



MAY 2020 - Volume 18 Number 05

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

JUNE 2020
Calendar

Birthdays



There are no birthdays
of note in June of 2020
according to the
Vishudda Siddhanta
Almanac

Zushi Events

We continue social-
distancing practices in
May and lectures,
classes and events
at our Zushi Centre
will be suspended
until further notice
as a precaution

against the
CORONAVIRUS.

However,
some classes will be
LIVE-STREAMED,
so click the live stream
link on page 02!



✧ Thus Spake ✧

"Stand up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny. All the strength and succor you want is within yourselves. Therefore make your own future."

- Swami Vivekananda

"Everything is produced by ignorance and dissolves in the wake of Knowledge."

- Sri Sankara

Vedanta Society's Monthly Discourse
Streamed from the Zushi Centre 19th April 2020

'The Importance of a Daily Schedule in Our Life'
A talk by Swami Medhasananda

Today's topic is 'The Importance of a Daily Schedule on Our Life'. First we will talk about the nature of our mind and personality, as it has a deep connection with our life. There are many books and discourses on this topic and we will talk a little on that. Then we shall delve into the topic of a schedule and its relationship with our life.

(con't page 3)

In this Issue:

- Thus Spake ... page 01
- April Monthly Discourse
'The Importance of a Daily Schedule
in Our Life' - A talk by Swami
Medhasananda ... page 01
- May Live-Streaming Schedule ... page 02
- Thought of the Month ... page 05
- Story to Remember ... page 11

Vedanta Society of Japan

JUNE 2020 Calendar of Events

Since the number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases continues to rise and fall in Japan, the government has strongly advised that everyone continue social distancing measures and stay at home if possible in order to prevent clusters of new cases.

For the Month of June the Vedanta Society will continue to provide mental and spiritual support to devotees while they should stay at home. The new June schedule is shown below, and all the programmes listed will be 'live-streamed' so that one can watch them on a computer or mobile phone.

Let us sincerely continue our prayers that the present crisis ends soon by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, and let our prayers include those for the good health and wellbeing of everyone during this trying pandemic.

Swami Medhasananda
President
Vedanta Society of Japan

Link for Live-Streaming of talks

<<https://www.vedantajp.com/映像映像ギャラリー/livestreaming/>>

or visit <<https://www.vedantajp.com>> and follow the links
Live-streaming starts at 14:00 Japan Standard Time

• **June 2020 Live-Stream Schedule** •

- June 7th (Sun) 2pm–4pm

Half Day Retreat at Zushi

Topical Discourse
(in Japanese only)

- June 14th (Sun) 2pm–4pm

The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Study Class

(in Japanese Only)

- June 21st (Sun) 2 pm–4 pm

Monthly Distance-Retreat Talk

Talk: "Buddha and His Teachings"
Speaker: Swami Medhasanandaji
(both in English & Japanese)

- June 28th (Sun) 2 pm–4 pm

Discourse on the Bhagavad Gita (in Japanese Only)

Speaker: Swami Medhasanandaji

Please Note: This discourse is NOT at the Embassy of India, Tokyo.

Please have a copy of the Gita at hand to follow the Live Stream.

Again: Link for Live Streaming of talks:

<<https://www.vedantajp.com/映像映像ギャラリー/livestreaming/>>

Defining the Mind

In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* there are descriptions of various types of minds. For example, one type of mind cannot concentrate at all, as in the case of birds or monkeys; another type of mind can concentrate at times, but again becomes distracted; there is also the mind that can concentrate for longer periods, but then comes down from that state; and so forth. According to Vedanta the mind is considered in a holistic way and is explained as Manas (mind), Buddhi (intelligence), Chitta (memory) and Ahamkara (ego). The mind can be described separately as that which has thoughts, desires and emotions, or it can be viewed collectively as that which has thoughts, desires and emotions; along with Buddhi, the discriminative faculty, deciding things; chitta, the memory of past experiences; and Ahamkara, or that part of the mind from which ensues 'I' and 'My' consciousness.

According to Western psychology the mind is divided mainly into two, consciousness and subconsciousness. Again, the subconscious mind is much larger than the conscious mind, and that the conscious mind is but the tip of the iceberg, and the subconscious mind is everything below the waterline. Western psychologists, especially Freud, did extensive research on this subject and have thrown much light on the contents of the subconscious mind.

