



DECEMBER 2022 -VOLUME 20 NUMBER 12

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN



Birthdays

Swami Turiyananda
Thursday, 5 January

Swami Vivekananda
Saturday, 14 January

Swami Brahmananda
Monday, 23 January

Swami Trigunatitananda
Wednesday, 25 January

Thus Spake

It is necessary to practice some spiritual discipline. The guru no doubt does everything for the disciple; but at the end he makes the disciple work a little himself. When cutting down a big tree, a man cuts almost through the trunk; then he stands aside for a moment, and the tree falls down with a crash.

— Sri Ramakrishna

God has given fingers, in order that they may be blessed by counting Japa of the mantra. When a pure mind performs Japa, the mantra bubbles up spontaneously from within without any thought on its part. One who reaches this state attains success in Japa.

— Sarada Devi

Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.

— Swami Vivekananda

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Vedanta Society of Japan

Message Regarding Monthly Programmes for January 2023

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

JANUARY 2023 Calendar of Programmes

1st (Sun) January

Kalpataru Day

11:30 ~

Live Streaming

3rd (Tue) January

Service to the Homeless Narayana

To participate, contact urara5599@gmail.com

7th (Sat) January

Bhagavad Gita Study Class at the Indian Embassy

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

Video uploaded later

11th (Wed) January

Weekly Upanishad Study Class

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

15th (Sun) January

Swami Vivekananda Birthday Celebration

11:00 ~ 16:30

Bilingual Live Streaming

Prior reservation (until 11th January) is necessary. Tel: 046-873-0428

22nd (Sun) January

Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Study Class

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

25th (Wed) January

Weekly Upanishad Study Class

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

The following is Part three of the interview with Swami Medhasananda which was published in Anjali – the magazine of the Bengali Association of Tokyo in Japan.

Fulfilling the desire of Swami Vivekananda “to do something for Japan.”

An excerpt from the interview of Swami Medhasananda Maharaj for ‘Anjali.’

The interview was conducted by Mr. Ranjan Gupta & Mr. Sanjib Chanda.

(Continued from the previous issue of November 2022 ...)

Gautam

Yes Maharaj thank you so much.

Now could you please explain the challenges you faced in undertaking your activities in this country? Furthermore, how do you manage to integrate the Japanese and the Indians in the Vedanta Society so well?

Also, it is amazing to see how the Japanese coming to the Vedanta society develop the spiritual base to understand the difficult concepts of Vedanta. How did you make them understand these things in Japanese and integrate them into the main organization? That seems to me a great task. There are not many Indian societies in Japan that achieved a similar success. What are the challenges you faced, and how did you overcome them? Our readers would be very keen on knowing this.

Maharaj

Since 1993, the year of my arrival in Japan, what I have observed and also perceived through my study, is the fact that the image of India to the Japanese was at one time very high because of Buddhism. During the Meiji restoration when they were modernizing the country, they accepted the West as their model, and at that time there arose an attitudinal change. The high image of India as the land of the Buddha started to decline, since India was subjugated by the British and was besides a poor nation.

For Japanese, a great nation is a nation economically and militarily powerful. To the average Japanese that was the standard for a nation’s greatness. Since for many years after independence India was neither economically nor militarily strong, to the average Japanese the status of India was rather low. However, towards the end of last century, when India started

developing and its economic and military might grew substantially, and chiefly with the blossoming of Information technology, the image of India began to improve.

Another point to which I as an Indian would like draw your attention, is a basic lacuna in the establishment of people-to-people relations between India and Japan. In Japanese schools where students get to know of different cultures and civilizations including the religions of the world, it is very regrettable that while their text-books contain detailed descriptions of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and even Judaism, yet the description of Hinduism and India is minimal and insignificant. Hence the average Japanese has very little scope of attaining a fair idea about India and Hinduism, and that is most unfortunate.

It would not be inappropriate to mention the fact that from time to time we organize talks about India and Indian culture for Japanese University students, who display an interest in these issues. Here the students escorted by a professor visit our Society, and we arrange an audio-visual talk for them on India.

Since you ask about the challenges we face while running this Center, I must confess that to a certain extent we face at times financial problems. Unlike many Buddhist religious organizations, all our programs, which sometimes include the provision of food, are free of charge. So, to run our institution we mainly have to rely on donations, which as a source of income is something fickle. Although we get some monetary support from the sale of religious articles including books, our income is declining. Fortunately, in view of the Covid pandemic, large-hearted individuals send contributions to us, for which we are immensely grateful.

