

'Your Search Ends Here'

'This will be used extensively along with our Incredible India logo abroad', said an official of the tourism ministry. 'Our aim is to convey the message that India is not just a tourist destination.... Whether one is looking for beauty of the nature or *spiritual fulfillment* or for that matter luxurious holiday...'

In a temple at Kakatpur (Orissa) Lord Jagannath is firmly ensconced in his citadel, but with a difference. The idol is tied and iron chains that fasten the God are affixed to the rear portion of the citadel....The Lord had migrated to Kakatpur three centuries back. Jagannath cursed the ruler of the place because he was tyrannical. God- fearing people have been forced to hold him captive lest He goes away.

Want a change of taste? Delhi Mistan Bhandar of Shillong has made the world's biggest *jilebi* (a sweetmeat) with a diameter of six feet three inches 'as part of a festival aiming to promote the hill state of Meghalaya as a tourist destination'. Eight persons put their efforts to make it.

Another very old now international festival is going to change from this year. The Oxford council has decided to replace the word 'Christmas' with 'Winter Light Festival' from this year's celebrations to make the series of events more 'inclusive'. Oxford Inspires (a charity) maintains, 'In Oxfordshire we have Winter Light which is a whole festival spanning two months. Within that will be Christmas carol services.' Durga, Kali and other deities are travelling to other continents. Christmas is nothing new in India since the time of the British Rule. Jesus in person is supposed to have come to India during the period of his living incognito, according to the *Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*.

Attention went to an advertisement in the same newspaper which gave all the information jotted above. It reads: 'Be vigilant...Stop corruption!!!'... after sixty years of independence of the part of the country which we still continue to call India! India learnt corruption during the British rule. There was time when Chanakya was the Prime Minister of India. A Chinese traveller visited India and went round. He was amazed to notice meticulous administration everywhere. He was eager to meet the Prime Minister whose errands worked all this. With difficulty one evening he reached the village home of the Prime Minister near the capital and found him shuffling a big bunch of papers with a small oil lamp burning. After self-introduction when he was about to talk the PM lit a second lamp and put out the first one. Amazement in the eyes of the visitor prompted the PM to explain that he was doing Government work with the lamp for which oil is at the cost of the Government, when he talks with a guest he cannot waste Government funds. Now the Central Vigilance Commission has to call for help from people to catch the swindlers.

The reason is not far to seek. In the past teachers in villages taught small groups. They did not teach merely with texts. Alongside they talked about character, docility, respect, truthfulness, honesty, despicability of greed, etc. etc. Now in the whole educational field such things have no place. The Mahamandal has been trying to inculcate such things upon the youths who come. A young man used to attend the study circle of the organization in Calcutta regularly. Later he stopped attending. On asking it was heard that due to increase in train fare he cannot join. One member worked at a ticket counter at a railway station. He confessed after joining he used to accept tips often at the counter as is so usual. But later he gave up the practice. To commemorate Swamiji's advent the Mahamandal organizes a youth rally in Calcutta every year. From outside Calcutta many come to the city by train. Once it happened at Howrah station that after alighting from the train they formed queues on the platform and

when they came near the gates there were no checkers. They were waiting to hand over their tickets and some amazed railway men asked why they were not moving. When explained they wondered, 'Why, many political processionists come and go, they never offer tickets.'

Let us take a little licence now to quote from a recent article by an Indian professor at a foreign university: 'The problem with Western intellectuals is that they know very little beyond their own countries but are arrogant enough to comment on the world at large.' All of them are not true *pundits* like Max Muller, who could say with a seeming pride that 'Shankara was the very acme of human intellect.' Some think socialistic ideas were born only a century or two ago. In fact they are as old as the *Upanishads*. To get a clear statement about socialistic thoughts read the *Bhagavatam* if you like. Yudhishtira asked Narada about the duty of a king to his subjects. Narada said: 'I will tell you as I learnt from Narayana, it is to distribute to his people food and other necessities according to their need and to feel that they are his own soul and veritable manifestations of God.' (*Annādyādeh samvibhāgo bhutebhyashcha yathārhatam / Teshvātmadevatā-buddhih satatam kuru Pāndava. [Shrimad-Bhāgavatam : 7.11.6]*)

In fact no search ever ends. How little do we know about this big universe? That is the beauty and the pull that drag us on and on. We can never say *finis*. If we delve deep into our hearts we see there is something that is sublime. It is the one that has become many. Let us try to see the one in the many manifestations. If we can, all quarrels will vanish, all desires will be sober, there will come containment laying the path of peace and joy unspeakable. We will learn to love all, there will be no enemy to fight against. We shall learn to 'live for others' and that is the *summum bonum* of human life. We may gather these ideas from the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda.