



Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

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Newsletter March 2022

Words to Inspire

"Try to live with those who have mastered the mind. If you cannot live with them, think of them. Mind controls mind."
-----Swami Turiyananda

The Atman

Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda..Jnana Yoga

"Know the truth and be free in a moment." All the darkness will then vanish. When man has seen himself as one with the Infinite Being of the universe, when all separateness has ceased, when all men and women, an gods and angels, all animals and plants, and the whole universe have melted into that Oneness, then all fear disappears. Can I hurt myself? Can I kill myself? Can I injure myself? Whom to fear? Can you fear yourself? Then will all sorrow disappear. What can cause me sorrow? I am the One Existence of the universe. Then all jealousies will disappear; of whom to be jealous? Of myself? Then all bad feelings disappear. Against whom can I have bad feeling? Against myself? There is none in the universe but I. And this is the one way, says the Vedantist, to Knowledge. Kill out this differentiation, kill out this superstition that there are many. "He who in this world of many sees that One, he who in this mass of insentiency sees that one Sentient Being, he who in this world of shadows catches that Reality, unto him belongs eternal peace, unto none else, unto none else."

These are the salient points of the three steps which Indian religious thought has taken in regard to God. We have seen that it began with the Personal, the extra-cosmic God. It went from the external to the internal cosmic body, God immanent in the universe, and ended in identifying the soul itself with that God, and making one Soul, a unit of all these various manifestations in the universe. This is the last word of the Vedas. It begins with dualism, goes through a qualified monism and ends in perfect monism. We know how very few in this world can come to the last, or even dare believe in it, and fewer still dare act according to it. Yet we know that therein lies the explanation of all ethics, of all morality and all spirituality in the universe. Why is it that every one says, "Do

good to others?" Where is the explanation? Why is it that all great men have preached the brotherhood of mankind, and greater men the brotherhood of all lives? Because whether they were conscious of it or not, behind all that, through all their irrational and personal superstitions, was peering forth the eternal light of the Self denying all manifoldness, and asserting that the whole universe is but one.

Again, the last word gave us one universe, which through the senses we see as matter, through the intellect as souls, and through the spirit as God. To the man who throws upon himself veils, which the world calls wickedness and evil, this very universe will change and become a hideous place; to another man, who wants enjoyments, this very universe will change its appearance and become a heaven, and to the perfect man the whole thing will vanish and become his own Self.

Now, as society exists at the present time, all these three stages are necessary; the one does not deny the other, one is simply the fulfilment of the other. The Advaitist or the qualified Advaitist does not say that dualism is wrong; it is a right view, but a lower one. It is on the way to truth; therefore let everybody work out his own vision of this universe, according to his own ideas. Injure none, deny the position of none; take man where he stands and, if you can, lend him a helping hand and put him on a higher platform, but do not injure and do not destroy. All will come to truth in the long run. "When all the desires of the heart will be vanquished, then this very mortal will become immortal" — then the very man will become God.

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!!

Tinkari- the Actress

From "Girish Chandra Ghose", by Swami Chetanananda

Very little is known about Tinkari's personal life. As a celebrity she encountered many temptations, but she lived only with that man who had come to see her perform. Tinkari's beauty, affectionate nature, and lively acting captured the heart of one of Girish's friends, a wealthy man of North Calcutta. He proposed marriage to Tinkari, putting her in great difficulty. She hated the idea of sacrificing her career to become a wealthy housewife. She consulted Girish, who was her mentor. Girish told her: "No, you shouldn't be bound by marriage. Money is nothing. You have talent and you will be a great start in the future."

Tinkari rejected the wealthy man's offer, but he just smiled and said to her: "Look, your beauty is transient, and this acting job is also temporary. If you live with me your life will be safe and secure. All right, you go on acting as usual and I shall wait for you."

Rich people are often moody, and some believe that everything can be accomplished through money and power. This man knew that Girish was the obstacle to having Tinkari in his life, so he engaged Golap Singh a notorious ruffian to murder Girish.

One evening the wealthy man invited some close friends, including Girish and Tinkari, to his garden house in Sinthi, a suburb of North Calcutta. Girish arrived with Tinkari, who brought along her servant, Fakir. Their host then announced that the party would end at midnight. He asked everyone to leave then, except for Girish and Tinkari, as he had some business with them. The whole house reverberated with the joy of dining, drinking, dancing, and singing.

