



# 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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Salutation be to You, O  
Narayani! O consort of Shiva! O  
Auspiciousness of all  
auspiciousness! O bestower of  
all requisites! O giver of refuge!  
O Three eyed one! O Fair  
complexioned, Gauri !  
May the Divine Mother  
Shower blessings on us all.

## Sayings and Teachings

### Humility

“The tree laden with fruits always  
bends low. If you wish to be great,  
be lowly and meek.”

“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 18.*

### Love

“Love is our forte. It is through  
love that the Master’s family has  
taken shape.”

“If you love a human being, you  
will have to suffer for it. He is  
blessed, indeed, who can love God  
alone. There is no suffering in lov-  
ing God.”



**Sri Sarada Devi Temple at Ramakrishna Math, Jayrambati, Bankura , W.B. India, the  
birth place of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi. (Inset : Her marble image in the shrine  
and the thatched house where Holy Mother lived in her later part of life)**

--- **Sri Sarada Devi.**

*Ibid*, page 31 and 27.

### Strength

“...Men should be taught to be practical  
and physically strong. A dozen of  
such lions will conquer the world,

and not millions of sheep can do  
so. Secondly, men should not be  
taught to imitate a personal ideal,  
however great.”

--- **Swami Vivekananda.**

*Ibid*, page 58.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2010

Function	Centre	Date
<b>Durga Puja</b>	Sydney	Friday, 15 October 2010
<b>Birthday of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi</b>	Brisbane	Saturday, 1 January 2011
	Melbourne	Saturday, 1 January 2011
	Perth	Saturday, 1 January 2011
	Sydney	Monday, 27 December 2010

### 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 June 2010 to August 2010

### ADELAIDE CENTRE

#### Monthly activities:

a) Swami Sridharananda continued his three-days-a-month visit to Adelaide and delivered discourses on the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. The talks are held at 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 of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*" was held every month on a Sunday from 2:30 p.m. at 33 Woodhouse Crescent, Wattle Park, SA 5066.

c) A bookstall on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-Vedanta literature was organised by the Centre at the Annual Mela (Fair) organised by the Indian Australian Association of South Australia held at Elder Park, Adelaide on 27th of March 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.

### MELBOURNE CENTRE

#### Daily Activities:

Vesper service is held daily at the Centre at **7 Judy Court, Vermont, Vic 3133** from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 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 and 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) On the **first Sunday** of every month, meetings were conducted from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. These regular meetings 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) **Group study** of the *Bhagavad-Gita* continued every alternate Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. **Group study**



Our Bookstall in the IAASA Mela 2010 and a section of the spectators. The Premier Mike Rann, his wife, Multicultural Minister Grace Portelesi, opposition leader Isabel Redman, Lord Mayor Michael Hargison are seen in the photo above.

### BRISBANE CENTRE

#### Daily activities:

Morning worship, evening *arati*, *bhajans*, and reading 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. Swami Sridharananda visited the Centre from 10th to 11th of August 2010.



Guru Purnima at the Melbourne Centre



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

**d) The Children's programme** in two age groups comprising one group of 4 to 6 year olds and another from 7 to 12 year olds is being held on Wednesdays and Fridays respectively. The sessions are from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m. This includes prayer, recitations and singing etc.

#### Celebrations:

A special prayer meeting was held on the auspicious occasion of **Guru Purnima** on Sunday, the 25th of July 2010 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

#### Other Activities:

A committee meeting chaired by Swami Sridharananda was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May at Monash University. The agenda included future plans and activities for the Centre. Another committee meeting chaired by the Secretary, Mr Suresh Ravinutala was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July at the Centre. The agenda entailed a review of the financial statement for the period July 2001 to June 2010. This meeting was followed by the centre's monthly *satsang*.

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July at the Monash University and was presided over by Swami Sridharananda. The agenda included a review of the past annual activities held by the Centre, future plans and activities and the financial statements for the period 2009-10.

### 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*, a reading 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 *the Bhagavad Git*. About 50 devotees attend the discourses. Monthly *satsangs* 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 11:00 a.m.

On the occasion of the Australian Federal Election on the 21st of August 2010 a bookstall and a food-stall were organized on the campus.

**Special information:** Due to heavy hailstorm on 22nd of March 2010 the adjoining hall of the church was damaged extensively. It is being currently renovated.



Size of Hailstorm in Perth



Bookstall and Food-stall at the Perth Centre.



Guru Purnima celebration at the Sydney Centre.



## SYDNEY CENTRE

### Daily Activities:

At 2 Stewart Street, Ermington chanting, daily worship and meditation are held every morning from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., and the 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 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 *Bhagavad-Git* every Sunday morning from 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. at the South Strathfield Bowling Club, Augusta Street, Strathfield. The talk on 8th of August was held at the Ermington Centre. Swami Damodarananda gave talks on spiritual subjects during Swami Sridharananda's travels.

b) Classes on the *Bhagavad Git* 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 has

resumed from the 29th of May 2010. It is held every Saturday at the Centre from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

f) Classes on **moral and spiritual lessons** are conducted for children every Saturday from 4:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. at 2 Stewart Street, Ermington. In addition, drama and movement classes are also held.

g) A three day **Children's Retreat** was organised from the 6th to 8th of July 2010. About 32 children took part in it. Mantra recitation, Yoga, clay modeling, craft and other activities were organized to stimulate the children's creativity.

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.

i) A **bookstall** was organized on 15th of August 2010 at the India Australia friendship Fair 2010, Homebush Olympic ground.

### Celebrations:

*Guru Purnima* was celebrated at the Centre on 26th of July 2010.

