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SISTER NIVEDITA
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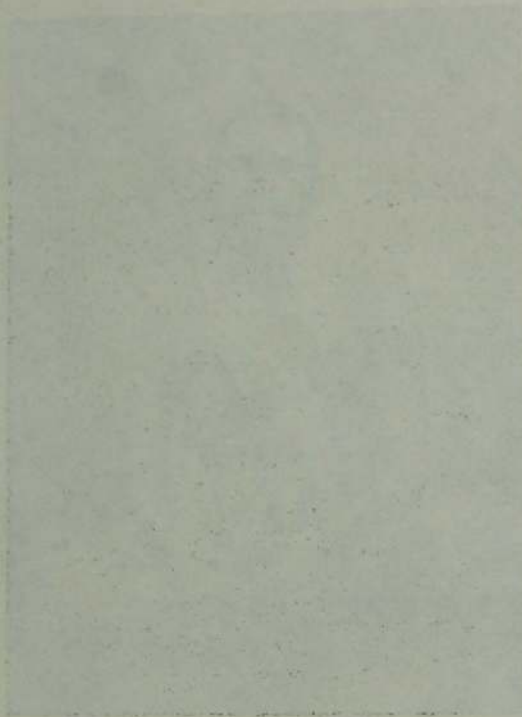


குருர் ப்ரஹ்மா குருர் விஷ்ணு: குருர் தேவோ மஹேச்வர:—

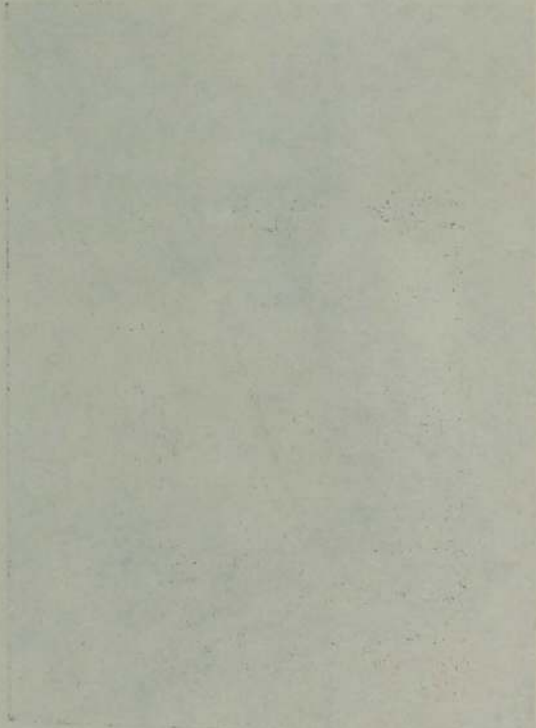
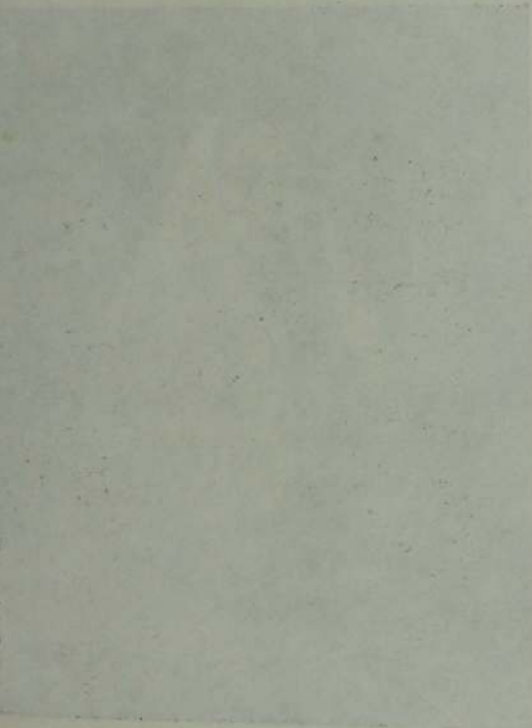
குரு: சாக்ஷாத் பரம் ப்ரஹ்ம தஸ்மை ஸ்ரீ குருவே நம:—

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உள்ளூராட்சி அமைச்சு,
ஹோமாஸ் கட்டிடம்,
கொழும்பு-1.
ஏப்பிரில் 4, 1968

சகோதரி நிவேதிதை அவர்களின் நூருவது பிறந்ததின விழாவை யொட்டி இச்செய்தியை விடுப்பதில் அளவற்ற ஆனந்தமடைகிறேன். "ஒன்றே குலம். ஒருவனே தேவன்" என்னும் உன்னத தத்துவத்தை உலகுக்கு எடுத்தோதிய பசுவான் இராமகிருஷ்ண பரமஹம்சர் அவர்களது போதனைகளின் உண்மையை உணர்த்தும் வண்ணம், மேற்குக்கும் கிழக்குக்கும் ஓர் பாலமாக அமைந்துள்ளார் சகோதரி நிவேதிதை.

சுவாமி விவேகானந்தரின் ஆத்மீக சக்தியாற் கவரப்பட்ட இவர்தன் வாழ்நாளை உலகமக்களின் முன்னேற்றத்திற்காக அர்ப்பணித்த தன் மூலம் இன்றும் ஓர் அணையா விளக்காகச் சுடர்விட்டுப் பிரகாசிக்கின்றார். அவரது அடிச்சுவட்டைப் பின்பற்றுவதன் மூலமே நாம் அவரை நினைவுகூரும் நோக்கை நிறைவேற்றமுடியும்.

மு. திருச்செல்வம்.

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Message

High Commissioner for India
in Ceylon, Colombo 3.

April 7, 1968

I am glad that a committee has been formed to celebrate Sister Nivedita's birth centenary to commemorate the great work done by this brilliant disciple of Swami Vivekananda. It is well known that the Swami was constantly assisted by Sister Nivedita in the propagation of his message all over India. Her work in the field of education and in the cause of India's national struggle is respectfully remembered by the people of India, and indeed, by the peoples of so many other countries in this region, including Ceylon.

Sister Nivedita was so deeply influenced by the religious thought and philosophy of India that she decided to leave her home in Ireland to work wholeheartedly under the banner of Swami Vivekananda for the religious and spiritual regeneration of the Indian people.

I have no doubt that the message of Swami Vivekananda and the selfless service rendered by Sister Nivedita, by way of upholding eternal human values of love and kindness, have relevance to the people of Ceylon as well, who have, through their savants and learned men, contributed in equal measure to the growth of spiritual thought and human understanding.

Y. D. Gundevia

SRI SARADA MATH AND RAMAKRISHNA SARADA MISSION DAKSHINESWAR.

In 1954, the year of the Holy Mother's Birth Centenary, Swami Sankarananda, the seventh President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, opened the Sri Sarada Math at Dakshineswar and thus gave concrete shape to Swami Vivekananda's idea of a Math for women, with the Holy Mother as the centre of inspiration. In May, 1960, the Trustees of the Sri Sarada Math, according to the advice of the authorities of the Belur Math, founded the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Association with the object of carrying on educational, cultural, charitable, and similar activities among women and children. Since the starting of the Math, a good number of young and educated women from different parts of India have joined and undergone the necessary course of training. A number of these have been initiated into Brahmacharya and Sannyasa. The Mission conducts the following activities at Dakshineswar:— Homoeopathic dispensary, Free school for Adult women and older girls, Library and Reading Room, and Sunday School. The Sannyasinis of the Math organise public meetings in and around Calcutta, and also undertake lecture tours in different parts of India. A Math for women was opened in Madras in 1965.

Pravrajika Mukti-prana, General Secretary of the Sri Sarada Math and Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, and Pravrajika Atma-prana, member of the Staff of Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, are visiting the Island in connection with the Sister Nivedita Birth Centenary Celebrations.



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
(Ceylon Branch)
RAMAKRISHNA ROAD
COLOMBO-6 (CEYLON)
PHONE: 88253

23rd March, 1968.

I am glad to learn that the Sarada Samiti of Colombo is organizing a celebration of the Birth Centenary of Sister Nivedita in April 1968 in Colombo and other parts of Ceylon. I am also told that the Samiti proposes to bring out a Souvenir on this occasion. The members of the Samiti are rendering this selfless service both spiritual and social in conformity with the spirit of Sister Nivedita who dedicated her life to the betterment of India and her people.

May the Samiti continue to do this noble service to the people of Ceylon with greater zeal and spirit in the years to come. I offer my best wishes to all its members.

Swami PREMATMANANDA,
Vice President,
Ramakrishna Mission(Ceylon Branch)

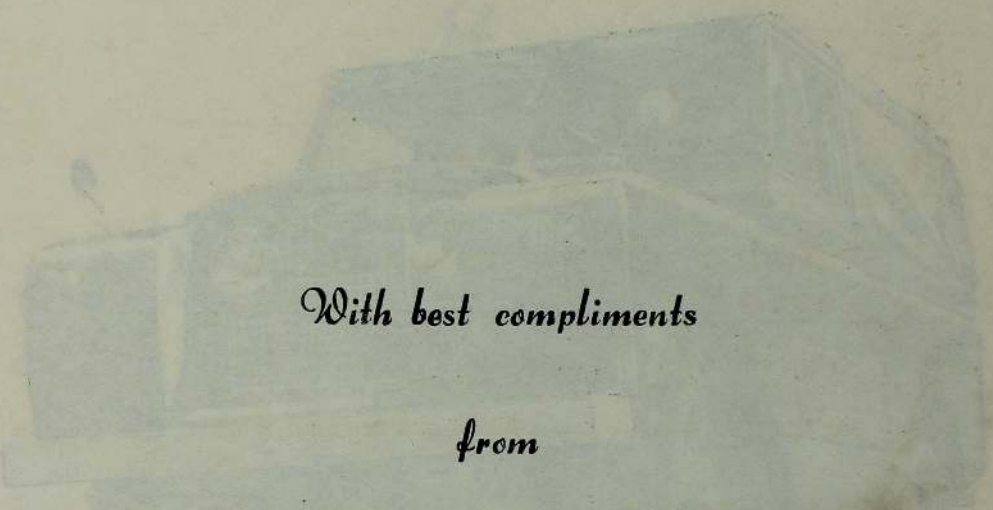
THE CANADIAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY
GENERAL SECRETARIES
1000 BROADWAY
TORONTO, CANADA

Dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst. in relation to the proposed visit of the Rev. Mr. [Name] to the [Location] in the month of [Month].

The Board of the Society has considered the matter and has decided to grant the request, provided that the proposed visit is in accordance with the general policy of the Society and that the proposed visitor is a member of the Society in good standing. It is requested that you advise the Society of the results of your negotiations with the proposed visitor.

Yours faithfully,
[Name]
General Secretary

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Message

I am very happy to learn that the people of Ceylon, more especially its women, are proposing to celebrate the Centenary of Sister Nivedita and bring out a Souvenir on the occasion. Sister Nivedita's dynamic character, her broad human sympathies, and her deep spirituality are a perpetual inspiration to all lovers of God and man. I hope the Souvenir and the celebrations will help to draw the attention of men and women of Ceylon to the beauty and strength of Sister Nivedita's personality and character and to the inspiration of her universal message of man-making and nation building.

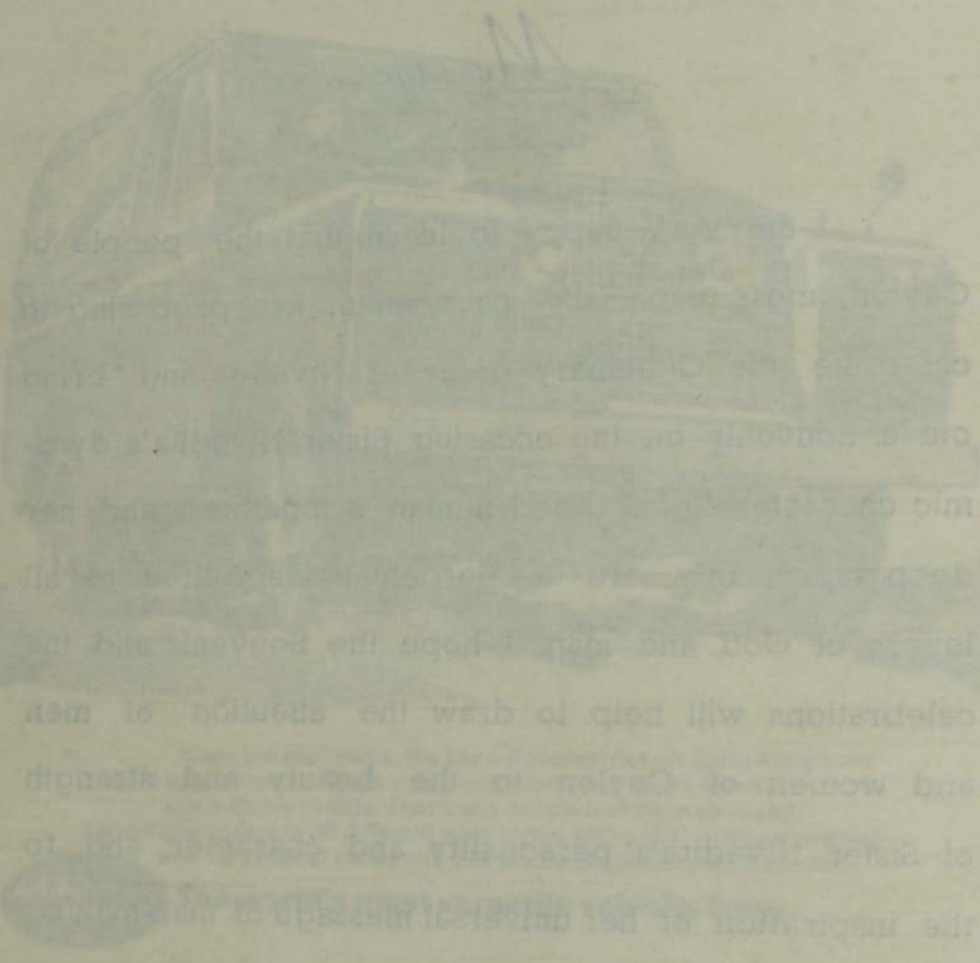
SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Vice-President

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.

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SISTER NIVEDITA BIRTH CENTENARY

Saturday the 28th October 1967

Inaugural Address

By

SRIMAT SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission

Friends,

We are here today to celebrate the birth centenary of a great soul who though an alien had made India her motherland and had dedicated herself to her service. The memorial raised to her in the laps of the Himalayas, where she breathed her last, 'Here reposes Sister Nivedita who gave her all to India' is literally true.

Born in Ireland, brought up in England, her field of activity was in India; but through her life and work she belongs to the whole world. Her idealism and spirit of dedication have lifted her to the ranks of the eternal. Her parents were pious Christians and her mother had consecrated her at birth to the service of God. She too was endowed with the qualities of self-sacrifice and passion for Truth. It only needed the living touch of a great soul to set ablaze the latent fire of dedication in her. And this was what happened when she met Swami Vivekananda in London in 1895. In spite of her being on the guard not to be influenced by the magnetic personality of the 'Hindu Yogi' and her intensely independent nature, she was captivated by his nobility and loftiness of his life and teachings. The result was as she said later, 'I had recognised the heroic fibre of the man and desired to make myself the servant of his love for his own people.'