Rajen Chattopadhyay, who was friends with both Girish and the host, arrived late to the gathering. As he entered the

garden, he saw some people doing something in a dark corner. Curious, Rajen walked over and found some men digging a pit. He recognized one of the men as Golap Singh. Golap whispered to Rajen: "Please leave this place by midnight. Tonight we will murder Girish, bury him in this pit, and cover it with plants." Rajen knew then that the owner of the house had hired Golap Singh to kill Girish.

Rajen asked: "Where is Fakir?"

"He must be somewhere," answered Golap.

Rajen told him that Fakir must also leave; otherwise he could be witness. Golap agreed to let Rajen look for him. Rajen located Fakir near the pond and instructed him to go and hire a carriage, and wait for Tinkari and Girish on the street. He then rushed inside the house to join the party. The owner of the garden house was happy to see Rajen and offered him a drink. When Rajen inquired about Girish, the owner replied that Girish and Tinkari were upstairs.

Rajen found Girish and Tinkari eating dinner. Rajen quietly told them the whole story, and Tinkari began to weep. Girish wanted leave immediately, but Rajen stopped him, saying that four villains were at the gate and that no one could protect him. "I have the grace of my guru," said Girish boldly. But Rajen had a plan. He said: "There is one way you can escape. This veranda extends from here to the bathroom, and the bathroom has a window without a grill. There is a mango tree between the bathroom and the boundary wall. Go through the window, grab a tree branch, then go over the wall and jump onto the sidewalk. There you will see Fakir waiting with a carriage." Without losing a minute, Girish, Tinkari, and Rajen followed the escape plan. Thus the murder plot was foiled.

Choose a Guru

There were two saints in one Ashram – Ramdas and Shyamdas and both were highly devoted to the Lord, humble, full of scholarship and immersed in taking the name of the Lord and remembering His glories. There was a young disciple well devoted to both the saints and ardently desiring to attain God – Realisation. As both the saints were equally mature spiritually, the disciple was unable to decide whom he should take as his Guru who will be capable of taking him across the ocean of Samsara. He prayed to the Lord to guide him in this matter. He dreamt that night that there were two boats in a big ocean. In one, Ramdas was sitting in meditation unaware of the Boat or the ocean but by Divine Will the boat was unerringly going on its course by itself. In the second, Shyamdas was sitting and paddling the boat with both oars, joyfully singing the glory of God in an ecstatic mood.

The command came through a voice from the Heaven "You choose". The disciple pointed towards Shyam's boat and said: "He is the one who, though established in the Lord is equally awake to the world and alert to rescue the swimmer in distress. I choose him." The divine voice again told him: "The other boat is moving by itself by the Divine will and is it not better that you get transported in a boat guided directly by the Divine Will?"

The disciple queried: "Lord, is there anything on earth which is not moved and guided by the Divine Will? It is the same Divine Will which guides unseen the second boat too. I stand by my first choice. Even this is your Divine Will which is behind my choice. Ultimately where is a choice at all? I have chosen my Guru and not the boat."

How Can We Live a Clean Unworried Life?

Facts and our concepts of facts are two different things. When through careful study, observation and verification, we make our concepts of facts conform to the facts themselves, then it is a true concept of fact. A true concept of fact may be considered to be identical with the fact for all practical purposes. But when we have not cared to do so we are not dealing with a true concept of facts but a false conception of it; that is to say, we are dealing with untruth, or mere illusion, which for all practical purposes has become a fact for us, with all its implications for our lives.

There is a Bengali saying, that it is not the tiger of the forest that devours you, but it is the tiger of your mind.

As regards the worries of our past sins it may be said that mostly we are being devoured by the tigers of our mind and not by the tigers of the forest. In other words, our worries are not rooted in facts but in our concepts of the facts of sin.

Therefore, our concept of sin has to be examined. We have to find out how far it tallies with the fact.

1. As regards the sins committed or personal sins, we are sure that it is a fact. Even if our friends may not know about it, we know it. It may be said, here the concept of the fact is identical with the fact. And as every committed sin will bear fruit, there is reason for worry. But is it necessary to worry? It may be natural to worry, but it is not necessary to worry. By worrying over our past sins, we do not improve our situation in any way, we rather aggravate it in many ways. We carry an unnecessary burden on our soul all our life. And that affects our nervous system, our present and our future. But it is possible to throw off this burden. It is an affair of the mind. By doing these three things we can get rid of the worries of our personal sins committed in the past.

(1) We must sincerely repent in contrite heart, and in true humility ask pardon of God.

