

"ARISE, AWAKE, AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED"



Vivek



"This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive."

"My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every movement of life."

— Swami Vivekananda



Vivekananda Human Centre

Vivekananda Centre, London, UK

www.vivekanandacentre.com

Greetings & Best Wishes for Vivekananda Festival 2024



"You are the creator of your own destiny"

-Swami Vivekananda



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Monastic Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna



Swami Vivekananda
(1863-1902)



Swami Brahmananda
(1863-1922)



Swami Yogananda
(1861-1899)



Swami Premananda
(1861-1918)



Swami Niranjanananda
(1862-1904)



Swami Shivananda
(1854-1934)



Swami Saradananda
(1865-1927)



Swami Ramakrishnananda
(1863-1911)



Swami Abhedananda
(1866-1939)



Swami Adbutananda
(-1920)



Swami Turiyananda
(1863-1922)



Swami Advaitananda
(1828-1909)



Swami Trigunatitananda
(1865-1915)



Swami Subodhananda
(1867-1932)



Swami Akhandananda
(1864-1937)



Swami Vijnanananda
(1868-1938)

Contents

About Vivekananda Human Centre	1
Editorial Board	2
Editorial	3
Programme	4-6
Message: The King	7
Message: The Prince of Wales	8
Message: The Queen	9
Message: The Duck And Duchess of Sussex	10
Message: The Prime Minister	11
Message: The Former Mayor of London	12
Message: The Former Prime Minister	13
Message: The Former Prime Minister	14
Message: The High Commissioner of India	15
Message: The Rt. Hon. Wes Streeting MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, UK	16
Message: The Most Revered President Maharaj	17
Message: Mr Bob Blackman MP	18
Message: Revered Swami Suhitanandaji Maharaj	19
Message: Revered Swami Girishanandaji Maharaj	20
Message: Revered Swami Divyanandaji Maharaj	21
Message: Revered Swami Vimalatmanandaji Maharaj	22
Message: Revered Swami Suviranandaji Maharaj	23
Message: Revered Swami Jnanavratandaji Maharaj	24
Spiritual Growth through Seva: Revered Swami Dayatmanandaji Maharaj	25-26
Swami Vivekananda's life and message: Revered Swami Balabhadranandaji Maharaj	27-29
Ramakrishna Mission: Its Future Prospects: Revered Swami Bodhasaranandaji Maharaj	30-32
Puja – The Quintessence Of Hindu Worship: Revered Swami Sarvasthanandaji Maharaj	33-34
Vivekananda's wise words and the route to religious harmony: Gary Thompson	35
Unity in Diversity: David Russell	36-37
Humanity And Values: Revered Swami Jnanalokanandaji Maharaj	38-40
Homage to Revered Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj	41
Homage to Revered Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj	41
Homage to Revered Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj	41
Homage to Revered Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj	41
Homage to Revered Swami Smaranandaji Maharaj	41
Homage to Revered Swami Aksharanandaji Maharaj	41
Homage to Revered Swami Prameyanandaji Maharaj	42
Homage to Revered Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj	42
Homage to Revered Swami Veetamohanandaji Maharaj	42
Vivekananda Human Centre, London has invited following Revered Maharajs from	
Ramakrishna Order for last 30 years	43-46
Photo Galleries	47-60
Advertisements	61-76





Vivekananda Human Centre

“...Where should you go to seek for God? Are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods? Why not worship them first?” “...Serve as worship of the Lord Himself in the poor, the miserable, and the weak. ... In this world always take the position of the given. Give everything and look for no return. Give love, give help, give service and give any little thing you can...” Swami Vivekananda dedicated his life to provide for the underprivileged members of humankind in the universe. Whether ailing or downtrodden humanity, Swamiji gave away his own life to show the right path of a universe of love. The time for humanity to join forces and embrace this universal message is now. “Come, be a man.....Do you love human beings? Do you love your Country? Then let us try our best to be good and develop ourselves.” inspired by Swami Vivekananda, Ram Chandra Saha founded Vivekananda Human centre in London on 11 September 1994 with blessings and support of Swami Aksharananda, Swami Prameyananda, Swami Prabhananda and Swami Dayatmananda. Vivekananda Human Centre is known by Vivekananda Centre for Human Excellence & Vivekananda Centre UK also centre is working as “Vivekananda Food Bank”. Swami Sarvasthananda, President of Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre UK is the adviser and patron of the Vivekananda Centre.

Vivekananda Human Centre is a registered charity (Reg No:1170716) in UK. This is a philanthropic organisation whose aim is to be good and to do good for all human beings and others, providing inspiration of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda’s messages.

The Vivekananda Human Centre promotes the philosophy of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda of Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace. It stages events through the course of the year to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds - regardless of age, belief or gender. Events include: Birthday Celebration of Swami Vivekananda- Youth Convention”, “Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna-Festival of Unity in Diversity”, Vivekananda Festival-Festival of Human Excellence”, Birthday Celebration of Holy Mother- Women’s Convention”, “Parliament of Religions- Festival of Universal Tolerance, Harmony & Peace”, Diwali- Festival of Light”.

Charitable objects: The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding between people from diverse background and the prevention or relief of poverty in the UK and overseas by providing: grants, items and services to individuals in need and/or charities, or other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty.

‘To serve man as God’- by taking this idea of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda in mind, we should mould our own life and character and should expand and promote this idea in the truest sense.

To render service to the poor, the disadvantaged, the sick, the disabled, the old and all under privileged members of human kind in the universe.

To promote Ramakrishna-Vivekananda’s philosophy of Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace.

To promote consciousness in education and culture among the youth and others as ordained by Ramakrishna - Vivekananda.

To promote advancement of public education and peace with those from different walks of life.

To promote the study of comparative Religion and philosophy in their widest form and by such and other means to assist in bringing about the harmony of Religions.

To establish and maintain universal temple and institutions for the advancement of religion, education and other charitable purposes.

To print, publish, sell or distribute, gratuitously or otherwise, any periodicals, books or leaflets or through any other media as may be necessary for the promotion of its objects.

The centre must be non-profitable and free from any political involvement.





Vivek

Vivekananda Festival 2024
Celebrating 30 Years of Vivekananda Human Centre
Sunday, 15 September 2024 at 3.00pm
The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB

Editorial Board

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Editorial

"I am a voice without a form. It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body – to cast it off like a worn-out garment. But I shall not cease to work! I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God!"

- Swami Vivekananda

We are celebrating 30 years of Vivekananda Human Centre & Vivekananda Centre, London. Swami Vivekananda is followed by millions of peace-loving people throughout the world. Outside of India, he was welcomed to London three times between 1895 and 1899. Swamiji's message of universal tolerance and acceptance is very important for this modern diverse society. We have celebrated Swamiji's 150th Birthday in 2013 and 125 years of Chicago Addresses in 2018 at the House of Commons and the British Parliament has acknowledged Swamiji's contribution and his important messages through an Early Day Motion. Also, we have received messages from the last 30 years of many British Prime Ministers, Mayors of London, MPs who have acknowledged Swamiji's contribution.

One day Sri Ramakrishna said to Swamiji, "I know that you are Narayana, born on earth to remove the misery of humanity." Therefore, we can see when Swamiji sat down to meditate on the rock of Kanyakumari, he did not meditate for his own salvation but for human problems and prospects and how to restore dignity and glory to all humanity. As a 'Amritasya Putrah' (child of immortal bliss) achieving overall human excellence, Swamiji says: "Each soul is potentially divine."

Along with other faith communities, we have been working over the last 30 years in London to make it a better place. We are now facing big challenges, including knife crime, hate crime, mental illness, climate change, and many other issues which need to be solved if our society is to be saved, if our world is to survive. Everyone, everywhere deserves to live in peace and dignity.

Vivekananda's universal messages can help us to address many of our personal, national and international problems. We need Swamiji's 'life-building, man-making, character-making and nation-building' education. Swamiji says, "You are the creator of your own destiny." "Have faith in yourselves." "To be good and to do good - that is the whole of religion!"

We are very grateful to all our supporters, including sponsors who have placed adverts in this publication, and all those that have made possible our work over the past 30 years. We are also very grateful to all delegates, honourable guests, artists and volunteers who have devoted their time to help us to ensure the success of the Vivekananda Festival 2024, our celebration of 30 Years of the Vivekananda Human Centre, as well as the publication of this VIVEK.

I hope all of you will enjoy reading VIVEK. The success of our publication will depend on all of us in understanding, realising and practising Swamiji's message in our daily lives, in accordance with our own capacities.

"ARISE, AWAKE, AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED"

Joy Swamiji!

Thank you

Ram Chandra Saha
Founder & Director
Vivekananda Human Centre
Vivekananda Centre, London





VIVEKANANDA HUMAN CENTRE

(An Organisation of Vivekananda Centre for Human Excellence)

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Email: info@vivekanandacentre.com, www.vivekanandacentre.com



*Welcome to the
Vivekananda Festival 2024
&*



Sunday, 15 September 2024 at 3.00pm

at The British Library

96 Euston Road

London, NW1 2DB



VIVEKANANDA FESTIVAL 2024

Celebrating 30 Years of Vivekananda Human Centre

"Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony & Peace"

PROGRAMME

15 September 2024 at 3.00 pm

Invocation: Candle Lighting, A brief period Meditation & Universal Prayer

Vedic Chanting: Revered Swami Madhuranandaji Maharaj, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, India

Songs: Dr Uma Basu Parbat, Dibbojit Bonik & Diya Bonik, Avantika Saha, Prottusha Saha Progga, Shubhangi Dam & Swayam Dam

Tabla: Priyas Barua **Keyboard:** Pretom Saha

Welcome Address: Ram Chandra Saha

Reading from Swamiji's Messages:

Vivek Ghosh, Aurik Meghdut Saha, Krish Howlader, Rishi Saha, Srijohn Ghosh, Bebanuj Chakrabarti, Sienna Saha, Shayan Roy, Kunal Saha, Shougata Das, Arnita Paul, Kriste Modak

Songs: Anvi Roy, Erin Mustafi Roy, Suhita Saha

Youth Convention 2024

"Swamiji's Messages for the Modern Age"

President & Guest of Honour:

Revered Swami Sarvasthanandaji Maharaj
Minister-in-Charge, Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, UK

Speakers:

Sarita Saha and Kavya Shah
Presidents, University of Bristol Hindu Society

Soham Bhansali
President, UCL Hindu Society

Shuchishmita Maitra and Akshat Sharma
Presidents, King's College London Hindu Society

Shlok Shah
President, Imperial College Hindu Society

Moderated by:

Amulya Pabbisetty
National Committee Campus Team Member, National Hindu Students' Forum

Performance:

Taal Music Bristol

Musicians: Malintha Peheesara Hewa Batage, Arushi Singh, Romuald Saithanyan Christy Ruban, Adhvik Chandran, Reeva Ajay Bijwe, Sarita Saha