### Raffle and Cultural Programme :

A **cultural programme, Arpanam**, along with a **Raffle draw** was held by the Centre on 14th of August 2010 at Bahai Centre Auditorium to raise funds for the Building Fund of Vedanta Centre. The first prize was a pair of diamond ear-rings donated by a devotee.

After an invocation for the blessings of the Divine by Swami Damodarananda, the students of various dance schools presented both classical and folk dances of India. The raffle was drawn at the end and the contributions by the participants were acknowledged by Swami Atmeshananda.

### Overseas Visit:

Swami Sridharananda visited New

Zealand from the 2nd to 7th of June 2010 and delivered talks on spiritual subjects in Auckland. He also visited Malaysia from 27th to 31st of July 2010 on invitation from the Lincoln College, Kuala Lumpur.

### Visiting Monk:

Swami Tadananda visited the Sydney Centre from 16th to 19th July 2010.

## AUCKLAND CENTRE, NZ

### Daily activities:

A vesper service is held daily at the Centre at 27 Arawa Street, New Lynn, Auckland from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. It includes singing of hymns, readings from text *God Lived with Them* and 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 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 visited Auckland from the 2nd to the 7th of June 2010 and delivered talks on the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

d) The Annual General Meeting, presided over by Swami Sridharananda, was conducted on 6th of June 2010. The activities of the Centre during the year 2009-10 were reviewed and plans for the year 2010-11 were discussed. The new office bearers were elected during the AGM.



Enjoying Prasad on Guru Purnima. A glimpse of the cultural programme. Swamis Damodarananda and Atmeshananda.

e) Dr. Jayashankar Lal Shaw, a senior Professor of the Victoria University of Wellington and also a Trustee of the Centre delivered two talks on “Neo Advaita Vedanta” on 18th and 21st of August 2010 during his visit to this Centre. He highlighted the essential aspects of the concept of Neo Advaita

Vedanta and also dwelt on the contribution of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in evolving this in the modern age and its relevance in our day to day lives.

f) Swami Tadananda of Ramakrishna Mission, Nadi, Fiji, visited Auckland during the last week of July 2010.

#### Celebrations:

The Centre celebrated **Guru Purnima** on 26th July 2010. The programme started at 8:00 p.m. after the *arati* and continued up to 9 p.m. followed by *prasad* distribution. There were bhajans/Kirtans and talks on the significance of Guru.



Auckland Centre—shrine; devotees attending Gita discourse and audience during the talk of Prof. J.L.Shaw.

### MANAGING COMMITTEES OF VEDANTA CENTRE OF SYDNEY AND OTHER CHAPTERS

#### SYDNEY

**Patrons:** Mr. B.Ramakrishna,  
Mrs. Kanaka Ramakrishna.  
**President:** Swami Sridharananda.  
**Vice Presidents:** Swami Atmeshananda,  
Mr. Prakash Chand.  
**Secretary:** Mrs. Vandana Sarathy.  
**Treasurer:** Mr. A. Premachandran.  
**Members:** Swami Chandrashekharaananda,  
Mr. Saba Arunanthu,  
Mr. Shivprasad Bhatt,  
Mr. Rajkumar Dutta,  
Mr. Dilip Mohanty,  
Mr. Debu Mukerji,  
Mr. Chandan Roy Chowdhury,  
Mr. Amitava Sen,  
Dr. Subramaniam Sinnathamby,  
Dr. Jenny Spencer,  
Mr. Chandras Thakkar,  
Mr. Jaishankar Venkataraman,  
Mr. Srinivas Avvari,  
Mrs. Modhumita Chaudhuri,  
Dr. Tadipatri Prasad.

#### ADELAIDE

**Patrons:** Dr. Janan Iswaran,  
Mrs. Pathma Iswaran.  
**President:** Swami Sridharananda.  
**Vice President:** Dr. Nitin Bhise,  
Dr. Kandiah Parasivam.  
**Secretary:** Mr. Raman Sharma.  
**Jt. Secretary:** Mr. L.V. Krishnamoorthy,  
**Treasurer:** Mr. N Rajaramanan.  
**Members:** Mrs. Nirmala Puvan,  
Mrs. Pathmini Parasivam,  
Mrs. S. Gowri Rajaramanan,  
Mrs. Shivani Sharma,  
Mrs. Anjan Bhise,  
Mrs. Margaret Holdsworth,  
Mrs. Madhu Saraf.

#### BRISBANE

**President :** Mr Maha Sinnathamby.  
**Deputy President:** Dr. Ashim Majumdar.  
**Vice Presidents:** Swami Atmeshananda,  
Prof. Prasad Yarlagadda,  
Dr. Unnikrishnan Pilla.  
**Secretary:** Mr. Shyam Das.  
**Asst. Secretaries:** Mr. Atul Deshpandey,  
Mr. K. Navaratnam.  
**Treasurer:** Mr. Rajah Kunarajah.  
**Asst. Treasurer:** Mr. Mahalingam Perumal.  
**Members:** Dr. Bram Singh,  
Dr. Gopal Krishna Bose,  
Mr. Muthiah Surendra,  
Dr. Naidu Bodapati,  
Mr. Biswadeep Basu,  
Mrs. Saras Narsey,  
Mrs. Parames Navaneethan,  
Mrs. Vicky Mogana Sundram,  
Mr. Indra Raja Selvaduray,  
Mrs. Krishnavanee Newman,  
Dr. Tapan Saha,  
Mr. Preeti Suraj,  
Mr. Hari Raniga,  
Ms. Jayashree Kapadia.

