

Voice of the Worldwide Vedanta Movement

# GLOBAL VEDANTA

ONLINE

Online Issue #1, July 2022

***In this Issue:***

**How to Get Along with Others**

**Lessons from the Pandemic**

**Hinduism—A Vibrant Religion**

**Treasure from the Attic:**

**The Spiritual Significance of Death**

**and much more...**



## Message from *Global Vedanta*

Dear Friends and Devotees,

We are happy to announce the resumption of *Global Vedanta*, however, now as a scaled-up online version in place of the printed copy. There are a couple of reasons the magazine was discontinued: The well-known reason, as you guessed, is the SARS-Cov-19 pandemic. Apart from the debilitating and domino effect on societies worldwide, the publication infrastructure and mailing protocols of the magazine also suffered collateral damage. Another reason was the deteriorating health of Swami Bhaskarananda, editor-in-chief. Besides, the editorial staff was also burdened with other unforeseen responsibilities.

The worst of the pandemic is behind us. Yet, we still need to be mindful of its lurking dangers and move forward tentatively. Swami Satyamayananda has been posted to the Vedanta Society of Western Washington as assistant minister and is now the editor-in-chief of Viveka Press, the publisher of *Global Vedanta*. Thus, the two main aforementioned reasons of *Global Vedanta* being suspended have now been addressed.

We understand *Global Vedanta* was needed the most during the exacting times of lockdowns, quarantines, pervasive safety protocols, and so on, and we offer our sincere apologies for its suspension.

We hope our patient and devoted subscribers, devotees, friends, well-wishers, contributors, and donors will once again find *Global Vedanta* the familiar source of inspiration as we all endeavor to elevate life to the glorious ideals of Vedanta.

Please accept my thanks as I look forward to your continued support for *Global Vedanta*.

Swami Satyamayananda  
Editor-in-chief

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Viveka Press, the publisher of *Global Vedanta*, is the publishing arm of The Vedanta Society of Western Washington, a branch of the Ramakrishna Order of India. The Vedanta Society, a nonprofit corporation founded in 1941, gratefully accepts tax-deductible contributions and requests to assist its efforts to publicize various aspects of Vedanta with special emphasis on its teaching of the harmony of all religions. All editorial work on *Global Vedanta* is provided on a voluntary basis.

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*Cover: "Panchavati—Temple of Meditation," a newly dedicated meditation hall at the Ramakrishna Mission in Selangor, Malaysia. See Vedanta News from Around the World (page 14) for more information.*

## About Contributing to *Global Vedanta*

*Global Vedanta* will gladly consider articles, poetry, humor, etc., submitted for publication. The subject matter should be religious, cultural, or educational and must appeal to a general and broad-minded readership. Articles should be entertaining, and yet substantial, and be within 1500 to 1700 words in length. Articles accepted for publication may require a release signed by the author and, unless prior arrangements are made, no materials submitted to *Global Vedanta* can be returned.

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# HOW TO GET ALONG WITH OTHERS

SWAMI BHASKARANANDA

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[This article is the second excerpt from Swami Bhaskarananda's book *How to Get Along with Others Using Common Sense and Ancient Hindu Wisdom : A Practical Guide to Trouble-Free Living* to be published by *Global Vedanta*. A review of this book was published in the last issue of *Global Vedanta*.

As explained in the first excerpt (*GV* Summer 2020), in Hinduism, *guna* means quality, peculiarity, or attribute, and is of three types *sattwa-guna*, *rajo-guna*, *tamo-guna*. This notion originated in the *Sankhya* philosophy.—ed.]

## HOW THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GUNAS MANIFEST IN PEOPLE

### Some Common Characteristics of the Gunas

The *gunas* are like three siblings perpetually wrestling with one another. Each one wants to be prominent by subduing the other two. When one *guna* becomes predominant, its state of preponderance does not endure forever. Each of the other two subdued *gunas* tries to make itself prominent by subduing the other two. Therefore, in the same person *sattwa-guna*, *rajo-guna* and *tamo-guna* may become preponderant one after the other.

At the same time the *gunas* also cooperate with each another. It is like the cooperation of the wick, oil, and the flame in an oil lamp. Even when *sattwa-guna* becomes predominant by subduing *rajo-guna* and *tamo-guna*, the two subdued *gunas* will still be associated with *sattwa-guna*, playing minor roles controlled by *sattwa-guna*.

As mentioned earlier, each of these *gunas* has its own characteristic qualities. The qualities of a particular *guna* become noticeably manifest when that *guna* becomes dominant after subduing the other two *gunas*.

### Some Characteristics of People with a Preponderance of *Sattwa-guna*

The preponderance of *sattwa-guna* in human beings endows them with peacefulness of mind, purity of heart, happiness, joy, serenity, alertness, clarity of understanding, a natural tendency to be truthful, absence of anger, a natural tendency to renounce whatever is detrimental to spiritual life, kindness to all creatures, absence of back-biting, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, freedom from restlessness, spiritual vigor, a forgiving nature, absence of malice and haughtiness, the ability to understand the deeper significance of the scriptures, humility, unselfishness, sympathy, compassion, the spirit of nonviolence and love of God. Higher spiritual truths become revealed to those who have a preponderance of *sattwa-guna*.

People with *sattwa-guna* prominent in them are fond of eating foods that are succulent, of smooth and creamy texture, substantial and agreeable. They like foods that augment life, cause strength, health, happiness, delight, and firmness of mind. At the same time, they are fully aware that all the food that we eat is directly or indirectly connected with violence. For example, all food grains, such as rice, wheat, etc., have life in them. Had we sown them they would have developed into living plants. Eating them means destruction of all these life forms. Even honey is obtained by robbing the bees of the fruits of their hard labor. So also is the case with many other kinds of food that we consume. Such food cannot be considered pure or free from defects. Therefore, people with a preponderance of *sattwa-guna* mentally offer their food to God before eating, praying for its purification.

People with a preponderance of *sattwa-guna* naturally develop faith in God. In addition to that, if they try, the preponderance of *sattwa-guna* in them may enable them even to experience God.

Such people endowed with an exuberance of *sattwa-guna* worship God with sincere love and devotion and gladly follow the injunctions of the scriptures. They do not make a show of their love and devotion to God. During worship they pray to God for the wellbeing of all living beings. The purpose of their worship is to experience God and not to acquire mundane rewards or cheap occult powers.<sup>1\*</sup>

When they give gifts to people they do so with great kindness of heart. They give gifts only to deserving people, without expecting any kind of reciprocation, gratitude, or praise. It is mainly people with a preponderance of *sattwa-guna* who give gifts anonymously for noble causes without expecting any return.

### Some Characteristics of People with a Preponderance of *Rajo-guna*

The preponderance of *rajo-guna* in people produces in them greed, avarice, restlessness, and lack of satisfaction. They have a hankering for worldly things and are eager to get involved in all kinds of activity prompted by such hankering. They have lust, anger, arrogance, self-conceit, jealousy, envy, craving for name, fame, power, and position, and the tendency to dominate others. They are also over-talkative. Such people can understand spiritual or scriptural teachings only superficially.

People with a preponderance of *rajo-guna* are generally fond of eating foods that are bitter, very sour, too salty, very spicy hot, pungent, dry, and burning. Unfortunately, they have a tendency to eat mainly foods that are likely to eventually produce pain, sorrow, and disease. People with a preponderance of *rajo-guna* easily get addicted to alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics, even though from a medical point of view they are harmful to people's health.

