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日本ヴェダンタ協会ニュースレター

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN



January Calendar

Birthdays

Swami Turiyananda
Sunday, 8 January

Swami Vivekananda
Sunday, 15 January

Swami Brahmananda
Wednesday, 25 January

Swami Trigunatitananda
Friday, 27 January

Kyokai Events

- **New Year Kalpataru** •
New Years Day 2011
Zushi Centre - 12 Noon

Annual programme includes
a talk, lunch, and a walk to
the Kamakura Daibutsu and
more!
All are welcome!

- **January Zushi Retreat** •
Swami Vivekananda
150th Birth Celebration

Sunday, 15 January 6 AM
Mangalariti, Chanting, Bhajan.
Then from 11 AM, Puja, Food
Offering, Flower Offering,
Reading and Talk by
Swami Medhasananda
Lunch / Afternoon Session
All are welcome to attend!



✧ Thus Spake ✧

"God is one's very own. It is the eternal relationship. He is everyone's own. One realizes him in proportion to the intensity of one's feelings for him."

... the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi

"If you bring forth what is inside you, what you bring forth will save you. If you don't bring forth what is inside you, what you don't bring forth will destroy you."

... Jesus, the Christ (Book of Thomas)

November Zushi Retreat 2011

Healthy Relationships

A Talk by Swami Medhasananda

There is an oft-quoted title of a poem by John Donne called, 'No Man is an Island'. Since we live in a society our life is not possible without constant, mutual giving and taking. Thus, relationships are connected with life and this is the starting point of making relationships with others. This constant, mutual giving and taking is not optional or voluntary, it is a necessity. Life is crippled without it.

What is an ideal, healthy human relationship? A relationship which is happy, sustained, creative and elevated is an ideal relationship.

There is one Japanese publication 'Naikan' (Introspection) wherein the author, Norimasa Nishida, says that in all important relationships three questions must be asked and deeply reflected upon. These are:

What did that person do for you?

What did you do in return?

How much trouble did you cause that person?

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Healthy Relationships (from page 1)

This book is about applying these questions to every relationship. It states that if you ask yourself these questions and deeply reflect the answers, all your relationships will be good.

In Hindu scripture and tradition there are lots of discussions and anecdotes on relationships. The Ramayana, the great Indian epic, alone is full of stories on ideal relationships. There is the story of an ideal son, an ideal husband, ideal wife, ideal friend, ideal brother, ideal master, ideal servant and ideal king. In the Mahabharata as well, there are important discussions on relationships. Sri Krishna's wife Rukmini goes to Draupadi, wife to all five Pandava brothers, and asks how is it she maintains happy relations with her five husbands and keeps them in good humor, while she found it difficult to do so with but one husband. One piece of advice Draupadi gives is to not dote too much on adolescent sons or husbands may become jealous, or simply feel left out, which is very true. Words of such practical wisdom in such ancient scripture is amazing.

In Hindu scripture it is also noted that it is one's duty to please the gods, the sages, one's ancestors, all fellow human beings and animal beings. This is called the Pancha-mahayajna or five great sacrifices. We receive as humans much from them, so we must do something in return to please them. So remember that this idea is not limited only to human relationships, but extends to other beings as well.

Today's discussion is mostly concerned with human relationships because there are so many aspects and dimensions to these. There are relationships with immediate family, relatives, friends, neighbors, members of a group or community, colleagues or bosses at work, teachers and students, students and students, etc. Then in the immediate family itself there are many relationships; husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters and in-laws. Within each of these there are common stages that one passes through as well, from troubles related to childhood, one's teen years, pre- and post-marriage. There are so many aspects and dimensions to discuss.

Let us highlight a point by point examination of healthy relationships in general and give a more thorough look some of these:

1. In order to maintain healthy relationships we must first have an **awareness and understanding of the goal of a relationship.** Without such awareness and understanding there can be no motivation to accept the challenge to make the goal of relationships reachable. The goal of marriage is a happy life with mutual support and help of both the husband and the wife. So if giving birth and raising children and maintaining happy, sustained relationships is the goal of married life, each spouse must accept the challenge of achieving this goal. If there is no such awareness and no such motivation, the relationship will become vulnerable.