Another point to be considered is the fact that although the majority of the Japanese are Buddhists, yet they hardly practice their faith. For several reasons religion has now become merely a matter of tradition for the average Japanese, if not something redundant. For example, visiting shrines on the first of January is not an act motivated by real faith and respect for the deities concerned, but merely to follow tradition. Real interest in spirituality is declining day by day. The Japanese have several wonderful character traits, but it is a matter of great concern that they are becoming more and more materialistic and atheistic. They are growing progressively fond of secular delights. Incidentally, Americans also pursue worldly philosophical principles, but there are among them millions of religious-minded people as well. Nevertheless, the average Japanese now does not have much interest in spirituality and religion.

They have the notion that if somebody evinced an interest in religion or spirituality, the person must be crazy.

That is where we lend a hand. It is certain that the more one leads a worldly life, the more the person gets tense and stressed out. The Japanese indeed desire peace and sublimity, but they are unaware of the means of attaining them. Hence they search in various places, but finally get frustrated. They do not get much support from their religious bodies, nor do they have any spiritual education. Families communicate good manners to children, but not the spiritual values that are most vital with regard to acquiring mental peace and happiness.

Most Indians on the other hand are deeply rooted in spirituality and religion. When Indian businessmen or visitors enter the country and meet the local people, in the course of their conversations there is a chance of their bringing up issues dealing with religion or spirituality. To these however, their Japanese counterparts reveal an utter lack of interest.

In the current situation, in order to obtain happiness and mental peace, along with materialistic needs there is a need also for spirituality. This spirituality should not be of an orthodox type. It should be universal, harmonistic, rational, and open, and such are the features of Vedantic philosophy. Vedanta, although a very ancient, spiritual, and philosophical tradition, is nonetheless modern, rational, universal, and harmonistic. This is the type of religion Japan needs, and this is what we seek to propagate within this country.

Those Japanese who seek religion that is open and rational, visit our ashrama and attend our programs. They feel excited at witnessing celebrations of Christmas and Buddha Jayanti in a Hindu Temple. Every Sunday morning we conduct a special service, where we chant Vedic mantras and the Bhagavat Gita, and read the Bible as well as the teachings of the Buddha and the Prophet Mohammad. That is to say, we do not merely talk about religious harmony but try to practice it in a modest way, and that impresses our Japanese devotees and visitors. In that way they identify with Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, as well as our organization. Whenever there is a program, as for example the Vivekananda celebration, it is attended by both Japanese and Indians, who are familiar with and who love Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, as well as the Vedanta and the Ramakrishna Mission. What is more, they spontaneously integrate with each other, and together assist in organizing such programs in a successful manner.

I think you have noticed that our Vivekananda celebration committee consists of Indians, Japanese, intellectuals, housewives, yoga teachers, and Christian priests. They form a cross-section of society, a really diverse set of people. The committee in itself reveals the fact as to how harmonious we are. Such things impress both Japanese and Indians, and motivate them to get involved in our activities. Also, all these things occur in a natural way.

(to be continued ...)



Power of the Name of God

Talk delivered by Swami Medhasananda on 20th November 2022

In our topic today, there are three key words – name, God, power. Isn't "name" a word? And what is a word? It is basically a sound, but an articulated sound, articulated by the sound mechanisms of the body. And at the same time, each word signifies either a concrete or an abstract thing, an inanimate or an animate object. What is signified by a word can be a common noun or a particular noun. We use so many words in our day-to-day life. But most of them connote those things which are finite, i.e., conditioned by time, space, and law of causation.

But sometimes a word signifies infinity, for example 'Om'. The word 'Om' signifies the Supreme Reality, the Infinite. Om, however is described as a word, and also as a syllable.

One point to note is that the name of a person and the person cannot be separated. Suppose I remember the name 'Srinath' whom I know. Immediately Srinath's image appears before my mind's eye. In this way, a person and his name cannot be separated.

Again, thoughts and words cannot be separate because all thoughts appear in our mind in the form of words. For example, you think about visiting the Kyokai. How will the thought appear in your mind: It will be like the following: “Today I shall visit Kyokai”, or “Today, I shall not visit Kyokai”.

According to Patanjali Yoga Sutra, when one is very advanced in the practice of Raja Yoga, he can separate idea from words. However, that is an exceptional state.

