



Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

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Newsletter June 2023

Words to Inspire

"This Atman is not to be realised by the power of speech, nor by a vast intellect, nor by the study of the Vedas."

-----Swami Vivekananda

The need of Guru

(Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda – Vol.3)

EVERY SOUL IS DESTINED to be perfect, and every being, in the end, will attain the state of perfection. The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the Guru—the teacher; and the person to whose soul the impulse is conveyed is called the Shishya—the student. It is not true that a high order of intellectual development always goes hand in hand with a proportionate development of the spiritual side in Man. In studying books we are sometimes deluded into thinking that thereby we are being spiritually helped; but if we analyse the effect of the study of books on ourselves, we shall find that at the utmost it is only our intellect that derives profit from such studies, and not our inner spirit. This inadequacy of books to quicken spiritual growth is the reason why, although almost every one of us can speak most wonderfully on spiritual matters, when it comes to action and the living of a truly spiritual life, we find ourselves so awfully deficient. To quicken the spirit, the impulse must come from another soul. To convey such an impulse to any soul, in the first place, the soul from which it proceeds must possess the power of transmitting it, as it were, to another; and in the second place, the soul to which it is transmitted must be fit to receive it. The seed must be a living seed, and the field must be ready ploughed; and when both these conditions are fulfilled, a wonderful growth of genuine religion takes place. "The true preacher of religion has to be of wonderful capabilities, and clever shall his hearer be"—आश्रयो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धा and when both of these are really wonderful and extraordinary, then will a splendid spiritual awakening result, and not otherwise. Such alone are the real teachers, and such alone are also the real students, the real aspirants. All others are only playing with spirituality. They have just a little curiosity awakened, just a little intellectual aspiration kindled in them, but are merely standing on the outward fringe of the horizon of religion.

There is no doubt some value even in that, as it may in course of time result in the awakening of a real thirst for religion; and it is a mysterious law of nature that as soon as the field is ready, the seed must and does come; as soon as the soul earnestly desires to have religion, the transmitter of the religious force must and does appear to help that soul. When the power that attracts the light of religion in the receiving soul is full and strong, the power which answers to that attraction and sends in light does come as a matter of course.

There are, however, certain great dangers in the way. There is, for instance, the danger to the receiving soul of its mistaking momentary emotions for real religious yearning. We may study that in ourselves. Many a time in our lives, somebody dies whom we loved; we receive a blow; we feel that the world is slipping between our fingers, that we want something surer and higher, and that we must become religious. In a few days that wave of feeling has passed away, and we are left stranded just where we were before. We are all of us often mistaking such impulses for real thirst after religion; but as long as these momentary emotions are thus mistaken, that continuous, real craving of the soul for religion will not come, and we shall not find the true transmitter of spirituality into our nature. So whenever we are tempted to complain of our search after the truth that we desire so much, proving vain, instead of so complaining, our first duty ought to be to look into our own souls and find whether the craving in the heart is real. Then in the vast majority of cases it would be discovered that we were not fit for receiving the truth, that there was no real thirst for spirituality.

There are still greater dangers in regard to the transmitter, the Guru. There are many who, though immersed in ignorance, yet, in the pride of their hearts, fancy they know everything, and not only do not stop there, but offer to take others on their shoulders; and thus the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch.

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.

Birth of a great soul - Swami Virajananda

From the 'Monastic Disciples of Swami Vivekananda', by Swami Abhajananda

At 8am on 10 June 1873, Trailokyanath was blessed with the birth of his first son. It was the day of Lord Jagannath's Snan Yatra (bathing festival), an auspicious day for the Hindus. Ramratan, the grandfather repeated the name of Mother Kali and prayed, "Mother, give this child a long life. May he glorify the Bose's lineage." The baby's maternal grandfather, Vindobihari, also prayed to Lord Krishna, "Oh Lord hari, may my grandson become an ideal man and be devoted to you." The two grandfathers named the child 'Kalikrishna' so that he would remind them of their respective chosen Deities. Later on Kalikrishna (Swami Virajananda) got initiated by Holy Mother and sanyas by Swamiji and was regarded as the spiritual son of Swami Vivekananda.

