



Reach

SAYINGS AND TEACHINGS

Sri Ramakrishna on Diverse Ways of Approaching God

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

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

Sri Sarada Devi on Manifesting the Motherhood of God

Sri Ramakrishna left me behind to manifest the Motherhood of God to the world.

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

Swami Vivekananda on All Power is Within

All power is within you, you can do anything and everything. Believe in that. Do not believe that you are weak... You can do anything and everything, without even the guidance of any one. All power is there. Stand up and express the divinity within you... Arise, Awake, Sleep no more. Within each of you is the power to remove all wants and all miseries. Believe in this, and that power will be manifested.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 34.

IN THIS ISSUE

1. News from Australian Centres

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

2. Feature Article: Jainism

3. Karma: In Its Effect on Character (From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*)

1. NEWS FROM AUSTRALIAN CENTRES 11 JULY 2022 TO 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

ADELAIDE

16 East Terrace, Kensington Gardens, SA 5068

Email: vedanta.adelaide@gmail.com

Contact: Dr Raman Sharma on (08) 8431 9775

Mrs Pathma Iswaran on (08) 8379 5336

URL: <http://vedantaadelaide.org>

Daily Activities

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

Regular Activities

- Swami Manyananda conducted classes and discussions on the *Vedanta Sara* - 'Fundamentals of Vedanta' every Wednesday from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon.
- Swami Manyananda also conducted classes on the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* on Sundays from 11:00 am.
- Every alternate Saturday, Swami Manyananda conducted a reading and discussion session on *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* before the evening *aratrikam*.
- On Sundays Swami Manyananda conducted classes on the *Vivekachudamani* from 5:30 to 6:30 pm.

Celebrations

- Guru Purnima* was celebrated on Wednesday, 13 July 2022. The evening programme included *aratrikam* (Vesper service to Sri Ramakrishna), special puja, *bhajan*, a talk on the occasion by Swami Manyananda, pushpanjali and distribution of prasad.



Gurupurnima Celebrations in Adelaide

Other Activities

- Swami Tattwamayananda, Minister in-Charge, Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, USA visited the Centre from 7 to 10 August 2022. Swami Tattwamayananda gave three talks on 'Yoga in Everyday Life' (Sunday, 7 August 11:00am-12:00noon), '*Vivekachudamani* - An Overview' (Sunday, 7 August 5:30-6:30pm) and 'Charm of the Vedas', (Wednesday, 10 August 11:00am-12:00noon). He also had informal meetings and discussions with the devotees every evening after *aratrikam*.



Swami Tattwamayananda in Adelaide

BRISBANE

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

Email: info@vedantabrisbane.org

Contact: Swami Atmeshananda (07) 3818 9986

URL: <http://vedantabrisbane.org>

Daily Activities

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

Regular Activities

- Sunday mornings:- (a) Yoga class from 7:45 am to 9:15 am. (b) *Srimad-Bhagavad Gitā* Class (10:00 am—11:00 am). (c) *Bala Sangha* or children's classes and *Yuva Sangha* (10:00 am—11:00 am during school term). (d) Hindi language classes fortnightly from 11:00 am to 12:15 pm.
- A class on the *Brahma Sutras* was conducted on Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. In the evening Yoga classes were conducted from 6:30 to 7:45 pm.
- A Vedic Chanting class was held online on Wednesdays from 8:30 am to 9:30 am.
- A monthly *satsang* was held at Sunnybank Hills on the first Monday of every month at 19, Scribbly Gum Street.
- Classes on *Meditation and Spiritual Life* were held from 7:30 pm — 8:30 pm at 134 Fleming Rd, Chapel Hill, Qld, on the last Friday of every month.
- A reading from the lives of the direct monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna was conducted on their birth anniversaries after the evening *aratrikam*.
- Chanting of the *Sri Rama Nama Sanskirtanam* was held fortnightly at the Centre on *ekadashi* days (7:00 pm — 8:00 pm).
- Devotees took turns in decorating and worshipping Sri Ramakrishna's image every week at the Sri Selva Vinayakar temple, South Maccan, Qld.

