



Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

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Newsletter October 2010

Words to Inspire

Is meditation an easy affair?

Only regular practice will bring perfection in it. Remember, it is next only to Samadhi. Self-surrender and everything will manifest from within through your Sadhana. Leave everything to God. Resign yourself wholly to Him.

- **Conversations, Spiritual Practice, p 152**

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

A Sadhaka should first learn about the spiritual path from great soul, then methodically follow it. If he does it haphazardly, he cannot achieve much success. Again, if he gives up, he will have to put forth double the usual effort to gain the desired result. But no endeavour is lost. Lust, anger and greed gradually leave him who leads the spiritual life.

Your mind is now covered by Rajas and Tamas. It must be made pure and subtle, and raised to the state of Sattva. Then you will find pleasure in Sadhana and will also feel inclined to devote more and more time to them. Later on, when the mind attains perfect purity, you will naturally devote yourself always to Japa and meditation. The mind is at present on the gross plane. Consequently, it leans towards gross things. But when it becomes awakened, it inclines naturally towards the spiritual. When it grows subtle, its capacity also increases and the aspirant is able to understand the subtle truths about God in a short time.

When you sit for meditation, first think of blissful divine form. This will have a soothing effect on your nerves and mind. Think of the form of your Ishta as smiling and full of bliss.

Otherwise meditation will become dry and tedious.

Don't waste your time anymore. Now the senses are strong and must be kept under control. This is no doubt a troublesome task. But practice Sadhana continually for seven or eight years; then you will enjoy the fruits of your practices, the peace and bliss thereof. Many women devotees have attained spiritual; illumination. Should you not also strive for it?

Women have greater faith than men. That is why they succeed in a comparatively shorter time.

Believe me, the Lord is always with you. If you practice a little, He will extend His helping hand to you. It is He who is protecting us all from miseries and troubles. How unbounded is His grace! How can I describe it to you?

You have only been hearing of all these spiritual things. Now do some Sadhana and realize them. In the beginning, start with a method suited to your temperament. After you become established in that, you can approach God through all other methods. Learn to keep your feelings under control.

Freedom through faith (Part -I)

(Delivered by Swami Swahananda at the Vedanta Society of Toronto)

Om, Tejo asi tejo mai dhehi. Viryam asi viryam mai dhehi. Balam asi balam mai dhehi. Ojoasi ojo mai dhehi. Manyur asi manyum mai dhehi. Saho asi saho mai dhehi.

Om. O Lord, You are the embodiment of infinite energy; fill me with energy. You are the embodiment of infinite vigour; endow me with vigour. You are the embodiment of infinite strength; bestow strength upon me. You are the embodiment of infinite power; grant power unto me. You are the embodiment of infinite courage; inspire me with courage. You are the embodiment of infinite patience; fill me with patience.

Om Peace! Peace! Peace!

People of old knew that Fire is live in the flint and the dry wood and that friction was necessary to ignite it. This fire of freedom is the nature of every soul and not a quality because qualities can be acquired and therefore can be lost. The soul is one with freedom, existence and knowledge – the Sat-Chit-Ananda – Existence-knowledge-bliss absolute. This nature, the birthright of the soul and all the manifestations that we see are its expression, brightly manifesting itself. Vedanta thinkers boldly say that there are enjoyments in this life. Even the most degraded joys are but manifestations of that bliss, the essence of the soul. You are pure and free already. If you think you are free, then free you are this moment. So it is possible for us to attain freedom, the conclusion is inevitable that the soul is by its very nature free. It cannot be otherwise. Freedom means independence from anything outside and that means that nothing outside can work upon it as a cause. Soul is causeless. If it is true that the soul is free, then naturally it follows that nothing can affect it and it can never die. Freedom, immortality, blessedness, all depends upon the soul being beyond the law of causation. This is the truth and truth is eternal; and truth itself teaches that it is not the special property of any individual or nation. This is the only way to reach the goal, to tell ourselves and everybody else, that we are divine.

