



Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

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Words to Inspire

"Maya reveals her mysteries only to him who has gone beyond maya."

-Swami Brahmananda

Vrindavan

From the book "The Way To God - as taught by Sri Ramakrishna", by Sw Lokeswarananda

Sri Chaitanya in fifteenth century Bengal revived the Vrindavan lila. Before he came, people thought the Radha-Krishna lila was a mere superstition, and that the mood of ecstatic love was imaginary. We see, however, that Radha's mood of intense yearning was vividly reflected in Sri Chaitanya. Sri Ramakrishna said: 'Inwardly Sri Chaitanya was an Advaitin, a nondualist; outwardly he was a devotee who practised the madhura bhava for the welfare of the devotees.' Living an extremely austere life, Chaitanya was the embodiment of renunciation. One cannot practise the madhura bhava unless one has complete renunciation. Yet how much love and compassion he had for all! He went from door to door, giving everyone the name of God. He lovingly embraced the sinner and the afflicted. Real renunciation culminates in love; he who is able to renounce unconditionally is able to love unconditionally. It is said of Chaitanya that in his body he contained both Radha and Krishna; while outwardly he appeared as Radha, on the inside he was Krishna. There is a poem written about Chaitanya which says: 'If Chaitanya had not come, we would not have understood the glory, or the love of Radha. He taught us the art of tasting the sweetness of Vrindavan. Like the gopis of Vrindavan, he came to teach us how to love.' When Uddhava reached Vrindavan, he found Radha in a frenzy because of her separation from Krishna. Sri Chaitanya exhibited the same marks of divine madness. Sri Ramakrishna also experienced the same intense grief when he identified himself with Radha and regarded Krishna as his beloved. Because of Chaitanya, we now know where Vrindavan is located. The location Vrindavan had been long forgotten before Chaitanya's advent. A description of Chaitanya's discovery of the ancient village is found in Mahaprabhu Gaurangasundara by Sudha Sen: "Travelling around the country, Chaitanya arrived in Vrindavan. Everyone and everything there recognized him—the people, the trees, the creepers, the animals. They said, "This is the person who performed so many lilas here. We saw

him! Today he has come with a different form. This is a new trick of that deceitful God! Krishna, the master of beguilement, has played so many tricks on us. No doubt this is another trick, coming to us in this new form." The people of the village said to Chaitanya, "where are you hiding your black form? We see you now in the form of Radha." Inside you are Krishna, outwardly you have the form of Radha, with 'Krishna, Krishna!' always on your lips. There is no other evidence of Krishna." 'For the welfare of mankind, and to enjoy the sport of the divine lila, Radha and Krishna took birth in the body of Sri Chaitanya. 'All the trees and creepers placed their pure flowers and fruit at the feet of their beloved Chaitanya, as if they were giving tokens of love to a friend. And Sri Chaitanya also lovingly embraced them. Wandering here and there in Vrindavan, he came to a spot where two parrots were talking. He could understand their language. The male parrot said, "Sri Krishna played on his flute and enchanted all the women of the world." 'It should be noted that the word 'women' here indicates all devotees; Krishna is to be regarded as the only man in the world; everyone else is a woman. The parrot continued, "The sound of Krishna's flute keeps calling to the hearts of all the lovers of God. He brings bliss to them all. Glory be to Krishna!" 'The female parrot replied, "You say, 'Glory to Krishna!' Have you forgotten Radha? Only if Radha is by his side can Krishna captivate everyone. If she is not present, he cannot attract anyone. For argument's sake, let us say he can captivate the whole world, but if he does that, he will be captivated too." Brahman and maya, purusa and prakriti, Siva and Sakti are not different. As Sri Chaitanya listened to the wise words of the parrots, he understood that he must be in Vrindavan. And in fact this is how Sri Chaitanya discovered the ancient village. One could say that this is only his imagination, but even if it is only his imagination— what an imagination! Imagination brings sweetness to our lives. Is that sweetness imaginary? To the lover of God, the divine play of Radha and Krishna is not imaginary, it is real.

