



# Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

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## Newsletter May 2016

### **WORDS TO INSPIRE**

"Japa is repeating the holy name; through this the devotee rises to the infinite."

-Swami Vivekananda

Though outwardly a man of Jnana, Narendra was full of Bhakti within. One day, he said to a young brother-disciple who was disturbed because of his failure to realize God:

"Have you not read the Gita? God is residing in the hearts of all creatures. He is, as it were, revolving the wheel of life to which we are tied. You are more insignificant than even the crawling worm. Can you really know God? Try to think for a minute of the real nature of man. Of these innumerable stars, everyone is a solar system. We see only one solar system and know only an infinitesimal fraction of that. The earth compared with the sun is like a little ball and man but an insect moving on its surface." Then he burst into a song, resigning himself to God and beseeching His aid in steering clear of the pitfalls and temptations of the world. Again he said to the brother-disciple: "Take refuge in God. Resign yourself completely at His feet. Don't you remember the words of Sri Ramakrishna? God is like a hill of sugar. You are an ant. One grain of sugar is sufficient for you. Yet you want to carry home the entire hill. Shukadeva was at most a bigger ant. Therefore I would say to Kali, (a brother-disciple) 'Do you want to measure God by your foot-rule?' God is the infinite ocean of mercy! He will shower His grace on you. Pray to Him, 'Protect us always, O Lord, by Thy benign mercy.

From the unreal lead us to the Real, from darkness lead us to Light, from death lead us to Immortality!" "

"How should one pray to God?" the brother-disciple asked. "Why," Narendranath replied, "You need only repeat His Name. That is what the Master told us."

Then the young disciple said good-humouredly, "Sometimes you say that God does not exist. Now you are telling us that He does. You cannot be true in your statement when you change your opinions so often." Narendra replied, "I shall never change these words: We do not have faith in God so long as we are assailed by egotism and desire. Some sort of desire always persists." Then, overwhelmed with emotion he began to sing: "He is the merciful Parent always giving shelter to those who take refuge in Him." The devotional fervour of the songs that followed was enhanced by the quality of Narendra's voice - a voice which was the delight of all who heard him.

Had not the Master said: "As the snake remains spellbound with its hood up on hearing the sweet notes of the flute, so does He who is in the heart, the Antaryami, when Naren sings!"?

From 'The Life of Swami Vivekananda, by His Eastern and Western Disciples'. Pp 206-207.

### IMPORTANT NOTE

Vedanta Society will be closed from May 15 to September 15, 2016 for Renovation Project Phase-2. During this period no activities will be conducted. Members and Devotees are requested to call the following numbers for any further information regarding the Society's activities: 416-240-7262 or 647-990-1418 or 416-569-9401 or 905-799-0023.

# The Uplifting Power of Jnana (Spiritual wisdom) Part-2

(Based on a Talk by Prof. Emeritus Narendra N. Bakshi at the Vedanta Society on January 24, 2016)

In Hanuman Chalisa, Tulsidasji prays to Hanumanji and asks this very question for all of us. He asks:

*“Buddhiheentanujanikesumironpavankumar  
Balabuddhibidyadehumohiharaukalesabikar”.*

O Pavan Kumar (Hanumanji) I pray to you: I am devoid of buddhi (I am ignorant and I don't know). Grant me bala (strength and health), buddhi (intelligence, wisdom), bidya (knowledge) and remove klesha (modification of mind causing pain) and bikara (mental negativities).”

- (i) There are five klesas:
1. avidya (ignorance, nescience)
  2. asmita (egoism)
  3. ragas (likes)
  4. dwesha (dislikes)
  5. abhinivesha (clinging to life)
- (ii) and seven vikaras
1. kama (desire, lust)
  2. krodha (anger)
  3. lobha (greed)
  4. moha (attachment)
  5. ahamkara (egoism)
  6. mada (pride)
  7. matsarya (jealousy)

It is our prayer to Hanumanji to help us in overcoming all these negative tendencies. Through his Grace and as one progresses toward developing pure buddhi through sadhana (spiritual practice), the influence of all these negative qualities becomes weaker and weaker over time and ultimately disappears.

