Beauty and Bliss

Contemporary Works on Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra

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Preface

Sri Sri Thakur Comes Live on Every Page in this Book

Every prophet makes a beginning; brings something new; puts mark on the landscape of human civilization. Of course, for each prophet there is a background to work on and there are footprints of the past prophets. Prophets normally work on very long time horizon; meaning, their life and ideology continue to work for very long period. They work much ahead into the future. Prophets' contribution has long durability, applicability and efficacy. Perhaps prophets' span of influence and efficacy of their ideology can be plotted on a sequential and somewhat cyclical pattern: stage of revelation, propagation of ideology, consolidation of influence, constructive phase for the future. Then a time comes, almost out of blue, when the prophet goes out of scene. Time and society then takes over the work of the prophet. Thereafter, a long phase ensues. There again, ups and downs follow; waves of upheaval carries the prophet's name, as if, into eternity. Prophets' disciples and admirers play significant role in keeping the phases upward and stable.

History would tell us later about the phase of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's influence that we are passing through now. One thing is sure, as we leant from Sri Sri Thakur, that there is nothing predictive and fixed as far as time and happenings are concerned, in a macro sense. Everything that is to happen is probabilistic; in the sense that events are partially predetermined by the happenings of the past, as part of formation process. And everything that is to come can be altered, manipulated, and engineered and so on. There lies the significance of timely action by the apostles of the prophet; and here we are talking about collective action. We are talking about the future time that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra worked for.

We feel that we are agents, players and participants of that time. We are tools and parts of the machinery that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra moved. The time machine is working. Sri Sri Thakur is also perhaps working. He expressed that He was looking for some shoulders, some instruments, which would carry Him and He would work through those. In what form and to what degree of control, Sri Sri Thakur is operating now is not exactly known to us. There is a bit of uncertainty and ambiguity in that. Even when Sri Sri Thakur was in flesh and blood with full visibility and full accessibility, people at times were baffled to understand where Sri Sri Thakur was coming from; what different roles He played at the same time; what magical effect He created in a twinkle of His eyes, by movement of his finger and so on. No one can therefore say today with any degree of certainty as to what is Sri Sri Thakur's wish today. What is He driving at?

But one thing is certain, and that is for each one of us to determine: what am I supposed to do? Each one of us can certainly get an inspirational direction as to what should one do, within the limited area of one's capability. Each one will remain within one's area of action and can contribute to Sri Sri Thakur's movement. The zone of work may be limited, but the range of work and the depth of accomplishment

remain unlimited. That is the challenge each one of us are struggling with. I say this for those of us, and there are quite a number of such devotees, who are dedicated for Sri Sri Thakur's cause. They live for Thakur and they live with Thakur; irrespective of their socio-economic status. They might be feeling constrained; that is because they are struggling to outreach their limitation. Sri Sri Thakur is beckoning them to march past further and still further. Those who have seen Sri Sri Thakur have seen infinity in finite form; have seen the possibility emerging out of seemingly impossible. They are trying to draw from the ocean of energy. And that is a strenuous exercise.

As a traveler on the road to infinity; on a path that is untraded, we are not sure, where are we now. But the passage of time gives us further lead to think, reflect and act for Sri Sri Thakur. We get impulse to offer some flowers at His feet; the flowers that bloom out of our experience and creativity. This book is a bouquet of flowers of those works. Each article is born out of experience of living with Sri Sri Thakur in current time and that is how it is contemporary works on Sri Sri Thakur. Most of these works were done during 2012 to 2015. The period witnessed many developments in the world; I mean the limited world within which we exist and operate. We saw Sri Sri Thakur's reflection in the happenings around and the spectrum of those reflections has colored the articles. We believe that you will be able to see Sri Sri Thakur on every page of this book.

Debesh C Patra

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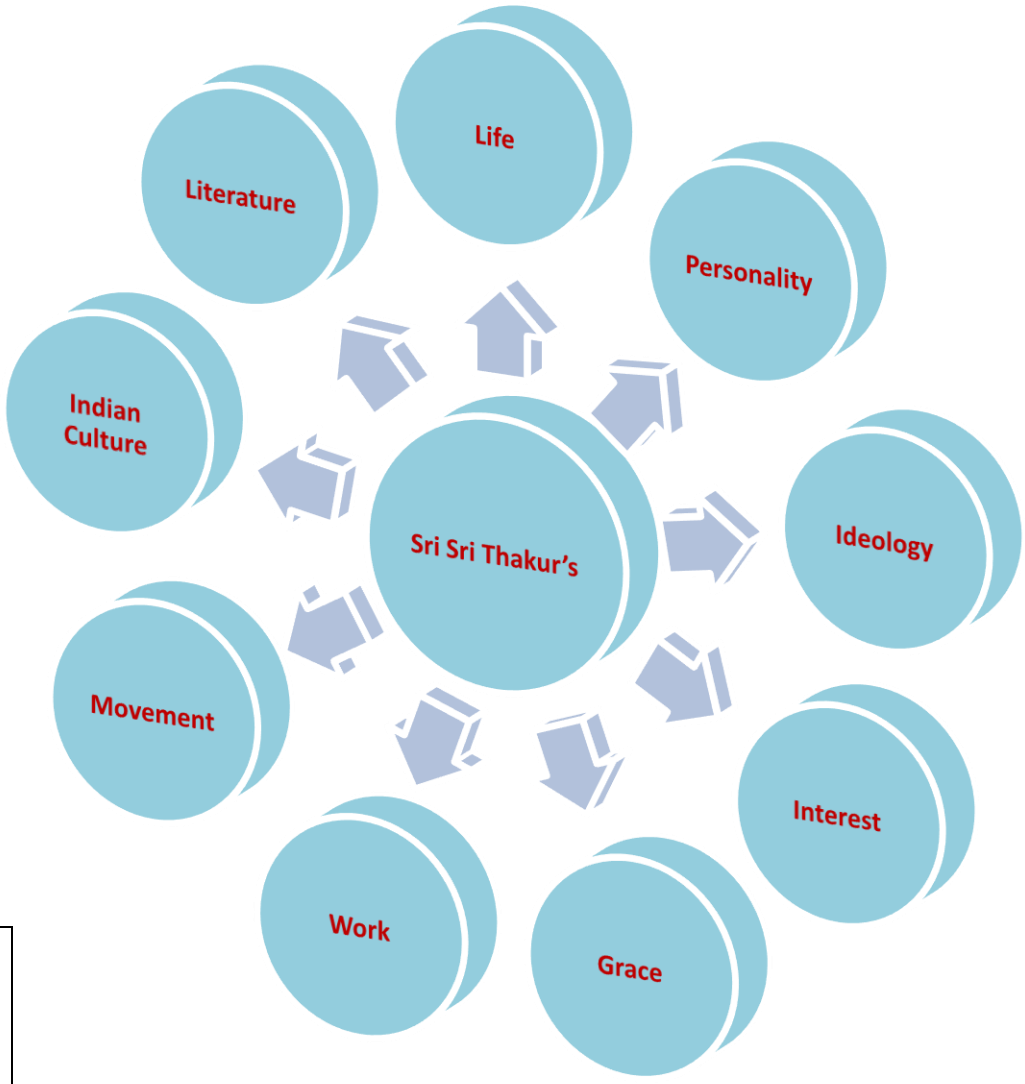
Beauty & Bliss



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Chapter 1

Sri Sri Thakur's Life

One

Thakur – the Divine
An Introductory Reading on Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra

Section 1	Sri Sri Thakur, the Person
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Section 1: Sri Sri Thakur, the Person

He was Anukul Chandra Chakravarty. His father was Shiv Chandra Chakravarty and mother Manmohini Devi. He was born in a hamlet called Himaitpur, in Pabna district of Bangladesh, erstwhile East Bengal in pre-independent India. Having born on 14th September 1888, he passed away on 27th January 1969. His was a life of intense activities in material, social and spiritual realm. He lived a life that can be called more of a public life than that of individual attainment and glory.

He lived in society, with family, friends and a large number of admirers. He experienced all the worries and anxieties of a human life in struggle. Human feelings and emotions were all there with him for everybody to share. He was husband of two wives and father of three sons and three daughters. He was victim of all kinds of social, economic, political, ethnic and communal upheaval that his time passed through.

He bore all the physical and psychological symptoms of a normal human being, may be at a refined and intense level. He expressed his feelings and emotions, just like any other human being, may be in more intimate way than most of us do. There was nothing strange in him, which would have put him at a distance from ordinary human being. There was of course something great in his personality, which distinguished him from others. But all these were on a human plane, within the reach of human touch. Amidst all the aura of divinity that surrounded him, the man in him was very much there for everybody to feel.

When someone came, he would usually receive him in the most cordial and native style. He would speak common man's language. He lived in very simple and natural ambient. His dress was just minimum and

yet quite decent. He followed all the trait of the culture and tradition in which he was born and brought up. He subjected himself to the laws of the land.

When he became old and physically weak, he passed through all the ordeals of illness, seclusion of old age and defiance of younger generation. He subjected himself to the prescriptions of doctors, he availed the helping required for him to survive the old age. He wailed in pain and prayed for recovery. He longed for a healthy and prolonged life, but just like any human being he breathed his last, leaving everything behind.

Section 2: Sri Sri Thakur, the Prophet

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra was an incarnate of God, in the lineage of all the past prophets namely, Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Prophet Mohammed, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna. All the past prophets, including Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, are the embodiment of the supreme power, the great Creator. They descended at various times with His message for the welfare of the mankind. They came to save the mankind by demonstrating the path of virtue. They all were the living image of God during their contemporary period. Each of them lived life, which was the most appropriate for the contemporary humanity to adopt and thereby achieve growth and happiness in all spheres of life. At all times, they carry the message of peace, love and life. Above all, they tell us exactly how to live a life so that the ultimate objective of man can be achieved. They came for the whole mankind. They did not discriminate between a man and another man on the lines of caste, creed, ethnic group and geographical boundary. They suffered for the mankind; still they showed us the path, out of sheer mercy for their creation. In all ages, they have shown path for evolution of mankind.

In essence, there is no difference in the ideology preached by all the prophets. All of them had a deep and abiding respect for the past prophets. Sri Sri Thakur, being the latest one, did show utmost regard and reverence for all the past prophets. While glorifying the past prophets, Sri Sri Thakur has carried forward the tasks left incomplete by his predecessor prophets. The life style, the philosophy of all the prophets has striking similarity among them, excepting the difference in style, with regard to time and place, when and where they descended and performed their mission. There is no ideological conflict among them. The differences in so called religions are of mankind's own creation and are result of corrosive effects of time.

Today, if Lord Krishna, Lord Rama and Prophet Mohammed or Lord Jesus has to be heard, then we get their voice in Sri Sri Thakur's words. If today the humanity has to follow the path shown by any of the past prophets, then we can see the path in the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra.

If God is one, then logically their messengers have to be the same. God's message has been resounded through all the past prophets at various times. The latest and most updated version of the Lord's message was heard through the graceful words of Sri Sri Thakur.

None of us had occasion to see God. Hence we may not be able to prove with the help of similarity that Sri Sri Thakur was the God in flesh and blood. The godhood of Sri Sri Thakur has been established by various means and an account of those has been presented below:

<u>Self revelation</u>

The foremost basis for identifying Sri Sri Thakur with the Supreme Father is the self-revelation of Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur did reveal his own self to a few disciples, under various circumstances. Some of his early associates could know by various incidents that the God has taken the form of Anukul and they got their findings tested again and again. When they were confirmed of their findings, they started

spreading this message for the benefit of the humanity. There were a number of symptomatic happenings of the grand descend, even before the child Anukul was born. There were early predictions made by some monks and sages, who apparently were precursors of the prophet and made preparatory arrangement for the Supreme Soul to arrive and serve his mission. Mother Manmohini Devi was blessed and was foretold by few devoted souls about her child. From his childhood days, a number of happenings confirmed that child Anukul was not an ordinary child. His words, behaviour, deed and above all his love and service to his immediate surroundings made him a crowned child. He became saviour to many. He did perform such extraordinary feats that he was liked, appreciated and adored by one and all. He started spreading holy message, he performed mass spiritual arousal, he cured many a patient, he created a movement by sheer strength of his personality, which radiated nothing but purity and divinity of the highest order.

All these happened normally as Sri Sri Thakur grew from infancy to childhood and then to boyhood. He lived a divine life from the early childhood days. His masterly qualities were inborn. During his span of life, he had never taken time off for achieving the kind of power, which he displayed all along. His words became prophetic. He prescribed ideology that brought solace and salvation to many souls. People found a normal resemblance with the known divine personalities of immediate past in Bengal like Sri Chaitanya dev and Sri Ramkrishna dev.

The belief and perception that Sri Sri Thakur was the incarnate was put to test by a number of skeptics. Their skepticism was turned into faith and the faith was confirmed by their realization in no time. Even hardened criminals got transformed into sages. Faith of a few individuals gradually gathered wings of reason and a nucleus of mass hysteria was generated around Sri Sri Thakur.

Whoever came in contact with Sri Sri Thakur got a new vision and the vision transformed not only the individual, but created a new sensitivity around. As if, the society came to posses something it was looking for ages in desperation. That was early twenties in the twentieth century, when Sri Sri Thakur was in his thirties. That was a period of revelation, when a charming and loving youthful Thakur was spreading the message of love and divinity like wildfire. Whoever came in his touch was finding a sacrificial fire for purification and elevation.

Then the phase of consolidation of ideology based on scientific and constructive social and political activities came. That was in thirties in twentieth century, when a few intellectuals of high order and social activist found their ultimate in Sri Sri Thakur and left no opportunity to make the best use of their lives. Literatures were created. Socio-political message of Sri Sri Thakur was given a shape. Scientific experiments were conducted. Entrepreneurial and economic activities relevant to the need of the society were organized. Sri Sri Thakur's mission was put in the form of an ideological package, so that it could be delivered to people at distance places. The movement got a brand and that was Satsang in Pabna. Satsang ashram was then operating like a nerve center, where the future destiny of mankind was being cooked and demonstrated. A new world order, where science and religion got synthesized; matter and spirit were integrated, promised to evolve out of Sri Sri Thakur. A new kind of empowerment was felt by each and every disciple of Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur transformed each and every individual by catapulting them on to the path of eternal growth and he universalized that mode of transformation. All these were a process of revelation of Sri Sri Thakur's masterly role that he came to play for the humanity. The humanity saw manifestation of the highest form of knowledge, realization, guidance, wisdom, direction and what not, which could only be found a resemblance with similar personalities of the yesteryears, who were the prophets of the past.

Similarity with past prophets

Sri Sri Thakur's style of living and approach to people was similar to those of past prophets. Sri Sri Thakur played more or less same type of role as were done by Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Jesus or Prophet Mohammed in succession. All of them had 'the welfare of existence' as their goal, preservation of virtue and eradication of evil as their mission. All of them were lovers of existence. 'Being and becoming' was their slogan. Love and service was their instruments. The whole creation, living and non-living alike, was their province.

The concept of 'dharma' as explained by Sri Sri Thakur was strikingly similar to that espoused by all the past prophets. 'Dharma' is the way of living and thinking whereby our existence along with the environment remains intact and gets further elevated by way of balanced growth of spiritual and material aspects. The codes of conduct and spiritual practices were also essentially similar. A thorough study of all the religious scriptures have brought out that the essence of the preaching of all the prophets are same as what Sri Sri Thakur has taught, but there is difference in style and appearance, which is to be attributed to the difference in time and space.

Sri Sri Thakur was found to quote the contents of Gita, Bible and Quran, both in letters and meaning. It is difficult to believe as to how he was doing that, without studying those scriptures even once. Many of the apparent contradictions in religious practices were resolved by Sri Sri Thakur by unraveling their true meaning and context. He was able to establish a fine similarity and synthesis among the plethora of versions and interpretations of religion. He in fact would tell what is the intended meaning of the sayings of Gita, Bible and Quran by the respective authors and how the meaning, in course of time, has suffered distortion. He would even go to the extent of saying the setting under which a particular event did take place and what are the causality factors, sequence of events and the characters involved in a particular event. The exact meanings of all the scriptural inscriptions were found crystal clear with Sri Sri Thakur. He could see, what happened and who were the people present when a particular scene in Bible was discussed with him. A number of such happenings left little doubt that Sri Sri Thakur was reincarnation of all the prophets.

The highest manifestation of divine qualities

Sri Sri Thakur has been measured to be much more than what human mind can do up to. By any standard of assessment, one fails to reach the bottom of his depth. During his lifetime, it is difficult to estimate as to how many persons would have tried to assess him. People from all walks of life have come, seen, talked and have surrendered at his height of greatness. A look at Sri Sri Thakur, a word from his mouth was enough to fill one's heart with content. It is something like watching the vast expanse of the sea standing on a beach. When humanity failed to fathom his depth and was overwhelmed by his love and effulgence, then humanity placed him at the highest pedestal and that was the place of the Supreme Father. Sri Sri Thakur was seen to be infinite in finite form. By his extraordinary power, he was christened as omnipotent. He could do wonders. So he was the most powerful. He could find solution to all kinds of problems, so he was omniscient. Who else he could be, if he was found to be the dearest and nearest one to everybody and does nothing but well to every one? His expertise in any subject, be it knowledge or action, was seen to be unparalleled. The sheer volume of literature that he has dictated, covering a wide range of topics, is something unprecedented in human history.

The incarnate of love

When a bereaved mother came and broke down before Sri Sri Thakur, Sri Sri Thakur felt the mother's pang so much that he also started wailing. When the mother saw Sri Sri Thakur's miserable condition, which was becoming worse with every passing moment, the mother started consoling Sri Sri Thakur. The

mother then started to reason with Sri Sri Thakur and prayed to contain his grief. She felt that, she has lost a son, but she has another son that was Sri Sri Thakur.

Sri Sri Thakur was near and dear to every one's heart. Sri Sri Thakur's love for everybody made him to work for everybody's betterment. His love for others was never at the level of feeling and emotion; it was always at the level of action. There were so much of feelings and the way Sri Sri Thakur communicated those feelings, everybody felt as if Sri Sri Thakur exclusively belonged to him. He really did things by which people were benefited; their destiny could be altered; new vistas got opened up before them; life took wings of joy and success.

When Sri Sri Thakur was at Himaitpur in Pabna, some of his household items were lost in theft. One day, he was talking to some people and came out with arguments in favour of thieves. The tenor of his argument was that a thief commits wrong deed out of compulsion. People, who are well do to, do not usually think about others who are deprived. Even if the needy people would beg, nobody would oblige them. Then the only path left for them is to resort to theft. Having listened to Sri Sri Thakur's genuine sympathy even for thieves, the one who committed theft felt so guilty that he privately confessed his wrongdoing to Sri Sri Thakur and returned some of the items he took away. Those items he already sold away, he said he would pay up the value for those items. He became Sri Sri Thakur's friend. For some time, he was still committing theft, while associating with Sri Sri Thakur. One day Sri Sri Thakur accompanied him while he was on his act of stealing. The event turned out to be a turning point for him and from that day onwards, he gave up his stealthy habit.

A stream of 'love and service' was perennially flowing out of Sri Sri Thakur. Whoever got an opportunity to bathe in that stream was transformed beyond recognition. There was magic in the air surrounding Sri Sri Thakur. Whoever came to Sri Sri Thakur felt empowered. One of the feelings that normally come to the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur is that, 'I am powerful, because I am His offspring. He would work through me'.

Who can love all without discrimination and take positive steps for the welfare of all, may be without explicit knowledge of the beneficiary, if he is not the Creator himself? In fact, Sri Sri Thakur was feeling that everything in the creation was the extension of his own self. The affinity between Sri Sri Thakur and with rest of the creation was natural and organic. Sri Sri Thakur was seen to identify himself with others and his interest was others' interest.

Self realization

Sri Sri Thakur is best known through one's own realization. It is a process that happens at the core of a person's being and gets built up within, through feelings, understanding, conviction and experience. It may come intuitively like a flash that yes, I have got the most wanted person in my life, the most preferred path, the most precious object in life, that is the God. It is like a natural freshness that one feels after seeing a bud of rose; it can be like a spontaneous outburst of emotion that gets exchanged between a child and parents. Just an encounter and few exchanges with Sri Sri Thakur brought out in many persons a deep faith that Sri Sri Thakur was that proverbial figure, whom Arjun got in the form of Krishna; Hanuman and Kabir Das got in the form of Sri Rama and Mira bai got in Nanda lala. It is like a reunion, a rendezvous, discovery of a long lasting intimacy. It is just like a flow of electric current resulting in a light getting switched on. Not much argument is required to come to that level of realization that Sri Sri Thakur is the ultimate Guide, the God, who has to be placed in the place of a Guru and derive the most out of him.

The same realization does come for some people out of long perseverance and hard experience in life. People with rational arguments and practical basis, may come to know the true self of Sri Sri Thakur, after some evidence and experience. Man with intellect may come to know Sri Sri Thakur after doing a

comparative study of religions and great men. They put Sri Sri Thakur's words to test through real life experiment and then realize how serious can be Sri Sri Thakur's words, which otherwise may appear to be quite terse and simple.

Whatever may be the path of realization, the hard fact has to be dawned in some one's mind that yes, I do not need anything more after I have got Sri Sri Thakur with me. It is like the brightness of the rising sun that comes in the morning when the darkness gets vanished.

Of course, realization on Sri Sri Thakur is not a static state. It is a level of conviction, a grain of faith, a moment of satisfaction, which comes and continues to grow with passage of life. Knowing that Sri Sri Thakur is the God and accepting him as the Guide is just a beginning in the life's journey. With Sri Sri Thakur in the forehead, there is no end to realization in life. It is likely to come in abundance as one proceeds on the path of self-discovery.

Section 3: Sri Sri Thakur, the Guide

Sri Sri Thakur as a living Guide plays the most active and apposite role in our life. He is the role model, the ideal for us.

He is such a living model before us that we can follow him and can give shape to our lives in the most appropriate manner, as per our potentiality and distinctiveness. He is a living example before us whom we can follow with regard to every conceivable aspects of life. He personifies all virtues, all superior instincts in life. As an example before us, he leads a perfect and impeccable life. It is very significant to learn that as a living ideal, there is no illusion, no deception and no limitation in Sri Sri Thakur's life. He has not done an act, which by any kind of wisdom, can be considered to be an error, a wrong and inappropriate step.

If we can translate his desire in our life, then life can achieve supreme status. As our ideal, we have to have a deep affinity and loving bondage with him. Affinity with him would keep ourselves away from all our worldly attachment, which usually keeps us linked with complexes. We can keep ourselves away from the clutches of complexes and obsessions, if only we are tied with Sri Sri Thakur by means of our thought and deed. Uninterrupted devotion and adherence on Sri Sri Thakur would bring out the best in our life.

As a living Guide, Sri Sri Thakur is unparalleled, incomparable and occupies the supreme place in our life's scheme. In all our priorities, if we can uphold the interests of Sri Sri Thakur, then we remain focused and poised. When we do things as per his will, we remain concentrated, composed and all our energy is used in doing things in inquisitive and acquisitive way and life takes the tenor of an enthusiastic uphill elatement. A lot of dormant energy within us gets unlocked and life takes a glorious uplift.

As a Guide, Sri Sri Thakur leads us with kindness and tender, which we see in a mother for an infant. He inspires us, provides sustenance and leads the way with utmost perfection that can hardly be expected from any other quarter.

Sri Sri Thakur during his lifetime has guided people with living instruction. Today he is guiding us in invisible way. Strange are his ways of guidance. His blessing is there for all of us at all times. His protective hands and his magnetic pull are actively working for us, like air and sunshine are serving our lives as provided by nature. We only need to pay heed to his words and keep ourselves tuned to his spirit. The ways and methods of keeping ourselves logged on to him are also prescribed by him. We only need to follow his prescription faithfully. Rest of the processes are taken care by him. As a guide he has taken our responsibility, which he would not let go under any circumstances.

Section 4: Limitations of Sri Sri Thakur

The greatest limitation of Sri Sri Thakur was his appearance. It is difficult to measure him and very hard to get to know his true identity. It is true that the human form, by which he presented himself for a brief tenure, made it easy for us to comprehend him. But that human form itself made him so natural that his supernatural ability became a subject of deep mystery. His finite form every now and then tried to defy and conceal his infinite power. It was a real puzzle to see the all powerful God, the Creator of the Universe, is sitting under a shade in the premise of the Thakur Bungalow at an underdeveloped tribal locality that was Deoghar in Santal Pragana District in Bihar (now Jharkhand). He had no artificial surrounding, no security cordon and no miraculous performance. There was nothing grand about his setting, except of course the charming and lovable personality that was never missed. How could man's mind experience something, which required him to overcome his limitation?

Sri Sri Thakur had another handicap, which was that he could not publicize himself. He never proclaimed in so many words that he was the God incarnate. He could have commanded, 'you foolish folk, better listen to me, or else perish'. He of course had given enough hints of this message. To some devotees, he had displayed his cosmic image, as per the requirement of that particular devotee. At one point he said, 'like light does not proclaim that I am light, like air does not announce that I am air, similarly if God hood has revealed in anybody, he does not say so in so many words. He has to be seen, to be felt and more so to be loved and be surrendered at'.

Sri Sri Thakur had another limitation, which was that he could not reject any body. He could not discriminate between good man and not so good man. All were his children. He once was heard to lament, 'I am a foolish father of fallen sons'.

Sri Sri Thakur could not threaten anybody. He did not try to apply his force on anybody. He was just trying to pursue, cajole, guide and implicitly take care. He respected individual dignity and sovereignty, which he as the Creator had endowed us with.

Perhaps the last thing that Sri Sri Thakur did not do was that he could never take care of himself. He did not run away from the torture and suffering heaped upon him by innumerable fellows like us. He was subjected to all kinds of humiliation, pain, and what not. People misunderstood him, defamed him and implicated him in legal proceedings. His own near and dear defied his wish and did things against his will. His own disciples tried to impersonate him and spread slender against him. He was physically assaulted. Assassination was attempted on him. It was sad commentary as alleged by some that towards the last part of his life, he was kept in apparent seclusion, in solitary confinement, against his will. Sri Sri Thakur at times was wailing of pain. He said once, 'Jesus is being crucified even today'. The humanity as a whole neglected him. He did not do anything for his own self, for his life, for his health and for his image.

Section 5: Sri Sri Thakur's Life Sketch

It may not be accurate to bind Sri Sri Thakur's activities in the time frame of eighty-one years, the span of his lifetime. Sri Sri Thakur was normally operating on a multidimensional timescale. How does one estimate the activities of a person who is found to be present at different places and performing different acts at the same time? How does one calculate the one to one communications that Sri Sri Thakur used to have with each one in the crowd surrounding him and each one getting their unique message? These are not certain exceptional events with Sri Sri Thakur. This is how Sri Sri Thakur was naturally seen to act.

Then the intensity and effect of his activities are something beyond any measurement. The involvement of Sri Sri Thakur in a particular act and the outcome of that act also had some kind of a different scale. The smallest thing did not escape his notice. The minutest details are there in his scheme. At the same time, the whole world is under his vigilant notice. His yardstick of result of a work is different. He views

things in a different way. For everything he finds a lasting meaning and each of his action has far-reaching consequences. His values are something different from what usually we have. These are some of the peculiarities that we saw in Sri Sri Thakur's life and while describing his life sketch we need to be aware of these.

Childhood

Anukul as a child was exceptionally dear to all his friends and neighbours. Everyone liked him and enjoyed his company. Right from his childhood, one feature that was very prominent in his character was his sympathy and service to others. As a child, he would share his warm clothing with others during winter. He would insist his mother to feed some needy guy, even if mother would not have enough food to feed her own children. He paid the examination fee for others and deprived himself the chance of sitting in the examination. His feeling of oneness with others was visible right from his early age. He would serve any body in need at the first instance.

Another feature of his childhood days was his extraordinary love and obedience to his mother. Mother was very dear to him. He would do anything to please his mother. As if he derived justification of his own existence for his mother till he was quite grown up.

Still another feature that was quite surprisingly seen during his early age was his extraordinary divine power. That was perhaps a revelation of his godhood, which was getting expressed naturally. He was highly devotional; he was performing certain acts that identified him with God. He would say something in his child like manner, which would turn out to be predictive.

Many saints and learned persons of that time started coming from unknown places to pay their obeisance to boy Anukul. They would like to take the boy in their lap and enjoy celestial bliss. They would praise mother Manmohini for her fortune to bear the great child. Predictions were made that her child would be highly detached soul, yet would possess the wealth of the world like a monarch.

Another significant development was that mother Manmohini, when she was a girl in her teen age, saw her Guru in dream, who was Saint Huzur Maharaj, living at Agra. She also came to know a 'word', a 'sound', a 'name', which was advised to her as a 'mantra', that is a clue for spiritual practice. Accidentally, through some distant contacts, mother Manmohini could visit Saint Huzur Maharaj when she was a young girl. Maharaj was in fact waiting for her. He blessed the young girl taking her in his lap and did tell her that she would be a glorious mother and her motherhood would be a cosmic event which would facilitate the God's descend on the earth. Formally the Saint consecrated the girl with the divine 'mantra'.

It was subsequently known by long chain of events that, Sri Sri Thakur's incarnation was known to Saint Huzur Maharaj and the latter was instrumental for preparing a ground for the great descend. The 'mantra' which is said to be the cardinal sound, supposedly the cause of the universe, is heard at the highest level of spiritual attainment. Huzur Maharaj by virtue of his high level of spiritual achievement could sense that 'name' and was also aware about the embodiment of that highest spiritual force, who would born through the girl Manmohini. Huzur Maharaj guided Manmohini for a long time till boy Anukul was born. When the child Anukul placed his head on the earth, Huzur Maharaj breathed his last in a state of fulfillment. His job of paving the passage for the greatest man on earth was accomplished.

As a boy, Anukul was occasionally experiencing some kind of thrill, something similar to trance, which made mother Manmohini anxious of his son's health. She thought it to be a disease, may be similar to epilepsy. She anxiously sought the advice of her successor-Guru Saint Sarkar Saheb at Agra. She was advised that these were symptomatic of his son's high spiritual power. She was advised to impart the holy 'name' to the boy. When mother did that, boy Anukul confided to mother that he was chanting the holy

‘name’ ever since he was in the womb. The fact which was known later that the boy Anukul was the personification of the holy ‘name’. The holy ‘name’ has taken physical shape in boy Anukul. He was the living ‘name’.

There are a number of anecdotes, which speak about the miraculous deeds of boy Anukul. People started loving him and had a lot of expectation from him that as the boy grows he would bring relief to the suffering of the mankind.

Boy Anukul had to walk long miles for his school. The teacher was somehow not very kind to the boy. There is a story which Sri Sri Thakur was heard recounting later in his life about an oral question in arithmetic. The question teacher asked to boy Anukul was: ‘what would be the sum of one plus one?’ The student Anukul was lost in a riddle and hesitatingly blurted out that there are no two ‘one’s in the universe. Nothing is exactly similar to something else. No two leaves on a tree are exactly alike. When there are no two ‘one’s, where is the scope to add those together. Boy Anukul completed his schooling but did not sit in the examination as he deposited his examination fee for someone else who did not have the required sum to pay the fee. That was the end of Anukul’s schooling.

Then he got himself admitted in National Medical College at Calcutta. He did some study there but it is not known whether he completed his medical study. Much before his completion, he started practicing medicine and was curing patients. During his stay in Calcutta, he was made to pass through a hard life. He did not have a place to stay comfortably. So he was adjusting his accommodation with porters in a coal godown. There again he was serving the need of the most downtrodden people and was making them happy. It was recounted by Sri Sri Thakur himself that in those days he did not have enough money to have square meal a day. He used to spend days together in fasting. One day he took some soda to kill his appetite and then he had stomach pain. He did not have few paise to pay for his fare to travel in tram. With the passage of time, the student Anukul got transformed to doctor Anukul.

Early youth

In early youth, Sri Sri Thakur was found to be engaged in healing people. As a doctor, he was treating people from physical illness. There was magic in his treatment. Supposedly incurable diseases were getting cured miraculously. Another type of healing he was rendering to people was mental and spiritual healing. The process was holy ‘name’ and mass ‘kirtan’. It was a flood of spiritual upheaval, which Sri Sri Thakur created along with a few associates and that attracted people from far and wide and gave them a divine touch. By various miraculous events during that period some wise people could feel that Anukul Chandra was no ordinary human being.

It would perhaps help us to be reminded that Sri Sri Thakur was born in a very poor part of the world, where suffering of the people was unbelievable. There was poverty, hunger, destitution, illiteracy, malnutrition, superstition; all these after centuries of social decadence following political wilderness. In this ambience, Sri Sri Thakur started healing people, physically and mentally and brought about enlightenment. In retrospect, we have to of course admit that there were favourable elements in the environment as well. The society had a cultural heritage, which though was faded and was still decaying, but did not die out entirely. The cultural fabric was being turned asunder, people were getting suffocated, but the deep psyche and spirit of the people was not corrupted and was not entirely debilitated.

A remarkable manifestation that took place during that early age of Sri Sri Thakur was that he was often getting into trance, a state of suspended animation, during the time of ‘kirtan’, a mass recital of divine rhymes, raising a frenzied state of mind and body. And during that period, his body was sometime falling flat like a corpse and at times was passing through various wriggling postures and motions, which had some kind of ‘yogic’ significance. During that process he used to utter many a kind of sounds, words and

known and unknown type of voices. A part of that spontaneous pouring has been recorded and published with title as 'Holy Book'. Most of the recorded messages are in Bengali and a little in English. Other languages could not be noted. Strange were the happenings in those days, which was incomprehensible to many. The attraction of the personality of Sri Sri Thakur in those days was something irresistible. Whoever came into the spell of his vicinity got a touch of his devotion and started unquestioning following. He was seen to be an embodiment of love, grace, mercy and divine charisma. In a very short period, his name and fame threw the whole undivided Bengal into hysteria. Words of mouth spread that Sri Sri Thakur was the incarnate of the era; he would relieve mankind of the suffering and he was the hope for the world to survive the danger of extinction.

Formative period of his movement

This was the era, when Sri Sri Thakur's views were crystallized, codified and was given a shape of complete ideology. Gradually Sri Sri Thakur's image of a 'friend, philosopher and guide' was transformed to that of a universal teacher. He developed mass following. His preaching was codified. His views were tested against the contemporary philosophies. His views on various complex social, political, economic and psychological subjects were circulated. Books and journals were published. Public personalities came to take Sri Sri Thakur's guidance on various macro and global issues. Scientist came to explore the mysteries of the universe. Sri Sri Thakur's message went all over the globe and few westerners flew to India to have a firsthand glimpse of this person.

Around this time, Sri Sri Thakur codified a way of living for universal use, which was imparted to others in the form of indoctrination, i.e., 'diksha'. Those who surrendered at him had to follow a few dicta, as a daily rite and slowly by this process the desired transformation and elevation would come. Sri Sri Thakur formulated a system where people, living at far off places, could follow his path and could avail his guidance. That is how he nominated some preachers (*ritwiks*), who at the instance of Sri Sri Thakur went around imparting 'diksha'.

A lot of socially constructive and economically productive activities gradually started building around Sri Sri Thakur's man making programme. Providing gainful employment to people was Sri Sri Thakur's immediate objective. But in the long run, he wanted to build such productive and creative character in human being so that he will not only be self employed, but also will work like productive agent in the society. In the process, socially meaningful projects like community deep tube well, wind powered electricity and workshop etc. were grown by employing unskilled and unemployed people. Sri Sri Thakur kept people busy by various novel ways. Sri Sri Thakur's ashram at Himaitpur in Pabna had a lot of industrial activities in small scale. People who were involved in these activities were kind of dedicated souls, who performed wonderful things. They were also refining themselves by way of learning culture and attaining spiritual heights. Sri Sri Thakur by mid forties in the twentieth century did so many organized activities with a view to build human character that Pabna ashram was considered to be beehive from where a new era in human civilization was being churned out. That was also a period when the world was passing through wars, nuclear explosion, anti colonial revolution and all that, which were not left outside the domain of Sri Sri Thakur's active manipulation. His intervention, by way of changing the mind of people and by bringing about a change in the course of events, had gone a long way in saving the humanity from total extinction.

By then Sri Sri Thakur's movement came to be known as Satsang movement and his ashram was known as Satsang ashram. It may be worth mentioning here as a postscript that Sri Sri Thakur can be put in the role neither of a social reformer nor of a social activist. Institution building, though he did it from scratch, was not in his agenda. His areas of operation were human mind and spirit and the whole of world was his field. What he could do during his lifetime was only seeding an ideology for the future; how far in to the future we really do not know.

A period of Calmness and Serenity

By the time Sri Sri Thakur migrated to Deoghar in Bihar (now Jharkhand in India) in 1946, he was 58 years old. That was just the eve of India's independence and territorial partition. A new era in Satsang movement began from there. A new Satsang ashram started to build up from scratch, on the backdrop of separation from the original land, loss of life and property, a new inhospitable environment (in the eye of the local people, ashram was a rehabilitation center of refugees). Sri Sri Thakur was after his mission of man making without any sign of letting up. Ashram building was not at all in his agenda, though he was instrumental in mobilizing man, money and material for making minimum arrangement of food, shelter and clothing for his associates.

We find two mainstream activities that did happen simultaneously during 1950s.

One activity was Satsang as an organization started to grow in a very big way, out of nothing, keeping Sri Sri Thakur in the heart. It was felt necessary to build an organized force in order to withstand the negative social and economic pressures coming from the environment, which was posing a threat to the mission of Sri Sri Thakur. Hence a formidable public opinion, financial mobilization and socio-economic activities etc. were given a very big push by Sri Sri Thakur. His disciples also did a stupendous task of mobilization, being inspired and guided by him. Satsang, Deoghar became a holy place of pilgrimage and people in large number poured in from distant places for the blessing of Sri Sri Thakur. There was exponential growth in the number of disciples of Sri Sri Thakur all around India and abroad. Sri Sri Thakur's mission and ideology was widely circulated and got far flung acceptance. People came in mad rush to derive whatever they could from Sri Sri Thakur.

The second stream of development that took place during that time was that Sri Sri Thakur's health started failing his spirit. Sri Sri Thakur's mobility and activities was becoming restricted very fast. During May 1956, Sri Sri Thakur suffered from paralytic stroke. He miraculously recovered within a couple of months. But he never came back to his normal health from that time onwards. Nevertheless, his grace and his powerful impact on the surrounding were fully felt by the old and new disciples alike. Sri Sri Thakur was sitting, talking and moving around with a magnificent posture and divine calmness. During this period, he started giving a lot of emphasis on creating and preserving literature. He was dictating a lot of sayings on various complicated issues, which were being recorded carefully. He wanted them to be published fast. He came out with some constructive schemes like building a university, river linking project, spreading out Satsang colony at different places and some more projects. One gets an impression that Sri Sri Thakur was accelerating his man making and culture building programme on a war footing and there was a clear indication that he was racing against time. Sri Sri Thakur was found pleading before people to give shape to his schemes before he departs. Despite failing health, his contact with people did not diminish. During that period Sri Sri Thakur was mostly living in shades and was changing his place of abode from one shade to another. He was as accessible to people as he was ever. Human being was his greatest asset. He enjoyed people's company. Against medical advice, he would meet people, talk to them, share their anxiety and would radiate his celestial impact and make people happy.

The end of his worldly play came cruelly in the early morning of 27th January 1969. It was a quiet withdrawal. For past number of years, it appeared; he was preparing for this and was also hinting to his close associates. Death was under his will. He descended, did a grand play, left a formidable legacy of divine wealth for the future, left behind an image of an Ideal and a well formulated body of ideology, left rest of the tasks to the future humanity and withdrew himself for eternity.

Section 6: Sri Sri Thakur's Ideological Threads

Be Ideal Centric

Like the planets move on their orbit centering around the sun, the life of a person exists and continue to move on, based on a pull which remains outside his own self. This is perhaps a primordial affinity in man's nature, which sometimes has been said as 'the genial current of the soul'. A person's life gets shaped and formed based on who or what is there at the center. Sri Sri Thakur wants us to put a superior beloved, nay the Supreme Beloved, at that place and tells us to make him the pivot of life. Life is in any way concentric by origin; we have to only put an Ideal at the center.

If we do not place an Ideal at the center, there will be something else in that place, knowingly or unknowingly, which would then drive us in the manner it likes. Invariably, it is any of the various kinds of complexes, which are called obsessions, which are found to be there. It is a complex psychological process, which is not always perceptible to all of us. But we can understand this at times, may be when we are at a distress, or in a dispassionate mood or may be by some flashes of enlightened vision. Whatever may be our perception on this issue, since the issue is very complex, it is advisable to go as per the view of the great sages. Our rational understanding may not be enough to dive deep into it unhurt. Our vision may be shrouded by emotion and indulgence. Nevertheless, it is easier to grasp this while paying attention to the sayings of the wise men.

An Ideal is said to be fulfiller the best. We need to have such an ideal before us whom we can follow and be fulfilled to the best of our requirement and who can guide us in the most unerring way.

Theoretically, we can have anyone as ideal whom we love and to whom we are prepared to surrender. The fact is that as we follow the ideal, the strength and limitation of the ideal also would have influence on us. It is not very difficult to appreciate that higher is the goal, better would be the progress. Similarly, higher is the ideal, better would be our benefit. On the strength of that argument, it is to be said that our ideal should the best, the highest, the most evolved person, the best guide and hence the God himself. We need to have an ideal like Lord Rama was for Hanuman, Lord Krishna for Arjuna, Sri Ramakrishna for Swami Vivekananda; all these are live examples.

On the basis of these yardsticks, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra stands out as the most appropriate Ideal for us, as has been said about his identity in the previous paragraphs. Another very reassuring fact for us is that Sri Sri Thakur himself has given us his words that once you surrender at him, he takes care of you.

Keeping ideal at the center of life essentially means to make him an integral part your core being. There has to be a deep and intimate relationship between you and Sri Sri Thakur. There has to be such emotional link between you and Sri Sri Thakur that you would do everything what he says. Consciously and sub consciously, your thought and action will be guided by him. This is a kind of subconscious, automatic and self reinforcing process. It has a natural force of its own, as Sri Sri Thakur is a very loveable personality and he has a strong pull effect. But a conscious effort also needs to be put in that direction by us. Sri Sri Thakur has provided the required path as to how to do that. We need to mentally condition ourselves to listen what he says and do accordingly,

Among many other things that Sri Sri Thakur says, he says one simple thing. 'You love me'; a very short and sweet expectation! In fact very high level spiritual practices become easier, if only we love him. Attachment to him is devotion. With love and devotion on the Ideal, there would be a continuous progressive refinement, which would take place almost imperceptibly. It is like how a plant grows after sowing the seed in to soil and providing it with water, air and sunlight. Basically, after that, it is the law of nature that takes over.

With ideal at the center, life would become concentrated and focused. Having a framework of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology in your mind and as that framework can solve all your ideological conflicts and can fulfill all other established ideologies, then you would not be torn asunder by a plethora of apparently contradictory views and emotions. Basically you now have a formula by which very difficult problems in life can be solved. You would rarely find yourself at a crossroad, as you have the compass in your own hand. You can get live guidance when it is required.

Now let us pass through an interesting dilemma. Either you are ideal centric or you are complex oriented. Complexes are psychological anchors that instinctively keep you obsessed with passions. Complexes can give you temporary enjoyment, but can jeopardize your long-term interest (you may not come to know of that). Ideal can give you a balanced long-term growth oriented tenor of life. All these have to be understood in relative terms. There is nothing good or bad in absolute sense. In real life, things are not always in black and white. Each one of us has to find a solution to this dilemma.

Sri Sri Thakur has provided a very simple solution to the mystery surrounding complexes. He says complexes like lust, anger, greed and infatuation and such others are natural tendency of human being. These have been part of human psychology; hence these are not to be shunned off; nothing very much to be worried about at their manifestation in our behaviour. In fact these are useful tools provided by nature to ourselves and each one of these feelings has got useful function to do. Only thing is that they need to be handled appropriately. The best way to handle them is to keep oneself under the influence of the Ideal. These complexes are very dreadful to the Ideal, as Ideal has got complete mastery on them. As long as a person is in touch with the Ideal, all these complexes would play only their assigned role. The moment, a person gets outside the area of influence of the Ideal, these complexes will assume various devilish role and start acting on the head of the person. Once they rise up to the head, the person on his own cannot get rid of it. Again he needs the influence of Ideal to come out their clutch. That is why Sri Sri Thakur advises his disciples always to remain within the focal area of the Ideal's light, so that the shadow of complexes will automatically shy away. Like we cannot fight with darkness without the help of light, similarly we cannot get rid of complexes without the help of the Ideal.

Once man is away from the clutches of complexes, then he is in fact master of his own self. In that state man can explore all the potential lying dormant in him. He can concentrate; he can regulate himself and can do whatever he wants to do. Then he can drive and play with emotions.

The attachment to ideal opens up so many fronts in a man's mind that he out grows his boundary. The Ideal inspires him to go on achieving and acquiring more and more. The attachment with Ideal is a sure way to unfetter oneself from all kinds of bondage that man builds around himself. Sri Sri Thakur always inspired and supported people to live, grow, enjoy and acquire. Sri Sri Thakur promised both peace and prosperity by means of the ideology that he preached.

The more we are attached to Sri Sri Thakur, more the chances that we get what all Sri Sri Thakur wants to give us. It all now is in our hand as to how much attached we feel for him and how much we translate his advises into practice and accordingly we get our selves rewarded.

Attachment with Ideal is not merely emotional issue, though Sri Sri Thakur at one place said that attachment has to be sentimental and fanatic. Attachment has to be inquisitive, active and volitional. Attachment is always followed by service and sacrifice. So attachment with Sri Sri Thakur would also necessarily have all these elements of activism. When a person actively fulfils the wishes of Sri Sri Thakur, he is sure to outgrow his own former self and possibilities for him would be immense. Sri Sri Thakur wants us to grow and be evolved into a very superior variety of human being.

Let us make a reality appraisal of ourselves and admit that we do not have that kind of attachment as of now. Therefore Sri Sri Thakur has provided ways and means of acquiring that feeling of attachment. He has prescribed such ideological rites and formulae that the attachment will grow and culminate in a higher state of devotion and faith.

Sri Sri Thakur said, 'the aim of human life is to attain Godliness and Godliness is that character which has a natural and perennial urge to nurture and fulfill.' Sri Sri Thakur has further put it in simple terms by saying, 'the aim of life is to exist and to grow'. Someone asked, 'do we need a guide for that or it can be done alone?' Sri Sri Thakur said, 'there is one significant work, which we cannot do alone. That work is to make everything meaningful and adjusted. We need a demonstrator, who has acquired mastery on that by virtue of practical experience.'

Have a Progressive Go of Life

By continuously reminding us about our goal, Sri Sri Thakur has attempted to keep us alert about our goal and the desired path. In fact, growth is a natural tendency of life. From the day man takes birth, he aspires to grow and this desire to grow has made it possible for man to scale the heights of evolution passing through generations.

Though the tendency to grow is the most natural and most ancient instinct of man, but there are factors to pull him down and keep him distracted from his goal. Besides, every person has his inbuilt limitations, which are woven around him at any point of time. Notwithstanding all these constraining factors, one has to have a progressive zeal and uphill motion, for which Sri Sri Thakur has provided the clues, which act through various sub systems in our life, namely psychological, physical as well as spiritual. The human body and mind is a very complex system. Sri Sri Thakur knows all the complexities of the system and has outlined a scheme by which the system is maintained and is driven towards its destination.

'Be progressive' is not a piece of advice from Sri Sri Thakur. It is Sri Sri Thakur's wish for us and he has provided the mechanism to fulfill his wish.

One very important point we need to remind ourselves is that Sri Sri Thakur is not a preacher, who habitually goes on churning out talks and sermons. It may sound disbelieving, considering the volumes of literature that has come out of talk of Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur was indeed a man of few words. His talks were very little as much as these were very meaningful and profound. Whenever he has spoken, it is only out of a need or in response to a query and at all times, he was very precise.

Sri Sri Thakur has not said anything by way of advice. He has given ideas, solutions, clues and everything to help everyone to do something. His every word had an action oriented push to the person whom the word is said for. His words were like a knife in the hands of an expert surgeon. He made people to do things. He guided, he goaded, he traveled along side, he shared loads and he healed wounds, everything as required. He has never made a public speech, except a few times from his seat, addressing his disciples congregated around him, by way of giving them a plan of action and direction.

If Sri Sri Thakur wanted us to be inquisitive and acquisitive, he also showed us the way as to how can we do that. Inquisitiveness in observation and inquisitiveness in service to others are the two qualities Sri Sri Thakur wanted us to practice. Acquisitiveness in skill, knowledge and experience is what Sri Sri Thakur wanted us to develop a habit for. All these are with a view to have a healthy and progressive life for oneself along with the environment. When one follows these dicta of being inquisitive and acquisitive, one encounters a lot of other challenges and tasks, which brings new dimensions to life and in the process life goes on rolling and getting refined.

Know the Cause & Effect Relationship

Spiritualism is those thought and deeds, which make mind reason oriented, says Sri Sri Thakur. Most of our problems in life spring from our ignorance of the cause and effect relationship. If we knew what causes what, then things would have been very simple for us and we would have oriented ourselves accordingly. Whatever Sri Sri Thakur has said and done during his life is only perhaps to explore the 'how's and 'why's of life. Why does man behave in the manner that we see him to behave; and each one behaves in a typical way. How does the society function, how can the social problems be taken care? What is the solution to the man's problem in all spheres? How can science and technology be further used for man's welfare? What is the relationship between spirit and matter? How can man live in peace and prosperity? How can the environment be preserved and promoted? How can we take care of our mental and physical health? What is happening to our cultural fabric; can it be further refined and be made relevant to the present time? How to bridge the past to future? Sri Sri Thakur has provided clues to all kinds of issues with a view to understand and manipulate them. After Sri Sri Thakur's advent on this earth, humanity should not commit any serious mistake. The key to knowledge has been left behind by Sri Sri Thakur in a very explicit manner.

After coming in association with Sri Sri Thakur and accepting his discipleship, Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das confessed that 'now he could see things more clearly than how he used to see earlier'. Having come to know Sri Sri Thakur, if a little more clarity of vision does not occur to a person, then it is unusual and one has to find a reason for that.

Sri Sri Thakur figuratively can be put in the slot of a mastermind and a hero in action. He knows, for example, what is happening at any point in the deep recess of your mind and what can be done to alter the orbit of the planets. For Sri Sri Thakur, there is no miracle. Every cause, every feeling and all resources of the universe are within his ability to maneuver. The supreme father that he is, he reigns over everything.

Nourish your Body & Mind

No one would perhaps dispute the necessity of nourishing body and mind. More or less everyone does take care of body and tries to keep mind peaceful. This is perhaps one of the basics of human conduct and living. The problem is with the complexity of the task and ability (or inability) of each person to take care of those. Sri Sri Thakur has provided the codes of health and hygiene including that of mental health. It is not enough that we know these; what is important is that we should practice all these. Sri Sri Thakur by his scheme of ideology has made such provision that health and well being of body, mind and spirit are taken care.

In this context come the issues of environmental condition, community health, family ambience and so many other issues like values, beliefs and emotions. The way of living, thinking and attitude together determine our health.

Sri Sri Thakur has woven all these issues into a framework and has provided us some guidelines to follow, by which the whole issues are taken care. He has codified laws and rules for healthy living at each stage of human life so that life becomes pure, progressive and prosperous.

Render Service to Environment

Environmental service is essential for the existence and growth of man, said Sri Sri Thakur very clearly. He urged his disciples to serve the environment and help the environment to upgrade. He himself has done it in splendid way during his lifetime. It is because of his service, sympathy and sense of oneness towards others, people loved him so much. One of his principles of keeping good health is to be in touch with the elements of nature and, of course, pure nature.

Nowadays most of us feel that environmental service is a collective job and hence no one single person can be held accountable for that. Be it environment in terms of society or environment in terms of nature, we take things granted, and leave them for someone else's consideration. Sri Sri Thakur said, no; each one has an environment surrounding him and it is his individual responsibility to serve the environment in the interest of his Lord. It is a very tall order on each one of us. But Sri Sri Thakur said unless we do it, we would not get rid of our misery.

It is important for us to recollect that the service to environment is not an act of charity. It is in our self-interest, as desired by our Lord.

Let us also bear in mind that collective means of service to the environment has not been ruled out by Sri Sri Thakur. Depending upon the scale and magnitude of job, collective strength has to be utilized within the framework of brotherhood, keeping the interest of Lord in the forefront.

Cohesion in Community Life through Common Ideal

Sri Sri Thakur said that the only way to bring about a cohesive society is to mobilize the members of the society around an Ideal. It is imperative that a society has to have a common ideal. That ideal should be such a person who fulfills each one as per distinctiveness. That person can guide and goad all the people on the path of progress without destroying their individual traits, liking and specialties. Once that person is upheld as Ideal and everybody follows him, a scene of collective unity and prosperity would dawn in the society. Unity in diversity becomes a reality, when the diverse interests are fulfilled by one and diverse perspectives are properly focused and streamlined.

Sri Sri Thakur was such an Ideal who can be, perhaps who has to be, projected as our national Ideal, if we want to have national integrity. Ideologically Sri Sri Thakur fulfills all other sectarian ideals. He does not have conflict with any sect, ism or viewpoint as long as it brings about existential welfare. He said all isms get culminated in existentialism.

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology makes a person so refined and flexible that he can accommodate others and serves others, so that collective co-existence becomes a reality. Integrity in thought and action, which comes out of practice of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, sets the precondition for a collective harmony.

History is witness to the fact that a nation suffers when distorted ideologies are imposed on the lives of the people by leaders, who are mostly short sighted, who gets swayed away by their limited and selfish perception. Macro policies, which are set by such narrow objectives, make the people and society to pay heavy price in terms of various kinds of setback. It is important that our leaders are led by Ideal like Sri Sri Thakur. They need to have understanding of the dynamics of eternal growth of man and mankind. Short-term expediency may kill the nation's drive towards long term growth. Clarity in vision, genuine interest in the good of others will sprout in the mind of a leader, if he is guided by a seer, a master visionary like Sri Sri Thakur, who knows what is required to be done, at what level, in which proportion and with what discrimination.

By placing Sri Sri Thakur's all fulfilling ideology, we can save ourselves from the invasion of the degrading culture that is taking place now. Indian culture has something special, which keeps on bringing out the best in a person and goes on evolving through generations. That culture is being polluted by so called western culture, which basically degrades a person by the pull of the lower instincts. Indian culture can be brought to its height of glory, if we highlight Sri Sri Thakur's image and ideology. It is Sri Sri Thakur who can perhaps be the best epitome of our culture and the quintessence of the best elements of our tradition.

Sri Sri Thakur has glorified Indo-Aryan culture in thousand words. No one has brought out the true nature of Indo-Aryan culture as Sri Sri Thakur has done in so many words and deeds. Sri Sri Thakur has also

provided the ways and means of reviving our culture with scientific and rational temper. He has provided various kinds of schemes as to how administration will be done, how economic development can take place, how can our people be gainfully employed and how can communal harmony be brought about and many things covering the life of individual, family and society.

Manipulation of Habits & Behaviour is Education

Once Sri Sri Thakur said, “Try to perform those things which are said to be impossible, for the welfare of existence”.

Sri Sri Thakur wanted us to outgrow our possibility. Sri Sri Thakur said that each one of us has got immense possibilities, which we are not aware. We need to just go on acquiring and growing, forgetting all negatives and overcoming all obstacles. Basically by this process, you turn out to be a doer, leaving the rein in the hands of Sri Sri Thakur.

But it is easier said than done. It is our action, which puts a limitation on our possibilities. The activities we normally do are largely governed by our habits and instincts. It is habits and behaviour, which we need to organize in such manner that we can do immense things, in short time, in right way, in such a manner that the possibilities are realized. To get all these things right, there is only one clue, which is that ‘be attached with the Ideal and get engaged in furthering his interests’. Through this process, our actions and thought get such boost that we get propelled towards becoming. No worry, no anxiety, no depression, no aimless searching. Get on to the job, which is what Lord Krishna said to Arjun, ‘pick up your bow and do what I say’. In Sri Sri Thakur’s words, that is education; the process of growing and evolving.

Marriage & Eugenics

Eugenics is one of the most important areas on which Sri Sri Thakur has laid emphasis from the point of view of having a peaceful conjugal life and more evolved progeny.

Biological wealth of a person sets the foundation on which a person builds his life. It is also necessary to bring about continuous refinement in that biological wealth by following the principles of eugenics.

If we want to breed qualitatively better persons in the society, then it is important that proper matching between male and female is done at the time of marriage. Principles of biology and eugenics need to be followed for having progeny, who would bring about the best genetic elements out of parents. Selection of partners at the time of marriage plays very important role. Compatibility from the point of view of health, family tradition, age, educational attainment, aptitudes and the hereditary family groups (i.e., *varna*) all these need to be carefully seen before choosing partners.

‘Varna’, which is the cultural groupings, helps to indicate the biological and hereditary qualities of a person. Sri Sri Thakur wanted us to maintain the distinctiveness of groupings in a homogeneous way, so that the cultural traits which any particular ‘varna’ represents are maintained in identifiable category.

Good progeny also needs so many other factors, which Sri Sri Thakur has identified and analyzed and has urged everybody to follow those. It is important for us to bear in mind that if, there is any kind of anomaly that takes place in the stage where the seed of a human being is sown and if, that results in unwanted qualities in the child, then nothing much can be done to bring about any change in that child’s life.

If we want the society to improve then the first step is to follow the principles of good progeny. It is an esoteric subject, which needs proper exposition and that has not been attempted here. Sri Sri Thakur has given so much emphasis on this, that he has urged his disciples to literally fight it out, if any breach of marriage as per ‘Varna’ does take place in the society. We all mature adults need to understand that

marriage is a sacred event in life and child rearing is a serious job. We need to remind ourselves that we relive life through our children. Evolution in human gene takes place through the process of successive births passing through heredity.

Section 7: Legacy of Sri Sri Thakur

Today an admirer of Sri Sri Thakur longs for his (Sri Sri Thakur's) personal touch. A person in distress is looking for his direct guidance. A devotee is looking for his graceful appearance. Unfortunately, Sri Sri Thakur, the person is no more available for direct and intimate touch with our sense perception. He has followed the law of nature and withdrew himself from this material world.

He played full role during his lifetime. And today, he is also playing his role, though silently and invisibly. His blessing is there in the air. But we need to be worthy of his blessing. How? His legacy is therefore important for us to entitle us his favour.

The foremost legacy is the imprint of his life and role that he played. His life story is alive through innumerable literature. There are still people around who are fortunate to have seen Sri Sri Thakur. Each of them tells stories about Sri Sri Thakur eloquently.

Secondly, Sri Sri Thakur has left behind an all fulfilling ideology. That ideology is to be followed by anyone looking for his mercy. That ideology is now available in literature and in the lives of his innumerable followers. To some extent, Sri Sri Thakur's ideology has gone into society through institutions and celebrations. The ideology has been institutionalized in habits and behavior of the countless devotees and in their family environment.

Sri Sri Thakur, the prophet, has left behind a legacy that is both complete and alive. Thakur, the divine is ever alive, ever alert and ever available to any body whoever remembers him and seeks his guidance and grace.

Conclusion

There is rhyme in Bengali, which sings, 'I know since I follow; they don't know who do not follow.' Let us start following him. Then we will know him and would earn his blessing.

Chapter 2

Sri Sri Thakur's Personality

Two

Come to me! Come to me!!...!!!
Let's be worthy of His call

> Sri Sri Thakur's blessing always brings our wellbeing in real and ultimate sense. If at all his blessing does not reach us, it is just that we do not want it or we are incapable of utilizing it.

This is straight from the heart; from the depth of compassion, and purely out of grace. This call is from someone very intimate, though lonely person. The voice is an expression of love, an invitation that can hardly be set aside. Ironically, such voice gets lost in the air; invitation not responded to; at times the advance is rebuffed; most of the time out of ignorance, and sometime out of suspicion.

It is like the sunshine scattered everywhere. Heat and light from the sun radiates, energizes every particle on the earth, without exception. Open invitation from the sun: come, take energy from me, as much as you can receive, in whichever form. The energy gets replenished everyday; it gets consumed; it can be stored, it can be converted; and it is up to the recipients and the receptacles.

Similarly, when it rains, water pours; it just does not wait for any solicitation. It is up to the container to be filled. It is free gift of nature that fills the world with life.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the human form of the creator, made him available to be drawn from as much as one would like to. He was disbursing love, providing path for acquisition, giving solution. He was the solved man of the age, and all problems had solution with him. He was the light by which darkness got automatically dispelled. He was embodiment of knowledge and wanted to enlighten us.

For those of us who are needy and aspirant, his call is irresistible.

Do you believe in it? Is it really so?

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra possessed all the qualities, resources and divine credentials. Not an iota of those was for his own use. He wanted to dispense and distribute all those assets amongst others. From the point of view of recipients like ourselves, this may be seen at different levels of execution, as reflected below.

Firstly, Sri Sri Thakur is the most gracious father to all of us. He knows what our requirements are. He also knows how the requirements can be fulfilled. Therefore, the benefit of his blessing being reaped by us is contingent upon our openness to receive. In other words, we will be deprived of his blessings only if and when we reject him.

Secondly, Sri Sri Thakur knows what is good for us in the long run, in an overall sense. Therefore, he would not grant us a thing, if that can cause harm to us, or if that goes detrimental to our overall wellbeing. At this level, even if we expect something to happen, it may not happen. There is a bit of frustration for us.

Thirdly, Sri Sri Thakur would not give us something, if we are not able to make worthwhile use of it. Improper use of that thing might create problem for us, or for others, or the thing itself may be devalued. Therefore, some kind of restriction gets built up in our benefit of his blessings.

Putting everything together, it appears, Sri Sri Thakur's blessing always brings our wellbeing in real and ultimate sense. If at all his blessing does not reach us, it is just that we do not want it or we are incapable of utilizing it.

The task of receiving blessing is in our hand. The first step is to ask for it and second step is to make ourselves worthy of his blessing.

Sri Sri Thakur is calling to handout his blessing.

Let us go all out and enjoy his blessing!

7th May 2012

Three

Dayal (Gracious) Thakur

Thakur's love translates itself into wellbeing of everyone

Faith on him is, in fact, faith on our own self to be worthy of his grace. It begins at the level of thought and convinction and gets translated in action for self and for the Thakur.

Amongst all the epithets we use to address Sri Sri Thakur, this one, i.e., 'dayal Thakur' seems to have a charming appeal. This one instantly takes us closer to Sri Sri Thakur on human plane.

English equivalent of 'dayal' is gracious. The word *dayal* also instantly invokes a sense of support and relief that Sri Sri Thakur provides to his devotees. That image of Sri Sri Thakur as a colossal power, benign and blissful, is very soothing to a devotee's mind. Every devotee of Sri Sri Thakur begins the day carrying that image and retires at the end of the tiring day with the same image. The whole day goes

under his care, under the canopy of his protection. There is absolute faith that if he leads the day and with him at the front, the day is taken care of.

All that I said in the above paragraphs are the beliefs of some people like us who have come to that depth of understanding where Sri Sri Thakur's grace is received, felt to be actualized and acknowledged. How would a newcomer today come to know about it? Basically the questions for today are: a) what is that grace which Sri Sri Thakur dispenses? b) What are the manifestations of that graceful behavior? c) How can that grace be availed?

Sri Sri Thakur is no more physically present today to display and enact those moments of live grace. There are, however, innumerable anecdotes from the experiences of others which are glowing testimony to the graceful personality of Sri Sri Thakur. The visibility or orchestration of grace is out of sight now; but the act itself is very much alive, responsive and pervasive as it were in those days. Today, the mercy is being played out, as normally as the play of nature.

Sri Sri Thakur unconditionally loved everyone. His love for someone essentially means doing good for the person; and he does that as if he is doing good for himself, in his own interest. There is no question of any conditionality or any expectation. His love therefore translates into wellbeing of the person.

Sri Sri Thakur was kind, compassionate to all. If someone asked for something, Thakur would meet that and see that his need is met in full. Here again, no question is asked, no judgment is made. Only issue in question is that - there is a requirement. Sri Sri Thakur felt anybody's need as that of his own. His feelings for others is very intense, such that there is no 'others'; as all are extension of his own self.

Sri Sri Thakur had an intense view of everything that happened; the cause and effect equation of everything was so clear in his view that no problem was without a solution for him. Therefore, when a problem came to any person, Sri Sri Thakur had a solution and he extended that solution so implicitly that one never felt conscious of the work he (Sri Sri Thakur) did. Sri Sri Thakur solved the problems for the people, even without their knowledge.

The grace that flowed from Sri Sri Thakur was unconditional; therefore by logic, it requires an unconditional acceptance. Acceptance of his grace is contingent upon our accepting that grace by being worthy of receipt.

Faith on him is, in fact, faith on our own self to be worthy of his grace. It begins at the level of thought and conviction and gets translated in action for self and for the Thakur.

That grace of Sri Sri Thakur is still live. Our own faith only has to remain alive to that.

14th May 2012

Four

The Arbiter

Can our fate be in His hand?

Sri Sri Thakur may oblige any supplicant; but he never played to gallery.

Amongst many sayings of Sri Sri Thakur, one saying which strikes me often is what Sri Sri Thakur said to Mrs. Spencer. “Give me your hand; I will alter your horoscope”.

Mr. Spencer and Mr. Hauserman, both American by nationality, stayed with Sri Sri Thakur almost life long, since 1945. Both were ardent devotees of Sri Sri Thakur and were very popular amongst the fellow disciples. Hauserman is more widely known for his number of books on Sri Sri Thakur; the first one, ‘Ocean in a Tea Cup’, published in 1962, is a classic masterpiece. His autobiographical account, ‘Being & Becoming - A Story of Devotion’, published posthumously in 2008 is an excellent account of Sri Sri Thakur’s life and ideology that makes a man transformed. Both these books are published in USA and highly acclaimed in India. The other book, ‘Answer to the Quest’ in two parts is published by ‘Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan’, Mumbai.

Mr. Spencer is known for his devotion and austere life style. He toured India penniless, walking on bare foot, with a view to popularize Sri Sri Thakur’s message. I know that he came to Balasore and Cuttack in Odisha. At Balasore, he stayed with my *ritwik*, late Sushil Ranjan Das. At Cuttack, he initiated Dr. Maayaadhar Mansingh, then Principal, Ravenshaw College and a well known litterateur in Odisha. I also know that he visited Mumbai number of times and used to stay with Dholakia family at Matunga. I have heard from some sources; Mr. Spencer at one time submitted a prayer to Sri Sri Thakur, that in his next birth, if at all it happens, he would like to be born in India. He also has authored a book, ‘Wait for me Christ, I am coming’, published in 1985 from USA.

Today’s reflection is linked to Mr. Spencer’s wife. The anecdote goes like this. Spencer’s wife visited Sri Sri Thakur and pleaded Sri Sri Thakur to examine her horoscope. She was perhaps amused by astrology, a tendency which is often seen amongst westerners, who cultivate oriental orientation. When she insisted; Sri Sri Thakur said, with a voice which was as authoritative as it can be. Mrs. Spencer was perhaps not very conscious of the fact that Sri Sri Thakur does not indulge into things without purpose. Sri Sri Thakur may oblige any supplicant; but he never played to gallery. However, in this case, being persistently prayed by Mrs. Spencer, Sri Sri Thakur became serious and said, “Give me your hand; I will alter your horoscope”.

Yes, this can come only from Sri Sri Thakur. When it comes, it comes like an axiom; an inevitable and indefatigable thing to happen. What is worrisome is to reflect on the process of that magic. Everyone would like to have the best of luck. How would it happen? This question is in perhaps everyone’s mind.

The issue is very complicated, beyond me to understand, let alone comment. I am still attempting to analyze, to make some sense out of it. The first part of the sentence is a condition that Sri Sri Thakur is asking. The second part is the consequence, which Sri Sri Thakur has taken on himself to assure.

It is here I would like put a stop to it, knowing that each of these two parts of Sri Sri Thakur's observation is world in itself. It is however, possible to make it happen in our life. Let us believe that the Lord has kindly said it for us.

27th May 2012

Five

Thakur's Smile

He smiles to make the world smile

To a man passing through a phase of depression, the smile brings about elevation; to a man beset with problems, the smile provides solace and solution; to an aspirant, the smile provides a lift and to a person with reflective mind, the smile takes him deeper into a state of enquiry.

Different types of facial appearance that we come across in the photographs do not really speak much of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra (1888-1969). Nevertheless, the smiling Thakur is something heavenly. That smile, which captivated millions in those days in the premises of Thakur Bungalow at Deoghar, will certainly not be seen again. The splash of smile on the broad face of Sri Sri Thakur had a magical and luminous effect on anyone who beheld it, without exception.

Of course, every mood of Sri Sri Thakur reflects something so striking that the moods can hardly be gauged, generalized and meaningful connotation is ascribed to. A smiling Thakur certainly had a force, a vibration, a radiation and a revelation, everything put together.

Sri Sri Thakur's smile is not limited to expression of his mood. His smile is expression of his stay in a world of joy, in a sphere of bliss, in a domain where ecstasy flows perennially. He comes from and prevails in the world of eternal joy, in the sphere of divine bliss. His smile brings these super natural substances down on to the earth. Anyone present in the periphery of Sri Sri Thakur's physical persona

used to get a bath in that stream of pure joy, enjoyment and happiness. His smile was the conveyance for the spread of those light and elements of pure nature, to provide a heightened experience.

Sri Sri Thakur's smile brought out feelings of intrepidity. He was embodiment of courage. For his disciples; he spread out a canopy of protection; he put out a shield of armory against odds and evils. His smile remitted that air of invincibility. His smile was a powerful tool to eradicate evil, to banish banality and to do away with dullness. His smile empowers spirit, elevates mind and jubilates body. His smile radiates energy that charges every particle around, both animate and inanimate.

Sri Sri Thakur's smile meant many things to many people, depending upon what state one is in and how does one receive Sri Sri Thakur. To a man passing through a phase of depression, the smile brings about elevation; to a man beset with problems, the smile provides solace and solution; to an aspirant, the smile provides a lift and to a person with reflective mind, the smile takes him deeper into a state of enquiry. Some common feelings that smile generate in the people are: peace, serenity, joy and overwhelming sense of getting fulfilled.

Sri Sri Thakur's smile was not a facial expression alone. His whole body used to sway in a rhythm of upheaval of joy and jubilation. A small thing around, a little happening somewhere, a bit of nice behavior of someone, virtually every tiny thing can cause smile on his face. Therefore, we may not know for certain what causes a spree of specialty in him.

Happiness is normal to human being, like joyous moments of a child. Sri Sri Thakur at times used to create scenes of humor, comedy, drama, laughter around him, engaging some persons in some roles. On the surface, it was everything of joy; but deep below he was enacting a play for some solution for somebody's wellbeing. And above all, he used to play with human character for their behavioral refinement and spiritual transformation.

Today, can we join in Sri Sri Thakur's smile, in his 125th year of birth anniversary?

3rd June 2012

Six

Thakur - the Beloved
Love took shape in Thakur

In Sri Sri Thakur's ideological paradigm, love regulates one's feelings, conduct and behavior. Love unites the lover with the Lord and provides joy. Love enjoins the devotee to undertake tasks which would please the Lord. Love creates an urge to discriminate things which are desirable from those which are unwanted. Love whips up urge to surmount odds, if it comes in the way of fulfilling beloved's wish.

Amongst the numerous feelings that one could have for Sri Sri Thakur, the 'lover' and 'beloved' relationship perhaps is the most cherished one. Once a male American devotee of Sri Sri Thakur after having years of association with the Lord was said to have replied to a query, "I see Thakur as my husband".

Sri Sri Thakur was often described by those who had the privilege of associating with Sri Sri Thakur as: the incarnation of love; the embodiment of love; the manifestation of love. They said, "Thakur – thy name is love!"

This is a perception, an experience and a realization of most of the devotees of Sri Sri Thakur. People saw love in him. His appearance, his talk, his behavior, even his rebuke radiated a vibration that touched the heart and appealed the senses of the people and took them on a flight to energy and ecstasy.

That love which flew like a stream from Sri Sri Thakur also invited reciprocal love. Sri Sri Thakur can be said to be asking one offering from his devotees, "love me". As he was dispensing love, he was also seen to be hungry of love.

That love for the Thakur is supposed to have a magical effect. Love is like a catalyst in human system that works at a deeper psycho-biological level to reorient a person. In Sri Sri Thakur's ideological paradigm, love regulates one's feelings, conduct and behavior. Love unites the lover with the Lord and provides joy. Love enjoins the devotee to undertake tasks which would please the Lord. Love creates an urge to discriminate things which are desirable from those which are unwanted. Love whips up urge to surmount odds, if it comes in the way of fulfilling beloved's wish. Love therefore works through myriad of ways which pushes a person towards the beloved. Since the beloved happens to be Sri Sri Thakur, it works wonders in terms of transformation towards a higher status.

Love is something natural, inherent, inborn and instinctive for human being. When that urge for affiliation gets anchored on Sri Sri Thakur, it gets heightened by the pull of Sri Sri Thakur. One's love for Sri Sri Thakur gets compounded and multiplied manifold by the pull of love coming from Sri Sri Thakur. Analogically, it is like the attraction between iron and magnet; object and gravity.

There are of course nuances in this process. When Sri Sri Thakur was physically present, an aura of love used to surround him. Sri Sri Thakur loved everybody; people also used to love him. But differences were observed very clearly and Sri Sri Thakur also pointed out some varieties prevailing around.

One type is love with expectation. Contrast to that is unconditional love. Love for the sake of love; pure love, love and love and nothing else.

When love is backed by expectation, one form it takes is sentimental love. I love Sri Sri Thakur till it (Sri Sri Thakur's ideology) goes well with my preconceived notions. I have my own liking, disliking, bias, prejudice, sense of glory and of adoration, all inbuilt into my mental model. I find part of these conforming to Sri Sri Thakur and to that extent I love him. But wherever there is nonconformity between my mental model and Sri Sri Thakur, I edge Sri Sri Thakur out and remain in the comfort zone of my own self. I avoid a clash between my own world and Sri Sri Thakur's world. Sri Sri Thakur is welcome into my world, if he fits into it; my door is open. But I will not clean my house to accommodate Sri Sri Thakur.

Another form expectation based love takes is passive love. I love Sri Sri Thakur in my senses, but I do not do any work for him. I cannot take any hardship for him, if it is required. Passive love fails to activate a person. Contrast to this is active love and inquisitive service. Here the slogan is 'labour for love'.

Even if love is latent and naturally endowed in a person, love needs to be cultivated. This is more relevant when Sri Sri Thakur is physically not there to dispense love, which we just spoke above. Reflection, discussion and action for Sri Sri Thakur are some of the ways to cultivate and grow love for him; of course, everything in line with his ideology. Those who are not aware of Sri Sri Thakur and his ideology so far, have to go through literature to know about him and see the relevance of Sri Sri Thakur in their life and society.

Specially those who are not quite aware of Sri Sri Thakur, there is a need for quest. Again the quest is natural in life for everybody. People undertake quest for many things, like: quest for solution, quest for excellence, quest for achievement, quest for happiness. Very interestingly, Sri Sri Thakur provides answer to all the quests on personalized basis; hard to explain in language, something one can experiment.

Like we are on path of quest, Sri Sri Thakur also is looking for each one of us. His love is waiting for an entry into our region, our home.

"Love is supreme wisdom", proclaimed Sri Sri Thakur.

Intense love for the Lord may appear to be attachment, infatuation, longing for association, etc. Things take various expressions, depending upon the psyche of the person and his / her quest. Engagement arising out of love for the Lord has far reaching consequences.

Seven

Thakur - the Mystery

Sri Sri Thakur takes us through the mysteries of life

The complexity of life and mystery of Sri Sri Thakur have something in common. Both need to be experienced in hard way. Both present before us in new way every day and invite us to greater depth of realization. We know that much of Thakur, as much we experience life.

Those of us who generally know Sri Sri Thakur soon come to realize that Sri Sri Thakur is much more than what we know of him. That realization gets reinforced over a period of time, again and again, as we travel with Sri Sri Thakur. Even if we are familiar with Sri Sri Thakur's life and ideology, he remains a mystery. More we know of him, still much more remains to be known; justifying for us the *vedic* saying: "अबां मानस गोचरम", meaning, 'beyond the reach of speech and mind'.

This mystery has something to do with the mystery of life. The more we explore life, more we get perplexed as to how much more remains to be covered. Sri Sri Thakur remains with us in our life's journey. He guides us, leads us, goads us and holds our hand through the passage of life.

In a sense, the complexity of life and mystery of Sri Sri Thakur have something in common. Both need to be experienced in hard way. Both present before us in new way every day and invite us to greater depth of realization. We know that much of Thakur, as much we experience life. Sri Sri Thakur, for us, is a way of life. We experience that much of Sri Sri Thakur as far as we travel. The intensity of experience is perhaps correlated with the twist and turn of life that we negotiate with.

Sri Sri Thakur the mystery, looking from the angle of complexity of life, actually presents himself as a solution to the mysteries of life. He provides us the key to deal with the complexities and in the process Thakur gets revealed. When we pass through hardship and hold on to him steadfastly, he comes up alive, provides us strength and thus we acquire enhanced strength.

In the context of life, Sri Sri Thakur, the mystery, has simplified another great mystery that is God. The concept of God in the context of life and society is one of the greatest mysteries of all time. Here, we find Sri Sri Thakur, not as a mystery, but as a mystery burster. The simplicity and felicity with which the mystery of God in the context of life and society has been presented by Sri Sri Thakur appear to be too simple to be true. There lies the two sides of Sri Sri Thakur, which when seen together, presents a unique personality, that is God in human form.

Here is a point of reflection for those of us who think and take pride that 'we know Sri Sri Thakur'. The question that can be directed at us is: how much of life we know about?

Without going much into Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, we can say that Sri Sri Thakur wanted us to be successful in life. That poses the next question: how much successful are we in life?

The issues are complex, something like plain truths, hard to face. We can try escaping these questions only at the cost of deluding ourselves.

18th June 2012

Eight

Sri Sri Thakur's Healing Touch & Sterling Job

Sri Sri Thakur provides shelter to orphans

The love, affection, sympathy of Sri Sri Thakur is available for everyone even today. Since Sri Sri Thakur is physically not there, we are deprived of viewing him and feeling his cordiality.

One deficit our generation is, and future generation will be, suffering from is the absence of live personality of Sri Sri Thakur. There is no substitute to Sri Sri Thakur's physical expression. He displayed unique physical features and inimitable behavioral style. His was a grand and yet sweet and captive view. All these are not merely external and visual. His behavioral expressions are symptoms of his vast expanse of consciousness that is akin to cosmic consciousness. He had deep love, affection, sympathy and affinity with everybody. He had feelings for everybody; he loved everybody and he was a shelter for everybody.

The love, affection, sympathy of Sri Sri Thakur is available for everyone even today. But there is problem of cognition and perception. Since Sri Sri Thakur is physically not there, we are deprived of viewing him and feeling his cordiality. Therefore today, we have no way but to know these from literature. One such literature piece appealed me so much that I got tempted to bring it out here.

This is from July issue of 'Bodhadipti', a monthly magazine in Bengali, published from Kolkata, edited by Shri Narayan Chandra Nandi. This piece is contributed by Mrs. Vandana Dasgupta, an octogenarian devotee of Sri Sri Thakur, who was blessed to have seen and associated with Sri Sri Thakur right from Pabna Himaitpur. She has quoted a letter dated 21st March 1984, written to her by Shri Gurudas Bandopadhay. Now I am translating and quoting some portions from the letter from Shri Gurudas Bandopadhay.

Quote:

When I was six months old, I lost my father and by ten years, I lost my mother. Then I was brought up at my uncle's house at Rangoon. I had no certainty then about my future. It was over there in 1937, when I was of 16 or 17 age; I got the initiation of my life's lord, the supreme beloved Sri Sri Thakur through Yogesh Chakravarty. Next year, in October 1938, I undertook journey to visit Sri Sri Thakur.

Xxxx I got to realize in the first visit itself that Sri Sri Thakur is supreme beloved. His sympathetic and blissful look sent a shiver on my whole body. I instantly felt mercy in his eyes, affection in his heart and panacea (महा मृतुंजयी मंत्र) in his two hands. That day, this orphan adolescent got back his parents; ever lovely father and mother with broken hearts. I said to myself, 'Thakur, you are indeed balm to pain'. I submitted to Sri Sri Thakur, "I love you Thakur and I love this place too. I will like to stay here." Gracious Thakur said, "It's very painful here. Don't you see at what difficulty people are staying over here?"

- "Thakur, I will not go away from here, even if you evict me."
- "If that is the case, how can anyone evict you? Who all are there at your home?"
- "Thakur I have no one."
- "Oh! I am verily there for you. You now be one with 'name' (नाम) and work (काम)."

These words, 'I am verily there for you' is ringing in my ears even today; sweet, lovely tone. I regained the voice of my dear mother in Thakur's word, that day. Today, as I write, I get a sensation.'

Days passed. From a state of wilderness, I got fixed to the polestar in my life. I came here to see God, without a shred of idea about God. What I got is abundance of care and affection, which I am sure, would not be available anywhere else. Thakur was oasis in the desert of my life. On 10th day of *Kartik* (a month in lunar calendar) in 1943, gracious Thakur offered me *panja* and said, 'ritwik's work is a sacred and most noble work, which you will be doing hence forth. Ever since then, I am engaged in that work for last 58/59 years. Xxx"

Unquote:

Wonderful experience! What strikes me is that everyone whoever has gone to Sri Sri Thakur, looking for a shelter, has got a mansion of protection, love and ennobling experience. We have to now figure out who was Sri Sri Thakur? How was he?? And what did he do for people???

The next point that struck me is Sri Sri Thakur's saying, "ritwik's work is a sacred and most noble work". I had scope to experience something of it with my ritwik, who was Sri Sri Thakur's contemporary, Sushil Ranjan Das. Today, I am slightly bewildered to unravel meaning of that statement of Sri Sri Thakur, though I myself have got into that shoe for last 15 years or more.

No doubt, it is a sacred and noble work, as Sri Sri Thakur said. Question is: how do we discharge that work today? What is the outline and scope of ritwik's work today?

Life is wonderful and we are passing through wonderful time.

Nine

Sri Sri Thakur goes well with Einstein

Sri Sri Thakur dealt with all kind of stupidities

It is a wonder that we saw a person, amidst us, lived like a glowing sun, with all grace and grandeur, and that person was a finite version of the infinite, who is attributed to be the creator and regulator of the universe.

My roving eyes on the pages of Times of India dated 18th September '12 got stuck on a quotation, "*Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity. And sometimes I am doubtful about the former*". For a moment, I disbelieved that this can come from Albert Einstein. Few minutes of reflection, I had to agree with Einstein's wisdom.

I must admit upfront that I do not know the context of the statement. Secondly, I have no qualification to understand the meaning of Einstein's statement. I have no place before the great scientist; I can only speak about Sri Sri Thakur from my level of understanding.

I understood the first part of the statement as: universe is infinite; no one has measured as of now where does it end. There are innumerable celestial bodies floating in the universe, in a strange symbiosis. No one knows with certainly the origin of this universal spectrum. We understand, lot of things happening in the universe all the time. These are simply mind boggling. Scientists like Einstein are engaged over years and centuries to explore the surprises in store in the universe. A magnificent spectacle indeed! No words to narrate the universe.

What makes me to feel ease that we know a person by name Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, who represented the universe; who is said to be the creator and regulator of the universe! What? It is stupid! Yes, this statement is as mindboggling as the expanse of the universe; therefore, it evokes that kind of exclamation. Who knows Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra?

Yes, we neither know Sri Sri Thakur, nor do we know the universe. Nevertheless, let us make a reality check. Have we not seen Sri Sri Thakur, living on this earth for 81 years, (1888-1969) in our midst, doing wonderful things and giving out many precious things for the humanity? Yes, we can hardly disagree with the fact that Sri Sri Thakur lived amidst us for 81 years. We indeed saw a grand spectacle of natural phenomenon in Sri Sri Thakur's life and living.

It is a wonder that we saw a person, amidst us, lived like a glowing sun, with all grace and grandeur, and that person was a finite version of the infinite, who is attributed to be the creator and regulator of the universe. That is the charm of Sri Sri Thakur; the finite shape of an infinite power; the much revered God in flesh and blood; the all powerful in a disarmed frame; the nature in the captivity of a natural frame.

Sri Sri Thakur represented that infinity of the universe in a finite form. That is our fortune that we availed him.

A little bird outside the window chirped, 'Are you missing Him'?

The second part the statement talks of infinite 'stupidity' of human being. I presume, Einstein would have meant 'ignorance' of human being. It is indeed true that each one of us is beset with monumental ignorance. Ignorance is the greatest folly that all of us suffer from, in varying degrees. Here Sri Sri Thakur plays the role of light that banishes ignorance.

Sri Sri Thakur enlightens each of his disciples by putting things in right perspective. So called mysteries get cleared before him. Sri Sri Thakur brightens up consciousness and in the process, zone of ignorance gets shrunk. Sri Sri Thakur's ideology provides us a path which leads towards enlightenment.

The little bird outside the window chirped, 'Are you getting enlightened'?

I was amused to read Einstein's statement. In a witty way, he has stated a reality, which would have dawned on him after his lifelong investigation into nature, human as well as environmental. I was equally amused when it occurred to me that our Lord Sri Sri Thakur dealt with both the types of infinites which baffled Einstein.

24th September 2012; 125th holy birth anniversary of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra

Ten

Does Knowing Thakur Mean Everything to Us?

Thakur is Infinite; we get only our asking

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra carries an image, which has finite perceived shape, is supported by an infinite base. Knowing Sri Sri Thakur, in a basic sense would mean to know his image and ideology. This is a hard task, though appears to be fairly achievable.

Frankly I do not have answer to this question. I am only trying to develop a set of reasoning, based on my limited understanding.

We begin with a premise that God in flesh and blood on this earth is a special phenomenon. Therefore God incarnate is a special person. He is divine in human form. If we look from another perspective, He is a human being with all features of divinity. This is a strange combination for us, as we tend to mistake one with the other; or we create an impression of our own, depending upon our own perception. Left to Him, He as well as all the Incarnates has identified them with the second part, which is 'a normal human being with all ingredients of divinity'.

People have come to know the incarnate in various ways, in multiple forms and by different means. There are stories of miraculous ways by which the devotees, and the world at large, have come to know the incarnate of the age (*avatars*; otherwise called prophets). Stories of all past prophets, for example, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed etc. as recorded in literatures, parables and folklores are, in essence, evidences of the prophet coming onto the earth, for providing redeeming path to the humanity. These experiences and recounts are many and varied; some are documented in logical way, some are personal experiences out of faith, devotion and experience of ascetic practices. Notwithstanding all these, there is a definite and significant way by which He is known. That is 'His revelation'. The prophets, by virtue of their normal human appearance and expressions, can seldom be identified by any manifest god like properties, unless He brings out his image and message, which by normal prevailing standard is always observed to be marked departure.

In case of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, that occurrence was unfolded by various means, as we survey His life story. That revelation was a very subtle and delicate invitation to the world to take note of His ideology and mission, which is the sole purpose of His descend. From His early life stories, we identify two significant plays, which proclaimed His descend in unmistakable ways.

Revelation Act - I

One was the phase of '*samaadhi*', His getting into state of suspended animation. That was a period when He was in His youthful vigor and was conducting *kirtan* (mass recital of divine rhymes) along with dance and tune of traditional musical instruments. He formed a circle of devotees, who were good at that and led them to conduct *kirtan* at different places in the locality. Those sessions of *kirtan* were a way of creating a divine mood on a mass scale, through participation of large number of people, leading to throbbing and vibrating divine impulse in the air. Participants and even onlookers of the *kirtan* sessions used to be transported to a different world of extra sensory experiences like ecstasy, spiritual sensation, vision, feelings and, above all, a sense of being identified with the divine. Generally at a height of frenzied *kirtan*, Sri Sri Thakur would jump to the scene, would undergo marvelous postures, to the beats of rhythms of chorus and music. That would create a tumultuous divine spark in the air, mesmerizing all around, including the elements of nature. Suddenly, Sri Sri Thakur would fall flat, his body motionless, He goes into a state of *samaadhi*, a state of mortal stillness, and soul in unification with the divine outside the body. During that state of senselessness, His body used to display some postures, which are said to be yogic *mudras* of the highest order. At times, he used to voice some powerful and forceful words, some sounds; some are understood and most were not understood. However, for the benefit of humanity, some utterance in known languages have been recorded and published in a volume, titled 'Holy Book'.

This period in Sri Sri Thakur's life was so unusual, striking and significant that it can be said to be a milestone in the text book of 'history of human civilization', chapter 'prophet'. For the contemporary society and world at large, the period of '*samaadhi*' and '*kirtan*' was a period of apocalypse, a spectacle of spiritual renaissance, a grand upheaval where devotees met divine. It was a period in which some scenes from mythology were replayed, as if, a live concert where epics were reenacted by veteran artists. The significance of this event was many. One amongst that significance was that the prophet of the age mobilized his apostles, some of them were believed to be from His previous incarnations; about which we

do not know much, but there were indications. Another point of significance was that humanity came to know the prophet, as He revealed Himself in resplendent acrobatics, in physical outburst. That was the rise of sun on a summer day in the morning. It was an expression of extraordinary revel, an announcement in action, a motion of the redeemer of the age reaching out to the mass. It was an appeal to the crying soul; it was the first shower of monsoon on the parched land. It was to herald a movement by the leader, whose arrival was much awaited and his taking over was celebrated with *kirtan* and procession.

