

Travelogue

On the Mahakumba Mela - 2001

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My pilgrimage to the Maha Kumbha at Prayag was a soul-stirring experience.

The Sangam at which the mighty Ganga and Yamuna joins is the epicenter of this great religious concourse. The vast river bed of the Ganga has been converted into a mythical land where different religious sects have set up their temporary abodes. Seen against the fort supposedly built by the legendary mughal emperor Akbar the vista of the blue Jumna and the silvery Ganga presented a spectacle of cosmic union.

The Maha Kumbha happens only once in twelve years and this is a continuation of the Aryan Brahmanical tradition of religious gatherings where great scholars and saints and householders from various regions of India met and exchanged their experiences and thoughts. And Indians have always worshipped rivers and the bath in a river is considered a holy ritual.

While the higher strata of society mingle to exchange profound thoughts the lower strata of people gathered to take bath in the holy Ganga. It rejuvenated, reorganised and recreated the spirit of India for another twelve years which is

considered to be the life span of a creative idea. And the sheer beauty of the place, the sunrise and the sunset, the contrast of colors and the epic scope of the gathering, transport the faithful to higher dimensions of existence.

For me all these were words gathered from books till yesterday. And today as I go through these experiences, memories from what I have read and what I have gone through several lives--all surface to my conscious mind giving me the thrill of a sort of Virat Rupa Darsana.

I invite you viewers to go through this picture pilgrimage as a retour to your own past, into your own unconscious, into the vast dimension of your spirit, into the land of the unknown, where every experience become meaningful and ecstatic.

From Prayaga my companions and me motored all the way (120km) to Kasi/Banares/ Varanasi, the abode of Lord Visvanath. The Ghats of Kasi on the banks of Mother Ganga where she turns towards the north and then to the east brought up all the 4000 years of history into my mind. Here we could see the universe in miniature with all its complexity. The young and the old , the rich and the poor, the healthy and the sickly, filth and splendour, stench and aroma, eternity and effervescence. . .

I can go on and on, on the contradictions that goes on in this ancient city of Varanasi. . .

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