## Bala

Bala implies strength, good health, vigor and vitality. One needs to follow a proper, healthy and disciplined lifestyle (yukta). Lord Krishna tell us in Gita VI/17:

*“Yuktaharaviharasyayuktacestasyakarmasu  
yuktasvapanavabodhasyayogobhavatidukhaha”*

For him who is proper and disciplined in eating and recreation, proper in his actions, who is regulated in sleep and wakefulness, yoga (spiritual discipline) becomes the destroyer of pain and sorrow.”

Such a lifestyle is also called a ‘yukta lifestyle.’

Here, ahara (eating) is not only what we eat from our mouths but includes what we take in through our eyes and

ears also. All these intakes should be good and pure and of positive nature.

We should remember that in the Gita (or Vedanta) the emphasis is on self-effort. Otherwise, one is considered one's own enemy.

This ‘yukta’ lifestyle (described above), also is a prescription for happiness. Lord Krishna tell us in Gita II/66:

*“Nastibuddhirayuktasyanacayuktasyabhavana  
Na cabhavayatahsantihasantasyakutahsukham”*

There is no wisdom (pure buddhi) in the unsteady (ayukta – undisciplined). Nor is there meditation in him/her because the thoughts are not under control and they are not pure). To the unmeditative, there is no peace. And how can the one who is not at peace enjoy happiness?”

## Buddhi (intellect)

Buddhi is not mind (manas) or smartness. It is the faculty of reason, judgment, and discrimination. It represents the integration of the energies of intellect, emotion, and will.

We purify or refine this energy through spiritual discipline (yukta lifestyle). Lord Krishna refers to it as satvikabuddhi and defines it in Gita XVIII/30. Such a buddhi can readily judge things that are to be done and the things that are to be avoided. There is clarity in thinking. In addition, such a buddhi has the fortitude to do the right thing. There is steadiness and equanimity in such a buddhi.

And how does one attain such a buddhi? Lord Krishna gives us a very simple method to achieve that (Gita X/10-11).

*“Tesamsatatyuktanambhajatampritipurvakam  
Dadamibuddhiyogam tam yena mam upayantite”*

To them, ever steadfast and devout, worshipping Me with love, I give that buddhi yoga (yoga of discrimination) by which they come to Me.”

This is a powerful verse and full of tremendous meaning. Simply by constantly remembering God with love, one attains pure buddhi (or Yoga buddhi or Yoga of discrimination). This results in a calm and steady mind. It is full of luminosity. Such a buddhi is the best guide in human life. A life lived and guided by such a buddhi will always be a dharmic and righteous life.

Not only that, over a period of time such a buddhi will lead its practitioner to God-Realization and the experience of ‘Aham Brahma asmi – I am Brahman. This is ‘amritam.’ Thus, dharmic life leads one automatically to the final goal of life – the last purusartha, moksha.

Bhagavan tells us in Gita X/11:

*“Tesamevaanukamparthamahamajnanajamtamah  
Nasyamiatmabhavasthojnanadipenbhasvata*

Out of mere compassion for them, I, abiding in their hearts, destroy the darkness (in them) born of ignorance, by the luminous lamp of jnana (spiritual knowledge.)”  
What a beautiful and profound verse. Grace of the Divine descends when we become grace-worthy through self-effort (sadhana). Through the Grace of the Lord, the veil of maya (ignorance, avidya, nescience) is lifted and one just wakes up to one’s divine Nature.

Swami Brahmananda used to say: “Never squander the energies of your mind. This means remember God constantly. The worldly man is very careful not to squander his money, but he gives little heed to how he squanders his mind. There is nothing greater nor easier than the constant remembrance of God. Such a practice awakens the kundalini; the veils of maya are removed one after another, and a new vision opens up. Then you will see the wonderful treasure that lies hidden within you. You will unfold your own divinity.”

