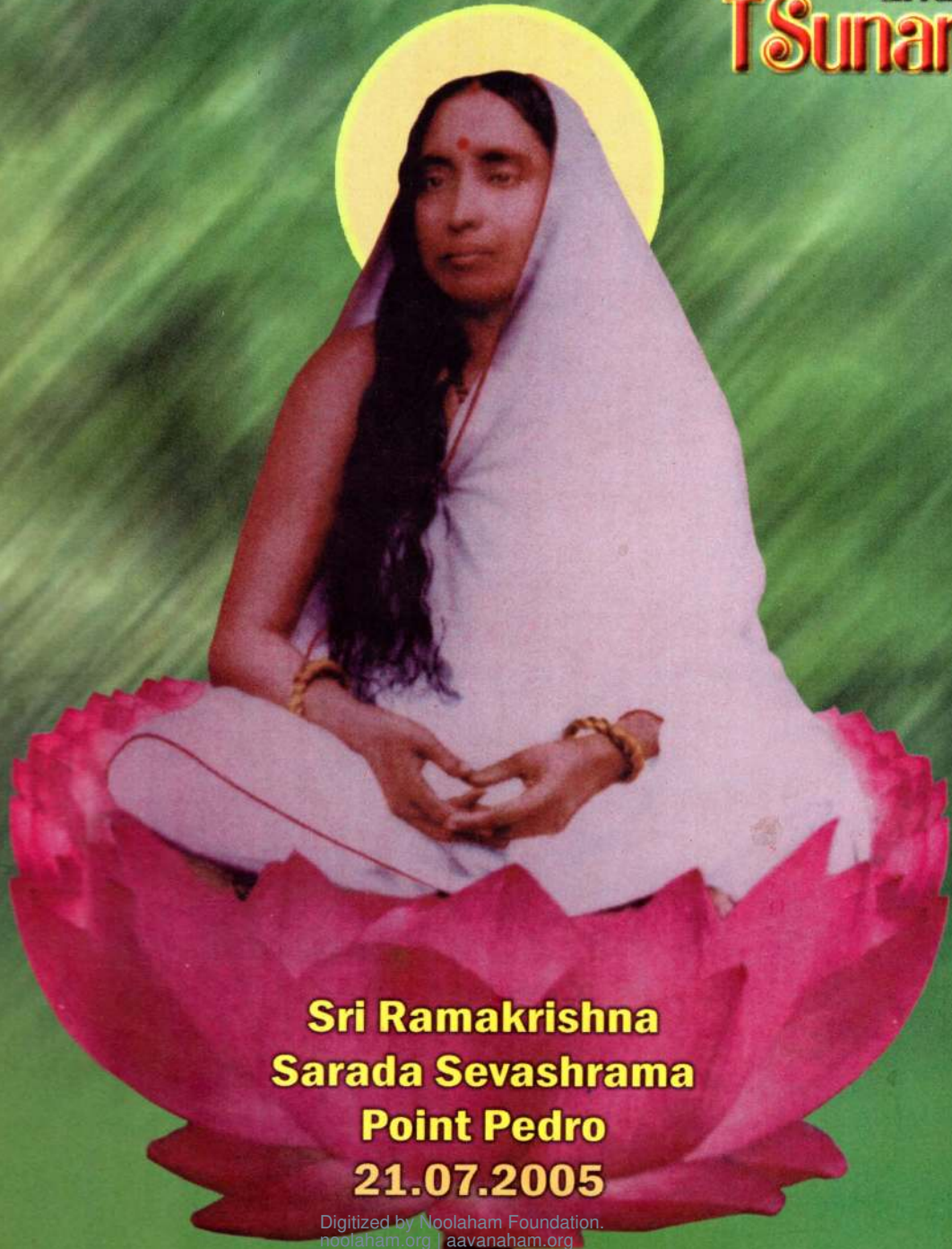


Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and TSunami



**Sri Ramakrishna
Sarada Sevashrama
Point Pedro
21.07.2005**



Vireswarananda
7-1-79

The souvenir is dedicated at the
Holy Feet of His Holiness
Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj

*New President of the
Ramakrishna Order*



Most Revered Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj
14th President - Ramakrishna Math & Mission

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RAMAKRISHNA MATH
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11th July, 2005

Dear Chidrupananda,

I am happy to receive your letter and I am glad to know that you are going to publish a Souvenir on "Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Tsunami."

"Sarada Devi was the very personification of purity, holiness, and love which is the meaning of the ideal of motherhood at its highest and best. She herself declared that Sri Ramakrishna left her on earth to reveal the Motherhood of God, which prominently indicates God's function of *anugraham* and giving *abhayam* to those who seek God in absolute trust and self-surrender. Out of the abundance of her heart Sarada Devi gave of her love to one and all without any distinction as regards to caste, race or nationality and by so doing, justified the endearing epithet of 'the Holy Mother'. She is the perennial spring to nourish the life of woman in her varied roles."

I pray to the Holy Mother so that the publication of the Souvenir succeed in beseeching Holy Mother's all-embracing grace for the manifestation of more and more of divinity and perfection in one and all 'for the good of many and for the happiness of many.' I convey my love and blessings to all concerned.

Yours affectionately,

Swami Gahanananda

(Swami Gahanananda)
President
Ramakrishna Math and
Ramakrishna Mission

To
Swami Chidrupananda,
Sri R.K. Sarada Sevashrama
Point Pedro
Sri Lanka

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON

THE HOLY MOTHER

IF ANYONE MENTIONED SWAMI VIVEKANANDA to the Mother, she would say, "Why do you drag Naren into everything? He is in a class apart." The Swami regarded Holy Mother as Divinity Itself. Once he remarked at the Belur Math, "Mother is the incarnation of Bagala in the guise of Saraswati.¹ Outwardly she is all peace, but inwardly she is the destroyer of the power of evil". After his return from the West, when ever he visited her, he purified himself with Ganges water, because he felt he had lost some of his spirituality by associating with all kinds of people there. Often he would be overwhelmed as he reached the door of the Mother's house and could move no further. On one of these occasions the Mother herself brought him in, holding him by the hand. In the course of a letter he wrote from America to a brother disciple, the Swami said, "You have not yet realized how precious Mother is. People will not understand her now, but they will, gradually. Brother, there will be no salvation of the world without the help of the Divine Power....² Why is it that our country is the weakest and most backward of all countries? Because Shakti is held in dishonour here³. Mother has been born to revive this wonderful Shakti here.... Without the grace of Shakti nothing will be accomplished.... What do I find in America and Europe? The worship of Shakti, the worship of Power. Yet they worship Her ignorantly, through sense gratification. Imagine then what a lot of good they will achieve when they worship Her with purity, looking upon Her as their Mother! I am coming to understand things every day; my insight is opening out more and more... Let Ramakrishna disappear, that does not frighten me. But it will be a calamity if people forget Mother.... Don't be angry with me. None of you has understood Mother. Her grace upon me is one hundred thousand times greater than that of the Master... About Mother I am a little fanatic. I can do anything if she gives the order. I shall give a sigh of relief when you purchase a piece of land and install this living Durga there.... Brother, when I think of Mother, I say to myself: "Who is this Ramakrishna?" I say this because of my fanaticism. Whether Ramakrishna was God or man-you may say whatever you like. But, brother, shame upon him who is not devoted to Mother!⁴"

1. *Bagala represents one of the terrific aspects of the Divine Power, as the slayer of a fierce demon, and Saraswati represents Wisdom.*
2. *Swami Vivekananda regarded all women as manifestations of Shakti, or the Divine Power, and Holy Mother as Her special manifestation.*
3. *Referring to the degraded condition of Indian womanhood.*
4. *Culled from the Holy Mother by Swami Nikhilananda, 1963.*

REMINISCENCES OF MOTHER

SWAMI SARADANANDA

MOTHER'S FIRST VISION OF MOTHER KALI was in a wayside in near Tarakeswar, on her way to Dakshineswar from Jayrambati.

When mother resided at Dakshineswar, Master used to consult her on various matters from time to time. Mother's usual reply was, "I have nothing to say at the moment. I shall tell you later, after I have a clear understanding of the matter". Master used to counter, "No, tell me now. Who is there for you to consult with that you will tell me after you have done so?" Still Mother used to persist, "Later I shall tell you when I have a clear understanding of it." Back at Nahabat, she used to beseech Mother Kali piteously, "Mother, tell me what I should say" This invariably resulted in a clear view of the matter presenting itself to her, which she would then communicate to the Master.

At Cossipore, when the Master's condition was highly critical, one day Mother was lying down in a miserable state of mind when all at once she saw that dark woman [Mother Kali] with flowing tresses come and sit down beside her. Mother exclaimed, "Oh, it's you!" Mother Kali replied, "Yes, I have come from Dakshineswar". After they had conversed for some time, Mother noticed that the dark woman's neck was bent sideways. Mother asked, "Why are your neck and head bent sideways?" Mother Kali replied, "Because of the sore in the throat". "How strange!" Mother wondered, "He (the Master) has a sore in his throat, and you also have one?" "Yes", said Mother Kali. In this way She [Mother Kali] brought it home to Mother that She and Master were one and the same.

One day when Mother was feeding the master at Cossipore, in the course of conversation Master asked her, "Have you ever played *ashta-kashte*?"¹ Mother said she had not. Master continued, "When playing the game if two pieces are paired, no piece can be struck off. Similarly, one should pair oneself with one's *Ishta*, then there is nothing to fear. Else, one loses a piece on the point of winning it. If you lead a life linked to your *Ishta*, there is no fear of perdition...."²

1. *A rural indoor game played with cowries.*

2. *Swami Saradananda had obtained this material relating to Mother from Yogin-ma. Source: Ramakrishna Saradamrita [Bengali], Swami Nirlepananda, Karuna Prakashani, Kolkata, 1968, pp.22-23. Courtesy: Manabendra Mukhopadhyay, Sarat Chatterjee Road, Howrah - 711103.*

Courtesy:
Reminiscences of SriSarathadevi

— 02 —

SARADA DEVI: THE CROWNING GLORY OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD

-Swami Ranganathananda-

Woman as Wife to Grow into Woman as Mother

India's spiritual heritage gently whispers to every woman, as also to every man, to utilise the marriage context to achieve the increasing liberation of the tremendous value of the Atman, the sexless Self, behind man and woman. Vedanta upholds this as the goal and direction of social evolution, or of evolution at the human stage.

So far as woman is concerned, this is achieved by the wife growing into the mother, not merely, or even necessarily, biologically, but certainly spiritually. Motherhood is a spiritual transformation of wifehood. If woman as wife is socially significant, woman as mother is spiritually glorious. If the spiritual is no more than coterminous with the biological, then woman as mother of a little genetic group would have remained the highest possible moral and spiritual development for her sex. But Vedanta sees the spiritual as transcending the merely genetic and the biological, and even the social, and finding expression in an ideal of

motherhood, where love and service break the barriers of family, race, and creed, and assume a universal aspect. It is this spiritual elevation in self transcendence that enables woman, even as wife, to function effectively as a citizen of a free socio-political order, embracing with her mother - heart the millions of its body - politic. If this is called finding life-larger and fuller life-then the path to it lies through self - development by self - effacement. That is what a woman does when she grows from wifehood to motherhood. In this, no human value is neglected or negated, but there is only a growth from a smaller to a larger personality and a progressive manifestation of the inherent divinity.

The Glory of Mother in Indian Culture

This is the Vedantic criterion of progress of an individual or a culture. This motherhood ideal is the highest reach of womanhood according to Indian culture. This symbol of self - effacing love and service, namely, the mother, has revealed to the Hindu mind the presence of a divine reality within, over and above the limited personality of the visible

mother. To the Hindu, even God is revealed as the Mother of all creation. A people and a philosophy that has educated itself to look upon God as Mother, has also learnt to invest its view of woman with the utmost tenderness and reverence. The very hoary culture of the Hindu trains him/her to look upon all women, nay, to look upon the female of all species, as forms of the one Divine Mother.

What constitutes this abundant glory in the mother is her self-effacing love and compassion which, to the Hindu, is the mark of high spirituality and true culture. And men in general, and women in particular, have the privilege to attain to this high spirituality and true culture by growing beyond the limitations of mere sex, even while living and functioning physically at that level in all dignity and freedom. It is this vision that India has always held up before all men and women, and which her women, more than her men, have passionately struggled to realize in their lives.

Indian ideal of Womanhood: Ancient and Modern

The ideals of purity, unselfishness, simplicity and modesty, exemplified in great women like Sita, Savitri, and Damayanti, have been pursued by the India women, drawn by that vision of innate and inalienable divinity of man and woman: millennia of

historic experience have made these the warp and woof of their being. And modern Indian woman cannot jump out of this age old inheritance of theirs.

Women in old India were nourished on the ideals of Sita, Savitri and Damayanti. But women in modern India, even while responding to these ideals and examples, are in search of a newer inspiration to sustain them in the wider opportunities for self-expression offered by the modern age, compared to their sisters of previous ages. Modern Indian women are in search of an adaptation of the ancient spiritual values to the vastly expanded modern conditions and opportunities of life and work. And it is this authentic sanction that the modern Indian women receive from Sri Ramakrishan, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.

The Mesmerism of Sarada Devi's Personality

What is the source of the mesmerism of this name and personality? Even a slight acquaintance with her life will make us realize that this mesmerism does not proceed from any aspects of her personality which the modern world recognizes as significant in women. To all outward appearances, the Holy Mother was just ordinary, or even less than ordinary: Rustic in simplicity, almost unlettered, and shy and modest, she was far removed from the educated,

self-conscious, active type of modern women. And yet, her life finds powerful responsive echoes from the hearts of all men and women, rustic and modern alike. It is evident that she has captured, in her life and being, the fundamental value which lies at the back of the womanliness of woman and which transcends all distinctions based on mere sex and the attractions thereof. This fact alone explains her universal appeal, representing, as she does, not a mere national or racial type, but the fulfilment of woman as woman, the realization, in flesh and blood, of the Eternal Feminine.

Sarada Devi: Her Spiritual Eminence

Sri Ramakrishna himself recognized the spiritual eminence of Sri Sarada Devi. Unlike the general run of spiritual aspirants who forsake all worldly connections on entering the religious life, for which there is the sanction of religious law and custom behind them, Sri Ramakrishna welcomed Sarada Devi to his side when she, coming of age, came to claim her rights over him. It is a deeply moving episode in their lives, which helps to reveal the stuff of both. Sri Ramakrishna was in Dakshineswar, passing through storms of spiritual moods and experiences; except on the two occasions of his brief visits to his native village, he had not met his wedded wife these twelve long years and seemed apparently to have forgotten her.

Sarada Devi, now about eighteen, entered his room late at night after an arduous journey from her native village in the company of her father. She had her fears in her heart proceeding from the gossip she had heard in her village about the deranged condition of her husband's mind, and her own knowledge of his utter indifference to worldly concerns. But Sri Ramakrishna, though a bit surprised at her sudden arrival, welcomed her very cordially, and accommodated her in his own room for facility of medical attention, and arranged for the medical care of her body which had been ravaged by illness and fatigue during the long trek. She found in him the same loving divine husband whom she had known during his previous visits to the village. When she had settled down, Sri Ramakrishna one day addressed her thus:

'As for me, the Divine Mother has shown me that she resides in every woman, and so I have learned to look upon every woman as Mother. That is the one idea I can have about you; but if you wish to drag me into the world, as I have been married to you, I am at your service'

To this challenging question of her divine husband, Sarada Devi gave a straight forward answer.

'Why should I desire to drag your mind down to the worldly plane? I have

come only to help you in your chosen path. I desire only to live with you and serve you and to learn of you'.

This reply of his pure and spotless wife pleased Sri Ramakrishna immensely and he experienced a great accession of spiritual strength. His mission, in the world, of calling humanity back to an awareness of its inborn divine nature is not to be a lonely struggle; he recognized in Sarada Devi a companion in this noble mission; within a year of her arrival, he verified the truth of this exalted view of his wife through the Shodasi puja in 1872. From now on till the end of his life, for full fourteen years, Sarada Devi served the person of Sri Ramakrishna and the large number of disciples and devotees visiting him, with a rare devotion and self-effacement unrivalled in human history. It was also the period of her intense spiritual education under her divine husband. She has referred to this period as a continuous experience of intense bliss. Months together they lived in the same room and slept in the same bed, with no trace of carnal thought in the mind of either. Their minds constantly soared in region of divine awareness and bliss each stood transfigured to the other; and both became instruments for the working out of the divine will. The immense store of spiritual energy divine shakti - which was generated by the sadhanas of Sri

Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi contains the promise of the spiritual evolution of modern humanity which keenly feels its own tragic spiritual poverty in the midst of abundant material wealth.

