamiji, along with the bed, chair, and other

articles used by him, transported everyone back to those times, as if only an invisible veil hid Swamiji and others from view.



***Swami Raghavendranandaji Offering Flowers at The Feet of Sister Nivedita***

As everyone returned to the Shivananda Hall, they had a bittersweet feeling in their hearts. After the sandhya arati, a documentary titled "Swami Vivekananda ki Himalaya Yatra" made by Harshit Soni was shown to everyone. Through those moving images, everyone relived the memories from the Parikrama and yearned for more.

The journey outside had come to an end, but the journey within would continue, now propelled forward by the renewed energy received from the retreat and the parikrama. From engaging with the chosen few who had come together, it was now time to spread the word far and beyond. Seminars were organized at various universities across cities to share the wisdom of Vivekananda and Vedanta.

### **Seminars and Talks at Universities**

**22nd May : Kumaon University, Nainital**



Swami Sarvapriyananda, Swami Vedanishthananda , and Dr. Radhakrishnan Pillai spoke to a gathering of 100 students on **"Bridging the Gap: Ancient Thought, Modern Life."**

**23rd May: GB Pant University of Agriculture & Technology**



Swami Sarvapriyananda and Dr. Radhakrishnan Pillai addressed 200 students and faculty on **"India's Contribution to the East & the West."**

**24th May: SSJ Government Institute Of Medical Science & Research, Almora**

Swami Atmashraddhananda, Secretary of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Kanpur, and Swami Vedanishthananda, the designated Spiritual Head of Ramakrishna Mission Vedanta Centre,

Geneva, Switzerland, delivered inspiring addresses on **"Fighting Stress, Anxiety, and Depression: The Vivekananda Way"** to about 100 students.

**24th May: Government College of Nursing, Almora**



Swami Atmashraddhananda and Swami Vedanishthananda spoke on **"Swami Vivekananda's Idea of Service"** to the entire institute, including students, faculty, and staff, totaling about 250 attendees.

**Valedictory Ceremony at SSJ University, Almora**

Earlier, Swami Atmashraddhananda delivered a benedictory address at the valedictory ceremony of the international seminar at SSJ University, Almora on 22nd May. He highlighted the importance of practical and character-building knowledge over theoretical knowledge, as professed by Swami Vivekananda through an engaging story.

From April 2023 to May 2024, it was truly a feast of intellectual and spiritual pursuits, marking a grand celebration of Vivekananda and Vedanta. And as with everything good, this too came to an end.

## ***Memoirs from Retreat and Parikrama***

***T***his 3-day retreat session will forever hold a special place in my heart. I really hope this experience has transformed me, and in turn, I will at least try to bring about some positive change in society.

**- CS Mahodi, Almora**

***I*** am writing to express my deepest gratitude for organizing such an effective and transformative spiritual retreat. The retreat was meticulously planned and executed, providing a perfect environment for reflection, growth, and inner peace. The sessions were insightful, and the Parikrama was thoughtfully designed to enhance our spiritual journey. I am incredibly grateful to the...the commitment of the Volunteer in creating a meaningful experience for all participants was evident in every detailing...

**- Amit**

***T***his retreat was a divine experience for all and especially for me. Apart from the precious lectures of all the Swamijis, ...I want to thank and congratulate the team who worked day & night tirelessly for this retreat, this journey was not only towards Himalayas but it also showed some glimpses of the divinity within.

May the divine mother bless us all and may we all move toward light from darkness

**-Shubham Jha, New Delhi**

***I*** express my gratitude and thankfulness to everyone for making us a part of an enriching, extraordinary retreat and an exceptional divine parikrama. No words are enough to congratulate&applaud the untiring efforts of the organizing committee, the reverend Swamis, Brahmacharis, volunteers & devotees whose dedication & unflinching endeavours left us spellbound & mesmerized.

An experience par excellence!  
Happiness galore.

**- Jayshree Paul Choudhury, Kolkata**

***W***ords can't sufficiently express my gratitude. Responsibility to practice has increased manifold now. Would strive to do my best with blessings of the Holy Trinity and Swamijis....

