



REACH

Newsletter of Vedanta Centres of Australia

Motto:

*Atmano mokshartham
jagad hitaya cha,*

**“For one’s own
liberation and for the
welfare of the world.”**

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Sayings and Teachings

Vanity

“Be as devoid of vanity as the cast away leaf carried by the high wind.”

--- Sri Ramakrishna.

*Great sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna,
Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda;
The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of
Culture; Kolkata; page 8.*

Meditation

“Practice meditation, and by and by your mind will be so calm and fixed that you will find it hard to keep away from meditation.”

--- Sri Sarada Devi.
Ibid, page 21.

Love and Life

“All expansion is life, all contraction is death. All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love’s sake, just as you breathe to live.”

--- Swami Vivekananda.
Ibid, page 35.

“Come out into the universe of Light. Everything in the universe is yours, stretch out your arms and embrace it with love. If you ever felt you wanted to do that, you have felt God.”

“The power is with the silent ones, who only live and love and then withdraw their personality. They never say “me” and “mine”; they are only blessed in being instruments.”

--- Swami Vivekananda.

*The Complete Works of Swami
Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata*



Statue of Swami Vivekananda at the Ramakrishna Mission Swami Vivekananda’s Ancestral House and Cultural Centre, 3 Gour Mohan Mukherjee Street, Kolkata, W. B.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FROM JANUARY TO APRIL 2011

Function	Centre	Date
Birthday of Swami Vivekananda	Brisbane	Saturday, 5 February 2011
	Melbourne	Wednesday, 26 January 2011
	Perth	Saturday, 29 February 2011
	Sydney	Wednesday, 26 January 2011
Shivaratri	Sydney	Thursday, 3 March 2011
Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna	Brisbane	Saturday, 12 March 2011
	Melbourne	Saturday, 12 March 2011
	Perth	Sunday, 6 March 2011
	Sydney	Sunday, 6 March 2011

Welcome

We welcome you all to the Ramakrishna - Vedanta Movement and invite you to attend our functions and actively participate in the propagation of the Universal message of Vedanta as epitomized in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda.

News from and activities of the Vedanta Centres of Australia and New Zealand

For the period from September 2010 to December 2010

ADELAIDE CENTRE

Monthly activities:

a) Swami Sridharananda continued his three-days-a-month visit to Adelaide and delivered discourses on the *Srimad-Bhagavad Gita* and *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* at the Dulwich Community Centre, 14 Union Street, Dulwich SA 5065. The lectures are being recorded. For details of the ongoing monthly programmes please contact Mr. Raman Sharma, Secretary, on 08- 8431 9775 or Mrs. Pathma Iswaran on 08-8379 5336.

b) A 'Reading from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*' is held every month on a prescheduled Sunday from 2:30 p.m. at 33 Woodhouse Crescent, Wattle Park, SA 5066.

c) **Annual General Meeting** was held on 23rd of October 2010 at Dulwich Community Centre.

d) The **annual day-long spiritual retreat** was held on Saturday 4th of December 2010 at the Monastery, 15 Cross Road, Urrbrae, SA 5064. Swami Sridharananda and Swami Atmeshananda conducted the retreat. Swami Sridharananda gave two talks on "What is meditation and how to practice it." About 22 devotees participated in activities such as chanting of vedic mantras, guided meditations, *bhajans* and a lively question-answer session. The retreat concluded with devotional singing and *arti*.



At the spiritual Retreat, Adelaide

BRISBANE CENTRE

Daily activities:

Morning worship, evening *arati*, *bhajans*, and readings from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* are the regular activities at the Centre at **181 Burbong**

Street, Chapel Hill, QLD 4073, (Phone no. 07-3720 0228). A resident volunteer looks after the day-to-day activities at the Centre.

Monthly and Annual activities:

Swami Atmeshananda visited Brisbane once a month and delivered talks on the *Bhagavad-Gita* as well as on other spiritual topics. On the 16th of October, 2010 a special prayer was conducted on the occasion of Navaratri.

Swami Atmeshananda spoke on the significance of Deepavali Festival during its **celebrations** organized by the Federation of Indian Associations on the 1st of November 2010 at King George Square, Brisbane. A book-stall was also organized by the Centre at this venue throughout the day.

Swami Sridharananda visited the Centre from 17th to 18th of October and on the 8th of December along with Swami Atmeshananda.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held under the chairmanship of Swami Sridharananda on 17th of October 2010.

CANBERRA CENTRE

Swami Sridharananda conducted classes on the *Bhagavad-Gita* twice a month at the Majura Community Centre in Canberra. He also gave parlour talks based on the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* once a month. Contacts: Mr. J. Venkataraman, Secretary - 02-6258 7612 and Dr. Ian Doherty, Treasurer - 02-6247 8519.

The **annual programme** was held on 24th of October 2010 in the presence of Swami Sridharananda and Swami Atmeshananda. It featured prayers, *bhajans* and devotional dances performed by local artists.

MELBOURNE CENTRE

Daily Activities:

Vesper service is held daily at the Centre at **7 Judy Court, Vermont, Vic 3133** from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. It includes set hymns, scriptural readings and meditation and occasional devotional singing.

The bookstall made available literature on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, Vedanta philosophy, and other spiritual topics in print, audio, and visual media

throughout the period. For further information please contact Mr. Suresh Ravinutala, Secretary, on 03-9803 6154 or Mr. Mohana Krishnan on 03-9801 6174.

Weekly/Monthly Activities:

a) Swami Sridharananda continued to deliver monthly discourses on the *Bhagavad-Gita* from Thursday to Saturday of a prescheduled week at Monash University Clayton Campus of Law, Wellington Road (L. Theatre L1). The Thursday and Friday sessions were from 7:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. and the sessions on Saturdays were from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. The recordings of these discourses are available in Audio, Video and MP3 formats.

b) **Prayer Meetings** were conducted on the first Sunday of every month, from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. which included prayer, recitation of sacred mantras, singing of *kirtan* and *bhajans*, followed by selected readings from the scriptures and discussions on them by the participants. The meetings concluded with an *arati* and the distribution of *prasad*.

c) A **Group study** on *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* continued every alternate Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

d) **Group study** through viewing of the 'Mundaka Upanishad' lecture series on Video is held every Sunday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. and the 'Yoga Sutras of Patanjali' lecture series every Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

e) The **Children's programme** for the age group of 5 to 12 year olds was held on Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. These sessions include prayer, recitations, singing and moral lessons. The programme is suspended from October 2010 to 11th of February 2011 on account of the academic break and other reasons.

f) In September a special **workshop** was hosted by Dr Aneja entitled *Bhakta, Bhagavan and Bhagavad – Kṛpa* (Devotee, God and God's Grace) in order to facilitate enhancement of one's own understanding of the relationship between devotee and God.



