

Vishwaguru Mahotsav 1918 – the spirit and significance

By

Dr. Debesh C. Patra



This work can be copied, reproduced and transmitted, wholly or partly, providing explicit acknowledgement to the author and the publisher.

Vishwaguru Mahotsav 1918 – the spirit and significance

Content

1. Foreword
2. The Backdrop
3. Preparations
4. Celebration of Avatars (Incarnates)
5. The Invitation
6. The Mahotsav (The Grand Celebration)
7. Sri Sri Thakur’s Desire
8. Conclusion

About the Author

Dr. Debesh Patra (born 1961) is into Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra’s culture and discipline for more than four decades now. He was initiated by Ritwikdev Sushil Ranjan Das (1974). He has authored more than hundred papers and about a dozen books on the life and ideology of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra. Most of his works are available in www.srisrithakuranukulchandra.com.

Professionally, he is Chief General Manager in Bharat Petroleum Corporation, Mumbai. A Master in ‘Economics’ from Utkal University (1983), he holds Ph. D in ‘Petroleum Economics’ from University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun (2007). He is a ‘Fellow Energy Institute’, London. He is author of 2 books and 40 papers in the field of energy, economics and environment.

Foreword

It is history, philosophy and culture, all in one that constitute the account of *Vishwaguru Mahotsav*. The *Mahotsav* (mega celebration) happened a century back, in 1918. Since then, there have been succession of events in the history of Satsang. Cultural features of the *Mahotsav* have unfolded during the course of the century that followed the *Mahotsav*. Amidst all these and in the process of deciphering the philosophy, civilization has travelled a long way. Yet a lot remains to happen towards materialization of the purpose behind the *Mahotsav*.

The target beneficiary of the events preceding and following the *Mahotsav* is the mankind; each person living on this world today and those who will come tomorrow. The message of this saga has impact on each person and on the humanity at large, knowingly and unknowingly. As long as there is misery and pain on this earth and there is aspiration and perspiration of people, the silent voice of the event will continue to ring aloud.

We are talking about the life and mission of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra, the eighth human incarnate and the latest one. His relevance and his power to progress can hardly be over emphasized. Hence, this attempt to unearth historical accounts of hundred years back and attempt to unravel its cultural and philosophical significance.

Today, there is general acceptance for quest for excellence, mixed with emotional and spiritual quotient. Innumerable processes and methods are being espoused. Every process and method has its place and possibilities. Here is a message that must not go unknown, unheard and unnoticed, buried in the debris of publicity onslaughts of all kinds. That is the motive behind bringing live the scattered pieces of historical gems lying here and there, mostly in Bengali language, and presenting the piece, '*Vishwaguru Mahotsav 1918 – the spirit and significance*'.

More research on the subject is sure to happen in future, as the quest for Sri Sri Thakur will gather accelerated move. Struggle for becoming will continue as much as the move for extinction of spiritual thirst and ascendance of soul.

Humble author

25th December 2018

Vishwaguru Mahotsav 1918 – the Spirit and Significance

No event can be said to measure up to adding value to him as He is complete by himself. No event is adequate to add significance to him, as his significance seems to be endless. Humanity needed him and humanity had to discover him. *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* held in 1918 was step in that long and windy passage of discovery.

It is now history. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra was publicly proclaimed in September 1918 as the incarnate (*avatar*) of the age. This was announced by way of a grand celebration (*Mahotsav*) held in a town, named Kustiya (currently in Bangladesh). His birthday was celebrated in the same way as the devotees in Kustiya celebrated birthdays of other preceding incarnates. The event carved an indelible mark as a milestone, as the process of revelation of Sri Sri Thakur did pan out and the grand role that he played came to be noticed by the humanity.

Vishwaguru Mahotsav voiced to the world that the incarnate (*avatar*) of the age had arrived. To see him was to see God. To reach at him was to achieve God. Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra was the natural *guru* (Master) for the humanity. He manifested himself out of sheer love for his creation. Love for him was devotion. Following him was to tread the path of becoming. Putting him into one's life scheme would make a world of difference. The invitation was; accept him for what he was and glorify your life. Submit to him and acquire the virtues of divinity.

The Backdrop

The event was preceded by a massive buildup of divine energy that continued to emanate from Sri Sri Thakur. As a corollary to that, people in and around Pabna district in then undivided India, now separated as Bangladesh, intensely felt a magical transformation in their consciousness. What was witnessed was an upheaval of devotion, dedication and determination for human soul to find liberation and joy, coming in live contact with the extraordinary power that Sri Sri Thakur was, being the expression of God, disbursing the supreme consciousness and swaying everything around with the force of love and service. The crystal ball of divinity was gathering speed, as the rescue from distress and sufferings was getting momentum. Sri Sri Thakur was a full view of divinity in action, as he advanced from childhood to adolescence to youth, orchestrating the huge power that touched everyone's heart, triggered everyone's consciousness to ascend higher level of joy, ecstasy, energy and mobility. Large number of people, of all age, class and community, found a magical touch, miraculous happenings and experienced unlocking of their mind and spirit, creating unusual sense of love, elevation, attraction and affection.

At the center of all the convulsions was an amazing charming and darling young man Anukul Chandra Chakravarty. Carrying halo of effulgence around his persona, the man was seen to swirl around like hurricane, from village to village, from door to door with band of devotees who would

move miles in procession, chanting divine songs to the tune of drums and other musical instruments. The sway of *kirtan* had the power to move everyone whoever came in close vicinity, to get into the spell and motion of dance, song and thunderous music. The moments and movements were so rapturous and divine that people would forget their own self and would unconsciously be transported to different dimension of consciousness. The party and the procession moved in great speed and created such tumultuous vibration that even nature in the surroundings was seen to be swayed in to the mood. It was a flood of reawakening and energizing where from there was hardly any escape for anybody. People felt a new life, renewed life force and dawn of new era. The *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* was an invitation to the larger world to be part of this celebration of life, love and lift.

The boy from the Chakravarty family was a no ordinary child. He appeared to be precocious and prodigious, yet was affable and obedient. He was lovable, charming and was of a superior type. His words became prophetic and brought wellbeing to all. He came in the dream of some people in the form of child Krishna. Like an angel, he came to the rescue of many from imminent danger. He cured diseases miraculously. He showed leadership qualities in adversities. He was compassionate to those who were condemned to poverty and sufferings. He lent helping hands to many who went astray and reformed them. He consoled and stood by the bereaved and forlorn. Overall it appeared the child Anukul had some mysterious solutions to many ills which people suffered from.

People also found an unmistakable streak of divinity which impelled them to delve deep into spiritual realm, with determination of probing and exploring the boy Anukul. To those hard core practitioners of mystery and austerity, Sri Sri Thakur came like an engulfing tunnel of experience and discovery that strengthened their belief that Sri Sri Thakur was the incarnate for the age, a rare phenomenon of descend. He was, they believed, personification of the creator; God in human form who has come to salvage, redeem and reform.

Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra was born in 1888 to father Shiv Chandra Chakravarty and mother Manomohini Devi. The Chakravarty family had their house and ancestral property in village Himaitpur in Pabna district of undivided India (in pre-1947 era, currently in Bangladesh). Legend has it that the name Himaitpur is the colloquial version of Himattpur, named after Himmat Singh, son of Raja Man Singh, who was provincial king under the rule of Moghul emperor Akbar. Raja Man Singh had a palace and his barrack for platoon of soldiers in and around Himaitpur. Village Himaitpur was located to the north of river Padma and Sri Sri Thakur's birthplace was on the bank of the river. The ferocious Padma used to lash the land that was chosen as landing place by the Lord for his worldly play in 19th and 20th century.