**- S Ravichandran, Chennai**

...***We*** appreciate the meticulous planning and the enthusiasm with which the volunteers cheerfully took us to all the Sacred places, which we otherwise would have missed. It was nice being with fellow devotees during these three special days. Will cherish this experience.

**- Sobha and Vijay Reddy, Bengaluru**

...***I***t was indeed a spiritual enhancement in a divine atmosphere with all Revered Sadhus and learned devotees. I am sure, for all the participants, a new beginning with more vigor & focused determination towards getting immersed in the Advaita path is irresistible. We will

surely not forget the role of the altruistic volunteers with profound knowledge during our Parikrama, in days to come. The Delicious Prasad and snacks on all the days needs a special mention.

Our Pranam to each and every member of the organizing team- Ajoy Kumar Chakraborty The precision and bhaav of the organisers shone in every aspect of the Retreat. My husband Mahim and I have returned to Indore with renewed spiritual vigour. What more can we ask for!! In Kaliyug, asatsang guided by spiritual giants in association of sincere seekers is sheer nectar...

**- Subha Swami, Indore**

**A** week has just gone by after the spiritual retreat that we all attended. As I reflect back, my sense of gratitude for Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora grows more each day as I realise the higher essence of spirituality the retreat has given me ... it has given me a very good foundation to understand Vedanta and now Swamiji's every word makes a deep connection with me. I am blessed to have attended this retreat and I offer my reverential Pranams to the Holy Trinity for their blessings. My Pranams to Swami Dhruveshananda ji Maharaj for conceptualising this event. Also, Pranams to all monks of Ramakrishna Kutir for their seamless coordination in organising this event, right from registration till the send-off of devotees.

The selfless volunteers of this retreat - please accept my sincere gratitude for all your Seva to organise this event- meticulous, disciplined and always with a smile. For me, that's truly Karma

yoga in practice.

Not to forget the touches of brilliance during the entire duration- Dr Pillai's evening address, Sandhya Aarti at Kakrighat, the songs at Parikrama places, interaction with Lala Badri Shah's family, quiz during bus journey to Siyahi Devi temple, ever smiling Parikrama guides- all absolutely amazing and memorable...

Lastly, the opportunity to know each other from this family would be a lifelong treasure for me.

**- Amit Sarker, Malda**

**M**y wife Tripty Chakraborty joins me in thanking all revered Maharajs & the entire family of Ramakrishna Kutir for giving us the opportunity of a life time experience. It was indeed a spiritual enhancement in a divine atmosphere with all Revered Sadhus and learned devotees. I am sure, for all the participants, a new beginning with more vigor & focused determination towards getting immersed in the Advaita path is irresistible. We will surely not forget the role of the altruistic volunteers with profound knowledge during our Parikrama, in days to come. The Delicious Prasad and snacks on all the days needs a special mention. Our Pranam to each and every member of the organizing team...

**- Ajoy Kumar Chakraborty, Chennai**

**I** want to thank All for such a 'feast' of spiritual experience in the Retreat and Parikrama. I want to sum it up by one word - 'Oneness'

**- Rajesh Kumar Chunawala,  
Ontario, Canada**



## Memorable Moments



Monks gathered for the Spiritual Retreat during the Closing Ceremony in May 2024



Devotees from India & abroad came for the Opening Ceremony Celebrations in April-June 2023



Swami Sukhanandaji Maharaj conducting a session on Ramcharitmanas in Cantonment in May 2023



Swami Vedanishthanandaji Maharaj conducting classes on Kathopanishad in April-May 2023



Swami Shuddhidhanandaji Maharaj conducting a Spiritual Retreat in May 2023



Swami Atmashraddhanandaji Maharaj conducting classes on Atmabodha in April 2023



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and do you radiate it around you ?  
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inwardly, and by work done in a spirit of service outwardly".

- Swami Ranganathananda

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everything else will be ready,  
but strong, vigorous, believing young men,  
sincere to the backbone, are wanted.”***

***“Numbers do not count, nor  
does wealth or poverty,  
a handful of men can throw the  
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provided they are united in  
thought, word and deed.”***

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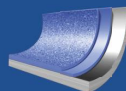
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