Now, let us discuss the effect which words have on us. Pleasant words and unpleasant words have totally different effects on us. For example, if you tell someone, ‘You are a stupid’, that person is sure to be angry with you. If on the other hand, you tell him, “You are such a kind man, and intelligent too” he will be happy. As we all know, pleasant words or kind words make us happy, whereas unpleasant or abusive words make us angry, sad, depressed. This shows the power which words have.

Words also have vibrations associated with them. These can be positive vibrations or negative vibrations. For example, if you just repeat, “Water, water, ...” there is no effect of this repetition on your mind. But if you repeat, “Ganga water, Ganga water, ...” positive vibrations will arise in your mind, because Ganga water is holy water. On the other hand, if you repeat, “drain water, drain water, ...” then it will generate different vibrations. So, each word, whether positive or negative, will have a different effect on the mind. In certain cases, the impact of these vibrations is quite deep.

Once I heard a talk on values delivered by the Principal of an educational institution. He recounted the following in his talk: In a particular grade, he divided the class into two sections. For one section, each day before the start of their lessons, the students would be asked to chant “Om” for two to three minutes. This practice continued for 2-3 months. The other section continued as before, with no chanting prior to the commencement of their lessons. It was found that students in general from the section which chanted Om performed much better in the examinations than those in the section which did not chant.

Similarly, the names of Gods and Goddesses such as Shiva, Durga, Vishnu, Narayana have a special mystic power. The names of incarnations of Gods such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Sri Ramakrishna of the Modern Age will also have similar effect on those who chant such names as the incarnations are full of God consciousness.

The name of God may be compared to the seed of a tree. Though the banyan tree is so big, its seed is even smaller than a mustard seed, yet such a tiny seed has the potentiality of growing as a huge tree. Similarly, even though the name of God is apparently small like a seed, it has the potentiality of transforming our lives remarkably. Our spiritual life will blossom by repeatedly taking such holy names.

Maharshi Valmiki was the author of one of the two great epics of India called Ramayana. Before becoming a sage, he was a violent robber and his name was Ratnakar. He lived in a forest and whenever travellers would pass through that forest, he would kill them

and snatch away their money, jewellery and other costly belongings.

Once it happened that Narada, the great sage, was passing through that forest. Ratnakar came and wanted to kill him too. Narada stopped him and said, “Wait a moment. I have a question to ask you. You have killed so many people and robbed them of their possessions, so surely you have incurred great sins. May I now ask you if there is anyone who can share your sins? If no, then you will have to suffer for all sins that you have committed so far by yourself”. To this, Ratnakar replied that, he had a family and parents, and that certainly they would share his sins, as he was doing all these heinous acts just to support them.

Narada said that he was not sure that Ratnakar’s family would agree to suffer for the sins committed by Ratnakar. He asked Ratnakar to go and ask his wife and parents if they would share his sins. Ratnakar was worried that this was a ruse by Narada to run away and so tied Narada to a tree. Then he went to his house and first asked his parents whether they would share his sins he committed for earning money. His parents said, “No, we have brought you up and now it is your duty to provide for our living. Why should we share your sins you have committed to support us?” Then he went to his wife for he was almost certain that if not his parents, his wife would surely share his sins. But his wife also said to his dismay, ‘You have married me, so it is your duty to maintain me. I do not bother how you are earning the money. If you earn money in an unethical way, that is your problem. Why should I be responsible for that and suffer?’ Ratnakar was tremendously shocked and scared and realised for the first time that his people for whom he was committing these sinful acts were not willing to share his sins. He alone would have to suffer the dire consequences of his evil actions.

He came running to Narada and fell at his feet. He asked Narada to save him from the great sins he had incurred and the sufferings that would surely follow. Narada became compassionate with Ratnakar and initiated him with a mantra, with the holy name of ‘**Rama**’. But initially, Ratnakar could not even pronounce ‘Rama’ for his sin was so great. He started chanting the opposite of “Rama”, “Mara, Mara, ...”. Then finally he could chant “Rama, Rama”. The holy name of Rama finally transformed the robber Ratnakar into the sage Valmiki who composed the great epic Ramayana. This is one example of the power of God’s name.

In modern times, among the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, we see the example of Aghoremani Devi known as Gopaler Ma (Baby Krishna’s mother) who became a widow when she was very young. She too became a saint just by chanting the name of God. She chanted the name of **Gopala** (Baby Krishna) continuously for 30 to 40 years and had the continued vision of Gopala. Gopala would be moving about her, playing, demanding food from her, helping her in her house work etc. This is another example of how an ordinary aspirant can have the experience of a highly exalted spiritual state by the practice of Japa Yoga.