Sister Nivedita was a unique gift of Swami Vivekananda to India. A talented lady deeply rooted in Western culture and civilization was as it were uprooted from that soil by Swami Vivekananda and made to strike root in Indian culture and civilization. The metamorphosis was a painful one even to a brave heart like the Sister's but she did succeed in the end. Discipleship to this 'Master' and playing the role of a servant to India according to his vision was also no easy task. But he knew what he could expect from her and was not disappointed. The intense spiritual training she received under her Guru's supervision, the infinite trust he had in her, as

also the blessings of the Holy Mother who accepted and treated her as her own child, all these made the seemingly impossible possible. Thenceforward she dedicated herself to the cause of India in various ways. She inspired patriotism in the youth of India, and called them to dedicate their lives for the emancipation of India. She worked for the education and uplift of Indian women and interpreted to the West Indian culture and ideals in various fields—in arts, education, social life, religion, religious symbology etc. through speeches and books like *Religion and Dharma, web of Indian Life, Footfalls of Indian History, Siva and Buddha, Kali the Mother*. She also influenced many great personalities of her time in India.

Nivedita was a born educator, endowed with the vision and qualities needed. She started a school for girls which has now blossomed into the Nivedita Girls' School. Besides she became instrumental to a great extent in laying the foundation for the development of 'national education' in India.

Her great qualities of head and heart and her versatile genius drew to her quite a good number of leading personalities of the time in the fields of art, literature, science, education, journalism and politics. Many she inspired and helped in their own fields. Her strength of character, her originality, and her kind heart and self-effacement evoked loving tributes from many. The most significant tribute was 'this radiant child of God'. It was her own innate purity coupled with the blessings of her Guru and the Holy Mother that transformed Margaret E. Noble into 'this radiant child of God'.

In serving India to the best of her abilities she became convinced that political freedom was indispensable for the building of the nation. But she did not want to compromise the position of the Ramakrishna Order which had eschewed politics completely at the behest of its founder Swami Vivekananda. So in order to be fair both to herself and the Order she resigned from it thereby feeling free to work in the political field. She, however, maintained the spiritual bond. The brother disciples of Swamiji also maintained the same love and affection which they had for her before her resignation. She continued to be one of them as before. The break was only from the organisational point for the safety of the Order and not in any other respect. This act of hers was misunderstood in some quarters by people who did not know the true story behind this decision of hers. It was no doubt very painful to her but she could realise that it was the only way to be faithful to herself and to the Order which she loved so much.

Her politics was of an aggressive type and she had no patience with moderate politics of the petitionary type. Therefore the Swadeshi movement had her full support. In spite of this view in politics she was a friend of the leaders of the different schools of politics, for she had realised that India had to be united if she was to achieve her freedom. It was her dream to see in India "the great re-establishment of Dharma, when the whole of this nation shall be united together not in a common weakness, not in a com-

mon misfortune or grievance, but in a great...ever living consciousness of the common nationality, common heritage..."

Nivedita had her full share of trials and tribulations and had to live an austere life. But she was, and had been, prepared for it. Swamiji had held before her the ideal of sacrifice in these words, "Sacrifice in the past has been the law, it will be, alas, for ages to come." Nivedita had accepted this ideal placed before her by her Guru. for we read in her book *Kali the Mother*, "Look for no mercy for thyself, and I shall make thee bearer of great vessels of mercy to others. Accept bravely thine own darkness and thy lamp shall cheer many. Fulfil gladly the meanest service and leave high places unsought."

• May the life of this great dedicated soul inspire our youth in the service of our Motherland is my earnest prayer to Swami Vivekananda who gave in her his unique gift to our Motherland.

Shantih

Shantih

Shantih

HOMAGE TO SISTER NIVEDITA

(1867—1911)

KALIDAS NAG

Nivedita's name given by her master is justified by her life dedicated to the service of Mother India; and we should be awakened to the sense of our gratitude to the noble daughter of freedom-loving Ireland who adopted India as her Motherland. Inspired by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ethos, Nivedita made her very life the best commentary to that great epoch. From the "Cradle Tales of Hinduism" she watched with us the 'Footfalls of Indian History', studied with us the 'Myths and Legends of Buddhism and Hinduism' and watched with Sisterly care over the renaissance of Modern Indian Art, under the inspiring lead of Abanindranath Tagore.

Nivedita or dedicated life spontaneously roused the admiration of Great Indians like Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, Kaviguru Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo; and their appreciations scattered here and there should be reprinted with a full-fledged Biography of Nivedita. May we hope that such a work be taken up the Golden Jubilee Committee, so that her life will be a perpetual inspiration to all those who have faith in the spiritual collaboration of the East and the West.

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SISTER NIVEDITA

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Translated from Bengali by Kshitis Roy and Krishna Kripalani

Nivedita passed away on 13 October 1911.

The following tribute to her memory was published a month after in Pravasi. —Ed.

WHEN I saw Sister Nivedita* for the first time, she had freshly arrived. I had a notion that she must be like the usual kind of English missionary ladies—except for her religious persuasion.

It was this notion which made me propose that she take charge of my daughter's education. 'What kind of education would you like to give her?' she asked me. My reply was that a good grounding in English and English-based education would do. 'What good is it,' she asked, 'to force education down the throat? For me real education is to draw out and develop the knowledge and skill which tradition has handed down, and the aptitudes acquired by the child. Not to subject them to the steam-roller of regimentation which goes by the name of English-based education in India.'

Broadly speaking, my own views were not at variance with hers. But I did not quite see how one was to discover the inherited and acquired traits of children when they are in bud, as it were. Nor could I think of a mechanism for drawing them out in such a way as to harmonize in a system of education the individual's uniqueness with the universality of knowledge. A teacher of uncommon talent guided by his instinct or commonsense might be able to achieve it. But this is no job for an average teacher. Hence we have recourse to the conventional system of education which is, at best, a tactic of hit or miss, with some hits off the mark and some hitting the wrong spot, to the detriment of the poor pupil. Such a rough-and-ready way of dealing wholesale with so sensitive a thing as the human heart or mind is bound to result in colossal waste—but such waste is a matter of everyday occurrence in our society.

*Margaret Elizabeth Noble, born on October 28, 1867, in Ireland, came to India in January 1898, inspired by Swami Vivekananda.

Although I was not so sure that she had it in her to impart the ideal kind of education, I said to her, 'Very well, you may follow your own system and need not take orders from me.' For a moment it seemed as if she was inclined to agree, but the very next moment she said, 'No, this work is not for me.'

She had dedicated herself to serve the womenfolk of a neighbourhood in Baghbazar*. She lived with them and was concerned not so much with teaching them as awakening in them a desire for learning. She dismissed with contempt the idea—so common with the missionaries—of adding to the number of her converts or bringing one more family within the sphere of her influence.

After this first encounter I had several opportunities of closer acquaintance with her from time to time. I recognised the force of her personality, as also the fact that our paths lay in different directions. Her talent was manysided, and she had in addition a fighting spirit. She could wield her power of personality over others without inhibition or restraint, as though impelled by a fierce enthusiasm to dominate their minds. Where it was impossible to give her complete allegiance it was difficult to walk in step with her. At any rate I can say for myself that despite our many affinities, somewhere in my heart I used to feel a kind of resistance—due not so much to any difference of views and opinions as to an instinctive reaction to an act of aggression, as it were.

That I am able to say so publicly without any inhibition is because, despite this recoil on my part, I have in other respects received more good from her than from any one I can think of. Many a time, since I came to know her, I have derived considerable strength from recalling her qualities of mind and character which I deeply admired.

I have not seen in any one else such amazing capacity for a total dedication of self. Nothing could inhibit this pouring out of herself—neither bodily limitations, nor the European habits acquired since infancy, nor the affection of family of friends, nor the proud disdain of her compatriots, nor, indeed, the indifference, ingratitude and selfishness of those in whose service she thus gave herself. To know her was to see the spirit of humanity at its best—a privilege, indeed, to be able to see the human spirit's undimmed radiance through the coarse crust of the workaday world. We who had this opportunity to see face to face the spirit's unvanquished splendour revealed through Sister Nivedita, were thus blest.

The world's best gifts are given to us free of cost, without our having to haggle for them. Because we pay no price, we do not quite appreciate their full value. The gift that Sister Nivedita gave us was the gift of a

*A northern district of Calcutta.

great life. she kept nothing back, but gave without reservation, day by day, moment by moment, all that was best and noblest in her, no matter how severe the ordeal or high the sacrifice. She had pledged to give her best, and she saw to it that her gift was not tainted by any claim of her own self—of hunger and thirst, profit and loss, fame and prestige—that nothing should stand in the way of her giving, neither fear nor doubt, no claim of rest or comfort.

To the extent we take for granted this great gift of devotion which came to us without our having to seek it, to that extent we shall be the losers, to that extent what is given shall not be made ours. It will not do to receive such a gift lightly, as something that is rightfully our due. We have to understand and realise the power that was behind it, the intellect, the heart, the sacrifice, and the bright insight of genius which could make such self-dedication possible.

Such understanding will cure us of the self-applause in which we continue to indulge. By failing to accept the paramount nobility of her gift of life, we turn her very sacrifice into an excuse for our vainglory. We say that she was at heart a Hindu, meaning thereby that we Hindus are not a negligible lot. Her dedication proclaims the glory of our religion and society! Thus by making extravagant claims on our own behalf we nullify the gift she made.

Indeed, were we to examine the depth of her Hinduism we would face many a rebuff. I for one do not believe that her Hinduism was on the same plane as ours. The very foundations of what we today commonly regard as Hinduism would crack if we but tried to keep pace with her concept of the Hindu religion and Hindu society as she saw them from the historical and scientific viewpoint, tracing with understanding and imagination their many changes and evolutions, uninhibited by the hard and rigid walls of Sastric injunctions. If we valued historical evidence more than puranic myths, we might perhaps hit upon the truth—but such truth would hardly be congenial to the blind faith on which the structure of our Hinduism rests.

However that be, Sister Nivedita is worthy of our reverence, not because she was Hindu but because she was great. We shall honour her memory not because she was one of us but because she was much greater than we. Viewed thus, we shall find that the glory which she shed on us was not on account of her Hinduism but because of her humanism.

What impresses one most in her life is that she was at once a profound thinker and capable of dynamic action. All action must needs be imperfect—involving as it does the need to surmount obstacles which leave their scars on the achieved end. But a pure concept is inviolable and not subject to such scars. Hence those who are given to the enjoyment of pure thought either disparage action or fear it, Conversely, those who are doers

and nothing more have no use for thought, and thus bereft of ideal concepts demand no high standards of their deeds and are insensitive to their imperfections.

But luxuriating in thought is not true thinking, and a truly vital action is more than a mere outburst of ceaseless energy or an effort to meet a temporal need. Where action springs from thought, even a small deed assumes bigness, and imperfections take on a strange kind of beauty like the many—coloured rays of the sun filtered through an intervening layer of clouds. Such a beauty is revealed in the life and work of Sister Nivedita.

None of Sister Nivedita's undertakings was of large dimension. They all had small beginnings. Where the inner faith in oneself is lacking, one hankers to take comfort from a fetish of bigness. It was impossible for Sister Nivedita to succumb to such an attitude of the mind, being herself true metal unmixed with alloy. What was true was sufficient for her, she had no need whatsoever to make it seem any bigger, and loathed with all her heart the fakes and shams used for such purpose.

And so we witnessed the strange spectacle of one gifted with talent and education of the highest order so lost in the obscurity of a small lane in Baghbazar as to be hidden from public gaze. As Nature, vast and universal, does not disdain to nurture with the fullest care the tiniest seed hidden under earth, so was she. She neither publicised her work nor ever looked for any financial support from any of us. The expenditure she incurred in her work came not from subscriptions or a fund but from her own personal allowance. The meagreness of her resources cannot dwarf the grandeur of her achievement.

We should bear in mind that with her undoubted powers Sister Nivedita could easily have won for herself recognition and position in her own country. All her compatriots with whom she came into close contact had to acknowledge the dynamism of her personality. But she never bothered to think of the fame she might easily have won in her own land. Nor was she lured by the prospect of carving out a leading position in this country by her power over the minds and hearts of our people.

There have been others from the West who have made the service of this country their life-work, but they also tried thereby to lift themselves high above others. Their dedication lacked wholeheartedness and the very act of their giving had an element of condescension in it. Our Sastras enjoin: Give with respect; do not give with disrespect—lest what the right hand gives is taken away by a contemptuous left hand. But Sister Nivedita loved India and gave herself with unreserved devotion, not withholding anything of herself.

Nor indeed did she give herself out of weakness or because she was soft-hearted. I have already hinted that there was an overwhelming element

in her personality which she was not always loth to exercise. What she wanted she willed with all her heart and mind, and could be severely impatient of adverse opinions and aptitudes. I would not say that her Western spirit of overweening dynamism did no harm ever to the other party—for whatever tries to overwhelm or subjugate man is hostile to his human worth. Nevertheless, I would maintain that the innate greatness and generosity of Sister Nivedita's heart far outstripped the domineering element in her character.

She would fight relentlessly for what she considered right, but having won, the laurel of victory meant little to her. Nothing could have been easier for her than to organise a party and make herself its leader. But she was endowed with a mind whose natural dignity was much higher than that of a party-leader, and she could never descend from that high position of integrity to scramble for a place on public platform in the market place. And so she left behind to our people the legacy of her life but not of a party.

This aloofness was not due to any aristocratic pride of intellect or culture. It was not that she refrained from courting the public because of her disdain for the masses. On the contrary she was a shining example of what it is like to give one's heart to the common people. Our sense of service to the people as a public duty is something that we have imbibed from books. It is an intellectual conception that fails to penetrate to the deeper layers of our minds and hearts. But Sister Nivedita's love for the people made them as real to her as the child is to the mother. This love was almost personal, and her tender concern for the common people was truly maternal. It was as though the 'people' were a child to be lifted into her lap and nourished with her own life.

She was indeed a *Lokmata*, a mother to the people. We are familiar with the mother's role in a family; but the image of a mother whose love enfolded a whole people was something we had never seen before. We have had glimpses of the male devotion to public duty, but never before had we witnessed such magnificent sweep of womanly devotion. When she referred to 'our people', the feeling in her voice rang more true than in the voice of any one of us. So genuine was Sister Nivedita's love of the people that those who had observed it could easily see the difference between her love and our concern for the people. Many of us may give our time and money to the people and may even lay down our lives for them, but are unable to pour out our hearts, unable to make the common man our very own. When we try to visualise our country or the world as a whole, what we see is a blurred vision: the reason being that we see it with our mind only, as an abstraction, and not as a concrete reality with our eyes. He who cannot see his country in every one of its people does not know his country, say what he will. I have watched Sister Nivedita with the people; she saw them and touched them, and not just thought of them. I have seen her once greet a common

Moslem woman in her obscure villagehut with a courtesy so genuinely heart-warming as to be beyond our common experience, for the capacity to see the image of humanity in the smallest of men is rare indeed. This insight came to Sister Nivedita so naturally that even her long and close intimacy with India failed to undermine her faith in our people.

The people were her heart's treasure. She was not content to do good to them from afar as an act of grace. She wanted their living contact and touched with the antennae of her mind every aspect of their life, to understand them fully. She strove to assimilate their faith and rituals, stories and ballads, art and literature, all the minutae of their daily life—not through intellect alone but through a process of inner identification. Whatever was good or beautiful or of abiding value in them, she made it the object of her eager exploration. With her innate humanity and deep motherliness, she sought the good, believed in it and found it. In her impetuosity she might have erred here and there, but the truth she discovered through faith makes these errors inconsequential.