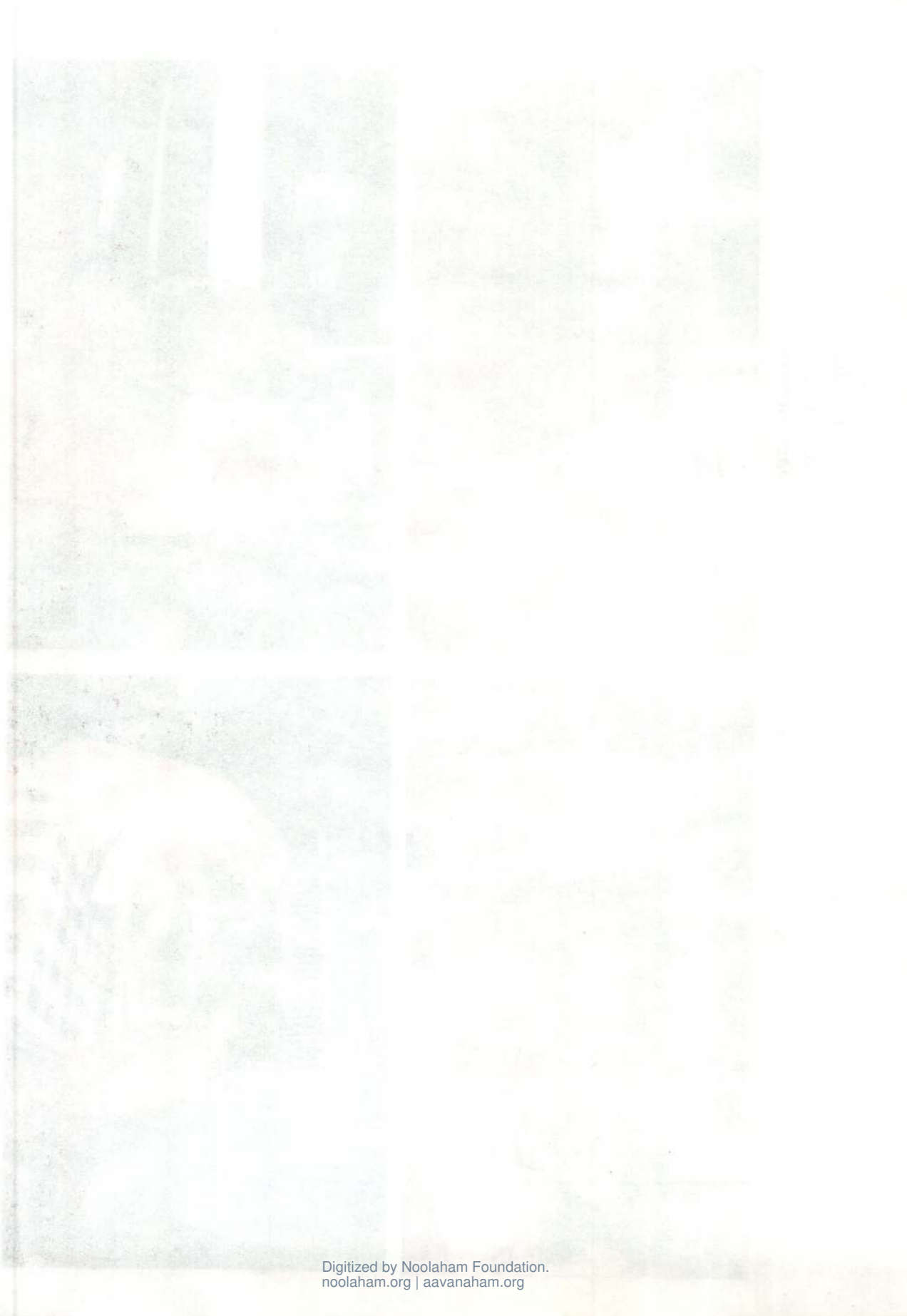
Her Role as Spiritual Teacher

Sri Ramakrishna passed away in 1886. Sarada Devi was thirty-three at the time. Having lived in a non-physical plane of relationship with her husband, she did not experience the feeling of widowhood at his death. To her he continued to be a living reality to the end of her days. And for the next thirty-four years, she lived a life, complex in its roles and varied in its riches, and withal silent and sweet, that gained for her the endearing title of 'Sri Ma', the Holy Mother' by which she is known ever since.

The Holy Mother was called upon to be the spiritual guide of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, constituted initially of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda and to be the guru of and ever-increasing circle of spiritually hungry men and women. Her spiritual eminence and the divine power of her personality enabled her to fulfil this mighty role with ease and naturalness. But it was in the role of a household woman in the midst of her own family circle consisting of her worldly-minded brothers, sisters-in-law, and their

**Her Excellency Mrs. Nirupama Menon Rao -
High Commissioner for India visited Holy Mother's Ashrama, on 11.01.2005.
She handed over 19 tons of relief items for Tsunami Victims.**





children, that the Holy Mother manifested a unique facet of her character and personality. It is this aspect of her personality that provides a shining example of practical spirituality capable of inspiring all men and women. The nun shone through the household both through the heart of an all-loving mother. Far from shunning a distracting world, she embraced it and enfolded it in her love. And in the midst of a thousand distractions, she preserved the naturalness and peace of her personality.

Divine Motherhood in Sarada Devi

Verification is the proof of a theory or a claim. The test of life alone proves the genuineness of a moral virtue or a spiritual value; virtues are tested more in ill-fortune than in good fortune. To maintain poise and grace in good weather is easy enough; but it is only bad weather that tests their genuineness. The calmness, poise, and grace, and the spirit of unobstructed love and self-effacing service, which Sarada Devi expressed in her day-to-day life in the context of a highly distracting environment of sheer worldliness, possession of this power by a man or a woman makes him or her pure and holy. The expression of this power in life is love. Sarada Devi was the very personification of this purity, holiness,

and love which is the meaning of the ideal of motherhood at its highest and best. This power lies embedded in the heart of every woman. An ordinary woman captures in her life only a fraction of this ideal by which she shines in her loving kindness and holiness. A merely biological function becomes elevated through the infilling of a spiritual value. But this spiritual value shone in its fullness, even outside the biological context, in the personality of the Holy Mother, demonstrating thereby the ideal in its pure form. Out of the abundance of the heart she gave of her love to one and all without any distinction and, by so doing, justified the endearing epithet of 'the Holy Mother.'

Herself out of the ordinary in all basic values of character and personality, but hiding these under the mantle of the simple and the ordinary in social and physical make-up, the Holy Mother eludes the grasp of ordinary minds, but reveals her true form to all seekers of basic values. Did not Sri Ramakrishna say of her: 'She is Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom, come to give spiritual knowledge to humanity'. And had she not also said of herself: 'Sri Ramakrishna has left me to manifest the ideal of divine Motherhood.'

*Courtesy:
The Vedanta Kesari*

RIPPLES IN STILLNESS

Editorial

Dearest Mother-I wish we could send you a wonderful hymn, or a prayer, But somehow even that would seem too loud, too full of noise!... We should be very still and quiet before you -except indeed for a little fun! Surely the wonderful things of God are all quiet-stealing unnoticed into our lives-the air and the sunlight and the sweetness of the gardens and of the Ganges, these are the silent things that are like you' That was part of Sister Nivedita's poetic letter to Holy Mother. Yes, trying to write on Holy Mother is like polluting silence with prattle and drowning sense into sound. Though eventful, her life needs more to be admired and adored with a view to emulation rather than made noise about. Yet, oblivious of creating ripples in the 'long stillness of prayer' we venture into dwelling on some of Mother's noble and inspiring traits. Two reasons support our endeavour: First, nothing can be more purifying than a mental dip into her pure life; second, a mother doesn't mind her child's prattle-not Holy Mother in any case.

Purity Born of Divinity

The first thing that strikes a devotee of Mother is her exceptional

purity of mind. If Sri Ramakrishna was an embodiment of burning renunciation and purity, her greatness was no less. Her pure mind saw nothing impure or imperfect. Physical purity is of easy accomplishment. Mental purity needs mind discipline. One is pure in proportion to the reduction of one's identification with the body and mind and increase in identification with one's divine nature, the Atman. The purest mind ceases to be mind, but becomes one with the Atman, says Sri Ramakrishna. Holy Mother was pure to the marrow. Her character was pure, her life was pure -she was purity itself (pavitrata Svarupini), says Swami Abhedananda. Sri Ramakrishna's alluded to parts of the ocean that remain frozen because of cold. Even so, said he, God's forms are nothing but the formless Brahman congealed by the cooling influence of bhakti. Even as ice is water all through, a divine personality like Mother was purity all over-from core to periphery.

Her outer cloak was too thin and fragile to hide her pure and divine nature. She rarely revealed her true nature to anyone, but it shone forth through some occasional casual remarks of hers. The

cook in her Jayrambati house once insisted on bathing at nine in the evening since she had touched a dog. Mother discouraged a cold-water bath at that late hour and asked her to wash her hands and feet and change her cloth. When the cook was not satisfied, Mother suggested sprinkling and drinking a few drops of Ganga water. When that too failed to satisfy the cook, Mother said, 'Then touch me'!

An aspirant experiences her purifying influence only when he tries to cast his life in the mould of Ramakrishna-Sarada Devi. In other words, only a struggle for purity in our own lives can help us appreciate a little of Mother's purity and stand on adoration and supplication before her benign form. The impure mind steadfastly pulls us out every time we 'stray' towards divinity. Every time the mind is one up in us we remember, 'I too am Mother's son; she will strengthen me and protect me'

Holy Mother is not just another deity to be worshipped with flowers and offerings. Only moulding ourselves on that pure life can make us her true children. Though she is the Mother of the good and the wicked, her true child will struggle to belong to the first class and try to press her for his divine inheritance from her.

Mother for Eternity

Though Holy Mother had no children born of the flesh, she was the Mother of all humans and animals alike. We have had earthly mothers in innumerable births, but here is a Mother who stands by us all through our evolution. 'With the earthly mother there is umbilical separation, but not with her. Swami Virajananda, one of her disciples, calls her Chirakaler Ma, Mother for Eternity, implying a mother who transcends time, a mother with a spiritual dimension. We are all sparks of divinity issued from that Mother fire and unto her we will return. she keeps attracting us to her, ever reminding us of our own burning power and divine heritage.

Whenever you are in distress, remember you have a mother' - reflecting on these words of Mother can lift us up from the 'misery-go-round' of this world and remind us that life has a higher dimension, a greater goal than a mere struggle for existence. And she patiently waits for us to be done with our play with earthly dolls and claim our spiritual inheritance from her. Sri Ramakrishna did not come to eat rasagollas, she said. Nor did she. She could accept the sins of Poison-like characters whom pure souls like Swamis Brahmananda and Premananda could not accept. Perhaps, those who strayed received more of her unstinting grace than others.

She could see virtue even in those whom society considered bad. One day a Muslim, known to be a bandit, offered her some bananas and said, 'Mother I have brought these for the Master; will you accept them?' Of course, I will' replied Holy Mother. Give them to me. You have brought them for the Master. I shall certainly take them.' The man was then rewarded with some sweets. A woman devotee who was present was surprised and said to Mother, 'We know he is a thief. How can you offer his things to the master?' After he had left Holy Mother scolded the woman and said, 'I know who is good and who is bad.' Her remark that she is the Mother of the wicked as well as the Mother of the good kindles hope in all of us.

A Unique Relationship

'A husband is not loved for the sake of the husband, but for the sake of the Atman. A wife is not loved for the sake of the wife, but for the sake of the Atman..... Everything in this world is not loved for its own sake, but for the sake of the Atman, 'says the Brihadarankaya Upanishad. Mother's life with Sri Ramakrishna validated this mantra. He saw in her, in his mother and in every woman the Divine Mother Bhavatarini. Holy Mother in turn looked upon him as Mother kali herself, as evident from her reaction to his passing away. When a disciple asked her later how she looked

upon Sri Ramakrishna, she said he was to her purna-brahma-sanatana, the absolute, eternal Brahman. When the disciple said that to every wife her husband is supposed to be God, she said that Sri Ramakrishna was Brahman to her both as a husband and also in a general way.

When Sri Ramakrishna asked her if she had come to drag him down to the path of samsara, spontaneously came her unique reply: 'No why on earth should I drag you down to the path of samsara? I am here to help you in your chosen path.' The significance of this unique reply becomes apparent only on deep reflection. Swami Budhananda's reflection captures some of her glory:

Here is a glimpse of the real Sarada. It is no borrowed light. It is the light itself. That primal sin of Eve was, as it were, thus requited by one of her sex after so many centuries. The prestige which Sri Saradamani conferred on the entire womanhood by this act of supreme renunciation has yet to be understood and assumed by the womenfolk of the world. This was not only a great event the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi; correctly understood It is in one of the greatest events in human history. This was virtually opening the floodgates of liberation for the millions. Sri Ramakrishna could not have been the 'kapala-mochana' that he is unless. Sri Saradamani had been the Holy Mother

that she is. Think, for instance, what would have happened if Sri Ramakrishna were to turn an ordinary householder! There was no law under the sun which could have barred Sri Sarada from claiming her right according to dharma. But how very easily she transcended the urge of becoming the mother of a few, for was she not the Mother of all? Thus in one sense Sri Ramakrishna was gift of Sri Sarada to humanity. (Emphasis added)

Again, she admitted to a disciple that she looked upon Sri Ramakrishna as her son. This was evident from the way she cared for the Master by the devoted service to him (and his disciples) at Dakshineswar when he was alive, and the way she tended to his presence in the picture after his passing away.

Yet she never considered herself as some one having a special claim on Sri Ramakrishna, but rather looked upon herself as one of those who were graciously granted shelter by him. In later days, none of the women devotees around her felt that Mother was closer to the Master or had a special claim on him. They felt that Mother was also one like them, having taken refuge in the Master. Here is an eyewitness account by sister Devamata:

She lived as they the few women disciples whom always lived with her [did, performing the same homely tasks, making no effort to

differentiate herself from others save by greater modesty, greater gentleness and humility... By her outward manner she was the most obscure of all the household, yet beneath the veil of simplicity which enveloped her, there was a lofty majesty of bearing which caught the heart and bowed it in prayerful homage at her feet. The human covering was too thin to hide the radiance of divine consciousness beneath.

An elderly woman devotee visited Mother during her last illness and started praising her: 'You are Jagadamba (the Mother of the Universe)' Mother rebuked her sharply: Off from here! "Jagadamba"! I have been saved just because he graciously granted me refuge at his feet. "You are Jagadamba, you are this, you are that" get away from here.'

In Dakshineswar there were occasions when she could not meet the Master even once in two months despite her living just some sixty feet from his room. But never was she on that account jealous of others. On the contrary, she would tell herself, 'O mind, what austerity have you performed to merit his darshan every day?' Sri Ramakrishna was everything for her. Her being was so full of Sri Ramakrishna that Swami Abhedananda addressed her as

'Ramakrishan-gata-prana. After initiating her disciples, she would point to Sri Ramakrishna as the real guru. Says Swami Budhananda, 'If the Holy Mother holds aloft and represents any ideal, it is the ideal of God-centred, Godcircumferenced, God-soaked life, which is verily the Ramakrishna ideal.'¹¹

Forbearance Unsurpassed

A fraction of the adversities that Holy Mother faced is enough to unnerve the most stoic of human beings. A study of her life makes us humble. We will no more make a song about how bravely we faced a situation or curse our fate if the situations are beyond our endurance limit. Holy Mother's putting up with the adversities around her was not mere stoicism. True, there are people in the world who can suffer adversities without a murmur. But without a spiritual anchor, a sense of meaninglessness of and utter disgust with life is sure to lurk behind the veneer of calmness. Holy Mother's calmness differed from this variety. Her mind was ever tuned to the Infinite; she kept it down to a lower level out of compassion, to fulfil her promise of assisting the Master in his mission. 'Is she tortured by the perversities of any about her? The only sign is a strange quiet and intensity that comes upon her; says sister Nivedita. The strange quiet and intensity perhaps implied the withdrawal of her mind from the immediate surroundings to the Infinite. She herself said on

occasions, The vision of God is in the palm of my hand; I can have it whenever I want; In the midst of worldly activities, whenever I desire, I understand with a flash that all this is nothing but a play of Mahamaya;¹²

Her compassion for her tormentors was phenomenal. Once, incensed at Holy Mother, her niece Radhu-no less crazy than her mother-flung a brinjal at her. Mother's back became swollen immediately with the impact. Mother looked at the Master's portrait and prayed to him, O Master, she is senseless; please don't take offense at her misdeed. She took the dust of her own feet and rubbed it on Radhu's head so that Radhu did not have to suffer for her foolish karma.

Her demanding brothers, crazy sister in-law and her daughter, and a niece with washing mania-with their own idiosyncrasies - were veritable thorns in her flesh. Yet she suffered them all, with Radhu as the fulcrum, to keep her ever-soaring mind tied to the earthly plane. why? Out of compassion for souls eager to break their bonds of transmigratory existence. And again, as one who lived a model life, she taught us that it is possible to live what the Bhagavadgita teaches: 'Having come to this transient and miserable world, worship Me'¹³

A Model for karma - Yogins

Holy Mother was an exemplar of her own teaching: 'One must always do some

work. Only through work can one remove the bondage of work. Total detachment comes later. One should not be without work even for a moment. Work helps one to fend off idle thoughts. If one is without work such thoughts rush into one's mind. ¹⁴ Right from childhood, hers was an active life. It was this active life that made her retain her bearings when people in her village murmured about her husband having gone mad in Dakshineswar.

In Dakshineswar she had a busy routine from 3.00am. She cooked untiringly for Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples in that tiny octagonal room in the nahabat, the distance between whose opposite sides measured hardly eight feet. No work was small or insignificant for her. Even inanimate things including the much-cited broom and basket received her respect.