KARMA YOGA ACTIVITIES

It is a great opportunity to provide your services to the Vedanta Society of Toronto. Kindly come forward and volunteer time towards maintaining and managing the facilities. If interested in volunteering, kindly 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!!



Snana Yatra

Snana yatra festival also known Devasnana Purnima is celebrated on the full-moon day in the month of Jyesta. This is the day when Lord Krishna appeared in the form of Jagannatha, he was feeling ecstatic while he was secretly hearing from Mother Rohini about Vrindavan pastimes.

Early in the morning the deities of Lord Balarama, Mother Subhadra and Lord Jagannatha along with Sudarsana cakra and Madana Mohan are carried in a procession to Snana vedi (platform) located in the Northeast corner of the outer compound near the Anand bazar.

The Deities are bathed in 108 golden water pots filled with cool sandal scented water from the Suna-kua (golden well). This large well which is near the banyan tree was excavated by King Indradyumna upon Lord Jagannatha's request for

snana yatra. This abhiseka is meant to refresh their Lordships from the summer heat. After the sunset their Lordships are dressed in Hati-Vesa (elephant decoration).

After the bathing ceremony (snana-yatra), Lord Jagannatha apparently becomes sick. During this period known as Anasara or anavasara their Lordships cannot be seen by devotees. He is removed to His private apartment, where no one can see Him. At this time three Pata chitra paintings are displayed for devotees to view instead. It is said that with the Ayurvedic medication ('pnachan') administered by the Raj Vaidya the Deities recover. This is called Nava-yauvana. Thus for fifteen days after the bathing ceremony, Lord Jagannatha is not visible to any visitors. Hence people who cannot take darshan of Jagannatha go to Alalanath to have darshan of Lord Jagannatha.

Fifty-Fifty

Do not think of divine Power only in terms of *srsti*, *sthiti* and *laya* (creation, sustenance and dissolution). Think of the power that comes through divine Knowledge, divine Love. Power may be physical, moral or spiritual. Turn to the original Source of all forms of power, the Divine Mother. Love for the Mother gives you infinite Power. You are only an instrument in Her hands.

Just as the Mother dwells in you, so She dwells in all – think thus, otherwise the love of today with turn to hatred tomorrow. Love of God should be for love's sake. The highest state of bhakti is that when one does not think of oneself at all. One just gives without expecting anything in return. At present our love is mixed with selfishness. Listen to a story of "fifty-fifty".

There was a hotel famous for sausages of rabbit meat. Once a customer found that the taste had changed. The police was called in. The lady hotel-keeper said, 'Sir, what can I do? Rabbit flesh has become rare, so I added a little of horse meat.' 'In what proportion?', asked the police. She answered, 'Fifty-fifty.' That is, one rabbit to one horse! Our so-called love for others is of the weight of a rabbit, our self-love, of the weight of a horse – fifty-fifty indeed! People including ourselves, are unreliable. Turn to the infinite Source of Love. We receive a drop of that true Love. It becomes too much adulterated with selfishness. Purify it. Self-love is in everyone. The problem is how to sublimate it. In science, sublimation is the process of purification. That is our life's task.

From the book, '*Meditation and Spiritual Life*', by Swami Yatishwarananda.

Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda

MARY C. FUNKE

Just think what it means to listen to a Vivekananda at every meal, lessons each morning and the nights on the porch, the eternal stars shining like "patinas of bright gold"! In the afternoon, we take long walks and the Swami literally, and so simply, finds "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good (God) in every thing". And this same Swami is so merry and fun-loving. We just go mad at times.

Later: We have been soaring on the Heights, since I last wrote you. Swami tells us to forget that there is any Detroit for the present — that is, to allow no personal thoughts to occupy our minds while taking this instruction. We are taught to see God in everything from the blade of grass to man — "even in the diabolical man".

Really, it is almost impossible to find time to write here. We put up with some inconveniences, as it is so crowded. There is no time to relax, to rest, for we led the time is all too short, as the Swami leaves soon for England. We scarcely have time to array ourselves properly, so afraid are we of losing some of the precious jewels. His words are like jewels, and all that he says fits together like a wonderfully beautiful mosaic. In his talks he may go ever so far afield, but always he comes back to the one fundamental, vital thing — "Find God! Nothing else matters".

