



JANUARY 2023 -VOLUME 21 NUMBER 01

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN



Birthdays

Swami Adbhutananda

Sunday, 5 February

Sri Ramakrishna

Tuesday, 21 February

Thus Spake

I tell you one thing my child – if you want peace, do not find fault with others. Rather, see your own faults. Learn to make the world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; the whole world is your own.

- Sarada Devi

The mind is susceptible to suggestions. It learns whatever you teach it. The only difference between a rich man and a poor man, is that the poor man suffers uncomfortably, while the rich man suffers comfortably. Meditate, meditate, meditate.

- Swami Brahmananada

Sri Ramakrishna did not make us great; he made us 'no body.' You also have to become no body. Wipe out all vanity and all sense of ego. Not I, not I, but thou, O Lord.

- Swami Premananda

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Vedanta Society of Japan

Message Regarding Monthly Programmes for February 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*

FEBRUARY 2023 Calendar of Programmes

4th (Sat) February

Bhagavad Gita Study Class at the Indian Embassy

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

Video uploaded later

8th (Wed) February

Weekly Upanishad Study Class

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

12th (Sun) February

Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Study Class

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

19th (Sun) February

Monthly Retreat at Zushi

10:30 ~ 16:30

Bilingual Live Streaming

Speaker: Swami Divyanathananda

22nd (Wed) February

Weekly Upanishad Study Class

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

The following is Part four (concluding part) 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 December 2022 ...)

Gautam

Thank you, Maharaj. Could you please provide us with a few more details about the Vivekananda Celebration in Tokyo that has been held successively over the years?

Maharaj

Let me tell you how the whole thing commenced. Earlier there was no such public celebration organized by the society. Interestingly, Swami Vivekananda first stepped on Japanese soil in 1893, and I did the same in 1993, a century after his visit. The year 1993-94 marked the centennial of Swamiji`s visit to Japan, which was a very critical event in this country for his followers and admirers. Since we could not celebrate the centennial of Swamiji`s visit to Japan every year, I considered utilizing this special situation. I came to Japan in the month of November 1993. During that year, the centennial of Swamiji`s address at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago was celebrated on a grand scale for seven consecutive days in Kolkata, within the Netaji indoor stadium. Many devotees and scholars from nations the world over attended the function, and I was blessed with an opportunity to serve as master of ceremonies at that magnificent event. With those experiences fresh in mind, I decided to commemorate the centenary of Swamiji`s visit to Japan. I was not aware of any Japanese nor Indians who could assist us in its organization, and it was impossible to do so with the aid of our few Japanese devotees, since at that time I hardly knew them either. The late Mr. Jyotirmoy Ray, who was a senior executive and former student of the Ramakrishna Mission, introduced me to BATJ, during Sarasvati Puja of 1994. I thought this was a great opportunity to organize the celebration. Since Indians were already familiar with Swamiji and had a reverential love for him, I wanted them to assist us in making this event a success, as without their backing it

would have been difficult to organize it. Accordingly, I introduced the idea of the celebration to Mr. Syamal Kar, Mr. Gautam Gupta, Mr. Partho Ghosh, and few others, and all of them offered to support and work for it. The biggest constraint was financing the event. We had to reserve a hall, decorate it, publicize the event, find relevant speaker(s), and arrange refreshments, and besides numerous other things big and small had to be done, for which money was needed. Fortunately, the owner of the chain of Maharaja restaurants, namely the late Mr. Shivji Kothari, donated a million yen for the event. This enabled me to realize that when it comes to doing the Lord's work, money never becomes a problem. That has been my experience and the experience of other monks as well, who are engaged in voluntary works. We reserved a community hall for the celebration at a location in Meguro, his Excellency the Ambassador of India and many other dignitaries spoke on that occasion, many devotees and admirers attended the program, and the entire event was a grand success.

This encouraged us to celebrate Swamiji's birth anniversary every year. Also, it became a platform to invite scholars, leaders of different religions, and other distinguished persons of Japan to share their thoughts, and it also became a platform to hold various cultural programs. Additionally, this event helps in spreading the message of Swamiji, as the program is attended by Japanese, Indians, and other foreigners as well. We exhibit and sell our publications, and sometimes organize exhibitions on the India-Japan relationship, which highly impress our many visitors.

