CHAPTER II

LIFE AND MESSAGES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA
PARAMAHAMSA

India mothered many great lives in her lap of spirituality and materialistic view. The lives of some of her spiritual personalities marks the real history of India. This has shaped the lifeline and destiny of her. The entire Indian life was influenced by the great seers and philosophers like Śrī Śankara, Śrī Buddha, Mahāvīra and Chaitanya and so on. No kings or emperors were able to extend their influence like the great saints and followers.

India was passing through a crisis of the influence of Western civilization and English education. The people were in total darkness because they did not know what is right and wrong; which faith to accept etc. They soon began to lose their interest and faith in their own culture. Only a few English educated appreciated the Indian culture. At that time of chaos or confusion, was born a heart which came as a light to remove the darkness which had blanketted the society. The light led the society to the right and justified path. It was none other than, SRKP, a fruit of new autumn, a new symphony of India.
Lineage or Antecedence

The lineage of SRKP is really just like in fables. His ancestry is from a Brahmin family, with Manikram Chattopadhyaya. These families were great devotees of Sri Ramachandra. The name ‘Rama’ was there in most of the name of this family. Manikram’s son was Kudhiram (who is the Father of SRKP) Khudiram married Chandramani. They had a son called Ramakumar, they were well settled in the village of Deray, District of Hoogly.

Khudiram was required by a Zamindar to give evidence against a heinous act. This was opposed by Khudiram and this led to misfortunes, so he decided to leave Deray and went to Kamarpukur. There he was again bestowed with wealth by his Master, Lord Rāma. The presence and blessings of Lord, was there for Khudiram and Chandramani. So it is said that God himself announced his birth in Khudiram’s house, to make him, his father and Chandra his mother.

Birth

The visions of God to both the great strong and sincere devotees, Khudiram and Chandra, bloomed into reality. It is said that many strange incidents had happened during this time. As it is mere heresay, it cannot be taken as solid evidence. The blessed hour arrived on February 18, 1836. It was the season of spring and nature
had adorned herself in the new attire after the cold and dull spring. The birds and flowers were eager to welcome the birth of the Prophet. The Prophet who came in the spring was filled with infinite love and knowledge, a soothing hand for the human suffering and miseries. The adept astrologer, Khudiram, found that the birth of this child was at the most auspicious moment. The boy was named Gadadhar by coining the visions and experiences the blessed parents had, from the Almighty.

**Boyhood**

Gadadhar was a healthy boy and possessed huge memory power. One hearing was enough for him. He hated mathematics. He was a very restless boy. He was never frightened of punishments nor was dishonest. All his energies were used up to study life and characters of spiritual heroes. He was the centre of attraction of all who came into his circle of friendship. It is said that he had unusual marks on his body. Whenever he read religious books, he became one with character and would roll out into hysteria. Even nature attracted him a lot. He would forget himself in nature’s beauty and sublimities. It is said that in later years SRKP narrated such an incident to his devotees:-

“In that part of the country (meaning Kamarpukur) the boys are given puffed rice for luncheon. This they carry in small wicker
baskets, or if they are too poor, in a corner of their cloth. Then they go out for play on the roads or in the fields. One day in June or July, when I was six or seven years old, I was walking along a narrow path separating the paddy fields, eating some of the puffed rice which I was carrying in a basket. Looking up at the sky I saw a beautiful somber-thunder cloud. As it spread rapidly enveloping the whole sky, a flight of snow white cranes flew over head in front of it. It presented such a beautiful contrast that my mind wandered to far off regions. Lost to outward sense I fell down, and the puffed rice was scattered in all directions. Some people found me in that plight and carried me home in their arms. That was first time I completely lost consciousness in ecstasy.”

At the age of seven Gadadhar witnessed the death of his father which shook him and the Chatterjee’s family alike. The entire responsibility fell on Gadadhar’s brother. Gadadhar also felt the loss of his father unbearable. He began to venture out to the mango grove or the cremation ground to be alone and undisturbed in thought. He started making clay images of Gods and Goddesses by reciting Purāṇas.

The village of Kamarpukur was frequented by sādhus. This attracted young Gadādhar. He understood their resistance to pain and pleasure. Their only devotion was God and they surrendered their life
willingly to the wishes of God. The already flaming consciousness of transistorizes in the mind of Gadadhar was concreted by these feelings of the sādhus. His mother Chandradevi encouraged his friendship with the sādhus thinking that her son would be benefited by it.

When he was ten years old there was a debate over a subtle point among the Brahmin scholars. The argument attracted many of them including Gadadhar. The other boys were enjoying the arguments of the pundits and imitating them, but Gadadhar who was a listener, whispered the answer to one of the Brahmins. There was a pindrop silence when they saw a boy of ten giving them an answer.