The Gita description of a karma-yogin fitted her admirably. Three important verses come to mind:(1) 'He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, he is wise among men; he is a Yogi, and he has performed all actions'¹⁵ she enjoyed bliss within her as she went about her activities in Dakshineswar. No inconvenience came in the way of her service. That was because the sheet anchor of her activities was love-love for her divine husband and his mission; for had she not promised to assist him?;(2)

'He who is free from attachment and egotism, endowed with fortitude and enthusiasm and unperturbed by success or failure-he is called a sattvic worker' (18.26); (3) 'As the ignorant work, attached to their work, so should the enlightened work, but without attachment in order to guide people on the right path; (3.25)

Her close companion Yogin Ma wondered where was the all-renouncing Sri Ramakrishna and where was Mother steeped in worldly problems. Sri Ramakrishna appeared to her in a vision and showed the corpse of a newborn baby floating on the Ganga. He asked her 'Can the Ganga ever be polluted? know her as such. She is not different from me; Though immersed in activities, she could have a vision of God just like that, as if it was a fruit in her palm. Sister Devamata had basked in her purifying presence. She has this to say about her:

Those who had the rare blessing of living with the Holy Mother learned that religion was a sweet, natural, joyous thing; that purity and holiness were tangible realities; that the odour of sanctity was literally a sweet perfume overlaying and destroying the foulness of material selfishness. Compassion, devotion, God-union were her very nature; one scarcely knew that she possessed them. It was through the soothing benediction of a word or touch that one sensed their presence. ¹⁶

Lived Her Last Teaching

Her prescription for peace has been quoted and discussed ever so many times by ever so many people that one more discussion could appear like a platitude. But she lived her own teaching. She did not look for others' faults. And that holds great hope to all of us with our own burden of faults. A seemingly trivial incident from her life validates a wonderful expression about her: 'A unique feature of her maternal love was its constitutional disinclination to notice the faults of others.'¹⁷

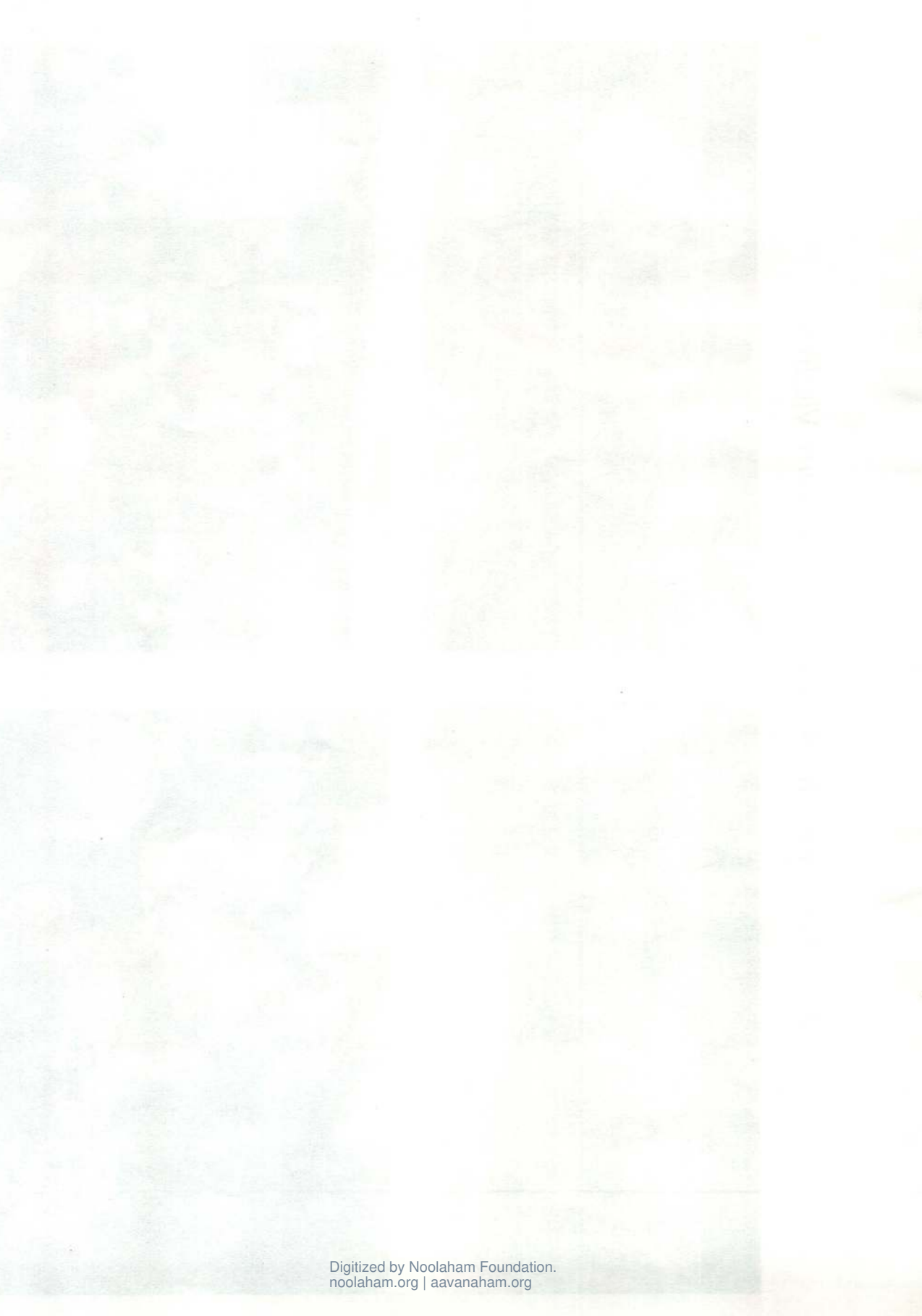
A lady disciple of hers placed in her hands a painting of Sri Krishna that she had done on a cloth, and did pranam to her. 'Did you do this, my child?' asked Mother. 'Yes', replied the devotee. 'Well done! what a beautiful expression on the face!' Mother showed the painting to those around and said, 'Nicely done. What do you say?' Everyone agreed with her. Mother touched the painting to her head, kept it aside and talked to the devotee about her welfare. She then gave her some prasad. Golap Ma chanced to come there and Mother told her, 'See, what a nice painting' Pointing to the devotee, Mother said, 'She has done it.' Golap Ma replied, 'Everything is all right, but the left hand is a bit stouter than the right, 'Everyone burst into a laugh.

Now let us briefly imagine how Mother would have managed the situation. If she had spoken of Golap Ma's fault-finding, that would amount to fault-finding on her part. On the contrary, if she did nothing, the devotee's embarrassment would not ease. Mother assuaged the devotee and praised Golap Ma too: 'Golap has pointed out the defect. Her taste is different, my dear. She has seen and heard a great deal. That's why she didn't like it. Golap is thoroughgoing in her work. The Master's belongings are of her doing. Devotees' mosquito nets, their pillows and all are her done by Golap. there is not trace of idleness in her.'¹⁸

What is significant is her continuing presence responding to her children's prayers and guiding them. That is not surprising, she being our Eternal Mother. Her noble life and teachings are for us to contemplate. She did sixteen parts so that her children could struggle to do at least one part. Her pure form is for us to adore and supplicate. And what do we pray for? In her own words, for desirelessness (nirvasana) and discrimination (sadbuddhi). In addition, we will do well to pray to her for purity, for we cannot have more of it.

Relief given by the Ashrama for Tsunami Victims





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*Courtesy:
The Vedanta Kesari*

LEARNING 'SOFT SKILLS' FROM THE LIFE AND MESSAGE OF HOLY MOTHER

Dr. Sumita Roy

When we begin to contemplate the personality of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, the immaculate consort of the Great Master Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, we are usually led to concentrate on the tremendous spiritual significance conveyed by the incidents in her life and the wonderful spiritual precepts that are available in her every recorded word. Consequently we say that the way to acquire a constant mindfulness and God-consciousness can be learnt from Mother's life. It is easy to say this but when it comes to emulating it and allowing it to percolate into actual experience, the difficulties are immense. What we need is to see some concrete pointers to guide us on this path, where the secular and the spiritual find a comprehensive balance. In the short introduction to the Gospel of the Holy Mother we read that 'the Master took pains to make the Holy Mother efficient in both spiritual and secular matters, and prepared her for the great mission that he was to entrust to her at the close of his life'

Soft Skills to Make Life Meaningful

Therefore, in any reading of Mother's life and message, instead of restricting

ourselves to mere elevated theoretical ideals, however impressive they may be, we need to supplement these with practical directions, accurate road maps to help us traverse the unfamiliar terrains of this trek we call life. Since this pragmatic dimension is one area that we could concentrate upon, it would be interesting to see how Mother teaches us lessons on 'soft skills'

The buzzword 'soft skills', which has been making its rounds everywhere as representative of some of the most coveted qualities needed by a person who aims at achieving anything worth while - peace, prosperity, plenty: in other words, success in any field of endeavour-has snared many. Since some of the most crucial aspects of spirituality are efficiency at the level of our daily activities, fulfilment of duties and training of the mind not to be too deeply involved in the mundane dimension of existence, 'soft skills' give us a value orientation that helps make life meaningful. And the magnitude of Mother's role in this can be gauged by the fact that she fits into every mould that our perception of her can create.

Her Message Eternally True

The greatness of Holy Mother's life and message is, thus, not restricted by any temporal or spatial boundaries. It is relevant to and revelatory for all times and climes. What was true in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is equally so in the twenty-first century. Mother comes alive through application of her words and deeds to newer parameters arising out of the changing global scenario with the passage of time and appears more and more efficacious as human perspectives keep altering from generation to generation. Such a live, vibrant, moving life and message with its endless variety to suit all the needs of different temperaments and situations is indeed one of the supreme wonders of our beloved Holy Mother. Reading and contemplating upon this is itself sadhana of the most satisfactory variety.

Holy Mother seems to suit exactly the metaphoric picture of Sri Ramakrishna's ideal of what a mother should be: she cooks fish, but does not prepare the same dish for all her children. She keeps in mind the palate of each of her children and also their digestive ability while serving them with what is best suited to each. Holy Mother likewise prepares for us the fish curry of spiritual nourishment and practical instructions but she does it in such a way that we can not only absorb and assimilate it, but also enjoy the dish

being served and thus combine the didactic with the aesthetic.

Remembering God amid Life in the World

In a word, both Mother's and the Master's message that God-realization is the only goal of human existence and their lives bearing the best testimony to how this can be achieved, have further ramifications that fill not only those hours of our day devoted to inward disciplines, but also all the rest of the time when we are engaged in responsibilities associated with the task of living. While we hold on to God with one hand, we are also compelled to perform with the other hand our duties in the world. We are told to rub the oil of God-realization on our palms and then cut the jackfruit of the world so that its juice of worldliness does not stick to us.

That is to say, there is no escape from living in the world, and real spiritual strength is our ability to live efficiently and effectively in this difficult sphere without getting totally bogged down by it. As Mother herself said, 'Can anyone think of God all the time?' (215) This rhetorical question makes it clear that both by performance and by precept Holy Mother has taught us the way in which we should spend our time: 'Spend some time relaxing and some time absorbed in thoughts of Him', she said. (215)

This crucial injunction is extremely significant when we look at the complicated experiences of an average human being in present-day life. However stupendous may be the advance of knowledge, technology and the ensuing information revolution, there is a strong sense of dissatisfaction in people who supposedly have everything they need to be 'happy'. But happiness is more elusive today than it may have been any time before. So even when we have a firm foundation of knowledge in our specific area of specialization, we seem to lack what is termed today as 'soft skills' and 'life skills' which invest all our experiences and activities with meaning.

Stress Management

For instance, Mother's famous words on the way to acquire peace of mind are a wonderful help in the process of stress management

Stress is an almost inevitable and inherent part of life today. Even the mind that has been controlled by long practice does some times become prey to this malady. Then Mother's memorable words come to the rescue. If we want peace of mind, we should not find fault with others, she tells us repeatedly. And she shows it also by her own example. She never indulges in criticizing anyone and forgives the worst mistakes of those around her. Again and again she

emphasizes by word and deed that most of our stress is due to this almost inescapable quality of fault-finding, which seems to be programmed into our very being. Only if we are able to overcome it by concentrated effort, we shall get rid of the negative stress or distress, as it is technically called. And this, according to her, is synonymous with peace of mind, the most coveted goal that we can set for ourselves.

Mother has told us in no uncertain terms that it is impossible to live a perfectly joyous life. The mind by its very nature gets disturbed and depressed. What causes stress in these circumstances is the worry which comes in the wake of experiences we cannot accept or appreciate. She says, 'Joy and sorrow, where will they go? They are our companions. Why should you worry about it? (246-7) In such a simple and direct manner she puts an end to the root cause of stress, which is worry. The implication here is clear: it is no use worrying about sorrow. Our worry does not lessen sorrow. If we worry we only create further physiological and psychological problems for our selves, instead of managing to get rid of the sorrow. Mother also says, '....misery is only the gift of God. It is the symbol of His compassion (36) such an injunction may be difficult, almost impossible to accept initially, but once we take it as true

because Mother herself has told us so, we shall be brought to realize its in valuable efficacy.

Conflict Management

In addition to stress management-a matter of an individual's handling of himself there is also the art of managing conflict with others, which is a cornerstone of perfecting 'soft skills'. Often in her life, Mother was compelled to take up the task of conflict management involving people who lived with or around her. Her brothers, their wives, her niece Radhu and her mad sister-in-law, the constant family quarrels, even a neighbouring labourer beating his wife mercilessly -all these structured situations of conflict which Mother resolved effortlessly. She was supposedly unlettered but her manner of handling tricky situations spoke of a native intelligence, empathy with all people and an inward strength that helped her in any crisis or conflict. Many are the instances where she would go to the root of the crisis, look at it from all points of view, and with a flexible, non-partisan and compassionate attitude, solve the problem at hand. Even as a child Mother assumed the role of 'peacemaker among her playmates'² Once she said about a woman, 'she imposes very strict discipline upon her daughter -in law. She should not go to such excess. Though she has to keep an eye on her, she should also

give her a little freedom. She is only a young girl. Naturally she likes to enjoy some nice things. If the lady becomes overstrict, she may go away from her or even commit suicide. What can she do then?'³ Such liberal injunctions are very beneficial for resolving conflicts through mutual understanding. And their potential to teach those who are rigid in laying down rules for others is invaluable.

Negotiation Skill

Unlike conflict resolution, the skill of negotiation helps circumvent situations, thus pre-empting a crisis. Mother has shown instances of negotiation in many recorded instances. Once she was asked to give an opinion about the guru of some devotees who came to see her. She refused because she believed that none should doubt or criticize someone's guru. Finally when they compelled her to say something she did so reluctantly, saying,... you have forced me to say... and refuted the rulings of their guru without willingly wanting to denigrate him. (20) Another instance was when Mother spoke highly about the devotion of a man to his mistress, a relationship which is usually looked down upon by the world as unethical. (8) Also when a married woman visited her without the necessary vermilion mark on her forehead and was questioned by someone, Mother said, 'what does it

matter, if she has not? she has such a noble husband. What if she hasn't worn the mark?' (230) All these incidents show Mother's ability to lead her followers to the goal of agreement where trust is the key concept on which the success of the negotiation depends.

Leadership Qualities

Such an anonymous and unassuming life as Mother led might make us conclude that she may not have had any qualities of leadership. It is said that many people who missed seeing her in her lifetime did so because they thought she was a mere village woman with no exceptional qualities except the good fortune of being the wife of Sri Ramakrishna. But this is far from truth because time and again we find in her a leader par excellence. She was naturally reticent and avoided coming into the lime light, but when the mantle of the Master's mission fell on her she did not hesitate to accept it. She began to give initiation only after being commanded by the Master in a vision. Then she gave initiation to many, even without strictly observing to many, even without strictly observing some of the so-called rules. She thus had the ability to conquer any context, which is defined as one of the most crucial qualities of a leader. Later in life she willingly became the leader not only of the teeming millions who came to her for succour but also of world-movers

such as Swami Vivekananda and the other direct disciples of the Master. She believed in participatory leadership and was never authoritarian. When we read her Gospel we are struck by the way in which she never insists on anything inviolate and inviolable. She suggests things gently, often in the form of questions instead of assertions so that the listener has a choice of accepting what she suggests or rejecting it, thus making her a true leader in the best sense of the term.