The long term significance of the *kirtan* and *samaadhi* era lies in its spiritual quotient. *Kirtan* as a tool of mass spiritual arousal and transportation of soul to a state of ecstasy was demonstrated. In Indian culture, it was a long standing tool; perhaps it was given a fresh seal of approval, with respect to form and intent, by the prophet of the age. Secondly, the 'Holy Book', as a divine expression is certainly a unique contribution of this time. There is, as I understand, hardly a parallel to these texts, in its appeal, assurance and affirmation, from a source, which seems to be something ethereal, supernatural, whose authentication is unknown. But certainly, it came from the lips of the prophet of the age, when He was in unison with the supreme.

Revelation Act - II

Second revelation in the early age of Sri Sri Thakur, when he was of 22 years, came by way of a small pocket size book titled 'Satyaanusaran' (meaning – 'in pursuit of truth'). Though the book is now hundred years old, its proper assessment and recognition of its significance on a worldwide basis is yet to happen. It is a small book, written by Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra in one night, purportedly for one of his close associates as his personal 'guide book'. Undoubtedly, that was just a trigger, but He penned down the 'guide book' for the humanity, for generations. It is a remarkable philosophical treaty, of course not for intellectual discourse alone, but for everybody's practice. One erudite commentator of 'Satyaanusaran', Umapada Natha (popularly known as Srinatha), says: 'Satyaanusaran' is an updated combined version of 'Srimad Bhagavat Gita' and 'Holy Bible'. In simple terms, all the serious issues pertaining to philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, psychology and theology etc. have been simplified in 'Satyaanusaran'. In doing so, Sri Sri Thakur has demystified grave myths, conventionally held, both in practice and in intellectual discourse. In terms of prophet's identification, this book can be said to be His manifesto. The lines in 'Satyaanusaran' announce the arrival of the prophet, who is here to bring out a revolution, in thought, action and at the level of realization.

Knowing Sri Sri Thakur

Today, knowing Sri Sri Thakur means to love Him. This appears to be an abstract proposition. Yes, it is truly so. It is in line with the thought suggested in 'Satyaanusaran', as I understood. Its method, practical shape and expression in our life and activities are to be explored. Few linkages are provided here.

a) 'Love', as outlined by Sri Sri Thakur in 'Satyaanusaran', is a matured form, or one step ahead, of devotion.
b) 'Devotion' is attachment on Ideal (in our case, he is Sri Sri Thakur).
c) Love takes shape in 'activities' for the beloved.

The above linkages bring us to a starting point, which is 'activities' or 'work' for or 'engagement' with Sri Sri Thakur. Knowing Sri Sri Thakur perhaps begins from our engagement with Sri Sri Thakur.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra carries an image, which has finite perceived shape, is supported by an infinite base. Knowing Sri Sri Thakur, in a basic sense would mean to know his image and ideology. This is a hard task, though appears to be fairly achievable. Sections of people, who do not believe the divine

part of Sri Sri Thakur, only see Him as a human being of an esoteric type. That becomes a reason enough for them to keep Sri Sri Thakur aside. Even if they consider Him to be of an extraordinary type, they do not find reason enough to deal further with Him. ‘He is not a normal case and certainly is a not role model for worldly wise people like us’, they come to reason.

On the contrary, devotees like us, know intellectually that Sri Sri Thakur is an ocean in a tea cup. We apply all our attention, in thought and deed, to know His life and ideology and apply the practical parts in our life and activities. Here again, our own natural limitation of comprehension binds us within a circumference. After knowing Sri Sri Thakur to an extent and doing certain things for Him, we form a zone of activities for ourselves and form a definite image of Sri Sri Thakur. Here a self fulfilling fallacy tends to creep in. We know what we want to know. We get what we ask for. We get filled up to the depth of our container. Because of this fallacy, we stop digging further into Sri Sri Thakur. Our exploratory activities tend to taper off.

So eventually in the society, for both sections of people, Sri Sri Thakur remains an object of high significance and low interest (for exploration). Even for those, who know Sri Sri Thakur, He remains standing outside the door; may be waiting for an invitation. He is an insider, but is kept at the periphery.

There are certainly people, who do not fall into this fallacy. They keep their enquiry on and on, to know more and more of Sri Sri Thakur.

Here, comes the issue of engagement. Knowing Sri Sri Thakur is only possible, when we work for Him. Then it becomes a question of becoming; continuous growth. It becomes a self reinforcing propeller: ‘doing, knowing and growing’ and, again, ‘doing more, knowing better and growing further’.

Then the question: does knowing Sri Sri Thakur mean everything to us? Here the significant point is what is everything? In other words: what is it that we want from Sri Sri Thakur? And then in that context, do we know Him?

If knowing begins from ‘doing’, then what we get also has large bearing with our ‘doing’. What we get remains circumscribed by our ‘doing’.

To highlight the sub theme of the discourse: Sri Sri Thakur is an infinite resource. We get what we work for and to that extent we get to know Him.

For some people, it would appear that the solution is harder than the problem. Yes, there is no easy solution in life. But certainly, it is a workable solution.

29th November 2012

Eleven

Sri Sri Thakur in Everything
He is Consciousness Spread Over

Sri Sri Thakur who demonstrated His sensitivity to all creatures including birds and animals is definitely alive today to the existential crisis we pass through and to our frailties.

'The elements of nature, the plants and the animals, are to be taken care as we do for our own organs', was the feelings of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. It is something more than the concern for environment, the ecological balance, and global warming due to green house gas emission etc., which we are listening about today. Of course, today's concern is our response to global crisis that our single minded pursuit of development has created. But Sri Sri Thakur's concern is of a different type and at a different level. His concern is perhaps His care for His creations. We would not know these, unless some facts are analyzed. We present some facts below, with a view to know Sri Sri Thakur.

Sensitivity to Birds

Those of us familiar with Sri Sri Thakur's life history know that Himaitpur, Sri Sri Thakur's birthplace and ashram in Pabna, was a habitation with rich natural surroundings. Even today, after more than sixty five years Sri Sri Thakur came out of that village; it still remains a quite salubrious place, with natural vegetation, flora and fauna around. In those days, in 1930s, there was perhaps a kind of forest like vegetation on the bank of river Padma. Inside ashram, there were cottages scattered here and there, connected by pathways. Birds and domestic animals had very comfortable life in that kind of environment. It is surprising to know, even in that natural setting; Sri Sri Thakur felt the need to build a home for birds. The idea of building a home for birds and the process in detail is very interesting as presented below:

The time was during 1930 to 1940; the setting was ashram environment at Himaitpur in Pabna. This is recounted by Mr. Jaylal Roy, son of Birendra Nath Roy, in a Bengali book, 'Tnaar Parash' (2007). Jaylal was a youthful energetic boy in ashram, did not have much of formal education, but learned lot of vocational and mechanical work, by working in Satsang workshops, under the guidance of senior technical people. Sri Sri Thakur also used to guide the people and provide them the technical knowhow at some critical points in work.

One day abruptly Sri Sri Thakur says, 'hey, Jaylal, my dear! You live in a well constructed house comfortably. Have you ever paid attention and thought about these birds, flocking around?'

Jaylal got alerted; something is brewing up in the back of Sri Sri Thakur's mind. Knowing Sri Sri Thakur's ingenuity and unpredictable will, Jaylal was not surprised. But he reasoned with himself. 'Every now and then, you come across animals and birds swarming around you. Do we ever take note of them, let alone think about them. Who carries sympathy for birds and animals? Who cares for their sorrows and happiness? Are we aware that they live in families? Some of us of course have pets in our houses. Some

keep birds in cage, pet dog and cat. Some of us have domestic animals like cow, buffalo, and goat for their use value. Some rich and indulgent people maintain horse etc. Some people cultivate hen, duck and fish etc. Now a day of course, people take up study in zoology, which is their intellectual pursuit which gives them some job. I do not think, beyond these levels of service and care, anybody ever thinks about animals and birds that surround them. But I know one person who thinks about animals and he is special. He is my Thakur.'

Few days later Jaylal was passing by the embankment that separates ashram from the bank of river Padma. He would soon be joining friends and would hangout. Sri Sri Thakur was sitting on the verandah of his younger brother's house that stands on the roadside. Having seen him walking by, Sri Sri Thakur called, 'Is it Jaylal? Where are you rushing to? I have something to talk. Do you have time now?'

- 'I am on my way to join my friends for a gossip session by the side of the embankment. Otherwise, there is no specific work. You may please tell me what bothers you.'
- 'Your job in workshop is over?'
- 'It is over for the day. Let me listen what you have to say.'
- 'Oh, what did you think about the birds, that I told you the other day?'
- 'I am lost about myself, don't find a way for me and you are talking about birds and animals. No! I have not thought anything about the birds.'

Sri Sri Thakur, 'Are you one away from them? Are you not part of them? You ought to spare a thought for them, as you do for your dear and near ones. Don't you work to mitigate hardship of your dear and near ones? These animals whom you see around do not spell out what they want. The more you think and do for them, your inquisitiveness will grow; so will you enlarge your area of knowledge. The best part is that you will feel joy within you.'

Jaylal probed, 'Thakur, why don't you tell me exactly what is in your mind? I will do whatever you want me to do; unless you have some other motive behind all that you spoke to me.'

- 'No, you are in no mood now. You better go and gossip with your friends.'
- 'Are you indirectly inciting me, Thakur? Do you hold the view that friends are dearer to me than you?'
- 'What I wanted to mean is that you can do it if you try. Just observe, how much suffering they entail in this storm, water, sun and rain. Can't you therefore make an arrangement for them?'
- 'Why, there are pigeon holes made for them inside the parapet, surrounding the *matri mandir* (a building). It is a regular structural arrangement. Still, if that is not enough, I can arrange some earthen pots, hanging from the ceiling, where in they can take shelter.'

Sri Sri Thakur disapprovingly chided Jaylal. 'You fool, my son, you perhaps are not able to catch my idea. Not all these; OK, these simple arrangements, I can get done through someone else. Why am I bothering you? I mean, how would it be, if we arrange shelter for them on trees, suiting their convenience? Birds would not be hit by storm water and can live comfortably on trees. What do you say?'

- 'What do I have to say? I have perhaps understood you by now. It will be done; it is your wish and your wish is binding on us. But one question; would birds like to stay in houses designed by man? Except one or two types, which are special, usually birds do not seem to enjoy arrangements made by man.'

Sri Sri Thakur exclaimed, 'What you said is a general idea, which everyone seems to appreciate. I want you to create a thoughtful idea, which will be suitable to birds. They can live in your structure. Even if it amounts to nothing, you will gather an experience. What I see is that you have already fabricated a design in your mind, no sooner I expressed my mind. Let me get your idea and see, if it meets with that of mine. And if there is any discrepancy, we can discuss and iron it out.'

- 'You have read my mind, Thakur. When you hold an idea before me, your inner feelings get injected in me and I visualize an image of your idea. At that time, I lose my own feelings and get ruled by yours. I fail to really express what goes on in me. Your idea comes to my vision clearly and that remains till I am in your close proximity. As I move away from you, the clarity of idea gets fudged, yet an impression remains.'

Sri Sri Thakur, in an encouraging tone, said, 'dear son, you resemble your father as you are talking. What image did you visualize now? Present an outline of that for me.'

- 'Some wooden house-like structures need to be erected. These will be one storied, two storied and three storied structures. There will be a verandah on the front portion; staircase inside for moving up and down. The portion inside the house will have a net of vines and creepers, on which birds can sit. There will be system for ventilating the house. There will be different arrangements for different type of birds, which we will have to think about. The houses are to be set under the shade of leaves and foliages in such a way that birds will come to know that these structures are meant for them.'

This particular story ends here as far as the details are narrated in the original book, 'Tnaar Parash'. Sri Sri Thakur's feelings for the natural objects are so intense that He felt everything His own. We will recount another event to understand the nature of His feelings. The story is much known, but the details of conversation would bring out the nature of feelings.

Sensitivity to Animals

This event was experienced by a group of devotees of early era in satsang movement and has been adopted from the book 'Tnaar Parash' by Jaylal Roy. The event is narrated by Birendra Nath Roy, author's father.

'That was when we were young. Few of us in the company of Sri Sri Thakur were heading towards a devotee's house on a horse cart. The devotee is from Kundu family in village Baradi, Tehsil Kustiya in District Nadiya. As the cart was moving slowly, the coach used to occasionally whip the horse. Every time, the coach whipped the horse, Sri Sri Thakur used to feel a jerk. We observed that while travelling, still did not enquire much into it. We reached the destination and got down to take bath. When I started applying oil on Thakur, to my horror I observed strips of blackish and reddish marks on His back.

'How have the marks developed', I asked Thakur. 'I never saw these earlier.'

'Oh, remember the coach was whipping. These are the marks', said Sri Sri Thakur.

- 'The whip was applied on the horse; how come the marks are on your back?'
- 'Biru da, please appreciate, when he was whipping the horse, I reflected that if I were the horse, the same way I would have been whipped. This thought lingered for some time. I, as if, was turned horse and still the coach continued whipping. Those whip marks are perhaps seen on my back. I fail to understand at times what occurs to me. Does this type of things happen to you?'
- 'Thakur, I never examined things from this perspective.'

Approvingly Sri Sri Thakur said, 'yes, you have not been careful; therefore, do not know that it occurs to you as well. You tend to get a jerk, if say your son tumbles down; or someone hits him in front of you; or he gets a deep cut on the body. Again, when you see the wound, your own body starts wriggling; as if your own organ is injured, and you start feeling the pains.'

- 'Yes, now I am able to make out that it happens, going by the example you gave. But why does it happen?' said Biru da.
- 'Your offspring is offshoot of your own self. Therefore, you get yourself identified with him easily and quickly. That is why, you feel like that. My dear son, you should feel that the entire creation is an offshoot of the supreme father. It is said, God created man after His own image. If you can get yourself deeply immersed, then you will start feeling similar to my feeling.'

Wonderful expressions of identification with animal, birds and all natural objects! This is what Sri Sri Thakur was. We understand this inductively from premises which say: Sri Sri Thakur is the creator of everything we see around. He is expressed and manifest in His creation. Therefore, whatever hurts His creation hurts Him by feelings and sensation.

One has to know Sri Sri Thakur intimately, to arrive at the above conclusion. Implication of this statement is far reaching from our own point of view. We all are expression of His self. When He could feel for birds and animals, it is definite that He feels for each one of us. If for some reason, we are upset, that hurts Him as well. We are perhaps an organic extension of His self.

Another way of saying the same thing is that He is a physical manifestation of the supreme consciousness that is spread out everywhere. We are part of that consciousness.

Universal Sensitivity

An identical topic came out in 'Speaking Tree' column in Times of India dated November 24, 2012. Deepak Chopra, a celebrated spiritual thinker of our time, writes:

"Today we walk around assuming that each of us a mind, holding on to a prized piece of consciousness the way sailors once held on to lodestones. But the truth is that we participate in One mind, which hasn't lost its infinite status by existing in the small packages of individual human beings.

We are so attached to our own thoughts and desires that we easily say 'my mind'. But consciousness could be a field like electromagnetism, extending throughout the universe. Electrical signals permeate the brain, but we don't say 'my electricity' and it's dubious that we should say 'my mind'."

We, the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur, have been blessed with instrumentality of being in tune with Sri Sri Thakur, the manifestation of supreme consciousness. We have the spiritual knowhow, the tools of *japa*, meditation and *ista karma*, the application of which keeps us in synch with Sri Sri Thakur. 'Unicentral attachment, intensity and continuity', together help us to lift, ennoble, enrich and sublimate our level of consciousness.

At the cost of repetition, we may remind ourselves that Sri Sri Thakur who demonstrated His sensitivity to all creatures including birds and animals is definitely alive today to the existential crisis we pass through and to our frailties. It is for us to be in synch with Him at the level of thought, action and consciousness.

Twelve

Love & Lore – the Twinkling Twin

Significant Features of Sri Sri Thakur

A significant feature that writ large on Sri Sri Thakur is 'joy'. As if, He was seen to float in a pool of pure happiness, joy, ecstasy. Of course, all the trials and tribulations that anyone faces in life was there very much with Him; may be multiple of these, as He used to shoulder everybody else's concern. He was like Lord Shiva who swallowed the poison to keep the earth free from toxicities.

Sri Sri Thakur, the person, exhibited features which are human and multifaceted. We, the human beings, could see our reflection in Him. By the same logic, diversity in creation also got to see its view in Him. Every one of us, irrespective of our differences amongst ourselves and being unique, could see our individual image in Him. In short; we could identify ourselves with Him.

Having proximity with Sri Sri Thakur, at psychological and physical plane, has got immense significance from the point of view of our benefit, our acquisition. We feel we are close to the source; therefore, resources are within our reach.

The personality features were so superbly demonstrated and exuded that Sri Sri Thakur appeared to be superhuman. Mixed with fragrance of pristine purity and glowing energy, His overall personality spoke of divinity, proclaiming His uniqueness. The supreme power humbled itself in the form of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, making Him accessible, comprehensible, communicable, reachable and lovable. And then we saw the distance, the depth and height, which kept Him away from us. He appeared to be near, yet so far. He kept Himself achievable, but the standards were high.

If we have to single out one feature, from the spectrum that we saw in Sri Sri Thakur, it is 'love'; His love for each one and for all. The love that came out from Sri Sri Thakur needs special mention as that is usually not seen everywhere. From the accounts of firsthand recipients of Sri Sri Thakur's love, what we get to know is that His love is something like bounty of nature; like rain, air and sunshine, available in plenty. It just flows out of Him without discrimination and without condition. At human level, the love is perhaps alchemy of feelings, well wish, intimacy and service.

The recipient of love is a blessed soul. He gets elevated and benefited. Only a few see to it that it gets reciprocated also. At the recipient's end, the incidence of love gets measured in terms of the recipient's capacity to receive. It calls for a reception which is best described as 'love for the love's sake'.

Many of us go to Sri Sri Thakur as seeker, as expectants, as subject of His benevolence. We make petition for His mercy; we seldom appeal to His friendliness. Example of *Sudaamaa* perhaps does not strike us. We probably like to remain in state of perpetual misery and look for redemption. There is

perhaps nothing wrong in such supplication. But there is a subtle difference between ‘what He expects from us’ and ‘what we expect from Him’.

We enter a garden, appreciate the flowers, enjoy the ambience and that’s all. We don’t bother to enquire about the gardener and seldom look for a familiarization with him. The gardener has put his life in the garden.

Second significant feature that writ large on Sri Sri Thakur is ‘joy’. As if, He was seen to float in a pool of pure happiness, joy, ecstasy. Of course, all the trials and tribulations that anyone faces in life was there very much with Him; may be multiple of these, as He used to shoulder everybody else’s concern. He was like Lord Shiva who swallowed the poison to keep the earth free from toxicities. Yet, He was carefree, remorse free, anxiety free; as He was always in state of pure joy and extreme happiness. There was no visible wrinkle on His face till he was past eighty. His face was like a blooming white lotus under the morning sun.

He was in fact radiating joy and happiness in the vicinity. Anyone who came in the surrounding of Sri Sri Thakur felt lightened, enlightened, energized and empowered. Poet’s question, ‘what is this life, if full of care; we have no time to stand and stare?’ does not arise when Sri Sri Thakur is around. His motto was that, we must enjoy life. Life is to be lived in full, with happiness. When it comes to question of travails of life, He used to feel like Alexander, who said, ‘I came, I saw, I conquered’. No failure, no subjugation, no humiliation, no room for depression, no scope for frustration. His feeling is like that of the solitary king who says, ‘I am the lord of all that I survey’. He developed logic: if I am an offspring of Supreme Father, then I inherit all the attributes of supreme Father. Why should I shudder? I am expression of fearlessness. I am ever blissful, as I am son of elixir.

In an extreme sense, Sri Sri Thakur wanted us to conquer death. His famous words: ‘Do never die, nor cause death, but resist death to death’, takes us to a different paradigm of life.

We conclude the session by remembering a saying of Sri Sri Thakur:

“Think not weak,
think not depressed, -
ye be not hopelessly immobile;
remember the best creation of His stock
which you live in!
Shout,
cheer up,
be sure and brave; -
hold His banner of love,
behold Him in His creation;
go –
and this go is only to serve
to kneel
and to pray!”

Thirteen

Sri Sri Thakur Tried to Prevent India's Partition

Graceful Thakur Took Every Damage onto Himself

Sri Sri Thakur disapproved the methods used in the freedom struggle, namely non-cooperation movement and violent method adopted by extremist groups. Sri Sri Thakur was not in great hurry to replace the political masters at New Delhi.

As it appears today, Sri Sri Thakur would never be known as a patriot, a statesman and a leader of any stature. History would not chronicle and take cognizance of Sri Sri Thakur's contribution in shaping the course of human civilization in general and Indian state in particular. For that matter, no one in India would perhaps know what Sri Sri Thakur did during the most turbulent period in India's history, that is India's freedom movement and also during post partition traumatic period.

However, we know something on the subject, which tells us that at no point in Sri Sri Thakur's lifetime, he spared any opportunity to do good for the country. India's political, social and economic uplift was very much in Sri Sri Thakur's agenda. However, Sri Sri Thakur's approach and method was different from those of politicians, who were obsessed with political emancipation and adopted path of agitation and disruption, disregarding 'man-making approach', which Sri Sri Thakur advised them to pursue.

In this article, I am bringing out a small issue, pertaining to partition of our country. Sri Sri Thakur wanted to prevent partition of India. This is a summary statement. It has long history and many instances, involving large number of people for considerable period of time. The efforts put in by Sri Sri Thakur are silent and sincere efforts, executed through low key personalities and the result was not a hundred percent success. Therefore, the mainstream press and government functionaries did not highlight this.

Let me attempt to present a summary account of Sri Sri Thakur's bid to keep India united.

First point to be noted is that Sri Sri Thakur was not supportive of the Indian freedom struggle, which went on in full rage during the first half of twentieth century, culminating in India getting a truncated freedom in August 1947. Sri Sri Thakur disapproved the methods used in the freedom struggle, namely non-cooperation movement and violent method adopted by extremist groups. Sri Sri Thakur was not in great hurry to replace the political masters at New Delhi. All these did never mean that Sri Sri Thakur liked perpetuation of India's subjugation. No; Sri Sri Thakur's view was that, before we go for a transfer of power, we need to get rid of those weaknesses in our national character which allowed a foreign trading company to subjugate us politically, culturally and exploited us economically for two centuries. Secondly, and in furtherance of the previous cause, Sri Sri Thakur wanted to create a generation of better bred people; which meant a lot in terms of cleaning our culture, tradition, public behavior and social system etc. That is the reason, when the entire country's elite mind was engaged in throwing out British Raj from Delhi; Sri Sri Thakur was sowing the seed for a cultural revolution, involving transformation of every man and woman; every home and community. Almost all the political leaders and so called freedom fighters of

all factions in the post and pre independence era, came to Sri Sri Thakur, got a glimpse of his views; but they had no patience and outlook to follow Sri Sri Thakur's viewpoint in action. They saw merit in Sri Sri Thakur's views, but they were obsessed with different priorities; their views were shrouded with myopic considerations. Elucidation of Sri Sri Thakur's political views, particularly in the context of India's freedom struggle will be a thesis by itself; therefore, not dealt here in further detail.

Coming to the point of partition, today on hindsight, it appears that Sri Sri Thakur had a preview of what was going to happen in future. He exactly wanted to prevent the logic and underlying causality of partition of the country on communal line.

Way back, sometime in 1920 and thereafter, when Sri Sri Thakur was in Pabna, then East Bengal, he wanted to bring about a balance in the demography of local population on communal line. For example, Sri Sri Thakur advised his Hindu followers, who came from different parts of East Bengal and stayed with Sri Sri Thakur in ashram, to buy land and have permanent settlement in and around Himaitpur and Pabna. Many of his disciples actually did that, in the face of opposition from local people. Local leaders, including those from Hindu community, apprehended that Sri Sri Thakur was creating an empire and building a cult and community which was admittedly strange to them, and felt jealous of him. But what Sri Sri Thakur actually aiming at was a balance of two communities, in number and in culture, namely Hindu and Muslim in every district of undivided Bengal.

When Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and some other top ranking leaders came, Sri Sri Thakur advised them to shift and rehabilitate some Hindu families in Muslim majority districts of Bengal and shift and rehabilitate some Muslim families in Hindu majority districts; and thereafter to conduct a census.

The leaders found it an impossible task. They perhaps would have argued: who would leave his own home and hearth and settle down at a strange place and for what? Very logical negation indeed!

Ironically, same displacement took place under situation of communal holocaust. As history records: "massive population exchange occurred between the two newly formed states in the months immediately following partition. Once the lines were established, about 14.5 million people crossed the borders to what they hoped was the relative safety of religious majority. Based on 1951 Census of displaced persons, 7,226,000 Muslims went to Pakistan from India while 7,250,000 Sikhs and Hindus moved to India from Pakistan immediately after partition.

There was a complete breakdown of law and order; many died in riots, massacre, or just from the hardships of their flight to safety. What ensued was one of the largest population movements in recorded history. According to Richard Symonds, at the lowest estimate, half a million people perished and twelve million became homeless." (Wikipedia, 'Partition of India', accessed on 06/08/2013)

It is also recorded in history that the Boundary Commission chaired by Sir Cyril Radcliffe drew the line of partition based on the religious majority in a district. A district in Punjab and in Bengal with majority Hindu formed part of India and similarly a district with majority Muslim population formed part of Pakistan. Pakistan was carved out of a misconceived frenzy by an English Barrister through the instrumentality of majority community in a district as per census 1910.

Sri Sri Thakur wanted to foil the basic premise of communal majority in a district. Problem with prophets is that they work silently, they struggle with people's mindset and they work in a very long time frame. Therefore, it was hard for contemporary people to come to terms with prophets' proposals.

Furthermore, Sri Sri Thakur axed the very root of communal tension by saying that: 'God is one, dharma is one; prophets are same and servers of the one'. Sri Sri Thakur never uttered the word 'conversion'. He

wanted everyone to stick to their religious affiliation and grow, following the principles of contemporary prophet. There cannot be more condition of communal harmony than what prevails in Satsang world. Still the worst thing happened; mother India was divided on communal ground. And after that till date, it is history, which needs no recounting on this page.

The summary of what I have said so far is that Sri Sri Thakur did all that he could do to prevent partition. I was surprised when I came across an observation made by a lifelong associate of Sri Sri Thakur that Sri Sri Thakur carried guilt feeling and did not excuse himself till he breathed his last by making him personally responsible for India's partition. "I could not prevent creation of Pakistan", Sri Sri Thakur used to repent whenever discussion about partition arose. (Page 30, *Priyaparam*, by Devi Prasad Mukhopadhyay in Bengali, Tapoban Prakashan)

What an intense feeling for the motherland? What a close ownership of event that happened around? What was the level of feelings and efforts Sri Sri Thakur put in against the tragedy of partition and how much he felt about the disastrous consequence! The Lord prevented many mishaps, for the humanity and particularly for our motherland. And for what he could not do successfully, there was no end to his repentance. He was heard of saying, "I am foolish father of fallen sons".

8th August 2013

Fourteen

Thakur – the Arbiter for our Age

Sri Sri Thakur helps us to be freed from bondages

Love for Thakur is a strange alchemy. It takes shape and gets formed out of surrender at Him by process of *diksha*, following the tenets of *diksha* with *japa* and meditation and overall, by shaping up oneself in line with His ideology.

At a time when Sri Sri Thakur is conspicuous by physical absence, the firsthand accounts of his close associate are powerful tool for knowing Him. On this premise, in this article, I am drawing facts from the writing of Deviprasad Mukhopadhyay, who was an inner circle member of Sri Sri Thakur's associates. One more credential of Deviprasad Mukhopadhyay that we must know is that Sri Sri Thakur engaged him for some fundamental research work on philosophy, comparative study of religion, which requires good knowledge of Sanskrit language. He has done substantial work comparing *Gita*, *Bible* and *Quran*. He got into fulltime work of Sri Sri Thakur as per His wish in August 1952, beginning with teaching in *Satsang*

Tapovan Vidyalay at Deoghar. Later he did transcription of Sri Sri Thakur's discussion, as assistant to the legendary scholar devotee Prafulla Kumar Das. Deviprasad is one of those who have extensively written on Sri Sri Thakur's life and ideology in Bengali. Each of his work is a valuable source material for doing research on Sri Sri Thakur. In this article, I am summarily translating a part of his Bengali articles (*Yuga Bidhata*) from the book *Priya Param*, published by Tapoban Prakashan in 2004.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is the contemporary incarnate. His company and association has brought about reform in many a criminals and deliverance for many deviants. A new breed is getting generated almost unnoticed. For this kind of reform and correction, Sri Sri Thakur did not subject people through formal rituals, penance and austerity etc. At the same time, whatever he did was not contrary to the measures prescribed in scriptures and ceremonial codes. He performed all those procedures and formalities that were required for protecting and promoting life and growth. He was right on the method and mission; with appropriate blend of discipline and flexibility.

Our scriptures and classic codes have provision for hard penalties and austere penance for those who murder *brahmins*, ladies and foetus etc. Those penalties were like self immolation in ice or fire, excruciating penance involving self abnegation, undertaking fasting and sacrifices etc. In the past, society used to banish and behead criminals like murderers, plunderers and treacherous. Some of those punishments have been reformed today in the form of fine, incarceration and death by hanging.

Purushottam, the incarnate of the age had wonderful provisions. For him, sin lies in obsession with complexes, which is a kind of disease. If one can be cured of the disease; meaning, can be taken away from the clutches of complexes, one can then grow like a normal human being. Therefore, the universal dictum of all prophets, 'hate the sin, not the sinner'. A sinner becomes a normal person, if the sin element from him can be wiped off. The courage, strength and endurance that are used for committing a crime, get appropriated for good work, which do more good to the society than what is expected from a so called ascetic person with feeble mind.

Wise men in the past have provided many a ways to get rid of sin. Sri Sri Thakur's is a different arrangement. As per Sri Sri Thakur, brain is the prime mover in our system, which dictates all our activities through sensory and motor nerves. Man's thought and actions are primed by the inclinations created in the brain. For example, if brain is shrouded by complexes, then man's activities are complex sodden. If on the other hand, man's brain is engaged with a pure and superior person, and if his mind and activities are employed for the interests of that superior person, then the base level thoughts would get restricted and eventually die out from the man's system, like darkness gets banished in the glow of light. Therefore, man has to love his Lord (the superior beloved) with body, mind and soul; repose faith in him and has to carry out His dicta in every step in life. It is only through this process; man can get rid of the clutches of complexes. What follows from the above is that one has to have a Guru as superior beloved and he must lead life as per His ideology.

Sri Sri Thakur further said, every man in his heart is pulled by libido, an urge for affinity. That urge looks for uniting him or her with some object or person or affairs. If that urge is impelled to a superior person or object, then that person becomes of a superior type. In the contrary situation, if the affinity gets attached with any inferior object or person, then man tends to acquire a deteriorating tendency, a fall.

Prophet, God incarnate, whenever descends on the earth, carrying all the divine qualities in human form, is the most superior person for that age. Love bondage with Him is the best affinity which tends to set a person on the path of elevation. Love for Him is a strange alchemy. It takes shape and gets formed out of surrender at Him by process of *diksha*, following the tenets of *diksha* with *japa* and meditation and overall,

by shaping up oneself in line with His ideology. That superior person is the embodiment of *holy name* and the personification of all divine qualities. Practice of *japa* and meditation strengthens attachment on Him.

We do meditation on the point of *agnya chakra*, which is at the base of the forehead that shelters the part of brain used for thinking. Our meditation on *agnya chakra* keeps the brain stimulated with superior thoughts, which wards off the contrary thoughts like misgivings, misery and misjudgments. In this process, man tends to acquire life of purity, peace and prosperity.

At this stage in the life of a person comes love for the lord. A sense of nearness to and possessiveness of the lord grips the devotee. He feels proud for the glory of the lord and he acquires charm by the radiance of the lord. Sri Sri Thakur conveyed the same in the following stanza:

I am bloated at your fame, charmed by your beauty
Seek meaning in your interest, elated by your glory.

This kind of love for the lord has to possess a devotee. The only interest in life has to be to acquire satisfaction in His pleasure. This kind of disciplined thought makes the brain to fall in line. The life becomes free from any kind of mishap and misdemeanor.

A devotee one day confessed to Sri Sri Thakur about his misdeeds and sought his advice for purification. “Do japa and meditation properly”, came the blessing from the gracious lord. He further said, “I don’t know any such sin that does not get incinerated by repetition of the holy name”.

These are the strong pointers for us, coming from the lord.

20^{h} August 2013, *Raksha Bandhan*

Fifteen

Let's Understand Thakur

Thakur has gifted us gems of ideas

If love does not have a centre and is not concentric, then it gets passionate. If love is not meaningful with respect to the Lord, then it is lust. Lord stands above everything that is there in the world. All kinds of anomaly get solved, if only I love Lord and all my complexes fulfill the Lord.

We know and we believe that Sri Sri Thakur is a wonder, the like of which is otherwise not available to us. He has gifted us ideas which are original, meaningful and appears to be unique. At times, you view the reality, the truth, the essence of things, when you go through his recorded discussions. In this piece, I am quoting some of his conversations from the Bengali book '*Dibyadyuti*' (2009), compiled by Sri Kumar Krishna Bhattacharya. The author spent his lifetime in the vicinity of Sri Sri Thakur from his childhood days and passed away recently, a few months ago. The issues presented below are disjointed as they have cropped up in course of conversations with different people. I have picked up few of his conversations at random. Some places, I have given the context and added my observations in brackets.

Section I

It was morning of 6th April, 1955. Sri Sri Thakur was seated on bedstead in *Jamtala* cottage at Deoghar. Discussion was on the topic संस्कार (hereditary culture or instinct).

Sri Sri Thakur said, "Hereditary culture is what is ingrained in zygot. That remains in biological configuration." (pp. 96)

(*This sentence is literally understood as what is there in biological formation is heredity. But how to draw the best out of heredity and how to cultivate what is already there in heredity, are some of the things which we need to know. Sri Sri Thakur has given those ideas in connection with his ideology related to varnashram and marriage.*)

Manilal Chakraborty, another lifelong associate of Sri Sri Thakur, author of many books in Bengali, asked on 2nd February 1955, 'can our hereditary configuration be altered?'

Sri Sri Thakur – How can that be altered? That is specific. That can however be added to. The undesirable can be banished, if you want to and good things can be flourished further.

Manilal – Does *japa* and meditation help to improve?

Sri Sri Thakur – *Japa*, mediation and regulated activities can help to give fillip to good elements (of hereditary culture).

Manilal – Sometime it is observed that a man born to an insignificant parentage becomes world famous. How does that happen?

Sri Sri Thakur – That happens by acquisition. Acquisition in course of time leads to transformation. Like a combination in chemistry give rise to a third factor. Some specific composition in photography leads to very rare phenomenon.

Manilal – That kind of manifestation is not observed to be supported by the line of heredity.

Sri Sri Thakur – Forefathers subtly contribute to this (hereditary acquisition), somewhere prominently from mother's side or from father's side.

Manilal – In such cases, mother's contribution remains or not?

Sri Sri Thakur – How will it happens without mother's impulse?

Manilal – Came across in encyclopedia about alteration of heredity. Like Kesto da has written in his book '*Maner Pathe*" (Bengali) that a poor farmer was impressed by a judge in the town court. In that state of mind, he returned to his home in village, had good time with his wife and their next child became a learned and successful person.

Sri Sri Thakur – See the liking he developed for the judge. The farmer possessed the property for developing that liking. Otherwise, how could that liking develop? Then he narrated his feelings to his wife, which caught the wife's mind. There it is to be understood that the wife had inclination for the husband to that extent. (pp. 58)

Then (on 6th April 1955) Sri Sri Thakur came out and sat on a bed in the courtyard. He was in conversation with Arun Joyardar and Ray Hauserman, when he said,

"If love does not have a centre and is not concentric, then it gets passionate. If love is not meaningful with respect to the Lord, then it is lust. Lord stands above everything that is there in the world. All kinds of anomaly get solved, if only I love Lord and all my complexes fulfill the Lord."

(*This paragraph is literally understood. Serious question however comes with regard to its practice. Perhaps, answer lies in trying to do things in line with what Sri Sri Thakur has said. These are hard core psychology and what Sri Sri Thakur has said in this chapter is truth. We only need to follow.*

What does it mean in behavioral terms for love to be concentric? How do our complexes fulfill the Lord? Some of us must be practicing these; but I find hard to put those in words.)

Section II

It was morning of 8th April 1955. Sri Sri Thakur was sitting on his bedstead in *Jamtala* cottage. Sarat Chandra Haldar, a scholarly devotee of Sri Sri Thakur asked, 'What is that affair of Ramakrishna dev got to view the Mother?'

Sri Sri Thakur – That kind of viewing is not that prominent. You need 'to be'. As you keep on following these, go on paying attention; unknowingly these things will form habit in you and will effulge in your character. Otherwise, as such these things are seen, strikingly palpable. Sitting under the *babla* tree at Himaitpur, I was absorbed in *japa*. Sun was setting down. Kesto Thakur came and started playing flute. I was not very comfortable with that. I requested him to go away. Kesto Thakur does not resemble what is generally seen in photos. He is like red mixed in milk. It is like the colour of grass that remained under weight and sun shine reflected on that. We need to see within – my vision has to be materialized in me with its philosophical meaning. Whatever is in me has to be successfully integrated from philosophical point of view. Lion shaped cloud got transformed into goddesses Durga, the deity sitting on lion. Philosophy and substance, both would reveal in perspective, without obfuscation. (pp. 97)

(*Some people experience extra-sensory perceptions, out of some achievement or for some reasons. But Sri Sri Thakur says those are only experiences. He does not want us to remain satisfied there. Those experiences have to shape our character and personality and get converted into acquisition. That is the net benefit.)*

Section III

To know Sri Sri Thakur is not an easy job. It is particularly hard today since, Sri Sri Thakur is no more in physical form in our midst. He is not one amongst many others, who perhaps can be put into some kind of stereotype and then can be assessed. We however get some accounts of revelations wherein his antecedents can be referred to. I came across one such revelation, very surprising at first glance, from the above referred book (*Dibyadyuti*, Bengali, 2009). Krishna Prasanna Bhattacharya, the scientist turned devotee, is conversing with Sri Sri Thakur in the morning of 12th March 1955 in *Jamtala* cottage at Deoghar.

Krishna da – A person comes to you. He stands before you with certain intensity of devotion. You acknowledge that and that acceptance gets reflected on your face. When the girls at Pabna used to recite the verse of *dasavatar* (ten incarnates), your face used to indicate that you were accepting their invocation.

Sri Sri Thakur – I am before Abraham was.

(*This appears to be astounding. I am not able to fathom the meaning and significance of what Sri Sri Thakur wanted to communicate. I am just holding out that utterance of Sri Sri Thakur, extremely profound as it sounds, for the readers to have their own impression and interpretation.*) (pp 83)

Sixteen

Wonder that Was Thakur

Sri Sri Thakur could see and know everything

> Sri Sri Thakur said, 'Gosain da, even if someone is hiding in the sea, he cannot escape these two eyes.'

The title and the sub-title of this piece of write-up conceals more than what these are intended to reveal. We admittedly know that Sri Sri Thakur was a wonderful person. Every time we get to know a new event, the like of which narrated below, we wonder who Sri Sri Thakur is. Coming to the sub-title, how much expansive is his view; what does his view encompass and how much deep his view gets into, leave us baffled.

Event like this hits our consciousness and makes us alert as to what are we doing with Sri Sri Thakur?

This anecdote is taken from an article written by Prof. Amalendu Chattopadhyay, published in January 2014 issue of *Saptarchee*, a Bengali monthly published from Bibek Bitan. The event is recounted by Shri Kalipada Raha, who is at an advanced age now. He was a young boy when the event was witnessed by him at Sri Sri Thakur.

Kalipada, as a young boy went through thread ceremony. Satish Chandra Goswami was the priest who conducted the sacred thread ceremony. Satish Chandra Goswami is a well known devotee of Sri Sri Thakur from the early age of Sri Sri Thakur. He is known for his mastery on rites and rituals as per scriptures. Satish Chandra Goswami is one of those rare devotees of Sri Sri Thakur whose biography has been written as per Sri Sri Thakur's wish and the book is considered to be an authentic account of early history of satsang movement. Sri Sri Thakur named the biography of Satish Chandra as 'Srimat Acharya Satish Chandra Goswami and Satsang Andolan', published in 1964 and reprinted with enlargement in 2010. Such was the devotee Satish Chandra!

After solemnizing the thread ceremony, Satish Chandra reached Sri Sri Thakur along with the *bramhachari* boy Kalipada to seek Sri Sri Thakur's blessing. Sri Sri Thakur was visibly elated to see the boy in saffron, coming out of sacred rites and blessed him. Satish Chandra also offered his *pranam* to Sri Sri Thakur. When he emerged from prostration, he viewed a furious face of Sri Sri Thakur. With that sight, Satish Chandra, the old priestly devotee broke down and remained lying on the floor, in remorse, guilty and sobbing state for quite some time.

The boy Kalipada was perplexed. Coming away from the visibility of Sri Sri Thakur, Kalipada could not resist his curiosity and asked, 'what went wrong?' Satish Chandra, almost compulsively, probably to come out of his sense of guilt said, 'see Kalipada, in this May heat at Deoghar, I cut short some verse and shortened the duration of the ceremony, so that the heat does not torture you.'

Kalipada – Is it an offence? Is shortening of the verses and rites a serious miscarriage?

Satish Chandra – Of course! Sri Sri Thakur asked me to conduct the ceremony. He did not ask me to cut it short. Mind it; nothing can be hidden from him.

Kalipada – Did Sri Sri Thakur reprimand you for this?

Satish Chandra – Sri Sri Thakur said, ‘Gosain da, even if someone is hiding in the sea, he cannot escape these two eyes.’

Gosain da articulated how Sri Sri Thakur pointed fingers at his own pair of eyes, while saying the above.

Boy Kalipada got scared; his heart started beating faster. He asked, ‘was Sri Sri Thakur pained at this?’

Satish Chandra – Of course! Sri Sri Thakur said, ‘You did this! You know me well. My anguish has no limit to see that you did this.’

Kalipada – Is it that you remained flat on the floor before Sri Sri Thakur to beseech his pardon?

Satish Chandra – Yes, though Sri Sri Thakur pardoned me; but how do I pardon myself? You tell me, Kali? I ought to have reminded myself that nothing escapes Sri Sri Thakur’s notice. How many times have I not experienced this? Despite that, I committed this error! Can you tell me, why did I slip and I slipped gravely?

Kalipada has no clue to the question raised by the veteran devotee.

Satish Chandra is shedding tears, unstoppable.

Kalipada is standing witness to a wonderful play of the divine and devotee. He was wonderstruck then. But now he reflects those days and gets into a state of perpetual wonder.

4th March 2014

Seventeen

Love is Condensed Devotion

Sri Sri Thakur is embodiment of love

The only way to experience love is to deal with loveable and loved ones. Amongst those, the most beloved Sri Sri Thakur stands out. Love is best felt when we follow the embodiment of love; when we take shelter under his feet and he displays and disseminates love, sheer out of mercy.

This piece of write-up follows the analysis and architecture built by Umapada Natha in his celebrated work '*Satyanusaraner Aloke*' (In the light of Satyanusaran) (Bengali, 2007). As a prelude, it must be said that Umapada Natha is an erudite scholar devotee during Sri Sri Thakur's contemporary period, who was specifically blessed by Sri Sri Thakur for his excellent and prolific writing. He is author of about 10 books and each book presents Sri Sri Thakur's life and ideology in a lively and scholarly style. He is popularly known as Srinatha. He breathed his last in 2008. This article is extracted from the Srinatha's commentary on that portion of Satyanusaran, where Sri Sri Thakur has spoken about 'love'.

Love is condensed devotion, as spelt out by Sri Sri Thakur in Satyanusaran. In Sri Sri Thakur's word, 'devotion is younger sister of love'. Srinatha says that Sri Sri Thakur has given a revolutionary concept by placing 'love' a step higher than 'devotion'. But real wonder is yet to come. Sri Sri Thakur is not only a worshiper of love, He was love embodiment. He was the form and shape of love.

Portion below is translated version of Srinatha's text:

"Thakur is walking in front of you. The charming, glowing and divine frame is moving in his inimitable style. You come and join the queue of his followers and start moving ahead. What is bothering you? Yes, he has a form, the physical shape; like it was there always, in all incarnations. This appearance is for this age. He will remain in this form, the form which is familiar to you; till he takes a new form in a new age. Your future generations have to wait for about eight to ten thousand years to get him in new form, in his completeness, in the new age that would come in future. Bear in mind, at all time around the world there would always be realized souls, achieved souls, saints of great height, scattered here and there, as friends and well wishers of human kind; yet humanity will have to wait for eight to ten thousand years to come across the *purushotham*, the complete man, the God in human form. We will cultivate and serve whatever the *purushotham* has gifted to us in thought, in action, within our family, society, and nation and in the world. As a result, a nobler and lovely civilization will spring up. That order is likely to prevail for few thousand years hence, till it gets impaired and polluted by the dirt of civilization and assumes unbearable proportion, when again he would descend in his completeness as savior. This is the law of providence.

Bear in mind that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is the priceless jewel of 'love' that we have spoke about earlier in the chapter. Love can hardly be felt by reading books on love. The only way to experience love is to deal with loveable and loved ones. Amongst those, the most beloved Sri Sri Thakur stands out. Love is best felt when we follow the embodiment of love; when we take shelter under his feet and he displays

and disseminates love, sheer out of mercy. My friendly urge, dear brothers! Join his bandwagon; you will reach the land of love; the proverbial garden of love, *Amaravati*.

Be a lover; get soaked in his love; you will be a winner. Cultivate love; be tied with the bondage of love with Narayan; laxmi (the heavenly consort of Narayan) will shine in your house."

4th April 2014

Eighteen

Knowing Sri Sri Thakur is Object of Pursuit

Sri Sri Thakur & Me Brings Joy

Sri Sri Thakur sat up erect on the pillow and said in a threatening tone, "If you only have to think everything about yourself, what for am I there? If at all I am anybody for you, is it fair to feel helpless anymore?

We all know Sri Sri Thakur in our own way. We are familiar with Sri Sri Thakur and His ideology. Most of us have experienced Sri Sri Thakur through various situations, events and particularly while passing through adversities. Alas! He is no more amidst us in physical form. That was a rare wonder that humanity got God in human form.

The intensity of our love for Him does vary; from person to person and even for the same person from time to time. The closeness of our familiarity differs. Our feelings and experiences related to Thakur in our life do fluctuate, as we get influenced by material developments and situations surrounding us.

How do we know Sri Sri Thakur as the person He was? It is significant to keep Him alive in our consciousness, so that the level of our consciousness remains elevated; we enhance our level of purity and sensitivity. Not only that we follow Sri Sri Thakur's ideology; not only that we remain engaged in activities dedicated to Him; we also need to experience live Thakur. If the third condition is not maintained, perhaps, we would keep ourselves at suboptimal level of consciousness and cannot get out of the boundary of our self.

Can God be imagined? This was the question raised to Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur categorically said, 'no. You need to know the God, what he is.'

Which image of God, we will view? - was the next question. Answer was, 'You will view God in the image what you carry with you.'

These are wonderful answers to curious questions. I found questions and answers like these in the narration of Panchanan Sarkar, when he had his first encounter with Sri Sri Thakur. I have reviewed and translated part of his book 'Sri Sri Thakur in my life'; full edition of the book in Bengali was published in 2011. Sri Sri Thakur comes alive in this conversation. What follows below is a part of my review of Panchanan Sarkar's account of his first visit to Sri Sri Thakur.

Review of Panchanan Sarkar's account of his first visit to Sri Sri Thakur

Panchanan Sarkar reached his destined place, the Satsang ashram of Sri Sri Thakur at Himaitpur on the bank of river Padma. It was not possible to have a view of Thakur in the same night, as Thakur was physically indisposed, suffering from fever and was on liquid diet. Thakur was not keeping well for last few days, but he was feeling better towards morning. Therefore, it would be better, thought Panchanan da, to see Thakur next morning.

Next day morning Panchanan Sarkar was getting ready when Sushil Chandra Basu, then Secretary, Satsang and a close associate of Sri Sri Thakur came and accompanied him. At that time, Sri Sri Thakur was with Birajkrishna Bhattacharya at the latter's residence, located in the middle of a field, a little away from Satsang ashram.

Sri Sri Thakur was on a bed, on the verandah, in half reclining position. His eyes were steady on the pages of a small size book in his hand. From a distance Panchanan Sarkar's inquisitive mind perhaps turned minute and got absorbed in assessment. "Where is the similarity of this figure with that handsome image that I have been seeing in photos all these days?" Panchanan Sarkar is asking himself. "The eyes are of course dazzling, but why are there so many shreds of gloom surrounding the eyes? Where is that effulgence radiating from the limbs? Ah, it belies all my expectation!"

Panchanan da was shaken awake from his thought, when Sri Sri Thakur was heard reciting a stanza, apparently from the book in hand, in an appreciative tone.

"How charming it is from a far,
yet, dark marks are seen nearer!"

Panchanan da stopped there, about ten feet away from Sri Sri Thakur. He could not proceed further towards Thakur, having heard these two lines. His mind benumbed, he did not know what is appropriate to do. "How is it possible that my own thinking at this point of time is getting expressed in Sri Sri Thakur recitation of these two lines?" Panchanan da wondered. In a flash of memory, he recollected having read from *Amiya Vani* of Ashwin Kumar Biswas about Sri Sri Thakur's ability to read the mind. "Am I encountering something of that sort", Panchanan da's rational mind was trying to come to terms with Sri Sri Thakur's presence. "Lo and behold the meaning of these two lines! May be Sri Sri Thakur is letting me know through this event that 'never roam in the land of imagination, staying away at a distance. Come close, however may be his appearance, shoulder his liability."

Sushil da bowed down before Sri Sri Thakur and sat on the floor, as a devout disciple would submit before his teacher. Panchanan da was standing still at a distance for quite some time, nonplussed. Panchanan da wrote, 'What a state of un-preparedness I found myself in! In any case, I am new to this place, not familiar with the customs. Sri Sri Thakur does not recognize me and surely has not noted my presence. As for others, all are so attentive towards Thakur that hardly they take note of anything else. At

this moment, let me give the slip; I can come conveniently later and be formal. Under the present circumstances, there cannot be any better strategy than this.'

Bang came a voice from Sri Sri Thakur, "You are into professorship; isn't it, my dear brother?"

"I heaved a sigh of relief after replying, 'I was into that; now given up'", wrote Panchanan da. "As Sri Sri Thakur broke the ice, I got pushed into the zone of familiarity, took few steps ahead, prostrated before Sri Sri Thakur and got myself seated on the carpet laid out over there. No one over there felt the need to introduce me as they saw Thakur knowing me; and I also felt like an insider of this place and jettisoned all my fears and inhibitions. Then I got into a different state. I saw Sri Sri Thakur looking at me; a lovely look with a magnetic pull; just look, without any expression. I got glued to that look; I did not know what that look meant for me. That look pierced deep into my mind, unlocked the knots in my mind and unearthed, as it were, a spring of monologues. I went on talking, as if a volley of verbiage rushed out, expressing feelings that were submerged in a heavy heart; being unmindful of numerous anxious listeners in the surrounding. Sri Sri Thakur's constant gaze flowed over me, like the waters of river Ganga, soaking, washing and purifying my body, mind and soul. Something happened in me, which I cannot express. I went on speaking out; but more than what I spoke, there were heaps of residue remained at the bottom of my heart. I left with a load of unbearable loathing."

"At last, I found Sri Sri Thakur! By then, I was emptied of all my inborn assets, whatever I was blessed with."

All the while, Sri Sri Thakur was silent, reclining on the bed, listening to everything that I poured out. He sprang into a feat of anger, when he heard me saying, 'what is there left for me now?' Shaken from his relaxed posture, Sri Sri Thakur sat up erect on the pillow and said in a threatening tone, "If you only have to think everything about yourself, what for am I there? If at all I am anybody for you, is it fair to feel helpless anymore? Do you think that you have come over here on your own? If you believe for a moment that someone has pulled you over here, then you know that the key is in his hand; and he can spring havoc in a moment. Do you find it hard to have a little faith in my words?"

The sweet reprimand that Sri Sri Thakur hurled at me had the force of a moral pressure, backed by an indefatigable logic. I quite did not know as to what happened to me; I felt elated, my heart was lighter; millions of layers of thick gloom within me got fizzled out like a whiff by the intimate words and lively posture that Sri Sri Thakur displayed in his inimitable style. That was a strange experience; words would hardly convey.

I was speechless; overtaken by a tempest of ecstasy; all my well formulated arguments and deeply entrenched thoughts blown out. My vacuous state has not failed the notice of Sri Sri Thakur. Addressing Sushil da, Sri Sri Thakur said, "Instead of crying for help in distress, if man can have a little bit of faith, then help would automatically come. In normal state, man would not step on to this path; but in the midst of turbulent river on the capsized boat, man gets into fast *japa* (repetition of holy name) with unhesitant faith. The divine deity, who remains embodied in the holy *name*, gets awaken by the earnest call of the distressed. There appears an island, instantly, out of whirling water. The emergent island shelters the sinking boat on its surface. You are of course witness to many such instances; aren't you, Sushil da?"

Earlier I was speechless; now I stood breathless, when Sri Sri Thakur cast his mysterious look at me. So, Sri Sri Thakur was referring to the incident that threatened us and we were miraculously saved. But we have not yet shared that incident with anyone in the ashram. That question is not yet answered. I used to wonder, what prompted the author of 'Amiya Vani' to fill up so many pages with narrations of Sri Sri

Thakur's omniscience? Now I know what option the author had for him? It was not miracle mongering; it was rather a spontaneous expression of gratitude of an ordinary author.

Panchanan da reflected on his first encounter and exchange with Sri Sri Thakur in a tone of self analysis and jubilation. 'Why am I recounting this purely personal feeling?' he asked to himself. He found an answer that was as compelling as it was spontaneous. A bud of lotus has its own urge to bloom. Nature has its own urge to beautify the creation. Sun has its own urge to energize the earth and sprinkle color on the petals of flowers. 'My life story is ugly and indecent. That set the backdrop on which I received the pure, the spotless, the unblemished Thakur. I received Thakur as my own; in my own way. When I speak about my Thakur, I will have perforce to speak about my own self. Thakur and me together brings joy. Real joy touches many minds instantly. The all pervading image of joy has an urge to spread – I did realize that and that is why I must share my experience.'

Sri Sri Thakur was in his own mood; very unique and inimitable; puffing the hookah from a long pipe. He was gently wandering on many topics. Staring at Sushil da, Sri Sri Thakur said, 'Have you noted Sushil da the manner Panchanan da outpours him during discussion?'

One elderly mother by the side interjected, 'exactly like Bona's father'. Later on I came to be familiar with that mother as wife of Radharaman da.

Sri Sri Thakur approvingly joined with the mother. 'You said right. These are of a distinct type. And you verily know that I like that type."

'You have said, that was a royal type', Sushil da added his view.

Some other episode was winking in mind to come out, but I resisted. I rather allowed some questions on meditation and spiritual attainment. The moment, I broached the subject, a bulky person who was seated by my side, (must be Sri Sri Thakur's disciple, but stranger to me then) made advance to respond to my question. That was his bad luck; he had hardly any scope to escape. My reaction to him was ugly, to say the least. 'Who are you gentleman?' I spitted venom on him. 'My question was addressed to Thakur Anukul Chandra. He alone will reply. I least care who you are and whatever wisdom you might have acquired. I equally posses the capability of explaining, at least, narrating the bookish knowledge from scriptures, as persons like you do.'

This came out from me like a bolt from the blue; least expected in the vicinity of Sri Sri Thakur's view and audience. I was however in no position to assess the reaction of the surroundings. Neither do I recall the face of the person. That was therefore my first and last encounter with that person. I did not get an occasion to unscrew the nail that my wild remark pierced on that innocent person.

Panchanan da reflects on his state. There was hardly an account of the load of such innumerable misdeeds that I acquired and stored in the bosom of my destiny. Yet I was marching ahead with aplomb and alacrity. Today, I find no measurer of the perplexity that was named as 'Thakur', whom I owned up, despite a shoulder stooped with a monstrous I.

My body was smeared with excruciating irritation; my mind and lip throbbed with arguments supported by whims. Amidst the plethora of self supporting arguments, as if, the 'cosmic image' appeared for me. All my attention being focused within, I solaced in the fact that 'whatever God does is for the good'. It was heard earlier that it takes years and years of pursuit for man to get his views focused inside. Despite that, the inexorable external world apparently does not grant relief to the mind. But for me, it was, as if, an exception. I distinctly recall, my mind was bubbling with ecstasy, as I advanced towards 'ashram'. It was certain in my mind that my lone retreat from the world for good would end up with a meaningful outcome

in near future. No shred of doubt in my mind that the boat that I have boarded on is faultless. It was not as if I was unaware of the fact that the boat is made of rejection. I sensed a mind in me that is cool with breeze of fullness. The ultimate of rejection is renunciation. What else could be the meaning of rejection, if it does not sway mind away from the world?

Alas! Who was alive to the fact then that rejection and renunciation are not the same stuff? The other side of attachment is repelled attachment. There was no shred of idea then that repelled attachment is more dangerous than attachment. The other side of supreme attachment is actually renunciation.

After some time, the seriousness in the ambience got dispersed. Sri Sri Thakur said, 'Hey, Sushil da. Panchanan da is new to this place. No one here knows Panchanan da; there is no understanding; friendship is something far away. But the words, (argumentative and pungent as these are) will sure to invite reaction. No doubt, it is a weakness. The same was there with Anta (Anantanath Ray – Maharaj). He had this dangerous tendency; of course got subdued now; mostly rooted out. Not much of complaints come on that account.'

Sri Sri Thakur paused for a moment and said, 'Of course, Panchanan da is much seasoned man; his words are not to be misunderstood.'

Sri Sri Thakur continued with a long breath, 'Men find their way to your place carrying series of bruises on their bosom; is it not true?'

Sri Sri Thakur cast his view wide around and repeated, 'what, is it not true?'

The air got cleared slowly. Sushil da was heard clearing this throat and said with repressed voice, flashing a gentle smile, 'What else it could be? Reality is that we all more or less …'

Sri Sri Thakur did not allow completing the sentence. 'That is the reason why I tell you all. It is no good just talking. Learn how to talk. Anta learnt very fast; has come up to mark. With continued effort, he will manage the rest.'

'At that time, Sri Sri Thakur got his meal. He got himself prepared to drink juice in the presence of everybody. Sushil da got up to leave Sri Sri Thakur alone for his meal. We also followed and half heartedly came out.

It struck Panchanan da then, what was the school where Maharaj got this wonderful lesson. 'Oh! This then is the source of the wealth of oratory that Maharaj possesses!'

'We came back to our respective seats when Sri Sri Thakur's meal was over. I then refrained from wandering here and there and raised a question which was supposedly the master question in my mind.'

- 'It is certain that everyone aims to have encounter with God', Panchanan da asked in affirmation.
- 'Certainly; but God is not an object of imagination', Sri Sri Thakur made a categorical observation.
- 'That is for certain. God is what he is. He cannot be made by man at his whim and fancy. Nevertheless, the concept of God is created by diseased mind of weak man. Besides that why do you have to create God? He comes in ages in human form for the sake of men; of course for those who are privileged.' Panchanan da presented his views.
- 'You said it right, Panchanan da', Sri Sri Thakur said amusingly. His body swayed, advancing towards Panchanan da, out of deep affection.
- 'So then, we can view the supreme image at the height of our spiritual attainment. Is it not right Thakur?' Panchanan da brought the discussion back to his point of enquiry.

- ‘Of course’, affirmed Sri Sri Thakur in a monosyllabic sound.
- ‘My query here is: at advanced stage of spiritual pursuit, what image of God we will come across? I do not think anyone has given a description of that image of God; God’s own image.’

Sri Sri Thakur gazed at Panchanan da and gave a simple yet pointed reply. ‘The image that you will carry from here; you will see the same image over there, after reaching there.’

Panchanan da resubmitted the question to Sri Sri Thakur as he could not really fathom what Sri Sri Thakur answered in the first place. ‘Thakur, if, for example, someone starts with the image of goddesses Kali, then he will see God in mother Kali? Is it so?’

Sri Sri Thakur repeated his answer in a mysterious way. ‘The same (what I said); the image that you carry from here, you will see the same image over there.’

Suddenly a new interpretation struck Panchanan da and he sought Sri Sri Thakur’s confirmation by saying, ‘The image that you carry from here….. Does it mean that the image that we are carrying on now is the ultimate image?’

Sri Sri Thakur did not respond to his last question. He observed Sri Sri Thakur, casting a unique look over a long range of space, stretching almost up to horizon. His face looked resplendent with a wonderful smile; hard to decipher its meaning and indication.

Fulfilled, Panchanan da observed, ‘that was the end of my first visit to Sri Sri Thakur when I got answer to the last question of man.’

<u>Thakur now!</u>

That was the Thakur Panchanan da saw? Now, do we see Thakur? Do we experience Thakur? How does Thakur come to us?

12th May 2015

Suffix ‘da’ after a name in this paper and elsewhere in this book mean brother.

Chapter 3

Sri Sri Thakur's Ideology

Nineteen

Sri Sri Thakur and the World: Poles Apart?
All Conflicts and Contradiction meet at Sri Sri Thakur

Central to Sri Sri Thakur's views is the issue related to human being, his existential wellbeing and environmental upkeep. However, the application and behavioral part of his views are always contextual, specific to individual distinctiveness and with reference to present and future.

I must confess that this topic is resultant of some unresolved contradictions visible in the society. The arguments and counter arguments in this piece may betray symptoms of myopia and petulance; which may be counterbalanced by the maturity and wisdom of the readers.

During Sri Sri Thakur's lifetime (1888 to 1969), Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra was a well known personality. People from all parts of India and some from across the world came to visit Sri Sri Thakur. A broad survey of history tells us that Sri Sri Thakur's extraordinary personality bordering divinity was first encountered by and revealed to some close associates, who were mostly drawn from the nearby areas of his birthplace, Himaitpur village in Pabna district in undivided Bengal (currently in Bangladesh). The profile of initial disciples of Sri Sri Thakur was a mixed one: a) representing people of devotional outlook and b) intellectually inquisitive type. One common thread running between these two types is that both these types had higher aspirations in life and, to fulfill that, they were looking for a method and medium to satisfy their higher quest. c) Third type of people who followed Sri Sri Thakur then belonged to a needy class, who looked for support, divine and temporal both; who needed solutions for their problems and people in distress. On intuitive classification, it can be said that people of first two categories constitute 5% each and balance 90% would fall under the third category. However, whoever came in contact with Sri Sri Thakur, became his follower, followed his ideology and went through a process of transformation and raised their status in course of time. Each follower of Sri Sri Thakur got an elevated status in their personal level, be it in the area of activities (कर्म), knowledge (ज्ञान) and devotion (भक्ति). Therefore the percentage classification as mentioned above is relevant only at the initial entry period and underwent a mixture and a change in proportion in later years.

Sri Sri Thakur's divine play assumed the force of a movement by the year 1918, when people in whole of undivided Bengal including the city of Kolkata came to know about him as the latest incarnate of God on the earth. The initial spread of His movement covered Bengal (including current Bangladesh) and Burma (currently Myanmar). Sri Sri Thakur migrated to Deoghar in Jharkhand (then in Bihar) in 1946, and ever since then, the whole of India came under the spell of his reputation. By the year 1953 to 1954, His

mission assumed the form of mass movement, engulfing large mass of people from states like Bihar, Bengal, Odisha, Assam and also from Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Delhi and Mumbai, the two metros, besides Kolkata, were the few earliest centers where Sri Sri Thakur's mission got rooted. The profile of people who came in contact with Sri Sri Thakur during this period was very diverse. Almost all sections of the society came to know Sri Sri Thakur as an extraordinary person. Those who got convinced of Sri Sri Thakur's divinity and felt the need for personal development, got themselves initiated into Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, which mandates strict regime in terms of thought, action and behavior in personal daily life. By the year 1969, large section of elites of the society, namely literatures, academicians, politician including those adoring ministerial berths, serving diplomats, bureaucrats, judges etc. visited Sri Sri Thakur. All of them, without exception, were charmed by the very look and aura of Sri Sri Thakur, not to mention of the width and depth of His knowledge, mostly application oriented to solve the numerous problems that people brought forth before Him. In this process, the world at large observed a difference in Sri Sri Thakur.

People who visited Sri Sri Thakur observed a striking uniqueness in Sri Sri Thakur. His views and thoughts were original and fresh. Central to his views is the issue related to human being, his existential wellbeing and environmental upkeep. However, the application and behavioral part of his views are always contextual, specific to individual distinctiveness and with reference to present and future. Most unseen and unheard things pertaining to every individual or every situation were in his knowledge, as clear as crystal. Therefore he could always establish cause and effect relationship as precisely as mathematical equation.

Sri Sri Thakur was a rarest of rare personality ever seen on the earth. His uniqueness and distinctiveness creating an exclusive category for himself was naturally getting revealed in his behavior, expression and demonstrated ability.

Belonging to the realm of spiritual cult, Sri Sri Thakur was observed to have a family life, social relationship, wearing simple attire and displaying little sign of occult power. Looking from a contrary perspective, living the life of a human being, he was seen to display divine aura of the highest order. That is how, he presented himself as a point of confluence where all differences vanishes; all apparent contradictions meet and melt and all conflicts find resolution. However, when we observe Sri Sri Thakur and the world at large from the angle of current societal conditions, lot of conflicting views become apparent. Some of these are presented below:

a) When everyone in the world is seeking to earn money, Sri Sri Thakur asked his disciples to earn 'man'. He laid immense emphasis on friendship, networking, relationship and everything centering on the Ideal, everything for love and for the Lord. Will the world take note of this?

b) When generally people are eating out, partying, taking hard drinks in the party circle; Sri Sri Thakur advised homemade vegetarian diet and prohibited alcohol. Will the society accept this?

c) When every leader in this country joined freedom movement (in pre-independence era) with kind of universally accepted lofty sense of patriotism, Sri Sri Thakur remained far from that and was making a silent movement of 'man making'. His priority was to 'make' man, build families, restructure social groups, and resuscitate the best in Indian culture. At that time, he said, more than independence, we need interdependence. What a striking reality foretold? Did anybody hear that?

d) When the world is talking about gender equity and coeducation, Sri Sri Thakur pleaded for separate educational provision for females and focusing on motherhood. Does it appeal to any one?

e) In the pre-independence years, Sri Sri Thakur wanted to bring about a communal demographic balance in each district of Bengal and Punjab by transplanting Hindus in Muslim majority districts and vice-versa. If that were to happen, India would not have been partitioned on communal lines. Did anybody pay any attention to this? What a tragedy followed?

f) When there was fierce debate on high tables between capitalism and socialism (during 1950 to 1980s), Sri Sri Thakur spoke about existentialism. He said, existentialism is the mother of all isms. Statecraft has to take care of individual existence and growth. Individual interest is supreme and cannot be bargained for state supremacy. State machinery is there for the individual for the latter's serve and not vice-versa. Would today's administrative machinery like to accept this?

g) Sri Sri Thakur said, 'dharma' is one, God is one; therefore there is nothing like 'Hindu dharma', 'Islam dharma', 'Buddha dharma', 'Christian dharma' and so on. These are various views about 'dharma', originated and upheld at different points of time in history. Therefore it is a travesty of faith and an act of sacrilege, if we divide the humanity on lines of religion and segregate them under different Godheads; one God for each sect. When there is only one God, all the Godheads are messengers of the One, descended at different time for that time. It is absurd to have sharp dividing line between religions and creating different sub-cultures along the lines which are inimical to each other. In today's situation of multi-religion society, Sri Sri Thakur advised each one to follow his own prophet in a true sense of his teaching. Sri Sri Thakur did not approve conversion. He wanted to have convergence, not conversion. It appears, this view is too radical for the current society to appreciate.

h) Today world is clamoring for preserving biodiversity, working for upgrading animal and plant pedigree. But when Sri Sri Thakur speaks of preserving diverse biological traits of human species, by way of classification based on common traits on hereditary line, which is called 'varnashram' in Indian culture, people smell some kind of discriminatory racial rat. We talk of preserving ethnicity of tribal and pre-historic clans staying in hilly and forest areas. But we do not want to preserve the biological asset and purity of blood of each class of people in civilized society. The political and economic slogan of equality and fraternity is indiscriminately applied on all aspects of life, based on a half baked motivated ideological movement. The subject is very deep, therefore cannot be dealt in totality here. Will the world pay attention to the 'varnashram' system of Indian culture?

i) We talk of upgrading quality of grain, vegetables and animals by applying biological and eugenic principles. If the same is applied on human being, then it means we need to regulate marriage and mating, which is not appreciated by mainstream society. Apparently in case of marriage, people want freedom to choose the partner. Freedom in any sphere is good, if it is exercised with discretion and does not violate some framework of discipline. Similarly freedom of choice in case of marriage has its own merit; but that freedom does not mean freak-dom. Choice in case of partner for marriage has to be aligned with the objectives of life and living. These alignments are what Sri Sri Thakur has been talking about, which are not properly appreciated. Today people take pride in cosmopolitan marital network and global family. As such there is no conflict with cosmopolitanism, as long as the outcome is good. Since outcome cannot be predicted by taking individual cases, therefore there is a need for validation before fixing marriage based on universally tested principles. Sri Sri Thakur says, if there is a distortion in biological asset due to

improper mixing of gene, there is hardly any cure for that. Sri Sri Thakur has therefore gone extra miles to caution people as to how marriage can be successful and can be a vehicle for progressive evolution. Would society look at these fundamental issues of creating better progeny in every family?

j) Sri Sri Thakur lived an Indian life; yet he never had problem with the best elements of western culture, specifically scientific and investigative approach; action and achievement orientation and capitalistic material progress including scientific approach to health and hygiene. He believed in contribution of science and technology in elevating living condition; he used modern medical practices; he used latest means of communication and at the same time, he inspired innovation and experiments. He found no scope for conflict between science and religion. Therefore, though he presented a meeting point for scientists and spiritual seekers; but a 'neither-nor' proposition took place. Neither scientists nor tradition bound spiritual seekers found home in Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur is seen to have remained a pole apart from each group; or so it seems apparently.

Objective of this article is to invite the society to give a hard look at the principles and ideological framework of Sri Sri Thakur. It begins with individual faith, practice in thought and action, achieving success and progression in all spheres of life. Sri Sri Thakur's ideology also covers social institutions, governance and culture. Sri Sri Thakur is very much rooted in worldly affairs; he wants every person in the world to progress and achieve higher status in body, mind and soul. The society has to embrace Sri Sri Thakur and herald the change.

April 2012

Twenty

Spirituality Simplified
Sri Sri Thakur is a living Ideal

Every time Sri Sri Thakur observed something, he provided a solution. He is never seen to provide an analysis, without concluding with synthesis. As we cultivate Sri Sri Thakur, we get drawn into a funnel of fulfillment, not into a tunnel of teachings, as normally we find elsewhere.

Nowadays one gets to hear a lot of analysis about religion, spirituality and issues related to self awareness. As a whole, *prima facie*, it appears to be a positive development. As civilization is progressing towards further refinement and human being is getting evolved, perhaps there is an increasing trend

towards search for divinity. Variations of the search towards spirituality are getting expressed as *yoga* and various mass programs like camps, retreats, healing centers, rehabilitation package and spiritual tourism etc. These are organized initiatives to make our living culture based and spiritual oriented. Symptoms of this organized drive towards culture, religion and spirituality are seen in some dedicated TV channels. Times of India's weekly supplement 'Speaking Tree' and its web edition are excellent examples of intellectual awakening towards core cultural issues, without being dogmatic and without assuming to preach a particular view or religious practice. That can be said to be a secular and scientific religious reading.

While wading through these myriads of readings, I at times feel that the world of spirituality is getting more and more cluttered. There are numerous views, techniques, shortcuts, arguments, and whole lot of intellectual delivery. Secondly, it appears, as if the world of spiritualism is up for sale, keeping pace with globalization and spread of market economy. There is a bit of competitive commercialization happening in the world of spirituality and the trend has originated from western culture. It is just a trend, a contemporary type. We are not competent to make a judgment; we are not commenting like 'good' or 'bad'.

Here we see Sri Sri Thakur as sharp contrast. He was embodiment of divinity, without any announcement. It is like Sun rising in the morning, without any kind of pompousness. The difference is felt in simplicity of concept and easiness in practice. Every time Sri Sri Thakur observed something, he provided a solution. He is never seen to provide an analysis, without concluding with synthesis. Therefore, as we cultivate Sri Sri Thakur, we get drawn into a funnel of fulfillment, not into a tunnel of teachings, as normally we find elsewhere.

In another significant way, Sri Sri Thakur stands out amongst so called 'gurus'. Interestingly, management discipline has popularized the term 'guru' world over, though in a slightly different level of seriousness. The difference between Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and other so called 'gurus' is that Sri Sri Thakur, the person, was the living image of his principle. He was an example of all what he preached. He was the 'ideal' of his 'ideology'. He was the divine, inseparable from divinity. Like ब्रम्हबिद ब्रहमइब भबती; meaning the one who knows divine becomes divine itself. Another example is the one who acquires knowledge becomes learned and at that stage, the person becomes the image of knowledge. So in the world of spirituality, Sri Sri Thakur stands out as savior, not a preacher.

A significant observation of Sri Sri Thakur is worth mentioning in this context. He says, 'your Lord's interest is more significant for you than what you see as your own interest. The reason being, if you take care of your Lord's interest, your own interest is taken care.' It is a very significant premise for those who follow Sri Sri Thakur. For us, Sri Sri Thakur is the mission and there lies our own enlightened self interest.

Today, people are looking for solution and Sri Sri Thakur provides just that.

3rd July 2012, *Guru Purnima*

Twenty one

Prayer in Essence and in Practice

We saw Thakur praying for us

Accomplishment, achievement and success are some key words in Sri Sri Thakur's lexicon. Beauty, accuracy and timeliness are some adjuncts in Sri Sri Thakur's vocabulary of performance. "Where action pursues desire, fulfillment appears immediately, with a smile", is what Sri Sri Thakur wanted his devotes to believe and orient themselves accordingly.

Prayer is a wonderful concept in spiritual pursuit. It is perhaps as mysterious as the concept 'God'. Owing to its mysterious essence, it is practiced in innumerable ways. Seeing its universal acceptability and its ubiquitous practice, I am inclined to believe that praying is natural to human being.

Prayer is a silent communication. It is dedicated to a deity on whom one has faith that his / her prayer will be granted by the deity. One perhaps carries an impression that more submissive one is and more transparent one comes out before the deity, the better is the communication and higher is the chances of the prayer getting heard.

Those of us who are bred in Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology believe that prayer is a psychological process. It begins with a desire to communicate to the Lord. That desire owning to its intensity gets resolved within. Further, owing to faith on the Lord, the fructification process also gets streamlined within. That internal resolution and streamlining of actualization process push us towards action for its actual materialization. We believe and then we work for the materialization of our prayer. Then the object of prayer takes shape in fruition.

When we pray to Sri Sri Thakur, it moves Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur works for the object of prayer in terms of mobilization, preparation and putting acts together. He acts in the same way as we act at our end, of course on different plane. When all these things happen from both sides, then the intended outcome takes place.

At times we heard Sri Sri Thakur explicitly saying, 'it is my submission at Supreme Father that …..'. Sri Sri Thakur's desire, wish and benediction, whatever terminology we may use, is actually His prayer. His prayer has great signal value for us to get clue and act. He expects us to do in the manner and direction, as He wanted and then transform ourselves and the environment by which the desired outcome happens.

'Verily you know, action begets acquisition', said Sri Sri Thakur. Accomplishment, achievement and success are some key words in Sri Sri Thakur's lexicon. Beauty, accuracy and timeliness are some adjuncts in Sri Sri Thakur's vocabulary of performance. "Where action pursues desire, fulfillment appears

immediately, with a smile", is what Sri Sri Thakur wanted his devotes to believe and orient themselves accordingly. 'Happiness does not lie in leisure and luxury; rather it springs from accomplishment that flows from unicentral disciplined activities, steadfast to the goal with well wishing urge'.

Therefore there are some preconditions and concomitant actions along with prayer. First is our faith on the Lord. We need to believe that the Lord, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra as we know him, is alive to our prayer. Second, we need to believe in Sri Sri Thakur's saying which dictates us to do things as per His liking, being free from complexes. Third, we need to know the process of acquiring what we are longing for. Fourth, surrendering ourselves at His desire; thereby allowing His will to prevail.

Summarily stated; prayer involves three parts: a) deep desire, b) appropriate action and c) mutual reciprocation (between self and the divine). Each of these three elements has multiple sub elements, which requires deep research to articulate. The sub elements are dynamic in nature, as the process gets evolved psychologically and physically, along with interface with surrounding environment. We are, knowingly or unknowingly, dealing with these factors and process day in and day out. What makes the process easy and enjoyable is the communion with the Lord.

Whenever these factors are not properly configured and the process gets clumsy, prayer may not lead to desired outcome. Pent up desire, with best of sincerity, may end up in frustration; which at times lead to disillusionment and disbelief in self and in the Lord.

Prayer in practice actually turns out to be a combination of elements like 'purity, patience and perseverance'. It is a wonderful tool in our hand and it acts wonderfully in our life.

May our prayer lead us to Him!

8th July 2012, *Guru Purnima*

Twenty two

My Own Thakur

Personal affiliation with Thakur is imperative

When prophet departs, he leaves behind two legacies: a) his image and b) his ideology. Both together make a veritable path for people to adopt. The third thing that Sri Sri Thakur has bequeathed for posterity is his literature, which is huge in volume and very potent in substance.

This is a feelings many old disciples of Sri Sri Thakur, mostly those who were His contemporaries, carried for Sri Sri Thakur. For all the ardent devotees of yore, who dedicated their life and everything for the Lord, Sri Sri Thakur was an integral and indispensable part of their life. Sri Sri Thakur was in their heart. He was foremost member of their families and came first and foremost in their life's scheme. They were kind of intoxicated with Sri Sri Thakur. They used to draw a taste, kind of elixir, from Sri Sri Thakur, which is different from the worldly things which we remain busy with.

The intimacy between Sri Sri Thakur and the devotees was so close and unbreakable that for many of them, Sri Sri Thakur was their friend; for some others, Sri Sri Thakur was their beloved; and for the rest, Sri Sri Thakur was everything.

Sri Sri Thakur was one of those rarest of rare persons, whom people used to feel আপন জন, meaning, my own and very close acquaintance; one of those in inner circle. One devotee addressed Sri Sri Thakur as মনের মানুষ, meaning; a man who knew me best and loved me the most. This sentiment was full with pure love, total dependence, complete surrender and wholehearted ownership. It was built on a human plane; little to do with philosophical construction. Obviously, there was a deep understanding between the two; realization level was very deep; commitment level was very high. Simple faith as it used to be; it was unshakable.

Today, Sri Sri Thakur is physically no more; therefore it appears hard to develop those human feelings that normally springs out of human touch, feel, association and mutual exchange. Here is a great dilemma; a puzzle that baffles many of us. Questions for many of us: how do I develop closeness with Sri Sri Thakur? How is Sri Sri Thakur related with me? What does Sri Sri Thakur mean to me in my worldly existence?

In my understanding, backed by my own humble realization, Sri Sri Thakur is present even today, in the same physical appearance, unseen but not unfelt. The proximity and the feelings, which were felt by those devotees in good old days, are possible even today, in our worldly existence. Whatever Sri Sri

Thakur may mean to the world, for me he is my own, verily an inseparable part of my world, my family. He in fact resides with me and in our family. I can speak the same for many fellow devotees.

Is this just a spiritually coated fairy tale? Is it a hallucination? Is it an outcome of a weak mind, tagged onto a support that is Thakur? Yes, Sri Sri Thakur does carry huge utilitarian and functional value for all of us. He is a wonderful resource for all of us. The question here is: is the resource available to us today? How do we utilize that resource today?

The invisibility of Sri Sri Thakur does not negate his presence. There are many cogent arguments in the conventional debate which asserts that God exists despite his invisibility. One scene from a serial on Sri Ramakrishna (প্রেমের ঠাকুর) being aired currently in *Rupasi Bangla* channel struck me. Sri Ramakrishna is strolling in an orchard in the company of young Vivekananda (Naren), who is in a skeptical state, does not know who he is walking with. Sri Ramakrishna looked up, pointing to wavering branches of tree and patches of cloud far behind those, asked 'what are you seeing?' Naren, replies nonchalantly, 'what is there; branches of trees being waved?'

'Oh, you did not see the wind that is causing the branches to sway?'

'Can you ever see the wind?'

'Only because, you cannot see wind, does not imply its nonexistence'.

Likewise, Sri Sri Thakur is felt even now; though physically he is no more. His relationship with devotees is also felt.

Here the issue becomes little mysterious. How is that relationship built on human plane? It is hard to answer this in a precise tone. However, as we all know, Sri Sri Thakur's whole lifetime was a demonstration of answer to this question.

When prophet departs, he leaves behind two legacies: a) his image and b) his ideology. Both together make a veritable path for people to adopt. The relationship draws its sinews from these two legacies. The third thing that Sri Sri Thakur has bequeathed for posterity is his literature, which is huge in volume and very potent in substance.

The ideology left behind by the prophet is tested, tried and validated during the lifetime of the prophet. That ideology or the bunch of principles is actually his contribution to the humanity. The ideology has its originality and utility, not easy to understand without deep study and practice. One of the ways to build relationship with the prophet is to put the ideology to practice in everyday life. (সাধনা)

The image and ideology will not work on impersonal base. It thrives on live demonstrators, who are the devotees. Therefore, one of the ways to keep live acquaintance is to be in association with the devotees, who partly represent the image and ideology of the Lord. (সত্সঙ্গ)

The process may be multipronged, but the end result is that we have to have one to one relationship with Sri Sri Thakur. That relationship with Sri Sri Thakur is inseparable, non negotiable and exclusive type and most importantly, is a live one.

This relationship is the spring from which many things flow.

Twenty three

Janmastami – Let us Make it Real
Get the living guidance of Lord Krishna

The complexity surrounding God, religion and lot of philosophical stuff get simplified if we get to know Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and his ideology. He does not contradict any of the eternal principles of religions and past prophets, yet he brings about a refreshing updating of all the past prophets.

Today is Krishna *Janmastami*; *Gokulastami*, as it is known at some place. It is the birthday of Lord Krishna. The day is celebrated all over the country with rituals, worship, *bhajan kirtan*, discourses and all those that go with Indian festival. Lord Krishna is part of Indian secular culture; there is universal respect for Lord Krishna. Krishna culture is very deeply entrenched into Indian cultural fabric, both in popular level as well as at scholarly level. Stories related to Krishna from the epic Mahabharata, are a part of Indian folklore, in various local versions. There have been films, devotional songs, epic serials and classic paintings, which together have made Lord Krishna a ubiquitous Godhead.

The jewel of Krishna culture is *Srimad Bhagavat Gita*, the scripture originally in Sanskrit, translated in almost all languages of the world. This contains the philosophical part of Krishna's culture, which has great relevance in day to day life. Therefore, it is often quoted in every spiritual discussion.

Janmastami is being celebrated with much elaborate arrangement now a day. There is a lot of enthusiasm and expectation in the celebration. Looking at the changing pattern of celebration and media exposure, one is curious to find the causes of high decibel celebration. One is, today there is money to spend, much more than ever before. There are various ways of mobilization of funds, which is why celebration is done with gusto and grandeur. Secondly, there is an increasing interest in the people about spirituality, religion, higher order of consciousness, healthy living and balanced life. That is making the celebration more participatory.

I am trying to place the real meaning and significance of Lord Krishna in our lives. Volumes have been written on that subject. I am attempting to bring out one particular aspect which perhaps has not got attention that it deserves.

Everyone knows one particular proclamation of Lord Krishna in *Bhagavat Gita*, which says, "संभबामी यूगे यूगे", which in simple language means 'I descend again and again in different ages'. The full stanza also

gives the preconditions against which he makes himself appear. He says, 'whenever dharma gets distorted, I appear to redeem the pious and banish the devil'. He has indicated what is known as 'अवतार बाद', the theory of incarnation of God (in human form).

History is witness to the actualization of this proclamation of the Lord. Normally there is a cycle of distortion and redemption of 'dharma'. A prophet comes, brings the contours of *dharma* live, in theory and practice, works hard to assert himself; bequeaths his ideology when he withdraws himself. He creates a band of dedicated devotees, who carry his flag even after his withdrawal from the scene. Once he is out of scene, the steadfastness in his ideology gets eroded, people misinterpret his sayings to serve their own narrow interests and gradually distortion creeps in. When the distortion reaches a tortuous proportion, people suffer and cry for the savior; then again he descends.

There is a clear pattern in this cycle and there are symptoms of re-incarnation. One striking pattern is that whenever he comes, he respects his previous incarnations, he recognizes them; he upholds the eternal part of his ideology, the path of being and becoming and the essential tenor of '*dharma*'. He renews and updates the ideology that he formulated in his previous incarnation and contextualizes it for the contemporary time and place. He never takes a conflicting stance with the previous incarnates, though he wages a war against the current trend, which is distorted, deviated and degraded form of the previous ideology. Therefore, his (the prophet's) ideology appears to be new in the contemporary time. He fulfills all the past prophets, by carrying forward their mission of life and growth.

Unfortunately, once the prophet leaves the scene, his ideology takes the form of a cult, and then, after years, comes to be known as 'a religion'. At that stage, the doctrine acquires lot of associated rituals, becomes part of social culture and tradition and then it maintains an identity of its own; however much it might have been deviated from the original prophet's doctrine.

Essential point to note is that there are no points of conflict between two successive prophets, neither in their personality nor in their ideology. Secondly, two prophets never advocate a doctrinal conversion; though they advocate purity in the doctrine itself. Thirdly, they also proclaim, at times indicate precisely at the future incarnation.

Taking this line of thought, we know that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra (1888-1969) is the latest incarnate of Lord Krishna. Thakur Anukul Chandra is the incarnate of our age (so called *Kali yuga*) and Lord Krishna is of his age (known as *Dwapara yuga*). This statement of mine may be taken as a piece of information; a hypothesis to be observed, tested and to be affirmed or negated by readers. There is no intention of forcing or indoctrinating or converting or alluring anybody. It is purely an enquiry and continuous search for spiritual excellence.

If this eternity of *dharma* and similarity of incarnations are accepted, then lot of vicarious offshoot of religion will be nonexistent. The negatives of religion are actually outcome of regimented religion, which denies purity of *dharma,* uniqueness of God and similarity of God's messengers.

The complexity surrounding God, religion and lot of philosophical stuff get simplified if we get to know Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and his ideology. He does not contradict any of the eternal principles of religions and past prophets, yet he brings about a refreshing updating of all the past prophets. The only purpose of this analysis is to invite the world to examine the doctrine of Sri Sri Thakur, see its beauty where all contradictions get resolved; all diversity is respected with singular focus on God. The whole humanity is God's creation; therefore humanity cannot be divided on religious lines.

On the occasion of *Janmastami*, let us celebrate lord Krishna's birthday in the light of Lord Krishna's latest incarnate, that is Sri Sri Thakur's life and ideology. We get the benefit of Lord Krishna's latest version, the updated principles, live guidance and love.

9th August 2012

Twenty four

Mission Mars & Mission Man

Thakur led science and consciousness ahead

Sri Sri Thakur sent one of his disciples, Sushil Chandra Basu in 1938 to hold personal discussion with foreign scientists who attended silver jubilee of Indian Science Congress held in Kolkata. Some scientific applications like wind powered dynamo and steam laundry etc were being used in Himaitpur ashram in those days.

Both the above missions have areas of striking similarity. Both are complex issues; ordinarily not understood. Both are something, which give a very satisfying experience when achieved; though none is easy to accomplish. Both need highly disciplined and scientific pursuit. Both are symptoms of advancement in science and technology and herald progress of human civilization.

Another similarity which struck me and spurred my thought is that both the missions found a common base and that base was Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. Sri Sri Thakur's main mission was man making. He also wanted scientific discovery to serve man.

The two missions are so complex and overbearing that only Sri Sri Thakur who could handle them together. On the face value, Sri Sri Thakur was operating in spiritual domain. On a deeper understanding however, one would know that he was a scientist *par excellence* in the core. He went ahead of science and brought up science one notch up. He came from the realm of realization and used science to prove and validate his realization by experimentation. He said that job of science is to demonstrate the realized facts and make it accessible to all people by means of application which can be replicated. Further, he made use of science to take the human experience and knowledge to a higher level. Thirdly, he utilized

scientific tools for the betterment of human existence; man's life, living condition, productivity, efficiency and degree of perfection.

It is pertinent to bring out that Sri Sri Thakur built a science laboratory sometime in 1930s or 1940s in his *ashram* at Pabna, Himaitpur, which was a remote hamlet on the bank of river Padma. He used to subscribe some international science journal and Krishna Prasanna Bhattacharya under Sri Sri Thakur's guidance used to conduct some basic experiments. Sri Sri Thakur sent one of his disciples, Sushil Chandra Basu in 1938 to hold personal discussion with foreign scientists who attended silver jubilee of Indian Science Congress held in Kolkata. Some scientific applications like wind powered dynamo and steam laundry etc were being used in Himaitpur ashram in those days. Sri Sri Thakur hinted many possibilities of scientific development on many fronts, which await research till date.

