

## THE FELLOW OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THEIR TEACHINGS TO THE YOUTH

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### Abstract:

The holy Parshads of Sri SriThakur had had great impact amongst the devotees and the spiritual seeker at that time and this legacy still continues. But here in this article it has been tried to unravel the influence of these holy Parshads on the youth especially at that time who came in contact with them and found out their way of living.

**Key words:** Devotees, Spiritual Seekers, Way of living.

Self-liberation or the welfare of others? This was the question continuously absorbing the minds of the young minds who wished to dedicate their lives to the lotus feet of God and wanted self 'moksh'. But their intimacy with the Thakur and their quest for God gave them answer to their question. Swami Vivekananda had the prolong quest to see God and He always searched for God and asked many persons but all answers or reply he got were futile. But it was the contact with Sri Sri Thakur in the holy place of Dakshineswar that Swamiji got His answer from Thakur that one can find and see God if he wishes. But here was a trick because Thakur wanted His disciples to be as big as banyan trees (as He advised Swami Vivekananda) where so many poor, poverty-stricken, exhausted, morally void people would find peace and liberation. So when Sri Thakur declared to serve people is like serve to God, Swamiji announced in His firm voice that if God mercy on Him He would make His Guru's words executed. The motto of Ramakrishna Mission thus says "Atmano Moksharthang Jagatdhitay Cha" which means self liberation and with it the welfare of others. Because self liberation is not the motto and goal of a monk in Sri Sri Thakur's view and He wanted His disciples to work for the welfare of others and their welfare becomes the welfare of them.

Sri Sri Thakur, while leaving His earthly body gifted sixteen of His jewel disciples to the world who would fulfil His dream and carry out the message of the Vedanta. Those 16 disciples were the sixteen 'kala's actually and that was celestially prompted by SriSriThakur that these 16 each 'kala' will complete the formation of the Ramakrishna Mission in very recent future. They will serve the message of the Upanishad – "Atmano Moksharthang Jagatdhitay Cha". Swami Vivekananda once very aptly said that the sons of Sri Ramakrishna do not wish of their own sake but for the others. They want to live for the welfare of others, to give others knowledge, to feed others with food, to quench others thirst for spirituality and to make 'MAN'. No other organization or spiritual association was there at that time in the earth to say words like the sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission. SriSriThakur, their one and only dearest and nearest Soul did not approve to wander like a Ramta Yogin by simply wearing a saffron cloth, not even Swamiji. Swami Vivekananda set objectives of the Mission. He proclaimed and advised that without the knowledge of education, even the lack of education makes a sannyasi organization poor in its morality; a sannyasin organization must avoid earthly luxuriousness and keep itself always thinking of God and make it an example of epitome of renunciation.

Swamiji's thinking and note was beautifully played by revered Swami Shivanandaji at the first convocation of Ramakrishna Math and Mission in the year 1926, 1<sup>st</sup> April when in his

speech he played the same note of what Swami Vivekananda and their Gurudev wanted: to spread Education and Religion to the needy and poor. Because Religion and Education and 'Moksh' are the futile words to those who even doesnot get proper food for one time in a day thatswhy SERVICE, SELFLESS SERVICE to the poor, to the needy because selfless service can make them to get something and if they get food they will understand the meaning of Religion, Education and with these Selfless Service the sannyasins will get closure to 'Moksh'. Swamiji and the other Parshads who came to Sri Sri Thakur were decided and thus it was His Plan. In "The Gospels of Sri Ramakrishna", many times it had been said that the Parshads were decided and chosen by the God. Hence, one thing is noticeable that those desciples of Sri Thakur came to Him at their youth, some of them came in a very earlier age and some in middle age (Swami Advaitanandaji). At that time the country was roughly administered by the British Raj and the emotion of Nationalism, Patriotism, Revolutionanism were in the hearts of every youth of the country who wanted to free their motherland from the bondage of the British Rule. And it was very surprise that being revolutionary and patriotic in their heart those youths came to Thakur to attain religious life and to know God. But Sri Sri Thakur turned the tender urge of self-attaining 'Moksh' to the welfare of others and revolution to rebel against the superstitions, narrow-mindedness, ill treatment of Religion and raise the purity of religion and spiritualism to the soft heart of others so that they can free themselves from their inner bondage of misconcepts regarding religion, God, and spiritualism. It was truly unbelievable sight to see the saffron clad young sannyasins to wander in the streets to deliver the message of the Vedanta. Like other monk organization they didn't try to make people conversion to their sect; they did not try to spread misconception of religion, spiritual texts, neither they tried to fan their publicity. What they did was sake for the others and they did tit from their core of the heart to carry the message of their Guru. Revered Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmanandaji) in one of his letter to Swami Akhandanandaji , once said that without the development of HEART no work could be done. "Dhanani Jibitanchaiba Porarthe Pragnya Utsrijet "– this great shloka demands the practical application from the sannyasins of Ramakrishna Mission. And through this selfless service the sannyasins of Ramakrishna Mission will attain 'Moksh' and will acquire God's Grace. [ Swami Narottamanand, Raja Maharaj, Udbodhan Karyalaya, 2014]

