

SWAMIJI'S AGENDA

by P. N. Murthy, Hyderabad 1984

*Only the immortals on their deathless heights,
Dwelling beyond the walls of time and space,
Masters of living free from the bonds of thought,
Who are overseers of Fate and Chance and Will
And experts of theorem of world need
Can see the Idea, the Might that changes Time's course
Come maned with Light from undiscovered worlds
Hear, while the world toils on with blind heart,
The galloping hooves of the unforeseen event
Bearing the superhuman rider near
And impassive to earth's din and startled cry
Return to silence of the hills of God.*

Sri Aurobindo, *Book of Beginnings*, Canto 4
Secret Knowledge, p. 53 (Centenary Editions)

The ideal and goal of every great man, a *mahapurusha*, is to bring peace and stability to this troubled world and turn it to the path of knowledge. The program and agenda will follow this great mission and idea. They also are dedicated according to the nature of the avatar. It is, therefore, necessary to know the nature of Swamiji's avatar to understand his agenda. This is no easy task. The avatar himself has to reveal his nature and mission. This is precisely the importance of Swamiji's conversations.

The process of creation is a long, ardent and intensive tapas. It is a great sacrifice (*mahayagna*) through which the Lord manifests Himself and enjoys. It is the Dance of Bliss and Ecstasy. It is a churning of the great Sea of Bliss. It is the way God discharges His debt to man who is born of His aspect. Similarly, the sacrifice made by man to reach his origin, the Truth, the Lord, is also a great tapas. During this tapas great heat will be generated. A great *agni* [fire] will flare. A lotus will blossom. Nectar will spill. Bliss will flow. This is a great play, a *leela*. The Lord blesses and nourishes the great, enormous desire of man to become God. To that end the Parameshwara takes birth as man. This is an unending cycle and series of sacrifices and tapas.

Taking birth as a mortal, living like a *mahatapasvin* (great yogi), and to make maharishis out of men is the grand play of *tapas* called the life of Sri Sri Sri Shivabalayogi Maharaj. This play started in a hamlet in Andhra Pradesh.

Every man goes through some kind of *askesis*¹ all the time. The end of that may be the life of this world. It may be full of personal desires and fulfillments, and may be the impermanent and temporary. Whatever it may be, the nature of man is to engage in action all the time. That is his *dharma*. To enlighten the *dharma* of action and guide it into an aspiration for Truth is the mission of the God born into men. This restless play is the *tapoleela*. A guru worth the name engages himself in *askesis* and induces his followers and disciples to engage in *askesis*. While his tapas cleanses them like fire (*agni*) and inspires them, the tapas of disciples drives him into a dance of ecstasy. This is the binding principle between the Teacher and the taught, the Guru and *shishya* [disciple]. The disciples wait with anxious expectation for the birth and appearance of Guru. The Guru awaits ardently the arrival of the disciple. This is the quintessence of the Vedic *mantra*:

*sahanavavatu, sahanau bhunaktu sahaveeryam karavavahai tejasvinavadheethamastu ma
vidvishavahai*

Taittiriya Upanishad, Sikshavalli

It is said in our Puranas that when Goddess Earth, Gaia, feels overburdened she goes to Lord Vishnu and weeps and pleads for relief and redemption. According to Sri Aurobindo this is the great tapas performed by Earth consciousness for a new emergence. And so, whenever one looks, wherever one turns, this world is full of tapas. This world is a play of tapas. Bliss is at the root of this play. Bliss is the goal and mission of this play. Only in the middle of the journey is there a distortion.

¹ *Askesis* is an ancient Greek word which refers to the training — mental, philosophical and moral — of an athlete. It is the word from which the English word “ascetic” derives. TLP

Swamiji's conversations deal with this play, its beginnings and ends.



Tapas shakti [the power attained through tapas] is Truth embedded in man's personality, body, mind and will. This is the reason for calling maharishis and gods the embodiments of Truth.

This *shakti* reveals and manifests with different names and forms. Each aspect acquires a personality and influences a field of action in the world. It associates with a part of the body. Some aspects come to the world in the sound form. These are *mantras*. These aspects of *shakti*, the powers and personalities, have different abodes and locations from which they operate. In our bodies they are revealed at the *chakras* (or plexuses). These powers and personalities are engaged in the creative processes assigned to each one of them. Sometimes they descend and manifest in unusual bodies in the world to perform with great intensity certain specific activities. These are called avatars.