After the incident he was permitted to worship the family God. Gadadhar was such a devotee that to him the idol of Raghuvīr was nothing short of a God who stood in flesh and blood before Gadadhar. He worshipped and meditated for hours and hours, thus being one with the almighty. On the Śivaratri day he was forced to play the part of Lord Śiva. As soon as he dressed in the costume of Lord Śiva. He immersed in the sublimity of Śiva and forgot everything and even the surroundings. Soon after this it was found that the trances were frequent. He was also a boy of great memory and he could recite Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata verbatim. His best friend was Gaya Viṣṇu who had the experiences of Gadadhar’s trances. Gadadhar was not interested in studies anymore and the neglected his studies and
was immersed in the thought of God. Even at the very young age Gadadhar showed divine qualities.

**Life of a House Holder**

SRKP went to Kamarpukur due to the frequent call of his mother of Chandramani. He was in such a state of hysteria that he used to behave like a child weeping for his lost mother. He always went to the cremation ground and spent days together there but all of a sudden he became normal. The search for a bride was in vain. He consoled his mother by saying that there was a girl at Jayarambadi in the house of Ramachandra Mukhyopadhyaya. Everyone was surprised to find a girl there and soon the marriage took place. SRKP or Gadadhar was twenty three and Sarada Devi was only five. The poor condition at home made him take up the job of the priesthood again.

**In the Spring Time of Life**

Gadadhar was disgusted with the world and academic education. He wanted to lead a life of meditation prayer and worship. He spent more time in worshipping personal God ‘Raghuvaśr’and reading holy books. He learned the baul music and used to sing occasionally. He was also a great mimic. People mostly women folk were attracted to him knowing his spirituality and devotion. To the
older woman he was Lord Kṛṣṇa himself. In spite of being restless and mercy Gadadhar was rightly intelligent and had deep insight. He viewed everything from a different angle and was very outspoken. He began to realize that he was born to fulfill a great mission of life. He thought it was the realization of God. He wanted to become a monastic but his love for his family pulled him back. He left everything to the wish of God. He was good at painting and clay modeling and was also a good actor. Ramkumar thought that Gadadhar who was seventeen must accompany him to Calcutta to help him. This was a stepping stone to his future. It was here that his life’s mission shaped out

**Ramakrishna in the Role of Priest**

Like the incarnations, Prophets and sages, the life of SRKP was also like flash of lightening which spread light over millions of areas. The life of SRKP, which was like a land of elevation and depression, entered into an arena of realizing God. He was appointed in the temple of Rādhakānta. He was in oblivion when he sat for worshiping. There was always a mystic musical tune in the mantras he chanted. It is said that SRKP always, during worship was surrounded by fire which was like a curtain protecting him from evil. He also felt the unspiritual vibration that is the awakening of kundaliniśakti.²
His face used to bloom like thousand lotuses. Impressed by Ramakrishna priesthood in Rādhakānta temple, Ramkumar wanted him to take up the priesthood of Kālī temple.

**Back to Dakṣiṇeśwar**

SRKP again took up the priest hood of Kālī temple. As soon as he saw the Divine mother the madness relapsed. This was a turning point of his life. He could feel all the vice in his body and mind was cleansed by the Divine power. He was always over powered with emotion whenever he chanted the hymns pleasing the Gods and Goddesses. Mathur who was always watching and observing SRKP was also blessed by the vision of Divine Mother in SRKP. SRKP started discarding the clothes of an ordinary man and being one with the divine.

**Experiencing the Divine Mother**

The custom that prevailed in those days was that in order to worship Kālī or Śakti initiation was a must. So SRKP accepted Kenaram Bhattacharya as his Guru for initiation. It is said that SRKP brimmed up with spiritual urge when the mantra was chanted in his ears. When SRKP was requested to be the permanent priest of Kālī, he asked Mathur “Sir I do not know the procedure of that worship so how can I perform the sacred task according to the injunctions of the
Śāstras.” But Mathur humbly said, “You do not require any Śāstric code; your great devotion and sincerity alone will satisfy the Goddess. Whatever you offer at the feet of the Mother with love, she will accept because of your devotion the Mother will surely manifest herself through this image.”

**Spiritual Attainment**

Gadadhar assisted his brother Ramkumar in his daily work and also took and the duties of the priest. He worked heart and soul in the worship of God which attracted all to him. He neglected his studies. When scolded by Ramkumar he replied “Brother what shall I do with a mere bread winning education? I would rather acquire that wisdom which will illumine my heart and getting which one is satisfied forever.”

