



Reach

SAYINGS AND TEACHINGS

Sri Ramakrishna on Money

He is truly a man to whom money is only a servant; but, on the other hand, those who do not know how to make a proper use of it, hardly deserve to be called men.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 12.

Sri Sarada Devi on Holy Men

Holy men are born on earth to show people the way to God. They teach differently. There are many paths leading to the same goal. Therefore the teachings of all the saints are true.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 20.

Swami Vivekananda on being True to One's Own Religion

The Christian is not to become Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the other and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 35.

Loa Tzu (One of the Founders of Taoism) on the Mind

To the mind that is still, the whole universe surrenders. **Source:** <https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/lao-tzu-quotes>

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

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

ADELAIDE

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Contact: Dr Raman Sharma on (08) 8431 9775

Mrs Pathma Iswaran on (08) 8379 5336

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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

- The Annual Festival of the Divine Mother Durga was celebrated on Monday, 3 October, 2022. The morning program included puja, Vedic chanting, *bhajans*, *homa*, *pushpanjali* (offering of flowers by the devotees), and *prasad* distribution. The evening program included *aratrikam*, *Mahisasura Mardhini Stotram*, *bhajans* by Mrs Sowmya Anand and students, *pushpanjali* and *prasad* distribution.



Durga Puja in Adelaide

Other Activities

- The 17th Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday, 9 October, 2022 at 16 East Terrace, Kensington Gardens, SA 5068. Swami Manyananda, the executive committee members, and many devotees were present. The meeting started with a prayer and welcome and included presentation of the minutes of the 2020-21 AGM, Vice President's, Treasurer's, and Secretary's Reports followed by updating devotees about the work that was undertaken for improving various parts of the Centre building and general discussion about the organisational matters of the Centre.

Visitors

- Pravrajika Gayatriprana of the Vedanta Society of NSW along with Pravrajika Alokaprana of Sri Sarada Math's Matribhavan Maternity Hospital in Kolkata, India, visited the Centre on Saturday, 17 September 2022. They were accompanied by the local devotees of the Ramakrishna Sarada Vedanta Society of SA.



Pravrajikas Gayatriprana and Alokaprana with Others 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 Maclean, 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 Abbinayia 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

- During Mental Health Week, a range of programmes were conducted on 9, 15 and 16 October 2022. A workshop for children and youth on the topic 'Calm minds, strong minds' was conducted Mrs. Menaka Thomas and Mr. Atul Deshpande on 9 October 2022.



Mental Health Week in Brisbane

- A nature walk at the White Rock conservation area (bushwalk) was conducted by Mr. Vince Osborn on the 15 October 2022.
- A Yoga class was conducted by Jyotiba Patil followed by a talk on 'Yoga – the Meeting place' on the 16 October 2022.
- Swami Sridharananda, accompanied by Swami Dhyanananda and Brahmachari Prajnachaitanya visited the Centre from 25 October to 30 October 2022.
- Swami Atmeshananda visited Singapore and India from 17 October to 30 November 2022.

Celebrations

- *Durga Saptashati* was chanted everyday during Navaratri from 25 September to 4 October 2022.
- Sri Sri Durga puja was conducted on the Ash-tami (8th day) of Navaratri on 3 October 2022. Brahmachari Ram performed the puja, assisted by Swami Atmeshananda. Devotees had to register online to participate in the puja. The



Durga Puja in Brisbane

programme included singing of devotional songs, *aratrikam* and partaking of *prasad*.

- Sprinkling of holy water (Shanti Jal) was held on the *Dashami day* on 5 October 2022 in the evening.
- The Ashrama was brightly lit for Deepavali (Diwali). Candles, lamps and beautiful *kolam* (mandala designs) were drawn by devotees at the entrance of the Centre on 24 October 2022.



Kolam in Brisbane for Diwali

Forthcoming Programmes

- Holy Mother's *tithi puja* on Thursday, 15 December 2022.
- Vedanta Native Orchard – Queen's Jubilee Conservation Project planting ceremony on Saturday, 17 December 2022.
- Public celebration of Holy Mother's birthday on 18 December 2022.
- Christmas Eve service on 24 December 2022.

- Kalpataru Day programme on 1 January 2023.
- Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary on 14th January 2023.
- Maha Shivaratri on 18 February 2023.
- Sri Ramakrishna's birth anniversary on 21 February 2023.

CANBERRA

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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

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Contact: Swami Sunishthananda (03) 8684 9594

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

Regular Activities

- Vesper service (*aratrikam*), *bhajans*, readings 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 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.
- A scriptural class on Thursdays from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm on *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

Celebrations

- Durga Puja was celebrated on Monday, 3 October 2022, in the morning. The programme



Durga Puja in Melbourne

included special worship, chanting of *Chandi*, *homa* and *bhajans*. Devotees shared *prasad* after the event.

Other Activities

- Swami Sunishthananda was invited to deliver a talk on the topic 'Mindfulness and Meditation in the Yoga-Vedanta tradition' by the House of Persia (HOPE) Community and Cultural Centre on Monday, 3 October 2022, in the evening. He also conducted a Meditation session followed by a Question-Answer session.
- The Bengali Puja Cultural Society of Victoria (BPCSV) invited Swami Sunishthananda to deliver a talk on the 'Significance of Durga Puja' on Saturday, 8 October 2022 at the Hungarian Community Hall.
- Swami Sunishthananda was invited to attend the Premier's (of Victoria) Diwali Dinner at Victoria Pavilion, Ascot Vale on Monday, 24 October 2022.
- Vedanta Centre of Melbourne in collaboration with the Bhagavad Gita Research Foundation organized *Gita Yajna* on Sunday, 30 October 2022. Sri Nityananda Chakraborty of Sri Sri Gita Sangha, Dhaka, Bangladesh officiated as the priest of the *Gita Yajna*.
- Swami Sunishthananda was invited by the Sankat Mochan Samity, Melbourne to deliver a talk in Hindi on 'Love and devotion as exem-



Premier of Victoria Dan Andrews with Swami Sunishthananda and others

plified by Mahavira Hanuman' on Sunday, 13 November 2022.