#### CANBERRA

**President:** Swami Sridharananda.  
**Secretary:** Mr. Jaishankar Venkataramanan.  
**Treasurer & P.O. :** Dr. Ian Doherty.  
**Members:** Mr. Venkat Krishna,  
Mr. Murugesan Puthur.  
**MELBOURNE**  
**Patrons:** Mr. Santosh Kumar Paul,  
Mrs. Aruna Paul.  
**President:** Swami Sridharananda.  
**Vice President:** Mrs. Nandita Bhattacharjee.  
**Secretary:** Mr. Suresh Ravinutala.  
**Treasurer:** Mr. Govindan Aiyar.  
**Members:** Mr. Mohana Krishnan,  
Dr. Ajit Kumar Ghosh,

Mr. Vierend Ramsaran,  
Mr. Moulinath Ganguly,  
Mr. Kirit Kapadia,  
Mrs. Rita Khazanchi,  
Mr. M. Neelakantan,  
Mr. Narendra Pilaka,  
Mr. Kannan Joghee.

#### PERTH

**President:** Swami Sridharananda.  
**Patrons:** Dr. Amirthalingam Sinnathamby,  
Mrs. Savithiri Sinnathamby,  
Mr. Cecil and Mrs Julie Bethell.  
**Vice Presidents:** Dr. S. Devi,  
Mr. Hiren Mukhopadhyay,  
Dr. Yatendra Sharma.  
**Secretary:** Mr. K.P. Basu Mallick.  
**Joint Secretary:** Mr. Unnikrishnan.  
**Treasurer:** Ms. Sharmini Lingam.  
**Member s:** Mrs. Maya Chatterjee,  
Mrs. Manju Ghosh,  
Mr. Bappa ,  
Mrs. S. Mazumdar,  
Mrs. Janet Waughray,  
Dr. Probhat Pal,  
Dr. Hariharan,  
Mrs. Rani Sanmugam,  
Mr. George & Mrs. Nirmala Veaudry.

#### VEDANTA CENTRES OF AUSTRALIA

**Chairperson:** Mr. Mahalingam Sinnathamby.  
**Secretary:** Mrs. Modhumita Chaudhuri.  
**Directors:** Swami Sridharananda,  
Swami Atmeshananda,  
Swami Chandrashekharaananda,  
Dr. Jennifer Spencer,  
Mr. Jaishankar Venkataraman,  
Dr. S. J. Iswaran,  
Mr. Shubroto Bhattacharjee.



## Holy Mother's journeys to Dakshineswar and Jayrambati

*The period of thirteen years that the Holy Mother served the great Master Sri Ramakrishna was inwardly characterised by her absorption in the Master's ideal and fusion of her life with the Master, and outwardly by her periodic migration from Dakshineswar to Jayrambati and back. During this period she went seven times to Jayrambati and back to Calcutta, a journey of about sixty miles, which she often had to make on foot. These visits were generally occasioned by her ill health or for rendering assistance to her mother during the Jagaddhatri Puja. But as her services were very much needed by the Master, her stay at Jayrambati was perforce not very long.*

### Sri Sarada Devi at Dakshineswar

Shambu Mallick had been serving the Master and the Mother with wholehearted devotion. His wife, too, adored the Master as God himself; and whenever the Holy Mother happened to be at Dakshineswar, the lady took her to her house every Tuesday to make offerings at her holy feet as she would have made at a deity's.

It did not take long for a warm and generous-hearted man like Shambu Babu to realise that for the Holy Mother who was used to the ease and freedom of the village, living in a small place like the Nahabat, which was very small, would be very uncomfortable. He purchased a small plot of rent-free land near the temple premises, on which he planned to build a thatched house for her. Captain Vishwanath Upadhyaya, who was a staunch devotee of the Master, offered to supply the timber for this purpose. The house was thus completed, and the Mother took residence there.

The Mother cooked the Master's food there according to his taste and needs and carried it to his room, where she sat till he had finished. For looking after the comforts of the Mother the Master, too, often visited the cottage during the daytime and spent some time with her. One day it rained so heavily just after his arrival there, that unable to return, he had to finish his meal there and then lie down for the night. From the bed he said to the Mother laughing, "This is as though I have come home like any priest of the Kali temple going home at night."

### Tending to the Master

The Mother could not live in this



Sri Sarada Devi at Jayrambati

thatched home for long. She had to return to the Nahabat for attending to the Master who had a bad attack of dysentery. As the Master became too weak to walk away from the room, the Mother used to come from the new home to help him. Eventually she shifted to the Nahabat to engage herself in the Master's service more completely.

### Holy Mother's subsequent visits to Dakshineswar

It was perhaps in the month of March 1881 that Holy Mother returned to Dakshineswar. However, Hridaya, the Master's nephew who stayed with the Master at Dakshineswar, for reasons best known to him, questioned the Mother for the purpose of her visit to Dakshineswar. For fear of Hridaya, the Master kept mum all through. With the deepest disappointment the Mother left – she could not stay at Dakshineswar even for a day. Apart from this solitary grievance, the unassuming selfless wife had no com-

plaint against the Master at all, or any ill-feeling towards her nephew. But all her sorrows and complaints were laid at the feet of the Almighty whose Will rules everywhere. And so at the time of departure, she told Mother Kali, who dwelt within her mind, 'Mother, I shall revisit this place only if you will have me here again.'