Directed By: Sarita Saha - Taal Director, University of Bristol Hindu Society

Seminar:

Theme: Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony & Peace

President & Guest of Honour:

Revered Swami Balabhadranandaji Maharaj

Assistant General Secretary

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission

Headquarters, Belur Math, India

Guest of Honours:

Councillor Samata Khatoon

The Mayor of Camden

Mr Virendra Sharma

Former MP, House of Commons, London

Honourable Speakers:

Mr Leon Silver, President, East London Synagogue

Mr Gary Thompson, Journalist & Writer, London

Mr David Russell, UK Coordinator, Survivors Fund (SURF)

Dr Monica Sen, University of London

Recitations: Ravjot Arora, Ashmita Saha, Dr Apoorvaa Raja, Sinthia Das, Samar Saha

Songs: Pinka Hira, Sanjoy Ghosh, Champa Saha, Nandita Mukherjee
Binayak Deb Joy, Krishna Saha, **Himangshu Goswami**

Group Songs:

Participants: Agomoni Ghosh, Anaya Shom, Patrali Ghosh, Aisheek Ghosh, Aparna Roy, Valentina Syed, Lara Khan, Aripita Chatterjee, Nishtha Ghoshal, Barnali Ghoshal, Kuheli Dasgupta, Sharmi Roy, Tanmoyee Chowdhury, Smritikana Chowdhury, Basabdatta Mukherjee, Madhumita Banerjee, Aurko Banerjee, Israt Hossain, Zara Babu, Ishika Bose, Anindita Mandal

Directed by Mrs Sajali Roy, Head of Bengali Music, **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London**

Group Songs & Dances from Vedika Academy:

Songs: Bhajans Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram and Ayyiri Nandini.

Performers:

Aarnav Hastantram, Anvi Nikhade, Ayaan Hossain, Hariharan Pitla, Nihara Arun, Prerna Vaideeswaran, Punyakeerti Papineni, Shivaksha Mohanram & Vihaan Sriram

Directed by: Esha Ramesh

"Bharatanatyam": Participants: Rhea Shetty, Ojasvi Varnakavi, Dhruthi Dhullapanavar, Aanya Ojha, Arjitha Kamalathas, Jananii Sri & Ria Jai **Directed by: Lena Rai-Shetty**

Vote of Thanks:

Ashis Roy

Break: Prasad Distribution

Musical performance by

Rezwana Choudhury Bannya

Abanti Sithi & Amith Dey

Musicians: Sandyman & Pretom Saha

The Programme to be conducted by

Uday Shankar Das, Ranjita Sen & Sarita Saha

Vote of Thanks: Sojay Saha

**"Help and not Fight", "Assimilation and not Destruction",
"Harmony and Peace and not Dissension".**

– Swami Vivekananda



BUCKINGHAM PALACE



9th September, 2024.

Dear Mr. Saha,

I have been asked to convey to you and the Members of the Vivekananda Human Centre The King's most sincere thanks for your kind letter containing Loyal Greetings, sent on the occasion of the Vivekananda Festival 2024, "Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony & Peace," taking place on 15th September at The British Library in London, where you will also be marking the Centre's Thirtieth Anniversary.

His Majesty was deeply touched by your thoughtful words in writing as you did. In return, The King sends his warmest good wishes for a most successful and memorable celebration to all those who are present, as you commemorate this significant milestone in the Centre's history.

Yours sincerely,

Tara Mundy
Private Secretary's Office

Ram Chandra Saha.



KENSINGTON PALACE

From: The Office of TRH The Prince and Princess of Wales

Private and Confidential

10th November, 2023



Dear Mr. Saha,

I am writing to thank you for your letter to The Prince of Wales enclosing your loyal greetings to His Royal Highness sent on behalf of the Members and Officers of the Vivekananda Human Centre on the occasion of Diwali Celebration 2023.

It was kind of you to take the trouble to write as you did. The Prince of Wales was delighted to learn a little about the celebrations, and he sincerely hopes that the event will be a success.

His Royal Highness would have me send his very best wishes to all the Members and Officers of the Vivekananda Human Centre.

Yours sincerely,

Head of Royal Correspondence

Mr. Ram Chandra Saha





BUCKINGHAM PALACE



13th June, 2019.

Dear Mr. Saha,

I have been asked to thank you for your message of loyal greetings sent to The Queen on behalf of the Members and Officers of Vivekananda Human Centre on the occasion of this year's Festival for Human Excellence which is being held at University College London Institute of Education on 21st July.

Your thoughtfulness in writing is much appreciated. In return, Her Majesty sends her warm good wishes to all concerned for a most successful celebration.

Yours sincerely
Miranda Hansen Lise

Miranda Hansen Lise
Loyal Greetings Officer

Ram Chandra Saha.

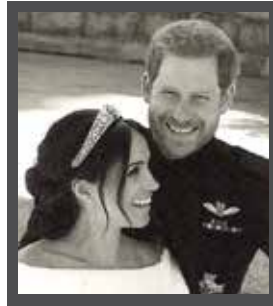


KENSINGTON PALACE

From: Miss Claudia Spens M.V.O.
The Office of TRH The Duke and Duchess of Sussex

Private and Confidential

24th June, 2019



Dear Mr. Saha,

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have asked me to thank you for your letter of 29th April in connection with the Vivekananda Festival 2019 on 21st July.

Your reasons for writing as you did are appreciated and Their Royal Highnesses are grateful to you for taking the trouble to bring this event to their attention. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have asked me to send you their best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Claudia Spens

Mr. Ram Chandra Saha



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER



I want to send my best wishes to you as you celebrate the life and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. His enduring message, reflected in the theme for today's Festival - of human excellence, unity in diversity, universal tolerance, harmony and peace - is much needed in today's polarised world.

Let me also extend my congratulations to the Vivekananda Human Centre on its 30th anniversary. Thank you for fostering greater understanding between people of different backgrounds and for your efforts in overcoming division and intolerance. Your work serving the poor and hungry, including through the Vivekananda Food Bank, is greatly appreciated.

I would like to express my gratitude to the many faith leaders and representatives present today. Since I became an MP in 2015, I have been deeply moved by the contribution of the UK's faith-based organisations. Through a global pandemic, overseas conflicts and cost-of-living challenges, our faith groups have served with resilience and compassion. You have saved lives, sustained families and strengthened communities in their hour of need. You have demonstrated what it means to be a society of service and we are forever grateful.

The Government I lead will pursue strong partnerships with faith communities, harnessing your energy and creativity to help renew our country. We are committed to building a Britain where all faith communities are safe and where diversity is celebrated.

Thank you for your work and my best wishes once again for the Festival and beyond as you celebrate this milestone anniversary.

All best wishes,

15 September 2024



MAYOR OF LONDON

Mr Ram Chandra Saha
Director
Vivekananda Human Centre
Vivekananda House
2a Elmhurst Drive
South Woodford
London E18 1BT



Our ref: MGLA210515-6066

Date: 06 JUL 2015

Dear Mr Saha

Thank you for your letter of 15 May kindly inviting me to be the Guest of Honour at the Vivekananda Festival, 'Festival for Human Excellence', at the Institute of Education on 26 July 2015.

Regrettably, it is not possible for me to attend this event but I am happy to provide the following message for publication in your souvenir 'VIVEK':

"I am very pleased to send my warmest wishes to all those attending the Vivekananda Festival for Human Excellence. Swami Vivekananda's essential message of love for all and the importance of humble service is particularly relevant here in London, a city of a multitude of faiths and where we actively celebrate our rich diversity."

Yours sincerely

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

City Hall, London, SE1 2AA • mayor@london.gov.uk • london.gov.uk • 020 7983 4000





10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

I am writing to send my best wishes to the Vivekananda Human Centre as you celebrate the historic address given 125 years ago by Swami Vivekananda.

His words, though spoken in 1893, still resonate today and are highly appropriate given that your celebration is during Inter Faith Week. Swami Vivekananda influenced many people through his teachings, while introducing Hinduism and interfaith cooperation to the wider world, not least with his words in Chicago. He was an inspirational figure, dedicated to his work, and to helping the most vulnerable in society.

I am sure everyone attending the event will be inspired by the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. As he said; "The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them".



10 DOWNING STREET

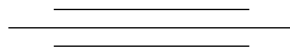
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Message

“Swami Vivekananda influenced great numbers of people through his teachings and was an inspirational and far-sighted religious leader, introducing Hinduism and the concept of inter faith dialogue to a world audience. It gives me great pleasure to send my best wishes to all those celebrating the Swami’s Birth anniversary.”

***The Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP
The Prime Minister, UK***



उच्चायुक्त
High Commissioner



भारत का उच्चायोग
लंदन

*The High Commission of India
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August 14, 2024

MESSAGE

I am delighted to learn that the Vivekananda Human Centre in London is organizing the "Vivekananda Festival-2024", sustaining a remarkable tradition of doing so for the past 30 years. This is indeed an example of praise-worthy commitment.

The timeless values of human excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace, embodied in the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, remain as relevant today as they were over a century ago.

My colleagues and I convey our best wishes for the success of the event. We are confident that this festival will remain a platform to spread the message and values of Swami Vivekananda, while encouraging further study and research into his teachings.


[Vikram Doraiswami]

Wes Streeting MP
Member of Parliament for Ilford North



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Vivekananda Human Centre



Tel: 020 3475 7901
Email: wes@redbridgelabour.org.uk
Our Ref: SG/ZA72397

September 2024

Re: Vivekananda Festival 2024 "Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace"

I would like to extend my best wishes to all attending the Vivekananda Festival this year. The theme of "Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace" is incredibly relevant today as is Swami Vivekananda's message of non-violence, peace and tolerance.

We can all learn so much from Swami Vivekananda and I am incredibly grateful for the excellent work that the Vivekananda Human Centre do to promote his message.

I hope that everyone attending the Vivekananda Festival today enjoys the event and feels inspired by Swami Vivekananda's life and teachings.

Best wishes

WES STREETING
Member of Parliament for Ilford North

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INDIA



MESSAGE

I am glad that Vivekananda Human Centre and Vivekananda Centre of London, is celebrating 30 years of its fruitful existence by conducting a Vivekananda Festival 2024 on 15 September, 2024, at the British Library, London. The theme of the celebration will be, 'Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace'. A part of the celebration will be the publication of a souvenir entitled 'VIVEK'.