- Swami Sunishthananda was invited by Interfaith Centre of Melbourne to represent Hinduism at the Interfaith Sacred Music Concert held at St. Michael's Uniting Church, Melbourne on Sunday, 20 November 2022.



Sacred Music Concert, St. Michael's Uniting Church, Melbourne

- Swami Sunishthananda was invited to represent Hinduism at an Interfaith Meet on Compassion organized by Maroondah Interfaith Network on Sunday, 27 November 2022 at Janssen Centre, Boronia.
- Swami Sunishthananda was invited by The UAE Mission to Australia to a reception held



Interfaith Meet on Compassion organized by Maroondah Interfaith Network

on the UAE's 51st National Day at The Promenade, Docklands, VIC.

PERTH

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Regular Activities:

- *Aratrikam* was conducted each night by a person or family taking the responsibility for it.
- Swami Dhanyananda visited Perth from 1 to 6 November 2022. He delivered three talks and conducted *Ramnam Sanskirtanam* while he was there.



Swami Dhanyananda's Visit to Perth

SYDNEY

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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

- Durga Puja was observed on 3 October 2022. The morning session consisted of worship by Br. Prajnachaitanya assisted by Swami Dhyanananda. Devotees registered before hand and came and offered *pushpanjali* during their respective time slots. They were served a packed *prasad*. In the evening, apart from *aratrikam* there was a musical offering by devotees and friends. Again, packed *prasad* was distributed.

Visitors

- Pravrajika Alokaprana, Sri Sarada Math's Matribhavan Maternity Hospital in Kolkata, India



Durga Puja (Evening Session) in Sydney

visited the Vedanta Centre of Sydney and met with Swami Sridharananda a few times in September 2022.

- Swami Manyananda from the Vedanta Centre of Adelaide visited Sydney from 5 to 10 December 2022.
- Swami Sunishthananda from the Vedanta Centre of Melbourne visited Sydney from 7 to 13 December 2022.



Swamis Manyananda and Sunishthananda

2. FEATURE ARTICLE: TAOISM/DAOISM

In ancient China there were three major religions. These were Taoism or Daoism, Confucius Thought and Cha'n or Zen Buddhism (In China it is called Cha'n and in Japan it is known as Zen). While the former two were contemporaries and indigenous to China, the latter travelled later from India through the Silk Road about 2000 years ago. Even though these different religions may seem to be separate, there was a lot of intermingling of the three, and the Chinese are able to follow all three religions together. Taoism often counter balanced the 'this worldly' Confucianism and emphasised naturalness, rather than education.

1. Taoism /Daoism: Introduction, Texts and History

Etymologically 'Tao' means 'the way' or 'the path'. There are said to be two intertwined forms of Taoism namely philosophical Taoism ('Taojia') and religious Taoism ('Taojiao'). Among the religious traditions of China, Taoism is a form of folk religion associated with the worship of natural phenomena.

The founder of Taoism is said to be Lao Tzu/Lao Zi who lived in the 6th century BCE. The seminal text of Taoism is *Tao Te Ching* / *Dao De Jing* by Lao Tzu, also known as Laozi, from the same period. Lao Tzu was a member of the Zhou emperor's court and was the older contemporary of Confucius. There is evidence that this book existed in 300s BCE.

The other important texts of Taoism is *Chuang Tzu* and the *Daozang*. The *Chuang Tzu* also known as *Zhuangzi* was written by Zhuang Zhou (369-286 BCE).

From around 200 CE Taoism develops as the major religion of the imperial court. In around 300 to 400 CE Buddhism is conceived as a branch of 'Neo Tao-

ism'. Between 618-907 CE during the time of the Tang Dynasty, Taoism is made the first official or state religion of China. During the period of the Ming Dynasty in 1366 CE Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism are identified as the three religions of China. In 1911 CE the Chinese republic is established under Dr Sun Yet Sen. The influence of Taoism is depleted. In 1949 CE with the institution of the People's Republic of China and communism, Taoists were forced to relinquish control of their groups or go underground.

2. The Tao (the Way) and Yin Yang

The Tao or the way is the basis to all existence. In the *Tao Te Ching*, the Tao is referred to as the 'nameless mother' and it constantly advises inaction. The 'Tao' is said to be the point of origin. It is from this point that Yin and Yang manifest. Yang in ancient Chinese refers to the southern or sunny side of the mountain and represents 'upwardness, dryness and warmth'. Yin is the balancing opposite of these and represents 'cold, damp and downwardness'. In popular parlance Yang is referred to the active mascu-



The Yin Yang Symbol

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yin_and_Yang_symbol.svg

line, while Yin represents the passive feminine.

The idea of Yin or passivity is a powerful concept in Taoism. The metaphor that is used for Yin and passivity is water. Water is essentially passive. It gives way when one steps into a stream. Nonetheless, it has the power to carve out canyons in mountain rock. This is the way the hardness and roughness of the Yang is balanced with the fluidity of the Yin.

3. Important Ideas of Taoism

According to Zhicheng (2016 pp. 359-364) Tao is noumenal, transcendental, open ended and beyond the senses and mind. Zhicheng cites the *Tao Te*

Ching, which in 1 says: 'The Tao if articulated is not the eternal Tao'. The Tao is also omnipresent as given in 34 of the *Tao Te Ching*: 'The Tao is everywhere, being spread far and wide, up and down and left and right.' It is also the ultimate source and cause of all things. In other words everything is derived from the 'Tao' and returns to it.