Coming to the Mars Mission of NASA, it is curious that the machine that has landed on Mars during last 2 weeks is named as 'Curiosity'. Sri Sri Thakur hinted the existence of extra terrestrial life and the 'Curiosity' is exploring that part. Sri Sri Thakur has indicated that science has to conduct much research on many fronts so that it can make life more progressive, comfortable, healthy and refined. In 1946, much before anyone could think of landing on moon, he had commented about possibility of trade and commerce between earth and moon. (*Alochana Prasange*. Vol.8 Page 177)

Same curiosity that has taken 'Curiosity' to Mars also has its application for internal growth of a person. Development in science and technology has mostly external visibility. Development in science gets converted to technological sphere. Then it gets application through business process, when people get accessibility of those applications in market place.

When curiosity works for inner growth of a person, it is less visible. That growth can hardly be marketed. That growth is related to man making venture. Man making mission was Sri Sri Thakur's core activity. It has many facets, which requires intense research for a proper exposition. I am attempting to present a brief outline of Sri Sri Thakur's man making mission.

- Refinement of habits, behavior and thought process make a man educated, aspirant and take him to higher spheres of achievement and excellence. That is how man can achieve extraordinary feat.

- Through a psycho-spiritual discipline, a disciple of Sri Sri Thakur regulates his psychological orientations, attitude, motives and value system, etc, which lift a man to a superior status.

- When the above process of transformation along with the practice of proper marriage and eugenics process takes place over generations, then it puts man on a higher pedestal of evolution.

- A social system where each person feels for the other; under the universal fatherhood of Sri Sri Thakur, universal brotherhood grows. Each one loves and serves the other. It brings a social order in which economic need of each are met, devoid of exploitation and greed.

- Man adopts a way of living in tune with nature, where environmental degradation does not take place. Natural resources are treated as a part of human eco system.

- Man lives not for the day, he aspires for an eternal life with high quotients of joy and happiness. Disease, premature death etc. are maneuvered to minimum.

These articulations may appear to be utopian and idealistic to a reader. But these are the precise process which Sri Sri Thakur drives everyone through. He was the Master, who did spectacular things for making man through a scientific process.

When Sri Sri Thakur was alive (1888-1969) at Himaitpur in Pabna (Bangladesh) and later at Deoghar in Jharkhand (India), people saw a man making laboratory where future world order was being demonstrated, as if on a drawing board. Humanity saw a huge orchestration of soft issues like: What is the sharpness of human mind? What are extra sensory feelings? What is spiritual ecstasy? What is sweetness of behavior? What are relationships in the family? How one learns from the surroundings? How a group functions cohesively with a common ideal? How does one love nature? How does one remain in tune with divine? What are the cultural anchors as distinguished from traditions? and so on. A moment in contact with the high voltage consciousness of Sri Sri Thakur would activate enormous sensibilities in the psycho-biological system. With a clarity of perception, in a moment, one can differentiate essence from the totality, right from the wrong, truth from the untruth, morality from the permissiveness; the finer sense of proportion that makes an ordinary human being a refined person. It was a great period for humanity to learn how to add value to every passing moment; how to create asset from almost nothing; how to add life to time and time to life.

It is now our time to carry both the missions of Sri Sri Thakur further. Every disciple of Sri Sri Thakur with his high order of commitment to Sri Sri Thakur's cause needs to come together to carry on the missions.

20th August 2012

Twenty five

Proselytizing – Not in Thakur's Vocabulary

Conversion – not admitted by Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra

People from all so called religious groups can follow Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and yet maintain their religious affiliation by birth. In other words, the religious affiliations by birth are no barriers for a progressive living, by following Sri Sri Thakur's ideology. Following Sri Sri Thakur does not amount to getting into any new religious cult or into a regimented order.

Proselytizing (conversion) is not admitted by Sri Sri Thakur. This aspect of Sri Sri Thakur's view is worth elucidating, in the backdrop of huge disturbances currently erupting in different parts of the world on this issue. This view of Sri Sri Thakur that there will not be a proselyte (convert) in his disciples is a radical departure from the practices observed in other established religions.

In Sri Sri Thakur's view, one believer will accept Sri Sri Thakur as *Guru* and follow Sri Sri Thakur's principles. But that is not a reason for him to forsake his 'religion', whichever he or she is born into. That means, a Muslim by birth can accept Sri Sri Thakur and practice his principles, still he / she will remain a Muslim. Similarly, a Christian can follow Sri Sri Thakur's principles and yet he / she will remain a Christian.

Sri Sri Thakur never wanted a change of natural identity, biological, cultural or religious affiliation.

At a basic level, Sri Sri Thakur did not admit multiplicity of religions. He says: religion is a way of 'life and growth'. All the so called major religions in the world are actually different views of the way of 'life and growth'. At different points in the history of humanity, prophets have come and after each prophet his ideological viewpoints have been consolidated in the form of a religious identity and that is how successive prophets' followers have maintained their independent group identities.

In a sense, the formation of a religion (or independent cult) after the successive prophets is perhaps an aberration of the prophets' ideology. I am not sure, if prophets wanted to separate their identity from their past prophets. Though ideologically it was not required to maintain separate groups, perhaps it became a necessity of the time. By the time successor prophet comes, the previous prophet's ideology would already have been distorted to an extent that it must have been felt necessary to maintain a distinct identify for the successor prophet for the purpose of maintaining purity, clarity and novelty. That is how, though it is a clear ideological aberration, the practice of formation of new religion has become a historical

necessity, repeated after demise of every prophet. That is how we have so many major religions and each one is sort of born of one prophet of the contemporary time.

History of all the religions of the world is a long and complicated story. There have been innumerable vicissitudes, ups and downs, conflict between religions and power centers of the day etc. It is not possible for us to get into those details and say what is right and what is wrong. Purpose of this write up is to understand Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology and for that purpose, we are only setting a context and highlighting a contrast.

A new era began with Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra; a new ideology was born. The ideology had continuity with the past, what is called eternal. And at the same time, it also had elements which are of contemporary relevance, socio political, economic and scientific, and therefore those were new. The ideology overall definitely had a new look, new spirit, new temper, new attraction; altogether a renovated package. Some such features of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology are: a) clarity of concept; b) scientific temper, c) universal applicability, d) above the prevailing parochial considerations like bias, superstitions etc. Everything put together, the ideology was radical; out to bring about a transformation in person, family and society.

Striking feature of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is that it attempted to bring out and highlight the similarity amongst all religions in essence and in philosophy. This is something a revolutionary step. Sri Sri Thakur attempted to bring out commonality and similarity in scriptures like Gita, Bible and Quran. His attempt was to bring out the essence of all religions and to show to the world that it is the same eternal principle of 'life and growth'.

Secondly, Sri Sri Thakur attempted to bring out a fact that all the prophets are same; expression and manifestation of one God, appeared in different time; mission is same and for the whole humanity. No prophet takes care of only a segment of humanity and excludes some other sections. No prophet said anything that might raise wall between and amongst religions. This aspect of oneness of all past prophets has been a truism that Sri Sri Thakur worked hard to bring home. He even said and demonstrated in his life that each successive prophet fulfills the past prophets; each successive prophet is an updated version of the previous prophet and therefore there is absolutely no scope for differences. And the possibility of dispute is the least.

These two threads of his ideological edifice is sharp contrast to the prevailing thoughts and practices in the society. I do not think mainstream religious leaders have given a hearing to this, let alone applying their mind to this. This, as it appears to me, is an irony of our time.

Having accepted the fact that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology presents a radically new paradigm in this era, question is: should we give an identity to it; how to maintain the identity and then how to prevent that this identity does not develop such rigidity that it becomes another religion (a cult or a communal group) by itself?

These are hard questions, which are not attempted to be answered here. Only indication that I would like to provide here is that Sri Sri Thakur himself has provided clue to these answers. We need to research into his literature and find answers to these, exactly the way he wanted.

To come back to the original theme of this article that people from all so called religious groups can follow Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and yet maintain their religious affiliation by birth. In other words, the religious affiliations by birth are no barriers for a progressive living, by following Sri Sri Thakur's ideology.

Following Sri Sri Thakur does not amount to getting into any new religious cult or into a regimented order. Following Sri Sri Thakur means to adopt an ideological framework that invites and spurs all-round wellbeing of a person along with family and society. Advances in Sri Sri Thakur's path may breakdown the religions barriers and the prevailing barriers will not come in the way of progress. In that sense, Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is liberal and may be called secular. This is a way, perhaps the only way, to come out of the vicious circle of competitive communalism and religious fundamentalism, which is hitting the world badly.

2nd October 2012

Twenty six

God Manages Human Weakness

God deals with Man's Complexes and makes Him a Master

We know that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has provided special ways for dealing with complexes. In fact, he has demystified the issues related to human weakness, complexes, obsessions etc. and provided a clear concept and way of handling these issues in our life.

"The word God is for me nothing more than the expression and product of human weakness, the Bible a collection of Honorable, but still primitive legends which are never the less pretty childish", wrote Albert Einstein in an unpublished letter, one year before his death in 1955. It is a handwritten letter, written on the letterhead of Princeton University to philosopher Erik Gutkind, after reading his book "Choose Life: the Biblical Call to Revolt".

Einstein is of course one of the greatest minds of our time. His knowledge and stature knows no bounds. We are not attempting to comment on his views. We are only trying to understand the depth of reality where the statement would have emanated from and the context in which it is reported in Times of India's Mumbai edition, October 6, 2012 on page 19.

The news column says, the letter 'questioned the existence of God'. This interpretation needs a deeper understanding. Albert Einstein has written quite voluminous pages on his belief on God, religion, ethics, human nature etc. The beautiful part of Albert Einstein is "his curiosity and how he could challenge conventional wisdom" (comment by Einstein's biographer, Walter Isaacson, Times Crest Edition, dated 6th

October 2012). In that context, his statement and views come from a very deep level of research on diverse subjects. Subjects like human nature, God and religion, mysterious as these are, have not escaped Einstein's curious mind. The fact that he went through Erik Gutkind's book of about 300 plus pages (available now in Net for reading) and took pain to write a letter to him, speaks volumes of his interest on the subject.

If God is 'an expression and product of human weakness', as Einstein chose to observe, then that speaks a great thing about God and about man's need for God. It is not, as one might erroneously understand, that God is a product of weak mind. 'It is an expression and product of human weakness.' Human weakness has expressed and created the concept of God to handle weakness. If that is the case, then both 'human being' and 'God' are great things. If we say, man created medical science to manage disease; then it would not belittle either 'man' or 'medical science'. Rather it is perhaps a compliment to both. It is a tribute to the ingenuity of mankind to conduct research and find solutions to all kinds of diseases and thereby making human life long and healthy. We all know the salutary and salubrious role that health sciences and medical practices have played in making our life active, painless and elongated.

Basically, man is one of the weakest creatures in the world. He does not possess the prowess of animal. Animals have the instinct and the physical tools to kill others and protect itself; which man does not have. Man has little strength to face and survive the fury of nature, unlike plants. Man needs protection from nature's bounties like sun, rain and wind etc. Man is easily susceptible to carriers of bad virus and bacteria. In the same vein, we can add that human being, with all its developed mental faculties, is subject to the prowls of frailties of internal weakness, which are 'complexes', as nomenclatured by Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra.

We know that we have weakness for some things; some allurements somewhere; some points and moments of subjugation, temptation; where we get subjected to the forces that cause us to stoop and fall. These are our internal drives, which lead us to lower our esteem before some forms of weakness and then cause serious damages to us. Very common examples: some people's craze for wealth, richness and high lifestyle by any means, mostly through illegal and shady deals. Not that they are not aware of the mess they are creating for themselves; what actually works in their mind is the weakness to richness. We know examples how people fall to the abyss of deterioration, almost ruining their life to the craving of lust; examples galore of people from all levels in life. It is not that they are not aware of the wrong doings. But they get sucked; get seduced by a process; grip of their weakness possess them systematically and they reach a point of no return, when the devil strangles them and commit them to dragon of blunder and soon the cruel consequence takes over. The overpowering of conscience by obsessions, at some time, which we call weak moments, are critical to human beings. All kinds of mania; may be for power, for wealth, for self glorification makes man blind momentarily and drives him to a state of hallucination, where he commits to delinquency. This process has root in the mind; it gets cultivated by the environmental conditions, it gets buttressed by certain leads and prompts; for some time the process may look gorgeous to outside world; but soon a moment of reality, law of consequence, the nemesis, the day of judgment appears to takeover and the gloom falls. One wonders, how did all these happen? Am I or is he so bad? Why did not he get a forewarning? Is it his bad luck that a hugely respected person is languishing in jail, under trial, even when not convicted? How did the misfortune (sudden heart attack) fall on him, when he was in perfectly good health? All these are expressions of sympathy, outrage, surprise; expressions of genuine disbelief to an outcome. At a deeper level these are expressions of innocence born out of ignorance.

It is only God who can take us away from this vicious circle. It is the holy books like Gita, Bible and Quran which teaches us to deal with such forces. Let us be mindful of the fact that all these are in the mind. How

to handle such things which have deep psychological base, most of these inborn? The issues are very integral to human existence. There is no escape from these forces.

We know that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has provided special ways for dealing with complexes. In fact, he has demystified the issues related to human weakness, complexes, obsessions etc. and provided a clear concept and way of handling these issues in our life. It needs a separate session to dwell on that topic.

Summarily, I would like to state that Einstein's observation in the letter is a tribute to religion and God, in a scientific way of viewing the nature of human being and emotion. It is important for us to get to the core of the issue and get benefit of handling our weaknesses in a better way. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideological framework has a special place on this subject.

24th October 2012, Holy *Vijaya Dasami*

Twenty seven

Who Made Statue out of Thakur?
Thakur wanted to remain alive within us

Today's situation is that neither Sri Sri Thakur is available in physical form nor is his divinity experienced as he wanted. On both counts, the 'God' and the 'human', he is being discounted by the limitations from which we suffer. We would like to get him the way we desire, not the way he desired to come to us.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is best described as 'God in human form'. Both parts, namely 'God' and 'human', have equal and simultaneous significance.

As a person, Sri Sri Thakur had a very lively and charming personality. Everything pertaining to him was special, inimitable, and heart touching. There was magic in the way he spoke and what he spoke. Most remarkable amongst his personality features was his love for others. The way he felt for others, the intimacy that he created with others instantly and the appropriate loving relationship that he built with everyone is something great. Coming in contact with him, one gets lifted to a high level of consciousness. An altogether different feelings and inspiration comes when we see his way of dealing, talking and reaction to events. He used to operate at a very high level of consciousness and at a deep level of

causality. Staying on those planes; he was very sensitive and responsive. He appeared to be flawless, unerring and an expression of completeness. And more important than all is that he was 'my own Thakur' to everyone.

When Sri Sri Thakur was in flesh and blood, during 1888 to 1969, the human profile was explicitly and overwhelmingly available and visible. His graceful and majestic performance on the world stage was played out magnificently and his kindness was dispensed abundantly. It was possible for people to relate with him on material and human platform.

But then there was a problem too. A kind of illusion in perception and a temptation to deceive him was also prevalent in those who were his disciples and were apparently close to him. It was perverse, but unfortunately, real. Not everybody saw the divine part of Sri Sri Thakur. Not many shared his mission. People around him thought that Sri Sri Thakur was easily accessible and so easily amenable to their needs; such that he could be used for all practical purposes. Someone in need of something found it easy to submit his need before him and need was met. Someone in crisis prayed him desperately, and the gracious Thakur came live to mitigate the crisis. A student is not able to decide his stream of study, he would ask Sri Sri Thakur and Sri Sri Thakur would give him a hint that would lay open a path for him. Basically, people surrounding him found easy way of getting blessing and they started taking for granted that Sri Sri Thakur is there for all kinds of fallback. People got used to the comfort and protection provided by Sri Sri Thakur so much that they even did not think that Sri Sri Thakur would not remain for all time to come.

The profile and framework of being a human at times overshadowed Sri Sri Thakur's original identity. His simplicity was mistaken for his weakness. The God in him was suspect, subjected to test and at times was attempted to be dispelled by evil forces. The world outside really did not come to know his greatness, as it was camouflaged by a human frame. People certainly saw an aura around him, but that aura was confused with an abnormality that people perhaps could not fathom and could not bear with. People came, saw his magnificence, took some immediate gratification of wants and then went back to their own world. Most of them refused to come to Sri Sri Thakur's world. Something pulled them back, as if threats of loss of one's own self. How can I give everything of mine at his hand? After all, who is he? He is not the world. There is world outside him, which is vast, real and different to deal with; I live in that world. I obviously do not know where Thakur comes from. Thakur is perhaps ethereal.

Of course, for discerning disciples, his godhood was dazzling and flowing every moment, like crystal shines from all angles at all times. They found the ocean of divinity in a tea cup in their hand. They understood that here is a person for whom humanity waits for centuries. They could sense that a new era has begun and a new chapter in human civilization will be written. They could see that the best of human qualities is being displayed in a person who perhaps would define the divine attributes for the future generation. They knew that man cannot always encounter God; but at some extraordinary moments, man can experience God incarnate and that period was what they were blessed to be in. They saw the Thakur, an expression of divinity; embodiment of godhood, the source where all the best things springs from.

That period was extraordinary from the point of view of defining, demonstrating and articulating all that was best; be it knowledge, wisdom, science, technology, extra sensory experience, a combination of wealth of personality along with material wealth, issues pertaining to means of living, societal concerns like politics, administration and so on. Everything that came out of Sri Sri Thakur had a human front with a divine back up. Since the context was material world, most people took Sri Sri Thakur as a material

phenomenon, one of its kind temporal happening; but failed to see the God in him, in that explicit sense as, for example, people visit temple to submit to the glimpse of the deity.

Today, that human frame is out of scene. It is no longer possible to get that person back in life. What is however available is his image, his ideology, his reflection in devotee's conducts and some memorabilia; all these trying to keep his human identity alive.

At the same time, his divine form is also getting blurred. As if a fire in rage is dying out being cut off from its fuel source. His devotees are trying to recast his divinity in traditional mould. People would like to place him back in temples, in photo frames and in statues. People would like to imagine his divinity in their own way. They would like to experience his divinity through miracles. They seem to say, divinity is better placed at a distance.

Today's situation is that neither Sri Sri Thakur is available in physical form nor is his divinity experienced as he wanted. On both counts, the 'God' and the 'human', he is being discounted by the limitations from which we suffer. We would like to get him the way we desire, not the way he desired to come to us.

In this context, it is important for us to know: who was Sri Sri Thakur, both on human and divine fronts. It is possible to know him, if we know his ideology, in letter and spirit, undistorted, the way he delivered during his lifetime. His ideology would keep both the parts alive, 'Thakur the person' and 'Thakur the God'. We cannot imagine Sri Sri Thakur; nor can anyone demonstrate and deliver Sri Sri Thakur in full measure.

For his ardent devotees, Sri Sri Thakur is alive in ideology, where both his human aspect and divine aspects are merged. His ideology is well documented, but his literature is to be understood, interpreted, put to practice and to be borne in our lives.

For ordinary worldly persons like us, we need to put his ideology in practice. We need to keep the facets of Sri Sri Thakur, both the human and the divine, alive. When we do so, we really would enjoy his live company.

The portraits and statutes do personify Sri Sri Thakur for the purpose of pursuing ideology, for visualization and concentration, for realizing the live presence of Sri Sri Thakur. Devoid of ideology in practice, all these are symbols; may not represent the live Thakur – 'Thakur the person' and 'Thakur the divine'. The symbol has to have life in it.

29th October 2012

Twenty eight

Surrender to thy Ideal
Surrender Hundred Percent

“Be surrendered and have surrender”, is a wonderful saying of Sri Sri Thakur. This is in line with Sri Sri Thakur’s sayings, ‘be and have’; ‘to have is to be’. He says, ‘unrepelling surrender is possible in a moment. It follows a psychological acceptance, which is a springboard for other motions of life like thought, action and deeds, through which a strong bondage develops with Him.’

“Surrender to thy Ideal”, said Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. It was His expectation from his disciples. Give yourself away at His feet. Give away the rein in His hand. Give Him a place in your mind and heart. He is the Master, submit yourself to His dictates. Mould yourself in His cast. Follow Him in body, mind and soul.

Let us make no mistake. With all the above commanding overtures, Sri Sri Thakur expects us not to be weak; not to be imbecile, not to be indulgent on fate, not to accept anything blindly, not to bring prejudice in faith.

With Sri Sri Thakur not being available in physical form, surrender is no more a physical act; though it has physical symptoms. Surrender therefore has to come at feeling level, at belief level and at action level. A life surrendered is said to be different from life otherwise.

We know that Sri Sri Thakur has not taken anything on its conventional meaning. He has gone to the root of every concept and given a true meaning, however different it may turn out to.

Surrender for Sri Sri Thakur means active acceptance. Today, in the absence of Sri Sri Thakur’s physical presence, it would perhaps mean active following of His ideology, with a belief that He is alive in unseen form. His presence is to be felt in absentia. He is omnipresent and omniscient. His divine persona is eternal. After His demise, He is survived by His image and ideology, which are carriers of His immortality. To surrender oneself before Sri Sri Thakur is to totally accept the supremacy of His image and ideology and allow these to prevail in every space of one’s life and activities.

“Be surrendered and have surrender”, is a wonderful saying of Sri Sri Thakur. This is in line with Sri Sri Thakur’s sayings, ‘be and have’; ‘to have is to be’. He says, ‘unrepelling surrender is possible in a moment. It follows a psychological acceptance, which is a springboard for other motions of life like thought, action and deeds, through which a strong bondage develops with Him.’

‘Surrender begins with unrepelling attitude and adherence on Sri Sri Thakur. From there follows urge, which expresses itself in energy; Energy gets materialized in activity. The velocity of urge and energy determines the motion and output of work’, says Sri Sri Thakur.

Once in the course of discussion, Sri Sri Thakur said, the foremost requirement of his *ritwiks* is to maintain ‘unrepelling active adherence to the Superior Beloved’. Having said this, in a sonorous voice, Sri Sri Thakur went on saying, “Do materialize with every immediacy in desired time the wishes of the Superior Beloved as you are asked for, managing all events and affairs for success. This is the foremost maxim, specially for the *Ritwiks*. It is the only way to thrive with efficiency and success.”

‘Surrender’ is one of the fundamental pillars of Sri Sri Thakur’s ideology.

15th November 2012

Twenty nine

Where do we Begin From?
Answer Lies in Sri Sri Thakur’s Ideology

We need an all fulfilling ‘ideology’, which carries the mark of spirituality and science. It upholds all eternal values; at the same time serves contemporary needs. Then we need the practical demonstration of the ‘ideology’ in an ‘Ideal’.

In a high level conference on ‘Development: Success and Challenges’, held yesterday at Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, I had occasion to hear some of the best minds of our country in the field of economic administration and policy making. In a panel discussion on ‘India’s economic prospect’, one panelist, who is currently a member *Rajya Sabha* (Upper House in Indian Parliament), having retired as a top ranking position in Government of India’s civil service, observed: ‘our system is failing us’. What he communicated during the discussion, that we have got everything right; we are a vibrant democracy, we are brilliant people, we have well designed policy. Notwithstanding all these, our governance and delivery system is failing and there appears to be no immediate solution to it.

These are very conclusive statements, coming from a very experienced and well meaning person. There is a quest for an alternate path for developmental pursuit; there is search for solution; may be a different paradigm in nation building exercise. Today, a similar scenario is presented in Times of India's 'Speaking Tree', weekly edition, dated December 2, 2012. I quote the beginning paragraph from that article, written by Reena Singh, a Times' journalist:

"Last weekend, I found myself attending brainstorming sessions by dozens of like minded NGO leaders who had one common agenda – to right every wrong. Speaker after speaker ventured up to the podium giving impassioned speeches to change and amend the system in an attempt to set right lackadaisical government policies and to persuade the powers-that-be to act in favor of the poor and the under privileged."

At any point of time in the history of civilization, at a policy making and ideological level, these kinds of thoughts and churning perhaps do take place; and through this kind of process, innovative shifts occur. These kind of quests and enquires come from reflective people, with little bit of selfless approach. They look for larger welfare and look far into the horizon. These kinds of thought and action are certainly outside the domain of existential struggle which every individual passes through every day.

In this background, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra very much comes to mind. He was prophet of the age and he had solution to all the problems that the age suffers from. We, the devotees of Sri Sri Thakur, firmly believe in this; but the statement is so general that it gets lost in the realm of practical application. We owe it for the humanity to distill specific solution to identified problems, from his literature and our experience of applying his ideology in practice. This definitely is a time taking and painstaking job.

In the mean time, we would like to invite notice of the inquisitive leaders to pay attention on Sri Sri Thakur. Irony is that when the source of solution is known, yet the mainstream intelligentsia feigns ignorance of it.

More than anything else, we need an all fulfilling 'ideology', which carries the mark of spirituality and science. It upholds all eternal values; at the same time serves contemporary needs. Then we need the practical demonstration of the 'ideology' in an 'Ideal'.

A significant feature of Sri Sri Thakur's 'ideology' is that Sri Sri Thakur expects every one of his disciples to contribute to society's well being. Everyone has to contribute to the solution. From our experience of having a self centered life, it appears to be a tall order on us. He wants everyone to feel and serve the neighborhood, surrounding, society and country at large. Yes, it has to be so. Unless every one rises up to a level of awareness, common things in society will be neglected. There possibly cannot be a macro level substitute to individual level consciousness.

Many of our so called social maladies are rooted in individual selfishness, greed, narrow mindedness etc. Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is primarily designed to elevate each individual to a higher level of consciousness, refinement and achievement. Generally, it is left to each individual to find and adopt a path in that direction. It is right; it is each individual's choice. But a criticality comes here, when the issue is perceived from the individual's perspective.

Every individual lives in a conditioned environment. Every individual aspires for higher and nobler things, but certain inhibitions from within and constraints from outside retard his progress and put him in a situation like an elephant tied to a coir rope. It is here the leaders in the society have a role to place an 'ideology' at the high table, which others can look up to. Leaders cannot just lament about deteriorating situation. They have to uphold an 'ideology' that provides solution. It is here we would like to place Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra.

Let the leaders in the society have a look at Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur, the divine head, lived on this earth from 1888 to 1969. He magnificently demonstrated an 'ideology' which can hardly be over sighted.

2nd December 2012

Thirty

You Do Exist and So….

You and Thakur Constitute Your Universe

Those of us who claim to follow Sri Sri Thakur must admit that we have got the source, but we might have not got the entitlement to the resources. We have got the glimpse of godhood; but we are yet to acquire godhood.

Who or what constitute the centre of my world?

Is it me, my family, Thakur, my profession? Is it my body, my home, ashram or temple, my office?

'Law of exclusion' and 'principle of segregation' does not work in life as precisely it works in logic and research activity. Life is such an intricate alchemy and a complex conglomerate that any part of life inextricably gets into a web of relationships. You seldom can exclude or segregate many associate parts from yourself and yet think of life. That creates complication, at times confusion, for us. We mistake root for branch and vice versa.

You are the centre, said Sri Sri Thakur. Everything else exists, because you exist.

Preserve your existence, promote your existential urge and prolong the tenure of your existence.

Look at yourself and your real interest, short and long term. Whatever and whoever comes favorable to you and your existential urge, hug them. Keep them in your surroundings. Support them as your own.

You are not alone in this universe. You have an origin, a centre and a destination. That is your 'Guru', the living guide, the God incarnate.

You and your guru make your universe; none else, nothing else.

Focus yourself in His light, mould yourself in His cast; colour yourself in His paint.

You have of course duty towards surroundings, your environment; your profession and occupational settings and the whole world around you. These are surrounding you; these are not the core of your world. These are your circumference, the peripheral settings, not the centre.

Sri Sri Thakur, as Guide and Guru, is always with you. But you are responsible for yourself. Your responsibility to yourself is nonnegotiable, non transferable. He can support you, only if you hold yourself up and hold on to Him. He can be your prop; not your float.

Those of us who claim to follow Sri Sri Thakur must admit that we have got the source, but we might have not got the entitlement to the resources. We have got the glimpse of godhood; but we are yet to acquire godhood.

Once Sri Sri Thakur said, 'I have seen Gods; they are born of mother's womb. Now I am looking for devotees.'

A devotee, more likely than not, is born out of a process of transformation. That process of transformation is 'sadhana'.

"Consciousness is always self-consciousness; if one is conscious of anything, one is essentially conscious of oneself. An un-self-conscious existence is a contradiction in terms and is no existence at all", writes Anup Taneja in Speaking Tree Column, in Times of India, dated December 29, 2012.

With this as backdrop, when you work, you work for your self-development. Here a critical 'transformer', a kind of 'adaptor' plays a role. Your work for yourself can only be focused, unalloyed, refined and effective, when you work for Him. This is a critical swivel joint, where your interest gets served through His interest.

One question in so many ways, many times, has been addressed to Sri Sri Thakur. 'Thakur, what should I do?' Sri Sri Thakur said one answer in so many ways. 'Look at God, surrender at Him, do for His pleasure'.

In that sense, work is worship; work is dispassionate and object is superior.

"You are for the Lord and not for others;
You are for the Lord and so for others", said Sri Sri Thakur.

By this saying, Sri Sri Thakur has made us to walk on razor's edge. He has brought into ambit the whole world, which is as wide and as complicated as it can be. But then, he has shown us a path to tread on. It is like a narrow walkway across a vast field. It is like a lifeboat on the sea.

We experience what we go through, seldom knowing the causality behind it. Secondly, we wish and fantasize, if we could avoid certain hard things in life. We attempt to keep Sri Sri Thakur with us and wish that what happens to our life could be better than the reality.

It is admittedly hard to stare the reality. It is equally hard to fathom the reality happening around. With the best of our ability, we try to connect the parts of happenings on the current canvass. More often than not, we fail to connect the disjoint pieces together; therefore life remains a jigsaw.

What we see on the reality canvas is actually the proverbial tip of the iceberg. What remains beneath the surface reality, is a huge submerged frozen block, which we can hardly fathom. Therefore, life remains a big puzzle.

Here Sri Sri Thakur plays a role. He knows the past, present and future of each one of us. He knows the causality in the past and he can see the probability in the future. So his guidance becomes a compass; sets a direction on which we need to act. Action is in our hand. The ability to act is our power. Guidance is the clue. Following the guide is an act of acceptance, surrender.

“Surrender to thy Ideal; continue to move on; smashing and managing the sufferings that come forth as obstacle and be crowned with success”, exhorted Sri Sri Thakur.

It may be worthwhile to remember, like we have the present and the past; analogously, Sri Sri Thakur also has a ‘current and temporal’ role and ‘eternal and guardian’ role. As Sri Sri Thakur, the incarnate, he is the redeemer, the gracious, the benevolent Lord. He saves us; he pardons us; he protects us.

In his ‘eternal and guardian’ role, he is impartial. He is the dispenser of justice, guardian of the principle, protector of ‘dharma’ and preserver of nature. In that role, he is neutral; he is the referee of the whole universe. He would not allow any exception; he plays rule of the game.

What is the rule? Sri Sri Thakur alone knows. In this context, he enlightens us. He takes us away from the zone of ignorance by providing guidance as to what to do.

The enlightenment that He infuses is His grace. Of course that comes with experience; the experience of dealing with life.

In this context, one feels that sufferings in life is blessing in disguise. Suffering strengthens a person. Whatever may the cause of suffering, notwithstanding the fact that suffering in any form is not received well, suffering comes almost inevitably. Sri Sri Thakur says, sufferings should never distract you.

Sri Sri Thakur, with infinite grace, mitigates sufferings; but up to a point; by certain degree. His guidance may enable to skirt some hindrances.

Do not resign your life to unknown forces like fate. Fate is what is unseen to you. Supreme father’s will is fate for you. Otherwise, you are the master of your destiny.

2nd Janaury 2013

Thirty one

Conscious Capitalism and *Swastyayani*
Sri Sri Thakur said all these much earlier

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the prophet of the age, has given a complete ideological package that is supposed to take care of the total wellbeing of individual person and the society, in all aspects like physical, spiritual and material.

I came to know the term 'conscious capitalism' recently from a newspaper article (Economic Times, Corporate Dossier, January 25, 2013). Then I briefly studied the subject in the net, where I found quite a volume written on the subject. What surprised me is that the world of business is coming around Sri Sri Thakur's views very strikingly. What surprised me more is that Sri Sri Thakur's views on subject like this so far has remained quite unknown, untried, unexplored and untested. The 'satsang' world, the world of Sri Sri Thakur's devotees, has not understood the true import of what all Sri Sri Thakur has given to us. No wonder, we say that He was much ahead of His time.

Sri Sri Thakur's views on business, industry and economic development are not clearly formulated in a methodical way. Generally what is known is that Sri Sri Thakur gave much importance to service and efficiency as the core clue for creation of wealth and eradication of poverty. He gave much importance to service to society and environment. He liked people to be self employed rather than doing salaried job. He wanted preservation of nature, both animal and plant kingdom, as part of living being on the earth. He wanted to maintain individual's right to property (a basic tenet of capitalism), at the same time maintained equality of opportunity and harmonious relation between labour and capital (basic tenet of socialism).

Going a step ahead, Sri Sri Thakur gave a scheme called 'swastyayani', a revolutionary concept for creation of social wealth, economic security, and employment generation and so on. His famous statement that, 'industry will grow from within', is really not understood by us. Today, we know about the 'swastyayani' scheme, its features, likely impact and all that, having participated in ten national level conferences on 'swastyayani', during 1998 to 2010. What is significant in that scheme is that individual involvement is total and community formation is natural; both in the mutual interest of betterment; fulfillment and total transformation. Even after seven decades of formulation of this scheme by Sri Sri Thakur, the full import of the scheme has not taken a social outcome, as it has not been tried out.

Corporate world has perhaps understood the need for serving the society while doing business, in the larger interest of sustainability. Business leaders and management experts have understood the importance of culture and are coming closer to what Sri Sri Thakur said his disciples to practice, as a matter of daily routine.

As the article in Economic Times reads, “Conscious capitalism is in keeping with the ancient wisdom of India as it views leadership as trusteeship, which is all about focusing on the right actions and not being attached to outcome. We can call it ‘karma capitalism’, says Rajendra S Sisodia, Professor of Marketing at Bentley University, an elite business school near Boston. There is a natural synergy between the wisdom of the East, particularly of ‘conscious’ India, and the wisdom of the west, specifically the ‘capitalism’ of the US. When you blend the two, the combination is extraordinarily powerful.”

The article continues, “The term ‘conscious capitalism’ really came into academic parlance, courtesy Nobel laureate Yunus Muhammad. But he used largely as a tool to catalyze what the world today calls social entrepreneurship. Muhammad considered business to possess a social objective and all the profits were reinvested back for that social cause.”

The article further states, quoting Marico Chairman Harsh Mariwala, “It’s not just financial well being but the intellectual, social, cultural, emotional, ecological, spiritual and physical wellbeing of people. Conscious business strives to provide positive value on all those dimensions in a conscious way for their stakeholders.”

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the prophet of the age, has given a complete ideological package that is supposed to take care of the total wellbeing of individual person and the society, in all aspects like physical, spiritual and material. Sri Sri Thakur’s movement is now more than hundred years old. It is well spread out in terms of followings; but its all-round impact in the society is yet to be felt.

One specific point we feel highlighting here is that the ‘swastyayani’ scheme has not been given a proper trial. We invite the conscious disciples of Sri Sri Thakur to reflect on this.

29th Janaury 2013

Thirty two

People Suffer Owing to Leaders' Mistakes

Sri Sri Thakur share peoples' sufferings

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the prophet of the age, has given a complete ideological package that is supposed to take care of the total wellbeing of individual person and the society, in all aspects like physical, spiritual and material.

Yesterday I viewed the film 'Midnight Children'. The film is based on celebrated novelist Salmon Rushdie's work. It is history presented in fiction. It is history of India's independence in 1947, covering 1971 Bangladesh war and stretched up to 1975, the year of 'national emergency' in India. I have gone through two more fictional work on the subject, namely 'Freedom at Midnight' by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre and 'Tale of two Cities' by Guru Charan Das. I read two more scholarly historical account on the subject; namely, a) 'India Wins Freedom', by Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and b) 'Independence and Partition of India' by Dr. MN Das.

A common theme runs in all these works. The theme provides account of landmark historical developments and the events leading to those and consequences which followed. The events of a nation, which become history on later days, are typically led and shaped by leaders at social and political levels. Leaders have their own vision, own ambition and they operate against hurdles, carrying support of mass with them. At any point in time, there are always differences of views and conflicts amongst contemporary leaders. So at times, the dominant and surviving leader is the one who becomes the principal architect; and the history carries his signature.

Two points by way of consequences are worth mentioning. First one is that the real outcome of any revolution or movement turns out to be contrary to what was intended in the beginning. If not completely contrary outcome comes; but certainly it comes with some compromised package. Reasons could be varied and many. But the desired consequences seldom come; and the real impact comes to surface after a considerable time lag. It then may become a mockery of the mission; a travesty of the original objective for which the revolution was led. The post revolution assessment, after some phases, most of the time justifies an adage, which says; 'the path to hell is paved by good intentions'. All revolutions are led by noble and lofty mission, but the outcome of all, more often than not, are fractured. Beyond a point, it remains in no control of any one, not even of the leader. Sometime, it is seen at the end of the revolution that the leader is a frustrated and forlorn person. We saw it with Mahatma Gandhi as well.

Second consequential factor worth mentioning is that, the brunt of any revolution, both at the time of making and at the end, is borne by common man. Typically, revolutions begin when common man looks

for a relief from the tyranny of prevailing practices. He sees a relief in change momentum. But that common man suffers, in personal life and family life. Some of their lives get ruined for generations. In case of India's independence, large section of population had to lose their home and hearth, dear and near ones.

The silent majority who suffers the consequence of the revolution gets disillusioned, sooner than later. But they do not always enjoy the strength to run against the system once again. They take the new system as it runs stoically, doing every possible adjustment at their own end. They undertake adjustments at their end, as they get resigned to their fate, which they feel turns cruel to them. They are the proverbial sacrificial lamb in the altar of revolution. There runs a classic justification for their sacrifice, which advocates that for a greater cause, smaller components must sacrifice. It is considered to be meritorious and noble.

These small people, who are treated anonymous crowd in a mass uprising, who silently absorbs the shocks of the system, are very dear to Sri Sri Thakur. When they cry, Sri Sri Thakur wipes their tears. When they feel pain, Sri Sri Thakur applies balm on their wounds. Sri Sri Thakur never justified this kind of means for a greater cause. He says, every person has a place which is dignified and his personal freedom to live and grow is non-negotiable. A person has to live, and then only he is part of the larger system. A person has to grow; then only the society flourishes. Every person must be happy; then only there can be greatest good of the greatest number. No greater purpose can be justified at the cost of life and dignity of a single person. There can be other means of achieving the greater purpose, without inflicting death and injury to common people. Therefore no mass movement can be justified by the end, without a justified means.

We can hardly believe the analogy that says: leaves have to be sacrificed for the robustness of the branch and branch has to be sacrificed for the health of the tree. It is against any logic of organic and symbiotic relationship. Sri Sri Thakur felt the life of a leaf in his own finger. If a leaf is snapped, as if his finger is hurt.

We saw humanity undergoing many such revolutions, as the doctrine of dialectical materialism argues, following the rhythm of thesis, anti thesis and synthesis. Essentially, history repeats itself. Every revolution undoubtedly has a positive outcome. But the process and the quality of outcome are not always desirable.

This human suffering is something that Sri Sri Thakur waged a war against. He termed it 'agony of civilization'. The leaders celebrate the success of the revolution; they have no time for the so called underdogs.

Our logic is not against revolution *per se*. Every revolution has a genesis in the immediate past and therefore is justified in terms of a change in the future. Limited purpose of this argument is that let there not be victors and vanquished in the same side. Let there not be perpetuation of human sufferings under all conditions. Let the object of revolution be the welfare of the people, who add frenzy to the revolution. Every person must know where his interest lies. His interest is as much significant as the group interest.

It is significant to observe here that the so called mass leaders are not always enlightened leaders. Their ideologies are not always tried, tested and un-erred. An inappropriate direction of an unworthy leader can cause untold and un-retrievable harm for generations of people. Therefore, leaders must be guided by a seer. The hallmark of leadership is vision, coupled with dedication and diluted ego. A leader must subject himself to a greater guide, which will lend legitimacy and accuracy to his vision and the means to achieve the vision.

World over even today, wars are being fought. Political regimes are being overthrown by bloody revolution. In all these tussles, innocent blood is being shed. All these are causing anguish to Sri Sri Thakur. The point we would like to make is that there is a crisis in ideology and inappropriate choice at the level of leaders in such incidents. Remedy of these two factors is available with Sri Sri Thakur and can be better managed with Sri Sri Thakur's guidance.

Today's human holocausts were avoidable, provided we paid heed to Sri Sri Thakur.

2nd February 2013

Thirty three

Devotion Makes it Easy

Sri Sri Thakur says – faith is an achievement by itself

Sri Sri Thakur made us to affirm our own existence first, before we realize the need for God. My existence and my growth are the two fundamental stay for me. God as an abstraction or as a mythological entity is hard to conceptualize in existence. However, as we saw and dealt with a person like Sri Sri Thakur, representing God, we could know what godhood is all about and then we could relate ourselves with God.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has made many things easy for us. Since, he has simplified things; we at times fail to realize the significance of those. Sri Sri Thakur, the God incarnate, has come to us so easily that we take Him for granted. It is a hard achievement, which we are seldom conscious of. Therefore, we get surprised at times to see the intellectual dilemma that people advance for things which are very easily solved for us. But then, those intellectual dilemmas of others make us to sit up and notice the significance of things. I came across one such argument in an article on Crest edition of Times of India, dated 9th February 2013. The title of the article is 'The Gentle Atheist'.

Alain de Botton, a British Philosopher, author of 'Religion for Atheists: A Non-believers Guide to the Uses of Religion', in an interview to Times Correspondent Ms. Malini Nair, said the following:

"Believing in God is, for me as for many others, simply not possible. At the same time, I want to suggest that if you remove this belief, there are particular dangers that open up – we don't need to fall into these dangers. For a start, there is the danger of individualism: of placing the human being at the centre stage

of everything. Secondly, there is the danger of technological perfectionism; of believing that science and technology can overcome all human problems, that it is just a matter of time before scientists have cured us of the human condition. Thirdly, without God, it is easier to lose perspective: to see our own times as everything, to forget the brevity of the present moment. And lastly, without God, there can be a danger that the need for empathy and ethical behavior can be overlooked. Now it is important to stress that it is quite possible to believe in nothing and remember all these vital lessons (just as one can be a deep believer and a monster). I simply want to draw attention to some of the gaps, some of what is missing, when we dismiss God too brusquely."

Those of us who know Sri Sri Thakur would be one with me to observe that Sri Sri Thakur made us to affirm our own existence first, before we realize the need for God. My existence and my growth are the two fundamental stay for me. God as an abstraction or as a mythological entity is hard to conceptualize in existence. However, as we saw and dealt with a person like Sri Sri Thakur, representing God, we could know what godhood is all about and then we could relate ourselves with God. With Sri Sri Thakur by our side, we have escaped the entire dilemma that the British philosopher is referring to.

'Refinement in thought' and 'accomplishment in action' are two most important things that Sri Sri Thakur wanted us to practice. That process of 'still pursuing and still achieving' takes care to address our dilemma, suspicion, inhibition and illusion. Sri Sri Thakur has laid down a practical path of 'dharma', that is known as 'being and becoming'. At the same time His love for us made us to have faith and devotion on Him very normally.

Faith on Sri Sri Thakur and adherence to His principles are two significant and powerful factors in life. Sri Sri Thakur has made these things easy for us by placing Himself as an Ideal and by laying down an ideological package for us to follow.

Nevertheless, the points raised by the British philosopher are very pertinent for us to reflect. These questions take us deep into the realm of existential issues. Only when we start asking questions in life, we will start recognizing the possibilities in life. Sri Sri Thakur has gifted us the tools, which only provide us the mechanism; which we need to deploy in life and society. All great things start with recognition in mind, reflection in thought and inquisitiveness in action. That makes the issues of the British Philosopher Alain de Botton very relevant.

To lesser intelligent persons like us, the questions raised by Alain de Botton are actually calling bell coming from Sri Sri Thakur.

24th February 2013

Thirty four

Dharma is That Which Upholds You

No one can stay outside the application of Dharma

Renunciation means to offer oneself completely at the Lord. The first stage is 'bramhacharya' – means to tread on the path of progression. Then it is 'gaarhyastha' (domestic life), followed by 'baanprastha', i.e., move into expansion. 'Sanyaas' or renunciation, which is mind's engagement with the Lord, comes at last.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra was a magnificent person. His personality was as deep as ocean and was as wide as the sky and, therefore, it is hard to project a profile of his personality. Now that Sri Sri Thakur is not seen in person, what is available for the humanity is His image and His ideology. While the ideology lives in the lives of innumerable followers, who carry Sri Sri Thakur in their conducts, mind and hearts, the explicit expression of His ideological edifice is available in His literature. What is presented in this article is Sri Sri Thakur's dialogue with a couple of visitors. Innumerable visitors used to call on him every day and used to get guidance and sustenance. Sri Sri Thakur was available for everyone who ever sought for Him. He used to receive guests very cordially and used to talk to them as a normal question answer mode. His ideological spectrum has been expressed lucidly through this kind of dialogue.

It was 8th June 1945 at Himaitpur Satsang ashram. (*Alochana Prasange* Vol. VI) That was Sri Sri Thakur's birthplace and was the cradle of his man making movement. By then Sri Sri Thakur was passing through his 57th year and Satsang, as an institution was at its peak of establishment, in its place of origin. By that time, Sri Sri Thakur's divine spell was spread far and wide. It was undivided India, undergoing the greatest political arousal ever known; that was India's independent movement. Bengal just came out of a worst famine. People of all kinds used to call on Sri Sri Thakur with varied problems, some are personal and some are general. On that evening, two visitors having high administrative position called on him. One was Khan Bahadur A. Haque, Assistant Sales Tax Commissioner of Rajsahi Revenue Division. The second visitor was M. Kabir, the eldest son of District Magistrate, Pabna. Sri Sri Thakur got up from his bench, received the guests and offered seat to them on another bench. Sri Sri Thakur took his seat only after the guests were comfortable on their seats. Sri Sri Thakur, as usual, was surrounded by a number of his followers, including Krishna Prasanna Bhattacharjee, a scholar devotee of Sri Sri Thakur and then President Satsang.

In the recorded literature on Satsang Ashram at Pabna, there are observations, which give us impression that it was a beehive of activities. There were many industrial and entrepreneurial activities, which distinguished Pabna Satsang from the traditional concept of ashram, which usually conjures up an image of hermitage, whose activities singularly focus on religious rites and rituals. Just to recapitulate some activities, Pabna Satsang played a pioneering role in popularizing technology in rural areas. The inmates of ashram were working for the Rail Company, for the PWD department of Government etc. on contract. Sri Sri Thakur set up a laboratory and named it as 'vishwa vigyan kendra' (World Science Center). For visitors like Mahatma Gandhi, these enterprises were of much significance, as these were rural and community development programs, which was in line with the spirit of 'swadeshi' movement of Congress party. Sri Sri Thakur, as we understand, had another holistic objective behind all these. The central point

in Sri Sri Thakur's movement was that he wanted to build 'man', as an integrated personality, having excellent harmonious achievement in material and spiritual pursuit. For unfolding the creativity and energy of mass, Sri Sri Thakur made available all avenues, suiting the need of all kinds of people with varied aspiration and aptitude. Second important point in this regard is that 'Satsang ashram' was developed out of Sri Sri Thakur's vigorous mobilization program to serve the eternal need people and their existential urge to grow. Therefore ashram as an organization did not grow on a planned basis. It grew more as offshoot of man making effort of Sri Sri Thakur than as an organizational outfit of a planned movement.

An interesting observation on Satsang ashram came from Mr. Haque that day. As it is recorded, it was his introductory observation and therefore, it must have struck a noticeable impact on him. He said, "I am happy to visit your ashram and everything in it, except the municipal arrangement, which I could not appreciate".

Sri Sri Thakur smiled and remained silent. He was not apologetic; nor was he defensive. We have nothing to deduce what reaction would have happened within Sri Sri Thakur. We can reasonably infer, perhaps Sri Sri Thakur desired to ignore the observation. He wanted to divert the topic and perhaps therefore, he turned to Mr. Kabir and affectionately enquired about his father's health.

Mr. Haque's subsequent observation was on 'dharma'. He said, "I feel the greatest identity of a man is that 'he is man'. 'Dharma' is meant for man. There could be a number of religious views and that is the diversity of nature. All scriptures lead to identical view, if their researched essence is taken out."

Sri Sri Thakur approved Mr. Haque's view and added, "That is why it is called science. God is one; 'dharma' is one; all the prophets proclaim the same truth. 'Dharma' has two sides: one is divine and the second one is, discrete. The divine side is immutable, irrespective of place and time; it is not true for the other one. The diversity in 'discrete' is inevitable, in line with differing space, time and person, for the sake of 'life and growth'. For instance, at some cold places, it is required to eat more of hot substance. Similarly, for some person in specific condition, liquor may be required for the sake of health".

Mr. Haque expressed his thought that God is so great by himself that he hardly needs to be glorified. "Does God expect human being to sing in his praise?"

Sri Sri Thakur put the issue in right perspective. He said, "God does not need; we need. We derive benefit out of it. The more we admire Him, the more we sing in His glory, His attributes get invoked within us. He looks for our growth, that is, transmutation and evolution. If prayer facilitates these processes, then it is all for our good. And that which is good for us pleases him as well. Have not you come across people who speak ill of others and they can only see evils. They invite evil on to themselves and pollute the society at the same time. The contrasts are the people, who see good in others and they spread good words about others. They themselves remain happy and they keep the environment happy".

Mr. Haque wondered, if mere recitation of verses without the knowledge of meaning and application thereof lead to any outcome? He drew example by saying that some of the Arabian verses are not intelligible to many of us.

Sri Sri Thakur brought out the true import of prayer. "Recitation is a superior method of understanding scriptures. Repeated utterances lead to gradual unfolding of meaning. So it is advisable not to discard the practices of prayer and hymns. Unless of course the meaning comes out, the conducts and activities do not take proper shape. Prayer essentially means to acquire control on something. Another name for prayer is autosuggestion. Prayer, in its practical scope, includes work. The ritualistic prayer that we perform is actually the precursor of appropriate action in consonance with prayer. Prayer precipitates the motion of action. Verbal utterances are not the whole of prayer. Prayer basically connotes acquisition through action."

Mr. Kabir made an observation. 'If there is any supernatural power, then it is worth making effort to acquire that; bring that within one's easy access. Otherwise, we tend to develop weakness, by submitting before something without much awareness and appreciation.'

Sri Sri Thakur said, 'without love and reverence, knowledge and appreciation do not come. Our ego comes in the way and draws a veil of ignorance between the desired object and us; and similarly between the soul and us. That blocks our channel of forward movement and progress. Progress means forward submission {*ut* (above) + *nati* (submission) = *unnati* (progression)}. In the absence of love and submission, no great achievement can take place.'

Mr. Haque raised a question. 'What is your view on rites? Can't we do without rites?'

Sri Sri Thakur smiled and said, "There are rites for boiling rice. Rice can be cooked only by following the rites; otherwise rice will not be cooked. The law is that, for every purpose, there is a prescribed process. No purpose can be achieved without following the process".

Mr. Haque – 'In your view, where is the place for pardon? If I commit murder of an innocent person, will you not pardon me?'

Sri Sri Thakur – "Pardon ought to plug the passage of injury. If an assassin has to be excused, he has to be brought to such a state of repentance that he is redeemed of propensity to commit further murder. Without creating such preventive condition, if an assassin is liberated to have his way with impunity, it would be injurious to the society. A meritorious and blissful deed is that which maintains and promotes the soul. The opposite is sin, which drags man away from that and we need to banish them. In case your son gets addicted to say tobacco, can you remain without counseling him? Without taking measures to cure, if we indulge in passive reprieve, it may be disastrous."

Panchanan Sarkar, an erudite disciple of Sri Sri Thakur, made an observation; "'Excuse' (*kshmaa*) has an in built sense of 'use' (*saksham*) in it."

Elated with the observation of Panchanan Sarkar, Sri Sri Thakur said, "You are right. True pardon helps to enhance a person's capability."

Mr. Haque – "I feel, *dharma* ought to be dynamic. Otherwise, there could be a tendency to isolate oneself from others and find an easy life, which I do not like."

Sri Sri Thakur – "It shall be dynamic, if insincerity is not there. If I have true attachment on you, then it would not be in mere words. It will be ironical if I claim to love you and I cry for you, whereas I do not practically do anything for your pleasure; I do not look for your comfort, I do not offer you a flower or a glass of water in thirst. Attachment breeds action and invites motive to fulfill. All these automatically blossoms in propensity to act and to move."

Mr. Haque enquired about the objectives of Sri Sri Thakur's association. Sri Sri Thakur said, "I have not built anything here out of deliberate planning. People came here, in large number; they settled down. Things sprouted all around and began to grow out of sheer existential urge. As far as goal is concerned, it is 'Khoda' (the Lord), others are incidental."

Mr. Haque – What is renunciation? Is it required?

Sri Sri Thakur – Renunciation is imperative; but it comes on its own. Renunciation means to offer oneself completely at the Lord. The first stage is 'bramhacharya' – means to tread on the path of progression. Then it is 'gaarhyastha' (domestic life), followed by 'baanprastha', i.e., move into expansion. 'Sanyaas' or renunciation, which is mind's engagement with the Lord, comes at last. It all flows and evolves in sequence as the developments of age sixty follows those of age five. Renunciation is a natural culmination of a normal devoted life.

Mr. Haque – Does not one have to leave behind everything like home, family and occupations etc?

Sri Sri Thakur – That is escapism born out of irresponsibility. A monk (sanyaasin) might have to flee away from his home, but it is only for managing others' homes. Can he shirk this responsibility?

Mr. Haque – You are talking about fraternity, which means to maintain contact, association and joining in meals etc. with all.

Sri Sri Thakur – By equality, we of course do not mean that everybody must share dishes with each other. It may not be permissible from hygienic point of view. A person of impure conduct should be quarantined. Purity in conduct has three aspects, namely spiritual, psychological and physical. I am told that our fingertips carry lakhs and lakhs of bacteria and one of them is capable of taking away our life. A scavenger is eating fried rice from his cloth after handling night soil. He is not getting affected by this as he has formed immunity. But if we start sharing that rice, we will have it. Some are carriers of TB. They continue to live with it, but they spread around the seed of death. Therefore it is not at all advisable to be served by any Tom Dick and Harry. There is, however, no bar to receive food cooked and serviced by one who is healthy, maintain purity in conduct and is sanctified by cultural rites, no matter what religion he belongs to. The criteria to apply in matters of selecting the type of food, the place and the cook are culture and personal distinctiveness. All these are to be maintained for the sake of health of body and mind. We need to bear in mind that the rules protect us when we protect the rules. You are a highly placed administrator. What is your view on these matters?

Mr. Haque – It is correct. But how does one find out that a person is of pure conduct? Ultimately then it rests on individual discretion.

Sri Sri Thakur – You follow the principles. Your vision will open up; then you will know who is what.

Mr. Haque – Let me clarify it further. Say I have invited you for meal. If you do not accept my invitation, I will feel anguished. Then I might be led to conclude that Thakur is guided by inhibition, whatever words of universal religion he might be preaching.

Sri Sri Thakur – How can you insist me to take food with you, without knowing my choice, food habit and liking etc? In a reverse situation, why should I get deterred, if I want to eat from your hand and you don't extend a formal invitation to me?

Mr. Haque – I do not offer prayer five times a day. Would you call me an atheist or non-religious. I believe in 'Khoda' (the Lord), so I am not an atheist; however, I may be considered non-religious.

Sri Sri Thakur – Can I assert that you are doing something if in reality you are not doing that? I can never consider you a non-religious. Religion is that which upholds things, which keeps being and becoming unhindered. How are you keeping on, if there is no religion at all in you? To whatever extent you have followed religion along with family and surroundings; you have achieved life and growth to that extent. Man does not last bereft of religion; he gets exhausted.

Mr. Haque – I deeply ponder over Hindu Muslim unity. This ideology of integration must take root in the society.

Sri Sri Thakur – This has got sprouted in a couple of lakhs of people who are wedded to our ideology. These people are from all communities like Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christs, Parsees, Santhaal, Garo, Naga, Burmese and Gorkha etc.

Mr. Haque took leave of Sri Sri Thakur. While leaving he expressed his desire to visit again.

Thirty five

Those of us, who Know Thakur…
Our reach is as great as our faith

Our faith on Sri Sri Thakur provides us our support system, irrespective of our individual strength and weakness. Sri Sri Thakur presented for us the wealth of resources; it is for us to draw from the pool. He gave us the vision; it is for us to perceive things in the light of our interest. He gave us the vital clue; it is for us to invigorate us with the life force. Sri Sri Thakur offered us the elixir; it is for us to immortalize ourselves.

Those of us who are into Sri Sri Thakur's discipline are a class apart from the rest of the world. This classification is based on our faith, belief and our commitment to the ideology that Sri Sri Thakur dawned on to this earth. This distinguishes us from the rest of the humanity on the criterion that we are privy to an ideological paradigm which, we believe, is the best that one can have. We are, therefore, far more certain on some view points, have better clarity on certain issues and therefore little more carefree than others.

The classification based on the ideological viewpoint ends there. This classification, to my mind, cannot be stretched for any other comparison with rest of the world. My assertion is based on the following logic: a) each individual and a cluster of individuals are endowed with such sharp nuances, that they can seldom be subjected to comparison. For, the groups or communities are so heterogeneous that comparisons amongst classes are seldom tenable. Within each group, our group of Sri Sri Thakur's devotees not excluded, there are people of innumerable peculiarities, which hardly makes group a homogenous entity. b) More importantly, comparisons are usually based on outcome, not on the basis of input or support system. Sri Sri Thakur has provided us a robust support system; it is for us to make use of it and determine our locus in the humanity.

Notwithstanding what is said above, Sri Sri Thakur is our strength. Our faith on him provides us our support system, irrespective of our individual strength and weakness. Sri Sri Thakur presented for us the wealth of resources; it is for us to draw from the pool. He gave us the vision; it is for us to perceive things in the light of our interest. He gave us the vital clue; it is for us to invigorate us with the life force. Sri Sri Thakur offered us the elixir; it is for us to immortalize ourselves.

Some aspects of Sri Sri Thakur are unique and therefore appear strange to us. A person goes up to Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur looks at him intensely. That look is something strange; it pierces into the very core of the person's life. The look plunges a spear of love, sympathy and affection. The person stands

immobile; he is lost for the moment; mesmerized; does not know what to do. When he recollects himself; he is a different person; fulfilled, obliged, calm and imbued with supreme satisfaction.

Another person visits Sri Sri Thakur. The moment he presents himself, Sri Sri Thakur asks him about an event that just happened on his way. Nobody, except himself, obviously knows what he went through. But Sri Sri Thakur not only tells him about the incident; Thakur also tells him the cause and likely consequence that were to follow, which was mercifully avoided. Sri Sri Thakur sees a person's past, present and future life as clearly as it is seen on a film.

Sri Sri Thakur had a magnetic personality. People used to swarm around Him just to have a glance of Him and that exchange of views used to relay a communication exchange, leading to fulfillment. That magnetism made Him unique, as striking as something irreplaceable; the most sought after object on the earth, the God manifest.

Those of us who know Sri Sri Thakur have got a magic wand in our hand. Our faith on Him and practice of His ideology would shape our life. Life is mysterious; and so remains Sri Sri Thakur, as He is the one who leads our life.

We can get to know the true image of Sri Sri Thakur, only by applying His ideas in our life. And that is how we will find meaning in life. It is significant to bear in mind that Sri Sri Thakur, as divine force, the cosmic energy, and the all powerful supreme power is actively present with us. His lifetime, the grand play of incarnation during 1888 to 1969, was a demonstration of life at its perfection. Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, the principles of being and becoming, is very much related to life; life with all its varieties, challenges and opportunities. We need to live life in association with Sri Sri Thakur, under the masterly guidance of Sri Sri Thakur. At a certain point in life's journey, we can perhaps say, His wish is our life. His grace is our destiny. His mercy is our solace. His way is our direction and He is the ultimate destination.

25th March 2013

Thirty six

Pray for Lord's Wish

Prayer is an act of submission for action

Prayer is essentially application of words and deeds to achieve the goal. When prayer gets focused and tuned with urge for action, you will get peace in body, mind and freedom from complex mania.

Did Sri Sri Thakur want us to pray, as a part of our spiritual pursuit? What should be the content of our prayer? What should we communicate to the Lord while praying?

Before we get into this and understand prayer from Sri Sri Thakur's perspective, let us read a brief commentary on prayer, that was published in 'Spiritual Atheist' column of Economic Times, dated 25th October 2013, under the title 'Pray, Don't Get it Wrong', by Anshul Chaturvedi. This article brings out a rational view of prayer; however, it leaves many questions unanswered. Purpose of quoting this article here is only to set a context on the subject.

Quote

"Many of us pray to specific deities for specific things. Soldiers pray to Bajrang Bali for victory while maidens pray to Shiva for suitable grooms; students see mishandling of a text book as an insult to Saraswati, while turning down monetary benefit is sending back "ghar aayi Lakshmi".

Along the way, sometimes, we simplistically equate our devotion with an obligation on the part of the deity to reward. "If I really pray, God will give it to me." Faith moves mountains, yes, but it is not God's accountability to give because we gushingly ask. A fair boss will reward those who deserve it the most, and not, hopefully, those who are most boss aligned, or who beseech the most.

The Supreme Managers of the Universe are likely to know their domains better, and be fairer, than the average appraising authority, surely?

Vivekananda derided fixation with formal worship, saying "lying complacently on the bed and ringing the bell now and then is a sort of disease, pure and simple."

Lakshmi may well bestow wealth, but Bill Gates and Warren Buffett – or Lady Gaga, for that matter – have got along just fine without ringing bells or lighting lamps. And by no stretch of imagination did Einstein attribute his knowledge to the grace of Saraswati. The fanatically efficient Germans make the best machines without seeking Vishwakarma's blessings.

If there are gods, then all god's children may have their love equally, but when they reward, they seem to often place merit above affection.

Let's pray, sure – and then quickly get back to work."
Unquote

In our understanding, the above is a rational and pragmatic analysis of prayer and more or less in line with Sri Sri Thakur's thread of ideology. We will examine below what Sri Sri Thakur has to say on prayer. Leaving aside for a moment, the morning and evening set of prayers (समबेत बिनती प्रार्थना), which has its own lineage and value; we will go into the essence of prayer.

The Message, Volume III, Satsang Publishing House (1964), provides the following saying of Sri Sri Thakur, as preface:

A Solemn Prayer

Say with solemn heart
to thy Beloved, the Lord-
the Lead
I like Thee,
I love Thee,
bestow Thy blessed glance
on me
so that
I may serve Thee
all through
my life's existential wave
which prolongs my life
to live for Thee;
and make me active
to serve Thee
and through Thee
others as well
with every soothing service
by which
I do devote myself
To Thee;
make me
blessed and bloomy
by Thy fragrance
so that
I can be enthusiastic again
with every serviceable
suffering of life
to make Thee happy
for me,
thus,
let me be divine

so that
I may serve Thee
with every elongated
divine thrill.

The six volumes of *Anusruti* (Bengali) have only 2 stanzas where Sri Sri Thakur has given his message on prayer. For the sake of absolute clarity and not miss out the nuances, I quote the original *vani* of Sri Sri Thakur in Bengali and would attempt to paraphrase it in English.

অভীষ্টটি পাওয়ার পথে
কথায়-কাজে বিনিয়ে চলা
তারেই জানিস প্রার্থনা কয়
প্রার্থনা নাম তাইতে বলা
- অনুশ্রুতি প্রথম খন্ড, স্ংঙ্গ্যা, বাণী সংখ্যা ৬২

Prayer is essentially application of words and deeds to achieve the goal.

প্রার্থনা যেই নিটোল হল
তদ-অনুগ কৃতিযোগে
অনেক শান্তি পাবি ওরে
শরীর-মন আর বৃত্তি-রোগে
- অনুশ্রুতি ষষ্ট প্রথম খন্ড, সাধনা, বাণী সংখ্যা ৩৫

When prayer gets focused and tuned with urge for action, you will get peace in body, mind and freedom from complex mania.

Both the above two sayings of Sri Sri Thakur link prayer to action, leading to goal. Payer is done both in words and deeds. When the prayer (the desired goal) and action (the medium for achieving the goal) are in synch, one comes to a state of peace and harmony, physically, mentally and emotionally.

In *Anusruti,* 3rd part, Sri Sri Thakur has given a long lyric *vani* (in Bengali), which really brings out what should be our prayer to the Lord. Dinabandhu (Dey) and I have attempted to translate that profound *vani* of Sri Sri Thakur below and that seems to be the last word on prayer.

Prayer

O my gracious Lord, the all powerful master,
the precious object, the priceless property;
The stay of my soul, the goal ultimate,
the light of my life, the path for eternity.

Whatever you ordain for me,
hardship, grief or punishment;
Be it hunger, or negligence you heap,
your derision or harassment!

Every act of yours is blessing for me,
I am your friend, ever at your feet;
Your service is my duty,
work for you is supreme I treat.

You are my interest supreme,
no one else, nothing be lost;
Least care for anything around,
your displeasure is my concern the most.

You know what is best for me,
you do, how it is to be done;
You remain live for me forever,
with glory, together with everyone.

Your service, your demand,
your work, words of wisdom;
Nourishing these is my duty solemn,
for my soul, propitious bloom.

Your smile, bliss and your care
glory unto you! world over;
That be the pursuit, my endeavor,
be my mission, project for ever.

You bless me! stay with me,
you live forever, life eternal;
Me, at your feet, at your call,
be with you, for you, ever loyal.

Those who love out of hypocrisy,
they, who pet their deficiency;
Do not observe your advice in action,
devoid of devotion and decency.

Flood of mercy, million words of admonition,
seldom touch their sense, do any progress;
Only they who live in you and you in them,
do they enjoy you, live up to your wishes.

Never I demand, nor do I beseech your service,
only because dear I am to you;
Let my heart overflow with love
wash your feet; my adoration for you.

Let me excel, do wonders, be perfect,
for meeting your wish, fulfill your demand;
My body, mind and soul, all that I am,
learn to see, hear and do understand.

This is my prayer, my Lord,
my life's go, need and hunger;
Let your place remain ever shine
in my heart, that beats faster.

Words of discipline, your command,
are blessings for me, path for my shelter;
Let those be my guide, pointer, unhindered,
may all hurdles and depression be clear.

When you grant my above prayer,
you make me full with your mercy;
I see you here, there and everywhere
you remain with me, by my side, in my eye.

The welfare, the care and wellbeing
of self, family with surrounding;
Be the prime principle of this life,
with you at the centre, joy of becoming.

Let your graceful view, sweet and bliss,
be spread around, everywhere;
Your worship, service and nurturing,
illuminate my heart, with elixir.

Let my being be tied with you,
let the tie be firm and energetic;
Let evil be resisted, be banished,
with swift and blessed proficiency.

Accomplishment, achievement and action,
upholding existential laws and providential piety;
Bring unerring effulgence and bloomy righteousness,
far sighted intelligence and consecrated policy.

Let adherence and allegiance to you,
make my heart conditioned with tenacity;
Face the evil with smashing resistance,
let me stride heavenly path with longevity.

May my devotion invoke your mercy,
the boon of bloomy benevolent bliss;
Do serve you, every cell of my existence,
be blessed and nurture your wish.

Knowing and non-knowing alike for you,
wisdom is your own being;
You are mine, all is yours,

savior of soul, the hoist for becoming.

You are with me, by my side
I look up bewildered, wonder you are;
Without you who else is there?
this weak heart fails to measure.

Not everyone knows, you are the destiny,
unmatched, the centre of creation;
You own the world, the supreme word,
you are unique and second to none.

3rd October 2013, *Deepavali*

Thirty seven

Uniform Idea to Unite
Sri Sri Thakur is the Universal Ideal

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology is above religion, though it defines religion. It is above political and ideological divides, though it influences the mind of the people. It deals with the existential issues of individual and society, therefore it is known as 'existentialism'. It is scientific in the sense that its premises are based on rational and experimented facts. It is modern in the sense that it differentiates the relevant and utilitarian part of our culture from the ritualistic and superstitious part. It encourages 'can do' attitude rather than the reliance on fate and pre-determination.

Legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar bowed out today from the cricket world. His home ground Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai gave a standing ovation to the hero who charmed the cricket world for last 24 years, playing 200 test matches. Today Government of India conferred the highest civilian award 'Bharat Ratna' on him. Media is agog with tributes and memories of the wonderful talent who is accorded the status of 'God' in cricket world.

One column on Sachin Tendulkar in today's The Times of India is titled 'I felt a yogi was meditating'. The column is scripted by another legendary creative person in advertisement and film world, Prasoon Joshi. I

was attracted by a sentence in the column that reads, “Whether it’s politics, business or even sports, India is looking for that one uniform idea to unite everything. Sachin Tendulkar is that fantastic idea.”

This article is no commentary on Sachin Tendulkar. Nor is it meant to be a reaction on the observation of Prasoon Joshi. We hold both Sachin Tendulkar and Prasoon Joshi in high esteem.

This article however is a reflection on the first sentence of the portion quoted from today’s The Times of India, which reads, “Whether it’s politics, business or even sports, India is looking for that one uniform idea to unite everything.”

Unity of India has a deep meaning. Apart from what is commonly referred to as unity and integrity of India in a political and geographical sense, unity of India has a deep rooted cultural underpinning. India is synonymous with a cultural and spiritual entity. Its unity is felt by every Indian, notwithstanding the diversity that runs length and breadth of this vast landscape.

I am bit reflective of the ‘one uniform idea to unite everything’, be it politics, business or even sports. Yes, the unifying forces must work to keep the spirit of the ancient country, set to march on the path of modernity, progress and development in all sphere. There are parochial considerations that have the potential to enervate and threaten the unity of India from various angles. Therefore, reflective persons are looking for forces to strengthen the unity of the country on all fronts.

In this quest for unifying India, the elites of India must not ignore one idea which Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra brought onto the table, which is the concept of ‘common Ideal’. The people of this country at large must come to accept an ‘Ideal’ who is all fulfilling. It is a wonderful concept, which has not got a proper evaluation on the high table in the society. The purpose of this article is just to flag this point.

This common Ideal (Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra’s ideology) is above religion, though it defines religion. It is above political and ideological divides, though it influences the mind of the people. It deals with the existential issues of individual and society, therefore it is known as ‘existentialism’. It is scientific in the sense that its premises are based on rational and experimented facts. It is modern in the sense that it differentiates the relevant and utilitarian part of our culture from the ritualistic and superstitious part. It encourages ‘can do’ attitude rather than the reliance on fate and pre-determination. It focuses on transformation and evolution of human faculties, qualities and abilities.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra’s ideology is that unifying cord that takes care of personal growth of each individual with surrounding welfare. That ideology has the capability to bring about a collective prosperity on all fronts. That ideology was demonstrated by Sri Sri Thakur during his lifespan of 81 years (1888-1969) very vigorously and has been captured in his literature and also in live practice in the life of huge followers. But looking at the social platforms and media landscape, the ideology remains almost unfamiliar to elite of the society. However, it is our appeal and submission that the most appropriate ideology of our time, which has the potential to unite the country must not suffer neglect. If it does, the society remains deprived of the use value of the ‘Ideal’, the unifying cord.

Thirty eight

We Need to Believe in the Impossible
Greatness Flows from Great Beliefs & Accomplishments

> Sri Sri Thakur in one of his sayings said, 'say no to impossible; say *nay* to no.' It is not just a positive and optimistic outlook; it is a hard headed belief in making things possible; come what may; throwing all adversities into wind.

'We need to believe in the impossible and remove the improbable', a saying of Oscar Wilde, quoted by Satya Nadella, the newly appointed 46 year old Indian CEO of Microsoft, in his mail to all employees of Microsoft on 4th February 2014.

The story of Microsoft and its founder Bill Gates need no recount here. It is an amazing story of human creativity with passion and ambition, fired by innovation and hard work. This article is not a place to recount those; as volumes have been written and is available in public domain.

What is striking is that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's philosophy supports and validates the spirit of many things pertaining to Microsoft, Bill Gates and what Satya Nadella, the third CEO had to do and say.

We quote a few more passages from the above referred mail of Satya Nadella, sent to Microsoft employees on 4th February 2014, after assuming the post of CEO.

Quote
To paraphrase a quote from Oscar Wilde – we need to believe in the impossible and remove the improbable. This starts with clarity of purpose and sense of mission that will lead us to imagine the impossible and deliver it. We need to prioritize innovation that is centered on our core value of empowering users and organizations to "do more". Finally, I truly believe that each of us must find meaning in our work. The best work happens when you know that it's not just work, but something that will improve other people's lives.
Unquote

These are great words coming from great people. These people have acquired greatness by achieving extraordinary feat in life. They have achieved greatness in personal life and they have built great organizations. The greatness is flowing from largeness; largeness in thought, action, feelings and aspiration and from large accomplishment.

I see an image of greatness in these people and in their work, which Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra wanted to bring in all of us. What person like Satya Nadella speaks and has done for him and for the organization is what Sri Sri Thakur idealized for all of us to do for the world. Sri Sri Thakur has provided an ideological framework as a ladder for all us to climb and attain the greatness.

Sri Sri Thakur in one of his sayings said, 'say no to impossible; say *nay* to no.' It is not just a positive and optimistic outlook; it is a hard headed belief in making things possible; come what may; throwing all adversities into wind. The energy flows from the divine; as the light emanates from the sun.

Let us start believing the impossible that is Thakur!

8th February 2014

Thirty nine

Sri Sri Thakur's Mission in the Current Context

Manifestation of Divine Sensitivity, Love and Life

Today Sri Sri Thakur is physically no more. But the divinity that he brought on and the ideology that he bequeathed are actively working towards His mission. Yes, we need to open ourselves at His lotus feet. We need to cultivate His ideology, literature and uphold His image, through our conducts, action and behavior.

Questions

The more I reflect on Sri Sri Thakur in the light of my own experience, two questions are peeking their heads very often in recent past. How do we know Sri Sri Thakur? What does He expect from us now?

Context

It is our firm belief that Sri Sri Thakur is manifestation of God. But that identity alone does not help us to know about His features and profile and therefore does not really create a living image which we would like to associate with and would like to live with. In the absence of a live interaction with Sri Sri Thakur, mere identification with Godhood may make Sri Sri Thakur as abstract and amorphous as the concept of God itself.

At times, it appears that the best way to know Sri Sri Thakur is perhaps to stretch our imagination, keeping our acquaintance with Sri Sri Thakur in the backdrop. No, it may not be fair and does not seem to be appropriate, as our imagination would be limited and certainly will have bias.

Even when Sri Sri Thakur was in flesh and blood and people could view, interact and associate with Him, it was also a hard task to know who Sri Sri Thakur was and what did He want? We have gathered this experience from a number of devotees who were blessed to have firsthand experience of Him. Sri Sri Thakur, in one of his sayings, have also hinted that the show that prophet displays in his life, the drama that gets unfolded surrounding Him, is never easy to grasp and fathom, in its true shape and intent, unless the prophet reveals Himself and makes His identify known, out of His sheer mercy. Very close associates of Sri Sri Thakur have experienced that, not withstanding easy access and simple demeanor with which He presented Himself, it required a bit of painstaking exercise to really know His true self and to acquire whatever people expected from Him. His real blessings came with hard exertion and a committed pursuit.

Expert View

It is appropriate, here to translate and quote Devi Prasad Mukhopadhyay from his book *Priya Parama* (Bengali, page 106):

Quote

"Every moment of the prophet's life is something to be observed. Every act and every movement of Sri Sri Thakur was heart touching and elevating. As if everything from Him wafted an endearing fragrance. His engagement with the surrounding people and event may appear to be common place from external view. The eternal divinity, the supreme father, the cause of all causes, that He represented; those forces were not suspended or subdued even for a moment, whatever may be his physical occupation. He might be having sickness; he might be sleeping or attending to call of nature; might be seen busy in discussion on worldly affairs with his family and kith and kin; or be engaged in serious philosophical discussion with visitors; in every situation and circumstantial position, the divine representation in Him remains ever awake and ever active. And, perhaps therefore, every act of His carries a distinct specialty, which is inimitable, wonderful and worth reflecting on. That reflection takes our mind high, makes life enjoyable and invokes alertness in us as to what is to be done and what is to be avoided.

We must remember that bookish knowledge about scriptures, which is 'rotten knowledge' in Sri Sri Thakur's words, is not enough to trace divinity in the worldly play of the prophet. We need to have bondage, a natural love with Him, if we want to know Him. This love and attachment takes us on the way towards exploring Him.

Sri Sri Thakur was embodiment of love. Love took shape in Him. Love gets expressed naturally in His conducts, speech and behavior. Once Sri Sri Thakur said, "My life is my materialized maxim".
Unquote

Take-home

Today Sri Sri Thakur is physically no more. But the divinity that he brought on and the ideology that he bequeathed are actively working towards His mission. Yes, we need to open ourselves at His lotus feet. We need to cultivate His ideology, literature and uphold His image, through our conducts, action and behavior.

We need to know Sri Sri Thakur through our life and experience. We need to practice His ideology, as we go forward. As we experience life through struggle for becoming, putting his ideology into practice, the Thakur will be revealed before us. We can keep live contact with Him through reading His literature and through self reflection, including meditation.

The two issues that were raised in the beginning: 'to know Him' and 'His expectation from us' are self complementary, in practical, experiential and contextual sense.

Validation

Coming back to the twin questions with which we started: why these questions at all? Are we playing hide and seek with our faith? Perhaps, yes!

Our faith appears to have sunk only to that level of consciousness, where it is swinging to the tune of external influences. Ideally, faith and action has to reinforce each other through devotion, experience and wisdom. We are told that reaching at the point of faith is considered to be a significant landmark. Sri Sri Thakur said, 'there is hardly any successful accomplishment like having faith in place in one's life'.

Alternatively, the questions can also be taken as symptoms of inquisitiveness. As we observe, life is an expression of quest and conquest. Unending stream of situations makes us alive to emerging stimuli, hitting our consciousness incessantly and shattering our existence. Sri Sri Thakur's grace is of course holding us steadfast on our ideological viewpoint.

Knowing Sri Sri Thakur is to know life and perhaps the vice versa is also true. Sri Sri Thakur and His domain cover the whole of life. Life grows and Sri Sri Thakur glows in it.

Today's 'Speaking Tree' Column in Times of India writes: "A disciple is a great achievement. Only through discipline you will become a disciple. Only through being centered you will become humble, you will become receptive, you will become empty, and the Guru, the Master, can pour himself into you. In your emptiness, in your silence, he can reach you. Communication becomes possible."

5th July 2014

Forty

Religion is more a Social Issue than a Divine One

Sri Sri Thakur brought the focus away from Religion

Any religious view or movement has to have dynamism. In Sri Sri Thakur's words, there is a 'divine' part and there is a 'discrete' part. The divine part is eternal, unchangeable. The discrete part is what gets altered to suit the credo of the evolving thought, life style and societal norms. By saying this, Sri Sri Thakur has kept his ideology open for adoption and adaptation.

In today's 'Speaking Tree' column of The Times of India, Mumbai edition, two interesting observations have been made by the author Binaifer Dulani. Author's focus is on 'consumerism', which he has equated with 'religion' for the middle class society of the current time. We are not commenting on that. We are segregating some portion on religion and commenting on that part. Religion in practice is the reference point for this article.

Two observations have been made in the said article as under:

- Sociologist Emile Durkheim stated that any object could morph from the realm of profane to sacred if the community marks it as sacred.
- Religion as a social construct is ephemeral. It transforms as societies evolve. It is liquid, in that it takes the shape of the doctrine of the society it breathes in.

These two observations have a lot of meaning from the point of view of general understanding of religion and practice of religion. As per that understanding, a family is the nucleus of religion and community is the unit on which religion survives. One gets into a religion by virtue of one's birth in a family practising that religion. Group of families for their survival instinct and social affinity make community which perpetuates religion by faith and practice.

How has Sri Sri Thakur dealt with this issue? Is religion a social issue or a divine issue? What it means to say that a person is religious?

First point of clarity must be made that Sri Sri Thakur has not approved the meaning of religion as per above understanding and practice, as it is generally prevalent in the society. Though it is a reality that the humanity is grouped into some organized forms of religion, on certain historical basis; still Sri Sri Thakur did not admit the sense of distinction, separation and divisiveness prevalent amongst those. He denied the existence of different religions by saying that there is nothing like Hindu *dharma*, Islam *dharma* and Christian *dharma*. He categorically denied the communal and sectarian view of *dharma*. He dismissed the conventional concept of *dharma* and said *dharma* is one, god is one, prophets are same.

In the above paragraph there is an implicit meaning that religion is the English word for *dharma*. In common parlance, both *dharma* and religion are used synonymously. But in a puritan and refined level of understanding religion and *dharma* are different. Sri Sri Thakur then goes on to say a lot of things about *dharma* and its linkage with life and God. That is another part, which we are not elaborating further in this essay.

The question we are asking is how and in which way Sri Sri Thakur has handled religion in its conventional sense? How to maintain the relationships amongst people of various faiths and religious orders who are operating world over in organized and exclusive fashion? And unfortunate reality is that many of these religious groups with allegiance to different forms of god are engaged in internecine conflict, sometimes scaled up to the proportion of war.

In my view, Sri Sri Thakur has remained out of this issue. Thereby, by implication, he has perhaps allowed the *status quo* in the sense of conventional social understanding and practice to continue. More particularly, he has not hinted, not even obliquely, to dismantle the existing and on-going religious order.

He did not do anything that would encourage a person to switch or shift one's religious affiliation. He said, 'I am not in favour of conversion; I am for convergence'.

This means, the practice of religion, dictated by communal, social and political compulsions will continue the way it is happening. One of the reasons perhaps is that forces engineering this dynamics are not strictly in the realm of religion. The forces only tangentially draw their reference from a particular religion or faith, largely from the distorted, worn out and timed out version.

Sri Sri Thakur however attempted to bring out a new order in the domain of religion. He did that at the level of concept, linking religion to life, science, rationality and God.

Having done that, Sri Sri Thakur has brought a factor into the concept of 'dharma', which centers on contemporary prophet. Therefore, he has shifted the focus from religion as in practice (the ism, the view point) to the personality who is the originator of the religion (the contemporary prophet).

While doing this, he has avoided any inter-religious conflict. He has very unequivocally said, conflict between religions would tantamount to denying the identity of all the past prophets as God. He further meant to say, a true devotee or preacher of any religion cannot subject himself to be preyed by evil, which is responsible for all conflicts and animosity amongst religions.

The focus is on 'Ideal', the origin of all religions. Religion as a social construct has undergone changes. It is bound to take place. But the focus on 'Ideal' keeps the practice of religion logged onto its spirit.

Any religious view or movement has to have dynamism. In Sri Sri Thakur's words, there is a 'divine' part and there is a 'discrete' part. The divine part is eternal, unchangeable. The discrete part is what gets altered to suit the credo of the evolving thought, life style and societal norms. By saying this, Sri Sri Thakur has kept his ideology (which is a way of thinking and living) open for adoption and adaptation. Otherwise, the ideology runs the inherent danger of being obsolete and obstructive.

The protagonists of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology will perhaps do well to take the following into consideration while steering Sri Sri Thakur's movement, either locally or at large group level.

- Do not attempt to alter the existing religious order, however, degenerated or imperfect it might have been.
- Understand, practice and propagate Sri Sri Thakur, the ideal and his ideology. This will create a new social order. The dimension and force of that order depends upon many factors, which can be dealt in another article.

- Establish Sri Sri Thakur as the contemporary prophet; never attempt to create a new form of ism or organized religion on the basis of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology.
- Adore and appreciate all past prophets. Go to the root and spirit of their ideology. Observe and bring out the similarities and unity amongst them. Therefore, bring about more and more of inter-religious dialogue, interaction and closeness.
- While following Sri Sri Thakur, keep the persona of Sri Sri Thakur live. Keep both the ideal and ideology together. Never give room for any kind of divorce between the two. a) attachment on the ideal, and b) adherence to the ideology, are two concomitant variables.
- Keep the faith always filtered by logic and science. Do not allow ritual to take precedence over the spirit of ideology. That will happen if Sri Sri Thakur's literature is cultivated.

29th August 2014, *Ganesh Chaturthi*

Forty one

Sri Sri Thakur is seen through Life
Make Sri Sri Thakur inseparable in your life

Sri Sri Thakur is perhaps best known through the hard way of living the life. The depth and complexity of life is the best measure to know Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur's purpose was to make every one purposeful in their daily life. Life may be hard or rosy; may be grueling or swelling; may be rolling on rock or flying on cloud; Sri Sri Thakur remains the companion of life.

We Indians are aware about river Ganga. It is a massive natural phenomenon. It has very long and winding course, originating from the snow clad peaks of Himalayas, passing through the plains of north India and courting sea in the Bay of Bengal. Our awareness about Ganga springs from our knowledge about geography and ecology. We are also generally aware about the role river Ganga played in shaping Indian culture and civilization since ancient time. River Ganga for its perennial nature also contributes to navigation and economic activities. People from diverse fields of interest know about Ganga from the point of view of their specialization. This awareness is intellectual, scientific and has many other bases.

For some people, however, river Ganga carries a different kind of affiliation. Those who live on the bank of river Ganga and are linked to the river for some basic necessities, may be related to their livelihood or otherwise, have a different kind of feelings with the river. Ganga is part of their life and living. They are connected with the river in a way that can hardly be dispensed with.

I see a striking analogy with respect to affinity with river Ganga and that for Sri Sri Thakur by various sections of people in the society.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra was a manifestation of nature, as much as a river is. He bore huge personality and was engaged with immense activities which touched the life of innumerable people. He was originator of a philosophy which has striking relevance with life, society and human civilization. He created an ideological movement which is said to be the precursor of a new era for the human civilization.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra meant different to different people. His identity was in fact mystically myriad, even on a human and rational plane. Commonly observed fact was that Sri Sri Thakur was a protector and benefactor to many. Extension of this fact is that He was gracious to the extreme and His grace made difference in the lives of many.

Today, public awareness about Sri Sri Thakur has features, perhaps, akin to the awareness about Ganga. People have different kind of awareness about Sri Sri Thakur. The difference of awareness can be attributed to many factors. People generally know him as one amongst the pantheon of god men that this country is blessed with. Significant point for the devotees to observe is that mere awareness about Sri Sri Thakur is not enough. Sri Sri Thakur has to be lived in or to be lived with. Some devotees of Sri Sri Thakur have intellectual appreciation of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology. Some are highly emotional and devotional. Some are energetic and are engaged with missionary activities of Sri Sri Thakur. Some are part of organizational activities and constitute the cadre in the formal satsang organization. Significant point to raise is whether and how much they live with Sri Sri Thakur. Real Thakur stays in life, much less in consciousness and the least in awareness.

Sri Sri Thakur is perhaps best known through the hard way of living the life. The depth and complexity of life is the best measure to know Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur's purpose was to make every one purposeful in their daily life. Life may be hard or rosy; may be grueling or swelling; may be rolling on rock or flying on cloud; Sri Sri Thakur remains the companion of life.

Having said above, we encounter many puzzles. Puzzle basically springs from our own limitations. Limitations of perception and of understanding are natural to each one of us. Life and Sri Sri Thakur tend to push us beyond our limitations. And when we experience life outside the zone of our limitations, what come around is a bundle of puzzles, riddles and contractions and so on. And amidst all the chaos and turmoil of life, outside the zone of comfort, we see Sri Sri Thakur.

Life for each one of us is very personal, subjective and unique. Sri Sri Thakur also comes to us on a very intimate plane. Therefore, the subjectivity with regard to perception about Sri Sri Thakur can hardly be over emphasized. Like God is unique, each of his creation is also unique. That uniqueness gets eroded when we begin to compare the life of one with that of another.

Being with Sri Sri Thakur would therefore mean following the principles of Sri Sri Thakur in one's life. Life, Sri Sri Thakur and His ideology are the triangle which constitutes the field for us to cultivate on. On this field, experiencing Sri Sri Thakur and experiencing life are supplementary and reinforcing to each other.

Forty two

Sri Sri Thakur Made Beginning where Doubts End

Science and Spirituality Converge at 'Being and Becoming'

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra made advances in the field of enquiry, knowledge pertaining to the art and science of living. His ideology is a goldmine of theories on various areas of human pursuit. These are known as ideology, not as theories, as His ideas have more things to put to practice and experience and less to experiment. Most of what He has articulated in thought and words are experimented truths, *testa maxims*, axioms.

