



Reach

Oz Mountain, Gunnedah, NSW

SAYINGS AND TEACHINGS

Sri Ramakrishna on Seeking God

One can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope; so too, diverse are the ways of approaching God and each religion in the world shows one of the ways.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 5.

Sri Sarada Devi on Money

Always remember Sri Ramakrishna's saying that money is at the root of all the disasters you see in the world. Money can lure one's mind into other temptations. Beware.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 22.

Swami Vivekananda on the uplift of Women and Masses

The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses must come first, and then only can any real good come about for the country, for India.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 39.

IN THIS ISSUE

1. News from Australian Centres

- ◆ Adelaide
- ◆ Brisbane
- ◆ Canberra
- ◆ Melbourne
- ◆ Perth
- ◆ Sydney

2. Karma Yoga: Freedom? (From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*)

3. From the Devotees: Celebration of the Centenary of Swami Vivekananda's Temple and Swami Brahmananda's Temple at Belur Math

We welcome you all to the Vedanta Movement in Australia, as epitomized in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, and invite you to involve yourselves and actively participate in the propagation of the Universal Message of Vedanta.

1. NEWS FROM AUSTRALIAN CENTRES 12 DECEMBER 2023 TO 12 MARCH 2024

ADELAIDE

16 East Terrace, Kensington Gardens, SA 5068

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Daily Activities

- The Centre functioned from 7.30am-12.30pm and 4.00pm-8.00pm. The evening vesper service to Sri Ramakrishna was performed from 7.00-7.30 pm followed by bhajans, devotional reading and meditation.

Regular Activities

- Swami Manyananda conducted a class on the *Vedanta Sara* or 'Fundamentals of Vedanta' every Wednesday from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon.
- Swami Manyananda also conducted classes on the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* on Sundays from 11:00 am.
- Every alternate Saturday, Swami Manyananda conducted a reading and discussion on *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* before the evening *aratrikam*.
- On Sundays Swami Manyananda conducted classes on the *Vivekachudamani* from 5:30 to 6:30 pm.
- Bala Sangha or spiritual classes for children began on 30 July 2023. It is held on Sundays from 4 to 5 pm. It is conducted by Swami Manyananda, volunteers and includes mantra chanting, meditation, yoga, singing, reading from spiritual books, value-based lessons and arts and crafts. The programme concludes with refreshments.

Celebrations

- The Christmas Eve programme started with *aratrikam*, followed by the singing of Christmas Carols, a talk on 'The Significance of Christmas Eve in the Ramakrishna Movement' by Swami Manyananda, and prasada distribution.



Sri Sarada Devi's Birth Anniversary

- The birth anniversary of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi (1853-1920) was celebrated on 3 January 2024. The morning program included Vedic chanting and bhajans, special puja, pushpanjali and prasada. The evening program included *aratrikam*, bhajans, a talk on Sri Sarada Devi by Swami Manyananda, pushpanjali and prasada.
- Swami Vivekananda's (1863-1902) birth anniversary was celebrated on 2 February 2024. The morning program started with Vedic chanting, bhajans and special puja. This was followed by homa, *aratrikam*, pushpanjali and prasada. The evening programme included *aratrikam*, a talk on Swami Vivekananda by



Swami Vivekananda's Birth Anniversary

Swami Manyananda, bhajans, pushpanjali and prasada.

- Shivaratri was celebrated on Tuesday, 8 March 2024. The evening program started with aratrikam, followed by a special puja of Lord Siva accompanied by chanting and bhajans, worship of the Siva Lingam by the devotees, and distribution of prasad.

BRISBANE

96 Vedanta Drive, (next to 2 Poppy Crescent),
Springfield Lakes, QLD 4300

Email: info@vedantabrisbane.org

Contact: Swami Atmeshananda (07) 3818 9986

URL: <http://vedantabrisbane.org>

Daily Activities

- Daily meditation and the chanting of hymns were conducted between 6:15 am and 7:15 am.
- Aratrikam, bhajans, and readings from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* were held between 6:30 pm and 7:15 pm.

Regular Activities

- Sunday mornings:- (a) Yoga class from 7:45 am to 9:15 am. (b) *Srimad-Bhagavad Gitā* Class (10:00 am—11:00 am). (c) Bala sangha or children's classes and Yuva sangha (10:00 am—11:00 am during school term). (d) Hindi language classes fortnightly from 11:15 am to 12:30 pm.
- A class on the *Brahma Sutras* was conducted on Tuesdays from 11 am to 12 noon. In the evening, Yoga classes were conducted from 6:30 to 7:45 pm.
- A monthly satsang was held at Sunnybank Hills on the first Monday of every month at 19, Scribbly Gum Street.
- On Thursdays, every fortnight, there is a study of the *Viveka Chudamani*, online, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. organized by Shakti Global, Gold

Coast.

