



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 September 2023

Words to Inspire

"The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little minds, are fragments of that universal mind, little waves in the ocean; and on account of this continuity, we can convey our thoughts directly to one another."

-----Swami Vivekananda

Krishna's message

(Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda – Vol. 1 - recorded by Ida Ansell, Delivered in California, on April 1, 1900)

In Krishna we find two ideas [stand] supreme in his message: The first is the harmony of different ideas; the second is non-attachment. A man can attain to perfection, the highest goal, sitting on a throne, commanding armies, working out big plans for nations. In fact, Krishna's great sermon was preached on the battlefield.

Krishna saw plainly through the vanity of all the mummeries, mockeries, and ceremonials of the old priests; and yet he saw some good in them. If you are a strong man, very good! But do not curse others who are not strong enough for you.

So, the ceremonials, worship of gods, and myths, are all right, Krishna says. Why? Because they all lead to the same goal. Ceremonies, books, and forms— all these are links in the chain. Get hold! That is the one thing. If you are sincere and have really got hold of one link, do not let go; the rest is bound to come. [But people] do not get hold. They spend the time quarrelling and determining what they should get hold of, and do not get hold of anything. We are always after truth, but never want to get it. We simply want the pleasure to go about and ask. We have a lot of energy and spend it that way. That is why Krishna says: Get hold of any one of these chains that are stretched out from the common centre. No one step is greater than another. Blame no view of religion so far as it is sincere.

Krishna talks of himself as God, as Christ does. He sees the Deity in himself. And he says, "None can go a day out of my path. All must come to me. Whosoever wants to worship in whatsoever form, I give him faith in that form, and through that I meet him." (Gita, IV. 12.) His heart is all for the masses.

Independent, Krishna stands out. The very boldness of it frightens us.

Krishna lays great stress upon worship. Worship God! Various sorts of worship we see in this world. The highest worship is that of the man who loves God for God's sake. The question may be asked: "Why should there be so much sorrow if there is a God?" The worshipper replies! "There is misery in the world; [but] because of that I do not cease to love God. I do not worship Him to take away my [misery]. I love Him because He is love itself." The other [types of worship]

are lower grade; but Krishna has no condemnation for anything. It is better to do something than to stand still. The man who begins to worship God will grow by degrees and begin to love God for love's sake.

How to attain purity living this life? Shall we all go to the forest caves? What good would it do? If the mind is not under control, it is no use living in a cave because the same mind will bring all disturbances there. We will find twenty devils in the cave because all the devils are in the mind. If the mind is under control, we can have the cave anywhere, wherever we are. It is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful; our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our own minds. Learn to see things in the proper light. First, believe in this world — that there is meaning behind everything. Everything in the world is good, is holy and beautiful. If you see something evil, think that you are not understanding it in the right light. Throw the burden on yourselves!

Work day and night! "Behold, I am the Lord of the Universe. I have no duty. Every duty is bondage. But I work for work's sake. If I ceased to work for a minute, [there would be chaos]." (Ibid. III. 22-23.) So do thou work, without any idea of duty. This world is a play. You are His playmates. Go on and work, without any sorrow, without any misery. Attach yourselves to the Lord and to nothing else because everything else is unreal. Attachment to the unreal will bring misery. There is only one Existence that is real, only one Life in which there is neither object nor subject. But unattached love will not hurt you. Do anything — marry, have children. Do nothing with the idea of "mine". Duty for duty's sake; work for work's sake. When we come to that non-attachment, then we can understand the marvelous mystery of the universe; how it is intense activity and vibration, and at the same time intense peace and calm; how it is work every moment and rest every moment. That is the mystery of the universe — the impersonal and personal in one, the infinite and finite in one. Then we shall find the secret. "He who finds in the midst of intense activity the greatest rest, and in the midst of the greatest rest intense activity, he has become a Yogi." (Ibid. IV. 18.)

Krishna, the only Purusha

From the book 'The way to God, as taught by Sri Ramakrishna', by Swami Lokeswarananda – Ch: The Madhura Bhava
Sunday, June 15, 1884

Sri Ramakrishna arrived in the morning at the garden house of Surendra, one of his beloved householder disciples, in the village of Kankurgachi near Calcutta. Surendra had invited him and a large number of devotees to a religious festival. Occasions like this were a source of great happiness and rejoicing to the Master's devotees.

