



Reach

SAYINGS AND TEACHINGS

Sri Ramakrishna on Mind

Do not let worldly thoughts and anxieties disturb your mind.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 6.

Sri Sarada Devi on Living a Fulfilling Life

Do the Master's work, and along with that practice spiritual discipline. Some amount of work keeps the mind free from idle thoughts.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 23.

Swami Vivekananda on Religion

Religion the common inheritance, the universal birthright of the race, must be brought free to the door of everybody..

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 40.

Jesus on Acceptance

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. .

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/bible-verses-about-acceptance/>

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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 11 SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 10 DECEMBER 2024

ADELAIDE

16 East Terrace, Kensington Gardens, SA 5068

Email: vedanta.adelaide@gmail.com

Contacts: Swami Manyananda +61425762436

Dr Raman Sharma on (08) 8431 9775

URL: <http://vedantaadelaide.org>

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

- The Centre observed *ekadasi* with *Ramanama Sankirtanam* every lunar fortnight.
- 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 a class on the *Bhagavad Gita* on Sundays from 11:00 am.
- Every alternate Saturday, Swami Manyananda read *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* followed by a discussion 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 were held on Sundays from 4pm to 5 pm. It is conducted by Swami Manyananda and volunteers, and includes mantra chanting, meditation, yoga, singing, reading from spiritual texts, value-based lessons and arts and crafts. The programme concludes with refreshments.

Celebrations

- Durga puja was celebrated on Friday, 11 October 2024. The morning program included puja, Vedic Chanting, bhajans, homa, aratrikam, pushpanjali and prasada distribution. The evening program included aratrikam, chanting *Mahisasura Mardhini*, and a programme by the



Members of the Bala Sangha: Presentation at the Durga Puja

Bala Sangha called 'Durga Puja – its significance and iconography', bhajans by Mrs Joyti Kulkarni, aratrikam, Pushpanjali and prasada distribution.

Annual General Meeting

- The 19th Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Sunday, 17 November; 2024. Swami Manyananda, the executive committee members, and many member devotees were present. The meeting started at 12:40 pm with a prayer, welcome and included a presentation of the minutes of the 2022-23 AGM, Vice President's, Treasurer's, and Secretary's Reports. This was followed by updating the devotees about the planned activities, the completed, and ongoing works.

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 6:30 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 8:30 am to 9:45 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 as a 5 weekly course). (d) Hindi language classes fortnightly from 9:00 am to 10:30 am.
- A class on the *Brahma Sutras* was conducted on Tuesdays from 11 am to 12 noon. In the evening, Yoga classes were conducted from 6:30pm to 7:45 pm.
- A monthly satsang was held at Sunnybank Hills on the first Monday of every month at 19, Scribbly Gum Street.
- Fortnightly on Thursdays there was a study of the *Vivekachudamani*, online, from 8 pm to 9 pm organized by Shakti Global, Gold Coast.
- A monthly satsang was held at the Centre on the 3rd Sunday of each month. The programme consisted of chanting, bhajans, a talk on a special subject and serving of lunch prasada.
- 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 *Ramanama Sankirtanam* 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 5.30pm to 6.30pm
- Interviews with applicants were held for prospective lending through NILS (No interest

loan scheme) at the centre by appointment. People who are doing it hard avail themselves of loans up to \$2000 repayable through their government payments. This is an initiative of the Wesley Mission's Good Shepherd Organisation.

- The Central Queensland University's Chiropractic College conducted a free Chiro consultation and treatment clinic at the Centre on alternate Fridays. Along with their supervisors, the advanced students at the College delivered this service free of charge to people. This service began on 19 April 2024.
- 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, Gailes 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 10 families receive grocery hampers along with cooked food and free bread.
- 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.
- Two Justices of the Peace (JP) render their services at the Centre on Fridays and Saturdays on demand.
- The Centre, in association with the Namdhari Sikh Association, conducted 'Kirtan and Langar' on the last Sunday of every month. After meditation and singing of kirtans, the Sikh brethren cooked and served delicious meals to anyone who could come and partake of it.