Soon everyone noticed certain peculiarities about the newborn baby. He would not let his mother suckle him, nor did he want to sleep at night. He slept well during the daytime, but would cry if anyone attempted to put him to bed at night. It was necessary for someone to carry him to the terrace and walk about showing him 'Uncle Moon' throughout the night. The members would keep awake by turns and attend to the child. In order to provide milk for the infant, his grandfather purchased a cow. The child brought good luck and prosperity to the family. After his birth, his father Trailokyanath was appointed the royal physician of Mahishadal State. Later he became the physician for Keshabchandra Sen and his family, where he met Sri Ramakrishna.

Kalikrishna's mother, Nishadkali Devi, was an extremely devoted and religious-minded lady, which influenced her son's character. Kalikrishna, later Swami Virajananda confessed, "I was greatly attached to my mother". Once when asked by his father, what was in his mind about future career, Kalikrishna politely replied, "I no longer find any interest in studies. I now spend my time in spiritual practices to realize God." When Kalikrishna decided to renounce the world, his parents supported him whole-heartedly. They not only encouraged him but sent him to join the monastery at Baranagore monastery, with lot of sweets, clothes and grocery for the monks living there (the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna). After death of his father, his mother completely detached herself from worldly affairs and spent her last days performing spiritual disciplines in Vrindavan, till she breathed her last in 1942 at the age of 85.

The Fish and the Net

From 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna', Ch: The Master and Vijay Goswami - December 14, 1882

Master: "This world is like a fishing-net. Men are the fish, and God, whose maya has created this world, is the fisherman. When the fish are entangled in the net, some of them try to tear through its meshes in order to get their liberation. They are like the men striving after liberation. But by no means all of them escape. Only a few jump out of the net with a loud splash, and then people say, 'Ah! There goes a big one!' In like manner, three or four men attain liberation. Again, some fish are so careful by nature that they are never caught in the net; some beings of the ever-perfect class, like Narada, are never entangled in the meshes of worldliness. Most of the fish are trapped; but they are not conscious of the net and of their imminent death. No sooner are they entangled than they run headlong, net and all, trying to hide themselves in the mud. They don't make the least effort to get free. On the contrary, they go deeper and deeper into the mud. These fish are like the bound men. They are still inside the net, but they think they are quite safe there. A bound creature is immersed in worldliness, in 'woman and gold', having gone deep into the mire of degradation. But still he believes he is quite happy and secure. The liberated, and the seekers after liberation, look on the world as a deep well. They do not enjoy it. Therefore, after the attainment of Knowledge, the realization of God, some give up their bodies. But such a thing is rare indeed."

"The bound creatures, entangled in worldliness, will not come to their senses at all. They suffer so much misery and agony, they face so many dangers, and yet they will not wake up.

"The camel loves to eat thorny bushes. The more it eats the thorns, the more the blood gushes from its mouth. Still it must eat thorny plants and will never give them up. The man of worldly nature suffers so much sorrow and affliction, but he forgets it all in a few days and begins his old life over again. Suppose a man has lost his wife or she has turned unfaithful. Lo! He marries again.

"Or take the instance of a mother: her son dies and she suffers bitter grief; but after a few days she forgets all about it. The mother, so overwhelmed with sorrow a few days

before, now attends to her toilet and puts on her jewelry. A father becomes bankrupt through the marriage of his daughters, yet he goes on having children year after year. People are ruined by litigation, yet they go to court all the same. There are men who cannot feed the children they have, who cannot clothe them or provide decent shelter for them; yet they have more children every year.

"Again, the worldly man is like a snake trying to swallow a mole. The snake can neither swallow the mole nor give it up. The bound soul may have realized that there is no substance to the world—that the world is like a hog plum, only stone and skin—but still he cannot give it up and turn his mind to God.

"I once met a relative of Keshab Sen, fifty years old. He was playing cards. As if the time had not yet come for him to think of God!

"There is another characteristic of the bound soul. If you remove him from his worldly surroundings to a spiritual environment, he will pine away. The worm that grows in filth feels very happy there. It thrives in filth. It will die if you put it in a pot of rice."

Vijay: "What must the bound soul's condition of mind be in order to achieve liberation?"