The devotees stood in rows inside the big hall of the garden house to hear the music sung by the professional singers. The floor of the room was covered with a carpet over which was spread a white sheet; a few bolsters, pillows, and cushions lay here and there. As was the custom, the musicians first sang about Gauranga (Sri Caitanya) and his ecstatic love for Sri Kṛṣṇa. Then they sang of the episodes in the life of Sri Kṛṣṇa especially associated with His divine love for the gopis of Vrindavan. This was a theme which always appealed to the Master and would throw him into ecstatic moods.

Next the musician sang about the anguish of Radha at her separation from Kṛṣṇa. When Sri Ramakrishna heard the song, he suddenly stood up. Assuming the mood of Radha, he sang in a voice laden with sorrow, improvising the words: 'O friend, either bring my beloved Kṛṣṇa here or take me to Him.' Thus singing, he completely lost himself in Radha and could not continue the song. He became speechless, his body motionless, his half closed, his mind totally unconscious eyes of the outer world. He was in deep samadhi.

After a long time, he regained normal consciousness and said in the same heart-rending voice: 'O friend, take me to my beloved Kṛṣṇa and make me your bondslave. I shall be your handmaid forever. O friend, it was you who taught me how to love Kṛṣṇa. O Kṛṣṇa! O Beloved of my soul!'

Radha is a lover of God, and Sri Kṛṣṇa is God Himself. Radha is the jivātman, the individual soul, and Sri Kṛṣṇa is the paramatman, the Supreme Soul. The name Radha is derived from 'ra', which means 'to acquire', and 'dhā' which means 'running towards'- that is, one hurries to get God or liberation. Radha symbolizes the intense feeling, the intense longing, of anyone who is desperate for God-realization. Radha and the other gopis say: 'We have renounced shame, hatred and fear. On one side is God, on the other, all worldly attractions. We have chosen God Kṛṣṇa as our all-in-all. We know nothing but Him.'

And who is Kṛṣṇa? He is one who attracts. The word Kṛṣṇa comes from the root 'kṛs', which means 'to attract'. Sri Kṛṣṇa attracts everyone. He is the magnet, and the lovers of God are pieces of iron. Can the iron ignore the attraction of the magnet? Can the river flow away from the ocean? Can the devotees keep themselves from Kṛṣṇa? No, Kṛṣṇa draws them to himself. The music of his flute is the call of the Infinite. It beckons us, 'Come! Come to me!' Unable to resist Him, we run to Him. People may criticize us and call us crazy, but we know nothing but Kṛṣṇa. Like the gopis, we find worldly life to be nothing. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has said of the madhura bhava, 'That love is not of this world.'

The madhura bhava was manifest in Sri Caitanya. In the latter part of his life he was completely absorbed in the feeling that he was Radha and spent his days crying bitterly for Krishna. All those who try to realize God through the madhura bhava try to be like Radha; she is their model. Sri Ramakrishna also practiced the madhura bhava and felt he was Radha. Though he experienced the other moods- the peaceful mood, the attitude of a servant, of a friend, of a mother, of a child- his practice of the madhura bhava included and carried to perfection all these other ways of approaching God.

The great woman saint Mirabai practiced the madhura bhava. At one time she visited Vrindavan and wanted to see Rūpa Goswami, who was living there; but Rupa Goswami did not want to meet her because she was a woman. He sent a message: 'I live in the groves and do not speak to women.' At that Mirabai replied: 'You do not know anything. As long as you think of yourself as a man, you will never understand the Vrindavan līlā. Sri Kṛṣṇa is the only man here.' In the discipline of the madhura bhava, we are all women; Sri Kṛṣṇa is the only man.

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 (cleaning the walls, floor, arrange chairs, table, arrange various utensils in correct place, replenish stock)
- Book-store assistance (arranging the books, helping out with stocks, replenish, inventory check)
- Library assistance (arranging the books, chairs, calling for book return)
- Lawn mowing, gardening, watering plants (during summer)

If interested in volunteering, kindly send email at toronto@rkmm.org or contact Abhijit Bhattacharya on 416-569-9401, indicating the Services that you are interested in and days you can be available for volunteering.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

Sri Ramakrishna-Incarnation of this age

Adapted from 'Prabuddha Bharata' April 1973

What did the Master look Like?

His complexion was like the colour of gold-like that of harital [a yellow orpiment]. It blended with the colour of the gold amulet which he wore on his arm. When I rubbed him with oil I could clearly see a lustre coming out of his entire body. People looked at him wonderstruck when he went with slow, steady steps to the Ganga to take his bath. And when he came out of his room at the temple, people stood in line and said to one another, "Ah, there he goes!" It also happened at Kamarpukur. Men and women looked at him with mouths agape whenever he chanced to come out of his house. One day he went for a walk in the direction of the canal known as Bhutir Khal. The women who had gone there to fetch water stared at him and said, "There goes the Master!" The Master was annoyed at this and said to Hriday, "Well, Hridu, please put a veil over my head at once."