Celebrations

- Durga puja was observed on the Ashtami day 11 October 2024. The celebration consisted of chanting the *Durga Saptashati (Chandi)* on every day of the Navaratri, worship and prasada distribution.
- On 13 October, Vijayadashami was observed, with a dance offering to the Divine Mother by Neelophar of Sama School of Kathak dance.



Durga Puja in Brisbane

After sprinkling of Shanti Jal (sprinkling of sacred water), nearly 350 devotees partook of prasad.

Other Activities

- During the monthly Satsang on 22 September 2024, Dr. Narada Sharma, a psychologist, gave a special talk on the subject 'Social Stigma and Mental Health.' She recounted her life's journey and gave the audience tips about how to identify mental health issues in oneself as well as with one's family and friends and how to respond positively towards them.



Dr Narada Sharma at the monthly Satsang in Brisbane

- A Sitar recital programme by Mrs. Jyoti Thakar, an eminent artist from India, was or-

ganised on Sunday, 29 September 2024. She was accompanied by Brisbane's Sitar artist Mrs. Srabani Choudhury. The programme was followed by langar meal organised by the Namdhari Sikh Samaj.



Jyoti Thakar presenting a sitar recital in Brisbane

- During the Queensland Mental Health week, workshops were held on 5 October 2024. The presenters were:- Shuktika Bose, psychologist on 'Connection is the Key'; Deep Breathing and Yoga by Sumathi and Jyotiba; Laughter Yoga by Kinjal Prajapati



Queensland Mental Health Week presentations

- The Centre conducted Diwali stalls at Brookwater on 19 October 2024 and at King Georges Square in the Brisbane CBD on 1 November 2024.
- Mr. Unni Krishnan Nair, Mrs. Usha Gokul and Mr. Ravi Gokul attended the Annual Bishop Michael Putney Memorial Lecture organised by the Queensland Faith Communities Council. The Archbishop of the Catholic Archdio-

cese of Brisbane Rev. Mark Coleridge gave a talk on 'The Ecology of God.'



Representatives of the Vedanta Centre at the QFCC function

- Swami Atmeshananda was invited by the Vedanta Society, Berlin, to participate in a retreat from 25 to 28 October 2024. Apart from Germany, he visited France, London, Amsterdam, Italy and Japan for five weeks. In his absence, Swami Mahabodhananda stayed and conducted the activities of the centre from 15 October to 24 November 2024.
- Swami Atmeshananda was invited to attend a multicultural community roundtable and morning tea with Federal Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Julian Hill MP on Tuesday, 10 December, at Brighton Home Arena in Springfield Central. The Minister met with the Swami and other multicultural leaders and enquired about the difficulties faced by the different groups.



With Federal Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Julian Hill MP

Upcoming Events

- Swami Vivekananda's birthday will be celebrated on 19 January 2024.

CANBERRA

4 Brigalow St, O'Connor ACT 2602

Email: vedacanberra@gmail.com

Contact: Mr Jaishankar Venkataraman 02 6258 7612 /0433 593 860

Regular Activities

- Evening aratrikam and prayers are now conducted every evening at the centre.

MELBOURNE

5-7 Angus Ave, Ringwood East, VIC 3135

Email: vedanta.melb@gmail.com

Contact: Swami Sunishthananda +61426864750

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 was conducted on Sundays from 10:30 am to 11:30 am on the *Bhagavad Gita* by Swami Sunishthananda.
- A guided meditation session was conducted by Swami Sunishthananda on Sundays from 10:00 am to 10:30 am.
- A class on *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* was conducted on Thursdays from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm by Swami Sunishthananda.
- A *Vivekachudamani* class was conducted by Swami Sunishthananda on Tuesdays from 7:30 to 8:30 pm.
- A children's class was conducted on Sundays from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Celebrations

- On the morning of Friday, 11 October 2024, Durga Puja was celebrated. The programme included special worship, homa and bhajans. Devotees shared prasad after the event.