Gautam

Thank you Swamiji.

We have another 5 minutes to wrap up, and so rather than ask a new question I shall share my own views. In the public celebration you referred to, both the Indians and Japanese work together so seamlessly. Could you tell me the secret behind that? Not many organizations can achieve that.

Maharaj

Okey. I believe there are two points.

First of all, Sri Ramakrishna is referred to as ‘*Jugabotar*’ – Prophet of this age. A prophet of this age must be a prophet of harmony, one who can harmonize the world with all its variants. At the same time however the world is also in need of spiritual values, to experience peace and fulfilment amidst this materialistic scenario. In Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda we find the message of harmony and fulfilment of life.

The second is the organization. The presence of an organization like the Vedanta Society run by monastics has only one motive. The motive is to spread the messages of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and practice the same in daily life.

In conclusion I must say that in addition to the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swamiji upon this society, there are many devotees and other persons, organizations, and establishments, that have contributed and are still contributing in various ways towards the smooth running and growth of the society. Considering its present dimensions, we are immensely grateful to them all. Here I wish to mention a few names, namely the Embassy of India, BATJ, the Japan-India Association, the Indian business community, the Japan Yoga Therapy Association, the late Mr. Chellaram, Mr. Gajria, Mr. and Mrs. Shivji Kothari, Mr. Sumitra Rao, Mrs. Haru Nakai, Prof. Tsuyoshi Nara, Professor Cyril Veliath, Mrs. Sato Yuko, and the Vivekananda Celebration committee members.

Gautam

Thank you, Maharaj.

We had a very informative and interesting discussion today about the Vedanta Society’s role in bringing about a closer relationship between the Indians and Japanese, and also in spreading Indian Culture and spirituality in general. In particular, the soul-inspiring messages of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Vedanta in Japan, were exceedingly thought-provoking.

(Concluded)



Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi – Our Eternal Refuge

Talk delivered by Swami Medhasananda on 18th December 2022

Today we are celebrating Holy Mother's birthday. Most of us here know about the life of Holy Mother, but for some who do not know we shall very briefly narrate her life. She was born in December 1853, in a village in Bengal. When she was very young, she was married to Sri Ramakrishna. During those days child marriage was very common in India. As was the custom in those days, in the beginning, after her marriage, she continued to stay with her parents at Jayrambati. When she was much older, she started staying with Sri Ramakrishna.

So, their conjugal life started much later. But we should remember, their marriage was only in name's sake. It was a pure relationship and there was no secular relationship between them as happens between a husband and wife. Once, Holy Mother was asked, how do you look upon Sri Ramakrishna. She answered, 'I look upon Him as my husband, as my son and also as Mother Kali'. So, when Sri Ramakrishna passed away, she cried out and said, 'Oh Mother Kali! why did you leave me?'

After Holy Mother came to stay with Sri Ramakrishna, He gave her instructions about spiritual life and instructed her regarding many details about a householder's life too. She practiced a lot of spiritual disciplines, and became a saint. We do not consider her a saint just because she was the wife of Sri Ramakrishna, but she became a saint by her own right. It is also not enough to say, that she was a saint. She was much more. She was the embodiment of the Divine Mother.

Once a devotee asked Swami Saradananda, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, "I cannot really believe that Sarada Devi is the incarnation of the Divine Mother". Saradananda replied, "If you really believe that Sri Ramakrishna is an incarnation of God, then do you

think that He married a destitute woman? Think of Rama and Sita or Krishna and Radha. Neither Sita, nor Radha were ordinary women. The same goes for Sarada Devi also”.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, referring to her, “She is my Shakti. Can you separate the fire, from its power to burn or its power to give light? The moment you think of fire, its power to burn and its power to give light also come to our mind”. Towards the end of Sri Ramakrishna’s life, one day as Sarada Devi came to Him, He just stared at Her without uttering any word. Holy Mother asked, “Why are you just staring at me like this? Do you want to say something?” To that Sri Ramakrishna said, “Do I have to do everything alone? Will you not do anything?” Sarada Devi replied, “I am only a woman, what can I do?” Sri Ramakrishna said, “No, no, you have to do more” Then Holy Mother said, “When the time will come, I shall think about it.”