I especially like Miss Waldo and Miss Ellis. although the whole household is interesting. Some unique characters. One, a Dr. Wright of Cambridge, a very cultured man, creates much merriment at times. He becomes so absorbed in the teaching that he, invariably, at the end of each discourse ends up with asking Swamiji, "Well, Swamiji all amounts to this in the end, doesn't it? I am Brahman, I am the Absolute." If you could only see Swami's indulgent smile and hear him answer so gently. "Yes Dokie, you are Brahman, you are the Absolute, in the real essence of your being." Later, when the learned doctor comes to the table a trifle late, Swami, with the utmost gravity but with a merry twinkle in his eyes, will say. "Here comes Brahman" or "Here is the Absolute".

Swamiji's fun-making is of the merry type. Sometimes he will say, "Now I am going to cook for you!" He is a wonderful cook and delights in serving the "brithrin". The food he prepares is delicious but for "yours truly" too hot with various spices; but I made up my mind to eat it if it strangled me, which it nearly did. If a Vivekananda can cook for me, I guess the least I can do is to eat it. Bless him!

At such times we have whirlwind of fun. Swamiji will stand on the floor with a white napkin draped over his arm, a la the waiters on the dining cars, and will in tone in perfect imitation their call for dinner — "Last call fo' the dining cah. Dinner served". — Irresistibly funny!

Since my last letter to you when I told you of Swamiji's capacity for merriment, so many little things have occurred to make one see how varied the aspects of Vivekananda are. We are trying to take notes of all that he says but I find myself lost in listening and forget the notes. His voice is wondrously beautiful. One might well lose oneself in its divine music. However, dear Miss Waldo is taking very full notes of the lessons and in that way they will be preserved.

Some good fairies must have presided at our birth — C's and mine. We do not yet, know much of karma and reincarnation but we are beginning to see that both are involved in our being brought into touch with Swamiji.

Sometimes I ask him rather daring questions, for I am so anxious to know just how he would react under certain conditions. He takes it so kindly when I in my impulsive way sometimes "rush in where angels fear to tread". Once he said to some one, "Mrs. Funke rests me, she is so naive". Wasn't that dear of him?

One evening, when it was raining and we were all sitting in the living room, the Swami was talking about pure womanhood and told us the story of Sita. How he can tell a story! You see it, and all the characters become real. I found myself wondering just how some of the beautiful society queens of the West would appear to him — especially those versed in the art of allurements — and before I took time to think, out popped the question, and immediately I was covered with confusion. The Swami, however, looked at me calmly with his big, serious eyes and gravely replied, "If the most beautiful woman in the world were to look at me in an immodest or unwomanly way she would immediately turn into a hideous, green frog, and one does not, of course, admire frogs!"

Apropos of my name, something so funny happened. One day, we all walked down to the village and passed a glass-blower's tent. Swami was much interested in this and held a whispered conversation with the glass-blower. Then he asked us to take a walk through the main street of the village and upon our return the glass-blower handed him sundry mysterious packages which proved to contain a gift for each of us, a large crystal ball, each one different with our names blown in the glass "With the love of Vivekananda". Upon reaching the house, we opened our packages. My name was spelled — Phunkey". We were convulsed with laughter but not where he could hear us. He never having seen my name written, "Phunkey" was the result.

And he was so sweet, so gentle and benign all that evening. just like an indulgent father who had given his children beautiful gifts, although many of us were much older than he.

Swami Tyagishananda – His humorous side

By Vinayak Lohani

Once a young regular visitor who in his later life became a senior civil servant visited the ashrama and found all doors closed. He went back thinking that the Swami was asleep. When he returned the following day and told the Swami that he had left the previous day thinking he might be sleeping, Tyagishanandaji, replied in fun, "What! Do the Swamis ever sleep? They are always in Samadhi." The fun of it was that Tyagishanandaji had said that in such a serious tone that for a long time whenever the person visited, he referred to the monks' rest as Samadhi.