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\* See Endnotes on page 4.

In spite of all this, the preponderance of *rajo-guna* makes people very energetic and hyperactive, because among the three *gunas*, only *rajo-guna* has the principle of activity in things as well as in people.

When people with a preponderance of *rajo-guna* perform a worship ritual, they do so to gain rewards in this life and in their afterlife, such as curing an illness, getting more money, or going to heaven and having eternal enjoyment there. Sometimes their worship ritual is performed mainly to get name, fame, or praise from other people. It becomes more a display of their wealth than the devotional worship of God. Not only that, when they organize some family event, such as their daughter's marriage, they make a lavish display of their wealth to feel superior to others.

They think that they can buy spirituality by paying money. Once a very rich man came to a genuine holy man in India and saluted him after placing near the holy man's feet a bundle containing 100,000 rupees.

The holy man asked him, "What's this bundle for? What does it contain?"

"That's my humble gift to you, revered sir," replied the rich man. "This bundle contains 100,000 rupees [a huge sum of money in those days]."

As soon as the holy man heard this, he kicked the bundle away.

Feeling embarrassed, the rich man said, "Revered sir, you won't find too many devotees who can give you a gift of 100,000 rupees!"

"You won't find too many *sadhus* (holy men) either who can kick away 100,000 rupees," calmly replied the holy man. It should perhaps be mentioned here that genuine holy people are completely free from the craving for money, name, fame, power, and position.

People with a preponderance of *rajo-guna* are also easily attracted to false prophets and charlatans. Only a person with a preponderance of *sattwa-guna* most of the time can recognize a genuine saint. Unfortunately, false prophets and charlatans are quite numerous. As long

as genuine diamonds are considered precious, there will be imitation diamonds in circulation. Similarly, as long as genuine saints and prophets are greatly adored by people, there will surely be many charlatans impersonating genuine saints. Over 2,000 years ago even Jesus Christ cautioned his followers saying, "Beware of false prophets!"

When people with a preponderance of *rajo-guna* give gifts to others they always do so for selfish gain, expecting reciprocation from the recipients. In order to get fame, they may create endowments in universities or charitable organizations, either in their own names or jointly in the names of their spouses and themselves. They give donations to political parties with the sole intent of getting favors in return. They never give gifts selflessly or anonymously. Sometimes, out of a sense of obligation, they give gifts grudgingly.

### Some Characteristics of People with a Preponderance of *Tamo-guna*

The preponderance of *tamo-guna* in people makes them lethargic, confused, depressed, and sleepy. At the same time it can sometimes make them lustful, senselessly angry, or violent. Such people can easily be incited to create riots and cause senseless killing of innocent people in the name of religion or anything else.

People with a preponderance of *tamo-guna* are unable to understand the deeper significance of the scriptures. It is mainly these people with a preponderance of *tamo-guna* who harm the world by misinterpreting the noble teachings of the scriptures.

People with a preponderance of *tamo-guna* are fond of eating foods that were cooked hours earlier, foods that are partially or fully rotten, malodorous, and stale. Like the people with a preponderance of *rajo-guna*, those who are dominated by *tamo-guna* also are easily addicted to tobacco, alcohol, and narcotics, even though all these substances are harmful to health. As mentioned earlier, according to Hinduism, no food is free from defects judging by how we procure

it. For example, all edible plants, food grains, fish, birds and animals have life in them. To eat them we have to destroy their lives. As mentioned earlier, even when we procure honey, which is lifeless, we do that by robbing the bees of the fruits of their hard labor. Therefore, before eating or drinking any kind of food, Hindus are expected to mentally or ritually offer their food to God for its purification.

People with a preponderance of *tamo-guna*, however, lack this kind of thinking. Therefore, they do not mind eating food that has not been offered to God.

In this connection it should be mentioned here that people with a preponderance of *sattwa-guna* will have a natural dislike for the kinds of food that are liked by people with a preponderance of *tamo-guna* or *rajo-guna*.

People in whom *tamo-guna* is preponderant give gifts without judging whether the recipient deserves the gifts or if the gifts will harm the recipient.

Those with a preponderance of *tamo-guna* are easily attracted to false prophets and are vulnerable to charlatans, pretending to be saints. They want to know whether these so-called prophets can cure illnesses or perform magic in the name of religion.

People with a preponderance of *tamo-guna* also lack common sense and the faculty of discrimination.

### Only One *Guna* Can Be Preponderant at Any Given Point in Time

At any given point in time, only one of these three *gunas* can be preponderant in a person's body and mind. Depending upon which *guna* is preponderant, the characteristics of that particular *guna* will become manifest in that person at that time.

### Who is a *Sattwik*, *Rajasik*, or *Tamasik* Person?

When *sattwa-guna* is preponderant in a person *most of the time*, he or she is called a *sattwik* person (closest English pronunciation: saat-wick). And the kind of food a *sattwik* person is fond of eating



is called *sattwik* food.

When *rajo-guna* is predominant in a person *most of the time* he or she is called a *rajasik* person (closest English pronunciation: ra-jaw-sick). And the kind of food a *rajasik* person is fond of eating is called *rajasik* food.

A person with preponderance of *tamo-guna* most of the time is called a *tamasik* person (closest English pronunciation: tum-awe-sick). And the kind of food a *tamasik* person is fond of eating is called *tamasik* food.

### The Preponderant *Guna* Can Sometimes Use One or More of the Subdued *Gunas*

As mentioned earlier, when one *guna* becomes predominant by subduing the other two, the subdued *gunas* are not wiped out. Any one of these two *gunas*, even though subdued, can still be somewhat active under the control of the *guna* that is predominant at that time. For example, when *sattwa-guna* is predominant, it can use the subdued *rajo-guna* to perform some activity conducive to spiritual life. Thus, using *rajo-guna*, a person with a preponderance of *sattwa-guna* can engage in selfless activities, such as giving food and shelter to the needy, or providing free medical treatment, or education for indigent people.

It should be noted here that when *sattwik* people engage in philanthropic activities, they do so without any craving for name, fame, power, and position. They do not engage in such activities to attain personal glory. They perform them selflessly or as a service to God, looking upon those served as so many children of God.

### Example of a *Sattwik* Person Using His Subdued *Tamo-guna*

In this context I would like to mention that Hinduism accepts only one God and says that we are all God's *true* children. God does not have stepchildren. Nor can God have any adopted children because, in that case, we have to admit the existence of another creator whose children have been adopted by God. According to Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886), the great

Hindu saint of the modern age, giving selfless service to people, looking upon them as children of God is conducive to developing a *sattwik* mind (a mind which has a preponderance of *sattwa-guna* most of the time). Such a mind is also called a "pure" mind. According to Hinduism, the most ancient living faith in the world, it is this pure mind that enables a person to have God-vision. Jesus Christ echoes the same truth when he says, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

Sri Ramakrishna also talked about how *sattwa-guna*, when it is preponderant in



Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886)  
in spiritual ecstasy

a person, can use the subdued *tamo-guna* to enhance his or her spirituality. *Bhakti*, or loving devotion to God, is an endowment of *sattwa-guna*. Sometimes, out of an intense yearning for the vision of God, a spiritual aspirant may say demandingly to God, "God, you must show yourself to me! You have created me. I am your child! Unless you show yourself to me, I shall cut my throat!" Sri Ramakrishna says that this attitude caused by an intense yearning for the vision of God is generated by *tamo-guna* inspired by *sattwa-guna*. This

is a case where the preponderant *sattwa-guna* is using the subdued *tamo-guna* to help the spiritual aspirant achieve his or her spiritual goal.