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, she played four major roles:

1. The guardian angel of the Ramakrishna Order
2. Spiritual guide for the devotees
3. Giver of Liberation
4. Role of the Universal Mother.

Among all these, the most prominent was that of Universal Motherhood.

Now, what is the difference between Holy Mother as the Universal Mother and an ordinary mother?

In the case of ordinary mothers, some discrimination is generally seen. Does it not often happen that in case of an ordinary mother, she loves the child who earns more money than the other children, or she loves the child who is more intelligent, or who is more obedient, or one who takes more care of the mother in comparison with the other children? But Holy Mother was not like that, because she did not have any expectations from her children. She would not discriminate, whether one was good or bad, whether he obeyed her or not, supported her or not. She did not have expectations, so her love was also indiscriminate.

Another point is that when a son is in trouble, the mother definitely tries to help, but is not the power of helping a son in the ordinary mother limited? But the Divine Mother has unlimited power. Furthermore, the ordinary mother thinks about the wellbeing of her child for this life only. She doesn’t think of the other world. We Hindus and Buddhists believe in the cycle of birth and death. An ordinary mother will not at all bother about whether her child will be liberated or not, whether he will go to heaven or hell, etc. Her whole love is confined to the welfare of her child in this life only. But the Divine Mother not only looks after the welfare of her child in this birth but also the other world after this life. Is it not a big difference? These differences between the ordinary mother and the Holy Mother which

we discussed were revealed by her through her own utterances and through illustrations from her life, which show that she was the Divine Mother herself.

Then another difference is that the human mother is the mother for this life only, whereas the Holy Mother is the mother eternal. Human mother too is the embodiment of the Divine Mother. So, Holy Mother is the actual mother. She manifests in various mothers. She Herself has emphasised this point again and again through her utterances. When someone would ask her, 'What kind of mother are you?' because in India, often it happens that some elder ladies are addressed as Mother out of respect for them. It is a custom. So, the questioner wanted to confirm that. Is it that she is called mother by others due to this customary respect? Or is it that she is shown special respect and called mother just because she is the wife of Sri Ramakrishna? Holy Mother said, 'No, I am your real Mother. The human mother which you have is actually my incarnation. I have been born as your human mother. So, the real mother is only me'.

Some of her sayings were:

- 'I am the mother of the good child; I am the mother of the wicked too'.
- 'Everyone wants to be a mother of good children. How many want to be the mother of the wicked too? I don't make such discrimination'.
- 'If my child pollutes itself, I shall wash the child and take the child in my lap. I shall not refuse the child. As a universal Mother I shall accept him.'
- 'My child, always know: If non else, I shall be with you. I am always with you. Never get frightened, never get dejected. When I am your mother, what should you be afraid of? And I am your real Mother. Don't be afraid as long as I am there.'

What words of assurance! We are sometimes very weak and helpless. Don't these words give us some kind of assurance during our depressing times? And these are not mere words. Many incidents in Her life authenticate this understanding. One gets deep faith and peace in the hours of despair, frustration, suffering. I shall give you one such incident.

It happened that a lady of an aristocratic family led a very immoral life. Later she felt repentance for that. Naturally, she was very much depressed and during that stage, she met a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, who suggested that she meet the Holy Mother. So, she went to Baghbazar, where the Holy Mother was living, and as soon as she saw the Holy Mother, she started weeping profusely. After some time, she said, "Oh Mother, I have done so many wrong things in my life that I cannot even dare to approach you". The Mother said, "Yes, my daughter, you have done wrong and now you are repentant, and that's enough. Come to me, I shall initiate you". So Holy Mother accepted her as Her child.