- Swami Atmeshananda conducted *Vivekachudamani* classes for the Vedanta Group at Toowoomba on the first Wednesday of every month.
- A class on the *Ashtavakra Gita* was conducted at 101 Sharpless Drive, Springfield Lakes, on a fixed day of the month.
- On alternate Saturdays, the *Bhagavad Gita* was studied by the Vedanta group on the Gold Coast from 5.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.
- On alternate Fridays, the Centre's volunteers cooked food at its soup kitchen for the benefit of the needy. An average of 100 meals per week are cooked by volunteers, packed into containers and frozen. They are distributed free of cost through the Westside Community Centre.
- Mrs Malarville Kandaiah of Sri Abhinaya Barathalaayam conducted classical Indian Bharatanatyam dance lessons every Wednesday evening in the community hall, Vedanta Centre. Classes are available for all ages. For inquiries please email Malar: ville7560@yahoo.com.au
- Every Friday the Centre's food bank distributed groceries to the needy. An average of 12 grocery hampers along with cooked food and free bread were distributed to the needy. From November 2021 this was provided on an 'on demand' basis.
- The Maa Sarada's kitchen prepares and sells food at a reasonable cost to people. On an average, about 110 persons avail themselves of this service. The kitchen is efficiently managed by volunteers.
- On Fridays, a Justice of the Peace (JP) renders service at the Centre from 10 am to 11 a.m. People needing the service access this free service.

Other Activities

- International Yoga Day was observed on 26 June 2022 at the Centre. Swami Atmeshananda delivered a talk on the 'Significance of Yoga in our Life', followed by Yoga demonstration and practice. Children, youth and adults participated in the event. Breakfast was served to all the participants.
- A winter market was organized at the Centre grounds on 9 July 2022. Stalls were set up by vendors to sell clothes, food items, jewellery



International Yoga Day in Brisbane

etc. Customers of the Ma Sarada's café supported the stalls.



Markets in Brisbane

- Swami Tattwamayanaanda, Minister in charge of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, visited Brisbane from 23 July to 5 August 2022. He delivered the following talks:-

1. 'Finding meaning to life through Hindu philosophy' at the Centre on 24 July 2022
2. 'Charm of the Vedas' on 26 July 2022 at the Brisbane Theosophical Society
3. 'Yoga in daily life' on 29 and 31 July 2022 at the Red Cross training Centre
4. 'Essence of Yoga' on 3 August 2022 at Too-woomba library
5. 'Charm of the Vedas' on 4 August 2022 at the Theosophical society, Logan, Queensland.



Inauguration of the Mandala Garden

- A mandala garden and a commercial kitchen were dedicated on 30 July 2022. Volunteers of the centre established a mandala garden with a 'Om' fountain at the front lawn of the Centre. The Centre also equipped a new commercial kitchen with requisite equipment to be used as a soup kitchen and serve as Maa Sarada's café. Dr.Thilaka Ramalingam in the presence of dignitaries. Ms. Charis Mullen MP, Assistant Treasurer Government of Queensland, Hon.Paul Scarr, Federal Senator for Queensland, Hon. Shayne Neumann MP, Federal Member for Blair, Mrs.Teresa Harding, Mayor of Ipswich, Dr.Maha Sinnathamby, Mr.Jim Varghese and other dignitaries participated in



Observance of Hindi Divas

the events and gave speeches.

- Workshops for children of the Bala Sangha were conducted during the following periods:-
a) Workshop on 'Guru' on 17 July 2022 b)

Workshop on 'Working with Mother Nature, simple solutions for complex issues' on 14 August 2022.

- On Hindi Diwas (day), students of the Centre's Hindi class participated in a programme on 10 September 2022 at a community hall in Upper Kedron, Qld.

Celebrations

- *Guru Purnima* was celebrated on Wednesday, 13 July 2022. Formal worship, devotional music, a talk on the 'Significance of Guru' and distribution of prasad were the main components of the programme.
- *Krishna Janmashtami* was celebrated on 19 August 2022. After the evening *aratrikam*, Brahmachari Ram performed special worship to Sri Krishna followed by a talk by Swami Atmeshananda on the 'Life of Sri Krishna' and devotional music. Dinner prasad was distributed to all the participants.