Centuries ago, the Chinese sage Confucius, recognizing the power and value of righteous (dharmic) life, said:

*If there is righteousness in the heart, there  
Will be beauty in character  
If there is beauty in the character, there  
Will be harmony in the home  
If there is harmony in the home, there  
Will be order in the nation  
And, when there is order in the nation, there  
Will be peace in the world*

### **Bidya (vidya or knowledge)**

Bhagavan answers in (Gita XIII/2) the question ‘what is true knowledge?’

*“ksetraksetrajnanayorjnanamyattajjnanammatam mama*

The knowledge of the kshetra (the field, that is, all types of secular knowledge) and the kshetrajna (knower of the field, that is, knowledge of the atman, spiritual knowledge) is considered by Me as true knowledge.”  
Knowledge of one alone is not enough. It is incomplete knowledge. Thus, education in both the disciplines is considered to be complete education.

### **Summarizing:**

We started with asking questions about wisdom (what is it?) and if there was an algorithm to attain it. Essentially, when one lives a dharmic life (made possible when one practices sadhana – spiritual disciplines), one develops pure buddhiand, which in turn, endows one with jnana (or wisdom). This pure buddhi guides us at every step of life and helps in making wise and righteous decisions.

1. There are some interesting signposts of such a life:

(i) One develops ‘self-confidence,’ the highly positive ‘can do’ attitude. This is no mere bravado or ‘ego trip.’ This confidence is simply the result of one’s getting established in jnana (spiritual wisdom.)

(ii) This ‘self-confidence’ then leads to ‘self-satisfaction’ as one’s attitude becomes greatly positive and one is able to achieve success in attaining various goals.

(iii) Next, self-satisfaction leads to ‘self-sacrifice.’ As one now feels fulfilled, the natural consequence is that you want to share it with others.

(iv) And finally, ‘self-sacrifice’ over time leads to ‘Self-realization’ – the summum-bonum of life.

All this does not mean that one has to lead the life of a hermit. Not at all. All the worldly activities can be grouped under two headings:

- (a) artha: wealth related, economic, money etc.
- (b) kama: fulfillment of all variety of desires.

Vedanta tells us to live a fulfilled and active life, but just make sure that all activities are guided by dharma. Nothing should be contrary to the ‘dharmic life.’ Live in the world like a ‘raja rishi’ (attitude of a sage within and of a king outside).

If this condition is met, then one does not have to worry about liberation or moksha. Moksha will follow by itself over time (kalenatmanivindati Gita IV/38)

2. And finally, is there an algorithm to achieve this wisdom? The answer is ‘yes’ and it can be summarized in two lines:

*aharashuddhauchittashuddhi and  
chittashuddhau jnana siddhi*

When all our inputs (ahara) to the body and mind (the food we eat, whatever we see through our eyes, whatever we hear from our ears, and whatever thoughts we think in our mind) are pure (absence of all seven ‘vikaras’ mentioned earlier), it leads to the purification of ‘chitta’ mind-buddhi complex.) And when the chitta becomes pure, it leads to the attainment of jnana (spiritual wisdom).



**\*Vivekananda Dinner 2016 \***

*Vedanta Society of Toronto*

**Saturday, June 11, 2016, 5:30 pm.**

**at Bombay Palace Banquet Hall**

**200 Advance Blvd. Brampton, Ontario. L6T 4V4 Canada - (905) 799-9777**



- ❖ **Chief Guest** : REV. SWAMI ATMAGHANANANDA,  
President, Ramakrishna Math, Kanchipuram, TN - India
- ❖ **Keynote speaker** : PROF. MANJUL BHARGAVA, Princeton University  
(Recipient of 2014 Fields Medal)
- ❖ **Classical Dance by** : SANJUKTA BANERJEE & Saugandhikam Dance Academy
- ❖ **Flute Recital by** : DEEP GANGULY
- ❖ **Music Ensemble** : VARAGUNAN MAHADEVAN

