



Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

120 Emmett Ave. Toronto, ON M6M 2E6 CANADA

Tel.: 416-240-7262; Email: toronto@rkmm.org Website: www.vedantatoronto.ca

Newsletter June 2025

Words to Inspire

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Hindu calls this Maya, the manifestation of God, because it is the power of God. The Absolute reflecting through the universe is what we call nature."

-----Swami Vivekananda

The birth of an Incarnation

With the exception of Sri Ramachandra and Lord Buddha, all the divine incarnations were born in poverty and hardship. Consider, for example, the childhood of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, the glory of the race of Kshatriya princes. He was born in a prison and spent his childhood away from his kith and kin in a community of humble cowherds; or the life of Lord Jesus, who, although born in a stable, with a manger for cradle, brought glory to his humble parents; or that of Bhagavan Sankara, born after his father's death, the son of a poor widow; or of Bhagavan Sri Chaitanya, of common parentage; and finally, the humble birth of the Prophet Mohammad, the founder of Islam. But despite this fact, none of them was born in a family where contentment did not reign supreme in the midst of want and poverty; or where the warmth of love and selflessness did not prevail over the chill of penury; or where the hearts of the parents were not adorned with renunciation and purity, and adamant firmness and austerity were not matched with tender charity and kindness. If we think deeply, we find that there is a subtle connection between the condition of poverty and the future course of the lives of the incarnations. For unless, from their early years, they had known and sympathized with the lot of the poor, the oppressed and the miserable, how could they, in later years, have wiped away the tears of such people and brought them solace? That, however, is not all that the incarnations aimed to accomplish. We have already seen that they came into the world mainly to arrest the decline of religion. To fulfil that objective they had to acquire intimate knowledge of the principles underlying religion in the past, and, to bring out by a study of the causes of its decline, new and perfected forms of religion suited to particular times and places. It is in the huts of the lowly and not in the palaces of the rich that this intimate knowledge can be gained; for it is the poor man, deprived of the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, who clings to God and His dispensation as his main support.

Although, therefore, religion declines everywhere, a little gleam of the old teaching still brightens the poor man's hut. That is perhaps why these great souls, the world-teachers, are attracted at the time of their birth to the huts of the poor. The divine Lord has promised in the Gita that, through His Maya, He will assume a human body and manifest His powers whenever religion declines, and will help men to obtain peace.

Sri Ramakrishna's birth

An incident which happened at this time still further intensified Kshudiram's faith in God. One day he went to another village on business. On his way back he became tired and rested under a tree. The vast, lonely field and a soft, pure breeze brought repose to his troubled mind and tired body. He felt a strong desire to lie down, and no sooner had he done so than he was overcome with sleep. He then had a dream in which he saw standing before him his chosen Ideal, Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra, in the guise of a divine Boy, His body green like the tender blades of Durva grass. Pointing to a particular spot, the Boy said, "I have been staying here for a long time without food and without anyone to take care of me. Take me to your house: I have a very strong desire that you should serve me." Kshudiram was overcome with emotion and said, paying homage to the Lord again and again: "O Lord, I am without devotion and am very poor. Service befitting you is not possible in my hut, and I shall lose all grace should there be any flaw in it. So why do you make such a difficult request of me?" At this the Boy Ramachandra comforted him and said graciously, "Do not be afraid. I will not take offence at any shortcoming. Take me with you." Unable to control his feelings at the Lord's unexpected grace, Kshudiram burst into tears. Just then his dream came to an end. When he awoke, Kshudiram wondered at the strangeness of his dream and thought, "Ah! If only such good fortune would be mine!"
From 'Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master', by Swami Saradananda.

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 or contact Abhijit Bhattacharya on 416-569-9401.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

Swami Saradananda – Holy Mother's burden-bearer

(From the book "Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi", by Swami Gambhirananda)

One incident which took place in the middle of March 1909, is worth mentioning here. Swami Yogavinode of Kankurgachhi celebrated the Master's birthday at Kamarpukur at that time, and to make it a complete success took the Holy Mother there. She enjoyed it immensely. Just after the celebration there arose a new situation at Jayrambati. For meeting it adequately, the Holy Mother requisitioned the services of the most dependable and level-headed of her sons, Swami Saradananda. The Mother had been acting as the guardian of her brothers who lived in a joint family. But as the brothers and their wives grew up and their families expanded, differences and tensions developed, as a result of which the brothers wanted to be separated; and the Mother also found that to be the only logical solution. For bringing about this settlement Swami Saradananda was invited to help with his personal presence. On the 23rd of March, 1909, Swami Saradananda started for Jayrambati in the company of Yogin-Ma, Golap-Ma, and a Brahmachari and arrived there the next day. A remarkable trait in the Swami's character to be noticed at this time was that, though he had come evidently for a settlement of worldly affairs, he spent most of his time in talking about the Master or editing the Jñāna-yoga of Swami Vivekananda.