Master: "He can free himself from attachment to 'woman and gold' if, by the grace of God, he cultivates a spirit of strong renunciation. What is this strong renunciation? One who has only a mild spirit of renunciation says, 'Well, all will happen in the course of time; let me now simply repeat the name of God.' But a man possessed of a strong spirit of renunciation feels restless for God, as the mother feels for her own child. A man of strong renunciation seeks nothing but God. He regards the world as a deep well and feels as if he were going to be drowned in it. He looks on his relatives as venomous snakes; he wants to fly away from them. And he does go away. He never thinks, 'Let me first make some arrangement for my family and then I shall think of God.' He has great inward resolution.

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.

Fear and its conquest

Adapted from (Vedanta and the West" Vol.# 177– Article by Swami Sastrananda)

For a true Vedantist, convinced of the eternal, immortal, blissful nature of his Self, and of the changing and transitory nature of the phenomenal world, there is no mortal fear of losing anything. All the things of the world, to which others attach so much value, things which they labor to possess, are for him just disposable utilities.

There is the classical episode of Janaka, the great ancient teacher of Vedanta, the true philosopher-king: While he was engaged with others in a deep philosophic discussion, a messenger burst in to make the terrible announcement, "Sire, your capital Mithila is burning." "If Mithila burns, nothing of mine is burnt," was the calm reply. Unlike Nero, who callously fiddled on while Rome was burning, Janaka was most conscientious and capable in the discharge of his royal duties, but was at the same time truly nonattached within.

The genuine Vedantist is not attached to his own body either. He is not afraid of disease and death. He knows that the body is by its very own nature subject to decay, perishable. Disease is the tax one has to pay for living in and using the body. Conscious of his real nature, which is the immortal and imperishable Atman, he is not unnerved by the prospect of disease or death which only pertains to the body. Death is but a change of the planes of existence, or in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, "moving from one room to another." Bodies are like garments. A true Vedantist takes care of the "garment" so long as it lasts but when it is worn out, he is not sorry to drop it and take on a new one if need be. Perhaps he may even welcome the prospect of being without a body, which may prove to be more advantageous for him. Swami Vivekananda, the true Vedantist he was, preferred to be thus "a voice without form." He declared: "It may be that I shall

find it good to get outside my body, to cast it off like a worn-out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God."

Protected by the dual-faced shield of spiritual knowledge and devotion, the Vedantist can face and overcome fears which beset others. For him there is no such thing as failure in its real or ultimate sense. Perfection is there, already inherent in his soul; it is but a question of realizing it, with proper effort. And in this quest after perfection, or spiritual realization, no effort, not even the least, is ever lost. There is no such thing as eternal damnation or a vengeful God. Not even "falls" in the spiritual life are disastrous. If the genuine aspirant "falls" he only falls into the lap of God, to rise again and continue his ascent with greater vigor than ever.

In true Vedanta there is no place for fear. Fear arises only because of "another," and for the illumined soul everything is his own Self, the Soul of his soul. And God is verily fearlessness, as the Upanishad declares. In our lives, when we are alone, it is not the aloneness that causes fear but the prospect of "another" lurking somewhere. Fear is inevitable as long as there is difference and the possibility of separation. All fear ends only when we realize our inseparable unity with God. For the genuine devotee, God - - ever dwelling in his innermost heart -- is a constant and unfailing source of protection and security, strength and joy. So let us establish our eternal relation, or rather become aware of our eternal relation, with this divine Source of fearlessness and protection. Then we shall have conquered fear once and for all.

Realization

From the 'Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda' Vol 2 - Jnana Yoga