A profound write-up in today's 'Speaking Tree' weekly edition of 'Times of India' made a thought provoking reading, which I am quoting here in full for two reasons: a) readers must go through this write-up as ready reference to appreciate the point that I am making; b) the Time's article is so beautifully written, it must come to larger viewership; as the article captures and sums up the latest thought on the subject. No wonder that the writer is Mr. Jug Suraiya, who needs no introduction to the readers of Times of India and to others as well, who read contemporary English literature. Full compliments are paid to the author and to the 'Speaking Tree' weekly edition of 'Times of India', for reproducing the full article, as a prelude to my writing. Objective my writing is to bring out the logic, theory and philosophy of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra on the topics brought out by Mr. Jug Suraiya in the Times.

Quote

Would Pope Francis, the current pontiff who heads the Roman Catholic Church, been burnt at the stake as a heretic had he lived at the time of the Spanish Inquisition? Quite likely. The Inquisition tortured Galileo to force him to recant his 'heretical' view that the Earth revolved around the Sun, instead of the other way round.

Now five hundred years later, two scientific theories with even more challenging implications have been given a clean chit by Pope Francis: The Big Bang creation of the universe, and the Darwinian evolution of all species, including humans. Speaking at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Pope Francis has been quoted as saying, "When we read about creation in Genesis, we ran the risk of imagining God as a magician with a magic wand who is able to do everything. But this is not so." The Pope's remarks would have created even more of a stir than they have if they hadn't come in the wake of similar concessions made to these scientific theories by the pontiff's predecessors, like Benedict XVI, Pope Pius XII and John Paul II.

However, the rider added by Pope Francis that far from eliminating the need for a Creator, both the Big Bang theory as well as that of evolution 'require' a Supreme Being underscores the fundamental difference between the foundation of all religion, not just Roman Catholicism, and the foundation of science.

All organized religion is based on the doctrine of dogma; all scientific enquiry is based on what JBS Haldane called the 'duty of doubt'.

It is the duty of all those who profess to be scientists to call into doubt the current stage of knowledge, including that brought to light by their own research. In true science, there is no 'proven fact', incredibly cast in stone for all time; there are only hypotheses which have yet to be proved false.

The diametric opposite of doubt is the blind faith of dogma, which is the basis of religious belief. For the believer, doubt is not a virtue but a weakness, a disease which has to be cured. Dogma and doubt represent the two sides of a profound and seemingly unbridgeable chasm. Or is it unbridgeable?

Arguing that the overriding hegemony of scientific rationality had led to a spiritual deformity in western civilization with its mechanistic and soulless interpretation of the cosmos and of ourselves, Carl Jung sought to 're-saclarise' the world by exploring what he called the 'Collective Unconscious' that connected us to each other and to all other beings in the universe.

Jung's collective unconscious is no different from what a spiritualist might call cosmic consciousness, a state of being which can be attained through the practice of meditation, without recourse to priests, religion or even belief in God.

Many of today's neo-atheists who have launched an all-out crusade against religion, such as the neuroscientist Sam Harris, are advocates of spiritual disciplines like meditation and other exercises which help us overcome our ego-blinkered view of the world and make us realize our oneness with the universe.

Such oneness goes beyond all illusory opposites, including such seeming opposites as religion and science, dogma and doubt.

Unquote

The above quoted article titled 'Between Dogma and Doubt', attempts to make the following points:

1. The article attempts to bring home a point that religion and science are no poles apart. The view that maintains that religion and science have different domain perhaps thrives on illusion.
2. A significant observation of this article is that religion thrives on dogma and science leads on doubts and there seemingly is nothing much wrong in this.
3. The article can be said to make a case for a sound meeting point between religion and science. The cogency of the arguments makes us to believe that both religious leaders and protagonists of science are converging towards oneness, which is quest for truth.

These three points, looking from the perspective of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology, can be made a little more refined. This is the objective this article.

Point 1

The debate on righteousness between religion and science, both pulling away from each other, is a dated one, though still continuing. It is no more confined to having faith on religion or not. Those who repose faith on religion do also carry scientific outlook. Today, no one is willing to give room to blind faith. This

debate as of now perhaps is confined to dilemma at personal level. And at collective level, it is confined to academic forums.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, for one, never supported anything unscientific. While arguing the case for science, point to consider is that how much scientific we are in terms of our knowledge and behavior? How robust and far sighted is our scientific pursuit? What in real parlance we call science is something that we know and label as science. There is science beyond our zone of knowledge, which may come to us as unscientific. That has been the cause for conflict in all ages. It is, in reality, the conflict between the zone of knowledge and that of ignorance.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's area of scientific pursuit essentially remained at experiential science, application oriented science and inventions for the benefit of humankind. Actually, the area is very vast.

Sri Sri Thakur's ideological stance makes few points clear. Any so called religious view must have sanction of science. In a situation of conflict between science and religion on any particular issue, the view of science would prevail. If there is a view of religion that cannot have sanction of science, which could be either experiential or extra-sensory for few, then science has to make stride to reach up to that. And religion, on its part, also has to make effort to bring up its realizations to general, if not universal, perception and experience. So there is challenge for both religion and science to extend the horizon of knowledge and experience. This is an ongoing process, leading to continuous evolution.

However, at an intermediate level of thought and practice, it is necessary for religious leaders to carry science besides them. In the absence of that, religion in the form of mass appeal can create hysteria, which may be harmful, if it is not rational. That is where spirituality comes to the rescue of religion. Spirituality is generally considered to be religious practice at a higher level of consciousness.

With regard to mass appeal, religion, as contrast to science, has some advantages. Here Sri Sri Thakur has provided a fresh approach. He says, do not challenge your religious affiliation, which of course comes with the family which you are born in. While you maintain allegiance to that form of religion, you must adhere to the contemporary prophet. By following the dicta and ideology of the contemporary prophet, you are not subjecting yourself to conversion, as the contemporary prophet is the renewed version of all the past prophets, including the one who is supposedly the originator of your religion. Second point is, keep your objective clear, which is 'being and becoming' of your existence, that circumscribes your family and surrounding. Prophet contemporary is the ideal to follow and to fall back upon. The approach is not only scientific; it may appear to be heretic to some; it is revolutionary and not dogmatic. It has its root on faith on the ideal, at a personal level and gets morphed into love for the humanity, propelled by enlightened self interest, under a common ideological platform.

<u>Point 2</u>

Organized and regimented religion supposedly works well for the purpose of maintaining discipline, execution and social order. Most of the religious orders have taken this path for spreading their wings, undoubtedly being inspired by the noble and revolutionary vision of their founder (s) or protagonist (s). Organized and regimented religious orders find large acceptance amongst the followers. An average follower is a believer, loyal and unidirectional person, for whom religion and order are more or less synonymous. This has generally been the experience in the most formative phase of religious movements.

Organized and regimented religious order shows its negative face when the order gets divorced from the purity of the original founder, the Ideal. This drift usually happens with the noble intention of aggressively pursuing to meet the objective (the end), disregarding the process (means). Secondly, at this phase, the

rein of leadership is taken over by ambitious people, who at sometime in their personal life-curve become unmindful of the original founder and miss the distinction between Ideal and ideology. Another associated feature of this form in this phase is that some sane elements amongst the governing elites are sidelined and the latter prefer to remain silent spectator and mute observer. Their sense of commitment to the Ideal gets fatigued and eclipsed, may be temporarily, by their love for peace and status quo. It is observed in the history that exceptional and committed devotees or followers of the Ideal raise dissenting voices, but they get outnumbered by majority; because majority are peace loving, loyal and status-quoists.

In its extreme form, the regimentation can cause persecution to the lone dissenters. That is what happened to persons like Galileo and Aristotle. History is replete with such unfortunate instances.

Sri Sri Thakur was undoubtedly aware of this history and the likely scenario of his movement sliding into that low. He has provided safeguards. Firstly, he has guarded each individual devotee to know what true devotion is; what true religion is and what roles these play in the life of the devotee. What do you expect from being a devotee? And what are the symptoms of a counterfeit devotion. What are the symptoms and causes of a person becoming a spurious devotee? He has urged and cautioned devotees not to fall into the trap of conventional and fictitious devotion and forms of ritual. He has gone to the extent of identifying where from these tendency gets triggered in the mind of a devotee and in the collective formations of the devotees. He has clearly differentiated for his devotes, where, for example, discipline ends and bondage begins. He has clearly identified for his devotees, where, politeness ends and meekness begins. What are the tests to distinguish between firmness of a devotee and ego? In our call for obedience, how to heed the signals coming from intelligence, judgment and rationality? How does one maintain respectable distance from others? There is 'n' number of sign posts and caution notices that Sri Sri Thakur has built into the domain of individual practitioners of his ideology. The expected result is that negativity would not get scope to enter at individual level and individual devotee would not support any such negative move coming from ambitious elite of the religious formation.

In the next stage, moving from individual to collectivity, Sri Sri Thakur has provided enough safeguards against organizations getting deviated from the ideology and the Ideal. The first point of deterrence is that a devote of Sri Sri Thakur gets indoctrinated to Sri Sri Thakur and not necessarily get inducted into an organization, whatever may be the level: local, national or international. A devotee of Sri Sri Thakur of course needs company of other devotees; that is called *satsang*. But that accompaniment does not mandatorily, either by suggestion or by implication, become association with any organization. That rules out organizational influence in spiritual activities of a person. A person is guided by Sri Sri Thakur in a spiritual sense and by His literature for detailed guidance. A devotee is also free to keep company of any brother-in-faith. He is neither inhibited from nor prescribed for joining any organization or association for his self development.

The second point of deterrence against organization getting deviated from Sri Sri Thakur's ideological purity is the guidelines that Sri Sri Thakur has provided. For Sri Sri Thakur, any form of organization, with the explicit purpose for working for His mission, must keep the service to people, within the framework of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, as the objective. Organization has power; it has a definite role; but it is meant to serve the development (being and becoming), both at individual and at collective level. By that logic, organization is a means; it cannot be an end in itself.

The leaders in the organization are supposed to be persons of high popular acceptance; capable of leading the people and manage the affairs. Sri Sri Thakur has provided high and exacting standards for the leaders. Essentially, leaders should be able to fulfill the need of people as Sri Sri Thakur has defined. Few leadership criteria standout, such as: a) dedicated to Sri Sri Thakur's cause, b) being service oriented, and c) least aspiration for power, pelf and position. It is for people to accept or reject the leader.

Wherever there is attempt, implicit or otherwise, to thrust the leadership by manipulation, one has to test the leadership by Sri Sri Thakur's standards. The key of test and acceptance of the leadership remains in the hands of people. Leaders can be chosen democratically by the members or by hereditary process. Leaders will have a council of advisers constituted from lead devotees.

Testimony of Sri Sri Thakur's above quoted measures, and many more not touched upon here, is that after 45 years of Sri Sri Thakur's sad demise, despite turmoil in the organizational affairs in Sri Sri Thakur's movement, no organization today holds undisputed and universally accepted obedience over all the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur. The regimentation has not happened and the efforts to do so by some quarters at various times have been foiled.

Point no. 3

Today science is progressing on its own way, riding on the spirit of enquiry and supported by innovative genius, corporate mobilization to commercialize the innovation and making those popular on a worldwide scale. Religious groups are also carrying out their mission of finding peace, happiness and providing solution to miseries that man is increasingly been afflicted with. There is exchange and cross fertilization between these two forces. Both the camps are apparently driven by quest for progress, comfort and commerce. What is perhaps missing is focus on inner growth, love for the Lord and love for the fellow beings in the surrounding and cultivation of culture and environment.

The crux of the issue is to view culture in contemporary context; particularly keeping the existential issue and aspiration of the new generation in view. It is here Sri Sri Thakur's views on life and culture becomes relevant and pertinent. Cultivation of culture does not necessarily mean revival of the past alone, which is being seen at large today. Culture includes fine art, but not necessarily that alone. Culture is cultivation of science, taking body, mind, soul and society in totality. That exactly is what is provided by the ideological framework of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra.

Conclusion

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra made advances in the field of enquiry, knowledge pertaining to the art and science of living. His ideology is a goldmine of theories on various areas of human pursuit. These are known as ideology, not as theories, as His ideas have more things to put to practice and experience and less to experiment. Most of what He has articulated in thought and words are experimented truths, *testa maxims*, axioms. That however in no way means that what he has provided is the end of the world. No; there are many areas of human interest which needs further pursuit, more experimentation and intense suggestions, as life and time take us further on the curve of evolution and growth. The advances He has made and left behind are too deep and too far for us to tread as of now. We, as humanity, are just at the beginning of what He has bequeathed for us.

24th November 2014

Forty three

Buddhism in the Eyes of a Contemporary Devotee

Living Ideal Represents the Ideology

Today, Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is exactly same what Lord Buddha's ideology was at his (latter's) time. These ideologies are all fulfilling ideologies in the sense; these ideologies do not exclude the existing sects / opinions. These ideologies are progressive in the sense that there are elements and practices that can be adapted to situations and times (in future), keeping the essence of ideology and live-Ideal intact.

I came across a scholarly article on Buddhism in today's Times of India, the Speaking Tree column, 'Buddhism and Multicultural Religious Pluralism'. The learned author Ashok Vohra is a former professor of Philosophy in Delhi University. I was touched by the narration and the spirit of the article which attempted to bring out the uniqueness of Buddhism as distinct from other religions, and Hinduism in particular. While enjoying every thread of argument, I was reasoning with myself, what if a contemporary devotee of Lord Buddha would have reflected on the subject. I am juxtaposing the thought process of the author with the fabricated thought of a contemporary devotee in the remaining part of the article. Objective of this exercise is to see the thoughts in different light, without being subjective on anyone. Objective is to bring out subtle difference when same ideology is viewed by two minds.

History is witness to the fact that all ideologies undergo a process of metamorphosis in course of time. The sad fact is that most of the ideologies suffer erosion with respect to purity. The saddest part is that the distortion in ideology is mostly engineered by the so called practitioners of the ideology. One of the ways to keep any ideology free from distortion is to bring rationality and scientific logic into its practice and interpretation. This exercise is motivated by that kind of thought.

Writing of Mr. Ashok Vohra in 'Buddhism and Multicultural Religious Pluralism'	**Synonymous thoughts of a contemporary devotee of Lord Buddha**
Unlike Hinduism, Buddhism is a missionary religion. But unlike many other missionary religions, it is a tolerant religion.	Buddhism is a specific way of life with a mission. All religions, Buddhism no exception, admits other school of thoughts, yet seeks truth in a particular way. Mission of all religions remains more or less same.
Buddha realized that a claim to exclusivism by followers of different faiths would not be acceptable. He adopted inclusivism and argued for multiculturalism and religious pluralism in the society.	Buddha lived an ideology that fulfilled different faiths. Therefore following Buddha did not create conflict for followers of other religions. Claim to exclusivism to a particular school of thought is the creation of fanatic followers of the faiths. Buddha

The doctrine of religious pluralism is the all embracing perspective that upholds that one's own religion's perception of reality and the path of liberation advocated by it are as valid as those of other religions even if they may be opposed to one another. There is no hostility but hospitality towards all.	adopted inclusivism and allowed multiculturalism and religious pluralism in the society to stay. The doctrine of religious pluralism is the all embracing perspective that upholds that one's own religion's perception of reality and the path of liberation advocated by it are as valid as those of other religions even if they may be opposed to one another. There is no hostility but hospitality towards all.
Buddhism critically evaluated almost all the doctrines presented by Hinduism and also several tribal religions it came across. However the evaluation was done not with arrogance or authority and sense of superiority but was based on humility and reason.	Buddhism critically evaluated almost all the doctrines prevalent in the contemporary society. However the evaluation was done not with arrogance or authority and sense of superiority but was based on humility and reason. The evaluation attempted to bring out the unique identity of God and essential similarity present in all the religions, with a view to present the fulfilling nature of the ideology promoted by Buddha.
Buddha's sense of humility was based on the principle that no human being can know and understand everything. Only a bigot can claim that his knowledge is superior and ultimate and hold that the claims made by the others and other religions are totally false and untenable.	Buddha's sense of humility was based on the principle that deeper you go, still more remains to be seen and known. Prophet, the messenger of God, comes with the clue to knowledge and wisdom. For Him, knowledge and ignorance carries the similar shade. Human being remains on the path of knowing and becoming eternally. He who claims that his knowledge is superior and ultimate and hold that the claims made by the others and other religions are totally false, untenable and is short sighted.
According to the Buddha, "These sectarians, brethren, are blind and unseeing. They know not the real, they know not the unreal; they know not the truth, they know not the untruth. In such a state of ignorance do they dispute and quarrel." He illustrated these bigoted preachers with the parable of the blind men and the elephant. This principle underlies the source of tolerance in Buddhism.	According to the Buddha, "These sectarians, brethren, are blind and unseeing. They know not the real, they know not the unreal; they know not the truth, they know not the untruth. In such a state of ignorance do they dispute and quarrel." He illustrated these bigoted preachers with the parable of the blind men and the elephant. This principle underlies the source of progressiveness in Buddhism.
The Buddha denounced only phoney expositions by some Brahmins and fake traditions and practices.	Buddha gave meaning to tradition by contextualizing those. His ideology contained the essence of tradition. He made tradition scientific and progressive.
In different Nikayas - texts that held 'virtuous' Brahmins in esteem – he condemned the tendency of religious disputants to display their own doctrine and rubbish those of others - and encouraged gifts by Buddhists to non-Buddhists, and admitted the right of non-Buddhists to heaven.	In different Nikayas - texts that held 'virtuous' Brahmins in esteem – he condemned the tendency of religious disputants to display their own doctrine and rubbish those of others - and encouraged gifts by devotees to people in the surrounding, and admitted the right of all to heaven.
Wherever it is difficult to reconcile two opposite views and there is genuine disagreement between two religions, the Buddha argued that aggression is of no help. A continuous attempt at reconciliation in the light of one's experience alone and not hatred, would be of help.	Wherever it is difficult to reconcile two opposite views and there is genuine disagreement between two religions, the Buddha argued that aggression is of no help. A continuous attempt to identify the core of each religion and strengthening adherence to the own prophets as well past and present prophet

	would be of help.
The Buddha advocated a tolerant attitude by removing the ego attachment to one's own religious doctrines and practices. The ego attachment makes us wrongly believe that our religion, its principles and practices are absolute.	The Buddha advocated a loving and serviceable attitude by purely following one's own religious doctrines and practices. There are 'divine' and 'discreet' elements in all religious doctrines. Attachment on doctrines, bereft of attachment on the prophet, makes one wrongly believe that one's religion, its principles and practices are absolute.
The Buddha advised Buddhist monks to hold opinions but not cling to them. He says, "A man has a faith. If he says, 'this is my faith', so far he maintains truth. But by that he cannot proceed to the absolute conclusion. 'This alone is truth, and everything else is false.'	The Buddha advised monks to hold opinions on a subject after looking the subject from all points of view. Once faith on Ideal is established, cling to the ideology. He says, "A man has a faith. If he says, 'this is my faith', so far he maintains truth. But by that he cannot proceed to the absolute conclusion. 'This alone is truth, and everything else is false.'

Some basic premises for understanding Lord Buddha today, from our perception, are as follow:

Lord Buddha (563 BC – 483 BC) was the successor prophet to Lord Rama and Lord Krishna and preceded Lord Jesus (7-2 BC to 30 – 33 AD), Lord Muhammad (570 – 632), Sri Chaitanya (1486 – 1534), Sri Ramakrishna (1836 – 1886) and Thakur Anukul Chandra (1888 – 1969) in the lineage of incarnation.

Lord Buddha came to reform the past and present a future in consonance with the eternal principles of living and law of nature (that can be termed as *dharma*). He practiced, demonstrated and left behind a living ideology that came to be regarded as Buddhism as a sect in later years, mostly after his departure. But He never came to promote Buddhism as an exclusive religion. His mission was to embrace the whole humanity into a pure form of living and that is how he promoted inclusivism.

Today, Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is exactly same what Lord Buddha's ideology was at his (latter's) time. These ideologies are all fulfilling ideologies in the sense; these ideologies do not exclude the existing sects / opinions. These ideologies are progressive in the sense that there are elements and practices that can be adapted to situations and times (in future), keeping the essence of ideology and live-Ideal intact.

A significant yardstick of living ideology is that it respects past prophets and keeps alive the contemporary prophet, by practicing the principles. Ideology becomes obsolete, if practices are morphed into dogmas and the founder prophet is forgotten or replaced.

19th May 2015

Forty four

Death – Pre & Post

Let us not worry about death

This article in a sketchy way reflects Sri Sri Thakur's ideas on death and immortality. The article has three parts: part 'A' deals on pre-death experience; part 'B' on post death state and part 'C' on immortality.

Introduction

We all know that death is the end-state in life. It is the ultimate reality; inescapable. It is universal and non-discriminatory. It has its own logic, seemingly outside the control of the person concerned. We are also aware little bit of philosophical statement about death, primarily which came from *Bhagavat Gita*. It is said that death is a process of transition. During the process, the soul leaves behind the old and generally invalid body and gets into a different state. It is analogous to change of clothes, when the old clothes get dirty and torn. It is also said that soul is a substance, which is permanent; does not get annihilated by weapon, fire or water or wind and what you have. Therefore, death is something that one should not be afraid of. Rather, one is required to focus on life and be ready for death.

This is a well known commentary on death, which is logical and therefore fully accepted. But we feel, there is something more on death, which Sri Sri Thakur has reflected upon and this article elaborates his concept.

There is one school of thought, kind of rational and motivational, which attempts to keep you alert for death, saying that death can be imminent. Therefore, it is wise to be prepared to face it anytime and remain active to achieve whatever one wants to, before one gets caught in the terminal state.

There is another school of view which argues that contemplation on death represses man's advances towards vices. When Sri Sri Thakur was asked his view on this, he said; "While contemplation on death may help repress vicious complexes in man, but at the same time, it brings about an obsession for death. Then, man's lively psychological impulses like hope, enthusiasm, willpower and determination get attenuated, leading to advancement of the end. Man has to undertake focused and powerful effort for doing anything good and great. Those who are possessed by the syndrome of imminent fatal consequence, when face these hard challenges; they immediately raise a negative thought by saying, what is the use of all these? Where is the duration of life? Therefore, such people fail to master courage for noble work. They remain depressed and immobile. They tend to miss the joy of life. Everything comes to them couched in sorrow. A cloud of remorse and frustration remain overcast in their life. They contrive logic for averting reality. As they become weak and withdraw from reality; they induce timidity and fatigue in others as well. Such kind of repression is therefore not good. On the contrary, one should develop attachment for blissful existential flavor and that attachment would regulate the vicious complexes. The

flawed residues in man can be cleansed though conscientious analysis and refutation. Instead of that constructive path, why should we take the path of fatal obsession, leading to obnoxious turmoil in life?"(*Alochana Prasange* Vol V, date 15.10.1943)

Sri Sri Thakur glorified life and waged war against any kind of devaluation, destruction and diminution of life and perhaps by that logic, he never rationalized death. He was all for life and liveliness. His celebrated blessing, 'Do never die, nor cause death, but resist death to death' is something revolutionary.

A few salient concepts that Sri Sri Thakur upheld are: 'every existence craves for life'. 'The inner hankering of creation is to be increasingly richer in the wealth of life.' 'External existence is the cry of life.' (*Alochana Prasange*, Vol. X, date 28. 01. 1948) By saying these statements, Sri Sri Thakur has brought out the original virtue and aspiration of life.

Part- A: Pre-Death

How to make death a good experience? Is there a technique for a pleasant retreat? In course of discussion, Sri Sri Thakur said, 'I get surprised when I hear the death-time experience of good devotees. Many devotees just relapse into eternal sleep on the lap of supreme father, while rhyming the holy name or listening to the holy name. It is not at all easy to place mind at that lofty state at the moment of collapsing. It indicates that by the grace of the Lord, work has progressed so far in this life itself.' (*Alochana Prasange*, Vol. IV, page 172)

Kesto da – Sri Ramakrishna dev said, 'Some remember even *panch photon* (a commonly used alloyed spice in Bengali cooking) at the time of death'.

Sri Sri Thakur – if the *panch photon* contains Thakur, then that can take the soul up.

Pandit da – Narayan was the name of his son. And Ajaamil achieved salvation by calling his son at the time of death.

Sri Sri Thakur – That is why that kind of name is given.

(*Alochana Prasange*, Vol. 8, pp. 101)

Sushila ma – How does one know that one had a good death?

Sri Sri Thakur – Whatever things one keeps alive in mind while leaving, he lands up in that consequence.

Sushila ma – Some people suffer a lot.

Sri Sri Thakur – That does not help to determine anything. May be someone is struggling on the strength of his vitality. Someone else may not have that; his end may come in short time. That is the difference.

(*Alochana Prasange*, Vol. 15, pp. 175)

Sri Sri Thakur, in course of discussion said, 'Complexes are there; this body is of complexes only. Every cell has ectoplasmic state. These ectoplasmic cells remain intact even after death. That is called *chinmay deha* (body in consciousness) and *bhava deha* (body in feelings). Complexes remain embedded even in those states and give shape to the next birth. At the time of death comes a pitch dark, followed by dazzling light and thunderous clang. Everything shatters and gets disconnected by the numbing impact of this. He who can stand at this point, his continuity of consciousness remains intact. Otherwise, it gets disrupted. One can retain consciousness if only one maintains deep attachment on the Lord (*Ista*). Even

during lifetime, we see that we remain in self control and resolute on the face of disease, grief, sorrows, destitution, offence, despair, adversity, clash with surroundings and upheaval of complexes, if we have untottering devotion on the Lord. Otherwise, our intelligence, conscience, consciousness and morality etc get washed away. I therefore feel that according to the degree of balance we maintain on the face of adversity in real life, our adherence on the Lord gets strengthened and the probability of memory retaining consciousness remains high. It then becomes possible to attain immortality in physical sense and in the sense of retaining consciousness with memory of the past lives. I don't think it is very hard to attain the memory retaining consciousness. First step for this is to keep the memory of Lord uninterrupted in life. (*Alochana Prasange*, Vol. XI, date 18. 03. 1948)

Part – B: Post-Death

Panchanan da asked, 'Does the soul carry sense of feelings after death and before re-birth?'

Sri Sri Thakur - yes, it does.

Kesto da – One need to have brain and senses to have the feelings. But at that state (after death), one does not have those.

Sri Sri Thakur – One exists in subtle form; and within that form everything exists in subtle ways. Every state has a form.

(*Alochana Prasange*. Vol. VI, page 134)

By saying subtle form in the above conversation, Sri Sri Thakur perhaps meant that existence of soul is there in 'ethereal form'. Elsewhere, Sri Sri Thakur has used 'ectoplasmic body' to communicate the same meaning.

Kesto da – Death is certain and inevitable.

Sri Sri Thakur – What has been inevitable so far, is there any certainty that the same will remain inevitable for all the time? Even though death is inevitable; it is certainly not what we want. And why should we reflect on something and invite it in our life which we do not like to have?

(*Alochana Prasange*, Vol VII, page 12)

The above observation of Sri Sri Thakur remains mystery to me till date. One is not sure what did Sri Sri Thakur want to say. Today, one wishes, He should have been probed further on this issue. Experiments if any were to be done should have been done when He was around. The literal meaning that we derive are: a) He has challenged the inevitability of death. b) He has hinted that sometime in future, death may not be inevitable. C) He has created a rebellious thought within us to fight against death.

Kesto da – One renowned scientist observed, everything in the world is wave.

Sri Sri Thakur – Did I say this today? I have said this long back. Things get dispersed unless one is concentric and immersed in holy name. The soul after death resides in the open expanse of the universe, in the midst of elements of nature, without any pedestal. That is a state of utter pain.

Kesto da – If that state can rest on *Ista* (the Lord) instead in open sky, then is it Okay?

Sri Sri Thakur – Yes, the thought with which one expires, that becomes tiny wave. If one goes with the all embracing thoughts of *Ista* (beloved lord), then the feelings and complexes get shaped by those thoughts.

Kesto da – How does one feel after demise, without body?

Sri Sri Thakur – Same way as in dream?

Kesto da – In case of dream, the body is there.

Sri Sri Thakur – If you can dream without body!

Kesto da – is it possible?

Sri Sri Thakur – Yes; at that time, that tiny wave is the soul. Everything remains configured in that in its own ways. You tend to get gross feelings in gross manifest form and you get fine feelings in subtle form.

(*Alochana Prasange*, Vol. 14, pp. 95)

Part – C: Immortality

Kesto da – You have spoken to exterminate death. Is it within the realm of possibility?

Sri Sri Thakur – if we do whatever is required for not dying; then it is possible to a large extent. If one carries memory of so many previous births, then it is like triumph over death in a way.

(*Alochana Prasange*, Vol. 17, pp. 12)

Sri Sri Thakur made a wonderful observation while discussing with an American lady on 05.02.1948 (*Alochana Prasange* Vol. 10) “Any death is perhaps against the will of God. The will of *satan* may be active there. The opposite thing of God is death. God is always life and light.”

That devotee perhaps attempted to explain death by saying, ‘death means change of vessel or vehicle’.

Sri Sri Thakur said, “Change can be by various ways; but why cessation of conscious memory? Whatever might happen after death, but we require having continuity of conscious memory. Then man can know that he is carrying a stream of life, cutting across several cycles of life and birth. His experience and knowledge get accumulated. Otherwise, if every cycle of birth and death becomes a discrete life, then time and energy gets wasted during the course of evolution. I say, let death die; we are children of immortality; why should we get eclipsed by mortality? If go we must, then minimum that we need to retain is conscious memory.”

Conclusion

These are few observations and reflections of Sri Sri Thakur on death. These are not exhaustive. There are some more places in literature, where we need to refer to get a complete conceptual framework on the subject. That remains a subject for future research.

30th June 2015

Forty five

The Forbidden Trio

Sri Sri Thakur Leads Freedom

There is no difference between two prophets. All the prophets descend from the same source. They carry the message of love and life. All the prophets of the past come converged and awakened in that of the present. Sri Sr Thakur never supported conversion, under any pretext. Whoever causes harm to people, even by the name of God and religion, are epitome of evil, and therefore, far away from God. Let us be free from the scourge of communalism, religious rivalry and hatred.

In a strikingly candid tone, Sri Sri Thakur has identified three things which surprise God. (*Dhruti Bidhayana, Vol. I, vani no. 186, page 227, 2nd Edition, November 1986*) These three acts, which people, individually and collectively indulge in, make God to wonder. These are blatantly unnatural, absurd and illogical; yet continue to remain in currency.

- The first point of wonder is when people want to equalize all man, knowing well that each person has individual distinctiveness.

- Second instance that makes God wonder is when people create differences amongst religions, knowing that religion is the stay of God and God is one and unique.

- God again wonders to see people who reduce love for the God to the level of transaction. In this case, people end up tempting God, instead of engaging God with love and regulating oneself accordingly.

To those of us who are familiar with the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, each of these above acts is known to be unwanted, if not counterproductive. We see a robust logic behind each of these view points. Still there is a general tendency to stick to those forbidden acts by some pretence and convoluted logic. These acts are played out, less out of ignorance and more out of indulgence. Somehow, these acts have earned legitimacy out of convention and, at times, out of scriptural inscription. Sri Sri Thakur however, has put things in correct perspective by clearly saying what is right and what is wrong.

The first point brings out the uniqueness that each person holds out and proclaims to the world outside. This appears to be a truism and does not require much intelligence to comprehend. But the operative part of this statement, as takes shape and comes out in belief and behavior of a person, let us know the depth at which this point is assimilated by the person. A common test of this understanding is to raise questions like: how do I place myself in the group in which I operate? Do I quickly place myself in comparison with others and form an image of myself? How many of us feel secured and be assertive when faced with a

situation of being singled out, may be for committing a strange acts of commission or omission? How many of us rate others and deal with others, assessing them on the scale of stereotypes? There are innumerable situations, when we feel comfortable to observe similarities; but feel discomfort to observe and accept dissimilarity amongst people or types. All these bring out that the uniqueness of each person, which perhaps not has gone well deep down our cognitive perception; though we pretend to see merit in the viewpoint. This highlights one more point of our behavioral system; which reinforces the fact that to know anything is one thing; assimilating that into our being so as to impact our psyche and nerves is another things. Sri Sri Thakur, in his ideological framework has put some psycho-spiritual pursuits which shape up our thought and action in sync with our appreciation. The trick is to translate ideology to belief and further to thought, action, behavior and ultimately getting formed into instinct.

Making issues out of difference in religions has gone so much deep into our social milieu that it has become now a hard nut to crack. There are studies which go to suggest that people's affiliation to religion and spirituality have strengthened, despite the ethos of modernization and scientific temper engulfing the mass psyche. People by and large repose faith in God for the purpose of leading a happy and prosperous life. Each individual and each family adhere to principles of morality, ethics, self improvement and peaceful living in the society. Nobody generally would like to face conflict and animosity arising out of differences between religions. The differences amongst communities on line of religious affiliation are a social reality, deeply entrenched in some pockets and yet getting thin and evaporated at some other places. The ill effects of religious differences largely arise out of wanton mobilization of passion whipped up by some motivated leaders. Factors related to existential crisis like Ignorance, poverty and suffering of people play blindfold on the minds of people. Sri Sri Thakur has provided solution to all these. Sri Sri Thakur says, irrespective of the religion to which you are affiliated; follow the principles of life and growth, adhering to the scientific dictates of the current prophet. There is no difference between two prophets. All the prophets descend from the same source. They carry the message of love and life. All the prophets of the past come converged and awakened in that of the present. Sri Sr Thakur never supported conversion, under any pretext. Whoever causes harm to people, even by the name of God and religion, are epitome of evil, and therefore, far away from God. Let us be free from the scourge of communalism, religious rivalry and hatred. Sri Sri Thakur provides the path to freedom from religious animosity.

The third point apparently has two misplaced genesis. Firstly, many of us do not know how to use God (Sri Sri Thakur for us), given the fact that He is favorably disposed towards us. How to use His grace, knowing that His grace is there? At times, we just seek fulfillment of our desires and He is used as the proverbial *kalpabriksha*. Secondly, some people use Him for satisfaction of their base instincts, like craving for wealth and glory, deliberately. Knowingly and carefully, they use God as a commodity for trading. As if that is not enough, they indulge into extremes of it to the extent that His image and ideology get distorted. Both the above acts are matter of regret, as these hinder the real progress of the person or institution concerned.

Coming from Sri Sri Thakur, we must carefully and seriously avoid committing these three acts; acts that cause God to grief.

21st August 2015

Forty six

Life in Sri Sri Thakur's View

Sri Sri Thakur wanted a Successful, colorful and healthy life

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra wishes a life of devotion, full of energy, urge for activity, amidst surroundings. Life is a journey of unending possibilities. Life is to be loved and existence of all types needs to be cultivated. Life has a rhythm, in consonance with nature, which makes it enjoyable.

Introduction

LIFE: this four letter word speaks for everything on earth. This very word captures the essence of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology and mission. Life has immense dimensions, depth and décor. Life on its reality show has both universal expanse and individual domain.

Enough research must have been conducted on life, in view of its significance, depth and universal applicability. However, little is known about Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's views on life. Sri Sri Thakur's literature in Bengali language carrying His ideological view is indeed vast and voluminous. If we have to single out one topic around which Sri Sri Thakur's literature revolves, that is 'life'. Significantly enough, life is very dear to Sri Sri Thakur. In many different ways, Sri Sri Thakur has drawn our attention to life.

In this paper, we have attempted to review what Sri Sri Thakur has observed on life. In *Anusruti*, volume V, (Bengali, 1962) there is a chapter जीवनबाद, meaning 'regarding life' or 'tenor of life'. That is one out of 39 chapters in the book. Each chapter is a classification of Sri Sri Thakur's lyrical sayings on a particular topic. The chapter on life has 87 lyrics, running into 21 pages. In *Anusruti*, volume VI, (Bengali, 1964) there is a chapter on the same topic. That is one out of 20 chapters in the book. The chapter on life has 87 lyrics, running into 22 pages.

Attempt has been made in this paper to translate Sri Sri Thakur's reflection on life with a view to bring it to the notice of non Bengali readers. The original sayings of Sri Sri Thakur in Bengali are in the form of lyric stanzas, which are not necessarily in thematic sequence. In this paper, Sri Sri Thakur's reflections on life are presented under certain headings. Homogenous thoughts and issues are put together to bring focus on each aspect.

In this paper, texts within single invited comma ('xxx') are translation and texts within double invited comma ("xxx") are quotations. Source has been cited after every significant translation with a view to enable readers to refer back to the original text for verification, further research and interpretation.

The paper is structured in two parts: Part I presents some building blocks on the subject. Those conceptual blocks are fundamental in understanding Sri Sri Thakur's view on life. These are covered as reflections on: a) life, b) being, c) *dharma* and d) attachment on the Lord. Those concepts are frequently referred to in the second part.

Part II presents Sri Sri Thakur's views on life, classified under two headings: a) tenor of life and b) success in life.

Part I

Reflection on life

'The symptom of life is walking on the path of disciplined activity.' (VI.47)

Life pervades all around. We come across expression of life everywhere. 'To remain alive is an act of fulfillment. That fulfillment does not come, if one is not alive. That is why to remain alive and be fulfilled is a prime principle.' (V.24) Ironically enough nobody lives forever. For Sri Sri Thakur, death is a painful affair, though inevitable. Sri Sri Thakur has posed a question: can we preserve and maintain life giving forces for eternity? (V.9) 'The world is moving in the speed of light, notwithstanding creation and destruction. Why can't we have so much of urge and energy to usher in life of immortality?' (V.27) 'The supreme task is to prevent death. Urge for action with love, which can strike blast in heaven (the world of sound vibration), can cause that (prevention of death).' (VI.68) 'Life's days inevitably come to an end; it undergoes a painful metamorphosis. Try to relieve and recover life, if you can, making it perpetual and progressive.' (VI.71)

Life is so much precious that millions of wealth does not stand in comparison with that. (V.11) For Sri Sri Thakur, life comes first and prosperity follows.

When life comes under threat, violence goes out; like snake, tiger and frog stay together in situation of flood. (V.33) 'Even wild animals get to see reason when their existence comes under threat. They submit to humbleness and adopt greatness with positive intention.' (V.34)

Sri Sri Thakur wants us to pursue and cultivate few things in life; a) conducts which uphold life and b) feeling pain at someone else's grief. Life has least meaning, in the absence of these two. (V.13)

'As one grows in age, one's discriminating memory gets reduced gradually. The habits formed out of long practice then cause the dominating influence in firming up views.' (V.25)

'Life is not a blank; nor is without meaning. Life gets colored depending on which mould we cast life in.' (V.26) 'You are traveler of an unending path; attachment for your life is unending too. Let attachment for your existence is exalted with a surfeit of spontaneity.' (VI.62)

Sri Sri Thakur has put life's journey on the path of activities analogous to birds' search for food. Like birds roam here and there, search food and take that much they want, wherever they get their food. Sri Sri Thakur wants us to move on the vehicle of *dhruti* around the desirables and use those to the extent of our need. (V.37)

'Stones are animate objects; soil and water also are endowed with life. It is God's gift that their existence is maintained.' (VI.59)

Reflection on 'being' (human spirit)

सत्ता, (*satta*) a Sanskrit vocabulary must be understood as it plays a significant word in the scheme of life in Sri Sri Thakur's ideology. The literal meaning of *satta* is 'being' or 'existence'. It sums up the core of one's life in essence. It is that critical element in life, without which life can hardly be thought about.

In a sense, word *satta* denotes the spirit in life, which is original, pure and everlasting. However, spirit can have its ethereal existence; but word *satta* connotes something that exists here and now; that can be seen felt, touched and that can breathe, sleep and communicate.

Many significant aspects of life are linked to this word *satta* or existence. For example, in one of His numerous sayings, Sri Sri Thakur has articulated life in terms of 'existence'. "Energetic urge of existence with volitional flow that radiates into conscious will is life – the blessed glow of God."

Continuing with the example, Sri Sri Thakur has expressed God as the source of existence. "The source of existence, instinct with inherent intelligence, that sprouts into a variety of conscious flow, in the floody run of eternal go, is God – realized through devotional service to Lord the Divine."

In yet another saying, quoted to bring out the fact that *satta* is the defining yardstick to measure desirable parts of life. "What gathers for existential welfare with meaningful adjustment, exalting being into becoming is good."

'The properties and motion of existence is shaped by ectoplasmic soul'. Those whose ectoplasmic soul is wholesome, loaded with discipline, beauty and hard pursuit (तप), their personality also gets loaded with those soft elements. (VI. 37, 38)

This saying of Sri Sri Thakur links 'existence' with 'life', in which Sri Sri Thakur says, 'let the new dawn of existence be coloured by the rising rays of life. Let the life grow this way, glowing in effulgence.' (VI. 69)

'Hold on to the colorful winds that blows on life's path. Stay on the ground where bliss is spun.' (VI.75)

Reflection on *dharma* (upholding force of life)

The Sanskrit word धृति (*dhruti*) is integral to understand Sri Sri Thakur's concept of life. The word *dhruti* literally means urge to hold and nurture. Many of the ideological concepts of Sri Sri Thakur are expressed using this word. For example, Sri Sri Thakur says, "Upholding urge of our existence is Dharma." At another place, he says, "Dharma is the culture of uphold of existential proficiency xxxx."(Message, Vol II)

'Uphold of existence' is used at innumerable places in Sri Sri Thakur's literature in the context of life, prophet and *dharma*.

Reflection on 'Attachment on the Lord' (devotion)

निष्ठा (*nishthaa)* is yet another Sanskrit vocabulary having deep relevance in Sri Sri Thakur's ideology. The literal meaning of *nishthaa* is sincere in devotion. Sri Sri Thakur has defined *nishthaa* as continuous and uninterrupted engagement. Of course, the engagement is with divinity, purity and sanctity. The word इष्ट निष्ठा and निष्ठा have been used interchangeably in Sri Sri Thakur's literature. *Ishta nishthaa* means in Sri Sri Thakur's vocabulary "be devoted to the Lord". At another place, Sri Sri Thakur is saying, "Be

adhered to your Love-Lord with every devout attitude"; that precisely conveys the meaning of word *ishta nishthaa*.

Attachment on the Lord (इष्ट निष्ठा) is a primal tendency. It has overarching influence on life. 'Irrespective of any other tendency, if the attachment on Lord prevails in life; life goes on unhindered towards activity.' (VI.8) 'Even a thief, thugs and a man of low esteem, despite his evil character, can develop craving for existence, if he embraces Lord's interest with total adherence. The total adherence will sprout feelings in him, spurring him to serve and shelter people.' (VI. 29)

'Proper conduct backed by attachment and adherence on the Lord diminishes the affects of ailments to a large extent.' (VI. 31)

Sri Sri Thakur has also spoken about unadulterated adherence. 'If you are intensely engaged in unicentral devotional service (एकनिष्ठ इष्ट सेवा), then you will get into the urge for activity in thought and satisfaction.' (VI.9)

Part II

Tenor of life

'Everyone generally remains contented with basic needs of life like food and joyous activities. Few realize that there is no other way but to remain engaged with those activities that upholds and nourishes existence (*satta*)'. (V.17)

'Be a worshipper of life; let the string of devotion be struck by the swell of activities. Swing yourself into that spell where the being rules supreme with full blaze of consciousness.' (V.45)

'A regulated life bears immortal fruit. Behavior that is sanctioned by norms blooms into petals of lotus.' (V.46)

When our conducts and actions in life follow the dictates of conscience and judgment, then we have fewer things to fear about. (V.22) Sri Sri Thakur wants us to have a triumphant life and the prescription that he provides is that whatever we do must do, after a thorough process of understanding as to what causes what. (V.23) To know the cause and effect relationship of everything that happens around is of course a tall order. Each one has a mental model and a framework of general knowledge, mostly arising out of experience. People generally deal with the affairs of life from that background position. The point that merits mention here is that Sri Sri Thakur's core ideological prescription creates that insight of causalities which is referred above for a devotee.

'Life longs for perpetuation through procreation. A plant bears flowers naturally, almost instinctively; then it bears fruits to line up its breed.' (V.35)

Like a flame cannot but blaze its radiance, existence cannot find its glory without attachment with superior beloved. (V.36) 'How well protected is your existence can be gauged from the following two factors: a) how steadfast is the tenor of your engagement with the Lord; and b) how much enlightened is your move.' (V.51) 'Keep the Lord alive in your heart, with pleasant affection and feelings. Let the evils be banished. Let your heart swell with everything that goes with life.' (V.52) 'Be immersed in uninterrupted engagement with the Lord; acquire whatever you want to achieve; pour elixir into everyone's heart; let the blossom of affection spread around.' (V.53)

‘The base of your existence will be that much sound and strong, to the extent you remain balanced in the midst of chaos and cosmos; conflicts and complements.’ (V.54)

‘Let your valor be as potent as lightening; your physique remains sound; your adherence be soothing and sublime; your hand be adept and accomplished.’ (V. 55)

‘Money is charmed everywhere, keeping life under shade. But great men are those who charm life.’ (V.56)

‘Choose a divine direction and valid path with application of mind; which are more significant factors in life than being a short sized person.’ (V.58) Being high or low; big or small is not so much of a programmed deficiency. Get up from wherever you are and move ahead, matching steps with the wise man who knows what is what. (V.59)

‘Life bears fruits as life rolls on, gets its fulfillment in valid move. Life’s tenure gets extended by the vibration caused by mental repetition of holy name.’ (V.60) ‘The holy name is a composition of all that what upholds the existence.’ (V.61)

‘Get to know the existential issues thoroughly, keep those in memory; use those appropriately where ever required for life.’ (V.62)

‘The supreme truth for everyone is the metaphysical plane on which existence grows. This is true for all, regardless of whether you are self abnegated or indulgent.’ (V. 63)

‘Keep everyone enchanted with the tune of peace and blissful welfare. Let everyone march with accomplishment and acquisition. Let life takes the wing of elevated energy and eternal consciousness.’ (V.64) ‘Life aims to live and strives to work and grow. It means to glow with success and fulfillment.’ (V.65) ‘The story of real life may come out eloquent. The lessons of life may be spread around for the benefit of all.’ (V.66) ‘In sum and substance, proceed on the path of existential uphold, armed with valid conduct, follow the steps of the Lord with adherence, be crowned with fulfillment and success.’ (V.67)

‘Existence glows and gets refined with: a) truthful life, b) truthful thought, c) truthful inspiration and d) truthful urge.’ (V.68)

‘Life is certainly not a void; nor is it a path treaded by fools. Life unfolds into success by means of: a) urge arising out of repeated culture; b) successful accomplishment; c) practice and pursuits; d) urge arising out of undiluted devotion.’ (V.70)

‘A mistake or a faulty action or a deviated step causes disorientation or leads to misdirection. The tenor of continuing growth gets shattered proportionately. Instantly, get into a probing analysis and see how you can retrieve the balance. Make all efforts to sweep away the virus of mistakes and deviations and then you will land yourself on a growing dispensation. Never stray on to a conduct that can snap adherence to the principle and ideal. Even if that appears to be sweet and palatable; it slowly drifts towards poison. Examine your existential surrounding and find out danger and deleterious elements and keep those aside. Keep on moving ahead unhindered with blissful satisfaction. Let all distortions be washed away; let the heaven be dawned with a dancing sway.’ (V.76)

‘Be engaged with the blissful Lord, oh dear! Remain focused on the Lord, unshaken and un-swerved. Pour out whole of your life as object of worship for Him. Make your life illuminated by the lamp for worship. Never allow the flame to be off and the attachment to be snapped.’ (V.77)

‘Make your existence wholesome. Put in strenuous and simple mobilization. Exert, exercise and achieve the boon of life from the Lord. Have meaningfully focused conduct with patience; carry the lamp of refined knowledge. Live a life of elixir, spread around knowledge out of pious deeds.’ (V.79)

‘Look up and see the marvel of rocking (*tandav*) dance of Lord Siva. Observe closely and try to appreciate how and where the resplendence of life is. *Sivaness* (शिवत्व - the essence of Siva) is life bearing; the dance presents the life. The overwhelming dance has the combined role of *sat* (that which exists and life rearing in masculine version) and *sati* (that which cohabits with *sat* and in feminine version). Let your life dance to the beat of success, following the laws of nature, and to the melody of *siva* (life) and *sundara* (beauty).’ (V.83, 84)

‘Lord, the prophet of the age, is everybody’s light. Keeping that light in view, pull the Lord with the string of adherence. The combination of light and adherence will spring from where resources will flow on to your life’s path. This is how you will cross darkness and will get satisfaction. Never cease your progressive go. Crawl, in case you have to, still never come to halt. That continuity will create energy and bliss in you.’ (V.86)

‘With unswerving enchantment with Lord and pull of glowing urge for activity leading to service, stand strong, displaying habits mastering effulgent virtues. Master the habits that worship existential activity. Be bold with art of mastery and energized alacrity. Let the whirlwind of capability around your existence lift you up and up till you are great. Existence is not cultivated without habitual urge for activity; capability is not acquired without active attainment. Capability or efficiency (पारगता) is the flower in the garden of the heaven (पारिजात). That only blossoms up your community and the country as a whole. Let your personality grow with radiant satisfaction and active intelligence. Be disciplined yet be strong, without which the wealth of your intellect will not shine. Work and learn, with extreme urgency, without losing a moment. With a surge of valor, let the society and country move on desired discipline. Go ahead on this line with unfaltering adherence, such that existential knowledge blooms with mass urge for activity.’ (V.87)

‘Concentrated attachment backed by urge and initiative for action leads to blooming of personality; when personality effulges with good conduct. Personality is a combined reflection of thought, words and deeds. It swells up by the pull of adherence and attachment. ’ (VI.39, 40)

‘Let your heart roar with the inner feelings of devotion. Let heart remain disciplined, clean and swell with effulgent activity. Let the roar of your effulgent life reverberate across the world, elevate life’s light and spawn wisdom on way to life.’ (VI.44, 45)

Success in Life

Life for Sri Sri Thakur is blissful existence. Life is a journey for activity and accomplishment. Life gets glowed with achievement.

Sri Sri Thakur wants each one to move ahead in life with brave heart, balanced rhythm and disciplined conduct. (V.29) All our behavior must display truth (*sat*), which is the way to remain out of complexities. And truth is that which crowns existence (*satta*). (V.30)

‘The booming blaze of life is supported by effulgence of urge for activity, which is backed by principled conduct, disciplined behavior and a wholehearted valor.’ (V.6) ‘Life will experience overflow of urge for activity as outcome of combined play of pleasantries, focus and knowledge. The experience is as soothing as the song of a bird sitting in the groove of a tree and cooing in the hot summer.’ (V.31) Life gets its glow by three behavioral practices: a) sweet tongue, b) minute observation and c) focused on existence. (V.41) ‘If you want unceasing effulgence, then go on building on life and strength. Run with the urge for activities, playing on farsightedness, backed by enlightened intellect.’ (VI.73)

There is nothing wrong in aspiring to enjoy life and to have peace in life, if only we work for those in orderly manner. If we do not follow up our desire with proper action, then to harbor desire amounts to having madness and then what would certainly follow is sufferings. (V.14) ‘If our desire is not backed by proper execution, then acquisition gets defunct. Life gets crowned with prosperity, when there is fruitful service.’ (V.28)

‘If you live well and others get exterminated, then your existence can hardly be sustained. You will be hurt.’ (V.15)

Sri Sri Thakur has hinted at another type of self assured destruction, by giving example of treacherous tiger that prowl on its own master. Tigers that kill their own protectors inevitably get subjected to violent death. Sri Sri Thakur says, ‘get rid of the tyranny of mutual harming, the food chain devouring; maintain self restrain. Let the being be cleansed off the dust.’ (V.38)

Life’s glow is not necessarily contingent upon appearance or charisma; though these have their own utility in public space. However these apparitions become meaningful with life supporting progress (existential propitious becoming). (V.16)

A life radiating with adherence to the Lord is a blissful life. (V.1) Higher the intensity of adherence, coupled with the exuberance of affinity with accomplishment, more blissful is the existence and life’s melody blows with symphony. (V.81) “Untottering adhering service to the Love Lord gradually increases ability, rhythm of heart and strength of life with an up heaving fortune.” (Message, VIII)

‘Hardship in life tends to generate suspicion; but mind does not go with that; like tiger and cat do not habitat together despite being of the same species.’ (V.32)

Sri Sri Thakur wishes, ‘the melody of life be raised to high pitch by the symphony of becoming, on the track of attachment on the Lord’. (V. 43) ‘Where adherence is unswerving and love gets swelling, in all affairs of life, then life gets bloomed into halo of effulgence.’ (V.44) ‘Be engaged in serving the interest of the Lord, if you are looking for a brilliant life.’ (V.71) ‘The person who glows by the enchantment of the lord and if his heart is filled, goddesses Laxmi nurtures him and leads him towards blissful growth.’ (VI.53) ‘Basic elements required for an orderly existence are love and attachment on the Lord, which are symptom of devotion. When devotion gets distorted, the gift of god gets vanished in the manner gloom gets cleared by the rays of light.’ (V. 1, V. 7)

Behavior has to be: a) skillfully well adhered; b) courteously hospitable; c) brilliantly polite; d) banish evil with courage; e) burnout everything that is dirt. (V.82)

‘If a person is devout, having urge for activity and his love is unadulterated, then such a person never gets reduced to insignificance.’ (VI.7)

‘A disciplined and balanced mind, guided by intellect and conscience, engaged in service to Lord, can never be hindered from progress.’ (VI.9) ‘Sanitize the glow of your intellect with unfaltering adherence. Let your life roar with the tune of sweet and sublime symphony.’ (VI.70)

Along with adherence to the Lord, Sri Sri Thakur is also saying about service to people. ‘Worship people as you remain adhered to the Lord. You will acquire energy and devotion and your life will be expanded. The satisfaction you derive by serving people will invite decent and disciplined stimulus which will glorify you. With overflowing energy, you prevent all mishaps and overcome all hurdles’ (VI.19, 20, 21)

Sri Sri Thakur in a wonderful allegory has presented life as a boat and said that the boat is controlled by the helmsman. ‘Row your life-boat with spotless adherence, sailing with the splash of discipline. Let your conducts and living match with the speed of your mind. As your conducts get disciplined, your behavior will be sweet and sound, which will give you inner satisfaction and also will please your family. Have close affinity with the helmsman, keeping continued affinity with the helmsman,’ (VI.26)

Conclusion

This paper provides a glimpse of life as Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra viewed and presented. We, however, have our own perception and experience of life. There certainly lies a gap between these two.

We experience life as it comes to us, here and now, amidst all humdrum. Sri Sri Thakur certainly opened and exhibited a different vista of life before us. Significantly however, Sri Sri Thakur stood on the same plane of life, on which we all exist and operate. Sri Sri Thakur did not picture an ethereal and otherworldly view of life, meshed with philosophy and abstractions.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra wishes a life of devotion, full of energy, urge for activity, amidst surroundings. Life is a journey of unending possibilities. Life is to be loved and existence of all types needs to be cultivated. Life has a rhythm, in consonance with nature, which makes it enjoyable.

Life in its manifest form originates from parents, grows in the society and blooms with experiences. Personality swells when one shines with knowledge, acquires human qualities and be crowned with achievements. Sequentially further, if one cries for the Supreme Father, then knowledge gets morphed into wisdom. Additionally, coming in terms with *acharya* (accomplished person who sets himself as example and guides others), mastering the art of living, life radiates like a cluster of lamps emitting knowledge.

Limitation of the study

First limitation of this paper is that it has a narrow reference base. It has chosen to pick up Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra’s literature from a particular type of sayings, which is in lyrics in a six volume book, named *Anusruti*. More specifically, this paper is sourced from 2 chapters in 2 volumes of *Anusruti*.

Second limitation is that it has not attempted to elaborate on the sayings of Sri Sri Thakur. It is expected that commentators in future will do extensive interpretations of these sayings.

Objective of this paper is limited to place before the readers what Sri Sri Thakur has said on this subject. There would be many ways of discussion, reflection, elaboration, interpretation and so on, particularly by scholars of philosophy, on and about those sayings of Sri Sri Thakur in future. What Sri Sri Thakur has said is original and may not fall into any conventional school of thought. Much more work therefore is left

for future research by way of expanding Sri Sri Thakur's view, linking to all aspects of life and comparing with similar views by other philosophers.

Thirdly, future research has to reflect on a question: if this is what Sri Sri Thakur expects from life, how can those would be met? There is certainly a gap between expectation and real life, which is perhaps concern for all of us. This paper no doubt provides some answer to this question. I would expect future research would provide a more precise answer to this.

Fourth limitation of this paper is that it has not been able to bring out some more critical aspects of the references, due to the lack of good Sanskrit knowledge of the author.

Reference

References provided in parenthesis denotes: Volume of *Anusruti* in Roman, followed by Chapter serial number of that particular stanza. *Anusruti*, Volume (V & VI), compilation of Sri Sri Thakur's sayings in Bengali language, published by Satsang Publishing House, Deoghar, Jharkhand, in 1962 & 1964 respectively.

Reference may also be made to my paper 'Existentialism – as propounded by Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra', in 'Proceeding of the Conference on Indian Culture' held in Mumbai University, jointly organized by Department of Philosophy and Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies, in September 2011.

August 2014

Forty seven

Analyze Your Thought & Action
Shape Your Destiny & Be Free from Sufferings

Sri Sri Thakur says that destiny is the probabilistic outcome of accumulated past actions. The outcome of past actions remains like a blueprint or like a zone of potential future happenings. But those are not cast in stone. Past outcomes get processed through present action and create a new blueprint for the future.

"When faced with a mishap, do not just think that it was destined and therefore I was on the spot. Rather, scan the surroundings rationally and find out the lapses that you had or are still having; try to correct those. Your urge for success will then be fortified. If you do not mend those thoughts and actions, then

the inner glow of observation will not shine, rather will dim out. This internal all-round observation and service amount to worshipping God. You must therefore remain engaged with Him." (*Aachar Charya, Bengali, Vol. II, vani no. 272, page 91, 2nd Edition*)

This particular saying of Sri Sri Thakur brings out three points relevant for our life.

- When faced with hard time, where should we look at?
- How is destiny linked with day to day life and activities?
- How is our effort linked to worship of God?

Hard times or unfortunate events are reality in everyone's life. The time and the degree of course vary from person to person. Our reactions to those mishaps determine the aftermath course of the events. In that sense, our reaction to events play role in determining the consequence of events. Sri Sri Thakur argues for active response, rather than passive and submissive response to events. Submission to the will of God does not necessarily mean submission to the adversities in life. Urge to act, as per Sri Sri Thakur, is the sign of life.

The question is where we look for the root cause or genesis of any kind of misfortune. Sri Sri Thakur says not to accept anything as pre-deterministic. He would like us to point the finger to our activities, both individual and collective (or environmental). Sri Sri Thakur wants us to observe our own past activities and find out the factors responsible for the unfortunate event; and then to take corrective action.

Things out here happen at two levels and within two domains. To take the second aspect first, domains are two, viz, a) individual area of action and b) action that happens in the surroundings. These two domains are interactive, overlapping and yet the domains are distinct on the basis of control on activities. Sri Sri Thakur has specifically mentioned to look for the causality factors at personal domain and at collective domain.

Coming to level of corrective activities, there are two types of things: a) thought and b) action. Thoughts encompass analysis, understanding, introspection, finding the cause and action relationship, looking at things in the short term and long term, of past and future and so on. The list would cover everything that human mind is capable of doing, consciously and subconsciously.

The above series of action would help convert every failure to pillar of success. The urge for action will be strengthened, which would hasten up process of success. This involves a chain of psychological process which keeps a person moving. Sri Sri Thakur says, in the absence of these activities, the mobile forces in the system will slow down. In Sri Sri Thakur's words, the internal sensitivity may get blunted.

On the second issue, Sri Sri Thakur says that destiny is the probabilistic outcome of accumulated past actions. The outcome of past actions remains like a blueprint or like a zone of potential future happenings. But those are not cast in stone. Past outcomes get processed through present action and create a new blueprint for the future. Every action that we do everyday helps to shape our future. Destiny may at times position itself as boundary. That boundary has its relativity; can be stretched with appropriate intervention. The intervention can be endogenous (originating from the person) and can be exogenous (originating from someone other than the self). In exogenous sense, there can be a divine intervention. Sri Sri Thakur has attached greater weight to 'free will' over 'pre-determination'. Sri Sri Thakur observed; 'to take everything as predetermined is an insult to God'. We may say that every person with the help of Sri Sri Thakur can rewrite the destiny that can be seen and felt by the person in this life.

The third point; worship is an active concept in Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, as distinct from ritual. Worship (*Bhajan*) in this saying has got meaning equivalent to service and love. That is a very broad area of action having very high quotient of human qualities. Sri Sri Thakur also is saying here to remain engaged with God. Combination of 'highest form of human qualities' and 'remaining adhered to God' perhaps makes a golden antidote to mishap and consequential suffering.

Forty eight

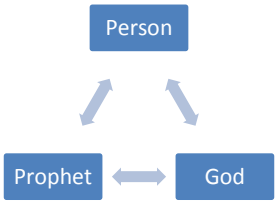
Is Prophet a Categorical Imperative?

Yes, you need to remain connected with the prophet

God has granted internal perceptive ability and realization to prophet and has revealed everything to him. Prophet maintains individual distinctiveness and fulfils everything. Having grip on the axis of the time circle, prophet is the manifested Supreme Being. God gets reflected in the prophet's view.

I came across a categorical affirmation in *vani* no. 193 in *Dhruti Bidhaayanaa*, part I (Bengali). Here Sri Sri Thakur has made a point. It is a triangular kind of relationship that has been weaved together; the angular points are as under:

- God
- Prophet
- Person



(Figure 1)

God

God is generally understood by everyone, as someone or something supreme. God does not require much of discussion here except to say that God is such a force (or power or entity) that can hardly be seen and shown. Though everyone has his or her own realization of God; but certainly God remains beyond reach, beyond easy comprehension and beyond scientific validation. Every aspirant would look forward to a day when he gets an access to God and can have a dialogue with God. Every person in grief is constantly praying to God for the remission of his or her burden. We believe that God responds; but that is only belief. We repose faith on God; but that is only our faith. We pray to God; but that remains only our appeal. Many times in life, many of us would have come across a logjam; a road block; a point of no return. That is the time, we look towards God. Do we at that time reach God?

Prophet

Then comes the Prophet. Generally, we have idea about prophet. Each religious order has some prophets as designated deity, the originator of the order. The general concept as understood and practiced however is mired with lot of cobwebs. The concept, meaning and attributes of prophet need to be known with great deal of clarity. Sri Sri Thakur has clarified the real identify of prophet in his literature. We request perceptive readers to go through 'The Message', Volume II; by Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the first edition was published in 1964.

Prophet comes with lot of attributes. It will be an endless exercise to really portray any prophet in particular or the prophet hood as a generic concept. For the purpose of this article, I have used two sayings of Sri Sri Thakur to see what Sri Sri Thakur has said about prophet.

Prophets – Messengers of Providence

1. Prophets come down in the role of reformers, with the message of existential propitiousness; with its uphold suiting the age, by the observance of which they can advance the welfare of the people.

2. Prophets are the same and similar and are the messengers of providence according to age.

3. The present prophet is the summation of the past; the advent of the previous ones.

4. Bow, kneel down before Him, with revering limbs.

5. Reverence for the present one is reverence for all the past, and blasphemy to the past is blasphemy to the present.

6. Hear Him, act and have His blessings to uphold thy existential steps.

7. With revering enthusiasm, bow again to him, whose hands are for service, feet for work, eyes for science, voice for artistic display, heart for love, brain for wisdom, mind for providence, nose to breathe spirit, ears to hear, and nail to resist evil.

8. He is the Anointed, the Christ.

The Advent's Descent

1. He, the Advent, descends through the mercy of providence from father to mother with holy attributes and compassion for the people due to the cry of existential crisis and serves normally with his own urge as a man.

2. He, the holy man at once the holy spirit and friend of the people evolves in attributes and service in His personality, throbbing with compassion for the life of the people.

3. He is a man, the holy man, the loving embodiment in the service of existential propitious bloom.

4. He is for one; he is for all, with every hearty compassion that reaches a farfetched plane with an unfathomed trail of intelligence.

5. He is a man, the son of man; at the same time the son of God, the providence, the providing breath of everyone.

6. Think, behold, bow down on thy knees and follow Him with hearty adherence, allegiance and active service, installing Him in the throne of existential uphold and propitious immortal nectar of life.

7. Bow thou, again bow with kneeling love, surcharged with adherence, allegiance and active service.

(In both the above pieces of sayings of Sri Sri Thakur, the segments have been decomposed and numbered by me for the purpose of identification and focus. Each point can be said to highlight one attribute of prophet.)

In the *vani* no. 193 of *Dhruti Bidhayanaa*, vol. I, Sri Sri Thakur says a very interesting point about prophet, as follows: (only a portion of the *vani* is translated from Bengali to English)

"God has granted internal perceptive ability and realization to prophet and has revealed everything to him. Prophet maintains individual distinctiveness and fulfils everything. Having grip on the axis of the time circle, prophet is the manifested Supreme Being. God gets reflected in the prophet's view. No one can get to know or even feel God bypassing the prophet."

This categorical assertion resounds the biblical statement, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me'.

The above triangular process in Figure 1 then gets converted into a singularly linear process, as depicted in the figure 2.

(Figure 2)

Forty nine

Marriage is Sacred – Says Supreme Court of India

Family Values are required for Benefit of Individual & Society

> Ideal (Guru) centric living in the family brings about convergence in the family. Each member finds a resonance in the other, if there is love for the Ideal. Ideal becomes the cementing element; the ideology brings in purity and progressive element in the family.

My eyes were stuck with wonder while reading a line on the front page of today's The Times of India. The line reads, "The Court said that for a Hindu wife, husband is her god; she devotes her life in his selfless service and this was why marriage law enjoins a corresponding duty on the husband to look after her comfort and protect her from calamities. Hindu marriage is sacred and a holy union of husband and wife".

What endeared me is not the content of the observation as such, which I am quite familiar with. But that the observation has come as a judicial pronouncement is what elated me. What made the honorable judges to state so many things? Is there a message in the observation for us and for the young generation, in particular?

It then dawned on me that the honorable judges of the Supreme Court of India have seen value in Hindu marriage system and they travelled extra miles and upheld the value. I then went through the full text of the judgment. The relevant extract from the judgment is produced below:

"Hindu marriage is a sacred and holy union of husband and wife by virtue of which the wife is completely transplanted in the household of her husband and takes a new birth. It is a combination of bone to bone and flesh to flesh. To a Hindu wife, her husband is her God and her life becomes one of the selfless service and profound dedication to her husband. She not only shares the life and love, but the joys and sorrows, the troubles and tribulation of her husband and becomes an integral part of her husband's life and activities."

Quoted from Judgment delivered by Justice MY Eqbal and Justice C Nagappan on December 2, 2015 in Transfer Petition (Civil) no. 702 of 2015.

This observation of Supreme Court of India, highlighting the value of marriage and relationship between husband and wife, is words of wisdom coming from sagacity of the judges. We are not going into the legal part; rather seeing the value part of the observation. This observation will perhaps ring alarm bell to the emerging young generation, who generally see marital relationship as casual companionship and for

gratification. In a scenario when social values are getting crumbled; when marriage as an institution is getting threatened by sense of individual independence and indiscipline, this observation brings a lot of sobering feelings. The observation may make one to sit up and think what made the judges to see such a binding and compelling functionality in the relationship between husband and wife. Perhaps honorable judges meant; yes, it is companionship; it is love and gratification; yet it is much more. It is life; here, now and forever. Marriage is lifetime relationship that survives all ups and down in life's passage. The feelings are much deeper than what is felt on the surface of the skin.

We turn to Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and see two of his observations on the subject. *(The Message, Vol VII)*

"Wife is she, who never wipes out her adherence to the husband; husband is he, who through his love to the Lord, the Lead, does not separate himself from her existential interest in every suffering and happiness."

"Marriage is not a matter of contract, but it is solemnly needed to draw one in the bosom of one's heart, with all service and caressing attitude."

Sri Sri Thakur has attached lot of emphasis on compatible marriage and healthy relationship between wife and husband in the context of having progressive life of individuals in society. Few salient points of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology on marriage are attempted to bring out here.

- Marriage between a boy and girl has to be done on the basis of compatibility. The compatibility matrix has a number of parameters like heredity, education, health, cultural refinement, attitudinal faculties, worldview, outlook to life, status of living, taste and preference and host of factors that goes into build up of a human being. Every person carries with him or her set of biological traits, reflecting the state of evolution of that person. Each one also comes from a social background that brings with him or her set of tastes, etiquettes, lifestyle and aspirations. The prospective groom and bride will like each other; can live together and complement each other, only if they have large commonality with respect to these personal and ingrained attributes.

- Ideal (Guru) centric living in the family brings about convergence in the family. Each member finds a resonance in the other, if there is love for the Ideal. Ideal becomes the cementing element; the ideology brings in purity and progressive element in the family. Therefore, there is no place for dispute and discord between husband and wife. There is only mutual appreciation, forbearance and tolerance.

- Compatible match and cohesive living prepares the fertile ground required for birth of superior souls in the family. That is how every family becomes link for evolution, following the principle of biological procreation (eugenics) and social tradition (education). In Sri Sri Thakur's language, "Sacred solemn union begets solemn progeny instinct with solemn love, generally." *(The Message, Vol VII)* Every parent takes rebirth in the child they together beget. Every parent survives the point of cessation of life through their children.

The above principles of regeneration and upbringing are universal in human beings. The way of living and practices surrounding life of course varies from place to place, from community to community and from religion to religion. That is what gets manifested in various forms of marriage celebration and rituals. Though Supreme Court of India has referred to Hindu religious text and laws, but in reality, this applies to

every family in the society. What works through marriage is the primordial instinct of human species to procreate and survive. Society has in course of time codified various rites and has institutionalized it.

Summarily, it is reinforced that marriage heralds a significant phase in everybody's life. Each society has formulated rituals and institutions to celebrate marriage from certain cultural point of view. A good understanding of that significance makes us responsible. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has made specific and significant exposition on the subject of marriage and eugenics in his literature. All of us, irrespective of religious affiliation, would do well to understand the subject from the scientific and utilitarian point of view. If it is marriage, then it is life and life thereafter.

4th December 2015

Chapter 4

Sri Sri Thakur's Interest

Fifty

How Sri Sri Thakur Might be Feeling Now?

Transformation of self and society was Sri Sri Thakur's interest

We, the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur, are fortunate that we have a vehicle that is robust, that can run fast, that can carry us through rough weathers; none of these put us onto a state of complacence and over confidence. We the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur have more responsibility then others in the society, simply because we are better aware of our capacity, responsibility and commitment.

Most of us under Sri Sri Thakur's discipleship consider ourselves fortunate. Without denying this self belief, at times it comes with a bit of assertion, I feel, there is need for a deeper analysis, by way of introspection. Of course, the assertion has a high degree of subjectivity and is contextual. My purpose here is to make an objective analysis, based on my own experience.

The fact that Sri Sri Thakur's disciples are today large in number, still growing and getting dispersed across the globe; general awareness about Sri Sri Thakur's ideology and personality are perceptibly getting diluted; this analysis hopefully will find a meaningful cognition in some quarters.

It is perhaps justified on anybody's part to feel that one is fortunate to have come to know Sri Sri Thakur and is under His care. Though one must put a caveat by raising question as to how much one knows Sri Sri Thakur and how much protection of blessing one is entitled to.

It may not be apposite to claim that being a disciple of Sri Sri Thakur, one is relatively more fortunate than, say, someone else who is not a disciple. This claim for relative fortune may be repudiated by a broad level proposition that no one can be and should be compared with someone else. Each person, irrespective of his/her status, is uniquely placed, by virtue of his/her background, potential, aptitude, social conditioning and biological makeup and host of other factors. Therefore, the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur as a community have no ground to claim a superior status with respect to rest of the society, either individually or collectively.

The community of Sri Sri Thakur's disciples, the so called *Satsangees*, however can claim superiority if and when they can acquire higher status and demonstrate qualitatively better mass behavior and social cohesion, then society may take cognizance of it. In today's situation, it appears to be far from reality.

One can however aspire to be different from others, not on the basis of presumption or postulation. One's behavior and performance has to be demonstrated and has to be noticed, at least by proximate surrounding and has to earn their love and admiration. In the context of larger society, one needs to be known by achievement and transformation.

One's achievement and transformation is an outcome of one's conscious exertion, which Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is supposed to push one into. It is साधना which if pursued properly will end up in सिद्धि. We can, to a limited extent, weigh ourselves with others on the basis of achievement (कृति), with qualification; certainly not make a sweeping generalization.

We, the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur, are fortunate that we have a vehicle that is robust, that can run fast, that can carry us through rough weathers; none of these put us onto a state of complacence and over confidence. We the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur have more responsibility then others in the society, simply because we are better aware of our capacity, responsibility and commitment.

We the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur have taken a pledge to keep Sri Sri Thakur alive within us and within the environment. That is possible, if we keep Sri Sri Thakur as our goal and self development as our target. Today's mass of disciples, however do not appear to betray that impression of being carriers of Sri Sri Thakur's load.

I come across many disciples, both by way of casual encounters and long relationships. I don't see an anxiety in them that they are on a path of crusade, not for any social cause as such, but for their own self and for the cause of Sri Sri Thakur.

The best amongst them casually display their affiliation with any one of many 'satsang' groups and appear to display a culture of exclusiveness. To an extent, affiliation with a group displays a natural tendency of extension of self and socialization, which is good but certainly not enough. Forty three years after Sri Sri Thakur's demise, all the groups in Satsang have developed a purposefulness to perpetuate themselves on conventional path. Some social purpose and Sri Sri Thakur's interests must be getting served by those Satsang groups. However, these Satsang Groups have little contribution in terms of individual development and least achievement in keeping Sri Sri Thakur alive in the way He desired, on the scale of a movement.

We are living in a society that is progressively getting away from Sri Sri Thakur and Sri Sri Thakur is getting fast consigned to oblivion. How is Sri Sri Thakur feeling now?

This is my own reflection, arising from my limited observation. It is not a researched output; never meant to corner anyone or any group. It is a self analysis, meant to express Sri Sri Thakur's interest and desire, keeping self development or personal transformation in view.

1st April 2012

Fifty one

It is Double Wonder: Not Single
You are the wonder Sri Sri Thakur Looked at

Every person who came in contact with Sri Sri Thakur became a different and wonderful person. The unfurling of instinct that takes place, the activation of brain cells that happens and the motor sensory coordination of nerves that takes shape, make a follower a wonderfully evolved person.

Part I – Wonder No. 1

Those of us who know Sri Sri Thakur, even at an elementary level, would admit that Sri Sri Thakur was a wonder. There are innumerable features of Sri Sri Thakur which appear to be unusual; do not have any similarity with those of the rest of the people. And those unusual features make him outstanding. His appearance, his look, his way of talking, his simplicity, everything wearing his persona was very attractive, pleasant to the extreme and therefore, he was endearing on a universal scale. Secondly, whatever he did, individually and collectively, for people at large, was magnificently benevolent. Unconditional love and service, which is unusually seen, was seen galore with Sri Sri Thakur. He used to protect victims of evil in a predictive and preemptive way. There are innumerable anecdotes of his rendering miraculous service, and multiples of that unrecorded, which was impossible by any other person; therefore, these were mysterious. When all these profile of Sri Sri Thakur were presented together, he was simply wonderful.

He played his life and activities during 1888 to 1969, when the humanity passed through hard times. There were wars, political convulsions, industrial revolutions, scientific inventions and above all there was a quantum jump in civilization's march towards progress. Human being evolved faster during this period than ever before. On all these fronts, Sri Sri Thakur had his contribution; to a very significant extent; some are known and some have gone unnoticed. Summarily stated, Sri Sri Thakur was ahead of his time; civilization followed him; humanity will explore him as time passes. He was the harbinger and forerunner of evolution of human species.

Humanity has to know him, if this process of evolution has to gather speed and direction. If on the contrary, humanity does a slipshod with him, deprivation will follow. History is replete with instances, when the prophet was ignored, neglected, victimized for his radical thought and action. Prophet's ideology always comes under attack for its unconventional outlook and approach. Prophets in all ages had to undertake uphill struggle to set the prevalent culture onto his path. Even his followers and disciples also

mount veiled attack on him, to have their own whims and predilections. We saw all these happening to Sri Sri Thakur.

Everything what we saw in Sri Sri Thakur was so extraordinary that it was simply wonderful. Actually, for the disciples, the whole pursuit is to know him, explore him, follow him and in the process one acquires realization, deeper meaning of everything. With every deeper understanding of Sri Sri Thakur, there comes a charm, a feeling of joy, a sense of fulfillment. Devotees have spent their lifetime in understanding the wonder that was Thakur and have acquired tremendous status in realization, acquisition and transformation.

Part II – Wonder No. 2

While the first part presents a magnificent fact, the second part bears proximate relevance for you. You are the second wonder. It is you! Your body is a wonderful machine; your mind shelters wonderful software; you carry enormous possibilities; your adaptability and response mechanism is unparallel amongst the living organisms and you are evolving. You have a past as well as a future.

The wonder that you are, most part of it, is invisible. Most part of it is unexplored and large part of it is inactivated, therefore, remains unused. That's why you are a wonder.

You are a replica of the Lord; you are created by the Lord; you are the image of the Lord. Therefore you are a miniature version of the wonder that we saw in Sri Sri Thakur.

Sri Sri Thakur said in no uncertain term that 'I want each one of you to grow up and be like me'. That makes you more wonderful, as that presents a possibility of immense transformation. The limitless possibility in you actually makes you wonderful. You are a 'being', in the process of 'becoming'. You are a matter that carries a spirit. You have senses by which you can feel, touch, see, hear and smell; in the same way, you can have capacity to get extra sensory experience. You have very wide limit; at the same time, you can outgrow your limit. You leave your years behind; yet you carry them in your memory. Your life comes to an end, still you can survive death.

The wonder is that you are a vehicle for Sri Sri Thakur's desire to be translated. The wonder that Sri Sri Thakur is, works through you to make thing possible in you.

Every person who came in contact with Sri Sri Thakur became a different and wonderful person. The unfurling of instinct that takes place, the activation of brain cells that happens and the motor sensory coordination of nerves that takes shape, make a follower a wonderfully evolved person. Like a seed grows to a huge tree, like a stream springs off a mountain, like darkness of the night gets vanished at dawn, the wonder in you comes to life at the touch of Sri Sri Thakur.

Part III - Conclusion

Therefore, when we saw Sri Sri Thakur, we saw double wonders, not single.

Fifty two

What Sri Sri Thakur Wants from Us?
Everything has to be meant for Him

Origin of creation is the Lord, and Lord stands for the urge to hold and nurture. There is positive pole and negative pole, which have got attraction and repulsion. Everything has contraction, expansion and stagnation in itself and the action and reaction of all these has taken shape in neutron, proton, atom, cell, body, plant kingdom, animal kingdom — each one in a specific rhythm, in a particular way.

As a person, Sri Sri Thakur wants us to be a person with attachment on the Lord (ইস্টানুরক্ত মানুষ). He even preferred this ('man with attachment on the Lord') over being a 'complete man'.

Why? Answer is given by Sri Sri Thakur in his continuing speech.

If one becomes attached with the Lord, then rest of things that are desirable come automatically. Whatever work we do, must be done thoroughly. This habit would lead us towards perfection. We have to go on advancing with that mindset and there is no end to it.

It was 21st November 1954. One Dr. Pal came from Samastipur.

Dr. Pal – What is our path and how do we proceed on that?

Sri Sri Thakur: Our object is to walk the path which leads to existence and growth. We need to be educated from someone who knows, understands and has seen.

Dr. Pal – What shall I do at my personal level?

Sri Sri Thakur: Be concentric; drink wine of life; which means do repeat the holy name and live in such a way that you continue to grow.

After a few more questions answers, Sri Sri Thakur directs him to take *diksha*.

One more point Sri Sri Thakur brings out during the conversation, where he says, "it (practice of *diksha*) is as simple as it is blissful.

Dr. Pal further enquires – 'Is *dharma* a solution to all problems?'

Sri Sri Thakur: We need to overcome death, by finding reason for ignorance; and we need to attain immortality by strengthening existence. *Dharma* is that which enables you to live and helps surroundings to live. As much we set surroundings aside, so much will be our loss. We need to cultivate knowledge and make surroundings and our own complexes favorable for life and growth. Chloromycetin, the elixir, has come out of analysis of death caused by typhoid. May be in future, we will be able to cleanse the surrounding to such an extent that we may not need the medicine; when typhoid will cease to exist.

Dr. Pal – Can any individual control the vast surroundings? Is there any need for mass initiation?

Sri Sri Thakur: A person will try and will achieve to the limit of his effort. We must try to spread the Lord (*ista*) everywhere around. Integration will come amongst those who are wedded to the Lord. That is how develops a collective consciousness. Our body consists of a number of cells, which are interconnected. If one cell starts degenerating, other cells get along to fulfill the system and that requires cells to be concentric. Same way, each one of us is like a cell in the body of universe. When we become inter-interested, we grow healthy and along with us grow the Lord of the universe. We can never segregate anyone. To make everyone grow, we need to get everyone initiated with Lord and make them habituated with right conducts. The surrounding is like our bone-flesh-nerves and muscle system. If one cell develops gangrene, that gets spread in all cells. *Sadachar* is that which prevents this. If I have to live, I need to arrange for everyone's living. Living and growing along with surroundings is *dharma*.

Dr. Pal – What is the objective of creation?

Sri Sri Thakur: Origin (of creation) is the Lord, and Lord stands for the urge to hold and nurture. There is positive pole and negative pole, which have got attraction and repulsion. Everything has contraction, expansion and stagnation in itself and the action and reaction of all these has taken shape in neutron, proton, atom, cell, body, plant kingdom, animal kingdom ─ each one in a specific rhythm, in a particular way. Mango grows in mango tree, but it can never be formed in jackfruit tree. Nature maintains individual distinctiveness. *Purushottam*, the God in flesh and blood, is the supreme manifestation of nature. We come to know what supreme bondage is, what genial urge of the soul is, when we observe Him. We crave to live long for eternity. We like to have uninterrupted memory, surpassing death and other innumerable breaks and be like *bodhisatwa*.

Dr. Pal – Is it possible to overcome destiny?

Sri Sri Thakur: We can create destiny. That's what we have done. God has granted what we have done. *Roj-keyamat* in Quran and resurrection in Bible, what I mean, says – rebirth in line with results of our deeds.

On 30th November 1954, Kshitish Ray asked Sri Sri Thakur – State of mind does not remain same all the time.

Sri Sri Thakur: Mental state is like waves, sometimes small and some other time large. This happens due to circumstantial interface. Mind at times get stimulated and some other time plunges into depression. Besides that there is current, which has tendency for unification (affinity). If that current exists, then nothing to be worried about. Then everything gets adjusted and is revealed as knowledge. You are then able to discover unified integration and then you are Solomon.

Kshitish da – How to convert *tamah* nature to *rajas* nature?

Sri Sri Thakur: *Tamah* is a state of insensitivity. To the extent it gets activated and adjusted, then it (*tamah*) morphs into *raajasik*. When that (*raajasik*) gets crowned with intelligence and becomes crystal integrated, then it becomes *satvik*. Through this process comes wisdom. Where wisdom takes practical shape that becomes the spirit. Spirit contains spirare that is to breathe.

Kshitish da – We seldom go to the level of crystal integration; we float on the surface.

Sri Sri Thakur: That is why there is disturbance.

Kshitish da – Everybody feels, it is a time taking process; therefore everyone looks for a short term plan.

Sri Sri Thakur: In a state where your being, primarily intelligence, is integrated with the Lord, then you develop the ability in a short time.

Mentu da – Then, is it that we have to be an accomplished worldly person?

Sri Sri Thakur: You have to be such an accomplished worldly wise person that you can manage the world.

Mentu da – What is the co-ordination between emotion and practicality?

Sri Sri Thakur: My love for the Lord has to be seen in shape through whatever work I do. I might accomplish many things; these are futile, if not meant for Him. Everything has to be only for Him. That brings about meaningful adjustment.

(Original record of conversation with Sri Sri Thakur in Bengali is available in 'Divya Dyuti' (2009) by Kumarkrishna Bhattacharya)

16th June 2013

Fifty three

Love for the Lord
It is acquired under His guidance

I did not come into Satsang to love Thakur. I came to get adjusted and more equipped to handle this world. But Thakur said to love him and adjustment would come. Since love is without ulterior motive, what this amounted to was substitution of his purpose for mine.

Love for Sri Sri Thakur is perhaps the only stuff that Sri Sri Thakur expects from us. All the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur love Him in some way or other. Though all of us deal with this in our own way, still it helps to know the subject from a firsthand account.

I remember to have read in *Alochana Prasange*, where Sri Sri Thakur was asked, 'how to love Guru?' Sri Sri Thakur said, 'did anybody tutor you as to how to love your wife?' So it appears, love is a spontaneous and natural affair with Guru. In continuation of this conversation, Sri Sri Thakur said, 'start loving; then you will know how to love'.

Besides, there is something called un-expectant love and unadulterated love. Let us know little more of this from an account presented by Edmund Joseph Spencer, who spent his lifetime with Sri Sri Thakur. He hailed from USA and was in association with Sri Sri Thakur since 1945.

Spencer writes. *Quote*

Thakur seemed to be loving me. Was it real love?

What is love? How can we know for sure that we are being loved? When pressed for a definition of love, Thakur said, "Sympathetic, in-tuned feeling that leads one to con-delightment in the fulfillment of another as if one's own is the index of love. But love cannot be defined, as the whole of it contains everything."

He said, love's satisfaction is only in bestowing, in giving. It has no affinity with the dealer mentality of give and take. In it, there is no expectation, no hope of return. Lust is the opposite of love. It is the inclination to get. It is wanton, wanting, unprincipled.

"Love begets life", he said. "People say it is blind, but it is consciously blind; for it is the life of the lover. He who loves will not allow anyone to touch that love - whether with facts or reason or passion. Love is

wise in this foolishness; for it defends existence, preserves the being, keeps intact the integration. Love is the wine of heaven. No flee is written in the law of love. Love exposes all the complexes. When one is testing love within oneself, one is shy to criticism. When one denies one's love, one becomes very morose and shy. If one admits one's love again, one will become more exalted, more refreshed. Love generally means love for superior. Love is like pouring water. If it is poured in a cup, it takes the shape of a cup. If in a tube, it becomes like the tube. But if it is poured in the ocean, it becomes one with the ocean."

What about Thakur? Did he love? Like an ocean? Or was he just talking a good line? I wrote in my notebook there in the summer of 1946: "It is ten months since I came to Thakur, and it is time to take stock. One thing is undeniable: he has made a deep impression on me. He himself is undeniable by me; I have tried, but I cannot do. It only ends in wish for extinction-and very painful.

Unquote

Spencer writes in his diary on 25th September 1951.

Quote

The day seemed wasted with many cares, and when I went to Boral Bungalow late at night, I only bowed, thinking, accept this hypocrisy. When I got up, I was surprised to see Thakur nod to me from inside his room. O Lord! He even accepts hypocrisy as long as it is admitted as such. I remembered a time in Pabna when I did not admit it as such. I had bowed but with repugnance and hostility. When I got up, I was surprised to see Thakur had turned his back on me. He was not interested in mere outward allegiance.

Unquote

Spencer writes in his diary on 30th January 1952.

Quote

Can a man be squeezed into loving? I have done all the things prescribed: offerings, meditation, service. But it does not work. Love must be a more spontaneous thing, I should imagine. I used to think I loved Thakur quite independently of all these things and I loved to think so. But the flow was stopped when he said, my love was a hypocritic courtesy. I have tried to get over this punch. At times I thought I was doing it. But the hurt is still there. And I know not what will cure it.

Unquote

Spencer writes in his diary on 20th April 1952.

Quote

I was pondering my wounded ego out in the field yesterday evening when he came to where I was. At first, I thought it must be a vision and I remembered stories of olden days when he appeared in different places at the same time. He stole up behind me, making no sound, and put his fingers over my eyes. He sat down on a rock with me, took me in his arms, and kissed me again and again. I asked why he had said 'hypocritic courtesy', and cried a little. He said he had meant the grabbing of another to enjoy his beauty or whatever. I said I had smashed my attachment for him, that I got no pleasure doing things for him, that my mind understood nothing anymore, that I was living in a wounded ego. He said love was not smashed and the ego could be reinstalled. "All love starts from lust", he said. He pointed to the hill,

worshipping the sky. It wanted to enjoy the sky, not be it. He reminded me of Jesus' words about master and servant. 'Who loves husband, father and mother more than me…." He asked me to sing a song. I sang one of recent composition:

Moon thru the trees,
Heavenly breeze,
You by my side,
I've nothing to hide.
The love that I feel,
Makes me more than a king,
Though I might have nothing,
Or yet everything,
But love you I do;
Somehow it is true.
May this love please,
Like moon through the trees.
The love that I feel,
Isn't mine, I know.
It comes from above
That loves all below,
But love you, I do;
Somehow it's true.
May this love please
Like moon thru the trees.
Unquote

Spencer writes in his diary on 19th May 1952.

Quote

I did not come into Satsang to love Thakur. I came to get adjusted and more equipped to handle this world. But Thakur said to love him and adjustment would come. Since love is without ulterior motive, what this amounted to was substitution of his purpose for mine.

Unquote

In drawing meaning from the above and particularly using this for our own sake, we need to remember that this is a personal account of a devotee; therefore, there is subjectivity and personal background to this. Edmund J Spencer was an American; therefore, by his origin and upbringing, he had a different temperament, outlook and psychological composition. Leaving aside these personality and subjective aspects, he can be considered to be class which can be representative of some of us. By seeing Sri Sri Thakur's dealings with him, we can perhaps draw some kind of reflection about how are we for Sri Sri Thakur.