Ramkumar did not understand Gadadhar. Gadadhar understood the nature of people. Their selfishness and greediness too. His only aim was to realize God.

Rani Rasmani a Śudra gifted the Kāli temple to a Brahmin. Ramkumar was appointed as the priest. He accepted the office of priest by discarding the school job. Gadadhar, who now is called SRKP was reluctant. The name gained much prominence during his stay it Dakṣiṇēśwar. This name was most probably given by Mathur
Babu, the son in law of Rani Rasmani, as Ramlal, the nephew of SRKP, says on the authority of his illustrious uncle himself. Taking food on the banks of Ganga SRKP acclaimed that, “the water of the Ganga is as pure as Brahman. Even an agnostic attains devotion if he but lives on its banks. The whole area over which the wind charged with particles of its water blow is sanctified, and the residents of that area are spiritually awakened without any effort.”

Mathur started noticing SRKP at the same time SRKP’s nephew Hriday was attracted like a magnet towards his uncle. They were always together. It was Hriday who took care of SRKP when he lost himself in samādhi. SRKP accepted the duties of the priest, if Hriday took the responsibility of taking care of the valuables in temple.

A legend of SRKP’s attachment to God is that the idol of Kṛṣṇa fell down and one of the legs was broken. Rani Rasmani called for pundits to ask what to do next. The pandit is advice to immerse the broken image in the Ganga and install a new one. SRKP who was in a trance shouted out that if Rani’s son in law would be discarded if his leg was fractured. He asked Rani to repair and worship the image. SRKP himself repaired the broken image Mathur brought a new image and SRKP told that it was not the same image.
The Divine Vision

SRKP was thrilled in worshiping the divine mother Kāli. He could feel her all over him. To him She was the only reality; He started spending most of his time after the priesthood in meditation. The love for Kāli was so great that he sometimes forgot himself to do the worship. Instead he used to sing devotional songs and behaved like a child who was separated from its mother. He was so eccentric in the love for Her. He would shout “Art thou true, Mother or is it all fiction mere poetry without any reality if though.”

Like a mad man he would spend hours sitting still on the prayer carpet or he would give up his food and sleep, but Mother was waiting to know the extent of his love. One day unable to bear the pangs of separation he snatched the sword of the Mother and tried to kill himself. Just then Mother appeared before him but he could not keep on glancing for a long time. He fell unconscious. Thus he was in a state of ecstasy and that only God can realize God and also view God.

The vision of the divine Mother made him hysterical. He wanted the vision always, both in meditative mood and wide opened eyes, but Mother was teasing him. She used to lock and unlock his knees when in meditation. In short everyone thought that he was an insane person and was given treatment but no medicines could cure him other than the Divine Mother. He thought that Mother was in everything and
everyone with which he had contact. One day he even fed a cat with the offerings of Kāḷi, thinking that mother came in the form of cat. He became a servant like a Hanuman, a priest and also a child. His feelings were unrefined. To relax his tension Mathur and Rani Rasman sent a notorious woman to him. On seeing them he prostrated as if they were the Divine Mother and soon fell into Samādhi.

Haladhari one of the cousins of SRKP told SRKP that a human mind cannot comprehend God. SRKP could not control his emotion and prayed to God with and wet eye. “Earnest though has the heart to deceive me like this because I am fool?”

Accumulation of Experiences

Renunciation is for those who can detach himself from the enjoyment of worldly life. One who drowns in the material life will never be able to swim across that flow to realize the self and be liberated. Only a firm and brave heart can renounce everything, lust and wealth without any hesitation. So in olden days one who is entrusted with the duties of worshiping Kāḷi were asked to undergo rigorous training. He should be free from all bondages and desires. To him only Devi or Kāḷi and her charms, should be enchanting. So the tāntric mode of worshipping was accepted as the worship of Kāḷi. This worship is supposed to be introduced by Lord Śiva.
Tāntric Knowledge

The natural weakness of human beings lover appetites and love for the concrete is considered with great regard in tantra. Tantra is made up of rituals meditation along with renunciation with full involvement in it. This eventually leads the person to meditate and realize his self and ultimate. In short tantra leads a human being to come into union with consciousness with the support of Śiva and Śakti. This is because tantra is aimed at motherhood and glorification of women. This sādhana requires a well qualified guru.