Hridaya transgressed the limits of courtesy. This was not the first instance of his rudeness to the Holy Mother. On another occasion, Sri Ramakrishna who noticed such misbehaviour, reprimanded him saying, "My dear Hride! you may be talking to this (pointing to his own body) slightly, but don't you do so to her. If the one that is in this (body) raises its hood, you may still be saved; but if the one that is in her raises its hood even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara cannot save you.' In due course, through the force of circumstances, Hridaya had to leave the temple precincts for good to clear the way for the Mother's return. Then the Master's nephew Ramlal succeeded Hridaya as the priest of Kali. On getting this promotion he was elated with the thought of becoming the priest of Mother Kali and became unmindful of his duty towards Sri Ramakrishna. There was none besides Ramlal who could really serve the Master with devotion. So, the Master suffered, and he sent word to the Mother through people who happened to go those parts of Bengal, to rejoin him at Dakshineswar. The earnest call made the Mother at last come to Dakshineswar around February-March, 1882. This was her fifth visit after staying away for about a year.

The next time she went to Jayrambati, she spent about seven to eight months there, before returning to Dakshineswar in January-February, 1884. It was at this time that the Master tumbled down when in a state of ecstasy and, as a result, had a bone in the left hand dislocated. As soon as the Mother entered the Master's room and placing the bundle of clothes on the floor saluted him, he inquired, "When did you start?" Ascertaining from her reply that she had started in the afternoon of a Thursday, which is regarded as extremely inauspicious, he said, "I got my hand injured because you started on Thursday afternoon. Go back and make a fresh start." The very next day the Mother left for her village home to recommence her journey on a more auspicious day. The next she was at Kamarpukur at Ramalal's marriage in 1884 and returned to Dakshineswar in the beginning of the next year. From this time on, there are no records of Mother visiting Jayrambati again during the Master's lifetime.

### **The Mother and the Bagdi couple**

The Mother usually covered the distance from Jayrambati or Kamarpukur to Dakshineswar by foot. Once when some village women started for Calcutta for a dip in the Ganges on some sacred day, the Mother, too, accompanied them together with her nephew Sivaram and her niece Lakshmi Devi. Her idea was to stay on at Dakshineswar after the holy bath. It was settled that their first halt should be at Arambagh which was eight miles from Kamarpukur; for in front lay the uninhabited, notorious stretches of fields called Telo-bhelo which were infested with robbers. People would not cross them alone even in daylight. As a reminder of those fearful days there is still the terrible image of the goddess Kali at the centre of the Telo-bhelo which the robbers used to invoke before engaging in their nefarious activities. The image is still called the robbers' Kali.

The party from Kamarpukur de-

cided after reaching Arambagh, that there was plenty of time left for a moderate walk to reach Tarakeswar before it became too dark and that it was not wise to waste a day for rest which was not really wanted. The Mother was well known, even from her early age for her unobtrusiveness; if need arose she would endure discomfort to make it easier for others. In the present instance too, she restarted with them, though she knew well enough that her tired legs could not bear such prolonged strain. Soon she began to lag behind others. Her companions halted three to four times to allow her to catch up with them. But when at last they were convinced that she could not keep pace with them and that such slow movement would expose all to inevitable danger or even death, and on top of all this, the Mother asked them not to worry about her but to go forward, they quickened their steps. They were soon lost to sight, while the Mother trudged on all alone.

When the sun set and the darkness of the night began fast enveloping everything around, the Mother was still plodding on across the solitary fields of Telo-bhelo, full of anxiety, but finding no way out. Just then she noticed a tall figure emerging out of the darkness and approaching her. When the figure had drawn sufficiently near, the Mother saw that it was a man of deep dark colour and thick long hair who had a stout staff on his shoulder and silver bangles round his wrists. She knew that he was a robber, and terror-stricken, she halted at once. The man had no difficulty in understanding her mind, and with a view to terrifying her all the more he said in a harsh voice, "Hullo! Who is that standing there at this time? Where would you go?" "Eastward," said the Mother. "This is not the way there; you have to go that way", said the man. The Mother still made no movement, and the man came very close. But as he looked at the Mother's face, there came a sudden change in his demeanour, and the cruel man-hunter

said softly, "Don't be afraid; I have a woman with me who has fallen back. At this the Mother's eyes were taken off the immediate danger and extended further off where, sure enough, a woman was moving up. Then she got encouraged and said, "Father, my companions have left me behind, besides, methinks, I have lost my way. Will you kindly take me to them? Your son-in-law lives in the Kali temple of Rani Rasmani in Dakshineswar. I am on my way to him. If you take me to that place he will treat you very cordially." The woman came up before the Mother had finished and the latter took hold of the woman's hand with full confidence and affection and said, "Mother, I am your daughter Sarada; I was in a terrible plight having been left behind by my companions. Fortunately you and father appeared; otherwise I can't say what I would have done."

### **Holy Mother conquers the hearts of the robber couple**

This simple behaviour, extreme confidence and sweet disposition conquered the hearts of the robber couple who belonged to the lowly Bagdi caste. As a result they forgot the gulf of social difference that separated them from a Brahmin woman and consoling her as though she was truly a daughter of theirs, they did not allow her to proceed further because she was tired. They took her to a little shop nearby, where the woman improvised a bed for her with her clothes and other things and the man brought some fried-rice for her to eat. Then she was laid to rest with extreme affection, and the man kept guard at the door with his staff.

At dawn, when they were on their way to Tarakeswar, the Bagdi mother picked up green peas from the field for the Holy Mother. The latter accepted the affectionate gift like a little girl and put them in her mouth. They reached Tarakeswar about an hour and a half after sunrise. Here the Bagdi woman said to her husband, "My daughter had

nothing to eat at night; finish the worship of the Lord Tarakeswar (Shiva) soon, and bring some good things from the market; she has to be fed today.” When the man was out, the companions of the Holy Mother who had been out in search of her came to that place and were delighted to find her safe. Then the Mother introduced them to the Bagdi mother who had given her shelter on the previous night and said, “If they had not appeared and saved me, I don’t know what I would have done last night.”