Taoism, as represented in Yin and Yang, emphasises interdependence, unity, harmony, balance and complementarity. We humans are said to be out of sync with the rhythm of the universe. We have to attune ourselves to this rhythm and get in sync with the universe. This is not only with respect to other human beings, but with respect to the whole universe. 'It advises us to find ourselves in the other.: the white in the black, the black in the white; the feminine in the masculine, the masculine in the feminine, the friend in the enemy, the enemy in the friend; my religion in yours and yours in mine.' (Holloway, 2017, pp. 84-85).

Aggressive action is denounced in Taoism. People are advised to act in harmony with the natural course and go with the flow. Lao Tzu called his approach to life 'Wu-Wei' 'doing by not doing, letting things be, letting things happen'. The natural course often means giving into passivity and inactivity. This is the reason that water is admired in Taoism because it is 'soft and yielding' and has the ability to wear down rocks.

The practitioners of Taoism strove to attain eternal life

through diet, breath control, meditation and magic. Reaching heaven was not an ultimate aim of Taoism. Longevity in this world was something that was important to the Taoists. Texts like the *Book of the Yellow Emperor's Court* dealt with health and longevity. In order to attain to this they engaged in alchemy or the mixing of secret portions (chemicals). The Taoists are said to have invented gunpowder, other chemicals and even acupuncture. They also believed in the existence of many Gods in the human body and in the universe who could be supplicated for eternal life.

4. Taoist Deities

The iconic Taoist deities are the Eight Immortals headed by Li Tie Guai. The eight immortals hold the keys to immortality. They are said to reward the just and punish the wicked. They are like superheroes and represent the highest development in Taoism of those that are just and live eternally.

5. Taoist Rituals

Rituals are undertaken to reverse the body's natural process of ageing. These personal rituals are practised through the brewing of alchemical portions, strict dietary prescriptions, meditation and breathing techniques. Breathing techniques try to inhale breath into one's feet to draw the 'Ch'i' or essence through to one's body as much as possible. This Ch'i is aimed to be converted into spiritual energy which leads one to immortality.

6. The Practice of Taoism in Current Times

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Organised Taoism is mainly found in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. In China there are not many religious Taoists left. According to the *World History Encyclopaedia* the votaries of Taoism in current times practice ancestor worship and spirit worship, but the original Taoism may have not included these practices.

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Zhicheng, Wang, 'Inter-Religious harmony from the Perspective of Chinese Religious Traditions', in Bhajanananda, Swami and Mahabodhananda, Swami (Eds), *The Universal Message of Swami Vivekananda*, 2016, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math pp. 359-364, 384-390).

2. EACH IS GREAT IN HIS OWN PLACE

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

In the 63rd issue of *Reach* we began serializing Swami Vivekananda's *Karma Yoga*. The original *Karma Yoga* was published during Swamiji's lifetime during the latter part of the 19th century, comprising 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 first volume of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. The following article is a reproduction of the original in which two changes have been made 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*.

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—the Three cosmic Forces of Sankhya Philosophy

According to the Sankhya philosophy, nature is composed of three forces called, in Sanskrit, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. These as manifested in the physical world are what we may call equilibrium, activity, and inertness. Tamas is typified as darkness or inactivity; Rajas is activity, expressed as attraction or repulsion; and Sattva is the equilibrium of the two.

In every man there are these three forces. Sometimes Tamas prevails. We become lazy, we cannot move, we are inactive, bound down by certain ideas or by mere dullness. At other times activity prevails, and at still other times that calm balancing of both. Again, in different men, one of these forces is generally predominant. The characteristic of one man is inactivity, dullness and laziness; that of another, activity, power, manifestation of energy; and in still another we find the sweetness, calmness, and gentleness, which are due to

the balancing of both action and inaction. So in all creation—in animals, plants, and men—we find the more or less typical manifestation of all these different forces. Karma-Yoga has specially to deal with these three factors. By teaching what they are and how to employ them, it helps us to do our work better.

Morality is Relative

Human society is a graded organisation. We all know about morality, and we all know about duty, but at the same time we find that in different countries the significance of morality varies greatly. What is regarded as moral in one country may in another be considered perfectly immoral. For instance, in one country cousins may marry; in another, it is thought to be very immoral; in one, men may marry their sisters-in-law; in another, it is regarded as immoral; in one country people may marry only once; in another, many times; and so forth. Similarly, in all other departments of morality, we find the standard varies greatly—

yet we have the idea that there must be a universal standard of morality.

Duty is Relative

So it is with duty. The idea of duty varies much among different nations. In one country, if a man does not do certain things, people will say he has acted wrongly; while if he does those very things in another country, people will say that he did not act rightly—and yet we know that there must be some universal idea of duty. In the same way, one class of society thinks that certain things are among its duty, while another class thinks quite the opposite and would be horrified if it had to do those things. Two ways are left open to us—the way of the ignorant, who think that there is only one way to truth and that all the rest are wrong, and the way of the wise, who admit that, according to our mental constitution or the different planes of existence in which we are, duty and morality may vary. The important thing is to know that there are gradations of

duty and of morality--that the duty of one state of life, in one set of circumstances, will not and cannot be that of another.

Non Resistance as the Highest Moral Ideal

To illustrate: All great teachers have taught, "Resist not evil," that non-resistance is the highest moral ideal. We all know that, if a certain number of us attempted to put that maxim fully into practice, the whole social fabric would fall to pieces, the wicked would take possession of our properties and our lives, and would do whatever they like with us. Even if only one day of such non-resistance were practised, it would lead to disaster. Yet, intuitively, in our heart of hearts we feel the truth of the teaching "Resist not evil." This seems to us to be the highest ideal; yet to teach this doctrine only would be equivalent to condemning a vast portion of mankind. Not only so, it would be making men feel that they were always doing wrong, and cause in them scruples of conscience in all their actions; it would weaken them, and that constant self-disapproval would breed more vice than any other weakness would. To the man who has begun to hate himself the gate to degeneration has already opened; and the same is true of a nation.