We may bounce a question on ourselves, 'how much we love Sri Sri Thakur?' What does love to Sri Sri Thakur mean to us?

As it appears, love and lust are two extremes of the same continuum. Our professed love for the Thakur is lying somewhere in between; varying by degrees. Question here is: if that love has to be pure love, then how would it be?

The question comes of un-expectant love. What is the nature of that?

Above all these issues of modalities and varieties, our own wellbeing and progressive living are supreme. At one point, Spencer said, 'I came here for a purpose and not for loving Thakur. But then loving Thakur became an imperative for meeting my purpose'.

There are many circular logics in this, sometimes beyond our comprehension. But the bottom line is: what kind of love Sri Sri Thakur expects from us? How can we measure up to His expectation?

5th July 2013

Fifty four

Chosen Forty
Profile of Premium Workers

We get to know from literature, notwithstanding leading and dedicated band of contemporary devotees and workers; Sri Sri Thakur was frantically and anxiously looking for some special kind of fourty workers. Generally people say that he did not get such worker during his lifetime and that became a cause of his frustration.

It must be admitted upfront that many things what Sri Sri Thakur did and said remain beyond our commonsensical comprehension; and naturally so. He was God's manifestation on this earth, which is a very rare moment in the annals of human civilization. The 'descend' is a rare event, well orchestrated and meticulously played out by the Lord himself. The impact of his activities has far reaching consequences, much ahead into future, which we can hardly peep into.

This is one such pet project (or desire) of Sri Sri Thakur which we have least understood. It is found mentioned at many places in literature that Sri Sri Thakur was looking for 40 special workers. Generally we understand that for the great mission of the prophet, some great workers are required for execution. These workers necessarily have to be available around the prophet, during his lifetime and would work for the execution of the prophet's mission. During Sri Sri Thakur's time, we know quite a number of

exceptionally brilliant, dedicated and devoted disciples were around him, right from his childhood days and they have done marvelous work. In fact, they laid the foundation of Sri Sri Thakur's movement.

We also get to know from literature, notwithstanding this leading and dedicated band of contemporary devotees and workers, Sri Sri Thakur was frantically and anxiously looking for some special kind of 40 workers. Generally people say that he did not get such worker during his lifetime and that became a cause of his frustration.

I have not really understood the totality of this particular issue. What I have got from a book 'Priya Param', by Deviprasad Mukhopadhaya, Tapoban publication and I would like capture it here that Sri Sri Thakur specified qualities of these special 40, as he was expecting. Significantly, these qualities have been listed by Sri Sri Thakur in English in 1948. These are His words; it is for us to get the meaning of these attributes.

1. Tendency of sincere unrepelling adherence
2. Presence of mind with commonsense
3. Intelligent and untussling active acquisitive habits with apt use of time
4. Inquisitive responsive bend with educated adaptability
5. Maintaining monastic tendency
6. Forbearing perseverance and painstaking attitude
7. Lack of inferiority and selfish expectant attitude

Over and above these traits in their normal tenor, they should have sufficient general education along with speaking power, oratorical talent, writing capacity and charming exposition. M. Sc or M.A. in Philosophy or literature with artistic bend preferable. Celibate type is best.

Purpose of this write up is only to make us sensitive to this particular desire of Sri Sri Thakur and reflect for ourselves, how, which and how much of these qualities we can be possessed of.

28th July 2013

Chapter 5

Sri Sri Thakur's Grace

Fifty five

Thakur's Grace Defies Destiny

Grace Follows a Process & Has Logic

We must remember that the blissful Lord has kept us within his fold all the time. He is doing his best to get us rid of all imminent dangers. Unless we remain attached with him, overcoming our obsession with complexes; unless we conduct ourselves as per his wish and regulate ourselves; even if his blessings crown us, our character does not get refined and the effect remains temporary.

The incident being narrated here appears to be strange, but true. The points that are attempted to be made here have something to do with faith; but certainly do not subscribe to blind faith. We have every right to probe, question, and seek validation of every aspect of the incident. Objective of this piece of write up is to capture and highlight an aspect of Sri Sri Thakur's live play on this earth which has relevance with our life and its sustainability. The incident is taken form a Bengali book, *Priya Param*, by Deviprasad Mukhopadhyay, published by Tapoban Prakashan in 2004.

This incident dates back to the period when Sri Sri Thakur just has come to Deoghar. Construction of houses, bathroom, toilet etc, one or two at a time, was being done, meeting the necessities as was felt. One such new house has just come up. The house will be ready for occupation after getting cleaned of left out construction materials, sand and lime etc. Sri Sri Thakur called for Bhusan Chakravarty, an inmate of ashram, for this work.

'Hey Bhusan', said Sri Sri Thakur. 'Clean that house well. Pour enough water, sweep and mop the floor. Go right now and start the work. Oh, mind it, you will keep on pouring water and go on cleaning till I tell you to stop.'

This order came from Sri Sri Thakur at a time when sun was about to set. Bhusan got on to his assignment, picked up a bucket, a pair of vessel (of tin to carry water) and broom. That was the time when water in ashram was available in a few deep wells, from where water was pulled up manually, in bucket with rope; there was no water pump. Bhusan started drawing water from well, lifting the pair of water vessels with a shaft on his shoulder; and then went on sweeping the room, cleaning the sand, lime and other leftover materials with broom.

Bhusan, like all the inmates of ashram did, carried out Sri Sri Thakur's direction sincerely and promptly. Everyone had deep and abiding obedience for Sri Sri Thakur, as each one had unshakable confidence on Sri Sri Thakur's unerring direction, resolute purposefulness and benevolent care, however painstaking may be the task he directed. Bhusan is on his Master's duty, without dropping an eyelid, ceaselessly, as per direction, till stop signal comes.

Evening grew into night. It became half past ten, when Bhusan saw neatness in the house and felt completion of his work. He stepped out, wiping his brows and shaping up his hair, moved towards Thakur's abode. 'Let me report Thakur about the completion of work', he spoke to himself. His work will complete only when Thakur admits.

'You fool, gave up your work and moved away?' thundered Sri Sri Thakur from a distance, the moment his eyesight caught a glimpse of Bhusan. 'I told you to keep on watering and washing the floor till I stop you. Go back instantly; keep on pouring water.'

Bhusan got back to his work. Night became hard; ashram slipped into slumber and eerie silence engulfed the surroundings. Unmindful of anything else, Bhusan, with the steadfastness of a devotee, is going on repeating his chore; carry water, pour it and drain it out with broom.

Hour hand of clock touched one, but for Bhusan, time is standing still, till his Master's call comes. He thought to approach Thakur once again just to reaffirm if he still needs to continue. He came to Thakur's abode only to be greeted with darkness. He could see Sri Sri Thakur asleep under a shade on the courtyard. Out from the darkness came out Bankim, one of Sri Sri Thakur's attendants. Coming close to Bhusan, Bankim whispered, 'Sri Sri Thakur is sleeping. Before retiring, he said - when Bhusan comes, tell him to go home'.

Bhusan felt instant repulsion and remorse. He then felt that he was tired, after undergoing grueling exertion. For a moment, the graceful image of Sri Sri Thakur got overshadowed. 'He is fast asleep after dinner. If I had not come, then maybe I would have been engaged in drawing water whole night! Why this to me? He could have sent out a message for me.' With these disturbing thoughts, he walked back to his cottage. His cottage was opposite to Golap Bag on Rohini Road.

At home, everyone has gone to bed, keeping the door ajar. He entered into his home, changed dress, had a wash and took his meal which was neatly kept covered for him. His bed was kept ready in the side room; mosquito net sprang up on the cot. He was about to step on to the bed, lifting the net-screen from one side. In the faint visibility of the subdued lamp kept by the side, Bhusan spotted a tall snake curled up on his bed. Spontaneously, he sprang out of bed; got up and shouted. Others in the house gathered with light and stick. The snake uncurled itself and furtively glided into the drain. Bhusan otherwise a man of grit, got a terrible shock and started palpitating. It took some time to dawn in his intelligence that he was saved from a snake bite.

Bhusan spent rest of the night waiting for sun to rise. He rushed to Thakur and narrated the event of last night. Thakur heard everything without any visible reaction on his face. He did not exhibit any symptom to the evidence that he knows anything of that event. He who knows everything, where is the need for him to betray anxiety? At the end of everything, Sri Sri Thakur said, 'Just get your horoscope examined by Pundit ji.'

Bhusan took his horoscope to Pundit ji, Girish Chandra Kabyatirtha, and appraised him about Sri Sri Thakur's desire. Pundit ji was an accomplished astrologer. He took the horoscope in his hand, made some reading and then looked at Bhusan's face with a curious intensity of a child. Pundit ji re-examined the horoscope and stared at Bhusan, again and over again, as if the mystery for him was getting deeper.

That made Bhusan curious. 'What happened Pundit ji?', Bhusan could not resist his anxiety. Wonderstruck, Pundit ji counter questioned to Bhusan, 'How are you alive? You had an inauspicious moment of fatality yesterday, and that was to be caused by snakebite.'

Bhusan recalled last evening's happenings like an electric flash. Why Thakur ordered Bhusan to pour water till late night? Had it been his normal schedule, the snake would have got its prey in time in place. His Lord's blessing, in the guise of His order that kept him engaged elsewhere in hard labour, the inevitable was dislodged; the cruel fate was foiled; Bhusan retained his life.

Bhusan, his horoscope in his hand, ran to Thakur like a mad; poured his heart out through tears. Sri Sri Thakur heard and witnessed everything calmly and uttered two words, 'take care'.

Narrator of this event, author of '*Priya Param*' Deviprasad Mukhopadhyay, who spent his lifetime in association with Sri Sri Thakur, writes the following as conclusion:

We must remember that the blissful Lord has kept us within his fold all the time. He is doing his best to get us rid of all imminent dangers. Unless we remain attached with him, overcoming our obsession with complexes; unless we conduct ourselves as per his wish and regulate ourselves; even if his blessings crown us, our character does not get refined and the effect remains temporary. So, despite his grace, our unadjusted character can let us fall in any grave.

24th July 2013

Fifty six

Miracle is Mirage of Ignorance

Miracle is observed through process

Miracle does happen, at a higher level of maneuverability. At that level, human effort works in conjunction with divine effort. 'What is humanly impossible, can be divinely possible', said Sri Sri Thakur. But it is a joint effort of human and divine; a symbiotic act of fulfillment, a glorious play of law of nature.

Everyone, I not an exception, at sometime or other expects some kind of miraculous things to happen. The expectation comes to us, as ordinary people we are, naturally, as a corollary of high aspiration or out of desperation. In any situation, much against reality on the ground, we hope for big things. On a common plane, it appears to be normal; a kind of rational expectation.

There are another set of people, who believe things to happen without making specific effort towards the desired result. They just expect things to fall from the sky. That type of miracle mongering becomes an obsession. It manifests in so many ways; which at its extreme form can be said to be irrational. For many, it becomes a habit. We do not have dearth of people around, who visit a deity or shrine regularly, with hope that something they cherish would happen just by the visit or by some offerings, which they pledge.

Paradoxically, miracle and belief, comes concomitantly. Only a person, who is a believer, would see a possibility of miracle to happen out of divine intervention. Combination of these two attributes makes miracle a strange phenomenon. Contrary to the above, an atheist or a cynic would not bother for any such unexpected things to happen. So, the dividing line between faith and miracle mania is very thin.

At times, we have seen some miraculous happening going viral, making people frenzied, with the help of mass visual media like TV & net. We have heard of some deity drinking milk at all places same time, some other deity crying, drops of tear falling from the eyes. Such happenings makes us to think how much susceptible, we as a nation, to gullibility. We are much weak in mass psychology, vulnerable to anything in the name of God or faith or religion. Public can be credulous at times, displaying intense appetite for supernatural things to happen.

This subject, playing a very significant role in our life, has been explained by Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra in his unique way. I have attempted to elucidate Sri Sri Thakur's exposition on the subject at three levels.

Level I

Miracle, defined as 'good or welcome act or event which does not follow the known laws of nature and is therefore thought to be caused by some supernatural power', remains only in dictionary. As something contrary to known law of causation does not occur, we can say, at the first level of understanding, that miracle actually does not happen. Still something happens which we often call as miracle. That is because, the cause of that particular happening is not known to us.

This first level of understanding tempts us to believe that we may be rewarded or may get some benefit like a windfall, without working for that. But, expectation to get something without doing for it is actually a myth. Sri Sri Thakur goes one step further and says, you get what you are worthy of. 'Do, be and get', is the formula given by Sri Sri Thakur.

Level II

Second level of understanding on the subject is that any result is usually an outcome of combination of multiple causal factors. Most of the time, we are not capable of knowing the complex web of relationships among these multiple causes and effects. Still, for any act of consequence or any event happening is known to have a defined track of causalities. When we tread on that track, some favourable or otherwise extraneous factors do act and react to our movement and the resultant outcome gets determined.

The analysis at the second level brings out: a) some known factors, b) some unknown factors and c) some definite action for a particular object. Then there are: d) intended consequences and e) unintended consequences, all of which are to be dealt with at respective action level.

At this level, there are certain known areas of action and certain grey areas of causation and thirdly, there are unintended consequences. While some are within our zone of control, there are areas outside our zone of influence too. It is here that we assign a space to the supernatural forces, presumed to have worked. Many believers pitch in their tent in this space, the space outside our zone of influence. That provides a room for believing in miracle.

Level III

The third level of understanding on the subject is clearly spelt out by Sri Sri Thakur in the following saying:

"Be thou sure; there is no miracle in the world. It is observed in materializing the commandments of Beloved the Great; with allegiance, adherence and active service, in an uphill interest of emotional outlook. Think, act and see with inter-related attachment of meaningful, compatible, co-relating concert of affinity; wisdom winks there; bloom of becoming glows there." (The Message, Vol. 9, October 1965, page 284)

The second sentence of the above paragraph, takes us to the third level of understanding on the subject. We therefore, come to a view that normally unexpected and unusual events favorable to us can happen under certain conditions, as spelt out in the statement.

The meaning of miracle comes out in full play at this level of understanding. We have seen prophets conducting many miraculous things during their lifetime. They move certain forces which give rise to some strange and out of the world things. Even there, nothing happens out of nothing.

This space under the conditions spelt out by Sri Sri Thakur provides a clear room for miracle. But that miracle is different from those analyzed under level I & II.

Summary

The operative part of Sri Sri Thakur's view on the subject comes from the 3rd level of understanding. It keeps the option of miracle open. The responsibility of opening that option is left in the hand of the person. It gives the key of possibilities in the hand of each individual with certain conditions.

What is significant for us to conclude that miracle does happen, at a higher level of maneuverability. At that level, human effort works in conjunction with divine effort. 'What is humanly impossible, can be divinely possible', said Sri Sri Thakur. But it is a joint effort of human and divine; a symbiotic act of fulfillment, a glorious play of law of nature.

At that level, the zone of capability of a person gets stretched. A person outgrows one's limit of capacity. At that level a dumb can be loquacious and a handicapped can cross the mountain peak.

5th September 2013

Fifty seven

No Go Situation for Sri Sri Thakur

At times Sri Sri Thakur expresses his helplessness

Sri Sri Thakur was embodiment of divine power. He was the divine, in living form. He was God, in human form. He was all powerful, indomitable and invincible. Looking at all these features, we very well can comprehend that Sri Sri Thakur could do anything what he wanted. He actually accomplished many so called impossible things, which largely go to prove that He was gracious to the extreme.

The title of this article may be repulsive to some devotees. That is obviously not the intention. Intention is to reflect and highlight one particular aspect of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's life and liability.

Let us first remind ourselves that Sri Sri Thakur was embodiment of divine power. He was the divine, in living form. He was God, in human form. He was all powerful, indomitable and invincible. Looking at all these features, we very well can comprehend that Sri Sri Thakur could do anything what he wanted. He actually accomplished many so called impossible things, which largely go to prove that He was gracious to the extreme. If need arises, in exceptional cases, he has come in the way of impending and imminent disasters and has protected and rescued his devotees. He has warded off many mishaps; eliminated many negatives and paved way for all positives to come into the life of his devotees.

Notwithstanding His grace, the general condition required is that one has to fall in line with His principles. His core principles are universal and eternal. If, say, someone inadvertently or mischievously plays foul with His principles and expects that Sri Sri Thakur's blessings would work for him, for whatever eligibility one may claim to; this may turn out to be preposterous. Under that situation, Sri Sri Thakur finds himself at a roadblock. Here the person blocks the passage through which Sri Sri Thakur would have facilitated (many) things. Not following His principles and not adhering to His wishes amount to creating a barrier between oneself and intended consequences. Here Sri Sri Thakur finds himself in no-go predicament.

Sri Sri Thakur said in Satyanusaran, "The desired good of man remains hidden beneath his habitual superstitions, and the giver of good is punished only when conflict appears between the goodness He gives and the habitual superstitions. So the Saviour is slandered in His own country."

We say that we are surrendered at Sri Sri Thakur. We undoubtedly believe so. But the act of surrendering is a mysterious term, at least so it appears. There we fall into trap of self limitation. This is best understood by some live cases, cited below:

This is a well documented anecdote in Thakur's literature. I am recounting from my own memory. Zamindar of Muktagachia (an area in Bangladesh) came to visit Sri Sri Thakur. After visit and having discussion with Sri Sri Thakur, he was to leave for his home place in the evening. But Sri Sri Thakur

desired that he stayed back for that night at ashram and take early morning train next day for his home. But the zamindar sought excuse, as he had some important property matters to deal with the next day, for which he had to go back that night itself. Sri Sri Thakur insisted for his staying at ashram; but that was not to be. Then Sri Sri Thakur offered that a vehicle from ashram would drop him at Iswardi station. That was also not to be, as the zamindar hired a taxi for round trip from Iswardi station while coming, so that the same taxi would ferry him back to station. Finally, much against the wish of Sri Sri Thakur, the zamindar left ashram for his home. On the way to station, zamindar's car met with a fatal accident; that was the last trip of his life.

Sri Sri Thakur was crestfallen hearing the sad news. He repented profusely that he could not save the zamindar from the clutch of sure death, despite his knowledge of it beforehand. He was deep in remorse for he could not save the zamindar.

Here was a case where Sri Sri Thakur was helpless. If the zamindar did abide by Sri Sri Thakur's earnest desire, he could have escaped the supreme danger. But, a great dilemma!

Was the zamindar wrong in doing whatever he did? He was bound by the call of duty. He had no idea of the impending disaster waiting to happen? He had no clue to understand the seriousness and significance of Sri Sri Thakur's desire. Did Sri Sri Thakur foretell him about the impending danger? It was primarily Sri Sri Thakur's call, as no one other than him knew about the future in store.

Sri Sri Thakur, merciful as he is, provided an explanation of this helplessness. He said that he could have forcefully detained the zamindar that night, whereby the latter would have avoided the fatal mishap. In that scenario, the zamindar would have had to incur the material loss for which he would have regretted lifelong. Zamindar could have never known that his life was saved that day; but he would have carried a sense of loss of his property. That sense of grievance against Sri Sri Thakur for lifelong, would have caused more harm to him than the death with devotion on Sri Sri Thakur.

Once someone came to Sri Sri Thakur and sought his permission to leave ashram. Sri Sri Thakur said, 'you have already booked your ticket. Go carefully.' This is again a case where Sri Sri Thakur felt constrained.

Many a time, we contrive permission from Sri Sri Thakur. Sometime, we take our feelings as His desire.

Similar instances really put us into a dilemma to know what exactly Sri Sri Thakur's desire is. I have no definite answer to this question. Under this situation, only thing I ask to myself, are we surrendered at Him with truthfulness, loyalty and faith on him?

15th September 2013

Fifty eight

Sri Sri Thakur Provides Us Clues of Life
His Commands are His Blessing

In today's situation, when Sri Sri Thakur is physically no more available, that command is to be felt by some kind of signal or circumstantial development. There is a bit of grey area in this. That grey area is caused by our ignorance, incapacity and limitations of all kinds which we build around us as we go. Here one question comes: how much room we allow Him to play in our life, so that His command prevails.

Those of us who follow Sri Sri Thakur are aware that He is the path, the light and the savior. We are aware that His mercy pours like rain water in monsoon in India. We understand that faith and devotion on Sri Sri Thakur has got enormous significance in achieving whatever we need in life. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to look at life dispassionately, objectively and intelligently. We, the disciples are, to a large extent, sentimental lot. We at times need to step back and be a little more rational in our life. Sri Sri Thakur was scientific, rational and logical in his approach. Of course, he had a bit of magic up his sleeve, but that is also a science, though at a different level. We really do not know much about those charms of Sri Sri Thakur.

Above everything else, Sri Sri Thakur has provided us clues to deal with life. In this article, we focus on one such clue, as came out during answers to two devotees' appeal.

Part I

The day was 14th January 1962 in Deoghar. Time was pre election in West Bengal. Dr. Jeevan Dhar a disciple visited Sri Sri Thakur and sought His blessings to be successful in election. Subsequently, he was elected as member of West Bengal legislative Assembly and became Health Minister in West Bengal.

Sri Sri Thakur had a lengthy talk with Dr. Jeevan, as the latter overwhelmingly listened, as recorded in *Smritir Mala* (2006), Bengali by Manilal Chakraborty.

Sri Sri Thakur said, "You besought my blessing! My blessings are there in my discipline. You treat patients. You find it hard to deal with patients who do not follow your prescription. It is easy for you to cure

someone who follows your advice. In the same way, man achieves success, if he observes the commandments of his blissful Guide, the Lord. Thus life attains completeness and beauty."

Part II

A girl ran up to Sri Sri Thakur. That was an evening in the month of September or October 1959. The girl is about to write her school final examination, scheduled in March next year. She had not yet started preparing for the examination. She thought to seek Sri Sri Thakur's blessings before embarking on the preparation. She had faith that if Sri Sri Thakur blesses, then she could certainly pass the examination.

Sri Sri Thakur after dinner was taking rest in the first room in Baral Bungalow (now known as Thakur Bungalow). Bada ma (Sri Sri Thakur's wife) was in conversation with him. Sri Sri Thakur was enjoying a laugh, in his inimitable style; His whole body swaying with the rhythm of His laugh. It was a heavenly scene. Accompanied by her uncle (Anil Chakravarty), the girl prostrated before Sri Sri Thakur and said, "Thakur, I will write school final examination this time. Bless me, so that I will come out successful."
Thakur said, "What is the meaning of successful?"
The girl pressed her little palms together in supplication and said, "You say the meaning".
The gracious Thakur said, "Successful means to do and be. You work. My blessing is there."

The school going girl of 1959 is aged today. She is Smt. Mallika Bharadwaj. She has recounted this event in just published annual journal of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra Research Academy, Kolkata, *Yajanikaa:* Vol VII, 2012-13.

Summarily stated, Sri Sri Thakur meant to say that 'His blessing lies in His commands and our fate is the outcome of what we do'.

Part III- Where is His Blessing and what are His Commands?

Today, the above summary statements do not come to me with its literal meaning; rather the intent of Sri Sri Thakur's saying appears to confront me with the cruelty of reality. I would presume that life for almost all of us is being sharpened on the hard rock of existential crisis. I got into Sri Sri Thakur's order in February 1974. Last 40 years of knowing (or pretension of knowing, as it appears today) Sri Sri Thakur falls flat, when this intent of Sri Sri Thakur is received with mystery, bordering on disbelief. Four decades of understanding of Sri Sri Thakur is challenged and rebuffed by this statement.

Do these two statements mean to say that Sri Sri Thakur cannot help us? Did not we believe and rely on His supreme strength to fight evil and seek His immense grace for the fallen and miserable?

Steering clear of this feelings, it is pertinent to ask, how are we, the disciples at large, entitled to His blessing? What is meant by His commandment or discipline?

For a disciple, the operative and applicative part of His commandment or discipline (अनुशासन) would perhaps cover adhering and putting the following into practice: His principles of *Yajan*, *yaajan* & *istabhrity*, with '*unicentral attachment, intensity and continuity*' (His terminology, hence italicized)

Application of these principles in the life of each individual will have some elements of customization to person and situation. Sri Sri Thakur's attribute of maintaining individual distinctiveness (बैषीस्ट्यपालि) allows that differences. Here comes the issue of 'degree' of adherence to the principles, particularly, adherence getting circumscribed by individual limitations of birth, affiliation, circumstances, pre-conditions

with which a man remains surrounded by; so the degree of adherence gets limited and hence the extent of blessing.

But Sri Sri Thakur has not accepted this limitation part. He says, the limitations are our own creation and can be overcome. Limitations are largely created by attachment to complexes, which can be overcome by an antidote, which is attachment to Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur has explained this by means of war between 'predetermination' and 'freewill'.

His blessing in essence turns out to be overcoming the limitations of 'predetermination' and exerting 'freewill', with the catalyst of love and attachment on Sri Sri Thakur. The ratio between these two factors in a person's life determines the fraction of His blessings received by the person.

Sri Sri Thakur's outlook to life was that of an optimistic, creative and progressive one. It was natural for Him to stay in a state of ecstasy and enthrall others into a pure divine joy. This transmission of joy, energy and life into everyone was His benevolence and it was indiscriminate. But for the receiver, it came measured by the limitations of his capacity to receive, retain and recycle. Here comes the play of adherence to His commands. Adherence to His commands clears the passage of the transmission, enables one to receive and play with the blessings.

The limitations of people like us are manifested in existential crisis. The supreme controller of events Sri Sri Thakur won't interfere with that eco system which comes as existential crisis to each person. The ghost of existential struggle is not wished away by Sri Sri Thakur. Rather, that is the starting point at which Sri Sri Thakur holds a person with his command. He makes us conscious about our true existence, its natural hankering, its normal tendency and its further wellbeing. He makes us aware that your existence at its core is सच्चिदानंदमय. Your existence is real, responsive and blissful. His command compels us to mend our ways and take life in consonance with the true nature and rhythm of existence.

Moments of suffering comes when existence comes under threat. Suffering also comes when the go of existence gets constricted and obstructed. That is the time, when one prays to Sri Sri Thakur for blessings. The merciful Thakur descends from His pedestal of arbiter and upholder of rule of law and commands the situation to relief. Here again His commands, may be by way of some move, comes as His blessings. In today's situation, when Sri Sri Thakur is physically no more available, that command is to be felt by some kind of signal or circumstantial development. There is a bit of grey area in this. That grey area is caused by our ignorance, incapacity and limitations of all kinds which we build around us as we go. Here one question comes: how much room we allow Him to play in our life, so that His command prevails.

Two elements are relevant here. One is: devotion and second is experience. These two help us in distress situation to get His command and get going.

Significant to observe that in our time of distress, Sri Sri Thakur behaves in human way; not in so called detached enlightened way. He cries with us; He feels our pain, He nurses us, he heals us. His commands perhaps at that time come in the form of various succors like medicine for a patient, to given an example.

A very pertinent fact that needs to be highlighted here is that Sri Sri Thakur is present and available to us today; as He was available in those days of His lifetime (1888-1969). Few days prior to his sad departure from the earth, He pronounced repeatedly a short line in Sanskrit, "अनुकूल: सदाबिभू: पदमनाभ: मनप्रभु:" We exactly do not understand what this saying means literally. Sanskrit scholars can only decipher its

meaning. What has been indicated by the compiler of *Smritir Mala*, who heard it from Sri Sri Thakur, perhaps Sri Sri Thakur left it for posterity that the name and frame of Anukul will remain as our Master and savior. He gave an eternal stamp to the name and frame 'Anukul'. I remember to have heard from my ritwik, Sushil Ranjan Das, who was a longtime associate of Sri Sri Thakur from 1953 onwards and passed away in 1979 that Sri Sri Thakur used to come to him in the same physical form in meditation as he used to see him during his lifetime. The physical frame and the form have something eternal about it.

Extended format of His command would perhaps mean translating His mission into action. Study of His life and His literature clearly throws up some areas of action as He desired. Plunging into some of those activities for the sole purpose of furthering His image and interest is a good way of earning His blessings. A subtle logic works there, which is, 'our interest lies implicit in fulfilling His interest'. Two factors are pre-requisite in undertaking His mission. First one is: individual aptitude for a particular type of work that would fulfill Sri Sri Thakur's interest. One has to be little perspective and selective in choosing one or few out of wide range of activities which go under the name of His mission. Sri Sri Thakur used to cultivate individual aptitude and talent in a way that a person gets enriched and be fulfilled. Today, one would naturally get inclined towards such activities which would complement and supplement his own aptitude. This involves a bit of self assessment and self determination, which one has to do. Second prerequisite is: affiliation and association with like minded people or groups or organization. Today a number of groups, sub-groups and organizations are active in the field of Sri Sri Thakur's activities. One can always find one's own affiliation, without getting into conflict with others. Here again one has to be a little circumspect about the association that one chooses for the obvious reason that the group interest should not come in conflict with own one's own interest and with Sri Sri Thakur's interest.

Mending one's habits and behavior in line with Sri Sri Thakur's expectation (or commands) is a sure way of making oneself worthy of His blessing.

At times of distress, some of us look for some astrological remedial measures, over and above seeking Sri Sri Thakur's blessings. In distress situation, rational explanation system breaks down and one looks for remedy and relief irrespective of the rationality behind it. As far as we know, astrological remedies, if properly done, are perfectly in consonance with Sri Sri Thakur's ideology. However, for the sake of clarity, we must state that measures for Sri Sri Thakur's blessing have their own place. Astrological procedures can never be substitute to Sri Sri Thakur's measures. Following astrological solutions do not dilute, even by thought and belief, our measures for Sri Sri Thakur's blessings. It must be remembered that astrology is a science. Only problem we encounter today is that it is an ancient science, whose practice today is much shrouded in ignorance. That way, ignorance in any field is a bane and can cause lot of problems in life.

Part IV – Do your work, my blessing is there

Let us take, for argument sake, that Sri Sri Thakur says this (do your work, my blessing is there) to everyone under all situations; though this is certainly not the case. I am only trying to generalize His advice and trying to derive a universal meaning out of it. He expects us to do our work. Certainly, the expectation would mean doing right work in the best possible way. What to do, how to do, when to do, how much to do and then taking care of the peripheral issues; as there are many issues to a particular work. When Sri Sri Thakur said, 'you work'; He definitely meant, work properly, sincerely, adhering to its due process in the manner leading to success, without any inkling of negativity, and without allowing any kind of lethargy.

It is significant for us to note that He does His part. We can take it for certain that He does His part in the most appropriate way, as required for a given work, under a given situation.

Putting both the parts together, we get a view what the celebrated verse in Gita says on *karma*. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Lord Sri Krishna says "*Karmanye Vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana, Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani*" (Do your duty and be detached from its outcome, do not be driven by the end product, enjoy the process of getting there.)

Sri Sri Thakur is exactly saying the same, when He says: you do your part and do not worry about the result.

In Sri Sri Thakur's blessing, I see a new element, where He is taking responsibility of His part. When He says in 'Satyanusaran' that "Your destiny is His desire", He is taking upon Himself the outcome of our action. He is allowing us to leave the result of our action on to Him. His benevolence perhaps works through this.

Part V - Conclusion

Summarily stated,

- Sri Sri Thakur's commands provides a way of life for His disciples, which invokes His blessings automatically.

- His commands are there and we have to know what those are.

- Outcome of our action is joint impact of our action and advances from His side. What He does from His side is not exactly clear to us. But He certainly does a wonder.

A skeptical mind still would ask, 'how and where do I get Sri Sri Thakur's blessing? I am praying Him all the time.'

30th April 2014

Fifty nine

Sri Sri Thakur Makes Unlikely Things to Happen
That is His Grace & There is Science Behind it

At times, Sri Sri Thakur used to press Payaari da too much for giving relief to the suffering of the people. Paayari da was a highly dedicated doctor and an ardent devotee of Sri Sri Thakur. At times Sri Sri Thakur would ask him, 'why are you not able to provide quick relief to so and so person?' Once Pyaari da retorted, 'I am evidently trying my best. But everyone has some suffering as providence, as we all know. What more can I do?' With renewed urgency, Sri Sri Thakur would say, 'What is the use, if you fail to remedy the providential sufferings of people?'

Section I

I suddenly was joyous when I spotted a colorful flower on top of a long stem, reared its head and swaying in gentle breeze on my balcony from a pot which was lying barren and uncared for long time. I said that this was nature, which could make original color, beauty and pure happiness, out of nothing. It is creation of the Creator. The Creator expresses himself in numerous ways; He perhaps thereby feels happy and keeps us happy. Nothing else, least the human endeavor, can explain this creation. In that blossom, I got to view a manifestation of Sri Sri Thakur's grace. It is just happiness, pure ecstasy, joy that is the expression of Sri Sri Thakur. And that feeling gets transmitted when we look at Him, feel Him, touch Him, hear Him. The joy just radiates, like sunrays gets sprayed when sun rises in the morning, breaking the darkness of the night.

I remember to have read an article of Rabindranath Tagore, in his celebrated book *Gitanjali* in Bengali, wherein he described the spectacle of star studded sky at dark night, viewed from the terrace of his building. He looked the decorated expanse of the terrestrial dome and felt as if a celestial orchestra was in progress. Nothing else but nature could cause the view and the feelings. He said that he was overjoyed to view and hear the melody, getting echoed all over the horizon.

In a Bengali monthly, *Bodhadipti*, April 2015, I read an interesting article written by Prof. Amalendu Chatterjee. The article narrates happening in the life of a couple, Mrs. and Mr. Nikhil Chandra Das, of Sinthi in West Bengal. Mr. Das has since passed away and the story is being recounted by Mrs. Das. The long story summarily states that their son till the age of eight was not able to speak. When they went and

visited Sri Sri Thakur in Deoghar, they silently submitted their grief, Sri Sri Thakur on his own assured the mother that her son would soon have voice. Surprisingly, the boy started calling mother next day.

This is a miracle and to my knowledge, uncountable such miracles did happen with the grace of Sri Sri Thakur when He was around. Two issues are creating turmoil in me; not for my interest alone, but for the sake of everyone in the humanity. One subject is 'His grace' and second is 'miraculous healing of disease or incapacities'.

Section II

We say and we truly do believe that His grace is pouring even today. His grace is bountiful and it does not discriminate for or against anyone. It is for anyone to hold, capture, contain and make use of His grace. Question for us is: how to capture His grace? Answer provided by Sri Sri Thakur summarily states: 'have faith and dependence on Him. Follow His ideology. Act on and materialize His directions'.

Is it hard for anybody to follow and adopt the above path, presented in three simple sentences?

Yes, it is hard to have faith and act on His line. Keeping oneself steady on faith in the face of existential struggle requires a firmness, which many of us may lack. On the face of it, faith is based on something unseen, unverifiable, whereas existential struggle is real and undeniable.

Here, the presence of Sri Sri Thakur, the living Ideal, made a difference. People saw Sri Sri Thakur and His huge presence. That was the basis for faith. It was faith on Sri Sri Thakur and His capability. That faith was unshakable, as it was tried, tested and rooted firmly on verifiable facts. Sri Sri Thakur was divinity and science, both together. He took pains to assert the ideology in unambiguous terms. His ideology was revealed by the live acts of Sri Sri Thakur and also in black and white. His ideology bore relevance and applicability to the existential part of human life. Therefore that faith had a live basis.

Today, that base is not as clearly available as it was then. That base however exists on faith. Therefore, today faith perhaps is the starting point. Of course faith begins with knowledge and gets reinforced by experience. Faith is something like air; it can be thin and it can be hard. Faith is like cloud; it can be soft and can be tough. Today, we need to know Sri Sri Thakur, know His ideology through His literature and need to have conscious faith.

Strength of faith depends upon reciprocation. If I have faith on Sri Sri Thakur; do I feel that Sri Sri Thakur responds to me? If, for example, I take recourse to certain path, consequent to having faith on Sri Sri Thakur, do I get rewarded? If I do, then my faith gets strengthened. Of course, it is not that easy to assess these causalities and consequences, linking to faith. Therefore, faith has a stickiness that perhaps goes with man's inherent tendency to have faith on something or somebody. From our experience we can reasonably assert that faith gets responded to; primarily, on two accounts: a) due to our internal conditioning and b) due to the reciprocation by the object of faith; Sri Sri Thakur in our case.

Faith invites dependence. When we develop faith on Sri Sri Thakur's omnipotence, then we tend to think that Sri Sri Thakur will share our existential burden. It comes naturally to every devotee, partly because, every devotee needs support. Every devotee is either an aspirant (upward looking) or a struggler (support seeking), if not a sufferer (relief seeking). Then looking up to Sri Sri Thakur for helping hand and for alleviating force is perhaps natural. We believe, there is nothing much wrong in having dependence on Sri Sri Thakur, as long as our own self confidence is maintained and own capacity is enhanced. Faith is an accelerating tool; it is not only a supporting (crutch like) tool.

In a sense, everyone is trying hard, in their own way, to do what is said above. The degree, direction and dialect of 'faith', 'following Him' and 'materializing His dicta' vary from person to person. The variation and the impact of the variation are quite wide, distinct yet imperceptible. At the level of self (individual), it is simple action, within one's own zone of action and area of control. But at the level of collective reckoning, there are complexities, particularly with respect to perception, assessment and interpersonal interaction. Some God man, some religious organizations take good advantage of the collective confusion on faith. Faith has historically been used as public opium. That is a kind of exploitation of a pure object for malicious purpose.

Section III

Miraculous healing happened during the lifetime of all prophets. The whole mythology in various religions is made of these incidents. However, miracle healing always has remained mysterious. We are never sure as to what happens and for what. Getting a supposedly incurable incapacity or chronic disease cured is a hard thing to do and its process is not known.

All of us would like to get relief through a divine process, as many of us face that kind of sufferings at sometime or other in life. I am in no position to comment on that, as the issue is far complicated and sensitive than that can be handled. From my own limited experience, I can share my belief that supposedly impossible events do happen by His grace. The process is not known to us, as it is too complicated. But for us, the process is 'to follow His principle with total surrender'. And if any specific task, direction, indication and command is available or is on hand, then those are to be accomplished single mindedly and expeditiously.

For us, the process is 'sharing our sorrows with Him'. When sorrow is shared, it gets lesser. Instances of miracle healing have been seen when Sri Sri Thakur was physically there and we therefore have to believe it (the act of miracle healing).

Whatever we submit to Sri Sri Thakur, He accepts those. Means of communication with Him is mental thought (psychological advances). That mental thought has to be so intense, sincere and resolute that it must condition our physical acts. When Sri Sri Thakur was physically present, it was seen that He could sense the problem that one would have come with. But still, at times, He would ask people to state the problem. He at time would ask people to readout the problem, if it has come through a letter. At times, He would ask people to write letter and communicate the problem. At time, He would enquire about someone's specific problem through telephone. All these are physical and external actions, which He would make one to go through. It has meaning for the person and for the environment. But He knows the problem and He knows the thought process going in the person's mind.

Having known the problem, Sri Sri Thakur works on the problem. He sympathizes; He provided guidance and solutions; He seeks help from others; He mobilized resources. He does everything at His command to solve the problem. Here, something remains mystery for us. His knowledge is such and resources at His command are such that, He could do something which we do not know. That part appears to us as miracle.

He has attempted to explain that part as the 'gift of Supreme Father'. He was heard to quote sometimes, 'there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy'. He was seen to act on both 'logic' and 'magic'.

Here comes one point; a very significant point. Large part of the role in this process, the share of responsibility in this process, rests with man.

We have read in literature, people seek blessings, saying, 'Thakur, you bless me so that ……'. Thakur in folded hands, with all humility used to be heard saying, 'the power of blessing is with you…..'. That means the active part of causing the desired phenomenon to happen lies with us. An analogy can be, in a transaction of give and take, the receiver is equal, if not more, active than the giver.

Today, science is trying to understand the process of spiritual healing. Today's the Speaking Tree supplement of Times of India writes the following. This has come by way of interview from Dr. Deepak Chopra.

"Recently, we had asked scientist Elizabeth Blackburn, a Nobel laureate and her team to research at our meditation centre. They found that within four days of intense meditation, the enzyme, telomerase went up by 40 percent in meditators. Telomerase influences telomeres which are the ends of chromosomes. When we grow older the length of telomeres decrease, and at a certain point, the length becomes so short that the chromosome falls apart and that is the cellular basis of death. The fact that telomeres increased by 40 percent in over three days of intense meditation suggest that meditation prolongs lifespan. We have about 23,000 genes; a gene is like a word in a language and DNA is like alphabet; your body is an expression of your genes. At conception, you would have had double strands of chromosomes with 23,000 genes and that expressed itself as your body. With meditation, since genes influence self healing, the expressions of those genes that cause inflammation are controlled. Inflammation is the background of everything, from autoimmune disorders and infections to chronic illness like diabetes, heart disease and several types of cancers."

Google Ventures is now on a mission to use technology for improving health care, quality of life and for longevity.

Bejan Daruwalla, the 84 years celebrated astrologer was asked, 'is there freewill or is everything cast in stone?' He replied, "In the olden days what we used to call fate is now called genes. In fate versus freewill, we have 35 percent of choice and 65 percent is fate. But there is a third option too: 'grace of God', His *kripa*, whatever is fated, the privilege and right to give, and grace and blessing to remove it lies with God – and that's 100 percent." (Speaking Tree, Times of India, June 14, 2015)

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology and process of spiritual pursuit provides method for spiritual healing. Heightened pursuit of His principles and specific effort for achieving specific object provide us scope to get many things. However, we are not competent to write on the subject much; as the desire, process and outcome are subjective and sensitive. We would definitely like divine relief to come to such persons who are unfortunately affected by adversities. We believe that Sri Sri Thakur is sensitive and sympathetic to our sufferings. We pray for all at His mercy.

I came across a wonderful reference in 'Smriti Tirthe', the memoire of Prafulla Kumar Das, having striking relevance to the subject. Pyaari da was a doctor in the ashram. He was deputed by Sri Sri Thakur for treating the people. At times, Sri Sri Thakur used to press Payaari da too much for giving relief to the suffering of the people. Pyaari da was a highly dedicated doctor and an ardent devotee of Sri Sri Thakur. At times Sri Sri Thakur would ask him, 'why are you not able to provide quick relief to so and so person?' Once Pyaari da retorted, 'I am evidently trying my best. But everyone has some suffering as providence, as we all know. What more can I do?' With renewed urgency, Sri Sri Thakur would say, 'What is the use, if you fail to remedy the providential sufferings of people?'

Chapter 6

Sri Sri Thakur's Work

Sixty

Labour for Love
Labour for the Lord

Great examples of 'istakarma' come from the mythological stories of Hanuman ji. Hanuman ji did supposedly wonderful things for the sake of pleasure of his Lord Sri Ramachandra. Such live instances are also available in the history of Satsang, where supposedly impossible feats have been rendered possible by so called ordinary devotees of Sri Sri Thakur.

If a person loves someone or something, he enjoys doing such things that would please the beloved person or would enable him to possess the object. This comes naturally to almost every normal person in worldly spheres.

In Sri Sri Thakur's scheme of ideology, this particular doctrine has a significant role. First of all, let us be clear that we have a love relationship with Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur loves everyone very intimately and we also love him. It is love for the sake of love; pure love and nothing else. As we love Him, we tend to get moulded by Him. Our thought and action, habits and behavior and choice and preference, the whole being in short, get regulated and refined by His liking.

It is expected that life would take a progressive turn and be upwardly mobile, with this love bondage. One of the mechanisms of this transformation is known as 'istakarma' (इष्टकर्म). In its simplest sense it means, work for the Lord; work that would please Sri Sri Thakur. Practical shape of this 'istakarma' is as interesting as it is enlightening.

When Sri Sri Thakur was alive with all His grace and grandeur, he used to direct people to undertake specific works. Those works were 'istakarma' for those people. We have history, these kinds of direction from Sri Sri Thakur has done wonders. (For example – read '*Manas Tirtha Parikrama*' (Bengali) by Sushil Chandra Basu) Sri Sri Thakur's directions were his command; His blessing; non negotiable; were taken in letter and spirit. These directions have come in innumerable ways; but essentially these were His desires. Going by the known and documented instances of these directions, we know that His desires were inscrutable; appeared strange at times and unpredictable almost all the time. Behind each of those directions, there were, and certainly so, without exception, a grand plan, whose meaning was to be seen and realized later than sooner. All such instances of direct direction from Sri Sri Thakur were taken as His

blessings and these were really so. Most of the time, significance of His directions were known only after these were carried out. Miracles have taken place. Impossible tasks were rendered possible. Only one condition: take His directions whole heartedly, with surrendered approach, without a shred of negative. Just go ahead taking his blessings on your head, put your heart and soul together, look for all options, turn heaven and earth topsy-turvy, if that were called for. Take His words as sure as letters cast on stone.

Having said all these, there is a sense of deep despair in me. Alas! These opportunities are no more available to us. Therefore, we need to look for a proxy, a surrogate, a live approximation to Sri Sri Thakur's direction. These are certainly available, may be more in counts, and varieties in nature.

First category of such 'istakarma' is 'Yajan, Yaajan & Istabhrity'. These principles are very wide in their scope of application, though the baseline is well defined by Sri Sri Thakur. Therefore, these activities are something like essential and foundation level work.

Second category of 'istakarma' is some physical engagement which would help in establishing Sri Sri Thakur's image and interest. These are also very wide, but not as well defined as the previous category. Here local level activities, tradition and convention play a great role. Company of fellow devotees also plays a great role. Important point to highlight with respect to this category is that these are not universal in applicability; which means, each one takes up a work as per one's aptitude and ability. Here some kind of maturity and discretion is called for. What is that activity which is worth to be engaged with? How much of that fulfills Sri Sri Thakur's desire? A balance between self development and sacrifice is to be struck and Sri Sri Thakur's interest is to be kept supreme as the goal.

What is of significance here is that one has to know Sri Sri Thakur's scheme of things and get idea as to how to translate Sri Sri Thakur's desire into action. A good knowledge of Sri Sri Thakur's life and His movement would help one to know what Sri Sri Thakur wanted to be done. Every such activity has to be measured by His ideology; lest it should serve purposes other than Sri Sri Thakur's.

Direction from senior devotees and guidance by organization leaders do a lot of help in this kind of activities. Here again two decisive tests perhaps would clear the path: a) aptitude, b) Sri Sri Thakur's ideological prescription.

Whatever may be the type and category of 'istakarma', it is of paramount importance to understand that 'istakarma' is His load. Whoever carries His load; He carries the devotees load'. (योग खेम्मं बहाम्यहम), meaning, 'I carry the load of the person, whoever is attached with me, said Lord Krishna'. We all need divine blessings, support and strength. Keeping ourselves engaged in 'istakarma' is the veritable path for getting His blessings.

Great examples of 'istakarma' come from the mythological stories of Hanuman ji. Hanuman ji did supposedly wonderful things for the sake of pleasure of his Lord Sri Ramachandra. Such live instances are also available in the history of Satsang, where supposedly impossible feats have been rendered possible by so called ordinary devotees of Sri Sri Thakur. 'Istakarma' is a process to achieve miraculous feats in life and thereby make transformation in life possible.

'Istakarma' is actually part of our daily साधना. In today's context one has to fix an 'istakarma' for oneself. There are many varieties of work that one can do, which at some level becomes one of those personal works, which one does as a sacred work.

I would like to summarize the discussion in the following line:

- Besides performing ‘yajan’, ‘yaajan’ and ‘istabhrity’ on daily basis, each one of us should keep oneself engaged in a divine work, as ‘istakarma’, which is primarily a work for the pleasure of the Lord.

- This work is important to keep us tuned with Sri Sri Thakur; be a part of larger social movement; helps to unfurl inner abilities and faculties of each person, which gets translated into activities, creation of utilities, service and constructive developments.

- The objective of ‘istakarma’ and the process has to be in line with Sri Sri Thakur’s ideology.

- ‘Istakarma’ can be undertaken individually and also collectively. Collective ‘istakarma’ has a larger impact, but then that kind of mobilization, togetherness and leadership should be available as a hygienic and necessary condition.

- Whatever work one undertakes always needs to be tested on the yardstick of Sri Sri Thakur’s ideology. A secondary test can be, whether this particular work is helping me to develop myself and lead to a transformation in me. One question can be, ‘am I getting liberated, expanded or am I getting shrunk or getting myself tied up with something other than Thakur’.

One must enjoy doing ‘istakarma’. That enjoyment may come out of struggle, may be out of suffering; if these are for the sake of the Lord. A strong resolution for shouldering His burden, even when the shoulder bleeds, need to be taken. A painful cry from within has to scream out to serve His cause. Is He not taking suffering for us? Does He not take our suffering as His? Does He not walk with us, when we are left alone? Does He not jump at the scene where we come under attack?

One saying of Sri Sri Thakur perhaps summarizes everything what we discussed: “You are for the Lord and not for others; you are for the Lord and so for others”.

A time may come, at a very high level of dedication; one may feel that whatever I do is for the sake of the Lord. At that level, everything becomes ‘istakarma’. There perhaps the question will be, how much more can I do? How many more people can I lead and provide liberation? What do I leave behind when I would be no more?

“What ‘istakarma’ am I engaged with”?

“Is ‘istakarma’ powering me”?

“Am I carrying His load”?

27th September 2012

Sixty one

What did Thakur Expect from Eugene Exman?

Sri Sri Thakur's Desire from each one of us

Holy *Name* is a composition of vibration. This is the primordial vibration, which I say, is the original root. Root is that which has got to and fro motion. The piston in the engine has a motion by which it comes forward once and then backward, similar to to and fro motion. The *Name* has motion and sound. If *Name* is practiced properly, it does wonder.

Eugene Exman was Editor-Manager of Harper & Brother's religious book department. He became a member of the firm's Board of Directors in 1944, a Vice President in 1955, and retired in 1965 after thirty-five years with the company. Exman is also the author of 'The Brothers Harper' and wrote the text for the photography book 'The World of Albert Schweitzer'.

In 1961 Mr. Eugene Exman visited Sri Sri Thakur, stayed in Deoghar Ashram for 7 days and on 13th September 1961 accepted Sri Sri Thakur's holy initiation. (There is a video narrative on the subject in YouTube, prepared in Bengali by Shri Manilal Chakraborty) The visit was remarkable on many counts. Here in this piece, I am translating and quoting some of the recorded conversation that Mr. Exman had with Sri Sri Thakur from a book 'Smrutir Mala' (in Bengali, 2006) by Shri Manilal Chakraborty. (pp. 36-40)

It must be known that Eugene Exman developed curiosity to see Sri Sri Thakur from the manuscript of a book titled 'Ocean in a Tea Cup', authored by Ray Archer Hauserman, published in 1962 by Harper and Brothers from New York . The book is now available in net for free download. A brief account of Exman's visit and discussion with Sri Sri Thakur is presented by Hauserman in his autobiography, 'Being and Becoming – A Story of Devotion', posthumously published in 2008 from Virginia, USA. (pp 158-161). I quote a portion from the book to present an account of the experience that Hauserman and Exman had when they encountered Sri Sri Thakur together.

> "Thakur's eyes shone brightly with joy and affection when we met again. Tears welled up in mine as I realized that, as long as he lived, I would never be an orphan in the world. He enquired about my health, my clothes, my teeth, just like mother used to, and he continued to nurture me in this way for ten more years.

> Deeply moved by the warmth of the welcome, Exman told Thakur, “I feel like a returning hero. I’ve done a lot of travelling all over the world, but never have I had a welcome filled with such transparent joy and affection.”

The balance part of this article is taken from Manilal Chakraborty’s book in Bengali ‘Smrutir mala’.

Exman raised a question, ‘I came to know that people in distress from distant places, from other countries, recall you and you have reportedly saved them. How is it?’

Sri Sri Thakur remained silent for a while and said, “I don’t know. They only know for whom this has happened. I feel, the object of love comes lively for them, who really love. I have heard that Lord Christ used to cure lot of diseases; restored eyesight for many. When asked, he used to reply – I don’t know. Your faith alone has cured you.”

(*This answer of Sri Sri Thakur given to a westerner is wonderful. The answer is precise, meaningful, complete and clear. I don’t think, any further question can be raised after this. But the answer leaves the person on the other side with a solution as to what to do. The answer is a practical guidance; it has its bit of lesson too.*

Today, we all are much away from Sri Sri Thakur physically; at that time it was geographically. The message is clear for us…. ‘Love’, unpretentious love; of course for Thakur! As Sri Sri Thakur said, Thakur comes lively. What Sri Sri Thakur did not say is that, He not only comes alive, he cures you; He pulls you out from the distress that you are helplessly plunged in.

Another observation in this pithy answer is that, there is striking similarity between the answer what Christ gave then and what Sri Sri Thakur is giving now; not only in substance, but also in style. Let us bear in mind who Sri Sri Thakur is talking to. What we see in the answer is not a response to a query, a glimpse of ‘fulfiller the best’ in action.)

Sri Sri Thakur then looked at the walking staff in Hauserman’s hand and said, “I have presented that to him. I said – do never lose, nor handover to anybody else; make proper use of it. The staff carries my memory. With the staff in his hand, his thought remains centered around my memory. The memory again gets enliven in his allegiance and devotion. That pull creates thrill in every cell of his body and mind. A surge of urge towards the Lord gets generated from there. That overpowering urge releases strength, efficiency and wisdom in him. Then whatever he does appears to be impossible to others. The chain of reactions that takes place behind this is the science. Thought induces inspiration and sprouts plan; then comes the idea for practical work.”

(*Everything that Sri Sri Thakur spelt out here is deep psychological truths applicable to each one of us. He has delineated science of action, beginning with devotion. Here again, we find the ‘fulfiller the best’ in action. He came out suo-moto. Perhaps, it was a question in Exman, not spelt out.*)

Exman received the holy *diksha* of Sri Sri Thakur from Mr. Hauserman on 13th September 1961. Both of them visited Sri Sri Thakur after *diksha*. Then Exman asked, ‘What is this Holy *Name*?’

Sri Sri Thakur said, “Holy *Name* is a composition of vibration. This is the primordial vibration, which I say, is the original root. Root is that which has got to and fro motion. The piston in the engine has a motion by which it comes forward once and then backward, similar to to and fro motion. The *Name* has motion and sound. If *Name* is practiced properly, it does wonder. *Name* becomes active when done with devotion.

Devotion is an expression of unalloyed continuity. Here in my ashram, there is Radharaman Joyardar, who is a fool like me. But he used to practice things (*Name* healing). He has cured double pneumonia in three days. He had rich and innumerable experiences. I therefore proclaim that impossible things are wonderfully done with *Name* practiced sincerely and enthusiastically. Out of those old guards (who practiced *Name* healing), Sushil da (Basu), Gosain da and Radharaman are still there. They had in their grasp some facts that get mobilized through *Name* practice. They used to do all these out of natural understanding in a normal way. They indulged into little adulteration in these matters. But then love for the Lord (*Ista* – the living Ideal) is the paramount requirement. Man does wonders, turns impossible to possible, through the pull of love. Untottering and continued devotion and love for the Lord enable a person to grow in all respects. Let the real love sprout in us by the grace of supreme father. My heartfelt blessing is there with you all. Blessing of course means disciplined conduct. Valid action makes things happen. I therefore say that it is possible to be crowned with His blessings by following His directions."

Portion relevant to this as presented in Ray Hauserman's book, 'Being and Becoming', in the context of discussion between Sri Sri Thakur and Exman is reproduced below for us to get a better appreciation of the issue under discussion (which is Holy *Name*).

> Then Exman asked, "Ray keeps talking about the benefits from repeating this Holy *Name*. Can you explain what that is?"
>
> "The continuous repetition of a particular word acts upon our nervous system and stimulates our brain cells, and those cells become sensitized to the ideal of that word. Over time, these cells become adjusted to the vibration of the image and are not only able to respond but also to comprehend and understand more of what that word means," Thakur said.
>
> "What is the particular word, Thakur?"
>
> "Oh, words such as *Om*, *Hring*, *Cling* articulate subtle vibrations present in creation. Such sounds carry creative power and develop keenness of perception. *Radhasoami* also carries great power as the Holy *name*. I think in this way, our spiritual perceptions deepen and develop, and I don't think we can acquire this particular kind of sensitivity in any other way."
>
> When Exman finally asked Thakur for initiation, Thakur told me to give it to him. I did. He seemed comfortable with the meditation process and more at peace with himself. After he returned to the States, he wrote me this letter:
>
> "Dear Ray,
> I am writing to inform you that I reached New York safely. I was having lunch with an old friend who works for Time Magazine, when a woman at a nearby table suddenly collapsed and slid onto the floor, unconscious. I immediately got up and knelt down beside her. I could find no pulse and she appeared lifeless.
> I put my finger on her forehead and began repeating the *Name* I learnt from Thakur. After about five minutes had elapsed, she suddenly opened her eyes, looked at me and said, 'Thank you. I am alright'.
> She got up and resumed lunch with her companion. My friend looked at me strangely as did many onlookers, but he began treating me with a new respect after that. That's the story. Please tell Thakur.

With affection, Gene."

Eugene Exman came to Sri Sri Thakur on 14th September 1961 at around 9.30 in the morning and said, 'Au-revoir. Today is a very sad day. I shall go today'.

Sri Sri Thakur – Sad for me!

Exman – I stayed over here in your ashram for about a week. My heart is filled. I am pleased. People over here are knit with each other through thread of love. I am only contemplating when can I come back and get a glimpse of yours.

Mr. Exman got his throat chocked and eyes watered. Sri Sri Thakur's graceful eyes were fixed on Exman.

Mr. Exman perhaps made a parting submission to Sri Sri Thakur. 'Thakur, please say few words for me. And if I can have the privilege of doing something for you!'

Sri Sri Thakur – You are out to leave; I am left with a void. I have only one requirement – keep yourself in good health, stay well. Give me news of your wellbeing from the far land of America – this is my only look out.

Exman – America badly needs person like you. I wish I airlift you up from this bungalow up to Dumdum airport by helicopter. From there, you will fly to America. You can move around to different states in America by helicopter. I will organize everything, if I can have your consent. Radhakrishnan, India's President is my friend. Please come to America at least once.

Sri Sri Thakur – I am there with you. You carry me on your head. I will travel countries through you.

Exman – Time for good bye has come. Au-revoir!

(*This desire by Sri Sri Thakur to travel to places through his disciples puts great responsibility on all of us. What do we need to do for that? Can we allow that desire of Sri Sri Thakur to be fallen by roadside?*)

2nd March 2014

Sixty two

Cultivating Culture is the Key
Institutional Platform Provides Scalability and Sustainability to it

Sri Sri Thakur has provided in his literature the updated and refined elements of Indian culture that we should put to use. What Sri Sri Thakur has provided is a cultural compass for the humanity. But then the real search begins to convert the culture into practice as distinct from culture in frame. A distinction has to be made between 'what cultural heritage we carry' and 'what culture we live in'.

Today Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Centre of Gandhian and Indian Studies in Fudan University in Shanghai, China. It certainly is a laudable initiative, particularly coming along with business exchange initiatives as a package. Complimenting the steps taken by the China Government, Prime Minister of India in his speech said that it was relatively easy to open the gates of a country's boarder for business and for tourism; but opening the gates for exchange of culture and ideas, was a brave step. He cited examples that scholars in the past like Hsuan Tsang visited India purely for search of knowledge. India has ideas of Buddha and Gandhi for the world of today, which is preoccupied with concerns like terrorism and global warming. Ideas of Buddha and Gandhi offer solutions to these problems.

One clear signal comes out for us, which is that culture needs cultivation. If we look at culture from the perspective of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, culture has to be cultivated at different levels. At the level of individual and family, culture has to be practiced in habits, behavior and such activities that lead us to self development and managing worldly pursuit with 'Ideal' at the centre. At the level of society, we need to set up institutions of excellence for conducting research and demonstration. What will emerge from research has to be applied in socio-political space. Besides, culture at societal level remains alive by way of collective pursuits. Collective pursuits take various forms and expressions. One important objective of culture is to regulate and influence people's behavior. Here Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's cultural strand plays a very important and appropriate role. Remember, *Yajan, Yaajan, Istabhrity, Swastyayani & Sadaachaar*? There are few ideological paradigms available in the world, which has such powerful behavior influencing tools as Sri Sri Thakur's ideology provides.

Surveying the landscape of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, philosophy and culture in practice, one comes to view that there is lot of works to be done. Significant to observe, if we have to understand what Indian

culture that is relevant today is; our search should end with Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur has provided in his literature the updated and refined elements of Indian culture that we should put to use. What Sri Sri Thakur has provided is a cultural compass for the humanity. But then the real search begins to convert the culture into practice as distinct from culture in frame. A distinction has to be made between 'what cultural heritage we carry' and 'what culture we live in'. Culture has to have a progressive force that will enable the people to take a leap into the future.

Moreover, unless the ideology is practiced and accepted at both the mass and the class level, it will not obtain the status of culture. Therefore, there is a need to put Sri Sri Thakur's ideology into practice at all levels. First stage is awareness, second stage is practice, third stage will be perfection and fourth stage is outcome. Sri Sri Thakur, during his lifetime (1888 – 1969) activated all the four stages simultaneously. Today different segments of people are at different levels of the cycle of this 'culture activation process'. Therefore number of activities cutting across the spectrum of stages has to be undertaken to cover large segment of people.

The initiative for cultivating Sri Sri Thakur's culture by default rests with each disciple of Sri Sri Thakur. For each one of us, culture means excellence, achievement and acquisition. What Sri Sri Thakur has given is like raw material to be processed in our life and add value to ourselves. Each one of us has been entrusted with the responsibility of cultivating Sri Sri Thakur's ideology amongst both mass and class. That calls for action on our part. Two sayings of Sri Sri Thakur appear to be having relevance here: (from Magna Dicta, 58, 59)

"To materialize the wishes of Beloved the Lord, with every fulfillment and sharp tactful immediacy, throwing behind all other calculating back-out tenors is the only way to achieve love, energy and perfect skill."

"Do and do materialize with every immediacy, in desired time, the wishes of your Superior Beloved as you are asked for; managing all events and affairs for success. This is the only way to thrive with efficiency."

What is derived from these two sayings is that working for Sri Sri Thakur is way for our individual skill development and success. I believe, many of us are engaged in some kind of work dedicated for the Lord in individual capacity, at our own place, either alone or along with groups of similar interests. How much of those work are adding up to cultivation of culture is for us to examine and evaluate. What is significant to observe is that collectivity adds scalability and sustainability to work. It is therefore important for us to collaborate with each other (at individual level, at group level and also at organizational level) and work together for the culture activation process. 'Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies' provides a platform for research and demonstration of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology. We welcome research minded people to join hands with us in this initiative. This presents an opportunity for those who would like to cultivate the culture.

16th May 2015

Sixty three

Sri Sri Thakur in Myanmar – A Peep into History

Is Suffering Destined for Some Section of Humanity?

Large number of Sri Sri Thakur's disciples domiciled in Myanmar got Sri Sri Thakur's live direction to flee from the area which were about to be affected by bombing during World War II. Letters were written to all the Burmese disciples to come to Himayetpur with demarcated short routes from then Burma.

Innumerable loose thoughts crowded my mind on the subject, as I counted four days in Myanmar, closing today. I knew from my reading of Sri Sri Thakur's literature, that this country was the first satellite country to get a reflection of Sri Sri Thakur's ideological manifestation, as it unfolded in and around Bengal (in undivided India) during the early part of twentieth century. Sri Sri Thakur, the redeemer, cast His benign spell on this land (Myanmar) as His devotees; prime amongst them was Dr. Trailokya Nath Chakravarty, initiated people in Sri Sri Thakur's doctrine in the countryside of then Burma, now Myanmar. A kind of small movement started in Myanmar with Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra as the Ideal and his ideology as a way of life.

Dr. Trailokya Nath Chakravarty worked in Myanmar with the mission of Sri Sri Thakur from 1924 to 1934. He initiated many people, mostly persons of Bengal origin and culture. He set up two satsang centers, where weekly satsang sitting were held. Once, Sri Sri Thakur's birth day celebration was also held for 3 days.

We know that Hauserman and Spencer, two well known American disciples of Sri Sri Thakur came to know about Sri Sri Thakur while working in the Red Cross ambulance in Myanmar. Both of them came to Bengal from Myanmar in war torn state of mind, in search of peace.

It is a documented fact in Satsang history that large number of Sri Sri Thakur's disciples domiciled in Myanmar got Sri Sri Thakur's live direction to flee from the area which were about to be affected by bombing during World War II. Letters were written to all the Burmese disciples to come to Himayetpur with demarcated short routes from then Burma. That was the extent of involvement Sri Sri Thakur had with the people then staying in Myanmar.

Today I have no clue to know as to what is the status of Sri Sri Thakur's ideological influence in Myanmar. I would presume, in the absence of any visible signage, that the influence is on the wane. No reason as to why? How can the Lord's mission not work for duration slightly longer than even a generation? Of course, war and political disturbances have played havoc in that region. That might be the reason for the disruption of cultural movement.

A related observation is that Myanmar is visibly under the influence of Buddha; whatever relic influence it may be.

Putting these above two facts together, an overall observation is that while the conventional religious faith is still ruling in the mass psyche; the latest scientific religion is failing to catch up. While relic of the past prophet still evokes love and respect; the latest prophet is yet to gain ground. These observations obviously come from a partial view; these are not a settled fact. A deeper sociological study would help us to understand this phenomenon better.

Intuitively, it appears that today we are witness to the darkest phase in the cycle of time when the latest prophet, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, passed away about 45 years back. We all believe that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra played the role of latest prophet on this planet. He came with an ideology that is most suited to the peace and prosperity of the current generation. But till date, only a fraction of the humanity has got to know about Him and still a fraction of those who know about Him follow Him in the spirit of ideology.

Time will tell us what is in store for the materialization of mission of the latest prophet. There may be a revival of the movement, after the initial wane. The void created by Sri Sri Thakur's physical absence was too deep to be balanced. Society is perhaps yet to come to terms with living prophet and his disappearance. These are two massive phenomena (descend and disappearance) in the history of human civilization; too impactful to be grasped easily.

The question here is: how to make Sri Sri Thakur's ideology a part of culture of a region. This question of course requires extensive treatment. Significant to mention here is that culture formation is a long and much involved social affair; which is much more than imparting *diksha* to some people on one-to-one contact basis.

As a student of economics and with the experience of a practicing manager, another observation comes to my mind. This region of the world, namely, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Eastern part of India, where Sri Sri Thakur was living and his influence was actively spread out, continued to remain in state of underdevelopment; and therefore remained as pothole of sufferings. Poverty and consequential deprivation is keeping this segment of population away from the development happening elsewhere in the world.

One related observation must not be missed with regard to these geographies. People on these lands are good, simple, hardworking, nature loving and god loving too. They carry with them the treasure of classical civilization. They also live in happiness, in state of self sufficiency. Still, it appears to be a classic case of irony that good people are destined to remain high in the scale of existential struggle. Of course, there are as many variants of goodness as there are degrees of struggle. Correlation between quality of goodness and degree of sufferings may not exist. We fail to explain this kind of instances of coincidence, where we see that people of a particular region struggle or suffer due to the regional reasons or local adversity or due to historical reason. These kinds of conflicting socio-economic situations put a question mark as to the impact of Sri Sri Thakur's ideological influence on the life of the people inhabiting in those regions which was privileged to shine by the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur. These are hard and complex issues which need much deeper research.

These issues take us to a larger issue of mass sufferings at certain patches on the world. There are some geographies of the world, where people are suffering almost on perpetual basis. One kind of suffering is abject poverty and consequential inhuman living condition; second kind of suffering is caused by frequent and devastating natural calamities. Third type of suffering is caused by human aggression like war, terrorism, racial discrimination etc. One fails to understand why some areas of the world have to be perpetually under the spell of sufferings. Why are we not able to take the prophets' ideological breakthrough to these areas and bring relief to the people living in those regions?

We are aware that suffering of every person has got causal factors, may be remote or proximate and those factors are to be traced to the person only. However the factors are not easy to establish, given the

limited view that we are blessed with. As far as mass sufferings and perpetual sufferings of generations are concerned; Sri Sri Thakur must have given solution to these questions. We need to unearth His solutions and act on those. Some solutions wait for a higher order of thought, realization and action. Some of us have to reach at that elevated level in the realm of thought and action and highlight the solutions provided by Sri Sri Thakur.

The world needs Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur came for the people of the world. When and how these two would meet? It is again a baffling question. People of higher level of realization and achievement may be following Sri Sri Thakur's ideology without explicit knowledge about Him. Those are the persons living Sri Sri Thakur's ideology and still have scope to know Sri Sri Thakur and accelerate their process of evolution. The process of evolution is a continuous, lively and happening process. Sri Sri Thakur is a torch bearer, precursor and a milestone in the process of evolution.

It may be worthwhile to mention here that the mechanism of evolution depends as much upon divine will as on human intervention. Each one of us is an active agent of evolution. We have a role to play in our growth as well as in the growth of others. Sri Sri Thakur has shown the path; given the vehicles and also provides guidance and sustenance. Let the benefit of His guidance reach everywhere. There is no doubt that though sufferings are partly caused by destiny; sufferings can be mitigated.

Let me conclude with a saying of Sri Sri Thakur:

"Surrender to thy Ideal; continue to move on; smashing and managing the sufferings that come forth as obstacle and be crowned with success."

31st October 2015, Airport, Yangon

Chapter 7

Sri Sri Thakur's Movement

Sixty four

In Memory of Prafulla Kumar Das
He kept the lamp burring

Text of Speech delivered at 'Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra Research Academy, Kolkata' in the annual program and celebration of birth centenary of Shri Prafulla Kumar Das on 8th April 2012

Dear Devotees, the children of immorality!

Greetings on the occasion of birth centenary celebration of the legendary associate of Sri Sri Thakur, Prafulla Kumar Das!

Thanks to 'Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra Research Academy, Kolkata' for inviting me to this forum! Representing 'Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies', a pioneering research institute; I am delighted to be here before you.

Advent of the Lord in the form of incarnate, the supreme father in flesh and blood on the earth, is a significant natural phenomenon. Human civilization is witness to few such occurrences in awe and reverence; in puzzle and perseverance; and every time, it results in a leap of culture, a march of civilization, a quantum jump in endeavour towards excellence.

With the Advent, as we witnessed in the 20th century in the form of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, there comes an explosion of knowledge, arising out of a massive bang on human consciousness.

Something strange happened in the last part of 19th Century, precisely in 1888 on the cradle of the human civilization, on this part of the earth, namely Bengal, on which fortunately we habitat. That strange phenomenon went on unfolding to an unprecedented scale, resulting in a grand revolution in all spheres of human activity, consciousness and social dynamics.

That process of galvanization and heightened mobilization stopped in 1969 in the early morning of 27th January; the grand wheel of manifested divinity, the latest episode of incarnate, came to a grinding halt at Deoghar. For a moment, life on earth was silenced, the cosmic energy on the earth tripped, a blackout of senses engulfed the collective mind of humanity, and that changed the scene.

Then came scene II. What continued from scene I was the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, enshrined in volumes of literature and his image carried on by devout band of disciples, though crestfallen

by the bereavement. Life went on. The Sun, the moon, the waves of ocean, the birds, the animals, the entire eco system silently grieved the demise, but carried forward the orchestra of life on earth, on which the Lord played his grand play just the day before. The eternal force of divinity and the enlightenment of ideology brought on by Sri Sri Thakur kept the system going.

Scene II requires perseverance of a different type. It is time, when Sri Sri Thakur is present everywhere, but not seen anywhere; just a metaphor to reveal the contrast with the Scene I and the hard time in the Scene II. It is no more the green canopy of a grand banyan tree under whose shade and beneath the leaves and branches, there was shade and cool; the devotees were enjoying the bliss and the protection, singing the glory of the Lord. Now it is scorching sun on the head, hard rock beneath the feet; yet there is life, love and legacy of the Lord. Today, there is oasis in the desert that has to be reached. There is fruit on the tree that is to be plucked. There is field that needs to be cultivated. There is ocean that needs to be explored; there is peak that needs to be scaled.

Today, things are different no doubt, but not desperate. Some things remained the same, unchanged and continued. First, the divinity of Sri Sri Thakur that was actively working for each one is still working today. The ever responsive Thakur, the most gracious Lord, is responding even today. Sri Sri Thakur smiles to his devotees in the intimacy of one to one. Second, the principles of life and growth, formulated into three capsules, namely *Yajan*, *Yaajan*, *Istabhrity*, are ever potent as these were, in causing the magic of transformation in every individual. The process of awakening the consciousness remains the same; consequent to adherence of uni-central attachment, intensity and continuity.

The essential condition, which was required then and even now, is that Sri Sri Thakur remains at the centre of focus, the pivot of life, the first and foremost.

In Scene I, the Lord was outreaching to his creation; in Scene II, He expects his creation to reach him out. In Scene I, it was hard to recognize the divine in human form, in Scene II; the divine is eulogized, imputed in portrait and idols and worshipped in the form of ritual, his ideology and principles compromised to complexes. In Scene I, the Lord was tortured and isolated physically; in Scene II, Lord's ideology is attacked, in essence and in practice.

Sri Sri Thakur said in pain and anguish on a Christmas day that on this fateful day, Jesus was crucified and even today, the same Lord is being crucified. The humanity has to do a penance, if it longs for salvation. Sri Sri Thakur also hoped and provided a path for resurrection.

If resurrection is to happen, as it must, we need to do few things. One: read, understand and propagate Sri Sri Thakur's literature, the original ones. Sri Sri Thakur lives in the pages of Sri Sri Thakur's books. Original literature of Sri Sri Thakur needs special efforts to read, understand, interpret, translate and disseminate the content. This will require institutional efforts, as the exercise is a mammoth one and has to continue for generations, surviving the disruption of individual life span. Second: a lineage of devotees has to keep Sri Sri Thakur alive in their conducts, behavior and in the families. These devotees will have their loyalty firmly fixed on Sri Sri Thakur and Sri Sri Thakur alone. There is no space for anybody between the Lord and devotee. Large number of devotees in their continued perseverance over a period of time will create a tradition of devotion. Few enlightened amongst them will lead the others.

In Scene II, the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur are entrusted by Sri Sri Thakur the onerous responsibility of keeping Satsang movement 'endured' and 'unsullied', to use of the words of Prafulla da, from his book 'A Pilgrimage to memory'. Sri Sri Thakur says to Prafulla da, "You should attain such a position that world leaders consider it necessary to accept your judgment and counsel at the time of grave crisis. I long to see that a chain of seers may grow in Satsang and they may be recognized by the world. This is my

primary objective behind founding the Shandilya University. India will one day be the Guru of the world. None will be able to resist it."

These prophetic wish of Sri Sri Thakur needs vigorous action plan. We all have to work in that direction. Sri Sri Thakur provided a hint, as reminisced in his book 'A Pilgrimage to Memory' by Prafulla da. Sri Sri Thakur said, "After my demise man will get me in a devotee endowed with passion transcending attachment. If such a man works on the basis of ideology given by me, he can turn the world upside down."

The urgency today is therefore to keep His ideology alive. This can be done through literature and through practice. An eminent litterateur Bibhuti Bhusan Banerjee asked Prafulla da, "Why don't you propagate this unique literature of Thakur among the larger public? Really it has a distinct appeal and relish." This was in 1944 and this is about Bengali literature. What about non Bengali mass of the society, world over? Research has to be done and literature has to be created in English and Hindi to start with and also in other regional and foreign languages in phases. Kudos to 'Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra Research Academy, Kolkata' for taking lead in this type of works!

Reverend Prafulla da's pen was the fountain from which Sri Sri Thakur's literature flowed and he was also a specimen of a true devotee. He played his life, of devotion and dedication, during Scene I & II, both; very significant for all of us to note his steadfastness in living and upholding Sri Sri Thakur's principles. By paying tribute through such a large mobilization to that apostle of Sri Sri Thakur, the Prafulla da, the 'Research Academy in Kolkata' has laid a milestone on the tradition of devotees.

I prostate at the feet of the Lord and say 'Jayguru' to all the disciples present here!

8th April 2012

Sixty five

What are these Temples for?
Let's build Thakur's temple in our hearts and homes

> Worship in Sri Sri Thakur's ideology means to follow the footsteps of the Ideal. Worship in a broad sense means to lead a life of pursuit and penance that will help acquire worthiness. A worthy man deserves blessings and rewards. Sri Sri Thakur used to say, acquisition comes from accomplishment.

The actual question is not: why temples for Sri Sri Thakur? The real issue is: how would we like to worship Sri Sri Thakur? Also a relevant issue is: how do we like to preserve Sri Sri Thakur's image and ideology?

As we cross the time stone (analogy – milestone) 2012, we see a number of temple complexes where Sri Sri Thakur's portrait or idol is worshipped. A large number of temples (may be 50?) exists all over the country and every now and then we hear that somewhere a temple is being built. It presents a classic uniform view: a lean white structure, the dome protruding into the sky, with overlapping arches at various levels; overall a marvelous architecture. Within the temple, there is a hall for prayer; the end of the hall is the sanctum sanctorum, where Sri Sri Thakur is worshipped. Few large size portraits of Sri Sri Thakur and may be his immediate family members like father, mother wife and son, adore the raised walls of the hall. There is a section in the complex for accommodating the permanent inmates of the temple complex, who render various services and maintenance jobs. Depending upon the size, there are some rooms for guests and some rooms reserved for the family members of Sri Sri Thakur. At some places we also see rooms dedicated for imparting 'diksha'. All the facilities surrounding the complex are also known as *Satsang Vihars* at some places. However, this write up deals with temple structure only.

The temple structure meeting all the features of a traditional place of worship creates an instant sense of devotion and sacredness. These complexes are used for periodical satsang sittings, *utsavs*, and also are used as branch offices of Satsang organization at Deoghar (whichever camp it may be).

The temple culture in India is such deeply seated that it has been well accepted by everyone, including Sri Sri Thakur's disciples for last 40 years. Today, it has fallen into the culture in Satsang activities, being driven by all the (organizational) camps in Satsang. It appears; they found it easy to adopt the traditional culture of worshipping the Lord. I am raising few issues, not to oppose this temple culture in Satsang, but to have original thinking on some issues related to this.

Did Sri Sri Thakur hint at or want to have temples where he would be worshipped in? If any such direct wish of Sri Sri Thakur is not there, then can we examine this temple culture in the light of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology on the issue of worship and preserving the Ideal after his demise?

Worship in Sri Sri Thakur's ideology means to follow the footsteps of the Ideal. Worship in a broad sense means to lead a life of pursuit and penance that will help acquire worthiness. A worthy man deserves blessings and rewards. Sri Sri Thakur used to say, acquisition comes from accomplishment. 'Worship means worth ship.' 'Do, be and get'; Sri Sri Thakur's monosyllabic formula.

Therefore the ritualistic worship of Sri Sri Thakur is only a symbol of serving live Thakur. When we offer flower, scents and offering (*bhoga*), we actually feel that we are serving the Lord, the way we would have done to him, if he were there with us in flesh and blood. The lady of the house in a *satsangee* family feels that Sri Sri Thakur is the first member of the family. This kind of offering can be taken as a symbolic extension of 'istabhrity' and 'yaajan'. This sense of worship goes well in a family setting and therefore it is a household affair; much different from a temple ritual.

Even within the house, we usually have a niche or small temple like structure where in Sri Sri Thakur's portrait is placed and worshipped. Some people, put Sri Sri Thakur on a small bed like structure with proper mattress, bolsters on both sides with a cloth canopy. This is a replica of Sri Sri Thakur sitting on his large size bed, covered with white bed sheets, pile of huge pillows by his side. If we build a temple within our housing complex, say in the premise of a bungalow, then we are erecting an exclusive arrangement for Sri Sri Thakur, away from our own house.

A temple in that sense appears to be a community place where common service can be offered, congregational prayer can be held and can be a centre for community activities of Satsang. As we extend the place of worship from within the house to outside the house, we dilute the concept of keeping Sri Sri Thakur part of our family life and living.

If at all we have to have an exclusive community arrangement for Sri Sri Thakur's living, must we build huge temple structures? Why can't we have shade like structures for Sri Sri Thakur's living, the way Sri Sri Thakur used to live at Deoghar? That will bear the striking similarity with the way Sri Sri Thakur lived at Deoghar, a frugal ascetic life style with open visibility and accessibility to devotees. Why do we need palatial temple structure for Sri Sri Thakur, when Sri Sri Thakur spent large part of his lifetime under shade like structure?

In a philosophical sense, Sri Sri Thakur wanted to live within our heart-temple (हृदय मन्दिर). Sri Sri Thakur wanted to live within us and wanted to be carried on our shoulders. Why should we, even symbolically, consign him into a brick and mortar confinement? Are we sailing on tradition or we are adopting the scientific sprit of Sri Sri Thakur and creating a Thakur's tradition? Or in the name of temple, we are acquiring real estate in cities and prime localities? How will the devotees from other religious communities, like Muslims and Christians will be treated in Thakur's temples? The rituals in Sri Sri Thakur's temples follow whose pattern: traditional or Sri Sri Thakur's?

Preserving an ideology or object of veneration in stone carving, sculpture etc has a tradition of its own. But those have been promoted as artifacts and pieces of excellent art; not as a mass drive on uniform design.

One wonders: what is the spirit behind adopting a primitive and expensive culture of building temples in this age of digital and nano technology?

Sixty six

Ten Reasons why Sri Sri Thakur is not popular?

Popularity is not a measure of Sri Sri Thakur's appeal

So far Sri Sri Thakur's movement has remained apolitical; good or bad, we are in no position to comment. In the context of this article, it is to be said that no political party found it worth, for whatever reason – political or otherwise, to espouse the cause of Sri Sri Thakur.

The question is not about popularity of Sri Sri Thakur. It is all about the mission of Sri Sri Thakur and the direction of his movement, popularly known as 'Satsang' movement. A pertinent question also at times crops up, as to how and why Sri Sri Thakur is not so well known in the society as are many god men in today's time?

The issue begins with a supposedly accepted fact that Sri Sri Thakur is relatively less known than what is expected to be; keeping in view his identity as the 'incarnate of the age', 'world teacher', the 'universal Guru' and all that his disciples ascribe him to be.

The underlying belief for the above question is that Sri Sri Thakur was the 'prophet of the age', who descended for the whole humanity. Therefore, his message must reach the humanity, if his descend has to have meaning and his mission is to be fulfilled. It is now hundred twenty five years after his birth and above forty years after his demise. What percentage of humanity knows him? Where did his message permeate to? Various nook and corner of the world are getting devastated out of poverty, malnutrition, war, accidents, both natural and man-made. When they need Sri Sri Thakur the most, is Sri Sri Thakur available for them? Is it a hypothetical and farfetched question! A kind of irony is very much palpable; very uneasy reality which we are compromising with.

1. First and most important reason for Sri Sri Thakur's stay in the so called twilight zone is perhaps found in Sri Sri Thakur's own liking and disliking. Sri Sri Thakur was not in favour of his own publicity. He never wanted to proclaim his identify and always wanted to keep himself known as a normal human being. He was seen to invoke the blessing of 'Supreme Father' and treated himself as His messenger. Though the disciples knew him as the incarnate, but people at large were left with ambiguity. Faith and devotion on Sri Sri Thakur was left open for testing and validation, which was not easy to do for average people. It was not easy for a flickering and suspicious mind to muster the strength of testing and knowing.

2. Sri Sri Thakur shunned direct exposure to visual media, photography and appearance on public dais. Sri Sri Thakur never addressed a public gathering. He never went places. Only place that he visited, other than his place of habitation, was Puri, the abode of Lord Jagannath in Odisha. It must also be kept in mind that electronic media did not exist then in India. Even video recording was not there. Having a personal camera was a luxury, which few could afford.

   Sri Sri Thakur however wanted his disciples to carry him places and keep him alive for ever, through personal conduct and exemplary behavior. It is as if, he was the Sun and he wanted his disciples to shine like planets and reflect his light. Therefore, he wanted his popularity to be tested in the light of practical benefit to people. Today Sri Sri Thakur gets carried over through words of mouth, personal touch and propagation by personal contact. His disciples put themselves as spokesperson of their Guru. In this process, what happens is that Sri Sri Thakur's ideology gets tested live. Limitation of this means of propagation is that it is slow; it is contingent upon individual effort and demonstration.

3. He did not dress himself in traditional ascetic attire, which might have attracted people's sentimental view on a mass scale. He did not organize any tradition bound hysteric mass *mela*, *yagnya*, camp, etc., which would have helped generate mass popularity.

4. Sri Sri Thakur did not meet people's craving for miracle. He was not there just to grant people's desire to fruition. Today people are crazy for instant gratification for which they flock to places of worship. Some places of worship have acquired distinction for getting devotees' desire fulfilled by some miraculous way, which is construed as divine. Sri Sri Thakur, though in a way fulfilled people's need, was not of a type that he would resort to magic for popularity. He did everything, including magical event, for people's ultimate wellbeing; never with a view to enhance his own fame. He was least concerned with his own name and fame.

5. Knowing Sri Sri Thakur is not just an intellectual exercise. It is not just an exercise in communication. A person Knows Sri Sri Thakur; that would mean that he is following Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, being convinced of the ideological credential. This is a hard job, especially when put on a mass scale.

   Looking at the history of any ideological movement; it is possible to create a cadre; not that easy to have a mass following with discipline. Whenever and wherever, mass movement has taken place; the ideological rigour has been diluted. The popularity rating of Sri Sri Thakur is actually a measure of transformation that might have taken place in the life of an individual devotee and society at large. That kind of mass transformation follows a revolution and results in evolution. Sri Sri Thakur's impact is to be felt in both thought and action. Sri Sri Thakur works in the sphere of human consciousness. Therefore, the spread and speed of Sri Sri Thakur's movement is expected to be deep, intimate and involved. It is like a stream of water cutting into rocks, creating a fall that generates power. It is not a flash flood, which creates destruction.

6. Sri Sri Thakur's movement was a kind of war of *satta* (existence, or soul) against complexes. For every disciple of Sri Sri Thakur, his ideology warrants 'love for the Lord'; active service for the surrounding and a regulated thought and conduct. Therefore, his disciples are subjected to hammering every now and then; of course, they are shaped and sharpened in the process. But the process is painstaking. Had Sri Sri Thakur directed a relatively easy path, would have allowed appeasement of complexes, perhaps there would have been larger followings and popularity rating would have been high.

7. Sri Sri Thakur's life span is beginning of an era. His movement awaits a lot of unfolding, which is contingent upon lot of favorable conditions. Sri Sri Thakur was ahead of his time. Time and society has to catch up with him. His disciples collectively have to translate his vision and mission into social actions and thereby create conditions in which Sri Sri Thakur's ideology gets demonstrated, nurtured, cultivated, adapted and it engulfs the society in successive generations. If the mass disciples fail in doing those, even in parts and degrees, to that extent, Sri Sri Thakur would remain unknown, as society would miss the total benefit of his ideology.

8. One such instance of failure has been multiple fractures in the organizational setup in his movement. The Satsang organization, headquarter at Deoghar, which evolved out of Sri Sri Thakur and was supposed to lead the movement has been a divided house, after Sri Sri Thakur left his mortal frame in 1969. Number of splinter groups is working now, at times at cross purposes, at different places. Result is that lot of activities, socio-economic and cultural, which need organized initiative on a large scale, have fallen on the roadside. The leaders of those camps of Satsang, in a populist and competitive zeal, have narrowed down the focus of Satsang movement. Most unfortunate fallout of this event; or maybe this is the genesis of the event itself; is that the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur has got distorted in its application. It is like corruption getting into administrative system. In the context of this topic, it is to be said that Satsang organization, divided into various camps, have failed to undertake such large scale resource intensive projects, as a result of which Sri Sri Thakur remains relatively unknown today.

   With optimistic fervour, we hope, perhaps the movement is waiting for emergence of some pilot men with fanatic zeal to set the organizational set up on track.

9. Sri Sri Thakur's literature is mostly in Bengali. Many people are not aware that Sri Sri Thakur has bequeathed his ideology through a high quality voluminous literature. Not much effort has been made to disseminate the literature, so that it comes to public view. Extensive research work is required for that. Of late, some initiative has been made to bring the literature in English and Hindi language, but that is just a drop in the ocean.

10. So far Sri Sri Thakur's movement has remained apolitical; good or bad, we are in no position to comment. In the context of this article, it is to be said that no political party found it worth, for whatever reason – political or otherwise, to espouse the cause of Sri Sri Thakur. This issue needs a separate exposition. Suffice to say here, Sri Sri Thakur had a huge influence on mass; had a political philosophy of his own. Given an opportunity, he would bring the political class to his line of ideology; but would resist himself to be aligned with any extant political ideology. This has gone adverse so far as his popularity is concerned.

    Almost the same thing can be said for today's media. In these days of high profile media blitz, media is observed to take up many popular causes; but the hard line of Sri Sri Thakur's mission somehow has failed to attract their engagement. May be, time will come.

I would like to conclude this discussion here, expecting some researcher in the field of social science to do further work on this topic.

April 2012

Sixty seven

Can We See a Social Revolution?
Sri Sri Thakur's ideology provides the framework

I am looking for a day when a disciple of Sri Sri Thakur, or a group of disciples, mobilize the mass and bring about fundamental reform in the society on the basis of Sri Sri Thakur's ideological framework. This is a massive job. It requires an elaborate theoretical exposition of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology and a movement.

Last week India witnessed a significant development in its socio-political landscape. Yesterday Anna Hazare, the veteran Gandhian crusader called off his fast on 5th day, on its 3rd or 4th session during last 2 years. He dismantled his team, disassociated himself from his team and the team is now out to form a political party to fight election in 2014.

