

## The Flagging Off

*This is for all those who are eagerly waiting to know what good news is in the offing as a result of the prayer for the well-being of this world by Sri Sri Thakur Sitaramdas Omkarnath. It is evident that the prayer for well-being by an incarnation of god has and always will save this degenerating world from being dismantled. Where, how and when these prayers affect the mundane protagonists and pave the path to heaven for all is only revealed to the Mahayogis of all times.*

*Sri Sri Thakur through different incidents has always taught us that whatever God does He does it for our good. It is true that with our normal senses and average intellectual faculty we are also able to perceive the blessed hand of Sri Sri Thakur above our head in every step we take. Though at times it becomes hard for us to find the latent good in the apparent misfortunes but in due course of time the goodness reveals itself. And my latest journey to the United States of America is no exception to this eternal rule.*

*During our last tour to the European countries in the year 2006, (which has been partially depicted in the book - 'The Pilgrim of the Sky' by Mr Raj Dupe an eminent writer and one of my nearest satsangi who also accompanied me in that tour) we had an intention to visit the United States due to the repeated requests from the disciples residing there. But then the wish got struck due to time constraint and lack of planning - both of which has been very effectively handled this time. Apart from this the most important point is that at that moment we were not well equipped for the mission of preaching and propagating the philosophy of Sri Sri Thakur in this foreign land. But this time by the infinite grace of Sri Sri Thakur we have been able to publish three very contemporary books SKY (Sahaj Kriya Yoga), Profile of Omkarnath Mission and Be Tension Free all of which are highly acclaimed both in India and abroad.*

*Therefore 'whatever God does He does it for our good' - keeping this truth in my mind I set off from Mahamilan Math on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Mr. Deviprasad Chakraborty the main sponsor of the trip accompanied me along with Debnathji, Basudevji, Mrinalbhai and our dearest driver Dulal bhai. Mrs Banani Ghosh and her daughter Srinooyee, Rtan bhai, Smt Indrani didi and Smt Sila didi were waiting at the airport to see-off me. Mr Premendu Dasgupta, air hostess Luthika Dutta and one of Indranidi's close relatives helped me in completing all the customs and check-in formalities by sitting in the cozy comfort of the waiting room and I did not have to stand behind the long queue for completing these hazardous jobs. But then the process was not that smooth as problem regarding my luggage being overweight. At that point also another disciple of Sri Sri Thakur stepped in to solve the problem and not only did he sort out the matter but also made it a point to show his obeisance for Thakur and he even assisted me inside the aircraft to make me comfortable in my specified seat. Who could dare to say that I was alone? Before planning the trip when it became evident that I had to travel all alone, I was in a dubious mind whether to continue with the trip or abandon it. My dearest friend Sri Subrata Ray Choudhury of Delhi and Sri Loknathji the worthy editor of Pather Alo magazine who is also very much near to my heart assured me of God's infinite grace and cited the example of Swami Vivekananda and of Prabhupadaji in the recent times who were all alone when they first set off for the United States.*

*The flight was a bit late when it reached Delhi. I was thinking of the long hours of the flight and was thinking that a satsangi beside me would be a relief from the tiring experience. From Delhi a young chap of Madnapore occupied the seat beside me. He though being a village boy was well versed in the modern education. After a little formal exchange of words we became engrossed in our own respective work. At due time I made good use of the bread and vegetable curry made by Sriman Ajit Pahari of Mahamilan Math and again engaged myself sometimes in meditation sometimes in reading and sometimes in drowsiness. In between all these things I was constantly refusing the various types of food offered by the air hostess which caught attention of both the air crew and the fellow passengers who were staring at me most surprisingly, some even went to the extent of describing me as the most astonishing creature of the world to their co-passengers. Some people looked at me with great inquisitiveness but could not understand who I am. And why ridicule them the most confusing matter in this world is 'I'.*

*The plane landed at the New York airport about an hour before its scheduled time.*