Our first duty is not to hate ourselves, because to advance we must have faith in ourselves first and then in God. He who has no faith in himself can never have faith in God. Therefore, the only alternative remaining to us is to recognise that duty and morality

vary under different circumstances; not that the man who resists evil is doing what is always and in itself wrong, but that in the different circumstances in which he is placed it may become even his duty to resist evil.

Resistance and Non-Resistance in the Bhagavad Gita

In reading the Bhagavad-Gita, many of you in Western countries may have felt astonished at the second chapter, wherein Sri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and a coward because of his refusal to fight, or offer resistance, on account of his adversaries being his friends and relatives, making the plea that non-resistance was the highest ideal of love. This is a great lesson for us all to learn, that in all matters the two extremes are alike. The extreme positive and the extreme negative are always similar. When the vibrations of light are too slow, we do not see them, nor do we see them when they are too rapid. So with sound; when very low in pitch, we do not hear it; when very high, we do not hear it either. Of like nature is the difference between resistance and non-resistance. One man does not resist because he is weak, lazy, and cannot, not because he will not; the other man knows that he can strike an irresistible blow if he likes; yet he not only does not strike, but blesses his enemies. The one who from weakness resists not commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering re-

sistance. Buddha gave up his throne and renounced his position, that was true renunciation; but there cannot be any question of renunciation in the case of a beggar who has nothing to renounce. So we must always be careful about what we really mean when we speak of this non-resistance and ideal love. We must first take care to understand whether we have the power of resistance or not. Then, having the power, if we renounce it and do not resist, we are doing a grand act of love; but if we cannot resist, and yet, at the same time, try to deceive ourselves into the belief that we are actuated by motives of the highest love, we are doing the exact opposite. Arjuna became a coward at the sight of the mighty array against him; his "love" made him forget his duty towards his country and king. That is why Sri Krishna told him that he was a hypocrite; Thou talkest like a wise man, but thy actions betray thee to be a coward; therefore stand up and fight!

Such is the central idea of Karma-Yoga. The Karma-Yogi is the man who understands that the highest ideal is non-resistance, and who also knows that this non-resistance is the highest manifestation of power in actual possession, and also what is called the resisting of evil is but a step on the way towards the manifestation of this highest power, namely, non-resistance. Before reaching this highest ideal, man's duty is to resist evil; let him work, let him fight, let him strike straight from the shoulder. Then only, when he has gained the power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue.

I once met a man in my country whom I had known before as a very stupid, dull person, who knew nothing and had not the desire to know anything, and was living the life of a brute. He asked me what he should do to know God, how he was to get free. "Can you tell a lie?" I asked him. "No," he replied. "Then you must learn to do so. It is better to tell a lie than to be a brute, or a log of wood. You are inactive; you have not certainly reached the highest state, which is beyond all actions, calm and serene; you are too dull even to do something wicked." That was an extreme case, of course, and I was joking with him; but what I meant was that a man must be active in order to pass through activity to perfect calmness.

Inactivity should be avoided by all means. Activity always means resistance. Resist all evils, mental and physical; and when you have succeeded in resisting, then will calmness come. It is very easy to say, "Hate nobody, resist not evil," but we know what that kind of thing generally means in practice. When the eyes of society are turned towards us, we may make a show of non-resistance, but in our hearts it is canker all the time. We feel the utter want of the calm of non-resistance; we feel that it would be better for us to resist. If you desire wealth, and know at the same time that the whole world regards him who aims at wealth as a very wicked man, you, perhaps, will not dare to plunge into the struggle for wealth, yet your mind will be running day and night after money. This is hypocrisy and will serve no purpose. Plunge into the world, and then,

after a time, when you have suffered and enjoyed all that is in it, will renunciation come; then will calmness come. So fulfil your desire for power and everything else, and after you have fulfilled the desire, will come the time when you will know that they are all very little things; but until you have fulfilled this desire, until you have passed through that activity, it is impossible for you to come to the state of calmness, serenity, and self-surrender. These ideas of serenity and renunciation have been preached for thousands of years; everybody has heard of them from childhood, and yet we see very few in the world who have really reached that stage. I do not know if I have seen twenty persons in my life who are really calm and non-resisting, and I have travelled over half the world.

Let Everyone Take Up His/Her Own Ideal and Unity in Variety

Every man should take up his own ideal and endeavour to accomplish it. That is a surer way of progress than taking up other men's ideals, which he can never hope to accomplish. For instance, we take a child and at once give him the task of walking twenty miles. Either the little one dies, or one in a thousand crawls the twenty miles, to reach the end exhausted and half-dead. That is like what we generally try to do with the world. All the men and women, in any society, are not of the same mind, capacity, or of the same power to do things; they must have different ideals, and we have no right to sneer at

any ideal. Let every one do the best he can for realising his own ideal. Nor is it right that I should be judged by your standard or you by mine. The apple tree should not be judged by the standard of the oak, nor the oak by that of the apple. To judge the apple tree you must take the apple standard, and for the oak, its own standard.

Unity in variety is the plan of creation. However men and women may vary individually, there is unity in the background. The different individual characters and classes of men and women are natural variations in creation. Hence, we ought not to judge them by the same standard or put the same ideal before them. Such a course creates only an unnatural struggle, and the result is that man begins to hate himself and is hindered from becoming religious and good. Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the truth.

The Different Classes (Ashramas) in Hindu Society especially the Householder and the Sannyasin

In the Hindu system of morality we find that this fact has been recognised from very ancient times; and in their scriptures and books on ethics different rules are laid down for the different classes of men--the householder, the Sannyasin (the man who has renounced the world), and the student.