- A monthly satsang was held at the Centre on the 3rd Sunday of each month. The programme consists of chanting, bhajans, a talk on a special subject and serving of lunch prasad.
- A reading from the lives of the direct monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna was conducted on their birth anniversaries after the evening aratrikam.
- Chanting of the *Sri Ramanama Sanskirtanam* was held fortnightly at the Centre on ekadashi days (7:00 pm — 8:00 pm).
- Devotees took turns in decorating and worshipping Sri Ramakrishna's image every week at the Sri Selva Vinayakar temple, South Maclean, Qld.
- Swami Atmeshananda conducted *Vivekachudamani* classes for the Vedanta Group at Toowoomba on the first Wednesday of every month at the Toowoomba Council Library .
- A class on the *Ashtavakra Gita* was conducted at 101 Sharpless Drive, Springfield Lakes, on a fixed day of the month.
- Monthly, the Vedanta group on the Gold Coast studied the *Bhagavad Gita* from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm
- Sri Abhinaya Barathalaayam conducted classical Indian Bharatanatyam dance lessons every Wednesday evening in the community hall, Vedanta Centre. Some other dance and music schools also used the facilities to conduct classes and concerts.
- The Centre facilitates the granting of No Interest Loans (NILS) for people who need emergency help towards payment of white goods, vehicle repairs and similar expenses. A maximum of \$2000 is given out as loan for persons who fulfil the criteria. This is an initiative by the Good Shepherd Charities in conjunction with the National Australia Bank. Mr. Ron Mitchell and Mrs. Ferdous Mitchell volunteered at our Centre on Wednesdays to run this service. This is an ongoing activity.
- A meditation class, moderated by Sunjoy Ingle, began on 6 August 2023. It is being held from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm on alternate Mondays.
- On Fridays, the Centre's volunteers cooked food at the Centre's soup kitchen for the needy. An average of 300 meals per week is

packed into containers and frozen. They are distributed free of cost through the Westside Community Centre and Serving Our People (SOP). Many needy people come to the Centre and avail themselves of the free meals as well.

- Every Friday the Centre's food bank distributed groceries to the needy. An average of 12 families receive grocery hampers along with cooked food and free bread. The Centre purchases the groceries from Food Bank Queensland and local grocers. Generous donations are also made for the purpose by the public and some organizations. The Centre invites donations from devotees/public to serve the needy. This can be done by making a donation on a specific day, for example on the birthday or some other important day in their lives.
- The Maa Sarada's kitchen prepares and sells food at a reasonable cost to people on Saturdays. On an average, about 120 persons avail themselves of this service. The kitchen is efficiently managed by volunteers.
- On Fridays, a Justice of the Peace (JP) renders service at the Centre from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm People needing the service access this free service.

Celebrations

- Christmas Eve was celebrated with prayers and worship of Jesus Christ. The Bible was also read and prasada distributed to the devotees.
- Kalpataru Day was celebrated on 1 January, 2024. On this day we also celebrated the public celebration of Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi's (1853-1920) birth anniversary with worship, homa, bhajans, a talk on Holy Mother and prasada distribution.
- Swami Vivekananda's (1863-1902) birth anniversary according to Hindu calendar (tithi puja) was conducted on 2 February, 2024 by performance of puja. The public celebrations of Swami Vivekananda's birthday took place on 4 February, 2024. On this day, there was special worship followed by homa, talk and prasada distribution.



Swami Vivekananda's Birth Anniversary



Shivaratri in the Brisbane Ashrama

- Shivaratri worship was performed on 8 March, 2024. Devotees participated in the worship and devotional music and classical dance were performed as part of the celebrations.

Other Activities

- A 'volunteer appreciation day' programme was held on 17 December 2023. On this day, 65 volunteers were felicitated for their dedication. The programme consisted of meditation, prayer, a short talk by Swami Atmeshananda thanking everyone, followed by a lunch.
- Swami Atmeshananda and Dr. Nandini Siva (a volunteer) were invited by the BrisAsia Festival to participate in a session about 'Asian food'. BrisAsia festival is an annual event organized by the Brisbane City Council which showcases contemporary and traditional Asian arts and cultural events, programs and food display. On this occasion, Swami Atmeshananda



The Volunteer Function in the Brisbane Ashrama



*Swami Atmeshananda and Nandini Siva at the
BrisAsia Festival*

da led the audience through a guided meditation, followed by a panel discussion about Indian food in which Dr. Nandini Siva participated.

- Mrs. Usha Gokul represented our Centre at a luncheon meeting in honour of International Women's Day to celebrate and recognize the remarkable achievements and contributions of women worldwide. This was held at Brookwater Golf and Country Club on Thursday, 7 March 2024

Forthcoming Programmes

- Sri Rama Navami will be celebrated on 17 April 2024
- Sri Sankaracharya's birth anniversary will be celebrated on 12 May 2024.



Milton Dick (centre) Speaker of the House of Representatives and others at the Luncheon

- Buddha Purnima will be celebrated on 23 May 2024

CANBERRA

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Regular Activities

- On account of the Covid 19 pandemic the *Bhagavad Gita* classes have been suspended temporarily. They will resume some time in the future.

MELBOURNE

5-7 Angus Ave, Ringwood East, VIC 3135

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Contact: Swami Sunishthananda (03) 8684 9594

URL <http://www.vedantamelbourne.org>

Regular Activities

- Aratrikam, bhajans, readings from the Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda literature, and meditation were conducted between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm daily.
- A scriptural class on Sundays from 10:00 am to 11:00 am on the *Bhagavad Gita* by Swami Sunishthananda.
- A guided meditation session was conducted

by Swami Sunishthananda on Sundays from 9:30 am to 10:00 am.