Planning and Time Management

Planning is one area on which Mother laid great emphasis. She told her disciples how the Master himself taught her the need for planning, though he also spoke about the importance of surrender. This is no paradox because to achieve total surrender is a task of superhuman effort and in the meantime life has to be lived with the help of planning and organization. Whenever Mother went on a journey the Master instructed her about planning. Yogin Ma records that before one of Mother's journeys when she went to take her leave of the Master, he said, 'Move cautiously. See that you don't leave behind any of your belongings in the boat or railway compartment' (181)

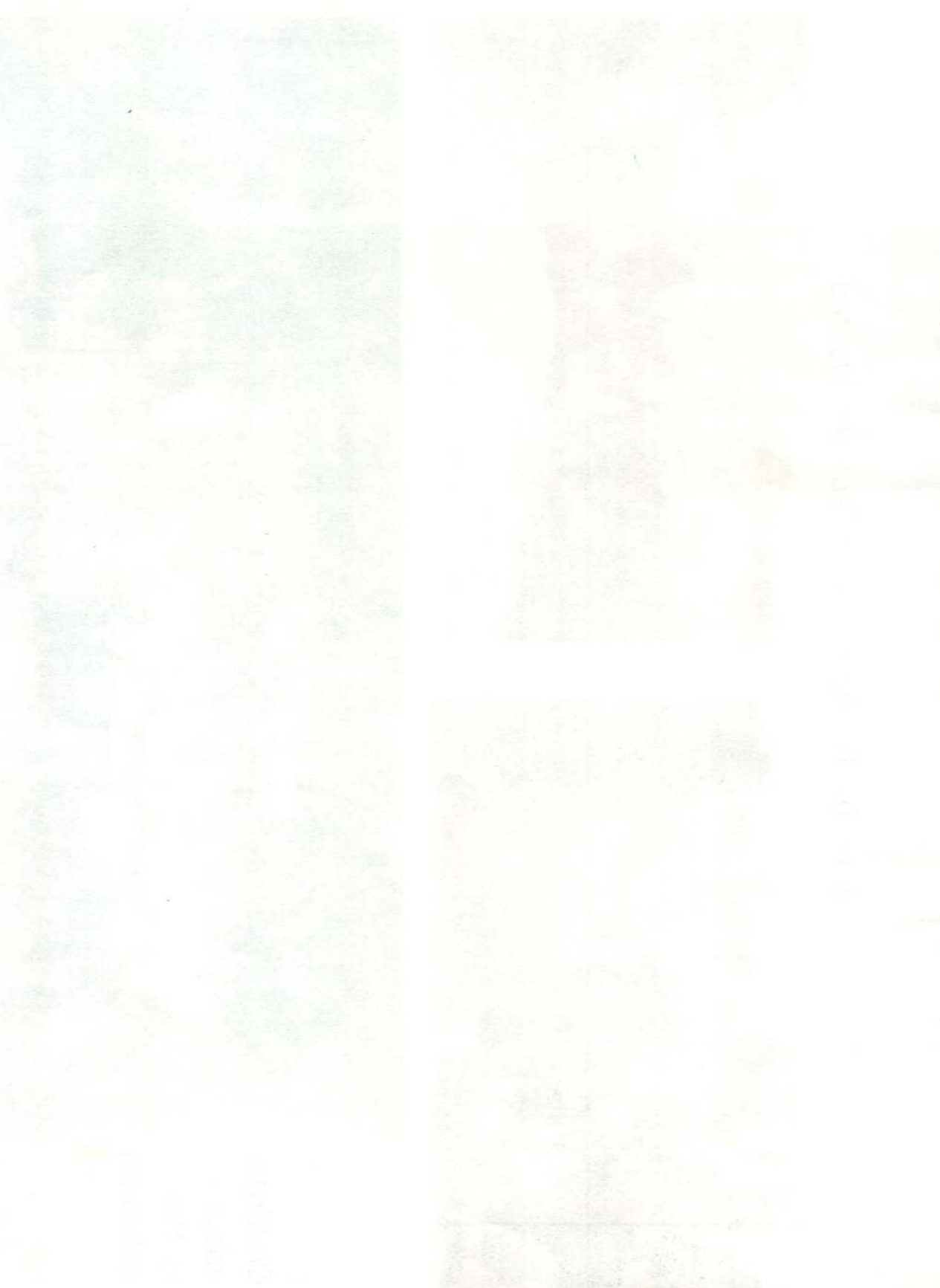
An example Mother gave about the crucial role of planning has been recorded by her disciple Swami

Relief given by the Ashrama for Tsunami Victims



Children adopted by the Ashrama





Tanmayanadaji mother said, The house may have all kinds of food stuff for cooking, but one must cook them and take his meal. He who cooks earlier gets his meal earlier too. Some eat in the morning, some in the evening, and there are yet others who starve because they are lazy and reluctant to cook' (314) Once when a person brought a basket of fruits, the basket was discarded when it was empty. Mother did not approve of this and said, 'But we cannot allow such a waste. We could have utilized the basket at least for keeping the peelings of the vegetables; (34) Then she asked someone to get the basket and kept it for future use, thus teaching a valuable lesson in planning and foresight to all who were present. Again, Mother mentions the instance where the Master gave her some hemp fibre to make suspenders for pots of sweets to be kept for his young disciples, who used to frequent Dakshineswar. Mother says, I made the suspenders accordingly, and with the fibre that was left, stuffed a pillow; (60)

Planning has a specialized, dimension and that is time management. This, according to Mother, is important to make life worth while. She forbade her devotees from wasting time in idle chatter or laziness. She said, 'My child, time alone is the principal thing' (128)

She also said: In old age the body deteriorates. It does not possess any

strength. The mind loses its vigour... Whatever you want to achieve, achieve now, this is the right time' (177)

At every turn we learn from Mother's activities how important time management was to her and how well she did it. She would get up at 3 o'clock in the morning in order to finish her bath before anyone else stirred. She would cook for numerous visitors at all times of day and night, Even when unexpected guests came to the temple she was always ready to serve them from her store of food. When in her father's house, she had many opportunities to illustrate her ability to plan, as for instance the time of the Jagaddhatri Puja, which was annually performed by her mother.

Decision-making

Though extremely modest and unassuming, Holy Mother was never reticent about letting her stalwart spiritual children know what was in her mind. she had perfect decision-making capabilities, which she could exercise without any hesitation. On the one hand she was love incarnate, while on the other she could be stern and unyielding when necessary. At every turn her life shows her power of making the right decisions without antagonizing people. When as a young woman she heard about the so-called madness of her ascetic husband, she did not shrink from going to see for herself what the true state of affairs was.

When the Master was no more, she decided to continue wearing a red-bordered sari and gold bracelets because she believed in the immortality of the soul and was in constant communion with the Master. It is said that when swamiji was in two minds about his historic trip abroad, he left it for Mother to decide.

Interpersonal Skills

Holy Mother inspired people with tremendous faith in herself, simple and modest though her behaviour was on all occasions. That is to say, her interpersonal skills were marvellous. These skills are the ways in which we interact with the people whom we live and work with. When we have a comfortable relationship with them our life is worth living, otherwise maladjustment and other maladies dog our existence. As Mother's life sketch in the Gospel of the Holy Mother records 'It is a remarkable thing that the Holy Mother was able to satisfy.... her exacting and quarrelsome relatives on the one hand, and the devoted spiritual seekers on the other.... The unique spirituality of the Mother can be recognized only when one comprehends the inherent contradictions of the demands that these two situations made on her; (***)II)

While interacting with people, we have to take extreme care about communication, both with superiors and inferiors. Mother, we are told, 'used to

respect her disciples as the manifestations of God, and at the same time show her affection to them as a mother does to her children (99) She never made anyone feel an outsider. Most of her disciples record how she never adhered to caste restrictions. To her all were her dear ones and she declared that devotees of God do not have any caste, which was a revolutionary statement for a woman of her background in the nineteenth century.

Motivation

Such unbounded love of Holy Mother formed and continues to form a powerful factor of motivation. For those of us who find japa and meditation difficult, she recalls how she used to get up at 3 o'clock every morning and sit for meditation. Once she was ill and got up late. After that it became difficult for her to keep to the schedule, but with great effort she got back to her old routine. Motivation from Mother comes in the form of inspiration when we listen to her moving experiences. It stimulates us to thought and action, serves as an incentive in all the progress we make or attempt to make, and invests all we do with enthusiasm.

Mother knew well how to motivate people to give their best in whatever they undertook to do. She also knew how praise and reward were powerful motivating factors. Describing a visit of

Holy Mother to their house, Sarayubala says, 'she was all praise for every thing she saw and made us all immensely happy (28)

Integrity

Holy Mother tried constantly to instil many good qualities such as integrity in her devotees. Integrity matters because without it there is no commitment to what is right. It also matters because it wins others' trust. It is a cornerstone of strong character, which is not built in a day but takes an entire lifetime to consolidate. Without integrity it is impossible to establish oneself in any field of endeavour. When some women asked Mother for spiritual instruction she said, 'What shall I instruct you about? The words of Sri Ramakrishna have been recorded in books. If you can follow even one of his instructions, you will attain everything in life (23) Later she regretted

the fact that not many people have the required commitment and integrity to assimilate genuine lessons in spirituality. She said, 'Where is that competent student who can understand spiritual instruction? First of all, one should be fit; otherwise, the instructions prove futile.' (23)

We can continue endlessly to read and contemplate these and various other aspects of the life and message of Holy Mother and their enormous significance for us. But even when we look at only a single incident or a single message we can still spend an entire life clinging to it and making our existence worth while. Such is Mother's potency that a small or big dose equally helps us to go ahead in life and attain whatever goal we have set for our selves.

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*Courtesy:
Prabuddha Bharata*

THE GREATNESS OF MISERY

Swami Chetanananda

People generally love joyful stories with happy endings. But human life consists of happiness and misery, comedy and tragedy. Even when divine beings take human forms, they must obey this law of maya. Because happiness and misery are inevitable in human life, avatars accept this fact but are not affected by it. Most of the time, their minds dwell in their divine nature, which is above the pairs of opposites. They take human birth to teach ordinary people how to face problems and suffering, maintain peace and harmony, and experience divine bliss by leading a God centred life.

In every age, when religion declines and irreligion prevails, avatars come to re-(establish) the eternal religion. But they do not come alone. They are attended by their spiritual companions. For example, Ramachandra came with Sita, Krishna with Radha, Buddha with Yashodhara. Chaitanya with Vishnupriya, and Ramakrishna with Sarada. As birds cannot fly with one wing, so avatars are accompanied by their shakti, their female counterpart. These spiritual consorts carry the avatars' spiritual message and serve as an inspiration for others. Sita suffered throughout her life; and she taught how to

forbear suffering by keeping her mind in her beloved Rama. Radha tried to forget her pain of separation from Krishna by focusing on her longing and passion for him. When Buddha left home, Yashodhara was grief-stricken. She raised their son and led a nun's life in the palace. She forgot her pain by practising renunciation and thinking of the impermanency of the world. Vishnupriya accepted chaitanya's wish to be a monk, releasing her husband to be a world teacher. She overcame her pain by repeating God's name and worshipping Krishna.

The lives of the avatars' consorts may have been and painful, but their love, faith, service and self-sacrifice were praise worthy and unparalleled. They are ideal women, made glorious by their patience and perseverance, love and purity, contentment and service, non-attachment and austerity, faith and devotion, gratitude and unselfishness, self-sacrifice and self-surrender, and other divine qualities.

One hundred and fifty years ago Sarada was born to become the spiritual consort of Ramakrishna, the avatars of the present age. Ramakrishna married Sarada and demonstrated how one can be

both an ideal sannyasin and an ideal householder. He had no physical relationship with his wife; he saw all women as the manifestations of the Divine Mother. He unveiled the real nature of Sarada, saying, 'she is Sarada, the goddess Sarasvati. She has come to impart knowledge to humanity 'she is my shakti, or power, When we read the life story of Holy Mother Sarada, some incidents bring tears to our eyes. It is a fact. But those tears connect us with Holy mother we have not seen her with our physical eyes, but we have read many books on her, heard many stories from her disciples, and seen the places where she lived and the articles that she used. Walt Disney, the founder of Disneyland, once said, There is no end to human imagination. Actually, imagination eventually becomes realization. Christians visualize the passion play, feel the pain of Christ's crucifixion, and thus experience his presence. In this article we shall try to connect ourselves with Holy Mother and feel her presence through the sad episodes in her life.

At the cottage in kamarpukur

Poverty is painful, and Ramakrishna's family was very poor. When his mother, Chandramani, and his brother Rameswar heard that Ramakrishna had become mad in Dakshineswar, they brought him back to Kamarpukur for treatment and then arranged for him to marry. They desperately searched for a bride, but

failed. In an ecstatic mood, Ramakrishna told them, It is useless to search here and there. You must go to the family of Ramchandra Mukhopadhyay in the village of Jayrambati. Fate has marked my bride with a straw. Ramakrishna then married Sarada, Ramchandra's five year old daughter.

Rameswar borrowed three hundred rupees for a dowry and Chandramani borrowed some jewellery from the wealthy Laha family for the bride to wear during the wedding ceremony. It must have been a wonderful sight to see little Sarada running around in her new sari and jewellery, picking up dates from the ground.

Chandramani was extremely anxious when- the time came to return the jewels to their owners. She had lovingly made the new bride her own by showing her affection. Now she needed to take the jewellery away from Sarada. This thought filled the old woman's eyes with tears. Although she expressed her agony to no one, it did not take long for Ramakrishna to perceive it. He consoled his mother; then, while Sarada was sleeping, he took the jewellery away so deftly that she was unaware of it. The items were immediately sent to the Lahas. But when the intelligent girl awoke, she asked, where is my jewellery? Chandramani took Sarada on her lap and tearfully consoled her ,

saying, my darling, later Gadadhar will give you better ornaments than those.' The matter did not end there. Sarada's uncle came to see her that day. When he learned of this incident, he was offended and took her home at once. Chandramani was terribly hurt. To ease her pain Ramakrishna said playfully, 'What ever they say or do they can't annul the marriage now!

This incident is painful to us as well. Of course, Ramakrishna later had jewellery made for Sarada. But we can visualize that sad incident when we see Holy Mother's image in the shrine, decorated with jewellery, and it melts our hearts.

In the Fields of Jayramabti

The Banerjees pond still exists at the entrance to Jayrambati village, and still the same kind of grass grows on its surface. We watch through our mental eye as ten-year-old Sarada wields a scythe, cutting that grass for the cows. The village pond has always been infested with leeches. We don't know how much blood those leeches sucked from her body.

Sarada was a practical village girl. Although she had very little education, she was endowed with intelligence and strong common sense. An Indian woman's life is fulfilled through four stages: as a daughter, a sister, a wife, and

a mother. Sarada was ideal in each role. As a little girl, she would carry puffed rice in a can basket to feed the farmers who were working for her father. Once pests destroyed her family's rice crop, and she picked the rice stalks from the field. She would take her younger brothers to the Amodar River to bathe and help her mother with household duties. During a famine, she served hot khichuri to starving people and fanned them with a palm-leaf fan.

Later in her life, Sarada collected milk and vegetables for her Calcutta devotees and cooked for them. Sometimes she would shiver from malaria and suffer without murmur, lying on the mud floor of her old cottage. But as soon as she felt a little better, and could eat milk and barley, she would initiate her devotees.

These scattered scenes of Holy Mother in Jayrambati transport our minds to the realm of meditation.

In the Roadside Inn near Tarakeswar

Time does not wait. Sarada gradually became a young girl of eighteen. She was extremely modest and bashful by nature, so she always tried to hide her beauty. When she would go to take her bath in the village pond, she would hear gossip about her. Some women would show her sympathy, but others would stand at a distance and point at her commenting, 'she is a wife of a madman.' Some

remarked, 'Aha! shyama's daughter has been married to a crazy person.' Others said, 'Her husband is mad. He moves around naked and shouts, "Mother; Mother."

This village gossip. An American columnist nicely put it:

My name is Gossip. I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age. The more I am quoted, the more I am believed. I flourish at every level of society. My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face. To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become. I am nobody's friend. Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same. I topple governments and wreck marriages. I make innocent people cry in their pillows. My name is Gossip.

Sarada became a victim of gossip in her own village. There is a saying, 'A funeral pyre burns only once, but anxiety burns all the time' Fear and shame made her mute. Sarada stopped visiting her neighbours and sequestered herself in her small thatched hut. Finally she decided that she must see her husband to ease her mind.

Her journey began during the Dol Purnima (full moon of spring) festival in 1872. Some villagers were leaving for Calcutta to have a holy bath in the Ganges on that auspicious occasion. Sarada and her father Ramchandra joined a group of pilgrims. The distance between Jayrambati and Calcutta is sixty miles via Kamarpukur, Arambagh, the vast meadow of Telo-Bhelo, and Tarakeswar. She waded barefoot, her mind torn between hope and anxiety. After walking for two days her feet started to become heavy; they were covered with cuts and blisters. Then she was attacked by malaria. Ramchandra took shelter with his daughter in a roadside inn. He covered Sarada's shivering body with a chadar and left to find food and water.

Sarada herself describes what happened next:

I was lying unconscious owing to fever.... just then I saw a woman, pitch dark in complexion, sitting by my side. She stroked my aching head with her soft cool hands, and I felt the heat in my body subsiding. Where are you from? I asked her. And she replied, 'From Dakshineswar.' At this I was speechless with wonder and exclaimed, 'From Dakshineswar! I too am going there to see my husband. But this fever has

unfortunately detained me on the way.' To this she replied, Don't worry. You will soon be all right and see your husband at Dakshineswar. It is for your sake that I have kept him there; ... I asked, Indeed! Is it so? But who are you to me? 'I am your sister; she replied... After this conversation I fell asleep.²

The next day she became free from fever

Still feeble, Sarada resumed her journey. She and her father reached Dakshinewar at 9.00 pm. The Master received her warmly. He immediately arranged for her supper and made a bed for her in his room. He took care of her treatment the next day.

Sometimes auspiciousness lurks in inauspiciousness and goodness comes of evil. Gossip united Sarada with Ramakrishna and then departed forever. Ramakrishna removed all anxiety from Sarada's mind and installed a jar of bliss in her heart.

At the Nahabat in Dakshineswar

There are two nahabats (concert towers) in the temple garden of Dashineswar -one in the south, the other in the north. Ramakrishna's mother and Sarada lived in the northern nahabat, Chandramani upstairs and Sarada downstairs. Sarada's octagonal room was tiny; its length and breadth were 7'9" and height 9'3"; its door was 2'2" wide and

4'2" high. Probably sarada was 5'6" tall and she had to pass through that low door.

Sarada recalled:

The room was so low that at first I would knock my head against the upper frame of the door. One day I got a cut on the head. Then I became accustomed to it. The head bent of itself as soon as I approached the door. Many aristocratic Women of Calcutta frequently came there..... They would stand at the door and lean forward holding the jambs. And peeping in they would remark, addressing me, 'Ah, what a tiny room for our good girl! She is, as it were, in exile, like Sita.