The life of every individual, according to the Hindu scriptures, has its peculiar duties apart from what belongs in common to universal humanity. The Hindu begins life as a student; then he marries and becomes a householder; in old age he retires; and lastly he gives up the world and becomes a Sannyasin. To each of these stages of life certain duties are attached. No one of these stages is intrinsically superior to another. The life of the married man is quite as great as that of the celibate who has devoted himself to religious work. The scavenger in the street is quite as great and glorious as the king on his throne. Take him off his throne, make him do the work of the scavenger, and see how he fares. Take up the scavenger and see how he will rule. It is useless to say that the man who lives out of the world is a greater man than he who lives in the world; it is much more difficult to live in the world and worship God than to give it up and live a free and easy life. The four stages of life in India have in later times been reduced to two—that of the householder and of the monk. The householder marries and carries on his duties as a citizen, and the duty of the other is to devote his energies wholly to religion, to preach and to worship God.

The Duties of a Householder According to Maha Nirvana Tantra

I shall read to you a few passages from the *Maha-Nirvana-Tantra*, which treats of this subject, and you will see that it is a very difficult task for a man to be a householder, and perform all his duties perfectly:

The householder should be devoted to God; the knowledge of God should be his goal of life. Yet he must work constantly, perform all his duties; he must give up the fruits of his actions to God.

It is the most difficult thing in this world to work and not care for the result, to help a man and never think that he ought to be grateful, to do some good work and at the same time never look to see whether it brings you name or fame, or nothing at all. Even the most arrant coward becomes brave when the world praises him. A fool can do heroic deeds when the approbation of society is upon him, but for a man to constantly do good without caring for the approbation of his fellow men is indeed the highest sacrifice man can perform. The great duty of the householder is to earn a living, but he must take care that he does not do it by telling lies, or by cheating, or by robbing others; and he must remember that his life is for the service of God, and the poor.

Knowing that mother and father are the visible representatives of God, the householder, always and by all means, must please them. If the mother is pleased, and the father, God is pleased with the man. That child is really a good child who never speaks harsh words to his parents.

Before parents one must not utter jokes, must not show restlessness, must not show anger or temper. Before mother or father, a child must bow down low, and stand up in their presence, and must not take a seat until they order him to sit.

If the householder has food and drink and clothes without first seeing that his mother and his father, his children, his wife, and the poor, are supplied, he is committing a sin. The mother and the father are the causes of this body; so a man must undergo a thousand troubles in order to do good to them.

Even so is his duty to his wife. No man should scold his wife, and he must always maintain her as if she were his own mother. And even when he is in the greatest difficulties and troubles, he must not show anger to his wife.

He who thinks of another woman besides his wife, if he touches her even with his mind—that man goes to dark hell. Before women he must not talk improper language, and never brag of his powers. He must not say, "I have done this, and I have done that."

The householder must always please his wife with money, clothes, love, faith, and words like nectar, and never do anything to disturb her. That man who has succeeded in getting the love of a chaste wife has succeeded in his religion and has all the virtues.

The following are duties towards children:

A son should be lovingly reared up to his fourth year; he should be educated till he is sixteen. When he is twenty years of age he should be employed in some work; he should then be treated affectionately by his father as his equal. Exactly in the same manner the daughter should be

brought up, and should be educated with the greatest care. And when she marries, the father ought to give her jewels and wealth.

Then the duty of the man is towards his brothers and sisters, and towards the children of his brothers and sisters, if they are poor, and towards his other relatives, his friends and his servants.

Then his duties are towards the people of the same village, and the poor, and any one that comes to him for help. Having sufficient means, if the householder does not take care to give to his relatives and to the poor, know him to be only a brute; his is not a human being.

Excessive attachment to food, clothes, and the tending of the body, and dressing of the hair should be avoided. The householder must be pure in heart and clean in body, always active and always ready for work.

To his enemies the householder must be a hero. Then he must resist. That is the duty of the householder. He must not sit down in a corner and weep, and talk nonsense about non-resistance. If he does not show himself a hero to his enemies he has not done his duty. And to his friends and relatives he must be as gentle as a lamb.

It is the duty of the householder not to pay reverence to the wicked; because, if he reverences the wicked people of the world, he patronises wickedness; and it will be a great mistake if he disregards those who are worthy of respect, the good people. He must not be gushing in his friendship; he must not go out of

the way making friends everywhere; he must watch the actions of the men he wants to make friends with, and their dealings with other men, reason upon them, and then make friends.

These three things he must not talk of. He must not talk in public of his own fame; he must not preach his own name or his own powers; he must not talk of his wealth, or of anything that has been told to him privately.

A man must not say he is poor, or that he is wealthy—he must not brag of his wealth. Let him keep his own counsel; this is his religious duty. This is not mere worldly wisdom; if a man does not do so, he may be held to be immoral.

The householder is the basis, the prop, of the whole society. He is the principal earner. The poor, the weak, the children and the women who do not work—all live upon the householder; so there must be certain duties that he has to perform, and these duties must make him feel strong to perform them, and not make him think that he is doing things beneath his ideal. Therefore, if he has done something weak, or has made some mistake, he must not say so in public; and if he is engaged in some enterprise and knows he is sure to fail in it, he must not speak of it. Such self-exposure is not only uncalled for, but also unnerves the man and makes him unfit for the performance of his legitimate duties in life. At the same time, he must struggle hard to acquire these things—firstly, knowledge, and secondly, wealth. It is his duty, and if he does not do his duty, he is nobody. A householder who

does not struggle to get wealth is immoral. If he is lazy and content to lead an idle life, he is immoral, because upon him depend hundreds. If he gets riches, hundreds of others will be thereby supported.

If there were not in this city hundreds who had striven to become rich, and who had acquired wealth, where would all this civilisation, and these alms-houses and great houses be?

Going after wealth in such a case is not bad, because that wealth is for distribution. The householder is the centre of life and society. It is a worship for him to acquire and spend wealth nobly, for the householder who struggles to become rich by good means and for good purposes is doing practically the same thing for the attainment of salvation as the anchorite does in his cell when he is praying; for in them we see only the different aspects of the same virtue of self-surrender and self-sacrifice prompted by the feeling of devotion to God and to all that is His.