The surrounding of Sri Sri Thakur's birthplace presented the best of nature. There was lush greenery, thick vegetation, bounty of nature reflecting seasonal flavors during the year, clear sky sporting all moods and colour of the sun and the season. The richness and mysticism of nature was matched by the deeply intense and high voltage spiritual exercise that Sri Sri Thakur conducted from there. Whoever came into that spell got mesmerized, came to possess different worldview and attained different status in life.

Prophet's descend in an age is like rise of sun in a day. Like sunshine spreads in full blaze, prophet's arrival infuses glow of consciousness in the world. Like sunshine requires a base to hold and reflect the light for its utility, the prophet needs some carriers, some shoulders and some landmarks for his mission to play out. Left to himself, he of course creates his own platform. His devotees out of sheer urge to expand and enjoy, spread his mission. *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* was that event, Kustiya was that base and the devotees were the carriers who were instrumental for the revelation of Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra.

Himaitpur was Sri Sri Thakur's birthplace and Kustiya was the place where his divinity got an early exposure. For innumerable people in Kustiya, of all age groups, Sri Sri Thakur was *Vishwaguru*, the redeemer. He was adored as the jewel in so many hearts. It is said, if Himaitpur was Mathura for this age, Kustiya was Vrindaban.

If *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* was culmination of certain developments, then there were few streams precedent to it. One was the *kirtan* process that was led by Sri Sri Thakur, initiated five years before the event. That was around 1913 (Bengali year 1320), when Sri Sri Thakur was 25 years old. The *kirtan* period coincided with, perhaps was complementary to, the era of *Samadhi* episodes of Sri Sri Thakur. *Kirtan* movement was initiated by Kishori Mohan Das of Pratap-pur. He was joined by Satish Chandra Goswami, who came to Sri Sri Thakur in 1914 (Bengali year 1321)

The second stream sprang from realization and inspiration of some devotees, arising from their deep meditation and attainment of spiritual elevation. A *mahotsav* (mega celebration) with a message that must go around the world was the brain child of Ashwini Kumar Biswas. He was ably associated by Dr. Satish Chandra Joyarder, Birendra Nath Roy and Dr. Satya Dutta. Each of these devotees had the privilege of being very intimate associate of Sri Sri Thakur. Each of them had probed into Sri Sri Thakur's life with critical and excruciating questions and developed abiding allegiance for him. Their level of conviction was firm, level of awareness touched deep and had clarity with regard to life and spirituality.

Foremost amongst the early devotees to realize the fact that Sri Sri Thakur was indeed the incarnate of God was Ananta Nath Roy. Sri Sri Thakur named him Ananta Maharaj, following the tradition of *Sant mat* (*sant* belief) and he was popularly addressed as Maharaj. Ananta Roy was resident of village Kashipur, half a mile away from village Himaitpur. He was Sri Sri Thakur's school mate. Ananta Roy accepted Sri Sri Thakur as God and his Guru, only after a kind of divine realization that came to him, following stern resolve to find the divinity and possessing God. He underwent series of shocks in life, arising from death of his near and dear ones, (mother in early age, wife and a new born son), which made him crestfallen and dejected. He then went through excruciating penance, practiced hard meditation and austerity. He built a small room (*sadhanaa gruha*) in a field away from home, kept himself shut in the room and got absorbed in meditation, forsaking food and sleep for days together. Onetime, he reduced himself to skeleton while continuously meditating for 18 days, when his body got covered with swarms of ants. All the while, Ananta Nath was under close view and timely association with his childhood friend Anukul Chandra. The intimacy and love between the duo was deep and simmering, with occasional pull and push. All along Ananta Nath was looking for the Supreme and the search came to a conclusive finality around 1912.

Ananta Nath did scale up high levels of spiritual achievement, like sighting glows of light, hearing ripples of vibration (sound), feeling of non-duality. All these whetted his thirst for the ultimate, to be with God. At some point of extreme determination, he decided to end his life, if his prayer of being with God did not materialize. In a deadly evening, when it was torrentially raining, Ananta Roy made all arrangement to hang himself by tying a noose of clothes from the wooden roof of his *sadhanaa* room. At this time, Anukul Chandra from nowhere banged and broke open the locked door and forcefully dissuaded him from the act of self-annihilation. It was at that moment, Sri Sri Thakur revealed himself to Ananta Maharaj by holding him tight in his arms. That togetherness of both, physically and emotionally, led to high voltage spiritual blossoming in Ananta Nath, culminating his quest for God that resulted in his friend Anukul getting transformed to his Guru Anukul. Ananta Nath's body and mind was illuminated by waves of light; the waves transported him to unknown regions, where spectacular objects like planets, stars and galaxies prevailed. His ear heard strange and pleasant rhythms and symphonies. Then again appeared a shattering glare at whose center was a radiant person. His limbs and physical expanse covered wide horizons; his presence stretched to infinity. Then slowly the apparition shrunk and took a shape. Ananta Nath screamed, 'who are you? 'Who is he?' Bereft of sense, in a lightening moment, he viewed what he longed for. Sri Sri Thakur endowed Ananta Nath the gift of possession of God. He then retrieved Ananta Nath from the region of eternity to the world of mortality. Ananta Nath regained his sense.

From there on Ananta Nath did not look back and went on sharing his experience. He, however, had to face some hardship, including the wrath of Sri Sri Thakur, when he made it public that Sri Sri Thakur was that resplendent revelation for which humanity waits for ages. He was God incarnate.

The idea of organizing a celebration in recognition of the latest incarnate, who was to be the world teacher (*Vishwa Guru*), came to the mind of Ashwini Kumar Biswas. Ashwini Biswas lived in Amla pada (a locality name, derived from inhabitants of aristocrats including lawyers and bureaucrats) in Kustiya. He was a practicing lawyer in Kustiya Sub-divisional court. He was *Kayastha* as per *varna* and his prime preoccupation was spiritual pursuit. In association with Sri Sri Thakur, he progressed far on the path of spiritual enlightenment; had reached the stage where he could hear sounds and visualize lights from the enlightened sphere. He became close to Sri Sri Thakur and had good realization of Sri Sri Thakur's wealth of divinity. His compilation, 'Amiya Vani' in Bengali, account of his discourses with Sri Sri Thakur, published in 1921 is a classic literature on Sri Sri Thakur.

Ashwini Kumar Biswas visited Sri Sri Thakur in 1915 (Bengali year 1322), in the evening at the residence of his neighbor advocate Prafulla Chandra Roy. In the first visit, addressing Ashwini Biswas as '*dada*' (elder brother) Sri Sri Thakur embraced him and placed him on his lap. Ashwini Biswas, recovering from a trance like state, dismounted himself from Sri Sri Thakur's lap. But the touch and the intimacy captivated him in transformative feelings; the blood in veins flew fast; as if an electric wave passed through his body. At heightened eruption of feelings, his mind was elated. He remained immersed in conversation with Sri Sri Thakur till clock clicked one at night. Seven months after that, in the year 1916 (Bengali year 1323), one early morning at around four past half, while in deep sleep, he found Sri Sri Thakur in dream and Sri Sri Thakur whispered a *mantra* (holy name) in his ear and advised to repeat the 'name' (perform *japa*).

Ashwini Kumar, at the height of his realization, was looking for an outlet. How would the world get the benefit of Sri Sri Thakur's direction and blessings, as he himself had benefited? He knew that Sri Sri Thakur's ideas were novel, yet coherent with the conventional wisdom and had progressive outlook. Sri Sri Thakur provided magical solutions to all the evils and ills that people had been suffering from. Why would people remain in darkness and allow the sufferings to continue when indeed there was light and instant relief available in Sri Sri Thakur? 'The world must know that the incarnate of the age has indeed descended, carrying with him the solution for the age. The *vishwa guru* (world teacher) must get revealed', Ashwini Kumar resolved within himself. Then the grand *mahotsav* started building in his mind.

