



# Vedanta Society of Toronto

(Ramakrishna Mission)

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## Newsletter November 2015

### WORDS TO INSPIRE

**“What need is there to know everything about God? It is enough if we only realize Him. And we see God Himself if we but see His Incarnation.”**

-Sri Ramakrishna

### From the book ‘GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH’ by Swami Chetanananda - (p-332-334)

That year the special worship of the Divine Mother Kali was celebrated on 6 November, 1885. Ramakrishna said to one of his disciples: “It is good to make some arrangements for the worship. Please speak to the devotees about it.” The devotees made the necessary arrangements. That evening, nearly thirty people assembled in the Master’s room. Girish described what happened then: “Sri Ramakrishna sat down to perform the worship, surrounded by flowers, fruits, and all the various articles for worship. Suddenly he turned to me and said: ‘It is the Divine Mother’s day. One should sit and meditate like this.’ I do not know what took hold of me at that point. I just rushed forward and, chanting ‘Jai Sri Ramakrishna (Victory to Sri Ramakrishna),’ offered flowers at his feet. The others in the room did the same. Sri Ramakrishna immediately went into samadhi, his hands assuming gestures symbolizing fearlessness and the bestowal of boons.’

Swami Saradananda described this Kali Puja in detail:

A thrill passed through the Master’s body, and he went into deep samadhi. His face became luminous and a divine smile played upon it. His hands assumed the gestures symbolizing fearlessness and the bestowal of boons that are seen in images of Kali, thus indicating that the Mother was revealing Herself within him. These events happened so quickly that the devotees seated nearby thought Girish had offered flowers

after seeing the Master in samadhi. To those who were a little farther away it appeared as if a luminous form of the Devi had suddenly appeared before them, taking possession of the Master’s body. The devotees’ joy knew no bounds. Each one took flowers and sandal paste from the tray, uttered a mantra according to his mood, and worshipped the Master’s feet. The room was filled with joyous shouts. Some time passed in this way. When the Master slowly regained partial consciousness, the sweets and fruits gathered for worship were placed before him. He partook of some and blessed the devotees that they might attain the highest devotion and knowledge. They ate some of the Master’s prasada, and then sang devotional songs and hymns to the glory of the Divine Mother until midnight.

Thus, the devotees worshipped the Divine Mother that year in a unique way and experienced an unprecedented bliss that remained forever vivid in their hearts. And whenever they later became oppressed by difficulties in their lives, that image of the Master appeared before them, his serene face illumined with a divine smile and his hands bestowing blessings and fearlessness, reminding them that they were under God’s protection.

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# Worship of the Divine Mother

Swami Kripamayanda

At this time of the year, there is a feeling of transformation in the air. Summer changes into autumn and all around us, the leaves are changing colour from a uniform green to a variety of hues: red, orange, yellow, brown – all different, but all bright and colourful. It looks as if someone has worshipped the trees by scattering holy powder on them.

That feeling of worship generates a kind of inner joy and thankfulness. In some parts of the world, we don't see this colourful transformation, but it is harvest time and there is abundance in every household. And again, one has a feeling of gratitude and the desire to offer thanks.

All of these feelings come together in the worship of the Divine Mother. This means to worship, to pray, to contemplate God through the motherhood aspect. In Indian thought, there are many ways in which we can establish a relationship with God. These ways are largely built on human relationships that are extrapolated to the Divine. Amongst these, one of the most powerful is to relate to God as our Mother, or expressed differently, as the Divine Mother.

The nurturing, caring and protective aspect of God is what we mean by the Divine Mother. When we were babies, our mother took care of us in many ways. At that time, we did not even have the means to ask for what we wanted, and perhaps in many cases, we would not even know what we wanted. But whether we knew or did not know, or whether we asked clearly or incoherently, our mother somehow knew what was needed and provided for it as best as she could.

This is typical of a mother and we speak of anyone who has these qualities as being

motherly. In our lives, perhaps we are fortunate to know many such people, both male and female, who care about others and try to help them with no thought of any personal reward. We think of such people as being like our mother.

Now imagine our relationship to God in terms of these qualities. Then we get an idea of what we mean by the Divine Mother. Sri Ramakrishna says "It is written in the *Chandi* 'The Goddess dwells in all beings as the Mother.' It is She who has become your mother." (Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, p. 425)

God knows what we need even before we ask. Moreover, God knows our abilities and our limitations. In Sri Ramakrishna's words "The mother cooks different dishes to suit the stomachs of her different children. Suppose she has five children. If there is a fish to cook, she prepares various dishes from it – pilau, pickled fish, fried fish, and so on – to suit their different tastes and powers of digestion." (Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, p. 81).

In the Indian tradition, this is the time of Durga Puja. The concept of Durga is a wonderful one. She is the combination of many spiritual forces. And the Divine Mother in the form of Durga protects us by destroying evil. That evil is usually represented in the form of the demon Mahisha. This demon is also very powerful and difficult to destroy. Each time the demon appears to be injured, it reappears in another form. But Mother Durga has the power and the determination to overcome this evil. When we worship Durga, we are trying to awaken that determination and power, apparently in the image, but also in ourselves.

Moreover, as spiritual aspirants, the evil that we have most to grapple with is not a demon

outside, but the demons inside us! These are the collection of tendencies that tend to take us away from God. These are tendencies like anger, hatred, and jealousy. But they are also things like laziness, doubt and pessimism. So we might pray to Mother Durga to destroy those demons within us.