He must struggle to acquire a good name by all means. He must not gamble, he must not move in the company of the wicked, he must not tell lies, and must not be the cause of trouble to others.

Often people enter into things they have not the means to accomplish, with the result that they cheat others to attain their own ends. Then there is in all things the time factor to be taken into consideration; what at one time might be a failure, would perhaps at another time be a very great success.

The householder must speak the

truth, and speak gently, using words which people like, which will do good to others; nor should he talk of the business of other men.

The householder by digging tanks, by planting trees on the roadsides, by establishing rest-houses for men and animals, by making roads and building bridges, goes towards the same goal as the greatest Yogi.

This is one part of the doctrine of Karma-Yoga--activity, the duty of the householder. There is a passage later on, where it says that "if the householder dies in battle, fighting for his country or his religion, he comes to the same goal as the Yogi by meditation," showing thereby that what is duty for one is not duty for another. At the same time, it does not say that this duty is lowering and the other elevating. Each duty has its own place, and according to the circumstances in which we are placed, must we perform our duties.

One idea comes out of all this--the condemnation of all weakness. This is a particular idea in all our teachings which I like, either in philosophy, or in religion, or in work. If you read the Vedas, you will find this word always repeated--fearlessness--fear nothing. Fear is a sign of weakness. A man must go about his duties without taking notice of the sneers and the ridicule of the world.

If a man retires from the world to worship God, he must not think that those who live in the world and work for the good of the world are not worshipping God: neither must those who live in the world, for wife and children,

think that those who give up the world are low vagabonds. Each is great in his own place. This thought I will illustrate by a story.

Story of the Householder and Sannyasin (Monk)

A certain king used to inquire of all the Sannyasins that came to his country, "Which is the greater man--he who gives up the world and becomes a Sannyasin, or he who lives in the world and performs his duties as a householder?" Many wise men sought to solve the problem. Some asserted that the Sannyasin was the greater, upon which the king demanded that they should prove their assertion. When they could not, he ordered them to marry and become householders. Then others came and said, "The householder who performs his duties is the greater man." Of them, too the king demanded proofs. When they could not give them, he made them also settle down as householders.

At last there came a young Sannyasin, and the king similarly inquired of him also. He answered, "Each, O king, is equally great in his place." "Prove this to me," asked the king. "I will prove it to you," said the Sannyasin, "but you must first come and live as I do for a few days, that I may be able to prove to you what I say." The king consented and followed the Sannyasin out of his own territory and passed through many other countries until they came to a great kingdom. In the capital of that kingdom a great ceremony was going on. The king and the Sannyasin heard the noise of drums and music, and heard also the criers; the people were as-

sembled in the streets in gala dress, and a great proclamation was being made. The king and the Sannyasin stood there to see what was going on. The crier was proclaiming loudly that the princess, daughter of the king of that country, was about to choose a husband from among those assembled before her.

It was an old custom in India for princesses to choose husbands in this way. Each princess had certain ideas of the sort of man she wanted for a husband. Some would have the handsomest man, others would have only the most learned, others again the richest, and so on. All the princes of the neighbourhood put on their bravest attire and presented themselves before her. Sometimes they too had their own criers to enumerate their advantages and the reasons why they hoped the princess would choose them. The princess was taken round on a throne, in the most splendid array, and looked at and heard about them. If she was not pleased with what she saw and heard, she said to her bearers, "Move on," and no more notice was taken of the rejected suitors. If, however, the princess was pleased with any one of them, she threw a garland of flowers over him and he became her husband.

The princess of the country to which our king and the Sannyasin had come was having one of these interesting ceremonies. She was the most beautiful princess in the world, and the husband of the princess would be ruler of the kingdom after her father's death. The idea of this princess was to marry the handsomest man, but she could not find the

right one to please her. Several times these meetings had taken place, but the princess could not select a husband. This meeting was the most splendid of all; more people than ever had come to it. The princess came in on a throne, and the bearers carried her from place to place. She did not seem to care for any one, and every one became disappointed that this meeting also was going to be a failure. Just then came a young man, a Sannyasin, handsome as if the sun had come down to the earth, and stood in one corner of the assembly, watching what was going on. The throne with the princess came near him, and as soon as she saw the beautiful Sannyasin, she stopped and threw the garland over him. The young Sannyasin seized the garland and threw it off, exclaiming, "What nonsense is this? I am a Sannyasin. What is marriage to me?" The king of that country thought that perhaps this man was poor and so dared not marry the princess, and said to him, "With my daughter goes half my kingdom now, and the whole kingdom after my death!" and put the garland again on the Sannyasin. The young man threw it off once more, saying, "Nonsense! I do not want to marry," and walked quickly away from the assembly.

Now the princess had fallen so much in love with this young man that she said, "I must marry this man or I shall die"; and she went after him to bring him back. Then our other Sannyasin, who had brought the king there, said to him, "King, let us follow this pair"; so they walked after them, but at a good distance behind. The young Sannyasin who had

refused to marry the princess walked out into the country for several miles. When he came to a forest and entered into it, the princess followed him, and the other two followed them. Now this young Sannyasin was well acquainted with that forest and knew all the intricate paths in it. He suddenly passed into one of these and disappeared, and the princess could not discover him. After trying for a long time to find him she sat down under a tree and began to weep, for she did not know the way out. Then our king and the other Sannyasin came up to her and said, "Do not weep; we will show you the way out of this forest, but it is too dark for us to find it now. Here is a big tree; let us rest under it, and in the morning we will go early and show you the road."