Durga Puja in Melbourne

- On the evening of Thursday, 31 October 2024, Kali Puja was celebrated. The program included special worship, Kali Kirtan, and bhajans. Devotees shared prasad after the event.



Kali Puja in Melbourne

Other Activities

- Swami Sunishthananda was invited to be a panellist for a webinar on maintaining peace when working in a fractured world, on 14 Sep-

tember 2024. The webinar was associated with the Raising Peace Festival, held annually around the UN International Day of Peace.

- The event 'Agamani: Cultural Evening on the Eve of Durga Puja' was held on 22 September 2024, at the Oakleigh Community Hall. The programme was supported by the Victorian Multicultural Festivals Grant. The evening featured a captivating sitar performance by Vidushi Jyoti Thakar from Pune, India. Additionally, local artists showcased *Agamani* songs and classical dance performances, celebrating the spirit of the festival.



Agamani: Cultural Evening on the Eve of Durga

- Swami Sunishthananda was invited as a Hindu Representative to attend the Hindu Jewish Friendship Dinner organized by the Hindu Council of Australia (Victoria) on 23 September 2024 at Grand Hyatt, Melbourne.
- The Annual General Meeting was held at Vedanta Centre on 6 October 2024.
- On 19 October 2024, a cultural event was organized as a part of Children's week celebration in partnership with the Educational Department of the Victorian Government. An inspiring short play was performed by the Children's Group of the Vedanta Centre. An inspiring dance drama on the Bhagavad Gita, choreographed by the legendary Kathak Maes-

PERTH

51 Golf View Street, Yorkine, WA 6060

Email: vedantaperth@gmail.com

Contact: Sumita Chetty +61438928136

Regular Activities:

- Aratrikam was conducted each night by a person or family taking the responsibility for it.
- Monthly satsangs were held on Sunday, 22 September 2024, 20 October 2024 and on 17 November, 2024. The programme included aratrikam, bhajans, reading from the scriptures and distribution of prasad.



AGM of the Melbourne Centre

tro Nriya Shiromoni Guru Bandana Sen, was performed by Nriyavilash Suchandra Banerjee. Additionally, local artists showcased *Baul* songs and classical dance performances, celebrating the spirit of the festival.



A cultural event was organized as a part of Children's week in Melbourne

- Swami Sunishthananda along with Mr. Suresh Ravinutala, Secretary of the Vedanta Centre, attended as invitees to the Premier's Diwali State Reception on 26 October 2024 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Devotees in Perth during a monthly satsang

SYDNEY

2 Stewart Street, Ermington, 2115

Email: vedasydney@vedantasydney.org

Contact: (02) 8197 7351

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 Dhyanananda started teaching the *Vivekachudamani* on Sunday mornings from 20 October 2024
- *Ramanama Sankirtanam* 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.
- Yoga Classes are conducted by Sudhir Mooray on Saturdays from 9:30 am to 11:00 am.
- A *Balak Sangha* (Children's Group) and a Vivekananda Youth Group met on Saturdays at 5 pm.

Durga was observed on 11 October 2024, at the Vedanta Centre. There were over 1200 people who offered puspajali in 4 sessions throught out the day.



Durga puja in Sydney

Celebrations

- Durga puja or the *Ashtami puja* of Mother

2. From the Devotees

Grace

By Daniel Adam White
A Devotee of Sri Ramakrishna

Life, a dreary ride, unending toil,
Wanting, confused, divine intentions we spoil.
The mind, revolving around an imagined self,
Hollow, doubting, hopeless seeker of wealth.
Our souls, tired of this world on loan,
Our souls, thirst for their eternal home.

Until Spirit kisses our skin in the cool breeze,
Whispering to us through soft wind in the trees,
Mother appears, frolicking, in the flowers and bees,
Blooming, buzzing, playing as she may please.
And suddenly we are moved to a joyful place,
Pure, innocent, blessed with her grace!