This centre, true to its name, has been bringing together people of various communities and denominations in the name of Swami Vivekananda, by spreading his universal ideas. As Swami Vivekananda has said, 'No individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others and whenever such an attempt has been made under false ideas of greatness, policy or holiness – the result has always been disastrous to the secluding one'.... 'The whole universe is one existence. There cannot be anything else. Out of diversities we are all going towards this universal existence'. This is in tune with the cosmic plan of oneness. To quote Swamiji again, 'It seems to be true, that the solidarity of the human race, social as well as religious, with a scope for infinite variation, is the plan of nature'.... 'It is a great work to bring this world into a spirit of sympathy with each other'.

I pray to Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda to bless all the participants of this festival and make them understand the value and importance of the universal teachings and help them translate these teachings into their lives for building a new world-order. My best wishes and blessings on all the participants and on the organizers of the function who are working towards universal oneness, tolerance, harmony and peace which Swami Vivekananda had envisaged.

2 June, 2024

Swami Gautamananda

(Swami Gautamananda)

President,

Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission





Bob Blackman MP
Member of Parliament for Harrow East
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7082



15th September 2024

Vivekananda Festival 2024

I begin with expressing my sincerest apologies for not being able to join the Vivekananda Festival celebrations this year. I am sure that it will be an excellent event, showcasing the devoted work the centre carries out and providing a superb occasion for members to commemorate Vivekananda and enjoy many vibrant Indian performances together.

The Vivekananda Festival 2024 provides an opportunity to sit back and cherish the gifts of human excellence, universal tolerance, harmony and peace. In the day to day rush of life, with conflicting stresses of work, education, social pressures and limited time, we must remind ourselves of these qualities and live by them to restore both internal and external peace.

Thank you to all those involved with organising this vast event. The whole community appreciates your devotion and tireless efforts to ensure its success and I look forward to joining next years festival!

Kind Regards,

Bob Blackman CBE MP
Member of Parliament for Harrow East

Constituency Office:

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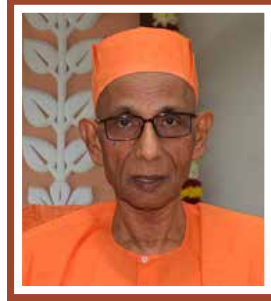
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RAMAKRISHNA MATH
(The Headquarters)
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INDIA

10 May 2024

Sri Ram Chandra Saha
Director
Vivekananda Centre
Vivekananda House
2a, Elmhurst Drive
London E18 1BT, UK



MESSAGE

Dear Sri Saha,

Received your email of 1 May 2024. I am glad to learn that the Vivekananda Human Centre & Vivekananda Centre will be celebrating its 30th year and will publish a souvenir to commemorate the occasion.

Swami Vivekananda's message of harmony, acceptance and human dignity is needed now, more than ever. The Swami expressed his mission in his letter to Ms Margaret Elizabeth Noble (later Sister Nivedita): "My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life."

I pray that Vivekananda Festival instils this lofty sentiment in all the participants and the organizers.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(Swami Suhitananda)
Vice President



SWAMI GIRISHANANDA

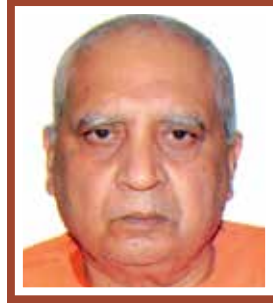
VICE PRESIDENT

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Fax: (91) 33 – 2654 4346, E-mail: girishananda@rkmm.org



Message

It gives me immense pleasure and happiness to learn that "Vivekananda Human Centre and Vivekananda Centre, London" is going to celebrate its completion of 30 years of existence in spreading the message and ideas of Swami Vivekananda among the communities and authorities in London. The theme of the celebration as chosen, "Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace" is very relevant and of utmost importance on today's date for the whole world, and there could be no better guide than Swamiji's life and teaching in these aspects of human life.

While the Centre is also organizing the "Vivekananda Festival 2024" on 15th, September, 2024 and is going to publish a souvenir to commemorate the celebration, I pray at the lotus feet of Sri Ramakrishna Dev, Sri Sri Maa Sarada and Swamiji Maharaj for a very successful and purposeful completion of the celebration and overall welfare of all concerned with the same.

I also wish that the souvenir 'VIVEK' will carry the words of Swami Vivekananda to a larger community to make it worth the pious effort put by Vivekananda Human Centre and Vivekananda Centre, London.

With loves and blessings


Swami Girishananda.



RAMAKRISHNA MATH, COSSIPORE

Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Dev Sarani

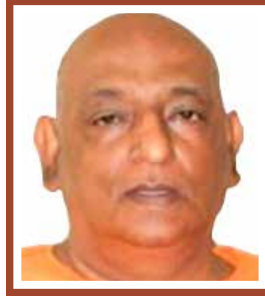
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Sri Ram Chandra Saha
Director
Vivekananda Centre, London



MESSAGE

Your mail dt May 1, 2024.

I am very glad to learn about your festival and 'VIVEK' Souvenir publication.

Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Saradadevi and Swami Vivekananda came for the welfare of whole humanity.

You have been working for more than a few decades in the field of value education & spreading the message of the Holi Trio.

I pray for the grand success of your VIVEKANANDA FESTIVAL 2024 & publication of the Souvenir "VIVEK".

May Sri Sri Thakur, Ma and Swamiji Maharaj bless you all in my earnest prayer.

Jai Thakur! Jai Ma! Jai Swamiji!

Yours affectionately,

Swami Divyananda

Swami Divyananda

Vice President
Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission
Belur Math, Howrah - 711 262

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RAMAKRISHNA MATH (YOGODYAN)

(A branch centre of Ramakrishna Math, Belur)

7 Yogodyan Lane, Kankurgachhi

Kolkata 700 054, West Bengal



I'm delighted to learn that a souvenir named 'VIVEK' will be published during the Vivekananda Festival 2024, commemorating 30 years of the Vivekananda Human Centre & Vivekananda Centre, London.

Sri Ramakrishna, through his unparalleled spiritual practices, realized that the essence of all religions leads to the same goal, as described in the ancient Vedanta literature with the invocation Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha Vadanti. He propagated this ideal worldwide, with Swami Vivekananda as his foremost instrument.

Swami Vivekananda's mission in London was highly successful. He often spoke of

his vision for England, stating, "On the other hand in England the Vedantic ideas have been introduced by the most learned men in the country, and there are a large number among the upper classes in England who are very thoughtful. So you will be astonished to hear that I found my grounds all prepared, and I am convinced that my work will have more hold on England than America."

The unifying concept of Vedanta, a sacred literature, has the power to bring together all nations and religions worldwide. According to Vedanta, all religions are equally true, and every individual, regardless of economic status, social standing, or educational background, is inherently connected to the Supreme Being, who is omnipotent and omnipresent.

Vedanta, described as a source of eternal strength, teaches that anyone can attain a state of immortal bliss, irrespective of their circumstances, by embracing its true principles. It is imperative that we learn these principles through the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, who embodied himself to make us aware about self-realization, the ultimate goal of human birth.

In 1937 the famous British historian Arnold Toynbee wrote properly, "At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is an Indian way. The Emperor Ashoka's and the Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions : here we have the attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family—and, in the Atomic Age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves."

The people of England are ideal messengers for Sri Ramakrishna's ideas to the world. As admirer of Swami Vivekananda, we must combat narrow-mindedness and division, with Swami Vivekananda as our guiding light. He once said, "I have only laid the foundation of the work. If future preachers follow my path, a good deal of work may be done in time."

Swami Vivekananda's vision has come true. The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre in London has been preaching Vedanta for years without interruption since its foundation. Your Vivekananda Centre, along with many other Vedanta Centres, is also following the same path, inspired by Swami Vivekananda.

My earnest prayer is for the smooth execution of both the souvenir publication and the festival, without any hindrances, unto Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vimalatmananda

(Swami Vimalatmananda)

Vice President

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission,

Belur Math, Howrah, India

Adhyaksha

Ramakrishna Math, Yogodyan,

Kankurgachhi

Kolkata, India

Date : 04-05-2024

Ramchandra Saha

Vivekananda Human Centre,

Vivekananda Centre

Vivekananda House, London, UK



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RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

(The Headquarters)

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16 May 2024



Dear Ram Chandra Saha,

I am delighted to learn that Vivekananda Human Centre is going to celebrate Vivekananda Festival on 15 September 2024, and that a commemorative volume Vivek will be released on the occasion.

Vivekananda Human Centre and the other Vedanta Societies in Europe and the USA have as their main objective spreading the eternal message of Vedanta as taught by Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. Though Vedanta encompasses several schools of thought, Swami Vivekananda emphasised the monistic ideas of Vedanta in the West more than anything else. Having closely observed the culture and mental make-up of the people there, he concluded that the ideas of supreme sovereignty of the human soul and its identity with the ultimate reality are best suited to meet their religious needs.

In the course of a sublime lecture in London, Swami Vivekananda said:

"All this manifoldness is the manifestation of the One. That One is manifesting Himself as many, as matter, spirit, mind, thought, and everything else... Therefore, the first step for us to take is to reach the truth to ourselves and to others.

"Let the world resound with this ideal and let superstitions vanish. Tell it to men who are weak and persist in telling it. You are the Pure One, awake and arise, O mighty one, this sleep does not become you... Say that to the world, say it to yourselves, and see what a practical result comes, see how with an electric flash everything is manifested, how everything is changed."

Vivekananda Human Centre is working to spread this revivifying message of Vedanta in London. I wish and pray that the Centre may continue to render this invaluable service to men and women to help them realize their true spiritual nature.

I send my best wishes for the Vivekananda Festival on 15 September 2024. May the event be a grand success!

With sincere prayers and good wishes,

Sri Ram Chandra Saha
Director, Vivekananda Human Centre
London

Yours sincerely,
Swamī Suvīrananda
(Swami Suvirananda)
General Secretary



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June 22, 2024

Mr. Ram Chandra Saha
Director, Vivekananda Human Centre
Vivekananda House
2a Elmhurst Drive
London, E18 1BT, UK

Dear Mr. Saha,

I am glad to receive your email dated June 11, 2024, informing about the Vivekananda Festival 2024, London, which is going to be held on September 15, at The British Library. Happy to learn that the theme of the Festival is: "Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace" and to commemorate the event a souvenir titled VIVEK will be published.

Swami Vivekananda, in his first lecture at the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago, which brought him in the limelight, he touched upon the above theme nicely. He said, "... Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecution with the sword or with pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal."

May by the grace of the Lord the Vivekananda Festival 2024, London, including the publication of the souvenir titled VIVEK be a grand success and the lively discussions to be held in it be instrumental in practicalizing the theme of the programme as envisioned by Swami Vivekananda in the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago, USA!

I convey my hearty good wishes to Mr. Ram Chandra Saha and his team for organizing this Festival.

At the feet of Swami Vivekananda,

Jnanavratana

(Swami Jnanavratana)
Manager



Spiritual Growth through Seva: Swami Vivekananda's Legacy

Swami Dayatmananda

Former President, Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, UK

The greatest tribute and service we can offer to Swami Vivekananda is to embrace and apply his teachings, along with those of Sri Ramakrishna, in our daily lives.