How can we recognize the avatar? How can we establish a relationship with him? How can we love him whom we have not seen? Many such questions arise in our minds. The gopis of Vrindaban tied Krishna with the cord of love. The Bhagavata says: "The unconquerable God becomes conquered by the devotees' love. Ramakrishna also said: "God becomes tender for the sake of His devotees. He appears before them, setting aside His powers." One cannot grasp God through money, learning, intellect, or psychic powers. One needs love, devotion, detachment, humility, and self-surrender. One has to offer the body, senses, and mind to God and establish a relationship with Him through meditation on His name, form, qualities, action, and lila. About such devotees, Krishna says in the Gita: "I bestow the yoga of understanding by means of which they come to Me." The Master would say, The Divine Mother Herself has come to visit the world in human form (meaning himself); when people of all sects assemble here, this body will not last.

Conversation with Sri Ramakrishna, as recorded by M in the Gospel— Visit to Nanda Bose's house dated July 28, 1885

Master: "Well, after seeing all this, what do you feel?"

M: "I feel that Christ, Chaitanyadeva, and yourself all three are one and the same. It is the same Person that has become all these three.

MASTER: "Yes, yes! One! One! It is indeed one. Don't you see that it is He alone who dwells here in this way.

As he said this, Sri Ramakrishna pointed with his finger to his own body.

M: "You explained clearly, the other day, how God incarnates Himself on earth."

MASTER: "Tell me what I said."

M: "You told us to imagine a field extending to the horizon and beyond. It extends without any obstruction; but we cannot see it on account of a wall in front of us. In that wall

there is a round hole. Through the hole we see a part of that infinite field."

MASTER: "Tell me what that hole is."

M: You are that hole. Through you can be seen everything—that Infinite Meadow without any end."

Sti Ramakrishna was very much pleased. Patting M.'s back, he said: "I see you have understood that. That's fine!"

M: "It is indeed difficult to understand that. One cannot quite grasp how God, Perfect Brahman that He is, can dwell in that small body.

The Master quoted from a song:

Oh, no one at all has found out who He is;

Like a madman from door to door He roams,

Like a poor beggar He roams from door to door.

Another recording by M in the Gospel, Master on Himself and His Experiences, dated August 9, 1885

(Master Pointing to himself)

"There must be something special here. Long ago a young man named Gopal Sen used to visit me. He who dwells is age placed His foot on Gopal's chest. Gopal said in an ecstatic mood.: 'You will have to wait here a long time. I cannot live any more with worldly people.'

He took leave of me. Afterwards I heard that he was dead. Perhaps he was born as Nityagopal.

"I have had many amazing visions. I had a vision of the Indivisible Satchidananda. Inside It I saw two groups with a fence between them. On one side were Kedar, Chuni, and other devotees who believe in the Personal God. On the other side was a luminous space like a heap of red brick-dust. Inside it was seated Narendra immersed in samadhi. Seeing him absorbed in meditation, I called aloud, 'Oh, Narendra!' He opened his eyes a little.

I came to realize that he had been born, in another form, in Simla in a kayastha family. At once I said to the Divine Mother, Mother, entangle him in maya; otherwise he will give up his body in samadhi.'

"Therefore I feel that it is the Divine Mother Herself who dwells in this body and plays with the devotees. When I first had my exalted state of mind, my body would radiate light. My chest was always flushed. Then I said to the Divine Mother: 'Mother, do not reveal Thyself outwardly. Please go inside.' That is why my complexion is so dull now. If my body were still luminous, people would have tormented me; a crowd would always have thronged here. Now there is no outer manifestation. That keeps weeds away. Only genuine devotees will remain with me now. Do you know why I have this illness? It has the same significance. Those whose devotion to me has a selfish motive behind it will run away at the sight of my illness..

Vivekananda Dinner 2023

Vedanta Society of Toronto



Sunday, September 24, 2023, at 5:00 pm

**at Woodbine Banquet Hall,
30 Vice Regent Blvd, Toronto ON, M9W 7A4.**

- ❖ Distinguished Keynote speaker : Swami Yogatmananda, Minister-In-Charge Vedanta Society of Providence, USA.
- ❖ The detailed programme of this significant event will be communicated soon.

Ticket price : \$100.00 Or \$70.00 per adult
(Free admission for children under 5 years)

On the occasion of the Vivekananda Dinner 2023, a souvenir will be published. Sponsorships, advertisements and donations are solicited for this unique occasion.