- A class on *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* on the second and fourth Thursday from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm by Swami Sunishthananda.
- A *Vivekachudamani* class was conducted by Swami Sunishthananda on the first, third and fifth Thursdays from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm.
- Swami Sunishthananda also conducted a class on the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* on the 1st Saturday of every month at 6 St Patrick's Pl, Tarneit, Victoria.

Celebrations

- Christmas Eve was observed at the Centre and the programme included evening prayers, offerings, singing of Carols and a talk on life



Christmas Eve in the Melbourne Ashrama

and teachings of Jesus Christ. Devotees shared prasadam after the event.

- Kalpataru Day was observed on 1 January, 2024. The program included chanting, singing, and reading from 'Sri Ramakrishna and His Divine Play'. Devotees shared prasadam after the



Kalpataru Day in the Melbourne Ashrama

event.

- The birth anniversary of Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi (1853-1920) was celebrated on 7 January, 2024, . The programme included special worship, homa and bhajans. Devotees shared prasadam after the event. In the evening after the aratrikam, Swami Sunishthananda delivered a talk on the life and teachings of Holy Mother.
- The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was celebrated on 4 February, 2024. The programme included special worship, homa and bhajans. Devotees shared prasadam after the event. In the evening after the aratrikam, Swami Sunishthananda delivered a talk on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda.
- On the morning of Sunday, 18 February, 2024, Saraswati puja was celebrated. The programme included special worship, and bhajans. Devotees shared prasadam after the event.
- Shivaratri was observed on 8 March, 2024. The programme included special worship, and bhajans. Devotees shared prasadam after the event.



Shivaratri in the Melbourne Ashrama

Other Activities

- Swami Sunishthananda was invited as the chief guest for the Yuva Divas event organized by the Consulate General of India, Melbourne

on Friday, 12 January 2024.

- Swami Sunishthananda was invited to represent the Hindu Faith in an Interfaith Meet organized by Namdahari Society of Australia at Jagjeet Mandir, Koo Wee Rup, Victoria, on Saturday, 2 March 2024.
- Swami Sunishthananda was invited for the Harmony Day Interfaith Lunch on Tuesday, 5 March 2024 organized by Maroondah Interfaith Network at Ora Doro, Croydon.



Interfaith Music Concert

- On the afternoon of 10 March 2024, Vedanta Centre of Melbourne organized an Interfaith Music Concert at Oakleigh Hall, being funded by the 2023-2024 Victorian Government Multicultural Festivals & Events Program Grant.



Swami Medhasananda and others

Visiting Swamis

- Swami Medhasananda, Swami-in-charge, Vedanta Society of Japan and Swami Atmeshananda, Monk-in charge, Vedanta Centre of Brisbane, visited Vedanta Centre of Melbourne on 13 and 14 January 2024. On the evening of Saturday, 13 January 2024, a satsang was arranged in which Swami Medhasananda delivered a talk and met the devotees. All shared prasada after the event.

PERTH

51 Golf View Street, Yorkine, WA 6060

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Regular Activities:

- Aratrikam was conducted each night by a person or family taking the responsibility for it.
- A monthly satsung was held on 8 February 2024 when Swami Dhyanananda visited Perth.
- Swami Dhyanananda held classes on 'Karma Yoga' when he visited Perth between 6 and 10 February 2024.

Celebrations

- Christmas Eve was celebrated at the Centre with the singing of Christmas Carols and bhajans. Mr Samir Chatterjee delivered a talk on 'The Meaning and Spiritual Significance of Christmas'.
- Kalpataru day was celebrated on 1 January,



At the Universal Church in Perth

2024. Several devotees visited the centre and received the blessings of the Divine.

- The Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi's (1853-1920) birth anniversary was observed on 7 January 2024. The programme included prayers, bhajans, aratrikam and prasada distribution.

SYDNEY

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URL: www.vedantaaustralia.org

Daily Activities

- The shrine was open from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 8:30 pm seven days a week.
- Aratrikam, bhajans, and readings from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* were conducted from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The times change on special occasions.

Regular Activities

- Swami Sridharananda resumed his *Bhagavad Gita* classes, from the 5th Chapter, on 18 February 2024.
- Sri Ramanama Sanskritanam was conducted on ekadashi days after the vesper service.
- Devotees also received spiritual counselling and guidance.
- The quarterly newsletter entitled *Reach* is compiled and published by the Vedanta Centre of Sydney.

Celebrations

- Christmas Eve was observed with aratrikam, Carols, a reading from the Bible on the nativity of Jesus by Swami Mahabodhananda followed by prasada distribution.
- Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi's (1853-1920) birth anniversary was celebrated on the tithi day on 3 January, 2024 with special puja and bhajans among the residents of the Ashrama. On 13 January 2024 a public celebration was held. On the public celebration day in the



Christmas Eve in the Sydney Ashrama



Swami Manyananda on Holy Mother's Birth Anniversary Celebration in the Sydney Ashrama

morning there was a puja with homa, bhajans and prasada distribution. In the evening there was aratrikam, bhajans, a talk by Swami Manyananda on the life and teachings of the Holy Mother, puspanjali and prasada distribution.