All good teachers know that nature has implanted an instinctive urge to learn in the child-mind; the child's restlessness, his irrepressible curiosity, his playful pranks are all nature's way of teaching the child. There is something childlike in the folk-mind too; and so it has devised various simple ways by which the common folk might teach themselves and find solace in their hour of need. As childishness in the child is not meaningless, so also the adult customs and conventions are not unmitigated foolery. These are the built-in efforts of the mass-mind to educate itself in diverse ways, instinctively and naturally. The mother-heart of Nivedita viewed the rites and rituals, customs and conventions of the people from that angle, and with her insight of sympathy and affection saw behind their seeming crudities the inscrutable and abiding urges of humankind.

Soft and tender as this mother-love of hers was towards her people, it could, like the tigress guarding her cubs, turn fierce on those who denigrated them, or could blaze into a fury against any high-handedness or injustice perpetrated by the rulers on the people. But from the people themselves she could and did put up with not a little meanness and treachery, deceit and fraud: and from out of her slender resources she met without a protest many an unjust demand of a host of worthless fellows. Her only fear was lest her close friends came to know of these instances of meanness and dealt harshly with her 'people'. She was as keen to see the good in them, as she was careful to protect them, with all the tender solicitude of her mother's love, from the accusing gaze of unsympathetic neighbours, critics and denigrators. This was not because she wanted to conceal the truth, but because she knew how easy it was for these others to humiliate them, how natural it was for the coarsegrained to sneer at the common folk to whose inner sanctuary of goodness they could have no access. That is why

she was so painfully anxious to protect her 'people' from the heavy-handed foreign critics, and way she was ready to blow up with scorn and indignation such Indians who were servile to foreigners whom they hailed as saviours.

We have known of Westerners who were so impressed by our Sastras and the Vedanta, or by the character and attainments of some holy man, as to make India their home. But sooner or later their devotion evaporated and they returned home empty-handed. What they had read in the Sastras or felt in the character of the sadhus, they failed to find in this country, unable to see through the miasma of poverty and want. Such attraction is mere delusion which thrives in darkness and vanishes with the light. But Sister Nivedita's devotion was no delusion, it was solidly real. It did not seek a philosophical abstraction in man, but penetrated through the outer shell and reached straight to the inner core of his humanness. And so she was not repelled by the extreme poverty she saw in the land. This poverty only roused her affectionate concern, not contempt.

We hardly ever realise how painfully disconcerting must be the impact on a European of our customs and habits, our speech and manners, our mode of dress and the daily ritual of living. When he reacts sharply we consider his attitude unwarranted. But if we pondered we would understand that differences in taste, habit and sense of values, however small in themselves, can raise a formidable barrier. We have only to consider the barriers that separate different classes, castes and communities in our own land. Small thorns can divide as effectively as any high hedge. It is worth recalling in this context that Sister Nivedita lived with us as one of us in a lane of the Bengali neighbourhood of Baghbazar. The history of what she must have gone through, day after day, remained hidden in her painful struggle. There is a coarse-grained type who are impervious to small annoyances, their thick skin acting as a shield against many a hurt. But Sister Nivedita was an altogether different kind, her sensitivity in everything was sharp and strong—and not the least where taste or aesthetic sensibility was concerned—Our inertia, our slackness, and shabbiness, our lack of initiative and organisation, which reveal at every step the darker side of our national character, must without doubt have been a source of acute pain to her, but she did not succumb, and emerged victorious in this most difficult test that faced her every moment of her life in India.

Sati, for love of Siva, subjected her delicate body and mind to a fiery ordeal of hunger and heat. Nivedita, too, a modern Sati, underwent a similar ordeal, with almost no food for days on end, cooped up in a small house in a narrow street where for want of air many a burning night was spent without a wink of sleep. No importunities of friends and doctors could persuade her to give up this abode. Renouncing at every step the habits and ways of a lifetime, she cheerfully carried on her mission without fail to the end of her days. That she could do so was because hers was a

true dedication to the well-being of India, and not a case of brief infatuation. It was her total surrender to the Siva seated in the heart of man. What *sadhana* can be harder than to strive to win as one's lord and master this Siva on his Mt. Kailash hidden in the hearts of all men?

One day Siva himself appeared in disguise before Sati in penance and said: 'Lady, is he for whose sake you are undergoing this ordeal deserving of one so beautiful as you? He is destitute, old and ugly and his ways are strange'. Flaring up, Sati rejoined 'He may be all that you say, nevertheless my mind is wholly centred on him.'

Can a Sati so absorbed in her Siva ever care for the outer glamour, wealth and beauty of the material world?

Sister Nivedita's heart overflowed with this deep and rare spiritual love. That is why she saw her God in the poor, and entranced by what she beheld she put the garland of the pure, white blossoms of her deathless devotion round the neck of the people whose lack of outward elegance repels the elite.

Witnessing with our own eyes the penance of this Sati for her Siva, our own paralysed faith was quickened into life, and we could believe that there indeed is Siva in every man, that his radiance illumines the tumble-down huts of the poor and the slums of the pariah and the outcaste. One who can penetrate through the outer crust of poverty, filth and superstition and glimpse with the inner sight the divine beauty within will hold this inmost spirit of man dearer than son, dearer than all the wealth of this world, dearer than everything that is.

*Tadetat preyah putrat preyo vittat
prepohanyasmat sarvasmat antaratara yadayamatma*

Such a person overcomes fear, conquers selfishness, disdains comfort, breaks the bond of custom and convention, and his thought never rests, even for a moment, on his own self.

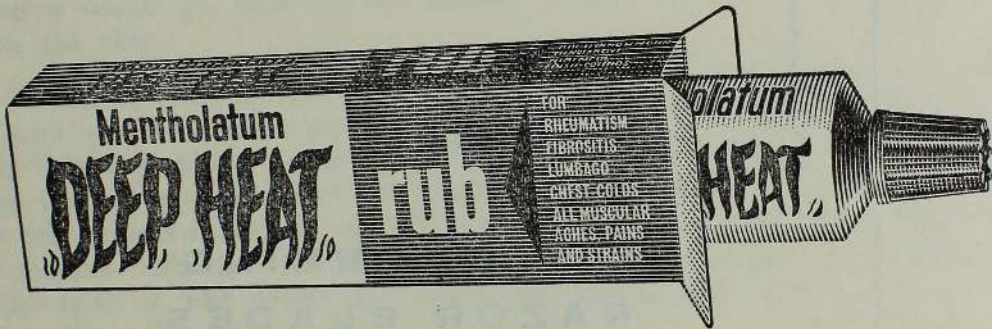
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The Master and The Disciple

Pravrajika Atma-prana

In her two books 'The Master as I saw Him' and 'Notes on some wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda' Sister Nivedita has given us enough material to show where and when she met Swami Vivekananda, how she came to accept him as her master and what her role was as his disciple. And, therefore, there is hardly any scope left to the play of imagination while treating of this interesting and significant subject. And it is best to treat this subject factually. For, otherwise, imagination distorts the subject and does more harm than good.

Nivedita died in her 44th year, In this short span of life she spent the last 14 years of her life in India's service. Her personal association with Swamiji was hardly for 6½ years- What was it then that she received from her Master that made this rare and gifted woman dedicate her all for the *jana-desh-dharma*, the people, the country, and the religion of this blessed land? Let us follow the story as given by herself in the two above mentioned books.

The Meeting: The time was a cold Sunday afternoon in November, 1895, and the place a West-end drawing room in London. Swami Vivekananda in his crimson robe and girdle was sitting facing a half-circle of listeners answering question after question. They were not orthodox believers, neither were they familiar with Hindu thought and religion. Their reception to the Swami from a far off land was cold and conventional. With insular pride that characterize the English people they sat, and listened and then went away, giving their verdict that "It was not new".

But was really nothing new in his message? This was the question that disturbed the mind of one amongst the listeners. Was it not unjust to dismiss in such fashion the new and strange message that spoke of the highest and best that life could offer. The 'Yogi' had not resorted to dialectics: he had spoken with a quiet authority. He was indeed strange! His Message was more strange.

The Master: Behind the gentleness of expression on his calm face was fierce firmness: in the kind and benevolent eyes was a penetrating look that

searched the questioner's mind: in his soft utterance of 'Shiva, Shiva' now and again, one had a glimpse of the fiery spark of renunciation that lifted the mind above the world for some time: in his rich and grave voice was heard a note that stirred deep feelings in the hearts of the hearers. He seemed in all ways to be quite different from the other men of genius they had met so far. And his words threw new light on subjects which were incomprehensible then. He talked with equal ease on Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. The western conceptions of Society, service of humanity and salvation seemed to be quite in conflict with the ideas of Hindus that he was elaborating. From the staggering heights of Advaitic teachings he gently came down to the mellow theme of Love and Bhakti. All this was discussed on the first day. The listener could not dismiss those ideas altogether. She decided to hear him on two more occasions when he would speak in London.

The disciple : Attractive, dominating, vibrant with energy and impulsiveness, Margaret Noble was an interesting person. Constant mental activity, restlessness of spirit and desire to manifest power were part of her personality. Proud of her race and country, grown up in the traditions of her people and her religion, she was given to loud self-assertiveness and argumentativeness. Passivity or subordination were not in her nature. Therefore though the newness of Swamiji's teachings appealed to her, it did not convince her. "There was a quality of blindness in the attitude I presented to my Master that I can never sufficiently regret. When he said "The Universe is like a cobweb and minds are the spiders; for mind is one as well as many, he was simply talking beyond my comprehension. I noted what he said, was interested in it, but could pass no judgement upon it, much less accept it."

And yet the time came before Swamiji left England that she addressed him as 'Master.' What made her do so? In her own words, 'I had recognized the heroic fibre of the man and desired to make myself the servant of his love for his own people. But it was his *Character* to which I had thus done obeisance. As a religious teacher I saw that although he had a system of thought to offer, nothing in that system would claim him for a moment, if he found that truth lead elsewhere. And to that extent that this recognition implies, I became his disciple."

At that early stage it was difficult for Margaret to comprehend his teachings sufficiently to become convinced of its coherence, but she was sure that Swamiji was not teaching anything that was different from the Truth that he had realized.

She had in her own way been a seeker after Truth. With all her manifold intellectual interest she was feeling down within her a certain amount of despair as regards religion, and was groping in the dark for light, Intellectual activity helps the growth of character, but not the growth of spirituality. Margaret was unaware of this till she met the spiritual dynamo, Swami

Vivekananda. It was only then that she had her great lesson in life that the kernel of spirituality was covered by the doctrinal shell which had to be cut away to reach Reality.

Swamiji believed that the time had come for the formulation of faith which could hold its adherents fearless of truth, and this bold and new approach to God stimulated Margaret's spiritual aspirations which were lying dormant all these years. "It was by no means his intention to set forth dainty dishes of poetry and intellectuality for the enjoyment of the rich and idle classes", she wrote.

The Call: After a brief visit to America Swamiji returned to London in April, 1899. He gave his lectures on 'Maya' this time. It was a very difficult task indeed! But through them his role as an apostle calling on the world to enter the kingdom of God became more and more clear. To larger audiences he spoke as a religious teacher enunciating and expounding the principles of Vedanta, but to his smaller intimate group he sounded a call in the name of that which was strongest and finest in man, "What the world wants to-day, is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder and say that they possess nothing but God. Who will go? Why should one fear? If this is true, What else could matter? If it is not true, what do our lives matter?" These words spoken with thunderous conviction touched the hearts of his hearers. Amongst them was Margaret. Since that blessed day this idea dominated her life. She started seeing the world as it appeared to the eyes of the Master and she decided to dedicate her life without any thought of the alternative.

As a result her restless spirit became passive and profoundly quiet and she was ready to assimilate the Master's thoughts. While he was still in London she wrote to him a letter conveying her ideas to him. And his reply became a gospel for Margaret all her life and will remain for ever a creed for all dedicated workers.

"My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.

"This world is in chains of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressors,

"One idea that I see clear as day light is that misery is caused by ignorance and nothing else. Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the law, it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundreds are necessary with eternal love and pity.

"Religions of the world have been lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.

"It is no superstition for you, I am sure, you have the making in you of a worldmover, and others will also come. Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great one! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call. What more is in life? What greater work? The details come to me as I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves. I only say, awake, awake!"

With this call the lioness in Margaret awoke. *Uttisthata jagrata prapya. varan nibodhata* — arise, awake and approaching the great ones. reach the goal — became her *life-mantra*. But she was waiting for Swamiji to give a more pointed direction as to what she was expected to do. She was an educationist, and had already spent about ten years gaining practical experience as a teacher. Her own school at Wimbledon was a successful experiment in the 'New Education' method. Her best role would have been that of a teacher and Swamiji did one day come out with the same proposition. "I have plans for the women of my own country in which you, I think could be of great help to me." Margaret understood that a call had come to her with clarion sound which would change her life. She would now go forward, never to turn back again.

Summons : Swamiji left England on December 16, 1896. About a year later Margaret left for India reaching Calcutta on January 28, 1898, During the one year that Margaret stayed back she had to face many difficulties. Her school work and all the other interests that held her back in London had to be relinquished, arrangements had to be made for her aging mother whom she was leaving behind, and greatest of all, she had to tolerate harsh misrepresentation of her motive. Her Christian relations looked upon her with suspicion and disapproval. Besides, India was an unknown country, viewed upto now only through the eyes of her Master. But her acceptance and adhesion to Swamiji was whole-hearted.

It is one of the deepest secrets of human heart that dedication comes spontaneously in love. Swamiji knew that Margaret's love and devotion for him had prepared her to make the sacrifice and indeed the Guru is the highest place for sentiment and love, But he was a great believer in work without attachment or work for impersonal ends as one of the highest expression of the religious life. He thought of making her realise this ideal and therefore wrote to her on October 1, 1897.

"I see person giving me almost the whole of their love. But I must not give anyone the whole of mine in return, for that day the work would be ruined. Yet there are some who will look for such a return, not having the breadth of impersonal view. It is absolutely necessary to the work that I should have the enthusiastic love of as many as possible, while I myself remain entirely impersonal A leader must be impersonal. I am sure you understand this." And Margaret did understand that the service to

which she was summoned by her Guru was not his own, but that of Truth itself.

A Novice: on reaching India Margaret's period of training began. She had to learn to live upto the motto of the spiritual Order founded by Swami Vivekananda in the name of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna. *Atmano mokshartham jagadditaya cha*—for the salvation of one's own self and the welfare of world. On March 25, 1898, Margaret was initiated and made a *Brahmacharini* and was given the name *Nivedita*. She had thus been accepted as a member of the Ramakrishna Order and her life was consecrated to the Divine. In this new life Swami Vivekananda stood before her as Guru in the old tradition. His method was directness of spiritual life, that is, a return to simplicity. Life with God had to be simple, almost natural and spontaneous. To introduce complications in religious life where there were none was against the spirit of complication according to him. The only virtue of novice was *sincerity*.

Swamiji knew the sincerity of Nivedita as a religious aspirant otherwise he would not have initiated her into the teaching that is required to lead the great life of God. Exactly one year after her first initiation she was made a *Naisthika Brahmacharini*. He gave her strict instructions about personal life after that. "You must give up all visiting and live in strict seclusion. You have to set yourself to Hinduise your thoughts, your needs, your conceptions, and your habits. Your life internal and external, has to become all that an orthodox Hindu Brahmin Brahmacharini's ought to be. The method will come to you, if only you desire it sufficiently. *But you have to forget your own past, and to cause it to be forgotten. You have to lose even its memory.* Nivedita made a conscious and determined effort to pass from her old world to the new. Desiring nothing of the comforts of the world for herself she lived her life in solitude and austerity. But that does not mean she lived a life of dedicated retreat and isolation. According to Swamiji's reorientation of the ideal her's was a life of spiritual retreat in the midst of great activity.

