



# Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

120 Emmett Ave. Toronto, ON M6M 2E6 CANADA

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## Newsletter July 2025

### Words to Inspire

"Bhakti is the one essential thing. To be sure, God exists in all beings. Who, then, is a devotee? He whose mind dwells on God. But this is not possible as long as one has egotism and vanity. The water of God's grace cannot collect on the high mound of egotism. It runs down."  
-----Sri Ramakrishna

### **Days with the Master**

One peculiarity of the Master which I noticed was that he talked of nothing but God and religion with every kind of person who came to see him. But he was never a dry bore. During talks on the most exalted topics he created much laughter by cracking jokes. One day he said, "You know, there are various kinds of siddhas [perfected souls]. Do you know the meaning of siddha? Literally it means 'boiled'. As potatoes etc. when boiled become soft, so are men when perfected." Once I spent a night at Dakshineswar with several other disciples, and the Master seated all of us in meditation. While communing, each one with his Chosen Ideal, we would often laugh or weep in ecstasy. The pure joy we experienced in those boyhood days cannot be expressed in words. Whenever I approached Sri Ramakrishna, he would invariably ask me, "Did you shed tears at the time of prayer or meditation?" And one day when I answered "yes" to this, how happy he was! "Tears of repentance flow from the corners of the eyes nearest the nose," he said, "and those of joy through the outer corners." Suddenly the Master asked me, "Do you know how to pray?" Saying this he flung his hands and feet about restlessly, like a little child impatient for its mother, and cried out, "Mother dear, grant me devotion and wisdom. I don't want anything else. I cannot live without Thee." As he was thus teaching us how to pray, he looked just like a small boy. Profuse tears flooded his breast and he passed into deep samadhi. He appeared to be praying for me. Talking of dreams one day, the Master said, "One may dream that someone has come and lit a lamp, or that

something caught fire, or that one is calling oneself by one's own name. All these dreams are auspicious, the last one especially so."

At that time whoever visited the Master was blessed with various spiritual visions during meditation. Sitting with half-closed eyes, people visualized their Chosen Ideal and talked with him. Seeing all this, the hairs of my body stood on end. Almost all of Sri Ramakrishna's intimate disciples attained the eight sattwic signs in some form or another. But Swamiji was exceptionally reserved and never yielded easily to any spiritual mood. There was another day at Dakshineswar, during which several unforgettable incidents took place. The Master asked me to go with him to the big ghat, where he intended as usual to take his bath. When we came down the ghat steps, I saw the temple manager sitting at the edge of the water with one foot in the Ganges while he rubbed the sole of his other foot on the step. Sri Ramakrishna descended to the northern end of the bottom step and did not even glance at the manager. Beginning his bath, the Master put his foot in the water very carefully, and got in waist-deep, putting a little water on his head. This respectful and reverent manner of taking his bath fully tallied with his saying a few days earlier that the Ganges water was divine. After his bath I followed the Master back to his room and sprinkled a little Ganges water on his cloth; he then bowed down to the deities in the temples, returned to his room, and ate a little sacramental food.

From the book 'Vedanta and the West'.

### **KARMA YOGA ACTIVITIES**

It is a great opportunity to provide your services to the Vedanta Society of Toronto. We are inviting volunteers for various activities in the ashram, which includes:

*Janitorial (cleaning carpets, floors, washrooms, Shrine area, Meditation room, dusting furnitures, etc.); Garbage / Recycling waste (preferably on Wednesday or Thursday every week); Kitchen and dining hall cleaning; Book-store assistance; Library assistance; Gardening / Snow cleaning / General maintenance activities.*

If interested in volunteering, kindly contact us at [toronto@rkmm.org](mailto:toronto@rkmm.org) or contact Abhijit Bhattacharya on 416-569-9401.