In its act of embodiment in this world the *shakti* aspect enters a woman's womb of Its choice, a womb that can tolerate the power and deliver it to the world. The stories that we hear of a light entering a woman's womb during a dream or otherwise belong to this part of the action of *shakti*. After the body is delivered, the baby grows and to increase the power, *tapas* is performed. In a way this performance shows the way to truth to the ordinary person striving in this world amid strife. After the body fills itself with the required power for attaining the assigned mission in the world, the *tapas* ends and action among the people begins. This happens in different ways to suit different circumstances and purposes.

From this, one can see that Swamiji's is no ordinary birth. It represents a clear action from the Divine to rid humanity of all trivial distinctions of caste, creed and country and launch it on the path of *dhyana* and *tapas* to realize its spiritual glory. Swami is a great movement. He represents a transition in human history.



While in Dehradun, on May 9, 1984, Swamiji said:

"I have been doing service to the world in some fashion or another since the age of ten. I have initiated lakhs of people into dhyana. There is no one until now in human history who has initiated so many people. I think my job is over. My mission is finished. Why should I not also, like all the government servants, retire at 55 or 58?² When I leave I shall initiate either twelve, twenty-one, fifty-one or a hundred and one people into tapas and bless them to carry on my mission."

"Who will allow you to leave?" one of us asked. "*No one can stop me,*" said Swamiji. Then Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Lahiri Mahasaya came to my mind. They also left around the same age after finishing their work in the world. It occurred to me that Swamiji may leave after the construction of the Trimurthy temple in Bangalore.

He repeated once again in Bangalore, "I will also retire at 55. After this I shall stay at one place and guide the mission through devotees and disciples. I am already very tired. This body will remain until the age of 85."

Now in 1986, he crossed fifty-five [sic³]. Still he is not retired. He is touring energetically in other continents.

In Adivarapupeta on June 11, 1983, I raised this issue. Swamiji then said, "This is my last birth. That is why the nadis say like that. If anyone writes differently I will not come because they have written it so. Mine is a birth for a mission."

Has he done everything that is to be done? If so, whatever is done now or is being done refers only to this age but refers to the future of humanity in this creation process. Is this a milestone in this process? To answer this query, one must refer to Swamiji's earlier births. Looking at the births listed in the nadis, a very interesting aspect of his appearances in the world is revealed. In everyone of his births he has essentially sown a seed and assigned the

² In those days, the retirement age was reduced from 58 to 55 in Andhra Pradesh. A big agitation against this was going on. TLP

³ Swamiji turned fifty-one in 1986. TLP

task of nurturing it into a tree to some one of his disciples and left. When I mentioned this to Swamiji once, he said:

“You have said it. Even in this birth it is the same. If anyone wants to see God, he can come to these temples⁴ and see God.”

H. N. Krishnamurthy, a close devotee of Swamiji, once told me, “Swami wants to revive Hindu religion to its pristine glory and purity.” Elaborating on this Swami once said, *“There are many misconceptions about Hinduism. There are many superstitions, blind beliefs and foolish practices which have surrounded it and clouded the Truth. It has been violently distorted by the pundits. This has to be corrected and the True Teachings and its Divine character have to be brought out. Only then the great prowess of Hinduism will be realized.”* Then it was said, “Is this not a gigantic agenda?” Swamiji replied, *“Yes it is. For that first this country has to be saved. People must be able to live peacefully. Their standard of living must increase. How can you teach philosophy to those suffering from hunger?”* This was the same refrain as Vivekananda.

Swami loves poor people. He enjoys feeding them. Sometimes in Bangalore he feeds nearly ten thousand people in a single day.

Swamiji gets upset when something happens to the country or he learns that something is likely to happen. During such times he is day and night constantly in the thought of saving the country from catastrophe. He looks like one possessed with anger. One wonders how such a compassionate person can be so angry.