2. Then we need to **'think twice' before establishing a long-term, close relationship.** The Panchatantra, is another ancient, Indian collection of moral tales and stories, full of practical teaching on relationships comparable to Esop's Fables. It advises us to give establishing such a relationship deep consideration. Love at first sight and instant marriage is fine to read about in stories, but in actual life this not a safe practice. Impulsive decisions can result in life-long regrets.

I remember once a fellow train passenger was telling me about his very young daughter's impulsive marriage and subsequent divorce with a child. She and the baby were now living with him. He was so sad about what she had done to her life.

Hence, we need to **maintain a space between 'liking' and 'loving'** because one is not the same as the other. Be very careful about love and reposing deep trust in others, because there are some serious challenges to the successful accomplishment of such a relationship. In fact, we should not be impulsive in any such relationships of deep mutual trust. Observe the nature of the person under consideration, whether it is a marriage or even business. Observe how he or she behaves with you and with others. This is important, because if someone is interested in you he may be nice to you, while disrespectful or worse, utterly selfish, in his behavior to others. So maintain a space between liking and loving.

3. Mutual love and respect and faithfulness. This should be practiced especially between husband and wife, teacher and student and friend and friend. There are two kinds of marriage, one being the arranged or negotiated marriage, and love marriages, which are becoming more and more com-

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Healthy Relationships (from page 2)

mon in many countries. There are many arguments in favor of and against each. Romance in an arranged marriage usually starts after marriage, while in a love marriage, romance precedes marriage and that fades after it. The point is that romance fades sooner or later in either case, and it is then that the challenge of a sustained relationship between the spouses becomes evident.

This challenge should be faced by the couple with mutual understanding, love, respect and faithfulness. Even in Hindu scripture we see so much emphasis on the idea of the wife looking upon the husband as God, but not so much the idea of the husband looking upon the wife as Goddess. If only the wife is required to observe this idea, there is every possibility that it may make the husband egotistic. That is why it must be mutual. If the husband also regards his wife in this way, an attitude of humility is created in the husband, rather than egotism. Faithful cannot be expected from the wife only, but from the husband as well. Thus, the relationship between them will be balanced.

Mutual love and respect is important in the relationship between parents and their children. Not only should the children love and respect the parents, but the parents must love and respect the children as well, though the expression of such love and respect obviously differs. Parents should consider that it is God who has come in the form of children to receive their service. This helps increase the self-esteem of the children.

Mutual love and respect is also important in teacher and student and guru and disciple relationships. A true Guru is always aware of the presence of Brahman in his disciples. Obviously the expression of mutual love and respect between a husband and wife differs from that between a teacher and student, and what I mean to say here in the case of teacher and student relationship is that both should maintain an attitude of loving respectfulness for each other.

4. The bringing up of children is another dimension of the family relationship. By trying to be too nice, **by pampering our children, we sometimes ruin them.** Today we have a nuclear family. In days past of an extended family, grand parents were there to teach and help in bringing up children. These days there is less such guidance from elders and I'm not sure whether young moth-

ers educate themselves regarding child rearing. Relying on one's own common-sense is not enough in such an important matter, with so many things to take care of. These days a one-child family is common and whatever the child wants is purchased or accommodated since parents want to please the child.

Thus, the child develops an attitude of being appeased: 'Whatever I want, my parents will provide for me, and whatever I do, my parents will accept.' More than mere manner training, if parents don't teach values and the difference between good and bad, many problems will occur with such an untrained child. It is too late to discipline a teenaged child and correct unacceptable behaviors, such as late nights with friends and delinquent school assignments.

In Sanskrit there is the saying, 'Bring-up a child by indulging him for the first 5 years; then discipline him for the next 10' Meaning, that while of course we always love the child, there should not be much pampering or displays of love after 5 years of age. More than simple table-manners and appropriate greetings, a mother needs to impress upon her child that hard work is necessary for success, she also needs to teach that there will be failures as well, and that this is to be expected and faced.

Children also need to be taught that we need to think of others; to consider their situation; and whenever possible to help others. I still remember as children while traveling with my father, we would occasionally come across a beggar. My father would give us coins to take to such people to teach us the attitude of helping others. This attitude grew in us. In this way my father taught us that we must not be selfish, but do something for society. So these is not only spoken words, but actions. We also had many mango trees in our garden. Our parents would also give us loads of ripe mangoes to distribute around the neighborhood. Later, when I came to school at the Ramakrishna Mission, I found this tradition of help and sharing was one of its main mottos. As this Mission is focused on serving others, that became one my purposes in joining the Order.