This involves dedicating ourselves to serving our fellow human beings, particularly the disadvantaged. Swami Vivekananda emphasized that serving "God among the needy" (Daridra-Narayana) is our foremost duty.

Swamiji proclaimed that India's national ideals should be renunciation and service; focusing on these would naturally address other important issues.

This philosophy aligns well with Mahatma Gandhi's teachings also, which awakened millions to the power of practical Vedanta in their lives.

Every single day is bringing the world nearer to third world-war. In this our materialistic age, Sri Ramakrishna stressed the supremacy of spirit. Vivekananda expanded on this, emphasizing both spiritual progress and material well-being as well.

He stated, "Religion is not for empty bellies," highlighting the need to address both spiritual and physical needs.

Swamiji's philosophy centered on selfless service as a valid path to spiritual enlightenment. He believed that through disinterested service also, one could reach the highest spiritual goal i.e., God-realization.

This passion for service, which was literally inherited from Sri Ramakrishna, (Daya noi, Siva jnane Jiva Seva) manifested in Swamiji deep concern for all beings, especially the suffering and marginalized.

The concept of spiritual liberation is explored, suggesting that some enlightened souls choose to retain their individuality after liberation (the well-known Bodhisattva ideal) to help others achieve spiritual release. Swami Vivekananda is presented as one such great soul.

Swamiji elaborates the practical application of sacrifice and renunciation in daily life (which he termed as Practical Vedanta), emphasizing the importance of seeing the deeper purpose behind all our activities. True Seva should lead us to inner balance and introspection, helping us regain our divine heritage.

Drawing from the Bhagavad-Gita, Swami Vivekananda explores the principle of Karma Yoga - working for the good of all without attachment to the fruits of one's actions. Practical Vedanta emphasizes work as worship of God, performing duties without ego or expectation of reward.

The concept of tyaga (detachment) is examined, clarifying that it doesn't imply loss or emptiness, but rather fulfillment and reconnection with one's spiritual essence. This detachment is presented as key to spiritualizing service and attaining true freedom.

Swamiji's interpretation of service as a manifestation of spiritual wisdom not only practical but also well-suited in today's work-oriented world. Service as worship of God can be synthesized with knowledge when performed for others' welfare without ego or personal motive.

The essence of Karma-yoga, according to Swami Vivekananda, is the annihilation of ego (ahamkara) and aligning oneself with the divine. His concept of "practical Vedanta" involves realizing the oneness of every being through disinterested service to humanity.



Romain Rolland's acute observation that Swami Vivekananda's genius can be summed up in "equilibrium and synthesis" is apt. His philosophy embraced all paths of spiritual growth, combining renunciation with service, art with science, and religion with action.

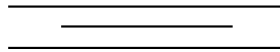
The practical application of Vivekananda's teachings is emphasized through his call to "be and make" - manifesting one's own divinity within by way of serving others. This, naturally, involves seeing and serving the divine in all beings.

The universality of Swami Vivekananda's message is very much needed at the present age in this war-torn world.

The final message of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy is: "First idealize the real; then realize the ideal."

This expresses the transformative power of his teachings, encouraging individuals to see the divine potential in the world and work towards manifesting that ideal in day-today life.

May Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda bless and inspire us all with Bhakti and Seva.



God dwells in all people but the manifestation of this inner Divinity varies from person to person. In saintly people there is greater manifestation of God. Women are special manifestations of Divine Mother of the Universe, and so are to be treated with respect.

-Sri Ramakrishna

It is idle to expect that dangers and difficulties will not come. They are bound to come. But for a devotee they will pass away under the feet like water.

-Holy Mother

Strength, strength it is that we want so much in this life, for what we call sin and sorrow have all one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes ignorance, and with ignorance comes misery.

-Swami Vivekananda





Sister Nivedita on the significance of Swami Vivekananda's life and message.

Swami Balabhadrananda

Assistant General Secretary

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Headquarters, Belur Math, India

Before coming to America in July 1893 to participate in the World's first parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda spent almost seven years of his life as a wandering monk as was the practice of the traditional monks in India. During that time, he once happened to meet one Mr Sarat Chandra Gupta, a young Assistant Station Master of a small Railway Station at Hathras in North India. Being impressed by the extraordinary personality of Swami Vivekananda, very soon Gupta became his monastic disciple and assumed the name Swami Sadananda. From Sadananda we come to know that Vivekananda once told him that Sri Ramakrishna, his Master, had entrusted him with a great responsibility which often kept him worried and restless, and that was: regeneration of India.

It was to assist him in this task of India's regeneration that Swami Vivekananda called Sister Nivedita, then Margaret Noble, to India. A few months after his return to India from the West, Vivekananda wrote to Margaret Noble : " I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man, but a woman—a real lioness—to work for Indians, women specially." Meeting of these two great personalities was surely destined by the Divine Will, as it is evident from the great impact they both created on India's national awakening and freedom movement. Nivedita is also hailed as a great interpreter of Vivekananda's. Her speeches and writings have thrown some deeper and newer lights on Swamiji's life and teachings, which would have otherwise missed our notice. The following paragraphs will deal with some of Nivedita's ideas as to the significance of Swamiji's life and message.

Margaret Noble met Swami Vivekananda for the first time in London on 10 November 1895 at the drawing room of one of her friends, Lady Isabel Margesson. She was then just 28 year old and already well known in the intellectual arena of London as a young educationist, essayist and speaker, rubbing shoulders with stalwarts like Bernard Shaw and Thomas Huxley. But at heart she was being pricked by some sincere spiritual questions which her inborn Christian faith as well as her recent studies of Buddha's life could not answer till then. Meanwhile, Swami Vivekananda had come to London from America exactly two months ago and created a great stir among the educated people of London and when only a fortnight was left for his departure, Lady Isabel Margesson invited him to her residence to give a talk and knowing Margaret greatly interested in spiritual and philosophical matters, she invited Margaret also to attend. Strangely, till then Margaret had not heard about Vivekananda. So as Vivekananda spoke that evening, sitting on the floor in a meditative posture, Margaret listened to him in rapt attention and all her questions seemed to have been answered. So impressed she was that she could not miss the remaining two lectures that Vivekananda gave before leaving for America. Margaret unmistakably noticed a heroic element in his personality and the tremendous love that he had for his motherland. But most impressed she was by the loftiness of his character. In Nivedita's own words : " I had recognized the heroic fibre of the man, and desired to make myself the servant of his love for his own people. But it was his character to which I had thus done obeisance." Even before Swamiji left for America, Margaret started to address him as " Master".

They were in touch with each other through letters and Swamiji again came to London the next year on his way back to India. Margaret wanted to accompany Swamiji to India, as she had by then made up her mind to come to India and dedicate herself to the cause of his Master and his motherland. But Vivekananda asked her to stay back and wait for his call. That call from her Master came in July 1897. The letter through which it came we have already mentioned and Margaret reached her adopted

home on 28 January 1898.

Shortly after her arrival in India, on 25th March 1898, Vivekananda gave her mantra- deeksha, formal spiritual initiation and named her Nivedita, meaning “ The Dedicated.”

Vivekananda then went round a tour of Northern India along with some of his brother disciples and Western Disciples .Nivedita also joined the tour at Swamiji’s behest. Swamiji had said to her : “ Come with me on this journey ! You are now one, I will make you twenty”.

During this tour Nivedita understood both India and Vivekananda in their true spirits. Both were rooted in spirituality and liberal to accept the good things from wherever it is available.

It was Sister Nivedita who pointed out the fact that idea-wise Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were but two expressions of a single soul. “There has been with us a soul named Ramakrishna-Vivekananda”, she writes in the ‘Master as I saw Him’. By this, she means that Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are more the expressions of some eternal principles relevant to all people for all times than they are mere persons limited to geographical locations and time. “..These two souls were indeed one great soul manifested into two souls for regenerating and rejuvenating Indian life”, she says. And in the same breath she says in the same speech, “These two Sannyasis (Ramakrishna and Vivekananda) dedicated their whole lives to the service of the whole world---to the redemption of the whole world”. That is why , though a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, Nivedita used to introduce herself as “Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda”---- not as Nivedita of Vivekananda or Nivedita of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

Nivedita discovered three basic things contributing to make what Vivekananda was. They were---- Scriptures, Sri Ramakrishna and India. He was a deep student of our ancient scriptures, which gave him a theoretical knowledge of the truths that the ancient sages knew at first hand. After meeting Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda realized that those truths were not mere the truths of the yore, they were true equally at present. As Nivedita puts it, “In his Master, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, living and teaching in the temple-garden of Dakshineswar, the Swami Vivekananda....found that verification of the ancient texts which his heart and his reason had demanded.” And the striking thing in this context is that though we find Sri Ramakrishna’s life as scriptures exemplified, he himself did not study any scripture. Nivedita writes it in her usual unique expression , “Yet he, who was thus the living embodiment of the books, was so unconsciously, for he had read none of them. In his Guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda found the key to life.”

But the making of Vivekananda was not yet complete. He was still to know India. Then only he would be fully equipped to appear on the world scene. We continue to quote Nivedita: “Even now, however, the preparation for his own task was not complete. He had yet to wander throughout the length and breadth of India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, ...seeing India as She was and is, and so grasping in his comprehensiveness the vast whole, of which his Master’s life and personality has been a brief and intense epitome.” The truths that the scriptures described, the truths that he found living in Sri Ramakrishna’s life , the same truths he found vibrant in the collective life of his countrymen. Sri Ramakrishna got revealed to him as embodying both the scriptures and India. Nivedita says that these were “the three notes” that mingled themselves “to form the music of the works of Vivekananda”. These were “the three flames burning within that single lamp” whom the world had known as Vivekananda. And out of these three ingredients, Vivekananda cooked his “spiritual bounty”, in which lay, in Nivedita’s words, “world’s heal-all” --- the cure of all sufferings of all human beings in this world..

The Vedanta also talks of and guides us all to reach this state of “ heal-all” ,which Nivedita found in Vivekananda’s message. The Vedanta only puts it in different words and calls it atyantika-duhkha-nivrtitti--- Absolute relief from all sorrow. Swamiji once said that he did not preach anything other

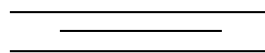
than Vedanta. It is actually so. Vedanta talks of inherent Divinity of every being and on the basis of that Divine identity, Oneness of all. To a question as to what his ideal is, Swamiji wrote on 7 June 1896 to Nivedita who was then still Margaret : “ My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: To preach unto mankind their Divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.”

Now , what he meant by Divinity ? He once said: “Everything that is strong, and good, and powerful in human nature is the outcome of that Divinity.” So Divinity can be conjectured as this: in the realm of name and form it is all the positive qualities at their best, and in the realm beyond, it is an inexpressible experience of oneness with the entire universe.