**THANK YOU AGAIN.**

## The Guru Power

In one of Vivekananda's early visits, Sri Ramakrishna said to him: "Behold, in you is Shiva! And in me is Shakti! And these two are One!" In a letter, written to a brother-disciple, he (Swami Vivekananda) exclaimed: "I am his (Sri Ramakrishna's) child, nourished by his heart's blood". According to the testimony of the Mother-guided Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda is "Siva", born "to bring spiritual consciousness to people", and "to remove the miseries of mankind". What is this "Siva-power", the power of the Guru? It is the power of dispelling the darkness of ignorance, which binds a soul to the body. Vivekananda meant power only when he said: "When I stand on the platform, a Power comes over me, which makes me feel as though by one word I could carry the whole audience of thousands across Maya and make them break the prison-walls of "I" and "Mine"!"

His listeners and disciples vouch for this enlightening power in him. Writing about his impressions of Swamiji's lecture on Vedanta in Lahore, Swami Ram Tirtha says: "The listeners were so deeply engrossed, and it created such an atmosphere, that all idea of time and space was lost. At times, one acquired absolute realization of Oneness between oneself and the cosmic Atman".

Misery of man is an effect of ignorance. Misery is permanently removable only by getting rid of ignorance. Vivekananda by his guru-power helped men to get back their Atman-consciousness. Misery cannot co-exist with Atman-consciousness. More than this, Vivekananda, the saviour that he was, stood by the side of each soul. He held in a parental clasp, as it were, its trembling hands, assuring it with the words "Don't fear". Did not Sri Ramakrishna foretell that he would become "the banyan

tree, under whose spreading shade millions of men and women, scorched by the misery of the world, would gather and find peace"?

We have in Madame Emma Calve, the celebrated singer, a typical example of how Swamiji removed the misery of human beings. She had met with a shattering domestic tragedy, which had left her heart-broken. She had even unsuccessfully attempted suicide. She came to know of Swamiji through her friends and met him. Without even looking at her, Swamiji spoke to her about her past, her present distraught condition, and how she should become happy and cheerful again. She was greatly puzzled and asked him, how he could know all her past and inmost secrets of her life. Swamiji smiled and said: "I read in you as an open book". She later wrote about the effect of this interview: "I left him, deeply impressed by his words and his personality. He seemed to have emptied my brain of all its feverish complexities and placed there instead his clear and calming thoughts. I became once again vivacious and cheerful, thanks to the effect of his powerful will".

Even today, when you are scalded from within by the seething "feverish complexities", you take up any collection of Swamiji's utterances and read a few. See how invariably the fever is assuaged and mental health restored. They give a shot in the arm, as it were, of strength and courage. To posterity his life and teaching have become the cooling "shade of the banyan".

(Swami Tadrupananda "Swami Vivekananda: The Embodiment of Guru-Power", Prabuddha Bharata, January, 1971).

## Incarnate Teachers and Incarnation

Higher and nobler than all ordinary ones are another set of teachers, the Avatâras of Ishvara, in the world. They can transmit spirituality with a touch, even with a mere wish. The lowest and the most degraded characters become in one second saints at their command. They are the Teachers of all teachers, the highest manifestations of God through man. We cannot see God except through them. We cannot help worshipping them; and indeed they are the only ones whom we are bound to worship.

No man can really see God except through these human manifestations. If we try to see God otherwise, we make for ourselves a hideous caricature of Him and believe the caricature to be no worse than the original. There is a story of an ignorant man who was asked to make an image of the God Shiva, and who, after days of hard struggle, manufactured only the image of a monkey. So whenever we try to think of God as He is in His absolute perfection, we invariably meet with the most miserable failure, because as long as we are men, we cannot conceive Him as anything higher than man. The time will come when we shall transcend our human nature and know Him as He is; but as long as we are men, we must worship Him in man and as man. Talk as you may, try as you may, you cannot think of God except as a man. You may deliver great intellectual discourses on God and on all things under the sun, become great rationalists and prove to your satisfaction that all these accounts of the Avatars of God as man are nonsense. But let us come for a moment to practical common sense. What is there behind this kind of remarkable intellect? Zero, nothing, simply so much froth. When next you hear a man delivering a great intellectual lecture against this worship of the Avatars of God, get hold of him and ask what his idea of God is, what he understands by "omnipotence", "omnipresence", and all similar terms, beyond the spelling of the words. He really means nothing by them; he cannot formulate as their meaning any idea unaffected by his own human nature; he is no better off in this matter than the man in the street who has not read a single book. That man in the street, however, is quiet and does not disturb the peace of the world, while this big talker creates disturbance and misery among mankind. Religion is, after all, realisation, and we must make the sharpest distinction between talk; and intuitive experience. What we experience in the depths of our souls is realisation. Nothing indeed is so uncommon as common sense in regard to this matter.

