



Thakur Ramkrishnadev's Vision and Annada's Role in Establishing a Temple for National Awakening

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Abstract

Thakur Ramkrishnadev's visionary efforts to inspire Annada to establish a spiritually significant temple hold profound philosophical and cultural significance. The envisioned temple, as described to Annada, symbolizes the resurgence of faith and spiritual awakening in the core of Sanatan Hinduism. Thakur's guidance emphasizes the belief that God exists, can be seen and interacted with, reaffirming the experiential aspect of divinity within the eternal Hindu tradition. This paper explores Thakur's directive to Annada, assuring divine support and the assistance of Past and Present devotees, including the involvement of eighteen devotees from Thakur's previous incarnation working through 128 individuals. The establishment of the temple, as instructed by Thakur Ramkrishnadev, is proposed to occur in Bengal on the Land of Kalee (Kaleesthan) between the temples of Nakuleswar Shiva at Kalighat and Dakshineswar Shiva at Ariadaha. Thakur assured Annada of transformative outcomes, including the manifestation of God witnessed annually by fortunate devotees, reinforcing faith and devotion in society. The temple's unique architectural design, consisting of three interconnected spires, represents a holistic spiritual journey. Each division, housing specific deities and inscriptions ("Guru," "Knowledge and Work," and "Prem"), signifies essential elements of spiritual growth: guidance from a Guru, integration of knowledge with righteous action and the attainment of Divine Love. The interconnected structure symbolizes the progression and unity of diverse spiritual pathways leading to ultimate realization. This study highlights the temple's envisioned role in fostering interconnected spiritual development, emphasizing the collective effort and divine support necessary for such endeavors. The philosophical interpretation underscores the temple as an allegory of holistic spiritual advancement, where the Guru, knowledge, action and love converge to inspire a new awakening, reaffirming the transformative power of faith and devotion in revitalizing society.

Keywords

Thakur Ramkrishnadev, Annada Thakur, Spiritual Awakening, Faith and Devotion, Guru, Knowledge and Work, Divine Love, Temple Architecture, Interconnected Spiritual Pathways,

Introduction

Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836–1886) was a renowned Indian mystic and spiritual leader whose teachings significantly influenced Indian philosophy and spirituality. Celebrated for his profound religious experiences and inclusive approach to spirituality, Ramakrishna emphasized the unity of all religions, asserting that they ultimately lead to the same ultimate truth. He encouraged integrating spirituality into everyday life and highlighted the importance of experiencing the divine in diverse forms, harmonizing the spiritual and material dimensions of existence. Consistently, Indian culture stands on a basis of rich tradition and heritage, embodying a longstanding legacy of remarkable individuals who have graced its land from birth to final breath. Among them shines Annada Thakur (1891- 1929), counted among the eminent figures of his era, renowned particularly for his profound spirituality. Roy. N. (2014) in his article "The Sri Sri Annada Thakur logo is a timeless ideal in memory" has mentioned - The detailed information regarding the dream-revelation received from Ramakrishna Dev and its impact. Thakur has described the story of Ananda Thakur's life-long pursuit in detail. In his book, 'Swpanajivan', the main melody from the beginning to the end of this incomplete book was tied to a single thread. That thread was the dream-revelation of Ramakrishna Dev. This young man, who was helpless in the worldly aspect, abandoned all the temptations of worldly progress. By giving up only the dream country and accepting it as the supreme being, the program he embarked on was aimed at the revival of the spirit of learning on the one hand, the revival of the spirit of spirituality on the other hand, the welfare of the deprived through service. According to Partha's calculations, he has celebrated a great vow in his short life. (In the light of the century ; Srimat Annada Thakur ,Life and pursuit vol 1. P.103) Thakur Ramkrishnadev showed him three