To awaken this dormant Divinity, which is lying equally in all and differing only in the degrees of manifestation, every thought and every deed matters. Every good thought and deed awakens my sleeping divinity a little more and every bad thought and deed sends my divinity to a little deeper sleep, and the life remains to be a sum total of these progresses and regresses that I make in the awakening of my inherent Divinity, thus indicating my overall spiritual progress in life.

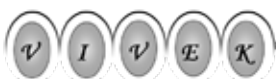
From this, Nivedita found in Swamiji’s message a broad and profound meaning of spirituality and its practices. She said: “.. it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realisation.” Because, realization means awakening of Divinity only and that can be done by any thought or action irrespective of its being clearly spiritual or so-called secular. Nivedita continues: “ No distinction henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray... Life is itself religion.... To him, the workshops, the study, the farmyard, and the field are as true and fit scenes for the meeting of God with man as the cell of the monk or the door of the temple. To him, there is no difference between service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality.” It is because, by spirituality Swamiji meant awakening of our dormant Divinity, and as our every thought and deed directly influences the state of our inherent Divinity, in each of these cases which Nivedita just mentioned, we can progress spiritually by dealing with our Divinity in a positive way.

As our every deed and thought matters, in a positive or in a negative way, in the awakening of our inherent Divinity and this process continually happens within even without our conscious knowledge of it, Vivekananda urged us to be consciously engaged in this important task of awakening our dormant Divinity and with utmost urgency. He said: “ Teach yourself, teach everyone his real nature. Call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes! Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come and everything that is excellent will come when the sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.”



Purity of mind is an essential condition for the attainment of the Ultimate Reality; real purity is freedom from lust and External observances are only of secondary importance.

-Sri Ramakrishna





Ramakrishna Mission: Its Future Prospects

Swami Bodhasarananda

Assistant General Secretary,
Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Headquarters, Belur Math, India

It is a matter of great satisfaction for all of us that Ramakrishna Mission celebrated its 125 years of founding two years ago. It is a period during which it has stood tall upholding high the banner of its twin ideals *atmano mokshartham jagat hitay cha* (for one's own liberation and for the good of the world). We all sincerely believe that this organization was started by Sri Ramakrishna himself and a legal frame was given to it by Swami Vivekananda later. Its future prospects were prophesized by Swamiji when he said:

‘That nectar which has been obtained by churning the infinite ocean of the Vedas, into which Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and the other gods have poured their strength, which is charged with the life essence of the incarnations—Sri Ramakrishna holds that nectar in his person, in the fullest measure!’

Elsewhere referring to Belur Math, the headquarters of worldwide Ramakrishna Mission, he said: ‘This Math (monastery) will be the central institution for the practice of religion and the culture of knowledge. The spiritual force emanating from here will permeate the whole world, turning the currents of men's activities and aspirations into new channels. The time will come when by the mere will of the sannyasins of this Math, life will vibrate into the deadened souls of men.’

After the establishment of the monastery, Swami Vivekananda said: ‘By the will of the Lord is established today His Dharmakshetra. Today I feel free from the weight of the responsibility which I have carried with me for twelve long years. And now a vision comes to my mind! This Math shall become a great centre of learning and Sadhana. Pious householders will erect houses for themselves on the grounds round this future religious university and live there, with the Sannyasins in the centre. To the south, the followers of the Lord from England and America will come and make their abode!’ Turning to a disciple, he asked triumphantly, ‘What do you think of it?’ The disciple having reverently expressed his doubt if this ‘most excellent piece of fancy’ would ever be materialised, the Swami cried out, ‘Fancy, do you say! Hear me, O, you of little faith! Time will fulfil all my expectations. I am now only laying the foundation, as it were. Great things will come later on. I will do my share of the task; and I shall instil into you all the various ideas which you will in the future have to work out! The highest principles and ideals of religion have not only to be studied and comprehended, but brought into the practical field of life. Do you understand?’

The Swami spoke of the glorious future which he felt it was to have: ‘It would be a centre in which would be recognised and practised a grand harmony of all creeds and faiths as exemplified in the life of Shri Ramakrishna, and only ideas of religion in its universal aspect would be preached. And from this centre of universal toleration would go forth the shining message of goodwill and peace and harmony to deluge the whole world.’

Swamiji has given us enough for fifteen hundred years. Slowly we have to translate his ideas into action ‘for the good of the Many, for the happiness of the Many!’ How to do it? He says: ‘There should be first Annadana, or the giving of food and other necessities of physical life; next, Vidyadana, or the imparting of intellectual knowledge; and last of all, Jnanadana, or the conferring of spiritual knowledge. The harmonizing of these three aspects which conduce to the making of Man, must be the sole duty of the Math.’

When Ramakrishna Mission was founded in 1897, India was one of the poorest and most backward nations in the world. Now we are considered one of the potential superpowers. This potential is attributed to several indicators, the primary ones being its demographic trends and a rapidly expanding

economy and military. Approximately 65% of its population is below the age of 35. This provides the nation with a large workforce for many decades, helping in its growth. It is going to become the third economic power within a few years. Before it can be considered a superpower and the Vishwa-guru (world teacher), the country must overcome many economic, social, and other problems.

Knowledge has become a great force in driving economic growth. Interestingly many Indian-origin CEO are leading the world's biggest companies. Education has come to play a crucial role. But the very concept of education has changed in recent times. The walls of the classrooms are no longer a barrier as technology enables new ways of learning, communicating, and working collaboratively. Technology has also begun to change the roles of teachers and learners. Students have access to personal devices, study materials, interactive lessons, and educational tutorials.

In this scenario of rapid changes, the time has come for us to review Ramakrishna Mission's response to the conditions and needs of the contemporary society in various fields, and to understand the future options before us.

Educational Activities: There is great public appreciation of our educational work in rural, urban and tribal areas. There is also a great demand for more schools, students' homes, hostels, and so on. While there has been an enormous growth in quantity, there has to be a corresponding increase in quality. Our aim is to make our boys true human beings. Swamiji wanted 'Schools and colleges must become training grounds for prophets'. Hence the great work that lies before us is the training of prophets. People should be made to realize who they are and what for they have taken birth.

Now that the education sector has become a big source of minting money, we have to think whether we can adopt some other means of imparting education to serve society.

Medical Service: The medical scene has undergone a great change during the past few decades. Medicine today is no more the humanitarian art and science that it used to be, but has become a lucrative business—something which was decried in no uncertain terms by Sri Ramakrishna. The Mission has a glorious record of more than a century of medical services under difficult conditions. In future it will have to face new challenges of providing cost-effective remedies and bringing the most modern medical, scientific and technological advances to the poorest in the remotest corners of India. At the same time it will have to maintain the high standard of dedicated service and motivate doctors and nurses to provide what little selfless service they can. The Mission has done this in the past and has the potential to do it for many centuries to come.

Relief and Rehabilitation: When a person has been hit or has lost something that is precious to him, be it a piece of property or a dear family member, he seeks solace, comfort and some answers to the dilemmas which otherwise threaten to consume him. This solace often comes only from God or from embarking on a spiritual journey. Hence spiritual organizations like ours have an important role in such situations. State Governments and local people have high expectation from us.

Householders: All people cannot become monks. The householders have to be made aware of their own ideal. In ancient India there was no distinction between monks and householders. They were all rishis. This ancient ideal has been revived in modern times by Sri Ramakrishna. According to Swamiji every Hindu must strive to become a rishi. All the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission are directly or indirectly connected to the redemptive work of Sri Ramakrishna.

Harmony of Religions: We not only propagate the idea of harmony of religions through books and lectures but actually put it into practice in our community life. Our organization admits people belonging to different religions into its ranks. The lay devotees also come from different communities. How important this idea of harmony of religions is in the modern world can be understood only when we remember that religious fundamentalism, supported by terrorism, is the single greatest threat to national integration and international peace and security in the present-day society. Sri Ramakrishna says: 'It is God alone

who makes people see things in different ways. Know that people have different nature. Realize this and mix with them as much as you can. And, love all. But enter your own chamber to enjoy peace and bliss.' Such harmonious and peaceful living in a pluralistic society is an objective we all aspire to. Various religions and religious practices, so many developed languages, hundreds of dialects, various customs and manners, foods and dresses, and ethnic variations—all come under the single name India. Swami Vivekananda rightly termed it as a 'veritable ethnological museum'! No other country in the world can boast of such diversity, all strung together like a garland.

In this modern age, nobody has stressed the importance of religious harmony as Sri Ramakrishna did. This emphasis on his part did not arise from an intellectual assessment or as an academic proposition. It sprang from his own spiritual practices and experiences leading to a spiritual goal. After practicing various religious disciplines found in Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, and reaching the same Supreme Reality, he declared, 'as many faiths so many paths'. We have to explore the possibilities of bringing this truth to all minds, so that all fighting in the name of religion comes to an end.

Rejuvenation of Monasticism: While monasticism is declining in the West, more sincere people are drawn to Ramakrishna Order. This Order of monks represents a new ideal of monastic life that retains all that is best in the ancient Indian monastic tradition. It emphasizes inner purity and renunciation and not outer show. It aims at all-round development of personality by the practice of the synthesis of the four yogas.

Dissemination of Ideas: The present century is in urgent need of ennobling ideas which are capable of instilling higher values of life in people from all walks of life, without being dogmatic and sectarian in nature, and which will be capable of giving wisdom, strength, and peace of mind to all. People are looking for global values, a global religion, and a global civilization. Sri Ramakrishna's message of the harmony of religions, Swami Vivekananda's electrifying message of hope and strength, and Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi's message of universal love have the potential to usher us into a new civilization. What is needed now is to present it in a style and mode suited to the needs of modern man, and to make earnest and systematic attempts to spread this literature on a vast scale with the help of latest techniques and communication methods.

Empowerment of Women: Swamiji's genius and insight revealed yet another prospect that he understood the true significance of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi's great life and the role she would have to play in the regeneration of women. In one of his letters he wrote: 'Mother has been born to revive that wonderful Shakti in India; and making her the nucleus, once more will Gargis and Maitreyis be born into the world.' We have to find ways how we can fulfil Swamiji's vision of empowering women. 'Without Shakti there is no regeneration for the world.' Hence the future role of Ramakrishna Mission in the advancement of women is immense.

Foreign Work: Swamiji believed that universal principles of Vedanta, lived and taught by Sri Ramakrishna, would be able to fill up the spiritual vacuum in Western society. There is a great spiritual hunger throughout the world. Disillusioned by the emptiness of wealth and pleasure seeking, millions of people are turning to spiritual life. India must contribute her spiritual wealth to world culture. To accomplish this work we have to send capable monks abroad to undertake the redemptive work of Sri Ramakrishna. The primary purpose of an incarnation is to liberate humanity from suffering and bondage.