Swami went into tapas during the Pakistan-Bangladesh war. *“Nobody should do anything to Bharat. That country should not suffer in any way.”* The same sentiment I noticed in Swami during the Punjab problem, living closely with Swami. He used to get every report read to him every day. He used to watch television. *“Why is this government inactive? People are suffering.”* His body used to shake with concern. During the Indo-China war in 1962, his skin used to split and blood used to come. Swami told me several times:

“We are the agents of the Divine. All are the same to us. We will not tolerate anybody who harms society and country. This X [identifying a troublemaker by name] should go. People should be free from trouble.”

“If people have to change, the minds must change. If they do not change, they must be changed. If necessary, force must be used. Medicine should be according to the symptoms. If necessary, surgery should be done. One should not feel that the body is being cut. Otherwise the rest of the body will be lost.”

Perhaps there is need for such a surgery now, hence this severe anger. Lord Krishna tells Sisupal, “I shall pardon up to a hundred mistakes. One more, your head will go.” In the same strain, the patience of the maharishis must have worn out looking at the present world situation.

Swami Viswanand, founder of Eternal Yoga Temple, used to say (in 1965), “By 1990 people should change and turn towards the Divine starting the Golden Age. If not, the date for the beginning of the Golden Age by the maharishis [sic]. If necessary, a holocaust will be created to stop the blasphemous downward trend and start the journey God-ward.”

If this is the agenda of the Divine, the agenda of His agents also must be the same. So is the agenda of Sri Shivabalayogi Maharaj. *Dharma*, peace, truth and love are the aspects and items in the agenda. To establish these is the primary mission of all avatars. Swami is mobilizing, commissioning and creating all instruments and forces to achieve the agenda during and after his life.

In this endeavor, each mahatma (great soul) delineates a method, chalks out a program, and creates the instrumentalities in his own specialist way. For supramental transformation of the life on this earth, Sri Aurobindo spent all his life to bring down the supramental. He revealed his yoga and his discoveries to the world through voluminous writings, especially *Savitri*, one of the greatest epic, philosophical poems. He experimented his yoga on his body and requested his collaborator, the Mother, to continue the same after him. He and the Mother created Auroville as a spiritual community experiment.

⁴ Trimurthy temples. TLP

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is carrying on his mission like a mass movement for turning the people towards the Divine through various healing, educational and lecture programs. He is striving for harmony between religions ceaselessly. He made Prasanti Nilayam his center of operations.

For Swami, his instrumentalities seem to be *dhyana diksha* [initiation into meditation], constructing and sanctifying temples, creating ashrams, *satsang* [spiritual conversation] and his conversations, and performing tapas at times when peace is in peril.

Swami likes *satsang*. He encourages the audience to ask questions and sometimes provokes them into discussion with him and among themselves. He does not show much inclination to deliver lectures. He prefers conversations to lectures, discussions over conversations, *sadhana* over discussions, and *tapas* best of all.



Lord Krishna says in the *Gita*: “O Arjuna, you and I have seen many births. The difference is that I know them while you do not know them.” *Bhagavad Gita* 14, 5. Lord Buddha says, “Till they are free from sorrow, each one will return to this again and again.”

It is said that Sri Aurobindo had several births prior to this. He revealed that Octavius Caesar, Leonardo da Vinci and Napoleon were some of his prior births. It does not appear on the surface that all these are for establishment of Truth and *dharma*. However, in every birth some great mission was the focus. And so these incarnations are remembered as historical figures. What then is the meaning of these incarnations in time? What is the purpose of such Divine descents into this confused world? Do all the avatars have the same purpose? Many such questions arise seeking answers.

The same kind of questions arise in the case of Swamiji also. “*This is my last birth.*” When Swamiji said this the question immediately arises about his previous births. The *nadis* answer this. However, what are these *nadis*? When asked, Swami said, “*Nadis are records of discussions between maharishis.*” “But sometimes we do not get the right predictions about some individuals,” I objected. “*The reason for that is the fellow who reads them is not sincere. He is interested in money. He reads and interprets in the way you want to hear.*” So replied Swami.

About Swami, his prior births are written in the following way (a summary only) in the *Brigu Nadis* and the *Kumar Nadis*. They are in order: Sanaka, Suka, Sivadeva, Ganeshwara, Jayanti, Tulsidas, Kabir, Rajabhushan, Namadev, Mahadev, Jayachandra, Mahabala, Nityananada, Bhavanand, Sri Chandra, Lahiripathi, Parameshwara Prasad, Ramashastri, Guru Arjundev, Shivaji, Gadadhar (Ramakrishna Paramahansa), Phanimohan Bhattacharya, and now Sathyaraju. This list seems to be too short for Sanaka who, according to *The Secret Doctrine* of Madame Blavatsky, is in primary charge of this *mahakalpa* [epoch].

