



Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

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Newsletter September 2010

Words to Inspire

M: "Is it possible to see God?"

Master: "Yes, Certainly. Living in solitude now and then, then repeating God's name and singing His glories, and discriminating between the real and the unreal-these are the means to employ to see Him."

-Master and Disciple, p 83-

Master and Disciple

Master: "You were talking of worshipping the clay image. Even if the image is made of clay, there is need for that sort of worship. God Himself has provided different forms of worship. He who is the Lord of Universe has arranged all these forms to suit different men in different stages of knowledge.

"The mother cooks different dishes to suit the stomachs of her different children. If there is a fish to cook, she prepares various dishes from it-pilau, pickled fish, and so on-to suits their different tastes and power of digestion.

"Do you understand me?"

M: (humbly): "Yes, sir. How, sir, may we fix our minds on God?"

Master: "Repeat God's name and sing His glories, and keep holy company; and now and then visit God's devotees and holy men. The mind cannot dwell on God if it is immersed day and night in worldliness, in worldly duties and responsibilities; it is most necessary to go into solitude now and then and think of God. To fix the mind on God is very difficult, in the beginning, unless one practices meditation in solitude. When a tree is young it should be fenced all around; otherwise it may be destroyed by cattle.

"To meditate, you should withdraw within yourself or retire to a secluded corner or to the forest. And you should always discriminate between the Real and unreal. God alone is real, the Eternal Substance; all else is unreal, that is, impermanent. By discriminating thus, one should shake off impermanent objects from the mind."

M (humbly): "How ought we to live in the world?"

Master: "Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all-with wife and children, father and mother-and serve them. Treat them as if they were dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you.

"A maid servant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but their thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her Master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them

as 'my Rama' or 'my Hari'. But in her mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all.

"The tortoise moves about in the water. But can you guess where her thoughts are? There on the bank, where her eggs are lying. Do all your duties in the world, but keep your mind on God.

"If you enter the world without first cultivating love for God, you will be entangled more and more. You will be overwhelmed with its danger, its grief in sorrows. And the more you think of worldly things, the more you will be attached to them.

"First rub your hands with oil and break open the jack-fruit; otherwise they will be smeared with its sticky milk. First secure the oil of divine love, and then set your hands to the duties of the world.

"But one must go into solitude to attain this divine love. To get butter from milk you must let it set into curd in a secluded spot; if it is too much disturbed, milk won't turn into curd. Only then do you get butter.

"Further, by meditating on God in solitude the mind acquires knowledge, dispassion, and devotion. But the very same mind goes downward if it dwells in the world. In the world there is only one thought: 'woman and gold'. The world is water and the mind milk. If you pour milk into water they become one; you cannot find the pure milk any more. But turn the milk into curd and churn it into butter. Then, when that butter is placed in water, it will float. So, practice spiritual discipline in solitude and obtain the butter of knowledge and love. Even if you keep that butter in the water of the world the two will not mix. The butter will float.

"Together with this, you must practice discrimination. 'Woman and Gold' is impermanent. God is the only Eternal Substance. What does a man get with money? Food, clothes, dwelling place-nothing more. You cannot realize God with its help. Therefore money can never be the goal of life. This is the process of discrimination, do you understand?"

Mantra – Divine Name (Part –II)

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

The names of all Avatars are in fact the name of God. There is no difference between the name and the form of God. The name of Rama is Rama himself, and the name of Krishna is Krishna himself. The meaning of Gayatri mantra- I meditate on the effulgence of the creator of the three worlds. May that power guide my intellect! The meditation is not done on any form but the effulgence of the creator of three worlds.

Sri Ramakrishna says, 'If God holds our hand then there is no fear'. If we hold the hand of God, then there is fear. We may leave it due to weakness, but when God holds our hand we will be safe and secure. When God controls something, it becomes godly. Our prayer should be- May God manifest through everything that I do and think. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, 'Oh God, you are so kind and gracious, you have given us so many names of yours, you did not confine yourself to only one name. And after giving your names, you have put all your power in your names'. Whole of God is there in the three letter name of Ram or five letter word of Jesus. We have to have the faith in that name. The word 'Maa' has the power of the Divine Mother who is the creator of this universe, the ever loving. All these words – Om, Maa, Allah, Jesus, Ram, Krishna, Ramakrishna- are the names of that one creator, the mantra that contain the full divinity and power of God.

Is there a special time to remember God? No, there is no special time to remember God. There may be a formal way to do Japam, but remembering God can be done whenever you want. 'Oh Lord, you are so gracious, so vast; seem to be so far, how can we reach you? Unless you give us your name and we take your name, obtaining you seems impossible. By chanting your name we can catch you through our mind, our speech and talk'. Sri Chaitanya said, 'Oh Lord, you have so much of grace. What an ill fate I have that I have not developed love and attraction for your name!' How will it come? Can you grant that much love for your name that my eyes don't stop shedding tears? May I cry shedding tears like rainy season, may my voice be choked taking your name, may my hairs stand at end on

repeating your name! How sad that I don't have that love for your name'.