Celebration of Krishna Janmashtami in Brisbane

Forthcoming Programmes

- Chanting of *Durga Saptashati* from 25th September to 4th October 2022.
- Sri Sri Durga Puja – Ashtami on 3rd October 2022.
- Mental health week programmes on 9, 15 and 16 October 2022.

CANBERRA

17 Bean Crescent, Mckellar, ACT 2617

Email: vedacanberra@gmail.com

Contact: Mr Jaishankar Venkataraman 6258 7612/0433 593 860

Regular Activities

- On account of the Covid 19 pandemic the *Bhagavad Gita* classes have been suspended temporarily. Friends and devotees are accessing the classes online. When the classes recommence, as soon as possible, they will be held at the Belconnen Community Meeting Room, 12 Chandler St, Belconnen, ACT. Monthly lectures, once scheduled, are advertised by e-mail.

MELBOURNE

5-7 Angus Ave, Ringwood East, VIC 3135

Email: vedanta.melb@gmail.com

Contact: Swami Sunishthananda (03) 8684 9594

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

Regular Activities

- Vesper service (*aratrikam*), *bhajans*, reading from the Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda literature and meditation were conducted between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm daily.
- An online and in person class on *Mundaka Upanishad* was conducted on Thursdays from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm.
- An online and in person scriptural class on Sundays from 10:00 am to 11:00 am on the *Bhagavad Gita*.
- Guided meditation was conducted online on Sundays from 9:30 am to 10:00 am.

Celebrations

- On the morning of Sunday, 17 July 2022, *Guru Purnima* was celebrated at Ashwood Hall, Ashwood, Victoria. The programme included special worship, chanting and *bhajans*. Swami Sunishthananda delivered a talk on the topic,

“Spiritual Empowerment through *Guru-Shishya* Lineage”. Devotees shared prasadam after the event.



Guru Purnima in Melbourne

- On the morning of Sunday, 21 August 2022, *Krishna Janmashtami* was celebrated at Ashwood Hall, Ashwood, in Victoria. The programme included special worship, chanting, and bhajans. Devotees shared prasadam after the event.

Other Activities

- Swami Sunishthananda delivered a talk on 25 June 2022 on the topic “Holy Mother and Sister Nivedita” organized by the Self Wellness Awareness, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, as a part of a 3-Day Online Conference on the theme, “Awaken with Eternal Motherhood”.
- Swami Sunishthananda was invited by the Mental Health Foundation, Australia as a panellist for a panel discussion on the topic “Community Impact study to ascertain the impact of COVID on Mental Health of the Indian Ethnic Community in Victoria.” held at Australia India Community Centre, Rowville, Victoria on 17 July 2022.
- Swami Sunishthananda was invited to deliver a talk on “Significance of *Guru Purnima*” on Sunday, 20 July 2022 by the Adi Shankara

Shakha Sanghsthan, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, Melbourne as a part of their Guru Pooja Utsav.

- Swami Sunishthananda delivered a talk on the topic, “Mindfulness and Meditation: A Hindu Perspective” on 3 August 2022 at RMIT University, City Campus, Melbourne organized by the RMIT Chaplaincy.
- Vedanta Centre of Melbourne in collaboration with Vasudeva Kriya Yoga, organized a day-long seminar on “Foundation of Wellbeing” at Knox Gardens Community Hall on 3 September 2022.



Swami Tattwamayananda in Melbourne

- Swami Tattwamayananda, Minister In Charge, Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, visited our centre from 5 August 2022 to 7 August 2022. He delivered a talk on the topic, ‘Yoga in Everyday Life’ at Ashwood Hall, Ashwood, on Saturday, 6 August 2022.
- Mahamandaleswar of Juna Akhara, Sri Rameshwar Ananda Giri Maharaj visited our centre on 29 August 2022 at 5 PM and spent a few hours meeting our members and devotees.



