

### **Moscow Marks Swami Vivekananda's 150th Birth Anniversary**

#### Source

RUSSIA, April 18, 2013 (Elena Krovvidi,RIR): This week, the Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre at the Indian Embassy in Moscow, the Ramakrishna Society - Vedanta Centre and the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, jointly commemorated the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Academics, Indologists and religious leaders speak of the relevance of the great Indian sage's teachings in modern day Russia. In his opening remarks, India's Ambassador to Russia, Ajai Malhotra, dwelt upon the contributions made by Swami Vivekananda, one of the most influential spiritual leaders of the 19th/20th centuries. The sage was a social reformer and a great scholar whose teachings influenced many across the globe and continued to do so even today. The Indian ambassador highlighted the message propagated by Swami Vivekananda that "service to God can be rendered by service to mankind." Other prominent speakers on the occasion were Swami Jyotirupananda, Rostislav Rybakov and Mark Mokulsky who highlighted various aspects of the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda and their enduring contemporary relevance.

Swami Jyotirupananda, president of the Ramakrishna Mission in Moscow, was the first speaker. He emphasised Vivekananda's role as a fighter for the rights of the suppressed members of society in India. Jyotirupananda reminded that in India that April 15 - the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda - is celebrated not only by holding lectures and functions but also by holding charitable activities.

Mark Mokulsky, Prof. and Dr. of physical and mathematical sciences at the Institute of Molecular Genetics, Russian Academy of Sciences, followed the discussion about Vivekananda by sharing his hypothesis on the connection between spirituality of Vedanta and genetic-molecular science.

Another eminent speaker Rostislav Rybakov, Indologist, Dr. of historical sciences and Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1994-2009, elaborated about the relevance of Vivekananda's teachings to the issues Russia has to face in our day. Rybakov maintains that Vivekananda's philosophy is very much on the agenda for Russia and Russians of the 21st century. Rybakov believes that the only path to follow is to educate children from the youngest age, but not simply educating but imbibing them with moral and ethical values that will lay the foundation for their future view of the world. "The way that we need to go is lengthy, torturous and complex," Rybakov says. But it is the only possible way." The finishing stroke of Rybakov's speech was drowned in enthusiastic applause: "Recently, the French actor Gerard Depardieu has become an honorable citizen of Russia. But, in my view, Swami Vivekananda should become an honorable citizen of Russia, even after his death. We need him very much in our lives today."

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### **Hindu Temple Inaugurated in Switzerland**

#### Source

SWITZERLAND, March 18, 2013 (Solothurner Zeitung): On Sunday, hundreds of Tamil Hindus from around the region gathered to inaugurate the new Sri Manonmani Ammbal Hindu temple in

Trimbach. It is the largest of its kind in Switzerland.

In front of the main shrine of Manonmani Ammbal a kind of pergola was built, which was decorated with garlands of flowers and leaves. In the center of this wood frame there were richly decorated vases filled with holy water. In the many rituals that were performed, offerings were distributed and incense was burned on small altars. The ceremonies were performed by ten priests headed up by the chief priest Somas Kandar from Jaffna (Sri Lanka). During the rituals four musicians played on their traditional instruments, the Nathaswaram (a double-reed horn related to the oboe) and the Thavil double-headed drum.

In a procession the priests took the vessels of holy water up onto the roof of the temple and blessed the main tower. Then the main shrine and the numerous side shrines were consecrated by the priests. The statues of Deities were adorned with garlands of flowers and draped with precious silk fabrics. After the ceremony, Vasanthavajan Ramalingam, president of the Association for the Advancement of Tamil Culture in Switzerland, Guenter Hildebrand, architect of the temple, and Shtapathi Nagaraj, chief of the Silpakala Nilayam temple architects firm in Chennai, were honored. The inaugural festivities will continue, on a smaller scale, for the next seven weeks.

## Siddhivinayak Smiles On Dialysis Patients

### Source

MUMBAI, April 27 2013 (DNA India): The Siddhivinayak Temple trust has decided to set up a state-of-the-art dialysis centre close to the Prabhadevi temple, where patients can have a dialysis done at just US\$4.61 per cycle (compared to an average cost in the United States of \$500/treatment). At present, patients have to shell out \$22 to \$28 for each cycle of dialysis. The temple has tied up with an NGO, Shri Veera Desai Jain Sangh, which runs a similar dialysis centre in Andheri, to get its 22-bed centre put together.

The NGO, which has a budget of \$553,000, will also appoint the health experts needed to run the centre. "We will charge patients the minimum fee. The rest of the expenses will be borne by the temple and us," explains Chetan Vora, trustee of the NGO.

The Sangh and the temple administration have signed a memorandum of understanding to have the centre up and running by July. Mangesh Shinde, CEO of the temple administration, says the decision was spurred by the realization to have a sub-centre within Mumbai for conducting dialysis procedures.

### *Arsha Vidya Newsletter*

Annual Subscription: Rs.180/-

**Published by V. Sivaprasad**

Trustee, Sruti Seva Trust, Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641108

**Edited by S. Srinivasan - 0422-2657001**

**Printed by B. Rajkumar, Rasi Graphics Pvt. Ltd.,**

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