Preparations

Ashwini Kumar started communicating with his likeminded colleagues and brothers in faith (the fellow disciples of Sri Sri Thakur). Amongst his legal fraternity were Harish Chandra Roy, Trailokya Sen, Pramath Sikder, Purna Saha, Birendra Nath Roy. There were doctors like Gokul Mondal and Satish Joyarder. Among other elites in the society were Yogen Sarkar, Krushna Chandra Das, Purna Chandra Kaviraj and Sushil Basu from Harinakundu in Jessore district.

Vishwaguru Mahotsav was held in the year when the world already passed through thirty long years of Sri Sri Thakur's incarnation. Of course, going by the motion of life cycle, this was the period of adolescence for Sri Sri Thakur's mission and movement. Historically, we find some building blocks were laid as foundation of his life play, in the run up to *Vishwaguru Mahotsav*. Clearly there were some built up forces which were looking for a public promulgation, which happened as a mega event in 1918 September in the town Kustiya.

The first factor responsible for creating that surge in the public was Sri Sri Thakur's charming persona, unusually affectionate touch and intimate reach out to one and all. His appearance was captivating, his behavior were attractive, such that everyone felt a compulsive urge to associate with him. Just a glimpse, silent accompaniment, attracted everyone like bees that swarm around honeyed flowers. The attraction was from within, natural, cardinal, as if springing from mind and soul. Everyone wanted to have conversation with him; no one wanted to be away from his sight. His ultra-fair physique, flowery smiling face, well proportionate youthful appearance, twin tender arms stretching up to knees and an image that silhouetted love were too precious to be missed out by anyone. Added to these shining features, was his redeeming mission and unflinching message providing solution to every query from every mind. There was unquestioning curiosity to know the angel, the fulfiller, the solved man.

The second factor in the run up to *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* that created the surge for expression of Sri Sri Thakur's divinity came from some devotees' urge to express their own realization, coming out of spiritual vision that Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra indeed descended from the highest realm that was the cause and genesis of creation. Foremost amongst them were: Ananta Nath Roy (popularly known as Ananta Maharaj) and Ashwini Kumar Biswas.

The third factor that led the ascendancy of Sri Sri Thakur's popularity came from people's experience about Sri Sri Thakur's abilities for doing things extraordinary and completely unusual. Sri Sri Thakur was seen to be knowing thoughts that were working in the minds of people. He could read unspoken words and used to respond to unarticulated needs. Sri Sri Thakur used to cure so called incurable diseases. He prevented imminent and unforeseen accidental happenings. All these miraculous happenings used to occur very normally with Sri Sri Thakur. All those piled up experiences created a public perception that Sri Sri Thakur was not a normal person; rather he was gifted with supernatural power. People at large felt obliged and got mesmerized; their need got fulfilled, their guilt were pardoned. People's prayers were answered. People started believing that here was a person, capable of bringing bliss and beauty, in the most unassuming and loving way. Who would not ingratiate a person who instantly and graciously caused peace, solace, calmness and hope in the mind of people?

The fourth development that prepared launching pad for the *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* was the setting created by incessant and tumultuous *kirtan* (chorus recitation of divine hymns) to the accompaniment of panel of heavy musical instruments. All the participants in the *kirtan* were dancing in frenzied mood. They enjoyed divine sensation; body, mind and soul symphonized to create highly charged energy. The *kirtans* were held in some community locations where people

from surrounding villages gathered. *Kirtans* were also held in processions, when the *kirtan* group moved from village to village. They walked long miles, 10 to 20 miles a day. The leaders were Satish Chandra Goswami and Kishori Mohan. Sri Sri Thakur often used to participate in *kirtans*. Sri Sri Thakur's participation used to create super natural atmosphere. At the height of that motion, Sri Sri Thakur used to get into state of *samaadhi*, when his body would fall flat, still, breathless and senseless. He used to leave this worldly plane and go to a different plane. His body would be sweating, his face bright and his forehead shining. Only symptom of his being alive was that the thumb of right feet would be trembling terribly, as if some kind of electrical vibration was taking place. *Samadhi* state would end slowly, when Sri Sri Thakur would ask for water, very eagerly. He would drink water, get up and would take some time for recovering to normal state.

An astounding and spiritually meaningful feature of this *samadhi* state was that Sri Sri Thakur used to voice some expressions. Forceful and high pitch sounds were pouring out of his lips. These were in different languages; at times there used to come different sounds other than human voice, different expressions like pain, exclamations etc. As if some messages and sounds, discordantly getting expressed from a different plane and different realms. These were messages of messiah that came in unconscious state. It was a wonderful phenomenon, not generally known and not seen. Some portions of those utterances have been recorded and published as a title 'Holy Book' (July, 1949).

Celebration of Birthday of *Avatars* (Incarnates)

Vishwaguru Mahotsav celebration was an extension of the practice of celebrating birthday of all past incarnates. The devotees in Kustiya started celebrating holy birthday of past incarnates, as they believed that the incarnates descended from the above and they carried the message of love and peace. There was hardly any difference amongst them. All the incarnates are respectable; they are ideal for the people. People from all religious sects used to gather in those celebrations and enjoy the company of each other. They used to dine together; exchanged notes and carried feelings of brotherhood. The celebration series of all the past prophets was named as 'Rishi Tarpan Utsav' by Sri Sri Thakur.

Sri Sri Thakur respected all the past incarnates. He loved each person irrespective of his or her religious affiliations. People from Christianity and from Islam got attracted to his love and took shelter under his benign loving appeal. Sri Sri Thakur encouraged the initiative of Kustiya devotees to celebrate the birthday of all past prophets. Sri Sri Thakur used to participate in all these celebrations, together with his associates and that used to add joy to the occasion. Besides the ideological reflection that the birthday celebration would do, Sri Sri Thakur advised a specific format of the celebration. He said, 'Celebrate *utsav*, only if you can feed the poor and depressed in the same style as you feed Brahmins; if you can wash their feet irrespective of their caste consideration. Otherwise, there is no purpose in conducting much hue and cry.'

The devotees, to the extent possible, carried out Sri Sri Thakur's wish in practice. They served the poor, they washed their feet, and used to breeze them with hand fan at the time of eating, that

soothed them from the heat. Those, who were not willing to take cooked food from Hindus, were offered rice and cash. There used to be worship, ritual of offering *bhog* and *aarti*, *kirtan* and *kirtan*-procession. After spending the day in the above programs, there used to be religious discourses and specific discussion on the life and message of the prophet and then closure of *utsav*.

As they celebrated the birthday of the past incarnates year after year, an idea struck that why would they not celebrate the birthday of the contemporary incarnate? Why not celebrate birthday of the present prophet who encapsulates and embody all the past prophets in himself?

Incarnation (*avatar*) is a natural phenomenon, whose significance is seldom realized timely. It is a strange phenomenon, whose root lies in divinity but its branches, flowers and fruits do manifest on human plane. The human form of God is called incarnate (*avatar*). Human appearance and divine power at work is a heady combination.

The passage of human civilization has witnessed the *avatar* phenomenon from time immemorial, ever since life came onto this earth. On the path of evolution, there have been appearances of this phenomenon. Life in motion took its maiden form in water in the shape of aquatics. This was followed by amphibian and then from animal to man in phases. Mythology tells us that at each juncture of this transition, there was an *avatar* in the form of fish (*matsya*), giant tortoise (*kurma*), boar (*kolha* or *baraha*), *narasimha* (hybrid of man and lion). There is also mention of a dwarf avatar (*Vamana*). These go well with the belief that every stage of evolution of life and consciousness, there was a milestone in the form of avatar. These five *avartars* are significant milestones, without having human faculties and social living.