It is no longer possible to ascertain how this event was viewed by the pilgrims from Kamarpukur who were steeped in class prejudices. Nor can we gauge how far they realised the full impact of that extraordinary drama of affection that was enacted on the solitary field at nightfall, and the intimate relationship that was established between the robber couple who belonged in a very low caste and the Brahmin girl who was picked up at that odd hour from a very odd place. Nor do we get any inkling of any light having flashed across the minds of those ignorant villagers with regard to the victory of that sacred, though as yet unfolded motherhood over the cruelty of the robber, or the supremacy of light over darkness when the two came into conflict. Instead, the Holy Mother, the robber couple, and the Kamarpukur pilgrims co-operated in a common endeavour for their noon-day meal. And after finishing it in a very cordial manner, started for Baidyabati on the way to Calcutta.

The Mother and the Bagdi couple had drawn so close to one another during that single night that all three began to shed profuse tears at the thought of separation. As the pilgrims moved onward, the Bagdi couple accompanied them for some distance, and the woman picked up some peas with eager hands from the fields and tying them to the hem of the Mother’s garment said in a choked voice, “Dear daughter Sarada, when you chew your fried rice at night, add these to it.” At last

the Holy Mother got a promise from the couple that they would visit Dakshineswar and then managed to take leave of them. The couple kept their promise visiting Dakshineswar more than once with various gifts for the Mother.

Sri Ramakrishna, coming to know the whole incident, behaved with them like a true son-in-law. The Mother, however, when relating the incident to the devotees ended it with this significant remark, “Though my robber parents were so simple and well-behaved, still it strikes me that they did commit robbery off and on in their earlier days.” In other words, she never looked upon that thrilling incident on that lonesome plain of Telo-bhelo as an ordinary event.

### Conclusion

It is beyond our capacity to imagine an adequate reason for the sudden change of mind of the robbers. It might have been that the common guilelessness of the Mother and her immaculate holiness exerted an irresistible influence on their minds or it might have been some supernatural factor was at work.

The Mother once asked her Bagdi parents, “Why, my dears, are you so attached to me?” They replied, “You are not, in fact, an ordinary mortal, for we saw you as Kali.” “How you speak my dears! How could you have seen me so?” remonstrated the Mother. Unabashed they said in an aggrieved voice, “No, Mother, there was no mistake about what we saw. You want to hide this from us since we are sinners.” To this the Mother said indifferently, “Who knows? I am not in the least aware of it.”

### Some reminiscences of the Holy Mother by ‘devotee-children’

#### The Holy Mother as ‘Mother’

At first I used to hesitate to address the Holy Mother as ‘Mother.’ My own mother had died during my childhood. One

morning the Holy Mother sent me to a certain person on an errand. As I was about to leave, she asked me, “What will you say to him?” I said, “Why? I shall say to him, ‘She asked me to tell you, etc.’” “No, my child,” said the Holy Mother, “Tell him, ‘The Mother asked me to tell you.’” She emphasised the word ‘Mother.’

#### At Udbodhan Prayer-Hall

It was morning and we were talking with the Holy Mother.

Mother: After Sri Ramakrishna passed away, while staying alone at Kamarpukur, I thought within myself, “I have no children. There is no one in this world whom I can call my own. What will happen to me?” Then the Master appeared to me and said, “Well, you want a son. I have given you so many jewels of sons. And in course of time you will hear many, many more people addressing you as Mother.”

#### Mother’s love

It was the time of worship. The Mother made herself ready to go to the shrine room. I came downstairs. After the worship was over, I went upstairs again to bring the *prasada* for the devotees. As I took the leaves containing the sweets and fruits, suddenly my elbow touched the Holy Mother’s feet. “Ah!” said the Mother, and saluted me with folded hands. “That’s nothing,” said I. But she was not satisfied with merely bowing down before me and said, “Come, my child, let me kiss you.” She touched my chin with her hand and kissed the hand and so became pacified. Thus she used to respect her disciples as the manifestations of God, and at the same time show her affection to them as a mother does to her children.

#### Sources:

*Holy Mother: Sri Sarada Devi* by Swami Gambhirananda; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, pages 63-73.

*The Gospel of the Holy Mother* recorded by her devotee-children, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, pages xxi-99





*According to the Vishuddha Siddhanta Almanac Swami Advaitananda's birthday celebration will be observed on Tuesday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, 2010.*

*The scriptures say, "Tormented by three kinds of suffering – physical and mental, terrestrial, and super-natural – people inquire about religion as an antidote to sufferings." Bliss is inherent in human beings; therefore they cannot bear pain, for it is foreign to their true nature. However, sometimes grief plays an important role in human life: It makes people understand the impermanency of the world. Nothing makes life so empty as the loss of a mother in one's infancy, the death of a father in boyhood, or the loss of a spouse in old age.*

#### **First meeting with Sri Ramakrishna**

Gopal Chandra Ghosh of Sinthi, Calcutta, lost his wife when he was fifty-five years of age. Broken-hearted and unable to bear his overwhelming grief, Gopal went to a friend, Dr Mahendra Pal, for consolation. Mahendra was a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, so he suggested that Gopal see the Master at Dakshineswar, thinking that holy company might assuage his grief. Sometime in March or April of 1884, Mahendra accompanied Gopal on a visit there. Mahendra told the Master about his friend's condition. Generally Ramakrishna felt an affinity with his disciples at first sight, but he treated Gopal like a stranger. Gopal also did not see anything extraordinary about the Master. After returning home, still deeply depressed, Gopal decided not to visit Ramakrishna again. Mahendra told Gopal, "Look, holy people sometimes do not like to be caught easily. They test our sincerity through indifference. Please visit the Master frequently."