And as we see the images of Mother Durga with many hands, carrying many weapons, we should understand that the Divine Mother manifests in many other ways too. In fact, the Divine Mother manifests through everything. Sri Ramakrishna says "The Divine Mother revealed to me in the Kali temple that it was She who had become everything." (Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, p. 345)

In fact, wherever any one is making a sincere effort to live a spiritual life, wherever one is trying to conquer one's lower tendencies, wherever one is caring and loving towards others, wherever one shows compassion and understanding, you can be certain that the Divine Mother is manifesting there.

All of us have these qualities to some extent, but sometimes we are fortunate to witness people in whom these qualities are very dominant. One such person is Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother. During Sri Ramakrishna's lifetime and even beyond, she largely remained hidden and so the general public might not have appreciated her spiritual greatness. But she herself said that Sri Ramakrishna had left her behind to manifest the motherhood of God. Sri Sarada Devi is now commonly referred to as the Holy Mother because she had a motherly attitude and relationship with everyone. She even felt that motherly connection with animals. She was an ocean of compassion and love to all beings. And people could feel that compassion and love, and

often they were transformed by it, even if they did not understand what was happening.

There is a very interesting incident in the life of Holy Mother that illustrates this. Once, she was travelling on foot from her village Jayrambati to Dakshineswar to meet Sri Ramakrishna. At that time, the path went through some forests and roads that were quite isolated and infested with robbers and dacoits. People usually travelled in groups, hoping that there would be greater safety in numbers. Sarada Devi was travelling with such a group, but due to her ill health, she was not able to keep up with the others. She became separated and suddenly found herself alone in a deserted and dangerous area, with nightfall approaching.

It was not long before she came across a dacoit. But maintaining her composure, she was able to communicate with the robber. She introduced herself as his daughter Sarada on her way to meet his son-in-law in Dakshineswar. There was something in the way she said it, full of sincerity, love and compassion, that awoke parental feelings in the dacoit. Not only the robber, but also his wife, took care of their 'daughter', providing her with shelter that evening and helping her find her direction the next day.

Through her sincerity and love, Sri Sarada Devi was able to 'slay' the demons of cruelty and violence in the robber and his wife, and even awaken feelings of parental love and compassion in them. In some sense, she is a living Durga.

Whether we are looking at the many-handed form of Durga, or the two-handed human form of Durga, worship of the Divine Mother is meant to make us aware of the motherhood of God.

Every manifestation of power in the universe is "Mother". She is life, She is intelligence, She is Love.

- Swami Vivekananda- CW-Volume 7/*Inspired Talks*

## **IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE MONTH**

**Kali Puja** will be celebrated on Tuesday, November 10, at 6:30pm  
**AGM on Sunday, November 15**, at 11:00am.

**Guest Lecture** on Sunday, November 22, at 11:00 am by **Swami Amarananda**, Minister in-charge, Vedanta Centre of Geneva.  
**Vivekananda Public Speaking Competition** will be held on November 28, 2015 at 11am.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**CHRISTMAS** will be celebrated on December 24, at 6 pm. The program consists of Prayer, Reading from the Bible, singing of Carols,

offering of lighted candles to Jesus Christ and Prasad Distribution.

### **REGULAR PROGRAMMES**

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

Devotional singing and meditation time in the evenings is from 6:00 pm to 7:30 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.*

**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.

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

**SOUP KITCHEN:** The Soup is cooked at the Vedanta Society and offered serving 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***

### **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.

**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.

**DAILY MEDITATION:** Meditation is done at the Centre every morning from 6:00 am to 7:00 am.

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Parking on the road beside the Vedanta Society which is a Fire Route and which belongs to the West Park Hospital, is strictly prohibited. West Park Hospital has informed that they are going to give tickets @ \$250.00 for illegal parking on the road as well as in their property other than the designated parking area.

# Vedanta Society of Toronto

Minister and Teacher - Swami Kripamayanda, Ramakrishna Order of India

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### November 2015

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Saturday
<u>1</u> <b>11:00 am Lecture:</b> <i>'Sri Ramakrishna and Mother Kali'</i> <hr/> <b>1:30pm : VVM</b>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen	<u>6</u> <b>7:30pm</b> Scripture class: <i>'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'</i>	<u>7</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen
<u>8</u> <b>11:00 am Lecture:</b> <i>'Come, O Mother, Come!'</i>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u> <b>6:30pm</b> <b>KALI</b> <b>PUJA</b> 	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen	<u>13</u> <b>7:30pm</b> Scripture class: <i>'Vivekachudamani'</i>	<u>14</u> <b>6am to 6pm</b> <b>Vigil</b>
<u>15</u> <b>11:00am</b> <b>ANNUAL</b> <b>GENERAL</b> <b>MEETING</b>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen	<u>20</u> <b>7:30pm</b> Scripture class: <i>'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'</i>	<u>21</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen
<u>22</u> <b>11:00 am</b> Guest Lecture: <i>'Ramakrishna's Abiding in Bhavamukha'</i> by Swami Amarananda <hr/> <b>1:30pm : VVM</b>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> <b>7:30pm</b> Scripture class: <i>'Vivekachudamani'</i>	<u>28</u> <b>9:30am</b> Soup Kitchen  <b>11:00am</b> <b>VIVEKANANDA</b> <b>PUBLIC</b> <b>SPEAKING</b> <b>COMPETITION</b>
<u>29</u> <b>11:00am Lecture:</b> <i>'How to prepare oneself for Meditation?'</i> <hr/> <b>5pm</b> <i>Ram Nam</i>	<u>30</u>					

**W**hat are you to do when you are placed in the world? Give up everything to Him, resign yourself to Him, and there will be no more trouble for you. Then you will come to know that everything is done by His will. *-Sri Ramakrishna*