With our mental eyes we watch Sarada busy with her housework and forgetting herself to run to serve her husband and mother in-law. Her forehead bumps against the door frame, and immediately her forehead swells like a red tomato. Tears trickle from her eyes. Covering her wound with her veil and forgetting the pain, she serves her husband and mother-in-law. We become angry with the door frame and at the same time feel jealous. Addressing the door frame, we say angrily, 'You are responsible for knocking against and cutting our Mother's head. We shall cut you into pieces with an axe!' Jealous, we continue, 'Blessed you are, O door frame! You have touched our eternal Mother so many

times how unfortunate are we who could not.'

One day the Master gave Holy Mother some jute fibre and asked her to plait it into cords that could be used to hang pots in his room, to be filled with sweets for his young disciples. She made the slings, and with the rejected fibers stuffed her pillow. She slept on a hard mat under which she spread some burlap. Referring to this kind of austere bed, she later said to her devotees, 'Now I use a soft pillow and mattress. How different from the hard bed I slept on at Dakshineswar! But I slept then as well as I do now. I don't feel any difference. 'Does Holy Mother come to our minds now when we sleep in a cozy bed in an air conditioned room?'

We visualize various earthen jars containing rice, lentils, farina, sugar, oil, spices and other food items on the floor around the walls, and also some pots in slings hanging from the ceiling. Sarada and Lakshmi, the Master's niece, slept on the floor in that tiny room, and sometimes some women devotees from Calcutta were also accommodated there.

Swami Nikhilananda wrote:

Sri Ramakrishna closely watched Sarada Devi's spiritual practices and saw to it that she meditated regularly. At three o'clock in the morning he would go to the door of the nahabat and say to Lakshmi; 'Get up and wake up your aunt. How long

will you sleep? It is going to be dawn. Begin your meditation.' In wintertime Sarada Devi wanted Lakshmi to sleep a little longer. When she knew that the Master was outside, she would whisper in Lakshmi's ear: Don't answer him. He cannot sleep. It is not yet time to get up. Even the crow and cuckoos are asleep. Don't move from your bed.'Hearing no response from inside, and thinking they were still asleep, the Master would sometimes tease them by pouring water under the door. The ladies had to get up quickly for fear of the bed's getting wet. Some times the bed actually got wet. (76)

Another aspect of Holy Mother's life in the nahabat gives us pain. There were no bathing or toilet facilities in the nahabat; and more over the temple garden was a public place and there was no privacy for women. Holy Mother was extremely bashful and modest. She kept herself veiled so that no one she did not know could see her face. During the dark hours of the morning she would go to the jungle on the bank of the Ganges to answer the call of nature and then would take her bath in the river. Once in the early morning darkness she almost stepped on a crocodile. Later she recalled her sad plight: 'I suffered terribly by suppressing the urge to relieve myself and thus developed physical problems. Only during dark hours of night could I go out.' What discomfort! Later, Yogin Ma (a woman devotee of the Master)

realized Sarada's predicament and arranged to build an outhouse near the nahabat.

One should not think that Holy Mother only suffered like a caged bird in the nahabat; she experienced ecstasy and endured all inconveniences by serving her God-intoxicated husband. She reminisced.

What a unique man he was! How many minds he illuminated! what unceasing bliss he radiated! Day and night his room echoed and reechoed with laughter, stories, talk and music.

The Master sang, and I would listen hour after hour, standing behind the screen of the Nahabat..... what joyous days we passed through! People poured in day and night, and there was no end of spiritual talk.

In the Attic of the Shyampukur House

In the middle of 1885 Ramakrishna developed throat cancer. It was difficult for his physicians to go to Dakshineswar regularly, so the devotees took the Master to Calcutta for treatment. The householder devotees provided funds; the young disciples took responsibility for his nursing; and Holy Mother prepared his meals. Several prominent physicians of Calcutta began to treat the

Master. Despite his illness, the Master continued to teach.

Swami Saradananda presents a vivid picture of the shyampukur house where the master stayed for nearly three months. The Master lived upstairs in a spacious room called the parlour.

To the north and south of the parlour are two verandas, the northern one larger than the southern. To the west of the parlour are two small rooms—one used by devotees who stayed overnight, and the other by Holy Mother for sleeping. The visitors' room has a narrow veranda to the west. A staircase to the roof is at the eastern end of the corridor leading to the Master's room. At the top of those stairs, near the door to the roof, is a covered terrace of about six feet by six feet in size. Holy Mother spent her days on that terrace, and there she cooked and special diet needed by the Master.

It is really amazing how for three months she performed her duties, forgetting all personal inconveniences, while living in that single-family house surrounded by men whom she did not know. As there was only one bath room for all, she would get up before 3.00 am, finish her bathroom activities, and then silently go to the terrace on the second floor, without anyone knowing. She would spend the whole day there. When

the master's meals were ready, at regular times she would send word downstairs through Swami Advaitananda or Swami Adbhutananda. At those times the people were asked to leave so she could bring the food and feed the Master, or we [the young disciples] would carry his meals to him if that was more convenient. At noon. Holy Mother would eat and rest on the At 11.00 pm, when everyone else was asleep, she would leave that room and sleep in her bedroom on the first floor until 2.00 am, Fortified by the expectation of the Master's recovery, she spent day after day in that way. She lived there so silently and invisibly that many of the regular visitors did not know that she was living there and carrying the responsibility for the most important service to the Master.

This description needs no further explanation. Holy Mother's daily routine tells us how she practised the Master's teaching, 'Adjust according to time; adjust according to place; adjust according to persons.' This is the only way one can maintain peace and equanimity of mind.

Back to Kamarpukur Cottage

When Sri Ramakrishna passed away on 16 August 1886, Holy Mother's new life began. To forget the pain of separation from the Master, she left on pilgrimage with a few of the Master's

close disciples and devotees. After practising austerities in Varanasi and Vrindaban for a year, she returned to Balaram's house in Calcutta. A little later she, Golap Ma, and Swami Yogananda left for Kamarpukur by train to Burdwan. Upon reaching Burdwan, they walked sixteen miles to Uchalan. Holy Mother was exhausted and hungry, so Golap Ma cooked khichuri for her. After having her meal, she exclaimed, 'Golap, what nectar you have prepared!' When they reached kamarpukur, Golap Ma and Swami Yogananda stayed with her for a couple of weeks and then returned to Calcutta.

Holy Mother began her life alone in kamarpukur. She was then thirty-four years old. While living at Cossipore, the Master advised Holy Mother :

Look, don't extend your hand to anyone for a penny. You will never lack ordinary food and plain clothing. If you ask for money from any one, your head will be sold to that person. It is better to have food from someone than to live with that person. some devotees may lovingly offer their homes for you to live in, but never give up your cottage in Kamarpukur. You stay in Kamarpukur. Grow some spinach. Eat that spinach with rice and repeat Hari's name'⁶

But it was not easy to live alone in a village, as a young widow.

First, Holy Mother had to fight poverty and loneliness. She had no money. Later she recalled: Trailokya Biswas used to give me seven rupees a month. After the Master's passing away, Dinu [the cashier of the kali temple] and others conspired and stoppend that monthly allowance. My relatives at Dakshineswar considered me as an ordinary mortal and joined with them. Naren fervently requested them, "Please don't stop that allowance to the Mother." But they did.' It took a long time for news of Holy Mother's financial condition to reach the devotees in Calcutta. Swami Saradananda remarked, 'We did not dream that Mother did not have the means to buy even salt.' Moreover, most of the Master's young disciples were then living as wandering monks, so they had no idea of her difficulties.

Second, when the Master passed away at Cossipore, Holy Mother was about to remove her bracelets and put on a white cloth, as was customary for a Hindu widow. But the Master appeared and forbade her to follow the custom. From then on she wore her bracelets and a sari with a thin red border. Because of this, the narrow-minded and fanatical villagers, of Kamarpukur criticized her. In distress she took off her bracelets. Again the Master appeared and asked her not to discard them. He then told her that Gauri Ma would cite the vaishnava

scriptures to explain why. Gauri Ma told Holy Mother that she could not be a widow, since her husband was none other than the Lord Himself. This vision reassured her. She on her bracelets again a and turned deaf ear to people's criticism.

Third, Holy Mother was harassed by a mentally ill devotee of the Master. Harish had become insane thanks to his wife's medications to divert him from spiritual life to worldly life. One day he arrived at Kamarpukur and began to act queerly. Holy Mother described the situation:

One day as I entered the compound of our home from a visit with a neighbour, Harish began to chase me. He was then insane. His wife had brought about this condition. There was no one in our house. In a helpless state I began to walk fast around our granary. He pursued me. After going around it seven times I stopped. I asumed my real form [the Divine Mother Bagala], laid him on the ground, placed my knees on his chest, and slapped him hard. He began to gasp for breath. My fingers became red. Harish became calmer and left for Vrindaban soon after, where he eventually became normal.

Fourth, the Master's close relatives were selfish and indifferent to Holy Mother. Ramlal, Lakshmi and Shivaram

spent most of their time in Dakshineswar, so in Kamarpukur she was practically alone and without protection. Yet she wanted to remain in Kamarpukur.

We are struck with grief when we think of Holy Mother's ordeal in Kamarpukur, which lasted an entire year. She did not want any one to know about her suffering. If the Master's devotees had learned of it, they would have handled the situation immediately. (Later on, of course, they took care of her for the rest of her life) We guess that there must be a special reason behind this ordeal. Because we know that the desires of illumined souls always come true, it seems to us that the Master had fulfilled his one unfinished wish through her. Swami Saradana.

When after the Mastro's passing away I moved about here and there for some time and then went to live at Kamarpukur, my relatives seemed to be indifferent towards me. After coming to learn of the high-handedness of the villagers, my mother brought me here (to Jayrambati)... From that time on I have been living with my brothers through stress and strain. And now, again, they complain, 'she does not look after us.' The human mind is strange indeed.¹⁰

There is no end to the difficulties that Mother Sarada endured. But regardless of what happened, she was an embodiment of forbearance like Mother Earth. Elderly men whined to her, struck her feet with their heads and told their sad

stories; a drunkard shouted from the street and broke her sleep; once a man lay down on the floor and asked her to put her foot on his chest and give him knowledge; another time a disturbed woman twisted her ankle and hurt her so that she would remember her. Sometimes Holy Mother had to intervene between two of her brothers to keep them from fighting; sometimes she needed to seek protection from her crazy sister-in law who wanted to attack her; moreover, she had endless suffering over her niece Radhu. Once a disciple asked her, 'Mother, how do you bear all these things?' She replied, 'My son, you will understand human suffering when you grow up. You are not a mother.'

Although happiness and misery are inevitable in human life, they cannot perturb those who are established in the Atman. Is there any way to be completely free of misery? Krishna said in the Bhagavadgita, 'Feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, are caused by the contact of the senses with their objects. They come and go, never lasting long, You must endure them., :''Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Forbear, forbear forbear. He who forbears, survives; and he who does not, perishes, 'Holy Mother said, 'Suffering is a gift of God. One should have patience like Mother Earth. There is so much turmoil, and so many calamities, going on all over the universe. But Mother Earth forbears everything. Human beings should have that kind of patience and perseverance.'

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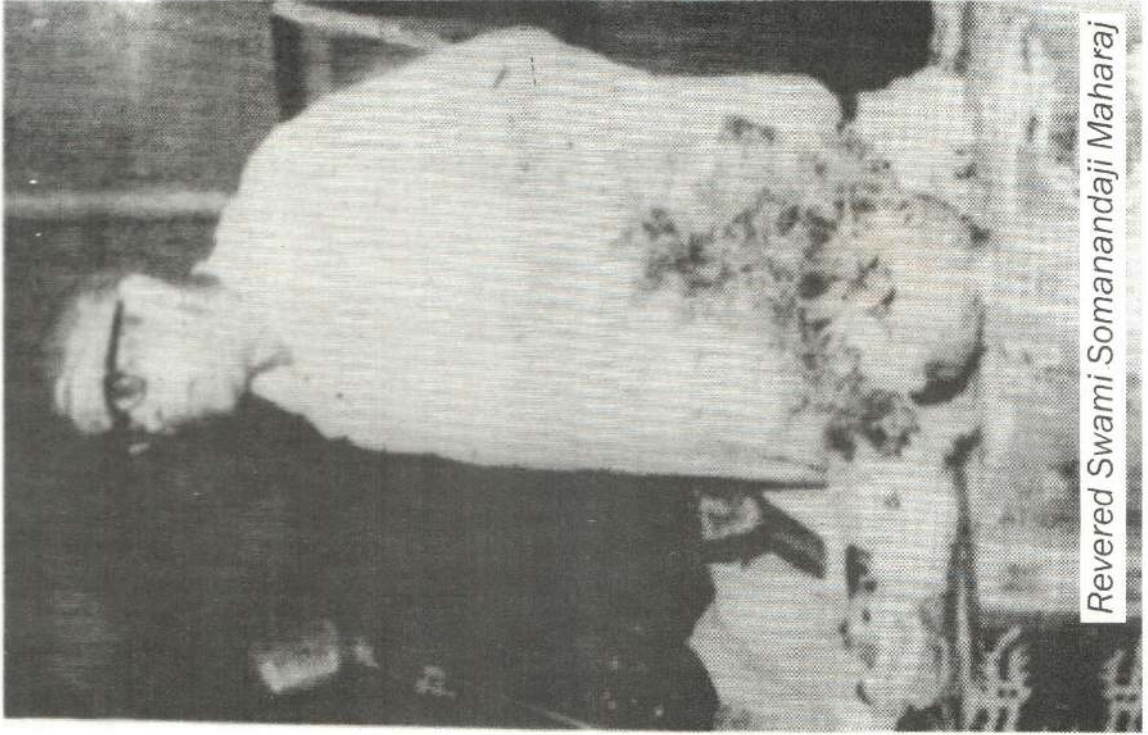
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*Courtesy:
Prabuddha Bharata*

We are Indebted to both of them



Sri T.S. Avinashilingam Aiyah



Revered Swami Somanandaji Maharaj



Relief

THE PRACTICALITY OF SRI SARADA DEVI

Swami Dayatmananda

The lives of great people serve as beacon-lights to humanity. Every great life helps us in three ways: first, it reveals the meaning and goal of life; it also shows us the right path; second, the life of a great person, whatever be the field, always brings inspiration; third, the incidents, small or big, in the lives of the great serve as guidelines for others. The life of Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, also serves these three purposes for all of us. We can learn many lessons such as love of God, love of man, modesty, simplicity, gentleness, forbearance, chastity, rationality, practicality etc, from her life. Unlike Sri Ramakrishna, we do not find many striking events, but as Swami Vivekananda says: 'As I grow older I look more and more for greatness in little things. I want to know what a great man eats and wears, and how he speaks to his servants.....' When we read her life we do find extraordinary greatness even in small day-to-day events. I intend to discuss one such useful lesson we can all profit from. It is her robust common sense and practicality. Every scripture teaches us that the purpose of life is to love God and realize him. When we are discussing Sri Sarada Devi's life we must not forget this. Hers was a God-centred life. God was the very breath of her life and the love of God manifested in her in the form of love for all beings including

humans, animals, plants etc, She saw God in everything. Japa and prayer were constantly going on in her mind.

The phrase 'love of God' has been repeated so often and been so often confused with mere sentimental emotionalism, that for most people the words have lost their meaning. If we want to know what love of God really means, we shall find the answer in Holy Mother. From her we learn that real love is not something spectacular or passionate, but rather a calm, unswerving, and profound direction of the whole soul towards God.

Love of God is vividly present in every stage of Holy Mother's life. When she was still with her parents as an unmarried girl, she was already in the habit of praying to God with great fervour; after her marriage to Sri Ramakrishna, that yearning for God increased a thousandfold. At Dakshineswar, in the company of Sri Ramakrishna, it had risen to such an intensity that she was uniquely fitted to become the first disciple of the greatest of religious teachers. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, that love, now perfectly mature, poured itself forth in an unceasing torrent to the innumerable monastic and lay devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, whom she now regarded as her own children.

Sri Sarada Devi was very rational and practical. She was imbued with plenty of common sense coupled with humour. Though her mind was always fixed on God, yet she never let common sense go. In this respect she resembles St. Teresa of Avila.

Sarada Devi did not regard Sri Ramakrishna merely as a husband. He was her revered Guru, God, intimate companion and protector. Yet when needed she did not hesitate to oppose, criticise, and differ from him.

Here is a story Mother told a disciple about herself and Sri Ramakrishna. With Hriday they were passing through Kamarpukur. The Master went to his old home and inspected the premises, as he always did when visiting his village. He was displeased to find that the kitchen was in a state of dilapidation, and scolded Hriday for allowing the place to run rack and ruin, ordering him to get it repaired at once. Mother, distressed by this scene, turned to Sri Ramakrishna and said: 'You only come to Kamarpukur to complain and then go away again. You're very selfish.' 'Yes', the Master retorted, 'I am selfish, but it is not love of the little self, but of the universal self'. 'And then', Mother added in a tone of mild amusement, 'Master stood there and gave me half an hour's lecture on Vedanta!

Here is another story. Sister Nivedita had a small pet dog of which she was very fond. One day she brought the dog with her to visit Mother. Nivedita wanted Mother to take the dog on her lap and fondle it. But Mother, like most orthodox brahmin ladies, though she could feel compassion for animals, was nevertheless reluctant to touch them. So she declined to stroke Nivedita's dog. Nivedita said to her: 'Mother, in the West we have a saying "Love me, love my dog." "so if you really love me, you must love this animal too Oh but I do love you, Nivedita,' protested Mother vehemently, 'Believe me, I do love you!'