5. Women play the key roll in the family. I am sure that most of the credit for a happy and successful family life goes to the woman. Here the same woman is playing the roles of mother, wife and in extended households, daughter, too. There is a saying in English, 'The son is son until he marries, (con't page 4)

Healthy Relationships (from page 3)

and is daughter is a daughter till she dies.' The long-held tradition of the eldest son taking care of the parents is all but lost, and it is daughters who now do so.

Centripetal and centrifugal forces apply here. Wikipedia says in essence, '... centripetal force is that by which bodies are drawn or impelled to a center, while centrifugal is an outward force away from a center.' I would like to believe that nature, at God's bidding, is operating centripetal force in relationships through women. The women's liberation movement may diminish or demean this role, but women play a great role in society by creating good citizens. If you study the lives of all the world's great men, many of them were greatly influenced by their mothers. This includes Swami Vivekananda.

By serving in the roles of mother, wife and daughter devotedly and wisely, there is a definite benefit to the woman. This service makes her mind pure; makes her mind broad; makes her perfect. In the Mahabharata, and in Swami Vivekananda's Karma Yoga we find references to wives doing their duty perfectly and becoming perfect souls. Their perfection is not attained by intense meditation or spiritual practice, but by being perfect wives, mothers and daughters. These are not useless duties.

In performing all these duties, can there be no space for herself? Yes. By doing one's duty to the family as much as possible, one can definitely do something for her own development. There are examples of housewives fulfilling their roles and doing something remarkable in a career also. One such example is our devotee, Ms. Rie Ueno, who, after playing her role as wife and mother and now runs a successful business, gave an inspiring speech on 'Positive Living' at our Vivekananda Celebration at the Indian Embassy this year.

6. Give more, take less. Practice unselfishness and give in the spirit of service. Swami Vivekananda said, 'Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practice it.' The common idea is that we must be selfish to live well, but Swamiji says, 'No!' This was also advice from Holy Mother to a young girl, 'If you want to love everyone equally, don't want anything from anyone.'

Practice contentment. 'Let me be happy with what I have.' One of the causes of bad relationships at home is when one or both in the couple are very demanding. The wife makes demands on the husband. The husband complains he works so hard and demands to know what the wife does for him. If both are demanding, one can just imagine how such a relationship fairs.

7. Find the balance between giving freedom and exerting control. This must be thoughtfully practiced. If we give too much freedom the relationship is not serious. Too much control is more like a slave and master relationship. There can be no double standard either. If the husband wants to exercise strict control over the wife, yet he wants complete freedom for himself, this will create disharmony. Finding and exercising balance is important in all our relationships at home and at work.

8. Give more time and feel more concern for family members. In family relationships, giving time to family members is important. 'I have no time!', is a bad and untenable excuse.

Husbands, especially, should not feel their contribution or duty to the family relationship is only earning money. This is really harmful to family relations, as it puts distance between the husband and his wife and children. The son should be given the feeling that not only his mother, but his father too, is concerned for him. In my case, my father was a doctor who worked hard from early morning to late at night and I went to a residential college of the Mission about 50km away in Kolkata. My father would make it a point to regularly come to the college and meet with me and ask the resident monks of my behavior and progress in studies. At times I would protest, 'Why do you need to come? It is so far and not an easy journey. You are so busy and are tired.' But he never relented.

So if it is possible to give of one's time in such a case, why not in a household where the family lives under one roof? There are weekends and holidays. Surely it is possible to give some time to the family. Whatever time you have, show concern for your children, show interest in what they do; their studies. This is not the exclusive responsibility of one's wife, but also that of the husband.

9. Love expressed in words alone makes it shallow, but love expressed in service makes it deeper. In all our storybooks and films (con't page 5)

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what happens? After but a few meetings the hero declares to the heroine, 'I love you, I love you.' Of course you know what fate lies in store for such examples of surface love. Does the mother, the embodiment of love for a child, continually say 'I love you, my son', or does she express her love for him through her whole being. The child, realizing the mother's love in his heart, reciprocates and, thus, love is sustained.