Swamiji told me once that his first birth was Ganesha, the Lord of all the Ganas, controller of all the destructive forces, an unenviable and indomitable task of cosmic magnitude.

There must be a very powerful reason for coming over to the earth so many times. When asked, “How are agents like you sent over here?” Swamiji said, “*We live in our world of maharishis. The Divine calls for a meeting and asks, ‘Somebody has to go to such and such a place [in the cosmos, including the earth]. Who will volunteer amongst you?’ Then somebody like me comes forward. Many do not volunteer due to a dislike for the problems of birth and life on this earth.*”

An interesting reference to such a congregation and discussion is made in *Srimad Andhra Bhakta Vijayam*.

“Once Lord Narayana convened a gathering of maharishis in Vaikuntha.⁵ He asked, ‘O great Suka Maharishi, you remember we wanted to revive *dharma* on earth, educating the ignorant about devotion and truth. You please hasten to the great city of Kashi [Benares]. Adopting the creed of non-violence, living the life of a weaver, a good man Tamal is living in Kashi along with his wife, Jeyeiboi. Please take birth as their son and do our mission.’”

“Suka Yogi was startled at this command of the Lord. He implored, ‘Lord, I am surprised at your command. How can you ask me to live away from you in *maya* and ignorance?’ To that, the Lord

⁵ The world of Lord Vishnu who is Narayana. TLP

replied, 'Maharishi, that is not my intention. I wanted you to enlighten the ignorant about *bhakti* and the truth. There is no other intention. You are the one fit to do this.' To this Suka said, 'Lord, what You say is fine. But how can one enmeshed in *maya*, darkness, lift people out of these? If I think of those who went from here for a similar purpose, of their troubles and tribulations, I shudder at the prospect. A simple touch of Your *maya* is sufficient to throw anyone in abysmal depths. If You really want to lift the ignorant out of darkness, You just draw away Your curtain of *maya*. Everyone will be enlightened.'"

"To that, Lord Narayana said, 'My dear sir, I am the one sending you. Why are you afraid? I will protect you always like the lid of my eye. The world must be redeemed as per the needs of the time. If I were to act the way you suggested, all of creation would be thrown out of gear and there would be untold suffering. So it is not proper to give enlightenment to humans at one time. It should be a gradual process and action. If you do not want to enter a womb to take birth, take the form of a body, enter the River Ganges, and reach the forest where Tamal is doing penance. He will take you as his son. Carry on thus My mission.' Suka Maharishi could not deny his Lord. He took birth as Kabir."

One does not know whether the above conversation took place or not. But this fits what Swami said.

It is written in the same *Bhakti Vijayam* at another place:

"On the earth, particularly in Bharata Varsh (India) where kings have become dictatorial and tyrannical giving unending trouble to people, gods, munis and maharishis, Brahma and Maheshwara went to Lord Narayana and plead with Him. Then He says, 'O men of great *askesis*, we should remove the present predicament of the world through peaceful means. I, Sanaka and Brahma will appear in India, take birth at Kashi, Ayodhya and Pandaripur, etc. Adopting *saguna*, *nirguna* and other methods, we shall propagate compassion and through such practices we shall bring peace to the world. Please cooperate with us and take birth on earth at appropriate places, propagate the greatness of Divine power, and establish *dharma*.' Turning to Lakshmi, Saraswati and Parvati, the Lord said, 'Please cooperate with these maharishis and see that their missions are not in any way jeopardized.'"

One may not know from these who took what birth or what is the truth in this. But one thing is clear. In the avatars there is a program and plan and to achieve them a number of births were taken. Perhaps there is a similar plan and program in Swamiji's births indicated in the nadis. If we examine these lives carefully, a great, gigantic plan may be revealed.