SRKP got Brahmani, the Divine mother, as his guru. The sixty four important tantra books were practiced by him in less than three days. This lead to frequent samādhis and all the evil in him disappeared. He started having divine fervour and experienced “Sat-Cit-Ānanda.” He achieved the super natural powers, that too eight in numbers as prescribed by yoga (Aṣṭāṅga yoga) which only men of rigorous practice can attain. This makes him omnipotent and also discriminate māyā and reality. This leads to the awakening of serpent power or the Kuṇḍalini Śakti. Thus he had union with Śiva in the sahaśrāra which is the most concluding part of tāntric disciplines.
**Vaiṣṇava Proselyte**

SRKP completed the tantric śādhanā and then followed Vaiṣṇavism. The intense love of God and attachment to Him is nothing but bhakti according to Vaiṣṇavism. The highest devotion is incessant flow towards God is considered with high esteem. God is personified in Vaiṣṇavism. Many forms or bhāvas adore God in Vaiṣṇava philosophy like śānta, dāsyā, śakhya, vātsalya, and madhur. SRKP described the different attitudes found in the scriptures: “śānta the serene attitude. The Ṛṣis of olden times had this attitude towards God. They did not desire any worldly enjoyment.”

“Dāsyā is the attitude of a servant towards his master. Hanuman had this attitude towards Rāma. He felt the strength of a lion when he worked for Rāma. A wife feels this mood also. She serves her husband with all her heart and soul. A mother also has a little of this attitudes, as Yaśoda had toward Kṛṣṇa.”

“Sakhya the attitude of friendship, Friend says to one another, ‘come here and sit near me.’ Śrī Rāma and other friends sometimes fed Kṛṣṇa with fruit, part of which they had already, eaten, and sometimes climbed on his shoulders.”

SRKP discussed the vātsalya is the attitude with relationship of parent to a child. “vātsalya is the attitude of a mother toward her
child. This was Yaśoda’s attitude toward Kṛṣṇa. The wife, too, has a little of this. She feeds her husband with her very life-blood. The mother feels happy only when the child has eaten to his heart’s content. Yaśoda would roam about with butter in her hand, in order to feed Kṛṣṇa.”

The final attitude is the Madura. This attitude makes one feel that the God is their lover and the beloved, and they feel God is their husband and their wife also. “Madhur is the attitude of a woman toward her paramour. Rādha had this attitude toward Kṛṣṇa. The wife also feels it for her husband. This attitude includes all the other four.

There is no barrier between God and devotee. This experience can be seen throughout the life of SRKP. After knowing more about the Vaiṣṇavīc philosophy, SRKP wanted to be in the clutches of Kṛṣṇa and Rādha. It is commented that when he went to Madhura he longed to be a Gopi. He dressed himself as a woman. Soon he became a Gopi and started crying for his divine Kṛṣṇa. In the later years he had remarked that Rādha was the epitome of beauty. She was beautiful because the radiance of Kṛṣṇa was always there with her. Rādha Kṛṣṇa according to him was the sun and sunlight which is inseparable.
SRKP pronounces that about nineteen kinds of emotions for God, called ‘Mahābhāva’ can be manifested in the same individual. Only the highest hermit will experience this. A layman will experience this only in one form that too if he is as pure as moon. This magnificent Mahābhāva has gone up and down in the body of the august, whole souled SRKP whatever mode of religion. SRKP accepted he became one with that God prescribed in that religion.

The Madhura Bhāva stuck into the heart of SRKP like an inseparable feeling. The vital form of Vaiṣṇava worship is love. Madhura bhāva is considered as the closest union between the worshipper and the object that is worshipped and this leads one to achieve oneness with the beloved through rigorous emotional feelings. This oneness leads to physical transformation and the proof is spirituality. The devotion seen in Vaiṣṇavism is that of a lover and loved one. The worshipper is enchanted by the charms of the worshipped. This can be seen in the purāṇic narration of the Gopikas of Vṛndāvan.

The masculine form of the Kṛṣṇa is Puruṣa and the feminine form is Prakṛti, that is Rādha here. To attain Kṛṣṇa one has to get the permission of Rādha. So one has to worship Rādha first and please her. SRKP started praying Divine Mother to boon him the realization of Kṛṣṇa. Then he came to know that only through Rādha this is
possible. Thus he went on severe penance. He forgot to eat and drink. The intense meditation heated up his body bringing drops of blood through his sweat pores. He underwent physical troubles which were beyond explanation. Thus at last he had the vision of Rādha. He describes it thus: “It is impossible to describe the heavenly beauty and sweetness of Rādha. Her very appearance showed that she had completely forgotten all personal considerations in her passionate attachment to Kṛṣṇa. Her complexion was light yellow.”

He also got the divine vision of Kṛṣṇa. Master picking up a blue flower remarked that Kṛṣṇa’s colour resembled the colour of that flower. Masters words are thus: “after this vision I came to realize that God, His devotee and the scriptures, which are His words, though they appear to be distinct entities, are in reality one and the same.”

