



SEPTEMBER 2022 -VOLUME 20 NUMBER 09  
**The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter**

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN



### Festival Dates

**Sri Sri Durga Puja**  
Sunday, 2 October

**Dussehra**  
Wednesday, 5 October

**Sri Sri Kali Puja**  
Monday, 24 October

**Diwali**  
Tuesday, 25 October

## Thus Spake

*“Live in joy,  
In love,  
Even among those who hate.*

*Live in joy,  
In health,  
Even among the afflicted.*

*Live in joy,  
In peace,  
Even among the troubled.*

*Live in joy,  
Without possessions,  
Like the shining ones.”*

— Buddha

*“First, meditation should be of a negative nature. Think away everything. Analyse everything that comes in the mind by the sheer action of the will. Next, assert what we really are-existence, knowledge, and bliss-being, knowing, and loving.”*

— Swami Vivekananda

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# Vedanta Society of Japan

## Message Regarding Monthly Programmes for October 2022

*Although COVID restrictions imposed by the Japanese government with the recent wave of the Omicron variant have been partially lifted, many precautions will remain in place.*

*Vedanta Society of Japan continues to observe social distancing, mask wearing, and avoid crowding in programme areas. Attendance to the Zushi Monthly Retreat and participation in other programs remains space limited, so please contact us if you wish to attend either of these programmes.*

Swami Medhasananda, President  
Vedanta Society of Japan

## OCTOBER 2022 Calendar of Programmes

1st (Sat) October

### **Bhagavad Gita Study Class at the Indian Embassy**

\* Video uploaded later

10:30 ~ 12:00 (In Japanese only)

5th (Wed) October

### **Weekly Upanishad Study Class**

8:30 ~ 9:30 (in Japanese only), Zoom

9th (Sun) October

### **Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Study Class**

Live Streaming [Click here](#) to go to YouTube

14:00 ~ 16:00 (in Japanese only), Zoom

16th (Sun) October

### **Monthly Zushi Retreat**

Bi-Lingual Live Streaming [Click here](#) to go to YouTube

10:30 ~ 16:30 (in Japanese only), Zoom

19th (Wed) October

### **Weekly Upanishad Study Class**

8:30 ~ 9:30 (in Japanese only), Zoom

24th (Mon) October

### **Kali Puja**

Live Streaming [Click here](#) to go to YouTube

19:00 ~ 21:00 ( \*resevation required )

# The Ideal Aspect of Sri Krishna for the Modern Age

By Swami Medhasananda

In the morning session, Swami Divyanathanandaji narrated different episodes from Sri Krishna's life and explained the significance of those episodes. These episodes related to different aspects of Sri Krishna's life. And each of these aspects can be followed as an ideal. In this regard, we can divide the life of Sri Krishna into some parts. For example, Sri Krishna in Vrindavan's Krishna, Mathura's Krishna, Dwarka's Krishna. And then Mahabharata's Krishna. As a devotee, we can follow each one of these.

For example, Vrindavan's and Gokula's Krishna if we combine, then what are the main aspects of Sri Krishna's life in this period? *Vatsalya Bhava* - to love God as a child. As Yashoda did and some other milkmaid women too did. We too can have the same attitude towards our own child. We can look on our own child as Krishna. Then, the *Sakhya Bhava* – to look at Sri Krishna as a friend as Sridama and Subal and many others learnt how dearly they loved Sri Krishna. They used to eat a fruit to check whether it is sour or sweet and then give it to Sri Krishna to eat. Sri Krishna too did not refuse to eat the fruit which had already been eaten by them. Arjun is another example. Sri Krishna himself said to Arjun – you are my *sakha*, my dearest friend. Then there is *Madhura Bhava*. To look on God as one's sweetheart. The young milkmaids had this attitude towards Sri Krishna.

Then there is Mathura's Krishna. The punisher of evil minded and wicked persons. Then also, he had a student life when he was in Mathura. He was a very good student, a very obedient student and was very devoted to his teacher Sandipani. The teacher had lost his son and requested Sri Krishna to bring him back to life. Sri Krishna did that too.

Then there is Dwarka's Krishna. Dwarka is situated in Western India. He was a king and householder. An ideal king and an ideal householder. Then there is the Mahabharata's Krishna. On the eve of the Great Kurukshetra War, during the War and also after the War. What was the main trait of Sri Krishna at that time? He was of course the charioteer of Arjun. And one interpretation is that not only for Arjun, but a charioteer for all our lives too. But I would like to propose that he was a counsellor. Was he not all the time counselling? What should be done, what should not be done. A counsellor, not in a narrow sense, but in a comprehensive and a very deep and a very wide sense.

So, now we can see the various roles of Sri Krishna. God as a child. God as a friend, God as a sweetheart, God as an ideal householder, God as a kingmaker, and as a King, God as a punisher of evils, and God as a counsellor. My question to you is, amongst all these roles, which we need the most?

*(Responses from audience members: Between friend and counsellor, Counsellor, Friend, ...)*

Now let me explain the difference between an ordinary counsellor and Sri Krishna as a counsellor. The usual counsellors we come across, I wonder if they are the ones who need more counselling than those whom they would like to offer counselling! As the saying goes, physician treat thyself. Ordinary counsellors have lots of problems. They themselves need counselling. But they have a degree, and they have to earn money, so they counsel.

