



Rameshwaram, the anchor of Indian renaissance

Shri.Narendra Joshi

Rameshwaram is the symbol of India's spiritual unity, a flowering of her genius and an anchor of her renaissance. That it is one of the twelve jyotirlingas is a well known fact. However, it has been the centre of perpetuating the Eternal Sanatana dharma from epic times to the date has amazing significance. We can attempt to understand this through the words of one of the most illustrious sons of Mother India, Swami Vivekananda.



Swami Vivekananda gave his world conquering speech at the world parliament of religions on 11th September 1893 and stirred the sinking western world in order to show them the age old Light of India. After his return to India in 1897, he reached Pamban in Ramnad. The Raja Bhaskar Sethupati gave him royal welcome. Raja even unyoked the bullocks/ horses of his chariot and he with others pulled the chariot to palace. Swami Vivekananda gave a speech in Rameshwaram temple. This was a spontaneous response of Indian psyche which places a spiritual guru above the political sovereign. Moreover, Swamiji was lion

of Vedanta which roared in the remote lands and gave the new hope to the sleeping giants. The welcome was unprecedented and yet pertinent to acknowledge this much awaited dawn. And what could be better place for such event than Rameshwaram! The raja erected a pillar to commemorate this historic event and got inscribed on the pillar the Upanishadic verse, a mahavakya: '*Satyameva Jayate*' i.e. Truth alone triumphs.

The Raja said this during his welcome note: 'We, the inhabitants of this ancient and historic Samsthânam of Sethu Bandha Rameswaram, otherwise known as Râmanâthapuram or Ramnad, beg, most cordially, to welcome you to this, our motherland. We deem it a very rare privilege to be the first to pay your Holiness our heartfelt homage on your landing in India, and that, on the shores sanctified by the footsteps of that great Hero and our revered Lord — Sree Bhagavân Râmachandra.'



The significance of this event was multiplied when Swami gave his address in the ancient temple of Rameshwaram. He redefined religion as purity and love and not ceremonies. He said Bhakti, the path of devotion, needs internal worship before external. He said, 'It is in love that religion exists and not in ceremony, in the pure and sincere love in the heart. Unless a man is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping Shiva is useless. The prayers of those that are pure in mind and body will be answered by Shiva, and those that are impure and yet try to teach religion to others will fail in the end. External worship is only a symbol of internal worship; but internal worship and purity are the real things.'

Gist of religion is to be good and do good. 'He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Shiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Shiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples.' Thus the path breaking message of Serve man Serve God or '*Shivobhava Jivaseva*' was uttered here in Rameshwaram.

'He who wants to serve the father must serve the children first. He who wants to serve Shiva must serve His children — must serve all creatures in this world first. It is said in the Shâstra that those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants.'

Swamiji unfolded his 'Plan of campaign' and vision of the sages as he spoke further in Ramnad and then in other places.