To sum up, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda saw things in much larger time frames than we do. So our limited vision of 125 years of their teachings is nothing. The seeds that were planted by them have grown and scattered everywhere. As Swami Saradananda said: 'The more we study the life of this wonderful Master, the more we shall see that he doesn't belong to any particular country, nation, sect or religion. He enters people's mind as liberal ideas, breaking all narrow barriers, putting people in his new mould, and binding them together with a unique cord of unity.'



PUJA – THE QUINTESSENCE OF HINDU WORSHIP

Swami Sarvasthananda

Minister-in-Charge, Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, UK

Within the past century or so, the Comparative Study of Religions has seen its birth and its subsequent growth. Among the great religions of the world, Hinduism and Christianity give the greatest importance to worship. Islam strictly prohibits ritualistic worship but encourages a worshipful attitude. In fact, the daily Namaz or Salah is more an act of worship or adoration than a prayer. In Buddhism, the Mahayana division gives some importance to worship. Some scholars even claim that Tantric worship in India was first developed by Mahayana Buddhists.

Hinduism stands on four main pillars – Dharma, Artha, Kama & Moksha. Moksha, the highest goal of man, has been attained by various individuals by following different types of Upasanas. Upasana is to 'sit near' God. It is the process of practicing the proximity of God and of progressively feeling His presence till one merges in Him. Puja – ritualistic worship forms a part of the process of Upasana. Dhyan is also a part of the same process. While dhyan and japa are purely internal and mental, puja or worship includes some performance of external acts as also chanting of some certain mantras and the like.

Puja is a science. It is a spiritual discipline that follows a logical procedure at every stage. In Kularnava Tantra, Puja is defined as the act which quells the waves of Karmic flow resulting from past births, puts an end to the cycle of births and deaths and offers complete fulfillment. Here fulfillment comes from the oneness of the worshipper and Isvara.

Man at the initial stages of spiritual development has to make use of something external, and when the inner self becomes purified, they turn to more abstract conceptions. External worship is referred to in the Mahanirvana Tantra as lower than the lowest (Adhamaadhama). In fact, there are two aspects of worship – external and internal. Each is of equal value. Total worship is a combination of both the internal and external ones.

The Vedas produced Yajnas and the Tantras produced Puja. From ancient times, both have been conjoined and thus have been fulfilling each other – each compensating for the other's limitations. Puja differs from Yajna not only in its external form but also in its basic philosophy.

The first basic doctrine behind Puja is the priesthood of man. In Vedic sacrifice, Agni was the priest who mediated between man and Gods. Man could not directly approach the Gods with offerings. What was needed was a divine assurance that God accepted offerings directly from his devotees.

The second fundamental presupposition behind Puja is that the Deity could be invoked in an Image. Image worship led to Temple worship, which completely replaced the Vedic Altar in post-Vedic Hinduism.

The third philosophical concept which distinguishes Puja from Vedic Yajna is the doctrine of divinization of the worshipper (Devo Bhutva Devam Yajet) The Vedantic doctrine of the Atman as the real Self, which is pure, self-luminous and blissful, makes man potentially divine. An important function of worship is to bring out this hidden divinity. This is symbolically done through certain rituals called Bhuta-shuddhi and Nyasa. Though to a beginner, all this is nothing but imagination, to an advance sadhaka, divinization of the subtle body is a matter of actual experience.

The fourth basic concept on which Puja is based is the doctrine of service and self-surrender to God.



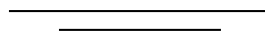
In Vedic Yajna, the main idea was sacrifice. In Puja, the idea of service (Upachara) take its place. The service (Upachara) of the Deity is done with five, ten, sixteen or more articles like water, flowers, leaves, incense, light, food etc. An important point to note here is the role of Mantras and Mudras in worship. The whole system of Puja is based on the implicit belief that these have an intrinsic power to produce changes in the worshipper's consciousness and in the objects around him. Certain poses of hand which are pleasing to all the Devatas, and by means of which all the burdens of sins are destroyed are known as Mudras. For example Ankusha, Avagunthana, Kurma, Yoni, Jwaalini, Dhenu, Mriga, Samhaara etc.

Swami Saradananda in his masterpiece -Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master- has mentioned, 'The Master used to say that at the time of performing Anganyasa, Karanyasa, etc he actually saw the letters of the mantras in bright colors set in the body. He actually saw the Coiled Power (Kundalini) going up in the form of a snake through the Sushumna to the Sahasrara. He felt that the parts of his body left behind by that power, at once became still and insensitive and dead to all appearance. Again, when according to the prescribed method of worship, he uttered the mantra Ram, sprinkled water all round himself and imagined a wall of fire existing around the place of worship, he actually saw an impassable wall of fire with a hundred tongues spread out, protecting the place of worship from all obstacles.' (II. 5.13, pp. 132-33)

Again in the same book he cites, 'At the time of performing sandhya and worship [said the Master] I used to think, according to scriptural prescription, that the Papapurusa within had been burnt up. Who knew then that there was actually Papapurusa within the body and that it could be actually burnt and destroyed? A burning sensation came on the body from the beginning of the Sadhana. I thought, 'What is this disease?' It increased by degrees and became unbearable. Various kinds of oils prescribed by physicians were used; but it could by no means be alleviated. One day, while I was sitting under the Panchavati, I saw that a jet-black person with red eyes and a hideous appearance come reeling, as if drunk, out of this (showing his own body), and walked before me. I saw again another person of placid mien, in ochre-colored dress, with a trident in his hand come out similarly from the body, vehemently attack the other and kill him. The burning sensation in the body decreased for a short time after I had that vision. I suffered from that burning sensation continually for six months before the Papapurusa was burnt up.' (II. 7.10, pp. 148-49)

Continuing he says, 'Formerly when he offered cooked food etc. to the Mother, he used to see an extraordinary ray of light coming out beaming from Her eyes, touching all the offered articles, taking their essential parts and withdrawing itself again into Her eyes.' (II. 7.4, p. 143)

Swami Vivekananda himself supported ritualistic worship, but he pointed out that purity and unselfishness were the foundations of spiritual life, and these are difficult to acquire without some form of social service. What he did was to enlarge the scope of worship. Spiritual life is the transformation of the total life of the aspirant. If worship is restricted only to rituals and certain devotional exercises, its transforming power will remain limited. It is only when even normal secular work is also converted into worship that the whole life gets transformed into divine life.





Vivekananda's wise words and the route to religious harmony

Gary Thompson

Author & Journalist

As somebody lucky enough to work all my life as a journalist, I know how powerful words can be. Great thinkers like Swami Vivekananda have always shaped history with their insightful language.

I was raised in England outside of the Hindu tradition, so I knew very little about the teachings of Vivekananda until I met my good friend Ram Saha. It is through Ram that I learned of how this Indian spiritual leader captivated Western audiences in London and Chicago during the late 19th Century.

Huge crowds flocked to hear his message, which is built around tolerance, truth, religious harmony and universal respect for all people. Intrigued by this, I went online and subsequently became fascinated by the texts of his great speeches.

Whilst I do not pretend to be a scholar of Vivekananda, I believe his many lectures are amongst the most powerful ever to have been delivered.

Today, at a time when sadly many parts of the world are plagued by war and division, we can learn a great deal from his wise words. An example of his oratory at its most powerful is contained in the following passage from an address that Vivekananda gave at the World's Parliaments of Religions in Chicago in 1893, during which he denounced bigotry.

He told the audience: "Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often, and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now..."

Powerful words, indeed. The Swami said on that day he was proud to belong to a creed that taught universal acceptance in pursuit of religious harmony. He championed not only toleration, but he also accepted all religious faiths as being true. He believed that the great religions of the world are like mighty rivers that begin in different mountains, but all flow towards the same ocean. Hence, it is our shared values that bind us.

His message remains just as important today as it was in 1893. It is for this reason that I think now more than ever is a time to celebrate what we share in common, rather than fixate upon our differences.

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

-Sri Ramakrishna





Unity in Diversity

David Russell

Trustee, Congregation of Jacob Synagogue in Stepney, London

As the Vivekananda Human Centre celebrates its 30th anniversary, we reflect on three decades of dedication to realise its mission to be good and to do good for all human beings and others, as inspired by Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna.

Through the course of the many events that I have attended and had the privilege to speak at over the years with which I have supported the work of Vivekananda Human Centre, I have often reflected on the core tenets of the philosophy Ramakrishna-Vivekananda of Human Excellence, Unity in Diversity, Universal Tolerance, Harmony and Peace. In particular, what Swami Vivekananda said about peace and harmony amongst people of different religions.

Swami Vivekananda tells us, that: “We Hindus do not merely tolerate, we unite ourselves with every religion, praying in the mosque of the Mohammedan, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrian, and kneeling to the cross of the Christian. We know that all religions alike, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, are but attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite. So we gather all these flowers, and, binding them together with the cord of love, make them into a wonderful bouquet of worship.”

The Jewish tradition in which I was raised, recognises that there are many religions, which demand different things from their adherents. For example, Judaism demands that Jews keep kosher, Muslims have to make the haj once in their lifetime, Hindus are expected to observe the festival of Diwali, and so on. But these obligations are not required of non-adherents.

But G-d makes certain demands of all human beings. All people should treat each other decently. Nobody has the right to steal, or to commit murder. About this, all there is a mutual understanding across all religions as to certain universal demands that are binding equally on everyone. But then there are other demands for us who are Jews, for you who are Hindus, because each of us has our particular traditions.

This then is the foundation on which peace and harmony can be built. It is now that I turn to the former Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks, who can put into words far more eloquently than I the Jewish perspective on the matter.

He tells us that religion is like a fire. Fire warms but it also burns, and we are the guardians of the flame. What then do Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus and all world religions share? Around what can we unite?

The God we meet at the beginning of the Bible is not the God of this people or that place, but the God of all peoples in every place. God does not say, “There is only one path to my presence?” And that is why the Rabbis tell us that “the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come.”

The rabbis put it beautifully, saying that when a human being mints many coins in the same mint, they all come out the same. But when God makes every human being in the same image, His image, we all come out different. It is that difference, which is the basis of the sanctity of life, because every life is unlike any other life. It is this difference, Lord Sacks reminds us, which is the basis of peace; because if we respect life, we respect difference and we respect each other.

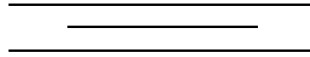


The key question in life is: can we find God's image in one who is not in our image, in one whose colour is different from our own, whose culture is different, who tells different stories, who eats different food, who practices a different religion from ourselves? That is the challenge God sets us at the very beginning of the Bible.