temples but lastly advice the second temple, as per Annada's description this temple had three spires rearing their heads high, higher and highest so that when looked at, it seemed as if one temple of medium size had entered partially into another larger temple and a third one of smaller size had been built into the medium, i.e., the smallest temple in front had entered the second and the second one had entered the third; thus linking together the three temples in a novel way, they had created a new model in the architecture of temples. In the first division there was the image of Ramkrishna Paramhansadev on the altar; at the foot on the wall of the altar was inscribed the word "Guru." In the second division there was the aforesaid image of the Divine Mother Adya that was found in the Eden Garden of Calcutta seemed to be smiling softly standing inside the temple. At the foot of the image on the wall of the altar was written the words "Knowledge and Work". In the last division there was the image of the Divine Couple Radha Krishna within Pranab and at the foot of the image on the wall of the altar was inscribed in bright letters the word "Prem". The three images were placed in such a way that from outside the door of the temple they could be clearly seen at a glance. The temple was very lovely and it looked as if it had been built of marble. After showing this Thakur said, "Annada you will be able to build the temple." Annada replied, "If you give mine strength, trust, shall be able to build the temple." (Thakur . A.2002 , A Life of Vision, p.321) Thakur Ramkrishnadev's efforts to inspire Annada to establish a unique temple reveal profound spiritual and philosophical insights. The establishment of this temple as envisioned by Thakur, was not merely an architectural endeavor but a mission to catalyze a spiritual awakening in India. Through this sacred project, Thakur sought to reaffirm faith in the Eternal (Sanatan) Hindu religion, emphasizing the tangible reality of God—a divine presence that experienced and conversed with, described in his own interactions with Annada.

FINDINGS

The Temple's Purpose and Location

Thakur Ramkrishnadev's vision highlighted the temple as a beacon of spiritual rejuvenation for the nation. He declared: "That hard task is the erection and establishment of a temple—after the establishment of which there will be a new stir in the country. The setting up of that Temple, simultaneously with the establishment of which faith will be resurgent in the core of Sanatan Hindu religion that God exists and that He can be seen; one can talk with Him as I am talking with you (Annada) now. Such beliefs will be roused in hearts of the followers of the Eternal Hindu religion and that will reawaken the country." (Thakur.A, p.319-20, A Life of Vision)

The chosen site for the temple was Bengal, specifically the land of Kalee (Kaleesthan) between Nakuleswar Shiva's temple at Kalighat and Dakshineswar Shiva's temple at Ariadaha. Thakur emphasized that the temple's establishment would inspire faith in God's existence and His accessibility. He foretold that at least three devotees each year would witness divine manifestations within the temple and dedicate their lives to the welfare of the world. (Thakur.A, p.322 A Life of Vision)

Symbolism of the Temple's Architecture

Thakur Ramkrishnadev's visionary description of the temple revealed profound spiritual symbolism. The unique architecture, where each temple is nested within the other, symbolizes the interconnectedness and progression of spiritual development. Smallest Temple (Front): Represents the beginning of the spiritual journey under the guidance of a Guru. Medium Temple (Middle): Symbolizes the growth and expansion of knowledge and the practice of righteous actions. Largest (Back): Stands for the culmination of the spiritual journey in divine love and union with the divine. The temple's design consisted of three interconnected spires, each representing a stage in the spiritual journey:

1. First Division: The Guru

- **Image:** Ramkrishna Paramhansadev
- **Inscription:** "Guru"
- **Symbolism:** The Guru is the foundation of spiritual growth, embodying wisdom and guidance. This division signifies the starting point of the spiritual journey under the Guru's mentorship.

2. Middle Division: Knowledge and Work

- **Image:** The Divine Mother Adya
- **Inscription:** "Knowledge and Work"
- **Symbolism:** This division integrates spiritual knowledge (Jnana) and righteous action (Karma). The Divine Mother symbolizes the nurturing and transformative power of applying spiritual insights through meaningful work.