Now, is it possible that one person can take another person's sins? It surely is possible. This is illustrated in the Lives of Jesus, Sri Ramakrishna, and the Holy Mother. When the body becomes pure, all the systems of the body become very subtle.

There are different classes of people. One class of people have committed a lot of sins, but they later repent and do not want to commit such sins again. Another class of people continue to commit sins. And there is a third class of people who are always very pure.

Since Holy Mother's body had become so pure and subtle, it would react differently when different types of people came and touched her feet. If people of the first category came to the Holy Mother and touched her feet, she would not mind it. But if a person who was still leading an immoral life would touch her feet, the reaction would be tremendous. She would feel a lot of pain. Because of her pure body, an impure touch would affect her very much.

When many devotees would come and make pranams to Holy Mother, she would often be seen washing her feet again and again with Ganga water. Some of her devotees would say to her, "Mother, why are you washing your feet with water? You will catch a cold." Then she would say, "My child, when some people touch my feet, I feel very soothed, on the contrary on some occasions after somebody has touched my feet, I feel as if a burning charcoal has been thrown on my body."

But she would not show that reaction immediately, while an impure person was touching her feet. She would bear the tremendous pain silently. Later, to get relief from that pain, she would wash her feet with water. This is not just a myth or a made-up story or some imagination.

Due to this, when she would suffer from some chronic disease, her monastic attendants would say to her, "From now on, we won't allow anyone to touch your feet. Because you allow the devotees to touch your feet, and by that you accept their sins and suffer. Naturally, your disease will not get cured". Holy Mother would answer, "My son, did Sri Ramakrishna (meaning Herself also) incarnate just to eat rasagollas? Will we not also take poison?"

So, they have incarnated with only this mission – to save humanity. They had the power, but they would suffer silently, and would continue to give comfort to the devotees. Just see the compassion of the Holy Mother. She said 'Have we incarnated as human beings just to be fed nicely, just to be served nicely and just to be worshipped? No. We are always ready to remove sufferings of others and for that even if we suffer, we don't mind. We want to take birth again and again'. This shows her Universal Motherhood.

According to my understanding, Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings demonstrate Bhakti Yoga, Swamiji's life shows us Jnana Yoga, whereas Holy Mother's life demonstrates Karma

Yoga. She truly led the life of a householder. She lived with several of her relatives, and those relatives were not all very saintly. A lot of them were always pestering her. Moreover, often some devotees would also come to stay with her. But she had compassion for all. She demonstrated how to live a householder's life and a spiritual life. So especially for the householders, particularly for the women devotees, the ideal of Holy Mother is very appropriate.

Christmas Eve Talk by Swami Medhasananda

Today we are celebrating Christmas Eve at Vedanta Society. This society is a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission. Some may wonder, why Christmas Eve is being celebrated at a Hindu Temple. The reason is, the founder of this Order, Sri Ramakrishna and His chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda practiced harmony of religions. Especially Sri Ramakrishna practiced not only different paths of Hinduism but also Islam and Christianity in His own way. So, we not only talk about harmony of religions, but we try to practice harmony of religions also in our own way. That is the reason why we celebrate the birthdays of Buddha and of Jesus Christ.

There is another reason for celebrating Christmas Eve in our Ramakrishna Mission. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, one day some young disciples of Sri Ramakrishna gathered together and took the vow of renunciation and later they found out, that that day happened to be Christmas Eve, associated with the birth of Jesus Christ the saviour who was a great renunciate and preached renunciation. For this reason, Christmas eve holds an important place in the tradition of Ramakrishna Order.

Today, we have Mr. Steven Morgan with us, who deeply studied spiritual songs and had taught devotional music and English literature in a university. Now he is retired. Today he will give a discourse on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

• Thought of the Month •

Do you think that a monk is your sweeper who will keep sweeping your mind for you day after day? He may clean your mind once; after that it is up to you to keep it clean. He will show you the path, but you will have to walk it yourself.