(2) We must resolve not to repeat the sins and see to it, no matter what happens, that we keep our resolution.

(3) We must be stoically prepared to accept the consequences of sin, as a just retribution, and derive from it a useful education for life. These three things done, we have not to worry about our past sins.

2. The concept of racial or national sin seems to have quite a hold on the minds of the people. If you enjoy certain benefits and privileges by belonging to a race or a nation, you will also be liable to bear its sorrows and agonies. If you inherit your ancestral property, you may have to inherit some hereditary disease also. You can do nothing about it by just worrying. But you can do something about it by not worrying. The mental time which you would spend in worrying over this very mysterious phenomenon, you can better spend in strengthening your character and life. Even if the visitation of nemesis comes on account of that sin, then as a stronger person you will be able to take it easier in your stride. Maybe it will not touch you at all. In any case, from the weakening process of worrying, no gain could possibly accrue.

Moreover, your share of the particular sin of your race or nation for which you may be worrying, may be individually counteracted by doing a contrary virtuous act as a matter of personal expiation—if you feel so much about it. This will be something positive to do, which might cancel your share in the racial or national retribution. As an ordinary individual you can do nothing better or more.

Then bold preparedness for suffering is any day better than cowardly worrying over an anticipated suffering. Often when you are prepared to suffer, the suffering may not care to inflict you.

Article by Sw Budhananda from the Archives of The Vedanta Kesari March 1964-65 pgs

Ramakrishna's love for Naren

Once several days elapsed between Naren's visits to Dakshineswar. Shri Ramakrishna became very anxious and sent for him. But Naren did not come. Thereupon Shri Ramakrishna set out for Calcutta himself. Surmising that Naren would be present at the evening services of the Brahmo Samaj, it was there that he directed his steps. He had often visited the Samaj and knew intimately many of its prominent members. The service was already in progress when Shri Ramakrishna in a semi-conscious state made his appearance. The preacher broke off his sermon, and the congregation started at the new-comer. Shri Ramakrishna, unmindful of the commotion his presence was causing, advanced slowly to the pulpit and fell into a superconscious state! This further heightened the curiosity of the assembly and the disorder increased. Some of the leading Brahmos present, connecting Shri Ramakrishna with a recent split in their camp because Keshab and Vijay had changed their views under his influence, considered this visit an intrusion. They turned off the lights in order to bring order. This only added to the confusion and everybody rushed towards the door! Naren who was in the choir guessed the reason of the Master's visit and went instantly to his rescue, conducted him through the crowd to the backdoor and so on to Dakshineswar. Naren would say, "I did not hesitate to use harsh words for his blind love for me. I used to warn him saying that if he constantly thought of me, he would become like me, even as King Bharata of the old legend, who so doted upon his pet deer that even at the time of death he was unable to think of anything else, and, as a result, was born as a deer in his next life. At these words, the Master, so simple was he, became very nervous, and said, 'What you say is quite true. What is to become of me, for I cannot bear to be separated from you?'

Sadly dejected, he went to the Kali temple, whence he returned in a few minutes smiling and said. 'You rogue. I would not listen to you anymore. Mother says that I love you because I see the Lord in you, and the day I shall no longer do so, I shall not be able to bear even the sight of you.' By this short but emphatic statement he dismissed once for all everything that I had ever said to him on the subject."

This was really the key to Shri Ramakrishna's overwhelming love for Naren and his other disciples. The Master had dignified their relationship beyond any human or personal sentiment.

From '*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna – The Guru and the Disciple*'.

A True Guide

From the book "Glimpses of Holiness-Swami Yatishwarananda" by Swami Sastrananda

He was energetic and dynamic, but in his own calm, quiet, and dignified way. He placed greater emphasis on building up a worthy life, whether it concerned oneself or others. He was not at all happy with people - monastic or lay - who, to justify their own restlessness or workaholic compulsions, went about glibly professing and proclaiming, "I work for the welfare of the world," or "For me work itself is worship. I am a follower of Swami Vivekananda." Swami Yatishwarananda, if anyone, knew clearly what Swamiji stood for and wanted for us. He took special trouble to make it clear to those concerned, that without striving for and progressing along the path of inner spiritual unfoldment, to talk lightly of 'doing good to the world' is futile. 'Atma-moksha' or the ideal of self-liberation and self-perfection is inseparable from 'Jagad-hita,' the ideal of doing good. Again, to speak glibly that work itself is worship, without knowing what true worship and its value are, can only make a caricature of the true ideal. So Swami Yatishwarananda was never tired of stressing the need for building up one's own inner life appropriately, as that is the essential and enduring foundation of any worthwhile philanthropic activity.