3. Top Division: Prem / Divine Love

- **Image:** The Divine Couple Radha Krishna within Pranab
- **Inscription:** "Love"
- **Symbolism:** Radha and Krishna epitomize unconditional love (Prema). This division represents the ultimate goal of spiritual practice—union with the divine through love and devotion.

The interconnected design of the temples—where the smallest spire is nested within the medium and the medium within the largest—symbolizes the seamless progression and unity of spiritual growth. From the foundational guidance of the Guru, through the integration of knowledge and work, to the culmination in divine love, each stage supports and completes the other.

Thakur's Assurance and the Role of Devotees

Thakur Ramkrishnadev assured Annada of divine support in this monumental task. He revealed: "Eight of my dearest devotees will lay down their lives for the work of your temple; and the eighteen devotees of my previous incarnation are again going to

Bengal to help you in your work by working through 128 persons. Vivekananda will work through three persons—a Brahmin, a Kayastha and a Baidya. Ram Dutta will work through two persons; in this way, 18 devotees will work. You need have no fear at all.” (Thakur.A, p.322 A Life of Vision). This assurance underscores the collaborative nature of the divine mission. The contributions of these devotees, both from Thakur’s lifetime and earlier incarnations, highlight the enduring spiritual legacy and collective effort required to achieve such a transformative goal.

DISCUSSION

The discussion section explores the broader significance of the findings, examining Ramkrishna Paramahansa Dev's vision and Annada's pivotal role in establishing a temple dedicated to national awakening. It also examines the challenges revealed in the findings, proposes solutions and emphasizes the potential impact on students, educators and the education system. Lastly, the discussion underscores the need for future research to further investigate the connection between spirituality and national awakening.

1st Stage – ‘GURU’ (Ramkrishna Paramhansadev)

The first division of the temple, centered on the image of Ramkrishna Paramhansadev and inscribed with the word “Guru,” represents the essential role of the Guru (spiritual teacher) in initiating and guiding the seeker’s spiritual journey.

1. Foundation of Spiritual Growth:

- The Guru serves as the bedrock of spiritual enlightenment, offering wisdom and removing ignorance. Without the Guru, the path to spiritual awakening becomes unclear and challenging.
- Ramkrishna Paramhansadev, as the embodiment of spiritual realization, represents the ideal Guru who imparts not only teachings but also the experience of divine truth.

2. Mentorship and Guidance:

- This division emphasizes that spiritual growth begins with the guidance of a mentor who nurtures the seeker’s understanding of the divine.
- The Guru helps the disciple overcome doubts, refine character and prepare for deeper spiritual experiences.

3. Beginning of the Journey:

- Just as the smallest temple in the architectural design is positioned at the front, the “Guru” division signifies the entry point into the spiritual life.
- This starting point anchors the seeker, providing direction and purpose while inspiring faith and devotion.

4. Connection to the Divine:

- The Guru is often viewed as a mediator between the devotee and the divine. By establishing this connection, the Guru makes the distant and abstract concept of God accessible and personal.

This division underscores the indispensability of a Guru in spiritual endeavors. It serves as a reminder that humility, trust, and dedication toward the teacher are critical for embarking on the path to self-realization and divine communion.

Middle Stage / Second Division-‘ Knowledge and Work’(The Divine Mother Adya)

The second division of the temple emphasizes the integration of **spiritual knowledge (Jnana)** and **righteous action (Karma)**, two essential aspects of a balanced and meaningful spiritual life. The presence of the Divine Mother Adya reflects the nurturing, compassionate and transformative power of divine energy, which inspires individuals to align their inner wisdom with purposeful actions.

1. Knowledge (Jnana):

- Represents the pursuit of spiritual understanding, self-realization and an awareness of divine truths.
- Encourages seekers to explore the deeper meaning of existence and to cultivate insight into the interconnectedness of all life.

2. Work (Karma):

- Refers to the practice of selfless action performed without attachment to the fruits of one’s labor, as outlined in the Bhagavad Gita.
- Highlights the importance of translating spiritual insights into meaningful contributions to society, promoting harmony and upliftment.