An Educator ; It has already been said that Nivedita was an experienced educationist before she came to India. Her foremost mission now in coming to India was of imparting education to women. Swamiji was consumed with the desire for the education of women, and he was hopeful of Nivedita's work. But he did not hurry into work. He felt that any European who was to work on his behalf in India must do so in the Indian way and so he was giving time to Nivedita to be familiar with the world in which she was to live and work.

On July 24, 1898, while in Kashmir, Swamiji for the first time asked her about her plan of work. Nivedita explained it to him and then asked him to pass judgement over it. Swamiji waited a little when he had heard

all and then said; "You ask me to criticise, but that I cannot do. For I regard you as inspired, quite as much inspired as I am..... So I shall help you to do what you think best."

She was therefore given complete liberty to work out her experiment remembering only one canon of his that to teach against the aspirations of the taught was to court ill result instead of good.

An Interpreter : Speaking about Sri Ramakrishna's life to Nivedita Swamiji had once said to her: "He lived that great life—and I read the meaning." The same can be said of Nivedita as regards her Master's life. The greatest role that Nivedita played in India—and to which she devoted all her years after Swamiji passed away—was that of being an interpreter of his life looking upon him as an 'Embodiment of the National Ideal of India.

That is the theme of all her writings which run into thousands of pages—Swamiji and India—Swamiji in India, and, India as reflected in his mind and heart. One day talking to a group of people he addressed Nivedita in particular and said: "And so you see, all this is but a feeble manifestation of the great ideas which alone are real and perfect Somewhere is an ideal you, and hear is an attempt to manifest it! The attempt falls short still in many ways. Still,—go on! You will interpret the ideal some day.

In this context two things are to be remembered without which Swamiji's choice of Nivedita as the transmitter of his ideas will not be understood or justified. One was his intense love for his motherland; second was his desire to effect an ideal exchange of ideas between the East and the West.

From 1898 when she stayed in the river-side cottage at Bejur till his second tour to Europe with her which ended in July 1899, Swamiji talked and talked to Nivedita.

It must be said that it was not easy for Nivedita to understand Swamiji always. In the beginning she was often confused; sometimes even felt exasperated. Swamiji's intense love for India was a revelation to her after her coming to India. In the West she knew him as a patient, sympathetic, meditative religious teacher. But in India a new element seemed to have entered Swamiji's whole being, of which he was also not quite aware. The power of Nivedita's lyric explain this better. "There was one thing, however, deep in the Master's nature, that he himself never knew how to adjust. This was his love of his country and his resentment of her suffering Throughout those years in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He neither used the word 'nationality', nor proclaimed an era of 'nation-making'. 'Man-making', he said was his own task. But he was

born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his Motherland. Like some delicately-poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her."

He wanted his disciples to LOVE India first before taking up any work. Swamiji's passionate worship of everything that was India's his unsparing criticisms at times of her sins and her want of worldly wisdom, his undimmed vision of her future greatness—all this staggered Nivedita. It was not without intense suffering that she came to understand him later. Once that understanding came her rebellious mood disappeared and she found profound peace. In that she reached the highest ideal of discipleship in which one sees a thing as it appears to the mind of the Master, one's heart and mind become one with his and one desires only to serve him silently with constant attempt to assimilate his ideas. My own part, throughout the years of my discipleship, appears to me to have been some things like that of a thought - reader.

And the later generations are grateful to Nivedita for faithfully preserving her great Master's idea's in her writing, through which we recognize Swamiji. '*The Master as I saw him*' is a master-piece of literature. After the book was published and it received worldwide acclamation she was deeply moved and wrote to Miss Josephine Macleod—"If when you do dip into it, you recognise Swami at all, you will give me great happiness. I have worked for others as a hand or a tool, but, Swami demanded the whole of my powers, and left me to use them for him. Both kinds of service, are great and good, but this alone is all absorbing, because this alone implies perfect faith"

Conclusion : A lot of speculation has been going on with regard to Nivedita's faithfulness to Swamiji's ideal to the end. Her taking interest in the political developments in India and her leaving the Ramakrishna Order after Swamiji's death are supposed to indicate her changed loyalty. But that was not true. Even during Swamiji's life-time she had become aware of the fact that new idea of the regeneration of the nation was too vast. Her whole-hearted love for India was, indeed, a legacy from Swamiji but it was necessary to fix one point from which to start. And it struck her that point was political freedom. She wrote to a friend.

"To my great horror, freedom has meant something to me, for my life has come to include many elements that Swami would probably not have put there. They are all for him, however, I trust, in the end—and be will not hold me less his child than before I belong to *Hinduism* more than I ever did. But I see the political need so clearly too! That is all I mean—and to that I must be true.

Swamiji was not interested in political developments in the country, while Nivedita's energetic mind was drawn towards the political tempo that was rising in the country then. Swamiji knew it, but did not say anything. He was never in the habit of dictating an opinion or creed, never he called for a confession of faith from his disciple.

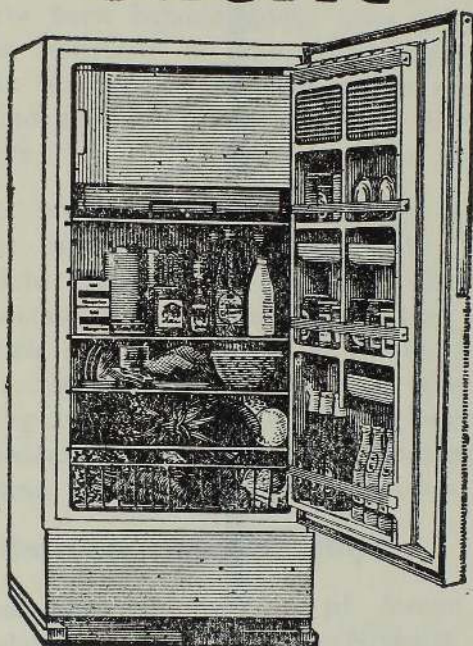
On February 12, 1902, just a few months before he died he wrote a letter to Nivedita blessing her in the most glowing terms—

“May all powers come unto you? May Mother Herself be your hands and mind! It is immense power — irresistible — that I pray for you, and, if possible, along with it infinite peace if there was any truth in Sri Ramakrishna, may He take you into His leading, even as He did me, may a thousand times more !”

And she did live and prove to the world that in all that she did and said she did not disappoint him. She kept his trust, and fulfilled all his hopes and aspirations as he had expressed them in a poem presented to her by him in 1900—

The mother's heart, the hero's will,
The sweetness of the southern breeze,
The sacred charm and strength that dwell
On Aryan Altars, flaming, free ;
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The Guru and the Sishya.

S. AMBIKAIPAKAN B. A.

Principal, Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya, Jaffna.

The greatest contribution of the Eastern Religions, specially of Hinduism, to the spiritual life of the world is the Guru Sishya tradition. Great spiritual truths have been handed down from generation to generation by the Gurus to their Sishyas in an unbroken succession. Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita exemplify this tradition in a unique manner. In Swami Vivekananda we find an ideal Guru and in Sister Nivedita, one of the most devoted pupils.

The upanishads bring out the Guru Sishya relationship at its best. In them we find some of the famous teachers like Yajñawalkya, Pippalada and Prajapathi and ardent students like Nachiketa, Satyakama and Gargi. Gurus play such an important part in the life of the students that there is a Tamil proverb which says that there is no Vidya either in this world or the next without a Guru. It is equally true that the Guru finds life's fulfillment in imparting his experience and knowledge to worthy disciples. In the Taittiriya upanishad we find the Guru making a prayer that worthy students should come to him from all directions.

The meeting of the Guru and the Sishya.

Let us now see how the meeting of Swami Vivekananda and Miss Margaret Noble who later became Sister Nivedita has been fruitful to both. Swami Vivekananda after his triumphant appearance at the Parliament of Religions in 1893 spent about two years in lecturing in different parts of America. He visited Europe in the later part of 1895 at the request of his friends. It was in November 1895 that Miss Margaret Noble met Swamiji in the drawing room of Lady Isabel Margesson.

Miss Nobel was running a model school in London at the time she met her future Guru. She like Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy with whom she collaborated later in producing the "Myths and Legends of the Hindus" had the inquiring mind of a scientist and the creative faculties of an artist. The traditional Christian teachings failed to impress her. This is what she says about her state of mind at this time.

"But after the age of eighteen, I began to harbour doubts as to the truth of the

Christian doctrines. Many of them began to seem to me false and incompatible with Truth. These doubts grew stronger and stronger and at the same time my faith in Christianity tottered more and more. For seven years I was in this wavering state of mind, very unhappy and yet very, very eager to seek the Truth”

Even at the first meeting she was impressed by Swamiji's approach to Religion and decided to attend the other two lectures delivered by him in London. Her strict adherence to Truth was the one factor that drew Miss Noble to the Swami and it was this that ultimately made her become his disciple. This is what she says in this connection:-

“As a religious teacher I saw that although he had a system of thought to offer, nothing in that system would claim him a moment if he found that truth led elsewhere. And to that extent that this recognition implies, I became his disciple.”

At the end of the two lectures Swamiji went back to America and returned to London the next year. Again he delivered lectures and conducted classes and Miss Noble attended them. It was the following words uttered by Swamiji in one of the classes that made her dedicate herself to the cause dear to Swamiji.

“What the world wants today is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder and say that they possess nothing but God.

Who will go?
Why should one fear? If this is true what else could matter?
If it is not true, what do our lives matter?”

Love of Service

Swamiji had given the highest gift — Atmagnana — which gave her utmost mental peace and tranquility. In return for this gift she was prepared to

spend the rest of her life in the service of India, specially in the service of Indian womanhood.

But Swamiji wanted her to become completely Indian in outlook before she could attempt to serve India. In doing this she had to cut away from her past. Not only had she to cut away from her past but even remove all memories of her past life. Swamiji gave the following instructions to her:-

“You have to set yourself to
Hinduise your thoughts, your
needs, your conceptions, and
your habits, your life internal
and external has to become
all that an orthodox, Hindu Brahmin
Brahmacharinis ought to be.
The method will come to you,
if only you desire it
sufficiently. But you have
to forget your own past,
and to cause it to be forgotten.
You have to lose even its memory”

This was no difficult task for her as she had completely identified herself with her master and fully merged herself in the cause dear to him. The nature of her surrender is well brought out in the following hymns of Appar.

முன்னம் அவனுடைய நாமம் கேட்டாள்
மூர்த்தி அவனிருக்கும் வண்ணம் கேட்டாள்
பின்னை அவனுடைய ஆரூர் கேட்டாள்
பேர்த்தும் அவனுக்கே பிச்சி ஆனாள்
அன்னையையும் அத்தனையும் அன்றே நீத்தாள்
அகன்றாள் அகலிடத்தார் ஆசாரத்தைத்
தன்னை மறந்தாள் தன் நாமம் கெட்டாள்
தலைப்பட்டாள் நங்கை தலைவன் தானே.

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HOLY MOTHER AND SISTER NIVEDITA

By K. Ramachandra,

Editor, 'Religious Digest'.



185936

**Sri Sarada Devi - The Holy Mother-
and Sister Nivedita**

The subject given to me is 'Holy Mother and Sister Nivedita'. I consider that it is appropriate to start the article with some introductory remarks concerning Swami Vivekananda and the manner in which Nivedita was accepted by him as his spiritual daughter.

Among' the notable women from foreign countries who spent their lives in the service of Mother India, Sister Nivedita (Miss. Margaret Noble) and Mrs. Annie Besant are the most famous. The former dedicated her life to the welfare of the Indian womanhood, and was intimately associated with the Holy Mother and the Ramakrishna Mission.

Through her own earnest aspirations and her Master's blessings, Nivedita was able to get a firm grasp of the most outstanding features of India's social, cultural, and spiritual life: Its fundamental unity in the midst of baffling diversity; its capacity to absorb, assimilate and adjust; and its extraordinary power to withstand all onslaughts and to survive and continue.

All these ideas were embodied in the speeches delivered by her at Madras, Salem, Baroda and other cities during her travels for propaganda work. Her books, 'Kali—the Mother', 'Cradle Tales of Hinduism', 'Footfalls of Indian History', &c reveal to us the depth of her understanding of

Hindu culture, and her book, 'The Master as I saw him' is a monumental work on Guru-Sishya relationship, which forms an ever-lasting guide for all spiritual aspirants.

At the commencement of her spiritual fellowship with Swami Vivekananda at London in 1895, she was rather sceptic. One of her intimate associates, who accepted the Master's statements without any doubt or hesitation, used to tease her for her scepticism to the hearing of the Master. The latter ignored their conversation for some time, and one day he came out with the following remark to the hearing of the whole class:

"Let none regret that they were difficult to convince! I fought my Master for six long years, with the result that I know every inch of the way!!"

Nivedita was happy to hear this advice, which she took as one meant for her personally. Later, when she decided to dedicate her whole life to his mission, she had the following prophetic vision of the Swami to inspire and guide her in all her noble efforts:

"Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man but a woman, a real lioness to work for Indians, women especially."

"India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination and, above all, your Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted." (in a letter dated 29-7-1897)

With these preliminary remarks, let us now come to the main theme of the article. It is best to recall here first what Nivedita had left on record after meeting the Holy Mother on arrival in India. "To me it has always appeared", she said, "that Shri Sarada Devi (the Holy Mother) is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood. But is she last of an old order, or the beginning of a new? In her, one sees realized that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself the stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood. I have never known her hesitate, in giving utterance to large and generous judgment, however new or complex might be the question put before her. Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilization. Yet she rises to the height of every situation."

When Nivedita took up her residence with the Mother, the latter treated her as her loving daughter. But the former realised that her stay in a brahmin family could complicate matters for the mother's relations, who had orthodox people to deal with. And of her own accord, she shifted

to another house in the same lane. In this connection, it is interesting to refer to the loving but solemn warning given by Shyamasundari Devi on one occasion when Nivedita expressed her wish to go to their kitchen and help in the cooking. The Grand-ma's reply was: "Don't my good grand-daughter; they will excommunicate us if you enter our kitchen."

The period from November 1898 to June 1899 was one full of happy glimpses for Nivedita. Her school for the girls was inaugurated during the Navaratri Poojah and the Holy Mother performed the opening ceremony. She prayed that the blessing of the great Mother might be upon the school, and the girls it should train be ideal girls. Writing of this event, Nivedita says: "To know that an undertaking is remembered and fraught with prayer in the lofty mind and heart of our Mother, is to me a benediction that makes content. I cannot imagine a grander omen than her blessing, spoken over the educated Hindu womanhood of the future".

In her spiritual fellowship with the Mother, there were incidents in the lighter vein too. On a Easter-day, the Mother and her group of old ladies desired to rest in the chapel, and hear something of the meaning of the Christian festival. Nivedita gave a beautiful exposition, singing the resurrection-hymns with the aid of a small French Organ played by the **Gurubhagini**. Later in the evening, the group wanted the two to dramatise a European wedding ceremony. This was done with much fun and laughter. Neither of the two actors was prepared for the effect of the marriage vow: "For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health," — till death us do part" were words that drew exclamations of delight from the whole assembly. The Mother appreciated the vow very much, and exclaimed: "Oh, the Dharmmi words! the righteous words!"