A workshop at Melbourne Centre

Celebrations:

The **Birth anniversary** of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was held on the 27th December 2010. The programme started at 9:30 a.m. and concluded at about 12:30 p.m. It included formal worship, *Havan*, *bhajans*, floral offering followed by *arati* and *prasad* distribution. The programme was attended by about 65 devotees and was conducted by Swami Chandrashekharananda. He also delivered a talk on 'the Divine Motherhood of Sri Sarada Devi' on the 28th of December.

Other Activities:

- a) A **committee meeting** chaired by Swami Sridharananda was held on the 11th of December at Monash University. The agenda included future plans and activities for the Centre.
- b) A Bengali play *Noti Binodini* was enacted with narrations in English by Syd-Kol Pty Inc. for the benefit of the Vedanta Centre on the 30th of October 2010.
- c) In November 2010, a garage sale was held at a devotee's residence in order to **raise funds**.
- d) A **Working Bee** was organised in November and December for general maintenance of the Centre.

PERTH CENTRE

Daily Activities:

The Centre located at **51 Golf View**

Street, Yokine W.A. 6060 holds vesper service daily at 7 p.m. with *arati*, readings from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, and meditation. The Centre maintains a small bookstall and a library. Contacts: Mr. Unni Krishnan - Assistant Secretary - 0430 391 369, Mr. K.P. Basu Mallick Secretary - 0422 370 066.

Monthly Activities:

Swami Sridharananda visited the Centre every month from Thursday to Saturday on prescheduled weeks and conducted discourses on *Srimad-Bhagavad Gitā*. About 50 devotees attend the discourses. Monthly *satsang* which includes the singing of *Bhajans* and reading from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and other inspiring books were conducted on the first Sunday of every month from 11 a.m.

Celebrations:

Due to heavy hailstorm in March 2010, extensive damages occurred to the Centre's building. The shrine had to be removed to a devotee's house for about three months. With insurance claims and other sources, we were able to replace the roof, flooring and doors of the hall. The kitchen was also refurbished. After completion of the works, a **re-dedication ceremony** was held on 9th October, 2010. About 150 devotees participated in it. Swami Atmesananda performed the formal worship. Swami Damodarananda and Swami Sridharananda spoke on the occasion.

SYDNEY CENTRE

Daily Activities:

At 2 Stewart Street, Ermington, chanting, daily worship and meditation are held every morning from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m., and vesper service in the evening starting at 7 p.m. includes devotional singing and a reading from *The Gospel of Sri*

Ramakrishna. Counselling, interviews and discussions with devotees are also conducted on a daily basis. The library is available to devotees for reference and research. The Centre maintains a bookstall which has a range of books on the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, Vedanta, Yoga, and other spiritual literature. Devotional songs, discourses on *Srimad-Bhagavad Gita*, the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, *Mundaka Upanisad*, and other topics are also available in various media.

Weekly/ Monthly Activities:

The Centre conducted the following activities in Sydney:

- a) Swami Sridharananda conducted classes on the ***Srimad-Bhagavad-Gitā*** every Sunday morning from 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. at the Centre. Swami Damodarananda gave talks on spiritual subjects during the travels of Swami Sridharananda.
- b) Classes on *Srimad-Bhagavad Gitā* were also conducted by Swami Sridharananda at 1 Edwin Street, Fairlight, **Manly Beach** on Tuesdays from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- c) Many devotees have availed themselves of **spiritual counselling** and guidance. The Swamis also visited the homes of devotees when required.
- d) **Meditation** sessions were held at the Ermington Centre on Sundays from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- e) **Yogasana** Classes for adults were held every Saturday at the Centre from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
- f) **Bala Sangha** Classes on **moral and spiritual lessons** were conducted



Re-dedication ceremony at the Perth Centre

for children every Saturday from 4:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. at the Centre. In addition, **drama and movement** classes were also held.

g) A three day **Children's Retreat** was organised from the 28th to 30th of September 2010. About 25 children took part in it. Mantra recitation, Yoga, clay modeling, craft and other activities were organized to stimulate the creativity of children.

h) Classes on **moral and spiritual lessons** were also conducted for children at Eastwood Public School on Wednesdays from 9:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. during the academic term.

i) Swami Atmeshananda participated in the **Deepavali** celebrations at the NSW Parliament on the 11th of November 2010.

j) For the benefit of students the Centre provided **English Language tutoring** on Tuesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. during the school term.

k) Classes on **Sanskrit language** were held for last three years regularly on Saturdays and Sundays for various levels of elderly students.

Celebrations:

a) Worship of the **Divine Mother Sri Durga** was held on 15th of October, the *Maha-astami* (eighth lunar day). About 550 devotees participated in the function. During the celebrations, over twenty young participants of the *Bala Sangha* ranging from five to twelve years of age presented a skit on the first section of the *Durga Saptashati*.

b) **Christmas Eve** was celebrated on 24th of December 2010 with singing of carols and reading from the Bible.

c) The **Birth anniversary** of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was celebrated on the 27th December 2010. The programme started at 9 a.m. and concluded at about 12:30 p.m. It included formal

worship, *havan*, *bhajans*, floral offering followed by *arati* and *prasad* distribution. The programme was attended by about 150 devotees. Swami Sridharananda delivered a talk on 'The life and teachings of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi'.

Overseas Visit:

Swami Sridharananda visited Canada and the U.S. on invitation from 15th of August to 1st of October 2010 and conducted retreats and delivered talks on spiritual subjects in various places. He also visited New Zealand from 18th to 29th of November 2010.

Swami Chandrashekhara nanda went on a pilgrimage to the holy Mt. Kailash and other places from 8th September to 2nd of December.

AUCKLAND CENTRE, NZ

Daily activities:

A vesper service is held daily at the Centre at 27 Arawa Street, New Lynn, Auckland from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. It includes singing of hymns, readings from the text *God Lived with Them* followed by meditation.