The full-fledged human play of *avatar* in societal setting was seen from Sri Ramchandra onwards. Beginning with Sri Ramchandra, there has been a succession of *avatars* in the order of Sri Krishna, Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus, Lord Mohammed, Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramkrishna and Thakur Anukul Chandra. The latest and the eighth human incarnate is Sri Sri Thakur Anukul Chandra (1888-1969). Kustiya took lead in making the world know that the incarnate had indeed arrived, with us and was playing his mission. The mission must benefit the humanity. That was the abiding spirit of *Vishwaguru Mahotsav*.

The devotees in Kustiya came to realize that no time should be lost in recognizing and publicizing the incarnate (*avatar*) of the age. The object of incarnation is to serve the humanity to leapfrog on the path of evolution, overcoming the limitations of the past and present. Object is to bring happiness and joy for the people, reversing the tide of miseries that usually engulf large mass of people. Object is to unveil the vista of newness out of the monotony of tradition.

Vishwaguru Mahotsav was planned elaborately and meticulously. The *Mahotsav* was planned to be comprised of features like religious meetings, *kirtans*, fun and merrymaking. Integral part of the program was feeding the people and that was planned to be done sumptuously. Delicacies of local food items with pure ingredients were arranged. Ashwini Biswas drafted an invite. Innumerable posters and leaflets, announcing the arrival of *Vishwaguru* (world teacher) got printed. Arrangements were made for public announcement of the event in villages and towns. Everyone pressed himself / herself into mobilizing resources. Prime amongst the resource raisers were: Ashwini Kumar Biswas, Birendra Nath Roy, Dr. Gokul Mondal, Prafulla Roy, Dr. Satya Dutta and Satish Chandra Joyarder.

The invitation written by Ashwini Kumar Biswas was by way of an appeal, translated (from Bengali) and reproduced below, was actually a clarion call to the humanity to join the bandwagon of the latest prophet. It appeared that the text emanated not from the mind of the author, but from an unknown force on its march towards expression, revelation and demonstration.

The Invitation

Above the zone of truth and falsehood, prevails the supreme, that is one,
Came down, (for) redeeming the human race, set foot on the earth that is rotten.

Taking the form that is seen, lapsing into animation that remained suspended,
Crystal joy is the form that he holds, (I) adore the lord, love that is embodied.

Seen at many places at a time, being one, plays role that appears multiple,
Carrying the mast, of updated past, he is avatar, summation of the triple.

Bramha, Vishnu, Maheswar, redeemer the *Ishwar*, he is supreme father,
God in form, to carryout reform, he brings down, the sun, moon and star.

He plays his will, climbs the hill, of consciousness, supreme, at ease,
Brings voice from the void, no one he avoids, speaks words of promise.

Master, the creator, he remains beyond the reach of speech and mind,
Dispenses love, carrying all above, Anukul, he prevails in particles and wind.

Images he carries, words he speaks, please the heart of one and all,
Sinner and sufferer, fallen and trodden, rise to freedom, peace and miracle.

Hold him high, sitting at his feet, I learn how to live, laugh and be a person true,
He is my lord, lord of the universe, the anointed, I bow before the *Vishwa Guru*.

The world today is passing through a phase of intense sufferings and is looking for sigh of relief. People, cutting across the lines of religion and schools of thought, the great souls and high minds alike, are waiting for a redeemer, the supreme, who would descend from above and will spring the elixir of peace and tranquility. Christians say, Jesus will come; Muslims say, Imam Mehedi will come; Buddhists maintain that Maitreya will come; Hindus say, there are all symptoms of a great man, who we don't know, descending. Some realized persons express their view that the messiah has come, waiting to reveal himself soon. There is no certainty and finality of these assertions.

But we know for certain that he descends, not in any singular body, but in form of multiple great men, at many places in the world. This time around, we see culmination of all greatness in one person. Time has come to see him in full, in the way Vivekananda saw in Ramkrishna, the summation of all faiths and religions. World is about to witness the replay of the grand manifestation of the supreme power. It is no more in the realm of imagination, his grand play has commenced on this earth. The grand descend on the earth was preceded by a fabulous orchestration in the heaven, that was illuminated by lights of millions of suns. A golden staircase was ready for the descend, guarded by the angels at the entrance. The gracious *bramharshis* stood in attention with stretched hands for the salvation of the depressed and downtrodden. The emancipated souls, inhabiting the divine land, are moving door to door and distributing love elixir. If you are not converged into this pull, if you negate the stretched hands of the *bramharshis*, if the divine chariot returns empty without you on board, then you are in for deep pain and no one would sympathize you. You would continue to remain in deep slumber of ignorance that prevailed for millions of ages and would be tossed like string idols for few more ages to come.

We invite people from across the globe to celebrate birthday of that person who has incarnated from the region of celestial supremacy, goes to the state of suspended animation and brings the message from the unknown strata for the humanity down to the earth. He is physical yet ethereal; consummation of all the greatness of all the places at all times. By his sheer personal power of vibration and galvanization, he gravitates the world towards the center that facilitates each being towards salvation. You, the son of immortality! Even if you find it hard to believe; even if it appears utopia to you at this stage, come, as you must. With all the shreds of ambiguity, once place yourself at his benign feet. Take his shelter for the sake of conducting experiment. Remember, Guru can be tested with power of pursuit. Imagine the height and depth of power of pursuit that could be called for testing the *Vishwaguru*. We are least eligible, of negligible worth, devoid of power of pursuit; yet we have measured up to his benevolent grace. We consider ourselves glorified. And on that strength of conviction we proclaim the *Vishwaguru*. Of course, you can recognize him better as much to the degree of your endowment.

Dear brothers, my dear friends, just come forward; come together. Come as you like. Come with normalcy and simplicity of faith. Come with logic and reasoning. Come with whatever you have, may be with blind faith, and may be with high power inquisitive mind. Come as you are; closet

yourself with him. View his state of *samaadhi*, the highest manifestation of suspended animation; listen to utterances in trance. After all these, be yourself, do what impels you.

One more word to share. If your heart is oozing with a shred of true love, as you approach the ocean of love that the superman is, you will be overwhelmed with avalanche of love. You will laugh, will dance, and will sing; you will move into a state of utter wilderness. The inhibitions in you, in the form of hatred, shyness, fear, all will vanish to where one does not know. At the end, you will find yourself submerged in the ocean of consciousness, joy and responsiveness.

Venue of *Utsav*: Kustiya, Nadia

Date: 28-29 *Bhadra*, 1325; 14-15 September, 1918; Saturday & Sunday

Activities details: *Kirtan*, religious lecture, discourse, devotional songs, service to God-in-poor by distributing meals and cloths.

Appeal by:

Shri Harish Chandra Roy, Advocate
Shri Gokul Chandra Mondal, LMS
Shri Trailokya Nath Sen, Advocate
Shri Birendra Nath Roy,
Shri Satish Chandra Joyarder, LMP
Shri Ashwini Kumar Biswas, Legal Counsellor
Shri Yogendra Nath Sarkar, MA, BL
Shri Pramath Nath Sikder, BL
Shri Purna Chandra Saha, Advocate
Shri Krushna Chandra Das
Shri Sushil Chandra Basu, BA
Shri Purna Chandra Kaviraj, BA

The *Mahotsav* (The Grand Celebration)

Mahotsav office was set up in the large building of Gouri Shankar Agarwal. Rajwali Khan vacated his spacious mansion including the large field adjacent to it for the venue of the *Mahotsav*. The venue was contiguous to Mohini Mill and Mohini Mill took charge of electricity supply. Shrish Nandi, a railway engineer, assisted by Pramath Ganguly, took the responsibility of arranging the *pandal* (tent) for the *Mahotsav* at the venue. Inside the tent, there were provisions for stores, cooking and place for storing cooked food in some parts of the tent. Rail lines were laid from the cooking tent to service areas (at different places where people would sit and eat). Trolleys would carry the food items on the rails from the cooking tent to the service tents. Fried food items like *luchi* and *manda* etc would directly be served on the leaf-plates from the trolleys, rolling on the rail. Huge oil barrels were stocked in the store room. Oil would flow in pipes from the barrels to the cooking panes of very large sizes sitting on mega size cauldrons.