- In order to commemorate the inauguration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, India (Rama's birth place and palace), the Vedanta Centre of Sydney lit up with candles and sang the *Rama Nama Sankritana*, which was introduced in the Ramakrishna Order, by Swami Brahamananda. It was a private event held on 22 January, 2024 for only the residents of the Ashrama.
- Swami Vivekananda's (1863-1902) birth anniversary was observed on 2 February, 2024. In the morning there was a puja, homa, aratrikam, bhajans and the distribution of prasada. In the evening there was aratrikam,

bhajans, a talk by Swami Dhyanananda and the distribution of prasad.

- Shivaratri was celebrated on 8 March, 2024. After, aratrikam and traditional worship, devotees offered their worship, while bhajans were sung.
- Sri Ramakrishna's (1836-1886) birth anniversary was observed at the Vedanta Centre on 12 March, 2023 in the morning and evening. The morning programme included worship, homa, aratrikam, bhajans and prasad distribution. The evening programme included aratrikam, a short performance on Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda by the children of the bala and yuva sangha, a talk by Swami Vedamritananda who is visiting from Hollywood, and prasad distribution.



Children and Youth Perform on Sri Ramakrishna's Birth Anniversary Celebrations



Swami Medhasananda, Swami in-charge of the Vedanta Society of Japan

Visiting Swamis

- Swami Medasananda, Vedanta Society of Japan visited the centre on 11 and 12 January 2024.

- Swami Manyananda visited the Centre from 9 January to 17 January 2024.

Other Activities

- The High Commissioner of India to Australia, His Excellency Gopal Baglay, the Consulate General of India in Sydney Dr. S. Janakiraman and others visited the Vedanta Centre of Sydney to meet Swami Sridharananda and some of the old devotees. His Excellency also briefly addressed those who had gathered after meeting them.



High Commissioner of India to Australia, His Excellency Gopal Baglay, the Consulate General of India in Sydney Dr. S. Janakiraman

2. Karma Yoga: Freedom —SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(From The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda)

In the 63rd issue of *Reach* we began serializing Swami Vivekananda's *Karma Yoga*. The original *Karma Yoga* was published during Swamiji's lifetime during the latter part of the 19th century, comprising his talks on the subject which were stenographed by G.G. Goodwin. These were also edited by Swami Saradananda. After the original publication, *Karma Yoga* was included in the first volume of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. The following article is a reproduction of the original in which two changes have been made for accessibility. Paragraphing and subheadings have been provided to facilitate easier access to the readings. We hope that these changes will enable people to read Swamiji's original lectures as found in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.

Karma as the Law of Causation

In addition to meaning work, we have stated that psychologically the word Karma also implies causation. Any work, any action, any thought that produces an effect is called a Karma. Thus the law of Karma means the law of causation, of inevitable cause and sequence. Wheresoever there is a cause, there an effect must be produced; this necessity cannot be resisted, and this law of Karma, according to our philosophy, is true throughout the whole universe. Whatever we see, or feel, or do, whatever action there is anywhere in the universe, while being the effect of past work on the one hand, becomes, on the other, a cause in its turn, and produces its own effect.

It is necessary, together with this, to consider what is meant by the word "law". By law is meant the tendency of a series to repeat itself. When we see one event followed by another, or sometimes happening simultaneously with another, we expect this sequence or co-existence to recur.

Law in Science and Vyapti in Nyaya Philosophy

Our old logicians and philosophers of the Nyaya school call this law by the name of Vyapti. According to them, all our ideas of law are due to association. A series of phenomena becomes associated with things in our mind in a sort of invariable order, so that whatever we perceive at any time is immediately referred to other facts in the mind. Any one idea or, according to our psychology, any one wave that is produced in the mind-stuff, Chitta, must always give rise to many similar waves. This is the psychological idea of association, and causation is only as aspect of this grand pervasive principle of association. This pervasiveness of association is what is, in Sanskrit, called Vyapti. In the external world the idea of law is the same as in the internal—the expectation that a particular phenomenon will be followed by another, and that the series will repeat itself.

Really speaking, therefore, law does not exist in nature. Practically it is an error to say that

gravitation exists in the earth, or that there is any law existing objectively anywhere in nature. Law is the method, the manner in which our mind grasps a series of phenomena; it is all in the mind. Certain phenomena, happening one after another or together, and followed by the conviction of the regularity of their recurrence—thus enabling our minds to grasp the method of the whole series—constitute what we call law.

Law is limited to the Universe characterized by Desha (Space), Kala (time) and Nimitta (Causation)

The next question for consideration is what we mean by law being universal. Our universe is that portion of existence which is characterised by what the Sanskrit psychologists call Desha-kala-nimitta, or what is known to European psychology as space, time, and causation.

This universe is only a part of infinite existence, thrown into a peculiar mould, composed of space, time, and causation. It

necessarily follows that law is possible only within this conditioned universe; beyond it there cannot be any law. When we speak of the universe, we only mean that portion of existence which is limited by our mind--the universe of the senses, which we can see, feel, touch, hear, think of, imagine. This alone is under law; but beyond it existence cannot be subject to law, because causation does not extend beyond the world of our minds. Anything beyond the range of our mind and our senses is not bound by the law of causation, as there is no mental association of things in the region beyond the senses, and no causation without association of ideas.