When some days had thus passed away, Sri Kedarnath Datta of Koalpara was brought there to make measurement of the landed property. Kedar went on with his work, while Swami Saradananda's mind still followed its wonted habit of spiritual aloofness. After the lands had been measured, there arose the question of division, in which Swami Saradananda had to play a vital part. The documents were all in the keeping of uncle Kali; but uncle Prasanna wanted them to be in his own custody. Ultimately he proposed a division of the papers; Swami Saradananda, however, decided that lands and documents would be simultaneously dealt with. Uncle Prasanna was not reconciled to this; therefore, taking advantage of the Swami's momentary absence from the room where the talk was proceeding, he tried to snatch away the papers from his brother, and as a consequence a scuffle ensued. But as Swami Saradananda again stepped in, uncle Prasanna sat down gloomily. Swami Saradananda remained unruffled like the immobile Himalayas; and relying fully on his judgment and direction, the Mother kept her mind absolutely above these worldly turmoils. Drawing attention to this equipoise of the Mother based as it was on a spiritual insight, the Swami said to the Brahmachari, 'You have seen us often enough—how we flare up at seeing our slightest wish disregarded. But look at the Mother. What a hell her brothers are creating and yet how calm and collected she is at all times!' When the terms of the partition had been worked out, they had to be incorporated in a document. The arbitrators were Swami Saradananda, Sri Saradaprasad Chatterji of Tajpur, and Sri Shambhuchandra Roy of Jibta. Sri Chatterji asked the Mother through her brothers which house she would prefer to live in. She sent her answer: 'Rats bore holes

and snakes live therein.' Sarada Babu explained to her that the whole property—lands, houses, and all was being partitioned, and so if any house was not set apart for her, where would she live in Jayrambati? This time, too, the Mother's answer was, 'Some days I shall live in Prasanna's house and some days in Kali's.' Without further ado, Sri Chatterji allotted to uncle Prasanna's share the house where the Mother lived. The documents were executed and duly registered at Kotulpur. Then the uncles took possession of their respective shares. At last the Mother heaved a sigh of relief and told Yogin-Ma and Golap-Ma that she would go to Calcutta. Accordingly, Swami Saradananda fixed Friday, the 21st of May, as the day of departure.

The 23rd of May, 1909, is a red letter day in the annals of the premises No. 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta; for on that day the Holy Mother set her sacred foot there. Swami Saradananda felt all his labour repaid when he saw the Mother established in her own house. The Ganges was near at hand, a full view of which could be had from the terrace. And as one's eyes extended far to the north, one could have a sight of the tops of the tall village trees in the outskirts of the city. The Mother was overjoyed to see the house and blessed Swami Saradananda heartily. On the altar in the shrine was placed the Master's picture over which was hung a silk canopy made by Sister Nivedita. In the adjoining room there was a new couch for the Mother and near it an old bedstead for Radhu. The Mother disapproved of the arrangement saying, 'I can't live separated from the Master, nor is it proper.' So the two beds were placed in the shrine-room.

In the beginning of 1920, during Swami Saradananda's stay in Banaras, when the Mother's going to Calcutta became imperative, she coolly said, 'There can be no question of my going to Calcutta unless Sarat is there. To whom am I to go? While I am there, if Sarat happens to say, "Mother, I am going out for a few days," I shall say, "Wait a little, my son; let me first step out from this place and then you can start." Who but Sarat will bear my burden?' On another occasion she said, 'I can stay at that place so long as Sarat is there. After him I don't see anyone who can shoulder my responsibility. Sarat can do so in every way. Sarat is my burden-bearer.' The hearer asked the Mother, 'Can't Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) do so?' 'No,' replied the Mother, 'Rakhal is not of that temperament. He can't face troubles. He can do so intellectually or through some one. He is of a totally different make-up.' The questioner pursued, 'What about Baburam Maharaj (Swami Premananda)?' 'No,' replied the Mother, 'not even he.' 'But, as a matter of fact, he is running the (Belur) Math.' 'Let it be so,' replied the Mother. 'Think of the responsibilities for a woman! He can make inquiries from a distance.' On another day she said, 'It is extremely difficult, my child, to stand up against my heavy pressure. Nobody excepting Sarat will be able to shoulder my burden.'