Indian psychology, too, describes the consciousness and sub-consciousness mind, but the difference from their Western counterparts is that Indian psychologists have postulated a superconscious mind, which most Western psychologists do not subscribe to. This superconscious mind signifies the Soul. To realise the nature of the Soul, and to enter into the superconscious state of mind, are synonyms.

With this brief explanation of the views of the psychologists regarding the mind, let us now focus on the mind according to everyone's experience. While some may doubt the existence of the soul, no one doubts the existence of their mind. The nature, impressions and experiences of that mind are more or less similar to us all.

The Nature of the Mind

First of all, we must understand that mind and thought are one and the same, one cannot conceive of mind without thoughts or of thoughts without mind – they are synonymous. One of the first characteristics of the mind is that it is restless, it is constantly changing the objects of its focus and attention. This is referred to as the 'monkey mind.' It is called the 'monkey mind' because, as we have observed, monkeys cannot be still for a single moment and are always moving here and there. Swami Vivekananda (Swamiji) compared the state of the mind with that of a monkey, that is by nature restless. Someone then made the monkey to drink wine, becoming more restless. To add to its misery the monkey was haunted by a ghost, making it more restless still. Then the monkey was stung by an insect bringing it unbearable pain. One can only imagine the intensity of the monkey's restlessness as a result of all these things.

(con't page 4)

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 3)

Then too, although not in Swamiji's story, but let me add, suppose someone presented a monkey with a mobile device or a smart phone to see the fun. Now just imagine the state of that monkey's mind. If we all analyse our minds and introspect deeply, won't we find that our minds too are more or less like the monkey's mind referred to here?

The mind rarely focuses on the 'here and now', but is drawn to the past, often reminded of the remote past, or recent happy or unhappy moments, or it conjures some worries about the future, or it dwells on some future plans. Rarely does the mind concentrate on the present moment, and as a consequence, the present moment often escapes from us. Moreover, our mind verily identifies itself with the body and the senses, and not the soul. It almost continually thinks of temporal things; family, money, work and entertainments, and rarely, if ever, does it think about the Eternal or the Infinite.

This is also how the mind reacts: When we receive something we like the mind becomes happy, and when we receive something we dislike the mind experiences suffering or sadness. It continually fluctuates between likes and dislikes or between joy and suffering. There are two Sanskrit words 'sankalpa and vikalpa', meaning 'should I do this' or 'should I do that', and the mind is continually vacillating between these two. Most of the thoughts of our mind are either negative or neutral, while more rarely they are positive. One example of this is instead of looking at the good qualities of others the common mind mostly finds their negative qualities.

If there is some difficult task to be performed, the first reaction of the mind is, 'I do not want to do this!' The mind is also full of negative feelings, such as pride, anger, attachment, greed, worries, fears, and so forth. There are also 'samskaras' or the chronic mental tendencies acquired in previous lives and the present life, and formed by repeated thoughts and deeds, some of which are good, but many of which are negative.

When with this state of a deluded mind, described above, we perform our work, we engage in our human relationships, and so forth, no wonder that we commit mistakes, and make wrong decisions. Consequently, we suffer and cannot experience sustained happiness or peace. It is a hard fact that we can be away from people we dislike, but we cannot distance ourselves from our own deluded mind, which turns out to be our own enemy. This often creates a feeling of helplessness and anguish in us, and we are at a loss as to how to remedy it.

In such a state we may wonder, does the mind belong to me, or do I belong to the mind? Am I the master of my own mind, or am I its servant? Our present condition would suggest that we are but slaves to our mind, and the mind has become our master. Now one may ask what is the root cause of this undesirable state we find ourselves in.

Once Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) observed, 'The Mind is Maya 'or 'The Great Illusion' Examining this statement a little deeper we conclude Maya and Prakriti (primordial energy) are one, and this Prakriti contains three gunas (attributes or qualities) present in all things and all beings of this universe. These being sattva (the quality of calmness and peace), rajas (the quality of restlessness, desire, attachment, activity and ambition), and tamas (laziness, dullness,

(con't page 5)

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 4)

ignorance and violence), and the percentages of rajas and tamas in our minds are greater than sattva, which constitutes a lesser volume. This is the reason our common minds presently behave in the way explained above.

There is also the impact of the environment on our mind. If we compare the countryside to the city, there is a greater scope for distractions of the mind which city dwellers often experience.