The second time Gopal went to Dakshineswar, Ramakrishna, like a good physician, gave him an infallible antidote for his grief. Speaking of God, he lifted Gopal's mind, uprooting his worldly ties and attachments. Gopal learned from the Master that the world is unreal, like water in a mirage,



**Swami Advaitananda**  
(One who enjoys being in the  
bliss of Non-duality)  
(1828—1909)

and that dispassion is the only medicine which will counteract grief and delusion. The Master's words on the impermanency of the world appealed to Gopal and made a lasting impression on his mind. He returned home and seriously began to think of renouncing the world to search for God. He was attracted to the Master, and soon returned to Dakshineswar. Gopal later narrated what happened after his third visit, "The Master possessed me. I would think of him day and night. The pang of separation from the Master gave me chest pain. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't forget his face."

#### **Early life**

Gopal Chandra Gosh was born in 1828 at Rajpur, twenty-five miles north of Calcutta. Very little is known about his family except that his father's name was Govardhan Ghosh. Gopal moved to Sinthi, a northern suburb of Calcutta, in order to work for Beni Madhav Pal. He was a Brahmo devotee and used to invite Sri Ramakrishna to his beautiful garden house during the spring and

fall festivals of the Brahmo Samaj. According to M, the recorder of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Gopal first met the Master sometime in the latter part of the 1870s. M. (Mahendranath Gupta) recorded three visits of the Master to Beni Pal's garden house in great detail: 28<sup>th</sup> October 1882; 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1883; 19<sup>th</sup> October 1884. Gopal probably saw Sri Ramakrishna in the crowd during festival time, but this did not leave any deep impression on his mind. Moreover, Gopal was a self-effacing person and did not try to put himself in the limelight.

#### **In the company of Sri Ramakrishna**

As he had no family ties after the death of his wife, Gopal moved from Sinthi to Dakshineswar to serve the Master. Ramakrishna accepted Gopal as his disciple and would address him as 'the elder Gopal' or 'Overseer.' The other disciples called him 'Gopal-da' (Gopal, the elder brother), since he was eight years older than Ramakrishna. The Master introduced him to Holy Mother, who needed a person who could shop and run errands for her. Ramakrishna praised Gopal's managerial capacity in household affairs and his sweet behaviour with people.

#### **Tending to the Master**

In September 1885 Ramakrishna moved to Shyampukur in Calcutta for cancer treatment and Gopal accompanied him. He served the Master like a nurse, giving him medicine and a proper diet. Usually Holy Mother prepared the Master's food and carried it to his room. Gopal acted as Holy Mother's messenger; he was free with her, and she did not cover her face with a veil in front of him. When the doctor prescribed any special diet for the Master, Gopal would note down the details and convey them to Holy Mother. When the food was ready, she would send Latu or

Gopal to inform the Master. The devotees and disciples would immediately leave the room and Holy Mother would bring the food. The Master took his meal twice daily: a little before midday and shortly after sunset. Holy Mother would wait in his room until he had finished his meal, then she would take back the cups and plates.

Gopal was also responsible for administering medicines to the Master. One day the Master noticed that the time for taking medicine had passed, so he asked another disciple, "Where is that old man?" When the Master learned that Gopal was sleeping, he said joyfully, "Oh, how many sleepless nights he has passed! Let him sleep. Please don't call him. You had better give me the medicine today."

Gopal used to wash the Master's cancerous sore daily with a special solution made from *margosa* leaves boiled in water, which is considered to be antiseptic. One day when Gopal touched the sore, the Master cried out in pain. Gopal said sadly, "Sir, what can I do? If I wash you will get pain, so let me not do it." "No, no, you go on washing. Look, I have no more pain," the Master replied as he withdrew his mind from that spot. Gopal was then able to wash the area carefully, and the Master remained silent and cheerful as if Gopal were washing someone else's wound.

Another day at Cossipore, Gopal inadvertently breathed on the Master's food plate. As a result, the Master could not offer the food thus defiled to the Divine Mother – and he never ate any food without offering it first to Her. The Master had to be served again with fresh food. After that Gopal was extremely careful while nursing the Master.

Once, Holy Mother recalled a significant incident that took place when the Master lay ill at Cossipore. A number of his disciples, including Gopal, were taking turns attending to his needs. But one day, instead of serving the Master, Gopal went off somewhere to meditate. He meditated for a long time. When

Girish Babu heard about this, he remarked, "The one upon whom Gopal is meditating with closed eyes is suffering on a sickbed, and fancy, he is meditating upon him!" Gopal was sent for. When he arrived the Master asked him to stroke his legs. Then he said to Gopal, "Do you think I am asking you to stroke my legs because they are aching? Oh, no! In your previous births you did many virtuous acts; therefore I am accepting your service."

Sri Ramakrishna made his life a model for his disciples to follow. Gopal, though older than the other disciples, tried very hard to follow the ideal the Master set for him. Even his brother disciples praised his sincerity, love, and steadfast dedication to the Master. One day he heard the Master say, "Never tell a lie – even jokingly or casually." Gopal followed this teaching to the letter and encouraged others to do the same. Once a doctor prescribed the juice of three lemons for the Master's upset stomach, and Gopal was entrusted to collect them. Instead of three he brought several additional lemons, but the Master accepted only three and asked him to return the extras. Gopal realised that the Master was an embodiment of truth and his speech and action were always congruous.