Role of the Divine Mother Adya:

The Divine Mother embodies the nurturing force that guides individuals in uniting their spiritual knowledge with practical, righteous efforts. Her presence symbolizes the compassionate aspect of divinity that supports and sustains the seeker’s journey towards both inner realization and outward contribution.

Integration of Knowledge and Work:

This division serves as a reminder that true spiritual growth is not limited to contemplation or introspection alone but must also manifest in action. The combination of Jnana and Karma ensures a holistic approach to spiritual life, where understanding leads to purposeful deeds and deeds deepen understanding.

Significance in the Temple's Architecture:

Placing “Knowledge and Work” in the middle division underscores its role as the bridge between foundational guidance from the Guru and the ultimate attainment of divine love. It reflects the transitional stage in spiritual development where wisdom transforms into impactful and selfless action, paving the way for the highest realization.

3rd stage / Top Division: “ Prem” / “Love” (The Divine Couple Radha Krishna within Pranab)

The **third stage or top division: “Prem / Love”** refers to the pinnacle of spiritual realization and devotion, symbolized by the Divine Couple, Radha and Krishna, residing within the **Pranab** (the primordial life force or cosmic vibration). This stage is deeply rooted in the philosophy of Bhakti (Devotion) and embodies the ultimate expression of spiritual love and union.

1. **Prem (Divine Love):**

- In this stage, love transcends the personal and reaches a divine dimension, where the devotee experiences an intimate, selfless and unconditional love for the divine.
- Radha and Krishna symbolize the union of the individual soul (jiva) and the Supreme Soul (Paramatma), representing the highest form of love that dissolves all barriers of duality.

2. **Radha and Krishna as Archetypes:**

- **Radha** represents the devotee's pure, intense yearning and surrender to the Divine.
- **Krishna** symbolizes the Infinite, playful and all-encompassing divine consciousness.
- Together, they exemplify the blissful interplay of devotion and divinity, a state where the devotee becomes one with the divine through love.

3. **Within Pranab (Primordial Vibration):**

- Pranab signifies the life force or the original vibration from which all creation emerges. It is the universal rhythm that connects the material and spiritual realms.
- The presence of Radha and Krishna within Pranab highlights the idea that divine love is intrinsic to existence and accessible through aligning oneself with the cosmic energy.

4. **Spiritual Significance:**

- This stage is the culmination of the spiritual journey, where the seeker not only realizes the divine but also experiences the ecstasy of being united with it.
- It teaches that divine love is the essence of the universe and through pure devotion and surrender, one can transcend ego and duality.

The **third stage of “Prem”** represents the highest spiritual attainment, characterized by the realization of Radha and Krishna within the cosmic vibration of Pranab. It is a state of divine ecstasy and unity, embodying the ultimate purpose of human life: to merge in the boundless love of the divine.

Philosophical Interpretation

The vision of the temple carries deep philosophical significance:

1. **Interconnected Spiritual Pathways**

- The nested structure of the temples illustrates the interconnectedness of spiritual paths. Guidance from the Guru, knowledge, righteous action and divine love are not separate pursuits but integrated stages of spiritual evolution.

2. **Holistic Development**

- The inscriptions “Guru,” “Knowledge and Work,” and “Love” highlight the holistic nature of spiritual growth. Each element is essential, creating a balanced and comprehensive approach to spirituality.

3. **Unity in Diversity**

- The inclusion of various deities and inscriptions reflects the diversity within Hinduism. Despite this diversity, the temple's design symbolizes unity in the ultimate goal of spiritual realization and divine love.