Using Time Effectively

Individually, some people, who mistakenly consider whims of the mind as 'freedom of will', do not care about controlling the mind at all, others care but are not willing to do the necessary practice to achieve it. Still others only practice casually and superficially with no tangible effect. The other problem is the state of mind we aspire for and our actions are in complete opposition. It is an irony that on the one hand we want mental peace and tranquility, but on the other we often engage in the types of actions which lead us to more restlessness and more stress.

Who is to be held responsible for this state other than ourselves, which, unfortunately, we neither admit to nor realise? If we continue working at cross-purposes, we shall never find peace, and this is what we need to realise first and bring a paradigm shift in ourselves. From the positive viewpoint, we have to practice hard in order to control the mind, and from the negative viewpoint, we must take care that our objectives and methods are not contradictory to each other. Otherwise, no one in this world will be able to help us; neither God, nor a Guru, if we have one, nor scriptures, nor our well-wishers.

While striving to control our mind we must also recognise that time is very precious in our life. It is more precious than any of our earthly possessions. We are very careful about spending money, but not that careful about spending the time which is limited by our lifespan. If we spend or lose money, we can work to replace or save it again, but time is irreplaceable. Once it's gone, it's gone forever and cannot be retrieved. Yesterday cannot come back. Time is something most people do not pay much attention to. Now let us talk about making good use of our time with regard to our life.

Self-Development

The third objective of our talk today is in regard to self-development. Most thinking people are not satisfied with their present state. They want a better state of being and want to develop in body and mind, intellectually or even spiritually, but for many it stops there and remains a wishful desire, as they are not ready to do the needful to achieve such goals. Another problem is that people expect to achieve greatness overnight, which is well-nigh impossible, since behind all manner of spectacular achievement lies hard and sustained practice or struggle. So if we want to

• Thought of the Month •

"When walking, walk.
When eating, eat."

- Zen proverb

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 5)

reach a higher state we must be ready to fulfil the conditions it requires, or in other words, to pay the price of it.

Is there a way we can fulfil all three of the objectives we have discussed above, namely, how to control the mind, how to use time effectively, and how to self-develop. The answer here is to make a daily schedule and follow it. If we make a basic but model daily schedule and follow it diligently, there is a fair possibility of achieving all three goals. This is a most effective method, which is not only important for devotees, but for everyone aspiring for a higher and better life.

For example, Swamiji, founder of the Ramakrishna Order, insisted that the monks must follow a schedule from morning to night to lead a disciplined life, and also for gradual, all-round self-development. Now every centre of the Ramakrishna Order of monks follows a set daily schedule, which is more or less similar. Here in our Zushi Ashrama we, too, follow a daily schedule of which our devotees are aware. Morning vespers are followed by meditation and chanting of Vedic prayers and reading from *The Bhagavad Gita*. After breakfast we read scripture and occasionally discuss it. We are currently reading from *Meditation and Spiritual Life*. Then inmates go for a walk. At noontime before lunch there is an offering to Sri Ramakrishna, accompanied by a short meditation. Evening vespers includes reading from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, followed by meditation. Finally, after supper again there is a reading from Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature and we are currently reading a biography about Swami Turiyanandaji. Thus by reading a small portion everyday, we have finished the *Gospel* and the *Gita* many, many times already, and slowly we are finishing other spiritual books. Hence, by following this schedule we learn from these invaluable spiritual texts little by little. In between such a schedule the inmates perform their work with a spirit of service to the Lord and also find time for rest and relaxation.

Swami Premeshanandaji, one of our senior and highly respected monks, who inspired quite a few aspirants to become monks and nuns, made a significant remark about our ashrama schedule. He said, "Our monks need not go to the Himalayas for doing hard spiritual practices for illumination. He can have the same experience here itself, if he follows our ashrama schedule regularly, with sincerity, understanding and faith.

Making and Following a Model Schedule

Let us now discuss the key points in following a schedule. First make a model schedule for one day. Time for physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual development should find a place in that schedule. To illustrate this, make some time for prayer, meditation and repetition of God's name, occasional self-analysis and introspection. Make time for study of the scriptures. Study of scriptures like the *The Bhagavad Gita* or *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, explain what Truth is, what is needed to realise the Truth, what the obstacles to realising Truth are, and what the effect of realising Truth is. There are plenty of moral and spiritual advices which give us guidance in our day to day life, our work, human relationships, etc. We should also spend time to read inspiring and elevating books to enrich ourselves.

