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In this Issue:
- How to Get Along With Others
- Art, Religion and Sri Ramakrishna
- The True Friend
- Treasure from the Attic—
- When God Dwells Among Men
- No Privilege!

and much more…
Dear Readers,

Winter has descended upon us, and yes, this is the summer 2020 issue of *Global Vedanta*—a delay of several months. Rather than bore you with a myriad of excuses, we humbly ask you to accept our sincere apology for this major lapse. Rest assured that we are fully committed to catching up in 2021—there will be no deleted issues.

**About Contributing to *Global Vedanta***

*Global Vedanta* will gladly consider articles, poetry, humor, etc., submitted for publication. The subject matter should be religious, cultural, or educational and must appeal to a general and broad-minded readership. Articles should be entertaining, and yet substantial, and be within 1500 to 1700 words in length. Articles accepted for publication may require a release signed by the author and, unless prior arrangements are made, no materials submitted to *Global Vedanta* can be returned.
HOW TO GET ALONG WITH OTHERS
BY SWAMI BHASKARANANDA

This article is the first in a series of excerpts to be published by Global Vedanta from Swami Bhaskarananda’s book How to Get Along with Others Using Common Sense and Ancient Hindu Wisdom/A Practical Guide to Trouble-Free Living. Please see a review of this book on page 16.

At one time or the other we all have wondered: “Why is it so difficult to get along with people?” The answer to this question is that there is no constancy in human behavior.

Why Do Our Moods Change So Frequently?

The same individual behaves differently at different times. Sometimes he is alert, calm, clear-minded, humble, nonviolent, sympathetic, understanding, loving, and compassionate. At other times he is restless, energetic, power loving, domineering, and egotistic. Still at another time he may be lethargic, dull and confused and senselessly cruel. No wonder it is so difficult to interact or get along with others.

If we think a little deeply, we shall discover that we are more our minds than our bodies. The changing moods noticed in our behavior are mainly due to the changing states of our minds. The body may sometimes influence the mind, but most of the functions of the body are inspired by our thoughts, whether those thoughts belong to the conscious or the subconscious level of the mind. Hinduism considers reincarnation a fact. Therefore, according to Hinduism, what we call reflex action is also the outcome of repeated past actions of the body prompted by our thoughts of either this life or our previous lives.

One naturally wonders about the causes for the frequent fluctuations in human moods and temperaments. Many thinkers, both Eastern and Western,1 have tried to solve this mystery. It seems some ancient thinkers of India were able to effectively and exhaustibly resolve this mystery.

The Ancient Hindu Sage Kapila’s Method of Interpreting Human Behavior with the Help of the Gunas

To resolve the mystery about the causes for the frequent fluctuations in human moods and temperaments, we shall take the help of the ancient Hindu sage Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya system of Hindu religious philosophy. According to Sankhya philosophy, the world has two parts: spirit and matter.

The spiritual domain of the world contains innumerable sentient entities, each one infinite and perfect. Such an entity is called a purusha.

The material domain of the world has its source in prakriti or Mother Nature, from which this entire material world has evolved.

Prakriti is insentient. It does not have consciousness.2 Both purusha and prakriti are infinite and eternal.

Purusha is the sentient Spirit while prakriti is primordial matter. Prakriti is the finest form of matter that we can ever conceive of, and it is composed of three extremely subtle substances, each of which is called a guna. The Sanskrit word guna has more than one meaning. Usually it means quality. But in the context of Sankhya philosophy, it means a strand or a thread. Prakriti is like a rope made of three strands. Each of these strands is called a guna in Sanskrit.

These three gunas are (1) sattwa-guna (also spelled sattva-guna), (2) rajo-guna and (3) tamo-guna.

Sattwa-guna is light or buoyant, bright or illuminating. It is of the nature of pleasure or joy; and it has the ability to reveal or make things known. The luminosity of light, the ability of the mind and the senses to know things, the reflecting power of a mirror, and the transparency of glass and crystals are all due to the presence of sattwa-guna in them. Similarly if we see happiness, contentment, satisfaction, joy, or bliss in a mind, we should know that it is due to the presence of sattwa-guna in it. In the same manner the lightness or buoyancy of cork or similar substances can be explained in terms of the presence of sattwa-guna in each of them.