On one of Gandhiji's transit via Bangalore, Tyagishanandaji who knew him for long, went to meet him at the Railway compartment where he was staying. An Austrian lady, painter by profession, had come to interview him. The lady was not allowing Gandhiji to speak but kept interrupting and speaking for most of the time. Gandhiji playfully held her nose and told her she had come to listen to him. He pointed out at Tyagishanandaji, saying, "See, how he is listening." The Swami was amused at this and upon return to the ashrama recounted how exactly Gandhiji had rebuked this lady. The same lady was also charmed by the long-flowing hair and beard, and sage-like appearance of the Swami, and wanted to do his portrait. She said she would come the following day. Tyagishanandaji could not say anything at that instant. When the lady came the next day, she found the person being introduced as Tyagishananda was one with short hair and clean shaved, hardly resembling the person she had seen the day before. To her utter dismay she

dropped the idea of portrait and left. As it happened, Tyagishanandaji, not at all interested in acting as a subject for the lady's artistic pursuit, thought this to be the only way to escape.

On another occasion an elderly Western lady devotee had come to ashrama and was engaged in a very long conversation when the Swami was quite unwell and confined to bed. There were other monks and brahmacharins also sitting there. Many felt that the Swami needed rest but could not indicate this to the lady. The Swami then asked a brahmacharin to bring the 'urine pot'. Hearing this the guest (along with others) took leave of the Swami. When the brahmacharin brought the pot the Swami told him he did not need it and had merely said this to see the lady off.

Once the Swami was teaching the Upanishads and referring to Rishi Angira. Since there were more than one Rishi by that name, a brahmacharin named Ramaiah asked in exasperation, "Oh, how many Angiras." The Swami replied, "Why, when there can be so many Ramaiahs – M. Ramaiah, B.T. Ramaiah, K.H. Ramaiah, and you Ramaiah, why can't there be more than one Angira."

Once almost all the students of the Vidyarthi Mandiram missed the weekly class citing some urgent and unavoidable business – probably some college assignment. Tyagishanandaji, not someone who liked routine getting disturbed, did not say anything then, but the following week's class went for twice the duration. The students promptly took their lesson and did not repeat it in future.

Swami Brahmananda – intense devotion

Swami Brahmananda was the first pontiff of the well-known Ramakrishna Mutt and Mission. He was always deeply engrossed in the Samadhi state while walking, while eating, etc. the trustees wanted to have a meeting which was a statutory requirement. They used to approach him and ask him, "Maharaj, it is time we have had a trustees meeting. When will it suit you to have it."

Raja Maharaj [Brahmananda] used to reply, "what date do you suggest?" The other Trustees asked him, "Maharaj, Shall we have it tomorrow morning at 10.00 O'Clock?"

Maharaj agreed.

The next day, the other trustees came one hour earlier, say by 9.00AM to the room of Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda). The latter was in absolute Samadhi state. They waited for 3 hours. Raja Maharaj did not move an inch. They went back in dismay and met Maharaj again the next day. They appraised him of what happened the previous day and suggested whether they can have the meeting the very next day at 3.00pm. Maharaj warmly agreed to it.

Next day they came at 1.00pm to his room and again found to their dismay that Maharaj was in Samadhi state. They waited for 3 hours and it was of no avail.

The next day again they came to him. Maharaj inquired of them, "Kal ker meetinger ki holo". They again informed him of what happened. Then he asked them, what can be done. They asked him, "what about having the meeting today?" Maharaj agreed and asked them when we shall have it.

They replied, let us have it now. The one who is completely absorbed in the Supreme can never think of any worldly duties and it becomes impossible to involve him in worldly affairs.

May God give us a little of the intensity of devotion of such souls.