Sizeable and spacious buildings in the Kustiya town were arranged to accommodate guests. All the inhabitants of Kustiya, irrespective of their religious or regional affiliations, turned hosts for the *Mahotsav*. They happily took the responsibility of organizing the holy event. The business magnets of Kustiya market said, 'this kind of program requires huge finance. Never get worried on that account. We are committed. We will fund any amount required in the service of Sri Sri Thakur.' All the business owners in Kustiya instructed their employees, 'whatever is called for Thakur's *utsav* will be given; rice, pulses, vegetable oil, ghee and sugar; everything to be handed over free. Let business be blessed.' It was an event of mass participation, of dedication and of voluntary service. A spontaneous urge to be part of the flow of divinity was visible in Kustiya.

Vishwaguru Mahotsav was planned at Kustiya with explicit understanding that Sri Sri Thakur would participate in the program. At the age of thirty, Sri Sri Thakur was reaching out to places and people. Kustiya was considered to be his second home.

When the organizers of the *Mahotsav* formally approached Sri Sri Thakur to participate, Sri Sri Thakur expressed his unwillingness. He observed, "What is this? Why is this move to designate me as *vishwaguru* (world teacher)? Have I ever confided at you all that I am *vishwaguru* or avatar or that type? In fact, I took objection to your addressing me as 'Thakur' (meaning Godly person). You all did not register my protest. Finally, I had to concede, with a logic that I was one amongst those cooks who are also addressed as 'Thakur'."

Sri Sri Thakur further argued. "Will it help or cause benefit to people by declaring me as *vishwaguru* or *avatar*? People, in reality, do not have clear and definite idea about *avatar*? People carry some imaginary concept about *avatar* and that is what they want to see in actuality. And if that does not materialize, they backtrack. If instead, they carry image of a man of higher value, a realized and a humanitarian person and they get to see such qualities in words and in character, then they feel obliged. People follow what such iconic person says; they tend to get influenced by such person and get benefited. If a few such persons come up, then lot of works get done by them. People who come here out of impulsive urge and by excitement do not sustain for long. Because, their reality assessment do not match with their preconceived notion and their faith hardly gets anchored. They seldom follow the precepts. They remain in the zone of blind faith. Does any great work get accomplished by those having blind faith? What really is required is abundance of true faith. You surely are aware that the faithful has infinite power. If someone develops friendship with me, starts loving me, follows my words and desires, develops capability and becomes worthy, then only he can discover incarnate in me, if any such stuff is there in me. Then he would say like what Arjuna said in Gita, 'my Lord, I could not recognize you earlier. I have addressed you as friend. Pardon me for my ignorance.'

Sri Sri Thakur continued. 'For me to come like a *vishwaguru* or *avatar* is analogous to becoming leprosy patient. Like people hesitate to touch a leprosy patient, in the same way, they hesitate

to mix well with such haloed person like *Vishwaguru*. I therefore implore you all not to create hurdle in my work by branding me as untouchable. Despite my request, if you all indulge into such act that render me handicapped like Jagannath, then you all have to shoulder the responsibility of my work. You hardly have scope to backtrack then’.

Sri Sri Thakur posed a question to the group. “Keep your hands on your heart and tell me who has got that realization that I am the world teacher? What is the basis of your announcement? If it is a concoction, then you all will be deceived. It won’t benefit anyone. Who amongst you has really understood what I am and is convinced that I am the redeemer?”

“Without proper enquiry, without grasping the underlying principles, you all are indulging in to some propagation; the same people may turn around in future and hurl all abuses at me”, Sri Sri Thakur continued after a pause.

The team leaders, the proponents of *Vishwaguru Mahotsav*, delved into self-enquiry. Depressed, they turned to Ananta Maharaj. Maharaj understood the gravity of the issue raised by Sri Sri Thakur, advised the team to stay put at Himaitpur and left for Kashipur, into his meditation temple. Ananta Maharaj remained inside the meditation temple for five days. He said, after coming out of meditation temple, “Please go and celebrate *utsav*. I once again viewed, He is the one who is there. You may call him *Vishwaguru* or *Purushottam*, whatever you like. The name is not called out of mere love; the name is valid, backed by proof. Sri Sri Thakur will attend your *utsav*.”

Sri Sri Thakur did not agree in the first place for joining the *Mahotsav*. The arrangement for the *Mahotsav* was almost complete. How could the *Mahotsav* be withdrawn? Sri Sri Thakur then proposed, ‘instead of celebrating my birthday, you make it a conventional *Mahotsav*, in which let people be serviced; there will be religious discourses, *kirtan* and dance-drama. That would be fine’. The delegate of devotees returned in empty hand to Kustiya. Everyone in Kustiya was crestfallen? They never expected resistance from Sri Sri Thakur. ‘What is the way out?’ the devotees in Kustiya wondered. It was not an event organized by the disciples of Sri Sri Thakur alone. The event had contributory participation by all the inhabitants of Kustiya, which included general people from all communities like Muslim, Jain, and Christian etc. How were the organizers going to face all these people?

Having moved that far and after mobilizing so many people, calling off the *Mahotsav* at that stage was certainly not a creditable option. Sri Sri Thakur’s consent was somehow to be obtained. Again Satya Dutta and some others rushed to Himaitpur. This time, they reached and gathered around Mother Manomohini Devi. They were well aware that if Mother could be made to agree, then the mother-hearted son’s disagreement would melt like ice to water. When mother was approached, she also expressed her reservation in the first place. ‘Are you all playing childish

game with my son?’ said the Mother. However, as she realized the serious intent of the all the people, she ultimately acquiesced. When Sri Sri Thakur came to know about mother’s intent, even then it was not easy to get Sri Sri Thakur’s agreement. He said, ‘Mother will join your *utsav* and that would be enough’. Sri Sri Thakur besought everyone’s acceptance and said, ‘please do not involve me in this event. I am least inclined to be present over there.’

The devotee group desperately reached at Mother’s feet. ‘Mother, how can the program happen without Sri Sri Thakur?’ they expressed their utter anguish. ‘We need Sri Sri Thakur and you will have to make Sri Sri Thakur agree and bring him to the *Mahotsav* by any means. When you have acceded our first supplication, you will have to fulfill the second one.’ The devotee group did not leave anything to chances.

Mother saw merit of the submission and reached Sri Sri Thakur. ‘When these boys are urging so much, then come with me; let’s make a round. I will be in your company and will ensure that nothing untoward happens to you’, said the Mother.

For Sri Sri Thakur, Mother’s words can hardly be transgressed. He said, ‘What do I do when you are also pitching for it so intensely? I have never crossed your words and this time also it will be so. I will accompany you.’

When Sri Sri Thakur agreed to join the *Mahotsav*, he had few pieces of specific advice. He did not want to sit on the stage. He wanted to be available at one place; normally it used to be someone’s home. Sri Sri Thakur advised that people must be served well with food and clothes, particularly the poor.

Devotees returned to Kustiya in cheerful mood, having secured Sri Sri Thakur’s agreement. Dr. Satya Dutta stayed back to escort Sri Sri Thakur and the Mother.

At 11 pm in the evening before the day of *Mahotsav*, Sri Sri Thakur, together with the Mother and Dr. Satya Dutta landed at the steamer station at Kustiya. Steamer station was teeming with crowd that assembled to receive Sri Sri Thakur. Multitude of people were eager to get a glimpse of Sri Sri Thakur. As the steamer moored and got berthed on the pier, roaring applaud to the accompaniment of conches and play of musical instruments rhapsodized the air. Crowd jostled to take precedence for seeing and paying obeisance to Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur viewed the scene from distance after off-boarding the steamer. He bowed down, touched his feet on the ground before the surging crowd. People also reciprocated the *pranam* at their respective standing places. That was how a near stamped situation was avoided. Heaps of flowers and garland got deposited on Sri Sri Thakur and on the Mother.