- Swami Adbhutananda



Christmas Eve Discourse by Mr. Steven Morgan

I am very humbled and honoured to be asked to give a talk this evening. From an early age I was involved in music in a Methodist church that I grew up in Ellenwood. Over the years I probably celebrated Christmas in ten different churches, either as a singer, or playing the pipe organ or as a conductor. I knew that the teachings of Christ are much honoured in Vedanta Society, but I was surprised when I learned that there is a Christmas eve service too.

I have prepared a few things to talk about here and hope to give you a little bit of insight about Christ, the person. Christ is another name for Jesus. The scriptures traditionally read in Christian Churches on Christmas eve tell the familiar tale about a young couple, named Mary and Joseph looking in vain for a place to spend the night. Both of them were exhausted and tired. Joseph was walking, Mary was seated on a donkey, and she was to give birth to their first child. All of the rooms and all the inns were already taken. There was only a place to try, but that place was also full but the owner being very compassionate, he offered them a place to stay but it was a stable, with the cows and the donkeys and other animals. The location was ideal for the night to stay, and it was warm and safe, but a little smelly.

Just as they were getting settled for the night, Mary started feeling the first pains of childbirth. Joseph ran back to the innkeeper for help, luckily his wife happened to be a midwife who was trained to deliver babies. She came, helped Mary and there was a successful childbirth, and they named the child Yashwa. Of course, the name has been translated as Jesus in English.

In the outskirts of the town, there was a group of shepherds who were watching over their sheep, so that wolves or thieves don't bother their sheep. Suddenly they saw in the sky a great host of angels, which took them by surprise, and the angels were singing, and they were singing what we sang early on 'Glory to God...' One of the angels said, a child has been born in the neighbouring town of Bethlehem and there is something special about the child. This child is the Messiah, the saviour, about whom the Jewish people have been waiting for centuries.

Most of the shepherds went to the town and they could find the stable because there was a bright star shining above. They found Mary, Joseph and Jesus and they paid their respects. So, this story is nostalgic for a person who has been brought up in a Christian family not only because this story is so familiar, but also Christmas eve is associated with family gatherings, burning of candles, singing of carols, etc. Also, in everybody's mind is the wonderful food, and presents waiting at home. Because of popular culture, this story is known around the world by people of many faiths and people not following any particular religion too.

As time went on, there was another reading of Christmas Eve, which caught my attention. This is known as Gospel according to St. John. There are four books that collect a lot of stories about Jesus. St. John opens his book with these words: In the beginning, there was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness have not overcome it. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

So, St. John takes us beyond the beautiful Christmas story and focuses our attention on Jesus, sort of Cosmic significance and his personal attributes. John reminds us that the new-born baby is none other than an incarnation of the Word. He wrote in Greek, so he used the word 'Logos' for 'Word'. This Word or Logos has existed for all eternity with God ('Theos' in Greek). But he points out, both of these are the same: The 'Word' and God are same in essence. So, to know Jesus is to know God and what is more, Jesus was sent not simply as a messenger to tell people about God, He was God in Human form.

So, absolutely the central message of Christianity is that the Word, or God literally became one of us, lived with us. He used a very important phrase 'To dwell upon us' which means

He pitched His tent on us. By 'tent' we generally mean to camp, but these were nomadic people. So, the idea that God would actually come, live in their place and be willing to travel around- there was such a wonderful feeling!

It is a kind of Christ consciousness- if we can use this term. So, John also talks about Christ, as a person. He said, 'His life was a light, and His life was full of grace and truth'. You can use 'light' in the sense that it lights the dark phases of our life, like hatred, fear, anything which separates us from other people, and this light helps us overcome these areas of darkness. The other personal attributes- grace, which means, He was kind, forgiving, gentle and understanding. And that He was full of truth, reminds us that Jesus in His words and actions was trustworthy and honest. Just imagine, if we really would receive those attributes: light, grace, truth then presence of Jesus would be real benefit to us and other people and peace, justice, compassion, hope could be the usual thing in the world.

So far you have heard the story of Jesus, His birth and the philosophy of His life and deeds according to John. Now, I would like to share with you His teachings that we can learn from. Now, if we fast forward, He spent some time in Egypt, avoiding persecution, and even there are some theories that Jesus spent some time in Kashmir and other parts of India to learn from some of the great teachers there. There is a big gap of 25-30. People started following him from place to place.