10. In any relationship, if something was done to you or by you, apologize, forgive and forget as soon as possible. By seeking to apologize we do not lower ourselves, but raise ourselves. Once Swami Brahmanandaji ('spiritual son' of Sri Ramakrishna and first president of the Math and Mission) became angry with a disciple's misdeed and slapped him. Later he apologized, saying what he did was not good and to please forgive him, even though it is the privilege of the Guru to discipline his disciple, which can be painfully harsh at times. The sattvic anger of a sage is soon gone like a child's, but rajasic and tamasic anger can drag on and on. Don't drag it on. Discuss and settle the matter, don't give up and break the relationship.

This is the challenge. It is easy to turn one's back, to walk away, to quit. This is going to be harmful in the long-run because there will always be a canker in your heart. The person we hate may not be affected at all, but we will suffer. If there is hatred and long-term anger in our hearts, we cannot develop spiritually, nor can we get peace. This is why Jesus says in Matthew, "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." Discuss and settle accounts with wife, children, colleges. Who will go first? Let me go first. There is no problem that cannot be settled with discussion.

Of all the negative emotions we possess, it is anger which has the most disastrous effect on our relationships and is one of the chief sources of peacelessness. Hence, for most of us, our main concern is how to control anger. One of the best tips on controlling anger, and one which I, myself, try to practice, is to not express my anger immediately when angered. So try to **allow some time to pass before expressing your anger.** If we can do this, half, if not two thirds, of the battle against anger is won. The rest becomes easier, as with the passage

of time we calm down and can tackle the task more effectively.

11. 'Hiss but don't bite.' When encountering an evil person try to avoid him. When avoidance is impossible, hiss as advised in the story of the brahmachari and the snake found in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. Hiss to protect yourself, but don't bite, cause no harm to him.

12. Change yourself before changing others. Everyone thinks about changes they'd like to see in their spouse, or their children, co-workers, etc., but we never consider changes others may rightfully like to see in us. Everyone thinks everyone else needs improvement. No, if you really want to change others, first change yourself. When we try to change ourselves, we come to realize how difficult it is to change, and with this realization will come more patience and understanding. Moreover, if we can change ourselves, it inspires others to change themselves. This is a natural law.

13. Put others first. In the book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, the author notes these people first seek to understand others, then seek to be understood. In another book author, Eknath Easwaran, an Indian Professor of English and, later, spiritual teacher working in the USA, writes in 'Take Your Time' of a young man who tells of his tension in his relationship with his girlfriend and asks for advice. Easwaran's advice is, 'Put your girlfriend first!'

After two or three days young man returns all smiles. The professor asks why he looks so joyful. The young man replies that the couple went to a restaurant and that he was always in the habit of ordering what he liked first. Thinking of the professor's advice, the man insisted that his girlfriend order first. This pleased the girl immensely and they had an enjoyable dinner. This is but a small example. Put others first. Seek to understand, rather than insisting on being understood.

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• Thought of the Month •

Having children
makes you no more a parent
than having a piano makes you a pianist.

- Michael Levine

Healthy Relationships (from page 5)

A big problem in many relationships is the continuous grumbling of one to the other, 'You don't understand me'. This attitude needs to be reversed. There has to be a genuine attempt to understand each other's situation, because mutual complaining alone does not work. For example, after retirement, the husband may spend a lot of time at home. The wife doesn't like this, because for years she had freedom of the household. While the wife should accept and adjust to their new situation, the husband, too, should respect his wife's sentiments and together come to an accord.

14. Don't brag about your achievements around others as it creates distance and irritation in others. I haven't seen much of this in Japan. In fact, I really appreciate this quality in Japan, that one rarely talks about one's achievements.

15. Speak less, listen more. There is a tendency in many of us to do most of the talking when we meet people without considering that others may have something to say and contribute.

In 1937 when Swami Siddheswaranandaji of the Ramakrishna Order was asked by its headquarters to move to France and take up preaching Vedanta there, Miss Josephine Macleod, one of Swami Vivekananda's closest friends and devotees, gave the swami the following piece of valuable advice which Siddheswaranandaji always remembered, 'Gopal (the swami's pre-monastic name) look!' she said. 'I have noticed that when you meet some people, you talk and talk without letting others speak. This is considered bad manners in the West. So when you meet guests, restrain yourself and allow them to speak.' Then Mrs. Macleod added, 'You all know that Swamiji (Vivekananda) would talk and others would listen to him intently. But what you don't know is that he was patient listener too, which made his devotees feel so comfortable with him!'