National Awakening

RamKrishna- Manohshiksha (Instructions for the Mind) Avataranika author Rasbihari Mukhopadhyay mentions that Annada Thakur was a saint and devotee of high rank. He is one of the heroes of Mahavrat, the eternal restoration of religion in Bangadesh (Thakur. A RamKrishna- Manohshiksha – Avataranika). The discussion elaborates on the broader implications of Ramakrishna Paramahansa's vision and Annada's pivotal role in establishing a temple dedicated to national awakening. This temple serves a spiritual and philosophical framework aimed at inspiring individuals and society towards a higher purpose. The temple's structure symbolizes three progressive stages of spiritual growth, each contributing to personal transformation and national awakening. The findings also address challenges, propose solutions and emphasize the potential impact on students, educators and the education system while highlighting the need for further research into the connection between spirituality and national awakening.

Stages of the Temple: Spiritual Growth and National Awakening

1. **First Stage – Guru (Ramakrishna Paramahansa):**

Represents the role of the Guru is the foundation of spiritual enlightenment.

- The Guru offers wisdom, removes ignorance and acts mediator between the devotee and the divine.
- The seeker begins their journey with faith, devotion and humility under the Guru's guidance.

This stage emphasizes mentorship and moral guidance is crucial for individual and collective awakening, providing the necessary foundation for spiritual and societal progress.

2. **Middle Stage – Knowledge and Work(The Divine Mother Adya)**

Reflects the integration of knowledge (Jnana) and selfless work (Karma) for balanced spiritual growth.

- Knowledge inspires self-awareness and insight into the interconnectedness of life.
- Work ensures the application of wisdom through righteous actions that uplift society.

The Divine Mother Adya - Embodies compassion and transformative energy, guiding individuals to harmonize inner wisdom with purposeful deeds. This stage bridges contemplation and action, highlighting the importance of translating spiritual insights into meaningful contributions for the collective good.

3. Third Stage(Top stage) – Prem (Radha Krishna within Pranab):

Represents the ultimate realization of Divine Love, symbolized by the union of Radha and Krishna within the cosmic vibration of Pranab.

- Divine love transcends ego and duality, uniting the soul with the Supreme.
- Radha signifies pure devotion, while Krishna embodies divine consciousness, together exemplifying spiritual bliss and unity.

This stage represents the culmination of the spiritual journey, where love and unity inspire a collective awakening of national consciousness rooted in compassion and devotion.

Connection to National Awakening

The temple symbolizes a holistic approach to National Awakening by integrating spirituality, wisdom and action. Each stage represents a step in aligning individual transformation with societal progress:

- **The Guru's guidance** fosters moral leadership and clarity of purpose.
- **Knowledge and work** emphasize collective responsibility and the application of spiritual values in everyday life.
- **Divine Love** inspires unity and the realization of a shared destiny, transcending divisions.

The discussion highlights the potential of this model to influence education and societal structures, cultivating individuals who are spiritually grounded, socially responsible and inspired to contribute to national progress. Future research is encouraged to explore deeper intersections between spirituality and national development.

Conclusion

The visionary temple described by Thakur Ramkrishnadev is more than a physical structure; it is a spiritual allegory embodying the essence of Sanatan Hindu philosophy. Through the interconnected roles of the Guru, knowledge, work and love, the temple serves as a symbol of holistic spiritual development. Annada's willingness to undertake this divine mission, supported by Thakur's assurances and the collective efforts of devoted followers, reflects the transformative potential of faith and divine guidance. The establishment of this temple is not merely an act of construction but a cornerstone for National Awakening and spiritual resurgence. The visionary Temple thus reflects: As our mind is now fixed on time our new humanity will have a mind of light fixed on eternity always.- Medhananda And finally, this is also an eternal message of Sri Sri Annada Thakur- "I aspire to infinite force, infinite knowledge, infinity bliss, can I attain it? Yes, but the nature of infinity is that has no end. Say not therefore that I attain it. Only so can many attain God by becoming God"... Sri Aurobindo (The hour God, p.15) To conclude it may that Sri Sri Annada Thakur attained God by becoming God through his eternal creations which purifies our souls with a thread of Eternity.

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