Sri Sarada Devi loved Nivedita as her own daughter. Once Nivedita expressed a desire to visit Jayramabati. At once Holy Mother objected explaining that the superstitious, casteridden villagers would not only disrespect her but would even create difficulties for herself as well. Another story: When Mother was staying at Jayramabati there was a particularly troublesome cat who sneaked in to the kitchen repeatedly and stole food. One day a disciple (who disliked cats, particularly) picked up the cat and threw it bodily out of the compound. Mother was in tears at seeing the harsh treatment the cat received. She was worried that it might starve to death. 'After all 'Mother said, 'why should we condemn the cat for stealing food? It's in

his nature to steal - and now that we've driven him away how will he survive? he cannot work for his living' When finally the cat returned Mother was not only relieved to see him, but actually glad!

There is an instance of mother taking the young wife of one of her householder disciples, on to the roof of the house and secretly feeding her with sweet, begging the girl to keep the incident a secret from the other ladies so that they would not be jealous!. Like every great teacher holy mother was realistic. She did not attempt the impossible by going against nature. She recognized the fact that spiritual seekers are not all equally endowed or even capable of equal development. Whatever she said to those who sought her advice flowed from a complete understanding of the individual seeker. To each she spoke directly and convincingly, suiting her words to the capacity of the hearer. To a monk who questioned her about the efficacy of pranayama and asana, she once said: 'The practice of these brings one occult powers and occult powers lead one astray.' But to another, in answer to his question as to whether he should continue the practice of pranayama which he had begun some time before, she could say: 'Yes, you may practise a little, but not too much, for it may heat the brain. But if the mind becomes calm of itself, what is the use of pranayama?'

Again, to one of her devotees she declared, when asked about whether to count when performing japa: 'No do it without counting, for counting often diverts the attention from the japa. 'But to another she said: 'One must repeat the mantra at least fifteen to twenty thousand times a day. Only then will one get some results.

There are devotees who profess faith and devotion to God. They do not try hard enough to remember Him. Yet they find enough excuses to justify why they are unable to practise prayer, meditation etc. for such here is what Holy Mother says:

"If you don't call upon God - indeed many people never even remember Him - what does it matter to Him? It is your own misfortune. Such is the Maya of God, He keeps them ignorant of Him saying, "They are happy enough, let them be so!"

What might at first sight seem to be contradictions in Holy Mother's teaching are to be explained simply by her ingrained habit of suiting the words to the hearer. To her simple women devotees she spoke simple, homely truths. To her monastic disciples she could give authoritative instruction on abstruse points of Vedanta.

How Mother loved her disciples. Once she blessed one by saying 'May happiness and sorrow pass under your

feet as water under a bridge'. Yet she could not herself remain indifferent to or unmoved by their sorrows.

A householder devotee came to her and said that his young wife had died suddenly. Mother burst into tears, and turning to Yogin -Ma said 'Oh, Yogin, my daughter -in law is dead.' Then Mother

sat in front of Sri Ramakrishna's photograph and prayed thus through her tears: ' Master, don't let my daughter-in - lay be born again -give her a place at your feet forever. Don't let her take another body.'

What could be more practical than praying for liberation?

*Courtesy:
Vedanta*

If a bad time comes, what of that? The pendulum must swing back to the other side .But that is no better. The thing to do is to stop it. Let the old cat die.

Swami Vivekananda

"OUR GRIEF WON'T GROW OLD"

**India's High commissioner
Nirupama Menon Rao reflects on
December 26 and thereafter**

"Grief never grows old
It falls with the rain
It's a late summer evening
A haunting refrain
And sorrow's an ocean
So deep and as cold
As the memories remind me
Grief never grows old."
(Mike Read, songwriter, in song
'Grief Never Grows old', composed
after the tsunami)

Boxing Day, 2004 dawns quietly enough. In the old wing of the Kumara Krupa guest house in Bangalore, the morning air is chilly- a made-to-order-December-in-Bangalore sort of day.

My cellphone which I have forgotten to charge -after all I am on holiday- suddenly crackles to life with the beep of a message from a friend. The time of message-9.25 a.m. Colombo time, half an hour ahead of Bangalore. "Sea intrusion in Batti.

Massive damage reported. Unconfirmed. "I read the message interpreting it as yet another instance of water-logging in flood-prone Batticaloa. But this is not a one-off. The phone rings again, and this time the call is about the sea having gone berserk in a number of locations along the Sri Lankan coast. A "sea attack" is how the initial reports describe it. Radio and television networks have meanwhile started reporting an earthquake in Sumatra and damage from tidal waves in the Andaman and Nicobar islands of India and in Sri Lanka.

It is darkness at noon, and it has a new word to describe itself- "tsunami" Not an alien word, but not something that happened to "us". A word that was confined to Hokusai (Japanese) woodblock prints, to the trenchant Pacific Ocean, and not to our sea, not to our Goddess Sea, the ocean to which we gave our name, the Indian Ocean.

Somehow on this Sunday, we find ourselves at world's end, with the

bottoms of harbours suddenly exposed, beaches shining with speckled sea creatures and wondrous hues of shells from the innards of the sea. A sea that waits for the little children to scream with delight at this faerie world, to move closer... and, closer... and, then swoops down on them, black, roaring and unforgiving.

I return to Sri Lanka. There is a pall of gloom everywhere. The stories about the dead and missing populate the atmosphere around me. One account haunts me constantly in the days ahead. The Faujdars and the Seetharamans, both from India, holidaying at Yala on the southeastern coast of Sri Lanka, are in their nightclothes in their rooms at the Yala Safari Lodge, when the Jurassick roar of the sea ambushes them, carnivorous, devouring, the quintessential, cunning raptor. The youngest offspring of these families, Farzan, and Arvind, aged nine and seven, escape the man-eating jaws of this carnivore that devours their parents and other relatives.

Farzan is found on a tree, splayed, lacerated, but alive. Arvind is miraculously unscathed. But the tsunami has twisted their lives

forever. Farzan's uncle from Mumbai, Percy identifies the body of his mother, Farzan's grandmother, who also died at Yala, from her heirloom ruby earrings. Her body is mutilated, and unrecognizable, but the ruby earrings remain, they have not been surrendered to the sea, the family keeps them. Old Parsee gold work and fine stones from deep within the earth that the sea could not conquer, even as its water slashed and flooded the lungs of the 75-year-old woman who was wearing them.

Percy and Kashmiri, Farzan's uncle and aunt, are kindly people, the sort you know are loyal and true to their family obligations. Farzan is in good hands, but he is unaware of the tragedy that has suddenly deprived him of his parents, grandmother and older brother. The last time I speak to his uncle, two weeks after the tragedy, he is still in hospital in Mumbai, recovering from his injuries, and determined to get well, so that he can "go to Sri Lanka, and look for Mummy and Daddy". A heartbreaking denouement to a tragedy that is difficult to accept or explain.

Little Arvind on the other hand, keeps dialling his father's telephone number, hoping he will answer. And when he does not, the seven-year-old says flatly, "I know father is dead". his mother is missing, and may never come home again. He does not talk of his older brother who too, has perished.

Arvind wants to go now to America with Srinivasan, his paternal uncle, who is a resident of Providence, Rhode Island. Farzan and Arvind, hardy little pocket survivors, spared by the very ocean that swallowed their families. I am haunted by their faces, and the facades, of cheerfulness that adults around them don as masks, so that the children are not made immediately aware of the tragedy that has changed their lives forever.

There are many, many more children like Farzan and Arvind. Indian and Sri Lankan children who have lost parents and are traumatized by what happened on that black Sunday.

They find what they believe is evidence, a few days

later, posted on the wall of the hospital at Tissamaharama south of Yala, that Prema, Arvind's mother, is dead. The face on the decomposed body is the same, or at least approximates the face of the woman in the photograph that is Prema's. An oh-so-typical "South Indian girl" face, shot in a small street studio, with painted mountains in the background, and no warning of the black wall of water that will one day swallow her and then disinter her, bloated and decomposed, body to be mass buried in an anonymous grave in Tissamaharama. I think of the normal, uneventful life she left behind in Dubai, where she lived, for a short Christmas vacation, and the cruelty of her death and there are no answers to the "Why?" I ask myself.

In the Millennium school in Dubai, the classmates of Ashwin, Arvind's older brother who also died at Yala, post little memorial notes on the school's website. Notes for Ashwin, who is described as a dear, sweet boy, who had wanted to go t

to Kenya on safari, like his closest school friend, but ended up in Yala. His great uncle, Natarajan, who comes to Sri Lanka to search for Prema, asks me, "why did they have to go to Yala?" Always, after a tragedy, it is in our nature to wonder how things could have been different if only certain choices had not been made....

There is an odd irony about the Indian Election commission identity card that lands on my table one day. An innocuous looking, laminated card, with some curling round the edges, simple black and white with the name and picture of the holder so clearly imprinted, I take some time in trying to place its provenance and establishing why it has come to me. And then the split second bulb lights in my brain why, this is Farzan's grandmother, Soonu, imposing, dignified, who had travelled to Yala with her elector's identity card, where destiny cast its final vote for her.

The sea is discriminating, it discriminates in favour of identity cards and passports, so we may count the dead and missing, while it devours mothers and, fathers and children.

And when it makes exceptions for the living, they are partial exemptions, one survivor in a whole family one Arvind, one Farzan, little will o'the wisps, carried aloft by the very wave that snuffed out the lives of their families, to be deposited on high ground, nobody's children....

I record the stories of Farzan and Arvind because I have a first-hand knowledge of their sad experience. The newspapers are full of similar tragedies, and indeed, after a time, the similarity of the experiences involving other little children, is apparent. The deluge that overwhelms us now is that of grief, and a sorrow that is unable to comprehend why we should have been violated and attacked in this fashion. This is a grief that has no answers. It is elemental, deep, and profound, like the ocean itself.

The shoreline of Sri Lanka is one vast heap of debris, except where the coconut palms sway in a sultry beguine. These palms, like the animals who took to high ground well in advance of the tsunami, have a how-to-survive-a-tsunami sequence programmed into their genetic code. Not so us humans, vanquished thus by

the sea, despite our urge to conquer it, thinking that we understand its character and its changing moods. And now, that it has revealed itself, frothing and rabid, roaring and monstrous, we will have nothing of it. The sea has died inside everyone of us. But its roar does not go away easily, it populates our nightmares; the tsunami is gone, but the cold sweat remains.

Buddha statues, mosques and a few Hindu temples and churches tell you of the centuries-old life that populated these shores until that Sunday morning. Not that the tsunami has spared all these structures.

There is a temple at Navalady in Batticaloa which had its chariot hurled like a torpedo to lie twisted on its side. There is a silence here that even the vultures forget to punctuate. Only the colours survive - the electric blue and violet of the temple walls, the green of the mosque on the seashore at Kalmunai in Ampara with the dark green Saudi Arabian flag adorning its inner walls, the upturned blue of fishing boats tossed into living rooms, the terra-cotta red of twisted train carriages at Telwatte,

of the Queen of the Sea express, and the white tourist buses half-sunk in the lagoon in Hambantota. So many colours, painting a new Guernica of torment and sand-crusted death.

There is the man in Batticaloa who commanded the wave to recede and succeeded in outsmarting death. His name is Reverend Sanders, and he has become a television hero overnight. All on the strength of his survival instinct that told him to turn the boat he was travelling in with children from the orphanage he runs by the side of the Batticaloa lagoon, to face the oncoming tsunami. As the raging wave chased him and his orphans across that very lagoon, the Reverend who is no mariner, did what every sailor does on a stormy sea - he rode his boat into the oncoming wave and onto life and salvation, as it would seem hearing him articulate his story in evangelical accents and biblical language.

The wave came right behind him, and he turns, saying, "In the name of my God, I command you" and takes his boat into the swirling wall of water that is ready to devour him and his 28 children, and somehow, like Dracula, the killer

wave is vanquished by the name of God.

The Reverend just managed to summon his God. The others who died across the coasts of Asia were not so lucky. God was not looking when the sea sneaked up behind the boys playing cricket on the Marina in Chennai, or the pilgrims enjoying a balmy Boxing Day morning on the beach at Vellankanni, by the Church of the Virgin. The cunning sea, the cruel sea, moves across the globe like a Stealth plane, picked up by no sensors because there are none for the nations in the region, and then raises its giant cobra head for that final attack.

The fishermen populate this coast, kilometre after kilometre. They have fished here for centuries, setting out from fishing harbours as ancient as the country itself. Fishing harbours that welcomed Arab dhows come for trade over a millennium ago. These fishermen have had their boats and catamarans tossed by the surging waves, deep into their backyards and verandahs, Iying upturned and unclaimed.

At Kalmunai, I see a boat that is half burned, not by a freakish twist of nature, but because the villagers needed light and set it alight to be able to see in the night, and to keep warm outside, the ruins of their houses. After the initial surge of fear and anger at the sea, these fishermen are now reconciled to venturing out into the ocean once again in search of fish. But the rumours run rife that there are no fish off the seas in the east, at least, not the fish they are used to catching. There are strange, new species, not native to these parts being caught in the nets of the fishermen.

While this may be a transient phenomenon, the lament of the fisherfolk grows even stronger. For the fish they once caught, for the catamarans and fibreglass boats shattered and flipped into places on land that make them difficult to retrieve or refloat, for the missing in their families and for the dead they have buried.

I hope the ocean is satiated - that it has had its recompense. But our grief will not grow old, nourished as it is by memories of December 26. And,

I hope the ocean will not engulf us again with a similar tragedy, that it will not blight our lives for another two Thousand, no ten thousand years. That it will permit us to trust it once again as we did till Boxing Day, 2004. But right now, it is difficult to watch it with anything but shock and awe, and a speechless, aching, emptiness, even though the waters are calm and beautiful once again.

We resolve to cling to high ground and build our houses away from the beaches. But even as we refuse to heed the sea's call, we know that we cannot resist it, that it can pull us out of the strongest of grasps, and drag us across the surf because we cannot fight its embrace, if it should choose to come out to us.

Somewhere, in the long forgotten histories of the human race,

we know there have been previous tsunamis. Maybe this was how ancient civilizations suddenly vanished. May be the sea rose up and attacked them on a similar, idyllic Sunday morning, and dragged them into the deep.

And yet, those of our early ancestors, who survived that manifestation of the ocean's wrath, went on with their lives after shedding tears for the lived ones they had lost. So too, must we, dealing as before, with birth, youth, old age, and death, and allowing that rhythm to coexist with the sea, because that is the way of this planet, our home, the only place of our arrivals and our exits. Is there another choice? But the sea, the ocean, cannot take our grief away from us. We will grow old, but not our grief.

Courtesy Sunday Times
6.2.2005

A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI B .A. F. C .A
 CHARATERED ACCOUNTANT

91/1/4Stanley Road.
 JAFFNA.
 26-03-2002

SRI SARADA DEVI SEVASHRAMAM.

Point Pedro.

BALANCE SHEET - 31-DECEMBER 2001.

FIXED ASSETS.	Rs. Cts	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts
Land & Buildings			1,090,874.89
New Buildings - Under Construction			1,229,587.45
Furniture & Fittings.			136,268.45
Equipment & water Pump.			121,430.80
Motor Vehicles.			160,000.00
Bicycles.			6,500.00
Kitchen Utensils.			3,223.05
			<u>2,743,884.64</u>
<u>CURRENT ASSETS.</u>			
Advance			25,000.00
Fixed Deposits.			200,000.00
Cash at Banks & in Hand			
National Savings Bank - Wellawatte.		6,864.56	
-do- -Point Pedro		51.29	
-do- -- do -		240.43	
Bank of Ceylon, -- do -		294.84	
Cash in Hand.		<u>26,179.35</u>	
		33,630.47	
Less - Peoples Bank, -- do - o/d		<u>18,319.058</u>	<u>15,310.89</u>
			<u>240,310.98</u>
			<u>2988,195.53</u>

Financed by :-

ACCUMULATED FUND 01-01-2001

	1,949,387.20
Add. Execes of Receipts over Current payments.	<u>1,038,808.33</u>
	<u>2,988,195.53</u>

I have examined the Books of Accounts of Sri Sarada Devi Sevashramam, Point Pedro and prepared the above Balance Sheet and the Connected Account together with the Schedules thereto, in accordance therewith and the information and explanations furnished, I am of the Opinion that the Balance sheet gives a true and fair view of the financial state of affairs of the Sevashrama as at 31 December 2001 and the Receipts and payment Accounts a true and fair summary fo the transactions for the year then ended.

A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI, B.A F. C. A
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT.

RECEIPTS.

	Rs.	Cts	Rs.	Cts.	Rs.	Cts
Donations Received - per Schedule					984,254.78	
Donations Received - RRAN -for Building.					700,000.00	
Interest on fixed Deposits & Savings A/cs.					<u>10,353.37</u>	
					1,694,608.15	

PAYMENTS.

Celebrations & Poojahs.

Sri Ramakrishna Jayanthi	7,250.75
Sri Sarada Devi Jayanthi	3,642.00
Swami Vivekananda Jeyanthi	2,613.50
Thai Pongal & New Year	2,688.50
Deepavali	3,475.00
Shrine Room Expenses	6,121.50
Poojahs & Temple Expenses.	3,120.00
	28,911.25

Social Relief & Services.