Swami Vivekananda was talking about the fundamental idea of freedom in his lecture. He gives the essence of philosophy with so much enthusiasm and zeal, that he can evoke enthusiasm

in us. He could energize people, and make people endowed with purpose of things and give us a direction.

Faith will have to be in three levels.

Faith from the stand point of the soul , that is the philosophical and spiritual position.

Swamiji argues, that if you did not have freedom already and if you want to acquire freedom, you may lose it also. Political freedom, social freedom fall in that category- where you acquire and lose it again.

First freedom is the freedom of the soul , to analyze the nature of man -Who am I is the special question in Vedanta. First comes the body, but body changes all the time. Then comes the mind that is also changing. Whatever changes is not final. What is final in man? It is not the body, not the mind, but the spirit - the Atman, the undying, unchanging, eternal soul of man. That soul is the part of the totality. Vedanta notes, that all the things we see around us are resolution of the one substance. They call it oneness, Brahman, infinity. From there everything is nourished. In that sense everything is charged with spirituality. When you identify yourself with your spiritual nature, you have no illness, no depression, and no other types of weaknesses, because you are identifying with your inner self.

Once Swami Nikhilananda of the New York center, who translated Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna , met a European who asked him –‘Are you Vivekananda?’ He said- ‘No, but I am follower of Swami Vivekananda. When I was 26 years old , Vivekananda told me that - I shall teach you how to love death. But since I was very young, so I did not bother about death. But now I feel that if there is some teaching or some technique, by which I am not afraid of death, I would like to know it.’ But Nikhilananda did not write what Swamiji told him.

What could have been the message that Swamiji gave him, which energized him and other people?

An American poetess was persuading her husband to go and see Swami Vivekananda, but he always avoided the topic .Her husband was beset with troubles in his business. Finally one day he went to

see Swamiji. After an hour and half or so, he came back free from the anxiety of his business. Swamiji did not say anything about his business, but told him about the glory of the soul, infinite of the Brahman. Swamiji gave the idea of vast Universe and he is part of it and made him understand that he is divine and full of power. That advice made him free from the fear of losing business, and even fear of death.

From this incident I could understand how Swami Vivekananda could make anyone not fear death, but face it. Vedanta argues, that man's ultimate nature is the Spirit. Spirit is not affected by any of the shortcomings. But when man has shortcomings, illness, etc., he has to turn to the core, that is the Atman. There is nothing else other than Brahman or Atman. If you can identify yourself with Atman then there is no suffering.

What is the domain of Karma? I have got, my body and mind. And I have told myself that I am not the body or mind. If I think it is my body then I suffer. If you know that my soul is different from my body, I won't suffer. Sankara says - my real nature is - I am not the body, not the mind, which are under the laws of karma. So you give any amount of power to the law of karma, I am not affected.

The belief that God is manifested in every soul gives us satisfaction. Even the karma theory can give us some solace or freedom. Everybody dies, if

this is accepted in complete faith, then even if I am very sick and may die any day, I won't feel any pain. When you have faith in death you will be free from the fear of death. The old body is full of pain and diseases, let it go - a new body is being given to you. This is the karma theory or the rebirth theory, which has sustained man for centuries.

A child feels restless when his parents are not nearby. But the moment he gets into the lap of the Mother, he feels secure. The child knows for sure that he is completely secured in his mother's lap. A devotee who believes that God is all-powerful and protects us, will be free from all fear. Both surrender and faith can be exercised as a training. That is why Swamiji asserted that the Soul is all-powerful, there is no weakness in the Soul. Assert your Soul or Spirit nature and you will be free from fear.

Faith matures into conviction. The Katha Upanishad speaks of 'Shraddha' - Nachiketa had shraddha that there is a higher Soul, which led him to go to Yama-God of Death. He believed that Yama knew what happens after death. If you do any work with shraddha or affirmative faith - that we will surely succeed and there are fewer chances of failure.