"He (the Avatar) gives a *dharma*, a law of self discipline by which to grow out of the lower into a higher life and which necessarily includes a rule of action and of relations with our fellowmen and other beings, endeavor in the eight fold path or the law of faith, love and purity or any such revelation of the nature of the Divine in life. Then because every tendency in a man has its collective as well as its individual aspect, because those who follow one way are naturally drawn together into spiritual companionship and unity, he establishes a *sangha* [fellowship], the fellowship and union of those whom his personality and his teaching unite. The Avatar represents the third element of the Divine personality, nature and being who is the soul of *dharma* and *sangha*, informs them with himself, keeps them living and draws people."

Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on Gita*, p. 164

Avatarana means descent to the earth into the limits of human consciousness. It is a descent from the consciousness levels which are available to man only after enormous effort, down to the body, the nature designed instrument. As mentioned earlier, the Divine consciousness may descend into a body which can tolerate its power. If such a body is not available, it can built one for itself and descend. Uddhava and Suka Maharishi were supposed to have constructed bodies like this. Otherwise, the womb of the woman which entertains this Divine consciousness must have the ability to build such a body. Once when Lord Shiva experienced orgasmic ecstasy and the powerful semen was released, it became a problem to find a womb that could hold that semen. They

searched the whole cosmos for such a womb to deposit the semen. Thus whenever a great power wants to descend into the earth consciousness, they search for a suitable womb. For this the condition is that the owner of the womb should be a devotee of God, always with the thinking of God.

Once Sri Sathya Sai Baba was asked why he was born in such a remote hamlet like Puttaparti. He said that they are great devotees of God and wanted his birth. Swami also gave a similar reply when he was asked about his birth in Adivarapupeta. *“Several people desire good children. Many do not look for unusual children. Even if they desire, it is not possible unless they can bear the power of such a birth. When Christ, Buddha and such people were born, it is said that a great light entered their mother’s womb. Mary and Maya Devi were great ladies who spent their lives in the purest way possible always thinking of God and living in prayer.”*

Is it always that God is descending into human consciousness? Is there no possibility of man rising to be God? Or is there no possibility that the Divine consciousness enters into well developed human body living always in prayer? Swami Viswanand of Eternal Yoga Temple says that the latter is most often the case. Many of the well known avatars are of this kind. (It is well known that only after the sudden entrance of a great consciousness into his body did Sathya Sai declare that he is the incarnation of Shirdi Baba.)

Swami Viswanand defines avatar as one who in one birth and through intense *tapas* has crossed the earthly, solar and cosmic consciousness levels like a meteor. He says that Lord Rama and Lord Krishna belong to this class. To prepare for such a meteoric ascent into avatarhood, they took several thousands of births. All the *jataka* stories of Buddha belong to this category of preparation. If one examines the incidents in the life of Lord Rama from this point of view, many of them fall into place like a beautiful collage.

Agni giving *payasam* (*kheer*) and a ray of light entering the womb are similar actions. It means that a great soul is being implanted into the womb. Most of the Hindu rituals during the prenatal period are invocations to the gods to implant a good soul into the womb. They are invitations to good souls to enter the womb.

Born like that, Sri Rama underwent education and spiritual initiation from early boyhood from Maharishi Vasishtha (one of Swamiji's incarnations). *Yoga Vasishtha* is a record of such initiating discourses. At the age of sixteen, Vishwamitra gave him all his yogic powers. Then the great Parasurama gave his powers. These are nothing but initiations into higher levels of consciousness. Then one can think that the fourteen years spent by Rama in Dandaka Forest gave enough time for intense *tapas*. Swami confirms some of these observations. During his stay in the forest Sri Rama met several maharishis. When he met Maharishi Atri, he says, “Rama, I have stayed on earth this long only for you.” Saying this, he gives all his powers to Rama. This has helped Rama to fulfill his mission as well as rise into high levels of consciousness. Referring to this Shiva Balayogi Maharaj says, *“Maharishis give powers to avatars. They do the tapas and give the resulting power to those who require it for human good. I am a maharishi.”*

According to Swami Viswanand, after these fourteen years of stay in forest where he performed great *tapas*, he became a cosmic yogi. The initiation for this was given, apparently as Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. Then Sri Rama became a permanent avatar, attained later the status of a Great Cosmic Lord, and he is still in continuous and eternal yoga and *tapas*.

Sadhana is endless and eternal in time. Sri Aurobindo says that there are many higher levels above supramental.