In fact, if we take the lion's share of time in a conversation not intended to be a discourse, we may appear to be too assertive or to be advertising ourselves to guests, which is not conducive to establishing sustained relationships.

16. Find the good qualities in others. Appreciate their good qualities and ignore their shortcomings. If not, fault-finding becomes a disease and destroys any relationship. Become like the honeybee, and not the common fly. When we see fault

and defects in others we are like a fly. When we only see the fine qualities in another, we are like honeybees sipping only nectar. This is important in our personal lives, because we degrade and pollute ourselves in faultfinding. If someone is constantly pointing out my failings, naturally I am not very comfortable around such a person.

Holy Mother is oft-quoted as saying on her last day, 'If you want peace of mind then give up fault-finding. If you find fault at all, find out your own faults and shortcomings. Learn to treat everyone as your own. No one is alien to you, the whole world is yours.' Sri Ramakrishna could see into a person's heart like seeing into a glass wardrobe. He could immediately recognize another's negative side or shortcomings, but His technique of teaching was in appreciating and encouraging whatever good qualities a person had. This was also practiced by Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda. The teacher's duty is to make better persons, and this needs to be done with a loving heart.

17. Build-up creative relationships. It is possible and to some extent desirable when family members, relatives or friends are engaged, for example, in some sort of cultural activity, intellectual pursuits, undertaking some voluntary service or even pursuing some business undertaking together. In fact, examples of such relationships are not wanting, which should be emulated.

18. We should also transcend relationships from the lower to the higher, from surface to deeper, from physical to mental and spiritual. How do we transcend relationships? If love is only concerned with the body, then it is only animal love. If the love encompasses both the body and mind, then this love becomes somewhat deeper. And even if the physical side of love fades, love may continue. But love will be sustained, pure and blissful, when love encompasses the spirit inside our beloved. This is what is called 'spiritualizing the relationship.'

This relationship will not only elevate the one you love, but will elevate you as well. It may start with loving the body and mind, but finally, it must transcend and mature into a spiritual relationship.

19. By broadening the boundaries of relationships, we can broaden our heart and get greater joy. We need not just limit love to our family, to our friends or to our neighbors. It is possible to cultivate of love anytime and anywhere in any-
(con't page 7)

thing. In my own way, I want to be a friend in our locality; with children by giving candy; by talking with local people who are out for morning walks; being friendly with their dogs; friendly with the postman, deliveryman, cab drivers and shopkeepers.

What is the way? Giving smiles, sincere greetings and candy prasad. Everyday greetings with feeling and a little smile go a long way in fostering relationships with others, as such gestures of goodwill count much in many ways.

20. Our eternal relationship is with God. We should always be aware of this relationship and cultivate it accordingly. Focusing on this relationship with God and adjusting our other relationships accordingly helps in all our relationships.

Conclusion:

At the end of this lengthy discussion on healthy relationships, if it is asked what the prerequisites of such relationships are, the answer is that primarily two things are essential. The first is reducing the level of the ego and the second is enhancing the

level of patience. If we remember and practice these two rightly and earnestly, the practice of the other techniques of healthy relationships will become easier.

The bottom line is how to practice these two basic things; reducing ego and enhancing patience. The best way to curb our ego is to substitute our 'I-ness and my-ness' with 'thou-ness and thy-ness'. This has two aspects. One is putting others first, whenever, wherever and to whatever extent possible, which we already noted. The second aspect is to try to get connected with God and then to connect to others through God. Meditation and prayer helps a lot to inculcate this attitude in us.

Enhancing our level of patience becomes easier if we can practice this curbing of our ego with some success. In addition, we will grow the power of understanding others and have better control of mind through self-analysis, meditation and prayer.

Thus the practice of meditation, prayer and self-analysis are not only vital for our spiritual life, but also vital in establishing an enjoyable, sustainable, creative and elevated relationships with others, which every one of us craves for. •

Since Swami Medhasananda was taking the message of 'Positive Living' to other parts of Japan on his busy November Satsanga schedule, we thought we might include summaries of these talks from participants to both encourage such participation and to review how the message was being received. - Editor

Kumamoto Satsanga and Annapurna Farm Visit / November 12, 2011

Positive Living

Summary Contributed by Yukie Minoda Chan

Since the Tohoku Earthquake on 11 March this year, we have been facing various problems here in Japan. Under such circumstances, how can we live positively? Swami Medhasananda talked in that regard based on Vedic teachings.