One more incident of some fun and frolic deserves to find place here. It appears to be the last one in which the Holy Mother and Nivedita were concerned. One day Nivedita and Christine visited the mother, The former had picked up a few words of Bengali. She told the mother in Bangali: "Mother Divine! you are our Kali!" Christine endorsed that statement in English. Hearing them, the Mother said with a simper: "No, my dears, I can't become Kali or any such deity. In that case I shall have to keep my tongue protruded." The two daughters were equal to the occasion. They replied: "The Mother need not undergo that trouble at all; we look upon her as our Mother. And Sri Ramakrishna is our Shiva." When this reply was explained to the Mother, She merely said: "That much can somehow be seen to."

The ladies who lived then regularly in the household of the Holy Mother were Gopaler-Ma Golap-Ma, Yogin-Ma, Rose Mother, Lakshmididi and a number of others. Referring to them, the Swamiji once told Nivedita, "Ah, this is the OLD India that you have seen, the India of prayers and tears, of vigils and fasts, that is passing away, never to return." To Gopaler-Ma,

it was a natural shock to her habits of eighty years' standing at having a European in the house, but, Nivedita says, that once over-ruled by the Mother, the old dame was generosity itself. It is recorded of Golap-Ma that she was a "Touch-me-notice" before she met Paramahansa Deva, but all of that orthodoxy gradually disappeared under the influence of that Supreme master. Yogin-Ma was one who, as directed by Sri Ramakrishna in early life, devoted herself to the study of Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharatha, and other Hindu literature. Gifted with a prodigious memory, she was able to quote passages with ease. Nivedita learnt a lot from her, and we find in her Preface to the book, 'Cradle Tales of Hinduism', words of thanks to Yogin-Ma for her help in the preparation of the same. Nivedita extended to these two and all other intimate associates of the Mother full devotion and adoration. Nivedita had Gopaler-Ma in one of the rooms of her shool for nursing during her last illness, and she passed into eternal silence in that room in July 1906.

In regard to the new school, Nivedita is very modest in claiming any credit for its success. After stating that the experiments made in 1898 and 1899 were really for her own eduction, she gives all the credit for its later success to Sister Christine who took charge of the institution in 1903. This was definitely the Master's plan to release her services in other more important directions. We refer here to her political activities, public lectures and writings of books and articles for news papers and peridodicals. She travelled to Baroda for the express purpose of contacting Sri Aurobindo in person and to enlist the sympathies of the Maharajah for the national cause. After Sri Aurobindo arrived in Culcutta, she was of considerable help to him. In fact, it was her intuition that helped him to get away to Chandernagore in French Territory in 1909 before the warrant for his second arrest was out. She acceded to his last request and edited 'Karma Yogin' for some time, Poet Subramaniya Bharati who met her in Calcutta during those tumultuous days accepted her as his Guru. Her spirited rejoinder to Lord Curzon for his mean attempt to defame the character of defenceless Indians was a classic one, which has already found a permanent place in India's 20th century history.

The Holy Mother survived Sister Nivedita by about nine years. She could not be near her during the latter's last days. Sir Jegadish Bose and his beloved partner, Abhala Devi, who were so much devoted and grateful to her for the valuable services she had rendered in broad-casting his scientific discoveries in England and U.S.A. had removed her to Darjeeling

with the hope of restoring her to former health and vigour by a change in that salubrious climate. But his hope was not realised. She was aware beforehand of the actual time of the release of her heroic spirit from the weakened body. So, on the 13th of October 1911, looking at the rising sun through the window of her apartment, and holding the rosary in her right hand, she breathed her last, uttering the following Santhi Sloka to her by her great Master:

Asato mo sat gamaya

Tamasoma jyotir gamaya

Mrityor ma amritam gamaya.

Om Santhi; Santhi; Santhi!

Lead me from the unreal to the Real;

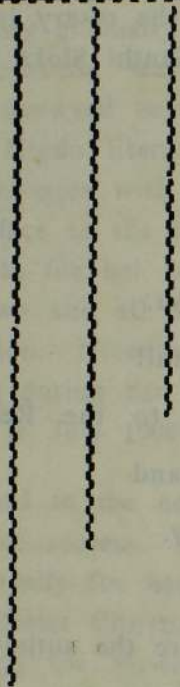
From darkness to Light, and

From death to Immortality.

Om Peace; Peace; Peace!

(Sister Nivedita's tomb is at Darjeeling where the author of this article had the privilege to worship in May 1925.)

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ஓம்

நிவேதிதா தியாக தீபம்

அருளுக்கு நிவேதனமாய் அன்பினுக்கோர்
கோயிலாய் அடியேன் நெஞ்சில்
இருளுக்கு ஞாயிறாய் எமதுயர் நா
டாம்பயிர்க்கு மழையாய், இங்கு
பொருளுக்கு வழியறியா வறிஞர்க்குப்
பெரும் பொருளாப் புன்மைத் தாதச்
சுருளுக்கு நெருப்பாகி விளங்கிய தாய்
நிவேதிதையைத் தொழுது நிற்பேன்.

என்று மகாகவி சுப்ரமண்ய பாரதியாரால் பாடிப்போற்றி வழத்தப் பட்டவர் சகோதரி நிவேதிதை அம்மையார்.

விவேகானந்த ஞானதீபத்தின் ஒரு கதிர் கர்மசக்தியாக உருவெடுத்து பாரதத் தாய்க்கு ஒரு புத்திரியாகவும், பாரதத் தாய்க்குல சேவைக்கு ஒரு நிவேதனமாய், தியாகத் தீபமாய் அமைந்தவரே நிவேதிதை அம்மையார்.

அவரது ஜன்மதின நூற்றாண்டுவிழா உலகெங்கும் கொண்டாடப்பட்டு வருகிறது. இவ்விழாவில் இலங்கையும் இன்று பங்குகொள்வது மிகப் பொருத்தமேயாகும்.

'ஐரிஷ்' பெற்றோர்க்கு, 1867-ம் ஆண்டு, அக்டோபர் மாதம் 23-ம் திகதியன்று ஓர் அன்பு மகளாகப் பிறந்த. மார்சுரட் நோபிள் என்று பெயர் சூட்டப்பெற்ற, தகுந்த கல்வியும், சீரிய பண்பாடும், உயர்ந்த நோக்கமும், வைரம் போன்ற உறுதிப்பாடும், இளகிய மனமும், அன்பு உள்ளமும் கொண்ட, நிவேதிதையார்க்கு "நோபிள்" என்ற குடும்பப் பெயரும் பொருத்தமேயன்றே!

இவ்வம்மையார், விவேகானந்த சுவாமிகளிடம் ஈடுபாடு கொண்டவராய், தனது குருநாதர் போதித்த வேதாந்தக்கொள்கைகளைச் செயலாக்கப் புகுந்த தீரத்தை என்னென்பது!!

வேத வேதாந்தங்களும், இதிகாச புராணங்களும், ஒப்புமையற்ற கற்புக் கரசிகளும், ஞானச்செல்வம் பெற்ற ஸாத்வீகளும், பிறந்த புண்ணிய பூமியான பாரதத்தில், மூடக்கொள்கைகளும், அறிவினமும், பலவினமும், குறுகிய நோக்கமும், வறுமையுமுற்று வாழ்ந்த தாய்க்குலத்தை உயர்த்திலைன்றி பாரத இந்து சமுதாயம் ஒரு போதும் முன்னேறாது என்பதை உணர்ந்தார் விவேகானந்த சுவாமிகள். பெண்களிடையேயும், பொதுமக்களிடையேயும், கல்வி வளரவேண்டும். பெண்களின் முன்னேற்றமும், மக்களிடையே விழிப்பு ஏற்பட கல்வியே

முதன்மையான தேவை. அப்பொழுது தான் இந்தியாவிற்கு உண்மையான நன்மை உண்டு என்ற உண்மையினையும் உணர்ந்தார் சுவாமிஜி அவர்கள்.

“The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses must come first, and then only can any real good can come about for the country, for India” —

இது அவரது வாசகம். எழுபத்தைந்து ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பிருந்த நிலையை இவ்வாசகம் விளக்குகிறது !

அந்தக் காலத்தில் அவரது கருத்தை செயலாக்கத் துணிந்து, தன்னைப் பரிபூரணமாய் அர்ப்பணம் செய்த மார்கிரட்டேரோபிள், பிரம்மசரிய தீக்ஷிப்பெற்று, துறவியாகி, நிவேதிதையானார். இந்து பெண்களுக்கு ஒரு உண்மையான சகோதரியும் ஆனார். பல்வேறு இன்னல்களுக்கிடையே பெண்களின் முன்னேற்றத்திற்காகப் பெரிதும் பாடுபட்டு உழைத்த அவரது ஜீவியம் ஒரு திவ்விய சரிதமாகும். அவரது சரித்திரத்தையும், அவர் இயற்றியப் பல நூல்களையும் யாவரும் நன்கு படித்து, ஆய்ந்து ஆராயவேண்டியது அவசியமாகும்

ஒரு தேசத்திலோ ஒரு சமூகத்திலோ, பொருளாதாரத்திலோ, சமயாசாரத்திலோ, ஏற்றமும் மாற்றமும், வீழ்ச்சியும் விழிப்பும் கால வேறுபாட்டால் அமைகின்றன. இந்தியா, இலங்கை ஆகிய கீழ் நாடுகளின் அடிப்படையான ஆதாரம் ஆன்மீகமேயாகும். அதுவொன்றே, மாறுபடுங்காலந்தோறும் மாறாது நின்று வந்துள்ளது. அவ்வான்மீகமே நம்முடைய பாரம்பரியமான சீரிய திருச் செல்வமாகும்.

நிவேதிதையார் வாழ்ந்த காலத்தில், இந்நாடுகள் ஆங்கிலேயரின் ஆட்சிக்கு உட்பட்ட அடிமை நாடாகத் திகழ்ந்தன. விதேசிகளின் ஆளுகையில் ஏற்பட்ட கொடுங்கோன்மையால், சுதேசிகளுக்கு மாறுபட்ட சூழ்நிலைகளும், ஏழ்மை, அறியாமை, மூடப்பழக்க வழக்கங்கள், கொள்கைகள், போன்றவைகள் தலையெடுக்கலாயின. இவ்விழி நிலையில் வீழ்ந்த பாரத சமுதாயம் தனது பாரதியப் பண்புகள் மாறுபாடுற செயலாற்றாது முழித்தது. சமயாச்சாரங்களும் ஆன்மீக நெறியினின்றும் பிறழ்ந்து, குறுகிய கோட்பாடுகளுக்கும் மூடத்தனத்திற்கும் இடந்தரலாயின. பிள்ளைகளைப் பெற்றுப்பேணிக் காப்பவர்கள் தாய்மார்கள். அதுபோலவே எல்லா வகையிலேயும், சமூக, சமய, ஆசார, பண்புகளையும் பேணிக்காப்பவர்களும் அவர்களேயாவர். எனவே அன்றைய சூழ்நிலையில் பொதுமக்களையும், பெண்மக்களையும் விழிப்புறச்செய்ய நிவேதிதையார் இங்கிலாந்திலிருந்து இந்தியாவிற்கு வந்து பணியாற்றும் பெருங்கடலில் குதிக்கலாயினர்— அவரது தியாகமே தியாகம் !!

இறுமாப்பு எய்தி வெள்ளையர் ஆட்சிபுரியும் அட்டகாச சூழ்நிலையில், இந்த வெள்ளைமாத் அடிமைப்பட்ட மக்களிடையே வந்து, சுத்தம் சுகாதாரம் இல்லாத சந்து பொந்துகளிடையே நுழைந்தும், வெள்ளையரைக்கண்டால் வெறித்து ஓடும் இந்திய எளிய பெண்களிடையே புகுந்தும், தானே தேசியமயமாகி, எல்லோரிடத்தும் அன்புகாட்டிப் பண்புடன் ஒழுக்கி, பொறுமையுடன் தொண்டாற்றியது ஒரு பெருஞ் சாதனையன்றோ!

‘தாயைப் போல பிள்ளை’ என்பது பொய்யானாலும் ஆகலாம், ஆனால், குருவைப்போல சிஷ்யை என்பது நிரூபிக்கப்பட்டது!

கல்வியறிவில்லாது தாழ்மையிலும், பாழ்மையிலும், அழுந்தியபெண்களிடையே கல்வியைப் புகுத்தவும், பெண் குழந்தைகளைத் தம் பள்ளியில் சேர்க்கவும் இன்னல்களுக்கிடையே, தன்னந்தனியே பணியாற்றி விழிப்பையூட்டி எழுச்சியை உண்டுபண்ணிய இம்மாது சிரோன்மணி ஒரு அணையாவிளக் கல்லவா? இந்த களின் மூலம் நிலைமைகளை தெளிவாக்கியும், இந்தியாவிற்கு வந்த பின்பு அவருக்குத் தக்கபடி பயிற்சி கொடுத்து உருவாக்கியும், உள்ளத்தில் திட்பத்தை உண்டுபண்ணியும் ஊக்குவித்தார் விவேகானந்த சுவாமிகள். 1897-ம் ஆண்டு, ஜூலை மாதம் 29-ம் திகதி சுவாமிஜி அவர்களால் எழுதப்பட்ட கடிதம் (ஞான தீபம் சுடர் 10, பக்கம் : 231— கடிதம் இல. 361) படித்தறிய வேண்டிய தொன்றாகும்.

ஸ்ரீ சாரதாமணி தேவியாரிடம், சகோதரியார் மிக மிக நெருங்கிப் பழகி அவரது கருணையில் மூழ்கி அன்பிலே மிதந்து அவரது குழந்தையாகவே திகழ்ந்தார். தூய அன்ணையாரின் ஆன்மீக அணைப்புக்கரங்களிடையே நிவேதனையாரின் துறவும், ஞானவாழ்வும் சீர்மைபெற்றது. சகோதரியார், தூய அன்ணையாரால், அன்புடன், ‘‘கூக்கி’’ என்று அழைக்கப்படுவார் — (வங்காள மொழியில் ‘‘கூக்கி’’ என்றால் பெண் குழந்தை அல்லது அன்பு மகள் என்பது பொருள்). தூய அன்ணையாரது திருமேனித் திருவுருவை உலகுக்குக் காட்டித் தந்த பெருமை அம்மையாரையே சாரும் சகோதரியார் ‘‘போட்டோ’’ படம் பிடித்துத் தந்திராதுபோனால், இவ்வுலகம் தூய அன்ணையாரது திருமுகம், திருமேனி இன்னபடிதான் இருக்கும் என்பதை அறிந்திராது! முகத்தையே முழுக்க மூடிமறைத்து வாழும் ‘‘கோஷா’’ வான அன்ணையாரை நமக்குக் காட்டித்தந்த அம்மையாருக்கு இவ்வுலகம் பெரிதும் கடமைப்பட்டுள்ளது.