(con't page 7)

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 6)

Make time for some physical exercise, whether doing some yoga exercises, swimming, taking a walk, visiting a gym or some combination of these. Swamiji, while in the USA, sent a letter to the resident monks at the Alambazar Math urging them to do some daily exercise, which Swamiji himself did almost until his last days. Swami Brahmanandaji, one of Swamiji's distinguished brother disciples, also followed Swamiji's instruction using small dumbbells, and wherever he went the dumbbells were carried too!

One of Brahmanandaji's disciples, Swami Yatiswaranandaji, who authored the religious classic, *Meditation and Spiritual Life*, would also regularly exercise as advised by his Guru. Once Swami Bhuteshanandaji, another monk of our Order, who later would become its President, reminisced that he was travelling by train with Yatiswaranandaji and at a fixed time in the morning, on the train itself, Yatiswaranandaji brought out the dumbbells and started his exercises without regard to the sight this presented to the other passengers or their reactions. Following the words of the Guru to the letter makes a disciple great, as it happened in the case of Yatiswaranandaji.

Of course schedule times for meals sleep, relaxation, hobbies, and for work as well. Make this daily schedule and follow it every day. However, while performing our works and duties we should try to do them with a spirit of Karma Yoga; that is, by looking upon ourselves as an instrument of God, depending upon Him for the results, and dedicating these to Him.

In making our schedule we should not be too ambitious or set goals too high, e.g. rising much too early for long meditations, but start with a more humble and realistic schedule. It is better to make two types of schedule, one to follow on the weekdays when we go to work, and the other to follow during the weekends and holidays when we have more free time. Moreover, we should review how closely we follow the schedule, and if not, why not, thus finding remedies.

There are two more pertinent points regarding this daily schedule. First, the time for meditation, study of scripture, and yoga exercises should be allotted in the morning for three reasons: In the early morning nature is calm and the environment is not noisy, hence one can concentrate these practices and get better results. Next, you will enjoy the benefit of those practices the whole day, during work and other engagements. There is also less chance of reducing the time of practice, or skipping it altogether, as there is less chance of being busy at that early hour, except for those busy housewives preparing breakfasts and/or lunches for the school children. For those housewives who have free time during the day, they should schedule their practices accordingly. The thing is, the practice of self-development cannot be skipped for a single day, even though the mind tries to impress upon you that it does not matter much if you skip one day for this or that reason. Therefore don't skip, because if you skip one day, you may skip the next as well. However, in exceptional and genuine cases one may reduce the duration of a particular practice and readjust the timing.

What does it mean to make a schedule? Sequence your daily activities and assign time durations for each from start to finish. In making this schedule there are three important points to follow. First is the order of activities, keep them in the proper order, what time to wake, go to
(con't page 8)

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 7)

bed, then for meditation, reading scripture, exercising followed by breakfast. Next will be the time to resume our daily activities. Times scheduled for waking and sleeping must be strictly observed. The more important of these two is the time we go to bed, because if we fluctuate the time of going to bed the night before, there is every possibility that our waking time the following morning will fluctuate and our entire daily schedule will be disrupted too!

There are, however, exceptional cases, for example Mahatma Gandhi would follow his daily schedule no matter how late in the night he worked, as he had very strong willpower. For us, if we fail to keep our scheduled bedtime because we are involved with something interesting or some other diversion and stay up, then it will affect our schedule the next day. Hence, please remember our schedule for the day actually starts the night before! Keeping to our schedule requires mental discipline and will power, because without such discipline and will power we lose control of the mind and we cannot bring any real change in our life. We shall remain forever where we are.

Some are very particular for keeping time with scheduled appointments of going to work. If the appointment is for 3:05PM, most arrive by 3PM and wait till the appointed time comes. This is a very good trait, but do they practice the same on a personal level, while leading their day to day life? Some introspection on this matter is highly required.

Swami Gambhrianandaji was a great monk and scholar, and he was in the habit of going for a walk daily at 4PM with an attendant. One day this attendant arrived a couple of minutes late and Swami Gambhriananda pointed out his tardiness, to which the attendant said, 'Well, Maharaj, it's only one or two minutes, does it really matter?' Wanting to emphasise the importance of every single minute, Gambhriananda asked if he knew how many miles an aircraft travelled in two minutes. Before Swami Gambhrianandaji became President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission (1985–1988), he served as Vice-President and as General Secretary, and despite all the the demands on his time, he followed his schedule strictly and found enough time to write many scholarly books.