It is only when "being" or existence gets moulded into name and form that it obeys the law of causation, and is said to be under law; because all law has its essence in causation. Therefore we see at once that there cannot be any such thing as free will; the very words are a contradiction, because will is what we know and everything that we know is within our universe, and everything within our universe is moulded by the conditions of space, time, and causation. Everything that we know, or can possibly know, must be subject to causation, and that which obeys the law of causation cannot be free. It is acted upon by other agents, and becomes a cause in its turn. But that which has become converted into the will, which was not the will before, but which, when it fell into this mould of space, time, and causation, became converted into

the human will, is free; and when this will gets out of this mould of space, time, and causation, it will be free again. From freedom it comes, and becomes moulded into this bondage, and it gets out and goes back to freedom again.

The question has been raised as to from whom this universe comes, in whom it rests, and to whom it goes; and the answer has been given that from freedom it comes, in bondage it rests, and goes back into that freedom again. So, when we speak of man as no other than that infinite being which is manifesting itself, we mean that only one very small part thereof is man; this body and this mind which we see are only one part of the whole, only one spot of the infinite being. This whole universe is only one speck of the infinite being; and all our laws, our bondages, our joys and our sorrows, our happinesses and our expectations, are only within this small universe; all our progression and digression are within its small compass.

So you see how childish it is to expect a continuation of this universe--the creation of our minds--and to expect to go to heaven, which after all must mean only a repetition of this world that we know. You see at once that it is an impossible and childish desire to make the whole of infinite existence conform to the limited and conditioned existence which we know. When a man says that he will have again and again this same thing which he is having now, or, as I sometimes put it,

when he asks for a *comfortable* religion, you may know that he has become so degenerate that he cannot think of anything higher than what he is now; he is just his little present surroundings and nothing more. He has forgotten his infinite nature, and his whole idea is confined to these little joys, and sorrows, and heart-jealousies of the moment. He thinks that this finite thing is the infinite; and not only so, he will not let this foolishness go. He clings on desperately unto Trishna, and the thirst after life, what the Buddhists call Tanha and Tissa. There may be millions of kinds of happiness, and beings, and laws, and progress, and causation, all acting outside the little universe that we know; and, after all, the whole of this comprises but one section of our infinite nature.

The Acquisition of Freedom

To acquire freedom we have to get beyond the limitations of this universe; it cannot be found here. Perfect equilibrium, or what the Christians call the peace that passeth all understanding, cannot be had in this universe, nor in heaven, nor in any place where our mind and thoughts can go, where the senses can feel, or which the imagination can conceive. No such place can give us that freedom, because all such places would be within our universe, and it is limited by space, time, and causation. There may be places that are more ethereal than this earth of ours, where enjoyments may be keener, but even those places must be in the universe and, therefore, in bondage to law; so we have to go beyond, and real religion begins

where this little universe ends.

These little joys, and sorrows, and knowledge of things end there, and the reality begins. Until we give up the thirst after life, the strong attachment to this our transient conditioned existence, we have no hope of catching even a glimpse of that infinite freedom beyond. It stands to reason then that there is only one way to attain to that freedom which is the goal of all the noblest aspirations of mankind, and that is by giving up this little life, giving up this little universe, giving up this earth, giving up heaven, giving up the body, giving up the mind, giving up everything that is limited and conditioned. If we give up our attachment to this little universe of the senses or of the mind, we shall be free immediately. The only way to come out of bondage is to go beyond the limitations of law, to go beyond causation.

The two ways of giving up this clinging to this body and the universe

But it is a most difficult thing to give up the clinging to this universe; few ever attain to that. There are two ways to do that mentioned in our books. One is called the "Neti, Neti" (not this, not this), the other is called "iti" (this); the former is the negative, and the latter is the positive way.

The negative way is the most difficult. It is only possible to the men of the very highest, exceptional minds and gigantic wills

who simply stand up and say, "No, I will not have this," and the mind and body obey their will, and they come out successful. But such people are very rare. The vast majority of mankind choose the positive way, the way through the world, making use of all the bondages themselves to break those very bondages. This is also a kind of giving up; only it is done slowly and gradually, by knowing things, enjoying things and thus obtaining experience, and knowing the nature of things until the mind lets them all go at last and becomes unattached. The former way of obtaining non-attachment is by reasoning, and the latter way is through work and experience. The first is the path of Jnana-Yoga and is characterised by the refusal to do any work; the second is that of Karma-Yoga, in which there is no cessation from work.

Every one must work in the universe. Only those who are perfectly satisfied with the Self, whose desires do not go beyond the Self, whose mind never strays out of the Self, to whom the Self is all in all, only those do not work. The rest must work. A current rushing down of its own nature falls into a hollow and makes a whirlpool, and, after running a little in that whirlpool, it emerges again in the form of the free current to go on unchecked. Each human life is like that current. It gets into the whirl, gets involved in this world of space, time, and causation, whirls round a little, crying out, "my father, my brother, my name, my fame," and so on, and at last emerges out of it and re-

gains its original freedom. The whole universe is doing that. Whether we know it or not, whether we are conscious or unconscious of it, we are all working to get out of the dream of the world. Man's experience in the world is to enable him to get out of its whirlpool.