Rajo-guna causes activity, movement, and restlessness. These characteristics noticed in human beings or other objects and things indicate the presence of rajo-guna in them. Similarly, when we notice in our mind avarice, hankering, anger, egoism, vanity, and the wish to dominate over others, we should know that it is due to the presence of rajo-guna in it. Rajo-guna is also of the nature of pain and suffering. It is the cause of all types of painful experiences. In this world wherever we see pain or suffering, we should know that it is due to the presence of rajo-guna.

The main characteristics of tamo-guna are inertia, passivity, sluggishness, heaviness, and negativity. It resists activity or movement. It renders the mind incapable of knowing things clearly by making it sluggish. It causes mental confusion, depression, bewilderment, and ignorance. It induces drowsiness and sleep. It also causes senseless anger. Heaviness of metals, such as lead indicate the presence of tamo-guna in them.

Both prakriti and purusha, being eternal and infinite, are in close proximity to each other. Due to its close proximity to purusha, prakriti borrows consciousness from purusha and becomes conscious. It is very much like certain kinds of metal.
acquiring magnetic power when placed very close to a powerful magnet. This kind of acquired magnetism is called induced magnetism in physics. It should be noted here that even when this borrowed consciousness is present in prakriti, it does not really combine with prakriti. It is very much like the full moon being reflected on a mirror. Even though the reflected moon seems to be present in the mirror, it has not become one with the mirror. It has not become an inseparable part of prakriti. Aside from this, purusha being Spirit, can never become one with the mirror. It has not become an inseparable part of prakriti. Thus borrowing consciousness, prakriti starts evolving. Through a process of evolution it becomes this entire creation consisting of all kinds of fine and gross matter. Therefore, prakriti can also be called Mother Nature. One may wonder how prakriti, which is the finest of all kinds of matter, can evolve into gross material objects like rocks or stones. But we know that carbon dioxide, which is a formless gas, can become solid “dry ice.” So also is the case with prakriti. Thus, all forms of gross or fine matter, and even energy and the mind, are only so many evolved forms of prakriti. Mind and energy, even though they are extremely fine, are no other than matter because they are the evolved forms of the primordial matter prakriti.

Since this world has evolved from prakriti, all human beings are a combination of purusha and prakriti, or Spirit and matter. Their physical bodies, energy, senses, and minds are the evolved products of prakriti. The consciousness in them indicates the presence of purusha or the sentient Spirit in them. Prakriti being no other than the three gunas, all human beings have sattwa-guna, rajo-guna and tamo-guna in them.

According to Sankhya philosophy, when purusha is entangled with prakriti it is in a state of temporary bondage. While in bondage, purusha appears to forget its true nature and seems to suffer from limitations, such as pain and suffering, imposed on it by the gunas of prakriti. When purusha gets rid of this entanglement it becomes free from pain and suffering.

Since we all are a combination of purusha and prakriti, we are subject to suffering and pain. But when we become free from our entanglement with prakriti, our purusha nature becomes fully manifest. In other words, the Spirit becomes fully manifest. This is called spiritual liberation.

ART, RELIGION, AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA


Of the world’s religious teachers of the highest order, Sri Ramakrishna is the first to be photographed. Today, humanity has among its cherished treasures three different photographic portraits of the divine Master, who is venerated by many as an incarnation of God and by many more as a rare type of illumined soul.

None of his three photographs, however, portrays Sri Ramakrishna on the plane of normal life, because each time he faced the camera he was absorbed in transcendental experience or mystic awareness, called in Sanskrit samadhi, while his countenance, radiant with joy, testified to the sublimity of his inner consciousness. Looking at one of his pictures, Sri Ramakrishna once remarked, “It is a picture of a very exalted state of yoga. The time will come when this will be worshiped in many a home.” Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna’s portrait bears the impress of the state of God-consciousness and is therefore its veritable symbol. It is not possible to render in more realistic terms an expression of that ecstasy of Self-realization which thought cannot attain nor speech disclose. The meditative poses of deities and of spiritual leaders, such as Sri Krishna, Buddha, Shankara, and others, delineated by Indian iconography, are colored more or less by the conceptions of the artists. Sri Ramakrishna’s whole personality was so suffused with divine love, purity, wisdom, and bliss that even in his lifetime he was recognized as the supreme Spirit, incarnate in human form. His image is therefore a genuine representation of Divinity. I firmly believe that the sacred icon which is unveiled today will contribute immensely in removing the veil of ignorance from the hearts of men and women and in revealing unto them the spiritual Reality it typifies.

