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The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

JUNE Calendar



✧ Thus Spake ✧

"The peace of the Bhakta's calm resignation is a peace that passeth all understanding, and is of incomparable value."

- Swami Vivekananda

"Among the contributory factors of liberation, devotion stands supreme, and it is the search for one's own true nature that is meant by devotion."

- Shankara

Birthdays

There are no significant birth celebrations for June 2012

The Uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna as Prophet

A talk by Swami Jyotirupananda

The following talk was given by special guest speaker Swami Jyotirupanandaji visiting from Moscow at the Zushi March Retreat celebrating the 175th birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna and the dedication of Japan Centre's New Annex Building.

Kyokai Events

• Yoga-Asana •

Saturdays

June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
from 11am

Contact the Zushi Center

• June Zushi Retreat •

Sunday

June 17 from 11:00

Celebrating the Holy Birth Anniversary of Lord Buddha

The Practise of Lord Buddha's Message of Service

A talk by Reverend Eiichi Shinohara, Buddhist Priest at Chojyuin, Narita

Afternoon Session: Q&A

Slide Show: A Pilgrimage to India - Mr. Kenichi Mitamura

All are welcome to attend!

• Summer Outdoor Retreat •

Mt. Mitakesan

July 29-31 / Reserve Soon

Contact Shanti-san

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A prophet is a revealer of God's Will, a path-finder to save humanity from all types of sufferings. Krishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammed and such others are prophets. Sri Ramakrishna, in our time, is also a recognised prophet of India. They, by their lives and teachings, guided humanity with a specific path leading to God, the Supreme Reality. They had to give prominence to a particular path for solving problems of their time and locality even though their teachings were based on some eternal Truths. Sri Ramakrishna's advent was at a time when technological developments were bringing the world population so close, that persons living in one corner of the earth feel other persons living in another corner far away from them as their next-door neighbours. Now a problem arising in a country disturbs not only people living there, but all other countries as well. Keeping this in mind, we find the life of Sri Ramakrishna and his message surprisingly covers the whole of humanity as regards solving the problems of our time. In this we find some visible uniqueness in Sri Ramakrishna.

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Uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna (from page 1)

His most effective experience, to my mind, is his wonderful discovery of the Harmony of Religions, which the world needs so much at the present moment to save humanity from mutual destruction as a result of conflicts between the followers of different religions. If we search from ancient times to our present time, we find it is Sri Ramakrishna alone who practiced different existing religions and confirmed that all religious paths lead to the same God in whatever name we may call Him.

Moreover, another big problem which Sri Ramakrishna solved was regarding the views on God, Nature and living beings. One view called Dualism holds that God, Nature and individuals are separate existences under the control of God. Major religions of the world are fond of this view. There are others who think that Nature and Beings are parts in the body of God and he is the Soul of them. This view is known as Qualified Non Dualism. The third view is that God is Absolute and Transcendental. He is the only Reality, Nature and Beings are mere appearances seen through the limitation of mind and senses because of our primal Ignorance of the Supreme. These contradictory views have been the source of great problems which stand in the way of love among the followers of different religions. Sri Ramakrishna through his direct experiences found out that all these views are true.

God can be experienced differently under dif-



ferent stages of spiritual development and there is nothing contradictory in them. His unique experiences make it possible to bring amity among all religions. And it has started working all over the world. A good number of parliaments of religions are recently taking place in different cities of

the world where religious leaders assemble to talk in the same platform, peacefully and with mutual respect.

Next we come to the problem of women's status in society, which most countries of the world are facing now-a-days. It is not unknown to us that women everywhere are trying their level best to gain due status along with men in all spheres of life. Of late, we see lots of conferences and demonstrations occurring all over the globe for this purpose. Sri Ramakrishna's unique role in support of women's uplift is far-reaching.

Of course, he never claimed that he had any plan to solve any of these problems. Rather, he was able to completely erase his ego and could not even utter such words as 'I' or 'I do this'. He felt that he was simply an instrument in the hands of the Divine Will which was working through him. Whatever it may be, we

find a powerful weapon in him to counteract our wrong attitudes towards women. That whom we call Brahman (Supreme Reality) he called his Divine Mother Kali. Sri Ramakrishna conveyed in this way the womanhood of God. To him God is Mother.