Significance of Snana Yatra

A very special and sacred festival of [Lord Jagannath](#) held in the full-moon day of the month of Jyestha. This festival is known as 'Devasnan Purnima' or 'Snana Yatra' (Bathing Festival). There is a general belief that the devotee washes away all his sins if he gets a vision of the Lord on this day, therefore, it attracts thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. According to Skanda Purana when King Indradyumna installed the wooden deities he arranged this bathing ceremony. On the previous day of Snana Yatra the [images](#) of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra along with the image of Sudarshana are ceremonially brought out from the inner sanctum of the main temple in a procession (called 'Pahandi' in local language) to the Snana Mandapa (Bathing pandal). This bathing platform is situated to the north-east of Ananda Bazar and besides the outer wall of the [temple](#) (called Meghanada Pacheri in local language). The length and breadth of this bathing platform is 76 feet. It is at such a height that visitors standing outside the temple also get a clear view of the Deities.

Three Deities on the Snana Mandap

On this auspicious day the Suaras and Mahasuaras go in a ceremonial procession to fetch 108 pots of water from the Golden well (called 'Suna Kua' in local language). The holy water drawn from this well once a year. During the entire process all of them cover their mouths with a piece of cloth so as not to contaminate it even with their breath. Then all the pots filled with water are preserved in the Bhoga Mandap. Then the priests purify the water with Haladi (turmeric), Java (whole rice), Sandal (Chandan), flowers and perfumes. The filled and purified water pots then carried from Bhoga Mandap to the bathing platform by the Suaras in a long single line queue. This ritual is called 'Jalabhisheka'. 'Jalabhishek' consists of two words 'Jala' and 'Abhisheka'. In local language 'Jala' means water and 'Abhishek' means Bath. This Abhisheka is accompanied by chanting of vedic mantras by the priests, kirtana and blowing of conch shells.

At evening, after the bath ritual, the Deities assume the special elephant form which is otherwise known as 'Hati Vesha'. Lord

Jagannatha and Lord Balaram dressed like elephant, and Goddess Subhadra wears a lotus flower vesha.



Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra in their elephant form (Hati Vesha)

After Snana Yatra, the deities are supposed to fall ill (fever) and do not return to their pedestal. The Deities are kept on a special sick room called the 'Ratan vedi' inside the temple. They stay away from the public view for a period of 15 days. This period is known as '[Anasara](#)'. During Anasara the Deities offered only fruits and water mixed with cheese and Dasamula medicines to cure from fever. The Deities are treated by the Raj Vaidya (the King's physician) with specific medicines (Dasamulas). During all these days the daily rites of the temple remain suspended. Due to the sacred bath with 108 pitchers of water, the colours painted on the images fade out. The Daitas repaint the images with new colors and on the 16th day the Deities appear in their new forms after colouration become ready for the public view. The festival of the first appearance of the Lord Jagannath to his devotees is called 'Netrotsava' (festival for the eyes) or 'Nava Yauvanotsava' (festival of the ever new youth).

The Teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

"If a creature adores Krishna and serves his guru, he is released from this world of illusion and attains Krishna's feet and leaving these temptations and religious system based on caste, the true Vaishnava takes refuge with Krishna."


"Ye the children of Amrita, have recourse to Sri Krishna-Name and arrest the perverted current of life and redirect it towards the Eternal Source."

"Vain are the pedigree, scholarship, recitals, of Mantras, and austerities in a man who lacks faith in and devotional love for God."

"Service to God is only the noble virtue that unites all beings together, inspiring in one the presence of the Divinity."

"The essence of all religious principles in the age of Kali is chanting of the holy names of the lord. One cannot be delivered by following any other religious principles."

July Retreat 2025



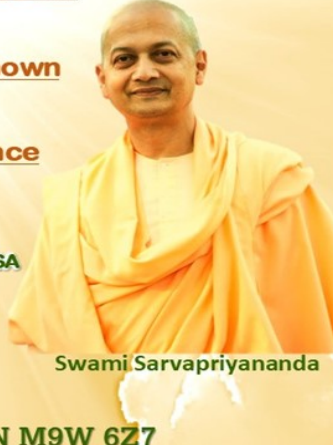
Vedanta Society of Toronto
SPECIAL ONE DAY RETREAT

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

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.

Fees for the Retreat: \$75 per participant.

Registration is first-cum-serve and limited to 200 seats.

All are requested to please follow below steps:

1. Send email to toronto@rkmm.org mentioning full name, you will receive acceptance email from us.
Correspondences on phone or Whatsapp is not recommended and may not be entertained.
2. **Only after receiving acceptance email**, pay (before June 15,2025) @ \$75 per participant. After payment, please email the receipt to toronto@rkmm.org.

Swami Virajananda

Swami Virajananda, Kalikrishna Bose, as he was called in his pre-monastic life, was born on 10 June 1873 to Trailokyanath Bose and Nishadkali Devi on the Hindu festival day of bathing festival (Snan Yatra) of Jagannath. He was an initiated disciple of Sarada Devi and the sixth president of the Ramakrishna Order. Born as the son of Trailokyanath Bose and Nishadkalidevi, Virajananda was the first person to join the Ramakrishna Order after the direct disciples of Ramakrishna. Kalikrishna was inspired by his friend Khagendranath, later Swami Vimalananda, a disciple of Vivekananda, to lead a spiritual life. He also had a group of young friends who later became renunciates and who also joined the Ramakrishna order. Among them were Sudhir Chandra Chakravarty (Swami Shuddhananda), Sushil Chandra Chakravarty (Swami Prakashananda), Govinda Shukul (Swami Atmananda) and Haripada Chatterjee (Swami Bodhananda).

