

Dear Mrs. Radhakrishna,

26.06.1994

On the 20th June I was on my way from Bonn to Madras. During the stopover in Delhi, I got an Indian Express from the stewardess and the first thing I saw was the small photograph of Radhakrishnaji a face so familiar and dear to us. Then I read the news and was deeply sad to know that our beloved and respected friend was no longer with us. If there had been a possibility, I would have got down the plane as we were still in Delhi airport but I had a meeting in Madras that day.

Since the 14th of May, when I first got the news of Radhakrishnaji's illness, I and many of our friends were alternating between a deep sense of agony and hope. We prayed to God and hoped that a miracle may happen and Radhakrishnaji would recover and continue to be with us, remaining a great source of inspiration, motivation and fulfillment for many of us. I often called up J.B Singh from Bonn just to know if the situation had changed. Then I had to travel to South Africa and after my return to Bonn the news about Radhakrishnaji was the same, yet still we continued to hope. Now he has passed away, he is no longer with us.

You may know that our relationship was beyond the institutional or official - in a unique manner he was very near and dear to many of us in EZE, besides being one of the key personalities for our own conceptual, programmatic and basic value orientation, with regard to EZE's basic developmental understanding in general and support policy in India in particular.

I have known Radhakrishnaji for 20 years and during these two decades our relationship has grown, deepened and has become a fundamental source of inspiration and orientation for any personal and occupational spheres. He was, for me and for all of us, great and true Gandhian in the contemporary context of India, a visionary, an endeavourer for Gram Swaraj in India, a great conceptualist, a uniquely integrating personality with a charismatic touch, a great human being and a true friend for all of us.

Radhakrishnaji's demise is a great loss for me, for us and for the whole voluntary sector in India and indeed, worldwide. We will miss him for ever and shall be thankful to him for all time to come for all that he was and will remain the ideal for us and to me.

As you know better than me, Radhakrishnaji was a societal personality, belonging somehow to many many people, beyond the near and dear in the immediate family environment. Yet, more than to anyone, he belonged to you, to your grand daughter and son. Therefore the loss to you is much greater and has a different depth. I can very well perceive your sadness and the mourning of all of you. Words are often inadequate to express genuine feelings. Yet, may I, with this letter, convey to you, your daughter and son my deep felt condolences. May God give you all the solace, you need today and may He grant Radhakrishnaji the eternal peace in the other world.

Let me conclude quoting from heart a passage from a poem by Rabindranath Tagore:

Save me Oh God, in these hours of distress

This is not my prayer to you

Give me the courage and strength to withstand

these hours of agony

This is my prayer to you today

Yours in mourning

BADAL SEN GUPTA

Madras

26th June, '94.