What is Karma Yoga?

What is Karma-Yoga? The knowledge of the secret of work. We see that the whole universe is working. For what? For salvation, for liberty; from the atom to the highest being, working for the one end, liberty for the mind, for the body, for the spirit. All things are always trying to get freedom, flying away from bondage. The sun, the moon, the earth, the planets, all are trying to fly away from bondage. The centrifugal and the centripetal forces of nature are indeed typical of our universe. Instead of being knocked about in this universe, and after long delay and thrashing, getting to know things as they are, we learn from Karma-Yoga the secret of work, the method of work, the organising power of work. A vast mass of energy may be spent in vain if we do not know how to utilise it.

Karma-Yoga makes a science of work; you learn by it how best to utilise all the workings of this world. Work is inevitable, it must be so; but we should work to the highest purpose. Karma-Yoga makes us admit that this world is a world of five minutes, that it is a something we have to pass through; and that freedom is not here, but is only to be

found beyond. To find the way out of the bondages of the world we have to go through it slowly and surely. There may be those exceptional persons about whom I just spoke, those who can stand aside and give up the world, as a snake casts off its skin and stands aside and looks at it. There are no doubt these exceptional beings; but the rest of mankind have to go slowing through the world of work. Karma-Yoga shows the process, the secret, and the method of doing it to the best advantage.

Getting rid of Attachment through Identification

What does it say? "Work incessantly, but give up all attachment to work." Do not identify yourself with anything. Hold your mind free. All this that you see, the pains and the miseries, are but the necessary conditions of this world; poverty and wealth and happiness are but momentary; they do not belong to our real nature at all. Our nature is far beyond misery and happiness, beyond every object of the senses, beyond the imagination; and yet we must go on working all the time. "Misery comes through attachment, not through work." As soon as we identify ourselves with the work we do, we feel miserable; but if we do not identify ourselves with it, we do not feel that misery.

If a beautiful picture belonging to another is burnt, a man does not generally become miserable; but when his own picture is burnt, how miserable he feels!

Why? Both were beautiful pictures, perhaps copies of the same original; but in one case very much more misery is felt than in the other. It is because in one case he identifies himself with the picture, and not in the other.

Identification with 'I and Mine' is the Cause of Misery

This "I and mine" causes the whole misery. With the sense of possession comes selfishness, and selfishness brings on misery. Every act of selfishness or thought of selfishness makes us attached to something, and immediately we are made slaves. Each wave in the Chitta that says "I and mine" immediately puts a chain round us and makes us slaves; and the more we say "I and mine", the more slavery grows, the more misery increases. Therefore Karma-Yoga tells us to enjoy the beauty of all the pictures in the world, but not to identify ourselves with any of them. Never say "mine". Whenever we say a thing is "mine", misery will immediately come. Do not even say "my child" in your mind. Possess the child, but do not say "mine". If you do, then will come the misery. Do not say "my house," do not say "my body".

The whole difficulty is there. The body is neither yours, nor mine, nor anybody's. These bodies are coming and going by the laws of nature, but we are free, standing as witnesses. This body is no more free than a picture or a wall. Why should we be attached so much to a body? If somebody paints a picture, he does it and

passes on. Do not project that tentacle of selfishness, "I must possess it". As soon as that is projected, misery will begin.

So Karma-Yoga says, first destroy the tendency to project this tentacle of selfishness, and when you have the power of checking it, hold it in and do not allow the mind to get into the ways of selfishness. Then you may go out into the world and work as much as you can. Mix everywhere, go where you please; you will never be contaminated with evil. There is the lotus leaf in the water; the water cannot touch and adhere to it; so will you be in the world. This is called "Vairagya", dispassion or non-attachment. I believe I have told you that without non-attachment there cannot be any kind of Yoga. Non-attachment is the basis of all the Yogas. The man who gives up living in houses, wearing fine clothes, and eating good food, and goes into the desert, may be a most attached person. His only possession, his own body, may become everything to him; and as he lives he will be simply struggling for the sake of his body.

Non-attachment does not mean anything that we may do in relation to our external body, it is all in the mind. The binding link of "I and mine" is in the mind. If we have not this link with the body and with the things of the senses, we are non-attached, wherever and whatever we may be. A man may be on a throne and perfectly non-attached; another man may be in rags and still very much attached. First, we have to attain

this state of non-attachment and then to work incessantly. Karma-Yoga gives us the method that will help us in giving up all attachment, though it is indeed very hard.

Two ways of Giving Up Attachment

Here are the two ways of giving up all attachment. The one is for those who do not believe in God, or in any outside help. They are left to their own devices; they have simply to work with their own will, with the powers of their mind and discrimination, saying, "I must be non-attached".

For those who believe in God there is another way, which is much less difficult. They give up the fruits of work unto the Lord; they work and are never attached to the results. Whatever they see, feel, hear, or do, is for Him. For whatever good work we may do, let us not claim any praise or benefit. It is the Lord's; give up the fruits unto Him. Let us stand aside and think that we are only servants obeying the Lord, our Master, and that every impulse for action comes from Him every moment. Whatever thou worshippest, whatever thou perceivest, whatever thou doest, give up all unto Him and be at rest. Let us be at peace, perfect peace, with ourselves, and give up our whole body and mind and everything as an eternal sacrifice unto the Lord.