Monthly and annual activities:

a) On the **second Sunday** of every month *Satsang* programmes, which includes singing of *Bhajans*, discourse on the *Ramayana*, reading and discussion about the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and meditation were conducted from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

b) On the **last Sunday** of every month reading and discussion on *Srimad-Bhagavad Gita*, the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, the life and teachings of Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda were conducted in addition to the above. Music and chanting classes were also held on these days.

c) Swami Sridharananda conducted *Srimad-Bhagavad Gita* classes from 25th to 28th of November 2010 at the Centre. Evening classes were

held from 25th to 27th from 7:45 p.m. to 9 p.m. On 28th the class commenced from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. A large number of devotees attended the classes.

Celebrations:

d) **Sri Durga Puja** was celebrated on the 14th of October 10. The programme started after *arati* with *bhajans* and ended at 9:00 p.m. Talk on the "Significance of Durga Puja" was delivered by one of our devotees and *prasad* was distributed after the function.

e) **Christmas Eve** was celebrated on 24th of December 2010. The programme started at 8 p.m. after *arati* and ended at 9 p.m. The devotional songs and talks on "Jesus Christ as an incarnation" and "Jesus Christ as an Ideal Man" were delivered by members of the Vivekananda Youth Group.

f) The **birth Anniversary of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi** was celebrated at the Centre on 27th December 2010. The program included *bhajans* and two talks on "Why is Sri Sarada Devi called Holy Mother?" and "Holy mother - the Ideal Woman."

g) The Centre held a spiritual retreat from 7 p.m. of 19th of November to 2 p.m. of 21st of November 10 at Bella Rakha, 581 West Coast Road, Oratia, Waitakere. The theme of the retreat was 'The higher and lower self (Mundaka Upanisad)'. Meditation, Yoga, Chanting of sacred mantras, devotional songs and discussion on the main theme were the different parts of the retreat. A lively question and answer session helped the participants gain an in-depth understanding about spiritual life. 23 participants took advantage of this live-in retreat. Swamis Sridharananda and Atmeshananda conducted the proceedings.



A group photo at the Retreat and the shrine



Audience at the Bhagavad Gita Class

Sri Ramakrishna's Way of Training, Self-effort and Spiritual Aspiration

Only a few spiritual aspirants achieve the power to transmit spirituality to others through mere thought or touch. The Master repeatedly said that, in the course of time, Swami Vivekananda would be endowed with that power and would use it to do much good for people. Such transmission of spirituality is grace for the recipient because it comes without self-effort of the recipient. However, there is room for enthusiasm and self-effort in the domain of grace as explained by Sri Ramakrishna in this collection of excerpts. It has been shown here the meaning of spiritual aspiration and its goal, i.e. reaching the transcendental state through self-effort and grace of the Divine.

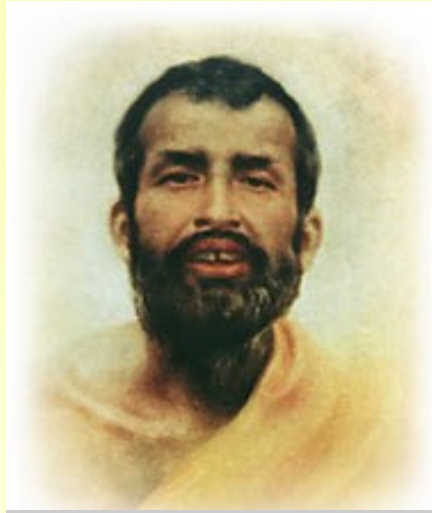
Introduction

A competent aspirant like Swami Vivekananda is indeed rare in the world. Knowing this fully from the very beginning, the Master began to mould Vivekananda's character and spiritual life through the teachings of non-dualistic Vedanta in particular. Swamiji (Vivekananda) was accustomed to worshipping God according to the dualistic mode of the Brahmo Samaj, so the non-dualistic mode of "I am Brahman" was blasphemy to him. Nonetheless, the Master tried in various ways to make him practise non-dualism.

Although the Master trained Swamiji in this manner, he guided other young men in spiritual life in other ways: some through the worship of God with form, some through the worship of the formless God with attributes, some through the path of pure devotion, some through devotion mingled with knowledge, and so on. Thus Swami Vivekananda and other devotees lived with the Master at Dakshineswar, practising spirituality under his guidance, but the Master trained them individually, according to their respective aptitudes and tendencies.

At the Cossipore garden house

The following incident occurred in March 1886 at the Cossipore garden house. Day by day the Master was growing weaker due to cancer. Despite his illness, he was concentrating more vigorously than ever on moulding the spiritual lives of devotees, especially Swami Vivekananda's. The Master did not confine himself to giving Swamiji spiritual advice and helping him to practise it. Every evening the Master would ask everyone to leave his room and then would call Swamiji to his side.



Sri Ramakrishna

Over the course of two or three hours, the Master would talk with him and teach him how to guide and keep the young devotees together so that they might not return to their homes. Observing the Master's behaviour, most of the devotees believed that he was feigning cancer in order to firmly establish his Order, and that when this had been accomplished, he would recover. Only Swamiji wholeheartedly understood that the Master was making his last arrangements and preparing to take leave of the devotees. It is doubtful, however, that even Swamiji was able to hold on to that idea all of the time.

By practising spiritual disciplines, Swamiji had by this time developed some limited ability to transmit spirituality to others by touch. Sometimes he distinctly felt the awakening of that power within, but he had not yet tested its validity on others. Because of various recent experiences, he now believed in the truth of non-dualistic Vedanta, and he tried to introduce it to the young men and householder

devotees through reasoning. This created a tremendous commotion among the devotees, and sometimes they argued over it. It was Swamiji's nature that when he considered something to be true, he talked about it to others and tried to use logical arguments to convince them. At that time the young Swamiji did not realise that in the practical world truth assumes various forms according to the different conditions and capabilities of aspirants.

Shiva-ratri

It was Shiva-ratri, the night of the spring festival of the Lord Shiva. Three or four boys were fasting with Swamiji. They wished to pass the auspicious night worshipping and keeping vigil. So that the noise would not disturb the Master's rest, the worship had been set up in a newly built kitchen a little to the east of the main building. That evening there was a heavy shower, and the devotees were delighted to see on the newly formed clouds occasional flashes of lightning that looked like Lord Shiva's matted hair.