From the steamer station, Sri Sri Thakur moved around the *utsav* sites. He moved from tent to tent where arrangements were made for the stage (for the sessions), for people to rest, for

people to take food and for storing the materials. He inspected every aspects of arrangements. The place of arrangements were illuminated and were glittering. Sri Sri Thakur called Shrish Nandi and appreciated for the innovative and creative arrangements. While leaving the site, Sri Sri Thakur called all the organizers and said, 'Pay individual attention to the guests. There should not be slightest deficiency in service and care. No one should go unfed.' That was Sri Sri Thakur's first and last visit to the *utsav pandal*. He did not come to *utsav pandal* again. From there in the night, Sri Sri Thakur reached the house of Prafulla Roy.

Sea of humanity started converging in Kustiya town since the previous day of utsav. All means of transport, namely rail, steamer and boat, off loaded passengers in Kustiya. The number swelled on the previous day to ten times the estimated gathering. People were fed during the whole night, as they poured in. Volunteers roamed around the town and searched every house for guests, if any, left without food. About four to five large buildings were kept secluded for ladies and their food stuff was delivered at their respective places.

Reputed *kirtan* troops arrived the previous night. They were famous in those days in whole of Bangladesh. The lead singers were: Ramdas Babaji, Ganesh Kirtiniya, Chota Rasik, Ramananda, Hrushikesh and others.

Sushil Chandra Basu and Radha Vinod Basu were there to receive guests at Kustiya railway station. Radha Vinod went around, distributed leaflets and returned on the first day of *utsav*.

On the first day of *utsav* arrived Saakya Singh Sen. Saakya Singh Sen was son of Chandra Sekhar Sen, a reputed barrister in Kolkata. On landing at Kustiya, he said to Sushil Chandra Basu, 'There are posters in Kolkata inviting to *Vishwaguru Mahotsav*. I have been deputed by the people of Kolkata to have a close look at the *Vishwa Guru*, to get firsthand knowledge about his views and his mission. The elites of Kolkata are eagerly waiting to know my views about *Vishwa Guru*.'

While travelling, Sushil Chandra Basu had discussion about the *Mahotsav* and about Sri Sri Thakur. Saakya Singh heard all and then remarked, 'I am happy to hear your account. But I am not able to firm up any definite view until I see Sri Sri Thakur.' Sushil Chandra Basu arranged to put up Saakya Singh on the first floor accommodation in the Union Bank building, took a time from Sri Sri Thakur about his meeting at five in the afternoon on the next day.

In the morning on the first day, huge pieces of clothing were distributed to poor and dispossessed. After cloth distribution, there was distribution of food. Thereafter came rain with thunder. However, rain situation was managed on the first day. It caused massive inconvenience on the second day, when it rained torrentially. Places where people were to sit and eat got slushed. Volunteers had to deliver the eatables at the places where people were putting up. As the number of congregation went much higher than estimated, almost ten times, it was not possible to supply food from centralized kitchen. Then food stalls were opened at different places

on the main road. These were opened up by *Marwaris* (business community), affluent and reputed houses and shop keepers. Then also the crowd could not be fed totally. When it became unmanageable, the organizers desperately ran up to Sri Sri Thakur and prayed for discontinuation of the downpour. Sri Sri Thakur said, 'nature is nobody's enemy. It would rain during the rainy season. Make adequate arrangement, keeping that in view. Enhance your capability. As I see, it is good that it rained. Unless it rained, the environment here, out of such huge congregation and the left over from nature's call, would have got much polluted. Nature has helped you.'

During *utsav*, Sri Sri Thakur stayed in the house of Prafulla Roy and Ashwini Biswas. Large number of people always used to throng over there for visiting Sri Sri Thakur. Some of them had many questions for Sri Sri Thakur. One of them was Saakya Singh Sen. He satisfied himself with all his queries, took the blessings of initiation (*diksha*) and returned to Kolkata.

Sri Sri Thakur' Desire

The analysis done in this section, on hindsight, is not at all meant to belittle the great event that *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* was. It should not even remotely be understood that there was any lacunae in the efforts made by the great devotees of Sri Sri Thakur. Nor is it meant to discount the tremendous impact it created in the world outside East Bengal. Objective of discussion under this heading is to know how real propagation in the line of Sri Sri Thakur's desire can happen.

About a month or two after the *Vishwaguru Mahotsav*, Sri Sri Thakur during discussion observed the following. Perhaps the context of discussion was how to fruitfully work for the Lord? What measures could possibly be taken for the propagation of Sri Sri Thakur's ideology?

Sri Sri Thakur said, 'A person gets wholly interested in Lord and makes Lord's interest his own, if his mind and heart remain attached with Lord. That tendency, the inquisitiveness to know Lord's need and the urge to get Lord's need fulfilled help to shape up the person's life and habits. A composite alchemy of a person's behavior and conducts, feelings, expressions, words, indications and action is the asset that a person carries in his character. This character is the nucleus around which a person becomes a center of others' interest. As the person gets more and more into serving others, and through acts of sympathy, feelings and aid, fulfils others, he gathers other people around him.'

Sri Sri Thakur continued after a long pause. 'If you shift one person from one ideological view point to another by preaching lofty stuff, by telling stories of miracle and by argument and you don't form that character that manifest those ideology, then the shift does not last very long. Someone else can pull that person to another ideological base by placing a more forceful arguments, stories of miracle etc. You all build yourself such that people will be swayed towards you by charming personality. They will see the difference.'

Ashwini Biswas, himself charmed by Sri Sri Thakur, mulled over every word from Sri Sri Thakur. 'Yes, what Sri Sri Thakur says is true', he thought within himself. 'Can I ever be such? Can I ever build that character in me?'

Sri Sri Thakur instantly turned towards Ashwini Biswas and said, 'Do and you shall be able to do.'

In continuation of the subject, Sri Sri Thakur resumed. 'Why did not you reap the full expected outcome out of the massive *utsav* that you organized? You definitely had good intention of creating a sensation in the world; you wanted to shake up. Some parts were done like a stupid does. You all did not toe my line completely. All were fine, done with devotion. If it were not the desire to place me in the front, to project my image the way it was done, then the results would have been still better.'

Ashwini Kumar went deeper in exploration. He did own up the lapse pointed out by Sri Sri Thakur. He could see the limitation very glaringly. In an apologetic tone, he said, 'Thakur, What is the worth of our personality? Our own image would not have succeeded as much. Why would people come around us?'

Sri Sri Thakur interjected. 'That is precisely why I am saying that you all bloom up, come to the fore and work. Then work will be more vigorous. I have said this all the time, you all have not taken my words seriously. Secure a position for yourself individually. Stand up with glory before the society, grow in stature. From the high position, go on emitting fire that would burn the sins and sufferings from the world.'

The discussion with Ashwini Biswas reflected Sri Sri Thakur's desire that his contemporary disciples were the apostles, who were the real saviors. They had the benefit of seeing the stark divinity that Sri Sri Thakur revealed. Sri Sri Thakur the divine wanted to be multiplied in so many devotees who in turn would serve the mission and carry the message. The devotees in those days were fortunate to enjoy the benefit of Sri Sri Thakur's physical touch, feelings and view, both in temporal form as well as in spiritual form. Sri Sri Thakur inspired them and propelled them to ascend the height from where they would glitter like stars and would illuminate the humanity. Perhaps that was what got mentioned during Sri Sri Thakur's personal review of the *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* with Ashwini Kumar Biswas.