Love for God does not come so easily. How do we develop the love for the name of God? We are suffering from the disease of worldliness. The remedy is chanting the name of God. First it will not sound so tasty or sweet, but when we continue repeating the name of God day after day, we will surely start getting the sweet taste of it.

'Mantra-Chaitanya' – The particular word that the Guru gives to the disciple during initiation, becomes very powerful and impregnated with spiritual power. Those words which become potent with spiritual power is called Mantra Chaitanya. The mantra becomes conscious and living. The mantra used by a seeker in the practice of Japa, has been imparted by the Spiritual Teacher, after it has been charged with spiritual power. Mantra is that which saves the seeker and gives liberation. The saving power of mantra is not the word itself, but spiritual power transmitted through it. This power comes from the originator – The lineage of gurus. This mantra is practiced so many times by so many people. So when one gets that mantra, you get the blessings and power of all those who has passed on this mantra i.e.; the lineage of Gurus. My Guru who has given the mantra to me does not have any selfish desires, but his/her only concern is my spiritual upliftment and welfare. By my Guru's grace, the mantra blooms and I need to practice repeating the mantra. Japa helps to develop the spiritual taste for the name. It is an effective way to achieve purification of mind. We have to repeat the name along with remembering the meaning of the mantra. If we say Shiva, then we have to remember the meaning of Shiva –means positive, auspicious, pure, and blissful.

There are many types of japam – Vachika japa-mantra is chanted loudly, Upanshu japa-very slowly in whisper. In the Ramakrishna tradition, the Guru asks you to avoid saying the mantra loudly, don't whisper it, don't even let your tongue move while repeating the mantra, but the mantra has to be repeated in the mind only. This japa is called Manasa japa-thinking of the mantra. In Likhita japa – mantra is written in a notebook. In Akhanda japa-time is fixed to do a specific number of japa at a

certain time. In Ajapa japa- the mantra is practiced in every breath. In Purascharana-you start doing say 1000 times and everyday you increase it by 1000 times more till it becomes say 15000 times, then again gradually reduce it in the same way and bring it to 1000 times.

Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Go to a lonely place for 6 months or one month or one week or even three days and practice japa'. There are many factors that can influence the practice of Japam- one is the environment. Whatever affects our mind affects the quality of japam. If you are in a holy place, then automatically you feel like doing japam and worship.

In Chaitanya Charitamrita, there is a saying-'Whom do I know as a devotee of God? Not by external marks, so how can I know him?'-Know that person to be the devotee of God, by seeing whom, you automatically start taking the name of God. You feel the holiness and peace in presence of that devotee. So when you meet a true devotee, there is an aura around that person which will indicate the presence of God.

It is important to have a fixed time, a place and seat to do japa. The method of repetition of the mantra must exactly as taught by the Guru. The mantra must be repeated at a certain pace, not too fast nor too slow. If it is too slow then mind may divert, if it is too fast then you cannot concentrate on its meaning. While doing japam there should be alertness of mind.

The word Ramakrishna has two words -Rama & Krishna. He, who bestows delight upon the Yogis

and devotees, is Rama. . The word Krishna means- He who absorbs and destroys the sins and sufferings from the minds of his devotees. Ramakrishna is the combination of Rama and Krishna - He gives us joy and takes away all our sufferings. When Rama was born, Rishi Vasistha (their family Guru) explained,' **Ra** comes from the Vaishnava mantra- Om Namō Na-**Ra**-yanaya-means Salutations to Supreme being Lord Narayana. If you remove Ra then the mantra becomes Namō Nayanaya-means Salutations to the sensuous objects of the world. Similarly **Ma** comes from the mantra Namah Shivaya-Salutations to the all auspicious Shiva. If you remove Ma from Na-**Ma**-h Shivaya - it becomes Nah Shivaya-means Salutations to the inauspicious objects of this world. Rama is the combination of these two words. Ramakrishna contains these two glorious names of the Lord. Swami Shivananda said, 'When you worship Ramakrishna or do his japam, think of his form. One day you will realize the Lord by thus meditating on his form'. That Supreme Being has taken this human form as the son of Khudiram and Chandramani Devi. Repeat the mantra and meditate on His form and if God wills, you will get that experience of the supreme Brahman - the bliss independent of any material thing, the ultimate goal of human life. By attaining this, nothing else is left to be attained. . That is Ramakrishna; the divine name of God and the mantra contains that divinity.

(Concluded)

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 2 hours to prepare soup & salad. Please drop in on Tuesdays at 9:30 am & 10 am on Saturdays.