At 10 p.m., after finishing the first quarter of the night's worship, chanting and meditation, Swamiji remained seated, relaxing and conversing with others. One of his companions left the room, and another went to the main building to finish a particular chore. Swamiji suddenly felt that divine power awaken within him. Intending to put it into effect and test the results, he said to Swami Abhedananda, who was seated facing him, "Please touch me for a while." After a little while, the boy who had earlier left the room returned. He saw Swamiji meditating, sitting motionless, while Abhedananda sat close by,

his right hand touching Swamiji's right knee. Abhedananda's hand was trembling rapidly, and his eyes were closed. After a few minutes Swamiji opened his eyes and said, "That is enough. How did you feel?"

Abhedananda replied, "As one feels a shock wave while touching an electric battery, and one's hand trembles, so I felt when touching you."

The boy asked Abhedananda, "Was your hand trembling of itself as you touched Swamiji?"

Abhedananda responded, "Yes. I could not keep it steady, though I tried."

There was no further discussion of the incident. Afterwards all were involved in the second quarter of worship and meditation. Abhedananda then went into deep meditation. We had never seen him so absorbed. His whole body became stiff, his head and neck were bent, and for a time he completely lost consciousness of the outer world. Everyone present thought he had that deep meditation as a result of having touched Swamiji shortly before. Swamiji also noticed his condition and silently pointed it out to a companion.

At 4 a.m., when the worship of the fourth quarter was over, Swami Ramakrishnananda came to the worship room and told Swamiji, "The Master is calling for you." Swamiji immediately went to the second floor of the main building, where the Master was staying. Ramakrishnananda also followed him because he was serving the Master.

Seeing Swamiji, the Master said, "Hello! You are frittering away your power before you have accumulated enough of it. First gather it deep within yourself, and then you will understand where and how you should use it. Mother will let you know. Don't you see what great harm you have done to that boy by infusing your ideas into him? He had been following a specific practice for a long time, and now all is spoilt like a miscarriage in the sixth month of pregnancy. Well, what was supposed to happen has happened. From now on, don't do such a thing rashly. The boy is

lucky that greater harm did not befall him."

Swamiji said later, "I was completely dumbfounded. The Master had come to know whatever we did during worship! What could I do? I remained silent as he scolded me."

Because of this incident, the spiritual attitude that Abhedananda had previously cultivated was completely annihilated. From that point on the Master began guiding him along the non-dualistic path, affectionately correcting the mistakes he made. But it was not until long after the Master's passing away that Abhedananda was able to fully incorporate non-dualistic ideas into his daily activities.

Two types of teachings

The Master's teachings to his devotees can be classified into two categories: divine grace and self-effort. The distinction between them can be evident by considering the following sayings of the Master. On the one hand he said to devotees:

"I have cooked the food, you need only enjoy the meal."

"I cast the mould, you put your mind into it and shape yourselves accordingly."

"If you cannot do anything, give me your power of attorney."

But on the other hand he also said:

"Give up all desires one by one, only then will you succeed."

"Be like a cast-off leaf before a gale."

"Renounce lust and gold and call on God."

"I have done sixteen parts, you do one-sixteenth of that."

It seems that because we often do not understand the Master's two types of teachings – divine grace or self-effort, self-surrender or spiritual practice – we fail to determine which one we should follow in our lives.

'Free will' versus 'God's will'

One day in Dakshineswar we had a long discussion with Swami Niranjanananda about whether human beings have free will; then we went to

the Master for the definitive answer. The Master listened to us debate for a while and was amused. He then said seriously, "Is there any free will for anyone? Everything is happening and will happen eternally by God's will. People understand this eventually. Let me give you an example: Here is a cow tied to a post with a long tether. She can walk one cubit from the post or up to the whole length of the tether. A person ties a cow with the intention of allowing her to lie down, stand, or move around as she likes within that area. Man's free will is also like that. God has given some power to human beings and has also given them the freedom to use it as they wish. That is why people think they are free. But the rope is still fastened to the post. Let me tell you, if anyone intently prays to God, He can move that person to another place with the same stake, or extend the rope's length, or even take the tether away completely."

At this, we asked, "Sir, is it not then in human hands to practise spiritual disciplines? A person might simply say, 'Whatever I do is according to God's will.'"

The Master replied, "What good does it do to say that? One may say, 'There is no thorn, no pricking; but one still cries out when one's hand is pricked by a thorn. If practising spiritual disciplines were at one's discretion, everyone would practise them. Why don't they do it? If you don't properly use the power God has given you, He won't give you more. That is why one needs self-effort or perseverance. Look, everyone has to make some effort. Only then can one attain God's grace. When one makes the effort, then by God's grace, ten lifetimes of suffering are finished in one lifetime. But one must make some effort, even while depending on Him.'"

Wholehearted faith and self-effort

"Listen to a story: Once Vishnu, who lives in heaven, cursed Narada that he would have to suffer in hell, for some reason. Narada was worried. He praised the Lord with hymns to please Him, then said:

'Lord, please be gracious enough to tell me where hell is. What is it like? How many types of hell exist? I am curious to know.' Vishnu then drew heaven, earth and hell on the ground with a piece of chalk and said, 'Here is heaven and here is hell.' Narada said, 'Is that so? In that case my suffering in hell is now over.' While saying this he rolled over the chalk mark representing hell and bowed down to the Lord. Vishnu said with a smile, 'What? How could you suffer in hell?' Narada replied, 'Why not, Lord? You have created heaven and hell. When as You drew You said, 'This is hell', that spot truly became hell. As I rolled over it, my suffering was completed.' Narada uttered these words with wholehearted faith. Then Vishnu said, 'So be it.' Having genuine faith in Him, Narada had only to roll over that mark representing hell. That small effort ended his suffering.

Sometimes with the help of this story the Master explained to us that in the domain of grace there is room for both enthusiasm and self-effort.

Assuming human bodies and living like human beings, avatars to a great extent experience our short-sightedness and limited knowledge. Like us, they must struggle to discover a path to liberation from all those limitations. Until that path is discovered, the awareness of their divine nature sometimes manifests itself within, but only momentarily – a veil then covers it up. Thus, for the good of many, they accept the veil of maya and, like us, grope along the path in this realm of light and darkness. Because they do not have a trace of selfish desire, they see more light during their spiritual journey than we see in ours. They focus all of their energy in one direction and quickly solve life's problems. Afterwards they devote themselves to doing good to humanity. The godman Sri Ramakrishna actually admitted his human imperfections.