Instead of the sacrifice of pouring oblations into the fire, perform this one great sacrifice day

and night--the sacrifice of your little self. "In search of wealth in this world, Thou art the only wealth I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee. In search of someone to be loved, Thou art the only one beloved I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee." Let us repeat this day and night, and say, "Nothing for me; no matter whether the thing is good, bad, or indifferent; I do not care for it; I sacrifice all unto Thee." Day and night let us renounce our seeming self until it becomes a habit with us to do so, until it gets into the blood, the nerves, and the brain, and the whole body is every moment obedient to this idea of self-renunciation.

The Idea of Duty is Lower

Go then into the midst of the battlefield, with the roaring cannon and the din of war, and you will find yourself to be free and at peace. Karma-Yoga teaches us that the ordinary idea of duty is on the lower plane; nevertheless, all of us have to do our duty. Yet we may see that this peculiar sense of duty is very often a great cause of misery. Duty becomes a disease with us; it drags us ever forward. It catches hold of us and makes our whole life miserable. It is the bane of human life. This duty, this idea of duty is the midday summer sun which scorches the innermost soul of mankind. Look at those poor slaves to duty! Duty leaves them no time to say prayers, no time to bathe. Duty is ever on them. They go out and work. Duty is on them! They come home and think of the work for the next day. Duty is on them! It

is living a slave's life, at last dropping down in the street and dying in harness, like a horse. This is duty as it is understood.

The only true duty is to be unattached and to work as free beings, to give up all work unto God. All our duties are His. Blessed are we that we are ordered out here. We serve our time; whether we do it ill or well, who knows? If we do it well, we do not get the fruits. If we do it ill, neither do we get the care. Be at rest, be free, and work. This kind of freedom is a very hard thing to attain. How easy it is to interpret slavery as duty--the morbid attachment of flesh for flesh as duty! Men go out into the world and struggle and fight for money or for any other thing to which they get attached. Ask them why they do it. They say, "It is a duty." It is the absurd greed for gold and gain, and they try to cover it with a few flowers.

What is duty after all? It is really the impulsion of the flesh, of our attachment; and when an attachment has become established, we call it duty. For instance, in countries where there is no marriage, there is no duty between husband and wife; when marriage comes, husband and wife live together on account of attachment; and that kind of living together becomes settled after generations; and when it becomes so settled, it becomes a duty. It is, so to say, a sort of chronic disease. When it is acute, we call it disease; when it is chronic, we call it nature. It is a disease.

So when attachment becomes chronic, we baptise it with the high-sounding name of duty. We strew flowers upon it, trumpets sound for it, sacred texts are said over it, and then the whole world fights, and men earnestly rob each other for this duty's sake. Duty is good to the extent that it checks brutality. To the lowest kinds of men, who cannot have any other ideal, it is of some good; but those who want to be Karma Yogis must throw this idea of duty overboard. There is no duty for you and me. Whatever you have to give to the world, do give by all means, but not as a duty. Do not take any thought of that. Be not compelled.

Why should you be compelled? *Everything that you do under compulsion goes to build up attachment.* Why should you have any duty? Resign everything unto God. In this tremendous fiery furnace where the fire of duty scorches everybody, drink this cup of nectar and be happy. We are all simply working out His will, and have nothing to do with rewards and punishments. If you want the reward, you must also have the punishment; the only way to get out of the punishment is to give up the reward. The only way of getting out of misery is by giving up the idea of happiness, because these two are linked to each other. On one side there is happiness, on the other there is misery. On one side there is life, on the other there is death. The only way to get beyond death is to give up the love of life.

Life and death are the same thing, looked at from different points. So the idea of happiness without misery, or of life without death, is very good for school-boys and children; but the thinker sees that it is all a contradiction in terms and gives up both. Seek no praise, no reward, for anything you do. No sooner do we perform a good action than we begin to desire credit for it. No sooner do we give money to some charity than we want to see our names blazoned in the papers. Misery must come as a result of such desires.

Different Grades of People

The greatest men in the world have passed away unknown. The Buddhas and the Christs that we know are but second-rate heroes in comparison with the greatest men of whom the world knows nothing. Hundreds of these unknown heroes have lived in every country working silently. Silently they live and silently they pass away; and in time their thoughts find expression in Buddhas or Christs, and it is these latter that become known to us. The highest men do not seek to get any name or fame from their knowledge. They leave their ideas to the world; they put forth no claims for themselves and establish no schools or systems in their name. Their whole nature shrinks from such a thing. They are the pure Sattvikas, who can never make any stir, but only melt down in love.

I have seen one such Yogi who lives in a cave in India. He is one

of the most wonderful men I have ever seen. He has so completely lost the sense of his own individuality that we may say that the man in him is completely gone, leaving behind only the all-comprehending sense of the divine. If an animal bites one of his arms, he is ready to give it his other arm also, and say that it is the Lord's will. Everything that comes to him is from the Lord. He does not show himself to men, and yet he is a magazine of love and of true and sweet ideas.