Nirvikalpa Samādhi

The highest flight of Advaita philosophy is nirvikalpa samādhi. The sādhaka is blessed with the revelation of truth. A sādhaka who has steady light in his mind, filled with bliss and in oblivion then his mind is devoid of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ concepts. His body is a shadow and is encased in the soul. Past is not dealt with nor present or future. The identity with the eternal Brahman is established. SRKP has had this experience many a time. He then would manifest many rare character traits with great intensity. At the time of experiencing nirvikalpa
samādhi, SRKP is filled with rapturous ecstasy. He says about many kinds of samādhi. “My own spiritual experiences tally with the words I heard from a sādhu of Hrishikesh. Sometimes I feel the rising of the spiritual current inside me, as though it were the creeping of an ant sometimes it feels like the movement of a monkey jumping from one branch to another. Again sometimes it feels like a fish swimming in water.”¹⁷ His senses and mind comes to a stop, he becomes corpse. In short SRKP becomes one with Brahman. This situation lasted for, sometimes a day or for three days at a stretch, thus this great son of India, with great self. Physical torture attained this glorious experience within a short span of time.

**Preceptors**

One might have acquired heaps of knowledge but there should always be a guide to guide, the proper utilization of knowledge. The mighty saint SRKP too had such guides. The most important among them were Bhairavi Brāhmaṇī, Totāpuri and Ramlāla. These guides or rather preceptors guided him in the tāntric and Vaiṣṇavaśītic ideologies. His teaches the spiritual activities which are very simple and useful to achieve the yogic power. The gurus found in him the nineteen mahābhāvas which is bestowed only on the incarnations. So in short it can be said that the preceptors at the first sight itself could find out that SRKP was an incarnation of God.
Bhairavi Brāhmaṇi

Bhairavi Brāhmaṇi, of a Brahmin family was an ardent devotee of Lord Viṣṇu. She was self educated in holy texts, the Vedas, Purāṇas, mythology and other streams of Indian philosophies. She was also well versed in the bhakti scriptures and these scriptures influenced SRKP’s life. During this period SRKP used undergo the trance of bliss frequently and was called mad man. This trance of bliss or realization really needed years and years of rigorous practice, but SRKP would acquire this experience within a short time. Bhairavi Brāhmaṇi helped SRKP to modify and rectify the practice of Yoga and yogic power.

The Vaiṣṇavaitic text describes five bhāvas of devotion, śānta, dāsya, sakhyā, vātsalya and madhura. Bhairavi Brāhmāṇi found these bhāvas and also the nineteen bhāvas along with madhurabhāva. A remarkable thing is that Bhairavi Brāhmaṇi was a Vaiṣṇava bhakta and SRKP was born in a family where they believed in Vaiṣṇavism. Bhairavi spent some years with SRKP and moved on.

She taught SRKP the Tāntric and Vaiṣṇavaitic modes of worship, devotion and meditation. She was a true philosopher and a jñāni. With her enormous scripture knowledge combined with practical knowledge, she purified the already purified SRKP’s life. The more purified soul of SRKP was acclaimed by Bhairavi
Brāhmaṇi as the incarnation of her Lord Viṣṇu, but the thing is that SRKP who was brim with humility disliked the term avatar and so she addressed him as the epitome of spirituality, that too as precious and clear as a crystal.

**Totāpuri**

By the end of 1864, Totāpuri arrived at Dakṣineśwar. It was not a purposeful visit but happened so during his wanderings. The spiritual radiance of SRKP attracted him. Totāpuri was a man of taller frame and was a man who spent much of his time outdoors. Even though he had reached realization, he had often meditated. He accepted the doctrine of the holiness of fire and was always seen with lighted fire by him.

Totāpuri had studied Vedānta and received spiritual instructions and he imparted it to SRKP. Later Totāpuri initiated Gadhadar into monastic life and named him SRKP. The title ‘Paramahamsa’ was added by his friends. Once Totāpuri happened to watch SRKP in nirvikalpa samādhi. SRKP was dead to objective world and was immersed in his self. Seeing this Totāpuri remarked thus, “It took forty years for me to attain this state. But you have achieved it in hardly three years.”

18
Rāmlāla or Jatadhāri

A Vaiṣṇava monk Jatadhāri, who is considered as Rama came to Dakiṣineśwar. He had deep devotion towards Rama, and he realized the eternal in the metal image. His love and devotion attracted SRKP through, Jatadhāri who is now known as Ramlala, SRKP came to know about the deep, touching love and devotion. This turned into a motherly position at times and regarded himself as woman. Not only this but at this stage his gestures and speech too changed.