ஸ்ரீ சாரதாமணி தேவியாரின் தூய்மை, துறவு, இனிமை, மேன்மை, பொறுமை, பணிவு, அன்பு, ஆதரவு, ஆகியவைகளை நேரிலே கண்டும் உணர்ந்தும் அனுபவித்த சகோதரியார், ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண பரமஹம்சர் கூறியதுபோல், ‘‘இந்தியப் பெண்களின் இலட்சியக் குறிகளின் உருவமே ஸ்ரீ சாரதாமணி தேவியார்,’’ என்பதை உலகுக்கு அறிவித்தார். அவரை முன்னோடியாகக்கொண்டு அவரது பாதச்சுவடுகளைப் பின்பற்றினால் உலகிலுள்ள எல்லாத் தாய்க்குலமும் உயர்வு பெறமுடியும்— உயர்ந்த இலட்சியத்தை அடையமுடியும் என்ற முடிவுக்கு வந்தார். அத்துணிபுடனேயே செயலாற்றவுஞ் செய்தார்.

இயற்கையாக நம்மிடையே ஏற்பட்டுள்ள குறைபாடுகள் பற்பல. பொறுமை, சுயநலம், கோபதாபங்கள், விருப்பு வெறுப்புக்கள், வஞ்சகம் கபடம், ஆகியவைகளை நீக்குவதே ஆன்மீக வளர்ச்சிக்கு அத்தியாவசியமான சாதனங்கள் ஆகும். தாய்மைக்குரிய பொறுமை, அன்பு, அடக்கம், உழைப்பு தியாகம், சேவை ஆகியவைகளை வளர்ப்பதே சமூகத்தின் அல்லது தேசத்தின் திருச்செல்வமாகும். தாய்மையின் பண்பாடே ஆன்மீகத்தின் வளர்ச்சிக்கான உரம். தாய்க்குலத்தின் முன்னேற்றமே சமூகத்தின் முன்னேற்றமாகும் எல்லாப் பெருமைக்கும் அடிப்படையானது பெண்மையின் பெருமை, பெண்மையின் பெருநலம்! இதனை உணர்ந்து—நமக்கு முணர்த்திய சகோதரியாரிடம், மற்றும் தூய அன்ணையாரிடமும் இவைகள் நிறைந்திருப்பதைக் காணலாம்.

இன்று, நமது பகட்டு வாழ்விலுள்ள போலி சுயகௌரவத்தை அப்புறப் படுத்தி, துணிந்து சமூக முன்னேற்றத்திற்கு செயல் படவேண்டியவராக நாம்

இருக்கின்றோம். சுயநலம், மோஹம், மயக்கம், உள்ளவிடத்து கபடமும் வஞ்சனையும் குடிகொள்கின்றன. ஆற்றுநீர் மேட்டில் பாயவேண்டில் அணைகட்டித்திருப்புவதுபோல் நமது மனம் கட்டுப்பாடுற்று திருப்பப்படல்வேண்டும். உடல் மென்மையானாலும் உள்ளம் மேன்மையடைய வேண்டும். மோஹத்திலே பிறந்த நாம் தியாகத்திலே முடிவடையவேண்டும். ஆக்குவது கடினமானது, அழிப்பது இலகுவானது. “ஆவதும் பெண்ணாலே அழிவதும் பெண்ணாலே” என்பது ஓர் பழமொழி. அதன் பொருள் எதுவாயினும், இன்று பெண்மையில், “சக்தி சொரூபத்தை— பவித்திரத்தன்மையை” உணர்வதும், உணர்விப்பதும், விழிப்புற்றும், விழிப்புறச்செய்வதும், நமது முதற்கடமை. பெண்மையின் தன்மை தியாகமேயன்றி போகமல்ல.

“ந ஹி தேஹப்ருதா சக்யம் த்யக்தும் கர்மாண்-யசேஷத:
யஸ்து கர்மபலத்யாகே ஸ த்யாகேத்யபிதீயதே”

—(கீதை 18-11) என்பதைக் கருத்தில்
ஓர்க! விழிப்பு என்பதும் தூய்மை என்பதும் ஒன்றே.

திடச்சித்தமும், நிச்சய புத்தியும், தன்னலத்தியாகமும், பணிவும், பண்புமே, நிவேதிதையாக உருக்கொண்டு. கீழ்-மேல் நாட்டு கல்வி, கலாச்சாரப் பண்புகளை, தன்னகத்தே கொண்டு ஆன்மீக அடிப்படையில் அரிய சேவைகளை, புனிதமுறையில் செயலாக்கிய இந்த “அணையா விளக்கு” நமக்கு துணையாய் இருப்பதாக! இவ்வையகத்தில் விவேகானந்த ஞானதீபம் உள்ளவரை ‘நிவேதிதா தியாக தீபம்’ சுடர்விட்டு அணையா விளக்காய் விளங்குமன்றோ!— அத்தகைய நிவேதிதைகள் பலர் இன்றும் தேவைப்படுகின்றனர்!!

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அவர்தம் தீரச்சிஷ்யை

சகோதரி நிவேதிதையும்.

உண்மையைக் கண்டடைவதில் இடையறா முயற்சி, சரியெனக் கண்டதை எடுத்து மொழிவதில் அஞ்சாத நெஞ்சு, எடுத்த கருமத்தை முடிப்பதில் இணையிலா ஆற்றல், அடுத்தவர் இடுக்கண் களைவதில் ஈடிலா ஆசை, உள்ளத் தெளிவு உண்டான பின்னரே எதையும் ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளும் இயல்பு. இத்தனையும் தனக்கெனக்கொண்ட, பெண்மைக்கோர் அணிகலனாய் உதித்த ஐரோப்பிய மாது, நம் சுவாமிஜீயின் தொண்டுக்காக வாய்த்த தனிப்பெருந் தையலாராவார். இவர்தியாகமே ஒருருவு பெற்றவர். கல்விச் செல்வமும் நாவன்மையும் ஒருங்கே கைவரப் பெற்றவர். கற்றவாறு ஒழுகியவர். இந்திய ஆத்மீகச் செல்வத்தை அள்ளிப் பருகிய பின்னர் தெள்ளிய ஆங்கில மொழியில் தெளிவுற எழுதி உலகுக்கு வழங்கியவர். பாரதத்தைத் தன் சவீகாரத் தாய்நாடாக மதித்தவர். தனது உடல், பொருள், ஆவி யாவும் தனது குருநாதன் அரும்பணிக்காக அர்ப்பணித்தவர். இந்திய சுதந்திரப் போராட்டத்தில் ஈடுபட்ட பெருமக்களுக்கெல்லாம் அறிவுரை வழங்கிய தோடு அவர்தம் ஆற்றல் பெருக அரிய ஊக்கமும் அளித்தவர்.

இத்தகைய பெருந்தகையாளர் ஆயிரத்தெண்ணூற்றறுபத்தேழாம் ஆண்டு அக்டோபர் மாதம் இருபத்தெட்டாம் திகதி அயர்லாந்தின் வடபகுதியில் சாமுவேல் நோபில் என்ற பாதிரியாராகிய நன்மகனுக்கு, முதற் பெண்குழந்தையாக அவர்தரித்தார். பதினெட்டு வயதிலேயே பி. ஏ. பட்டதாரியாக வெளியேறிய இவர் ஆசிரியத் தொழிலை மேற்கொண்டு பொதுத்தொண்டில் ஈடுபட்டார். தொழிலாளர் துன்பந்துடைப்பதில் பேரார்வம் கொண்டார். படிப்பித்தல் முறைகளிலும் புதிய வழிகளைப் புகுத்தி போதனா முறையிலேயே புதிய சாதனைகளை மேற்கொண்டார். இவற்றோடு கூட ஆத்ம சாதனத்துக்கு மக்களை ஆயத்தப்படுத்தும் பணி பெரும் பணி என்றும், ஞானவிளக்கை அடையப்பெற்றால் மட்டுமே, வாழ்வு என்னும் பயணத்தை வெற்றிகரமாக நிறைவேற்றலாம் என்றும் உணர்ந்தார். விவிஸிய நூலில் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளனவற்றின் உண்மையைப் பற்றிய சந்தேகம் மார்கரெட்டுக்கு உண்டாயிற்று. உண்மையைக் கண்டடைய வேண்டும் என்ற அவாவினால் உந்தப்பட்ட மார்கரெட் புத்தசமய நூல்களைப் படித்துக்கொண்டிருக்கும்போது, சுவாமிஜீயைத் தரிசிக்கும் பேறுபெற்றார். இதுபற்றி அவரே கூறுவதாவது, “எனது குருநாதனாக நான் ஏற்றுக்கொண்ட சுவாமி விவேகானந்தருடைய போதனைகளே, உண்மையைத் தேடி அலைந்த எனது உள்ளத்துக்கு உவந்த மருந்தாயமைந்து, ஆறுதலை அளித்தது” (“And now came the turning point for my faith.... The swami I met was no other than swami Vivekananda who afterwards became my Guru and whose teachings have given the relief that my doubting spirit had been longing for so long”) என்பதாம். இதனாலேயே மார்கரெட்

மற்றோரிடத்தில் “எனது அதிஷ்ட வசத்தினாலேயே எனது குருநாதன் போதனையைக் கேட்கும் பாக்கியம் பெற்றேன்” என்கிறார்.

சுவாமிஜீயிடம் பேரன்பும் பெருமதிப்பும் கொண்ட மார்கரெட் “எனது நாட்டுப்பெண்களின் முன்னேற்றத்துக்காக தொண்டுபுரிய முன்வருவீர்களா?” என்ற விவேகானந்தர் அழைப்புக்கு உடனடியாகவே உடன்பட்டு விட்டார். தனது சுற்றமும், மற்றுமுள்ள யாவும் முற்றாகத்தள்ளி வைத்துவிட்டு, உடனடியாகவே இந்தியா வந்துவிட ஆயத்தமானார். ஆனால் சுவாமிஜீயின் கட்டளைப்படி சிறிது காலம் தாமதிக்க நேர்ந்தது. அந்தக்காலத்தில் இந்தியாவில் ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ணரின் சீடர்கள் செய்துவந்த சமுதாய சேவைக்காக, இங்கிலாந்தில் நிதி சேர்த்து அனுப்பினார்.

இந்தியாவுக்கு நேரடியாக வந்து பார்த்து இந்திய மக்களுக்குத் தொண்டு செய்யவேண்டும் என்ற பேரவானினால் உந்தப்பெற்றார். புதியவர் மத்தியில் செல்வது உள்ளத்தில் சிறிது கிலேசத்தை உண்டாக்கினாலும் “யானையின் தந்தங்கள் வெளியே வருகின்றன. பிறகு அவை உள்ளே போவதில்லை. நல்லான் ஒருவன் கொடுத்துள்ள உறுதி மொழியைத் திருப்பி எடுத்துக்கொள்ள மாட்டான். என் உயிர் இருக்கும் பரியந்தம் நான் உனக்கு உதவி செய்வேன்” என்ற குருநாதர் வாக்கு தளராத உறுதியைத் தந்தது.

ஆயிரத்தி எண்ணூற்றித் தொண்ணூற்றொட்டாம் ஆண்டு ஜனவரி இருபத்தொட்டாம் நாள் கல்கத்தா வந்து சேர்ந்தார். சுவாமிஜீயிடம் ஒழுங்காக வேதாந்த பாடம் கற்று, அவரிடமிருந்து ஞானதீக்ஷையும் பெற்றுக்கொண்டார். ‘நிவேதிதை’ என்ற தீக்ஷாநாமமும் கொடுக்கப்பட்டது. சுவாமிஜீயுடன் அமரநாத் யாத்திரையிற் பங்குகொண்ட நிவேதிதை பல புதிய அனுபவங்களைப் பெற்றார். மற்றைய ஐரோப்பியர் மேற்கொள்ளத் துணியாத அருஞ்செயலைத் தனது அன்பு சிஷ்யை மேற்கொண்டது பற்றி சுவாமிஜீ பெருமகிழ் வெய்தினார்.*

சகோதரி நிவேதிதை கல்கத்தா திரும்பிய பின்னர் சாதாரண இந்தியக் குடும்பங்கள் வாழும் எளிய வாழ்க்கையை மேற்கொண்டு தொண்டு புரிதலைக் குறிக்கோளாகக் கொண்டார். அக்காலத்தில் பரவியிருந்த ‘பிளேக்’ நோயாளரைப் பராமரிக்கும் தொண்டில் ஈடுபட்ட ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண சீடர்களான, சந்நியாச சகோதரர்களோடு சேர்ந்து அரும்பணி ஆற்றினார். பெண் கல்விக்கான பாடசாலை ஒன்றை ஆரம்பித்தார். அதை நடத்தும் முறையைப்பற்றிச் சுவாமிஜீயிடம் கேட்ட போது அதை அவர் பிள்ளைகளிடமிருந்தே கற்றுக்கொள்ளலாம் என்ற பதில் வந்தது. அவ்வாறே அவர் கற்றுக்கொள்ளவும் முடிந்தது. சுவாமிஜீயின் கூற்றின் உண்மையையும் அவர் உணர்ந்தார். பாடசாலை நடர்த்தப் போதிய பணம் இல்லாததால் பணம் சேர்க்க அமெரிக்கா செல்லத் தீர்மானித்தார். சுவாமிஜீயும் அமெரிக்க அன்பர்களின் அழைப்புக்குச் செவிசாய்க்க வேண்டியிருந்தது.

இவர்கள் இருவருடன் சுவாமி துரியானந்தரும் ஆயிரத்து எண்ணூற்றித் தொண்ணூற்றொன்பதாம் ஆண்டு ஜூன் மாதம் இங்கிலாந்துக்குப் புறப்பட்டனர். இங்கிலாந்தில் மார்கரெட் வீட்டில் சிலகாலம் தங்கியபின் சுவாமி விவேகானந்தரும், சுவாமி துரியானந்தரும் அமெரிக்கா சென்றனர். சிறிது காலத்துள் நிவேதிதையும் அமெரிக்கா சென்றடைந்தார். அங்கு சகோதரி நிவேதிதை நல்ல ஆத்ம சாதனம் பெற்றார். ஏகாந்தத்தின் மேலாம் கருத்தை தம் குருநாதர்பால் கேட்டறிந்து, அவர் கட்டளைப்படி பதினைந்து நாள் அந்தர்யோக வாழ்வைத் தனி அறையில் நிகழ்த்தினார். வீணைப்பயனை முற்றாக இறைவனுக்கு அர்ப்பணிக்கும் சிறப்பு

அவருக்கு உணர்த்தப்பட்டது. செய்வினையின் சிறப்பைவிட வினைசெய்பவனது மனம் பண்பட அவ்வினை எவ்வளவுக்குப் பயன் பட்டதென்பதே முக்கியம் என்பதையும் நிவேதிதை உணர்ந்து கொண்டார். சுவாமிஜீ அமெரிக்காவிலிருந்து பாரிஸ் நகருக்கு வந்திருந்தபோது, சுவாமிஜீக்கு வந்த கருமம் முடிந்து விட்டதால் வாழ்க்கையில் களைப்படைய, மனநிலையிலும் சிறிது மாற்ற முண்டாயிற்று. இதை நிவேதிதை சரியாகப் புரிந்து கொள்ளாததால் சுவாமிஜீ தன்னை அலட்சியம் பண்ணுகிறாரோ என்று மனதில் சிறிது வருத்தம் அடைந்தார். ஆனால் சுவாமிஜீயை நேரில் தரிசித்துப் பேசியபின் சமாதானம் பெற்றனர். அதன்பின் சுவாமிஜீயின் வாழ்த்து அன்பு சிஷ்யைக்கு கிடைக்கலாயிற்று. “தாயின் உள்ளம், வீரனது உறுதி, தென்றலின் இனிமை, தேவாலயங்களில் ஓயாது திகழ்கின்ற இன்னருள், ஆற்றல் ஆகிய இவையாவும், முன்னூலைய மனிதன் கணவிலும் கண்டிராத இவையாவிலும் மேம்பட்ட பண்புகள் பலவும் உனக்கு உரியனவாகுக. இந்தியாவின் சக்திக்குத் தலைவியாகவும், திருத்தொண்டு புரிபவளாகவும், தோழியாகவும் நீ இருப்பாயாக” என்பதே குருநாதன் வழங்கிய ஆசியுரை. இதனால் நிவேதிதை புதிய சக்தியையும் மன உறுதியையும் பெற்றார். அமெரிக்காவிலும், இங்கிலாந்திலும் தனது பாடசாலைக்குப் பணம் சேர்த்துக்கொண்டு ஆயிரத்துத்தொளாயிரத்தோராம் ஆண்டு நவம்பர் மாதம் இந்தியா வந்து சேர்ந்தார். பாடசாலை வேலையோடு இந்திய தேசியத் தலைவர்களுக்கு அரிய கருத்துக்களை வழங்குவதில் காலம் கழித்தனர்.