*Mahamandaleshwar of Juna Akhara, Sri
Rajeshwar Ananda Giri Maharaj*



Perth Devotees at a Satsang

PERTH

51 Golf View Street, Yorkine, WA 6060

Email: vedantaperth@gmail.com

Contact: Sumita Chetty (04) 3892 8136

Regular Activities:

- *Aratrikam* was conducted each night by a person or family taking the responsibility for it.
- *Satsangs* were held in the months of June, July and August. The programmes included *aratrikam*, *bhajans* and *prasad* distribution.

Celebrations

- *Guru Purnima* was observed on 17 July 2022. The programmes included *aratrikam*, *bhajans* and *prasad* distribution.
- *Krishna Janmasthanmi* was celebrated on 21 August 2022. The programmes included *aratrikam*, *bhajans* and *prasad* distribution.

SYDNEY

2 Stewart Street, Ermington, 2115

Email: vedasydney@vedantasydney.org

Contact: (02) 8197 7351

URL: www.vedantaaustralia.org

Daily Activities

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

Regular Activities

- Swami Sridharananda conducted his study of the *Srimad-Bhagavad Gitā* on Sundays between 9:30 am and 10:30 am. Due to the current restrictions owing to Covid 19, the talks were pre-recorded and uploaded to the Centre's website and Youtube Channel.
- *Sri Rama Nama Sanskirtanam* was conducted on *ekadashi* days after the vesper service.
- Devotees also received spiritual counselling and guidance.
- The quarterly newsletter entitled *Reach* is compiled and published.

- The Centre also has a library containing books of the Ramakrishna-Sarada-Vivekananda literature, philosophy and religion.

Celebrations

- *Guru Purnima* was observed on 13 July 2022. In the morning Sri Ramakrishna was worshipped in the temple. In the evening, following the *aratrikam*, there was a short sarod recital by Sandipan Ganguli followed by a talk by Swami Dhanyananda 'On the Guru'. The programme ended with the distribution of dinner prasad. There were 186 people who registered to attend in the morning and evening.



Krishna Janmashtami in Sydney



Sandipan Ganguli playing the Sarode on Guru Purnima

- *Krishna Janmashtami* was observed on 18 August 2022. In the evening there was *aratrikam*, puja, singing of *Shayama Nama Samskirtan*, other bhajans and the distribution of prasad.

2. FEATURE ARTICLE: JAINISM

(Based mainly on Chatterjee, S and Datta D, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, University of Calcutta, 1948, Calcutta, India).

Introduction

Jainism is one of the most ancient philosophies and religions to originate on the Indian subcontinent. Even though the exact date of its origin is disputed, it was put on a firm footing by the 24th Tirthankara who was known as Vardhamana Mahavira (599-527 BCE). Mahavira lived during the time of the Buddha and had 23 other Tirthankaras preceding him. The first Tirthankara was Risabha Deva and the Tirthankara immediately preceding Mahavira was Parsvanatha who lived in the 9 century BC. The Tirthankaras are known as Jinas who have conquered their passions characterized by raga and dvesha and attained liberation.

Brief Geographic and Historical Sketch of Jainism

Jainism originated in North India and spread to the central, west and South India. It received royal patronage through the Mauryan Empire, under Chandragupta Maurya (322-185 BCE). During the Islamic period 12th to 16th Centuries it survived persecution under different Muslim rulers and also 'resisted efforts' of the Christian Missionaries in the 19th century of conversion.

Two Broad Schools of Jainism

Broadly there are two divisions of Jainism, the Svetambara and

the Digambara. The differences between these two sects is on account of minor points of faith and practice, rather than on philosophical doctrines. The svetambara are clad in white and tend to be less ascetic and puritan than the digambara. The digambara remain naked and are more ascetic.

Jaina Literature

The Jaina literature is mainly in Prakrit, containing the teachings of Mahavira and relevant to both Svetambara and Digambara. But later a body of literature developed in Sanskrit for engaging with other schools.