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna, we find a beautiful example of this phenomenon. In spite of his intense spiritual practice, Sri Ramakrishna, then a young priest in the temple of the Divine Mother Kali<sup>2</sup> in Dakshineswar, was not yet able to get Her vision. So his yearning for God-vision became extremely intense. One day the excruciating pain of not having been able to get the vision of the Divine Mother became so unbearable that he cried to Her saying, "Mother, unless you show thyself to me, I shall cut my throat!" Then, snatching a sword hanging on the wall near the basalt image of the Divine Mother Kali standing in front of him, he was about to cut his own throat. Immediately the Divine Mother appeared before him in all Her Divine splendor and stopped him! This is how Sri Ramakrishna attained God-vision using his subdued *tamo-guna* inspired by his *sattwa-guna*.

### Endnotes

1. Divine incarnations like Sri Krishna, Gautama Buddha, and Sri Ramakrishna have expressly stated that the use of occult powers by spiritual aspirants is detrimental to having spiritual enlightenment. Sri Krishna once said to his devotee and friend Uddhava, "For one who seeks union with Me (God), these (occult) powers have been called obstacles and things that cause waste of time." (*Uddhava Gita* 10.33). Buddha once forbade his disciples Pindola Bharadvaja and Moggallana to display occult power or *iddhi*, as it is called in Buddhist literature. In *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* we read that the Divine Mother showed Sri Ramakrishna through a spiritual vision that occult powers are worthless, disgusting, and despicable like human excreta. Such powers should, therefore, be carefully avoided by genuine seekers of spirituality.

2. According to Hinduism, God transcends time, space, and causation. Transcending time, God is eternal. Transcending space, God is infinite; and transcending the ceaseless chain of cause and effect, God is changeless. God being infinite is formless. Therefore, God is beyond personality and gender. God is neither father nor mother. Yet, when the finite human mind tries to think of God, it projects

*Continued on next page bottom*

# LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

SWAMI SATYAMAYANANDA

**I**t took a strain of a coronavirus to wake up the world to the fact that nations, societies, people, and everything else is interconnected in a symbiotic manner. In a way, this was, and is, a very Vedantic time for the world. Vedanta is global, it is a message for humanity, and the title of our magazine also stands vindicated. The extreme polarities of being rich or poor, educated or non-educated, moral or immoral, capable or incapable and so on, were bridged during the global crisis. The humble yet deadly virus humiliated humanity, teased our efforts, taunted our sense of superiority, ridiculed our big talk, dismissed all our claims, cornered, and drove us to drink and drugs, depressions and other mental ill-health problems. It affected us psychologically, socio-economically, environmentally, and so on. Yet humanity arose stronger thanks to the breakthroughs in science and technology.

It is true that just as people were brought together in these global crises, it also showed us our fault lines that need to be addressed practically. There are yet so many vulnerabilities that need to

be confronted. Primarily, the pandemic showed us that we have not learned much from our past mistakes. As we emerge out of its grip, we hope these lessons will not be forgotten. Such pandemics are predicted to recur because of our growing proximity to and greed in exterminating habitats of other species of animals and birds. We have been brash and irreverent in exploiting nature, without knowing the consequences. We hope at least those who survived and those who became orphans, widows, and widowers, will not forget and will also remind us of its horrors. We must include the heroic frontline workers in hospitals, nursing homes, research laboratories, etc., who carried on the unrelenting fight for us all.

Humanity needs to make peace with nature and live responsibly. Overconsumption, the degradation of the environment, the unwillingness to recycle because it does not make economic sense, the increase of our carbon footprints, the lack of care for future generations, nor for other life forms, these are some of the mistakes we are still making. We are

in a sixth mass extinction, according to experts, and we are not even aware of it. Destroy the habitats and life that abounds and those habitats will destroy us. It is the simple law of karma.

Are we really that bad and helpless? Far from it. We have been able to mobilize resources, to share knowledge, to establish alternate supply chains, to reach out where dangers were most prominent in homes and communities, and so on. We can work together. We must work together. We need an overarching philosophy that can complement and harmonize all our strengths and weaknesses, our aspirations and hopes, our struggles and sufferings, our knowledge and responsibilities, and yet be able to lead humanity to a higher ideal. This is where Vedanta, the ancient doctrine of the oneness of the universe and its divinization, comes in.



## Sri Ramakrishna Teaches

*God has made different religions to suit different aspirants, times, and countries. All doctrines are only so many paths; but a path is by no means God himself. Indeed, one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with whole-hearted devotion.... One may eat a cake with icing either straight or sidewise. It will taste sweet either way.*

*From the previous page*

its limitations on God. As human beings cannot think other than in human terms, the first projection of the human mind on God is a human personality—no matter how glorified. This is how the impersonal God appears to be a person to human beings. God appears to acquire a glorified human personality—but devoid of human limitations. At any given point in time a human being can exist occupying only the limited space that his or her body occupies, but God does not have that kind of limitation. God is omnipresent. A human being is limited in power, but God is omnipotent—all-powerful. A human being has only limited knowledge, but God is omniscient—all-knowing. Then again, some human beings who dearly love their fathers project fatherhood on God. Similarly, some human beings, such as the Hindus, who love their mothers dearly, project motherhood on God. To them God appears to be a loving mother—the Divine Mother. Hindus clearly understand that “God the Father” and “God the Mother” are one and the same God.

If you look at the blue sky through a pair of red eyeglasses, the sky will appear to be reddish. Then again, if you look at the same blue sky using a pair of green eyeglasses, the sky will look greenish. The blue sky does not change its color. The red or green color is projected on the blue sky by the viewer's red or green eyeglasses. The reddish sky and the greenish sky are not different from each other. They are one and the same blue sky.

Human minds are like so many pairs of different colored eyeglasses. Some minds may project fatherhood on God while other minds may project motherhood on God. Hindus look upon God as father, mother, friend, child, or even sweetheart, just in order to feel close to God using their feeling of love. At the same time, they are fully aware that these are only so many projections of their minds on the one and only God. The *Rigveda*, the most ancient scripture of Hinduism, teaches that God is one; only different sages call the same God by various names.



# HINDUISM—A VIBRANT RELIGION

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

One of my friends teased me saying, “Hinduism is a weak religion.”

I asked, “Why?”

He said, “In Hinduism, God has to incarnate again and again to reinforce the religion. But other religions have only one prophet or son of God.”

I humorously replied, “You see, God gets bored in heaven, so from time to time he descends to Earth to check on how his children are doing. Moreover, if he takes birth in other parts of the world, he might have had some difficulty. So, he comes to India, the safest place to be born. Indian people love gods and goddesses.”