## Swami Vivekananda - Mahasamadhi

*(From "The Life of Swami Vivekananda, by His Eastern and Western Disciples*

Sister Nivedita has written: "Many of his disciples from distant parts of the world gathered round the Swami on his return to Calcutta. There was none, probably, who suspected how near the end had come.

Strangely enough, as days passed by, the Swami felt more and more the necessity of withdrawing himself from the task of directing the affairs of the Math, in order to give those that were about him a free hand. "How often", he said, "does a man ruin his disciples by remaining always with them! When men are once trained, it is essential that their leader leave them, for without his absence they cannot develop themselves." When he spoke thus, it invariably caused pain to those who loved him. They felt that if he leaves the body, it would mean a terrible blow to the work. But there were times now in his deep meditation when the Swami cared for nothing but infinite repose. Work and all other bonds were dropping off; more than ever did he withdraw himself from all outer concerns. Meditation became his great occupation. The Master and the Mother were constantly in his mind. A high spiritual mood had come over him, and he was making ready for death. His brother-monks and disciples became very anxious at seeing their beloved Leader retire into such an atmosphere of austerity and meditation. Their memory was constantly haunted by the prophecy of Sri Ramakrishna that Naren would merge in Nirvikalpa Samadhi at the end of his work, when he would realize who and what he really was and refuse to remain in the body. "Not long before his departure," writes Sister Nivedita, "some of his brother-monks were one day talking over the old days, and one of them asked him quite casually, 'Do you know yet who you were, Swamiji?' His unexpected reply, 'Yes, I know now!' awed them into silence, and none dared to question him further."

One day, about a week before the end, the Swami told his disciple, Swami Shuddhananda, to bring the Bengali almanac to him. On getting it, he turned over several pages beginning at that day and kept it in his room. He was seen several times on subsequent days studying the almanac intently, as if undecided about something he wanted to know. Only after his passing was the significance of this understood by his brother-monks and disciples. Then they realized that he had been searching an auspicious day on which to throw off the bondage of the body; and the day he chose of all others was the Fourth of July!

Three days before his passing away, as the Swami was walking up and down on the spacious lawn of the monastery in the afternoon with Swami Premananda, he pointed to a particular spot on the bank of the Ganga, and said to his brother-monk gravely, "When I give up the body, cremate it there!" On that very spot stands today a temple in his honour. On Wednesday [July 2] of the same week, the day being Ekadashi, and himself keeping the fast in all strictness, he insisted on serving the morning meal to the same disciple


[Nivedita]. Each dish as it was offered — boiled seeds of the jackfruit, boiled potatoes, plain rice, and ice-cold milk — formed the subject of playful chat; and finally, to end the meal, he himself poured the water over the hands, and dried them with a towel. "It is I who should do these things for you, Swamiji! Not you for me!" was the protest naturally offered. But his answer was startling in its solemnity — "Jesus washed the feet of His disciples!" Something checked the answer — "But that was the last time!" — as it rose to the lips, and the words remained unuttered. This was well. For here also, the last time had come.

On the day of the Mahasamadhi itself, whether consciously or intuitively, his actions were most deliberate and full of meaning. His solitary meditation for three hours in the morning from eight to eleven was the most striking. He rose rather early that day and, after partaking of his tea, entered the chapel of the monastery. After some time it was noticed that he had closed all the windows and bolted all the doors. What transpired there, no one will ever know. In his meditation his own Master and the Divine Mother — to his own realization One and the Same Personality — must have been present, for, when he had finished, he broke forth in a touching song in which the highest Jnana mingled with the highest Bhakti.