## The New York Chapter

*During landing a young man of Dumdum (A place at North Kolkata) was constantly pleading to help me. Though he was an efficient dancer but not so much efficient in handling mundane material problems. Maybe I was also searching for such a guy who could help me in handling my luggage. We were able to go through the very intense checkups of the American Customs and Immigration formalities with mutual help. I found a large corridor just outside the airport and after placing my luggage at a very safe place I used the corridor for completing my morning-walk. After about one hour arrived Mr. Gour Mitra and his wife Mrs. Basanti Mitra. Mr. Gour Mitra is the worthy brother of the all-time great and universally respected Sitararam Devotee Mr. Gopal Mitra. With hearty greetings to the states they helped me to their car and they themselves put my luggage in it. On the way to their home which is about an hour's drive from the airport Mrs. Mitra completed some marketing and we arrived at Mitra Bhawan at Bronx which is inside the City of New York. Mr. Mitra is at New York for about forty years. He is a very successful mechanical engineer. Basically Mr. Mitra is very studious in nature. At the time he graduated there was a great demand for mechanical engineers in New York. That's why it was not so difficult for him to set up a career according to his own choice. Gradually he set up his own business with great efficacy. With Sri Guruji's divine blessings and the best wishes and consultancy of his elder brother Sri Gopal Mitra he is very much fortunate to be accompanied by his worthy wife Mrs. Basanti Mitra in every facet of life. Mrs. Basanti Mitra is well educated and an expert in handling all types of family matters, day to day household works and looking after her husband and sons. Not only that she is also an expert business manager and works hard for their business. It is really astonishing how she manages the both parts equally well while playing the perfect hostess for the Brahmins and worshipping the guru and the deities all along. She perfectly resembles the conception of Aryanari.*

*Along with the host and the hostess the locale of this house also deserves a mention. A brief description of this house and its surrounding nature can make any one feel its serenity. Sri Gurudeva selected this spot for this nature loving son of him to stay and perform his duties to his Guruji's ideals and preach them here. Will you be able to believe if I say that the divine river Ganga flows through just below this house? Really impossible! But keep your faith. It is a fact that as is your faculty of thinking so you derive a conclusion on whatever happens to you. The fact is that a bay created out of the great Atlantic has entered this portion of the New York City which looks like the Ganga at our Dumurdaha Ramashram. That is why I, from the second floor of this palace like mansion complete with all modern facilities and amenities, pay my obeisance to this foreign Ganga every morning. It looks really beautiful when the source of all our energy The Sun rises from the bed of the river. At times the sound of speed boats or the views of slow sailing ships make the view more captivating. The faintly visible greenery on the other side of the river reminds me of the places like Kalyani or Madanpur that are situated on the other side of the Ganga at Dumurdaha Ramashram. To add to all these flock of swans visit the banks of the river according to their mood at any time of the day only to enchant the nature lover. I get amazed thinking how the companions of the goddess Saraswati have managed to reach such afar?*

*Now let's concentrate on the issue for which I have come over here. After reaching New York we decided to start our Omkar Parikrama in the United States of America on the auspicious occasion of Sri Buddha Purnima - on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of May 2010. We arranged for Naam Samkirtan, Sat sang, Gita Path none of which are new at the Mitra Bhawan. That's why we had a gathering of good number of devotees at the Mitra Bhawan on that day. A group of people belonging to the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya (followers of the tenets of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu) participates at almost every religious occasion held at the Mitra Bhawan. This group consists of Nripenda an expert in recitation of the verses of Sri Bhagavat, Subhasda, Gerida, Radheshyamda and Ramda. Mrs. Mitra has conferred the name 'Pancha Tatwa' to this group. It is*

needless to say that most of them come with their respective families. Among other important devotees Sri Khekonda and family who is a close relative of the Mitra household, Mr. Pratik and Mrs. Kavita Sharma - a couple from Madhya Pradesh who are now well settled here and Dr. Srikanth Sundara Rajan - an intellectual reverent Tamil Brahman who is the All India General Secretary of Omkarnath Mission. Dr. Sundara Rajan is taking a praiseworthy initiative in preaching the ideals of Sri Sri Thakur in USA.