If we listen closely enough, the God in those early pages of the Bible - is one that is too big to be encompassed by any one religion. That God is the Infinite that Swami Vivekananda refers. And with that recognition, and a "cord of love", we can finally create the wonderful bouquet that Swamiji envisions.

As we celebrate this milestone of 30 Years of Vivekananda Human Centre, it is essential to acknowledge the countless volunteers, donors, and supporters who have been instrumental in the Centre's journey. And in particular the relentless dedication of Ram in making possible so much of that work. All of their unwavering commitment has enabled the Vivekananda Human Centre to make a positive contribution in the lives of so many people.

Looking forward, the Vivekananda Human Centre remains steadfast in its mission to serve humanity with compassion and dedication and to continue to inspire and uplift even more people, in true spirit of Swami Vivekananda's teachings.



Through spiritual practices man can overcome his evil tendencies, and divine grace can redeem even the worst sinner. Therefore one should not brood over the past mistakes, but should develop a positive outlook on life by depending on God.

-Sri Ramakrishna

If my son wallows in the dust or mud, it is I who have to wipe all the dirt and take him on my lap.

-Holy Mother

The history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls out the Divinity within. You can do anything. You fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to manifest infinite power. As soon as a man or a nation loses faith in himself or itself, death comes. Believe first in yourself, and then in God.

-Swami Vivekananda





Humanity And Values

Swami Jnanalokananda

Trustee, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur math India
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Swami Vivekananda's Ancestral House & Cultural Centre

We always try our best to establish ourselves as a good human beings. Establishing someone as a good human being is a little tough! Gold has to establish its purity only after crossing four hurdles like withstanding rigorous friction, cutting, heating and finally constant hammering. Then only Gold gets its glitter. Next, Gold to bring into a desired shape i.e. of a ring or necklace etc. it is cut into pieces. Then to extract its impurities, it has to be melted in high temperature. Finally, constant hammering is required to bring it in its perfect shape of ornament. As Gold has to undergo these four stages to transform into ornaments, a person also has to go through similar tests to establish as a human being. Those tests are namely, education, courtesy, required skills and application of acquired skills into practice. Then only he is accepted as a proper human being.

The process described above is stated in the following SUBHASITA:

Yatha Chaturbhi Kanaka Parikshyate Nirgharshana-Chhedana-tap-Taranoi,

Tatha Chaturbhi Purusha Parikshyate Shrutena, Shilena, Gunena, Karmana; which means purity of Gold is established in four ways namely by rubbing, cutting, heating and lastly by constant hammering. A person is also judged by four ways, namely by his knowledge and observance of the tenets of the Vedas and scriptures, by his virtues, by his noble lineage and by his good deeds. Now we would discuss the four words of the SUBHASITA i.e. SHRUTENA, SHEELENA, GUNENA and KARMANA in short.

SHRUTENA: The other name of VEDA is SHRUTI, as it was unwritten and people had to acquire knowledge only through listening. The word SHRUTENA conveys us to take care in acquiring knowledge. The first step to achieve humanity is when proper care is initiated to acquire knowledge. We know without cultivation of knowledge, we remain illiterate, and fail in the very first test of becoming a human being. Knowledge means knowledge of 'Oneness', which is never the outer one, but always within the self. As Swami Vivekananda said - "No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside.... We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? No, it was in his own mind All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind, the infinite library of the universe.... The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind....". (1.28)

SHEELANA: The word SHEEL means conduct or 'behaviour'. So, SHEELENA is the practice of good conduct in practice. To become a human being, we have to build and practise a set of good conducts and manners in everyday life. We have also to try and improve ourselves through good practices constantly. Our behaviour would tell us whether we have attained the standard or not! You might have noticed that in many of the public transport, it is written "Your behaviour proves your own identity."

Mind gets purified with virtuous practices, and when the mind is pure, it becomes the temple of God. Practically the human form and the body are like the temples of God! Swamiji has compared the human body with the temple like the Taj Mahal. The virtuous practice would alone cover up the entire dearth like knowledge, intellect, strength and the like. There is a saying - 'It is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice' and another one says - 'Goodness is greater than greatness'.

There are no better friends than Charity, and sharing Wealth with others is the best practice in life, while the worst enemy in life is Greed. The best ornament is good Character (i.e. good manners & conduct), and the greatest wealth is Contentment. We earn wealth to remain happy, and contentment is the key to that happiness.

Non-envy, forgiveness, contentment, humility, soft and sweet words and renouncing sense pleasure and anger are accepted as good manners. Establishing oneself in these manners and conduct and becoming

a good human being are one and the same.

GUNENA: To be successful in life one must exhibit some special skills in one's domain. People with competencies or skills in any given domain, would be accepted with greater respect and honour. One must analyse his/her competencies or skills in that domain to be recognized with respect and honour! For gaining acceptability in this world we must acquire the required skill and efficiency through self-efforts with perseverance.

The simple meaning of the word GUNENA is to acquire skills. Swami Vivekananda, even hundred years ago, has spoken radically on this issue of improving the skills both for men or women. Swamiji praised the skills of the Japanese and said "The Japanese seem now to have fully awakened themselves to the necessity of the present times..". We know Wealth is transient, so is the mind. Everything in this world is short lived but the fame one has acquired lives on. Swamiji says – "When you are born a man, leave some indelible mark behind you." He further says, "I want each of my children to be a hundred times greater than what I could ever be."

KARMANA: The word KARMANA signifies to give a practical shape to some plan of action. Swami Vivekananda has said - "An ounce of practice is worth hundred thousand tons of big talks". He has further said, "Can anything be done unless everybody exerts himself to his utmost?" our scriptures say "Udyoginam puruṣasimhamupaiti lakṣmīḥ", means "It is the man of action, the lion-hearted, that the Goddess of Wealth resorts to." No need of looking behind. FORWARD! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage, and infinite patience, and then only will great things be achieved. (6.383-384)

We conclude the discussion on Humanity in the following manner. Three letter word MAN, represents three values i.e. – M for Morality, A for Ability and N for Nobility.

M for Morality – When someone behaves according to the established norms and manners of the society, he is called as a man of morality. To choose and practise the good and correct one avoiding the bad ones are understood as morality. But remember manners whether good or bad, completely depend on the circumstances, the country, the nation, the religion, the time, the place, the environment etc. In simple terms whatever is good and beneficial for the whole world, can be defined as morality. Morality is one of the primary qualities of a person.

A for Ability: - A person must have the ability to acquire it to redeem the self. He who proves his ability and competency is much loved and respected. To acquire this, one needs to put a lot of labour with perseverance. In short, ability denotes one's own strength to stand on one's own feet. Swami Vivekananda said in this regard – "With no strength in the body, no enthusiasm at heart, and no originality in the brain, what will they do - these lumps of dead matter! By stimulating them I want to bring life into them - to this I have dedicated my life. I am born to proclaim to them that fearless message — "Arise! Awake!" Be you my helpers in this work! (7.182) Practically the more the competency, the more the freedom. And who enjoys more freedom, happier he is. It is only for want of competencies that we enhance our dependence on others. Dependence on others and bondage are synonymous.

On effective education, Swami Vivekananda has stressed on standing on one's own feet and to be self-reliant. He also paid special emphasis on female education. In his words, "Let the women learn something, so that in case of need they must be able to stand on their own feet. ... Religion, arts, science, housekeeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene — the simple essential points in these subjects ought to be taught to our women. (6.493)

Their education must be an eye-opener in all matters. Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with a devotion to lofty principles of selflessness. The noble examples of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Lilavati, Khana, and Mira should be brought home to their minds, and they should be inspired to mould their own lives in the light of these. (6.494)

N for Nobility (Greatness or Excellence) : Following illustrations, would throw an insight on the subject.

(True) Story of an old couple and an unknown clerk - On a stormy night, an old couple reached a hotel in Philadelphia and asked for a room. The receptionist smilingly informed them that the city is overcrowded



with three international conventions, and therefore no room was available. Considering the plight of the aged couple, and he, being on night duty, wanted to offer them his own room, if they so wished. The receptionist even told them that he would be happy, if he got the opportunity to serve the 'parent like' couple. The stranger-couple were moved by his sincerity and agreed to stay the night there. Next morning, they cleared the dues and while leaving the old man said to the receptionist "As you are so courteous and considerate in your profession, you should be the manager of the best hotel in America. Let me try whether I can do something for you". Then they exchanged pleasantries and left the place.

After two years of that episode, the receptionist received a letter from that old stranger, enclosing an air ticket to and from New York and a request to meet him at New York, for an urgent need. The receptionist went and was cordially received by the old man there. He took the receptionist to a newly constructed building, covered with red and grey stones at fifth Avenue and Thirty Fourth Street. The old man said "This new hotel is built keeping you in mind, and you have to look after it". The receptionist was taken aback and asked whether he is ridiculing him! The old man held his hand firmly and said "I can only assure that whatever I am telling you, is true and from my heart. And you must have to accept this responsibility". The old man was William Waldorf Aster and the name of the hotel was Waldorf Astoria Hotel. The first manager of this hotel was George C Bolt, that compassionate receptionist. It was unimaginable for George C Bolt, a simple receptionist in an unknown hotel, to be the manager of such a world-renowned hotel! In reality, it was his behaviour and noble conduct that had established him in that high position. (Source: Reward of A Great Deed – Wisdom, July, 2008, page no. 21-22)

Incident with Prophet Muhammad: This is a story of the life of Prophet Muhammad.

A lady used to hate Prophet Muhammad. Whenever the Prophet used to cross her house, she would throw garbage on him. The Prophet used to bear it smilingly and never protested. One day, while passing that house he noticed that nothing was thrown on him! He was surprised and thought something is wrong. To check whether the lady was there or not he entered the house and heard someone was groaning inside. The Prophet immediately understood that the lady must be sick. He made arrangements for her treatment and served her to his best. When cured, the lady asked forgiveness from Prophet for her own misdeeds. It was beyond her imagination that a person, whom she had only insulted, could serve her so much during her sickness.

These are the virtuous practices of nobility!

Gems are beautiful, but no gem can be made without friction. The more the beauty of the gems the more the frictions on it. It is said "A gem cannot be made without friction/abrasions." Similarly fruit-bearing trees are also pelted most. The taller trees only suffer more from storms. The Nabakumar's (the character that sacrifices his life for others in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya's novel) in every age are left in the woods by their fellow-travellers. Still, they go into the forests to bring dry woods for others' betterment and welfare. So, the noble practitioners of service oblation must always remember that they have to pay a lot to be able to achieve the competency of serving others. They at times have to sacrifice themselves. When able to absorb this pain, there would be no pain or sorrow at all.

