

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA

*(Diary Leaves)*

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[Prof. Roerich is one of the leading figures of the world in contemporary cultural life. In this appreciative article on the great saint he shows how the thoughts about the Good, which Sri Ramakrishna so generously taught, would awaken the best sides of human hearts irrespective of their nationality.]

We are in the deserts of Mongolia. It was hot and dusty yesterday. From far away thunder was approaching. Some of our friends became tired from climbing up the stony holy hills of Shiret Obo. While already returning to the camp, we noticed in the distance a huge elm-tree—"karagatch," lonely towering amidst the surrounding endless desert. The size of the tree, its somewhat familiar outlines, attracted us into its shadow. Botanical considerations lead to believe that in the wide shade of the giant there may be some interesting herbs for us. Soon all co-workers gathered around the two mighty stems of the karagatch. The deep, deep shadow of the tree covered over fifty feet across. The powerful tree-stems were covered with phantastic burr growths. In the rich foliage birds were singing and the beautiful branches were stretched out into all directions, as if wishing to give shelter to all pilgrims.

On the sands, around the roots, innumerable trails made by animals were visible. Next to the broad imprints of a wolf were small hooves of the dzereen, the local antelope. A horse had also passed here and next to it was the heavy footstep of a bull. All sorts of birds had been here. Apparently the entire local population visited the welcoming shelter of the giant. The elm-karagatch especially reminded us of the huge banyan trees of India. Such trees were the meeting place of blessed

gatherings. Many travellers found there both bodily and spiritual rest. Sacred narratives were chanted under the inviting branches of the banyan tree. And thus the lonely giant karagatch in the Mongolian desert vividly turned our memory to the shadow of the banyan. The mighty branches of the karagatch reminded us also of other great achievements of India. What a joy to think of India !

Thoughts turned to the radiant giant of India—Sri Ramakrishna. Around this glorious name there are so many respectful definitions. Sri, Bhagavân, Paramahansa—all best offerings through which the people wish to express their esteem and reverence. The consciousness of a nation knows how to bestow names of honour. And after all, above all most venerable titles, there remains over the whole world the one great name—Ramakrishna. The personal name has already changed into a great all-national, universal concept. Who has not heard the Blessed Name ! The conception of goodness and benevolence truly befits him. Except for petrified hearts, who would oppose the Good !

We recollect how in various countries has grown the understanding of the radiant Teaching of Ramakrishna. Beyond shameful words of hatred, beyond evil mutual destruction—the word of Bliss, which is close to every human heart, spreads widely like the mighty branches of the sacred banyan

tree. On the paths of human searching, these calls of goodwill were shining like beacons. We ourselves witnessed and have often heard how books of Ramakrishna's Teaching were as if unexpectedly found by sincere seekers. We ourselves came across the book in a most unusual way.

Hundreds of thousands, even an entire million of pilgrims gather on the memorable day in the name of the Blessed Bhagavân. They gather, being called by an inner impulse of the heart, in goodwill and they become rejuvenated by blissful remembrances and strivings. Is this not a most remarkable expression of the voice of the people! This is the nation's judgment, the reverence of the people, which cannot be compelled nor forcefully commanded. As wonderful lights they spread from one to another forming an inexhaustible flame, hence such national reverence is not dimmed, but radiates throughout the times of contemporary world commotions.

Too many crises grip the people at present. It could happen that the spirit of the people could become confused and distracted from the spiritual fundamentals. The wail about the shattering of the foundations is so often heard nowadays. But is not this million of pilgrims, who assembled by their own free will, the best living proof that above the confusions of today, there lives in the hearts an inexhaustible spirituality and striving towards the Good. We are optimists and conquer all obstacles through goodwill.