The Spiritual Aspiration

The spiritual truths were discovered through sadhana by Indian sages

through millennia of persistent effort. The Master used to say, "Seeing Brahman, or God, in all beings is the last word of sadhana." At the culmination of sadhana, one reaches that plane. The Vedas and Upanishads, the most authoritative Hindu scriptures, support this statement. The scriptures say that whatever you see in the world is truly one nondual Brahman, be it gross or subtle, sentient or insentient, bricks, wood, clay, stone, trees, plants, human beings, animals, gods or demigods. You are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting the same Brahman in various forms and in different states. Although you accomplish all of your daily activities with Brahman's help, you are unaware of It. The following discussion, in question and answer form, provides greater insight of this subject:

Question: Why do we not perceive that all is Brahman?

Answer: You are deluded. We recognise our delusions only by comparing our perceptions with real objects or states. You need to have a basis for comparison in order to discover that delusion.

Q: What is the cause of that delusion? When did it come to us?

A: The cause of this delusion is ignorance, just as it is in all other situations. As long as you remain in ignorance, all of your efforts to realise this will be futile. As long as one is dreaming, the dream appears to be reality. When one awakens, the dream is compared with the waking state and is recognised as unreal. You may say that sometimes while dreaming one may realise it as a dream. But in such a situation that knowledge appears in the mind from the memory of the waking state. Similarly, while perceiving the world in the waking state, some people have the memory of nondual Brahman.

Q: What is the way out?

A: One must eradicate ignorance. I can definitely assure you that

delusion and ignorance can be removed. The sages of the past were able to rid themselves of ignorance and have left us instructions for doing the same.

Q: Before we learn the means, we want to ask a few more questions. You assert that what so many ordinary people see and experience is unreal, and that what only a few sages have experienced is real. Could it be that their perceptions are wrong?

A: There is no rule that what most people believe is always true. We know that the sages' direct experiences are true because, with the knowledge they gained, they became free from misery and attained complete fearlessness and eternal peace. Moreover, they discovered the ultimate purpose of all actions and efforts of human life, which inevitably ends in death. In addition, this true knowledge manifests itself as forbearance, contentment, compassion, humility, and other noble qualities. It also makes a person's outlook amazingly catholic. In the scriptures we find evidence of these extraordinary qualities and powers in the lives of sages; and even now we find the same in those who have attained perfection by following in their footsteps.

Q: Well, how is it that all of us experience the same delusion? What I recognise as an animal, you also see as an animal – not as a man. It is the same for all external objects. It is amazing that so many people have the same delusion at the same time, regarding all objects.

A: The scriptures say in reply: The universe has arisen by way of ideation in the limitless, infinite, Cosmic Mind. We all experience the same mental images because the individual minds of yours, mine, and all people are parts of and included in the Cosmic mind. That is why we cannot see an animal in any way we like, nor can we perceive it to be other than an animal. Similarly, one among us may attain true knowledge and become free from all delusion, while others remain under its spell. Although the world arises in the

Cosmic Mind, of the Divine Being by ideation, He is not affected by the bond of ignorance as we are. Because he is omniscient, He sees that the non-dual Brahman thoroughly pervades this world, which originated from ignorance. Because we are incapable of this perception, our case is different. The Master used to say, "There is poison in the fangs of the snake. The snake eats its food daily with those fangs and is not at all affected. But a person bitten by a snake dies instantly."

Now it is clear that our conceptions about and experiences of the world have taken their present form as a result of habits accumulated over a very long period of time. If we want to have the right knowledge about the world, we shall have to realise that truth which is beyond name and form, space and time, mind and intellect, and other attributes of the world. The effort to know the truth has been called *sadhana* by the Vedas and other scriptures. This effort exists, knowingly and unknowingly, in men and women who, in India, are called *sadhakas*, or spiritual aspirants.

Sadhana: *neti, neti* and *iti, iti*

The effort to know the truth that transcends the world has developed along two main paths: the negative and the positive. The first is described by the scriptures as *neti, neti* (not this, not this), the path of knowledge; the second is *iti, iti* (this, this), the path of devotion. The aspirant who follows the path of knowledge understands the ultimate goal from the very beginning; remembering the goal, the aspirant consciously moves forwards towards it every day. Followers of the path of devotion, however, are not fully aware of their ultimate goal. They move forward by adopting higher and higher ideals one after another, until they finally have direct experience of the non-dual Reality beyond the world. The followers of both paths must renounce the idea about the reality of the world that is held by ordinary people. The *jnani* (follower of the

path of knowledge) tries to renounce completely from the beginning. The devotee begins *sadhana* by partly renouncing the world and partly holding onto it, but eventually reaches the truth, "One without a second," and renounces everything, as does the *jnani*. Giving up the ordinary, selfish, sense-pleasure-oriented idea about the world is called *vairagya* (renunciation) by the scriptures.

Meditation

The pressing goal of a devotee is to love and be absorbed in meditation on a particular form of God and to perform every action for His delight. In the early stages of meditation, the devotee cannot visualise the entire form of the chosen deity. Sometimes the hands or feet, or only the face, appears in the mind. As soon as those are visualised, they disappear; the images do not remain constant. As meditation gradually deepens, that form begins to remain steady in front of the devotee, until the mind becomes restless. Later, as meditation becomes still deeper, the devotee sees that divine form move and smile, hears the deity speak, and ultimately even feels the touch of that divine form. The devotee then perceives that form as alive in all aspects. Whether the devotee meditates with eyes open or closed, he or she can see the deity's graceful movements. Later still, as a result of the devotee's faith that the Chosen Deity can assume various forms at will, the devout aspirant attains the vision of various divine forms emanating from the form of the Chosen Deity. The Master used to say that a person who has vividly seen one divine form in this manner can easily have visions of other divine forms.

Conclusion

These are the ways, described in the scriptures, by which, aspirants who follow the paths of knowledge and/or of devotion can reach the ultimate goal. But because divine and human characteristics always coexist in the lives of the avatars, even during their *sadhana* they

sometimes appear to be perfect and powerful. This may happen because they have the power to move on both divine and human planes; or perhaps because their divine nature is innate and spontaneous, it sometimes pierces the external veil of their human nature and manifests itself. We would never be able to understand the life of an avatar if we had not seen the godman Sri Ramakrishna.