Significance of this development is that till the other day, Anna Hazare epitomized the hope of a large section of Indians who wanted freedom from the tyranny of politico administrative establishment. Riding on wave of rousing popular support, last year around the same time he announced that he was about to herald the second freedom movement for India. Almost singlehandedly, with the support of a few activists under the glare of media, he sent a shiver across the spine of all political parties and brought Indian parliament to his terms. That was simply unprecedented. He could mobilize and mount such sweeping and inescapable pressure on political establishment that his method was questioned as undemocratic and therefore unconstitutional.

Going by the developments of last week, despite his failure to reach the pronounced objective, the high point of his success was that he created awareness against some deep malaise of Indian administration, such as corruption.

From a detached position, I was enjoying and viewing the Anna Hazare movement, as it was unfolding. The view was that of public being galvanized by a clean honest crusader and that could be snowballed to a movement. With direction from a dedicated band of activists and with support from media, it was indeed possible by the mass to bring about a shakeup in body politic. I was getting a new hope that it was possible to usher a revolution by sheer strength of dedication, devotion and inner qualities of a person, which could challenge high and mighty, who were armed with power and state machinery. I was observing a scenario where a single individual was making a fundamental difference by a simple logic which says that the power of democracy lies with people, however unorganized they may be and not with

their representatives and not with the democratic institutions, which though are well established during last 60 plus years. If people's representatives become unmindful of their true nature and responsibility and if the public institutions run by tax payer's money get corrupt, then the multitude of unorganized and unarmed people can revolt against the democratically elected representatives and can teach them a lesson.

I started conjuring Sri Sri Thakur's ideological view in this development. I feel myself part of a movement that has a promise to sweep the whole humanity to a higher order, to a better and progressive world to live in, devoid of hunger, malnutrition, environmental degradation, war, violence and bloodshed. In Anna Hazare's movement, the first thing that strikes me is power of a person, an individual, who draws power from his own character, his sacrifice, his detachment and his record of service to people. Sri Sri Thakur's view of a powerful devotee, who can shake the world for the sake of his Lord, is getting conjured up in my view. Secondly, it is possible to mobilize a social force and use it against the establishment for the purpose of reforming the system. Third thing that was revealing was the power of media, use of technology in giving voice to public will. Fourthly, I was observing the weakness, hollowness and corrosive nature of our political system and was coming to believe that non political force can shake it.

Now many of these realization and views have been shattered. A paradigm that was getting built up, had some bearing with Sri Sri Thakur's philosophy in my view, had been crushed. Now it is an experimented fact that political establishment cannot be challenged by non political forces. Reforms in the system can be brought about by people from within the system, not by people from outside the system. Electoral politics through democratic principle has come to stay in India. Popular uprising will not work in India. Indian democracy has developed resilience to absorb popular discontentment, only exception appears to be Naxal movement and Mao movement, which is sustaining itself despite attempt by State to banish it. But that is an armed movement and fuelled by violence.

The above conclusions are tentative and are directly derived from the developments of Anna Hazare's movement as it is today. The analysis admits that what we are seeing today is just a phase, though a decisive one. No popular movement proceeds on scripted line and therefore entails some slips somewhere. Anna Hazare's movement also had its share of slipshod. Objective here is to look forward on the backdrop of this case study.

I am looking for a day when a disciple of Sri Sri Thakur, or a group of disciples, mobilize the mass and bring about fundamental reform in the society on the basis of Sri Sri Thakur's ideological framework. This is a massive job. It requires an elaborate theoretical exposition of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology and a movement. How will that happen and when, nobody knows. Limited purpose of this article is to make everyone aware that Sri Sri Thakur has provided a framework in which social, political, economic and cultural system can run that can sustain individual growth, peace and prosperity. Sri Sri Thakur's is a comprehensive ideology that fulfills all, keeping the individual distinctiveness intact.

Can we have a system, socio-economic-political, based on Sri Sri Thakur's framework? Will there be a social mobilization, involving political and economic forces, to bring about a reform? Is any group in Satsang or any section of Sri Sri Thakur's disciples preparing a ground for that?

What for did Sri Sri Thakur come?

Sixty eight

India @ 65 – its Eternal Credo in Question

Who looks at the solitary person in the crowd?

Biological asset of Indian people is the most valuable heritage of our country. That asset is a living and evolving organic entity, which needs to be cultivated for its preservation and refinement. This is the single most important mission for this country. This is the identity and differentiating element in our country's cultural heritage.

Today is India's 65th Independence Day, a day of much significance for the country. The day has its own pattern of celebration. Songs of patriotism blaring every nook and corner; talk for renewal of nation building tasks coming from podiums. There are many issues to reflect: political development, issues of economic significance and also social issues like education, health, environment, civic infrastructure and so on. Nation pays tribute to heroes like freedom fighters, martyrs and pioneers in the field of science, technology, agriculture etc, who have taken lead in building modern India after independence. Everything put together spreads positive energy and a progressive picture of a developing country.

This article attempts to focus on three points of view, which normally do not find place on the national forums. a) Remembering a worthy son of this country; almost left in oblivion; b) A national mission; c) An anonymous forgotten individual.

A. A worthy Son of the Country

A boy born in 1888, in undivided Bengal, currently in Bangladesh, shifted to now Jharkhand (then Bihar) in India on the eve of independence in 1946. He kept himself tirelessly engaged in nation building activities, till he breathed his last in 1969. He loved his motherland and he worked ceaselessly to regain its lost glory. He did not participate in freedom movement, but Mahatma Gandhi visited him in Pabna sometime in 1920s to seek his views about India's independence movement. Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, founder of Swaraj movement in 1920s, found a guide in him and got himself indoctrinated in to his ideology. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, prior to his historic visit to German, Japan and then to Burma, where he built Indian National Army, visited him at Pabna and was blessed by his guidance. After India attained independence, this person, in his sixties, chose to stay in a tribal area of Bihar, at Deoghar in Santhal Pragana, where all the then leaders and statesmen visited him and sought his views on various issues of national reconstruction. Visit of Lalbahadur Shastri, while he was railway minister before

becoming Prime Minister is well documented. There was no leader in public life who did not listen to him in those days, just after independence, when India was passing through critical time. Nation was groping for solution to multiple problems including fighting war against Pakistan and China. People at the helm of affairs in various nation building activities found some original and unorthodox views in his thought. All of them visited him and found some glimpses of solution. For them, he held out hope for our country and was an epitome of Indian culture.

A curious reader may wonder, why this person with such overwhelming influence on people, did not occupy a prominent position in national life? Yes, it did not happen. He did not want to occupy any official or formal position and recognition. Nation building was definitely in his agenda, but his area of focus was at a more basic level, which was: building the character and awakening the consciousness of every individual. He wanted to prevail in the mind and heart of every countryman and woman.

He is Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. He liked to remain far away from politics, power and pelf. He engineered a socio-cultural movement, staying away from any kind of so called revolution, which by nature is confrontationist. But his influence at popular level was unparalleled till 1969.

Today, his movement is not very much visible and audible on national platform, though it is very much ruling like an undercurrent. Whatever may be the reasons, it is unfortunate that the country has put that person in an obscure corner of collective psyche. What is appropriate place for Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra on the national stage is hard for me to figure out. Neither am I looking for a decorated title for him like Bharat Ratna or Nobel Peace prize. What could have happened is that his views and ideologies could have found a place in our collective quest for betterment. For that to happen, his mission and ideology need to be known, understood, to be experimented and to be adopted. Sri Sri Thakur is not here to form or share a political stage; but his ideology can be shared by all activists, policy makers and political parties for the benefit of the country.

Today, we must place Sri Sri Thakur in the hall of fame of nation's ideals. Unless we do that, a bright piece of Indian's heritage will be lost in the garbage of history. Next generation will be deprived of his appropriate guidance. They would not even know what have they lost.

B. A National Mission

Biological asset of Indian people is the most valuable heritage of our country. That asset is a living and evolving organic entity, which needs to be cultivated for its preservation and refinement. This is the single most important mission for this country. This is the identity and differentiating element in our country's cultural heritage. If this gets polluted, or takes a degrading tenor, then the essence of Indian culture will be hard to be traced in times to come.

What is this? How can it be cultivated? What are the actions to be taken? Who will provide leadership? There are many questions to which I alone do not have answer. But Government of India or some research Institute can take up this mission and provide the institutional structure for working on this. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has provided a blueprint for this mission.

C. An Anonymous Forgotten Individual

The administrative machinery of the state celebrated Independence Day this morning. This event is one of the duties of those who are running the state machinery. State is spending huge resources and deploying powerful machinery for the successful display of the event. Say, I am a farmer; I have to go to my field early in the morning every day. My day's schedule is governed by the nature, whether it is raining, or it is dry; my field is ready for ploughing or sowing. It makes little difference to me, whether it is

14th, or 15th or 16th August. I am, say, an office goer. 15th August gives me a holiday; therefore, my day's schedule goes in line with a holiday with my family.

The point that I am driving home is that all these state activities have little relevance for the individual, who is perhaps forgotten in the big events of the state. Sum total of the individual makes a system, but for an individual, the system is given and the system has become impersonal and impervious to individual need. An individual is lost before the might of the collectivity.

While state is celebrating Independence Day, ordinary person cannot participate in that celebration due to security reason. And those invited and honored guests participate in the state celebration, they are far away from ordinary person. An ordinary person can see the celebration from a distance in awe and would curse himself, as neither he nor his father is one of those privileged to achieve a status so as to participate in the elitist celebration of the state.

Let us find out the anonymous person who appears to have been lost in the society. Sri Sri Thakur remains with the person who is lost in the society.

15th August 2012

Sixty nine

Is Thakur off the Scene and out of Touch?
Thakur continues to remain the living Ideal

Greatest benefit that we got is that we were brought up under the mentorship of second generation disciples. We got firsthand account of Sri Sri Thakur's life and activities. Besides, we inherited two assets readymade; namely, a) the divine head Sri Sri Thakur; the image of incarnation in completeness, and b) the ideological framework of Sri Sri Thakur. Our previous two generations built these two painstakingly and we have inherited those.

The title thought is perhaps perturbing; nevertheless worth pondering over.

We, the third generation disciples of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, are a special breed. We face a kind of situation that was there never before, for our previous two generations. We are into an environment that has its own unique features to which there is no parallel. Therefore, we have to chart a path for ourselves.

We, I mean our generation of disciples, are at a turning point, as far as Satsang movement is concerned. Our next generation will be of a different type. We definitely owe something for them. Unless we are sure of ourselves, we may not be able to bequeath an enabling environment and an enriched culture for them.

Generation I

First generation devotees of Sri Sri Thakur were mostly drawn from Sri Sri Thakur's personal acquaintances; even if they were not, they became one. That was the era of Pabna Satsang at Himaitpur. Sri Sri Thakur was there everywhere in person. The devotees of that era saw a person, in Sri Sri Thakur, of a different type; then they explored deep into him out of their own inquisitiveness. When they found a treasure in him, they abandoned everything else and went on digging deep, deeper and the deepest in to the mine of treasure. As they went deeper, they became more and more devoted till they discovered a different world. Some of them, rather most of them, admittedly came as skeptics, but soon got converted to devotees, almost without their own knowledge. They were blessed to have got personal favour from Sri Sri Thakur. It is an amazing story of personal grace, love, service, vision and enlightenment that Sri Sri Thakur rendered to them; to each one of them; such occurrences, if put together, will be a series of epics; epics of play between divine and devotee. The type of play that was enacted had neither predefined nor

predictable script. Every moment, with each encounter, it was a strange story of divine revelation for his creation; each creation is unique; therefore the creator comes out in the best of diversity. The common factor was Sri Sri Thakur and his aura of divinity. The end result was transformation of each individual devotee. The process was unique for each, suiting individual distinctiveness.

The scene was natural, in all senses of the term. The physical setting of ashram was nature at its elementary expression. Bank of river Padma, hamlet of Himaitpur, amidst thick flora and fauna, and people had a natural life style. Amidst all these alchemy of nature and its beauty, there was the best creation of nature that was Sri Sri Thakur; the creator amidst his creations and the creatures. There were cottages, pathways leading to villages in the surrounding areas, some of which were to be ferried by country boats, crossing the web of river and rivulets. What is of significance is that the creator, the Master (पुरुष) played his role in the midst of unalloyed nature (प्रकृति).

The role that Sri Sri Thakur played in those days was spectacular, unprecedented, which baffled the humanity. Humanity hardly came across such a person, who is endowed with wealth of all kinds; temporal, spiritual, mortal, immortal and of all conceivable varieties. Like the sun rising on the east horizon, with full blaze of light and spectrum of color, Sri Sri Thakur prevailed on the society; on customs, on practices, on mores, on all spheres of human endeavor like a colossus, that could hardly be resisted. More significant than the impact that the world could see, there were thrusts that were unseen. Sri Sri Thakur worked in the deep recess of mind, psyche, attitude, impulse, instincts of a person such that he took full control of a person from within. And then what we saw is history. Total transformation in personality, total migration of core being from one end of the spectrum to the other end, total upheaval in emotions, feelings and sensitivity, getting into a sphere of hyperactivity, depth of maturity and wisdom and all those blossomed in each person like a bud blooms into petal and colors in the morning sun. Sri Sri Thakur invited, nay summoned, his followers like a true leader invoking following and commanding obedience. Sri Sri Thakur only needed a place in the mind and heart of a person from where he could maneuver the person like a pilot taking charge of the cockpit. In those days in and around Himaitpur, there was philosophy in practice, knowledge in action, euphoria in devotion, love in labour, science in vision, mythology in manifestation, metamorphosis in the making. Everything put together, it was a different world, a new world, a world of surprises, a world in which people live in the ocean of love.

Devotees in those days who dedicated themselves in Sri Sri Thakur's movement underwent grueling hardship. They gave up their worldly callings and their societal props. They came out of their worldly trappings and remained totally engaged in their transformational drive. They had no time to lose in their quest for ultimate fulfillment. They formed the mass for the movement that Sri Sri Thakur dawned on the earth. That was movement of the soul, of spirituality, for supreme status. They did not have food to eat, not a roof on their head; their family was ruined without regular livelihood. They were torn in dilemma, innuendoes and social stigma. Still, they made their lives. Individually each of them would have achieved supreme status by the time they bid adieu to Sri Sri Thakur, their ultimate friend, philosopher and guide. And collectively, they laid the foundation of Satsang movement. They laid the base for a future world order, the world of Sri Sri Thakur's dream.

Generation II

The second generation of disciples saw Sri Sri Thakur at Deoghar; sometime seated on the verandah of *Boral Bungalow*; some time under the shade of parlor, sometime in *Nirala Nivesh* and for a brief time in the wooden structure of *jamtala* courtyard. On Sri Sri Thakur's life scale, that period commenced at the age of fifty eight. On the scale of divine credential, Sri Sri Thakur reached the pinnacle of public figure as a godlike man. The divine expression and godly manifestation became profound in a sense that Sri Sri

Thakur was seen to be more reserve outwardly. Though he was accessible to all, on a close observation one could see that he was open only for those who were intimate, inquisitive and purposeful. During that time, Sri Sri Thakur was visibly working to consolidate his ideology and create a grand social mobilization.

The second generation of disciples got a structured ideological framework, which was better defined and delivered than what the first generation got. The ideological paradigm was built, well documented and delivered as a coherent package by Sri Sri Thakur himself, being aided by his able lead disciples like Satish Chandra Goswami, Krishna Prasanna Bhattacharya, Panchanan Sarkar and Sushil Chandra Basu. Some of the classic literatures were published during this period. Some volumes documented Sri Sri Thakur's life story, well known amongst those were by Brajagopal Dutta Roy and Satish Chandra Joyardar. An account of Sri Sri Thakur's life story in English, 'Ocean in a Tea Cup', came out during this period, written by Ray Archer Hauserman, published in USA and became very popular. Two volumes came out documenting Satsang history; one by Krishna Prasanna Bhattacharya and second one by Sachidananda Goswami. Systematic process of '*diksha*', *ritwik*, '*yajan, yaajan & istabhrity*', *swastyayani* and *sadachaar* were formulated and codified during this period.

The second generation of disciples had two preoccupations; (i) to cultivate, harvest and extract the divine potential of Sri Sri Thakur which was available in full blown manifestation. (ii) They also were pushed for a greater social mobilization for the mission of Sri Sri Thakur to take shape of a world movement. Some disciples during this period got engaged in building institutions at Deoghar as well as at different places in the country.

The second generation disciples took over *sadhana* as a matter of discipline both at individual level and at community level. *Satsang adhibesans* (satsang sittings) were held at many places, regularly at some places with elaborate paraphernalia of events like prayer, followed by *kirtans*, discussions and *Anand Bazar* (community kitchen). Conducting kirtans in frenzied way, swaying the mood of the mass towards devotion and elevation, fell very much into Indian tradition and took off well. Significantly, Sri Sri Thakur himself used to participate in these *kirtans* in his youthful days, but for the second generation disciples, Sri Sri Thakur's direct participation was a thing of the past; a thing only to refer and to reflect.

For second generation disciples, Sri Sri Thakur was an object to be achieved, to be realized and to be owned up. He was available on appeal. He was there to be visited. Communication with him was brief, precise and many times it was silent communication, by unspoken words, through exchange of eyeballs and expression of intense mutual feelings. Disciples' prayers were granted through reciprocal love and affection. But it was never a show of miracles; it was never an orchestration of so called playing to the gallery, no stage performance, no mass mesmerizing, no occult healing; nothing of that sort. It was a natural, intimate and divine experience. For Sri Sri Thakur, he was delivering and demonstrating his ideology; he was fulfilling his mission of service to his creation; he was on his agenda of redeeming the virtuous while banishing evil. For the disciples, it was an extraordinary moment of coming face to face with incarnate; the living expression of godhood; an extravaganza of divine play on the earth; flow of love, mercy, light and delight.

A close observation on hindsight reveals that Sri Sri Thakur was on an accelerated mode to wrap up his founding mission, keeping in view the contemporary and upcoming trend. He was firm on his mission to be delivered. His steering was on a steady course. His speed was at its peak. He had many things to design, to define, to delineate, to defend, to discipline, to demonstrate, to deliver, to dictate, to discuss, to deliberate, and so on. At the same time, he was preparing for his departure. The grand finale was to be dawned, as significantly as his descend happened on this earth. Second generation disciples witnessed, at some time and from some angles, that Sri Sri Thakur was failing in his health and therefore there was a

need to relieve him of public pressure. A scene of keeping Sri Sri Thakur secluded, much against his wish, was created. Sri Sri Thakur, the all powerful arbiter, was slowly shrouded by a shadow of administration, by an organized disciplining and a kind of managing the show crept into the ashram environment.

The strength of second generation disciples multiplied exponentially. The humanity, having come to know the incarnate of the age, gathered in multitudes, almost every day from across the world and the surge of visitors came like a tidal avalanche wanting to break at his feet. Sri Sri Thakur, in his infinite grace and prowess, received and fulfilled each one of the visitors. No matter what was the condition of his physical frame, he used to revel at the presence of people around. Father was enjoying the children's love and attention.

Second generation disciples had teams of leaders in various spheres. In essence, they were hard core devotees, totally dedicated for accomplishing Sri Sri Thakur's mission. They plunged into activities in different directions; some of them started building institutions, some got in to literary activities, some into public relations, some into mass mobilization, and some into social service; all under Sri Sri Thakur's directions. There was hardly any sphere of activity which Sri Sri Thakur's disciples did not attempt to touch. From the disciples' perspective, it was their *sadhana*, worship of their lord, everything for His satisfaction. Sri Sri Thakur's personal guidance, approval and satisfaction were the moving forces. For them Sri Sri Thakur's blessings were as evident as the sunshine during daytime.

Second generation of disciples did not glimpse past so much as they aimed at the future. They felt in their nerves that they are part of process that is out to transform the world. For them, every drop of their sweat would contribute to the new world order that Sri Sri Thakur hinted at, to come not in distant future. 'We are children of the supreme father, the father would be known by our merit' – that was the pride feelings each active disciple of Sri Sri Thakur felt in that era. True to their belief and faith, some of them laid their life at the altar of '*ista swartha*, *istapratishta*' (ईस्ट स्वार्थ और ईस्ट प्रतिष्ठा) (Lord's interest and Lord's image). Despite setbacks on personal fronts; may it be health, wealth, social standing etc., some of them sang the glory of their lord while breathing last; without least regret. They lived through and witnessed a period in which the Lord in flesh and blood was leading the race; a spectacular view and very productive engagement.

Generation III

Our generation, the third generation in 'satsang movement', are singularly unprivileged by not having the live touch with Sri Sri Thakur. That mishap has been played by nature, for which there is no compensation. Time has taken its toll. Time also has built for us a past, a tradition, a footprint which has its own value. Needless to say, Sri Sri Thakur knowingly made these provisions for the future generation. Third generation disciples therefore have inherited a tradition of divinity, which they need to cultivate for their own benefit and build on for the next generation.

Greatest benefit that we got is that we were brought up under the mentorship of second generation disciples. We got firsthand account of Sri Sri Thakur's life and activities. Besides, we inherited two assets readymade; namely, a) the divine head Sri Sri Thakur; the image of incarnation in completeness, and b) the ideological framework of Sri Sri Thakur. Our previous two generations built these two painstakingly and we have inherited those.

The divine Thakur and his direction and blessings are there for us as always. It is up to us to look for his blessings and be blessed. Individual guidance, direction and protection from Sri Sri Thakur are as lively

available today as it was available to second generation disciples. Sri Sri Thakur is as responsive today as he was when he was on this earth with mortal frame.

Today Sri Sri Thakur's image and the ideology are two most powerful tools available to us. The challenge for our generation is to live on the ideology and to conceive his image from the available sources. A hard task indeed; only determined minds can perhaps stick to it. Since Sri Sri Thakur is physically not present and is past by about 40 years, the image and ideology are getting eroded and distorted. That is something unfortunate but real and we have to steer our path clear amidst all these. The objective is to attain self development, elevation and acquisition in addition to preserving the ideology.

For our generation disciples, ideology is to be lived in our daily lives, amidst the social and professional conditions that we live in. Since, almost all of us are scattered in pursuit of our professional call, there is a physical disconnect from the satsang environment for most of us. Therefore, we have no option but to stand on our own, create our own environment and keep Sri Sri Thakur alive through our own conduct. Sri Sri Thakur has to be seen through our professional callings, in the social environment and through all ups and downs in life. Here comes a test of our faith on Sri Sri Thakur, which says, 'to know Thakur is to know all; and to know all is to know Thakur'. Sri Sri Thakur is to be seen and to be pitched in the context of the larger society, in which there are whole lot of diversities, peculiarities, adversities and what not.

Our generation disciples are engaged in their own occupation, vocation and family related activities. Most of us are hardly found to shoulder any responsibility that would purely be Thakur's. This is a sharp difference in type and level of engagement between our generation and those of earlier two generations.

What is called '*istakarma*', work dedicated for the Lord, hardly seen to inspire us today. There is a bit of disorientation amongst our generation of disciples on this account. On the one hand, we do not find interest, relevance and affinity in the field level conventional activities of 'Satsang movement'. The conventional leadership and traditional activities are perhaps not very compatible to our generation disciples. Lack of personal contact and time constraint has become two great barriers for us. On the other hand, we are not able to create a model which would keep us engaged with Sri Sri Thakur's activities, suiting our lifestyle. We are perhaps not able to find a method by which we can keep us engaged with Sri Sri Thakur's work that would make us feel connected with Sri Sri Thakur and Sri Sri Thakur would be visible in the society. While we do not appreciate the conventional leadership and activities, we are not able to take the mantle of leadership on ourselves and therefore, there is a vacuum. As if, we are waiting for someone or some appropriate time in future to come.

Those of us who are in the west side of life cycle have seen the next generation disciples joining the queue. The gen-next is entirely of a different type. They face different challenges and opportunities. However, it is the responsibility of our generation to provide them the launching pad. If we are found wanting there, we are not sure how Sri Sri Thakur would be present with and remain alive for them.

Our generation, owing to our proximity to Sri Sri Thakur's time, owes a responsibility to keep Sri Sri Thakur alive and his ideology undistorted and pass on that to the next generation. This is a great responsibility, which we must appreciate; though we may at times not be clear as to how to discharge that responsibility.

Last 40 years have witnessed massive transformation in use of information technology, which has totally transformed communication, interpersonal transaction and lifestyle. Those of us, who are on the positive side of the digital divide, have developed a different view of life, of society and of the world around. If we

are not adapting to the digital lifestyle, keeping the essence of Sri Sri Thakur's ideological practices live with us; then perhaps, the disconnect between Sri Sri Thakur and the future generation may widen.

For the third generation, it is an opportunity to transcript Sri Sri Thakur's wishes to materialization. The framework for institution building and project activity that were laid down by the second generation needs to be taken forward for demonstration; thus helping to capture the imagination of future generation on Sri Sri Thakur's work and philosophy.

From this perspective, what follows is that Satsang movement is at a turning point. The composition of Satsang world in terms of 'mass' and 'class' is sure to undergo an alteration. Social manifestation of Satsang movement is sure to undergo a change. What will be the shape and direction of Satsang movement and Sri Sri Thakur's place in the changed social order, we do not know. If our generation disciples remain unconcerned about these developments, then we are leaving things to chances.

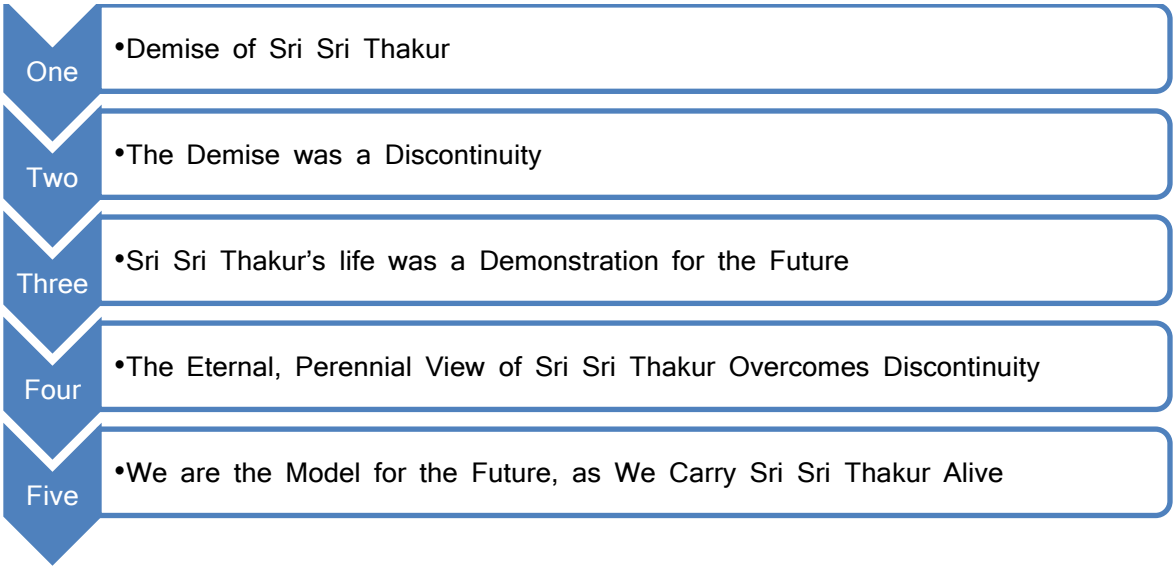
As of now the doubt that Sri Sri Thakur is off the scene and out of touch is valid, at least for some of us. That's what it appears. However, let's keep in mind that Sri Sri Thakur is actively watching the developments. He can turn things around.

11th November 2012

Seventy

The Generation That Is Destined to Carry the Cross

The Live Thakur is Seen Now



Ours is a 'bridge' generation. Our generation of disciples of Sri Sri Thakur connects Thakur's lifetime to the future. We bridge the great divide between two ages: the age which witnessed Sri Sri Thakur's physical play on this earth and the age which will view Sri Sri Thakur in history and will struggle hard to know about him. The divide is indeed wide and the discontinuity is too sharp to be missed.

Demise of Sri Sri Thakur

Humanity lost Sri Sri Thakur forever in 1969 January. The flame that kept the divinity ablaze on this earth since 1888 was extinguished. The period in the aftermath of the demise was dark. There was a vacuum that was as real as centre of gravity of a whirlwind. The withdrawal of Sri Sri Thakur from the surface of the earth was a celestial retreat that was of significance not only for the human race, but also for the whole eco system.

The demise, the departure, the destitution that followed, was colossal. But who felt and absorbed the immediate impact? In the short run, the immediate surroundings of Sri Sri Thakur got the first impact. The contemporary disciples spread far away from the vicinity of Sri Sri Thakur, felt the secondary incidence of loss. Both these teams were shocked and dismayed. They reconciled to the inevitability in their own

ways. The real and permanent loss, however, was for the generations, who were yet to come and yet to get the benefit of his association. For the contemporary disciples, the loss was immediate and severe; but for the coming generations, the loss was implicit, insidious, and long lasting.

The Demise was a Discontinuity

It must be admitted that Sri Sri Thakur's withdrawal from the world stage was a massive break; a departure with a deadly significance. Secondly, there was nothing that could have mitigated the loss. When loss is so grievous and of such immeasurable magnitude, then finger turns to the probable cause for the loss. Someone will turn out and say that it is logical that Sri Sri Thakur's death was inevitable, like any other mortal being. Therefore, what do you get by looking for cause of Sri Sri Thakur's death?

Sri Sri Thakur's last breath is not to be treated like the inevitable eventuality of any other life on the earth. Yes, there is no gainsaying the fact that the inevitable end would have gripped Sri Sri Thakur any day. It is not the eventuality which is being questioned; it is the time and circumstances in which he had to beat the retreat that is being deplored and that has got some lesson for us.

It is our belief that Sri Sri Thakur could have continued to live for some more years. He was timed to die at His will. He yearned to live with his creation. He loved his creation and wanted to do as much he could. But that was not to be, for a reason that is deplorable, inscrutable and mysterious. However, no singular cause can be attributed to this great fall. If at all, any proximate cause for the early departure of Sri Sri Thakur is to be established, then the causal factor can only be traced in the immediate environment of Sri Sri Thakur. However, this is not the central point of this article. Still, it is relevant to quote a saying of Sri Sri Thakur for its depth and poignancy. In response to a question from an American lady on 5th February 1948, Sri Sri Thakur observed, 'I believe, Christ could be saved; Srikrishna could be saved, if the adherents were careful'. (*Alochana Prasange*, *Vol. X, - Bengali*)

Sri Sri Thakur's life was a Demonstration for the Future

Sri Sri Thakur's life is valued for its demonstration of divinity on earth. Every act of his was an expression of extraordinary significance. Every moment was spent for educating, for building, for creating value for others. His life was a grand display of human value, human power, human capability and creativity. His every action, reaction, emotion and articulation had unique expressions, backed by meaning, feelings, devotion, compassion, consciousness, alertness, responsiveness and what not. That made Sri Sri Thakur's life invaluable. His contribution to the history of human civilization was immense. He added to humanity's 'being' and to the process of 'becoming', by demonstration, by expression, by example, by conduct, by talk and so on. His life was a type, unique of its kind.

All these ended on 27th January 1969. As the self procreated legend breathed his last, this process of demonstration came to a terminal and irreversible halt. The rhythmic beat of the universe took a momentary blip. But life on its eternal motion went on. What continued, as His legacy for the posterity is: a) His ideology; b) His image as captured and retained in the society; c) His literature and d) His mission.

Our generation, the generation who came to Sri Sri Thakur's fold through the process of *diksha*, post 1969 have a great role to play in each of the legacy elements, to keep the legacy continued in robust manner.

Sri Sri Thakur lived a span of 81 years. During this period, he did wonders. He made heaven and earth to shake in very fundamental way for His mission, keeping in synch with law of nature, working through the basics of human and social dynamics, buoying up things to the height of becoming and beatitude. Every moment of Sri Sri Thakur's life was flush and blushed with hectic activity, simultaneously at the level of

material, spiritual and eternal. Natural bouts of wonders used to occur at and around him; but those were not miracles; those were height of happenings, surpassing all peaks of excellence, overcoming hurdles that threaten life. Looking his life in totality, we will summarize and say that whatever he did can be classified under two objectives:

- One is to cause benefit to people, individually, collectively and socially at large, without sparing any ground, which might cause a slip. He did everything, even turning impossible to possible, so that each one on this earth, directly and indirectly, gets to benefit from His descend and His intervention. A ground swell of energy, mobilized by Sri Sri Thakur came to action for the welfare of each and every individual. He indeed played the role of redeemer for the human race.
- Second thing he did was that He demonstrated and left behind a model of living. He created, enacted, validated, consolidated a way of life; life in its all forms and varieties that is worth living. Everything he did was a piece to preserve for the posterity. Each of his activities was a view (path) to capture and find meaning, explore and experiment and to make use at all time. He did not do anything, which was, say for example, necessary for him to accomplish certain things or to achieve certain object, for his sake.

The Eternal, Perennial View of Sri Sri Thakur Overcomes Discontinuity

Sri Sri Thakur came to us as incarnate. With devotion on the unseen God, we took Sri Sri Thakur as living representation of Godhood. We found that the prime features of divinity, which we had in our idea, got a concrete manifestation in the person that Sri Sri Thakur was. He demonstrated in his life and activities what we would have to otherwise look for in heavens, temples; places of pilgrimage, hermitage of ascetics in inaccessible places like say Himalayas. So we found a living God, a personalized divine head, an embodied divinity, who spelt out in his life what is divine. He also defined in lucid terms the tenets of scriptures, which are again esoteric for our generation people, as most of these are in Sanskrit language and are in the exclusive preserve of ancient culture. We found Sri Sri Thakur explaining in his native language, in Bengali, in simple terms what is otherwise a jumble of pedantic and esoteric knowledge, drawn from time immemorial from anonymous sources. Sri Sri Thakur lived a homely life, wore normal civil dress, was accessible to all and sundry, very compassionate and yet spoke profound knowledge with ease and felicity of a wise person. He did not say things of other world; he spoke about the mundane world and provided solution to our worldly problems. Based on these facts, realization and a kind of natural familiarity, we accepted Sri Sri Thakur as our Ideal. For us, Sri Sri Thakur was a living ideal as distinct from an abstract ideology. He was a living ideal, as he practiced everything that he preached. He was a living Ideal, as it was possible through him for us to comprehend the abstraction in life, in motion, in shape. It was like seeing knowledge in a teacher, like feeling service in the hand of a nurse, like getting to see creativity in an artist. Likewise, we saw the peak of excellence in all fields of human endeavor and therefore, we took Sri Sri Thakur as a perfect living Ideal.

That Thakur, who came to us through his image, literature, ideology and through association of devotees (satsang) became more and more vivid, lively and closer as we put his ideology into practice. We found a path for our life, amidst all trials and tribulations. We saw reflection of our own life in Thakur's ideology. We found solutions, guidance, and solace in our hours of reckoning with reality. As we struggled on the course of life, we found a friend, philosopher and guide in Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur provided us direction, guidance, clue and goaded us on the path of progress. It so happened, we found love bondage with him. We saw our aspiration getting whetted by him and being met by him. We felt as if our aspiration is his desire and he is leading us towards realization of our aspiration. He sought an exclusive one-to-one love relationship with us, and we started enjoying that. In this way, Sri Sri Thakur, the Ideal and ideology, the person and principle, the God and the godhood, became an inseparable part of our life.

Forty four years have passed. Our belief on him has gathered strength and has gone deep into our psyche. We see continuity in this paradigm. Our faith, belief and devotion are getting intensified, as these are getting reinforced by positive developments. We see Sri Sri Thakur prevailing everywhere. We see his message getting more and more validated, relevant and lively with passage of time. What Sri Sri Thakur said is becoming more and more evident with our experience and outlook getting matured. In our worldview, Sri Sri Thakur is presiding with a resplendent smile, looking directly at us with assured protection. That view of Sri Sri Thakur is keeping us energized, empowered, and we have taken his mission as our life mission. We have realized that our interest lies in translating his mission into reality.

We are not bedeviled by the discontinuity that happened in 1969 January. For us, it is a historical account, to be taken rationally. It has not smashed and sullied our sentiment. Sri Sri Thakur is our Ideal; He is supreme, unique, indivisible, and inseparable. We are not bemused by the confusion surrounding his succession. For us, he is one and he will continue to remain one. We have seen his nature, which is eternal, imperishable; death cannot drown him. He lives in his ideology and his ideology gets defined by him. We have seen his eternal flame and that flame remains shining before us.

The fundamental tenets of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is cast in his sayings which are valid, relevant and applicable today as these were in the past and so will these remain in foreseeable future. Sri Sri Thakur has said that in any culture, there are certain parts which are divine and some parts are discrete. For us this distinction between the core principles of Sri Sri Thakur and the time sensitive outfits are clear. Therefore, there is nothing that can take us away from Sri Sri Thakur; rather everything can find a place in relation to Him.

That eternal face of Sri Sri Thakur has to be kept pristine by adhering to his principles. His mission has to be carried forward as he wanted to do. His literature has to be cultivated for knowing what he wanted and how he wanted things to happen. His ideology is to be lived on, as that paves the path for us. So, as we experience, there is no question of any discontinuity as his trilogy of *gyana* (knowing his literature), *bhakti* (adherence to his ideology) and *karma* (work for his mission) will keep the devotees constantly engaged.

We are the Model for the Future, as we Carry Sri Sri Thakur Alive

Significance of our generation is that we are not carrying the 'luggage' of the past. The luggage that I am referring to is a feeling of dependence on Sri Sri Thakur's influence for meeting immediate requirement of a person. The contemporaries of Sri Sri Thakur were privileged to draw Sri Sri Thakur's consideration for meeting their immediate needs; those needs could be anything. For some, that need was a life and death issue; or for someone else, it could be his personal wish. Sri Sri Thakur's grace, compassion, love and service was used by people for all kinds of needs, small or big, temporal or spiritual, health or wealth, need of oneself or of family or of friends. Sri Sri Thakur, the most gracious lord, fulfilled everyone's need unconditionally. Of course, he made people ideal-centric, made people to see the cause and effect relationship in life by putting them through various tasks and processes. That direct and easy path is not available today and our generation is not spoiled by that.

Not that the contemporary disciples did not do any worthwhile thing. No. The purpose is not to deny the great role that they played under the direct blessings of Sri Sri Thakur. Objective of this paragraph is to bring out the contrast between the generation of contemporary devotees (the bygone era) and our own generation (the current era).

What was significant then and holds good even now is that how much the disciples adhere to Sri Sri Thakur's ideological tenets in their daily life? Second pertinent point is; how much dedication and commitment a disciple has for translating His mission to reality. Third pertinent point, perhaps, would be:

how much integrated and consolidated is the Sri Sri Thakur's movement today to have a larger impact in the society.

The responsibility of our generation disciples is onerous, as we provide the model for Sri Sri Thakur's future generation disciples. That model will continue, as there will not be a discontinuity of the type that happened in 1969. We need to protect, preserve, and promote the four legacies, namely: a) His ideology, b) His image, c) His literature and d) His mission, undistorted, the way Sri Sri Thakur wanted.

14th January 2013

Seventy one

Satsang Movement – Past & Future

Much remains to be done, to be seen and to be heard

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is originator of an era. He is initiator of a movement that has great promise to deliver. His ideology is applicable for the current and future society. The phase that we are witnessing now is perhaps a cooling phase, to be followed by a phase of revival. One holds out a hope that leadership will emerge to give a direction to the Satsang movement.

Discussion on this topic needs to be qualified with the following cautionary notes:

- First, this is not a commentary on the course of Satsang movement. Satsang movement is long, vast and has innumerable facets. Scope of this article is limited to appreciation of a piece of observation made below.
- Secondly, this article does not hold any malice or prejudice against any person or organization. It does not intend to cause any injury to anybody.
- Thirdly, the article is, if at all anything, holds a pointer for the future leaders of Satsang movement. Past is discussed here only as a reference for learning lesson for future.

This man came to Sri Sri Thakur in 1945, when Sri Sri Thakur was at Himaitpur, in Pabna district of erstwhile East Bengal, currently Bangladesh. He was born in 1915 in New Jersey, USA, did his Masters from Harvard, joined American Field Service in World War II, came to Burma in war duty and came

across Sri Sri Thakur in East Bengal. Ever since then, he was intensely engaged in exploring his life and divinity under the guidance of Sri Sri Thakur. In the first visit, Sri Sri Thakur told him, 'I shall make you closer to Christ'. He travelled world over, all regions in the world on road and on foot. He also travelled throughout India, on road and on foot. He had very close interaction with Sri Sri Thakur for long years. That man writes an excellent memoire of his own life's journey and experience, where one gets a firsthand account of Sri Sri Thakur.* In that account, written in 1978, (9 years after Sri Sri Thakur's sad demise) he writes, "Concerning his (Thakur's) work, I would say, it was unfinished. The organization he left behind seems a sorry caricature of what he (Thakur) was after. That is because none of us fully followed him."

The person we are talking about is Edmund Joseph Spencer, who is quite well known amongst Sri Sri Thakur's disciples. Ray Archer Hauserman and Edmund Joseph Spencer are two popular American disciples of Sri Sri Thakur, besides many others, whose names are read in *Alochana Prasange* volumes.

For the purpose of this discussion, it is to be admitted that it is an autobiographical observation. It is to be taken with some qualifications.

- First point is that, this veteran devotee of Sri Sri Thakur breathed his last in 1994. What he wrote in 1978 (16 years before his last breath), is a mature and conscious observation.
- Secondly, Spencer was known for his candid and unflattering observations. At the age of 63, spending lifetime with Sri Sri Thakur, moving world over with 'one shirt and no money', he obviously had nothing to lose or gain, in consideration of writing anything but truth; of course truth as per his perception.

The narrative quoted above makes three points; each one has significant meaning and implication, which we will try to understand, one by one.

One: *Concerning his (Thakur's) work, I would say, it was unfinished.*

This observation on the face of it is not correct in the sense that prophets, by the logic of their descending, complete their mission. But the adversities that they face do attenuate the impact of their actions. Secondly, the nature of prophet's work is such that he sows the seed of a movement, the true shape and ramification of the initiative is intended to happen in future. That future trail is supposed to be carried out by the prophet's disciples. Therefore, it is natural for the contemporary disciple of Sri Sri Thakur, who is witness to the grand design of Sri Sri Thakur, to lament that his mission was left incomplete.

The true import of the observation prompts us to realize that Sri Sri Thakur, during the active phase of his life, launched a grand movement with significant promise. That promise had the potential to redeem the world; to shake the civilization; to create a new world order; to bring about a total transformation in the psycho-spiritual realm. With this order of expectation, it is a natural feeling that the task remained incomplete; which set the agenda for the successive generations of devotees of Sri Sri Thakur. In this sense, Spencer's observation carries lot of meaning and provides lead for the future.

Second: *The organization he left behind seems a sorry caricature of what he (Thakur) was after.*

This statement is a reality appraisal of satsang organization as it was seen in the year 1978; nine years after Sri Sri Thakur left his mortal frame. The comparison between what Sri Sri Thakur started with and what the organization became, was too striking to be missed. Though it was seen and felt by most of the leading contemporary disciples, who survived post 1969; very few actually raised voice, made it public, if not for anything else, at least for the purpose of making a difference. It was only a foreigner, who dared to

write a candid observation. Today, 35 years after that observation by Spencer, Satsang situation is quite different and has become more complex, as diverse and divisive forces have reared their heads.

In this context, I have one observation to make, keeping in view the future action plan for a stronger Satsang movement. Purpose is not to find a quick solution for the situation or to single out a faction or factor for the cause behind this sorry state of Satsang affairs. Objective of my observation is to highlight and focus on a strategy, if Satsang movement has to regain a force.

Precondition for my strategy is that Sri Sri Thakur as an ideal has to be kept alive and his ideology is to be followed undistorted. The spirit of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology and purity of his divine purpose has to be maintained.

Two pronged action needs to be followed in Satsang movement.

A) Every devotee has to be kept aligned with the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur. This is a matter of devotion, urge for self development and individual need for expansion. Here the primary responsibility lies with each individual devotee; and the secondary responsibility lies with the enlightened ones in the group (the leadership type). What eventually emerges is that each one is responsible for oneself and also for others in the group to remain devoted and committed. It is a kind of mutual responsibility for each other, in line with 'live and let others live'. Sri Sri Thakur has made explicit provision for this in his ideological paradigm, by making his disciples conscious about their social and environmental responsibility.

B) Collective activities with long term developmental and social relevance need to be institutionalized. Individual energy and aptitude needs a platform to be nurtured and put to use for larger society. These institutions will create socio-economic and cultural conditions for the movement to have impact on a larger scale and the initiatives will have longevity.

An assessment of Satsang movement post 1969 brings out a fact that Satsang as an organization has not been managed properly. Two perceptible trends are obvious:

a) Organization became individual centric; power was centralized. As a result, the organs of the organization; systems, structure and culture; got decimated and enervated. There was ennui and alienation in the rank and file; and the organization got fragmented. Therefore, the intended and expected vigour and impact of the Satsang movement became weak. That is how it became a 'caricature' of its own self, to use the words of Spencer.

b) Second factor that contributed to Satsang organization becoming a 'caricature' of its own self is that it got disoriented. There was an ideological deviation. Instead of treading the path of Sri Sri Thakur, Satsang organization took some shortcuts, apparently with a view to adapt to the changing time at popular level, at the cost of 'purity, patience and perseverance', the three basic blocks for any great accomplishment, as identified by Sri Sri Thakur.

<u>Approach I</u>

Those who revolted from the mainstream Satsang organization, as a reaction to the above mentioned twin developments, took an extreme view. They held out a view that every organization, Satsang no exception, when grows big, tend to deviate from the original mission of the founder; therefore, organizations are no good. They relied on their own view of Sri Sri Thakur's movement and found that Sri Sri Thakur's movement is an individual centric (ब्यक्ति केन्द्रिक) movement. It started around Sri Sri Thakur and it grew around mother Manamohini devi; it flourished by the individual initiatives of dedicated devotees with the sole purpose of pleasing Sri Sri Thakur. And therefore, this is the only way to take the

movement further, keeping the original purity and purpose intact. They had numerous arguments to convince themselves that each devotee of Sri Sri Thakur will pursue his or her own development; perform *yajan*, *yaajan* and *istabhrity*; and in the process there will be natural clusters of devotees based on their affinity towards each other and connectivity with Sri Sri Thakur. *Yaajan* was considered to be tool of communication and expansion in a self breeding mode. In the process, larger groups will automatically be formed and the movement will expand, gain momentum. Significantly, each devotee will be rewarded by the logic of their following Sri Sri Thakur's path and that is the ultimate aim of Sri Sri Thakur's movement.

This argument sounded logical to me when I was young and I was then convinced. I have been part of this stream of active agents of Satsang movement. I thought we all are on Sri Sri Thakur's directed path; therefore, a day will come, the movement will blossom and will bear fruits, when the whole society will get enveloped by Satsang movement. The movement is based on a robust philosophy, which is Thakur's.

Today, I have come to realize that it was a one sided argument; simplistic in its logic and certainly lacked a social perspective. I certainly cannot say that it was wrong; nor will it be fair on my part to say that it was not based on Sri Sri Thakur's logic. The shortcoming of that argument is that it lacked a larger view of an organized movement and it came from such persons who are by nature solo players and introvert. It also came from such persons who fought against the deviated system and were fatigued. Further, this argument suited those people who did not want to destabilize the *status quo*. This argument overlooked the varying behavioral symptoms of an evolving movement at different stages.

Approach II

At this stage let me bring out my current realization, which advocates that larger individual initiatives and some collective initiatives need to be institutionalized. This method would not substitute individual pursuits, as mentioned in Approach I. Institution building will run alongside the individual pursuits. The difference between this approach (Approach II) and the previous approach (Approach I) is that this approach believes that society, culture and public behavior have their own features and characteristics and these have to be engineered through tools which are not maneuverable by individual initiatives or small scattered group initiatives. This approach is based on a premise that 'collective outcome is much more than the sum of individual outcomes'. So, the approach II is an extension of Approach I, not a replacement.

At this stage, I will bring one point from Sri Sri Thakur's conversation on 19th April 1955, quoted from page 116 of "Divyadyuti", compiled by Shri Kumarkrishna Bhattacharya.

Quote

Individual (ব্যক্তি) নিয়েই তো সমষ্টি। তাই simultaneously (একই সঙ্গে) দুই দিকই দেখা লাগবে। ব্যক্তিসত্তা বাদ দিলে সমাজ সত্তা থাকে না। আবার সমাজ সত্তা বাদ দিলে ব্যক্তিসত্তা থাকে না।

Unquote

Translated in English, the above paragraph would read: "The group consists of individuals. Therefore, we need to keep both the entities in view. Social spirit will cease to exist without individual spirit. At the same time, individual spirit will cease to thrive, if we oversight social spirit."

Just for illustration, if one reads the first sentence in isolation, one would draw justification for the first approach, which is an individualistic approach. The second approach would draw justification from the whole of Sri Sri Thakur's above sayings.

Coming to the conclusion of my above submission, the need of the hour is to institutionalize large individual initiatives and to give the small-group initiatives an organized shape. Care has to be taken that, by design and by structure; Sri Sri Thakur's ideological perspective is never lost sight of.

There are some more aspects to this; for example: to deal with the existing monolith Satsang organization; the splinter groups and the ideological distortion that has already taken place. These are real issues; but I am not addressing them in this piece.

Third: *That is because none of us fully followed him.*

This appears to be a confession of a devotee, measuring up to self piety. Almost all the aspirants, at sometime or other, come to this reflection when they admit that they could have done better.

Notwithstanding the above, the fact is that following the ideological path of Sri Sri Thakur and carrying on his mission is really an uphill task. By that standard of exacting and grueling performance, we all have failed. This is not to deny that all the contemporary devotees of Sri Sri Thakur undertook severe penance and led a life of dedication, determination and devotion. But then there was always more that could have been done.

The import of this observation is that we failed to measure up to Sri Sri Thakur's expectation. If this realization comes to us in true remorse; then let us pledge that we will now certainly do what he wants. It calls for coming out of our own self imposed limit and getting into the voyage of faith, furtherance and fulfillment.

Summary

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is originator of an era. He is initiator of a movement that has great promise to deliver. His ideology is applicable for the current and future society. The phase that we are witnessing now is perhaps a cooling phase, to be followed by a phase of revival. One holds out a hope that leadership will emerge to give a direction to the Satsang movement and this analysis is addressed for those future leaders.

*'Wait for me, Christ – I'm coming', (1985) by E. J. Spencer, published by Sampa Mukhopadhyay, New York

15th July 2013

Seventy two

Future of Sri Sri Thakur's Movement

Organized Devotees are the Hope

It is significant for us to remind ourselves that we can no longer lay back and wait for Sri Sri Thakur to play his magical role. Therefore, we need to take up the gauntlet and play active role in whichever sphere we have our aptitude. Let us not wait for anything, except for his mercy, which is there, as he has repeatedly assured us.

Some well meaning readers of this column posed a thoughtful question to me, 'what is the future of Sri Sri Thakur's movement?' They, in my assessment, are looking for a reaffirmation of their own belief that Sri Sri Thakur's movement holds out lot of promise for the humanity.

The question, rather the skepticism, stems from their observation of the current reality in satsang world. They observe that satsang world appears to be not in sync with the society, which is changing very fast. This is more so with respect to the emerging youthful generation. Secondly, there is a looming fear that looking at the disintegrated and discordant state of satsang organizational outfits, whether any strength and forces will at all emerge to revive the lost spirit and glory of satsang, as planted by Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra.

Not that these devotees do not know Sri Sri Thakur and his ideology and his divine prowess. But precisely because they know Sri Sri Thakur and also hope to see more of Sri Sri Thakur presence in the society, they seem to be getting worried at the present predicament.

Few questions are baffling them: how Sri Sri Thakur, who came to save this moribund world from the brink of disaster and for that purpose, brought in a new ideology, will be consigned to oblivion, into the sunset zone so soon? How the ideology, which is so precious and so promising, could be allowed to be diluted and distorted? Is it not that humanity was looking for the ideology and praying for the Advent? Then the question is, whether the day will come when Sri Sri Thakur and his all fulfilling ideology will prevail on the dominant mood of the human civilization? These are heady questions and I do not have any definite answer. I will, however, attempt to share my honest view on this, for whatever its worth.

I begin in reasserting my belief that Sri Sri Thakur is alive in spirit, active in his influence and playing his benevolent role even today.

What will happen in future, he alone perhaps knows. But, he remains neutral when it comes to individual decision and action. He has done everything that is required for his ideology to remain effective, even when he no longer remains in physical form.

Future is certainly not within our preview. But I am hopeful that his devotees will emerge and take leadership positions and bring about a paradigm shift, sooner or later.

It is significant for us to remind ourselves that we can no longer lay back and wait for Sri Sri Thakur to play his magical role. Therefore, we need to take up the gauntlet and play active role in whichever sphere we have our aptitude. Let us not wait for anything, except for his mercy, which is there, as he has repeatedly assured us.

Yes, question is what to do and how to do? Each one has to get that answer for oneself and from Sri Sri Thakur, through one's own life experience.

Yes, individual and scattered efforts may prove to be inadequate and short lived. Therefore, it is imperative that like minded devotees have to be clustered and pool themselves together.

One thing is sure; some of us have to come to acquire power and position on high pedestal in society, at which people will look up.

Task for us is to put Sri Sri Thakur's ideology into practice as per our capacity and to the best of our ability. Therefore, institutionalized and organized move by some like minded people, who are unshackled of the past, have to perhaps create new platforms. One such platform has been created for the purpose of conducting research and bringing out Sri Sri Thakur's ideology to the public notice at large. The website (www.srisrithakuranukulchandra.com) and the Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies (IIAS) which are the two faces of the same coin represent this endeavour.

Formation of splintered groups is not the purpose; that will only bring disintegration and disunity. Converging on the line of activities, socially relevant and ideologically determined, is certainly the way.

Coming back to the question, 'what is the future of Sri Sri Thakur's movement?'

Answer is, 'Future of Sri Sri Thakur's movement lies with the devotees'. The devotees have to evolve into a higher state and position, only then will the society take note of it. It is important for us to realize that in days to come, Sri Sri Thakur will be known by the credential of his devotees.

At this stage, I propose to come to some operational issues, getting into the realm of action on the ground.

I presume that there are some devotees, who truly would like to work for the Thakur's cause; primarily being goaded by their enlightened self interest and, secondly, would like to be an instrument in the hands of Thakur for larger goal. Perhaps, a platform, an agenda, some affiliates would help them to take the plunge. There are well meaning, dedicated people, with a burning desire to make a difference with Sri Sri Thakur's ideology. Mostly these people are young professionals staying scattered all over the world and time is precious for them.

I have an offer for those friends. We have created platform: a) this website and b) Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies (IIAS). This website is operating for last 14 years and the Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies, as a brand, has come to exist for last 4 years. Both these initiatives are operating in the public domain for all these years. Yes, we have never claimed to be an outfit, either separated or affiliated with any camp in the Satsang world. Our output, activities and views are supposed to speak of our credential, identity and

ideological plank. We are not so much conscious of our identity, as we are careful about our activity. Our activities have lent us an identity, based on Sri Sri Thakur's grace.

I would like to invite all dear and esteemed devotees to join us in this initiative. Ours is an intellectual, cultural and educational enterprise, based on Sri Sri Thakur's ideology. Our mission is that of Sri Sri Thakur's mission and our core purpose is synonymous to that of Satsang movement. We would dive deep into Sri Sri Thakur's ideology, experiment and demonstrate the ideology in the social arena. We keep ourselves at arm's length from the 'organizational groups' in Satsang world. We would like to believe, each group is doing some work in some sphere and our space is not intersecting with the space of others.

From this limited point of view, I hold out a hope that there is future for Sri Sri Thakur's movement.

Would you like to join in building that future?

12th August 2013

Seventy three

A Setback to Indian Culture

Law of Nature Would Catch Up with Everyone

Istabhrity is a love offering of a person for Sri Sri Thakur; offered daily ritualistically out of deep love and unconditional service to the Lord. Whoever is receiving this fund in material sense, huge sum as these are, has got great responsibility for its proper utilization. And it is expected that they are very much alive to this expectation and are doing a dedicated job, putting their heads at the feet of the lord.

Today Asaram Bapu was arrested. It is a sad day in the sense that it lowers the esteem of all the protagonists of Indian culture; I included.

We are not going into the criminality part of the episode. Nor are we in a position to sit in judgment on the controversial issues involved. The spectacle of the charges and counter charges surrounding the 'god

man' and the view of the 'man' on the run like a fugitive to escape from the hands of law enforcing agencies itself cast a bizarre show, particularly in full glare of camera and amidst high decibel debates.

In the memorable past, some more 'god men' of our country have gone through this ignoble process. Sum total of all these cast a pall of gloom on one sterling asset of India, which is Indian culture and Indian deep heritage of spirituality in practice.

Everything said and done, Asaram Bapu is a respectable preacher. His knowledge of Indian scriptures is both wide and deep. His oratory is unparallel. But to speak of all these qualities today amount to defending the indefensible, to say the least.

If Asaram Bapu and a few more of his type, who are the brand ambassadors of Indian culture in the world arena, fall like this; these bring irreparable disrepute to our country and to our culture.

"The Supreme Court on Tuesday (3rd September) appeared to make an indirect reference to the arrest of god man Asaram Bapu for alleged rape charges when it said people with ill gotten wealth either choose politics or religion, and then grab land to become more powerful and end up doing heinous crime." (Times of India, Mumbai edition, September 4, 2013, page 13)

What has gone wrong?

Something has gone wrong somewhere. We are not referring to one Asaram alone. We are taking him to represent some such so called self proclaimed 'god men', who are quite popular and are reigning high in the Indian cultural and religious landscape. Firstly, lot of pomp and grandeur has come to surround such persons, their discourses, and their style of living. Indian culture always upholds abstinence, simplicity and more of substance than style. But today, taking the advantage of media and technology, spiritual life has come to acquire a visibly luxurious appearance. In our view, these ostentatious living is not required.

Secondly, behind these grand media blitz, lot of money is playing around. Sprawling ashrams, decorated pandals, expensive cars in use, foreign sojourns and heavy security; all these trappings are clearly attempt to display worldly substance; nothing to do with inherent spiritual value.

Behind façade of all these, one can see some base elements working. Craving for name and fame, desire for amassing wealth and exercising power; some of the basic instinctive desires of normal man appear to have gripped the so called 'god men' of today. They talk of divine, they claim to have attained super natural power; and have made provision for serving people. Their service to people is a mask of coercion contrary to the cultural ethos of '*sarva jana sukhaaya, sarva jana hitaay*' (good and happiness for all). But what is worrisome is that they appear to play game on the same pitch on which successful businessmen and politicians are also playing. It appears the so called god-men are in nexus with politicians and businessmen with the common purpose of self aggrandizement.

Sri Sri Thakur's Ideology

Now we turn to Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra for his guidance. Comparison between any two god-men and particularly anyone with Sri Sri Thakur is not warranted. We are just taking Sri Sri Thakur's ideological reference for the purpose of assessment of the situation.

Sri Sri Thakur had a fundamental caution for his disciples. He said to be beware of temptations for fame, wealth and lust. These temptations are human and natural. There is a need however to keep one's inclination pure by being in touch with the Ideal.

These so called god-men, by virtue of their initial success of having large followings and the stamp of divinity, got their heads turned upside down and found themselves at the throes of fall. Their success became cause of their undoing.

These so called god-men are, after all, human beings; they are at best serving God by a particular calling. They must stop playing God. They are subject to law of nature; therefore they must exercise caution and discretion. They must first try to practice what they preach.

In Sri Sri Thakur's ideological framework, there is a place for such elevated souls to work as substitute to Guru, when Guru is physically not around. But they should not proclaim themselves as Guru. The word 'self styled' should not defile them.

What is happening in Satsang world?

Turning our attention to Satsang world, which is spearheading Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's movement, in a conglomerate formation of groups within groups, we find sprouts of this kind of aggrandizements taking shape; despite the fact that Sri Sri Thakur has clearly warned against these kinds of spiritual adultery.

It is not very rare to see *ritwiks* and some members of Sri Sri Thakur's extended family displaying larger than life image of their self, either by holding on to some position in the organization or by drawing sanction from Sri Sri Thakur's misinterpreted sayings. Some of them claim superior position publicly, by exercising some influence somewhere. A few of Sri Sri Thakur's extended family members, following the law of inheritance, do receive huge sum everyday in the form of 'istabhrity'. Yes, 'istabhrity' is a love offering of a person for Sri Sri Thakur; offered daily ritualistically out of deep love and unconditional service to the Lord. Whoever is receiving this fund in material sense, huge sum as these are, has got great responsibility for its proper utilization. And it is expected that they are very much alive to this expectation and are doing a dedicated job, putting their heads at the feet of the lord.

Our Call

It is for all of us to create a healthy and constructive ambience so that those amongst us who are not up to mark get a sounding of it. I am sure that this write up will not reach the leaders of satsang movement (the group of ritwiks and family), as they remain in their own world. But persons like us, particularly, you the reader, must take care that the leaders in Satsang do not commit such pitfalls which will bring disrepute to all of us.

It is not hard to appreciate that little bit of spiritual image or affiliation can provide a place of adoration in the mind of Indian psyche. Some of the *ritwiks* consider themselves in enviable and enjoyable position. Similarly, where easy money flows, the place starts getting stinky and filthy. This exactly is happening to some of the Satsang centers. Given the situation, the people (the group of ritwiks and family) who are enjoying the position and wealth will unlikely see reason and reality. It is for us, the educated and intelligent devotees of Sri Sri Thakur to resist evil, before it becomes too late.

3rd September 2013

Seventy four

Riot in Muzaffarnagar in UP (September 2013)
Secular India awaits socio-religious awakening

> The prophet contemporary needs to be recognized and to be followed without forsaking the affiliation with the earlier prophet, which one gets into by birth. “Prophet of the time is the enlivening emblem of the past and fulfillment thereof”, said Sri Sri Thakur.

Nobody likes this; but it happens at frequent interval at different parts of the country. I am referring to communal riot; somebody may call it ethnic conflict. Going by media reports, 40 people were dead; 40,000 people got displaced and dispossessed from their habitation. There is no end to sufferings of the victims. This kind of loss of life and property leaves a long scary trail behind; at times it takes generations for healing up. For many of us, fallout of the riots are cold statistics; but not so for Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. For every person, Sri Sri Thakur takes the pain on to himself.

We are aware that, politician are playing this game of communalism. I am not attempting to suggest a solution to this, knowing the complexity of the problem. Attempt here is to bring out some of Sri Sri Thakur’s ideological threads relevant to the issue which may spur a solution. Solution to this vicious issue cannot be a theoretical construct. It requires practical works, few steps at a time which in turn would perhaps open avenues for further steps. At this stage some conceptual clarity and few initial steps are being outlined.

Concept of Religion

First is the concept of religion. At mass level there are serious misgivings about the true concept of religion. Some of us, more so the youthful generation, carry very hazy idea about religion. Rest of us believes that religion is akin to faith, which is by definition dogmatic, inflexible and therefore not subject to scientific scrutiny. Still many of us remain steeped in religious rites, rituals, pilgrimage, either out of fear or out of need for gratification of our desire, a kind of quick fix divine blessings.

Therefore when it comes to the issue of religion and divinity, there is not much of enquiry, research or rational debate. It is here, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra brings a refreshing change. He says, spirituality is an invention and investigation in to a better meaningful life. He changed the definition of religion, when he said, ‘To uphold one’s own life and growth with that of others is Dharma, and to bind oneself with the Love-Lord through sacred devoutness and to follow Him accordingly is religion’. He further clarified ‘Dharma never becomes many. It is always one. There is no variety of it. Views may be many -even as

many as there are people. Still, Dharma cannot be many.' In his opinion, it is wrong to speak of Hindu Dharma, Christian Dharma, Islam dharma, etc.; rather they are so many views.

If dharma means to live, grow and let others live, then in that definition, there is no place for conflict and animosity between and amongst religions. All prophets, the originators of major religions are the same. Each prophet is a representative of the God at his time. Each prophet has universal appeal; none of them came for any specific segment of humanity. The whole humanity is God's creation and each prophet comes to serve the humanity with the God's message as applicable for the contemporary society.

Only significant point is that the prophet contemporary needs to be recognized and to be followed without forsaking the affiliation with the earlier prophet, which one gets into by birth. "Prophet of the time is the enlivening emblem of the past and fulfillment thereof", said Sri Sri Thakur (The Message, Vol. II, 1964)

In wonderful words, Sri Sri Thakur further said, "The present Prophet is the concentrated digest and fulfiller of specific specifications of all the Prophets – the Forerunners; and He is the meaningful advent for the present, the message of life and growth and rescue for all – but not limited by time". The Message, Vol. II, 1964)

In Sri Sri Thakur's words, "*Dharma* is nothing but the culture of existential go of life, with honest exercise of it; and a rational adjustment of psycho-physical traits, by which we can achieve the personality of an adjusted becoming, mingled with the specific characteristics of man and his normal environmental development, to enjoy the providential blessings, with the glow of heavenly life." (The Message, Vol II., 1964)

This view of religion is a serious pursuit for self development. This also entails enormous responsibility for the society, community and environment. Then where is the scope for harming others, in the name of religion? If politics is to be played, then why on earth play dirty in the name of religion? That is because; religion is steeped in superstition, blind faith and anachronistic ideas. If domain of religion is cleared of these luggages of the past, then politician or any other vested interest will not gain ground over there.

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology provides that spirit of clearing the past and creating an air of transparency. Sri Sri Thakur himself was embodiment of this concept of religion. He lived his ideology and demonstrated how to live a religious life in the current society.

Social Mobilization – First Step

A point that needs to be made here is that the task we are talking about is not entirely an individual pursuit. The task is to create such an environment in social space that the communal poison does not find a space to rear its head. It requires mobilization, organization, fermentation, and channeling public energy in a constructive conduit. It is a job akin to bringing about a socio-political revolution; a transformation in social order; a new tenor of social living and thinking.

It is worthwhile to recall here that Sri Sri Thakur did everything of this in a grand scale during his lifetime. He has sown the seed; the seed however needs care of a gardener. To the best of my knowledge, Sri Sri Thakur's movement is by far the single largest non-political movement in twentieth century history. However, it has taken a setback in the contemporary age of digitization and frenzied mass media. The spirit is there; perhaps the set and style is yet to be acquired.

Against this backdrop, one step that needs to be taken has to come from the enlightened disciples of Sri Sri Thakur. They are devoted; they have the spirit of service and sacrifice; but they are scattered and devoid of any inspiring leadership. They need to be united on an elevated platform. As I can see, with my

limited view, Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies has created that platform. However, that needs your support, participation, association, contribution and a vigorous push. We must push in terms of achieving Sri Sri Thakur's dream. We all know what Sri Sri Thakur desired. He desired a mass awakening of consciousness. He wanted us to 'roll on like a flood over the sorrows, sufferings and calamities of the world'. He wanted scientific way of alleviating people's sufferings. He desired revival of indo-aryan culture. He wanted evolution of mankind. He wanted *varnashram* based marriage and eugenic based procreation. He wanted upward mobility across the board in the society.

Conclusion

We all need to join hands, put our heads together. Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies provides that platform. In the absence of any alternate framework, I feel, Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies is a categorical imperative.

Inter-religious harmony is a misnomer. Religious life is inherently, and by its very nature, harmonious. What is required is a common ideal and adherence to the Ideal that brings about integration at popular level. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is that Ideal, the shelter for humanity.

18th September 2013

Seventy five

Platform for United Effort
Integrated Action is the need of the Hour

There is no dearth of talented people in our country. No dearth of honest, resourceful and active people. But what is lacking is their united effort and concerted approach. You have to create that platform, where all these people will be united.

"It is true, whether we appreciate it or not, that we can hardly live, leaving the surroundings aside. Our life is at stake, if we do not set the larger surrounding right. The little shed of thatch on our head will be reduced to ash, if there is fire around us. A few institutions here and there cannot save this nation, if sensitivity about our culture, dharma and integration does not possess us. I therefore talk about mobilizing people for upholding dharma. This is fundamental, without which all scattered efforts, however sound and sincere these might be, would go in vain. There is no dearth of talented people in our country. No dearth of honest, resourceful and active people. But what is lacking is their united effort and concerted approach. You have to create that platform where all these people will be united. If you want to live, let others live, you need to accomplish this very fast."

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra expressed his desire to at his activist devotees on 28th March 1942, documented in *Alochana Prasange*. Since then, 70 years have passed. Born in 1888 in Himaitpur village in Pabna district of Bangladesh (erstwhile East Bengal), Sri Sri Thakur shifted to Deoghar and organized his movement from there since 1946. After toiling hard for the welfare of mankind, he breathed his last in 1969. More than 40 years have passed since Sri Sri Thakur left his mortal frame. What happened to his desire, expressed so fervently, earnestly and with great urgency? We however are not making an assessment of that here. Any such assessment will be incomplete in the absence of a comprehensive research. Lot of work has indeed been done by the dedicated devotees of Sri Sri Thakur during last seventy years, about which a historical assessment is yet to be made.

We would like to reflect, if that desire of Sri Sri Thakur is to be materialized today, even from the beginning, then what is the way, what is the method and who will do?

Do you see a platform for dedicated intellectual devotees of Sri Sri Thakur?

24th September 2013

Seventy six

United World
Sri Sri Thakur's desire

For a devotee, everything around is expression of Guru. As that feeling (of identification) gets intense, love for Him grows stronger. Then comes a time, when the devotee starts behaving with people with a cordiality that makes everyone inseparable from him. That love becomes magnetic pull.

Every word of Sri Sri Thakur is significant. At times, some of these also appear to be strange and inscrutable. That is because; we always do not understand the depth and desire behind everything that Sri Sri Thakur said.

Today these are words; documented and narrated in his literature, at times out of context. I am however trying to put his words in the context of the live Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur's image, sitting on his sprawling bedstead, under the shade in the parlour, appears hazily before me. Sri Sri Thakur was a magnificent person, with resplendent image, huge following and was credited with extraordinary accomplishments, having wonderful impact and far reaching ramifications. On that backdrop, the significance of his words needs a careful assessment. We simply find ourselves inadequate to explain full import of whatever he said. Therefore it is prudent to present below a translated passage from Bengali text (ref. *Smritir Mala*, by Manilal Chakravarty, published by *Tapoban prakashan*, Kolkata in 2006)

That was 21st September 1964 at Deoghar. A group of devotees from Mumbai are on visit to Sri Sri Thakur. One amongst them was Gopal Bhai Desai. He said, "Thakur, what role do the fellow brothers-in-faith (গুরুভাই) have in our life? I am related to Guru (গুরু) alone. I do not bother for anyone other than my Guru."

Sri Sri Thakur observed:

This is fundamental. 'Sadguru-live' is the pivot. As one meditates on the Guru and carries on his directions, one develops love for him, from the core of one's heart. In the process, one develops a sense that Guru is everything. One then sees 'the one' and through 'the one', one gets to visualize all. For such a devotee, everything around is expression of Guru. As that feeling (of identification) gets intense, love for Him grows stronger. Then comes a time, when the devotee starts behaving with people with a cordiality that makes everyone inseparable from him. That love becomes magnetic pull. Dharma cannot be put to practice without people around. Dharma is that which holds everything together. Therefore there is no *dharma* in the absence of the magnet that is the Lord, the Guru.

A person is handled easily when he follows the *Ista* (the Guru) and his vision gets unfolded. Then that person can be made to work a lot of things in a very short time. His intelligence gets unlocked. His life is meant for Guru only. Remember, I have said, 'I am for the Lord and not for others. I am for the Lord and so for others.' In the process of following the Lord, he becomes a solid person and becomes popular too. His personality becomes an integrated one. Chhatrapati Shivaji was said to have epilepsy. But that did not hold Shivaji back. Shivaji defeated Afzal Khan. Man can do wonders. God has not sent anyone as pauper. What can God do if someone makes oneself pauper remaining embroiled in passion? The word God has originated from the Sanskrit root '*hru*', which means to welcome, to invite. We invite him, in essence, would mean that we adopt right conduct. We achieve desired outcome when we invite and work.

Sri Sri Thakur paused for a while and resumed:

See here carpenters are working (workshop under the peepal tree, by the side of parlour). We hear the stroke of wood cutting. They are joining the pieces with nails and making it so strong that even a storm cannot dislodge the pieces. Each piece of wood remains tied with each other firmly. Unification with *Ista* (the Lord) is also like that. Let the people of India be strongly bonded with the Lord. India will be the magnetic pull. Countries in Europe will come united to form tie with India. Then cluster of some other countries will follow. Like this the world will come together and be the united world.

30th September 2013

Seventy seven

Architecture of Sri Sri Thakur's Movement

Ideal, Ideology & Ideation – Three Pillars of Satsang Movement

Sri Sri Thakur is the spring-well from where everything originates. His life is the manifestation of divinity. He played a spectacular role while demonstrating how to lead a progressive life. His life span of 81 years was a period of marvelous display of wonders that man can make. His lifetime was a beginning for many new things to come for the human race.

Lord Buddha said, '*Dharmam saranam gachhami, Buddham saranam gachhami, Sangham saranam gachhami*'. Similarly, from the perspective of Sri Sri Thakur's movement; there are 3 layers, to be seen with equal importance:

a) Sri Sri Thakur the wonder; needs to be explored. He is unending; there is so much of him that at times, he appears to be mysterious. Sri Sri Thakur represents the combined depth and complexity of life, society and nature; therefore, He appears to be complex.
b) Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is to be practiced. Without putting Sri Sri Thakur's ideology into practice, the real charm does not come out. This may appear to be a tall order, as at times practicing Sri Sri Thakur's ideology runs contrary to our habitual way of doing things; it challenges our mental model and outstretches our capacity.
c) Sri Sri Thakur needs to be seen and felt everywhere as Ideal and to be followed at aggregate level. The environment needs to be positively charged. Social practices and institutions need to be cleansed and there has to be active purposefulness and fruitful engagement.

Point a. Sri Sri Thakur is the spring-well from where everything originates. His life is the manifestation of divinity. He played a spectacular role while demonstrating how to lead a progressive life. His life span of 81 years was a period of marvelous display of wonders that man can make. His lifetime was a beginning for many new things to come for the human race. Therefore, it requires exploration and research of very high order for getting into the jewels of the things that he intended to give to the humanity. He was a big surprise for human race. More we explore his life, more are we enriched.

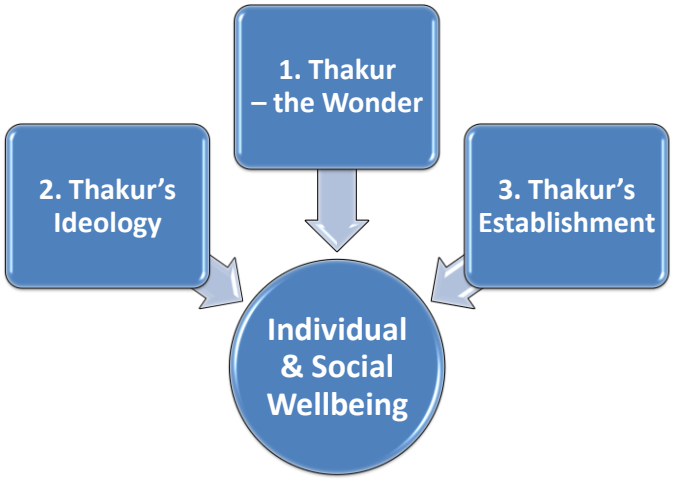
Point b. On a cursory view, it would appear that Sri Sri Thakur focused on point no. 2 alone. Yes, it forms the core of an individual's objective and scope to grow. Without practicing Sri Sri Thakur's ideology everyday and under all situations, a person will not get the desired outcome. Sri Sri Thakur has put his finger on individual's development, growth and welfare, with respect to the person's capacity, sensitivity

and positive attitude. A person's engagement with Ideal is equal to his pursuit for higher order of achievement.

Point c. The life of intense activity of eighty-one years came to an end in temporal sense on 27th January 1969. Thereafter, Sri Sri Thakur went back to his own state of being unseen, ever-present and infinite. So, the time has come when his life and ideology has to be kept alive through practice, conduct, institutions and culture, by means of various creative, tangible and durable mediums. All the people at all time, for generations to come, would look for Sri Sri Thakur, his directions, his ideology, his lovely solutions. Therefore, Sri Sri Thakur has to be cultivated, imprinted, and embossed in popular practice and public mind. That requires huge orchestration of Sri Sri Thakur's life and ideology.

All these three components constitute the architecture of Satsang movement. The agenda of activities, at all levels, has to flow from the above three components.

Architecture of
Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's Movement for
Being & Becoming



With a view to avoid distraction, it must be mentioned that Sri Sri Thakur has given ideas and ideological threads for each of these activities at many places in his literature. He remains the Ideal and the centre of our universe at all time to come. Any addition and deletion from these three core agenda may bring about a distorted priority and consequently may hinder growth and development.

The above structural components of the movement have been drawn by me, keeping individual devotee in mind. Objective is to have clarity for individual aspirants with regard to 'Thakur's work'. However, the third component has large degree of collective quotient. It requires organized effort, support and mobilization. But from where would that collective mobilization begin? It is a moot point. Sri Sri Thakur has made each one of us responsible for that. Each one of us has to be the originator, supporter, facilitator, carrier and organizer of his mass mobilization, of course as per our individual aptitude.

2nd October 2013

Seventy eight

Prophets are Inborn Divine

Sri Sri Thakur must get an accurate historical assessment

Sri Sri Thakur made provision to safeguard the corroding effects of time by taking some measures. One principal measure Sri Sri Thakur took was creation of literature. His life and ideology have been documented profusely, as was never done for any past prophet.

How truly history depicts past prophets, Buddha for example?

Let us read a brief account of Lord Buddha:

"The Buddha was among the few wise people who were actually aware of this fine biological balancing act and how it can also apply to our spiritual dimension. Till the age of 30, his had apparently been a sheltered princely life till one day he famously rode out of the palace and came face to face with death, disease, old age, etc. Thereafter, he went on such a monster ascetic binge in order to find a solution to human suffering that he nearly starved himself to death and almost drowned emaciated in a river while bathing. That's when he realized there is something like too much of a 'good' thing and formulated his well known Middle Way."

The above is excerpted from 'Yes, it Does Matter' by Mukul Sharma in 'The Economic Times', dated 1st October 2013. Mukul Sharma is a highly celebrated columnist of Times of India. Our analysis is in no way a commentary on Mukul Sharma. In fact, we cannot match with his wisdom, experience and erudition. Purpose of this article is to know prophets from a close quarter and to go behind the scene activities that go to portray a prophet on the pages of history.

The above description of Lord Buddha is a typical historical account of Lord Buddha. His philosophy (ideology is perhaps a better word) is also attempted to be understood deriving from his life experience. As if, Lord Buddha achieved his realization from the incidents of his life and he underwent excruciating path of *sadhana* so as to achieve wisdom as an outcome of his pursuit. Thus this historical account portrays that Lord Buddha was an exceptional person, who propounded an exceptional philosophy (Buddhism), out of his realization, which was an outcome of his pursuit to know life and its sufferings. History has given a cult status (a religion status) to his ideology and its relevance is not questioned till date.

Is it a true portrayal of his life and philosophy? How much of it is a proper appreciation of Lord Buddha and how much of it is the outcome of erosion and improper appreciation?

First myth about Lord Buddha is that he attained 'knowledge' or 'wisdom', after going through an excruciating pursuit, in search of truth about life, which were triggered by certain encounters he faced with incidents of disease, old age and death. It is again a myth that till such encounters, he was leading a cloistered princely life, though he displayed severe symptoms of detachment. It is also a myth that his ideology is shaped by his personal experience and wisdom.

It must be said at the very outset that each of the three points mentioned above has some truth about it. It is only slight turn of perception, which makes the whole thing different.

As we know from the life and ideology of Sri Sri Thakur, Lord Buddha was an incarnate of God. He was a realized person from the very birth. He was born to a royal parentage (like Lord Rama) and led a normal life in then social context. He was exceptional from the childhood, as is natural for an incarnate. He did not have to acquire any wisdom through a process; as he was the embodiment of wisdom. Yes, he must have gone through a process of *sadhana*, to set certain context for him and to demonstrate a particular way of life for others. His ideology was a codification of his message which he came with for the contemporary humanity. He customized the eternal principle of 'life and growth' for the people, which had the elements of eternity as well as newness. His ideology was not necessarily derived from his personal experience, which he would have gone through and certainly not triggered by any specific events. Yes, those events stood for the hard realities of life and answered those questions symbolically to provide solutions to life. History has made a story of out of symbols and made oversimplification of a complex phenomenon of prophet hood.

Lord Buddha's lineage to the past and future prophets has been snapped by this particular characterization. The true benefit that posterity would have derived from the life and message of Lord Buddha was impaired to a great extent, nullifying the purpose of his advent.

The immediate question arises as to why did this happen? There must be some reason, which only a proper historical analysis into the saga of Buddhism would reveal. This article does not provide a scope for research into the history of Buddhism. This article would however attempt to reflect the same in the context of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the latest prophet in the series.

It is an axiom that prophets are seldom appreciated during their own lifetime. Time for proper appreciation with lasting impact comes just after the demise. From the point of view of the movement, this is the point of inflexion. Either, the movement retains its original and core tone, tenor and purpose, or the movement gets derailed for something else.

Historians would make assessment of the movement during the period in the aftermath of the demise. They would observe the movement 'as it has happened'; they would not know many things which have not happened. Historians only record the dominant events and see newness in it.

Few symptomatic developments in Sri Sri Thakur's case point to the negative direction. We are afraid that history may not do a proper appreciation of Sri Sri Thakur, despite the fact that Sri Sri Thakur made provision to remain alive for the benefit of mankind. Our apprehension is based on certain observations:

From the point of view of quality of followers of Sri Sri Thakur, there appears to be a lop sidedness; more of 'mass' and less of 'class'. The skewed profile of Sri Sri Thakur's followers towards common mass is getting more acute with the passage of time. Sri Sri Thakur cautioned against this development; it appears his apprehension came true. The elite sections of the people have not come to know Sri Sri

Thakur's true image. History records the impression of elite sections. Mass impression is mute. Mass impression gets faded after few generations. Mass impression remains in folklore; but does not get institutionalized. Mass impression gets shadowed by the overpowering blitz of the elite impression.

Sri Sri Thakur made provision to safeguard the corroding effects of time by taking some measures. One principal measure Sri Sri Thakur took was creation of literature. His life and ideology have been documented profusely, as was never done for any past prophet. Second measure was his devote disciples, who are pledged to him with unshakable tenacity, who would move heaven and earth for keeping his ideology alive. It appears today, that both the above measures are proving to be inadequate.

The movement got derailed as some fundamental flaw vitiated the system by the way of ideological distortion, after the sad demise of Sri Sri Thakur. The development acted like a drop of poison into a bowl of elixir. Some members of Sri Sri Thakur's family, supported by then some prominent disciples, attempted to usurp the position of 'ideal' by claiming them to be successors in a spiritual sense. In the large arena of public following, they have successfully thrown a mystery ball of chaos, which has weakened the movement from within. There is trust deficit in the Satsang leadership position. That has deflated the spirit and strength of the movement. It is unbelievable yet true that the followers of Sri Sri Thakur, at certain time in the past, played devil's role of bringing about distortion in Sri Sri Thakur's ideology and became the cause for the undoing of Sri Sri Thakur's movement. Sri Sri Thakur suffered silently, almost fatally, towards the later part of his life.

Of course, it is not a hopeless situation as of now, as new possibilities cannot be ruled out. This situation however calls for certain action.

A movement is called for which would create literature on Sri Sri Thakur and society has to be flooded with those literature. This requires institutionalized research, publications, socio-intellectual activities and use of mass media. The ideology has to be kept undistorted as much as the 'ideal' needs to be kept alive. Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies is a collective initiative in that direction.

Today, those disciples of Sri Sri Thakur have an urge in their heart that they must do something towards realizing Sri Sri Thakur's desire of keeping Him alive and to enable a proper historical appreciation of Sri Sri Thakur, must work through the 'Institute'. Passivism would not lead us anywhere. Being a devotee is very important; being an activist in the sphere of one's aptitude is one more step and that is the call of the day. Else, we would not know how historians would paint the life and philosophy of Sri Sri Thakur.

27th October 2013

Seventy nine

Satsang Movement Must Remain Unadulterated
Ideal and Ideology be Kept Alive Together

There is no doubt that we have faith on Sri Sri Thakur. We must follow Sri Sri Thakur's principle; not someone else's principle. We must follow Sri Sri Thakur the way He wanted; not the way others wanted. We must go through Sri Sri Thakur's literature, not get carried away by propaganda

How has militancy got into Religion?

In the aftermath of terrorist attack in Paris on November 13, 2015 and ISIS activities in public discourse, few uncomfortable questions on religion and religious groups are being raised. One such question is: how religion and religious groups have given their space to deadly militants who indulge in such dastardly inhuman activities, which an ordinary human being would shudder to think, let alone commit?

No one is finding fault with religion, as everyone is sure that no religion advocates militancy. Every religion is engaged in serving the spiritual need of the people and working for bringing out the best in human being.

But the activities of some religious groups, religious communities and organizations spearheading religions are not all that above board so as always to claim innocence. Sometimes during their long history, due to some causes, while aggressively promoting their mission, some religious groups, have taken resort to means which are questionable. There is an underlying force in the activities of the most of the religious groups to extend their area of influence and establish their relevance and supremacy over others. In their zeal to serve their cause, they might have used dubious means such as power, force and easy gotten money etc. They draw their justification from the logic that the end justifies the means. They argue that they need to fight and banish unjust, unholy and so called profane forces and for that purpose, some kind of murderous activities are required. In such situations, two types of interactive process happen. While religious groups short circuit their process and use the brute elements as their tools; the brute elements get opportunity to gain entry into the religious camps. Religious camps for supposedly long term high order goals, lend themselves into the playful hands of the brute elements. And the brute elements use the credential of religions (wear the mask of religion) and indulge in their nefarious activities.

While the above process plays out, the ideology on which the religious order was founded by the founder (normally a prophet or seer), gets compromised. This typically happens after the sad demise of the founder. A schism develops within the order: one group, the conventional and tolerant one, clink to the original founder; and the radical group who look for quickly achieving the mission. In the process, the ideology in currency starts getting partly divorced from the Ideal. That is the phase of distortion, deterioration and deviation. Almost every major religious communities, order and groups have gone through these phases.

Sometime down the line, the dominant group takes over. Some splinter groups remain in the periphery and there takes place a silent war of supremacy. The fields on which supremacy is sought are three: a) ideological space, b) the following mass and c) the resources owned by the organization. The subgroups always look out for elements or forces which they use for strengthening their camp, adding to resources and bolstering their sense of satisfaction of achieving the mission. In this process, the Ideal is usually placed at high pedestal and mysteriously glorified; taking away from the natural human feel. And the ideology, in its partisan shape, is selectively used for self aggrandizement.

Ideological distortion in Satsang Movement

Satsang movement, post Sri Sri Thakur's demise, has footprint of about 47 years. Sri Sri Thakur's movement in its halcyon days in twentieth century was no ordinary movement. History witnessed the largest non-political mobilization of humanity in those days. The movement has now taken a deep root in the society and has spread out its branches across the cultural space of our country. The movement has developed its own social institutions, rituals, symbols, literature and festivities. All these have grown out of deep love of devotees for Sri Sri Thakur. At a deeper level, the solution provided by Sri Sri Thakur's ideology to the existential crisis was the force behind the movement. The movement healed the sorrows and sufferings of the people and received a rousing reception from the people. The impetus of 'being and becoming', 'love and service', passage for 'enlightenment and elevation'; which Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is impregnated with, were the currents that created large waves which inundated the society. For last ten years, the movement has taken the wings of technology and has occupied quite a space in cyber space.

Satsang movement like all the great movements of the bygone era has unfortunately fallen victim to distortion, deviation and deterioration. The ideology of the movement has been compromised at some core features, to suit parochial interests. The interests have been varied and many, which needs research to bring out, which is outside the scope of this paper. Few specific points of ideology where deviation has occurred are however mentioned below. Perceptive readers can pitch these against the features of current reality and assess the gap.

1. Ideologically speaking, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has to remains as the only 'Ideal' in Satsang world. He is the 'Guru', the 'Acharya', to be worshipped and to be followed. Sri Sri Thakur's position as the focal point of meditation cannot be diluted even though he is no more physically available.
2. There is no successor or heir to substitute Sri Sri Thakur from what he was, 'the living Ideal of his ideology'.
3. If at all there is someone to deliver and represent Sri Sri Thakur in the contemporary society, it is his disciple. His disciples carry Him in their life, and to that extent the devotees can be the face of the Guru. However, each devotee has his / her own limitation; limitation of being a human being and limitation of his / her acquisition.
4. Sri Sri Thakur's progeny, some of whom are claiming to be his successors, are undoubtedly blessed souls. Their hereditary status places them at the head of the line of devotes. But none of them can claim to be the substitute of Sri Sri Thakur. And since Sri Sri Thakur had three sons, no

one can claim monopoly of His genetic inheritance. Today, there are fairly large numbers of grandsons and great-grandsons, none of them can lay claim to any superior position in the spiritual kingdom, unless anyone earns the position by virtue of his acumen and demonstrated capability.