Three Dimensions of Jainism—Realism, Pluralism and Atheism

The three important factors that summarise the essence of Jainism are i) realism, that is the empirical world is taken to be real, unlike classical Advaita Vedanta, where objects perceived by us are real, ii) pluralism where there are many ultimate realities, and iii) atheism, as it rejects the existence of a theistic extraneous God. Nonetheless, the world is considered to be made up of two realities, living and non living. The living being has a spirit or soul. Unlike other religions like theistic Hinduism and sematic religions, Jainism is atheistic. It does not believe in a benevolent God like Ishwara in Hinduism. Nonethe-

less, the characteristics like omniscience and omnipotence are attributed to the Tirthankaras, rather than God and the Tirthankaras are worshipped and adored as God.

Similarities between Hinduism and Jainism—the Soul and Karma

Jainism has much in common with Hinduism and Swami Vivekananda actually considered it to be a part of Hinduism, which the Jainism themselves may not accept. Some of the similarities between Jainism and Hinduism or Vedanta is with respect to its theory of the soul and karma. The soul in Jainism is held to be spirit just like in Vedanta. There is a plurality of souls somewhat like Sankhya, rather than Advaita Vedanta. These souls permeate not only the bodies of humans and animals, but also plants and even particles of dust (Datta and Chatterjee p. 31). The different souls are not equally conscious. There is a difference in the distribution of consciousness according to animate and inanimate bodies with differences in the number of senses. But unlike in Vedanta, the soul is limited in knowledge, power and subject to miseries. Thus there is the bondage of the soul. The ability of souls to express consciousness, power and knowledge is dictated by karma, which is the second similarity between Hinduism and Jainism.

Karmas obstruct the expression of consciousness, power and knowledge which adhere to the soul. Karmas are like particles of matter that obstruct the soul just like particles of dust cover any kind of light. Therefore karmas act like bondages of the soul by matter. The pristine purity of the soul is recovered through the elimination of bondage of karma.

Jaina Ethics or Means to Salvation—Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct

The various moral and ethical means to the removal of the bondage of karma are outlined by the Jains in their scriptures or teachings by the Tirthankaras. The three main teachings are i) Right Faith or perfect faith in the teachings of the Jinas, ii) Right knowledge or correct knowledge of the teachings and iii) Right conduct. Right conduct consists of the practices also followed in other religions with some variance like the yama practices of the Yoga Sutras, the *pancha shila* of the Buddhists and the 10 Commandments of the Jews. The various components of right conduct, known as the *pancha maha vratas* are a) Ahimsa or abstaining from all injury to life, b) Satya or abstaining from falsehood and speaking what is true, good and pleasant, c) Brahmacharya or abstaining from all sensuality, especially sexuality, d) Asteya is abstaining from stealing or not taking what has not been given and e) Aparigraha is abstaining from attachment to sense objects.

The combination of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct enables the passions or particles of matter forming karmas to be controlled thereby enabling the soul to manifest infinite faith, infinite knowledge and infinite power and and infinite bliss and attain liberation.

Corner Stones of Jainism—Ahimsa and Syad vada (Popularly known as Anekantavada)

The two important corner stones of Jainia beliefs are ahimsa and anekanta vada. Ahimsa is sympathy for all living beings or 'avoidance of all injury to life', given that every one is endowed with a soul or spirit in thought, word or deed. The positive aspect of ahimsa is Jive Daya which is doing good to everyone, even animals, to achieve social solidarity. Syad vada (metaphysical theory of reality as many sided) is practised as respect for all opinions. All perspectives are relative. 'The Jaina philosophers point out that every object has finite aspects, judged by what it is and what it is not from different points of view' (Chatterjee and Datta, Introduction to Indian Philosophy p. 32). Only an omniscient Jina has the full knowledge of an object. For those who are not yet Jinas, every opinion that we have is conditioned by time, place and other factors. Therefore there may be more than one perspective or even contradictory perspectives. Hence we should respect the possibility of other views, knowing the limitations with our limited view.