Source:

Sri Ramakrishna and His Divine Play by Swami Saradananda; translated by Swami Chetananda, Vedanta Society of St Louis, USA, pages 147-159.

Magic

Ahah! O Magician!
I have caught You in
Your sleight of hand!
-So brilliant that only the magic is seen,
Never the Magician;
We hear the song,
but never see the Singer,
And go off singing;
Feel the rhythms of the unseen Dancer's feet,
And go off dancing;
Feel the Universe humming,
And go off whistling a tune.

No wonder You are laughing;
Your beautiful nakedness hidden,
Clothed in gaudy garments,
We can not see through.
O Magician, You have
Hoodwinked us with sight,
Deafened us with hearing;
No wonder You are laughing,
Hiding the Gem by putting it
In the middle of the street!

The creative

...Perhaps we are constrained by
capacity and knowledge,
confounding the method for the end,
living for life,
the score for the music
In a shadow-life
Of cardboard cut-outs;
mere symbols of things
we cannot know,
but struggle to define.

So the creative feed life's fires,
with much smoke, little flame, many
sparks,
struck by struggles to express
great meanings into words,
or stretch what is heard
in the core of the atom
into eight beats to the bar.

Gurudas

(Mr. Russell Frank Atkinson)
Bellingen, Australia

According to the Vishuddha Siddhanta Almanac Swami Premananda's birthday celebration was observed on Wednesday, the 15th of December, 2010.

As a little child needs constant care and protection, so does a paramahansa, an illumined soul, who frequently goes in and out of Samadhi. In this God-intoxicated state, the paramahansa is completely oblivious of his body and surroundings; as a result, he is subject to the risk of accidental injury. The paramahansa's body is extremely precious because it is God's instrument to benefit humanity. That is why it is the disciple's duty to protect their Guru's body.

On 20th June 1884 Sri Ramakrishna said to M. (the recorder of The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna): "You see, I am having difficulty about my physical needs. It will be nice if Baburam lives with me." Although several devotees lived with the Master, he could only bear the touch of certain people during his ecstasy. On 30th June he told Baburam, "Do stay with me. It will be very nice. In this mood I cannot allow others to touch me."

Matangini, Baburam's mother, was a devotee of the Master. When she visited Dakshineswar during this time, the Master asked her, "Will you give me something?" "Yes, Sir, whatever you ask." "Will you give me your son? I want a pure-hearted boy to live here. I am greatly pleased even when he gives me a glass of water." Matangini at once agreed, "It is my good fortune, sir, that you will accept him and that he will live with you. But, does anybody give away her son for nothing?" Ramakrishna smiled and asked, "What shall I give you?" Matangini humbly said, "I have just two requests: one is that I may have unflinching devotion for God; the other is that none of my children dies before I do." Sri Ramakrishna granted her those boons.

Baburam Ghosh: Childhood

Baburam Ghosh was born at 11.55p.m. Tuesday, 10th December 1861, at Antpur, a village thirty



Swami Premananda
(One who enjoys the bliss of love)
(1861-1918)

miles from Calcutta. His father, Taraprasanna Ghosh, and mother, Matangini Devi, came from two well-do-do and aristocratic families of the same village. Both were pious and devoted to their family deity, Lakshmi-Narayan. They had three sons, Tulsiram, Baburam and Shantiram and one daughter, Krishnabhavani, who was married to Balaram Basu, a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. Through Balaram, his family and his wife's family became devotees of the Master.

Very little is known about Baburam's early life. He was an extremely handsome child. When he was eight, Baburam would imagine a beautiful wooded place on the bank of the Ganges where he would live in a hut with another monk and meditate on God. These holy wishes were fulfilled when Baburam came in contact with Sri Ramakrishna in Dakshineswar.

Education

Baburam studied for a few years in his village school, then his mother sent him to his uncle in North Calcutta

to continue his education. He was at first admitted to Banga Vidyalaya, then to Aryan School, and finally to Metropolitan School, Shyambazar, where M. was the headmaster, and Rakhal was his classmate. Later, Baburam reminisced about his early life:

"My mother now and then would shut herself up in a room and meditate all day. If we happened to return home from Calcutta on those days, we had to live in a neighbouring house and meet her the next day. She was very strict in her discipline. She would never allow us to stay with her in the village home, lest that spoil our education. But she would never utter a harsh word to her daughters-in-law or even to servants...I was very naughty as a young boy. So I have got some scars on my forehead. Swamiji used to say, 'He is no boy who has no scars on his head.'"

First meetings with Sri Ramakrishna

In Pascal's immortal words, "You would not have looked for Me, if you had not found Me."

From his very childhood Baburam knew his goal; he was looking for a guru who would help him to reach it. One day he went to Hari Sabha at Jorasanko to listen to discourses on the Bhagavata, and there he saw Sri Ramakrishna, without knowing who he was. However, sometime before, Matangini and Tulsiram had visited the Master at Dakshineswar. Observing Baburam's religious inclination, Tulsiram told him to visit the Master, who, like Sri Gauranga, had lost all consciousness of the world while uttering the name of God.

Baburam had learnt that Rakhal had often visited the Master. The following day in school he asked Rakhal more about the saint at Dakshineswar. They planned to visit him the next Saturday after school hours, probably on 8th April 1882. Baburam reminisced

about that memorable visit:

“Swami Brahmananda and I went to Hathkola ghat (in West Calcutta) to take a boat for Dakshineswar, and there we met Ramdayal Babu. Learning that he was also going to see Sri Ramakrishna, we got in a boat together. It was almost dusk when we reached Rani Rasmani’s Kali Temple. We went to the Master’s room and were told that he had gone to the temple to pay obeisance to the Mother of the Universe. Asking us to stay there, Swami Brahmananda went towards the Mother’s temple to find the Master. Soon I saw him holding onto the Master very carefully and guiding him, saying, “Steps. Go up here. Down here.” I had already heard that the Master would often become overwhelmed with ecstasy and lose outer consciousness. Therefore I knew that he was in an ecstatic mood when I saw him coming, reeling like a drunken man. He entered the room in that state and sat on a small bedstead. Shortly afterwards he came back to normal consciousness.”