Every year during 'makar-sankranti' (an auspicious day in mid-January) monks and pilgrims from all over India go to Gangasagar, the confluence of the Ganges and the Bay of Bengal, for a holy bath. Many pilgrims go by boat from the Jagannath Ghat of Calcutta. Gopal had a little money and wanted to acquire virtue by offering clothes to holy people on that auspicious day; so he bought twelve pieces of cloth and twelve rosaries of rudraksha beads to distribute among the monks. He dyed the cloths in ochre colour himself. When the Master heard about it, he said to Gopal, "You will attain a thousand times more virtue if you present those ochre cloths and rosaries to my children rather than giving them to the monks of Jagannath ghat.

Where else will you find such all-renouncing monks? Each of them is equal to a thousand monks." This changed Gopal's mind.

On Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1886, Gopal gave the ochre cloths and rosaries to the Master who touched them and sanctified them with a mantram. He himself then distributed them among his young disciples. They put on the ochre cloths and saluted the Master. Sri Ramakrishna was pleased to see them in monastic cloth and blessed them. The disciples who received the ochre cloth were: Narendra, Rakhal, Niranjan, Baburam, Shashi, Sharat, Kali, Jogin, Latu, Tarak and Gopal. The twelfth ochre cloth and rosary, according to the Master's instruction, were set aside for Girish Chandra. Later Girish touched them to his head and felt the Master's special blessing. In this sense it may be said that the Ramakrishna Order was founded by Sri Ramakrishna himself, although it did not come into official existence until after his death.

### **Sri Ramakrishna's passing away**

Sri Ramakrishna passed away at 1.02 a.m. on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1886. At first the disciples could not ascertain whether the Master had died or gone into Samadhi. Immediately Narendra sent Gopal and Latu to Dakshineswar to bring Ramlal, the Master's nephew, thinking that he could determine the Master's condition. When Ramlal arrived, he found that the crown of the Master's head was still warm. Several doctors were informed, and at last Dr Mahendralal Sarkar declared that Ramakrishna had passed away. After the cremation that afternoon, all the disciples left for home except Gopal, Latu and Tarak, for they had no place to go. Within a few weeks the Baranagore Monastery was established with the help of Surendra Nath Mitra, a well-do-do devotee of the Master. Gopal joined the other disciples, took the final vows of sannyasa and became Swami Advaitananda.

### **Austerity and Pilgrimage**

Advaitananda lived for a while at



the Baranagore Monastery. He helped his brother monks with household work, and played tabla when Vivekananda sang. Sometimes the young monks would tease him or make him the subject of practical jokes. Most of the disciples slept in one room as they did not have many rooms. One day Akhandananda replaced his pillow with a brick and when Advaitananda returned, he discovered his brick-pillow. He smiled and said to Akhandananda, "Ganga, I know you have done this mischief. Brother, I shall use your precious gift tonight as my pillow." Akhandananda was very touched. Immediately he threw away the brick and brought back the pillow. With an apology, Akhandananda said, "Brother, you are a real monk, free from anger and ego."

While living at the Baranagore Monastery, Advaitananda visited many holy places in India. He left the monastery towards the end of 1887 and went to Varanasi, where he stayed in a cottage of Banshi Datta's garden house and lived on alms. He devoted most of his time to spiritual disciplines and made considerable progress. Sometime in the middle of 1888 he went to Kedarnath and Badrinath, two holy pilgrimage sites in the remote Himalayas. Then he met Akhandananda, whom he had not seen in a long time, and burst into tears of joy. After that he stayed for some time in Vrindaban and practised austerities. On 25<sup>th</sup> March 1890 he went to Gaya with Holy Mother, who performed rites for the departed ancestors of her family. In the same year Advaitananda met Vivekananda and six other brother disciples in Meerut. The brother monks remained together for a few weeks then began to travel again in different directions. Advaitananda left to attend the Kumbha Festival at Hardwar with Akhandananda.

At last Advaitananda returned to the old cottage of Banshi Datta's garden house in Varanasi. He decided to spend the remaining part of his life in this abode of Lord Shiva. Advaitananda passed five



Swami Advaitananda

years in Varanasi practising austerities and forgetting the mundane word. He took care of whoever came to Varanasi and would show the person the temples of the City of Light. In spite of his old age he was healthy. However, once while walking through the street barefoot, a thorn pricked his foot, which gave him a great deal of pain. Advaitananda travelled extensively all over India. In 1897 he visited Raipur, Central India, with Nabai Chaitanya of Konnagar. Then he went to Kanyakumari, Rameswaram and other holy places of South India. In 1899 he visited Kamakhya and Darjeeling; and in 1900 he went to Dwaraka and other holy places of Western India.

#### At Belur Math

In 1897 Vivekananda returned from the West and established the Ramakrishna Mission. He wanted to do some philanthropic work for the regeneration of India's poor. For that reason he

recalled those brother disciples who were practising austerities in various parts of India. Advaitananda responded to Swamiji's call. He left Varanasi and went to Alambazar, where the monastery had been moved in 1892. In the early part of 1898, a plot of land was purchased at Belur on the bank of the Ganges for the permanent home of the Order and Advaitananda was entrusted to make the land ready for construction. On 13<sup>th</sup> February the Ramakrishna Order was moved from Alambazar to Nilambar Babu's garden house, just south of the new property.

Although he was the oldest in the group, in carrying out responsibilities he was second to none. Early in the morning after breakfast he would go to the new plot and engage the Santal tribal labourers who had been hired to level the ground. He scolded them if he found any dereliction of duty. Sometimes Vivekananda would visit the grounds and talk to the poor labourers. He loved to hear the stories of their lives and hardships and sometimes would arrange a feast for them.