Throwing the above four premises to winds, today, some sections of Satsang world believe and propagate a theory of 'acharya parampara' to denote that there is a lineage of acharyas in Satsang, following the principle of the eldest son of previous acharya to be the successor, beginning with the eldest son of Sri Sri Thakur. Since this theory is spurious from the ideological perspective, the ideology as a whole (supposedly Sri Sri Thakur's ideology) as is being campaigned today in satsang world has lost its vitality. It seems, the 'acharya parampara' might have been useful to maintain power structure and succession in Satsang organization. Point to note here is that, it was not required to bring in 'acharya parampara' theory to maintain organizational continuity. Acharya parampara is much deeper and has higher order spiritual connotation, than what is required for organizational charter.

5. 'Istabhrity', a daily love-offering for Sri Sri Thakur is a wonderful tool for a devotee. It has deep meaning and high utility for devotional life. In many different ways, this has sanction of scriptures of all religions. However, today, this process and purpose has been vitiated in Satsang world. Istabhrity *mantra* which is recited at the time of offering the 'istabhrity' is apparently changed. Why should anyone alter the *mantra* which was given by the Lord?

   Then the way 'istabhrity' funds are being used by the groups who are collecting 'istabhrity', on behalf of Sri Sri Thakur, remains unknown and unexplained. Apparently, 'istabhrity' is being seen by various people in various ways, where the spiritual part is missing. It indeed is a sad commentary that Satsang world has reduced 'istabhrity' to the level of donation or contribution; which it certainly was not intended to be.

6. 'Swastyayani' is a wonderful scheme for all-round development of a person, along with environment, surrounding and society at large. It is unfortunate that Satsang world has not given an operating shape to it. 'Swastyayani' principles are higher order regulations for a person and the principles bind a person to social and economic requirements. Large scale following of 'Swastyayani' principles would have brought about a transformation in the life of devotees along with the society. Since, the 'Swastyayani' scheme was not followed in its spirit, the intended benefit of socio-economic transformation did not happen.

Apparent fall out of the compromises, as outlined above, has been the following:

- The movement is bereft of its ideological soundness. Therefore it has lost its appeal to that section of people who are looking for a rational ideological framework with scientific basis and manifestation of excellence.
- The devotees of Sri Sri Thakur failed to demonstrate Sri Sri Thakur's ideology on the high platform in the society. No doubt, the devotees, out of their deep love for Sri Sri Thakur, organize a lot of awareness campaign, in various social groups. Still, it appears to be too little and too fragmented to have a visible impact.

<u>Who should do what?</u>

This article is not meant for the leaders of the satsang movement. There are many level of leadership in Satsang world and Satsang world has got number of camps. The leaders in Satsang movement must

have their own agenda and wisdom. They would certainly not appreciate many points brought out here in this article.

This article is primarily meant for the devotees of Sri Sri Thakur, the so called followers and camp fillers of the Satsang world, who are sincere and silent. There is no doubt that we have faith on Sri Sri Thakur. There is also no doubt that we have aspiration to grow and we are convinced that Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is the most appropriate path for us and for the world at large. We must follow Sri Sri Thakur's principle; not someone else's principle. We must follow Sri Sri Thakur the way He wanted; not the way others wanted. We must go through Sri Sri Thakur's literature, not get carried away by propaganda. Let Sri Sri Thakur's blessings design and improve our life; let the strings of our life not be plucked by someone else.

If anyone raises a question what is that 'I' as an individual can do when large mass is being swayed by the trend? Yes, it is a genuine question and as a person, each one of us admittedly has small space and capacity.

With the above as the reality assessment, we conclude the article with the following resolution:

a. Let each individual devotee follow Sri Sri Thakur's ideology without diluting it for any extraneous consideration. Let each individual devotee be crowned with Sri Sri Thakur's blessing by following the ideology the way Sri Sri Thakur prescribed. The ideology cannot be divorced from the ideal.
b. Following Sri Sri Thakur's ideology involves understanding the ideology truly as prescribed by Sri Sri Thakur and those are available in the original literature of Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur lives in His literature. He created huge volume of literature for this purpose.
c. As a corollary of above, it is imperative that the devotee steers clear of the distortion and illusion which is there in the popular campaign. It is necessary that what is generally available in the air must be filtered through reason and intelligence. Herd mentality may not be the right thing to do when it comes to self development. It is significant to mention that Sri Sri Thakur made science and religion co-terminus. It is generally known that lizards roam around the light to grab the insects that come flocking around the light, being attracted by the glaze. Let us not fall prey to the drive of misinformation, motivated interests, who are out to exploit the softness of devotion and faith.
d. While subscribing to organized initiatives and institutions, let us examine and test the interests of the leaders. It is significant to understand that leaders need to be regulated by the followers. People generally get the leaders that they deserve. Leaders and their dictates and for the same purpose, the policies and works of the organization must be validated by the ideology and interest of Sri Sri Thakur.

2nd December 2015

Chapter 8

Sri Sri Thakur's Contribution to Indian Culture

Eighty

Culture in Current Context
Sri Sri Thakur sets the blaze

1. The glare of Indian culture
2. Culture – an evolving abstraction
3. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra – the proponent of Indo-Aryan culture
4. Culture to be shaped by ideology in practice
5. Mass culture in habits and behavior

21st Century is for India.

When the world sits up and looks at India, it adores a complex and exquisite panorama that is Bharat. Beauty of India is deeply ingrained somewhere in its value system, in its family ambience, in its sense of purity and purpose; and above all, in its cultural heritage.

Can we, the present generation of Indians, re-discover and highlight those features, which are eternal in one sense, but getting faded in real sense? For most of us, culture remains shrouded in mystic scriptures, it got confined within the precincts of temples and shrines. Our culture features in our rituals, ironically without shining in our behavior. Time has come to make our culture contemporary; when we lived in culture, in synch with science and spirituality. We discard the garbage and filth from our cultural baggage and fill it with love and energy that is so natural to our cultural mores and yet remains elusive from our day to day life style.

This article attempts to bring out the means to shape Indian culture in the light of ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra.

1. The glare of Indian Culture

India is set to be the country of twenty first century on the world stage. It is going to occupy the center stage in the comity of nations in years and decades to come. Though the undercurrent of this trend is strikingly palpable, its reality is still in the zone of probability, loaded with shades of possibilities. For the possibility to be realized, it requires a sustained propelling in the realm of vitality and reality. Moreover the country also requires a distinct direction. Even if India occupies a center stage, it is not certain as to what will be its nature of position and its impact on the future of humanity. Considering all these possibilities and signals, it is perhaps important for the leaders and opinion makers to understand the direction and the speed in which our country's future as well as the future of humanity is going to take shape. All positive thinking persons and activists in various fields of human endeavor must create those enabling conditions which will take our great country to a new height and will drive the destiny of the humanity at

large. It is commonly believed that ours is a country of great cultural heritage. It is considered to be a great ancient civilization, sustained till date, ever evolving and modernizing with the emerging currents of evolution. Ours is a country that is considered to be the cradle of many religions. It is one of the largest functioning democracies in the world with record of sustained economic growth and scientific achievement.

The core of India that has maintained the country's distinct identity lies in its people and in their culture. There are of course many other parameters, where India has excelled and shown a path-breaking trail on the world stage. What is incomparable and therefore unbeatable is the talent and creativity of Indians. It is the human resource and the bio-chemical composition shaped by the sinews of social mores, which an average Indian imbibes through his family upbringing that has given the country its distinct advantage. That bio-sociological wealth is inimitable in a short time frame. It is a striking paradox that a country deeply mired in poverty and malnutrition also throws up large number of scientists, doctors, technocrats, economist, philosophers and creative talents in almost all fields and those persons today are spread across the globe, east and west alike. One commonality they carry with them, which might at times remain hidden in the fast changing cosmopolitan milieu, is that they carry Indian blood in their vein, qualities of head and heart inherited through heredity. Basically it is Indian culture, which is the priceless treasure for the whole humanity.

2. Culture - an evolving abstraction

Culture is a living abstraction. During the passage of time, culture evolves; it gets refined and also gets corroded. Culture is context neutral in the short run. It however adjusts with people, practices and policies in the long run, during which it takes its form and flavor. At any particular point in time, culture appears to be given; therefore, it influences the events. Some events turn out to be trendsetter and therefore, such events give a shape and direction to culture. So are individuals, who mould and shape the mores and practices and set the building blocks of culture.

When we look at Indian culture in the current context, what appear before an average person is its mystic nature, ambiguous contours, mired with fads and fashions of modernity and monumental relics of the past, accumulated through centuries and surviving through social and mythological beliefs and institutions. The cultural landscape has been congested and infested with myriads of unwanted and unknown objects, which make an average person somewhat confused. Somewhere culture has been synonymous with religion, which itself is much abused and misused word. At some other place, culture has become the pastime of affluent and artistic persons, much beyond the reach of an average person. Some religious organizations have arrogated to themselves the position of guardian of culture. Some organizations have resorted to aggressive means to promote culture. With all these apparitions, culture has become either a much revered or a much despised subject. Whatever is its form and formations, one conclusion can safely be arrived that Indian culture has got alienated from the daily life of an average person. It is observed in ceremonies; it is preserved in museums. And the culture we are living in today is devoid of its enduring component. Today's culture is on a fast forward mode. Those which appeals to our body and sensory organs are better appreciated then the extra sensory realizations, which once set the building blocks of culture. Culture is considered next to power, politics, money, social status and what not.

Culture in its evolving and sustaining mode has certain characteristics, which keep it relevant, alive and vibrant. One such characteristic is that which keep its people and institutions inquisitive. That is called scientific culture and that culture looks deep into the happenings and enquires their causality. It tries to find out the 'how' and 'why' of things happening around. It explores and therefore it progresses on an even keel. It encourages people to maintain a scientific temper. With the light of investigation, it purges itself off the obscurantist elements.

Second characteristic of a rich culture keeps it aligned with nature. It follows laws of nature and does not attempt to run contrary to it. It uses nature for its purpose, but does not exploit it. From behavioral point of view, a sound culture encourages manifestation of natural human tendencies. It does not obstruct human emotions and qualities.

One of the symptoms of a holistic culture is a symbiosis of body, mind and soul. Indian culture is distinct from others on the ground that it considers life as an integrated organism having mind and soul supporting it. From that perspective, human being endeavors refinement and attainment in the field of mind and soul. Intellectual, esthetic and supernatural aspects of life are given a higher status in Indian value system. This value system is so much central and cardinal to a culture, that if there is any alteration in the order of priority in soul, mind and body, then the culture is definitely on the trend of decadence.

Culture is a melting pot, in the sense that it captures multiple streams of thoughts, viewpoints, ideologies and ways of life. A culture has a way of dealing with diversities. Every culture has a dominant ideology, which lends a connotative identity to the culture. At times when that ideology gets corroded, the culture runs the risk of getting degenerated and waits for a reformation. Reformation may be endogenous or exogenous, depending upon the genesis of the reformation process.

3. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra – the proponent of Indo-Aryan Culture

On this background, we need to look at the ideological paradigm built by Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra brought about a cultural revolution in 20th century world. The essence of his culture can be analyzed under two headings: a) his ideology and b) Sri Sri Thakur, the ideal.

3.a. Principle

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the latest incarnate of God, the prophet, has presented an ideological paradigm that is best suited for the present day man and society, with their scientific temper and modern outlook. His ideological framework is comprehensive, as it encompasses all aspects of life and society. The sphere of his ideological framework envelops the entire domain of human knowledge and societal activities. It is an integrated philosophy of life and it basically fulfils everyone without exception, as per individual's distinct requirement.

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology in totality is radical in the sense that it stands out from the conventional schools of human thought and style of living, as currently in force in different societies all over the world. Among many others, one striking feature of the ideology is that it is based on both science and psychology. The ideology attempts to explain all phenomena with tools of science and logic. Here faith and logic has been blended together without losing their individual contours and shades.

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology provides a way of life to each individual person as well as to the society as a whole. The life that Sri Sri Thakur aims at is an achievement-oriented life, based on devotion to Ideal. While the basis of such achievement is work, the outcome is determined by the Lord and His blissful will. The linkage between work and outcome is determined by a cosmic law, which is known to a person by his own experience. The repository of acquired experience is knowledge. Knowledge thus acquired is vast, ever growing. Thus empirical experience gets transformed to intuitive knowledge.

The easiest way to acquire knowledge and achieve success is to follow the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur. The knowledge can be earned by two means: viz., a) by action and experience out of action and b) by devotion, through intuition and divine guidance. In the process of acquisition and achievement, two sub processes are certain to come in the way and create hindrance. One is the dictates of complexes and

second is the difficulties and obstacles arising out of many reasons. Sri Sri Thakur's ideology clearly has provision to overcome these limiting factors.

At some stage of following the ideology, Sri Sri Thakur's ideology presents itself in the form of art and science of living. The complexities of life put the ideology to test and bring out the enabling and alleviating ingredients in it. Therefore, Sri Sri Thakur's ideology supports and promotes life in the society. It does not for a moment attempt to escape or elude life and society. The ideology is eloquent on attachment, posing a contrasting view to detachment, as an example. The ideology puts premium on family life, which again runs counter to much acclaimed ascetic life of sages and seers of past. But the ideology does not in any way compromise the finer sensibilities, the higher level of consciousness and lofty realizations.

Let us make no mistake in understanding that the ideology is a codified set of rules and guidelines, which needs strict adherence in words and deeds both at individual and social level. It is a mechanism, which sets in motion the process of becoming, encompassing all strengths and weakness of a person.

3.b. Person

Principles are abstract. If there is a person who observes all the principles and manifests them explicitly in his conducts and living, then it is possible for others to get a feel of the principles. In other words, principles get shape in the person who observes them. Such person is a living image of principles.

To put the same thing in other words, an ideal is the one in whom ideology has taken shape. Ideal is the personified ideology. Ideology takes form in an ideal.

Analogically speaking, knowledge takes form in a person who is learned. Without a learned person, it is impossible to comprehend what knowledge is.

The example of principles, ideology and knowledge getting personified in the bearer is drawn from the experience of human realm. In the superhuman domain, these abstract attributes get personified in much intensified form. In the ultimate and absolute sense, God in human form is the supreme manifestation of all these attributes like principles, ideology and knowledge. In fact he is the source of all these attributes.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is the incarnate of God and as such he is the source of all attributes. Being in flesh and blood, he was the example of a perfect human being. He descended on earth in human form to show the path of living. He was the Master, the world teacher and the preacher par excellence. In a way, he adopted a dual method of teaching. One, he formulated and doled out a package of living; and second, he set himself as a living example of that package. He basically demonstrated what he preached.

4. Culture to be shaped by Ideology in practice

Long after Ideal (the person) ceases to exist and operate, what remains for the humanity is the culture. Culture consists of the ideology in practice and the legacy of the ideal.

In a very simple sense it is said that 'principles' are to be followed and to be put in practice, whereas 'the person' is to be worshipped. It is significant that both the constituents of culture are complementary, to be cultivated concurrently and one without the other has a tendency to dry out.

Life needs a discipline. A discipline to be effective needs to be followed in letter and spirit. Therefore for a person, the ideology has a sanctity, which can hardly be compromised with. The ideology in the life of a person is like a navigator's compass.

Sri Sri Thakur has left behind a well-articulated ideology. The ideology is eternal in its content and universal in its applicability. A person has to follow the ideology in letter and spirit. It is a truism, even at the cost of repetition it needs to be said that, ideology is the offspring of Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur is the author, the architect and the designer of his ideology. He has absolute copyright on it. A follower has to understand what Sri Sri Thakur has said and has to follow the ideology single-mindedly. The issue for a follower is to have a proper comprehension of the ideology. Is it an easy task? Is it at all possible to understand everything in life and to practice the ideology in toto? Does everyone have the intellect and requisite power to probe deep into the ideological nuances and be guided by these? The answers to all these questions may not be affirmative for everybody.

Here comes the role of ideal, the personified ideology. The ideal reflects the ideology in his life and action. Ideal is the physical shape of the ideology. Ideology expresses itself in the life and action of the ideal. This process of incarnation makes it possible for the limitless expanse of the God to take limited form, which makes the God to be seen, to be heard and to be felt as closely as human interaction can be. In a sense, the ideal is a curious expression of God in human form.

As God descends in the form of ideal, the ideal is a vehicle for man to ascend towards god. The ideal provides a passage for transformation. The process of transformation is the ideology, which is formulated by the ideal in the form a package that human being can comprehend. Therefore, it is said that ideology is a path and the ideal is the guide.

Ideal plays a crucial role in the process of following ideology. It is ideology, which is to be followed, to be adopted and to be put in practice. The process of putting the ideology in practice is not a mechanical process. It involves emotion, motivation, as it means shaping and reshaping human behavior. Where ideology cannot exert itself, the ideal can do, by virtue of his human and emotional touch. It may be hard for a person to grasp the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur, but it is relatively easy and almost spontaneous to develop emotional attachment with Sri Sri Thakur. Once that emotional bondage with Sri Sri Thakur grows, then following his ideology becomes effortless, rather pleasant.

Love and attachment are the levers, which work in two complementary and reciprocal directions. One, it is the devotee's love for Sri Sri Thakur which makes the ideology acceptable to the devotee easily. Second is Sri Sri Thakur's abundant affection, which works within the devotees' psychophysical system towards implementation of the ideology.

It is in this sense it has been said; ideology can hardly be followed without active attachment with the ideal. Feelings and sentiment for the ideal, makes the ideology lively and efficacious. Shorn of ideal, the process of following the ideology tends to become mechanical, if not ritual.

5. Mass culture in habits and behavior

Amongst many good things happening today, one aspect can hardly be over emphasized is the need for putting a mass progressive culture in practice. The root of all developmental activities lies in practice. Culture is to be practiced by each individual in daily life. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra provides the light, the path and the solution. Today, if there is one person who can be said to personify the quintessence of Indian culture in its pristine and progressive form, it is Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. Each person and the society at large will benefit in joining with him to promote the cultural crusade that he championed.

Eighty one

Culture at Workplace

Culture is the bedrock of our organizational milieu

This paper was presented in international conference on 'Spirituality at Workplace' held at Mumbai by 'Usha Pravin Gandhi College of Management' on 21-22 February 2013 and was published in the 'Conference Proceedings'.

Introduction

There is a general despair going around our country that our system is failing us. Be it political, administrative, governance at national level or at state or organizational level, something is giving us a miss, because of which the intended output is not coming forth. There is gap between planning and execution at organization level. There is gap between promise and delivery at political level. There is gap between authority and accountability at administrative level. The existing structures and systems, either by design or by application, is becoming so much dysfunctional that the whole system is subject to suspect and a paradigm shift is being looked for.

Like a plant stands on his root, like a river continues to flow by virtue of its connect with the source, every subculture and subsystem draws its vitality from a large strata of society, which may be called its cultural base. If the base is solid, sound and strong and if the subsystems are integrated with the base, then the system flourishes on its own vitality.

This paper attempts to propose that professional value and organizational culture has roots in social milieu. If institutions are failing and professional integrity is getting eroded, the solution lies in strengthening the cultural more in the society. This is more so in case of an ancient culture like India, which is under rapid transition, coming under the influence of digitization, globalization and massive economic transformation.

This paper is organized in III parts. Part I analyzes the topic in its essence, linking the developments in current scenario to cultural base. Major portion of this part attempts to provide a brief exposition of Indian culture, under the heading 'Indian Cultural Edifice.' Part I ends with recommendations as to what should be done to strengthen our cultural base under the heading 'Cultural Remedy for Social Malady'. Part II of the paper present a live case of corruption, as one of the striking examples of social deviants cited in this

paper. This part analyses a pattern in all such cases and at the end links the subject to the core topic of this paper. Part III presents a case study of work culture in Indian army. While profiling Indian soldier and Indian army, this part links the work ethos of an organization to society's culture.

Part I

Society and Culture

Society is a conglomerate entity consisting of multi layered, multi ethnic and multi cultural groups. Society is a living collectivity that can be seen and subjected to descriptive features. Social transformation and social engineering are two tools which have engaged the attention of researchers and social scientists. Some factors which play significant role in social transformation and social engineering lie in the domain of culture.

Culture is a collective reality in any society. Its root lies in some abstraction, but its branches are out in various forms of manifestation. Culture gets formed over a long period of time and remains trapped in various layers. Some layers, which remain submerged below the proverbial tip of the icebergs, are deeply rooted and firmly entrenched in public psyche. And there are some other layers which remain in state of perennial flux, passing through complex process of adaptation to the emerging developments.

Culture has multiple dimensions analogous to diverse facets of life. Culture pervades the whole life of a person, family and community through behavior patterns, events and institutions, festivals and celebrations, entertainments and sports and so on and so forth. Significantly, each of these manifested patterns and observed occasions are backed by some values, some ideological thoughts and philosophies.

Culture Tree

Everything that manifests on the surface of the society has its roots, support, motive and origin, analogous to a tree; its flowers and fruits, branches, trunk and root. Society is a complex entity. Its layers and interconnections amongst layers are nonlinear and unclear; rather it is as interwoven as a web. The agents in a society are individuals, families, communities, social pressure groups, institutions and government, including its organs like administrative, judicial and legislative.

Layer (top down- foliage to root)	Visible Manifestations
Community behavior, events	Eating habits, living styles, festivals, celebrations, performing arts
Underlying forces, support base	Individual pursuit, Family, community, culture groups, religious organizations
Resources mobilization, mobilization of strength	Heredity, community property, religious customs and institutions, art and cultural centers
Drives, beliefs, faith, values, motivations	Aspiration, recognition, compliance with established norms, conformity with groups, self refinement, self fulfillment
Philosophy, ideology, thesis	Organized religions, social-economic, cultural reform programs, renaissance, Philosophical view points, revealed truths, axioms and maxims

If any of the social happenings and manifestations shows deviant symptoms and creates dysfunctional tendency in social fabrics, then it needs a corrective and transformative intervention. Social engineering needs specific understanding of the connectivity and causality connections amongst the layers in a particular context.

Two deviant symptoms stalking the canvass of contemporary Indian society are communalism and corruption; two 'C's. These are acting like another dreaded 'C', that is cancer, in India's body politic. The symptoms and damages arising out of these are too well known to be recounted here. These are deeply rooted in our collective psyche and much spread out in the social fabric. If the system is failing us, despite being well designed, then the root perhaps is to be found in a missing link; that is culture. We can safely propose that if these viruses are to be fought against, then it requires a cultural transformation.

For a long time in our country, we have treated our culture like a dustbin in the corridors of elite social groups. As a country, we have attempted to design economic system; we have laid out a political system based on constitution; we have developed techno commercial competence by carefully laying institutional arrangement. We felt the need for these infrastructure and superstructure. We took expert hands and employed them to design these systems and institutions for the country, with a view to develop the country economically. We thought that economic development and democratic system will provide everything to us. We looked at western countries and newly emerged economies in east also, and attempted to catch up with them in terms of development. But it did not occur to us that we needed to cultivate and grow on our own distinctive base, which is Indian culture.

Indian Cultural Edifice

The centrality of Indian culture lies in its progressive motion of human faculties. Indian culture looks at any living object as an offshoot of divine spirit and provides a unique position. Foremost amongst all living spirit is human being for its most evolved state of existence, including level of consciousness. Every human being, irrespective of its locus in the continuum of evolution, is a unique entity. Human existence has three basic features, namely, *sat* (eternal existence), *chit* (responsiveness) and *anand* (blissfulness). Human being is endowed with primordial urge to preserve and proliferate. These two urge manifests itself through number of complexes (inclinations), which in essence, drives a person to various action. Each of these complexes craves for appeasement through various behavioral expressions. To the extent, the complexes fulfill the existential urge for becoming; these are considered to be higher aspiration. Whenever the complexes militates the existential urge, causing threats to existence, these are called base instincts. The central focus of Indian culture is to drive the complexes towards fulfilling the existential urge for expansion, sublimation and blissfulness.

Indian culture eulogizes God and godlike qualities. God is considered to be the creator of this universe. He is accepted to be omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. His three primary roles, namely, creation, preservation and destruction, are supposedly discharged by trinity: *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Maheshwar*, who are the three subheads of the supreme father. Each of the divine powers rests with a deity and sum total of all the attributes rest with the supreme power. Like goddesses Saraswati is the presiding deity of knowledge; Lord Ganesh is the presiding deity of wisdom and success, so on and so forth. Each of the deities has been conceptualized in the form of a man or woman, based on the attributes that he or she is supposed to possess. Each person is an offspring of God and therefore, he or she has all the divine qualities in potential form. It is possible for each person to cultivate those qualities and get to possess the attributes and make use of these.

Indian culture believes in incarnates. God takes birth in human form at very critical times to exemplify and demonstrate the qualities of divinity to the contemporary age. When he takes birth, he is God in human form. He displays the perfect specimen of man and sets a benchmark for the rest of the mankind to follow him and be like him. In this process, he provides path for the people of that age to follow and redeem from the worldly sufferings which man subjects oneself to, as inevitable consequence of his misdeeds. The incarnate, or prophet or *avatar* as he is known as, leads the mankind on the path of evolution. When he descends, man gets an opportunity to ascend.

Prophet of the age provides a way of life, which is most suitable for people of that age to follow for the purpose of attaining superior achievements in life. He provides a path that is applicable for all the people of that age, irrespective of so called differences in caste, creed, religion, geographical region etc. For that time, he is the world teacher, the redeemer, the exemplar, universal father. He exemplifies an ideal way of living for attaining perfection in all spheres of activity. He guides, goads and fulfills each one as per one's individual distinctiveness. No matter who ever one is and wherever one is from, the prophet accepts him as he is and elevates him further from his extant status.

In the pantheon of god men, we see luminaries like Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Prophet Mohammed, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna and Thakur Anukul Chandra. All these godlike persons constitute a lineage of incarnates, who in succession, represented God on earth for the contemporary mankind. For their respective age, they were the best specimen of man and representative of God. Essential ideological tenets and philosophical view points of all these prophets are same. Each successive prophet fulfils the past prophets.

Whenever a prophet descends, he forms a landmark for that age. He creates a reform in the contemporary society, which at that point of time remained mired with all kinds of distortion, superstition, exploitation, so on and so forth. While reviving the eternal spirit of natural law, prophet makes provision whereby the contemporary needs of the mankind gets a progressive tenor. In that sense, the prophet contemporary brings about a revolution in the realm of thought, action and consciousness. He gives a push to the process of human evolution. Prophet contemporary is the most up-to-date and progressive person for his age. He is the torch bearer for human civilization. A distinct way of living, thinking and a packaged ideology begins with each prophet at his time. That is how major religions in the world have been born.

In a sense, the formation of a religion (or independent cult) after the successive prophets is perhaps an aberration of the prophets' ideology. One is not sure, if prophets wanted to separate their identity from their past prophets. Though ideologically it was not required to maintain separate groups, perhaps it became a necessity of the time. By the time successor prophet comes, the previous prophet's ideology would already have been distorted to an extent that it must have been felt necessary to maintain a distinct identity for the successor prophet for the purpose of maintaining purity, clarity and novelty. That is how, though it is a clear ideological aberration, the practice of formation of new religion has become a historical necessity, a cycle that repeats itself after the era of every prophet. That is how we have so many major religions and each one is associated with the prophet of the contemporary time.

Prophet of the age become living Ideal for the age. He exemplifies in his life what are the contours of human excellence. He defines Godhood in terms of human attributes and actions, which ordinary mortals like us can see, feel, touch and converse with. He sees himself as an example of the ideology that he preaches. His advocacy of ideal living does not remain in thought and abstraction, as he gives a living shape to all these. Therefore, humankind finds a role model in prophet contemporary.

Indian culture advocates for ideal centric life. Ideal centric life is a life of concentration, devotion and dedication. Life longs for enjoyment by adhering to what is prescribed and approved by Ideal. Ideal becomes the defining yardstick of life.

What follows from above is a holistic life, a balanced life, an expanded life and a healthy life. The conditions of such a life, for an individual, family and society, are codified in a package called *dharma*. Therefore, a person gets to operate within a set of codified and sanctified guidelines, which comprises,

amongst many other things, ethics and morality. Life gets its defining parameters from the tenets of *dharma*.

Dharma in Indian culture is an all embracing concept. The real *dharma* is defined to be path of 'being and becoming' and the tenets of *dharma* are defined by the prophet of the age. Dharma is generally understood to be a classical subject, having roots in scriptures and mythology, beginning with *Veda*, *Upanishada*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharat* and so on. Great and wise people at different times have given contemporary interpretations of *dharma*.

There comes the issue of dynamism of Indian culture and adaptability of Indian religious system. Indian culture is known for its accommodative, flexible and adaptive nature. The prophets and the wise men at different times have redefined the contours of Indian culture and have made it contemporary. Today, science and spirituality are moving hand in hand to make human life meaningful, enjoyable and peaceful. In this drive, there is a need to bring out the eternal elements of culture and *dharma*, cleanse the fundamentalist and obscurantist elements from the bucket of culture. It needs a special mention here for its relevance to our time, that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the prophet of the age, has done this work splendidly.

Cultural Remedy for Social Malady

The maladies as experienced by the society, particularly with respect to the two 'C's referred above, may have some immediate preventive and curative measures, which are in the domain of administration, judiciary and legislature. Social awareness drive and raising youth consciousness are also significant measures to fight against the maladies. In addition to these, we also need to strengthen our cultural base. We need to rinse the superstitious and prejudicial elements from our culture, bring in science and rationality into it and adopt the paradigm provided by prophet of the age. It must be appreciated that a person, for all that he does, is guided and prompted by, apart from many other influencing factors, his habits, instincts, beliefs and attitudes. These values are nurtured in family, in schools, in social milieu, in popular drama, theater and films. The leaders have to take our cultural values and cultural champions to the high table and beam the cultural lights around the society. Like there are experts and specialists in other fields of human endeavor, there are dedicated and realized people who cultivate culture. They have to be made part of policy making, public programs, in setting educational curriculum, planning schemes so on and so forth. Every place of work has to have a cultural ambience and culture quotient.

Part II

Madhu Koda, then Chief Minister of Jharkhand, was arrested in November 2009 for his alleged involvement in a scam of Rs. 4000 crores. Prior to that, as we recall in our short memory, we had Raju of Satyam, prior to that we had Telgi and many others. Each of these unwelcome events (scams and scandals) hugged newspaper headlines, when these were surfaced. Each of these sordid episodes kept the media agog with enough *masala*, suspense and exploration out of investigative journalism. All of these when happened shook the national conscience, similar to that is caused by earthquake. Law enforcing agencies swung into action in a dramatic style, courtrooms attracted public attentions; legal luminaries got into their acts of spilling the beans. Everything put together presents a mammoth infamous show in the national scene.

Today when any of these scams and scandals come to public knowledge, it does not create so much of repulsion in public mind as it used to cause in earlier days. Now a day, these things are happening almost at predictable interval. One of the reasons why scams are not causing raised eyebrows is that people have come to accept it as something that exists in the system. When we hear that a public functionary in

high office was caught for accepting bribe, people know that what comes to light is only the tip of the iceberg. It is also known that the findings of such irregularities will lead to no punishment. Some other groups will benefit from the findings.

In all these scam and scandals of huge proportion, certain pattern is clearly discernible. Normally, the scam star comes from ordinary folk, of insignificant origin. He would be ambitious, yet not able to realize his ambition through the existing socio-economic order. He would be an expert in some field, to such an extent that he would know the loopholes in the system. He would exploit the loopholes to his benefit as a test case in small measure and would get a validation of his *modus operandi,* as he perfects in his nefarious yet well manipulated job. He would gather a few close accomplices to create a group of supporters. He would also have established nexus with some top influences in the establishments. He would scale a meteoric rise in a very short time. When he grows too big to rein himself, he would cross limits and expose himself. By that time, he would have developed some adversaries, who would be waiting for an opportune moment to take revenge. When there is a change of regime or some non-conformist in the line, then the kingpin would be caught.

Such scams attract instant publicity. Media brings out the incident into limelight creating sensation in the mass. In the second stage, media puts pressure on law enforcing agencies and public functionaries to bring about accountability in them. Hammered by media, investigating authorities swing into action and their actions also get media publicity in the initial period and continue till the histrionic part comes to an end. The results of the actions of investigative authorities are usually found to be not too impressive. Results that are expected from such investigation are not mere fear of deterrence, but prosecution after judicial scrutiny. Such scam stars are not deterred merely by the ground level action, as they are armed with wherewithal to subvert the executive arm of the government. Then the scene of action shifts to courtrooms. Outcome of the court proceedings are typically lengthy, as the case moves from trial court to appellate court and finally lands up in apex court. Lengthy debate and inadequate or hostile witness and porous investigation report, all these put together make the judicial pronouncement unpredictable and at times might appear to be falling short of expectation. Sum total of the processes lend credence to belief that the loopholes in the system passively encourage the multi crores scams and scandals.

No scientific study has been made to assess the impression the successive scams imprint on the social psychology. Presumptive assessment would lead us to believe that social psychology is getting immune to ethics and morality. The line of discrimination between right and wrong is getting blurred. The firewall of ethics and morality is giving way to rational cost benefit analysis, as the society is getting more and more commercialized and economic development is inducing conspicuous consumption. Secondly, mass psychology is losing faith on the conventional preventive and punitive measures; as a result of which socially deviant behaviors and invalid conducts are coming to stay and getting encouraged. Thirdly, tendency to earn quick bucks by any means is getting promoted in the puerile mind. Young mind usually gets influenced by glamour and today it is getting tempted by high voltage offences.

Looking from another perspective, these scandals are magnifying reflection of multitudes of such micro offences that are happening in every nook and corner of the society and more so in the mind of average individual, in various walks of life. The genesis of scam as a social reality is cooked in the collective psyche, which today has become permissive of ill gotten money. This type of multi-crore scam is also product of a culture of big money, high spending and filthy living. This culture is a perverse symptom of capitalistic mind that revels in concentration of wealth and monopolization of power.

Today systematic remedy is attempted to rein the excesses arising from the prevailing system. Systems are strengthened, glaring loopholes are plucked, and new systems are brought in. It appears, the system would collapse by its own excessive superstructure; unless the cultural sinews are strengthened. Every

person in the society has to strengthen his or her conscience; promote a cult of virtuous living and look for others' well being.

If the society today wants a relief from the assault of scam and scandal, difference has to be made at cultural level. Social psychology has to be impregnated by cultural thoughts. We need to sow the seed of a culture that gives prominence to ethics and morality over power and pelf. Fundamental concepts from Indian culture have to be scientifically viewed and to be made part of our living, primarily at individual level and then at social and institutional level. People's behavior, habits and instincts have to undergo refinement and through that process, human consciousness has to get a divine touch. This process can be perceived as a new man making mission. This man making mission in our time has been splendidly pursued by the prophet of the age Thakur Anukul Chandra.

Economic development certainly would top the list of national agenda, as that would ensure essential conditions for people's wellbeing. At every level of our endeavor, we must balance material progress by spiritual status. Reforms at policy making level have to go hand in hand with man making mission. Man making mission would aim at enriching each individual by manipulating his habits and behaviors and bring about a transformation in his personality. That would entail enhancing his capability, stretching his potential for achievement and translating his latent potential to possibility. This mission works at psychosocial and spiritual plane and intervenes his repository of deeds in the past, keeping the future space in view. This deals with body, mind and soul in a symbiotic coordination. This is a continuous process and it follows a path that is synch with biological and natural laws. The mission works through individual, in concordance with family and surrounding society.

Man making mission operates at three levels; namely Individual, family and society; like concentric circles. Society encompasses political and economic aspects as well. At the level of individual and family, it is an issue of personal acquisition and transformation from the existing level to higher and still higher level. The society and other institutions do support, promote and help individual in accomplishing the objective of acquisition and transformation. Indian cultural renaissance wherein man making is a key action would go a long way to avoid recurrence of the scam and scandals. A blueprint of that renaissance is outlined and demonstrated by Thakur Anukul Chandra.

Part III

"Indian soldier is a remarkable human being: spiritually evolved, mentally stoic and sharp, physically hardy and skilled. And his institution remains proud of its traditions of selflessness, devotion to duty, sacrifice and valour", writes General VP Malik, former chief of Indian Army. He writes this in a lead article in Times of India, dated 26th July 2012, titled, "Kargil: 13 Years After". The article deals with the state of affairs in Indian Army, its relationship with its controlling body that is Government of India, with direct reference to the tension between the two, keeping Kargil war, fought 13 years ago, on the backdrop.

We have no authority to comment on the theme of the article. Going by the tone of the article and stature of author, we accept every point made in the article. What strikes us is the reference made to the spirituality of Indian soldier and the culture of Indian army as an institution. Hats off to the General for bringing these significant aspects out in his article! Our discussion centers around: a) personality feature of an average Indian soldier and b) organizational culture of Indian Army. We also address the question: what is the bedrock of these two admirable features and how can these be maintained?

Profile of Indian Soldier and Indian Army

To draw specific features of Indian soldier and Indian Army is a highly delicate exercise, involving good research in sociology and organizational behavior. The profile drawn by General Malik is sketchy and

symbolic. As an observer from a distance, we can rightfully say that Indian soldier is a dedicated professional. His commitment to his duty is legendary; his valorous feat in the face of challenges on the battle ground is fitting tribute to the best military tradition world over.

Extending the characteristic features of an Indian soldier to any other job in public service, the Indian worker stands for loyalty to its master, faithful to his salt and humane to his colleagues. There are of course innumerable variations and exceptions; which largely can be attributed to organizational discipline, work culture and environmental conditioning in specific contexts. What stands out as average features of Indian workforce is that they are true to their salt, unassuming in their skill and carry a high sense of obligation.

Extending those features to the society, a citizen of our country holds superior positions in esteem, likes the hierarchical order of society, and likes to remain peacefully in homogenous groups. By nature, Indians give value to group affiliations, respects socio-economic status, and have great respect for social norms, traditions and leaders.

Indian army as an organization places discipline above rest of the things. Army by nature is regimented and an Indian by nature respects group affiliation and discipline. Army by its service condition assures security and Indian by nature is risk averse; a complementary matter.

Sociological Root of Soldier's Spirituality and Army's Culture

The best elements in profile of Indian soldier and Army's culture have deep root in Indian society. Essentially, the world of an Indian revolves around God, the supreme power, whatever may be his name and form. God personifies the best things in life. God stands for a power that supports, defends and protects the people at the time of adversity, calamity and evils etc, which threatens man's peace, stability and serenity.

The nucleus of Indian social structure is family and family provides the space for culture to continue passing through generations. Love and affection within family builds the foundation of a robust psychological framework for every Indian. When a solider is in the camp or in the midst of an operation, these two psychological anchors, namely 'God' and 'family' keep his spirit high. He earns for the family; he adheres to principles of morality and ethics for the sake of God. His aspiration and motivation is tempered by the principles of asceticism and superior consciousness, which have been part of Indian culture.

An average Indian takes adversity and suffering head on, relying on the principles of *karma* or destiny. Service and sacrifice are twin wings on which every Indian aspires to migrate to higher order of living. Life in army and the call of duty on the ground actually are fortified by these two virtues of Indian culture.

Indian culture has a great adoration for tradition. Experimentation and deviations are usually treated with suspicion. The culture in Indian army thrives on sense of heritage in Indian culture.

Use of force against evil is considered to be a superior cult in Indian culture. We have glorious examples of Lord Rama and Krishna leading from the front in the battle field to banish evil and to buoy up virtue. Every soldier's mother takes pride and solace, when martyrdom overtakes the life, in belief that her child is performing a sacred job, on the footprints of divine prowess.

The country is addressed as 'mother India' and is accorded position of goddess. The image of our country evokes a sublime spirit that calls for supreme sacrifice. Every soldier and his family feel that in their call for duty lies the country's wellbeing.

The Degeneration in Army and the Society

If today there is a trust deficit between army and its civil masters in Government, as has been referred to in the article of General Malik, large share of the blame has to rest at the door of deteriorating Indian cultural environment. Aggressive commercialization has heightened the greed of every Indian in today's society which has slowly corroded the higher values and sensibilities, which were once the prime movers of our culture. Indian culture supports prosperity, but not at the cost of finer sensibilities and values of life. Corruption has sprouted in the dumping ground of Indian culture. The attributes of strength in Indian army men and in the organization have to be preserved and promoted in the cultural space in the society.

21st February 2013

Eighty two

Sri Sri Thakur Found Meaning in Tradition
Sri Sri Thakur Challenged the Convention

Part I – Religion

'Dharma' is a way of scientific living. It is living and growing, in association with the surrounding fellow beings and in consonance with the environment. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra defines it as 'being and becoming'. 'Dharma' in its conceptual domain has got certain essential ingredients like: law of nature, progressive and collective living, scientific temper, loving attitude, inquisitive serviceable approach to others, and life of balance between matter and spirit.

'Don't worry much whether God exists or not; rather be reassured that you do exist'. 'It is of least significance, how much God loves you; what actually matters is how much you love God'. 'I have seen Gods, they are born of mother's womb; but I am looking for a devotee'. These are few of the many maverick thoughts on God that Sri Sri Thakur brought upon collective consciousness of our time.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra was not a reformer, the type we read in history books. He was not a revolutionary of the types who overthrow the existing order by a big bang disruption and usher in a new order. He was not a philanthropist of the type we see around, who might have dedicated his life's savings for a socially noble cause.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra operated at a very fundamental level of human existence, consciousness, evolutionary traits of civilization; everything on scientific and spiritual plane. His movement can be said to have caused revolution in the domain of tradition, convention and all that have been part of a continued saga of human endeavour from past to present. In that sense, he heralded what is called modernization, progression and evolution; all that ushers a better future, distilled by an urge for refinement, excellence and innovation.

In this and following four essays, we will attempt to reflect on milestones where Sri Sri Thakur has differed from the convention and given a fresh and stimulating twist to conventional thoughts. Significant to note here is that real progress will happen if we all, the people at large, individually and collectively, follow and join Sri Sri Thakur at those twist and turn of time. Otherwise, time may lead us anywhere else, towards wilderness and bewilderment, and where else; nobody knows. Not many of us are conscious of our collective direction and next destination. Here Sri Sri Thakur plays the role of guide, the leader, the forerunner, the path finder, and the able charioteer.

Conceptually, there is hardly any difference in essence between two religions. If one practices the ideology of any religion, one will achieve the intended objective. Prophets and the original scriptures, the holy books, which are the fountainheads of any religious movement, do not mean to conflict with any other religion. More than the principles of religion, it is the practice which provides life to religion. Whoever follows the principles of religion tends to get benefit. Every major organized religion consists of 4 structural entities: a) the Ideal and the ideology in codes (principles); b) the conducts (practices) which are ritualistically adopted by majority of followers of religion; c) institutional structures which govern, influence, regulates and mobilizes the affairs of a religion in public domain, and d) the practitioners of religion who avowedly remain affiliated to the religion.

<u>Origin and Developments of Religious Movement</u>

Major religions of the world are originated from the ideological paradigm of contemporary prophets. Prophets descend at different points in time for the whole humanity. God is one, prophets are God's messengers; hence they are the same. They never discriminated any group, based on its religious affiliations by birth.

Religious tenets have been packaged and branded with a tag of exclusivity, by the followers of the prophet, with a view to propagate and perpetuate the new view point of the prophet for the then society. Normally, during the lifetime of the prophet, the devotees get guided by the prophet directly and that guidance normally happens to have universal appeal. But after the great demise, the prophet's life and time remain shrouded by some kind of mystery and the mystery gets murkier with passage of time. In the process, various distortions backed by mean interests, creep into the organized legacy of the prophet. Lot of social, commercial, ethnic and political feelings get associated with the prophet's movement. When the prophet's followers promote the prophet's mission with zeal and aggressiveness of a true devotee, some fanatic elements and group sentiments also creep in. The first casualty of this movement is the liberal elements of the prophet's ideology, which are the core of any prophet's life and teaching, like: love, fellow feelings, service, forgiveness and so on. As the movement progresses, it snowballs into a systematic and structured organized societal groups. Slowly the spiritual aspects becomes a low key affair, while

temporal part, which is visible and more affable, gains prominence. This is the trend and pattern of almost all major religions, though there are differences in their history and contours.

World of Religion as it stands Today

In today's context, every religious leader has to look deep into his own ideology. It is of course easier said than done. Given a chance, everybody would like to do that. The process of getting into the root of ideology of any religion is not very well laid down. Nevertheless this is the only way to deal with religion, if one were to escape from the clutches of the communal and fundamental forces. When one turns to the original sayings of the prophet, one would know that religions are not to be treated like 'isms', to serve the interests of some influential sections, the way it is being treated now. Even if few religious leaders take to the liberal path, there may not be much impact on the society. The reasons being, the sphere of today's religion has widened much to include all kinds of elements in the society and the fundamental elements, mixed with other interests like politics, jingoism, megalomania, etc, have gone out of hands of sane leaders. Today religion is more of rhetoric, less of practice; being used to serve number of other interests.

Today religious affiliation on a societal scale has some features and some privileges. People of one particular religion own up a particular deity (godhead) and some associated symbols like a holy book and some holy places and some sacred objects (may be a tree, may be an animal, may be an object of nature like fire, and moon and so on). Almost all religions have a place of reverential congregation, some places of pilgrimage and some festivals. All these practices bring practitioners of a religion under the influence of same faith, same rituals, same dos and don'ts etc. Therefore, surrounding the above features, people of each religion develop a cult, a set of codes, and a peculiar pattern in behavior. Most importantly, dress, festivities, and language are very explicit features of most of the religions, which clearly distinguish one religious group from others.

The socio-religious groups provide a sense of security and fellow feelings to their members. Privileges also stretch up to political and economic benefits. A clear sign of solidarity is visible in each religious group when it comes to facing the outside world. Political leaders find it attractive to capitalize the sense of inclusion of each member of religious community and bring in leadership dynamics to this particular phenomenon. This exclusive privilege in this competitive world, with visible trend of fast upward mobility, brings about a conflict of interest amongst religious groups. There is a very intense urge in the groups to maintain the status quo, to strengthen the divisive barriers, out of fear of insecurity.

Taking everything into account and viewing from a sociologist's perspective, we find religions have come to acquire more socio-economic political connotation than the spiritual content in it. Therefore, separate spiritual cults are growing in parallel, on the social landscape. The enlightened sections of the society are quite aware of the differences between religion and spirituality. There are quite a good number of spiritual leaders who are quite influential and they are using managerial leadership and media and meeting emotional and spiritual need of the people. Branches of discipline like yoga, astrology, architecture (*vastu*), trauma care and social service to the disadvantageous section of the society etc are growing and meeting the need of the people. Growth of herbal medicine, homeopathy, spiritual healing and gated community living etc. are also associated features of the same trend of healthy and holistic living. All ancient scriptural wisdom is being delivered on a mass scale, with an entrepreneurial drive and being organized in the form of corporate culture. Powerful media, digital technology and web culture together have stretched the reach of these services to every corner of the world. Today, the spiritual world has a global integration, competitive spirit and therefore some spiritual promoters have a very wide base and mass appeal.

So today, we have:

a) World of Dharma (ancient breed)
b) World of Religion (socio-economic-political breed)
c) World of Spirituality (hybrid of ancient, modern and corporate)

All these have evolved with the need of the time, taste of people along with a living style which is marked by graduating order of affluence and technology. Rising aspiration of people, propelled by new and younger generational outlook has made the culture entirely different from what it used to be, say, a quarter century ago.

Striking negative feature in this trend is that certain natural elements are missing. For example, the following elements which were part of our culture and upbringing, are slowly getting discredited and perhaps being marginalized from the life of people:

- Living with nature, love for nature, curiosity to explore nature
- Human touch with each other, sentiment and emotion for others in the family and society
- Connect with history, heritage, art, literature and pure science

A point that must be brought out here that society is progressing fast in terms of standard of living people enjoy, connectivity that is available, both physical and cyber, fast urbanization that is taking place and overload of media's impact in shaping people's view of the world. Culture – traditional as well as contemporary, is trying hard to assimilate these changes and yet remain relevant to people and their lives. That is where spirituality is emerging as modern face of religion in the enlightened part of society.

Religious Revival & Remix

Religion still remains favorite recourse to large sections of society; rational and modern. People attach God, Godly prowess and God's favor with religion. Therefore, people of all sections of society feel the need for religion, religious establishment and religious paraphernalia for various reasons like personal gain, security, immunity from evil happenings and unforeseen mishaps etc. Large numbers of people do not understand much about religious principles; as they have neither time nor ability to get into the nuances of religion; as there are huge mysteries in the world of religion itself. Therefore, when it comes to practice of religion, even modern and well meaning people get guided by traditional religious leaders, however ancient and outdated those leaders and practices might appear to be. So we have proliferation of all kinds of religious leaders; traditional, modern and spiritual. It appears, there is place for all in a heterogeneous and uneven society like ours, which is eternally in state of transition.

World over, India no exception; there are people at the bottom of the pyramid. There are sections of the people suffering from abject poverty, starvation, malnutrition, ravaged by natural calamities, manmade calamities like war, subjugation, exploitation and victim of terrorism and so on. This section of people have no recourse other than subjecting themselves to traditional religious tradition, customs, being guided by traditional religious leaders, whatever may be their level of enlightenment.

Then comes a time when everyone, without exception, suffers from own limitations; namely: weakness to complexes, old age, ill health, unforeseen mishaps and death. These moments of reality, create a phobia in people's mind, sooner or later. People, being obsessed with these hard realities, tend to surrender before any recourse, when and where they can find a relief, a support, strength, a ray of light and a heave of sigh.

Due to the three situations and factors mentioned above, religions still hold a sway on large sections of people world over. Fear and awe for the supernatural power overpower the ordinary mortals. The fear of

being distressed and hope of getting relief compel people to look up to God, religion or what you have. It is the ultimate succor, the supreme insurance, the hard destiny, which people have not been able to face; therefore they come to terms with it.

Religion as understood from Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra

a) The world of religion needs fresh air, new light and a renewed originality.
b) It needs a vigorous popular movement too.

In a nutshell, I would like to observe that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has done everything of these two, in a superb demonstration of breaking the tradition and setting a new era. Conceptually, he has challenged the very term religion, saying what prophets have actually propounded is not religion, but 'dharma'; religion is not the English equivalent of what 'dharma' conveys. Concept clarity travels with use of appropriate vocabulary.

'Dharma' is not to be equated with any dogma, creed, and ism or with any kind of restrictive and exclusive preserve of institutionalized social tradition. 'Dharma' is not barrier, based on one's place of birth and inherited customs. 'Dharma' is certainly not an organized strength to be used for or against any other similar groups to settle certain existential issues.

'Dharma' is a way of scientific living. It is living and growing, in association with the surrounding fellow beings and in consonance with the environment. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra defines it as 'being and becoming'. 'Dharma' in its conceptual domain has got certain essential ingredients like: law of nature, progressive and collective living, scientific temper, loving attitude, inquisitive serviceable approach to others, and life of balance between matter and spirit.

Sri Sri Thakur very nicely said that principles of 'dharma' have two parts: divine and discrete. The divine part is eternal; things which are linked to law of nature, principles of human biology and deep rooted psychology. Such principles which are foundations of our stay, cornerstone of cosmic law and very core to ecology, have got all time value, are divine. Those divine laws are to be maintained through basic codes of conducts, which every religion upholds. On those counts, no religion takes a contrary stand.

There are however discrete parts of 'dharma', which are associated to the core and are relevant to the context of time, locality, climate and habitation. These parts of 'dharma' are related to ritual, habits and customs, which are adaptable. On these grounds, there can be differences amongst religions. These differences are immaterial to the core purpose and substance of 'dharma'. Therefore, there can be differences in the practice and observations amongst religions, which are mostly of these kinds of discrete affairs. These differences can however be no basis for any conflict amongst religions.

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology provides us the following:

a) Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra provides clarity about the concept of 'dharma', thereby making it crystal clear to a person about his or her way of living, in line with 'dharma'. Sri Sri Thakur tells one: what is that one should do which will be in conformity with 'dharma' and what is that one is required to eschew which is not sanctioned by 'dharma'. Sri Sri Thakur made 'dharma' an integral part of one's daily living, thinking and action. There is nothing that one has to do separately for the sake of acquiring virtue as required by 'dharma'. 'Dharma' does not exist outside one's life. No worship, no penance, no ritual, no pilgrimage, no recitation of scripture, no donation – nothing of this sort to be done exclusively for the sake of satisfying 'dharma', and which is not linked to one's life. Everything has a place in the scheme of life and everything has to support existence

and growth. One can draw line between what is core and what is periphery; what must be done under any circumstances and what should be done under a given circumstance. Under Sri Sri Thakur's guidance, everything what one does has a rational, scientific and psychological understanding; no blind faith, no superstition, no tradition without personal satisfaction.

b) Having defined what 'dharma' is; Sri Sri Thakur sets his own life as an example of that. Sri Sri Thakur's life was a demonstration of 'dharma'. He was embodiment of 'dharma'. His life delineated an outline of 'dharma' for others to see and follow. 'Dharma' got a life and shape in Sri Sri Thakur. With Sri Sri Thakur before us, one does not have to look for any deep reference or inscrutable scriptures for knowing the shape, feature, the outline, the look and knowhow of the most mysterious concept called 'dharma'. Sri Sri Thakur's life is that open book which scripts the text of 'dharma'.

c) We got a glimpse of lives of all the past prophets in Sri Sri Thakur. This is something great, bordering on unbelievable today. Imagine Lord Krishna, the mythological god-head with thousand and crores of verse and text singing his divine attributes, is present before you in flesh and blood! Are we talking sense? Same awful exclamation can be made for other mighty names like Lord Rama, Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, Hazrat Muhammad, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna Pramahansa. It became easier for us to know, understand, and appreciate past prophets' conducts, lifestyle and approach when we saw Sri Sri Thakur live. It was just a replica of all the past prophets, looking from the point of view of ideology and approach to people. Sri Sri Thakur has done interpretation of holy texts of other religions; which bear a striking originality that resembles the first person experience. We have read Sri Sri Thakur's interpretation of Gita, Holy Bible and Quran Hadis, where we do not find much of philosophy but more of personal expression, feelings and sentiment. When we read this, we get a rational and practical view of the scriptural narration.

<u>What best can be done now</u>

Given the situation today, the following action seems plausible in the current socio-religious sphere:

a) We need to bring spirituality into religion. That would essentially mean bringing more of spiritual practice into the life of people who are spiritually conscious; who are conscious for their self development and who have quest for something higher things in life.

b) It is premised that attempt to reform conventional religious groups and institutions and leaders towards the true practice of dharma will not meet with much of success. That domain of religion is occupied by multiple interests; religion is observed as a label, as a facade. Established religious institutions and leaders would not like to adapt to changes due to fear of losing their identity.

c) True meaning of 'dharma' and spiritual practice will be seen and felt with the prophet contemporary only. His ideology is worth following; as it is all fulfilling, scientific, rational and up to date. The prophet contemporary fulfills all past prophets. While following the principles of the current prophet, one can still maintain one's affiliation with the religion to which one is born. Sri Sri Thakur does not admit conversion. One would necessarily preserve and remain wedded to one's originality with respect to religion, culture, heredity and family linage. One can lead a progressive life without forsaking one original identify. Maintaining identify is something like maintaining purity.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra had followers belonging to all so called religious groups; they have not forsaken their original affiliation. Rather they have come to know what those affiliations in effect means.

d) Today Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideological paradigm needs a proper understanding and following. The ideology is such that it does not limit one to any parochial consideration. It only helps to enlighten.

4th April 2013

Eighty three

Sri Sri Thakur Found Meaning in Tradition
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Part II – Worship

Real worship brings about flourishing life and growth. It becomes a saga of 'purity, patience and perseverance'. Sri Sri Thakur said, 'God seldom bothers about what man thinks; but He looks up to what one does'. Thought, especially pure thought, is important but not enough. 'Where action follows desire, fulfillment peeps there', said Sri Sri Thakur. In that sense, every act of worship is blessed to perfection.

Worship is an act of glorifying God through submission and dedicated actions. Worship has many forms, innumerable varieties and different scales in terms of arrangement and grandeur. The common thread running amongst all these varieties is that worship essentially remains a devotional and transactional affair with God, marked by high degree of purity, purposefulness, procedures and precision. Overall, due to its esoteric nature and divine connectivity, worship remains an otherworldly affair, performed in a worldly way.

<u>Varieties of worship</u>

In terms of varieties, all worships can be classified in the following 3 forms:

- *Home worship*: Everyday worship we do in our home

- *Temple worship*: Everyday worship that is done in designated places like temples, *ashrams*, churches, gurudwarads and mosques (some call it prayer, *bhajans* and services, etc)
- *Mandap worship*: Occasional worship on designated auspicious occasions like (Durga puja, Ganapati puja, Saraswati puja etc)

In all these forms, the arrangement and procedures vary a lot; but at its core, worship remains an individual affair with the divine. To clarify the point, even if there is a grand *puja* going on in the neighborhood, it becomes a *puja* for us, only when we visit the place and participate in it by whatever way. Individual performance and participation is always encouraged in all kinds of *puja*, be it, homely *puja* or an event on a mass scale. In this individual performance, the transaction, (material, psychological and devotional) between the person and the deity is significant, without which the act of worship is not considered to have happened.

In terms of scale, worship has innumerable varieties, based on degree of arrangement, procedure and money spent. People undertake *puja* on a particular scale, based on their willingness and ability to take up the arrangement.

Worship is a primordial act

Worship, as an act of submission and admiration to supernatural power, is as old as human civilization. Human being started worshiping objects of nature, like Sun, moon etc. Each natural object and natural phenomenon was associated with a divine power, which was required to be propitiated for their benevolent occurrence. Each of those types subsequently became a divine head with attributes and those attributes were glorified in verse, which became *mantras*. In course of time, innumerable godheads have come to stay, largely due to man's enlightenment, imagination, creative talent and need for maintaining a favorable terms with those divine heads. All the procedures and paraphernalia have been created by seers, realized souls from their knowledge and experience of dealing with high powers; nature's power, power of divine and so on. Looking from this perspective, each of these procedures are highly meaningful, purposeful and creation of refined minds.

How is worship happening today?

Today, generally, all forms of worship are reduced to a transactional event. Everyone expects outcome and therefore conducts worship. There is nothing much wrong in what is happening, except that the spirit of worship is getting circumvented and people are getting deprived of higher order achievement. What is happening in the form of worship is perhaps in tune with the tenor of current time. There is, of course, devotion in whatever people are doing. But looking from spiritual perspective and divine orientation, something appears to be amiss.

In today's existential plane, worship has become an activity supporting our life and growth. Just like any other activity, worship has become a specialized, sophisticated, precise activity, matching with today's lifestyle. Since standard of living and affluence of high-end section of society has risen, the grandeur of worship also has gone up. With the current trend of society, form of worship also has undergone change. For example, new temples have come up with varieties of facilities to meet the various kinds of needs of people. Today, there are temples with guest house, restaurants, and conducted tour programs for exhibits attached to it. Places of worship have become technology intensive. In the days of terrorism and communal tension, some sensitive places of worship have come to require high security protection.

Today we follow conventional method of worship, put in contemporary time frame. We have priests, who are supposed to know the art and science of worship. Even if one priest does not know, still he performs up to his skill. We repose faith in him and in his role of invoking the divine power by following the rules

and procedures in a sanctimonious ways. We believe and follow all the conventional customs and restrictions prescribed at some classic places of worship. We do not violate them, out of fear of guilt of sacrilege.

Worship as per Sri Sri Thakur

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra says, 'worship is worthship'. 'To worship the feet would essentially mean following the footprints.' Basically, Sri Sri Thakur wanted to make worship meaningful and an integral part of life.

Worshipping is actually an act of appreciation and admiration. What follows naturally from over there is a sense of owning up the object of worship and imbibing the qualities of the deity whom we worship. For that to happen, everything that we do in worship has to be understood by us. Questions like, who the deity is; what are his or her attributes; how can those attributes be internalized by us; what are the procedures of worshipping. Basically, we need to understand many things that we perform symbolically and ritually.

Let us get this in Sri Sri Thakur's own words: (Message, Vol II, 1964)

"To worship a deity
or a great and good one
is to imbibe him
in your being
through service,
exercise for him
and exalted adjustment in you
of all the attributes
that dwell in him
and to be active accordingly –
this you may call
the advent of that deity
or good and great one."

Not that Sri Sri Thakur was not in favour of observing worship with all its attendant paraphernalia. He was never in favor of jettisoning the traditional way outright. Only thing he wanted to do was to see meaning in symbols of worship. Therefore, he was not in favour of doing anything superficial and superfluous.

The choice for us is between substance and style, content and carrier, core and cosmetic. If one can have the luxury of having the both; it is perhaps excellent. Otherwise, if one has to chose, Sri Sri Thakur would go for the substance (in preference over style); content (in preference over carrier) and core (in preference over cosmetic). Therefore, in a situation like today, when we do not understand much about the rituals and deities, hymns and homilies, scriptures and similes, it is better that we observe worship (codes of *dharma*, devotion and sacrifice) through our actions; rather than doing rituals out of awe, reverence and ignorance; as everything might add up to blind faith and superstition.

If I just obey my Guide and follow his ideological dicta, in letter and spirit, do I need to perform worships in the *vedic* or scriptural or liturgical way? Yes, you will do all these in meaningful and successful way. But if you do not indulge into worship and yet follow your guide and abide by His ideological dicta, you do not lose much.

In Sri Sri Thakur's ideological language, real worship is done when 'yajan', 'yaajan' and 'istabhrity' are observed. All these are practical works, which one has to perform. All these need assiduous efforts in terms of execution; therefore, here worship is done by work.

In Sri Sri Thakur's scheme of things, when we work for our Lord, for meeting His ideological interest and for building His image (what is called '*ista karma*'), we render real worship for Him. When we extend this concept, whatever we do, get dedicated for His purpose, then for us, work becomes worship.

Real worship brings about flourishing life and growth. It becomes a saga of 'purity, patience and perseverance'. Sri Sri Thakur said, 'God seldom bothers about what man thinks; but He looks up to what one does'. Thought, especially pure thought, is important but not enough. 'Where action follows desire, fulfillment peeps there', said Sri Sri Thakur. In that sense, every act of worship is blessed to perfection.

In the words of Sri Sri Thakur that follows, we can see the result of worship, which can happen to a worshipper: (Message, Vol II, 1964)

"To imbibe the attributes
that make one fit
to embrace the affairs of
existential propitious
with aptness, tricks and tactics
combating evil
through devout worship, admiration
and every earnest service
that duly fulfill the commandments
of the Beloved Master
is a blessed devout boon
for one's blessed proficiency,
for it creates and constructs
the elixir of love, inquisitiveness and earnestness
and bedews one's personal conduct and characteristics
upholding and keeping up
existential propitiousness
with a constructive
resonant connotation."

<u>Action Plan</u>

- If you and your family have a love for any kind of worship, please try your best to make it a meaningful exercise. Appreciating the spirit of worship is not that hard, as it appears to be. Little bit of knowledge of Sanskrit and familiarity with Indian scriptures, will give you a fairly good impression to get a grasp of what is happening in any worship.

  Making worship meaningful requires a scientific enquiry, concentration and disciplined behavior. These changes in approach make you eligible to reap the benefit of worship.

- Please bear in mind that no worship by itself can do a miraculous accomplishment. Therefore, the so called worship mania does no good. Desire for any particular worship for any particular deity or at some place of worship can certainly provide a psychological satisfaction, which has meaning by itself.

- If you are highly devoted to Sri Sri Thakur and do not have appetite for any particular worship, it is perfectly alright to be away from any worship. No need to bear a guilty conscience. Sri Sri Thakur as Guru is summation of all gods and goddesses.

- In our country, there is a custom of pilgrimage to places of worship. This has many justifications and implications. It is better to maintain the tradition, without being obsessed about it.

  While visiting any place of worship, try to understand the spirit behind the culture prevailing over there. It is no use making religious bias while visiting places of worship. Normally, the places of tourist attraction by any standard are worth visiting.

- Sri Sri Thakur's principles of 'yajan', 'yaajan' and 'istabhrity' are supreme form of worship. All the forms of worship, namely, *karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga* and *gyana yoga* are assimilated in the principles of Sri Sri Thakur, if observed in letter and spirit, with devotion and dedication. All forms of worship get supreme glorification at the observance of 'yajan', 'yaajan' and 'istabhrity'.

8th April 2013

Eighty four

Sri Sri Thakur Found Meaning in Tradition
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Part III - Science & Spirituality

Sri Sri Thakur made a radical departure from then existing model. He remained in family and society, was deeply committed to all worldly affairs; yet was an example of divinity, spearheaded an ascetic movement and brought in a cult of domestic-hermit. With all the practice of heightened spiritual culture, life of purity, detachment and dedication, a person, as per Sri Sri Thakur, has to follow a life ordained by nature.

Title of this article might as well have been 'synthesis between tradition and modernity'. Significance of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology is that he never discarded tradition, only because tradition appears to be obsolete and discredited as outdated. If anything is really dysfunctional and needs to be replaced, then Sri Sri Thakur did that without qualm.

Sri Sri Thakur departed from the cult of hermit

One remarkable tradition Sri Sri Thakur departed from is the cult of hermitage for spiritual seekers. Prevailing model in later part of nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century (little more than a century ago from now) for any religious leader was, carrying on spiritual pursuit by following celibacy, an austere life style, away from human habitation, putting physical system to stringent abnegation; overall a life of renunciation. Sri Sri Thakur made a radical departure from then existing model. He remained in family and society, was deeply committed to all worldly affairs; yet was an example of divinity, spearheaded an ascetic movement and brought in a cult of domestic-hermit. With all the practice of heightened spiritual culture, life of purity, detachment and dedication, a person, as per Sri Sri Thakur, has to follow a life ordained by nature. Life gets perpetuated through procreation. Sri Sri Thakur set up model of divine domestic life; a life of balance between spiritual and material affairs, a complete life experience, a forward link in evolutionary process.

The model of domiciled divinity, social *sanyasin*, a hermit in the home, celebration of life, enjoyment in creation and a symbiotic accord with surrounding, everything that Sri Sri Thakur demonstrated was

superb. It was both revolutionary and evolutionary. It was glorification of human spirit and celebration of divine expression in human being, with an indomitable urge for expansion and sublimation.

A maverick Thakur had no fiery slogan, no disruptive agitation, no whirlwind tour, no magic show and no esoteric appearance. No sign of abnormality in dress, talk, living style, exclusivity from others; but everything was a spectacle of charm, a resplendent aura surrounded him; love was overflowing from his persona. He said, 'I am a selfish person, as I cannot forsake anyone's real interest'. 'I am much attached person, as I do not see anyone detached from me.' 'I can sacrifice an empire if required, to save a person'. 'I am a beggar of people.' 'I do not do any charity, as I see no one who is not a part of me. I do everything for myself, as all are my parts and I am in all.' 'Everything that I see is expression of myself; I have multiplied myself in so many.'

Everything put together presents Sri Sri Thakur in a show of contrast, a baffling personality and an endearing puzzle. That is how perhaps, he brought about seamless reconciliation between ancient and modern, resolved conflict between past and present and presented an ideology that is a step towards future and a lead for evolution.

Sri Sri Thakur's approach to Science

One more area where Sri Sri Thakur differed from the conventional religious world was his approach to science. Everything that he did, said and prompted others to do was science at its best. He said, spirituality provides answer to why's and how's of things that happen and leads towards causality of things happening around.

Not that conventional religion had much of unscientific stuff in it. The difference lies in how do we view things and how do we explain things. In the conventional world of religion, there were seers, realized souls, who could experience things through extra-sensory perceptions and did set some philosophy for others. They expected rest of the world to believe things and lead life. The seers tested the assumptions, arrived at some conclusions, and announced these as maxims. For majority of people, those theories were rolled out as axioms; they were supposed to believe those. In the name of beliefs, however, some blind-faith like stuffs and banalities also got inducted into system, as the culture rolled out from generation to generation, passing through centuries of human civilization.

With passage of time, human ingenuity brought out many inventions, which proliferated. Science got popular on the basis of tested knowledge through equipments, documentations and education. People in general got used to scientific inventions, which they could see, touch, feel, experience, test and got practical observations. Sometime down the history, science and religion took a conflicting position, not because of any genuine reason, largely out of one-sided and narrow view of things. Degeneration of standards at a popular level led to bipolarity between religion and science. That was a time, when knowledge was compartmentalized; industrialization gave wing of commerce to science and technology and religion got degenerated to dogma and superstition.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra did few wonderful things:

Sri Sri Thakur brought a new perspective to religion. As per Him, practice of religion brings about enlightenment. World of religion was cleansed by Sri Sri Thakur of dogma, creed, ism and superstitious elements. He said, religion is a way of life based on law of nature. Religion promotes life and growth and the rules of religion, at any time, are set by the contemporary prophet. Contemporary prophet today is Sri Sri Thakur himself and he defined religion as an 'Ideal' centric life, a life of love, service and fellow feelings. Love and attachment on the 'Ideal', makes one disciplined, progressive, free from complexes,

enlightened and all that. In that scheme of things, all prophets are equally honored and principles of 'being and becoming' are followed. Therefore, Sri Sri Thakur made religion a liberal way of life, centering around the latest prophet.

Faith

Faith, a term much used and abused in the world of religion, is to be differentiated from blind faith. The difference between the two is a thin line, highly subjective and contextual. Sri Sri Thakur attached much significance to faith in the sphere of spiritual life. Faith, in the sense of Sri Sri Thakur, primarily means faith on the Lord, the Guide, and the Prophet (all are synonymously used here). Faith means: absolute faith on Him; His power; His grace; His ideology. Faith leads to unconditional surrender at the Guide, the Prophet. Unconditional surrender means undoubted acceptance of His ideology, leading to following the principle of ideology. The real operating part of faith is observance of His principles. It is here, activities and practical life comes to play.

In the absence of active practice of the ideological dicta, faith remains in the realm of psychology and thought process. Faith on the Lord induces action; faith cannot make one indolent, lethargic and passive. Having faith on the Guide does not mean to be fatalistic. Deep faith on the Guide induces faith on one's own capacity. A life of faith gets transformed to a life of reassured confidence on oneself, as life unfolds into a virtuous cycle of faith, struggle and achievement, reassured faith and the cycle continues.

Faith on Sri Sri Thakur means taking a plunge into the deep sea of perseverance and exploring the pearls of achievement. It means jumping high up in the sky to catch moon of realization, perception, materialization of potential. Faith in Sri Sri Thakur means dedicated action to turn impossible to possible.

It was Hanuman's faith on Sri Ramachandra which made him possible to lay a floating bridge of stone on the sea to connect mainland to Lanka. It was Columbus's faith that he would see the end of the sea that made him to discover America, the prized land of fortune. It was unflinching faith on Ramakrishna Paramahansa, which turned Narendra to Vivekananda. Therefore, faith is the fulcrum that transforms life, makes impossible to possible, alters destiny, enables to overcome hurdles, forces one to climb the mountain and scale the peak.

Faith is strengthened through reasoning and conviction. Achievement deepens the faith. Faith is built on the foundation of love. Love invariably springs from the Lord and gets reciprocated by the obliged devotee. The devotee gets inundated by the love that he receives from the Lord and explores a treasure in the Lord. The gracious Lord is out to take the child, mend his way, cleanse him of his impurities and obsession, and lead him towards unfurling of possibilities.

Sri Sri Thakur's application of Science

Sri Sri Thakur applied high technology in day to day application in an unassuming way. He would guide illiterates to handle complicated machine by sheer application of own inner faculties. He would guide a compounder (para medical staff) and make him cure many serious ailments by bringing out his intuitive knowledge. He would make simple ways of cracking hard scientific and technical problems and enable so called ordinary people to find appropriate solutions. In the process, Sri Sri Thakur provided lead to scientific and technical experiments and clues to superior inventions.

Sri Sri Thakur's drive was to popularize scientific inventions to people's application. He said, the high spiritual realizations of seers are actually sparks of scientific theories and can be popularized through appropriate technology for mass application.

Science and technology must provide ways to alleviate people's suffering and take the humanity towards better and higher life. On this point, Sri Sri Thakur was one with rest of the scientific community, who are engaged in research and development.

Spirituality and science are complementary to each other, may be overlapping subset of human enquiry towards endless possibility. In both the fields of enquiry, the depth of perception, degree of perseverance and dimension of purposefulness ─ all matter for the outcome. People get confused in these variations (in depth, degree and dimension).

Sri Sri Thakur made an epoch making assertion that in a situation of conflict between science and religion, the rule of science would prevail. Science has a method of experimentation, verification and arriving at conclusion for mass acceptance, whatever may be the level, order and degree of the issue in question. On the contrary, religion can get degenerated at mass level, acting like opium. Religious movements have a tendency to be swayed away by various kinds of bias, when not subjected to some kind of validation.

Sri Sri Thakur perceived scientific invention

Sri Sri Thakur demonstrated science in everything what he did and said. It was a bit surprise that Sri Sri Thakur's ashram at Himaitpur in Pabna District (currently in Bangladesh), which was a village then and even now, there was a 'vishwa vigyan kendra' (world science centre), wind powered dynamo to power the surrounding villages, steam laundry, and so on. One of the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur was a scientist turned devotee, who was working with CV Raman, the Nobel Laureate, as a research student, a gold medalist in Physics from Kolkata University sometime in pre-1920. He was Krishna Prasanna Bhattacharya, who writes (quoted below) after a thoroughly enchanted dialogue with Sri Sri Thakur for the whole night under the canopy of star studded sky on the bank of rive Padma: (Message – Vol I, 1935)

Quote

"I talked of science, of atoms, of electrons, of radium, of x-rays, of quanta, of the living and non-living, of heaven and earth and of what not – on the breezy summer night under the star glittered canopy of the sky. The Padma was lashing her waves on her bank, I poured out my brains – I could not but do so. I found in him a loving responding receptacle of all the questionings and absurdities in me. Like one meeting his asked-for after a long separation I had all my valves open, my brakes were off. I laughed with him, kept silent for long with his head on my lap both gazing at the same stars in the same sky, rang with talks on all topics and there was an overwhelming response from him – sympathetic retorts, unique suggestions, queer queries. I wondered how one, who as I knew, was not initiated into academic culture, could understand so profoundly and respond with such intelligent keenness. His utterances were so homely, so intelligent, so delicate, so nice, so loving, so enlightening, so very cordant with the latest discoveries of science and suggestive of newer avenues of thought and work – yet so nakedly simple. I doubted and asked, "How can you talk of these things, of electrons, of quanta? Surely you have read of these things?" He answered, "No! From my childhood I sometimes see the universe all melting into a glow of ineffable light particles and the light condenses and condenses into the material objects surrounding me." His utterances burst out like eruptions volcanic but sweet. They were rough-hewn expressions of sensations – so immediate, so real, so absorbing. I vaguely apprehended he can see the sciences, he can perceive the ultra-atoms!

The next day I left him with reluctance. My pretensions of knowledge got a rude shock from him who has no university education and cannot even speak in English. I again met him soon at Calcutta and kept his company for months. His vivid description of the ultimates of physical nature did not only tally with present day science but suggested new lines of research which were so brilliantly original and prolific to me and

to most of my scientist friends that I soon gave up the work I began with Prof. CV Raman at the Palit laboratories, Calcutta University and joined him in his cottage home. The words of Max Planck rang in my ears – “Scientists will arise who will have much keener perception than the scientists of today. What we need to develop are the perceptive faculties themselves. The development of the powers of perception is one of the main tasks we have to meet. That seems to be Einstein’s idea.” And that idea I saw realized in him, in his queer visions.”

Unquote

Summary

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra’s worldview has got science and spirituality embedded in it, in a symbiotic relation with life and society. If someone is following Sri Sri Thakur, the so called dichotomy between science and spirituality is a non-issue. Both the areas of human endeavour attempt to make life progressive, sharpening the perceptive faculties that man is endowed with. It is a continuing pursuit of self discovery and self actualization.

Action Plan

- The world of region, in thought, practice and institutional arrangement, has to have more of scientific quotient, as demonstrated by Sri Sri Thakur. For the conventional religious camp, it means a paradigm shift, which is possible, if we appreciate Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra’s ideology.

- For the world of science, there is a need to be more appreciative of the spiritual part of life. Spiritual world is experiential, it is exploratory and the quest is more in the realm of inner world than that meets the eyes.

11th April 2013

Eighty five

Sri Sri Thakur Found Meaning in Tradition
Sri Sri Thakur Challenged the Convention

Part IV - Man Making

The philosophy of Sri Sri Thakur, when put in practice, ignites the practitioner's consciousness, sensitivity, intelligence and concentration. A person also gains enhanced efficiency in accomplishing things he does, as he develops an urge and taste for superior performance and higher accomplishment.

Everyone has aspiration for some achievement; whatever may be the object, or the kind of achievement. Everyone wants to get something and reach somewhere. The need for aspiration and achievement orientation do vary from person to person and also from time to time for the same person.

It is commonly known that one has to do certain things to get certain objects. Action breeds results, which, as a universal principle, is generally known to people. It, however, is not clearly known to everyone; what action leads to what results and also the time factor. The action-result equation is a complex multivariable equation, which is hard to solve by all, at all times. Even if one knows what to do, there may be constraints due to which one is not able to accomplish the action. There are factors outside one's control which may prohibit the desired result out of a set action. Therefore, everyone is found caught in the race for achievement oriented action and resultant frustration. Generally, what is observed is that the desired outcome, as expected, remains far away from the hand and disillusionment sets in.

What comes on the way of our desired result is a series of unexpected hurdles, constraints, difficulties, which stares us as hard realities. We do not know how to deal with these thorns; many of these remain beyond our reach, knowledge, idea etc. It is like hitting a mountain on the way; like crossing a forest in the night; walking through a desert under scorching sun. We come to face situation, when we simply do not know what lies ahead and what life is all about.

<u>Causes of Gap between Expectation and Result</u>
Sri Sri Thakur brings two factors, related to this topic. Those two factors provide some causal analysis to the above phenomena.

1. First one is ignorance. Ignorance is the cause of much of our trouble and sufferings. At any point in time, if we are sure what to do and what to expect, then the consequence of our action would match with expectation. If we know how to deal with an unexpected situation, then the consequence would not go against us. Much of our inabilities are outcome of our ignorance. Limited perception, limited viewpoint, limited idea, limited clue and limited skill are all which limit our capacity to deal with life. These limitations directly or indirectly contribute to limit our possibilities.

   As per Sri Sri Thakur, ignorance is sin. Ignorance would not let us away from the consequences of any act of omission and commission. Sri Sri Thakur says, if you put your finger into fire out of ignorance, fire is not going to spare you. Point that Sri Sri Thakur would like to bring home is that we must be aware of laws of nature and be guided by those. Sri Sri Thakur wants to make us enlightened, experienced, mature, skilled and wise.

   What we call mistakes is also another form of ignorance. We commit mistakes, because we are not fully conversant with that particular activity. We have not learnt that process to perfection.

   Elements required for one to steer clear of trap of ignorance are: sensitivity, alertness, consciousness, vigilance etc. These elements need to be cultivated. Sri Sri Thakur has provided a different way of creating sensitivity, creativity, probity and all those. He says, love for the Lord makes you alert. Love for the Lord puts forth your existence before your complexes. You tend to protect, promote, and perpetuate your existence. You tread the path of existential bliss. “Love is supreme wisdom”, says Sri Sri Thakur. You do labour for the love-Lord and you gather experience.

2. Second thing Sri Sri Thakur says in this context is the process of transformation. Significantly, love on Sri Sri Thakur and adherence to His principles, puts one on inquisitive and acquisitive mode. This mechanism, implicitly and explicitly, creates conditions by which a person acquires abilities, qualifications, features, attributes and capability to perform superior tasks. A person gains self development. He scales himself up on the ladder of ability to perform higher and better tasks. His mental, physical and emotional capacity gets stronger and mightier. That is how, a person transforms himself.

   Summarily, Sri Sri Thakur says, “do, be and get”. Further, Sri Sri Thakur has presented a defining arcade of accomplishment in the following para: (*Kruti Bidhayana, 264*)

   - Accomplishment upholds existence,
   - Accomplishment is honesty,
   - Accomplishment springs from worthiness,
   - Accomplishment is the announcement of mastery and mastery is the spark of godhood.

<u>Deeper Root of Difference in Individual Distinctiveness</u>

Sri Sri Thakur has taken us much deeper and brings out that ability to acquire knowledge and to perform things has much deeper field of formation. The difference in performance of two individuals is as fundamental as a tree bears mango and another tree, by the side, bears apple. The two trees are of

different variety; though they are growing on the same field. The variety lies in their DNA; apparently both are trees with roots, branches and leaves and appear to be of same structure and get same nursing.

Sri Sri Thakur's man-making program is based on the following premises:

- Quality of a person is fundamentally what he is born with. The basic stuff of a person is kind of inborn. A person is born with his type.
- A person can of course undergo transformation during the lifetime. Up-gradation of qualities and abilities done during one's lifetime are called acquisitions. Qualities acquired during this life are different from the instinct that one is born with. Instinct of a person constitutes the core of a person's nature, while acquisitions remain in the realm of habits and behavior. Progressive acquisitions passing through generations, when takes shape of gene and becomes irreversible, get added to the instinct. Therefore, while a person is always on a dynamic motion of acquiring quality, at any given point of time, he is fixed with a set of biological asset.
- What follows from above, looking from the point of view of society, man-making process is actually inviting (creating condition for the birth of) soul of higher and better instincts. Analogy can be drawn with agriculture. If you want good crop, you need to have high yielding variety seed and fertile soil appropriate for that crop. Similarly, for better human being, you have to have compatibility between father (seed source) and mother (field condition) in the plane of bio-psychology. This follows the principles of biology, eugenics and psychology; issues which are not very much popularized by science so far, though it is known amongst the scientist circle. Sri Sri Thakur, as an operating guideline, said that quality of child is determined by the deep psychological desire of parents and the biological compatibility between the parents.
- Every person, by quality, aptitude and aspiration, is a chip of a larger block. Every person has a genealogical root and the root manifests in the person's type of attributes. Therefore, a group of persons having homogenous attributes and same genealogical root forms a class, since time immemorial. Heredity of a person helps to establish that genealogical link and helps to predict certain generic attributes. It is therefore necessary to know a person's original stock and the class he belongs to. Based on this classification and affiliation to a particular stock (race), it is possible to match the male and female from the point of view of compatibility for marriage. Ultimate aim is to create condition for better progeny and refinement of each class through proper culture and maintenance of purity. This is essentially a process of evolution.

<u>Culture of Becoming</u>

Sri Sri Thakur therefore wanted a human-culture, in the same way we do agriculture, sericulture, horticulture and so on. That culture has to be part of a social system. Marriage, child bearing, education, both formal and informal, are part of social institutions and culture. Every society has norms to maintain the system and also to check deviant behavior and control idiosyncrasies.

The issue here is that social systems are constantly changing and, more so currently, it is in a state of flux, primarily due to cosmopolitan living, migration and globalization. The class barriers are crumbling; social norms are breaking; individual tastes are getting formed based on life style. All these are adding up to a situation, where traditional systems are under threat.

It is here that Sri Sri Thakur's contribution plays unique role. What Sri Sri Thakur tells us to do, is not something carrying forward from the past. He has updated everything of past to be presently relevant and applicable. Therefore, we are spared from the headache of searching pearls of wisdom from the heap of

the past, accumulated through centuries, vitiated by various kinds of interests. Sri Sri Thakur has provided us an ideological path which only needs to be followed in letter and spirit.

Summary observation

Man-making process involves preparation prior to birth of a child. That preparation begins with marriage of parents and their psychological and biological preparedness to invite a child of superior variety. The child's bio-psychological makeup is shaped by the deep seated desire of parents and their conducts in terms of purity, mutual love and concentric affiliation to the Ideal (Lord). When a child is born, his type (in terms of inherent potential) comes with it. After birth, there is scope for exploration of those potential and translating possibilities into reality. The factors which come to play then are: family culture, ideal centric environment, education, world view, aspiration for distinct life style, so on and so forth. Concentration on ideal and following His ideological framework, together, provide a progressive tenor to life. Life takes wing of high attainment, following the ideology of Ideal; as Ideal fulfills the person as per his / her distinctiveness. Then it becomes a journey on path of 'being and becoming', a life of growth and prosperity in association with family, surroundings and society.

The philosophy of Sri Sri Thakur, when put in practice, ignites the practitioner's consciousness, sensitivity, intelligence and concentration. A person also gains enhanced efficiency in accomplishing things he does, as he develops an urge and taste for superior performance and higher accomplishment.

Sri Sri Thakur as Guru plays the role of friend, philosopher and guide. He leads the path; he facilitates the process of becoming; he provides light and enlightenment; he protects from adversities; he plays an umbrella role. The only condition required is surrender to the Ideal with devotion and roll on the path prescribed by him.

Action plan

- Understand and practice the import of marriage, as a process of procreation.
- Matching between male and female for the purpose of marriage has to be based on the principles of compatibility of bio-psychological attributes. In conventional Indian society, the groupings of *varna* used to provide the class to identify the bio-psychological blocks and pedigree of each person.
- Follow the ideological prescriptions for development of full potential of a person in terms of achievement and self actualization.
- It is significant to bear in mind that man is born first and then can be made to grow on a particular frame, based on inclination of the person, his parents, family and society

19th April 2013, *Ram Navami*

Eighty six

Sri Sri Thakur Found Meaning in Tradition
Sri Sri Thakur Challenged the Convention

Part V - Living Ideal

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology touches the core of a person's life, habits, thinking and doing. This kind of ideology is not an ornamental type; though it has aesthetic and beauty in it. This kind of ideology calls for total commitment, involvement and engagement, leading to a progressive transformation of life, individually and collectively.

Life is a continuing play and the world is a stage. The script of the play is continuously being rewritten by the actors themselves. No one has option to change the rule of the game, to hold the time in abeyance and to play whimsical.

Hard realities of life catch up with everyone on this earth, though imperceptibly. A universal reality is that life is dear to everybody; life likes to live, longs for longevity and reacts to threats of extinction. Life, as a being, has an eternal urge for becoming. Everyone has instinctive existential urge for preservation, protection and promotion of life. Rules of 'dharma' facilitate that process. Ideal, the embodiment of 'dharma', upholds the existential urge of everyone.

<u>The Concept of Ideology and Living Ideal</u>

The concept of living Ideal is integral to Sri Sri Thakur's ideological framework. It refers to a person who lives exactly the ideology he advocates. He is a living example of the ideology that he professes. He demonstrates the ideology. He is the embodiment of the ideology. The ideology takes shape in him. He defines the contours and colours of the ideology. Ideology is referred to him for validation. He teaches the ideology by holding himself up as an example. His life is the ideology that he makes available for the rest of the world to test and taste.

In the above scenario, ideology is not merely an idea; it is a tested, verified and demonstrated idea, raised to the level of dicta. Ideology does not remain confined in the realm of maxims, scriptures and sermons; ideology is delivered through live demonstration. Such ideology, emblem of lofty and purity, does never remains in utopia; such ideology stalks the world.

Such an Ideal, the manifested idea in flesh and blood, shines like an elementary object of nature. It shines like a flame; it rises like the sun; it pours and sooths like rain drops; it touches cool and gentle like breeze; it lashes the shore like the bottomless sea; it looms large like magnificent snow clad peak of a mountain. Beauty is that such an ideal does not make an announcement for himself; does not hoist and foist himself high up in the air; does not hold a rally to mobilize a following.

The ideology under reference here is an all fulfilling ideology. The ideology is a complete framework in which a person's all aspects of life is taken care, and led towards all-round progress. Life of a person is a very complicated affair, as it has myriad of interfaces. Life faces innumerable situations. Sri Sri Thakur's ideological framework covers life in totality, provides solutions to all kinds of issues and fulfils a person with long run perspective. At the same time, the ideology covers social life, family life, economics and political aspects of a person's life and also of society. The ideology has universal application; it is all embracing and all-inclusive. It is a holistic ideology in the sense that it takes care of physical, psychological and spiritual parts of a man and brings about a balanced growth.

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology touches the core of a person's life, habits, thinking and doing. This kind of ideology is not an ornamental type; though it has aesthetic and beauty in it. This kind of ideology calls for total commitment, involvement and engagement, leading to a progressive transformation of life, individually and collectively.

If there is a person who happens to be the springboard of that ideology; he is the progenitor of the ideology, then he is the living ideal. In a scenario, when both the ideal and ideology are embedded together, then that presents an enabling scenario.

Sri Sri Thakur – the Living Ideal

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is the living Ideal. Firstly, he is the Ideal who gave an ideological framework, unique of its kind, all fulfilling and universally applicable. For a person who is wedded to his ideology, there is a direction for life.

Secondly, Sri Sri Thakur lived on his ideology; demonstrated the ideology, showcased it in his own life. His followers did not have to look here and there to find an emblem, an example, and a visible replica of the ideal that he put forth before the humanity. His followers only looked at him, followed his footsteps. Consequentially what happened to them was a transformation that the ideology induced in them.

The two things: a) following Sri Sri Thakur and b) putting the ideology in practice, are the same. The whole affair happens with mutual love and affection between the Ideal and the follower, an energizing episode, and the process is a self reinforcing one. The whole process happens so naturally that once someone gets into the process, changes appear to happen almost automatically and imperceptibly. One of course has to make a determined and focused effort.

Sri Sri Thakur – the Living Ideal for Ever

Today, the mortal frame of Sri Sri Thakur is no more available. Sri Sri Thakur, the walking and talking God, has withdrawn himself from this earth. The living emblem of ideology has merged into the realm of eternity. The living image is now cast into history, tradition, folklore, literature, cult, an organized religious force. Sri Sri Thakur is no more visible and therefore the living example of his ideology has become a thing of the past.