The Pancha Tatva group presented the Naam Samkirtan in the Goudiya norms for quite some time. When they finished singing I presented the Naam Samkirtan based on the Shastriya Ragas (Purabi etc.). The devotees developed an instant latria for this type of Naam Samkirtan. It is a fact that when Naam Samkirtan is done based on the appropriate ragas according to time and situation it casts a magic spell - and this type of Naam Samkirtan is one of the main features of the tradition of Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur has taught us about Pranama as one of the most intrinsic part of Naam Samkirtan. He has given the divine inspiration to combine Naam, Pranama, Asana and Pranayama in a very contemporary and useful module called Sahaj Kriya Yoga or SKY - which contributes to the complete well being of the mankind. So we selected this auspicious occasion of Sri Buddha Purnima to start prophesying this unique Yoga in USA. The first session of SKY which started at 6:30 A.M. in the morning with the host, the hostess and other family members of the Mitra Bhawan as the students lasted for an hour and ended at 7:30 A.M. Mr. Gour Mitra and Mrs. Gour Mitra exclaimed with joy at the end and said that Sri Sri Thakur has granted their prayer at last and that they will host the SKY class every week along with Naam Samkirtan.

The next important program was held at Maryland - 3 hours drive from New York. It is needless to say that in these parts of the world most of the programs are held in the week-ends. On the other week days no one gets time due to immensely busy work schedules. Maryland is a nice city near to Washington D. C. - the capital of the United States of America. Under the apt leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Mitra we along with the Pancha Tatva group and their family totaling of about 15 to 16 persons reached a pious Vaishnava household at about 11 o'clock at night. Dr. Satya Basu an eminent cancer specialist played the role of a perfect host. Every member of the family were a Tulsi-Mala (a necklace made out of the woods of the Tulsi plant). The signs of the perfect Vaishnava cult that were exhibited in the actions of the whole family along with the hostess Mrs. Rita Basu astonished all of us. The well decorated Sri Krishna Temple at the very entrance of the house deserves a special mention. The regular whole-souled salutations and obeisance to the deity has enlivened it to the appropriate sense of the term. Mr. Amit the son of the Basu family is a college student and Miss Sanchita is a school student. Though being well versed in the English language and culture they are equally well trained and possess avidity in the Vaishnava rituals, Naam Samkirtan, in different household works and in the art of felicitating the guests. Whenever I visit any household in India I make it a point to advise them to adopt the Western - discipline, smartness, tenacity, the advanced science and technology - the virtues of the western civilization but not to leave behind the spirituality, truthfulness, the art of plain living and high thinking and above all Japa, Meditation, Naam, Pranama, Asana and Pranayama the best features of the Indian civilization. I presumed Mrs. Basu to be a not-so-much educated Bangladeshi woman. But I was completely awe struck when I learnt the fact that she had completed her Masters Degree in the subject of Political Science from the Dhaka University. We spent two days with the Basu family in their house by singing Hari-Naam, discussing Hari-Katha performing Sahaj Kriya Yoga and accepting lots of Prasadam.

Another Sahaj Kriya Yoga program was held at a Kali temple in Washington. In between all these packed schedules Mr. Amit Basu took me out in his car to see the White House and the Senate House monument. Though the exhibition of wealth in the architectures was quite engrossing I was murmuring a song which when translated goes almost like this:

To what are you engrossed at - This world is an illusion

You failed to identify the magician residing in every scion.

The most important program was held at the residence of Mr. Joydeb - the worthy son of Mr. and Mrs. Mitra at Battery Park. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of June afternoon we held a very important class on SKY regarding the synthesis of Yogasana and Meditation. The class attracted the attention of about eight to ten American friends of Mr. Joy. One Chinese woman got so much attracted that after the class ended she went to her children's school only to come back with them to make them well educated in Indian Yoga. During these Yoga classes I give the particular demonstrations of the different poses while carrying on my discourse in my easy free flowing English Language. Dr. Srikanth Sundara Rajan assists me by describing all the Asanas and poses in the perfect American language and accent. This initiative by Dr. Srikanth Sundara Rajan helped the Americans to adopt SKY very easily. Among the persons who participated in the Yoga sessions on that day the most important ones are: Dina Novikova, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Gordon, Jonathon Wilson, Mariana Herre, Chinese lady Shen Meng etc.

They all exhibited a palpable excitement for Indian Yoga. That is why Dr. Srikanth Sundara Rajan has started a Yoga class in his own flat that teaches the Americans about Indian Yoga on every Saturday and Sunday. Slowly but steadily the SKY class introduced by the Omkarnath Mission is casting its magic spell on the different temples and households of America. Mrs. Basanti Mitra and her daughter-in-law Jimli didi have decided to start a Yoga class exclusively for girls' very soon. Other than these we are spending quality time at the Mitra Bhawan by singing Naam Samkirtan and by reading and discussing books on Sri Sri Thakur almost every evening.

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