Another time, He went up a Hill and He gave the Sermon on the mount, so that people could see Him and listen to Him. These were the essence of His teachings. He said:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. What He meant was, people whose faith was weak, they should not give up. He was saying, 'You too will inherit the kingdom of Heaven'.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. People whose parents or family members have died; they can find comfort in His words. From the beginning, it shows Jesus' great sense of compassion, by showing to those, whose faith is not so strong, 'Come, come, listen. You too will gain strength.'
- Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. The humble people actually gain riches, not the people who have loud voices.
- People who hunger, or have thirst after righteousness, they will be filled. Not just people who are preaching for self-righteousness, but people, who quietly and inwardly desire. They will be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart. People who try for purity in their action and deed, they will indeed see God.

Now the people who were listening, somehow could see themselves in these situations. May be recently someone had died, may be secretly they were wishing that peace be in the world, maybe they showed mercy in a little way. He promised all of them. Every kind of devotee, every kind of seeker could find something. The last two are sort of capstone. He said:

- Blessed are the peacemakers, not just people who just want peace, because everybody wants peace. He meant people who are working to make it happen a little bit. They are the children of God
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of peace and righteousness, theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Many of the teachings are parables which we heard tonight. That was the main way of teaching.

I would like to close my remarks here following the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. I was touched when I saw the beautiful picture of Jesus as an adult and also Jesus as a baby with His mother. We read in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna that one of His friends had a painting of what we call Madonna and the child, so Mary and the baby Jesus. One day He was transfixed. He could not take His gaze away from that picture, and in His usual way, He cried out to Mother Kali 'What are you doing to me? Not again... You know, I have already done'. You see, He has always been drawn to another tradition, to understand it. So, for several days he refused to go to the Kali Temple, He couldn't have anything to do with that.

A few days later He was having a walk in the Grove, The Panchavati. He saw a man walking towards Him. He had beautiful, large eyes, fair complexion and there was something radiant about Him. As they met, face to face, maybe they crossed each other, He heard some words: Behold the Christ, who shed His heart's blood for the redemption of the world, who suffered a sea of anguish for love of men. It is He, the master Yogi, who is eternally in union with God. It is Jesus, the Love incarnate'. So, if you are wondering, what is that word, which became flesh, the word that has dwelt with God since the beginning of the ages. It is one word, that is love.

Thank you very much, I appreciate that I got the opportunity to share some of my ideas with you. I will say that my appreciation for the Christian scriptures have deepened over the many years that I have been involved with the Vedanta Society. It's been a deepening of my faith in many ways.

• Story to Remember •

What We Think We Become

Thought is all important for “what we think we become.” There was once a Sannyasin, a holy man, who sat under a tree and taught the people. He drank milk, and ate only fruit, and made endless ‘Pranayamas,’ and felt himself to be very holy.

In the same village lived an evil woman. Every day the Sannyasin went and warned her that her wickedness would lead her to hell. The poor woman, unable to change her method of life which was her only means of livelihood, was still much moved by the terrible future depicted by the Sannyasin. She wept and prayed to the Lord, begging Him to forgive her because she could not help herself.

By and by both the holy man and the evil woman died. The angels came and bore her to heaven, while the demons claimed the soul of the Sannyasin.

“Why is this!” he exclaimed, “have I not lived a most holy life, and preached holiness to everybody? Why should I be taken to hell while this wicked woman is taken to heaven?”

“Because,” answered the demons, “while she was forced to commit unholy acts, her mind was always fixed on the Lord and she sought deliverance, which has now come to her. But you, on the contrary, while you performed only holy acts, had your mind always fixed on the wickedness of others. You saw only of sin, and thought only of sin, so now you have to go to that place where only sin is.”

The moral of the story is obvious: The outer life avails little. The heart must be pure and the pure heart sees only good, never evil. We should never try to be guardians of mankind, or to stand on a pedestal as saints reforming sinners. Let us rather purify ourselves and the result must be that in so doing we shall help others.

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