(To be continued in the next issue)

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF TORONTO

1. The Vedanta Society of Toronto is planning a major expansion to its existing premises in order to accommodate the growing needs of the devotees. Members, devotees and friends are welcome to email their suggestions and valuable input on this project. The email address dedicated for this project: VSTBuildingExpansion@gmail.com
2. Soup Kitchen is looking for volunteers, for the year 2010 - 2011 to enable us to continue the soup kitchen. Volunteers are required for two hours to prepare soup & salad from 9:30 am on Tuesdays and Saturdays. If you are interested, please contact us.

BELUR MATH NEWS

On 24 August, the birthday of **Swami Niranjananandaji, Swami Atmasthanandaji, President, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission**, laid the foundation stone for the proposed building near the Headquarters office to accommodate the central office for Swami Vivekananda's 150th birth anniversary celebrations. Swami Prabhanandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, inaugurated the additional staff quarters at **Chennai Students' Home** on 8 August, the birthday of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji.

The bookstall at **Kanpur** centre was inaugurated on 8 August 2010.

Sri Manik Sarkar, Chief Minister of Tripura, inaugurated the senior boys' hostel building and a blood donation camp at **Viveknagar** (Tripura) centre on 29 August.

The **Institute of Culture**, Kolkata, has enriched its library with connections to e-journals consortia, namely JSTOR, J-GATE and Oxford University Press.

On 7 August, Sri P P Shrivastav, Member, North Eastern Council, and Sri Ramesh Chandra Saxena, IG, BSF, Assam-Meghalaya Frontier, distributed prizes to the winners of the annual cultural competitions the **Shillong** centre had organized in the month of July.

Puri Mission Ashrama conducted a free dental camp on 7 August at **Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama**, Beleswarpatna Village, Puri Sadar Block, Puri District, in which 60 patients were treated.

Cooch Behar Math held a daylong Bhakta Sammelan (devotees' conference) on 8 August, in which 460 devotees participated.

Chennai Math held **Antar-yogam (spiritual retreat)** for devotees from 6 to 8 August, in which 385 devotees participated.

Rajkot centre organized a **blood donation camp** on 1 August in which 48 bottles of blood were collected.

Vivekananda University held its **fifth foundation anniversary celebration** and the annual convocation at its Belur campus on 4 July. Professor ECG Sudarshan, former Director of the Centre for Particle Theory at Austin and presently Professor of Physics at the University of Texas

at Austin, USA, was the Guest-in-Chief and delivered the convocation address. Professor G Bhamathi, former Professor of Physics, University of Madras, Chennai, was the Guest of Honour and gave away the prizes to meritorious candidates. Swami Prabhanandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, who is also the Chancellor of the University, presided over the meeting and gave away the certificates, degrees and diplomas to the students who have successfully graduated from the Belur and Narendrapur campuses of the University.

Guwahati centre conducted a medical camp during Ambuvachi Mela at Kamakhya Dham on 22 and 23 June in which 650 patients were treated.

Cherrapunji centre organized 14 health awareness camps in different parts of Meghalaya from October 2009 to March 2010

Swami **Prameyanandaji**, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, inaugurated the newly built students' home building at **Shillong** Ashrama on 3 July.

The newly set-up physiotherapy unit at **Kanpur** dispensary was inaugurated on 4 July.

Puri Mission Ashrama served lemonade and drinking water to about 31,000 pilgrims during the Ratha Yatra festival and treated 142 patients in the medical camp organized on this occasion. The centre also served lemonade to about 800 pedestrians per day throughout the summer season.

Vidyamandira (Arts & Science College at **Saradapitha**, Belur) has been conferred autonomous status by the UGC (University Grants Commission) and the University of Calcutta. Students of our colleges in **West Bengal** secured the following ranks (within the first ten) at the **BA / BSc** (Honours) final examinations held by **Calcutta University** this year:

Narendrapur: Physics: 10, **Chemistry:** 4, 5, 6 & 10, **Mathematics:** 1, 3 & 8, **Statistics:** 4 & 9, **English:** 4 & 5;

Rahara: Chemistry: 2.