Heart skips a beat, waves come to a still,
Our soul resting in wholesome, soft thrill.
The meaning of life flashes bright and clear,
Breathtakingly simple, to love without fear.

Mind gone! Personless and one with all,
Behold! God is infinite, yet smaller than the small.

Eternity in an instant and stamped with his mark,
Thank you dear Lord, for dispelling the dark!
Even if only for a moment, here and there,
Thy revealest Thyself, then all will be fair.
For one glimpse is enough to enkindle my faith,
To move heaven and earth, just to see Thy face!

Oh dear Lord, King, the Soul of our Souls,
Blessed Art Thou, for you are your own goal.
Mercy of mercies, Oh compassionate one,
What a mystery it is, what a world you have spun.
May it inspire our zeal, but enchant us not,
For Thy Will must be done, and ours forgot.

3. Press Release of the 115th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission (FY 2023-24)

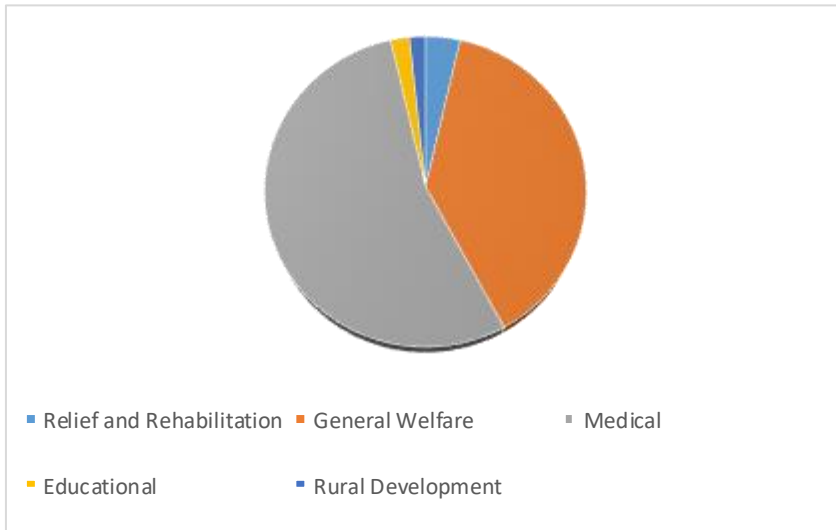
The 115th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at Belur Math, West Bengal, India, on Sunday, 15 December 2024, at 3.30 p.m. The General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission presented the 'Report of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission' on the working of the association during FY 2023-24'.

The Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math, had 235 branches and sub-centres in India that spent Rs.1292.03 crore towards various services like Relief and Rehabilitation, General Welfare, Medical, Educational, Rural Development and Publication of Literature. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math, through their 100 centres and sub centers situated in 24 countries outside India, did various service activities. The most salient features of the report were:

1. New Branch Centres Started in India in 2023-24 Financial Year

	No. of Centres	No. of States in India
Ramakrishna Mission	6	6 (Assam, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal)
Ramakrishna Math	3	3 (Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal)

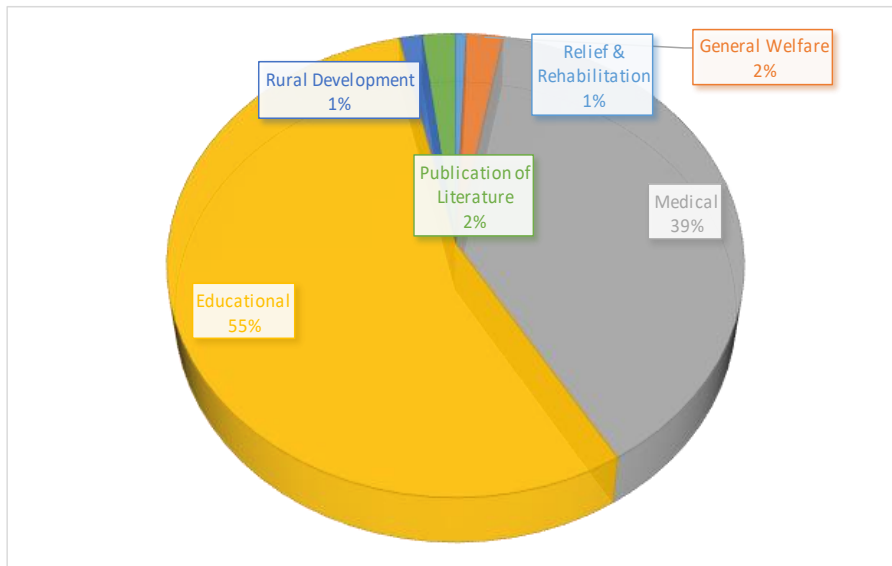
Figure 1: Proportion of the total number of beneficiaries of the Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math by the different Service Areas for FY 2023-24