Sri Sri Thakur wanted his disciples to rise to such pedestal, by strength of conviction and by blaze of their achievement, that they could set themselves as example for others. A devotee is a dedicated person with unending program in hand for the welfare of each soul on the earth. A devotee is face of his Guru. He works for the Guru and the Guru works through the devotee. When *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* ostensibly wanted to put Sri Sri Thakur on the world stage, Sri Sri Thakur wanted his disciples to decorate the stage. The effort and the desire of the devotees and those of Sri Sri Thakur were indeed complementary to each other. But the onus was expectedly heavy on the part of the devotees. Devotees enjoy eternal bliss, out of wealth of love for the Lord; nevertheless they also suffer from divine discontentment, as they have so much to serve.

Related to the subject, there was intimate conversation between Sri Sri Thakur and Ashwini Kumar Biswas. The conversation happened in the year following the year of *Vishwaguru Mahotsav*. The site was bank of river Padma and it was night time. Ashwini Biswas with a view to dig deeper into the self of Sri Sri Thakur reminded him of a couple of questions raised by Birendra Nath Roy.

Birendra Nath Roy (pet name Biru Roy) was a gifted personality. He was blessed by Sri Sri Thakur in so many ways. His father, Sita Prasanna Roy was an engineer and was working in PWD. His grandfather Harish Chandra Roy was a well-known advocate in Kustiya court. Biru Roy passed undergraduate law degree from Kolkata. That was the time, during 1905, when Bengal was politically on fire, agitating against the proposal of partition of provincial Bengal into two (West Bengal and East Bengal) during the regime of Viceroy Curzon. Biru Roy was an activist, orator, organizer in the *Swadeshi* movement that raged across the length and breadth of India. He was acquainted with top leaders of India's independence movement during that era. Besides leaders from Bengal like Bipin Pal, Surendra Nath Bandopadhaya, Rash Bihari Basu and Aurobindo Ghose, Biru Roy developed contact with other national leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Biru Roy after passing law, stayed in his house at *Amla Pada* in Kustiya, together with his uncle (father's younger brother) Prafulla Chandra Roy, who was an advocate. The family was of Brahmin varna belonging to Barendra clan, original inhabitant of *Alampur* village, ten miles south away from Kustiya town.

Sometime after 1906, Biru Roy was persuaded by his uncle Prafulla Chandra Roy to visit Himaitpur, primarily to know Sri Sri Thakur. By then Sri Sri Thakur was known in Kustiya. But as Biru Roy was moving around the country and was engaged in political activities for the country, he till then had not come in Sri Sri Thakur's acquaintance. His uncle Prafulla Chandra Roy and his grandfather Harish Chandra Roy were already been disciples of Sri Sri Thakur. Advocate Harish Chandra Roy was friend of Dr. Gokul Mondal and through his contact the former came to know Sri Sri Thakur. At Dr. Gokul Mondal's invitation, Sri Sri Thakur once visited the home of Harish Chandra Roy.

Biru Roy reluctantly visited Himaitpur being escorted by his uncle Prafulla Roy on a Saturday afternoon, after attending court work. When they got down at Pratap-pur steamer station and walked up in the direction of ashram, they were received en route with great cordiality by no one other than Sri Sri Thakur. It was getting dark and Sri Sri Thakur accosted their way. 'Dear brother, are you here; just arrived?' Greeting them Sri Sri Thakur embraced Prafulla Roy. He also embraced the young Biru and said, 'I have been waiting and looking forward to your arrival.'

Biru Roy was taken aback for a moment having seen that the uncle's Guru was a fine person with extremely sweet and endearing behavior. There was no visual manifestation of a conventional

Guru. Here was a lovable person with sincere and straight dealings. How did he know that the uncle and nephew duo from Kustiya were on their way and they were to reach at that time?

Biru Roy spent the night in Himaitpur ashram; relished the food cooked by Sri Sri Thakur's wife, adorable Laxmi mother Sarashi Bala Devi and served by mother Manomohini Devi. An unusual heavenly joy waved inside Biru Roy's mind. The natural environment in the ashram and the unpretentious behavior of inmates created utmost satisfaction and curiosity in Biru Roy. He got up early morning to the tune of *kirtan*. The lone star in the eastern sky was still glittering, as if heralding the sun. The water in the river touching the horizon looked misty. Some birds flapped their wings across Biru Roy's ears when he unknowingly advanced towards the group in *kirtan*. Soon Biru found himself dancing amongst the *kirtan* team.

Biru was roaming on the bank of river Padma, lost to himself when he saw Sri Sri Thakur sitting with a bowl of oil, getting ready for bath. He took Biru closed to himself, unbuttoned his shirt, massaged oil on his body and took him along to river Padma for bath. Biru got himself bathed in the mother like love of Sri Sri Thakur.

After lunch, Sri Sri Thakur took Biru to a room where Sri Sri Thakur would take rest. Lying on his back on the bedstead, Sri Sri Thakur caught hold Biru's right hand and pressed it on his (Sri Sri Thakur's) chest. 'Dada, I suffer from a severe disease', muttered Sri Sri Thakur.

Biru retorted. 'What! You are afflicted with disease? I don't think so; it does not appear from your handsome physique; you are shining. Moreover, you are a doctor.'

Sri Sri Thakur heard Biru and reasoned, 'yes, I am a doctor. Does it mean that I can never be attacked by any illness? Press your palm on my heart and examine by yourself, if I am into any illness?'

Biru just followed Sri Sri Thakur's words and put his left hand on the latter's chest and tried to feel his heartbeat. Yes, heart was beating normally, rhythmically. He reported the same to Sri Sri Thakur. Then Sri Sri Thakur asked Biru to examine his heart once again closely.

Biru placed his hand on Sri Sri Thakur's chest once again. To his surprise, this time the heart beat was no more found. Biru then brought his ear close to Sri Sri Thakur's chest and tried to hear the sound. No, there was no vibration. He pressed the pulse and felt no beat. He then found that there was no respiration; eye balls static. 'Did Sri Sri Thakur undergo cardiac arrest?' A perplexed Biru swiftly ran for his uncle. He found uncle in the dispensary of Ananta Maharaj. Dr. Gokul Mondal was also there. Gokul Mondal was putting up in ashram for last two days. 'Sri Sri Thakur has fallen sick', Biru hastened up to Gokul Mondal and urged him to hurry up to examine Sri Sri Thakur.

All of them ran up to the cottage where Sri Sri Thakur was lying. Gokul Mondal enquired, 'Thakur, how are you feeling?' Before Sri Sri Thakur responded, Biru indicated Dr. Gokul Mondal to examine the heart. Sri Sri Thakur nodded and gave consent to check his heart.

Dr. Gokul Mondal did not find heart in stethoscope and punched stethoscope again and again. He examined the pulse, there was no pulse. But Sri Sri Thakur was visibly conscious and was speaking. Dr. Gokul handed over the stethoscope to Maharaj and urged him to examine Sri Sri Thakur's heart. Maharaj minutely observed and found that the heart was beating occasionally and then getting stopped. Same was the case with pulse. Maharaj was aware, as experienced previously, that Sri Sri Thakur's heartbeat used to get stopped at the time of *samadhi*. But this time around, Sri Sri Thakur was not in *samadhi*; this time Sri Sri Thakur was in natural state. There was no sign of any illness. He was having conversation. Everyone became worried. Suddenly, Sri Sri Thakur cleared the air and pointing to Biru Roy said, 'this happens to me occasionally. And that is why I said that I was having a serious illness.'

Biru Roy arrived in ashram in the evening of Saturday and left in the morning of Monday. He carried with him a load of curiosity and anxiety. He had to probe deeper to know how could Sri Sri Thakur play hide and seek with life and death. The only way, he thought, was to unravel the mystery from the player himself, who has mastered the art.

Biru Roy found himself in ashram after one or two weeks. This time he travelled alone and out of his own accord.