Similarly one can examine Sri Krishna's life also. Then one finds that Krishna is a great Yogi, a maharishi more than anything else. The other incidents and legends go into the background.

Once Sri Ramakrishna said, “What was Rama, what was Krishna is Sri Ramakrishna.” The meaning of this can be that Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Rama, and Sri Krishna belong to the same aspect of the Divine. Sri Ramakrishna is a *Paramahansa*. This shows that to be a maharishi is the main characteristic any Divine aspect. In the case of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna (according to Swami Viswanand) aspects of great rishis descended into the human world and through enormous, gigantic effort of *askesis*, attained individuality and remained in the cosmic government as permanent personalities and powers. These avatars are still continuing in their *tapas*. We know that Lord Shiva is shown always in the posture of *tapas*.

One can deduce from all this that what we call god is a high level of consciousness. It is for this reason, perhaps, that in Vedic *mantras*, always the Divine is referred as Brahman, the manifest, unmanifest Parabrahman. In this way those who attained these very high levels of Divine consciousness will evidently be in constant *tapas*. There

are many instances for this including the Great Lord Shiva. Devarishi Narada is known to all as always singing the praises of Lord Narayana.

Sri Ramakrishna refers to one of his great Divine experiences in the following way:

I was shooting into the Divine world. Suddenly I noticed a great Divine light. I stopped. A maharishi, our Nara Maharishi, was in deep *tapas*. I embraced him and said, 'You must come with me.' He opened his eyes and nodded assent. He is our Vivekananda."

When Swamiji was asked why they are always in *tapas*, he said, "*Firstly for themselves. Secondly for this creation. For this creation to sustain, one needs great shakti. To acquire this shakti, the only way is tapas.*" Where is this *shakti*? "*The unmanifest Parabrahman is infinite. This shakti generates in that.*" Swami also is always in *tapas*. Even though he appears to be talking to us his subtle body is performing *tapas*. He once told me when I had been quiet for a while, "*Come on, talk. If none of you talk, I will slip into samadhi.*"

Even though they are immersed in *tapas*, maharishis have to come down as avatars into the world very often to guide this world in person into the right path. We are even now worshipping many such avatars who have come and gone. "Are they even now residing close to the earth?" When this question was put, Swami replied, "*Each such avatar or what you call god or maharishi leave several millions of subtle powers of theirs while they are on the earth. Their tapas shakti remains on the earth as a subtle force. You can worship them only when such subtle force is present. They do not come down specially for you. The subtle forces fulfill your desires and requests. Now these forces are unable to operate. The reason is the lack of real bhakti.*"

There is another angle to the characteristics of avatars. Sri Aurobindo elaborates on this. We are told that the ten avatars of Sri Mahavishnu are essentially to save the world from the titans (*rakshasas*). The evolutionists treat them as describing stages in the evolution of the world. Sri Aurobindo reinforces this interpretation in a way. He says that this creation is emerging and evolving out of the unconscious stage by stage. These avatars come and establish the right consciousness in the earth.



Once their mission is decided, it looks as though these avatars achieve their respective missions taking and through several births. Some births are to prepare the ground. Some are to watch the progress. Some are to show the path. Viewed in this way all the Swami's incarnations mentioned in the *nadis* acquire a new meaning and light. Mostly his births have taken place on the Indian soil. This can mean that one of Swamiji's primary missions is to mold this Indian nation into a great spiritual community. He took birth as a maharishi, a poet, a great *bhakta* [devotee], a king, a judge, and a common man. These are a wide variety touching every nerve and center of the nation.

Some skeptics ask, "Why should an avatar or series of avatars worry about making a single nation into a Divine community? Why this singling out? What is this partiality of the Divine?" In answer, one can say there should be a focal point for any action. First let this focus be tuned, toned and refined. Then the results can be propagated to others. The Indian nation is a laboratory for spiritual research and action. For millennia India as a human community invested its effort into spiritual inquiry, investigation and discovery, almost to the exclusion of every other aspect of life. Many historians and social philosophers agree on this view. They opine that every race acquires a distinctive character and consciousness over the ages and this turns into a kind of community *sadhana*. This becomes its distinctive culture which unifies the community in a subtle manner. Historians like Toynbee and Spengler and mahayogis like Sri Aurobindo have referred to this aspect in their writings. Even we can observe this spiritual slant in Indian culture. Indian arts, sculptures, music, literature, daily life, and festivals all constantly refer to and revolve around the Divine. The life of an Indian looks like a constant trust with the mystic.