The Marattha newspaper in it's editorial of 1901, 22<sup>nd</sup> December Issue, wrote, "The work of the Ramakrishna Mission has set a noble example to their countrymen of being serviceable to humanity under the changed conditions of modern life. The creed of self-denying and self-sacrificing Swami was up to now to lead a holy life of abstinence and seclusion and resignation far off from the busy lives of humanity. But it is really more laudable, more meritorious to devote a life of entire resignation and self-denial to relieve distress and help destitution of our fellow creatures. The Ramakrishna Mission have followed this principle in practice, and their work both in plague and famine cannot but inspire great respect."

In society, in the respect of Nation the contribution of Swamiji and His influence on others have been discussed so many times but the contribution of His fellow brother sannyasins are not so told especially their influence on the youth; how their lifestyle, their works, their teachings had influenced the then youth generation and have been still influencing. Those Parshads were not only popular amongst the young people but also amongst the women, teenagers, even children. The 16 holy soul and the gem disciples of Sri Sri Thakur , Swami Brahmanand, Swami Yogananda, Swami Shivananda, Swami Ramakrishnanada, Swami Vigyanananda, Swami Saradananda, Swami Advaitananda, Swami Turiananda, Swami Niranjanananda, Swami Advutananda, Swami Trigunatitananda, Swami Premananda, Swami Abhedananda, Swami Akhandananda, Swami Subodhananda and Swami Vivekananda, all of them created history in the world of Humanism by their works and hence the light has been focused on the other disciples except Swamiji on the youth.

As it has been said earlier that the knowledge seed of the Vedanta was sown into their mind by Sri Sri Thakur and was nurtured by Swami Vivekananda and was completely taken care by the holy grace of Sri Sri Matathakurani. Each of them carried it into them very piously and cautiously and spread this message of Practical Vedanta, Selfless Love and Sacrifice amongst the other specially into the pure souls of the young generation. Their knowledge, purity, chastity, celibacy, selflessness, sacrifice, indomitable spirit had attracted thousands and thousands of young refreshing hearts that these hearts came to contact with them to become as pure as them and sacrifice their lives for the sake of others.

The message of the Ramakrishna Mission- “Atmano Mokshartha Jagatdhitaya Cha” was carried forward by Swami Vivekananda but it was practically executed for the first time by Swami Akhandanandaji when he was in his travel to Mohola, in Murshidabad. Actually Swami Akhandanandaji guided the service of charity and relief work of the Mission and thus he became the torchbearer for this cause. He set an example to the other other monks with his noble life and works and his work for spreading literacy among the students attracted the youth very much. He stressed for the sacrifice of the sannyasins and literacy of the youth because without education nothing could be achieved. It was his effort while living in Khatri of Rajasthan that the Raj Court of Khetri developed the structure of Entrance School. He went door to door to arrange students for the school. He knew that everything is possible through selfless love. Selfless love is the way to meet God. He was directed by Swami Vivekananda, “It is the heart that conquers, not the brain”( Letter to Akhandanandaji, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1897).