So today, Sri Sri Thakur is available everywhere, though not seen anywhere. The divine image of the Lord, however, is present as it was ever. After completing the demonstration for us for 81 years (1888 – 1969), Sri Sri Thakur has bequeathed the following:

- The ideological framework, well codified, documented in such a manner that the Ideal would come alive, if invoked
- A set of literature, immense in volume and diverse in nature and still growing, in such a manner that one can get the Ideal in the literature
- A precedent of principle in practice, getting transferred from generation to generation, in such a manner that the principle remains undistorted
- A set of devotees, still counting and to be succeeded in future in such a manner that people can see the reflection of their Ideal in and through the devotees. The succession of devotees includes the Ideal's family lineage.

With all the above provisions, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra remains the living Ideal. He is 'living' in the sense that his life and ideology, together makes him eternal. He is living for devotees whoever feels the need for him. His physical frame is the chosen crystallization of attributes, which will remain as the object of meditation forever, till he descends again. Till a new prophet descends in the lineage of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Sri Sri Thakur will remain the incarnate to be worshipped, to be reflected, to be adored, to be followed. He is one, unique, irreplaceable, non-dual and indivisible. Love and devotion has to be concentrated on Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra only; on none of his followers, his progeny included, however greatness they might have come to achieve. No one can be greater than the Lord. Ideal and followers cannot be placed on the same pedestal, if degeneration is to be avoided.

Sri Sri Thakur's Face and Mouthpiece

Today, in the physical absence of Sri Sri Thakur, it is possible that some of his disciples by virtue of their intense spiritual attainment can guide and mentor the people, as Sri Sri Thakur's representative. His representatives cannot replace him; at best the representatives can help others to know Sri Sri Thakur, to help attain Sri Sri Thakur. Representatives of Sri Sri Thakur can be his face, can be his mouthpiece, and can be his missionaries. They can be carriers of his grace. They can be *ritwik*, *yaajak*, and *udgata*, like apostle, clergy men, and priests in conventional religious world. They can be 'godly' persons by virtue of their attainment; but they cannot be 'godlike' persons. All these are roles to be performed, not positions to be inherited and certainly does not provide any privileges to be enjoyed. These devotees would deliver Sri Sri Thakur and serve the mankind. They have to win the status by earning confidence of the people; there is no way that a divine status can be awarded by any temporal authority. These exalted devotees can be legendary ideal for people; but certainly cannot replace the living Ideal. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is the living Ideal for ever. He would remain forever at the peak; as he is omnipotent. He is the destination and therefore always remains to be reached. He can have numerous angels to perform his roles in parts.

Summary

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra remains our living Ideal for all time to come, till he re-incarnates again and that possibility is ruled out at least for next few thousand years. Our life, fame and furtherance will flow uninterrupted only by following Sri Sri Thakur. There is no substitute to him.

Sri Sri Thakur, after 81 years of his play has withdrawn himself from the earth to his original state of divinity. His ideology, image and literature have been bequeathed for the humanity to know him, be connected with him, follow him and enjoy association with him.

There is no successor to Sri Sri Thakur's supreme position. He is one and unique. Love and concentration on him has to be total.

The devotees are part of God's inner group. Devotees will continue to deliver him and serve his mission for the benefit of the mankind. There will be great men and women amongst the devotees, who may become much sought after. They will be like guardian angels of Sri Sri Thakur serving his mission in his physical absence. They will maintain a tradition of devotion and dedication for the Lord and will never attempt to usurp his position.

11th April 2013

Eighty seven

Spirituality, Science and Magic
Ideological Clarity at Societal Level Needs a Movement

Spiritualism is an art and science of living. It is an investigation into how's and why's of human nature, material objects and quality of existence. It appears to be a lesson in abstraction, unless we see the life and living of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. His ideology fulfills every aspects of life; be it biological, material and spiritual.

The words spirituality, science and magic are highly loaded concepts. We saw all the three concepts or features available with Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. And in addition, we got love. Combination of these four features at one place, in symbiotic play, makes Sri Sri Thakur a wonderful person. And none of these was for the sake of cultivating a personality feature; none was for mere manifestation or demonstration; rather it was for fulfillment of every human being on this earth.

A strange alchemy of contradiction was continually getting resolved with Sri Sri Thakur and that is why perhaps people christen him as prophet. 'Where contradictions and conflicts get resolved with a meaningful purpose, godhood peeps there.'

General Understanding

I have picked up this topic from a panel discussion in NDTV 24X7, under able anchorage of celebrated journalist Ms. Barkha Dutt. Participants were a select enlightened group, representing various professional expertise and reflective persons, including a magician like Mr. Sarkar and a yogi who is good at faith healing. The content of discussion brought out various facets of the above three concepts as is perceived and practiced in the current society. Quality of discussion was high as is expected from a reputed channel like NDTV.

What struck me the most was that the viewpoints that came out from each participant appeared to be a veiled attack or negation of the other's view points. It gave me an impression that today's intelligentsia has been able to discriminate between the concepts like spirituality, science and magic effectively. But the level of understanding differs so much from person to person that, more often than not, the view comes out very strongly one sided. There is a lot of intolerance amongst people and that brings out the worse part of otherwise good awareness spreading around.

Sri Sri Thakur's Concept

It is less known amongst general intelligentsia that spirituality and science are like two sides of the same coin. Both are similar in their approach, objective and method of enquiry. Sri Sri Thakur has made such striking observations that those need to be read to believe. I therefore, reproduce some of Sri Sri Thakur's sayings which are unique in their language, meaning and scope.

"To know the Dharma of anything is to know the clue of its unfoldment and existential attributes; science smiles there with its shining resources of present and future in every lofty mood."

"To maintain and nurture that which makes the existence breathe is spiritualism."

A very interesting account of the synthesis between science and spiritualism is available in a chapter "On Science and Sainthood" in 'Answer to the Quest', Part II, by Ray Hauserman.

To a question from a group of scientists, Sri Sri Thakur observed, "Man has found facilities placed before him through science, and in seeking for solutions to successive difficulties, he is gradually penetrating down to the root of things."

Question: "But what is that 'root' towards which science seems to be blindly stumbling?"

"I think that to know, both analytically and synthetically, the prime cause by which existence extends is the root. Knowledge of this 'root' can replace fear with hope and turn the darkness into dawn."

Question: "But then, what is the 'prime cause'?"

"That which we see before us is the world. And looking deeper we find that behind the gross lies the fine; behind the fine lies the finer and behind the finer lies the finest. Thus, it seems to me, the world is made. So, the cause behind and as the effect of which all matter exists is its prime cause or spirit. This is what I understand."

Question: "It is still hard to understand, Thakur. Just what do you mean by science?"

"I think science means to see all the aspects of a thing – observing the 'how' and 'why' of a particular thing's adjustment along with all its constituent parts. Then to discern the inter-linking affinity of this

observation with the construction of the whole and in a way that carries meaning for existence through both an analytic and synthetic integration of the whole."

To expand the relationship between spiritual striving and scientific research, Sri Sri Thakur said the following three paragraphs:

"I think matter is qualified by its attributes creating interest accordingly. Then interest creates urge which transforms into energy and then the impulse of adherence arouses into action. So, I think, adherence adores matter. This is perhaps the reason why emotion means: 'that by which a thing is set in motion'. So I feel that the positive in an atom loves the negative – though the positive never becomes the negative. And the aura of electrons dances around the positive nucleus, shooting and throbbing with an effulgence of quanta. This is a resonating transmission that makes the atom, maintaining and enlarging its existential tremolo. Thus everything in creation is created similarly; a coordinating connection of positive and negative each to give their life properties."

"I think that energy in condensed form is matter. Further, anything that exists, occupies space and is perceived by the senses and has the tendency to combine and separate is what I understand to be matter. Further to possess this tendency to combine and separate is, what I feel, to have life, because life is that by which the existence of matter is kept intact and helped to grow. So, I believe that even the grain of sand has life and even more, that urge of life flows eternally from molecule to man."

"Dharma, I understand, is the upholding excellence of intelligent existence. Science, with its eye always on how to expand life, discerns compatibility and discredits incompatibility by seeing the effect of each. Thus it is the pilot that drives the people to Providence. And love, love is the spinal fluid that meaningfully adjusts existence. Philosophy is the literary embodiment of this existential uphold. And what is more, I believe that Dharma, science, love and philosophy - all of them co-exist in every grain of existence."

Rational Approach

In today's society, we find a group of activists known as rationalists. They apparently are working against superstition and practices like black magic etc. We support the view of those groups. Only point that we would like to bring out here is that the meaning of science and superstition should be clear. Everything that we call superstition, by virtue of the current dominant thought, may not be so. And *vice versa*, everything labeled as science may not be so and is bound by the zone of ignorance as prevails today.

I quote a portion from 'speaking tree' column of today's Times of India, written by Sadguru, under the title 'Superstition and Scientific Temper'.

Quote:

So, is there no truth to superstitions? Not necessarily. Most of them have some scientific basis, but they have been badly distorted over time. Over generations, the science component has gotten lost and becomes something else. Moreover, today, because of political or other kinds of dominance, we have come to the conclusion that if something comes from the West, it is science; if it comes from the East, it is superstition.

For example, in the last few years, a phenomenal amount of research has gone into water. Scientists are saying that water has memory. It remembers whatever it comes in touch with. Suppose I take a glass of water in my hand, look at it in a certain way and give it to you, wellbeing will come to you. If I look at it another way and give it to you, you will fall sick. Our grandmothers always told us we must receive food

and water only from people who love and care for us. When your grandmother tells you this, it is superstition; if you hear it from a western scientist, you take it seriously.

Many of the things we have always said in Indian culture are being discovered today by modern scientific research. We have known these things because ours is not a culture which evolved out of compulsions of living. Ours is a culture which was evolved consciously by sages and saints. There is immense scientific value in it."

Un-quote

Conclusion

Any constructive viewpoint certainly has a rationality, which needs proper appreciation. But when it takes the posture of a reaction and becomes defamatory, then there is a need to be cautious. Sri Sri Thakur holds a complete ideological paradigm, which attempts to enable people to exercise discretion in the light of existential propitious view.

Spiritualism is an art and science of living. It is an investigation into how's and why's of human nature, material objects and quality of existence. It appears to be a lesson in abstraction, unless we see the life and living of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. His ideology fulfills every aspects of life; be it biological, material and spiritual. Sri Sri Thakur never looked at anything from the prism of any ism. For him, existence, upbringing and environment are the key parameters for evaluating any ism.

This ideological paradigm and concept clarity flowing from there has to become part of our social mindset. This has to spread around and go deep into the collective mind and cultural milieu. Sri Sri Thakur's movement, otherwise known as 'Satsang' movement aims at elevation of collective consciousness, while meeting the urge for living and growing in togetherness.

30th August 2013

Eighty eight

Uniform Idea to Unite

Sri Sri Thakur is the Universal Ideal

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology is above religion, though it defines religion. It is above political and ideological divides, though it influences the mind of the people. It deals with the existential issues of individual and society, therefore it is known as 'existentialism'. It is scientific in the sense that its premises are based on rational and experimented facts. It is modern in the sense that it differentiates the relevant and utilitarian part of our culture from the ritualistic and superstitious part.

Legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar bowed out today from the cricket world. His home ground Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai gave a standing ovation to the hero who charmed the cricket world for last 24 years, playing 200 test matches. Today Government of India conferred the highest civilian award 'Bharat Ratna' on him. Media is agog with tributes and memories of the wonderful talent who is accorded the status of 'God' in cricket world.

One column on Sachin in today's The Times of India is titled 'I felt a yogi was meditating'. The column is scripted by another legendary creative person in advertisement and film world, Prasoon Joshi. I was attracted by a sentence in the column that reads, "Whether it's politics, business or even sports, India is looking for that one uniform idea to unite everything. Sachin Tendulkar is that fantastic idea."

This article is no commentary on Sachin Tendulkar. Nor is it meant to be a reaction on the observation of Prasoon Joshi. We hold both Sachin Tendulkar and Prasoon Joshi in high esteem.

This article however is a reflection on the first sentence of the portion quoted from today's The Times of India, which reads, "Whether it's politics, business or even sports, India is looking for that one uniform idea to unite everything."

Unity of India has a deep meaning. Apart from what is commonly referred to as unity and integrity of India in a political and geographical sense, unity of India has a deep rooted cultural underpinning. India is synonymous with a cultural and spiritual entity. Its unity is felt by every Indian, notwithstanding the diversity that runs length and breadth of this vast landscape.

I am bit reflective of the ‘one uniform idea to unite everything’, be it politics, business or even sports. Yes, the unifying forces must work to keep the spirit of the ancient country, set to march on the path of modernity, progress and development in all sphere. There are parochial considerations that have the potential to enervate and threaten the unity of India from various angles. Therefore, reflective persons are looking for forces to strengthen the unity of the country on all fronts.

In this quest for unifying India, the elites of India must not ignore one idea which Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra brought onto the table, which is the concept of ‘common Ideal’. The people of this country at large must come to accept an ‘Ideal’ who is all fulfilling. It is a wonderful concept, which has not got a proper evaluation on the high table in the society. The purpose of this article is just to flag this point.

This common Ideal (Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra’s ideology) is above religion, though it defines religion. It is above political and ideological divides, though it influences the mind of the people. It deals with the existential issues of individual and society, therefore it is known as ‘existentialism’. It is scientific in the sense that its premises are based on rational and experimented facts. It is modern in the sense that it differentiates the relevant and utilitarian part of our culture from the ritualistic and superstitious part. It encourages ‘can do’ attitude rather than the reliance on fate and pre-determination. It focuses on transformation and evolution of human faculties, qualities and abilities.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra’s ideology is that unifying cord that takes care of personal growth of each individual with surrounding welfare. That ideology has the capability to bring about a collective prosperity on all fronts. That ideology was demonstrated by Sri Sri Thakur during his lifespan of 81 years (1888-1969) very vigorously and has been captured in his literature and also in live practice in the life of huge followers. But looking at the social platforms and media landscape, the ideology remains almost unfamiliar to elite of the society. However, it is our appeal and submission that the most appropriate ideology of our time, which has the potential to unite the country must not suffer neglect. If it does, the society remains deprived of the use value of the ‘Ideal’, the unifying cord.

16th November 2013

Eighty nine

Culture Preserves the Streams of Diversities
Prophet is the Vortex of Diversities

Then Sri Sri Thakur came to the point that Indian culture, through the principles of *varnashram*, preserves, nurtures, excels and regulates the uniqueness of diverse streams of family, clan, groups and sub-groups. This system maintains the qualitative differences amongst the cluster of families and regulates their progressive assimilation through marital share.

A significant point came out in course of discussion with Sri Sri Thakur on 10th January 1942, exactly 72 years ago from now. Sitting on the bank of river Padma in Himaitpur, Sri Sri Thakur was surrounded by his favourite scientific devotee Krishna Prasanna Bhattacharjee, his younger brother Prabhash Chandra (respected Khepu da) and his close aide Bankim Ray. Sri Sri Thakur appeared to be on a reflective mood, looking far into the open space lying ahead of him. During the soliloquy that came out of Sri Sri Thakur, a few universal law of nature having abiding relevance to our social system came out so precisely that they need to be recounted here.

Two quotes from Sri Sri Thakur's monologue:

1. 'The crux of culture is diversity and distinctiveness of its individual components. Culture identifies, helps to fortify and regulates the distinctiveness of the components of diversity.'
2. 'Purusottam (the prophet) is the apt cradle of convergence of the entire spectrum of diversities and range of distinctiveness.'

Before coming to point no. 1, Sri Sri Thakur observed: "My vision is very perceptive and inquisitive since my childhood days. I never used to get satisfaction unless I went to the root and got the whole of whatever I saw, heard and understood. As a child, I used to see different varieties of tress in the garden and wondered how varieties of trees grow on the same soil. I had no clue to it, even after serious thought. Finally one day, I uprooted a bunch of saplings and observed to my findings that different plants sprouted from different seeds, though the soil is the same. It was sometime later that I came to understand that different seeds from same soil grow trees of different shape and breed different fruits etc. The tree bears fruits which are identical to the seeds, though the nature of soil adds or subtracts quality to the species. Human species is also exactly like that. People may be born and live in one environment, but each one is

of a specific nature and type in line with his or her origin. Each person carries the seed and the seed keeps on evolving through generations. Therefore, there is no way but to acknowledge the uniqueness of each family and clan through the nature and significance of the blood."

Then Sri Sri Thakur came to the point that Indian culture, through the principles of *varnashram*, preserves, nurtures, excels and regulates the uniqueness of diverse streams of family, clan, groups and sub-groups. This system maintains the qualitative differences amongst the cluster of families and regulates their progressive assimilation through marital share.

On the point no. 2 noted above, Sri Sri Thakur says, "Where ever efforts have been made to bring about unity, excepting the prophet at the vortex, individual distinctiveness gets diminished and smashed in the name of unity; or conflicts get created amongst the groups centering on their gaps and differences, in the name of preserving their uniqueness."

Prophet preserves and fulfills each one distinctly, as per his or her requirement. At the same time, he promotes the collective status by making each one bigger and greater. He does not pull down the taller to equate with the dwarf. He says human beings are equitable, not equal. Everyone has immense possibility to grow, excel, realize and actualize the self.

19th January 2014

Ninety

Sri Sri Thakur has updated Tradition
Tradition needs to be rinsed and renovated

If tradition is to be followed then Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra needs to be understood. He is the updated tradition of culture. He comes with updated tradition in all ages in the form of prophets at different ages. Each prophet is an updated version of all past prophets and crystallized version of all the traditions.

While going through an article by Prof Amalendu Chatterjee in *Bodhadipti*, December 2013, a Bengali monthly published from Kolkata, I came across a saying of Sri Sri Thakur, quoted below. The saying flashed a meaningful significance to me, which made me reflect a few things. This *vani* has been read by me earlier many times and understood by me for its substantive meaning and central idea that is communicated. But this time, what caught my mind is not the central meaning, but a peripheral issue.

Sri Sri Thakur is saying, “If traditional *varnashramic* division of professional labour be established, rinsed and renovated, unemployment will be off, efficiency will be on, capability will set up, imparting of instinctive talent will effulge.”

The point I am reflecting today is not *varnashram*, which Sri Sri Thakur has commented on. I am focusing on the process of adaptation which Sri Sri Thakur has highlighted. Sri Sri Thakur has spoken about the need to establish, rinse and renovate the tradition to get the intended benefit out it.

This is a mammoth task. The task is so onerous that it is like shifting a mountain from one place to another. Large space in our social and cultural landscape is filled by tradition, which is crying for renovation. Who will do this? How will it be done? Even if tradition is renovated, will it be generally accepted?

Sri Sri Thakur, the prophet of the age, has himself undertaken this onerous task of reforming, renovating an updating tradition. The prophet of the age brings about a total transformation possibilities. He maintains the essence of tradition, keeps to its eternal value; but he makes tradition updated and makes it contemporary.

Tradition, with respect to any aspect of life and society, has deep roots, numerous branches, diverse foliage, far impact shades, multi-color flowers and amorphous fruits. To bring about reform in tradition is

like fertilizing the soil, watering the plant, trimming the foliage, mending the branches, garlanding the flower, dressing the fruits, everything with a view to flourish the nature, support the creation, upbringing the civilization and energizing human spirit at its best of creativity.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra brought about a new culture altogether. It is too comprehensive to present here in this article. The point that needs to be mentioned is that Sri Sri Thakur created a new era, a new paradigm, a whole new world order and a new view of life. Significant point to note today is that whatever Sri Sri Thakur has done needs to be understood and to be put in practice, so that the reform meets its purpose.

We observe today that century old traditions, rites and practices are being followed in social and public life. People faithfully observe the prevailing cultural and religious mores which are being practiced since time immemorial. It is partly good that people have reposed faith in time tested practices and do not want to deviate from tradition. But at the same time, it is distraught to observe that people follow practices blindly and what is followed is a caricature of tradition with dysfunctional outcome.

We therefore invite attention of people at large that if tradition is to be followed then Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra needs to be understood. He is the updated tradition of culture. He comes with updated tradition in all ages in the form of prophets at different ages. Each prophet is an updated version of all past prophets and crystallized version of all the traditions.

Let us take the subject of *varnashram* itself, as an illustration. Sri Sri Thakur has said that *varnashram* as a social institution has its value. It is linked to branches of science like biology, eugenics, genetics etc. Its purpose is to preserve the diversities in human species and upgrade the quality of each species. It is useful for the purpose of identifying aptitude, latent skill and making compatible match for marriage.

It is true that the *varnashram* as a social system has been misused and abused. *Varnashram* as social institution has been reduced to casteism, which has been used as a tool of exploitation in the past and has been subject of fierce class conflict. Moreover, the classification and demarcation among *varnas* has been blurred over a period of time, due to cross breeding.

It is to be understood that these are products of socio-cultural malfunctioning and localized institutional distortion, which does not negate the science. Socio-cultural institutions need to be reformed. Sri Sri Thakur has attempted to bring out the essence of *varnashram*, which has not been properly understood, experimented, validated and implemented. Time is still there for a proper appreciation of what Sri Sri Thakur has said and done.

25th January 2014

Ninety one

Indian Society and Culture Has It
India has to follow the path of Sri Sri Thakur

There is something special about Indian culture, which has maintained high energy, particularly on matters of ethics, amidst abject poverty. This is a bright side of an average Indian, who is struggling hard with existential issues. Moot point is that, if the best of Indian culture has to come out, it can only happen if the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is put to practice.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has done it and done it splendidly. He has framed an ideology which is the need of the day. What is remarkable in Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is that it has everything in right proportion. It has a right balance of materialism and spiritualism. It has the right proportion of human values and material development. It has the best of cultures from classical orient and modern west. It has science and spirituality, high sensitivity and creativity, humour and essence, passion and detachment and everything that makes life valuable, meaningful and brings out the peak of excellence.

India is an ancient civilization. The country has come long way on the road towards economic development. India has transformed itself from a controlled economy to a market economy, in a span of last twenty years. It has globalized itself, yet kept itself afloat in the recessionary cycles sweeping the world. It has built pockets of world class infrastructure; it has done reasonably well in drive towards banishing poverty in a short time; it has come up with some world class institutions and many such wonderful things. In the arena of sports and entertainment, it has marched well and has created a niche for itself in the world stage. India has successfully managed to remain democratic and secular, backed by independent judiciary and vibrant press. Notwithstanding all these, India has much to do in terms of human wellbeing index, particularly with regard to primary education, basic health and nutritional provision.

A significant point about India is that with all these pluses and minuses, a section of India has maintained its tradition, its culture, and its core values. Few noteworthy features of Indian culture that has enabled to maintain its sheen are: Indian family system, caste based marriage system and adherence to some core spiritual values. Not that everything is going well over there; lot of reforms and renovations need to be done in those spheres. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has provided the ideological framework what is exactly required for the betterment of our culture.

In this connection, it is interesting to come across an observation made by Michael Sandel, Harvard Professor of Philosophy, who was recently in India. (Times of India, January 26, 2014, page 25, interview published under the title 'The marketization of life will be a challenge for India').

Prof. Michael Sandel observes:

Quote
"What strikes me whenever I am here is the human energy and spirit that is manifest everywhere one looks. It is especially inspiring and evident when I engage with audience in discussion of hard ethical questions. The hunger and passion – not just for the sake of arguing but for the sake of really trying to work it out. To a sympathetic visitor, the most striking unmet challenge here is working towards the day when the basic human needs of everyone will be fulfilled."
Unquote

When the observation comes from such a perceptive observer and knowledgeable person of the stature of a professor of Harvard University, it conveys that there is something special about Indian culture, which has maintained high energy, particularly on matters of ethics, amidst abject poverty. This is a bright side of an average Indian, who is struggling hard with existential issues. Moot point is that, if the best of Indian culture has to come out, it can only happen if the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is put to practice.

Prof. Michael Sandel also observed in the same interview, "Marketization of life will increasingly become a challenge for societies like India". Observing the latest trend world over, and particularly in developed countries like USA, he says, "we have drifted from having a market economy to becoming market societies – the difference is that a market economy is a valuable and effective tool that has brought about prosperity to countries all over the world. But a market society is a place where almost everything is up for sale. Market values invade almost every sphere of life – personal relations, families and community ties, health, education, civic life, law, politics. And that's what I think we need to step back and debate."

The observation of marketization of life, as a trend, is very much visible in the next generation upper society in India. My personal feeling is that the trend is irreversible. Market forces that are driving the country in search for better quality of life have their own pull, which can hardly be resisted. It has a bright upside, which can hardly be ignored. But if the downside is to be avoided, then we need a progressive and powerful ideology which Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has provided.

The question that marketization of life and society, which is getting into Indian milieu fast, eroding our values and ethics, and that is to be arrested, needs much deeper research. Perhaps, effort should not be made to arrest or react to it; rather it needs a suitable channelization. This is a topic for serious research.

The issue that we are talking about is very complex one, which is not confined to any branch of knowledge, whatever that is. It is not an issue of say, economics, or politics, or ethics or religion. Therefore the solution does not lie with any kind of specific expertise. Then the question will be: where will solution come from? It can only come from someone like Sri Sri Thakur who is the incarnate for the age, who knows the cause of the causes, who is the Master of masters, who has vision far in to the past and future, who is expert in an art which is called 'man making process'.

I would like to qualify; these are not platitudes or superlatives, heaped on a person, to glorify him. The objective is to find solution, where it indeed is available.

Ninety two

We need Lord Krishna Live, not the *Gita* Alone

Ideology without living Ideal can be dated and confusing

Lord Krishna presented himself in the form of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and played a marvelous role of incarnate during 1888 – 1969. Humanity is witness to that. There is more than enough evidence to suggest that.

A rare headline on the front page of 'The Speaking Tree' weekly edition of the Times of India, dated 26 January 2014, caught my notice and made me to read the half page article number of times. The title reads, "Gita is not secular".

The article presents a contrast to very popular and highly held belief about *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. The article has come from very celebrated sources. Ms. Narayani Ganesh, the renowned editor of 'The Speaking Tree' interviewed Meghanand Desai, the renowned economist, author and member of the UK House of Lords.

Lord Meghanand Desai is not known to have great expertise on spiritual subjects, as far as I know. He however has released a book recently, titled 'Who Wrote the *Bhagwat Gita*?' The article appears to be an outcome of amateurish enquiry into a serious subject, expressed in rational and candid style; which makes it eminently readable. But it appears; Lord Meghanand Desai has not done a quality research and has used an eclectic approach to the subject. What is presented about *Gita* is more a misunderstanding than an appreciation; more a misleading analysis than a perceptive exposition. Still, it appears to be an honest attempt and presents a narration in contrast to popular notion. However, the rationality in analysis and modern approach to the subject, scientific questioning to entrenched belief are some of the welcome features of the article, a portion of which is worth quoting here.

Quote:

"I wrote the book as a secular inquiry into the *Gita* because in a sense, I could never make head or tail of it and then I stopped trying. About two or three years ago, I was asked to deliver the Goswami lecture in Goa and I used that opportunity to speak on the *Gita*. It is a confused philosophical book. All kinds of people have liked it from Hitler and serious philosophers to Sufi saints and other seekers. But it justifies violence. Saying it is an allegory as Gandhiji said, that speaks of good vs. evil, is something I don't agree

with – I feel that at the end of the day, it is about one man who doesn't want to kill and who pleads, "Let me go!" And then, after a huge, philosophical discussion, he ends up killing everybody. How can people believe we are non violent? Is violence a godsend," asks Desai. Xxxxxx

In course of writing the book, Desai says he referred to at least 30 or 40 commentaries and worked on it for two years. According to him, both Ambedkar and Goswami had doubts about the *Gita* being an abstract philosophical work. "When Buddhism arrived, Hindus had moved from Vedas to Vedanta and there was even more abstraction. Then Buddhism came with concrete advice and it became a Brahmin vs. Buddhist battle. In the first version of the *Mahabharata*, Jaya, Krishna is a minor figure. Only later he grows to become a legendary figure. Chapters 2 – 6 were written before Buddhism. The later chapters talking of *sankhya* and *nirguna* is post Buddhist and the *bhakti* part is of the Gupta period and *bhakti* wraps it all up," says Desai.

"I speculate that *Bhadrayana* was the third author. The *Gita* is not suitable for modern India. It is against women. Only two *shlokas* refer to them and both insult women. Arjuna says if there is *kulanash* (genocide) women will go astray. In the ninth chapter, Krishna says, 'those born of low or degraded wombs, *vaishyas* and *shudras* can also come to Me'. Moreover, the *Gita* talks of *nishkama karma* and says that action has no consequence. If that is what we believe, then how can we overcome corruption? There is then no morality. And you are immortal, so you don't die, so murder is nothing. It does not matter what you do," concludes Desai. According to him, the *Gita* is highly overrated and has no contemporary relevance in secular India.
Unquote

We are no worthy for locking horns with Lord Meghanand Desai. We also have no qualification to judge the significance of bringing out the interview on the front page of the esteemed 'Speaking Tree' edition of The Times of India. We have however some relevant observation to make, as a sequel.

It may be appropriate for someone to arrive at a conclusion that *Bhagavat Gita* has little relevance to our time and life. Secondly, it can be well appreciated if someone holds a view that he got confused by trying to understand *Gita*. Thirdly, if someone says that, *Gita* is not secular, there is no cause for anyone to be aggrieved.

The point is, and it is an irrefutable point, that we need the updated version of *Gita* and Lord Krishna live, both together. For some rational mind, this may be impossibility. For some believers, this may be scandalous. Yet this fact needs further probing and enquiry for validation.

Lord Krishna himself said that for some grand purposes like reestablishing *dharma* and banishing evil, he appears again and again in ages. Therefore, there is a need for living Ideal and contemporary ideology in all ages. It, at times, baffles us as to why this particular stanza of *Gita* is not worked upon.

To cut a long story short, if today, someone is looking for Lord Krishna in our time, he has to try out Thakur Anukul Chandra. In the absence of live Krishna, *Gita* may truly be confusing.

What happened to Arjuna then is not happening to us now. Lord Krishna was sitting on the charioteer's place and leading Arjuna in the midst of the war. Who is there in that place in our life?

Lord Krishna presented himself in the form of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and played a marvelous role of incarnate during 1888 – 1969. Humanity is witness to that. There is more than enough evidence to

suggest that. There are volumes of literature documenting his ideology. Sri Sri Thakur has said in million words to convey that in the absence of living ideal, perception about ideology will be clouded.

Lord Meghanand Desai has brought out his perception of apparent contradiction very candidly. We need to travel much deeper to get an insight into it. The search for that insight will lead one to Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra of twentieth century. Thakur Anukul Chandra is not mythology; his literature is not in a classical language like Sanskrit. Therefore, one needs to apply oneself with an inquisitive mind.

2nd January 2014

Ninety three

Election 2014 - India is looking for New Order

Sri Sri Thakur remains besides the Sufferer and Deprived

For Satsang organization, Sri Sri Thakur held the view that Satsang as a platform will not directly participate in politics. However, *Satsangees* as individuals can contest elections on the strength of their popular support and work for Satsang's ideology at the national or state level.

Section I

India is facing a landmark election. Election 2014 is projected to be a make or break election, in a sense, the results of the election would endorse one of the few ideological paths in governance that India may adopt for next few years. This election has thrown up some game changing issues and method of governance before the electorate, which can lead to turning points in country's future. The issues which are in the boiling pot are developmental, economic, social and cultural. Political parties are fiercely pitching their arguments and counter arguments. No holds barred passions are being aroused. We are however not entering into the merits and demerits of the issues raised.

We are witnessing a process whereby a nation is preparing for a jump into the future. Nation's conscience has been stirred by mountainous cases of corruption and scandal that preceded the election, particularly manifested during last five years. Nation's hope bar has been raised by maverick candidates in the

electoral fray. Political parties are desperately trying to win over the electorates' favor and large percentage of this year's electorates is young. Remarkable feature of this election is that it is being campaigned using e-technology, social media and personality of leadership. By all accounts, there is a high voltage stirring in socio-political arena.

Intellectuals, professionals and activists have joined in this electoral fray like never before. All kinds of ideological issues are being discussed threadbare. Perceptive observers are however left clueless as to what is in store for us as a country. What kind of future India is likely to carve out, assuming that we will have a best team in the new government? One journalist has put it, 'they (a group of intellectuals discussing about election in Delhi) yearned for development with a moral and spiritual face'. (Economic Times, dated 10th April 2014, Mumbai edition, page 3, by Chaitanya Kalbag, a senior journalist, former Asia editor of Reuters)

Here we find ourselves in a state of illusion. The scene that is unfolding before us is certainly spectacular; but is it promising and relieving? Even if the election throws the best government and the government of the day does the best work; would it make a fundamental difference to the people?

Here come the issues of culture, conscience, aspiration and quality of life of people. No doubt that we need good governance, economic development, civic facilities, better ways of transport, communication, more job opportunities and everything linked to material progress. It must be understood that quality of life of people is much more than all these. It requires a balanced progress in material, spiritual and physical state of human being. It requires a cultural ambience, a peaceful co-existence, a dispassionate progressive outlook, an inner quest for higher faculties and refined sensitivities. All these require an ideological platform which Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has provided. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra provides such an all fulfilling ideology that shows path for both individual and nation, in almost all spheres of personal and collective life. Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is scientific, progressive and contemporary. Surprisingly, when everyone, in their own way, is groping for ideological solution, Sri Sri Thakur's ideology remains relatively less known and much less in practice. Notwithstanding its popularity, we must pronounce that every person, irrespective of his religious affiliation, must give a fair look and trial to the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur.

Section II

At the moment, we see all powers are out at play; in open field. We can hardly evade asking the question where is Sri Sri Thakur now? What he must be engaged with?

Nobody has an answer for this question. We are only trying to develop a logical response sheet for these queries.

Scene I

In the heat of electioneering, some people are getting injured. Passions are being aroused, leading to clash among groups, communal or political, resulting in destitution of some families. Sri Sri Thakur is with those people, with those families; nursing them; healing them; arranging diet and medicine for them; looking after their children and keeping their hope lingering so that they are struggling for recovering and coming back to normal life.

Scene II

The election season is also the season for children's exam. Children, irrespective of their family and academic background, are anxiously writing their papers in the examination hall. Their future and their family's future critically depend upon the outcome of their performance during those three hours. They are

anxious, stressed at the same time they have aspiration and competitive spirit. Sri Sri Thakur is with the candidates in the examination hall. He is keeping them empowered with energy, courage and keeping their spirit live.

Scene III

Large section of Indian middle class is engaged with their daily struggle of life. They begin their day with routine chore and end their day tired of day's drill. Those families look for happiness in small things. Sri Sri Thakur remains in those family environment and says 'yours is my family; your life's burden is my burden. You give me a place in your heart, in your family and enjoy the bliss of good health, peace and prosperity that go with your hard earned livelihood'.

Scene IV

Amidst the din and dust of everything outside, I see Sri Sri Thakur presiding glowingly in my small home; supporting me in my little life and he is protecting me from all trials and tribulations. He takes care that we all get good food, nourishment and bit of plain enjoyment and have sound sleep.

Section III

This portrayal of Sri Sri Thakur living besides the destitute and desperation does not take him away from the turmoil of election. It is not that electioneering and Sri Sri Thakur are poles apart. When Sri Sri Thakur was alive, (1888-1969) India faced a number of elections and we have seen Sri Sri Thakur's guidance to people during the time of election. He had directions for electoral candidates, for public at large and for Satsang as organization. I am attempting to summarily capture Sri Sri Thakur's point of view expressed on electioneering.

- When candidates came to Sri Sri Thakur for seeking his blessing and indirectly to mobilize his support for their candidature, Sri Sri Thakur used to urge them to uphold Indian culture. In today's time, if I have to put the same in more meaningful words, I have to urge our leaders to uphold and promote Sri Sri Thakur's ideology.
- When people in their capacity as electorates sought Sri Sri Thakur's view as to whom to favor with their ballot, Sri Sri Thakur said, cast your vote in favor of that candidate who leads principled life.
- For Satsang organization, Sri Sri Thakur held the view that Satsang as a platform will not directly participate in politics. However, *Satsangees* as individuals can contest elections on the strength of their popular support and work for Satsang's ideology at the national or state level. Sri Sri Thakur said, 'His ritwiks are natural leaders. They do not have to canvass for themselves. Others will nominate them as unanimous choice of people's candidate.'

It requires a detailed research to bring out Sri Sri Thakur's political ideology.

Ninety four

Sri Sri Thakur Made us Aware of our Origin

Some specific anthropological facts from Sri Sri Thakur

This paper presents a wonderful fact of historical and anthropological significance. This lets us know the origin of Indians as a race and sets at rest all debate on the subject.

Those of us, who know Sri Sri Thakur, are aware that Sri Sri Thakur is the source of all knowledge, information and facts. Facts relating to origin of creation and everything related to developments of human race and civilization is in his view. And when he speaks, some of very esoteric facts, otherwise unknown to humanity, come out from him, depending upon context. The views of Sri Sri Thakur are precious, sometimes may appear to be strange yet true. I am quoting below one such anthropological fact that came out from Sri Sri Thakur in the Bengali book, *Smritir Mala* (Garland of memory)(2006) by Manilal Chakraborty.

In the morning of 24th February 1965, Sri Sri Thakur spoke to Ajay Ganguly the following:
Quote
Your forefathers (meaning Aryans) settled in the region of arctic home. Over there, it is day for continuous 6 months and night for next 6 months. There was a place known as Novaya Zemlaya. There one could see the focus of aurora borealis. People perform all works in that light. There used to avalanche of glacier. One group of people found it hard to stay over there and started migrating towards the mountainous region in Europe. Later they entered in to the western side of Ural Mountain into the countries of Lithonia and Finland.

The Indo-European group took the east side of Ural Mountain on the bank of Om River and entered into India. The root of the word ‘zemalaya’ is taken from ‘jhamal’, which means pair or twin. Man started habitation in Novaya Zemlaya and Severnaya Zemlaya (North and South regions in Arctic Pole). As man could not stay over there, they migrated in groups into other areas. I therefore hold that Russian and you, mean Indian or Lithonian, are from the same stock.
Unquote

This appears to me a wonderful fact of historical and anthropological significance. This lets us know the origin of Indians as a race and sets at rest all debate on the subject. To validate what Sri Sri Thakur said from the generally known facts in the literature, I searched in net places named by Sri Sri Thakur, where

the Aryans came from, namely Novaya Zemlaya and Severnaya Zemlaya. The facts that came from net, 2 sources, are placed below for easy reference of readers.

Further I also searched about the origin of Aryans in net to see what the generally accepted views on the subject are. Sri Sri Thakur's view is one of the most acceptable views as given in website of sciforums.

All the three net searches are done today and presented below. Significant to note here, Sri Sri Thakur said all these in 1965, sitting at Deoghar in a remote place in then Bihar, now Jharkhand. Sri Sri Thakur was not that educated in formal sense of the term, as we all know. Still his knowledge of geography, the origin and movement of race, appears to be native, intuitive and authentic.

Reference I: Downloaded from the site of 'Encyclopedia Britannica' on 19.04.2014:

Novaya Zemlya, also spelled Novaia Zemlia, archipelago in northwestern Russia, lying in the Arctic Ocean and separating the Barents and Kara seas.

Novaya Zemlya ("New Land") consists of two large islands, Severny (northern) and Yuzhny (southern), aligned for 600 miles (1,000 km) in a southwest-northeast direction, plus several smaller islands. The two major islands are separated by a narrow strait, Matochkin Shar, only about 1 to 1.5 miles (1.6 to 2.4 km) wide. The most southerly point, the island of Kusova Zemlya, is separated from Vaygach Island and the mainland by the Kara Strait.

Novaya Zemlya, a continuation of the Ural Mountains system, is for the most part mountainous, though the southern portion of Yuzhny Island is merely hilly. The mountains, which rise at most to 5,220 feet (1,590 m), consist of igneous and sedimentary materials, including limestones and slates. More than one-quarter of the land area, especially in the north, is permanently covered by ice, and most of the northern island, as well as part of the southern, lies in the zone of Arctic desert. The climate is severe, and temperature varies from 3° to -8° F (-16° to -22° C) in winter to 36° to 44° F (2° to 7° C) in summer. There are frequent fogs and strong winds. The vegetation in those portions of the islands free from ice is predominantly low-lying tundra, with much swamp, though low bushes are found in sheltered valleys. Lemmings, Arctic foxes, seals, walruses, and occasionally polar bears are found on Novaya Zemlya; a rich bird life abounds in summer. Novaya Zemlya has been known since at least medieval times, though it was not explored until the 18th and 19th centuries. Area 31,900 square miles (82,600 square km).

Reference II: Downloaded from the site www.poseidonexpeditions.com on 19.04.2014:

Severnaya Zemlya ("The Northern Land") is an archipelago located in the Arctic Ocean. It is located near the Taymyr Peninsula, north of 80°N latitude, between the Kara and Laptev Seas. The four major islands, October Revolution, Bolshevik, Komsomolets, and Pioneer, and a number of smaller islands, cover a total area of about 37,000 sq. km. Politically, they are part of Russia's Krasnoyarsk Territory.

The last archipelago on Earth to be discovered, Severnaya was first noted in 1913 and originally named Nicholas II Land. Initially believed to be a single island, the 1931 polar flight of the Graf Zeppelin determined them to be at least two islands; later study showed Severnaya Zemlya to be further divided.

At the beginning of the XX century the Globe has seemed to be explored thoroughly. Yet, 1913 has brought a sensation – new archipelago has been discovered by Russians in the far North. In 1910 Russian Navy icebreaking vessels "Taymyr" and "Vaigach" sailed through the Bering Strait, met the ice floes of the Chukchi Sea, and returned. In 1911 they sailed farther westwards reaching the mouth of the

Siberian river Kolyma. The “Vaigach” also went to Wrangel Island. The next year “Taymyr” and “Vaigach” explored the coastline of Novosibirskie Islands. In 1913 the expedition continued: the “Taymyr” rounded Novosibirskie I slands from the North aiming to find the legendary Sannikov Land. The vessels met beside the Preobrazhenia Island and headed northwards. On August 21 the crew has seen the shape of land: it seemed to be a vast island with domelike peaks about 500 meters high. August 22, the flag of the Russian Empire has been raised above the newly discovered land... In the twenties of XX century there were suggestions to name this archipelago ‘Lenin Land’, but at last the name ‘Severnaya Zemlya’ has been chosen.

Reference III: Downloaded from the site www.sciforums.com on 19.04.2014:

"Aryan" is derived from the Sanskrit and Avestan term arya-, the extended form aryana-, ari- and/or arya- of which the word Iran is a cognate. (Source: Wikipedia)

Precisely who the Aryans were and exactly where they came from is a puzzle still debated today. Historians have generally used the word “Aryan” to denote those peoples who spoke the Indo-European languages, which include English, German, Latin, Greek, Russian, Persian, and Sanskrit. “Aryan” also has a narrower racial meaning. It has quite often been used to designate mankind’s non-Semitic white-skinned race.

There are many theories about where Aryans first came from. A common hypothesis is that Aryans originated in the steppes (plains) of Russia. From there they may have migrated to Europe and down into Mesopotamia. Others believe that the Aryans arose in Europe and migrated eastward. Some theorists, occasionally for racist reasons, claim that Aryans were the founders of the ancient Mesopotamian civilizations and were therefore the world’s first civilized peoples. This theory was promoted during the brutal Nazi regime of Germany to bolster its “Aryan supremacy” idea. The Nazis even claimed that Aryans were originally created by Godlike superhumans from a different world. A similar belief was expressed earlier in history.

However, some recent archeological discoveries in India, Russia and Japan have pushed back the antiquity of the Aryans to at least 6000BC and proved beyond doubt that the ancient Aryans were not nomadic tribes from central Asia but had very advanced urban civilizations. Russian archeologists and linguists also proved that the Aryans have migrated not from the Russian steppes but came to Russia via Armenia and Georgia. (Source: http://www.ivarta.com/columns/OL_051212.htm)

If the Aryans did indeed invade India (according to Max Muller's invasion theory) then the evidence in the social system imposed on India by the Aryans were unmistakably designed to create human spiritual bondage. As elsewhere, this bondage was partially accomplished by giving spiritual truths a false twist. The result in India was a feudalistic institution known as the “caste” system.

Nevertheless many Indian historians and archeologists dispute claims that Aryans migrated to India from central Asia. Ruins in places like Dwarka and even submerged ruins off the Japanese coast challenge these theories

Ninety five

Genetic Architecture Can Predict Your Health
Varnashram has to be given a chance

Biological asset pertains to life in totality and it has specific application in procreation, a fundamental factor in building society and civilization. In our Indo-Aryan culture, the socio economic system had a sub-system called *varnashram*, which used take care of many things, particularly occupational excellence, procreation, backed by proper selection of mates, leading to upward mobility of all sections of societal groups

Background – the advertisement of a pharmaceutical Company

The full front-page advertisement in today's Times of India attracted my notice. Something exceptional yet familiar fact struck me. I found a known fact in an unusual site. In fact it was a two full-page advertisement released by Datar Genetics Limited; www.datarpgx.com.

The front page reads like this:

Genetics is unleashing life changing possibilities….. Are you ready?

At the bottom of the page, there is a tag line "Genetics 360 deg".

The second page reads:

Genetics doesn't just touch life. It's life 360 deg.

For the first time in India, we introduce World Class Genetic Analysis platforms for screening of individuals at high risk of hereditary diseases such as Cancer, Heart Disease and for aligning treatment strategy and drugs to the specific needs of the patient's genetic architecture. Our ultra modern test set up includes the ability to detect and characterize Circulating Cell-Free DNA and Circulating Tumor / Endothelial Cells for unprecedented insight into treatment success and prognosis. These procedures provide a 360 deg support to the clinician from the frontiers of technology."

The central theme of the Advertisement and its applicability in our life

As a non medico, I understand from the advertisement that there are genetically transmitted diseases. Which means; genetics plays a role in causing disease or ill health of a person. This particular

pharmaceutical company has announced that it will be able to identify high probability cases of few diseases by testing a person's genetic architecture.

Sri Sri Thakur's view on biological asset

I got myself reminded of Sri Sri Thakur's word about genetic wealth or biological assets. Sri Sri Thakur says that each person has a particular biological asset. The biological asset of a person is linked to heredity. A group of families having homogenous biological assets and linked to a common root of heredity form a class, which can be called a clan. A *varna* can have several clans.

Family heredity comes from two streams; one from father and one from mother. A person is an outcome of the union of the biological assets or genes of two streams. Genetic science tells us that union of genes could give rise to qualitative appreciation (positive transformation) or lead to qualitative deterioration (negative transformation). The former type of combination is identified as compatible and the latter type as incompatible. The compatibility breeds appreciation and the incompatibility breeds depreciation.

Based on the compatibility criteria, marriages have been classified as hypergamous and hypogamous. Therefore, it is necessary to ascertain the type of classes and their compatibility before marriage with a view to get progeny of a superior quality.

The classes of biological assets are grouped on the basis of their potential, scientifically known as genotype. The biological asset or quality of gene is the core. The demonstrated features that are visible include the expression of this potential and the acquired qualities. Biological assets or genes are the core of a person's being. It is hard to disintegrate. It is the culmination of acquisition of past generations of forefathers. It forms the platform (or the framework) on which the newly born person has to perform his/her life drama; though the determinants of previous birth's acquisition determines large part of current birth's activities. It is like a programmed event that unfolds on the stage of the current life span.

That is why it is said that *varna* structure is rigid. Because, the core of the gene is hard to undergo any alteration, though the transformation takes place through a prolonged impact. The impact comes from achievement and then passing through generations of acquisitions, it becomes instinct. Instincts are closer to the core and are like programmed package. When it becomes genetic material, the instinct stabilizes.

Like biological asset of a person, there can be a biological asset of a clan or a country. It is a collectivity of uniform and homogenous assets, possessed by the members of that group. If the group asset has to be preserved and cultivated, then the prerequisite is that the identity of the asset has to be maintained. Secondly, care has to be taken that the asset does not get contaminated or suffer atrophy due to ingress of non-homogenous stream into that collectivity.

It is perhaps possible to create hybrid stream, but care must be taken that the output stream is a distinctively enriched stream than the element (input) streams. That is how the element streams get opportunity for upward mobility. That means, stream identities are to be maintained, cross breeding is allowed only for the purpose of enrichment and up-scaling. So, even when there is clarity with respect to identity by way of segregation, there is no stagnation. Each stream has scope to upgrade itself.

Changes in Socio-Economic System

Biological asset pertains to life in totality and it has specific application in procreation, a fundamental factor in building society and civilization. In Indo-Aryan culture, the socio economic system had a sub-system called *varnashram*, which used take care of many things, particularly occupational excellence,

procreation, backed by proper selection of mates, leading to upward mobility of all sections of societal groups.

Today, due to changes in the socio-economic system, the traditional system has crumbled. Rational people are indiscriminately abandoning the old system in favor of what appears to be updated system. New kind of occupational system, social conditions and marriage system have evolved. The changes that are taking place are spontaneous and in many cases irreversible. Social system has to adapt to new developments. Sri Sri Thakur has given a new ideological framework that permits innovation, transformation and adaptation. Only thing is that the new systems, whatever be their nature and compulsion, cannot defy the basic science. Eugenic based marriage system, the core of *varnashram* based marriage system is, one of those scientific bases, which has to be maintained.

Law of nature and Basic Scientific principle to be adhered to

We admit that *varnashram* system has been subjected to much abuse and distortion. It is reduced to casteism. But today, that classical casteism has also undergone so much change. The socio-political process is also undergoing lot of changes. Therefore, changes are welcome; we need to adjust to emerging situation. But what is welcome and what is not, is to be judged based on its outcome. Secondly, the process has to be in conformity with laws of nature. Everything put together has to have a contemporary and scientific sanction, the yardstick of which has been provided by Sri Sri Thakur.

Conclusion

If a scientific process is capable of predicting the health of a person from the study of his or her genetic architecture, then that object of study, that is, genetic architecture, is something real. And there is a definite impact that the genetic architecture causes in a person's life. This particular pharmaceutical company is attempting to take a clue of life from 'genetic 360 deg'. The genetic wealth and biological asset is something basic to our life. Therefore, it is important for us to know something more about those assets. A prime question can be: how do I build this asset? How does this asset get depreciated or appreciated? There must be a process for that. Nothing is accidental in the world.

We have heard arguments, 'I am so and so (high or low) due to my accident of birth, meaning, my getting born to a particular family is a random happening'. We have no argument to counter this statement. But at the same time, how can we accept this statement which leaves a fundamental happening in our life to chances? Does anything happen in world without a cause? It is possible that we have not been able to understand the underlying factors and causalities of that happening. That particular happening is perhaps lying outside the zone of our knowledge. Science is trying to catch up with unexplored zone. It is perhaps yet to come to popular level of awareness.

Sri Sri Thakur's ideology is based on science. We do not possess that kind of scientific knowledge to really appreciate those bases. Secondly, it is definitely true, that *varnashram* as an ideological cult that has been distorted to such an extent that today there is lot of wrong practices at behavioral level. Therefore, there is a need to rinse and revive the practice of *varnashram*. That itself needs a vision and vigor, which has not been seen in contemporary *satsang* world. In the absence of that, we need to keep up the spirit and science behind *varnashram*, till visionary leadership emerges for a overhauling of the social system where the *varnashram* as a social institution will be in place.

It requires deep research to bring out what has Sri Sri Thakur said on the subject.

Ninety six

Relook at Indian Secular Cult

Sri Sri Thakur has provided the cultural credo for India to adopt

Society cannot be devoid of spiritual and cultural elements. Spiritual and cultural elements have role to play in the life of individual and society. What is required are: a) an all fulfilling ideology, and b) an unerring and infallible guide. Prophets who descend in ages are those guides.

I read the following observation in an article written by Dileep Padgaonkar in today's Times of India, Mumbai edition. Dileep Padgaonkar is a well known veteran journalist of The Times of India and a thoughtful commentator on Indian socio-political system. He wrote this column by way of his observation on recently held general election in India and its outcome.

Quote
What we need is to acknowledge the flaws in our idea of secularism. Correctly or otherwise, it has been perceived as a hostile attitude to even the most uplifting traditions of India's myriad religious and spiritual traditions. And, by that token, it has been equated with an indulgent attitude to Muslim extremism. A course correction is in order.
Unquote

A very timely and thoughtful observation, coming from an erudite and accomplished observer of India's socio-political changing order. The author feels that there is a need for a change in our understanding and practice of secularism in our country.

The subject is deep and having wide ramification. We are not getting much deeper into the subject. We would like to limit ourselves to our thought on the subject in the light of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's ideology.

We need to understand that we cannot view and treat Indian people differently on lines of so called 'religion'. The vote bank politics is no more working in favor of any particular political party. The so called polarization in last general election in 2014 defied all conventional patterns. Therefore, there is not much incentive for any political party to play communal card.

Therefore state policies and state craft has to be carried out keeping the interest of country and all citizens in view. State has to be neutral as far as areas of religious interests are concerned. Religious issues are best left to religious leaders. Let the intellectuals, rationalist and liberals in each of the so called religious groups take charge of affairs of religions.

That being said, the society cannot be devoid of spiritual and cultural elements. Spiritual and cultural elements have role to play in the life of individual and society. What is required are: a) an all fulfilling ideology, and b) an unerring and infallible guide. Prophets who descend in ages are those guides. We must understand the message of those prophets. It appears, going by the mores and ambience of the present society, it is impossible to know what the messages of the prophets are. There is only one way and we must not fight shy to acknowledge this reality. The latest prophet Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra provides the way.

To know what Sri Sri Thakur means by 'dharma' (religion) and where the contours of religion is manifest, one must read Message Volume II, (1964) which contains the sayings of Sri Sri Thakur. It requires a good research to bring out the meaning out of it.

In this article, I will only quote two sayings of Sri Sri Thakur, which can be accepted as national credo. The country can accept these two, or any one of the two, as nation's guiding principles, in the matter of religion:

Five Fires

Do surrender to and serve
The Almighty One and unique;
do serve devoutly
the solemn seers
who fulfill the past;
be devout unto the forefathers
who roamed on the route of
eternal go;
do serve devoutly the grouping
of the varieties of similar instincts,
that specifically inhere in the being;
and do thou dedicate thyself
to the present Fulfiller, the Best –
the adjusted abode
and resurrect meaning
of the past;
this –
the superb and sovereign path
of consummation;
this – the Dharma of existence
and this to follow eternally.

(The Message, Vol. II, Satsang Publishing House, 1964)

Seven Proclamations

God is one.
Dharma is one,
Prophets are same, -

Servers of the One;
conflict and animosity with any of them
proclaims the presence of opposite – the Satan.
Surrender to the Supreme is the sauce
that brings heaven down to the soul and service:
Do love, do serve, do surrender,
Do ever for Providence, the Lord, the Ideal, the source of all sources,
with every inter-interested serving zeal that serves the ideal –
Fulfiller the best of the past and present
whose presence is to fulfill, not to destroy!
Utter and act with every enthusiasm,
Surrender to the One and only!
Surrender to the enlightened Seers that are fulfillers of the past,
Surrender to the Fathers that follow the right Way,
Surrender to Varnashram that evolves out of providence,
Surrender to the all fulfilling Fulfiller of the present,
This is the Aryan path,
This is Dharma that upholds existence,
This the eternal truth
that all are
to surrender to!

(Magna Dicta – no. 67; Satsang Publishing House, 1949)

31st May 2014

Ninety seven

A Nation Turning Around
Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra Showed the Path

Large share of root cause for deviant persons in the society rests with parents and family culture. This was a fundamental factor of Sri Sri Thakur's man making process. He has laid much emphasis on parent's preparation and role in bringing-in a child and bringing-up a child.

It appears to be a turning point for India. Today, on its 68th independence day, one gets a feeling that a moment of cultural revival is seen on the horizon. Symptoms are manifold and are seen in discrete manner. While a new generation is emerging, rising on the crest of modernity; the leadership is seeing value in our tradition. A social dynamics in its typical motion is witnessing a continuity and change. Amidst all the humdrum, we see Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra and his ideology, for its practical value and application orientation at individual level.

This article is triggered by two sources that occurred today: a) Prime Minister of India's address to the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort; and b) the lead article on editorial page in Today's 'Times of India' by Bill Gates.

The context for both the pronouncements is that India has got a new Government at the Centre headed by a new Prime Minister. That person electrified the imagination of the nation by a whirlwind electioneering, making use of technology and talent and dislodged the entrenched Government, backed by a grand old party. This political development came at a time when there are transformation taking place at social and demographic level and also on the front of adoption to technology. Everything put together, the moment has brought about an air of hope. There is expectation, which is getting whetted by promise and performance. Government through its functioning in last two months is showing a sign of urgency and accountability.

Points that I am drawing attention in this article from Prime Minister of India's address are:

- He paid tribute to Maharshi Aurobindo, whose birthday coincides with India's Independence Day. Prime Minister said that he carries India's *yogis*, *acharyas* in high esteem. Aurobindo is one such *yogi* who started his life as a revolutionary and then transformed himself to be a *yogi*.
- Prime Minister of India made a reference to Vivekananda's vision which was that India would one day become world teacher. India is born to lead the world.

- Prime Minister extolled the virtue of health and hygiene. He said that cleanliness was very dear to Mahatma Gandhi. Let us gift a clean India to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary which will come in 2019. India's roads, public places, schools, hospitals and temples need to be kept free from the filth and litters. Prime Minister also said this work cannot be done by Government. Each one of 1.25 billion people in this country will have to undertake this.
- Prime Minister made a reference to Indian culture, which extols morality, non violence and communal harmony. He made a pointed reference that it is few individuals who have gone deviant and are causing shameful breach of these national virtues. He made parents of those individuals responsible and exhorted them to question themselves and to their children.

Analysis of these four points that came out very clearly in Prime Minister of address has the following features and dimension:

- Each one of these points falls within the ambit of individual acts, but in an aggregate level they build up to a nation making exercise. This instantly struck a chord in my mind: 'hey, is it not a basic method in Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's man-making process? Did not Thakur again and again say that a nation or a group (समष्टि) is made up individuals (ब्यष्टि)? So, if you want to make change in national character, then begin with individual character.'
- Second point is that large share of root cause for deviant persons in the society rests with parents and family culture. Here again, this was a fundamental factor of Sri Sri Thakur's man making process. He has laid much emphasis on parent's preparation and role in bringing-in a child and bringing-up a child.
- Third point is the need to revive Indian culture, in synch with technology and economic development. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has shown a robust process for that.

Today, top man of the country is realizing that nation building has to start in the mind of each individual and in every family. He felt it necessary to exhort the nation from high pedestal and remind the national conscience that a lot needs to be done by each person and family, which Government cannot do. It calls for a discipline at individual and family level. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra's principles of *yajan*, *yaajan*, *istabhrity*, *swastyayani* and *sadaachaar*, which every disciple of Sri Sri Thakur are pledged to perform every day captures all these aspects.

Bill Gates in article 'India's health is its wealth' in today's Times of India quotes research findings to make a point that health, both physical and mental, plays a significant role in country's well being. He writes: "A recent global commission of leading economists found a strong connection between health and national prosperity. Its report stated that about 11% of the economic growth in low and middle income countries over the past generation resulted just from reductions in adult mortality.

That remarkable statistics underscores the fact that the raw material of a dynamic society is the mental capacity and labour productivity of its population."

Of course, Bill Gates is talking about national investment in health. But I am using his arguments to say what role Sri Sri Thakur's tenets of *swastyayani* play in nation building and collective well being. If all the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur rigorously practice the principles daily, besides individual progress, they are contributing to nation's wellbeing, may be unknowingly and without acknowledgement.

Ninety eight

Indian Culture at Crossroad - Needs Sri Sri Thakur

Soul Searching will lead to Solution

When whole of India was frenzied in independence movement in the first half of 20th century, Sri Sri Thakur was cool about it. Not that he was not in favour of political independence of India, but he wanted to achieve the same in a different process. He wanted to prevent partition of the country on communal line and he certainly wanted to prevent the communal massacre and mass migration causing massive suffering to the people, for generations.

Introduction: Spiritual Elements of India

"India is a special place for me. I travel all around the world, but India stands out for a number of reasons. People are warm; there's a very strong spiritual element in its culture. India constantly reminds you, particularly westerners, about how it is visually stimulating and spiritually and intellectually enriching. This is unlike any other place.

I am impressed with what's happening in this country. Under Prime Minister Modi, we are moving in the right direction. There is a substantial push from a population that is living on less than $2 a day, but there is so much positive energy and India is really claiming its rightful place in the global economy as a leader and not just in the traditional sense of what people expect – which is reverse engineering."

The above was said by Kenneth Carleton Frazier, global CEO of Merck & Co, a pharmaceutical company, in an interview to Economic Times, published on 6th November 2015, on page 13. Discounting for the fact that, Mr. Frazier was in India and was looking at India as a big market; therefore he had to eulogize India as courtesy; we however take note of his view of India for its spiritual element. The same kind of appreciation for Indian spirituality comes out from other westerners occupying high places.

India is known for its high spiritual heritage, which is still valued today. World looks up to India for spiritual and human values. A general observation of the social transformation that is taking place in India gives an impression that Indians at home are also looking at their spiritual heritage with renewed interest. People cutting across socio-economic and education status are turning to religious practices with a lot of enthusiasm. One can say that a higher level of consciousness and deeper search for meaning in otherwise stressful life is taking Indians closer to religion; as if as a rediscovery. Indian diasporas are able

to place Indian culture on the high platforms in the world by virtue of their recognition for the positions they occupy. Practices like yoga, herbal medicine, prayer and meditation, festivities are getting appreciation by people world over. For example; Diwali is being celebrated in White House. Ganapati worship is being done in some universities in US where large Indian students are studying. UN has announced international yoga day, that gives yoga a worldwide recognition for healthy life.

Are we clear what are we looking for and where is it available?

In this milieu of high expectation for spiritual values, there seems to be a bit of confusion, hollowness, deception, all together perhaps resulting in desperation. Objective of this paper is to unearth deeper realities of this phenomenon of revivalism and if possible to find an approach to solution that people are looking for.

What is being manifested on the surface of the society is the search for values. People are pursuing higher sensibilities with sharper sensitivities. They are looking for quality in life. What is important is that the search must lead to right direction and should end up with satisfactory outcome. The process of enquiry has to be right so as to lead us to right solution. The trend visible in the society somehow does not provide that cohesiveness between search and solution. The social milieu, colored by political and commercial pitch, indicates a cacophony of views and counterviews of quick fixes. As if there is a competitive race amongst different interest groups, spearheading religion and cultural views. In the process, are we sure that the search and renewed interest in spiritualism is taking the society closer towards the solution? Is looking at past always provides the means for going forward? Is artistic expression of anything is an unmixed blessing? Is it that every endeavor has to be a commercially successful enterprise? Is every pursuit to be evaluated against the benchmark of power and money?

In today's society, generally we find that the religious views and cultural thoughts are promoted either by artistic pursuits or by commercial enterprise or by political outfits. Sometimes, these groups take strong positions suiting their interests; may run contrary to each other and create confusion for general mass. It appears, as if the divide amongst religions is getting strengthened and sharpened. Debates on line of 'religious versus secular', 'liberal versus hardliner', 'tolerance versus intolerance' etc are perturbing social equilibrium. It appears, in this din of competitiveness, populism and money making, the best of culture and real spiritualism is getting obscured.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra – the latest Prophet

It is here, we feel the need for Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. We admit that in the societal space that we are talking about, (that is: educated, urban, cosmopolitan and networked people, across the globe) Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra may not be well recognized. That to me is the greatest tragedy of our time. Of course, it is known that a prophet seldom gets recognition during his lifetime. Is it not an irony that prophet comes; He works hard to set the house in order (in civilization and cultural sense); He serves the humanity as per need of the time; and yet the humanity does not benefit from Him. Is it not a real deprivation?

To make up for this loss, society has to make extra effort to know the latest prophet. We, the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur, shoulder great responsibility in letting the humanity know the prophet. Prophets descend at different times for showing path to the humanity. He carries the clue to the problems of the age and gives workable solution befitting the current time. Prophet of the age, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra descended in 1888 and lived an eventful life, before departing in 1969. During the span of 81 years on this earth, He did wonders and saved the humanity from the point of extinction. He has left behind a complete ideology that has given meaningful clarity on such critical issues as life, love and lift. The

ideology provides guidelines for both the individual and the society, covering almost all aspects. This ideology is an invaluable asset for the human civilization.

The Vision of a Seer is what is required for steering collective destiny

Clarity at the level of ideology is a significant factor in any society and in any country. History is witness to many instances where movements propped up by inappropriate ideology created dysfunctional outcome for the country. Many wrong policies are implemented based on fallacious logic and finally society suffers. Kind of historical events involving social engineering, political movements, which are complex by their dynamics, which deal with large number of people and impact their future, need ideological guidelines requiring different type of crafting. These crafting require vision, farsightedness and sagacity, which come only from people of some genre. It is here that we must pay heed to the guidance and directions of prophet of the age. Prophets are the ones having view of the past, the present and also of the future. It's a strange vision; vision of alchemist; which only prophets are anointed with. Prophets are un-erred; infallible. These are not humanly qualities; but prophets do display those. No one knows human psychology better than the prophet. Similarly, no one knows the fate of any collective action better than the prophet.

We cite few examples to make our view explicit. When whole of India was frenzied in independence movement in the first half of 20th century, Sri Sri Thakur was cool about it. Not that he was not in favour of political independence of India, but he wanted to achieve the same in a different process. He wanted to prevent partition of the country on communal line and he certainly wanted to prevent the communal massacre and mass migration causing massive suffering to the people, for generations. He wanted certain reforms in the social space, before seeking change of political master. On hindsight it appears, the unfortunate event of partition of India, communal holocaust, creation of hostile neighbors and all those unfortunate aftermaths were in the preview of Sri Sri Thakur. He appealed all the then leaders for a course correction in the freedom movement. But leaders had their own views, priorities, urgency and mission; all apparently lofty, nationalistic, sacrificial. But the result was something different from what they intended. Such huge movement went out of control of leaders and, as if; a cruel and evil destiny took over. Today, we clearly see that Sri Sri Thakur's view and actions at that time had merit worth taking note of. Still Sri Sri Thakur played his bit of role in preventing human suffering. This very incident needs further research to bring out what Sri Sri Thakur did during the period when the nation was engaged in freedom movement and what Sri Sri Thakur wanted differently.

Suffice to say here that nations and leaders must pay heed to the words of the prophet of the age. It does not pay to ignore the prophet's call at any point of time. Whenever and to whatever extent prophets' views are ignored, humanity greets sufferings to that extent. It is perhaps analogical to say that Lord Krishna wanted to prevent Mahabharat battle; but when His pleas fell on deaf ear, He still played His role of upholding truth. Of course macabre dance of bloodshed resulted.

On the issue of movement, Sri Sri Thakur never did anything to whip up passion in public, to create an upsurge in the people and organize agitation, with a view to overthrow an established idea or order. He never did something in the public space as a reaction (or counter) to any development. The genesis of Sri Sri Thakur's organized movement was always rooted at the crying need of people and the need of society. It was all crafted to uplift the people and the society. Sri Sri Thakur clearly knew where the problem was; what was required and how the situation was to be handled. The prognosis and diagnosis are original; never reactionary. Sri Sri Thakur served the need of the people, both at individual and at social level, covering such things as existential, accidental, intellectual, and consciousness level.

There was no sacrificial lamb in Sri Sri Thakur's movement. No person was required to take up supreme sacrifice of his own self to push a supposedly greater collective cause. Every person is an asset by himself or herself. If a person dies for upholding (or filliping) the cause of mass, then there is some anomaly in the process. Undertaking supreme sacrifice in the form of death is a frenzied activity. Many extremist youths who took up to agitation and courted death in different forms, either by taking dangerous step or by way of punishment, were misguided; unfortunately so. The act of killing, either to oneself or to others is always counterproductive; amounting to annihilation. Sri Sri Thakur never supported self sacrifice in the form of martyrdom. On the contrary, Sri Sri Thakur held a view that, 'it is easy to die for God than to live and work for God'. Death in any form cannot be tolerated by the Father. Self inflicted death in the name of creative destruction or of self sacrifice is an extreme negative step, amounting to suicide.

For Sri Sri Thakur, threat to existence is repulsive; diminution to existence is painful. Sri Sri Thakur gave an epoch making call, 'Do never die, nor cause death; resist death to death'. This call of Sri Sri Thakur constitutes a cardinal feature of His ideology. The full meaning and implication of this saying goes far beyond the scope of this write up. I would only observe that Sri Sri Thakur expressed His intention to bring about a breakthrough to the event called death in human life. Humanity, as it moves on the path of evolution, has to overcome the disruption caused by death. 'Death is a curable disease', says Sri Sri Thakur.

Concept of Scientific Religion of Sri Sri Thakur

High point in Sri Sri Thakur's ideological edifice is that He made religion scientific. By this single measure, He threw away all the obscurantist, prejudicial and mystical aspects from the concept of religion. He said all the tenets of religion can be subjected to scientific scrutiny. The baggage of rituals and submission to mysticism has no place in Sri Sri Thakur's ideological framework. He encouraged everyone to be inquisitive to know the 'hows' and 'whys' of life and religion. He subjected himself to all kind of questions, doubts, tests, clarifications that arose in people's mind. He commented and clarified all such questions; some of those have been very elaborately documented. A reading of accounts of those questions and answers would convince anybody that He was a mastermind at work for a mission, for the humanity, for civilization and for evolution. Clarity, logic, precision and originality are the hallmarks of His answers. You believe Him not because of any sense of customary binding; but because He wins you over. Even His dress and appearance was so natural and yet so impressive that you do not smell any mysticism and conventional brand of being a god man. Yet he wore an aura around Him; aura that radiates around rising sun.

Committing good for others is a universally admired personal value system. Sri Sr Thakur did this in magnificent way, all through His life. And this is also a cardinal principle, which all His disciples are mandated to follow. Sri Sri Thakur has taken this concept to a level where the act becomes more meaningful and gets devoid of any negative. Firstly, as far as Sri Sri Thakur is concerned, there is no one called 'other'. Everyone is a part of His self. He felt everybody in His self, rather than feeling for everybody. Sri Sri Thakur wished and did such good for the other that the person feels better; he indeed feels benefited which is not an ephemeral sense of being elated; rather that wellbeing remains with him for longer time. In that sense, Sri Sri Thakur propelled everyone towards wellbeing by giving an ideological framework for practicing, living and growing. Here, the premise is that a person can do good to himself; he can at the best be guided and goaded by a teacher (guru, or ideal), who would fulfill the person as required. Every person is the architect of his / her own destiny. Destiny is best built by the person himself / herself.

Destiny has been demystified by Sri Sri Thakur by explaining it as accumulated outcome of past actions. That can be modified or be undone by present actions, the outcome of which comes as refined destiny in future. Sri Sri Thakur knows the destiny of each person. He alone can prescribe the way to counter the destiny towards betterment. The emphasis is on action as required; action in tune with law of nature; action as guided by the Guide. Result would follow in proportion to the power of action. Of course that 'power' means many things. Sri Sri Thakur has admitted the powerful role that both 'pre-determination' and 'freewill' play in our life. He has pumped 'freewill'. He has placed enormous hope on man's ability to accomplish wonders, partly derived from man's connectivity with the source, the God. And certainly, God's is the world of wonders, creativity, surprises and originality.

Second aspect with regard to doing good for others by the devotees (by us) is concerned, Sri Sri Thakur never saw the act of doing good as an act of charity or philanthropy. For Him, doing good is an act of service, in our interest of keeping the surrounding and environment healthy and efficient. Sri Sri Thakur often reminded the old adage, 'do unto others, as you would like to be done by'. Here service means, feeling, loving, active application of mind, use of time and resources to make the other person strong, capable and comfortable. The service comes with a sense of worship to the Lord, with a view to keep the Lord pleased. By this process, each member of the community and society becomes normally inter-interested.

In a finer sense, Sri Sri Thakur said *dharma* is not same as religion. *Dharma* is the way of living and growing and religions are points of views. He preferred the word *dharma* and never admitted that there can be more than one *dharma*; whereas religions are many. His ideology, in explicit and unambiguous terms, proclaims that 'God is one, Dharma is one, and prophets are same, servers of the One'. It is significant to observe that 'dharma' is a way of progressive, righteous and ideal centric living. When *dharma* gets associated with some code of conducts, some paraphernalia, some cultural elements, all these get associated with the way of living at particular place and at specific time, then that becomes a religion. However, essentially, *dharma* is that which keeps our existence intact and takes us towards growth. All human beings are children of one God. The way of living can vary from place to place, from time to time, from region to region and so on. Therefore, while the divine part of every religion is same, the discrete part varies. Humanities at different place have formed different cult, different beliefs, and different life styles; follow different religious practices, following the dicta of some prophet, or some scripture, or some presiding deities. Based on these, different class, clan, communities have grown over period of time. But there cannot be differences, animosities and conflicts amongst the communities and classes based on religion.

Lineage of Prophets

Related to above is a fact is that prophets have chain of lineage amongst them. They descend at different times and there is a chronological sequence. Linking to that sequence, it can be seen that each prophet fulfils the predecessor prophets. Sri Sri Thakur said, 'all the prophets of the past converge and remain awakened in that of the present'. We have known that the lineage of prophets follow this heritage sequence: Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, prophet Mohammed, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. There is striking ideological congruence amongst the religious order flowing from each of the above named prophets. Of course, there are some inexplicable apparent areas of differences amongst the religions flowing from the prophets; but these are superficial, affected by erosion of time and distortion brought in by many interest groups at different times. It is long time, since these prophets came and lots of socio-cultural and political weathering has gone on those ideologies. Therefore, it is hard to know today, what Lord Krishna or Lord Rama did and said on any particular issue of today's relevance. Same kind of murkiness applies to all the past prophets' views and deeds. Best way to know the past prophets is to look at the view of the latest prophet. We have

observed in Sri Sri Thakur's lifetime and discourses that He was very easily able to relate Himself with the past prophets. He was very respectful for them and their activities. He used to recall some of their experiences as His own. He was able to interpret the sayings of Gita, Bible and Quran with authenticity and clarity. As there is no conflict amongst prophets, as there is no difference in the ideology propounded by the prophets, there is no scope for conflict amongst religions.

For Sri Sri Thakur, proselytizing (conversion) is not acceptable. One can follow the latest prophet's principle of life and growth; that does not amount to change of religion. Religious and hereditary identify, which is a social reality, should not be tempered with. Communal feelings have no place in the prophet's courtyard. Therefore, people from all religions and communities have come to Sri Sri Thakur, adopted his principle and yet maintain their religious affiliation; without slightest inhibition. People from all faiths and religions have accepted Sri Sri Thakur as their guide without any compromise with their own religion. Fundamentally, principles of life and growth are same. The latest prophet makes those principles more scientific and contextual.

The prophet of the age, Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra is the rallying point for all people looking for progressive life. The latest prophet's ideology is the quintessential spirituality to be looked for and to be practiced. Sri Sri Thakur's ideology provides the guideline for individual life and social direction.

Sri Sri Thakur ushered a new era

Human civilization on this earth entered a new phase with the advent of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra in 1888. It was dawn of an era of new consciousness, transformation in all spheres of human endeavor and beginning of alleviation of human sufferings. Sri Sri Thakur drove the movement under his direct guidance till 1969, when he left the helms in the hands of his devotees. His worthy devotees are his successors. Till date, innumerable souls have joined Sri Sri Thakur's movement (popularly known as Satsang movement) and a solid foundation at socio-intellectual level has been laid. Time has come, when Sri Sri Thakur's ideological threads are given shape in society's policy and institutions, which impacts lives of people. Cultural fabric of the society needs to be woven around the directions of Sri Sri Thakur. Biological assets of people and education system, which forms the anchor for humanity, must be cultivated as per Sri Sri Thakur's guidelines. Research has to be conducted to interpret these guidelines and the mechanism of integration with the current system.

Conclusion: The Living ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Provides the Direction and Solution

Sri Sri Thakur's ideological framework is well articulated in his literature and those are lively, being practiced by innumerable devotees world over. Sri Sri Thakur himself was the living example of his ideology. In that sense, we are talking about a live ideology. One does not have to do much of wandering around while looking for the spiritual elements of India. It is encrypted in wholesome manner in the ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra.

The ideology is an integrated holistic framework of living, consistent with the essence of all religions. It provides a tenor of life in consonance with family, society and environment. Sri Sri Thakur was the living image of that ideology. As messiah on the earth, he was here to demonstrate the ideology and make it rooted on the civilization ground and on the plinth of human consciousness.

People at different places in the world are undergoing strain of severe struggle or sufferings; in varying degrees. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra has given a clarion call to all those who are suffering, to come to Him and off load all their sufferings; get filled with the elixir of love, life and lore.

Chapter 9

Sri Sri Thakur's Literature

Saga of Devotion, Dedication & Divinity
Anecdotal Literature on Sri Sri Thakur

Purpose of this article is to provide source materials for interested people to get live accounts of Sri Sri Thakur. All these books put together would be the reference material for writing Sri Sri Thakur's biography in future. If someone attempts to do a film or serial on Sri Sri Thakur, one has to necessarily draw resources from these books.

The autobiographies of Sri Sri Thakur's contemporary devotees are wealth of literature to know about Sri Sri Thakur's life and ideology. These set of books are a type, exclusive from other books on Sri Sri Thakur's life and ideology. These books provide firsthand narration of encounter and association with Sri Sri Thakur under different hard situations. These accounts bring out how the authors have underwent miraculous transformation under the guidance of Sri Sri Thakur. The narrations of these books are in first person and always in conjunction with Sri Sri Thakur. Through these books, one would come to know Sri Sri Thakur from an intimate human angle. In fact, the live Thakur is found on the pages of these books.

I have attempted to make a list of such autobiographical accounts of Sri Sri Thakur's contemporary devotees, with a view to provide the readers the sources where they should turn to for seeing Sri Sri Thakur in action of making man.

Author (Alphabetical order of surname)	**Title**	**Publisher**	**Language**	**Year**
Basu Sushil Chandra	Manas Tirtha Parikarma	Madhusudan Bandopadhya	Bengali	1972
	Manas Tirtha Parikarma	Kishore Bhai Clerk	Gujurati (Translated)	1984
Bhattacharya Guru Prasanna	Tnaar Kathaa	Abhay Dyuti Bhattacharya	Bengali	2007
Bhaumik Bikash Ranjan	Amrut Kahani	Ratna Rekha Devi	Odia	2008
Biswas Ashwini Kumar	Amiya Bani	Satsang Publishing House	Bengali	1328 Bengali
Chakraborty Manilal	Kata Katha Mane Pade	Tapoban Prakashan	Bengali	2008
	Smritir Mala	Tapoban Prakashan	Bengali	2006
Chakraborty Trailokyanath	Jaajan Pathe (Combined Edition)	Sriprasad Chakraborty	Bengali	1398 Bengali
Chattopadhyaya Sanjay kumar	Purner Prangane, Vol I	Smt. Dipti Chatterjee	Bengali	1998
	Purner Prangane, Vol II		Bengali	
Das Prafulla Kumar	A Pilgrimage to Memory	Tapoban Prakashan	English	1992

	Smriti Tirthe	Tapoban Prakashan	Bengali	2006
Das Sushil Ranjan	Manar Manish Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. Vo. I	Smt. Bakul Rani Das	Odia	1977
	Manar Manish Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. Vo. II	Smt. Bakul Rani Das	Odia	1980
	Maner Manush Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra	Sree Guru Anukulashram	Bengali (Translated)	2010
	Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra – The Man Who Knew My Mind and Loved Me the Most, Vol. I	Sree Guru Anukulashram	English (Translated)	2007
	Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra – The Man Who Knew My Mind and Loved Me the Most, Vol. II	Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies	English (Translated)	2010
Fakir Jaylal	Tnar Parash	Aparthiba Roy Chakraborty	Bengali	2007
Goswami Sachidananda	Srimat Acharya Satishchandra Goswami O Satsang Andolan		Bengali	1964
Hauserman Ray	Being and Becoming – A Story of Devotion	Mrs. Audrey Hauserman	English	2008
Mukhopadhaya Devi Prasad	Priya Param	Tapoban Prakashan	Bengali	1411 (Bengali year)
Nath Umapada (Srinath)	Punya Bhumi Kustiya O Biswaguru Sri Sri Anukulchandra	Charyashram Prakashan	Bengali	1421 (Bengali year)
Roy Phani Bhusan	Amar Dekha Thakur, Thakur Paribar Ebang Bhaktabrinda	Shandilya Prakashan	Bengali	2013
Sarkar Panchanan	Amar Jibane Sri Sri Thakur	– First edition by the author – Complete edition by Ritesh Nandan Sarkar	Bengali	1972 2011
Singh Braja Kishore Narain	Purushottamer Ashirwad, Vol I	By the author	Hindi	1995
	Purushottamer Ashirwad, Vol II	Vijay Kishore Singh	Hindi	1997
Spencer, E.J	Wait for me, Christ; I'm Coming	Sampa Mukhopadhyaya	English	1985

Truly speaking, none of the above authors has attempted to write about himself. They have written to recall and recount their own experiences about their Guru, the beloved Lord. Their own life is the context and Sri Sri Thakur is the subject matter for all of them.

These accounts portray Sri Sri Thakur in his real life and lore. The man-making process of Sri Sri Thakur has been shown at full play in these accounts. Each of these authors comes from entirely different background and with different make up; each one has been guided and moulded by Sri Sri Thakur in a peculiar way. There are events, crisis, situations, personalities, people; with different complexes, different instincts, different nationalities, different occupation, different temperament, different life mission and what not. Each life represents a type and each life has its own motion. How Sri Sri Thakur has dealt with each one, in different situations and under different conditions and played his universal mission of 'making

man', 'fulfilling man', taking each one to his / her peak of accomplishment, overcoming all hurdles and obstacles. The accounts are really fabulous, splendid; the play of divine with devotee. All through these accounts, the live play of Sri Sri Thakur comes out cordially and lovely. The gracious Thakur is seen in resplendent action.

Interestingly, none of these authors is litterateur of any genre. Exceptions are those who did Masters; namely, Sushil Chandra Basu, Panchanan Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar Das, Umapada Nath, Manilal Chakravarty and Phani Bhusan Roy. Debi Prasad Mukhopadhaya joined Sri Sri Thakur after graduation. Brajakishore Narain Singh was an advocate and Trailokyanath Chakraborty was a doctor. Others hardly had any formal education, worth speaking. But each of these authors is a devotee par excellence; each one has come to acquire high knowledge through intense devotion and frenzied action. Surprisingly, Sri Sri Thakur has induced some of them to write their unalloyed experience, by presenting them with notebook and pen. Sri Sri Thakur has heard some of these written accounts and has seen some of the books after print.

In the list presented above, there are eighteen authors; a few might be missing from the list. Taking all these accounts, the number is not large. The number of authors and books could have been more. But alas!

Linguistic Profile

Only 2 American disciples have written in English and 2 author's (Prafulla Kumar Das and Sushil Ranjan Das) books have been translated into English. That makes the number of books in English five.

Only 2 authors have written in Odia and one in Hindi. Rest all authors have written in Bengali. The book of Sushil Chandra Basu has been translated into Gujarati and published from Ahmedabad.

This kind of linguistic concentration in one vernacular language actually has been a barrier in spreading Sri Sri Thakur's movement. Lot of work has to be done in translating these works into pan Indian language, namely, Hindi and English.

Age Profile

3 books were published (in book form) when Sri Sri Thakur was alive. ('*Amiya Vani'*- by Ashwini Kumar Biswas; *'Srimat Acharya Satish Chandra Goswami O Satsang Andolan'* by Sachidananda Goswami; *'Jaajon Pathe'* by Trailokyanath Chakraborty)

Some more books were published in parts and in the form of serial articles in magazines, when Sri Sri Thakur was alive.

Large number of these books has come out after Sri Sri Thakur left this world. Naturally so, as these memorabilia came to be valued when Sri Sri Thakur was no more available and the value of these accounts was felt more intensely as the years passed. That is how we see number of books increasing every decade, as seen below:

Decade	Number of books published
1969 – 1980	3
1981 – 1990	3
1991 – 2000	4
2001 – 2010	10
2010 – 2013	1

This age analysis is only indicative and conclusions are directional; as in some cases, date of publication is in Bengali year and in some cases the first edition books are not available with me.

Publishing Support

Interestingly, most of these books are published by individual initiative (going by the publisher's name). Only one or two books in their first edition were published by Satsang Publishing House. Only 6 books have been published by commercial publishing companies. (Tapoban Prakshan – 4, Charyashram Prakashan and Sandilya Prakashan one each) This brings out another feature of Satsang movement, as it has taken shape. Large initiatives are still individualized, not institutionalized. That shows the authors or authors' family successors themselves have taken initiative to publish these books, obviously with a purpose to keep Sri Sri Thakur's accounts live for future generation. These speak high degree of devotion and dedication. But it speaks poorly, when it comes to the spread and reach of the books. The books are being circulated and read mostly in close circle of devotees. It limits the purpose of publishing the books.

Conclusion

Purpose of this article is to provide source materials for interested people to get live accounts of Sri Sri Thakur. All these books put together would be the reference material for writing Sri Sri Thakur's biography in future. If someone attempts to do a film or serial on Sri Sri Thakur, one has to necessarily draw resources from these books. Human civilization will look for these sources very intensely in times to come.

When we go through these accounts, sometimes, we can see ourselves and parts of our life in the positions and situations the authors passed through. Under such situations and positions, we can relate ourselves with Sri Sri Thakur.

Another point that comes out of this analysis is that there is a need for organized effort in translating these books into other Indian languages, for making these accessible to larger readers. 'Institute of Indo-Aryan Studies' and the 'website' (www.srisrithakuranukulchandra.com) has done considerable work in that direction.

Do you see a role for yourself in this drive?

17th July 2013

Hundred

Adherence and Intelligence
The Twin Factors of Survival and Success

You have got the message clear, coming from the source. The message is speaking about few important factors: devotion and understanding. It also speaks of intelligence and urge. Each of these constitutes powerful psycho-spiritual faculties; called in modern language as emotional quotient and spiritual quotient.

This piece of write up has two objectives: one, to focus on two significant aspects of life which together takes us towards survival and success. Second objective is to highlight Sri Sri Thakur's literary expression.

I would have used the word 'literary talent', which I am not using. Sri Sri Thakur's talents are not something like endowments, which we say for people like us. He had all the talents; but it is appropriate to say these as His expression. All His personality features are actually expressions of those faculties in their completeness. We all have talents of varying degrees. Sri Sri Thakur just displayed His features and those features are expression of talents.

Sri Sri Thakur dictated a verse in Bengali on 28th February 1965. The verse is presented below in its original language only for the benefit of Bengali knowing readers:

ভক্তিই তোর শক্তি আনে
বোধ আনে তোর জয়
ভক্তি ও বোধ ছাড়িস নাকো
হবেই নাকো ক্ষয়!

Ray Archer Hauserman, an American disciple of Sri Sri Thakur was asked by Sri Sri Thakur to translate the verse in to English. To my knowledge, it is an unusual development on that day that an English translation of Sri Sri Thakur's saying was done on the spot, in Sri Sri Thakur's presence. Mr. Hauserman, as we know was not such a literary person, though he is author of 4 books in English and each book is a

masterpiece. But being a westerner, English came to him naturally. He translated the above saying of Sri Sri Thakur as presented below:

Devotion develops power,
Feeling fertilizes success;
Dissolve not that feeling and devotion
Decay won't spread its position.

I felt something missing in the translation done by Mr. Hauserman. To put the sense of Sri Sri Thakur's message in perspective, the way I felt, I thought of writing Sri Sri Thakur's Bengali verse in English. The intent was not at all to subject the literary work of Hauserman into comparison; rather to get the message of Sri Sri Thakur across the readers, in my way. Hopefully, readers will get the message in a better way, if that is presented in two different literary formations. And this is what I wrote:

Devotion invites strength,
Knowledge leads to victory;
Devotion and knowledge, the twin,
Never eschew; suffer atrophy.

I was really amused, when I read the English version of the verse, composed by Sri Sri Thakur Himself. It was like this:

Adherence invokes strength,
Feeling fulfils success;
Never abandon devout urge and intelligence,
And be never decayed.

My dear non-Bengali English loving readers! You have got the message clear, coming from the source. The message is speaking about few important factors: devotion and understanding. It also speaks of intelligence and urge. Each of these constitutes powerful psycho-spiritual faculties; called in modern language as emotional quotient and spiritual quotient.

It is a real question as to how these factors can be acquired and cultivated. Sri Sri Thakur's ideology definitely provides answer to this. However, it is not attempted to elucidate those over here.

The amusement turns mystery, when we remind ourselves, that Sri Sri Thakur did not pass X standard, matriculation in those days. Further, it may not be appropriate to put Sri Sri Thakur in the league of born poet and philosophers, like Rabindranath Tagore, for example. Sri Sri Thakur's was a not a class; not a type; it is the source and therefore unique. It is not the talent what we see in Sri Sri Thakur; it is Sri Sri Thakur's normal features, which presents them as talent to us.

For those who would be more inquisitive to know the literary aspect of Sri Sri Thakur, particularly English literature, need to go through nine volumes of 'The Message' and one volume of 'Magna Dicta'. It would be a wonderful and fascinating experience to see both the substance and style.

5h May 2014