Why, then, do we see in these days so much corruption, poverty and dissoluteness entrenched everywhere? This is undeniably true. However, if one scratches an Indian, one can always notice a fear of sin and a desire for spiritual life. Once Vivekananda remarked, "In our country if a king and *sannyasin* appear together side by side, everyone will first do obeisance to the *sannyasin* and then to the king. Even the king does the same. There is a great respect in our country for learned people. In your country the rich are respected more. We may be poor in wealth but not poor in mind."

It is easy to propagate spiritual doctrines in such a country. If such a community acquires a spiritual mold, it is easy to influence the rest of the world through them. Perhaps this is the reason why Swami took birth again and again in India. In the incarnations as Sri Ramakrishna and Lahiri Mahasaya, it is well known that their disciples started spiritual journeys to the entire world during their lifetimes. In this respect Sri Aurobindo's explanation gives us a great clarity on this issue.

“The work for which the Avatar descends has, like his birth, a double form. It has an outward side of the divine force acting upon the external world in order to maintain there and to reshape the divine law by which the Godward effort of humanity is kept from decisive retrogression and instead decisively carried forward in spite of the rule of action and reaction, the rhythm of advance and relapse by which nature proceeds. It has an inward side of the divine force of the Godward Consciousness acting upon the soul of the individual and the soul of the race so that it may receive new forms of revelation of the Divine in man and may be sustained, renewed, enriched in its power of upward self unfolding. The Avatar does not descend merely for a great outward action, as the pragmatic sense in the human is too often tempted to suppose.”

Sri Aurobindo, Essays on the Gita, p. 158

Some births of Swami may appear too common place and simple. However their mission is essentially what Sri Aurobindo says above: to inspire silently the soul of the race. Sometimes it may be to decide the paths of action by living close to the common man. Once Swami told me, “*It is to decide the future program, we live incognito on this earth.*”

In the *Kala Jnanam* of Sri Veerabrahman it is written, “When this world is in unprecedented confusion and conflict, suffering greatly, Suka Maharishi will be born on the earth and will free the world of all this.” Hearing this, Swami said, “*Swami is Suka Maharishi. Is it not so?*”



In the series of Swami's birth, one can see a dominant aspect of Maha Kali (also of Shiva). He prayed to Bhavani in the Shivaji incarnation and Mother Kali as Sri Ramakrishna. One can say, however, that he prayed to Lord Rama in his incarnations of Tulsidas and Kabir. One can resolve this apparent contradiction in the following way. Behind every incarnation there will be a *shakti* and an associated mission. It is said that the *shakti* behind the Sri Krishna incarnation is Kali and behind the Rama incarnation is Tara. That is why Ramnam is called also Tarakanam. This fits with the declaration of Sri Ramakrishna referred to earlier that what was Rama and Krishna is Sri Ramakrishna. Sankaranarayan says in his book *Dasa Mahavidyas* that in Todala Tantra it is mentioned that Tara is a *shakti* of Lord Shiva. It is perhaps for this reason Swami did tapas in this incarnation as the disciple of Lord Shankara.

In *Dasa Mahavidyas* it is mentioned that for every *mahavidya* there is a root *mantra* and an associated rishi who has “seen” the *mantra*. Thus there is a *shakti* and a maharishi behind every avatar. These maharishis give the necessary power to the avatar to do their assigned work. Once Swami said:

“*I am a maharishi. Maharishi is greater than an avatar. So maharishi does tapas and transmits that shakti to the avatar. There is no necessity for the avatar to do tapas. He gets the shakti from maharishis.*”

In this incarnation, to which avatar is Swami going to give his *shakti*? As far as our knowledge goes, Kalki is the last avatar coming for the welfare of this earth. Swami is on this earth now only to give *shakti* to the coming Kalki. This does not seem to be an unreasonable inference.