Next in order come the men with more Rajas, or activity, combative natures, who take up the ideas of the perfect ones and preach them to the world. The highest kind of men silently collect true and noble ideas, and others--the Buddhas and Christs--go from place to place preaching them and working for them. In the life of Gautama Buddha we notice him constantly saying that he is the twenty-fifth Buddha. The twenty-four before him are unknown to history, although the Buddha known to history must have built upon foundations laid by them. The highest men are calm, silent, and unknown. They are the men who really know the power of thought; they are sure that, even if they go into a cave and close the door and simply think five true thoughts and then pass away, these five thoughts of theirs will live through eternity. Indeed, such thoughts will penetrate through the mountains, cross the oceans, and travel through the world. They will enter deep into human hearts and brains and raise up men and women who will give them prac-

tical expression in the workings of human life.

These Sattvika men are too near the Lord to be active and to fight, to be working, struggling, preaching, and doing good, as they say, here on earth to humanity. The active workers, however good, have still a little remnant of ignorance left in them. When our nature has yet some impurities left in it, then alone can we work. It is in the nature of work to be impelled ordinarily by motive and by attachment.

In the presence of an ever active Providence who notes even the sparrow's fall, how can man attach any importance to his own work? Will it not be a blasphemy to do so when we know that He is taking care of the minutest things in the world? We have only to stand in awe and reverence before Him saying, "Thy will be done". The highest men cannot work, for in them there is no attachment. Those whose whole soul is gone into the Self, those whose desires are confined in the Self, who have become ever associated with the Self, for them there is no work. Such are indeed the highest of mankind; but apart from them every one else has to work. In so working we should never think that we can help on even the least thing in this universe. We cannot. We only help ourselves in this gymnasium of the world. This is the proper attitude of work. If we work in this way, if we always remember that our present opportunity to work thus is a privilege which has been given to us,

we shall never be attached to anything.

Millions like you and me think that we are great people in the world; but we all die, and in five minutes the world forgets us. But the life of God is infinite. "Who can live a moment, breathe a moment, if this all-powerful One does not will it?" He is the ever active Providence. All power is His and within His command. Through His command the winds blow, the sun shines, the earth lives, and death stalks upon the earth. He is the all in all; He is all and in all. We can only worship Him. Give up all fruits of work; do good for its own sake; then alone will come perfect non-attachment. The bonds of the heart will thus break, and we shall reap perfect freedom. This freedom is indeed the goal of Karma-Yoga.

3. From the Devotees:

Celebration of the Centenary of Swami Vivekananda's Temple and Swami Brahmananda's Temple at Belur Math

The centenary of Swami Vivekananda's temple and Swami Brahmananda's temple falls this year in 2024. Both these temples are dedicated to two of Sri Ramakrishna's direct monastic disciples. Swami Vivekananda was the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission on 1 May 1897 and Swami Brahmananda was the president of the Calcutta Centre. The fledgling Ramakrishna Mission was nurtured by Swami Vivekananda until the end of his life in 1902 and later by Swami Brahmananda until the end of his life in 1922. Daily worship is carried out in these temples, which houses the relics of these souls. The following are two accounts of these two temples by two of our young devotees: Arpitha Rao and Suchitha Rao.

My Impression of Swami Vivekananda's Temple at Belur Math

"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached." Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), also known as Swamiji, advises the modern generation to never give up on one's aspirations and goals. But, instead to give up arrogance and actively pursue their goals.

Swami Vivekananda was an Indian Hindu monk, philosopher, teacher and the disciple of the 19th century mystic Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), who founded the Ramakrishna Organization. The central mission is located at Belur, West Bengal, India.

Within these grounds lie Swamiji's mortal remains. Swamiji's temple is a two-storey structure. On the ground floor is a marble picture of Swamiji. This part of the temple is named as "Swamiji's shrine". Above the shrine lies a marble symbol of "Om" written in Bengali.

I, not too long ago, visited the divine temple. It was flocked with devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda who had gathered to offer their prayers to the divine deities. I stood at the entrance of Swamiji's temple. I felt a sense of comfort and safety. I was blessed to

be in the presence of an image of God.

Arpitha Rao, 15



Swami Vivekananda's Temple, Belur Math

Swami Brahmananda's Temple, Belur Math

A temple dedicated to Swami Brahmananda (1863-1922) is located at Belur Math, West Bengal. It is located on the West bank of the sacred Ganga River, where his body was consigned to flames following his passing away on 10 April 1922. Swami Brahmadanda was the first president of the Ramakrishna Order and a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. From my recent visit to Belur Math, I observed first-hand the profound impact of Swami Brahmananda evident through the large masses of devotees who visited the temple, immersed in prayer and meditation.

The domes forming the temple are topped with a Chakra (Disc), symbolising Lord Vishnu's weapon. Within the lower level of the sacred temple resides a life-like marble idol of Swami Brahmananda adorned with garlands of colourful flowers. There is also an image of Sri Krishna as a child reminding devotees of how Sri Ramakrishna himself had likened Swami Brahmananda to being the boy-companion of Sri Krishna. An upper storey to the temple is maintained as his room with his belongings, which devotees can visit on the auspicious day of Swami Brahmananda's birthday. The temple creates a tranquil atmosphere inviting devotees of all paths to seek solace in the divine presence of Swami Brahmananda himself.



Swami Brahmananda 's statue

- Suchitha Rao, 21