- Back colour Page : \$5,000 Includes 4 Complimentary tickets
- Back Inside colour page : \$4,000 includes 3 complimentary tickets
- Full page colour inside : \$2,000
- Full page B/W inside : \$1,000
- Half page B/W : \$500
- Quarter page B/W : \$300

**Tickets are available : \$120, \$110, \$100**

**For details Contact :**

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***There Is No Higher Virtue Than Charity – Swami Vivekananda***

## IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THIS MONTH

**BUDDHA JAYANTI** will be celebrated on Sunday, May 22 at 11 am with Puja, songs and Prasad, The Venue for the Buddha Jayanti Celebration will be Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Toronto.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Program detail	Date & Time	Venue Address
Annual Retreat	<u>June 18</u> 9am to 4pm	Professor's Lake Recreation Centre, 1660 North Park Drive, Brampton, ON L6S 5S8
Guru Purnima	<u>July 19</u> 6:30 pm	Tagore Centre, 140 Millwick Drive, Toronto
Seminar	<u>September 10</u> 9am to 4pm	To be decided

## REGULAR PROGRAMMES

**SCRIPTURE CLASS:** Every Friday at 7:30 pm, following the regular evening prayer at 6:00 pm.

**VIGIL:** A vigil consisting of japa and meditation is observed from 6:00am to 6:00pm. For the date of this month's vigil, please see the 'Calendar of Events' on the next page. *To participate, please call the Centre.*

**RAM NAM:** For the date and time of the monthly Ramnam, please see the 'Calendar of Events' on the next page.

### **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 416-247262.

**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.

**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 serving meals at Syme Woolner Neighborhood & 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 programs, 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

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Minister and Teacher - Swami Kripamayananda, Ramakrishna Order of India

### May 2016

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Saturday
<b><u>11am</u>Video Lecture:</b> <i>"Sri Rudram: The essence of Upanishads"</i> by Swami Sarvapriyananda	<u>2</u>	<b><u>3</u></b> <b><u>9:30am</u></b> Soup Kitchen	<u>4</u>	<b><u>5</u></b> <b><u>9:30am</u></b> Soup Kitchen	<b><u>67:30pm</u></b> Scripture class: 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'	<b><u>79:30am</u></b> Soup Kitchen <hr/> <b><u>6am to 6pm</u></b> Vigil
<b><u>811am</u>Guest Lecture:</b> 'Sufism' by Hafiz	<u>9</u>	<b><u>10</u></b> <b><u>9:30am</u></b> Soup Kitchen	<u>11</u>	<b><u>12</u></b> <b><u>9:30am</u></b> Soup Kitchen	<u>13</u> No Scripture Class	<b><u>14</u></b> <b><u>9:30am</u></b> Soup Kitchen
<b><u>15</u>No Lecture</b>  VEDANTA SOCIETY CLOSSES FOR RECONSTRUCTION	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> No Scripture Class	<u>21</u>
<b><u>2211am</u></b>  <b>BUDDHA PURNIMA</b> Venue: Bharat Sevashram Sangha, 2107 Codlin Crescent Etobicoke ONM9W5K7	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>  No Scripture Class	<u>28</u>
<b><u>29</u>No Lecture</b>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>				

### **AN APPEAL FOR DONATION – ASHRAMA RENOVATION**

Vedanta Society plans to start the Phase-2 Renovation Project in May 2016, which is estimated to cost \$1.4M. Members and Devotees are requested to come forward and donate generously for this purpose. The proposed Phase-2 includes : Prayer hall expansion, relocate the stairs for fire safety enhancement, Mezzanine floor expansion, Increased number of washrooms, New Lift for elder & physically challenged devotees, new flower room, new book store, new guest rooms for visiting Swamis, more multi-purpose meeting rooms (VidyaMandir, spiritual discussions, library), Energy efficient kitchens with better equipment and washing facilities, Energy efficient lighting, better heating-cooling & ventilation, better security and safety (CCTV cameras, alarms) and better audio-visual facility by which all the devotees in the buil