Swamiji said – "The twin ideal of India are renunciation and service", that comes from sacrifice. India has taught this 'Education of Sacrifice' for ages. Swami Vivekananda, in one place said 'Hold your life a living sacrifice for the good of many, for the welfare of all. In his famous 'Swadesh Mantra' he said "Forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar." Responding to Swamiji's noble call, thousands of youths laid down their lives in our Independence struggles at the altar of our motherland. Inspired by the call of 'self-liberation through welfare of all', hundreds of youths are sacrificing their lives renouncing worldly pleasures and luxury.

In this way, some people accept and bear the pain smilingly for others' good. It is as if a light to be enkindled. The candle disperses light to everyone. But every moment its wick is being burnt to ashes. It is reducing itself to ashes in silence and dispersing the light to all. Or it may be compared with sandal wood. The more it is rubbed against, more the fragrance it spreads around. But the amount of the wood is gradually decreasing every day because of the rubbing.



HOMAGE

to



Revered Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj

The 12th President of Ramakrishna Order

His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. He was very dear to all who came in contact with him.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj



Revered Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj

The 13th President of Ramakrishna Order

His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. He was very dear to all who came in contact with him.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj



Revered Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj

The 14th President of Ramakrishna Order

His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. He was very dear to all who came in contact with him. He came to visit the UK and delivered his message at the 150th Birthday Celebration of Holy Mother in London.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Ghananandaji Maharaj.



Revered Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj

The 15th President of Ramakrishna Order

His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. He was very dear to all who came and contact with him. Every year he used to give a message to Vivekananda Centre. His message always encourages to the people. We will miss him always special when we will organise a landmark festival like the Vivekananda festival.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj.



Revered Swami Smaranandaji Maharaj

The 16th President of Ramakrishna Order

His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. He was very dear to all who met him. He came to visit the UK and delivered his message at the Parliament of Religions in 2001 and Vivekananda Festival 2002 organised by Vivekananda Human Centre, London. We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Smaranandaji Maharaj.



Revered Swami Aksharanandaji Maharaj

His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. We miss him so much, especially when we organise any festival, more so when we organise a landmark festival like the Vivekananda festival. He was very dear to all of us who knew him. He came to visit the UK twice and each time delivered his message at the Vivekananda Festival in London.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Aksharanandaji Maharaj.

HOMAGE

to



Revered Swami Prameyanandaji Maharaj

His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. He was very dear to all who came in contact with him. He wrote the letter which introduced Ram Chandra Saha for the first time to Swami Dayatmananda. He came to visit the UK couple of time and delivered his message at the Vivekananda festival and 150th Birthday Celebration of Holy Mother in London organised by Vivekananda Human centre. We miss him so much, especially when we Visit Belur Math.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Prameyanandaji Maharaj.



Revered Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj

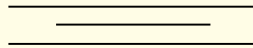
His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. He was very dear to all who came in contact with him. He came to visit the UK and delivered his message at the Parliament of Religions in 2006 organised by Vivekananda Human Centre, London. We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj.



Revered Swami Veetamohananda Maharaj

His blessings and inspiration will always be the guide for the Vivekananda Human Centre. He was very dear to all who came in contact with him. He came to visit UK many times at attend Vivekananda festival & other festivals organised by Vivekananda Human Centre.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude and homage to the sweet memory of Revered Swami Veetamohanandaji Maharaj.



God dwells in all people but the manifestation of this inner Divinity varies from person to person. In saintly people there is greater manifestation of God. Women are special manifestations of Divine Mother of the Universe, and so are to be treated with respect.

-Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda Human Centre, London has invited following
Revered Maharajs from Ramakrishna Order for last 30 years.
We are ever grateful to all Revered Maharajs



Revered Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj

14th President of Ramakrishna Order

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India (visited in 2004)



Revered Swami Smaranandaji Maharaj

16th President of Ramakrishna Order

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India (visited in 2001 & 2002)



Revered Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj

17th President of Ramakrishna Order

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India (visited in 2014)



Revered Swami Akshranandaji Maharaj

Former Head of Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission

Dhaka (visited in 1998 & 2006)



Revered Swami Prameyanandaji Maharaj

Former Vice-President

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India (visited in 2004 & 2007)



Revered Swami Prabhanandaji Maharaj

Former Vice- President

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India (visited in 2001 & 2006)



Revered Swami Suhitanandaji Maharaj

Vice- President

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India
(visited in 2013, 2017 & 2024)



Revered Swami Girishanandaji Maharaj

Vice- President

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission and Manager, Belur Math, India (visited in 2015)



Revered Swami Suviranandaji Maharaj

General Secretary

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India (visited in 2016)



Revered Swami Bodhasanandaji Maharaj

Assistant General Secretary

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission and Manager, Belur Math, India
(visited in 2018)



Revered Swami Chatananandaji Maharaj

President

Vedanta Society of St. Louis, USA, (visited in 2015 & 2017)



Revered Swami Prubhudanandaji Maharaj

Minister-in-charge Vedanta Society of Sacramento

USA (visited in 1999)



Revered Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj

The present Swami in charge of the Vedanta Society of Western Washington

USA (visited in 2001)



Revered Swami Ameyanandaji Maharaj

Former Head

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka (visited in 2013)



Revered Swami Gokulanandaji Maharaj

Former Secretary

Ramakrishna Mission , Delhi (visited in 1998)



Revered Swami Dayatmanandaji Maharaj

Former President

Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, UK (visited many times from 1994 to 2018)



Revered Swami Amaranandaji Maharaj

President

Centre Vedantique, Switzerland (visited many times from 1994 to 2018)



Revered Swami Veetamohanandaji Maharaj

Former President

Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna, France (visited many times from 1994 to 2018)



Revered Swami Purnatmanandaji Maharaj

Secretary

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission Dhaka (visited in 2001 & 2013)



Revered Swami Baneshanandaji Maharaj

President

Vedanta Gesellschaft, Germany (visited in 2008 & 2016)



Revered Swami Kripamayanandaji Maharaj

President

Vedanta Society of Toronto, Canada (visited in 2015)



Revered Swami Savolokanandaji Maharaj

Secretary

Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi (visited in 2016)



Revered Swami Ishatmanandaji Maharaj

President

Vivekananda Vedanta Centre, Chicago, USA (visited in 2016)



Revered Swami Tripuranandaji Maharaj

Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre

UK (visited in 2018)



Swami Atmapriyanandaji Maharaj

Pro-Chancellor

Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Belur Math, India (visited in 2018)



Revered Swami Sarvastanandaji Maharaj

Minister-in-Charge

Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, UK (visited from 2018 to continue..)



Swami Nirmalatmanandaji Maharaj

The Head of Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre

Brazil (visited in 1999)



Revered Swami Sthiratmanandaji Maharaj

Secretary

Ramakrishna Ashrama, Chandpur (visited in 2006 & 2013)



Revered Swami Tattwasaranandaji Maharaj

Principal, Training Center

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India (visited in 2017)



Revered Swami Atmanishthanandaji Maharaj

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math (visited in 2004)



Revered Swami Jnanavratandaji Maharaj

Manager

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math (visited in 2002)



Revered Swami Shubhakanandaji Maharaj

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math (visited in 2016)



Revered Swami Durganathanandaji Maharaj

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math (visited in 2007)



Revered Swami Chandrakantanandaji Maharaj

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math (visited in 2024)



Revered Swami Sevatnanandaji Maharaj

Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math (visited in 2024)

God dwells in all people but the manifestation of this inner Divinity varies from person to person. In saintly people there is greater manifestation of God. Women are special manifestations of Divine Mother of the Universe, and so are to be treated with respect.

-Swami Vivekananda



Charitable Works

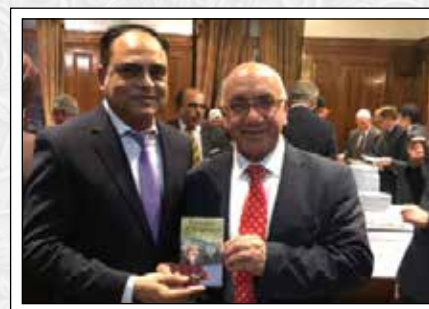
Vivekananda Human Centre, London Distributed Vivekananda Scholarship on Swamiji's Birthday, 12 January 2019 to the underprivileged students at Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka. Scholarship distributed by Revered Swami Suviranandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, India



Vivekananda Human Centre, London also distributed Vivekananda Scholarship to the students at Mayer Bari, Bagbazar, Kolkata, India. Scholarship distributed by Revered Swami Nityamuktanandaji Maharaj, Secretary, Ramakrishna Math, Bagbazar, Kolkata, India



Distributed Swamiji's Books at India House, London on the eve of Swamiji's Birthday



Vivekananda Human Centre, London, distributed education materials among the 135 students of the coaching centre of Sahapur Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda Seva Sangha, Burdwan, west Bengal, India



Vivekananda Scholarships



Celebrating Swamiji's Birthday 2024. Vivekananda Human Centre, London distributed Educational Materials, Food and Winter Clothes among 1000 of underprivileged in the UK, India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Co-sponsored by Sova Foundation



Food distribution to the homeless people in London on the occasion of Swamiji's Birthday 2024



Charitable Works

Vivekananda Human Centre London distributed winter clothes to the 250 Underprivileged students of Shishu Vikash Sanstha, at Somsar Sri Ramakrishna Seva Mandir (Birth place of Revered Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj) Bankura, West Bengal, India. Clothes distributed by Revered Swami Jyotirupananda, Prisedent, Ramakrishna Society Vedanta Centre, Moscow, Russia



Devotee's Convention 2024



Devotee's Convention 2024



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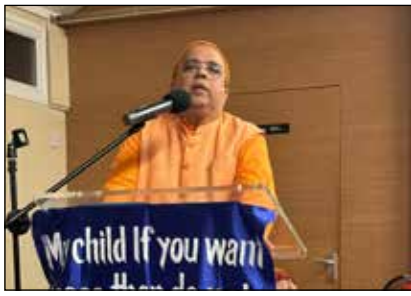
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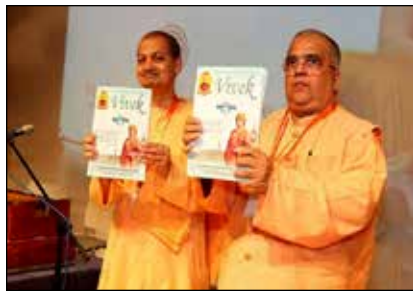
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--Swami vivekananda



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Greetings & Best Wishes for

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Strength, strength it is that we want so much in this life, for what we call sin and sorrow have all one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes ignorance, and with ignorance comes misery.

--Swami vivekananda



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All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we, who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark! -Swami Vivekananda

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“Never say NO, Never say, 'I cannot', for you are INFINITE. All the power is WITHIN you. You can do anything.”

--Swami vivekananda



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"This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient,
but they alone live who live for others, the rest
are more dead than alive."

– Swami Vivekananda

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--Swami vivekananda



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