

SRI SARADA DEVI - THE HOLY MOTHER

When Sri Ramakrishna was twenty-three years old and was engaged in intense spiritual disciplines, his relatives at Kamarpukur, in the hope of diverting his mind to mundane affairs, got him married to a girl by name Sarada Devi who belonged to the neighbouring village of Jayrambati. Sarada Devi was born on 22 December 1853 as the first child of a pious couple, Ramachandra Mukherji and Shyama Sundari Devi. The family was very poor, and from childhood Sarada helped her parents in various household chores and bringing up her younger brothers. She had no formal schooling, and could hardly read.

At the age of eighteen she walked all the way, in the company of her father, to Dakshineswar to meet her husband. Sri Ramakrishna received her with great love and taught her how to lead a spiritual life even while discharging her household duties. They lived absolutely pure lives, and Sarada Devi lived at Dakshineswar as a virgin nun, serving Sri Ramakrishna as his wife and disciple. On his part Sri Ramakrishna, who worshipped God as the Divine Mother, looked upon Sarada Devi as a special manifestation of the Divine Mother. Once he ritualistically worshipped her as the Divine Mother and thus awakened Divine Motherhood in her.

When disciples began to gather around Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi learned to look upon them as her own children. After the Master's passing away, she became the unifying centre for his disciples and was adored by them as Holy Mother. In due course, she herself became a great teacher, and disciples began to gather around her. Her mother-heart expanded to

enfold them all in the luminous consciousness of universal motherhood. In the whole history of humanity this was the first time that an unlettered village maiden decided to look upon all people in the world as her children, and came to be adored as the 'Mother of All'.

Owing to her immaculate purity, extraordinary forbearance, selfless service, unconditional love, wisdom, and spiritual illumination, Swami Vivekananda regarded Sri Sarada Devi as the ideal for women in the modern age. Swamiji had the historical insight to know that

neglect of women for centuries was one of the main causes of India's downfall (another cause being neglect of the masses). He believed that with the advent of Holy Mother the spiritual awakening of women in modern times had begun, and this would have far-reaching consequences for the future elevation of humanity.

The Holy Mother spent her life partly in the village Jayrambati and partly in Kolkata where the disciples of Sri

Ramakrishna provided her a home. In both the places she personally attended to household



Holy Mother's House, Jayrambati



Nahabat, Dakshineswar



Holy Mother's Temple, Belur Math



Udbodhan House, Kolkata