Relation with Brahmāsamaj and Aryasamaj

Both these samaj was organized to bring back the lost glory of Hinduism by cleansing of the evils that had covered it. The leaders of these organizations had a wider outlook in reforming the society, uplifting the women and spreading education. Besides this they promoted Sanskrit and Western philosophy.

Keshab Chandra Sen, who became the leader of the Brahmāsamaj was an ardent follower of SRKP. The Brahmāsamaj was an organization which was limited only too few educated group. This group was soon attracted to SRKP sermons. They were inspired and their religious views were broadened. The Brahmāsamaj devotees realized the truth behind the rituals and symbols of Hindu
religion and appreciated it. SRKP taught them the necessity of renunciation, sincerity in following discipline, and trust in God, about one’s duties and how to discriminate the real and unreal. SRKP too learned from them the basic tenets of Western philosophy. He also come to know that the depth of the influence of the Western philosophy on the new generation, their relation with God and their outlook of the society.

SRKP met Swami Dayananda Saraswati, who through his Aryasamaj had brought back the Vedas to life. This samaj also aimed at reforming the society by liberating the women. SRKP was much attracted to Aryasamaj as it was an organization for the entire society. One remarkable thing of SRKP was that he never imposed his teachings, his tastes and temperaments on anyone—either Brahmos or Aryasamaj.

**The Incessant flow of Disciples**

The relation with Brahmasamaj had brought a remarkable change in the worldly outlook of SRKP. He was now longing to have aspirants who would truly follow his teachings. The writings of the Brahmos about SRKP had attracted many young educated Bengalis to the famous teacher. The news of SRKP’s realization of God and the simple manner adopted by him to teach which was more practical than theory, spread like wild fire. This brought to him, a crowd of
disciples from all sections—religious, academics and castes—of the society. He taught them the Vedānta and Purāṇa. No one was turned out empty handed. Something that is, some knowledge was given to all those who came to him. He worked round the clock and also found time for meditation. Thus once a devotee approaches SRKP, he will never leave him. A strange power was transferred from him to his disciples. When he met some who had come to meet him, he in frenzy would run to them, as if a mother runs to hold her lost son who had just returned home. He had many household disciples too, as he had encouraged them.

**An Extra Spiritual Teacher**

The master SRKP detested three concepts guru, father and a master. The quality of extraordinary teacher lay cached in him and it soon revealed out. SRKP stirred the hearts of the disciples not by words and action but through subtle feelings. SRKP was a gardener. This is so because as the good gardener who prepares the soil, weeds are removed and seeds of noble ideas and words of exhortation were sowed. He then looked after each step of growth in them. The most remarkable quality which stood highlighted was that he could read the minds of the devotees and their innermost soul at first sight. This helped him to know the accepted disciples through and through. He was a companion, friend and playmate to the disciples who were very
close to him. The nature of the Great Master relieved the disciples and reduced the pain of chores of religious practices. The method of narrating stories to make the common people understand the complicated philosophy of Vedānta is opted by SRKP.

**Messages of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa**

- God is invisible to ordinary eye but one should not think that God is not there. As the stars are visible at night and invisible at day, so is the God. Here the learned is as bright as the twinkling stars. The morning sun rays are so bright as to dim the eyes, that is bright as ignorance that stars or God is invisible.

- SRKP says that if one realizes or knows the Eternal one through and through, he is sure to know all. He exhorts to realize the God first and then seek the jagat and jīva.

- The people as SRKP remarks, are playing with the toys of wealth and fame, that is, they are chasing after the luxuries comfort, pleasure and treasure. They should stop this chase and run after the Divine Mother or the spiritual force, to make this birth effective and fruitful.

- The diver dives deep into the sea to collect pearls. He may not be successful in an attempt but he will never lose heart. So also a man should try, try and try hard to get the most sought out bliss, the realization of God.
• SRKP says that the power of God is infinite as the ocean and the power of jīva is finite as a salt doll. When the salt doll jīva is drowned in the infinite ocean, it merges into one. A human being, who is a salt doll, should merge in the infinite Ocean, God.

• The Lord is the juggler of jīva and jagat. His arrangements are not reality and He is the only real. This is so because the Lord plays hide and seek with his devotees.

• The Brahman which is the supreme power is the controller of mind, intellect and senses; it is which makes them do their functions or karma. Once when one turns away from Him he is led astray. The Brahman when puts an end to his controlling, then the functioning of all, the above things will cease working.

• A man should be like a snake. When SRKP remarks so he means that the snake is never attached to its slough. It sheds off its skin and a new one appears. This process goes on till the end of the end. So also a man should never be attached to his body. The preference he should give is to the spirit.