Sources

Rupani, Aravind, 'Harmony of Religions from the Perspective of Jainism', *The Universal Message of Swami Vivekananda*, Ramakrishna Mission, edited by Swamis Bhajanananda and Mahabodhananda.

Joshua J. Mark, *Jainism*, 21 September 2020 @ <https://www.worldhistory.org/jainism/>

Chatterjee, S and Datta D, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, University of Calcutta, 1948, Calcutta, India.

2. KARMA: IN ITS EFFECT ON CHARACTER

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

In this issue of *Reach* we begin serializing Swami Vivekananda's Karma Yoga. The original Karma Yoga was published during Swamiji's lifetime during the latter part of the 19th century, comprising of his talks on the subject which were stenographed by G.G. Goodwin. These were also edited by Swami Saradananda. After the original publication, Karma Yoga was included in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. The following article is a reproduction of the original in which two changes have been made to enable easy comprehension. First, paragraphing has been changed, to include breaks in a number of places so that the amount of information that is digested is manageable and is in accordance with modern conventions. Secondly, Sub Headings have been included to help navigate the reader through material which may be difficult to grasp. We hope that these changes will enable people to read Swamiji's original lectures as found in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.

Meaning of the Word Karma

The word Karma is derived from the Sanskrit Kri, to do; all action is Karma. Technically, this word also means the effects of actions. In connection with metaphysics, it sometimes means the effects, of which our past actions were the causes. But in Karma-Yoga we have simply to do with the word Karma as meaning work.

Knowledge as the Goal of Mankind rather than Pleasure in Eastern Philosophy

The goal of mankind is knowledge. That is the one ideal placed before us by Eastern philosophy. Pleasure is not the goal of man, but knowledge. Pleasure and happiness come to an end. It is a mistake to suppose that pleasure is the goal. The cause of all the miseries we have in the world is that men foolishly think pleasure to be the ideal to strive for. After a time man finds that it is not happiness, but knowledge, towards which he is going, and that both pleasure and pain are great teachers, and that he learns

as much from evil as from good.

The Formation of Character

As pleasure and pain pass before his soul they have upon it different pictures, and the result of these combined impressions is what is called man's "character". If you take the character of any man, it really is but the aggregate of tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind; you will find that misery and happiness are equal factors in the formation of that character. Good and evil have an equal share in moulding character, and in some instances misery is a greater teacher than happiness. In studying the great characters the world has produced, I dare say, in the vast majority of cases, it would be found that it was misery that taught more than happiness, it was poverty that taught more than wealth, it was blows that brought out their inner fire more than praise.

Knowledge as Inherent in Man

Now this knowledge, again, is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man "knows", should, in strict psychological language, be what he "discovers" or "unveils"; what a man "learns" is really what he "discovers", by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.

We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. 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. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them,

which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.

All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, "We are learning," and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man, the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant, and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient. There have been omniscient men, and, I believe, there will be yet; and that there will be myriads of them in the cycles to come. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.

So with all our feelings and actions--our tears and our smiles, our joys and our griefs, our weeping and our laughter, our curses and our blessings, our praises and our blames--every one of these we may find, if we calmly study our own selves, to have been brought out from within ourselves by so many blows. The result is what we are.

The Effect of Karma on Character

All these blows taken together are called Karma--work, action. Every mental and physical blow that is given to the soul, by which, as it were, fire is struck

from it, and by which its own power and knowledge are discovered, is Karma, this word being used in its widest sense. Thus we are all doing Karma all the time. I am talking to you: that is Karma. You are listening: that is Karma. We breathe: that is Karma. We walk: Karma. Everything we do, physical or mental, is Karma, and it leaves its marks on us.

There are certain works which are, as it were, the aggregate, the sum total, of a large number of smaller works. If we stand near the seashore and hear the waves dashing against the shingle, we think it is such a great noise, and yet we know that one wave is really composed of millions and millions of minute waves. Each one of these is making a noise, and yet we do not catch it; it is only when they become the big aggregate that we hear. Similarly, every pulsation of the heart is work. Certain kinds of work we feel and they become tangible to us; they are, at the same time, the aggregate of a number of small works.