We have seen how Swami's birth series is dedicated to mold India into a great spiritual force similar to the bygone ages. How he laid the foundations to achieve this through the births makes interesting reading. He was working on the mission doing what is required by the times an relevant to the context. As Suka, he not only created the great devotional epic of *Mahabhagavata*, but revealed himself as a great maharishi to be emulated by the people of not only those times but for all time to come. He demonstrated what a true devotee to the Divine is as Namdev.

In India, the conflict between Hindu and Muslim is not of this day. This was extant since the day when Muslims entered this country. As Sri Chand, Swami laid the basic foundations for harmonious living of the two communities. As Guru Arjun Dev he created *Guru Granth Sahib* incorporating the devotional songs by various Hindu and Muslim saints. In the birth as Kabir, though born a Muslim, he worshipped Lord Rama, wrote several famous *dohas* (couplets) teaching communal harmony and devotion to the Divine. As Lahiripathy [Lahiri Mahasaya], he commanded his disciple Yukteswar to promote harmony between Christian and Hindu religions. Later it is common knowledge how Swami Yogananda, the principal disciple of Yukteswar, went all out to achieve this mission of unity and harmony in the U.S.A. In this incarnation, Swami's method of dhyana makes no distinction between religions. It is universal and enhances any spiritual effort that is being made in any way by anyone. Such a universality is obviously basic to his great mission of resurgence.

Thus he laid the basic rules in various births. The *Bhagavata* of Suka is still read with tremendous feeling of devotional bliss even today. *Ramcharitmanas* created by the great poet saint Tulsidas is recited even now in every household throughout India. In the North of India, *Manas Path* is almost a daily ritual in every home. His *Hanuman Chalisa* is very popular. Guru Arjun consolidated all the work of his predecessor Gurus through compilation of *Granth Sahib*. He also constructed the most sacred shrine of Harmandir Sahib. Kabir's *dohas* are sung everywhere. They have become part of common Indian repertoire of devotional songs. He came to Andhra Pradesh and inspired Ramadass, thus spreading the cult of devotion. While striving like this for all religious harmony, as Shivaji he raised the sword against the Muslim fundamentalist onslaught on Vedic Hindu culture even though it meant a deviation from the overall mission of spiritual regeneration without hurting any particular religion. He established the Maratha Empire to save Hinduism.

When the Vedic religion was getting distorted and becoming lifeless in the hands of fundamentalist pundits, he appeared as Buddha and breathed fresh life into the basic Vedic tenets. The general impression is, of course, different. People think that Buddha preached against the Vedic edicts. He only wanted people to revive thinking, experience and meditation. Even today, *vipassana*, the meditation he preached, is widely practiced. To save those roaming around as nomads in the deserts, addicted to vice and pleasure and living by the sword, he appeared as Mohammed. One is sorry to see the tremendous distortions entering into the later practice of that religion.

Even in this birth, one can notice many adventurous actions in Swami's life. He never tolerated anyone who derided Vedic religion or put the country into distress. To discipline them, he never hesitated to take any kind of action. As Ramakrishna, what Swami did to reinforce Vedic religion is common knowledge. This is the incarnation which while promoting religious harmony, propagated the message of Vedas without fear throughout the world. Thus Swami has been sowing the seeds of great world movements in every incarnation. The same is happening in this incarnation also.

In Swami's lives an important feature is his highly demanding *tapas*. Whatever may be the chosen path, may be devotional, may be *gyan* [knowledge], may be *dhyana*, in each he sped like a missile in the path in one birth. As Suka he attained unprecedented *siddhi* of knowledge; As Kabir most strenuous *siddhi* [mastery] of devotion; as Ramakrishna an incomparable *siddhi* of all religions; as Shivabalayogi the most strenuous, almost life consuming *siddhi* of *tapas*.

Investigating the time of each birth, one can notice that Swami was in several bodies at the same time, each body doing a different thing. Swami says that there is no surprise in this. One may be a body of *dhyana*, another may be a body of action. This is to inspire people into action through several methods. In the process, it might happen that these different bodies may develop individual personalities due to the intense *tapas* done in each and remain eternally as separate personalities in the cosmic hierarchy. There is no wonder if the enormous power of Maharishi Sanaka spreads in this manner.

In this way Swami has been ceaselessly and tirelessly pursuing the mission assigned to him by the Divine, through the ages through several incarnations. In this birth it is reaching its cosmic heights.