The motto of Ramakrishna Math and Mission to do welfare to the others and identify the Man with ‘Maan’ and ‘Hus’, was greatly carried forward by Swami Brahmananda. While staying in Kashi (now in Baranasi) in the year 1903 he delivered many speeches to the youth and the youth convinced and influenced by his lecture joined him and with their help Swami Brahmananda founded ‘Poor Men’s Relief Association’ which did charitable work and carried the message of selfless love and sacrifice. Swami Brahmanandaji always spoke for the character development of the youth and he wanted that a Man should be equal both in his mouth and heart.

The same message and teachings was also spread by Swami Yogananda, Swami Niranjanananda, Swami Turiananda, Swami Advutananda.

Swami Saradananda set a remarkable mark with his selfless love for the people, for the Mission and above all his true and pure love and respect for Sri Sri Mata Thakurani that his selfless love and responsibility created an example for many of the people. Where one child does not take care of his/her own parents, Swami Saradananda’s love and respect for Sri Sri Mata Thakurani showed others how to become a son and how to follow duty. His work for education, Udbodhan, Math and Mission impacted a huge number of youth.

It was mentioned here in this article that Sri Sri Thakur was a great pruner and He pruned His future organization so craftily. His 16 precious jewels formed into a big beautiful flower of sixteen petals and they surrendered and devoted their lives for others welfare. Swami Vivekananda delivered a new definition of Dharma. He said – “Religion is the manifestation of divinity already in man.” He also said, “I shall call you religious from the day you begin to see God in men and women.” It means the same message of worshipping Siva in human beings. The one who has served men has served the Shiva.

Swami Shivanandaji worked for this love and selfless service and advised his young disciples to follow this path so that they can easily find the true calm.

Swami Premananda in one of his letter to one of his devotee wrote, everything can be achieved with love and this is what the Ramakrishna Mission is. Sri Sri Thakur was an apostle of L-O-V-E Personified. Like every man and women specially the young people who will come in the contact with the Math and Mission are the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda volunteers and they can kill any hat redness, selfishness, dishonesty, falseness with this weapon of Love, the Selfless Love. Swami premananda also said that if someone devote Lord Shaligram soulfully he can achieve more virtue by servicing a patient and destitute. [ Udbodhan Patrika, Sravan issue, 1341 Bengali year]

It should be kept in mind that at the then society the evil of casteism, sects, classes, clan, gender, religions was in a very deep impact. Sri Sri Thakur, Sri Sri Mata Thakurani showed assimilation of every discrimination with their daily livelihood and protested above this narrow thinking's. Swamiji hit on this evil system frequently and so did His other fellow Gurubhais. It was a great surprise and achievement of Ramakrishna Mission when Swami Ramakrishnananda arranged a line dining system in Madras Math where devotees from various classes and clans took Prasad sitting side by side with others. This work of him had had a deep influence on the young people of there and with the help of the people of madras, now Chennai] he established Madras Students Home in 1905 which was the first ever school of Ramakrishna Mission in South India. Swami Ramakrishnanandaji became so popular among the young men that wherever and whenever he delivered his speeches were recorded by his young followers and they printed them in a book later. This was how the printing section of Chennai Ramakrishna Mission started.

Swami Abhedananda, one of the greatest disciple of Sri Sri Thakur and the great monk of himself had a distinct influence on the young people all over the world specially the young people of USA who physically came connected with him. In 1896 on 27<sup>th</sup> October in London when Swami Abhedananda gave his speech to there it was Captain Savior who elatedly commented Swami Abhedananda as a born preacher. In his later life it was found that his speeches, teachings, works, books became so popular among the youth and the university students that many of them tried to follow the path he showed and this legacy is still going on. The Ramakrishna mission is not just an organization it is a university where the men learn "To Be Man and To Make Man". Ramakrishna Mission is not a Mission only rather it is a Machine which makes MAN. The Marg Sri Sri Thakur showed, the teachings Swamiji characterized and the flag carried by His fellow brothers and the Parshads of Sri Sri Thakur has shown the path and what they did was selfless work and following their path the young generation, the future responsible citizens of the world lived their lives and the influence of the great Parshads of Sri Sri Thakur will be continued.

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