சுவாமி விவேகானந்தரின் மறைவு காலம் கிட்டியதென்பதை சுவாமிஜீ மட்டுமின்றி, நிவேதிதையும் உணர்ந்திருந்தார் குருவின் கருணை சிஷ்யை பால் அளவு கடந்து பெருகியது. நிவேதிதை பேலூர் மடத்துக்குச் சென்று சுவாமிஜீக்குக் குற்றேவல்கள் செய்வதுடன், சுவாமிஜீயிடம் அறிய வேண்டியவைகளையும் கேட்டு அரிந்து கொண்டார். சுவாமிஜீயின் உடல் நலம் படிப்படியாகக் குறைவுற்றது. சகோதரி நிவேதிதை வழக்கம் போல ஆயிரத்துத்தொளாயிரத்திரண்டாம் ஆண்டு ஜூலை மாதம் இரண்டாம் திகதி சுவாமிஜீயைப் பார்க்கச் சென்றிருந்தார். சுவாமிஜீ தான் ஏகாதசி விரதம் அனுஷ்டித்த நாள் அது. ஆனால் சிஷ்யை நிவேதிதைக்கு உணவு பரிமாறினார். ஈற்றில் கிறிஸ்து நாதர் கடைசி முறையாகத் தனது சீடர்களின் கால்களைக் கழுவினது போல, நிவேதிதையின் கைகளைக்கழுவி அதனை ஒரு துணியாற் துடைத்தும் விட்டார். இது நிகழ்ந்த நாலாம் நாட்காலை சுவாமிஜீ பரமபதம் அடைந்த செய்தியை நிவேதிதை அறிந்து அதிர்ச்சியடைந்தார்.

சுவாமிஜீயின் மறைவுக்குப் பின்பும், தனது குருநாதன் பணியையே கருத்தோடு ஆற்றி வந்தார். சுவாமிஜீயிடம் பெற்ற வேதாந்தக் கருத்துக்கள் எல்லாவற்றையும் நூல் வடிவில் வெளியிட்டார். இந்திய சுதந்திரத்தின் அவசியத்தை உணர்ந்த நிவேதிதை விடுதலைப் போராட்டத்திலும் ஈடுபட்டு தேசியத்தலைவர்களுடன் உழைக்க வேண்டியிருந்ததால், ராமகிருஷ்ண மிஷனை விட்டு வெளியேற நேர்ந்தது. இவ்வாறு தொண்டாற்றிய நிவேதிதை ஆயிரத்துத்தொளாயிரத்திப் பதினேராம் ஆண்டு அக்டோபர் மாதம் பதினமூன்றாம் திகதி டார்ஜிலிங் என்ற இடத்தில் பரமபதம் அடைந்தார்.

வாழ்க நிவேதிதை நாமம்! வாழ்க அவர் தம் திருத்தொண்டு!

ஓம் சாந்தி! சாந்தி!! சாந்தி!!!

வித்வான் செல்வி. வ. கணபதிப்பிள்ளை.

நாவிற்ரு ருசியான மிகக்கிறந்த

சுவையான சைவ உணவுகள்

ஆரிய பவான்

இனிப்புப் பலகாரங்கள் காரங்கள்

எம்மிடம் கிடைக்கும்.

ஆடர்களும் உடன் கவனிக்கப்படும்.

ஆரிய பவான்

பறக்கோட்டைப் பகுதியில் என்றும் மறக்க முடியாத

சுவையான சிற்றுண்டிகளுக்குப் புகழ்பெற்ற இடம்

ஆரிய பவான்

79, இரண்டாம் குறுக்குத் தெரு, கொழும்பு. போன்: 2410

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නිවේදිතා සත්‍යාසිතිය

රිච්ඡනාත් තාගෝර් නිවේදිතා සත්‍යාසිතිය ගැන මෙසේ පවසයි. “ඇයට ගෞරව කලියුත්තේ ඇය අප වැනිවූ හෙයින් තොව අපට වඩා උසස් වූ හෙයින්”. මහත්මා ගාන්ධි මෙසේ කියයි. “චිත්‍ර ආගම සඳහා ඇතුළු පැවති උතුරා යන හක්තිය මට හොඳින් පෙනේ.” උත්පත්තියෙන් අඟිරිඡ් ජාතිකයෙකු වූත්, ඉන්දියාවට විදේශිකයෙකු වූත්, නිවේදිතා ඉන්දියාවේ උසස්, පහත්, හාම දෙනාගේ ම හක්තිය සහ ආශ්වාදය ලබා ගත්තේ මෙසේය.

නිවේදිතා ගේ කලින් තම මාහුටි එලිසබත් තෝබල් ය. ඇය 1967 ඔක්තෝබර් මස 28 වෙනිදා අයර්ලන්තයේ උපත ලැබුවාය ඇගේ පියා පල්ලියේ සාමාජිකයෙක් වූ අතර දුප්පතුන්ගේ ඕනෑයෙකු හා දේශකයෙකු වශයෙන් ප්‍රසිද්ධියක් උසුලයි. ඔහු ආගම සේවයක් ලෙස සැලකූ අතර දුප්පත් මිනිසුන්ට සේවය කරමින් ඔහුගේ ජීවිතයේ හොඳ කාලය ගෙවුවේය ආගමික හක්තියත්, මිනිසුන්ට සේවය කිරීම සඳහා පැවති අපරිමිත ආසාවත්, මාහුටිට තම පියාගෙන් උරුම වූවකි ඔහු තරුණ කාලයේදීම එතම් වයස අවුරුදු 34 දීම මියගිය නමුත් ඔහුගේ බලපෑම දුටු තොරතුරු ලැබී තිබේ.

වගස අවුරුදු 17 දී අධ්‍යාපනය සම්පූර්ණ කල ඇය නිමාන ගක්තියක් ඇති වෘත්තීය වශයෙන් ඇගේ අදහස් ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීමට හැකි රැකියාවක් වශයෙන් ඇය සැලකූ ගුරු වෘත්තීයට බැඳුණා ය

ලමාවියේ දී ඇයට ක්‍රිස්තියානි ධර්මය කාවද්දවා තිබිණි. එහෙත් දැන් ඇයට ආගම යනු යම් ධර්මයක් ගැන විශ්වාස කිරීම නොවන බව අවබෝධ වූවාය. එය ඇත්ත වශයෙන්ම දිව්‍යමය සත්‍යයන් සෙවීමය. මෙම කරුණ නිසා ඇය තුළ ක්‍රිස්තියානි ධර්මය ගැන සැක පහල විය. ඒ නිසා ඇය ඇගේ සැක දුරුකර ගැනීම සඳහා වෙනත් ආගම් දෙසට හැරුණි මේ කාලයේදී ඇය බුද්ධ වර්තය කියවීමට යෙදුණිය අවුරුදු 3ක් පමණ ඇය බුදුන් වහන්සේගේ ධර්මය ඉතා හක්තියෙන් කැදුරුවාය එහෙත් එය ඇගේ සැක සම්පූර්ණයෙන් දුරුකර ගැනීමටත්, ඇයට සැනසුම් ලබා දීමටත්, ප්‍රමාණවත් නොවීය. මේ අවසරාවේදී ඇගේ මුළු ජීවිතයම වෙන අතකට යොමු කල සිද්ධියක් හට ගත්තේය. ස්වාමි විවේකානන්ද තම හින්දු යෝගියෙක් ලන්ඩනයට පැමිණියේය.

1893 දී ස්වාමි විවේකානන්ද ආගමික රැස්වීමකට සහභාගි වීම සඳහා විකාගෝ තගරයට ගියේය. රැස්වීම අවසන් වීමෙන් පසු විවේකානන්ද අමෝර්කාවේ ප්‍රදේශ කිහිපයකම දේශන පැවැත්වීය. 1895 දී ඔහු තම ඉංග්‍රීසි මිත්‍රයින් කිහිපදෙනෙකුගේ ආරාධනය පරිදි ලන්ඩනයට ගියේය ඔහු එහිදී දේශන කිහිපයක් පැවැත්වූ අතර කිහිප දවසකින් ඔහු චිත්‍ර යෝගියෙකු වශයෙන් ඉතා ප්‍රසිද්ධ විය ඉසබෙල් මාගසන්

මහත්මිය සහජ දක්ෂතාවයකින් යුත් සමාජයේ සැලකිය යුතු තත්වයක් දැරූ කෙනෙකි. ආය මාගරවගේද හොඳ යෙහෙළියෙකි. ආය ආගම ගැන මාගරව තුළ පැවති උන්ඤුව හොඳින් දැන සිටියාය. දිනක් ආය ස්වාමි විවේකානන්දට තම නිවසට ආරාධනා කොට මාගරව ද එහි කැඳවීය.

මාගරව මෙම කථාවට කැමති වුවත් ආයට මෙම ප්‍රථම කථාව එතරම් කා- වැදුණේ නැත ආය මෙම හමුවීමෙන් පසු ඔහු පැවැත් වූ දේශන වලට සාවධානව ආහුම්කන් දුන්නීය.

විවේකානන්ද අමෙරිකාවට ගොස් වර්ෂයකට පසු පෙරලා පැමිණියේය. මෙවර මාස 8 ක් පමණ හිඤු ධර්මය ගැන උතනදුවක් දැක්වුවන්ට දේශන පවත්වමින් කාලය ගත කලේය.

මේ වන විට මාගරව ඉතා කීවටු අනුගාමිකයෙක් වුවත්, ඔහුගේ හැම අදහසක්ම පිළිගැනීමට ආයට තොහාකි විය. ආය ඔහු සමග වාද කළ නමුත් ඔහුගේ මහඟු අදහස් හා උතුම් ආත්මය ආය ප්‍රිය කලාය. ආය ඔහුට සැලකුවේ වීරවරයෙකුට මෙහි ලෝකයට විනාශය ගෙන දෙන්නේ ආත්මාභීකාමිත්වය, තොසැලකිලිමත්කම හා තණ්හාවය ඔහු මේවා විනාශ කිරීමට සුදුනමින් සිටියේය ඔහුගේ අවිෂ්‍ය වූයේ දෙවියන් ගැන පැහැදීමයි ඔහුගේ ආයුධ වූයේ කරුණාව හා පරාභීකාමිත්වයයි. ඔහු මාග්‍රවට ලියූ ලිපියක මෙසේ සඳහන් කලේය. “මිනිසිට උපන් ඉතාම හොඳ දක්ෂතම අයට වැඩිදෙනාගේ යහපත සඳහා කැපවීමට සිදු වේ. අද ලෝකයට අසීමිත මෙත්‍රියෙන් යුත් බුදුවරු ගණනාවක් අවශ්‍ය ය.

තව දිනක් ඔහු එරට ස්ත්‍රීන් ගැන කතාකලේය. ඔහු මාග්‍රව වෙතට හැරී “මගේ රටේ ස්ත්‍රීන්ගේ දියුණුව උදෙසා යම් කිසි සේවයක් ඔබෙන් ඉටු වෙනවා ආතැයි මම බලාපොරොත්තු වෙමි.

මෙම වචන ආය කෙරෙහි බෙහෙවින් බලපෑවේය. එය ආ මෙනෙක් බලා- පොරොත්තුවෙන් සිටි ආරාධනයයි ආ සිතුවාය ආයට එය පිළිගැනීමට සිදු විය. ජීවිතයේ පෙරලියක් ඇතිකොට ආය ඉන්ද්‍රියාවට යෑමට තීරණය කලාය. එංගලන්තයට හොඳ සේවිකාවක් නැති වූ නමුත් ඒ සමග ඉන්ද්‍රියාවට හොඳම මිතුරියක් ලැබුණි.

1898 ජනවාරි 25 වෙනිදා මාග්‍රව කල්කටාවට පැමිණියාය. මාර්තු 11 වෙනිදා රැස්වීමකදී ස්වාමි විවේකානන්ද ආය හඳුන්වා දුන් අතර ආ ඉතා අතහි කථාවක් පැවැත්වූවාය. මාර්තු 17 වෙනිදා ආයට පූජනීය කෙනෙකු වශයෙන් විශාල බලපෑමක් ඇතිකල සරධාදේවි මාතාව හමු වූවාය. ඉතාම වැදගත් සිද්ධිය වූයේ මාර්තු මස 25 වෙනිදා ආගේ ගුරුවන විවේකානන්ද ආයට නිවේදිතා යන නම නැඹිමයි. මෙම වර්ෂයේ මැද භාගයේ දී ආය ස්වාමි විවේකානන්ද සමග උතුරු ඉන්දියාවේ වන්දනා ගමනක යෙදුනාය. මෙය ඉන්ද්‍රියාව කෙරෙහි ආය තුළ පැවති හක්තිය තම දුරටත් වඩිතය කලේය.

හඟවත් ගීතය ඉගෙනීම නිසා ආය භාවනායෝගී වූ අතර ආය තුළින් අහංකාරය තුරන් වී නිහතමානී ගුණය වඩිතය විය. මේ වන විට ආය සැබවින්ම හක්තීමත් ශ්‍රාවිකාවක් වූ අතර ආය රාමක්‍රිෂ්ණ ධර්මයේ ඇති විෂ්ව මාර්ගය කරා ලඟා වීමට දිරි ගන්කාය. එනම් ආත්මය මුදවා ගැනීම හා ලෝකයට යහපත සැලසීමයි.

දෙවියන් අවබෝධ කර ගැනීමට තම කෙනෙකු වාමි, පවිත්‍ර, ආගමානුකූල ජීවිත-
යක් ගත කළ යුතු අතර සියළු දෙනා කෙරෙහිම දෙවියන් වාසය කරන බැව්
සිතා සියළු දෙනාගේම සුභ සිද්ධිය සඳහා නිහතමානි ලෙස කටයුතු කළ යුතු
බවයි.

1898 දී නිවේදිතා ගැහැණු ලමයින් සඳහා පාසැලක් ආරම්භ කලාය. ඈය
නිතරම තමන් ගැන තොසලකා අනුන්ට උදව් උපකාර කලාය.

1902 දී ස්වාමි විවේකානන්ද අවසන් හුස්ම හෙළි අතර එය නිවේදිතා තුල
ඉන්ද්‍රියාව සඳහා සේවය කිරීමට තිබුණු පරිශ්‍රමය දියුණු කලේය.