Vidyamandira (Saradapitha): **Physics:** 4, 7, 8 & 9, **Chemistry:** 7 & 8, **Economics:** 9, **Political Science:** 8, **Bengali:** 4, **English:** 4, **Sanskrit:** 2, 3 & 5.

SUMMARY OF PAST EVENTS

The **Krishna Janmashtami** was observed on **Wednesday, September 1, 2010 at 6.30 pm**. The programme consisted bhajans, reading, puja and flower offering followed by prasad distribution.

Spiritual Retreat with Swami Sridharanandaji at Canmore, Alberta, (Rockies) was held on Sept 4 & 5, 2010.

Annual Seminar was held on Saturday September 10, 2010 with distinguished scholars including Rev. Swami Sridharananda, the monk in-charge of the Vedanta Society of Sydney, Australia.

Swami Swahanandaji visited the Vedanta Society from September 16 to 19, 2010 and delivered the talk 'Freedom through Faith' on Sunday September 19.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Durga Puja – Maha-Ashtami will be celebrated on **October 15, 2010 at 5:30pm**. The programme will consist of bhajans, reading, worship, homa and flower offering followed by prasad distribution.

Durga Puja – Vijaya Dashami will be celebrated on **October 17, 2010 at 11am**. The programme will consist of bhajans, reading, worship and flower offering followed by prasad distribution.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Kali Puja will be celebrated on **November 05, 2010 at 6:30pm**. The Program will consist of worship, bhajans, reading and flower offering followed by prasad distribution.

AGM 2010 will be held on Sunday, November 14 at 11am.

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.

RAM NAM: Sunday October 10, 2010 at 5:00 pm.

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 instruction. Appointments for interviews should be made in advance with the Swami at 416-240-7262.

DAILY MEDITATION: Meditation is observed at the Centre every morning from 6:00 am to 7:00 am. Devotional singing and meditation is held in the evenings from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK: Many less fortunate families are dependent on the food bank for their daily nutrition. Please help us by contributing non-perishable food items that we may pass along to the Daily Bread Food Bank.

SOUP KITCHEN: The Soup is cooked at the Vedanta Society and offered **9 days a month** serving 450 meals at **Syme Woolner Neighbourhood & Family Centre, 2468 Eglinton Ave W, Unit 3, Toronto, ON, M6M 5E2**. Please contact the Centre, if you are interested in participating. *Donations for the Soup Kitchen will be highly appreciated.*

BOOK STORE: The Book Store is open after Sunday Services and special programmes, and arrangements can be made by phone for weekday and Saturday visits. We carry selected titles from the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, as well as other Vedantic materials.

Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher - Swami Kripamayananda, Ramakrishna Order of India

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<u>1</u> 7:30pm NO SCRIPTURE CLASS	<u>2</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen
<u>3</u> 11am Video: 'Eight Limbs of Yoga'- Sw.Prabhavananda	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u> 7:30pm Scripture Calss: 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>9</u> Vigil: 6 am to 6 pm
<u>10</u> 11am Lecture: 'Invoking Divine Mother'	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> 5:30pm DURGA PUJA MAHA-ASHTAMI	<u>16</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen
<u>17</u> 11am: VIJAYA DASHAMI PUJA 5:00PM Ram Nam	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>22</u> 7:30pm Scripture class: 'Vivekachudamani'	<u>23</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen
<u>24</u> 11am Lecture: 'Company of the Holy' VYM 1:30 pm	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u> 7:30pm NO SCRIPTURE CLASS	<u>30</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen
<u>31</u> 11am Lecture: 'Acquiring Strength'						

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

The Vedanta Society of Toronto's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Sunday, November 14, 2010 at 11:00 am.**

Any member wishing to nominate an active and willing member of the Vedanta Society for the Executive Committee may do so by writing to the Society. All nominations must be received by November 7, 2010 and be duly proposed and seconded, and approved by Swami Kripamayananda.

All our members and friends are requested to attend the meeting. If you are unable to attend, please fill in the proxy form included in October 2010 Newsletter and send it so that it reaches us before November 14.