Pioneering work is always difficult. Advaitananda worked until noon; then he took his bath in the Ganges and sitting under a tree he ate his lunch, which had been sent from the Monastery. Apart from levelling the ground and other construction work, Advaitananda started a vegetable garden and a dairy farm. Swami Adbhutananda recalled about the early days: "Without Gopal-da the monks of Belur Math would not have had vegetables along with their rice. He worked so hard to produce various kinds of vegetables in the monastery garden."

Although Vivekananda was thirty five years younger than Advaitananda, Advaitananda had tremendous love and respect for Swamiji because the Master had made him the leader of the disciples. On the other hand, Swamiji also had affectionate regard for Advaitananda. Swamiji used to tease this old waggish monk, "You are like an old bull; breaking off your horns, you have joined the

young calves.” One day Swamiji said, “Gopal-da, you are getting old day by day. Be careful. Now you must start taking milk and fruits, which will give you new life and the bones will not be rusted. After all, you are the oldest among us so tomorrow we shall wash you ceremoniously with milk.” The next day Swamiji and other monks poured ten seers of milk on Advaitananda’s head and then washed him with Ganges water. Afterwards a new cloth was offered to him and he was given various kinds of nutritious food. Swamiji joyfully told him, “Brother, from today you are the abbot and the responsibility of the monastery is yours.” It was all done in fun. When one of Swamiji’s pet ducks suffered for a week and then died from shortness of breath, Advaitananda said to him, “Sir, it is no use living in this ‘Kaliyuga’ [the dark age] when ducks catch cold from rain and damp and frogs sneeze.”

#### **A trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission**

In 1901 Swamiji made Advaitananda one of the trustees of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission; later he became the vice-president. When Vivekananda died on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1902, Advaitananda first checked his pulse and then said to Swami Nirbhayananda, “Alas! What are you looking at? Hurry to Dr Mahendranath Mazumdar and bring him here as soon as you can.”

After Vivekananda passed away, the banner of Sri Ramakrishna was carried by his other disciples. They shaped their lives according to the spiritual ideals of the Master; they also helped others to put these ideals into practice for their physical, mental and spiritual advancement. Advaitananda made strenuous efforts to mould his life according to the example of the Master and would sometimes express disappointment that he fell so short of his ideal. But this feeling of inadequacy indicated his real spiritual height. He had keen powers of observation like Sri Ramakrishna.

He forbade the monks to bang doors or tear a new cloth with a shrill noise, as the Master could not bear it.

He kept himself busy in the service of Sri Ramakrishna and couldn’t bear lazy people. Because of his age and temperament he did not engage in public activities such as relief work and preaching; his monastic life was therefore uneventful. In spite of that, he definitely set an example for all and he was a source of inspiration to many.

Advaitananda loved to do his own work. If anyone offered any personal service, he would decline to accept the offer. His attitude was that a monk should be self-reliant, depending only on God and no one else. He was fond of music and would play tabla when the brothers sang devotional songs. Sometimes when he had a little leisure, he would copy the scriptures in his beautiful writing. He used to chant the Gita every day. For his daily chanting he copied five different Gitas.

#### **Towards the end**

In late 1909, Advaitananda, an all-renouncing sannyasin of the Master, made himself ready to depart from the world. He had suffered from stomach trouble and, towards the end he had fever. Dr. Matilal Mukhopadhyay of Ghosuri, Howrah, was his physician and all the monks served their old brother with loving care. One day the swami stood in front of Sri Ramakrishna’s picture and prayed, “Master, please release me from this pain.” The Master soon afterwards answered the prayer of his old disciple. Swami Premananda later said, “Before his death Gopal-da saw the Master carrying a mace on his shoulder. He then asked, ‘Master, why are you carrying the mace on your shoulder?’ The Master replied, ‘I am Gadadhar, ‘Upholder of the mace’, an epithet of Lord Vishnu. Gadadhar was also Sri Ramakrishna’s childhood name.

Advaitananda passed away at 4.15 p.m. on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> December 1909. Until the end he was fully

conscious, chanting the name of Sri Ramakrishna.

Swami Advaitananda started his spiritual journey late, but his sincerity and steadfast devotion to the Master brought fulfilment at the end of his life. Sri Ramakrishna made him a role model for elderly seekers of God. He will be remembered by the Ramakrishna Order for his cheerful manner and methodical ways, his self-reliance, his untiring zeal in every work he undertook, and his implicit devotion to the Master and his cause.

#### **Sources:**

*God Lived With Them: Life Stories of sixteen monastic disciples* by Swami Chetanananda; Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, 1998, pages 513-527.

*Ramakrishna and his Disciples* by Christopher Isherwood; Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, 1998, page 218.

“The highest men cannot work, for in them there is no attachment. Those whose whole soul is gone into the Self, those whose desires are confined in the Self, who have become ever associated with the Self, for them there is no work. Such are indeed the highest of mankind; but apart from them every one else has to work. In so working we should never think that we can help on even the least thing in this universe. We cannot. We only help ourselves in this gymnasium of the world. This is the proper attitude of work. If we work in this way, if we always remember that our present opportunity to work thus is a privilege which has been given to us, we shall never be attached to anything.

Millions like you and me think that we are great people in the world; but we all die, and in five minutes the world forgets us. But the life of God is infinite. “Who can live a moment, breathe a moment, if this all-powerful One does not will it?” He is the ever active Providence. All power is His and within His command. Through His command the winds blow, the sun shines, the earth lives, and death stalks upon the earth. He is the all in all; He is all and in all. We can only worship Him. Give up all fruits of work; do good for its own sake; then alone will come perfect non-attachment. The bonds of the heart will thus break, and we shall reap perfect freedom. This freedom is indeed the goal of Karma-Yoga.”

*The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol 1 page 106-7.