Foodstuffs	24,919.00
Milk Feeding - Children in Backward Schools.	3,499.00
Clothes	20,064.05
Medical Aid	16,586.50
Educational Assistance	34,696.30
Ashram Students	11,780.50
Feeding of poor & Alms Giving	47,284.50

Displaced persons - General Relief		44,896.50
Displaced Children - Milk Feeding		78,481.10
Book Exhibitions & Seminars.		20,028.25
Books & Periodicals - Purchases.	88,950.00	
<u>Less</u> - Sales	28,318.00	60,632.00
Publications - Souvenir & Brochures.	42,559.00	
<u>Less</u> - Sales	13,900.00	28,659.00
		391,526.70

Administration & Maintenance.

Printing & Stationery		3,282.00
Postage		12,238.25
Telephone		41,657.20
Newspapers & Periodicals.		10,580.00
Travelling & Vehicles Expenses.		31,928.70
Electricity & Lighting		7,854.00
Repairs & Mainenance		28,546.30
Donations & Subscriptions		2,890.00
Bank Charges & o/d Interest		5,230.03
Garden Maintenance		12,227.89
Loss on Sale of Car		35,000.00
Inmates Expenses		43,927.50
		235,361.87
		655,799.82
		1,038,808.33

Excess of Receipts over Current Payments

CAPITAL PAYMENTS

New Buildings under Construction		770,110.45
Moter Vehicls - Purchase, Peugeot 404	100,000.00	
<u>Less</u> - Sale of Car - Cost Rs 85,000/=	50,000.00	50,000.00
Bicycle - Donated	9,385.00	
<u>Less</u> - Purchase	6,500.00	(2,885.00)
		817,225.45
<u>Excess of Receipts over payments</u>		221,582.88

* Books & Periodicals given out free, not accounted.

* Garden Produce although used up, not accounted.

A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI, B.A.F.C.A
CHARATERED ACCOUNTANT

91/1/4 Stanley Road,
JAFFNA
26-03-2002

SRI SARADA DEVI SEVASHRAMAM,
Point Pedro.

SCHEDULE OF DONATIONS RECEIVED
YEAR ENDED 31 - DECEMBER 2001.

	Rs. Cts.
Dr. (Mrs) Nirmala Nagulendran, Briarwood, Gumberland, U. S. A.	20,106.50
P. Satchithanandam, Frances Road, Colombo 6	10,000.00
Mrs. Gowry Mahendran, Barnes Place, Colombo 7.	10,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada.	1,269.00
S. Visvalingam, Alfred Nurn House, Chedwick Road, London.	5,000.00
Miss. Vimala Nadarajah, sharmuga Girls Home, Trincomalee.	2,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Grescent, Ontatrio, Canada	1,642.00
S.V. Kasinathan, Second Cross Street, Point Pedro	1,000.00
S. Balachandran, 11th Lane, Colombo 3	1,000.00
Mrs. Radha Vigneswaran, Colombo 8	1,000.00
Mrs. Padma Puvanendran, Newbury Avenue, Middlesex, U.K.	3,068.25
S. Ganeson C/o SCOT, London	142,494.24
A. Nadarajah, Peterson Lane, Colombo 6	2,000.00
T. Sivasubramaniam, Pathirakali Lane, Point Pedro	2,000.00
Dr. (Mrs) Thilaga Ramalingam, Qucensland, Australia	10,000.00
Devotees UK	87,234.45
Mrs. T. Surendranathan, Principal, Hindu Tamil Mixed School, Kerudavil Pirapakaran, Germany	2,000.00
Dr. N. Subramaniam, De Havilland Road, Middlesex UK	5,806.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,250.00
V. Ganeshalingam, windsor Road, Essex, UK	2,000.00
A. Theiventhiram, Primrose Crescent Markham, Canada	8,200.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,432.00
S. Nadeson, Nelson Place, Colombo 6.	4,000.00
Mrs. Ramakrishnan, first Mile Post, Point Pedro	3,000.00
Mrs. Thangamutha Kandiah, Viyaparimoolai, Point Pedro	3,000.00

A. Bhaskaran Anderson Flats, Colombo 5.	10,000.00
K. Muthucumaru, Senior Legal officer, Bank of Ceylon, Colombo	1,000.00
P. Satchithananthan, Frances Road, Colombo 6	5,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart, Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,514.00
S. Ganeson C/o SCOT, London	122,156.25
Dr. M.K. Murugananthan, Dispensary & Surgery, Colombo 6	3,000.00
Master Umaesh, 11 th Lane, Colombo 3	1,000.00
Dr. (Mrs) Mangalam Krishnadason, Mammoth Lane, C.A., U.S.A.	16,797.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	2,772.00
Dr. K. Somasundarajah, Mosley Medical Centre UK	25,000.00
Ramakrishna Mission Colombo 6 for Milk Feeding	25,000.00
V. Ganeshalingam, Windsor Road, Essex U.K	1,000.00
A. Vishnukumar, Colliers Wood, London	2,959.00
Devotees, U. K	31,390.62
K.Muthucumaru, Senior Legal officer, Bank of Ceylon, Colombo	5,000.00
M. Visvalingam, Clifton Avenue, Middlesex, U.K	
and C. Ratnasingam, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	30,000.00
Mrs. P. Manikavasagar, Bernachchi Street, Mowson Australia	10,000.00
Mrs. K. Arumugadason, Mowson Australia	20,000.00
Mrs. R. Thavendran, Palm Grove, Colombo 3	2,000.00
Dr. (Mrs) Managalam Krishnadason, Pirasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi	17,754.00
Dr.K. Mylvaganam, Bucks, U.K	12,784.00
A.Karunanithy, west wickham, Kent, U.K	5,000.00
S. Sivanathan, Bank of Ceylon, Point Pedro	2,000.00
Mrs. S.Muthucumearsamy Daya Road, Colombo 6.	1,000.00
Mrs. Padma Puvanendrampillai, New bury Avenue, Middlesex, U.K	2,000.00
S.J. Kumar, Falaise Road, Scarborough, Canada,	10,000.00
Sundaramoorthy C/o S.J. Kumar , Scarborough, Canada	11,400.00
Mr. Nadarajah, Puloly East, Point Pedro	1,000.00
Dr. Selvi Thangammah Appakuddy, Thurkapuram, Tellipallai	10,000.00
S.Selvaratnam, Manning Road, Indianapoils, U.S.A.	15,000.00
Miss. Vimala Nadarajah, Shamuga, Girls Home, Trincomalee	1,000.00
Dr. (Mrs) Nirmala Nagulendran, Briarwood, Cumberland, USA	22,206.00
Mrs G. Aunshiya, Hotel Swisse, Kandy	1,000.00
	760,291.31

	Rs. Cts.
b/d	760,291.31
N.Mahendran, Edmonton, Canada,	1,000.00
T. Caneshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	2,750.00
S. Ganeson C/o SCOT, London	65,601.83
Dr. Raghu & Mrs Thilaga Ramalingam, Kensington Court, Australia	15,000.00
Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo 6	8,000.00
T. Geneshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,350.00
Sri Vigneswaramoorthy, Robinson Road, London.	6,550.00
K.Caneshalingam, Alfred Plascce, Colombo 3	25,000.00
V. Mahadevan Station Road, Colombo 6	2,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsarrat Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,520.00
S.Sivanathan, Mensarratr, Bank of Ceylon, Nelliady	2,000.00
Lion A. Amirthanayagam, Skelton Road, Colombo 5	14,000.00
V. Ganeshalingam, Windsor Road, Essex U.K	2,000.00
K.Muthucumaru, Senior Legal officer, Bank of Ceylon, Colombo	5,000.00
Dr. K. Mylvaganam, Medley Close, Bucks, U.K	12,929.00
Mrs.S. Namasivayam, Kootney Crescent, Toronto, Canada	3,000.00
Mrs T. Thavarajah, East Briarwood, Victoria, Australia.	8,000.00
T.Ganeshalingam, Monsarrat Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,350.00
Mrs .T. Surendranathan, Hindu Tamil Mixed School, Kerudavil	2,000.00
Mrs. S. Jeyakumari, Vada Hindu Girl's College, Point - Pedro	1,803.15
Appathurai Theiventhiran, Markham, Canada	5,000.00
Dr. Indrarajah, Chest Clinic, Jaffna	1,000.00
Dr. R. Ravindran Godfrey Terrace, Erindale, Australia	14,000.00
Mrs. Sundari Yoganathan, Edmonton Road, Colombo 6	10,000.00
Not Indentified	5,644.00
40 Others under 1.000/=	7,465.49
	984,254.78

A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI B .A. F. C .A
 CHARATERED ACCOUNTANT

91/1/4Stanley Road.
 Jaffna.
 04-03-2003

SRI SARADA DEVI SEVASHRAMAM.

Point Pedro.

BALANCE SHEET - 31st-DECEMBER 2002.

FIXED ASSETS.	Rs.	cts	Rs.	Cts.	R	s	.
Cts							
Land & Buildings				1,090,874.89			
New Buildings - Under Construction				1,405,810.20			
Furniture & Fittings.				136,268.45			
Equipment & water Pump.				121,430.80			
Motor Vehicles.				160,000.00			
Bicycles.				6,500.00			
Kitchen Utensils.				3,233.05			
				2,924,107.39			

CURRENT ASSETS.

Advance				25,000.00			
Fixed Deposits.				150,000.00			

CASH AT BANKS & IN HAND

National Savings Bank - Wellawatte.			263.35				
-do- -Point Pedro			1,368.36				
-do- - Point Pedro			5,045.74				
Bank of Ceylon, - Point Pedro			8,507.00				
Cash in Hand.			<u>1,241.93</u>			<u>16,426.38</u>	
						<u>191,426.38</u>	

Less - **CURRENT LIABILITIES**

Borrowings			25,000.00				
Peoples Bank, - Point Pedro- o/d			<u>25,312.07</u>			<u>50,312.07</u>	
<u>141,114.31</u>							

NET ASSETS

3,065,221.70

Financed by :-

ACCUMULATED FUND 01-01-2002

	1,949,387.20
Add. Excess of Receipts over Current payments.	<u>77,026.17</u>
	<u>3,065,221.70</u>

I have examined the Books of Accounts of Sri Sarada Devi Sevashramam, Point Pedro and prepared the above Balance Sheet and the Connected Account to gether with the Schedules thereto, in accordance therewith and the information and explanations furnished, I am of the Opinion that the Balance sheet gives a true and fair view of the financial state of affairs of the Sevashrama as at 31 December 2001 and the Receipts and payment Accounts a true and fair summary fo the transactions for the year then ended.

A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI B .A. F. C .A	91/1/4Stanley Road.
CHARATERED ACCOUNTANT	JAFFNA.
	04-03-2003

SRI SARAMD DEVI SEVASHRAMAM.
Point Pedro.
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT,
for the year ended 31-DECEMBER 2002.

<u>RECEIPTS.</u>	Rs.	Cts	Rs.	Cts.	Rs.	Cts
Donations Received - per Schedule					825,358.12	
Interest on Deposits & Savings A/es.					<u>22,041.92</u>	
					847,400.04	

PAYMENTS.

Celebrations & Poojahs.

Sri Ramakrishna Jayanthi	12,028.50
Sri Sarada Devi Jayanthi	10,492.00
Swami Vivekananda Jeyanthi	15,385.00
Thai Pongal & New Year	11,193.00
Deepavali	2,197.50
Shrine Room Expenses	7,089.50
Poojahs & Temple Expenses.	<u>5,632.00</u>
	<u>64,017.50</u>

Social Relief & Services.

Foodstuffs etc.		13,113.00
Milk Feeding - Children in Backward Schools.		25,210.00
Clothes		10,682.50
Medical Aid		2055.00
Educational Assistance		19,497.85
Ashram Students		4,031.00
Feeding of poor & Alms Giving		62,509.00
Displaced persons - General Relief		26,575.00
Displaced Children - Milk Feeding		9,904.00
Assistance for Housing - Repairs		20,517.00
Relief in Vanni District		34,029.27
Book Exhibitions & Seminars.		11,961.27
Books & Periodicals - Purchases.	99,708.00	
<u>Less</u> - Sales	<u>19,873.50</u>	79,834.50
Publications - Souvenirs & Brochures.	88,877.00	
<u>Less</u> - Sales	<u>9,550.00</u>	<u>79,327.00</u>
		<u>399,246.12</u>

Administration & Maintenance.

Printing & Stationery		2,551.00
Postage		13,490.00
Telephone		24,967.79
Newspapers & Periodicals.		10,015.00
Travelling & Vehicles Expenses.		36,128.75
Electricity & Lighting		7,550.00
Repairs & Maintenance		72,547.59
Donations & Subscriptions		6,080.00
Bank Charges & o/d Interest		6,110.37
Garden Maintenance		33,367.25
Distinguished visitors		33,627.00
Inmates Expenses		<u>60,675.50</u>
	<u>307,110.25</u>	<u>770,373.87</u>
		<u>77,026.17</u>

Excess of Receipts over Current Payments**CAPITAL PAYMENTS**

New Buildings under Construction		<u>176,222.75</u>
<u>Excess of Receipts over payments</u>		<u>99,196.58</u>

SRI SARADA DEVI SEVASHRAMAM,
Point Pedro.

SCHEDULE OF DONATIONS RECEIVED -
YEAR ENDED 31 - DECEMBER 2002.

	Rs. Cts.
A.Pasupathy, Asst. Commissioner of Labour, Trincomalee	1,000.00
Miss. Vimala Nadarajah, Vidyalaya Road, Trincomalee	1,500.00
Dr. (Mrs) Thilaka Ragh Ramalingam, Kensington Court, Australia	20,000.00
K.Muttucumaru, Bank of Ceylon * Colombo -1	3,000.00
Devotees, London	53,807.40
Dr. (Miss) Thangammah Appakuddy J. P	10,000.00
Miss Nalini Shanmugathan, Chetty Street, Jaffna	2,000.00
V. Ganeshalingam, Windsor Road, Stafford, UK	1,000.00
A. Thavendran, Ontario, Canada	5,000.00
Lions Club of Kotahena, Colombo	10,000.00
K.Muttucumaru, Bank of Ceylon Colombo	2,000.00
S.Sathiamoorthy, Retd, Principal, Valvetiturai	3,000.00
Mrs. Sundari Yogarathan, Edmonton Road, Colombo 6	2,000.00
S. Balachandram, 11th Lane, Colombo 3	3,000.00
T.Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescant, Ontario, Canada	2,828.00
K.Anandasahayam, Percival Road, Briton, UK	6,000.00
P.Satchithanandam, Frances Road, Colombo 6	5,000.00
Mrs. S. Nadarajah, Lorenz Road, Colombo 6	1,001.00
S.Ramesh, Faculty of Engineering, Peradeniya	2,000.00
Mrs. Malini Subashchandran, Puloly East, Point Pedro	1,000.00
A. Puvanenthiran, Guildford Guz, UK	6,000.00
Mrs. S. Ganeshalingam, V. H. G. College Road, Point Pedro	1,000.00
Mrs. Malini Subashchandran, Germany	10,000.00
R. Rudra, Advocate, Point pedro	1,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Cresocent, Ontario, Canada	1,375.00
S. Rajendram, P.H.I Thumpalai, Point Pedro	1,000.00

Mrs. Padma Puvanendrampillai, Middlesex, U.K	2,540.00
SCOT, UK	131,786.75
V. Ganeshalingam, Windsor Road, Esser, U.K	1,000.00
V.Sivarajalingam, Alvai West, point Pedro	2,000.00
Dr.N. Subramaniam, Havilland Road, Middlesex, U.K	5,143.20
V. Mahadevan, Station Road, Colombo 6	1,100.00
Miss Chitra Arulnandhy, Frances Road, Colombo 6	3,000.00
V.Selvanathan, Berlin, Germany,	19,592.12
Mrs. Leela Chandrasekeram, Rtd, Principal, Point Pedro	2,000.00
Mrs. S. Ramakrishnan, 1st, Mile post, Point pedro	3,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, monsaart Crwscent Ontario, Canada	1,413.00
Dr. K. Mylvahanam, Madley Close, Aston, Clinton, U.K	3,310.00
Mrs. Malar Kanagasingam, 4th, Cross Street, Jaffna	1,000.00
S. Sivanathan, Bank of Ceylon, Nelliady	1,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crascent, Ontario, Canada	1,500.00
N.Mahendran, 112 Street, Edmonton, Canada	1,500.00
Thavarajah, Australia	10,000.00
Mrs. Yaso Jeyakumar, Falaise Road, Scarborough, Canada	10,000.00
Mrs. Vimala Nadarajah, Sri Shanmuga Girl's Home, Trincomalee	1,000.00
K.Muthucumarasamy, Colombo 6	1,000.00
Poongothai Selvarajan, Chetty Street, Nallur	2,000.00
Dr. M.K. Muruganandan, Galle Road, Colombo 6	2,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,560.00
S.Sathyamoorthy, Retd, Principal Valvetiturai	2,000.00
P. Satchithanandan, Francis Road, Colombo 6	<u>10,000.00</u>
C/d	<u>375,956.47</u>

A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI, B.A.F.C.A
CHARATERED ACCOUNTANT

91/1/4 Stanley Road,
Jaffna.
04-03-2003

SRI SARADA DEVI SEVASHRAMAM,
Point Pedro.

SCHEDULE OF DONATIONS RECEIVED
YEAR ENDED 31 - DECEMBER 2002.