• SRKP says that human beings can be divided into three types of dolls made of salt, cloth and stone. When the salt doll is immersed in water it becomes one with it; the cloth doll will absorb water and bulge and there is no reaction on the stone doll. The salt doll SRKP compares with a devotee who merges with his self, that is, he realizes the God. The cloth doll is a true love
of God and always filled to the brim with bliss and knowledge. The stone doll is the man who never cares or bothers to care about true knowledge or God. SRKP opts for the first two types of dolls.

- The sufferings in the name of devotion need no suffering. One should always choose the way which suits one. Whatever be the method, the thought of God should be there in the minds of all, always. This will help one to remember God at the time of his death which will stop his rebirth. SRKP says that an ignorant man will have rebirth where as a man who has acquired knowledge will never be born again.

- God has the qualities of vidya māyā and avidya māyā. Vidya māyā is the true knowledge while avidya māyā is ignorance. Vidya māyā has with it knowledge, devotion, dispassion and compassion. Māyā is that which is lust and greed. This hinders the spiritual progress. The man who goes after māyā, that is, woman and gold is sure to be in the wrong path. So one must always take the path of vidya and realize God.

- Egotism is the veil which hides God from the eyes and the heart of the human who follows it. As the rain water which goes deep into the lower crust of earth, so also the God. The God enters into the depth of that heart which is free of ego and is humble. SRKP mentions two types of ego-ripe and unripe. The ripe ego is
that which states that “I am always eternal, free and all knowing.” The unripe ego is that which states that everything is “mine.” Here I and mine are the two concepts which control man.

- The higher knowledge, that is, para vidya is the knowledge of God. The scriptures, philosophy and the like bookish knowledge is a knot tied lightly. This can be good if and only if this leads to higher knowledge.

- One should strengthen oneself with true knowledge of the Eternal one. The knowledge of the Eternal one will be safe guarded from the lurings of the world. The heart of the man, like the needle of the compass always pointing North, should always be pointed towards the God, for not being lost in the dense and deep world.

- The worshipping of image during the early stages of devotion is necessary. When one is steady in the path of devotion, then image is not necessary because the image will be carved in one’s mind. God is omnipresent, but God can be seen or found in the temples which are sacred and filled with spirit of devotion. Strong faith leads one to feel His presence. Much offering is not needed to please the Lord.
Meditation is the path which leads to the God. One can choose a silent place where one can mediate. The object of meditation will be brought out during deep meditation.

A man must weep not for wealth or off springs or eateries but for God. The love for God should be the main object of a man’s life. Deep love, concentration and yearning will help a man to find God. SRKP says that three days of strong yearning will help one to obtain the divine grace in this Kaliyuga.

SRKP says the first and foremost thing to be practiced is “Neti, Neti.” The five elements, senses, mind, intelligence etc are not the supreme power. By following ‘Neti,(नेति) one can attain Supreme Brahman.

The message and teachings of SRKP is so infinite and vast, that each and everything cannot be included in this thesis. The lack of time and space is the most obstacles. SRKP stresses on bhakti and jñāna, and exhorts all to adopt the path of bhakti and true knowledge to attain the supreme God.

The teachings of SRKP were more by life than by words. SRKP was of opinion that whatever be the names of God, they are one and the same. The intelligence the essence of which is reality points out to one principle is God which is personal and impersonal tagged with attributes and non attributes. He compares this to water, that water is
called by different names in the different places so also the Sat-Cit-
Ānanda. The other example of SRKP illustrates is the potter’s clay. The potter uses clay for making vessels of different shapes and sizes. The reality is clay that which is transformed into different shapes, that is God. The God, the image made of clay is worshipped in different periods and in different names. The intelligent principle is He and She, that is, the father and mother of this entire universe and the jīva and jagat is the part and parcel of the God. Everything good and bad is the doings of this intelligent principle. As for SRKP it was the trick of Divine Mother to lead man into a right path and wrong path.

SRKP says that all religions lead to the same God called by different names. To explain this SRKP narrates that many bathing-ghats leads to one and only river or tank of water which is eternal bliss. He also exhorted his disciples that one should not compare ones idol which they worship with others worshipping idol. He also adds that all Gods are the manifestation of the one and only Brahman. As said earlier that the God is also impersonal. The instrument knowledge is used to approach the impersonal and the love is for the personal. The result of knowledge is similar with the absolute. The love for the absolute is compared to the love towards the parents and
siblings. It is the devotees mind which gives form, beauty and holiness to his worshipped deity.