Now a little bird and his wife and their three little ones lived on that tree, in a nest. This little bird looked down and saw the three people under the tree and said to his wife, "My dear, what shall we do? Here are some guests in the house, and it is winter, and we have no fire." So he flew away and got a bit of burning firewood in his beak and dropped it before the guests, to which they added fuel and made a blazing fire. But the little bird was not satisfied. He said again to his wife, "My dear, what shall we do? There is nothing to give these people to eat, and they are hungry. We are householders; it is our duty to feed any one who comes to the house. I must do what I can, I will give them my body." So he plunged into the midst of the fire and perished. The guests saw him falling and tried to save him, but he was too

quick for them.

The little bird's wife saw what her husband did, and she said, "Here are three persons and only one little bird for them to eat. It is not enough; it is my duty as a wife not to let my husband's effort go in vain; let them have my body also." Then she fell into the fire and was burned to death.

Then the three baby-birds, when they saw what was done and that there was still not enough food for the three guests, said, "Our parents have done what they could and

still it is not enough. It is our duty to carry on the work of our parents; let our bodies go too." And they all dashed down into the fire also.

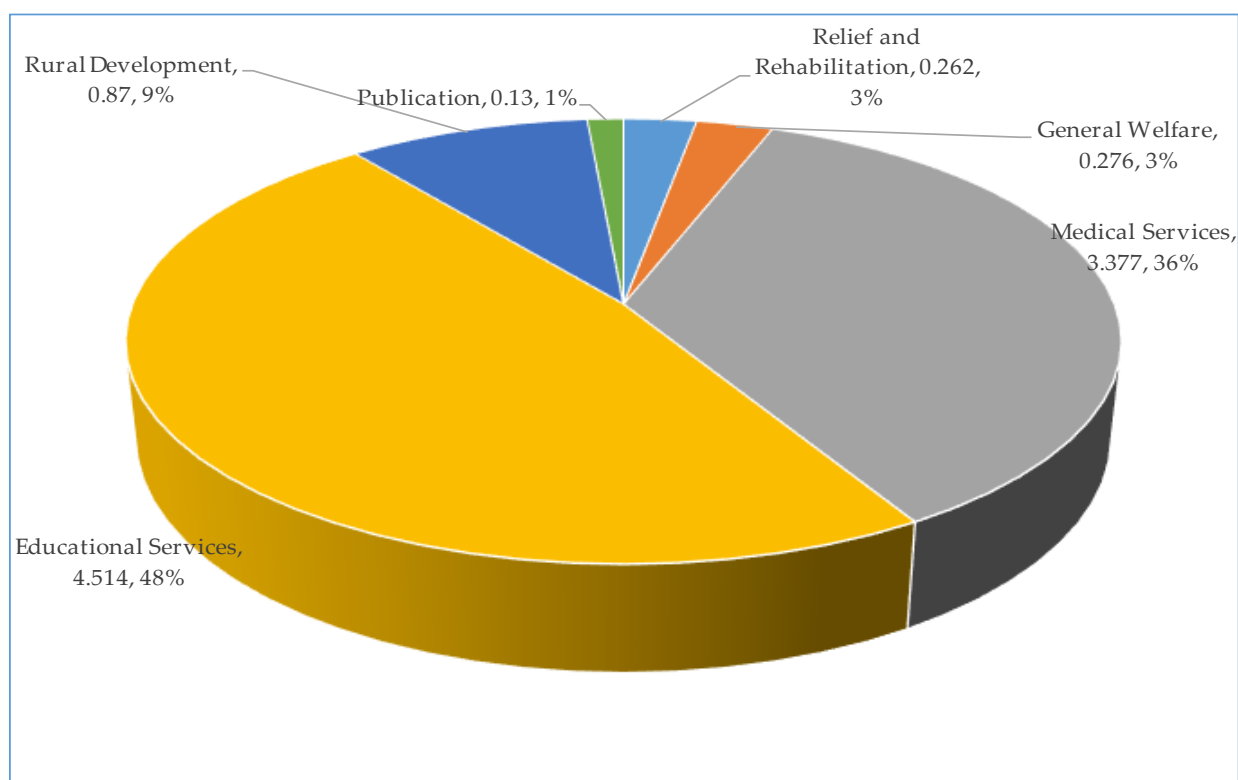
Amazed at what they saw, the three people could not of course eat these birds. They passed the night without food, and in the morning the king and the Sannyasin showed the princess the way, and she went back to her father.

Then the Sannyasin said to the king, "King, you have seen that each is great in his own place. If you want to live in the world, live like those birds, ready at any moment to sacrifice yourself for others. If you want to renounce the world, be like that young man to whom the most beautiful woman and a kingdom were as nothing. If you want to be a householder, hold your life a sacrifice for the welfare of others; and if you choose the life of renunciation, do not even look at beauty and money and power. Each is great in his own place, but the duty of the one is not the duty of the other."

4. SYNOPSIS OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION 2021-22

The 113th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at Belur Math on 18 December 2022. Swami Suvirananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission presented the AGM Report. The following are the main take away points from the report.