According to Figure 1, the main service that is provided in terms of beneficiaries is medical. This is because the organization has a number of outdoor dispensaries, mobile health facilities and conducts medical camps etc. The second most widely used service is General Welfare.

Source: Press Release 115th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission

Figure 2: Proportion of the total expenditure of the Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math by the different Service Areas for FY 2023-24



According to Figure 2, the main service (55 per cent) that is provided in terms of expenditure is Educational. This is because the organization has a number of educational centres providing a whole range of educational services. The second most widely used service in terms of expenditure is Medical (39 per cent). This is because the organization has a number of hospitals with sophisticated technology that is very expensive to maintain.

Source: Press Release 115th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission

4. Bhakti Yoga: Philosophy of Ishwara —SWAMI VIVEKANANDA (From The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda)

In this issue of Reach we continue serializing Swami Vivekananda's Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti Yoga was included in the 3rd volume of 'The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda'. These classes begin with a prayer. This is followed by a chapter entitled 'Definition of Bhakti'. This chapter is called 'The Philosophy of Ishwara'. Some of the important ideas discussed in this chapter are the definition of Ishwara where Swami Vivekananda equates the personal and impersonal aspects of God. Then he goes on to study the views of the acharyas, representing dualism (Madhavacharya), qualified non dualism (Ramanuja) and non dualism (Shankara), if a realized soul has the power of creation, preservation and destruction as discussed in the Brahma Sutras of Vyasa.

Definition of Ishvara

Who is Ishvara? *Janmadyasya yatah*--"From whom is the birth, continuation, and dissolution of the universe,"--He is Ishvara--"the Eternal, the Pure, the Ever-Free, the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-Merciful, the Teacher of all teachers"; and above all, *Sa Ishvarah anirvachaniya-premasvarupah*--"He the Lord is, of His own nature, inexpressible Love." These certainly are the definitions of a Personal God. Are there then two Gods--the "Not this, not this," the Sat-chit-ananda, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss of the philosopher, and this God of Love of the Bhakta? No, it is the same Sat-chit-ananda who is also the God of Love, the impersonal and personal in one.

The Personal God and the Impersonal Brahman are one

It has always to be understood that the Personal God worshipped by the Bhakta is not separate or different from the Brahman. All is Brahman, the One without a second; only the Brahman, as unity or absolute, is too much of an abstraction to be loved and worshipped; so the Bhakta chooses the relative as-

pect of Brahman, that is, Ishvara, the supreme Ruler. To use a simile: Brahman is as the clay or substance out of which an infinite variety of articles are fashioned. As clay, they are all one; but form or manifestation differentiates them. Before every one of them was made, they all existed potentially in the clay, and, of course, they are identical substantially; but when formed, and so long as the form remains, they are separate and different; the clay-mouse can never become a clay-elephant, because, as manifestations, form alone makes them what they are, though as unformed clay they are all one. Ishvara is the highest manifestation of the Absolute Reality, or in other words, the highest possible reading of the Absolute by the human mind. Creation is eternal, and so also is Ishvara.