I am reminded of an interesting story. A person had developed mental problems which made him depressed. He went to a psychiatrist to consult about his problem and to find out how to get rid of his depression. The psychiatrist said to him, I know of a person who is always full of joy. He is always cracking jokes and making other people laugh too. Many people with problems go to him, he makes them laugh and they are rid of their depression. Please can you go to that person? To this the patient replied, that your advice is very nice, but unfortunately, I am that person! The same applies to the usual counsellors. Sri Krishna is our eternal counsellor. And his counselling is not restricted to one part of our lives. It is very comprehensive. It covers all aspects of our lives.

Nowadays, every school, every college seems to have some system of counselling. But my question is – why do we let our children have some mental sickness in the first place? Is there no way so that the children do not have any mental sickness? Instead of treating mental sickness, is it not better to prevent it? So much money is spent on such counselling. And usually what is the result? They cannot think for themselves. They become dull and inert sort of persons. Some resort to drugs. The person degenerates into a mass of matter. There is no mind, no brain, no soul.

Sri Krishna counsels in such a way that we do not have such problems at all. If you study the Bhagavad-Gita, you will see that Sri Krishna gives so many advice so that you do not fall into such troubles. Sri Krishna also has counselling for people who have already fallen into troubles. And the comprehensiveness – personal life, day to day life, human relationships, food, entertainment, moral life, spiritual life. So, his counselling covers every aspect of human life. For any problem a person can imagine, he has a solution for that. Considering this, is he not a very special kind of counsellor?

Swami Vivekananda was very clear about what type of Sri Krishna we need. He said that for hundreds of years we Indians have been following Sri Krishna of Vrindavan. We have been accepting Madhur Bhava and other such Bhavas as our ideals. We should throw away all these things. Now we need the Krishna of Mahabharata. We need the Krishna of Gita. Do you think that Krishna was always playing the flute and dancing with the milkmaid girls? Is this your ideal of Krishna? Throw away that type of image of Krishna. Again and again Swamiji said that our ideal now should be Krishna of Mahabharata, Krishna of Bhagavad-Gita, the embodiment of courage, strength, wisdom.

For centuries we worshipped Krishna as Vrindavan's Krishna or Gokula's Krishna. And the result was that India became a subjugated country. India was ruled and exploited by other foreign countries. Because we never followed the teachings of the Gita which advises to face the brute heroically and not to run away or give up.

Arjun did not want to fight as he would have had to kill his teachers, his relatives. He said that I would rather prefer to beg food from others than to kill my friends and relatives and teachers. Then Sri Krishna ridiculed him – what are you saying? You belong to the caste of Kshatriyas, whose duty is to protect good people from evil people. That is your religion. You promised to take revenge of the humiliation suffered by Draupadi. You are forgetting all that and want to be a mendicant and beg your food? Shame on you! Get up and fight! That is your duty.



क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।  
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तवोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ 2.3 ॥

*klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat tvayyupapadyate  
kṣhudraṁ hṛidaya-daurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa*



This emotion is a very negative emotion. Throw this away. Get up and fight! That advice we did not listen to. We just worshipped Krishna, worshipped the Bhagavad-Gita. Decorated it with nice sandalwood paste. Did pranam. But never followed its teachings.

On the other hand, the western people, they did not study the Gita, but they actually practiced the teachings of the Gita. That is why they conquered us. So, even though the Gita was preached in India, and it is our philosophical and spiritual book, we did not follow it and so suffered. That is why Swamiji said that now we should follow the teachings of Sri Krishna of Mahabharata, of the Bhagavad-Gita.

Now, you all have read the Bhagavad-Gita. What according to you is the most impressive teaching of Bhagavad-Gita? Or, what is the teaching you like the most?

*(Responses from audience members:*

- *Detachment.*
- *Do your duty.*
- *Duty is more important than emotions.*
- *Whatever works you do, offer all the results of those works to Sri Krishna.*
- *Be strong, don't be weak.*
- *Balanced lifestyle. Everything should be done in a balanced manner.*
- *Internal joy.*
- *Life is temporary but there is something Eternal.*
- *In all the best things, there is the presence of Sri Krishna. The cosmic form of Sri Krishna.*
- *As the rivers flow into the ocean but the ocean remains unperturbed. Maintaining sameness of mind.)*

Regarding the last point above, there is a beautiful verse which explains this:

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् |  
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी || 2.70 ||

*āpūryamāṇam achala-pratiṣṭhaṁ samudram āpaḥ praviśhanti yadvat  
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśhanti sarve sa śhāntim āpnoti na kāma-kāmī*

As large quantities of water enter into the ocean, but the level of the ocean remains the same. Similarly, that person gets mental peace, in whom so many desires enter, but cannot disturb him. In our case what happens? Some desire arises and we want to satisfy that desire. Then our mind is disturbed. Because for the satisfaction of that desire, we have to work. Otherwise, how can we fulfil that desire? So, that is why our mind cannot remain calm and quiet.