When Ramakrishna inquired about the newcomer, Ramdayal introduced him. Ramakrishna said, “Ah, you are a relative of Balaram. Then you are related to us also. The Master caught hold of Baburam’s hand and said, “Come closer to the light. Let me see your face.” In the dim light of an earthen lamp he thoroughly examined Baburam’s face, hands and feet, and he expressed great satisfaction. Then he weighed Baburam’s forearm by placing it on his palm. It was one of his ways of judging a person’s spirituality; if it was higher than ordinary he would say that this showed a ‘beneficent intelligence.’ Observing the auspicious signs, the Master expressed with joy, “Very good, very good.”

Baburam recalled his first night at Dakshineswar:

“A few hours were spent delightfully in spiritual talk. We took our supper at 10.00p.m. and lay down on the southeast veranda of the Master’s room. Beds were arranged for the

Master and Swami Brahmananda in the room. But scarcely had an hour passed when the Master came out of his room with his cloth under one arm and came to our bedside. Addressing Ramdayal Babu, he asked affectionately, ‘Are you sleeping?’ Both of us quickly got up in our beds and replied, ‘No, Sir.’ The Master said, ‘Look, I have not seen Narendra for a long time, and I feel as if my whole soul were being forcibly wrung like a wet towel. Please ask him to come once and see me. He is a person of pure sattva quality. He is Narayana himself. I cannot have peace of mind if I don’t see him now and then.’

Ramdayal Babu had been visiting Dakshineswar for some time, so the childlike nature of the Master was not unknown to him. Seeing that childlike behaviour, he knew that the Master was in ecstasy. He tried to console the Master by promising that he would see Narendra first in the morning and ask him to come, and similar other topics. But the Master’s mood was not at all alleviated that night. Knowing that we were getting no rest, he would return to his room now and then for some time. But after a while he would forget and again come back to us and begin speaking of Narendra’s good qualities, expressing pathetically the terrible anguish of his mind on account of Narendra’s long absence.”

In the morning Baburam found the Master quite normal, and there was no trace of anxiety on his face. He was overwhelmed observing the Master’s love for Narendra and he thought Narendra must be a very hardhearted person. The Master asked Baburam to walk around the Panchvati grove, where he had practised sadhana. Baburam was astonished to find that it was exactly like the wooded place on the Ganges that he had envisioned in his boyhood. Then the Master sent Baburam to visit the deities in the temples, which he did. When he took leave of the Master, the latter affectionately said, “Come again.”

Three days after the first visit, Ramdayal met Baburam at Baghbazar

and informed him that the Master had asked for him. Baburam was moved by the Master’s kindness. On the following Sunday he arrived at Dakshineswar at 8.00a.m. When he saw Baburam, the Master said, “It is nice that you have come.” Go to the Panchavati where they are having a picnic. Carry this firewood there. Narendra has come. Have a talk with him.” At the Panchavati Baburam found Rakhal, who introduced him to Narendra and some other young devotees of the Master. They were having great fun. Baburam had heard about Narendra’s large, expressive eyes and handsome, vigorous form. His friendly jokes and humour, fiery conversation, and heavenly singing captivated Baburam’s mind. He quickly realised that Narendra was a brilliant man who excelled in everything.

One afternoon Baburam came to visit the Master at Dakshineswar. As soon as he arrived the Master said to him, “Baburam, it is good that you have come. This gentleman (pointing to Deven Majumdar) has come from Calcutta and is now suffering from a high fever. He can’t return by himself, so take him immediately to his home by boat. I have so many things to tell you. Please come another day.” Baburam took the dust of the Master’s feet, and left for Calcutta with Deven.

Love is reciprocal

Love is reciprocal. As the disciples loved the Master, he also loved them dearly. Baburam reminisced, “The Master used to cry whenever I left Dakshineswar to return to Calcutta. Oh, how can I explain to you how much he loved us! He would go to Calcutta in a carriage just so he could feed Purna (a young devotee). He would wait near the school where Purna went, send someone to bring the boy, and then feed him delicacies...One day he was found waiting outside Balaram Babu’s house where I was staying. Balaram Basu was not at home, and the Master was hesitant to go inside, thinking he might not be welcomed. He had come to see me. Someone finally called him in. His love knew

no bounds, and one drop of it completely filled us. Each one thus thought himself to be the most beloved of the Master.”

Baburam was twenty when he first met the Master, though he appeared to be much younger. He was very handsome, about five feet eight inches tall, and rather slim. He had black hair and a complexion like pure gold. In the beginning he visited the Master only on holidays, so that his family would not think that he was neglecting his studies. On 20th June 1884 the Master asked M., “Tell me, does Baburam intend to continue with his studies? I said to him, “Continue your studies to set an example to others...I don’t want Baburam to tear himself away from his family. It may make trouble at home.”

During these visits, Ramakrishna recognised through his yogic vision that Baburam had been born as a part of Radha, the spiritual consort of Krishna. On 20th June 1884 the Master said to M., “I noticed the other day that Baburam...has a feminine nature. In a vision I saw Baburam as a goddess with a necklace around her neck and with women companions about her. He has received something in a dream. His body is pure. Only very little effort will awaken his spiritual consciousness” On another occasion he described Baburam as a *nityasiddha* (ever-perfect soul) and an *ishwarakoti* (godlike soul). The Master earmarked six of his disciples as *ishwarakotis*: Narendra, Rakhal, Baburam, Yogin, Niranjana and Purna.

On 30th June 1884, the Master again said to M., “Yesterday I came to know Baburam’s inner nature. That is why I have been trying so hard to persuade him to live with me. The mother bird hatches the eggs in proper time. Boys like Baburam are pure in heart. They have not yet fallen into the clutches of ‘woman and gold.’ They are like a new pot. Milk kept in it will not turn sour...I need Baburam here. I pass through certain spiritual states when I need someone like him.” About Baburam’s purity the Master used to say, “He is pure,

pure to the very marrow of his bones.”

In the company of the Master

Baburam was deemed a proper attendant for Sri Ramakrishna because of his absolute purity. He was one of those fortunate souls whose touch the Master could bear during Samadhi, and many were the occasions when he was found supporting the Master in that state lest he should fall and be injured. Later, Baburam reminisced, “Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of purity. A man earned a lot of money by taking bribes. One day this person touched the Master’s feet while he was in Samadhi and he cried out in pain. During the Master’s samadhi we had to hold him so he would not fall, but we were afraid. We thought that if we were not pure enough, then, when we touched him during Samadhi, he would publicly cry out in pain. So we prayed for purity. It was the Master’s grace that I was allowed to live with him.”