The discourse started with the comparison between the concepts of "positivity", the topic of the day, and its opposite, "negativity". In my opinion, we know that positive living is ideal, but it is difficult for most of us to practice this in our day-to-day life. In fact, quite a few people choose suicide as a solution to their problems here in the Japanese society. How should we handle what happens to us? Swami Medhasananda pointed out the following ways of positive thinking.

Try not to see problems and stress in life from a negative point of view. Stop worrying and being afraid. Instead, think of them as something that helps you "develop yourself". Take a positive viewpoint. You need them to improve yourself to be a better person. It is important to not run away from them, but to face them so you can find solutions.

In his discourse, he said that "introspection is the steering wheel of our lives", which impressed me very much. I learnt that introspection referred to our knowing of our real nature; that it leads to a better life knowing why we live and what our purpose in life is; and that "discrimination" is important throughout life. I

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Kumamoto (from page 7)

think I always remember that, as he said, if one practises introspection even in times of trouble, one can overcome difficulties and steer one's life in a calm manner.

Moreover, he told us the story of President Eisenhower when he was very young, insisting that it was important to "live this moment well", rather than regret the past and worry about the future.

At the end of the discourse, he gave us some practical approaches for positive living. First, exercise "introspection" to know your real nature and the purpose of your life. To that end, "meditate" every day and understand that "praying" to God is important. He gave a tip on meditation, saying that when you begin, you should meditate at a regular time each morning for 15 to 20 minutes at least. I realised again that meditation and prayer helped with

introspection and to draw an inner power or divinity from inside us and reveal it.

In order to attain the purpose of life, we should have the willingness to meditate and pray. Moreover, via faith in God and prayer to Him, we can take refuge in Him for His support when facing problems. Swami also said that it was helpful to put inspiring messages and your favourite words wherever you can often see them at home, work, etc., which reminds you to reflect on yourself and helps you overcome difficulties.

I believe that following what I learnt from his discourse I would "meditate" and "pray" in my day-to-day life, as the first step towards positive living. I shall not be afraid of failure but take a positive point of view, discriminate and keep going until I can reach the goal. I really thank Swami Medhasananda for his practical discourse on positive living. •



Positive Living

Outline Summary Contributed by Mr. Shunsei Takahashi

Schedule:

Vedic prayer... 10 minutes
Discourse... 90 minutes
Short break... 5 minutes
Q&As... 40 minutes
Guided meditation... 30 minutes

Summary outline of points discussed include:

- Hope is to live, despair is to die.
- Do not run away but face it.
- Do not give up, but hang on and do not stop until you reach your goal.
- Strength is to live, weakness is to die. Do not think of weakness but of strength. The key to success is to keep at it until you succeed. (Konosuke Matsuhita)
- Strength lies in ourselves. Just reveal it.
- Your body, mind and ego is not the real you. Your inner-self (Atman) is Absolute Truth, Absolute Bliss and Absolute Existence.
- A modern epidemic in the world is stress.

- 90 per cent of worries do not really happen.
- Live this moment well.
- Introspection is the steering wheel of life. What is the purpose of life? Who am I? Where can you take refuge in life? Think about them deeply.
- Believe in God.

Comment:

I think we can understand and remember what Maharaj talked about by listening, seeing, writing and speaking as follows:

- i. Listen to the discourse
- ii. See what is written on the white board
- iii. Write it down and don't trust it to memory
- iv. Speak or repeat key words

Also, it was good that he directly asked each one of us a question at the Q&A session (he did so intentionally).

There were 27 attendees in total.

• A Story to Remember •

Zen Peace

When a rebel army swept into a town in Korea, all the monks of the Zen temple fled except for the abbot. The general came into the temple and was annoyed that the abbot did not receive him with respect.

"Don't you know," he shouted, "that you are looking at a man who can run you through without blinking?"

"And you," replied the abbot strongly, "are looking at a man who can be run through without blinking!"

The general stared at him, then made a bow and retired.

from Trevor Leggett 'The Tiger's Cave'

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