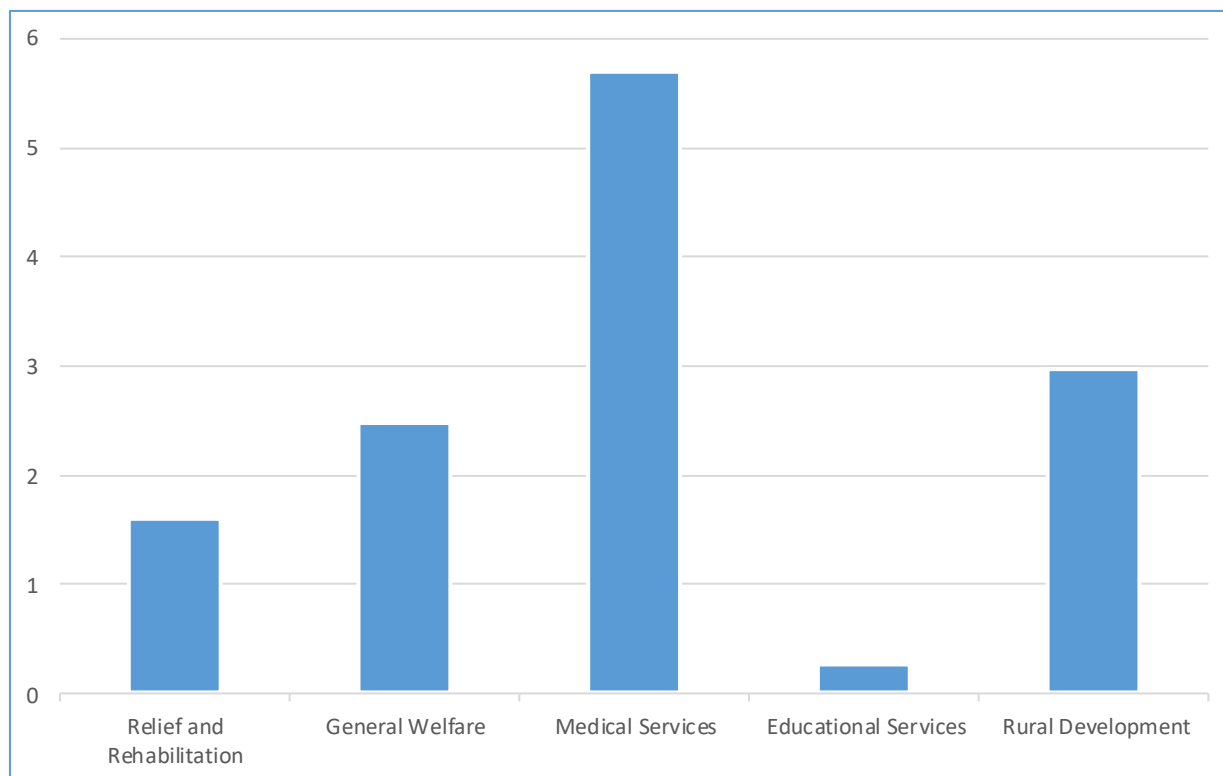
Figure 1: Total Expenditure in billions (Rs) and percentage of the total expenditure by the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission for 2021-22



Source: Synopsis of the AGM Report of the Ramakrishna Mission 2021-21

Figure 1 illustrates the amount spent in billions and the percentage of the total expenditure by the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission on its main services. Nearly half (48% or Rs 4. 514 billion) was spent on Educational services. Expenditure on Medical services followed this, amounting to 36% of total expenditure or Rs. 3. 377 billion; Rural Development amounting to 9 % or Rs. 871 million; General Welfare amounting to 3% Rs. 276 million; Relief and Rehabilitation amounting to 3 % or Rs. 262 million and Publication accounting for 1%, Rs. 130 million.

Figure 2: Number of Beneficiaries in Millions (Rs) by Types of Services of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission for 2021-22



Source: Synopsis of the AGM Report of the Ramakrishna Mission 2021-21

Figure 2 illustrates the number of beneficiaries of the different services of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. Medical services had the highest number of beneficiaries at 5,709,000 people. This was followed by Rural Development at 2,980,000 people), General welfare 2,477,000 people); Relief and Rehabilitation 1,595,000 people and educational services at 261,000 people.

Comparing Figures 1 and 2, the question may arise how education which constitutes the highest, almost half of the total expenditure, but has the lowest number of beneficiaries. The answer is that educational services, like enrolment in secondary and higher secondary educational institutions, entail a long term tenure for an year or more. Medical services, on the other hand, are short term, ad hoc and there may be repeated use of services that are administered not only general hospitals, but dispensaries attached to the various centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. General hospitals also have expensive medical equipment that is costly to administer. This explains the second highest expenditure by the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission in medical services of 36% as provided in Figure 1.

Figure 3: Starting of New Centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission 2021-22

	India	Abroad
Ramakrishna Mission	4	0
Ramakrishna Math	3	1

Source: Synopsis of the AGM Report of the Ramakrishna Mission 2021-21

Figure 3 shows that there were 4 new centres in India that began over 2021-22 that were affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission and 3 new centres affiliated to the Ramakrishna Math in India. There was 1 centre that began abroad in Auckland, New Zealand affiliated to the Ramakrishna Math.

5. Mention of the Vedanta Centre of Brisbane in the Official Papers of the Queensland Parliament (the Hansard) by Charis Mullen, Member for Jordon

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 17 August 2022

Jordan Electorate, Community Centres

Mrs MULLEN (Jordan—ALP) (7.04 pm):

Another organisation that is truly valued in the Jordan electorate is the Vedanta Centre in Springfield Lakes. The Vedanta Centre is a branch of the Ramakrishna Order in India. The centre runs a number of wonderful community and spiritual programs, including yoga, children's and school holiday programs and so much more.

Tonight, I would like to focus on the Maa Sarada's soup kitchen which has been running from the centre for a number of years. On a Saturday people can pop along to the community cafe and enjoy the most delicious food at an affordable price—dosa, samosas and, my new favourite, pani poori. The funds raised from the very popular community cafe are reinvested into running the soup kitchen.

During COVID-19 the amazing and dedicated volunteers—some of whom travel from Deception Bay to Springfield—went into overdrive, preparing ready-made meals for the local community members in need and those who were isolating. In fact, since 2020, the supporters of the centre have cooked and packed more than 10,000 meals for our local community and region.

It was wonderful a few weeks ago to attend a very special community event for the dedication of a brand new commercial kitchen for the centre. It is absolutely wonderful and I know the volunteers are excited about being able to use this new larger kitchen. They have said they are going to prepare even more meals—if that is even possible. I want to thank everyone involved at the Vedanta Centre and look forward to sharing a meal with them again very soon.