Madhavacharya's Commentary on a Brahma Sutra

In the fourth Pada of the fourth chapter of his *Sutras*, after stating the almost infinite power and knowledge which will come to the liberated soul after the attainment of Moksha, Vasya makes the remark, in an aphorism, that none, however, will get the pow-

er of creating, ruling, and dissolving the universe, because that belongs to God alone. In explaining the Sutra it is easy for the dualistic commentators to show how it is ever impossible for a subordinate soul, Jiva, to have the infinite power and total independence of God. The thorough dualistic commentator Madhvacharya deals with this passage in his usual summary method by quoting a verse from the *Varaha Purana*.

Ramanuja's Commentary on the same Sutra

In explaining this aphorism the commentator Ramanuja says, "This doubt being raised, whether among the powers of the liberated souls is included that unique power of the Supreme One, that is, of creation etc. of the universe and even the Lordship of all, or whether, without that, the glory of the liberated consists only in the direct perception of the Supreme One, we get as an argument the following: It is reasonable that the liberated get the Lordship of the universe, because the scriptures say, 'He attains to extreme sameness with the Supreme One and all his desires are realised.' Now extreme

sameness and realisation of all desires cannot be attained without the unique power of the Supreme Lord, namely, that of governing the universe. Therefore, to attain the realisation of all desires and the extreme sameness with the Supreme, we must all admit that the liberated get the power of ruling the whole universe. To this we reply, that the liberated get all the powers except that of ruling the universe. Ruling the universe is guiding the form and the life and the desires of all the sentient and the non-sentient beings. The liberated ones from whom all that veils His true nature has been removed, only enjoy the unobstructed perception of the Brahman, but do not possess the power of ruling the universe. This is proved from the scriptural text, 'From whom all these things are born, by which all that are born live, unto whom they, departing, return--ask about it. That is Brahman.' If this quality of ruling the universe be a quality common even to the liberated, then this text would not apply as a definition of Brahman, defining Him though His rulership of the universe. The uncommon attributes alone define a thing; therefore in texts like--'My beloved boy, alone, in the beginning there existed the One without a second. That saw and felt, "I will give birth to many." That projected heat.'--'Brahman indeed alone existed in the beginning. That One evolved. That projected a blessed form, the Kshatra. All these gods are Kshatras: Varuna, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mrityu, Ishana.'--'Atman indeed existed alone in the beginning; nothing else vibrated; He thought of projecting the world;

He projected the world after.'--'Alone Narayana existed; neither Brahma, nor Ishana, nor the Dya-va-Prithivi, nor the stars, nor water, nor fire, nor Soma, nor the sun. He did not take pleasure alone. He after His meditation had one daughter, the ten organs, etc.'--and in others as, 'Who living in the earth is separate from the earth, who living in the Atman, etc.'--the Shrutis speak of the Supreme One as the subject of the work of ruling the universe. . . . Nor in these descriptions of the ruling of the universe is there any position for the liberated soul, by which such a soul may have the ruling of the universe ascribed to it."

In explaining the next Sutra, Ramanuja says, "If you say it is not so, because there are direct texts in the Vedas in evidence to the contrary, these texts refer to the glory of the liberated in the spheres of the subordinate deities." This also is an easy solution of the difficulty. Although the system of Ramanuja admits the unity of the total, within that totality of existence there are, according to him, eternal differences. Therefore, for all practical purposes, this system also being dualistic, it was easy for Ramanuja to keep the distinction between the personal soul and the Personal God very clear.

Shankara (Advaita) Commentary on the same Sutra

We shall now try to understand what the great representative of the Advaita School has to say on the point. We shall see how the Advaita system maintains all the hopes and aspirations of the du-