If you really want to judge of the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Every fool may become a hero at one time or another. Watch a man do his most common actions; those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of a great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone is the really great man whose character is great always, the same wherever he be.

Karma in its effect on character is the most tremendous power that man has to deal with. Man is, as it were, a centre, and is attracting all the powers of the universe towards himself, and in this centre is fusing them all and again sending them off in a big current. Such a centre is the *real* man--the almighty, the omniscient--and he draws the whole universe towards him. Good and bad, misery and happiness, all are running towards him and clinging round him; and out of them he fashions the mighty stream of tendency called character and throws it outwards. As he has the power of drawing in anything, so has he the power of throwing it out.

Will as the basis to Karma

All the actions that we see in the world, all the movements in human society, all the works that we have around us, are simply the display of thought, the manifestation of the will of man. Machines or instruments, cities, ships, or men-of-war, all these are simply the manifestation of the will of man; and this will is caused by character, and character is manufactured by Karma. As is Karma, so is the manifestation of the will.

Buddha and Jesus as Men of Tremendous Will

The men of mighty will the world has produced have all been tremendous workers--gigantic souls, with wills powerful enough to overturn worlds, wills they got by persistent work, through ages, and ages. Such a gigantic will as that of a Buddha or a Jesus could not be obtained

in one life, for we know who their fathers were. It is not known that their fathers ever spoke a word for the good of mankind. Millions and millions of carpenters like Joseph had gone; millions are still living. Millions and millions of petty kings like Buddha's father had been in the world. If it was only a case of hereditary transmission, how do you account for this petty prince, who was not, perhaps, obeyed by his own servants, producing this son, whom half a world worships? How do you explain the gulf between the carpenter and his son, whom millions of human beings worship as God? It cannot be solved by the theory of heredity. The gigantic will which Buddha and Jesus threw over the world, whence did it come? Whence came this accumulation of power? It must have been there through ages and ages, continually growing bigger and bigger, until it burst on society in a Buddha or a Jesus, even rolling down to the present day.

All this is determined by Karma, work. No one can get anything unless he earns it. This is an eternal law. We may sometimes think it is not so, but in the long run we become convinced of it.

What We Deserve is Produced by Karma

A man may struggle all his life for riches; he may cheat thousands, but he finds at last that he did not deserve to become rich, and his life becomes a trouble and a nuisance to him. We may go on accumulating things for

our physical enjoyment, but only what we earn is really ours. A fool may buy all the books in the world, and they will be in his library; but he will be able to read only those that he deserves to; and this deserving is produced by Karma. Our Karma determines what we deserve and what we can assimilate. We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act.

Dexterity in Karma According to the Gita

You will say, "What is the use of learning how to work? Everyone works in some way or other in this world." But there is such a thing as frittering away our energies. With regard to Karma-Yoga, the Gita says that it is doing work with cleverness and as a science; by knowing how to work, one can obtain the greatest results. You must remember that all work is simply to bring out the power of the mind which is already there, to wake up the soul. The power is inside every man, so is knowing; the different works are like blows to bring them out, to cause these giants to wake up.

Motive in Karma

Man works with various motives. There cannot be work without motive. Some people want to get fame, and they work

for fame. Others want money, and they work for money. Others want to have power, and they work for power. Others want to get to heaven, and they work for the same. Others want to leave a name when they die, as they do in China, where no man gets a title until he is dead; and that is a better way, after all, than with us. When a man does something very good there, they give a title of nobility to his father, who is dead, or to his grandfather. Some people work for that. Some of the followers of certain Mohammedan sects work all their lives to have a big tomb built for them when they die. I know sects among whom, as soon as a child is born, a tomb is prepared for it; that is among them the most important work a man has to do, and the bigger and the finer the tomb, the better off the man is supposed to be. Others work as a penance; do all sorts of wicked things, then erect a temple, or give something to the priests to buy them off and obtain from them a passport to heaven. They think that this kind of beneficence will clear them and they will go scot-free in spite of their sinfulness. Such are some of the various motives for work.