Same reception, same cordiality, same intimacy. 'Wonderful my dear brother. I can hardly express, how much happy I am at your sight. I remain hungry of man's love for me. I normally don't feel like parting anyone's company. Come again, as you came now, whenever you get time', said Sri Sri Thakur.

Biru Roy this time stayed for longer duration, leaving aside his activities in *swadeshi* movement and his duty in court. He could not go without obtaining clarification on the mystery of life and death that he viewed during his last visit.

One afternoon, Sri Sri Thakur was sitting with Biru Roy in the cottage on the river bank. Suddenly a storm started brewing. The sands on the Padma river bank began swirling and took violent turn. Sri Sri Thakur shut the doors and window of the cottage and was seated on the bedstead, taking Biru by his side. In the dim visibility inside the room, Sri Sri Thakur stretched his hand towards Biru and said, 'Gently rub on my arm, I am getting a numbing sensation'.

As Biru held Sri Sri Thakur's arm and moved his palm on the former's arm, Biru observed flash of spark emanating from Sri Sri Thakur's hands. For a moment, Biru Roy mistook it as flame and tried to cover up the flame by wrapping his clothes. Then he saw the rays got spread all over Sri Sri Thakur's body. The rays filled the house with glow of brightness. The brightness was embellished by the soft smile that was spotted on Sri Sri Thakur's face.

A spooked Biru Roy composed himself. 'I cannot allow myself to unnerve, when I am testing Sri Sri Thakur', Biru said to himself. But he could hardly hold his fear within and let out a strident scream.

In a tone of amusement and encouragement Sri Sri Thakur said, 'No purpose, if you get scared and shout. Be calm; get consoled.'

An overwhelmed Biru sought solace and said, 'Thakur, please tell me what is this sight?'

'*Bhajan*', said Sri Sri Thakur tersely.

'*Bhajan*?' Biru sought reassurance. Obviously, he was clueless.

Sri Sri Thakur, 'Yes, this is outcome of *bhajan*. Practice of *bhajan* makes this to happen.'

Biru's mind got opened up to a passage to heaven. He must try out *bhajan*. 'How does one practice *bhajan*?' asked Biru to Sri Sri Thakur.

Sri Sri Thakur, 'Nothing much. Need to practice *Japa*, meditation and remain engaged in Guru's service.'

Biru Roy was averse to rituals, worship and other religious practices like prayer and meditation from childhood days. But he expressed his interest for these rites, as he got something unknown, mysterious and yet real. For few days, he lingered in proximity of Sri Sri Thakur; raised discussion on the subject of *bhajan* and played all tricks to get Sri Sri Thakur's favour. He wanted to know how to enter into the world of treasure that he had glimpsed at Sri Sri Thakur.

One day Sri Sri Thakur offered *diksha* to Biru Roy and made him to practice meditation under his personal supervision for few nights. An indoctrinated Biru Roy returned to Kustiya and got himself engaged in working for Sri Sri Thakur. Ashwini Biswas, who was a close friend of Biru Roy, was one amongst first few persons to get into the spell of Sri Sri Thakur, from the lead provided by Biru Roy.

In response to questions of Biru Roy referred by Ashwini Biswas, Sri Sri Thakur said, 'To the extent I recall, he (Biru Roy) wanted to know if I am *avatar* (God incarnate) and *bhagavan* (God). How do I answer this? People carry deeply held preconceived idea about God and *avatar*. Answer may not exactly fit to that idea; it may hurt their belief and it may harm them. The other day, someone insisted me to admit that I was *avatar*. I said, no, I was not. But he was in no mood to leave me alone. How do I accept it? But he hardly appreciated as to why I could not admit that. He was not quite impressed by my reply as his own notion was not admitted by me. I know for certain, that I was, I am and I will be – all the time in one form. I do not feel God separately; beyond myself. I am all in one, whatever you may name. There is no change in me; change does not happen. Does that mean I have to become *avatar*? I fail to see such God, separate from me, who becomes *avatar*? I am all, expressed outside, and apparently do appear to be different. I feel that I always remain in one form, in this physique and at everywhere. Irrespective of the fact that I am in this form or otherwise, how do I match with different strange ideas of *avatar*, which people carry? If

you say *Bhagavan* or God as presiding deity of any division of the universe, I do not see that is outside me and beyond myself. If there is any descend, then it is me and it is of me.'

Ashwini Biswas made an observation which goes to suggest that the subject was becoming more than what he could comprehend. He said, 'As I see, the mango is bigger than my palm and therefore, I am not able to see the boundary of the thought.' Ashwini Biswas summoned strength and said, 'Thakur, you know, Biru Roy holds the view that your parents and brothers have encircled you and are coming in the way of your rendering good for the world. He wants to alienate you from their clutches, make you detached from everything and make you to move around the world. He himself would like to live life of renunciation.'

Sri Sri Thakur said, 'I am aware that he is a completely detached person and he is right from his perspective and as a person with human intelligence. There is, however, an inconsistency. If I can do something good for the world, then I definitely know the 'how' of it? Therefore, does it make sense that I have to roam around with him as per his idea? If I have that capacity, then is it not right to allow me to have my way? And if I do not have the capacity, then there is no sense in moving from place to place, carrying me on your shoulder'.

Sri Sri Thakur continued. 'The first point is that the way Biru da and you are doing so much of propaganda holding me as Thakur and *Vishwaguru* etc. gives a clear impression that you believe in me and attribute something special to me in comparison with other people. Otherwise, why would you make this kind of propaganda? It is never that I have advised you to do any such thing. You all are educated and intelligent people. I am a child and fool before you, by age and by education. On this background, why so much questions on my working? Why so much judgment? Will it not be proper to accept what I am doing as right? You all have tested every bit of me and tested so much that nobody has ever done, nor anybody will ever do. When you have accepted me as something after testing me for three years, then is there scope for further testing? Then whole life will go like this? When will you work as per my words, with belief that everything I do has deeper object? No more test, after what ought to be done before the test. After that, there is place only for firm and unshakable faith. You all have arrived a stage, at which, if I wish you to do impossible task like catching the moon, you will attempt that without applying your logic. If I say, you leave aside all meditation and reflection and just dig the earth and you will be liberated, then you must get engaged in digging. You have seen me enough; now, have unquestioning faith. Express what you know as truth. No fear. Never compromise your faith with that of someone else's and belittle your faith. Do you think, the supreme father will leave you aside? Supreme father has sustained you much with food and beverages; he subjected himself to your assessment hundred times; now when it is time for him to put you to work, and if you do not do, indulge yourself with futile analysis, do you think he would give up? He will get his work done by any means even if that requires hurting you.'

Conclusion

Vishwaguru Mahotsav is now left hundred years back. Its message and mission, corollary to those of the *avatar* of the age, are rolling live in the annals of time. *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* was a significant milestone in the process of Sri Sri Thakur's revelation (for the humanity). The purpose and the process of Sri Sri Thakur's revelation is playing out with the passage of time. As it appears, the process of revelation is continuing on path *ad infinitum*. It is a mighty force, might be visibly slow and silent, that carries creations and culture to ever new level of existence and sensitivity, spurring on its way innovation, energy and enterprise. The mission of the *avatar* have been to give meaning to life and to morph life in its motion. The mission and its messiah are propelling us to discover our life, with its endless diversity and propensity.

There arises a compulsion for humanity to heed to the invitation of Ashwini Kumar Biswas. The invitation written in 1918 was call of time, call for love and call for life's lore. The invitation remains valid till date for transformation of life. What transpired was that Sri Sri Thakur did not want to be projected at the center stage, whereas he wanted his disciple to build themselves to be the saviours of the society and be active on the stage. That was a great mission and that thrusts massive responsibility on all of us.

If the philosophy of *Vishwaguru Mahotsav* is taken in its spirit, then the mission till date remains a work in progress. The call is being renewed and reiterated. Let the eternal celebration of divinity keep each one of us healthy, balanced, active and inquisitive.