Not only in Hinduism, but other religious traditions like Buddhism, Islam, Christianity too

have the tradition of repeating the name of God. In Buddhism, the popular mantra of one of the sects in Japan is '**Namu Amidabutsu**' (**Namah Amitabha Buddha**). In Christianity, they repeat, '**Jesus, have mercy on me**'. In Islam repetition of the word **Allah (God)** is not uncommon.

There are various methods of spiritual practice, for example, prayer, unselfish work, meditation, path of discrimination between the real and the unreal, etc. For aspirants practicing these different spiritual disciplines, **Japa**, or repetition of the name of God is very helpful. Japa itself is a great spiritual practice. Moreover, it is quite easy to practice. That's why, Swami Brahmananda, the Spiritual son of Sri Ramakrishna, used to say, Japa is **Sahaja Yoga** – a Yoga, which is easy to practice. In Sanskrit it is said, 'Japat Siddhih' which means, spiritual realisation can be attained by Japa.

The reason why it is called Sahaja Yoga, that is, easy Yoga, is because no previous preparations are necessary to practice this. For example, in Patanjali's Raja Yoga, some preparatory steps are needed: Yama, Niyama, Pranayama, Pratyahara etc. In Jnana Yoga, preparations such as Shama, Dama, Nityanitya-Vastu-Viveka, and study of scriptures, are all necessary. For Karma Yoga, you need a strong body. For practicing Bhakti Yoga, faith in God is a necessary condition. But for practising Japa Yoga previous preparations are not necessary-. One can just repeat the name of the Lord with diligence then purity, faith, devotion, knowledge, realisation – all will follow.

Moreover, one can chant the name of God at any time: morning, noon, night. Also, one can chant it at any place too. It is not necessary to go to the shrine or a prayer hall to do so. You may chant the name while taking a shower, while walking, while working, in a marketplace, anywhere. As a contrast, for meditation you need a calm and quiet place. In a market place surely you cannot do meditation. But you may do Japa at any time in any place.

Another advantage of Japa is that it can be done irrespective of your physical or mental conditions. For example, if you have a headache or a back ache, it is difficult to meditate or to do Karma Yoga but you can repeat the name of God. Hence Japa Yoga is easier to practice than the other Yogas. Moreover, rich or poor, young or old, sinner or saint— everyone is eligible to repeat the name of God.

There is another important thing we need to understand. If we think deeply and repeatedly about a particular person or object, the nature of that person or object will have some impact on us.

Niranjan, (later known as Swami Niranjanananda), a young disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, was fond of performing planchette. For doing this, practitioners have to think deeply about the dead person they want to call. Then the spirit of the dead person, commonly known as ghosts, is likely to appear before those practitioners and answer their questions. However, the spirit will leave a tamasic impact on the performers of planchette as the state of ghost is a tamasic state. When Sri Ramakrishna came to know

about this hobby of Niranjan, he made a profound comment to Niranjan, “Look, if you habitually think of ghost, you will become a ghost, whereas if you habitually think of God, you will become God. What would you prefer to be? Swami Niranjananda understood the message of Sri Ramakrishna and left the company of the planchette performers.

Just as a child inherits the property of a father, so we being God’s children inherit his property of purity, universal love, compassion, truth etc. by thinking of Him through repetition of His name.

There are some relevant points we should remember as far as the practice of Japa Yoga is concerned:

1. We should take the name of God as many times as possible, every day.
2. Apart from chanting the name of God at other times of the day, it is also necessary to sit at given times (morning, evening etc.) and practice it.
3. We should continue this Japa Yoga until the last day of our life.

Now, let us talk about how to chant. Chanting the name of God must be slow and distinct. In India, there is the custom of chanting of Vishnu-sahasra-nama, the thousand names of Lord Vishnu. But generally, when people sit for chanting these thousand names of Vishnu, they try to rush through these and finish it as quickly as possible. For if they chant slowly, it will take too much time and the programmes which follow next, for example, having food and socialising with friends etc. will be delayed. Thus they miss the holy and positive effects of chanting by hurrying through it. Chanting needs to be done slowly and in a distinct manner fixing the mind on God.

There are various ways of chanting. Chanting may be done in a low voice or without making a sound but moving the lips or mentally. Mental repetition is considered to be the best among various ways of chanting as we can practice it irrespective of the circumstances in which we are put.