Hinduism is vibrant for the following reasons:

1. No other religion has as many gods and goddesses as Hinduism. Other religions are *ekeswara-vadi* (believing in one God). Hindus have plenty of choices, although they believe that “Truth is one, sages call It by various names.”
2. There are many avatars, or incarnations of God, in Hinduism, such as Ramachandra, Krishna, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, and so on. *The Bhagavatam* lists various incarnations of Vishnu.
3. No religion has as many *munis* (sages), *rishis*, saints, illumined souls, and mystics as Hinduism. In the Hindu almanac, we can read lists of their appearance and disappearance.
4. No religion has as many holy places as Hinduism. *Punya tirtha Bharat*, Bharata (India) is the sacred land. This vast *aryavarta*, land of the Aryas—from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari and from Dwaraka to Kamakhya, is full of holy places. There are twelve *Jyotirlingas* and fiftyone *Shakti-pithas* (special symbols of Shiva), plus the avatars’

birthplaces and their playgrounds (*lila-bhumi*). The Himalayas and innumerable gorgeous temples have created a tremendous spiritual atmosphere throughout India.

5. Hindus worship rivers as the Divine Mother. The Sindhu, Ganga, and Brahmaputra originated from the Himalayas; their tributaries are the source of life in northern India. Similarly, the Narmada, Tapti, Godavari, Krishna, and Kaveri sustain life in southern India. The Aryan civilization and the *Sanatana Dharma*, eternal religion, mainly developed on the banks of these holy rivers of India.
6. No religion has as many scriptures (*Vedas, Puranas, Smritis, Tantras, Ramayana, Mahabharata*) and hymns to gods and goddesses as Hinduism.
7. No religion has as many monasteries, ashramas, *akharas*, and places for austerity as Hinduism.
8. There is a saying that Hindus have thirteen festivals in twelve months. No religion has as many religious festivals and birth celebrations for the avatars and saints as Hinduism. These festivals create joy, enthusiasm, and inspiration in the minds of the masses, and they feel religious fervor.
9. The practice of holding *melas* (fairs) and monastic gatherings is another characteristic of Hinduism. *Kumbha mela, Gangasagar mela, Jaydev mela, Ratha-Yatra* (chariot festival), *Dol Yatra, Mahashiva Ratri*, and hundreds of other religious activities in India make Hinduism vibrant.
10. Hinduism is the most ancient religion in the world. India is the birthplace of four major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. The word *Bharata*

is very significant: *Bha* means light; *rata* means immersed. India is known as *Bharata*, the country that is immersed in light, or god-consciousness.

11. Another glowing characteristic of Hinduism is “harmony of religions.” Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (4.11): “Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form, I reach him. All men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.” Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated this aspect of Hinduism in this age. First, he realized God in the Hindu traditions, and then he practised Islam and Christianity and experienced the same Truth. He then proclaimed: “As many faiths, so many paths.”

Who brought Hinduism to the West? Swami Vivekananda. He represented Hinduism at the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September 1893. Sister Nivedita remarked: “Of the Swami’s address before the Parliament of Religions, it may be said that when he began to speak it was of ‘the religious ideas of the Hindus,’ but when he ended, Hinduism had been created.”

The first Hindu temple in the West was established in San Francisco in 1906 by Swami Trigunatitananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. It is now a historical landmark.

I conclude with a Hindu prayer:

*May all be happy.*

*May all be free from diseases.*

*May all realize what is good.*

*May none be subject to misery.*





# THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DEATH

SWAMI ASHOKANANDA

*[This lecture was delivered in San Francisco by Swami Ashokananda on April 21, 1940. A transcription appeared in the March 14, 1945, issue of The Voice of India. The lecture has four parts and we will present Parts I and II here, with further parts appearing in future issues of Global Vedanta.]*

## PART I

I hope you do not consider death a subject too grim for discussion. Many refuse to think of death, arguing it is enough if they live their lives properly without asking what happens afterward. I think such avoidance of the thought of death is due partly to fear and partly to misunderstanding and ignorance.

As I have sometimes pointed out, we cannot understand life without knowing what death is and what lies beyond it. How can our birth, our life, and our actions in life have real significance unless they have a survival value? How can we be sure that we are not wasting our time and energy, unless we know that the fruits of our efforts on earth will have meaning and validity also in the other world, the world beyond death?

We must admit that life as we know it—bounded by birth and death—has no obvious meaning. Simply because we do things instinctively and find such doings interesting, does not mean our mode of living is real. It may well be that we are deluded. I am inclined to think that most of us are, for is it not true that we know very little, that our instinctive knowledge is extremely faulty? For thousands of years, we have perceived reality in a certain way. Now science points out that our perceptions and conclusions are wrong—things are not what they seem. Our understanding of life also may well be mistaken. There is little doubt that most of us are ignorant. Because we happen to be in the majority, it does not follow that our ideas are trustworthy. We must probe deeply into life in order to understand it, and one way

to deepen the understanding of life is to understand death.

At the present time there is a great interest in postmortem phenomena. Spiritualism admits the existence of the soul and makes great effort to find what happens to it after death. As a result there are many stories of after-death existence. Some departed souls are said to establish direct contact with their loved ones on earth; others try, it is said, to reach them through mediums or to communicate with them by means of automatic writing. Even when such contacts and communications are genuine, the satisfaction derived from them is never permanent, and the benefit derived from them is doubtful. Besides, the chance of deception, especially of self-deception, is great.

Consider automatic writing, for instance. The claim is made that even living persons can inspire it. I remember a tragic case of three brothers who indulged in automatic writing. All were well-educated. The youngest was a brilliant student of mathematics, and the other two were lawyers. These young men composed many philosophical essays which they believed were really written through their hands by a great philosopher who lived about five hundred miles from their city. After some time one of the young men thought he received initiation from the sage through the same medium, automatic writing. Finally, the brothers made a journey to the place where he lived, and upon arrival asked to see him, saying that one of them was his disciple. The sage replied that he did not know them and had not given initiation to any of them. When the brothers replied that they had been the medium through which he had written voluminously, he denied that he had done so and refused all responsibility for the writings. The brothers returned home disappointed and disillusioned.

In this talk I shall not concern myself with the kind of life departed souls live, nor

even with the possibility of their communicating, either directly or indirectly, with relatives left on earth. The significance of death can no more be learned by conversing with spirits than an understanding of life can be acquired by conversing with average persons. How few comprehend the true significance of life! How many merely float on its surface! As the living may miss the meaning of life, so the departed may miss the meaning of death.

## PART II

Various explanations are given of death. Materialists say that matter is the only substance, mind being merely a subtle form of matter. The physiologist explains that when the heart ceases to beat, the blood no longer assimilates the oxygen which the cells composing the vital organs need for their functions. Being deprived of it, the machinery of life fails, the cells die in masses, and the organs begin to disintegrate. This is of course a purely physical interpretation of death, and I shall not discuss it further. If it represented the meaning of death, it would also represent the meaning of life, and there would be no moral obligations, sense of duty, search for knowledge, or any other value in our existence here. We would be merely passing time. But even in saying this, we are assuming a “we” who would be passing time! If man is but an aggregate of organs made of cells, he is not a unitary being but a composite thing. In that case discussion of death, as of life, is not only meaningless but impossible.

There are those who are not materialists yet deny the existence of the soul. I am speaking of the Buddhists. They affirm the continuity of existence, not because of the immortality of the soul but because of the persistence of karma. They say that all actions leave impressions on the mind and that such impressions do not die with the death of the body but build up, time and time again, other conscious organisms with

physical and mental components. This process is said to form the continuity of existence. Is it not better to assume the continuity of soul rather than the continuity of karma as the most essential element in man?