For details contact :

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ANNUAL SEMINAR 2023

The Vedanta Society will hold its Annual Seminar, panelist details as mentioned below -

- **Swami Nishpapananda**, Ramakrishna Order monk from Vedanta Society St. Louis, MO, USA
- **Prof. Luis Seco**, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Toronto
- **Meena Singh**, Co-Founder and Chair, LAUF
- **Dr. Alakananda Nath**, founder & director of Sri Laasya Kalakendra

September 9, 2023- 8:30 am – 5 pm (8.30 to 9 am – breakfast)

Topic: *Success through love, respect and cooperation.*

The Seminar will encourage the active participation of all attendees, and to help them move forward in their life.

Registration fee \$50 per person (includes breakfast and lunch).

Participants are requested to email their confirmation at toronto@rkmm.org before September 8, 2023, mentioning their name. Payment can be made on the day of the Seminar by cash, cheque or by credit / debit cards.

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Events	Date & Time
Sri Krishna Janmashtami	September 7, 2023 – 6:30 pm <i>Also puja will be streamed live on YouTube.</i>
Annual Seminar <i>Panelist details as mentioned above</i>	September 9, 2023 8.30am to 5pm. <i>On-site only, this will not be streamed on YouTube.</i>
Mahalaya	October 14, 2023 – 6:30 pm <i>Also puja will be streamed live on YouTube.</i>
Durga Puja celebration Maha Ashtami Maha Navami Vijaya Dashami	October 22, 2023 (Puja from 11.00 am; Pushpanjali and prasada at 12 pm) October 23, 2023 October 24, 2023 (Puja from 6.30 pm; Pushpanjali and prasada at 8 pm) <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 Kripamayanaanda 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: For details on Soup Kitchen, please see the 'Calendar of Events' on the next page for details.

Holy Mother at Vrindaban

From the book, 'Sri Sarada Devi and Her Divine Play', by Swami Chetanananda

Swami Yogananda left a vivid account of Holy Mother's stay in Vrindaban:

We saw how Holy Mother, even in the midst of her intense grief at the passing away of the Master, fully realized his divine grace and presence at all times. We thought of ourselves as helpless orphans, but Holy Mother's love became our anchor. At Vrindaban Holy Mother had many spiritual experiences. One day her women companions found her absorbed in deep samadhi. They uttered the name of the Lord in her ears and tried to bring her mind down. I repeated the name of Sri Ramakrishna with all my strength; at that, the Mother seemed to return to the ordinary sense plane. During such periods of ecstasy, her manner of speech, her voice, her way of taking food, her way of walking, and her general behaviour were exactly like those of the Master. We have heard that in deep meditation the worshipper and the worshipped become one. The scriptures mention a spiritual state known as tadatmya-bhava-being at one with God. We have read in the Bhagavata how the gopis, unable to bear separation from Krishna, became so deeply absorbed in the thought of him that for the moment they forgot their own individualities and behaved as though they were Krishna. In the same manner Holy Mother, too, forgot her own separate existence and acted just like the Master, feeling her oneness with him. When I asked her some complex questions about spiritual matters shortly after her states of samadhi, she replied from a god-intoxicated mood, very much like Sri Ramakrishna; that is, in the same manner characteristic of the Master, even using his same easy style of expression with metaphors and parables.

We all were surprised to see the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna united with hers. It was unique. We then realized that the Master and the Mother were one in essence, though appearing in separate forms. Is it not said in the scriptures: "Lord, thou art man, thou art woman"? The Master told me many times that there was no difference between him and the Mother.

Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher- Swami Kripamayananda, Ramakrishna Order of India

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>3</u> NO LECTURE	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> 6:30pm Sri Krishna Janmashtami	<u>8</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>9</u> 8.30am to 5pm Annual Seminar
<u>10</u> 11:00am Lecture: 'Glimpses of Swami Vivekananda' by Swami Nishpapananda	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>16</u> 6am to 6pm VIGIL
<u>17</u> 11:00am Lecture: 'Overcoming difficulties of life' 5:00pm RAMNAAM	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>23</u>
<u>24</u> NO LECTURE 5:00pm VIVEKANANDA DINNER	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>30</u>

Vivekananda Dinner

Venue: Woodbine Banquet and Conventional Hall, 30 Vice Regent Blvd., Etobicoke, Ontario, M9W 7A4.

Date: September 24, 2023

Start: 5pm

For tickets, please see above flyer.

AN APPEAL FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (Year 2023) & 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 2023, are requested to send their details by email to 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.