Behold, on an unbearably hot day, not being frightened of distances, pilgrims are hastening, in order to venerate the memory of Ramakrishna. Is this not a remarkable event! For it is not an official duty which brings together all the multifarious travellers. A pure heart and a sincere striving im-

peratively leads them to the places consecrated by the name of Ramakrishna. Such a spiritual gathering is the most precious evidence in our days. It is wonderful that amidst the heavy labour, amidst doubts, amidst depression, people yet can be lit by the flame of gratitude and veneration. Their hearts call them together. They are gathering not for destruction, nor for quarrels, nor for insults, but in order to unite their thoughts upon the Good.

Great power is contained in a united benevolent thought. Humanity should value such sublime manifestations, which are the cause of all these unifying and constructive thoughts. Creative is the thought of Good! The good never destroys, it untiringly elevates and builds. By commands of good are affirmed those eternal foundations, which have been ordained to humanity on all the best tablets. The call of the Blessed Bhagavân for creative Good will for ever remain the great spiritual heritage of humanity.

Light is especially precious during the hours of darkness. May the Light be eternally preserved! In his parables about the Good, Ramakrishna never belittled anyone. And not only in the Teaching, in parables, but in his own deeds he never tolerated bemeaning. Let us remember his reverent attitude towards all religions. Such broad understanding will move even a stony heart. In his broad outlook, the Blessed Bhagavân of course possessed a real straight-knowledge. His power of healing he in turn gave out freely. He never hid anything useful. He exhausted his strength in innumerable blessed givings. And even his illness of course was due to such constant self-sacrificing outpouring of his spiritual energy for the healing of others. And in these generous gifts Ramakrishna manifested his greatness.



HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS GATHER ON THE MEMORABLE DAY IN THE NAME OF THE BLESSED BHAGAVAN



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In all parts of the world the name of Ramakrishna is venerated. Also is revered Swami Vivekananda, who symbolizes true discipleship. The names of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and the glorious host of their followers remain on the most remarkable pages of the history of the spiritual culture of India. The astounding depth of thought, which is characteristic of India, the beautiful manifestation of Guru and Chelâ—remind the whole world of basic ideals. Ages pass, whole civilizations change, but the Guru and the Chelâ remain in the same wise relationship, which was since antiquity established in India. Many millenniums ago the words of Wisdom were already recorded in India. And how many more millenniums were they preserved even before, in verbal transmission. And in this sacred mouth to ear transmission they were kept perhaps even safer than on written records. The ability to keep up the correct meaning depends on a developed wise consciousness and in this is contained the application of precious stones of the past for the radiant future.

Not only the everlasting value of the Teaching of Good affirmed by Ramakrishna, but precisely the necessity of these words especially for our times is unquestionable. When spirituality, as such, is being so often refuted through wrongly interpreted formulae, then the radiant constructive affirmation as a beacon becomes especially precious. One has but to know the colossal number of editions of the Ramakrishna Mission. One has but to remember the large number of cities in which this Mission has its branches. These

figures require no exaggeration. There is no unnatural nervousness and no pre-meditatedness in these quiet thought-creating gatherings. Everything is deeply realized not in tumult and rush, but grows in highest commensuration.

The thoughts about the Good, which Ramakrishna so generously taught, should awaken the best sides of human hearts. Ramakrishna always preached against deniers and destruction. He was in all respects a builder for the Good, and his admirers should unfold on the examples of his Teaching the best hidden treasures of their hearts. Such beneficial creativeness is very active. And it naturally is transmuted also into best achievements on all paths of life. Gathering on the memorable day of Ramakrishna's anniversary, the pilgrims do not fear the dust of the road, they are not frightened by the fatiguing heat, but they are filled with a striving towards the Good, towards the great service to humanity. Service to Humanity—great is this ordainment of Ramakrishna !

Reverence to the Teacher !

"I recall a small Hindu who found his Teacher. We asked him: 'Is it possible that the sun would glow to you, if you would see it without the Teacher?'"

"The boy smiled. 'The sun would remain as the sun, but in the presence of the Teacher twelve suns would shine to me!'"

"The sun of wisdom of India shall shine because upon the shores of a river there sits a boy who knows the Teacher."

*Timur Khada (Mongolia).*

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