QUANTUM LEAP

Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and the Gita Utsha Saha - Grade VIII student

Why do we worship to Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi as an incarnation?

In the Gita, Arjuna said,

“What, O Krishna, is the description of him who has steady wisdom and is merged in the super conscious state? How does one of steady wisdom speak? How does he sit? How does he walk?”

“He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who is free from desires, and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is a sage of steady wisdom.”

We can see all these qualities in the Holy Mother herself.

Mother’s mind was always free from fear and never shaken by adversity.

Mother once traveled to Jayrambati to Calcutta by foot. A few village women accompanied her. It was still early in the day and Holy Mother’s party decided that they would be able to pass the dangerous area before dark. But Mother’s feet were already hurt and she was tired. She did not want to delay the others. Soon she lagged behind her companions and continued to walk slowly.

Soon darkness fell over the solitary fields. A fierce looking man emerged from the bushes and shouted in a threatening voice, “Hello! Who is this standing here at this time?” Holy Mother said, “Father my companions left me behind and I have lost my way. Will you kindly take me to them? I am on my way to Dakshineswar.”

The man was astounded and could not do or say anything. His wife came out and Mother took hold of her hand and said, “Mother, I am your daughter Sarada and I was in a terrible plight. Fortunately, you and father came just in time. I don’t know what I could’ve done.”

Mother’s simple, confident and sweet behaviour melted the hearts of the robber couple. They took

Holy Mother safely to Tarakeshwar and delivered her to her worried companions.

What had started out to become a disaster turned into an intimate experience and changed the lives of the Bagdi couple forever. Under the influence of Mother’s love, the robber gave up his evil ways and took on a regular job. Love made all the difference.

Mother was free from desires and attachments. She never went after worldly things. When she went to Rameshwaram with her niece Radhu, the king welcomed them by opening up his royal treasury telling his guests to choose anything they wished for. Not only did Mother not take anything, but she also prayed to Sri Ramakrishna so that Radhu, her cranky niece does not get the desire to take anything either. Mother heaved a sigh of relief when after seeing everything, Radhu only asked to replace her broken pencil.

Mother was free from anger. After Thakur left his body, mother lived in extreme poverty. Sometimes she ate only some boiled leaves with salt. On top of all this, Mother had to hear so much verbal abuse from her close ones. Still, she was always happy, loving and caring and always kept her mind on God. She was absolutely free from anger.

Mother saw God in everything. To her a Sanyasin and a robber are the same and she is the mother of both. She once said, “I am the mother of the wicked, as I am the mother of the virtuous. Whenever you are in distress, just say to yourself: “I have a mother.”” She sees God in a cat, dog, cow and even the tiniest insect.

One gets this state of mind only if he or she realizes Brahman and becomes one with him. Hence, one sees Brahman in everything. Mother is an incarnation of God and she reveals to us how an Sthitaprajna and a realized Soul behaves in day-to-day life, which is described in the Gita. If one study’s the Mother’s life, then he or she will truly understand the whole essence of the Gita.

SUMMARY OF PAST EVENTS

Guru Purnima was held on Monday 26th July 2010 at 6:30pm. The programme

included bhajans, reading, puja, flower offering and prasad distribution.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spiritual Retreat with Swami Sridharanandaji at Canmore, Alberta, (Rockies) on Sept 4 & 5 2010. Seats are limited. If you are interested, please contact Vedanta Society of Toronto at 416-240 7262.

The **Krishna Janmashtami** will be held on **Wednesday, September 1, 2010 at 6.30 pm**. The programme will consist bhajans, reading, puja and flower offering followed by prasad distribution.

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 September 12, 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 offer **8 days in September (7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28 & 30)** 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.

The Forthcoming Annual Seminar

The Annual Seminar on 'Tradition and Innovation' will be held on September 11 from 9am to 4pm. We have a panel of distinguished scholars including Rev. Swami Sridharananda, the monk in-charge of the Vedanta Society of Sydney, Australia to address the audience.

Space is limited and will be provided on a first-come first-served basis.

Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher - Swami Kripamayananda, Ramakrishna Order of India

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> 9:00am-4:00pm Annual Seminar
<u>12</u> 11am Lecture: 'Sacrifice as a Spiritual practice' 5:00PM Ram Nam	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>17</u> 7:30pm Scripture class: 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<u>18</u> NO VIGIL
<u>19</u> 11am Lecture: 'Freedom through faith' <u>VVM 1:30 pm</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>24</u> 7:30pm Scripture class: 'Vivekachudamani'	<u>25</u>
<u>26</u> 11am Lecture: 'Desire to be desireless' <u>VVM 1:30 pm</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u> 9:30am Soup Kitchen		

I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, and which is every day repeated by millions of human beings:

As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which people take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita:

Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach them; all are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.

- Swami Vivekananda -