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Events	Date & Time
Guru Purnima	July 13, 2022 - 6.30 pm
Annual Retreat	Day-1: July 23, 2022 – 8:30 am – 4:30 pm & Day-2: July 24, 2022 - 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Sri Krishna Janmashtami	Aug 18, 2022 – 6.30 pm

Hints on Practical Spiritual Life

Excerpts from lecture "VOICE OF FREEDOM" delivered by Sw Trigunatitananda in San Fransisco on June 21, 1914

In order to understand what is meant by the spiritual life we must understand, to some extent, the worldly life. What is the worldly life? It is that life which we are leading now, no matter how much we may go to church or read bibles; the life in which we cannot express ourselves without the use of the worldly "I" and "mine;" where we identify ourselves with the things of the world and are satisfied with intellectual understanding, forgetting that the intellect is only a part off the brain and like it subject to death. Spiritual life is unchangeable and has no connection with intellectual culture. The more we develop the intellect the greater barrier it is to the spiritual life. We think and talk of the spiritual life very ardently, but we are in no way practical. We may even regard ourselves as spiritual so long as no occasion comes to test us; but when the test comes we find our motives are selfish and worldly. Our intentions are good, but when we try to carry them out some fear, humiliation, disgrace or vanity comes and we turn aside, forgetting all our resolutions. We should try to be absolutely sincere. How far are we so? We think we are until we analyze ourselves closely. If we are to judge ourselves properly we must take the positive way —always against ourselves—always analyzing our work and our motives for doing things; that is the first mark of sincerity. It is better to do only one spiritual thing a month, but to do it well with the utmost sincerity. So with selfishness. We must be constantly watchful and critical of ourselves. Today we may think ourselves unselfish, but further culture will reveal subtler forms of selfishness in us. How far do we bring ourselves into the field of work, thinking, "It is I who am doing this," "this is my work?" This is the greatest sin against the soul, God and our divine nature. Sin means deprivation, exclusion, bolting the door of the soul against something or putting obstacles in the way of the growth of the soul. Above all things we must not deceive ourselves. Nature knows all about us and records all our actions, whether they are wise or foolish. We must search ourselves to see whether we are concealing anything; for when we try to hide anything, especially from ourselves, we make of it a sin. Any form of deception is tamasic. Judging, criticising or talking in any manner of the affairs of others is not spiritual. The question of whether others are spiritual or not should never be asked. By attending strictly to our own affairs we develop sattvic qualities. Another thing—we should try to imagine ourselves in the midst of all sorts of trials and unfavourable circumstances and endeavour to picture to ourselves how we would act: whether we would remain quiet and well-balanced or lose our peace of mind. If we are ready and very sincere God will give us an opportunity to demonstrate how much we have learned and how far we are sincere. Let us make our choice now and make room for Him in our hearts. Then we will have no fear for the morrow; everything—our minds, our bodies, our affairs—will take care of themselves.

2022 Annual Summer Retreat

This year, the Vedanta Society will hold its **in-premise** Annual Summer Retreat, details as mentioned below. **Pravrajika Krishnaprana Mataji, a senior nun from Sarada Convent, Santa Barbara, a sub-center of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, will be conducting the Retreat. Topics to be discussed are: Grace, Effort, Faith and Gratitude**

Day 1 - July 23, 2022- 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Day 2 - July 24, 2022- 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

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

Registration fee (includes breakfast and lunch):

Attendance for **One day – \$50** per person; for **Both days – \$90** per person.

Participants are requested to email their confirmation toronto@rkmm.org before **July 1, 2022**, mentioning their name, and how many days they want to attend. Payment can be made on the day of the Retreat by cheque or by Credit / Debit cards.

Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher- Swami Kripamayananda, Ramakrishna Order of India

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> 7:30pm Scripture class: 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>4</u>
<u>5</u> 11:00am Lecture: (Online only) 'Holy Mother and Adjustment Yoga'	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>11</u> 6 am to 6 pm VIGIL
<u>12</u> 11:00am Lecture: (Online and In person) 'Snana-Yatra' 5:00pm RAMNAM	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> No Scripture class	<u>18</u>
<u>19</u> 11:00am Lecture: (Online only) 'Radha's Pure Love'	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>25</u>
<u>26</u> 11:00am Lecture (Online and in person): 'Guru lives forever'	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>		

AN APPEAL FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL & DONATION

In these difficult times going through around the world, our attendance has significantly dropped at the Centre and maintenance costs are ongoing, 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 <http://newsite.vedantatoronto.ca/donate.shtm> using Credit / Debit cards. Through PayPal you could also setup recurring monthly donations.

All members who have not renewed their membership for the year 2022, 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.