Karma for Karma's Sake

Work for work's sake. There are some who are really the salt of the earth in every country and who work for work's sake, who do not care for name, or fame, or even to go to heaven. They work just because good will come of it. There are others who do good to the poor and help mankind from still higher motives, because they believe in doing good and love

good. The motive for name and fame seldom brings immediate results, as a rule; they come to us when we are old and have almost done with life.

Unselfishness as the Highest Motive

If a man works without any selfish motive in view, does he not gain anything? Yes, he gains the highest. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them lies such a manifestation of power. In the first place, a man who can work for five days, or even for five minutes, without any selfish motive whatever, without thinking of future, of heaven, of punishment, or anything of the kind, has in him the capacity to become a powerful moral giant. It is hard to do it, but in the heart of our hearts we know its value, and the good it brings.

It is the greatest manifestation of power--this tremendous restraint; self-restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing action. A carriage with four horses may rush down a hill unrestrained, or the coachman may curb the horses. Which is the greater manifestation of power, to let them go or to hold them? A cannon-ball flying through the air goes a long distance and falls. Another is cut short in its flight by striking against a wall, and the impact

generates intense heat. All outgoing energy following a selfish motive is frittered away; it will not cause power to return to you; but if restrained, it will result in development of power.

This self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or a Buddha. Foolish men do not know this secret; they nevertheless want to rule mankind. Even a fool may rule the whole world if he works and waits. Let him wait a few years, restrain that foolish idea of governing; and when that idea is wholly gone, he will be a power in the world. The majority of us cannot see beyond a few years, just as some animals cannot see beyond a few steps. Just a little narrow circle--that is our world. We have not the patience to look beyond, and thus become immoral and wicked. This is our weakness, our powerlessness.

Even the lowest forms of work are not to be despised. Let the man, who knows no better, work for selfish ends, for name and fame; but everyone should always try to get towards higher and higher motives and to understand them. "To work we have the right, but not to the fruits thereof." Leave the fruits alone. Why care for results? If you wish to help a man, never think what that man's attitude should be towards you. If you want to do a great or a good work, do not trouble to think what the result will be.

Karma in Akarma and Akarma in Karma (or Activity in Inactivity or Inactivity in Activity)

There arises a difficult question in this ideal of work. Intense activity is necessary; we must always work. We cannot live a minute without work. What then becomes of rest? Here is one side of the life-struggle--work, in which we are whirled rapidly round. And here is the other--that of calm, retiring renunciation: everything is peaceful around, there is very little of noise and show, only nature with her animals and flowers and mountains. Neither of them is a perfect picture.

A man used to solitude, if brought in contact with the surging whirlpool of the world, will be crushed by it; just as the fish that lives in the deep sea water, as soon as it is brought to the surface, breaks into pieces, deprived of the weight of water on it that had kept it together. Can a man who has been used to the turmoil and the rush of life live at ease if he comes to a quiet place? He suffers and perchance may lose his mind.

The ideal man is he who, in the midst of the greatest silence and solitude, finds the intensest activity, and in the midst of the intensest activity finds the silence and solitude of the desert. He has learnt the secret of restraint, he has controlled himself. He goes through the streets of a big city with all its traffic, and his mind is as calm as if he were in a cave, where not a sound could

reach him; and he is intensely working all the time. That is the ideal of Karma- Yoga, and if you have attained to that you have really learnt the secret of work.

But we have to begin from the beginning, to take up the works as they come to us and slowly make ourselves more unselfish every day. We must do the work and find out the motive power that prompts us; and, almost without exception, in the first years, we shall find that our motives are always selfish; but gradually this selfishness will melt by persistence, till at last will come the time when we shall be able to do really unselfish work. We may all hope that some day or other, as we struggle through the paths of life, there will come a time when we shall become perfectly unselfish; and the moment we attain to that, all our powers will be concentrated, and the knowledge which is ours will be manifest.

Source:

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Mayavati Memorial Edition, Volume 1,