Formal Education

In 1885 Baburam was preparing for his Entrance examination, but after meeting the Master he cared very little for study. On 7th March 1885 Ramakrishna said to Baburam, “Where are your books? Aren’t you attending to your studies? (To M.) He wants to stick to both (God and the world). That is very difficult. What will you gain by knowing God partially? ...One procures the thorn of knowledge to remove the thorn of ignorance; then one goes beyond both knowledge and ignorance.” “That’s what I want,” said Baburam. “But, my child,” said the Master, “can you attain it by holding to both? If you want that, then come away.” Baburam said joyfully, “Take me away from the world.” Baburam failed his Entrance examination. A few days later he came to Dakshineswar with Vaikuntha. Vaikuntha told Baburam’s bad news to the Master, but he made light of it. “Well,” he said, “that is very good. You have failed to pass; now you are free from all passes.” (In

Bengali, ‘pass’ is the same word as ‘fetter’.)

Spiritual Education

With Baburam’s formal education at an end, his spiritual education began under the Master’s guidance. He received his mother’s approval and began living at Dakshineswar permanently. On 7th March 1885 the Master said to M. In front of Baburam, “I have been seeking one who totally renounced ‘woman and gold.’ When I find a young man, I think that perhaps he will live with me; but everyone raises some objection or other.” Baburam had no objection, so the Master called him *daradi*, the companion of his soul.

Living with Sri Ramakrishna was a great education. He taught his disciples through his life, not merely with words. Baburam watched the Master day and night and imbibed the spirit of renunciation and purity, which are the two main pillars of spiritual life.

The Master could not bear any kind of bondage. If the edge of his mosquito curtain was tucked under the mattress, he would feel suffocated. It was instead draped around the edge of his bed. He could not even button his shirt. We had to do that for him. And neither could he bolt his door. He saw God in everything. One day someone tore a piece of new cloth in front of him and he cried out, “Oh, pain!”

Once I saw a person secretly put money under the Master’s mattress when he was not in his room. Later when the Master came back, he could not go near the bed. His renunciation was phenomenal.

Baburam used to give personal service to the Master, such as sweeping the floor, making his bed. He used to rub the Master’s body with oil before his bath, and would fan him when necessary. Baburam would accompany Ramakrishna whenever he visited the devotees’ houses or theatres in Calcutta.

The Master kept a watchful eye over his would-be monastic disciples. He gave them spiritual instructions and would send them at night to different areas in the temple garden

to practise meditation. He generally kept Rakhai and Baburam near him. He even told the Holy Mother how many pieces of chapatti (unleavened bread) should be given to each disciple. Baburam was supposed to have four, but Holy Mother gave him six. When the Master came to know about it, he immediately went to the nahabat and complained that her indiscreet affection might ruin Baburam's future life. The Holy Mother firmly replied, "Why are you so much worried because he had a couple more chapattis? I shall look after his future. Please don't make an issue about his food." The Master understood that Holy Mother's action was justified as she exercised her motherly prerogative towards her children.

Cord of love

The Master tied his disciples with a cord of love. Sometimes they would share their sweet memories with each other. Many years later (15th August 1915) Baburam wrote to Swami Abhedananda who was then preaching Vedanta in America. "Do you remember when you and I were together at the Cossipore garden house, and the Master remarked, 'Your relationship is between Self and Self'? Do you remember what else he said? He said, 'You are like monkeys; and I am the monkey trainer holding in my hand the ropes tied around your waists. The monkey-trainer pulls the rope if the monkeys become too troublesome.' Please bear in your mind, brother, that we are monkeys in his hands."

Conclusion

Baburam learned how his compassionate guru served mankind, and he later followed Sri Ramakrishna's example in his own life.

The inspiring life story of Swami Premananda will be continued in the next publication.

Source:

God Lived with Them: Life Stories of sixteen monastic disciples by Swami Chetanananda; Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata; pages 179-191.

Ramakrishna and his Disciples by Christopher Isherwood; Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata; pages 238.

Grace

O Mother

How unbounded is your grace!

You keep on giving

Even without our asking

And yet we fail

To recognize it.

You give us diamonds

When we deserve hay

"Mother where is your grace?

Please give us more" we say

O Mother, how unbounded is your grace

And yet we fail

To recognize it.

Every thought that we think

Every action, even as small as a blink

Every word we spake

Every breath we take

Is nothing but a reflection

Of your unbounded grace, Mother

And yet we fail

To recognize it.

In times of happiness, we perceive joy

And we think we deserve it

In times of misery, we are sad and we cry

And blame everyone for it

These pairs of opposites

Are nothing but your grace Mother

Given to help us grow

And come closer to you

And yet we fail

To recognize it.

To you Mother

Is this earnest prayer

Bring us constant awareness

Of your ever-flowing grace

So that we always recognize it.

Mother of Infinite Grace

You have given me Mother

Much more than I deserve

Yet I ask you to be less me

That I love you without any reserve.

Let me realize, Mother

That worldly ties are transitory

And that you and you alone

Are my only repository.

During trying times in life

When for myself I feel sorry

Let me remember, "I have a Mother"

So I don't have to worry.

*Let my love become unlimited
Like your love for man or beast
Whether it be friend or foe
Let it not matter in the least.*

*Let my mind, like water
Not always flow downward
Let the breeze of your grace Mother
Pick it up and carry it upward.*

*Contrary to advise Mother
I find others' fault and complain
Guide my understanding, O Devi,
And let this quality not remain.*

*You have said that the Master and you
Are not two but one
But in your form dear Mother
You bless all and leave none!*

*O Mother of the Universe
Your grace is infinite!*

*Mrs. Arundhati Kale
Houston, U.S.A.*

Ocean

*Wherever is being, is seeing the same;
A vast ocean of matter
Bounded by shores,
Waves, ripples, currents,
Its worlds, men and laws,*

*The one sea is roaring,
Is ebbing and flowing,
Unchanging,
Changes things,
Coming and going.
One word is calling,
All this into being,
Through nature,
Mistress of matter,
And deep consciousness knowing,
Mother of man,
A reaping and sowing.*

City

*In our city of nine gates,
Lives the blissful magician,
In dark warps of air,
Hoodwinking us with eyes and ears,
So we chase the song,
Not the singer;
Leaving the old magician
Dangling His keys
On a key-ring made of
Rabbits' horns.*

*Gurudas
(Mr. Russell Frank Atkinson)
Bellingen, Australia*