Now, if I am asked what the most impressive verse to me is, then I say not a particular verse but all the verses of the Gita. There is not a single verse which I don't like in Bhagavad-Gita.

But anyway, if I have to say, what according to me are the most important words of the Gita, they are as follows. One thing is this, do your duty. Do not escape from your duty. Whatever duty you have, you must do it. No running away. No escaping. But there are two conditions. One condition is – while doing your duty, always remember God. Think of God.

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ... || 8.7 ||

*tasmāt sarveṣhu kāleṣhu mām anusmara yudhya cha*

This is a great message. Fight! Fight does not necessarily mean to fight with weapons. Here it means doing our duty. Everyone's field of duty is like Kurukshetra. It may be a hospital or a company, or the family environment of a housewife. In one way or another, it is like Kurukshetra. In that way, every one of us is like a soldier. Every one is a fighter. Arjun is just a symbol of us. So, whatever duty you have, do that, but mentally always remember God.

The second condition is to do the work as God's instrument. Don't think that you are doing the work. Yes, I am doing, outwardly. But I am doing work as an instrument of God. And whatever power, intelligence and skill that I have, all have come from God. The source is God. If a pen thinks that it is writing, what nonsense it is. Pen or pencil cannot write on their own. They are just instruments which are used for the purpose of writing. Our position too is like that. So, do the work as an instrument of God.

Then the third point is: do not get attached to any thing or any person. Love, but do not get attached. Because attachment leads to bondage and suffering. But love leads to freedom and joy. Now, how to practice this? Many people have this confusion, how to love without attachment. People are afraid that if they do not have attachment to their beloved, then they do not have any love too. This is absolutely wrong. It is possible to love without attachment.

One example is Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna loved the young disciples so much, that Premanandaji once remarked to his mother – mother, how much do you love me? Sri Ramakrishna's love is much much more than your love for me. Then the mother replied with surprise – what are you saying? I am your mother. Don't I love you? Premanandaji said – you of course love me. But Sri Ramakrishna's love is incomparable. But there is not the slightest trace of attachment in that.

So, how to accomplish this? Two things need to be practiced. First, connect all your love to the love of God. That means, love everyone through God. Try to see God in the person you love. And not only the people you love, try to see God in all people. So, all love, all relationships should be connected to the love of God. The second point is to remember that all human relationships are conditioned by and limited to this life only. But our relationship with God is eternal. If we remember this, then we can practice love without attachment.

Then the fourth and last point is: all the various kinds of advice can be put into practice, if we can control three things. The first thing to control is *kama*, desire, most specifically lust. The second one is *krodha*, anger. And the third is, *lobha*, greed. These three need to be controlled.

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः |  
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् || 16.21 ||

*tri-vidham narakasyedam dvaram nāśhanam ātmanaḥ  
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet*

If we are able to control these three things, then it will be easier for us to practice other things.

Now, why should we practice all these things? Because we want a state of eternal peace and eternal joy and highest wisdom. This is the purpose of human life according to Bhagavad-Gita. Everyone wants peace and joy, but they are searching for these in a wrong way and in a wrong place. To get peace and joy, we need to practice the teachings of the Gita.

• Thought of the Month •

"Are you growing spiritually? Can you love others? Can you feel oneness with others? Have you peace within yourself? And do you radiate it around you? That is called spiritual growth, which is stimulated by meditation inwardly, and by work done in a spirit of service outwardly."

- Swami Ranganathananda



## • Story to Remember •

### **Yudhishtira's Dog**

Years after the Kurukshetra war, the successful Pandavas decided to retire and renounce their kingdom on the advice of sage Vyasa.

Following the coronation of Parikshit as the king of Hastinapur and Vajra as the king of Indraprastha, the Pandavas along with the wife Draupadi commenced their journey of India and Himalayas. Yudhishtira lead, followed by the brothers Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, and last in the line was Draupadi.

At the start of the journey, a dog befriended them and kept them company throughout.

As they started to go up the Himalaya mountains, starting with Draupadi, one by one, they fell down, fainted and died. The eldest of the Pandavas, Yudhishtira, survived and the dog gave him company through his ordeal. These two continued their journey.

Just before it was time to ascend to heaven, Indra descended in his chariot, asking Yudhishtira to come on board so they could go to heaven together. Yudhishtira then asked Indra to allow the dog to accompany them.

A firm Indra told him that dogs can't travel in his chariot, but only Yudhishtira can. But, how could the man of dharma let go of the being who stayed with him throughout. To the former king, the dog was now a friend who didn't leave his side through the rough and smooth of the journey. His heart didn't allow him to betray his friend, as that would've been a sin. Yudhishtira was just being himself till his very last moment, but unknowingly, was weaving one of the most glorious stories of morals in the epic.

The dog he showed his everlasting commitment for was none other than the deity Dharma himself. Touched and impressed by Yudhishtira's kindness and commitment, the dog reappeared as the deity and praised him for his virtues. It was a test of dharma and Yudhishtira had once again proved his righteousness by not abandoning people who stayed with him throughout.

The gates of heaven now welcomed the virtuous Yudhishtira in the chariot of Indra.

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