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Uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna (from page 2)

Secondly, in the early stage of his spiritual practice he accepted a woman as his spiritual instructor, Guru, Bhairavi Brahmani by name. That was not enough. Still we are to go further through his life's most important event, his marriage.

A prophet like Jesus Christ remained unmarried, Shankaracharya, a savant and seer also was unmarried. Buddha and Sri Chaitanya both had to leave their wives behind to pursue some greater purpose. From such events people's misunderstandings increased further and they consider woman as a hindrance to the spiritual path. But Sri Ramakrishna's way was different.

He married Sarada Devi, loved her as a representative of the Divine Mother, trained her as his companion in a spiritual movement, and finally, gave all responsibility of his spiritual ministrations to her, which she successfully maintained till the end and, thereby, set the highest example of women's status in society. Ramakrishna's worship of his wife as Divine Mother is a unique example for all. In India we mark that from Sri Ramakrishna's example, quick changes in the attitudes of men towards women are gaining ground.

Sri Ramakrishna completely freed himself from the attachment of lust and gold. His life proves that the highest peace and joy can be attained only through controlling the tremendous force of the mind



towards these two. As much as we are able to make ourselves free from this attachment, so much peace and joy will reign in our mind.

The present world seems to forget these teachings advocated by all religions in some way or other. Our planet has become the victim

of some mad rush for money and enjoyment of material comforts. The minds of millions of people are captured by fear and anxiety everywhere as a result of violence and other criminalities bred from lust and greed. We have no way to escape from such eventualities.

Sri Ramakrishna's life is a pointer to turn this wrong direction of life towards a right one. Enjoy life in a right way and earn as much money as you like, but before doing so free yourself from the tremendous pull of lust and greed. To Sri Ramakrishna worldliness is summarised in the two words, lust and gold. The spiritual way of life alone can bring peace and bliss, and by subduing these two strong propensities of the mind one can be spiritual.

The giving of some money or extending other kinds of help to the poor and the needy on auspicious occasions or at places of pilgrimage is an essential part of spiritual practice in all religions of the world. In our present egotistic world, however, most people do not get the spiritual benefit of their benevolent actions. Rather, this increases their sense of ego instead of the attitude of humility necessary for inner

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Uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna (from page 3)

growth.

Sri Ramakrishna gave a new dimension to the very act of service. Once in a state of a spiritual mood he remarked, "Showing compassion to all beings! Who are you! - insignificant creature! - to show compassion? No! no! it is not compassion, it is serving the Lord in all beings." This is the attitude to be followed while doing good to others. In the temple of the body resides God as the inner controller. Therefore, service to man is service to God.

Keeping this attitude, a giver's mind will be uplifted when he serves the needy. And the receiver also will be benefitted not only materially, but his higher self also will be awakened. Taking the clue of this idea from Sri Ramakrishna, his great disciple Swami Vivekananda, later organised the Ramakrishna

Mission, a philanthropic organisation for all round service to the poor, the needy and the down-trodden of all classes in the world, regarding it as one of the paths to reach God.

The time is coming at its own pace for the world to have a deeper understanding of Sri Ramakrishna's invaluable contributions to bring new light to the modern world. •

• Thought of the Month •

Skepticism,
riddling the faith of yesterday,
has prepared the way
for the faith of tomorrow.

... Romain Rolland

• Story to Remember •

The Town Up Ahead

One day a man pulled up into a gas station in the country and asked the gas station attendant, "What are the people like in the next town up ahead?"

The attendant replied, "What were the people like in the town you just came from?"

"Awful people," the man responded. "Rude, cold, hostile, abrupt, unfriendly ... they wouldn't give me the time of day."

"Well," said the attendant, "I'm sorry to say it, but you're going to find exactly the same sort of people in the next town up ahead."

A bit later, another driver pulled in, heading in the same direction as the first. "What are the people like in the next town up ahead?" the second man asked.

The attendant said, "What were the people like in the town you just came from?"

"Oh, they are wonderful people," the second man responded. "Friendly, warm, helpful, patient, kind ... they go out of their way to help a stranger."

"Well," said the attendant, "I'm happy to tell you that you're going to find exactly the same kind of people in the next town up ahead." .

Popular Parables (origin unknown)

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