Let us forget the materialistic and the Buddhistic views and hold to the proposition that the soul exists, that the soul is immortal, and that it dwells within the body and the mind. Vedanta maintains that the soul is clothed with three bodies: the causal body, the subtle body, and the physical body. It is the conclusion of our philosophers that the mind does not die with the death of the physical body, but that the soul departs intact with the two inner bodies, the subtle (the lower mind) and the causal (the higher mind). Therefore, the impressions made upon the mind during life remain with the soul, and only the physical body is left behind.

Death has two phases: it appears differently to the living and to the dying. When we think of death, we, the living, generally form an extraneous picture of it; we think of its objective phase. We observe that the dying person loses consciousness, that he is unable to see, hear, or speak with normal clarity, and that he breathes with great difficulty. Sometimes he appears to suffer terrible agony at the time of passing. All bodily processes stop—the breath goes out—and we say that the soul has departed, that the man has died.

In regard to the subjective phase of death, that is, death as it is experienced by the dying rather than as observed by the living, we are told that as a spiritually undeveloped soul separates from the body, it feels all the shock and agony such separation implies, whereas when a spiritually developed soul departs, its passing is easy and smooth, and there is no attendant agony.

Even when the dying man appears outwardly unconscious, he is inwardly conscious and experiences the transition from life to afterlife. At the dying moment his whole past life is said to pass before him as a quickly moving panorama, and certain tendencies and characteristics of his life begin to assume prepotency. Colored and influenced by them, he departs, and the na-

ture of the departure is determined by these predominant tendencies and characteristics. If they are good, the passing is pleasant; if not, it is unpleasant.

When a soul struggles hard and suffers great agony because it resists separation from the body and the world, on passing it appears stunned by the blow of death, and it requires some time to recover alertness. Even when full consciousness returns, it is not immediately able to determine its course. It drifts for a while, and only later is it able to find its way to a suitable plane of existence.

What do you think makes the soul resist separation from the body and the world, with the result that death means agony and struggle? Suppose I have lived in a certain place for fifteen or twenty years, that I have developed countless interests there, and that I have become fond of my neighbors. Suppose I am forced to leave that place at a moment's notice—what a stunning blow it will be to me finding myself torn away from all I knew and loved; I shall suffer greatly. Death is that kind of separation, and to those who have been much attached to life it is certainly painful.

As long as we enjoy life, we shall be attached to it; so some philosophers say it is kind of the Lord to visit men with illness in their last days, for, without a period of suffering before death, their clinging to life will not relax. If I suffer a lengthy illness, I shall no longer enjoy the things which gave pleasure in health. You may tell me of a beautiful play that has come to town or of a new book, but they will not interest me. During a protracted illness everything loses flavor, we grow disappointed with earthly life, and our mind is gradually prepared to withdraw. Even when it does not become consciously ready to do so, the pain of separation is much less acute than when death comes suddenly. Accidental death is therefore considered undesirable.

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of people: one kind is prepared for death and the other is not. As we have seen, those who have become detached from the world pass away easily and painlessly when the hour of death comes, while those who

are attached to the world die in an agony which persists after death.

Many console themselves with the belief that however painful dying may prove, endless happiness will be theirs after death. They think they will be reunited with the loved ones who have gone before. Do not picture death so sentimentally. Let us forget the fairytale stories we were taught in childhood—we adults should be able to think more realistically. Do you consider the prospect of an endless family reunion after death so desirable? Love we should have, but it becomes unbearable if we do not, at the same time, feel independent. Whenever affection becomes a bondage, it is unendurable. Even here, if our family members cling together every moment of the day, do we not find it intolerable? Family reunions are all very well on Thanksgiving and Christmas, but we could not stand them throughout eternity. Is there any reason for thinking God has so arranged things that after death we shall be compelled to suffer the eternal bondage of eternal family relationships?

Many doubtless believe that we become so perfect after death that life in the other world is ideal and not tiresome. But what is your idea of perfection? If you are perfect, can you have all kinds of relationships, cravings, and attachments? These are possible only in imperfection. Family relationships arise out of necessity from our limited being, because we are dependent upon others for the fulfillment of our desires. When we are perfect and therefore complete in ourselves, we do not need father, mother, son, daughter, friends, and the like. Relationships then become meaningless. The perfect being can not be related; only in imperfection is relationship possible.

Consider the implications of childhood beliefs concerning death, and you will understand how irrational they are. The idea that after death we continue the earthly existence in an idealized form has no validity. Death rudely snatches us away, and this sudden departure is indeed very painful unless we have prepared ourselves for death even while living.







All five drawings in this section are by Charles Mathias.

## How to Solve a Country's Problems

A small country's economy is in a bad way, inflation is getting higher, and immigrants are flooding in from all over the world. Problems, problems, problems, but what should they do? So the governing body holds a special session to come up with a solution.

After several hours of talk without progress, one member stands up and says, "Quiet everyone, I've got it; I've got the solution to all our problems. We'll declare war on the United States."

Everyone starts shouting at once. "You're nuts! That's crazy!"

"Hear me out!" says the member. "We declare war. We lose. The United States does what it always does when it defeats a country. The US rebuilds everything: our highways, airports, shipping ports, schools, hospitals, factories, and loans us money, and sends us food aid. Our troubles will be over!"

Another member yells out, "Sure, but what if we win?!"



Apologies to "The Mouse that Roared."

## The Restaurant Order

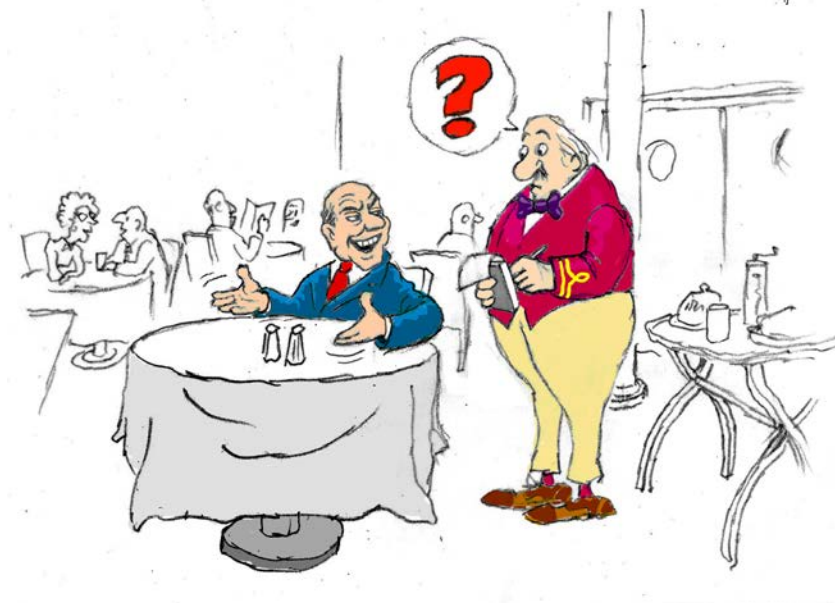
Jack went to a special restaurant near his house and the headwaiter came over and greeted him with a smile.

"Good morning, sir, may I take your order?" the waiter asked.