A monastic disciple of the Swami writes:

The Mahasamadhi took place a few minutes after 9 p.m. The supper bell had just been rung when the inmates were called to see what had happened to the Swami. Swamis Premananda and Nishchayananda began to chant aloud the name of the Master, believing that he might be brought to consciousness thereby. But he lay there in his room on his back, motionless, and the course proved fruitless. Swami Advaitananda asked Swami Bodhananda to feel the Swami's pulse. After a vain attempt for a while, he stood up and began to cry aloud. Swami Advaitananda then told Nirbhayananda, "Alas, what are you looking at! Hasten to Dr. Mahendranath Mazumdar of Baranagar, under whose treatment Swamiji was during these days] and bring him here soon as you can." Another crossed the river and went to Calcutta to give information to Swamis Brahmananda and Saradananda who were there on that day, and bring them to Math. They arrived about half past ten. The doctor examined him thoroughly, found life suspended, and tried to bring him back by artificial respiration. At midnight the doctor pronounced life extinct. Dr. Mazumdar said that it might have been due to sudden heart-failure. Dr. Bipinbihari Ghosh, who came from Calcutta the next day, said that it was due to apoplexy. But none of the doctors, who came afterwards and heard of the symptoms, could agree. Whatever they might say, the monks of the Math have the unshakeable conviction that the Swami had voluntarily cast off the body in Samadhi, when he did not want to remain any longer in the world, as predicted by Sri Ramakrishna.

## **July Retreat 2025**



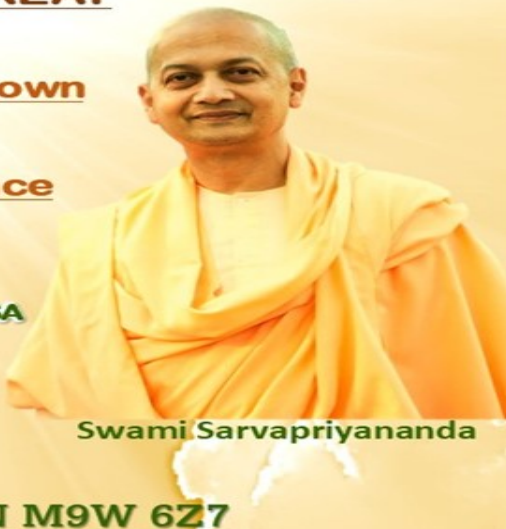
*Vedanta Society of Toronto*  
**SPECIAL ONE DAY RETREAT**

**Topic 1 :**  
**Beyond the Known and the Unknown**

**Topic 2:**  
**See Brahman in Every Experience**

**To be Conducted by –**  
**Rev. Swami Sarvapriyananda,**  
Minister in-Charge, Vedanta Society of New York, USA

**July 6, 2025**  
**9:00 am to 2:00 pm**  
**Sindhi Gurmandir,**  
**207 Queens Plate Dr., Etobicoke, ON M9W 6Z7**



Swami Sarvapriyananda

## **Registration is now closed.**

### **Retreat program:**

- 9.30am to 10.30am – First session Topic-1 'Beyond the Known and the Unknown';
- 10.30 to 11:15 am – Tea break
- 11:15 am to 12:15 pm – Second session Topic-2 'See Brahman in Every Experience';
- 12:15 to 1:15 pm – Question Answer session
- 1:15 to 2:00 pm – Lunch

**All participants are requested to be present at the venue by 9 am.**

### **Holy Mother's spiritual ministration**

The Mother carried on a constant mental japa. In old age, when owing to physical weakness, she had to spend longer hours in her bed, the attendant noticed that she was doing japa even while in bed. At night her sleep was very light, so much so, that she responded to the first call. The attendant might ask in wonder, 'Are you not asleep, or don't you get sleep?' The Mother would reply, 'What can I do, my son? The boys come and entreat me eagerly. They take the mantra and go home. But nobody does any japa regularly. Some don't do it even once. Yet as I have shouldered the burden, should I not look after them? That's why I do japa and pray to the Master, "O Master, grant them enlightenment, grant them emancipation, and do you take on yourself their care in every way here and hereafter! This world is full of trials and tribulations. May they never have to come back again."