නිවේදිතා ඉන්ද්‍රියාව කෙරෙහි තම ආදර හක්කිය දියුණු කලාය. මේ වනතුරු
ඈය පාසැලේ කටයුතු කෙරෙහි තම සම්පූර්ණ සැලකිල්ල යොමු කර තිබිණි. මෙතැන්
පටන් ඈය දේශපාලන නිදහස සඳහා ජාතික ව්‍යාපාරය වැනි දෙයට ආධාර දීමට
නිර්ණය කලාය. ඈය බ්‍රිතාන්‍ය රජය කෙරෙහි බියක් තොදක්වූ අතර හිතේ තිබුණු
අදහස් තොවලහා ප්‍රකාශ කලාය. ඈය ප්‍රසිද්ධි කථා පවත්වා රජය සමඟ සවිචනය
විය. ඈගේ අදහස් හා සිතුවිලි වලට තරුණ පරපුර ඉතා කැමති විය. රටේ තරුණ
පරපුර මෙම දේශ ප්‍රේමී නැතැත්තියට ඉතා ගෞරව කලහ. ඔවුහු ඈගේ අවවාද
වලට හොඳින් සවන් දී ඒවා පිළිපැද්දෝය.

“සුද්ධිය සඳහා අණ ලැබෙන විට කිසි සේත් නිද, තොසිටිය යුතුයි.”

ඈය අධ්‍යාපණය සම්බන්ධයෙන් ප්‍රකාශකළ දේ අද අධ්‍යාපණ ක්‍ෂේත්‍රයට
මහඟු දායාදක් විය. මෙසේ ඈය බොහෝ දෙනෙකුට අධ්‍යාපණ කලාව හා විද්‍යාව
උගන්වා සංස්කෘතික දියුණුවට මහත් රුකුලක් දුන්නීය. වරක් “වන්දේ මාතරා”
යන ගීය ගායනා කිරීම තහනම් කළ විට ඈය එය පාසැලේ වල දිනපතා
ගායනා කරවීමට පටන් ගත්තේය ඈය ඉන්ද්‍රියානුන් තුළ ජාත්‍යන්තරය වසිතය
කලේය.

ඉන්ද්‍රියානු කාන්තාවන් පිබිදී ඉන්ද්‍රියාව ඉතා උසස් තත්වයකට පැමිණීමට
ගැන කථාකර ඈය වෙනෙසට පත් තොවීය ඈය ඉන්ද්‍රියාව කෙරෙහි දැක්වූ ඈලේම
ජාතික චිරවරයන්ගේ සිත තුළට කාවාදුණේය ඈය ගැන පැහැදිණු අය අතර
තාගෝර්, සහ මහත්මා ගාන්ධි සමහරෙකි. ලේඛකාවක් වීමෙන් ඈය තවත් ප්‍රසිද්ධියට
පත් වූවාය.

වරින් වර නිවේදිතා රෝගාතුර වූවාය. දේශගුණය, ඈගේ දුෂ්කර සිරිත්
විරිත් යන සියල්ලටම වඩා ඈගේ භාරදුර කටයුතු ඈගේ සෞඛ්‍යය කෙරෙහි බල
පෑවේය. හතලිස් වියේ දී පමණ ඈය ලෞකික සැප සම්පත් අතහැර දමා තම
වස්තුව තම පාසැලේ දියුණුව සඳහා යෙදීමට භාරකරුවන් වෙත පැවරීය. ඔක්තෝම්බර්
13 ද, ඈය ඩැලිංජ් කම් කුඩා තරයේදී අවසන් හුස්ම හෙලුවාය.

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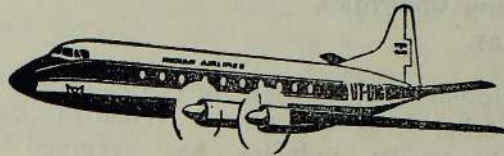
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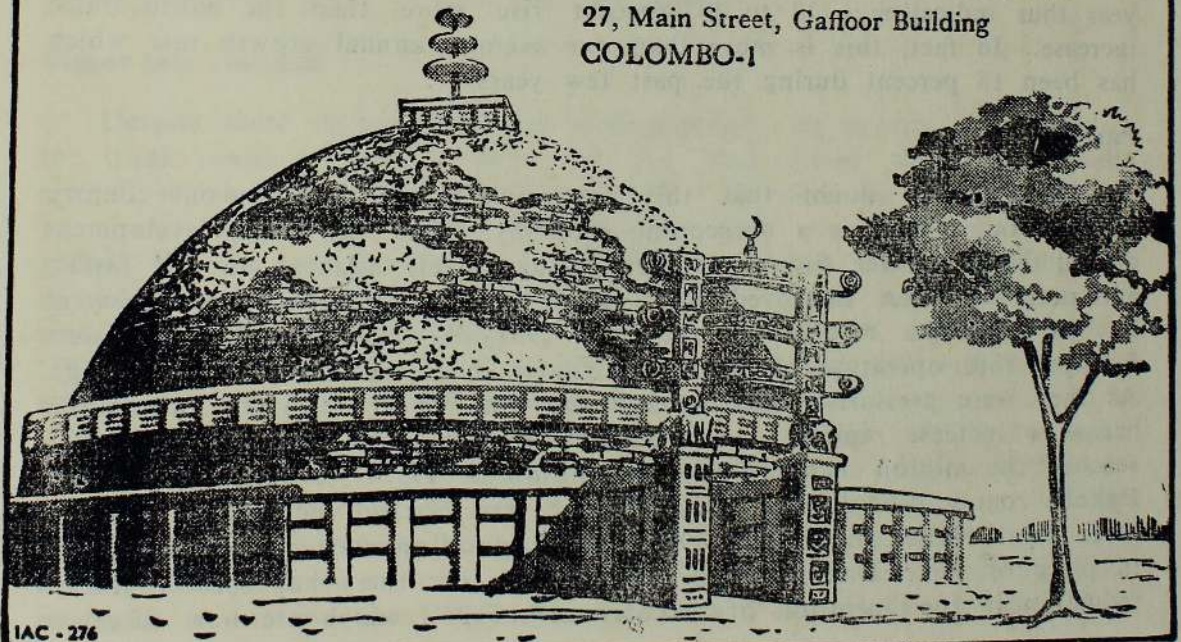
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OUTLOOK FOR INDIAN AIRLINES



by **Bharat Ram, Chairman,
Indian Airlines.**

The development of tourism and air transport are so closely interlinked in our time that it is difficult to visualize one without the other. The fillip which the tourist industry has received all over the world with the operation of jets has been unsurpassed in any other age; quicker and more comfortable transport has induced not only tourists but politicians and business executives to indulge in 'face to face' contacts rather than depend on protracted correspondence.

This change in policy and technique has been a boon to airline operators. According to the statistics released by IATA, world passenger traffic increased by 15.2 percent in 1966. In other words, the world's airlines flew 200 million passengers and 228,000 million passenger kilometres. During the same period, international travellers increased by 10 percent to an estimated 128 million and spent 13,000 million dollars in foreign countries. In our country, traffic has also been continuously on the growth. In 1966—67, Indian Airlines carried 14 lakhs passengers but in the current financial year, the traffic has already risen by 259,000 over the previous year thus indicating a 17 to 18 percent rise more than the world traffic increase. In fact, this is more than our average annual growth rate which has been 15 percent during the past few years.

Past history

There is no doubt that this expansion in air traffic in our country will continue. Ours is a burgeoning economy. The economic development during the first three Five Year Plans progressively affected our air traffic; and more so when improved and faster type of aircraft were employed. Let me take the readers to the year 1957—58, when the Viscounts were first put into operation on the trunk routes in replacement of the Vikings. As they were pressurised and reduced the time factor in flying, air traffic began to increase rapidly. In five years, by 1963, our passenger traffic had reached the million mark from half-a-million in 1957—58. The regional and Dakota routes also showed similar though less marked increase in traffic as three years earlier, in March, 1961, the Corporation started operating F-27's in place of some Dakota routes. From then on, there has been a gradual reduction in the operation of Dakotas with F-27's which are now fifteen in

number. From April 1968, there will be only five Dakotas operating on scheduled Indian Airlines services. By the middle of 1969, the last Dakota is expected to go out of operation when Indian Airlines receives its full complement of nine HS-748s which have been ordered to replace all the Dakotas.

Caravelles popular

Within five years, as against the originally anticipated ten years, the Viscounts became inadequate on the main trunk routes. With the introduction of Boeings on Air-India's services, the people in our country awakened to a new standard of speed and comfort. The replacement of Viscounts on the trunk routes became a necessity and a decision was taken in April, 1963, to introduce the Caravelles.

In February 1964, the Caravelles started operating in India. As its cruising speed was 500 miles per hour — nearly twice as that of the Viscount — distances were covered in less time and with greater comfort. The Caravelles created an impact not only on the trunk routes on which they operated but all over our aerial network. The common man's slogan of 'Delhi Bahut dur hai' became redundant as the capital was now just two or three hours reach from the important commercial cities of our country. The elite of our society found it a boon; politicians, business executives and the professional genteel took to air travel as a matter of routine. In one year, traffic rose by nearly 200,000. Even our own planners were surprised as the increase in traffic belied their expectations. Since then there has been a steady addition to the Caravelle fleet which now numbers seven. The popularity of jet travel is indicated by the increase in traffic to the extent of half-a-million today in less than five years.

Bigger Jets needed

Despite these replacements and modernisation, the density of traffic on the trunk routes is high as shown by the load factor on the Caravelle aircraft which was 79.4 percent in 1966-67. The need for a bigger type of jet aircraft appears imminent. This is not only due to our own traffic growth but the introduction of Jumbo Jets by several international carriers in the near future which will have its repercussions on our domestic operations. The advent of these high capacity jets by 1969-70, whether it is the 250 seater stretched version of the DC-8 or the Boeing 747 with its 360 to 490 seating configuration will undoubtedly aggravate our problem of adequate capacity. The seven Caravelles in operation at present will soon prove unequal to the task. Moreover, there is a limitation to increasing frequencies with a 89 seater jet to cope with growing traffic. For instance, between Bombay and Delhi, where there are already four Caravelle flights in each direction carrying on an average 600 persons per day. As it may not be profitable to increase the frequency on this route, the other possible alter-

native which appears to me is the introduction of a 300 seater air bus jet. This may seem to some a far fetched idea but time alone will show that Indian Airlines may have to introduce these large capacity short-haul aircraft sooner than foreseen. Already France's domestic carrier Air Inter is planning to introduce an air-bus from 1973 and the traffic carried by it is about the same as Indian Airlines — a million and a half per year.

According to our estimate, with the Viscounts continuing in operation upto 1971-72, Indian Airlines will need atleast three (100 plus seater) jets for the trunk routes. By 1972-73, it may need another two. Thus, in another five years, five (100 plus seater) jets would be required for our operations. In making a selection of replacement aircraft, the Corporation will have to take into account the reduction in the multiplicity of types of its fleet and, perhaps, the eventual replacement of the present Caravelles. Aircraft replacement implies medium term and long term planning in any air transport industry.

Regional Routes.

On the regional routes, Indian Airlines, requirements are different. Though the average annual growth is 12 percent (linear), there are some of these routes, for example, Delhi / Jaipur, Bombay / Ahmedabad, Bombay / Jaipur, Agartala / Silchar, where the load factor is high and the growth rate is about 15 to 20 percent per annum (linear). These routes are today partly operated by Viscounts and partly by F-27's. Many of these routes are of tourist interest like Delhi / Agra, Delhi / Jaipur, Delhi / Banaras, and with the passing through Delhi and Calcutta of jumbo jets, we are likely to be confronted with a serious problem by the operation of the 48 seater Viscount. Some of these routes will, therefore, have to be operated by the larger type of short-haul jet referred to earlier.

Then there are other regional routes where the growth rate is less than 10 percent - in some cases as low as five percent. These sectors are being operated partly by F. 27 and partly by Dakota (DC-3). On some of them, since August, 1967, HS-748s have been introduced. With the progressive addition of Hs-748s to our fleet, the Dakotas are correspondingly being reduced. The discontinuance of the Dakotas will be a considerable relief to the finances of the Corporation as they proved to be uneconomic for the past six or seven years. It must be remebered that though the commercial operation of Dakotas could not be justified, these services could not be curtailed in public interest. However, the last Dakota will go out of operation by middle of 1969 when we receive our full complement of HS-748s. The employment of pressurised and faster aircraft on these regional sectors is also likely to attract a larger flow of traffic than hitherto. It will therefore not be surprising if these sectors show a sudden rise in traffic after a couple of years.

Reduction in Fleet Type

Unfortunately, due to geographical and economic conditions prevailing in various parts of our country, different types of aircraft are required for their economic operation. It is therefore inevitable that the Corporation will have to reckon with about four types of aircraft for two or three years more. Thereafter, it should be possible to reduce this multiplicity of aircraft to three thereby enabling a reorganisation of our engineering bases with its consequent increase in efficiency. There will be other concomitant advantages relating to the training of our crew and servicing and overhaul facilities.

Nett Foreign Exchange Earner

The task before the Corporation is one of immensity and urgency. Resources are likely to be available out of its own earnings. Its foreign exchange earning which is expected to rise to Rs. 6 crores in the current financial year representing an increase of Rs. 1.7 crores over last year's would be sufficient to finance such a scheme of replacement. There is every reason to believe that our foreign exchange earning will keep growing with the influx of tourists in our country and world air traffic. But these funds are at the disposal of Government and it is hoped that the highest priority will be accorded to the Indian Airlines' foreign exchange requirements for its fleet augmentation.

But provision of up-to-date additions and replacement to its fleet is only one of the aspects of Indian Airlines objective of providing an efficient service to the people. There are other problems which cannot be ignored, like the introduction of computerisation and electronic system of reservations, training of staff, provision of a quicker turnover and better ground handling facilities which are necessary for any airline and more so for a carrier which has a monopoly in air transport. Systematic endeavours are being made in every direction, and I am confident that the passengers will soon see an over-all improvement in all our services.

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TOUR PROGRAMME

Wednesday, April 17,	1968:	Arrival from Madras at 10 45 a. m.
Thursday	„ 18	„ Lecture at the Ramakrishna Mission Hall, Colombo. at 6.30 p. m.
Friday	„ 19	„ Lecture at the New Arts Theatre, University, Colombo. at 5.30 p. m.
Saturday	„ 20	„ Lecture at the Vivekananda Society, Colombo at 6,00 p.m.
Sunday	„ 21	„ Leave for Batticaloa Via Amparai. Function at Karativu Girls' Orphanage. at 3 15 p.m.
Monday	„ 22	„ Lecture in the evening at Town Hall, Batticaloa, Leave Batticaloa to Trincomalee.
Tuesday	„ 23	„ Lecture in the evening at Trincomalee Hindu College and visiting places of interest.
Wednesday	„ 24	„ Leave Trincomalee early morning for Anuradhapura and take Yal Devi for Jaffna at 9.30 a.m. Evening : Lecture in Jaffna.
Thursday	„ 25	„ In Jaffna : Lectures and sight seeing,
Friday	„ 26	„ In Jaffna : „ „ „ „
Saturday	„ 27	„ Leave for Anuradhapura by 6 00 a.m. train Visiting places of interest and Lecture in the evening.
Sunday	„ 28	„ Leave Anuradhapura for Kandy in the morning: Visiting places of interest and Lecture in the evening. Ballroom Hall, Queens Hotel Kandy. Night at Kandy.
Monday	„ 29	„ Leave Kandy for Kataragama via Nuwara Eliya, Sita Eliya.
Tuesday	„ 30	„ Leave Kataragama after lunch : Night in Colombo.

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