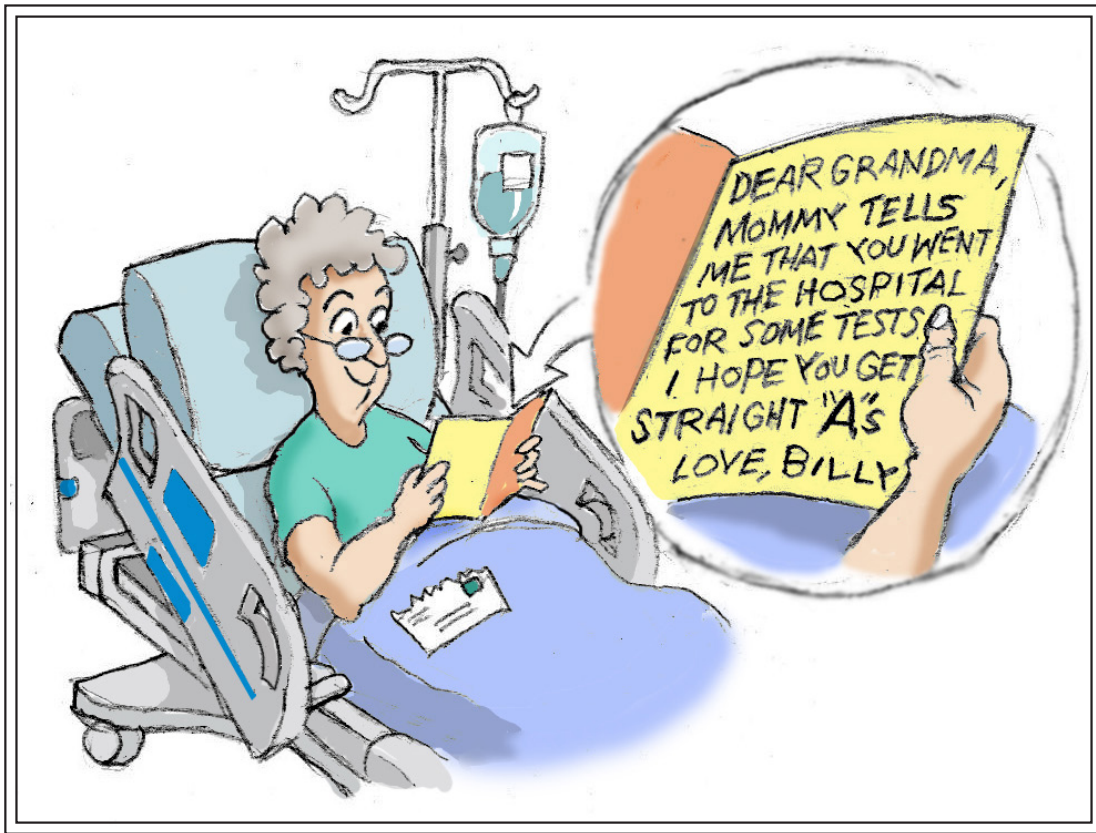
"Yes," replied Jack. "I'd like two boiled eggs, one of them so undercooked it's runny, and the other so overcooked it's tough and hard to eat. Also, a steak that has been left out, so that it gets a bit on the cold side, burnt toast that crumbles away as soon as you touch it with a knife, butter straight from the deep freeze so that it's impossible to spread, and a pot of very weak coffee, lukewarm."

"That's a complicated order sir," said the bewildered waiter. "It might be quite difficult."

Jack replied, "Oh? I don't understand why it should—that's what I got here yesterday!"







### The Staycation

Mike decided that instead of going away on a vacation he would stay at home and just relax—a “staycation.” And Mike was really taking his mandate seriously by doing as little as possible.

Mike ignored his wife’s not-so-subtle hints about completing certain jobs around the house, but he didn’t realize how much this bothered her until the clothes dryer refused to work, the iron shorted, and the sewing machine motor burned out in the middle of a seam. The final straw came when his wife plugged in the vacuum cleaner and nothing happened.

She looked so stricken that Mike offered some consolation.

“That’s okay, honey,” Mike said. “You still have me.”

She looked up at Mike with tears in her eyes. “Yes,” she wailed, “but you don’t work either!”



### A New Hire

Bill, owner of Bill’s Groceries, decided to do his friend Herb a favor and hire his grandson David, fresh out of college, to work in the grocery store. David reported for his first day of work and Bill greeted him with a warm handshake and a smile, gave him a broom, and said, “Your first job will be to sweep out the store.”

“But I’m a college graduate,” David replied indignantly.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t know that,” said Bill. “Here, give me the broom—I’ll show you how.”

*Humor continued on next page*

## The Phone Call

Mary, very upset, sprang to the phone when it rang and listened with relief to the kindly voice.

"Darling, how are you? This is Momma."

"Oh, Momma," she said, "I'm having a bad day." Breaking into bitter tears, she continued, "The baby won't eat and the washing machine broke down. I haven't had a chance to go shopping, and, besides, I've just sprained my ankle and I have to hobble around. On top of that, the house is a mess and I'm supposed to have people over for dinner tonight."

The voice on the other end said in sympathy, "Darling, let Momma handle it." She continued, "Sit down, relax, and close your eyes. I'll be over in half an hour. I'll do your shopping, clean up the house, and cook your dinner for you. I'll feed the baby and I'll call a repairman I know who'll be at your house to fix the washing machine promptly. Now stop crying. I'll do everything. In fact, I'll even call your husband, Bill, at the office and tell him he ought to come home and help out for once."

"Bill?" said Mary. "Who's Bill?"

"Why, Bill's your husband!...Is this 223-1374?"

"No, this is 223-1375."

"Oh, I'm sorry. I guess I have the wrong number."

There was a short pause, then Mary said, "Does this mean you're not coming?"

## The Fiancé

A young woman brings home her fiancé to meet her parents. After dinner, her mother tells her father to find out about the young man. The father invites the fiancé to his study for a drink.

"So, what are your plans?" the father asks the young man.

"I am a Torah scholar," he replies.

"A Torah scholar. Hmm," the father says. "Admirable, but what will you do to provide a nice house for my daughter to live in, as she's accustomed to?"

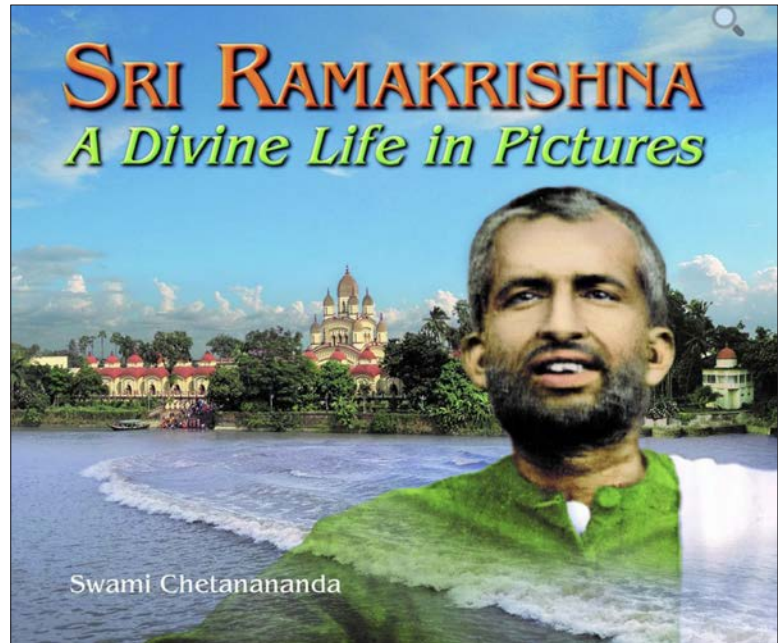
"I will study," the young man replies, "and God will provide for us."