In 1897, he was initiated into sannyasa by Vivekananda. From 1899 onward he served in Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati and became its president in 1906. He is recognised as a monastic disciple of Vivekananda.

Along with Swarupananda, Virajananda played a great role in popularising the monthly magazine of the order, Prabuddha Bharata. He was also responsible for successful completion of compilation and publishing of The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda. He then edited and published a biography of Vivekananda in 1906 under the title The Life of Swami Vivekananda by his Eastern and Western Disciples. He was appointed the president of the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati in 1913. In 1934, he became the General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Order. In 1913 he set up a retreat in the Himalayan foothills and named the place as Shyamala Tal. He set up the Vivekananda Ashrama and Ramakrishna Home of Service here. He also served as the secretary of the organising committee of the first convention of the monks of the Ramakrishna order in 1926 in Belur Math. He served as the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Order from 1930 to 1934. During his secretaryship he helped in organising the Sri Ramakrishna Birth Centenary Celebration and the Parliament of world Religions in Calcutta in 1937. He was elected as the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna order in 1938 and as the 6th President in December 1938. He used to call himself the Chief Monastic Servant of the order. He dreamt of a Vivekananda University and was the inspiration behind the founding of the two educational institutions in Belur Math, Belur Vidyamandir and Sarada Pitha. He passed away on 30 May 1951.

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

True Freedom

From the book, "*The Message of Vivekachudamani*", by Swami Ranganathananda

There is an element of freedom in every man. We are a bundle of bondage and freedom. Body is the product of food, and so also is the mind. They are controlled and bound by nature. But there is a focus of light inside us, though glimmering in our present state, which is the true focus of freedom. That is the atman, the divine spark, which is beyond nature. The little semblances of freedom we all experience in our day-to-day life is due to the light of atman, which percolates through the intellect, mind, senses, and the body. It makes all these faculties energized and vital. In a physical existence where the light of atman seems submerged in the psycho-sensory mire, we are totally in bondage. Most of us do not realize that we are bound. We remain satisfied. But when this great blessing of "the desire to be free" enters into our lives, it marks a turning point. Then begins our march towards freedom – first, by searching for the true focus of freedom in our psychophysical experiences and then, having discovered the true focus, by a mighty penetration into its real nature. Our whole being then responds to the Divine stimulus coming from the atman.

Work and wealth can create and provide us with different commodities of this world but not immortality, because immortality is a self-existent eternal entity. That ever-existing immortality has to be just realized by the extraordinary experience of spiritual illumination, which alone destroys our ignorance about our true nature. Wealth, as well as work done with a selfish motive, will never take us towards spiritual illumination. But if we learn the technique of squeezing our actions to produce knowledge, then it becomes spiritually fruitful and leads us towards illumination. Otherwise, mere work, without the touch of self-awareness in it, is akin to the work done by a bull going round the treadmill. It produces oil, but the bull remains the same as ever. It gets only a little grass for its labour. Most of us labour in life like the bull in the treadmill, motivated by our greed for a few grass-heaps of wealth and comforts. Thereby we only turn the wheel of nature and serve its purpose. Here is no hope of attaining immortality that way.

Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher- Swami Kripamayananda, Ramakrishna Order of India

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <u>11.00am Lecture:</u> 'Submission to Tripura Sundari'	2	3	4	5	6 <u>7:30pm</u> Scripture class 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	7
8 <u>11.00am Lecture:</u> 'Sri Ramakrishna, the Redeemer of Worldliness', by Swami Jnanaprakashananda	9	10	11	12	13 <u>7:30pm</u> ONLINE ONLY Scripture class 'Uddhava Gita'	14 <u>6am to 6pm</u> VIGIL
15 <u>11.00am Lecture:</u> ONLINE ONLY 'Sri Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe'	16	17	18	19	20 <u>7:30pm</u> Scripture class 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	21
22 <u>11.00am Lecture:</u> 'Vivekananda and Neo Vedanta', by Swami Shubhavratananda <u>5:00pm</u> RAMNAAM	23	24	25	26	27 <u>7:30pm</u> ONLINE ONLY Scripture class 'Uddhava Gita'	28
29 <u>11.00am Lecture:</u> ONLINE ONLY 'Mind Transformation'	30					

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.

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. In the subject line please mention: **AGM 2025 Proxy Form**.

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.