alist intact, and at the same time propounds its own solution of the problem in consonance with the high destiny of divine humanity. Those who aspire to retain their individual mind even after liberation and to remain distinct will have ample opportunity of realising their aspirations and enjoying the blessing of the qualified Brahman. These are they who have been spoken of in the *Bhagavata Purana* thus: "O king, such are the glorious qualities of the Lord that the sages whose only pleasure is in the Self, and from whom all fetters have fallen off, even they love the Omnipresent with the love that is for love's sake." These are they who are spoken of by the Sankhyas as getting merged in nature in this cycle, so that, after attaining perfection, they may come out in the next as lords of world-systems. But none of these ever becomes equal to God (Ishvara). Those who attain to that state where there is neither creation, nor created, nor creator, where there is neither knower, nor knowable, nor knowledge, where there is neither *I*, nor *thou*, nor *he*, where there is neither subject, nor object, nor relation, "there, who is seen by whom?"--such persons have gone beyond everything to "where words cannot go nor mind", gone to that which the Shrutis declare as "Not this, not this"; but for those who cannot, or will not reach this state, there will inevitably remain the triune vision of the one undifferentiated Brahman as nature, soul, and the interpenetrating sustainer of both--Ishvara. So, when Prahlada forgot himself, he found neither the universe nor its cause; all was to him one Infinite, indifferenced by

name and form; but as soon as he remembered that he was Prahlada, there was the universe before him and with it the Lord of the universe--"the Repository of an infinite number of blessed qualities".

So it was with the blessed Gopis. So long as they had lost sense of their own personal identity and individuality, they were all Krishnas, and when they began again to think of Him as the One to be worshipped, then they were Gopis again, and immediately {Sanskrit} (*Bhagavata*)-- "Unto them appeared Krishna with a smile on His lotus face, clad in yellow robes and having garlands on, the embodied conqueror (in beauty) of the god of love."

Now to go back to our Acharya Shankara: "Those", he says, "who by worshipping the qualified Brahman attain conjunction with the Supreme Ruler, preserving their own mind--is their glory limited or unlimited? This doubt arising, we get as an argument: Their glory should be unlimited because of the scriptural texts. 'They attain their own kingdom', 'To him all the gods offer worship', 'Their desires are fulfilled in all the worlds'. As an answer to this, Vyasa writes, 'Without the power of ruling the universe.' Barring the power of creation etc. of the universe, the other powers such as *Anima* etc. are acquired by the liberated. As to ruling the universe, that belongs to the eternally perfect Ishvara. Why? Because He is the subject of all the scriptural texts as regards creation etc., and the liberated souls

are not mentioned therein in any connection whatsoever. The Supreme Lord indeed is alone engaged in ruling the universe. The texts as to creation etc. all point to Him. Besides, there is given the adjective 'ever-perfect'. Also the scriptures say that the powers *Anima* etc. of the others are from the search after and the worship of God. Therefore they have no place in the ruling of the universe. Again, on account of their possessing their own minds, it is possible that their wills may differ, and that, whilst one desires creation, another may desire destruction. The only way of avoiding this conflict is to make all wills subordinate to some one will. Therefore the conclusion is that the wills of the liberated are dependent on the will of the Supreme Ruler."

Bhakti can be directed to Brahman

Bhakti, then, can be directed towards Brahman, only in His personal aspect. {Sanskrit}--"The way is more difficult for those whose mind is attached to the Absolute!" Bhakti has to float on smoothly with the current of our nature. True it is that we cannot have any idea of the Brahman which is not anthropomorphic, but is it not equally true of everything we know? The greatest psychologist the world has ever known, Bhagavan Kapila, demonstrated ages ago that human consciousness is one of the elements in the make-up of all objects of our perception and conception, internal as well as eternal. Beginning with our bodies and going up to Ishvara, we may see that every object of our

perception is this consciousness plus something else, whatever that may be; and this unavoidable mixture is what we ordinarily think of as reality. Indeed it is, and ever will be, all of the reality that is possible for the human mind to know. Therefore to say that Ishvara is unreal, because He is anthropomorphic, is sheer nonsense. It sounds very much like the occidental squabble on idealism and realism, which fearful-looking quarrel has for its foundation a mere play on the word 'real'. The idea of Ishvara covers all the ground ever denoted and connected by the word real, and Ishvara is as real as anything else in the universe; and after all, the word real means nothing more than what has now been pointed out. Such is our philosophical conception of Ishvara.