"And how will you buy her a beautiful engagement ring, such as she deserves?" asks the father.

"I will concentrate on my studies," the young man replies. "God will provide for us."



## NEW BOOK RELEASE



Author: Swami Chetanananda

ISBN: 978-0-916356-11-8

232 pages, hardcover, 13 chapters with preface, additional material, and references. Dim: w 11.5 in x h 9.75 in.

Price: USD 39.95

Publisher: Vedanta Society of St. Louis.

*From the back cover:*

Join us on a pictorial journey tracing the spiritual footsteps of Ramakrishna through rural Bengal to British Calcutta and into the sacred precincts of the Dakshineswar temple garden. Using a wide variety of archival prints and photographs from the nineteenth century up to the present, Swami Chetanananda follows Ramakrishna from his birth in 1836 to his passing away in 1886.

Ramakrishna's life and message and his divine play with his disciples and

devotees are vivid and living in these 639 images. These rare and evocative images will help readers to meditate on him with open eyes.

"Ramakrishna came to teach the religion of today, constructive, not destructive. He had to go afresh to Nature to ask for facts, and he got scientific religion which never says 'believe,' but 'see'; 'I see, and you too can see.'" —Swami Vivekananda.

*[Editor's comment: This book is beautifully put together. The reproduction of many 150-year-old photos on its high quality semigloss paper turned out superbly and offer delight to the heart and mind. Keep this book handy for visitors to your home. Indeed, anyone who picks it up and starts perusing the photos and reading the explanatory text will find it difficult to put down.]*



"And children?" asks the father. "How will you support the children?"

"Don't worry, sir. God will provide," replies the fiancé.

The conversation proceeds like this, and each time the father questions, the young idealist insists that God will provide.

Later that evening the mother asks,

"How did it go, honey?"

The father answers, "He has no job and no plans, but the good news is he thinks I'm God."



[At the request of Swami Suvirananda, general secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, we are pleased to provide our readers with the following synopsis of the report for the 112th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission.—ed.]

The 112th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at Belur Math on Sunday, 20th Feb 2022, at 3.30 p.m. The Report of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission on the working of the association during the FY 2020-21 was presented in the meeting. A synopsis of the report is given hereunder:

### **Awards & Recognitions:**

The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), Ministry of Education, Government of India has announced good positions in the ranking list for the year 2020 to our following four arts & science colleges: the college under Saradapitha (Belur) centre—7<sup>th</sup> rank, under Rahara (Kolkata) centre - 11<sup>th</sup> rank, under Narendrapur (Kolkata) centre - 20<sup>th</sup> rank and under Coimbatore Mission centre - 65<sup>th</sup> rank.

The high school of Bhubaneswar centre and the higher secondary school of Malda (West Bengal) centre won the Best School Award and each received a cash prize of Rs.1,00,000/- and a citation from the respective State Government.

The School Education Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, presented the Best School Award to the primary school of Chennai Math.

The molecular laboratory of Vrindavan centre's hospital received a certificate of accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).

Karimganj (Assam) centre was presented *Chief Minister's Best Community Action Award for Development*.

### **New Branch Centres:**

New branch centres of the Ramakrishna Mission were started at Ajmer in Rajasthan, and at Raiganj in Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal.

Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaleswar, which was functioning as a sub-centre of Viveknagar Ashrama, Agartala, was made a full-fledged branch centre.

A sub-centre of Ramharipur Ashrama was started at Amarkan, Bankura Dt., WB.

A new branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math was started at Bolpur, Birbhum Dt., WB.

A sub-centre of the Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, was started at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

### **New Developments:**

Chennai Students' Home distributed 630 tablet PCs, with necessary software installed, to the students of its residential high school and polytechnic college, thus enabling them to attend classes online in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Coimbatore Mission Vidyalaya's cultural centre launched an online programme entitled "Iyal, Isai, Nadagam" with the objective of transmitting to the youth the noble ideals of Indian culture, tradition and spirituality through a variety of programmes.

RKMVERI (Deemed to be University), Belur, started a new course viz., M.Sc. in Medical Biotechnology (MdBt) at its Kolkata-Narendrapur off-campus centre and established a Pathology Laboratory, Molecular Biology & Quality/control Laboratory at its Ranchi off-campus centre.

Rourkela centre introduced *Jnana Yatra*, a mobile audio-visual unit, for conducting online tutorial classes, motivational camps and values education classes.

Shillong centre launched a trilingual online magazine in Khasi, English and Hindi languages, entitled '*Ka Jingshai*—The Light'.

### **Educational Work:**

The Mission and the Math rendered educational services to a total of 2,31,868 students through its 539 schools & colleges and 1056 non-formal education centres incurring a total expenditure of Rs. 451.78 crore.

### **Medical Work:**

The Mission and the Math treated 72,382 inpatients through 14 hospitals and 31,90,265 outpatients through 123 dispensaries, 44 mobile medical units and 356 medical camps. Through 7 Nurse Training Centres 776 students were trained and through two Medical Research Institutes, 168 students undertook research work. A total of Rs. 262.11 crore was spent for the entire medical work.

### **Relief & Rehabilitation Work:**

The Mission and the Math undertook the following relief and rehabilitation services incurring a total expenditure of Rs. 34.20 crore benefitting 33.11 lakh people:

#### ***Covid-19 Relief:***

A total of 4,51,476 families were benefitted.

The headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission and its 127 branch centres spread over 26 states/union territories in India distributed



dry ration kits, vegetables, fruits, packets of snacks, water bottles, face masks, hand sanitizer bottles, bars of soap, washing powder, garments, and served cooked food.

Dedicated Covid wards were set up by our hospital centres at Lucknow and Vrindavan.

Kankhal, Haridwar hospital started a flu clinic.

Cyclone Relief: Nisarga (Gujarat), Nivar and Burevi (TN) and Amphan (WB)

Fire Relief

Flood Relief

General Distress Relief

Gangasagar Mela Relief

Winter Relief

Economic Rehabilitation

Cyclone Rehabilitation

Cyclone Bulbul: Belgharia (Kolkata) centre built two-storied hostel-cum storm-shelter-house, bore a submersible pump and handed over 26 two room houses to the afflicted families at G Plot, Sundarban, South-24 Parganas Dt., West Bengal.

Cyclone Amphan: The following three branch centres provided construction materials to a total of 230 families for renovation/repair of damaged houses:

Contai, Dt. Purba Medinipur, West Bengal

Manasadwip, Dt. South-24 Parganas, West Bengal

Taki, Dt. North-24 Parganas, West Bengal

#### **Rural & Tribal Work:**

The Mission and the Math extended rural & tribal services in the fields of (a) Community Development, (b) Medical, (c) Educational, and (d) General Welfare. A total amount of Rs.71.62 crore was spent and about 33.95 lakh people were benefitted.

#### **General Welfare Work:**

The Mission and the Math undertook general welfare work by way of providing (a) dry ration kits, (b) hygienic kits, (c) educational kits, (d) clothes & blankets, (e) tri-cycles, (f) sewing machines, (g) cooked food, (h) educational scholarships and (i) pecuniary help to needy people. Expenditure incurred was Rs. 21.30 crore, which benefitted 27.61 lakh people.

#### **Preaching & Publication Work:**

The Mission and the Math conducted 8,387 classes/ lectures on human values, which were attended by a total of 16,63,263 people. Through 127 public libraries, 1,38,300 people derived benefit. The publication houses brought out 80 new titles and 589 reprints; 16 periodicals in 13 languages with 2,19,697 subscribers. A total amount Rs. 10.35 crore was incurred in publication work.