Here are a few suggestions I would like to offer about actual practice of Japa which you may try. For example, chant the name of God a few times just after waking up in the morning. Then after washing yourself sit for some time quietly, close your eyes and chant. Next, before leaving home for work chant a few times. Then chant during the commute, before starting your work, during the work, and after finish your work. Next you practice when you commute back home and also after refreshing yourself and finally before sleep. Moreover, whenever you take some food, you can offer the food mentally to God by chanting His name. These are some suggestions on how one can chant the name of God and keep connected to Him throughout the day.

Now let me explain to you, how such chanting of the holy name of God helps us in different ways. You may have experienced that when you want to buy a product and you make a google search about that product. The search results will give you information about the product as well as various benefits of it. Sometimes, you get some sites which give, for example, seven or ten benefits of using that product. In a similar vein, allow me

to present to you the **Ten Benefits of Chanting God's name (Japa)**

1. **Making the mind calm and quiet.** By its very nature, the mind is very restless. Various thoughts arise and occupy our mind. By focusing our mind on the thought of God and reducing other random and unnecessary thoughts by Japa, the mind becomes calm and quiet.
2. **Stopping negative and harmful thoughts.** How to resist negative, unwanted and harmful thoughts? As you know, these keep on arising randomly in our minds. Unfortunately, we cannot stop these negative thoughts just by thinking that I shall stop them. The way to do so is by occupying the mind with Japa.
3. **Preventing the arising of harmful and negative thoughts.** Not only can Japa remove negative and harmful thoughts, but by regularly practicing Japa, such thoughts do not even *arise* in the first place.
4. **Making the mind pure.** Our mind is composed of three gunas, namely Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. At a given time, one of these dominates. In most of us, Tamas and Rajas are predominant than Sattva. As a result, we have negative traits such as secular desires, attachments, jealousy, egotism, greed, anger for which we suffer. Now how to eliminate Tamas and Rajas? It is possible by doing Japa. Since God is full of Sattva, so by the practice of Japa our minds become Sattvik. By chanting the name of God who is pure we become pure. Not only our impurities of which we are aware but also impurities which are hidden in our sub-conscious mind and manifest on given occasions are also cleaned by the holy name of God
5. **Countering the effects of Bad Karma done in previous lives.** How can we counter the effects of bad Karma which we have might have done in previous lives and have inherited from there for which we have to suffer the consequences in our current life. Chanting of God's name helps greatly to reduce the effects of such bad karma. That is why, God is also called Karmanasha: one who destroys bad Karma. Consequently, if we were destined to become a victim of a serious accident due to the bad Karma we suffer from only a pin-prick by God's grace.
6. **Eliminating the effects of committing sins in this life.** How to eliminate the painful consequences of committing sins in this life for which we have worries. Japa helps in this regard too. That is why, God's name is called Papa-nashaka: destroyer of sins. In the song of Sri Ramakrishna, composed by Swami Vivekananda, which every evening we sing in our shrine, these words appear: 'Mochana agha-dushana', which means Sri Ramakrishna expiates our sins.
7. **Getting rid of anxiety, loneliness, emptiness of the heart.** How to get rid of loneliness, helplessness, emptiness of the heart, anxiety, fear? The best way is by doing Japa. Because through sincere practice of Japa, we establish a connection, a relationship with God, we feel that God is with us, he is protecting us. Such

feelings will reduce our disturbing feelings of emptiness, helplessness, loneliness, anxiety , fear etc.

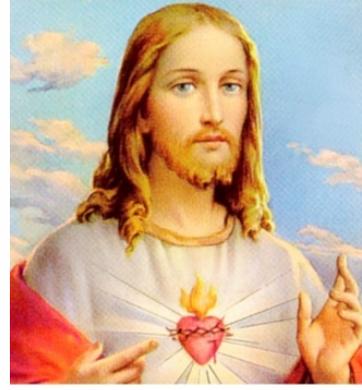
8. **Improving concentration while meditating.** Why are we not able to concentrate during the time of our meditation? Because, ordinarily we try to think of God only for a very short duration during our morning and evening meditation, while rest of the time our minds are mostly occupied by secular thoughts. If we make it a habit of repeating the name of God many times throughout the day, then there will be some sort of continued connectedness with God. Consequently, when we sit for meditation, it will be easier for the mind to focus on thoughts of God and we experience peace and joy.
9. **Increasing love for God.** How to increase our love for God whom we have not seen? The answer is, the more we chant the name of God, the more we shall feel God being close to us. And by the grace of God the love of God will develop in us.
10. **Overcoming the fear of Death.** Most of us have the fear of death and in old age or when we become critically ill this fear overpowers us. Moreover, according our scriptures for example, the Bhagavad Gita whatever we think of at the time of death influences our next birth. Sage Bharata was thinking about a deer whom he loved dearly at the time of his death, hence he had to be born as a deer in his next birth. So, if we chant the name of God throughout our life, by the sheer force of habit the name of God will appear in our mind at the time of death too and we may get liberation by God's grace. Otherwise, severe pain of disease or attachment to family or such other mundane things will be predominant in our mind making us forgetful of God before death and in consequence we will be subject to repeated birth and death and suffer endlessly.