Into a devotee's mind the Mother instilled these words of courage and assurance, 'What fear need you have, my son? Your thought comes to me well enough. You need not do anything; I am doing everything for you.' The devotee inquired, 'Do you have to work for all your sons wherever they may be?' The Mother replied, 'For all I have to work.' The devotee further asked, 'You have so many children; do you remember them all?' The Mother first admitted that she could not recollect all; and then she explained, 'I do japa for those whom I can recollect. And for those that I don't remember I pray to the Master thus, "Master, I have many sons in many places. Do you please look after those whose names I can't remember, and graciously grant that they may prosper."' About the power of mantra and the taking over of sins, the Mother said to Brahmachari Rashbihari on another occasion (February 1913), 'Energy is transferred through a mantra—the guru's goes to the disciple and the disciple's comes to the guru. That's how sin is accepted through the imparting of mantra and the body gets so many diseases. It's a hard task to be a guru; one has to take over the disciples' sins. The guru has to take a share if a sin is committed by a disciple. If the disciple is good, the guru also is benefited.'

From the book, 'Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi', by Swami Gambhirananda.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

<b>Events</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time</b>
<b>July Retreat 2025</b> Conducted by Swami Sarvapriyananda, Minister-in-charge Vedanta Society of New York, US	<b>July 6, 2025 @ 9am to 2pm</b> <i>In person only, this will not be telecast on YouTube.</i>
<b>Guru Purnima</b>	<b>July 10 @ 6.30pm</b> <i>Also Puja will be streamed live on YouTube.</i>
<b>Annual General Meeting (AGM)</b>	<b>July 26 @ 11am</b> <i>In person at the campus.</i>
<b>Sri Krishna Janmashtami</b>	<b>August 16 @ 6.30pm</b> <i>Also Puja will be streamed live on YouTube.</i>

### **REGULAR PROGRAMMES**

**SCRIPTURE CLASS:** Friday Scripture Classes begin at 7:30 pm, following the regular evening prayer at 6:00 pm. The class, held at the centre, is open to all interested persons. For details, please see the 'Calendar of Events' on the next page.

**VIGIL:** A vigil consisting of japa and meditation will be observed, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, for date kindly see 'Calendar of Events', on next page. To participate, please call the centre @416-240-7262.

**RAM NAM:** For the date and time of the monthly Ramnam, please see the 'Calendar of Events' on the next page.

**BOOK STORE:** Limited number of books are available for purchase.

**DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK:** Daily Bread Food Bank has actively started. We would like to encourage people to donate.

#### **INTERVIEWS/INSTRUCTION:**

Swami Kripamayananda will be happy to give Interviews to those interested in knowing more about Vedanta and meditation. Individual interviews are also given for Spiritual instructions. Appointments for interviews should be made in advance with the Swami at 416-240-7262.

**DAILY MEDITATION:** Meditation is done at the Centre every morning from 6:00 am to 7:00 am. Devotional singing and meditation time in the evenings is from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm.

**SOUP KITCHEN:** Please see next page for details.

### **Teachings of Swami Brahmananda**

Maharaj: 'His grace and His blessings are not lacking. But how many are there who set their sail to catch His breeze of grace? How many bend their heads to receive His blessings? People's minds are busy with trivial things; who wants the real treasure? They talk big, but they don't strive to earn anything. They want to get everything without effort. People can manage to do all kinds of worldly work, but when it comes to keeping recollectedness of God they say, "But where is the time to do it?"

'Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "Gurus can be had by the thousands, but rare is a disciple." There are plenty of people to give advice, but how many are there to listen to it? If a man has faith in the words of his guru and follows them, then all his doubts and troubles vanish. If a man has faith in the words of his guru, God will meet all his wants. Holding him by the hand, He will lead him on the right path. What worries are there if one has received His grace? From the Lord's infinite storehouse of knowledge will come a continuous supply. He in whom a longing for God has awakened, let him rise and struggle. While sitting, or lying down, or eating, let him pray piteously to His blessed feet: "O Lord, have mercy on me! Allow me to understand your grace!"

From the book, 'Swami Brahmananda, as we saw Him', reminiscences of Swami Aparanananda.

### **THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at the Vedanta Society of Toronto, 120 Emmett Ave, Toronto on **Saturday, July 26, 2025 at 11am**. Any member who wishes to nominate an active and willing member of the Vedanta Society for the Executive Committee may do so by writing to the Society. All valid nominations, duly proposed and seconded, must be received by **July 24** and be approved by Swami Kripamayananda.

All our members are requested to attend the meeting in person. **If you are unable to attend**, please fill in the Proxy form included with this Newsletter and mail it so that it reaches us by **July 24**. Alternatively, the filled-in Proxy form can be emailed to [toronto@rkmm.org](mailto:toronto@rkmm.org). In the subject line please mention: **AGM 2025 Proxy Form**.



# Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher- Swami Kripamayananda, Ramakrishna Order of India

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### July 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <b>7:30pm</b> <b>Scripture class</b> 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>5</u>
<u>6</u> <b>9AM to 2PM</b> (In-person only) <b>Retreat by Swami Sarvapriyananda</b> Venue: GurMandir.	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u> <b>6:30pm</b> <b>Guru Purnima</b>	<u>11</u> <b>7:30pm</b> <b>ONLINE ONLY</b> <b>Scripture class</b> 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>12</u> <b>6am to 6pm</b> <b>VIGIL</b>
<u>13</u> <b>11.00am Lecture:</b> 'Narendra of the Absolute plane'  <b>5:00pm</b> <b>RAMNAAM</b>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> <b>7:30pm</b> <b>Scripture class</b> 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>19</u>
<u>20</u> <b>11.00am Lecture:</b> <b>ONLINE ONLY</b> 'Guru and Disciple'	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> <b>7:30pm</b> <b>ONLINE ONLY</b> <b>Scripture class</b> 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>26</u> <b>11am</b> <b>Annual General Meeting (AGM)</b>
<u>27</u> <b>11.00am Lecture:</b> 'Guided Meditation'	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>	<b>SUMMER VACATION Starts</b>	

### **Soup Kitchen Dates** (Starts at 9.30AM)

Main coordinator: Sayan Roy 416-305-4637

Please contact the coordinator for Soup Kitchen dates on email [r.sayandip@gmail.com](mailto:r.sayandip@gmail.com).

### **SUMMER VACATION**

The Vedanta Society will remain closed for the Summer Vacation from **August 1 to September 11, 2025**. All our regular activities will remain suspended during this period except the daily prayers and the special events. Newsletter for the month of August 2025 will not be published. The Society will reopen after the Summer vacation on **September 12, 2025** with the Friday Scripture class.

### **AN APPEAL FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL for the Year 2025 & DONATION**

Vedanta Society appeals to the devotees and well-wishers to kindly come forward and donate generously through online means. Our thanks to those who have responded to our appeal and kindly donated to support the Society. With the current scenario, devotees and well-wishers can donate online through our website PayPal link <https://vedantatoronto.ca/donate> using Credit / Debit cards. Through PayPal you can also setup recurring monthly donations.

All members who have not renewed their membership for the year 2025, are requested to send their details by email to [toronto@rkmm.org](mailto:toronto@rkmm.org) i.e. Name, Address, Mobile - Home phone numbers, email address and amount paid. Please pay the annual subscription through our website PayPal link as mentioned above. This will help us to issue the annual tax receipt.