An ignorant man always considers his own deity and religion the best in the universe, this leads to chaos and confusion in the society. On the other hand if he is educated and his mind is illumined then this attitude will change say SRKP. He narrates a story to make the common people understand this phenomenon. The chameleon is viewed by two persons, simultaneously. One says that the red colour of the chameleon made it more beautiful. Then the other remarked that the blue made it more beautiful. The arguments were on the edge of fight. So they decided to settle it with the help of a learned man. One asked him whether the colour of the chameleon is red. To this he answered ‘Yes’. The other when asked whether it is blue, he replied ‘Yes’. He said that the chameleon changes its colour. Through this narration SRKP taught the lesson that a devotee sees only one aspect of God and sticks fast to it. He never wavers from that view until and unless he is given proper spiritual awareness. The God is multifarious and at the same time formless.

It can be seen the scenario of partition is very common now a days. The partition means to part land, and decide boundary with measuring scales and rods SRKP on seeing and hearing about the partition wars and violence remarks that human beings can divide
only the earth and fence it, but it is impossible to divide and border the sky, The sky is so spread far and wide and it includes everything under it. No one is able to measure and part the sky. So also a learned man understands the true knowledge, Sat-Cit-Ānanda. The ignorant man is like the common man who divides the ultimate power and believes it is the best.

SRKP narrates the story of Ghantākarṇa to teach the lesson not to be bigot. A man loved lord Śiva more than all other Gods and considered Lord Śiva to be the supreme power. He started doing penance and Śiva made himself visible to this man. Lord Śiva asked this man to hate all other Gods except Him. This man’s happiness knew no bounds. Once more Śiva made his appearance in the form of Harihara. The devotee of Śiva prayed and offered his offerings only to Śiva. He was displeased with the Hari form and ignored Hari. Śiva cursed this man by saying that his bigotry was ineradicable and so he must suffer for this mistake for long. The man left forest and settled in a village. Soon all came to know of his hatred towards Viśṇu. The children began to tease by calling out Viśṇu’s name. He rang the bells to deafen his ears thus he came to be known as Ghantākarṇa.¹⁹

SRKP states that one who does exercise pertaining to devotion with the thought and belief that there is only one God, he is sure to attain that worshipped God. The worship might be in the aspect, name
or manner. SRKP opines that the sugar candy will taste equally sweet all over. The different paths Lord revealed to different people is according to their natures. A man may be a merciful Christian, a ritualistic like Muslim and a philanthropist like a Hindu. Sri Ramakrishna exhorted his disciples to mingle with all in the society, not differentiating their caste, creed and religion. The faith of others should be respected and honored.

It is said that one day the Master in his ecstatic state told the universal Mother that he had heard many say that their watch kept time and yet others believed that their religion was the best and true. SRKP felt bad when he thought that no one really bothered to understand the true Divine power. The incarnation, according to Sri Ramakrishna is the form of Divine mercy. The God takes human form with infinite spiritual power and almost holiness. The incarnation or embodiment is for guiding the human beings to the path of righteous living. The embodiments or avatars have cut novel paths of spirituality in different ages and nature. SRKP asked to worship these great people as it leads to the awareness of spirituality.

The most requisite thing to lead on spiritual life is strength as strength is synonymous with virtue. The source of strength is faith. Weakness which leads to self depreciation is not true religion and a sin too. One should always be filled up with the thought that he is the
child of God and can never be a sinner. This leads to the consciousness of strength and be virtuous.

Morality is the basis of spiritual life. Unselfishness is the foundation of morality. Renunciation is the only thing which helps one to be unselfish. By renunciation what SRKP means is giving up of kāma and kāncana, it is one type of māyā. Renunciation and intense longing and devotion to God lead one to the stage of liberation. If one does not even try this at least once in life, he is said to be a burden on the earth. Thus SRKP taught disciples that belief, renunciation and unselfishness are a must for life.

SRKP had his own views on bhakti and his role in the formation of bhakti is dealt in the chapter following.

Resume

The life of SRKP is viewed by all as that of a like a mystics story. All the events relating to his life from 1836 to 1886 is the panorama of a God realizing a God. Each and every minute second of his life is like a great teaching and advice to the common man. He never taxed his thoughts or feelings on anyone but all those who had met him, and came into close contact with him experienced the bliss and blessings of this human and God. He was the loving symbol of kindness and holiness SRKP’s teachings, sayings or messages are the
great lessons to the human being and world. He obtained the spiritual ecstasy which is very higher. He was a real devotee of Kāli but his practical and philosophical, spiritual and mystical approaches are fully for the common people. Through his life he brought about the tāntric and Vaiṣṇavaitic paths together and realized the same eternal truth. It is very deep and higher that is the reality of pure consciousness. His life is a very deep spirit of ocean, the spiritual experience and ecstatic love was the very nature. All his experiences are not only mere words but is an experiment practiced wholeheartedly by and with great sincerity.
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