Man feels the necessity of apprehending abstract ideas in concrete forms. It is the concrete expression that makes the abstract more vivid and real to him. So he has a tendency to represent the supersensible in terms of the sensible. He also finds satisfaction in giving orderly expression to his conceptions, thoughts, and sentiments. Both these urges have been the creative force of fine art. It is the function of art to give concrete shape to the inner ideas and ideals. All genuine works of art are symbolic. As man learns mostly through the eyes and the ears, he needs two distinct kinds of symbol: visible and audible. So art has two main forms of symbolic expression: architecture, sculpture, painting on the one hand; and music and poetry on the other.

Religion deals primarily with the supersensible truths. So in the religious life of man there has been the imperative need of symbols, both visible and audible. In every religion there are symbolic representations of spiritual truths. In its efforts to comprehend the supreme Reality, to worship God with devotion and joy, to feel his presence vividly and intimately, the religious spirit of man has manifested itself in all kinds of art. But not all the fine arts have been prevalent in every religion. For instance, in Mohammedanism, iconography and music seem to have no place. In Christianity, dancing has not grown as an expression of religious sentiment. In Hinduism, however, all the avenues of art have been sought in approaching God. In the development of art, religion has played a distinctive role. Perhaps all the fine arts have had their origin in religion.
Of the two main branches of iconography—sculpture and painting—the former has been prominent in Hinduism and the latter in Christianity. Both have deeply influenced the religious lives of people. Among the religious symbols, the likenesses of God-men are particularly impressive and inspiring. The great spiritual leaders who are worshiped as divine incarnations, messengers, or prophets are the highest manifestations of God in human form. They make God real to us. We may conceive of God by speculative reason or by the study of books, yet we cannot be free from doubts as to his existence until we know the God-like personages. We can understand divine purity, divine love, divine power, divine wisdom, divine joy only through them. They represent God to us better than any celestial being. We cannot help adoring God through them. Their images serve as natural symbols in the worship of Divinity. They are most helpful to spiritual aspirants, especially in the early stage of development.

These God-men are the very embodiments of moral and spiritual principles. Their images signify the highest ideals. Worshiping God through such images is not idolatry. The great spiritual leaders are the best exemplars of their own teachings. Their lives demonstrate the truths they preach. The key to their message is in their own lives. We can comprehend abstract principles only in relation to these persons. Their human forms are the emblems of divine truths.

It is the God-like personalities that implant in our minds the highest principles and truths as the very ideals of life. We may receive sublime ideas from various sources and ponder on them seriously, yet they will have no hold on us as ideals until we find them actualized in the lives of the great. It is our love and admiration for the great ones that sustain our moral and spiritual strength in the various trials and tribulations of life. A person may be interested in religion, may study religious books, and may speculate on God as assiduously as any research student of religion. He may even observe certain rites and forms. Yet, he may be lacking in the essentials of spiritual life. In order to be spiritual he should: first, be convinced of the reality of God; second, understand that the realization of God is the supreme ideal of life; third, find and follow the appropriate method of God-realization; and fourth, and above all, have yearning for God. For all these requisites of spiritual life, particularly for the longing for God, which is the rarest of all, the aspirant needs inspiration from the great souls. Only the lovers of God can inspire us with the love of God.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna provides us with the most striking illustrations of these principles. He was born in an age when skepticism was the order of the day, when atheism and agnosticism were running rampant. He was immune to the spirit of the time. From his early age he longed for God and God alone. His whole being was crying for the direct experience of God. He turned his back completely upon the sensible world and plunged into the struggle for God-realization. He practiced one religion after another, not only the multifarious courses of Hinduism, but also the methods of Mohammedanism and Christianity. He realized God through each one of them.