There was a monk, a senior one too, whom many admired as a very dynamic person. He had some building project achievements to his credit. In order to continue one of his ongoing projects, he resorted to some unconventional means in adjusting accounts. Swami Yatishwarananda had a loving concern for him and so talked to him privately in the attempt to correct him. He even advised him that it would be preferable not to undertake such projects when one had aged beyond a certain point. But that monk failed to heed the wholesome advice and warning, and even defended his action, saying, "But Maharaj, this helps me to build up my personality." Swami Yatishwarananda calmly but gravely countered, "Yes, but what a personality, all hollow within!" Hollowness and holiness cannot go together. Holiness is based on real substance; it is wholeness and wholesomeness. He related this incident to us more than once to serve as a warning and to act as a guide to ourselves. He was intensely conscious that the health and well-being or success of a spiritual organization depended not so much on its worldly assets, affiliations, and quantum of activity, as on the spiritual and moral integrity, substance, and stature of its members. No less are these necessary even in regard to lay

people, especially those in responsible positions. Sound character and moral integrity are a universal need.

In building up the life of those who came under his influence and direction, such as myself, he employed various means as the occasion required - encouragement, support, instruction, personal example, admonition, scolding, and even ridicule. His main power was that of unattached, non-self-seeking and dignified love, which is powerful indeed. Because this love was pure and nonpartisan, everyone who came into its orbit felt, and quite a few declared, that "He loved me so much," or "He loved me specially." Because he had a holy man's love for us, he wanted us to grow along healthy lines and took care to see that in the name of monasticism or spirituality, we did not become selfish and self-centred; whenever he found such a tendency, he expressed his disapproval and took whatever steps were necessary to help the person overcome it. One of us, he found, was falling into the rut and began to show signs of isolating himself from the mainstream. He began receiving Swami Yatishwarananda's attention. Unfortunately, that monastic had more than one ailment, and so naturally we had to be more considerate to him than to healthier persons. To add to this he fell down one day, causing a hairline fracture in his hip. The doctor ordered him to lie flat on his back in bed for 3 weeks. Next morning Swami Yatishwarananda went to visit him, along with some of us. We were sure that the visit and his loving, tender words would greatly console and buck up the unfortunate patient. Swami Yatishwarananda went in and quietly stood at the foot of the bed, looking at him. Then something happened. With a grave face and a voice tending to be stern, he said deliberately, "Do you know why these things happen?" Pause. Then, "Those who always think more of themselves than of others have to suffer like this." Without saying anything else, he quietly walked out. We were stunned. Why this undue harshness? Only in due course could we realize that it was his calculated treatment, designed to correct the person, his disciple, through such a drastic therapy. How else was that possible? And it certainly seems to have been fruitful; for, later in life that person changed for the better. He developed into a very capable and creative organizer, did fine work for the Order, and was greatly appreciated.

Faith is the Mother of Miracles

From 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'

A MILK-MAID used to supply milk to a brahmana priest living on the other side of a river. Owing to the irregularities of the boat service, she could not supply him milk punctually every day, Once, being rebuked for her going late, the poor woman said, "What can I do? I start early from my house, but have to wait for a long time at the riverbank for the boatman and the passengers. The priest said, "Woman! They cross the ocean of life by uttering the name of God, and can't you cross this little river?" The simple-hearted woman became very glad at heart on learning this easy means of crossing the river. From the next day the milk was being supplied early in the morning. One day the priest said to the woman, "How is it that you are no longer late nowadays?" She said, "I cross the river by uttering the name of the Lord as you told me to do, and don't stand now in need of a boatman." The priest could not believe this and said, "Can you show me how you cross the river?" The woman took him with her and began to walk over the water. Looking behind, the woman saw the priest in a sad plight and said, "How, is it, sir, that you are uttering the name of God with your mouth, but at the same time with your hands you are trying to keep your cloth untouched by water? You do not fully rely on Him."

Entire resignation and absolute faith in God are at the root of all miraculous deeds.

UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Events	Date & Time
Maha Shivaratri	March 1, 2022 – 6:30 pm
Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Celebration	March 6, 2022 – 11:00 am
Sri Ram Navami	April 10, 2022 – 11:00 am
Buddha Jayanti	May 8, 2022 – 11:00 am

Birth of an incarnation

From the book 'Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master', by Swami Saradananda

Need of the hour

One is surprised to find how far this decay of religion has spread all over the world at the present time. If there is really such a thing as religion, and if men have the power to realize it, through the grace of God, there is no doubt whatsoever that the modern age, steeped in sensuous pleasures, has strayed far away from it. That is the reason why science, although enlarging the scope of modern life by providing men with all kinds of means to enjoyment, has failed to bring them peace. Who will come to the rescue? Whose heart will be so moved by this restlessness and agony of the world as to make him ignore all sense-pleasures and discover a new mode of religion suited to the age? Who will reverse the downward course of religion in East and West, and once again teach men to follow the path to peace?

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. Will not the need of the age rouse His compassion? Will not man's helplessness and despair urge God to assume a body?

The demand of the times has, O reader, actually brought this about; for the divine Lord has, in truth, once again been born as the spiritual Teacher of the world. Listen with faith to His gracious message: As many faiths, so many paths and you will realize the divine Lord through any spiritual practice performed with a sincere heart. Let us dwell in admiration on the unheard-of renunciation and austerities practised by Him in order to bring back that transcendent knowledge to the world. Come, let us discuss and meditate on that holy life, free from the slightest taint of lust, and thus purify ourselves.

Birth of Gadadhar

It was some ten minutes before dawn that Chandradevi felt the first pangs of labour. Dhani helped her to the lying-in room, and there, almost immediately, she gave birth to a male child. After doing the needful for Chandra, Dhani turned her attention to the baby only to find that it had disappeared from the place where she had kept it. In alarm she took the lamp to look for the child and found that it had rolled down the ground covered with blood and slime into the hollow fireplace and was lying there, with its little body adorned with ashes, and still not crying! Dhani tenderly picked up the child, washed it, and looking at it in the light wondered at its beauty and its size. It looked like a six-months-old infant! Chandramani's friends, Prasanna and other women of the Laha family, were sent for. As soon as they arrived, Dhani told them what had happened. At the sacred solemn hour before sunrise, the sound of the conch filled that humble cottage—the scene of Kshudiram's austerity—and proclaimed to the world the advent of a great soul. Ascertaining the signs of the zodiac under which the child was born, Kshudiram, well versed in astrology, found that the boy had come into the world at an especially auspicious moment.

According to the scriptures, the parents of incarnations like Rama, Krishna and others, knew through their spiritual visions both before and after the birth of their sons, that these were under the special protection of Providence. But, blinded by parental affection, they forgot that fact, and would therefore always be anxious about their welfare. This applies to Kshudiram and his wife Chandradevi also. For, the lotus face of their loving child made them often forget the divine dream at Gaya and the celestial vision near the Siva temple, and they began to devise various means for his proper care and nourishment. The news of the birth was sent to Ramchandra, Kshudiram's prosperous nephew, at Medinipur. Fearing that there would not be sufficient milk for his uncle's poor family, he sent them a milch cow, thereby removing Kshudiram's anxiety on that score. But though all that was wanted for the new-born child came in unexpected ways from different quarters, there was no end to the anxiety of the parents. Time thus rolled on.

Important Notice – Tax receipts

The Tax receipts for year 2021 are ready and will be sent out shortly by email or mail. Once you receive the receipt, if there are any concerns please contact us at toronto@rkmm.org.

Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher- Swami Kripamayananda, Ramakrishna Order of India

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<u>1</u> 6.30pm Maha Shivaratri	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> No Scripture Class	<u>5</u>
<u>6</u> 11:00am (Online and In person) Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Celebration	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> 7:30pm Scripture class: 'Uddhava Gita'	<u>12</u> 6 am to 6 pm VIGIL
<u>13</u> 11:00am Lecture: (Online and In person) ' Ramakrishna Movement-Its creation and growth '	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> 7:30pm Scripture class (Online only): ' Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna '	<u>19</u>
<u>20</u> 11:00am Lecture: (Online only) ' Unselfishness, The True Vedanta '	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> 7:30pm Scripture class: ' Uddhava Gita '	<u>26</u>
<u>27</u> 11:00am Lecture (Online and in person): ' Relevance of Bhakti in Daily Life ' 5:00pm RAMNAM	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>		

Please be informed that All Celebrations, Sunday lectures and Friday Scripture classes will be conducted in-person and telecast online on YouTube.

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.