So far we have discussed following the schedule in it's proper order, then being punctual in keeping to the schedule, and the third, is to concentrate and focus on this moment, the Now.

Focus on the Now

One example of this takes us back to a time when Swami Premanandaji was in charge of training the brahmacharis (novices) at Belur Math. Aside from the various spiritual training exercises there were also many daily chores to attend to, as at that time finances couldn't support many hired helpers. One thing Premanandaji would often do is insist that the brahmacharis were paying full attention to the work they were doing. Once while a brahmachari was asked to cut straw to feed the cows, he sliced his finger. Premanandaji came in and scolded the brahmachari saying he was not yet ready to become a monk, because if he could not concentrate on the work at hand, how could he concentrate during meditation and build up his monastic life.

(con't page 9)

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 8)

If one can focus well on the work at hand, one can meditate well. If doing one's exercises, concentrate on the exercises. If one is doing housework, concentrate on that. If studying, concentrate on the subject at hand. This will help us to control our mind and allow better meditation. The emphasis is focusing on today and whatever we are doing at the moment. The past is gone and we cannot get it back, nor can we replace it. Tomorrow has not arrived, so focus only on the present. Let our motto be 'Mind! Be Here and Now', reminding ourselves of this constantly and practicing it as much as possible.

There is a famous poem by Kālidāsa, the celebrated poet of ancient India called 'Look to This Day' that emphasises this idea very well:

Look to This Day

*Look to this day
for it is life,
the very life of life.
In its brief course lie all
the realities and truths of existence,
the joy of growth,
the splendour of action,
the glory of power.
For yesterday is but a memory,
And tomorrow is only a vision.
But today, well lived
makes every yesterday a memory of happiness,
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.*

While practicing our focus on 'Now', two more allied practices are quite important and helpful. One is 'One work at a time!', meaning that while attending to one work, we should not leave it half finished to take up another. The second one is 'Don't rush! Slow down a little!' A tendency to rush always reveals our inner restlessness. If we want to remedy this, we should check it at the physical level.

Focusing on the 'Now' has various positive effects. First, by such focusing we can prevent the frittering away of our time and energy by not dwelling on the past, the future, or imaginings, and utilise that time and energy for better purposes. Secondly, we can do the job at hand with greater perfection. Thirdly, by utilising 'the present' time well, we can build for our better future. Finally, it will help us substantially to control our mind, as it is always engaged in positive things.

Just for Today

In Dale Carnegie's familiar book, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* he quotes a poem, 'Just for Today' by Sybil F. Partridge, a Catholic sister also known as Sister Mary Xavier, written in 1856. Since that time her verses have been adopted and included in the hymns of other Christian

(con't page 10)

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 9)

denominations, and online there is evidence editors and others have borrowed verses and modernised terminologies to suite their preferences. I too, like the idea that 'Just for Today' conveys, so I am borrowing this title and while including some of the poem's content, I have also added here and there in the following piece to convey the ideas we have discussed today:

'Just for Today'

(1)

Just for today,

I will try to follow a timetable from early morning when I wake up till I go to bed.

*This timetable will include time for my physical,
as well as intellectual, moral, and spiritual development.*

(2)

Just for today,

*I shall meditate and repeat God's name for fifteen minutes twice a day,
in the morning and in the evening, and thus get connected to God.*

*I shall repeat God's name at least ten-times when I am engaged in some work,
when I am travelling, and also when I take a bath.*

I shall offer mentally whenever I eat and drink and whatever I eat and drink to God.

(3)

Just for today,

I shall reflect on the true nature of myself, of other people, and of the universe.

(4)

Just for today,

*I shall reflect on the meaning and purpose of my life,
and what I have been doing to achieve the goal of my life.*

(5)

Just for today,

*I shall study spiritual and thought provoking books, and learn something new,
as it is important to learn something new every day.*

(6)

Just for today,

I shall breathe, breathe, breathe, stretch, stretch, stretch, and walk, walk, walk.

(7)

Just for today,

*Whatever happens, I shall not become upset, or perturbed, or dissatisfied.
I shall not complain, grumble or retort, but try to solve every problem calmly.*

(8)

Just for today,

*I shall not criticise anyone, or try to reform another, rather,
I shall praise others, encourage others, and see the positive qualities in others.*

(9)

Just for today,

I shall focus on this day alone.

(con't page 11)

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 10)

I shall live today, which is at my disposal, as best and as ideally as possible, as if there were no yesterday and will be no tomorrow.