#### **Activities outside India:**

Five Vedanta centres located in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Perth in Australia were officially recognized as sub-centres or chapters of Vedanta Centre of Sydney, Australia, under whose guidance they have been functioning for some years.

Mymensingh (Bangladesh) centre started an orphanage named Vivekananda Anath Ashrama at Durgapur in Greater Mymensingh district with ten tribal children.

Portland, Oregon, USA, acquired a 169-acre plot of land adjacent to its retreat centre in Scappoose, Oregon.

Centres in Bangladesh, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Zambia rendered Covid-19 relief services by distribution of dry ration kits, cooked food, bars of soap, bottles of hand wash, detergent powder, face masks, hand gloves, personal protective kits and served cooked food to the needy people.

All 65 centres spread over in 23 countries across the world rendered various medical, educational, cultural, welfare, moral and spiritual services.

We take this opportunity to thank our members, well-wishers and devotees for their invaluable support and cooperation in carrying forward the service programmes of the Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math.

*Suvirananda*

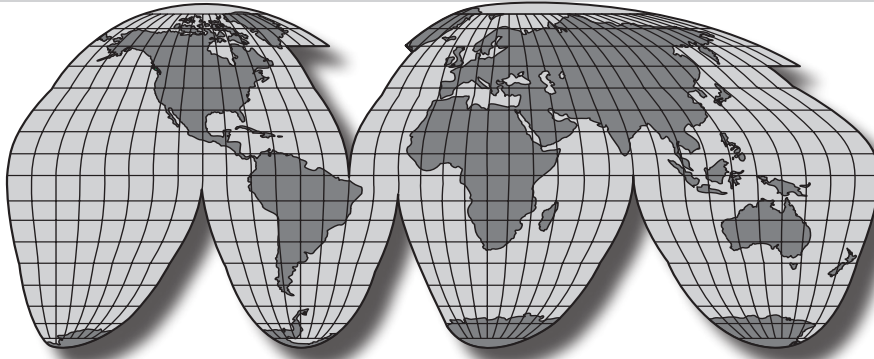
(Swami Suvirananda)

General Secretary

Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission

20 February 2022

# VEDANTA NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



## MALAYSIA

The Ramakrishna Mission of Malaysia dedicates Panchavati—Temple of Meditation, in Ramakrishna Mission, Selangor, Malaysia. The dedication ceremony of this new building, Panchavati, was held on the auspicious occasion of Sri Ramanavami, 10 April 2022. Panchavati—Temple of Meditation, with a shrine of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda is eco-friendly.

Stamped with simplicity, yet it has a distinctive architectural elegance that brings a feeling of vastness and expansion to one's mind. The octagonal walls are built of clay ventilation bricks providing air and light, while the black granite flooring with its cooling effect creates a conducive atmosphere for meditation.



From top: Close-up of the shrine with its beautiful wood carvings; a view of the exterior of the Panchavati; and the interior providing the mind with a sense of expansiveness

## UNITED STATES

The Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago inaugurated the “Home of Harmony,” an extension of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago. May 21, 2022, marked the beginning of a new initiative of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago—the Home of Harmony. On that august occasion, in the presence of monks of the Ramakrishna Order and representatives of all major world religions, including other Hindu traditions, the Vedanta Society unfurled the tallest statue of Sri Ramakrishna which measures twelve-feet in height, installed on a six-foot-high pedestal.

The Home of Harmony ushers in a vision and charter of fraternity across the boundaries of faith and culture. It is located at 3801 N Keeler Ave in the northern part of Chicago. The inaugura-



Monks sing joyously at the inauguration of the Home of Harmony below the unique statue of Sri Ramakrishna

tion ceremony on May 21 began with a procession/peace walk at 10:30 a.m., led by a banner that said “Come, Let Us



Make This World a Heaven.” In the midst of bell chimes and joyful smiles, the group of thirteen Ramakrishna Order monks accompanied by ten representatives of world religions and numerous devotees and admirers peacefully marched ahead towards the Home of Harmony building. They were welcomed at the building with ten strokes of a bell reminding everyone of the strokes that struck during the historic inauguration of the World’s Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893.



Ramakrishna Order monks and other religious leaders pose for pictures at the inauguration of the Home of Harmony. The substantial brick building was once a Christian church.

Through various talks, the monks of the Ramakrishna Order provided a profound bouquet of insights on the facets of harmony in Hinduism.

The program concluded with a vote of thanks from Swami Varadananda of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, and the showing of a documentary, “Swami Vivekananda—the Bridge Between the East and the West,” accompanied by a sumptuous complimentary lunch for everyone.

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York opens its Summer Retreat at Thousand Island Park for a brief period. After being closed for two years, the Center’s summer retreat at the Vivekananda Cottage in Thousand Island Park will again be available for visitors for a modified period from July 15 to August 5, 2022. Visitors will be required to show proof of vaccination and wear masks.



Vivekananda Cottage at Thousand Island Park

Further, at the Society’s home in New York, the celebration of Lord Buddha’s birthday was held on May 15, 2022.



Swami Yuktatmananda addressing the congregation at the celebration of Lord Buddha’s birth

The Vedanta Society of Northern California held the Shanti Ashrama Celebration on Saturday on April 30, 2022. After a delay of two years, caused by the coronavirus, the society was again able, this year, with swamis from the Berkeley and Sacramento Vedanta Societies also in



attendance, to hold its annual gathering at Shanti Ashrama. The program, consisted of formal worship, devotional music, flower offerings, scripture readings, and tours to holy spots around the Shanti Ashrama. The program attracted a large number of devotees from different parts of the country.



Formal worship at Shanti Ashrama



Participants at the Shanti Ashrama event



Meditation cabin at Shanti Ashrama, built under the direction of Swami Turiyananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna

## CANADA

Vivekananda Vedanta Society of British Columbia celebrated Ramnavami, the Birthday of Sri Ramachandra, on April 10, 2022. It consisted of a talk, devotional songs, and arati. About 20 devotees attended.



Swami Vimohananda performing worship of Sri Rama in Vancouver, BC

### Note to Vedanta Centers Around the World:

Your news items are welcome and encouraged.  
You may submit them by email to: [global@vedanta-seattle.org](mailto:global@vedanta-seattle.org)  
For more effective news coverage, please attach one or two high resolution, clearly labeled pictures to your email message.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Swami Ashokananda** (1893–1969), a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, was head of the Vedanta Society of Northern California in San Francisco from 1932 to 1969.



**Swami Bhaskarananda**, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, is founder of *Global Vedanta* and, since 1974, head of the Vedanta Society of Western Washington, Seattle.



**Swami Chetananda** is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and head of the Vedanta Society of St. Louis. He is the author, editor, and translator of many books on Vedanta and related topics.



**Charles Mathias** is a devotee and member of the board of directors of the Vedanta Society, Seattle, and a gifted cartoonist and artist. The cartoons contained in this issue of *Global Vedanta* are his contributions.



**Swami Satyamayananda** is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. He has been assigned to the Vedanta Society of Western Washington as assistant swami-in-charge. He also serves as editor-in-chief of *Global Vedanta*.



### Sri Sarada Devi's Famous Saying

*I tell you one thing. If you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others. Rather learn to see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; this whole world is your own.*