	Rs. Cts.
b/d	375,956.47
Dr. T. Upendran, Nalliah Road, Batticaloa	1,000.00
T. Surenthranathan, kerudavil, H.T.M. School, Thondamannar	1,000.00
Mrs. Sivananthini Yogandra Duraisamy, Castle Lane, Colombo 4	10,000.00
A.Karunanithy, West Wickham, kent U.K	2,950.00
T.Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,500.00
R. Somakandarajah, Lewisham, London	2,000.00
Mrs. A. Gowri Mahenthiran, Barnes Place, Colombo 7	10,000.00
Mrs. S. Rajendran, Moors Road, Colombo 6	10,000.00
K.Muttucumar, Bank of Ceylon, Colombo 1	25,000.00
S.Surendranathan, U.K	2,000.00
M. Ratnajoathy, ward 8, Pudukudiyiruppu	1,000.00
C. Ratnasingam, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	11,000.00
V. Ganeshalingam, Windsor Road, 11 ford, U.K	1,000.00
S.Ramesh, University of Peradeniya	3,000.00
Well Wisher, U.K	10,000.00
Dr. A. Puvanendran, New Maldan, Surrey, U.K	8,000.00
V.A. Vishnukumar, U.K	4 500.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario	1,500.00
Sri Panchadcharam, Scarborough, Canada	6,000.00
Dept. Of Hindu Cultural Affairs, Galle Road, Colombo 4	25,000.00
Mrs. Y. Kandasamy, Zonal office, Puloly	7,379.00
Mahadevan, Rathy Stores, Point Pedro	3,000.00
N. Kuganeson, kugan Studio, Point Pedro	5,000.00
N. Baskaran, Anderson Flats, Colombo 5	5,000.00
Ms. Jeyakumari, Teacher, Point Pedro	1,200.00

V. Sundaramoorthy, c/o S.J. Kumar, Canada	29,180.00
S.J. Kumar, Falaise Road, Scarborough Canada	5,000.00
Dr. (Mrs) Nirmala Nagulendran, Briarwood, U. S. A.	23,884.00
Dr. Ragahu Ramalingam, Queensland, Australia	20,000.00
Mrs. Padma Puvanendrampillai, Newbury Avenue, Middlesex, U.K	2,849.00
Dr. R. Ravendran, Godfrey Terrace Erindale, Australia	7,500.00
S. Balachandran, 11th Lane, Colombo 3	2,000.00
S. Sivaskanda 42 nd, Lane, Colombo 6	21,000.00
P. Satchithanathan, Frances Road, Colombo 6	5,000.00
A. Vishnukumar, South Harrow, Middlesex, U.K	7,289.00
K. Anandasekaram, Percivil Road, Feltham, U.K	7,289.00
G. Wigneswaran, Alperton, Wembly, U.K	7,289.00
T, Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	4,500.00
S. Siva Markandu, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	6,000.00
V. Ganeshalingam, I. B. C. Road, Colombo 6	3,000.00
Nagulan Gnanavel, puloly East, Point Pedro	1,000.00
Dr. N. Subramaniam, Edgeware, Middlesex, U.K	7,131.00
K. Satkunamohan, Zurich, Switzerland	2,000.00
M. Ravindrakumar, Hampden Lane, Colombo 6	5,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Cerscent, Ontario, Canada	1,375.00
S. Ramesh university of peradeniya	4,000.00
S. Balachandran, 11 th Lane, Colombo 3	1,500.00
Mrs. T. Surendranathan, Kerudavil H.T.M. School, Thondamannar	2,000.00
Divisional Secretariat, Vadamaradchy North	24,250.00
Dr. K. Mylaganam, Bucks, U.K	7,890.50
Dr. V. Paramanathan, London, U.K	2,000.00
Ms. Ankayakanny Selvarajah, University Road, London	5,000.00
Mrs. S. Yogeswary, Peoples Bank, University Branch, Jaffna	1,150.00
Mrs. P. Selvarajah, Station Road, Vavuniya	1,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Creseent, Ontario, Canada	1,484.75
Mrs. Rance selvaratnam, Manning Road, indianapolis, U.S.A.	5,000.00
V. Ganeshalingam, Navundil, Karaveddi	1,000.00
K. Somasundararajah, Mosley, Birmingham, U.K	60,000.00
45, others under Rs. 1,000/=	<u>6,811.00</u>
	<u>825,358.12</u>

SRI SARADA DEVI SEVASHRAMAM,

Point Pedro.

Inmate - Swami Chitrupanandajee

BALANCE SHEET 31 - DECEMBER 2003.

FIXED ASSETS. at Cost	Rs. cts	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts
Land & Buildings			1,090,874.89
New Buildings - Under Construction			1,457,160.20
Furniture & Fittings.			136,268.45
Equipments & water Pump.			121,430.80
Motor Vehicles.			160,000.00
Bicycleas.			6,500.00
Appliances to Computer, (received as Gift)			10,000.00
Kitchen Utensils.			<u>3,223.05</u>
			2,985,457.39

CURRENT ASSETS.

Advance			25,000.00
Fixed Deposits.			100,000.00
Cash at Banks & in Hand			
National Savings Bank - Wellawatte.	15,764.68		
-do- -Point pedro	50,763.41		
-do- -- do -	607.24		
Bank of Ceylon, -- do -	19,553.64		
Cash in Hand.	30,066.12	116,755.09	
			241,755.09

Less - CURRENT LIABILITIES

N. S. B. Loan on Fixed Deposit	90,000,00		
Peoples Bank, -- do - o/d	<u>23,522.61</u>	<u>113,522.61</u>	<u>128,232.48</u>
<u>NET ASSETS</u>			<u>3,113,689.87</u>

Financed by :-

ACCUMULATED FUND 01-01-2003

3,065,221.70

Add. Excess of Receipts over Current payments.

48,468.17

3,113,689.87

I have examined the Books of Accounts of Sri Sarada Devi Sevashramam, Point Pedro and prepared the above Balance Sheet and the Connected Account together with the Schedule thereto, in accordance therewith and the information and explanations furnished, I am of the Opinion that the Balance sheet gives a true and fair view of the financial state of affairs of the Sevashrama as at 31 December 2003 and the Receipts and payments Accounts a true and fair summary of the transactions for the year then ended.

Dr. A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI, B.A.F.C.A
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT.

SRI SARAMD DEVI SEVASHRAMAM.

Point Pedro.

Inmate - Swami Chitruapanandajee

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT,
for the year ended 31-DECEMBER 2003.**

RECEIPTS.

	Rs. cts	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts
Donations Received - per Schedule			745,234.80
Interest on fixed Deposits & Savings Accounts.			<u>15,719.58</u>
			760,954.38

PAYMENTS.

Celebrations & Poojahs.

Sri Ramakrishna Jayanthi	1,811.00
Sri Sarada Devi Jayanthi	29,225.00
Swami Vivekananda Jayanthi	3,434.00
Thai Pongal & New Year	965.00
Deepavali	9,977.00
Shrine Room Expenses	7,603.50
Poojahs & Temple Expenses.	<u>11,072.50</u>
	<u>64,088.00</u>

Social Relief & Services.

Foodstuffs etc.	20,253.00
Clothes	14,920.00
Medical Aid	900.00
Educational Assistance	31,504.50
Ashram Students	4,000.00
Feeding of the poor & Poya Day Alms Giving	45,422.50
Milk Feeding - Backward schools & Children in Refugee camps	17,072.00
Displaced persons	40,176.00
Miscellaneous	23,016.20
Book Exhibitions & Seminars.	61,202.52
Books & Periodicals - Purchases.	61,105.00

<u>Less - Sales</u>	<u>41,055.00</u>	20,050.00
Publications - Souvenirs & Brochures.	46,000.00	
<u>Less - Sales</u>	<u>12,060.00</u>	<u>33,940.00</u>
		<u>312,456.72</u>

Administration & Maintenance.

Printing & Stationery	8,687.50	
Postage	11,714.00	
Telephone	20,101.40	
Newspapers & Periodicals.	7,940.00	
Travelling & Vehicle Eepenses.	70,209.08	
Electricity & Lighting	14,047.25	
Repairs & Maintenance	71,717.25	
Donations & Subscriptions	9,600.00	
Bank Charges & o/d Interest	3,993.51	
Garden Maintenance	29,722.00	
Distinguished Visitors	10,973.00	
Inmates Expenses	<u>77,236.50</u>	
	<u>335,941.49</u>	<u>712,486.21</u>
Excess of Receipts Over current Poyments		<u>48,468.17</u>
CAPITAL PAYMENTS		
New Buildings under construction	51,050.00	
Appliances to Computer (received as gift)	<u>10,000.00</u>	<u>61,050.00</u>
<u>Excess of Payments over Receipts</u>		<u>12,581.83</u>

* Books & Periodicals given out free, not accounted

* Garden Produce al though used up, not accounted

Dr.A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI, B.A.F.C.A
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

91/1/4 Stanley Road,
JAFFNA
12-02-2004

SRI SARADA DEVI SEVASHRAMAM,

Point Pedro.

Inmate - Swami Chitruapanandajee

SCHEDULE OF DONATIONS RECEIVED YEAR ENDED 31 - DECEMBER 2003.

	Rs. Cts.
Siva Ganshan Textile Shop, Bazaar Street, Jaffna	3,000.00
S. Sivalingam, 47th Lane, Colombo 6	5,000.00
S. Balachandran, 11th Lane, Colombo 3	2,000.00
Dr. M.K. Muruganandan, Galle Road, Colombo 6	3,000.00
N. Sithamparapillai, Tile Hurst, Reading, U.K	5,000.00
K. Ravindran, Mayfield Road, Colombo 3	5,000.00
Miss Chitra Arulnandhy, Fredrica Road, Colombo 6	1,000.00
Mrs. Padma Puvanendrampillai, Enfield, Essex, U.K	2,947.40
T.Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,511.75
Devotees, London	46,373.90
K. Thayaparan, Parking Side, Essex, U.K	15,000.00
S. Sivarajah, Retd. Director of Education	2,000.00
V. Ganeshalingam, IBC Road, Colombo 6	1,000.00
Mrs. A. Thevarani, Oberentfeblea, Switzerland	1,000.00
K. Vivekanandan, Golf Place, Links Road, London	10,000.00
Mrs. Padma Puvanendrampillai, Enfield, Middlesex, U.K	2,940.00
S.J. Kumar, Scarborough, Canada	5,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,586.00
Dr. A. Puvanendran, New Halden, surrey, U.K	12,500.00
M. Ratnajothy, Ward 8, Pudukudiyiruppu	1,000.00
Principal, Ramanathan Maha Vidyalayam, Usan	1,000.00
S.J. Kumar, Scarborough, Canada	5,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,610.00
Dr. Raghu Ramalingam, Australia	25,000.00
Mrs. Radha Vigneswaran, Colombo 5	1,000.00

Lions Club, Colombo 6	1,800.00
K.V. Somasundaram, 28th Lane, Colombo 7	5,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,641.00
V. Ganeshalingam, Illford, U.K	1,000.00
Mrs. Padma Puvanendrapillai, Enfield, Middlesex, U.K	2,945.00
Mrs. Poongothai Selvarajan, Vavuniya Campus	1,000.00
N. Mahendran, Puloly east, Point pedro	2,000.00
Jeyalingam Kanagasabai, Neterre, France	2,000.00
A. Pasupathy, Asst. Commissioner of Labour, Trincomalee	1,000.00
G. Viganeswaran, Puloly East, point pedro	5,000.00
S. Sathiamoorthy, Retd. Principal, Valvetiturai	2,000.00
Mrs. Kamalanathan, 10th mile post, Averangal	10,000.00
Devotees, U.K	78,894.75
K. Muttucumaru, Bank of Ceylon, Colombo 1	2,500.00
K. Ganeshalingam, Alfred Place, Colombo 3	20,000.00
Dr. (Mrs), Nirmala Nagulendran, Briarwood, U. S. A.	9,573.00
Mrs. P. Kathirgamalingam, Puloly East, Point pedro	3,000.00
Dr. R. Vigneswaran, Victoria Place, Colombo	10,000.00
M. Arulananthan, Trets, France	5,000.00
G. Thavarajah, Briarwood East, Australia	10,000.00
SCOT, Suffolk, England	153,881.50
Mrs. Natanasabapathy & 2 Others, Colombo	4,000.00
Dr. K. Mylvaganam, Aylesbury, U.K	10,000.00
Mrs. Satkunadevi Mahadeva, Fredrica Road, Colombo 6	3,000.00
Mrs. V. Sri Bhavan C/o Kugan Studio, Canada	5,000.00
Devotee, Kerudavil	1,000.00
Dr. (Mrs) Nirmala Nagulendran, Briarwood, U. S. A.	23,432.00
V. Ganeshalingam, 11 ford, Essex, U.K	1,500.00
M.K. Sivajilingam, M.P. Valvetiturai	<u>1,000.00</u>
Ctd.	<u>537,537.05</u>

Dr.A. SOMASUNDARAMPILLAI, B.A.F.C.A
CHARATERED ACCOUNTANT

91/1/4 Stanley Road,
JAFFNA
12-02-2004

SRI SARADA DEVI SEVASHRAMAM,

Point Pedro.

Inmate - Swami Chitruapanandajee

SCHEDULE OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

YEAR ENDED 31 - DECEMBER 2003. Ctd

	Rs. Cts.
Balance b/d	637,537.05
K. Anandasegaram, V. A. Vishnukumar, & Vigneswaran, U.K	19,170.00
Dr.N.Subramaniam, Edgeware, UK	1,000.00
Mrs. Kalavalli Arumugadason, Fredrice Road, Colombo 6	10,000.00
Dr. R. Ramalingam, Brookfield, Queensland, Australia	20,000.00
Mrs. S. Namasivayam, Kootney Crescent, Canada	5,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	5,284.00
Dr. R. Ravindran, Godfrey Terrace, Australia	6,000.00
S.G. Deva, Colombo Road, Ragama	1,000.00
K. Muttucumaru, Bank of Ceylon, Colombo 1	2,000.00
Mrs. Leela Chandrasegaram, Retired Principal, Canada	10,000.00
Lion V. K. Selvarajah, Sagara Road, Colombo 4	3,600.00
Mrs. Ranee Selvaratnam, Indianapolis, U. S.A.	10,000.00
Mrs. V. Sundaram, Retd, Principal, Thondamannar	1,000.00
Mrs. Sankari Kumarachandran, Elicolt city, Maryland, U.S.A	2,306.00
Devotees, Jaffna	4,540.00
Devotees, London	82,222.25
Gnanendran Sujeeva, Germany, C/o Mrs. K. Sellathurai, Thavady	5,000.00
Mrs. Poongothai Selvarajan, Vavuniya Campus	1,000.00
Dr. M.K.Muruganandan, Galle Road, Colombo 6	2,000.00
T. Ganeshalingam, Monsaart Crescent, Ontario, Canada	1,000.00
K. Kugaratnam, Michigan, U.S.A.	1,000.00
G. Rajmohan & G. Murugadas, Windsor Road, Essex, U.K	5,000.00
48 Others - under Rs. 1,000/= each	<u>9,575.00</u>
	<u>745,234.80</u>

Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Sevashrama,
Point Pedro.
12-03-2005.

TSUNAMI

Tsunami in Sri Lanka had devastated the entire peoples' life.

We are indeed ever grateful to Her Excellency Mrs. Nirupama Menon Rao to have come to our aid on 11-01-2005 with 19 tons of relief materials. Glory unto Mother/Prior to this Colombo Young Hindu Women Association had come to Kilinochchi on 02-01-2005 with relief materials. From 26-12-2004 to 1st of January 2005 we were really sad at heart about the disaster caused to the people of entire Island. We are always with the suffering of all.

Quite contrast a person known to us too well - who has never been to Jaffna for several years has belittled the work we have done so far from Mullaitivu up to Point Pedro costal belt. Some Tamils cannot understand the situation in the North or East because they are selfish and very narrow in their out look always. So long such type of people live in this country, our future is doubtful and gloomy,

All relief materials received from Colombo Women's Association and the Her Excellency Mrs. Nirupama Menon Rao's timely gift kept us occupied until 12-02.2005.

Beside we owe grateful thanks to donors from Colombo and abroad.

The article by Her Excellency Mrs. Nirupama Menon Rao and our photos will give you all how we have done our work so far... May Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi's Choicest Blessings be with you all is our sincere prayer to her.

Swami Chidrupananda.

SPECIAL THANKS.

We owe always our heart felt gratitude to the Ramakrishna Mission and to all its Rev. Swami Monks of the order. If we have progressed so far since 1969-it is

purely Holy Mother Sri Sarada Dervi's guiding hand and the experience gathered from our Revered Monks. We can list those very capable monks who have set a pace for us but due to space the names are omitted.

His Excellency Sri Nirupam Sen who was the High Commissioner in Sri Lanka last year had gifted us a very worthy mobile library bus. He is now appointed to U. N as permanent Representative of India.

Her Excellency Mrs. Nirupama Menon Rao the present High Commissioner for India has been always supporting our Mother's work since the time she assumed office as High Commissioner for India.

To support our cause every one must have implicit faith in Mother's life. Dr. A Somasundarampillai our Accountant, the Director, sand Sathapons - the printers gave their full support. "Thinakural is the newspaper who help us lot in releasing our supplement time to time, Uthayan and Valampuri they give the daily news paper, free of charge.

This is purely a spiritual and a humanitarian organization and our main objective is to serve all. We may fail in our duty if do not thank Mr.M.K. Sivajilingam the only M.P who is with our work always. The Hindu Ministry too needs commendation.

For a progressive Institution help from colleges, members and devotees here in Sri Lanka and abroad is needed always.

May Holy Mother bless them all is our sincere prayer to her.

Swami Chidrupananda.

100
100

But I say one thing:
if you want peace,
my child, see nobody's faults. see you
own faults. Learn to make the world
your own. No one is a stranger.
my child. the world is yours.

-Holy Mother

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