(10)

Just for today,

I will work with the idea that I am an agent of God, and that I am serving God in others with my work, and I shall dedicate my works to God at the end of the day.

(11)

Just for today,

I shall not talk if not asked, not watch TV, read a newspaper, listen to the news, or a mobile phone, or work on a computer.

(12)

Just for today,

I shall try to feel how much I am indebted to other people and Mother Nature, and how much other people and Mother Nature have been contributing to sustain me. I shall pray for others and Mother Nature's welfare, as I also try to help others.

A Life Worth Living

This 'Just for Today' piece includes all the good practices we should undertake for our all-round development and complete transformation. Though 'Just for Today' is repeated several times for as many practices, it does not literally mean that we do each once in our lifetime. Rather it means to at least start such a practice, first for one day only, and then try to continue doing so daily thereafter. Some of the practices such as 'to talk only if asked, or to refrain from speaking on a mobile phone' altogether may not be possible for some people, but one can restrain or not do them once a week, for a fortnight, or even for a month. Obviously, to practice 'Just for Today' we need to make a schedule, which we have explained above.

In conclusion we may repeat that following a daily schedule and focusing on the 'Now' have tremendous benefits which we have already discussed. Here let me add one more important merit. I can tell you from my experiences such practices will help us tremendously with our hard times, owing to our failures, and various types of sufferings, as well as during the 'dark nights' of our soul, when our spirits very low. Despite such conditions let us just do the practices mechanically, even if body and mind are reluctant to do so and, and in fact may be revolting. Just continue the practice and it is certain that arduous situations will definitely come to an end, and you will see light at the end of the dark tunnel.

All these practices help us to face our greatest challenges in life, and by controlling our mind successfully, our 'enemy' mind will turn to be our 'friend' mind, acting as the 'Good

(concluded page 12)

Importance of a Daily Schedule (from page 9)

Samaritan' referred to in the Bible, and be of great help. Such a mind will guide us in the right direction and ever lead us to Spiritual Illumination, the goal of life. In this context let us take a quick look at two relevant and highly significant verses from the *Bhagavad Gita* (6:5-6):

*uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānam avasādayet
ātmaiva hyātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ*

*bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ
anātmanas tu śhatrutve vartetātmaiva śhatru-vat*

The idea of these verses is: One should uplift oneself through the power of the mind, and not depress or degrade it. This mind is both our friend and foe. The mind becomes our friend if we conquer it; if we cannot do so, verily, it becomes our foe.

Practicing in this way may appear monotonous and mechanical, but if we continue to keep a schedule and practice focusing on it, it will become part of our nature. In fact, we will come to enjoy this routined life, and 'life will be transcending and worth living'. •



● A Story to Remember ●

The Parable Of A Hundred Children

There lived in a certain town two neighbour boys, Rama and Krishna, who were fast friends. Rama married a nice charming girl when he came of age, but Krishna remained a bachelor for a long time.

Both Rama and Krishna inherited a lot of wealth from their parents. Rama multiplied his wealth and became a millionaire. But, Krishna adopted the son of his spiritual friend and guide and lived within his own means very happily.

In spite of his increasing fortune, there was no happiness in Rama's house. Too many children, born to him, were a regular source of constant annoyance to him and his wife. Neither of them could concentrate their attention on any of the children. The children always grew turbulent and boisterous and soon drained Rama of his wealth. No amount of income could help Rama to make ends meet.

One day he approached Krishna and asked him as to the secret behind his happiness and the heavenly nature of his house. And Krishna replied, "I have but one son."

Rama and Krishna represent the human mind. One mind takes to some fancy, and begets a thousand desires as its offspring. The desires quickly drain the energy that the mind daily conserves through a little concentration and meditation. The mind becomes a weakling, because of the number of its desires. For the same reason, it cannot concentrate itself on a particular desire and achieve its end.

Krishna in adopting the Guru's son is comparable to a mind imbibing a certain thought from the Guru and concentrating its energy and strength on developing it.

Where there are a thousand desires, there cannot be peace of mind or concentration of mental energy, or preservation of mental strength. Where there is but a single desire, the mind can concentrate upon it well.

The greater the number of desires, the lesser is the peace and happiness. The fewer the desires, the greater is the peace of mind.

Learn to reduce the number of your desires. Keep one and one alone, and let that be divine. Concentrate the mind on it. You will enjoy peace and bliss; you will soon attain your goal.

- Parables of Sivananda, Divine Life Society

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