Our ideal goal of life is the realisation of Truth or in other words realisation of God. We can reach this goal of ours by practicing devotedly this Sahaja Yoga, that is, chanting the name of God.

• Thought of the Month •

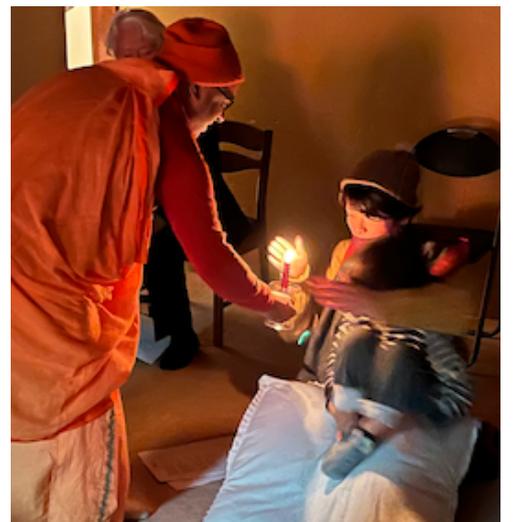
Meditate, meditate, meditate. Then you will find that people suffer for no reason when there is the a of bliss in everyone's heart. Then your heart will go out in sympathy and compassion for everybody.

- Swami Brahmananda



Christmas Eve Programme

- 05:15 p.m. Aratric Bhajan
- 07:00 p.m. Offering and Arati
Swami Divyanathanandaji
Carol: 'Gregorian Chant Ave Maria'
Mr. Steven Morgan Sing alone
and Japanese 'ARANO NO HATENI'
Ms. Shanti Izumida
Reading from the Bible
English:
Swami Medhasanandaji
Japanese:
Mr. Toshihisa Ishizuka
Carol : 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'
- 07:40 p.m. Discourse : Mr. Steven Morgan
'Teaching of Jesus Christ'
Interpreter: Ms. Yoko Sasaki
Carol : 'Noel'
Silent Prayer
Carol : 'Silent night'
- 08:45 p.m. Dinner Prasad





• Story to Remember •

Narada and Maya

A legend tells how once Narada said to Krishna, Lord show me Maya.

A few days passed away, and Krishna asked Narada to make a trip with him towards a desert, and after walking for several miles, Krishna said, Narada, I am thirsty; can you fetch some water for me? I will go at once, sir, and get you water. So Narada went.

At a little distance there was a village; he entered the village in search of water and knocked at a door, which was opened by a most beautiful young girl. At the sight of her he immediately forgot that his Master was waiting for water, perhaps dying for want of it. He forgot everything and began to talk with the girl. All that day he did not return to his Master. The next day, he was again at the house, talking to the girl. That talk ripened into love; he asked the father for the daughter, and they were married and lived there and had children. Thus twelve years passed. His father-in-law died, he inherited his property. He lived, as he seemed to think, a very happy life with his wife and children, his fields and his cattle and so forth.

Then came a flood. One night the river rose until it overflowed its banks and flooded the whole village. Houses fell, men and animals were swept away and drowned, and everything was floating in the rush of the stream. Narada had to escape. With one hand he held his wife, and with the other two of his children; another child was on his shoulders, and he was trying to ford this tremendous flood. After a few steps he found the current was too strong, and the child on his shoulders fell and was borne away. A cry of despair came from Narada. In trying to save that child, he lost his grasp upon one of the others, and it also was lost. At last his wife, whom he clasped with all his might, was torn away by the current, and he was thrown on the bank, weeping and wailing in bitter lamentation.

Behind him there came a gentle voice, My child, where is the water? You went to fetch a pitcher of water, and I am waiting for you; you have been gone for quite half an hour. Half an hour! Narada exclaimed. Twelve whole years had passed through his mind, and all these scenes had happened in half an hour! And this is Maya.

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