"That which all the Vedas declare, which is proclaimed by all penances, seeking which men lead lives of continence, I will tell you in one word-it is 'Om'." You will find this word "Om" praised very much in the Vedas, and it is held to be very sacred. Now Yama answers the question: "What be- comes of a man when the body dies?" "This Wise One never dies, is never born, It arises from nothing, and nothing arises from It. Unborn, Eternal, Everlasting, this Ancient One can never be destroyed with the destruction of the body. If the slayer thinks he can slay, or if the slain thinks he is slain, they both do not know the truth, for the Self neither slays nor is slain. A most tremendous position. I should like to draw your attention to the adjective in the first line, which is "wise". As we proceed we shall find that the ideal of the Vedanta is that all wisdom and all purity are in the soul already, dimly expressed or better expressed that is all the difference. The difference between man and man, and all things in the whole creation, is not in kind but only in degree. The background, the reality, of everyone is that same Eternal, Ever Blessed, Ever Pure, and Ever Perfect One. It is the Atman, the Soul, in the saint and the sinner, in the happy and the miserable, in the beautiful and the ugly, in men and in animals; it is the same throughout. It is the shining One. The difference is caused by the power of expression. In some It is expressed more, in others less, but this difference of expression has no effect upon the Atman. If in their dress one man shows more of his body than another, it does not make any difference in their bodies; the difference is in dress. We had better remember here that throughout the Vedanta philosophy, there is no such thing as good and bad, they are not two different things; the same thing is good or bad. and the difference is only in degree. The very thing I call pleasurable today, tomorrow under better circumstances I may call pain. The fire that warms us can also consume us; it is not the fault of the fire. Thus, the Soul being pure and perfect, the man who does evil is giving the lie unto himself, he does not know the nature of himself. Even in the murderer the pure Soul is there; It dies not. It was his mistake; he could not manifest It; he had covered It up. Nor in the man who thinks that he is killed is the Soul killed, It is eternal. It can never be killed, never destroyed. "Infinitely smaller than the smallest, infinitely larger than the largest, this Lord of all is present in the depths of every human heart. The sinless, bereft of all misery, see Him through the mercy of the Lord; the Bodiless, yet dwelling in the body, the Spaceless, yet seeming to occupy space; Infinite, Omnipresent: knowing such to be the Soul, the sages never are miserable."

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Events	Date & Time
Guru Purnima	July 3, 2023 – 6:30 pm <i>Also puja will be streamed live on YouTube.</i>
Annual Retreat <i>by Swami Balabhadrananda</i>	July 22 and 23, 2023 <i>Both days 8.30am to 5pm.</i> <i>On-site only, this will not be streamed on YouTube.</i>
Sri Krishna Janmashtami	August 8, 2023 – 6:30 pm <i>Also puja will be streamed live on YouTube.</i>
Annual Seminar	September 9, 2023 <i>8.30am to 4pm.</i> <i>On-site only, this will not be streamed on YouTube.</i>
Vivekananda Dinner	September 24, 2023 <i>Venue: Woodbine Banquet and Conventional Hall</i> <i>Starts at 5 pm.</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: For details on Soup Kitchen, please see the 'Calendar of Events' on the next page for details.

ANNUAL SUMMER RETREAT 2023

The Vedanta Society will hold its Annual Summer Retreat, details as mentioned below.

Swami Balabhadrananda ji, Asst General Secretary Ramakrishna Mission at the Headquarters at Belur Math, India, will be conducting the Retreat.

Day 1 - July 22, 2022- 8:30 am – 5 pm (8.30 to 9am – breakfast)

Day 2 - July 23, 2022- 8:30 am – 5 pm (8.30 to 9am – breakfast)

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 19, 2023, mentioning their name, and how many days they want to attend. Payment can be made on the day of the Retreat by cash, cheque or by credit / debit cards.

Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher- Swami Kripamayanda, Ramakrishna Order of India

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>3</u>
<u>4</u> 11:00am Lecture: ONLINE ONLY 'Shiva's Third Eye' by Swami Yogatmananda Live on YouTube from Providence RI	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>10</u>
<u>11</u> 11:00am Lecture: 'Religious Harmony" 5:00pm RAMNAAM	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> 7:30pm Scripture class: (ONLINE ONLY) 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>17</u> 6 am to 6 pm VIGIL
<u>18</u> 11:00am Lecture: ONLINE ONLY 'Spiritual aspiration'	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> 7:30pm Scripture class 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>24</u>
<u>25</u> 11:00am Lecture: 'Steadiness of purpose'	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u> 7:30pm Scripture class (ONLINE ONLY) 'Uddhava Gita'	

VIVEKANANDA DINNER 2023

Vedanta Society invites all to participate in the "Vivekananda Dinner" to be held on Sunday September 24, 2023 from 5PM; Venue: Woodbine Banquet and Conventional Hall, 30 Vice Regent Blvd., Etobicoke, Ontario, M9W 7A4.

Other details like program, ticket amount, etc. will be communicated by separate emails and future Newsletters. ALL are requested to book this date in their calendars and try to attend. Let us make this event a grand success.

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 <http://newsite.vedantatoronto.ca/donate.shtml> using Credit / Debit cards. Through PayPal you could 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 tonto@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.