Experience of God differs according to the nature of the spiritual discipline. Sri Ramakrishna’s realization covers the entire range of spiritual experiences vouchsafed to man. He had the transcendental experience of the impersonal absolute Brahman; he was aware of God’s presence in the universe as the all-pervasive supreme principle; he saw God dwelling in the hearts of all as their innermost Self; he also attained his complete unity with Divinity through every relationship of love. He was so well established in the realm of the Spirit that his mind went up and down the whole gamut of superconscious experience with perfect ease. Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna’s life is a complete demonstration of the fact of God-realization. Here he stands supreme. The world has been sorely in need of such an evidence.

From direct experience Sri Ramakrishna declared:

• God is real.
• He has many aspects and forms.
• He can be realized.
• The ways of realization differ according to the capacities and tendencies of the individual.
• The different religions of the world are so many pathways to God-realization.
• The realization of God is the supreme ideal of life.

Sri Ramakrishna also recommended the service of God in man as the universal spiritual discipline.

The reality of God, the realization...
of God, the harmony of religions, and the service of God in man are the four cardinal points of his message, which centers on the teaching that the supreme object of human life is the realization of God. Man should live with this end in view. Nothing else can be an end in itself. It is the goal not only of his religious but of his worldly activities. All of life's values—material, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral—must subserve the spiritual ideal. The social, political, and economic systems should be built so as to facilitate the spiritual growth of man. Thus there will be harmony in all the aspects and activities of life. The ultimate goal is one, but the ways are many according to the individual's psychophysical conditions. All men and women, at whatever levels of life they may be, can reach the goal through progressive courses. Even from the bottom of the lowest pit a man can direct his steps toward the mountain top. Let one and all live in this world as pilgrims to the shrine of Truth. This is the secret of world unity, peace, and progress. The supreme ideal is indispensable to both spiritual and material growth of man. Whenever worldly greatness and glory become the primary objectives of life, man's morals and intellect degenerate. How can there be peace and progress in such a case? Sri Ramakrishna's message is the key to man's spiritual and material development individually and collectively. His image is the symbol of his message.

THE TRUE FRIEND

BY SWAMI ADISWARANANDA


The need for friends can never be exaggerated. Friendship with others is vital for our survival, sustenance, and well-being. We need friends for consolation in grief, for support in distress, for self-expression, for sharing joy. Life is interdependent, not independent. Interdependence is not just a matter of religious idealism; it is the most compelling aspect of human reality. The human body is molded out of the physical universe; its cells are derived from the parents bodies, and its food is gathered from the vegetable and animal worlds. The individual mind is part of the universal mind. We are indebted to fellow human beings for their sympathy and support in times of distress and hardship, and to the sages and saints for moral and spiritual inspiration. The universe is one single organism, in which there is no gap between atom, cell, sense, self, and society. This oneness of existence is the basis of all ethics and morality.

The human individual is essentially a social being who cannot live without help from others. Relatedness—the feeling of belonging to a larger whole and of being of value to others—is a natural necessity of life. There are also psychological reasons for having friends. A person needs to express love and sympathy for others, and he wants to receive the same from them. He cannot satisfy the urge for love without being socially conscious. A person seeks companions for emotional support, and feels lonely when no one is around.

In a recent article in National Geographic Magazine, the author Rick Weiss writes:

Gerontologists are just starting to appreciate the ways that social and psychological factors can contribute to the quality of life in old age, and even to longevity. Studies have shown that seniors who have emotional support from friends and family have lower levels of stress hormones circulating in their blood and are less likely to die in the near future than are those who feel lonely and isolated. Scientists don't know all the ways that emotions and attitudes influence physical health. But health does seem to be enhanced by giving and sharing.

The instinct for self-expression is not to be identified with the sex-instinct, as Freudians claim, nor is it the wish for power or the desire to dominate others, as Adlerians would have us believe. Neither is it the instinct for self-preservation, as social scientists claim. Vedanta maintains that the instinct for self-expression stems from a deep longing for self-expansion. Expansion is life; contraction is death. Suppression of the instinct for self-expression can derange a person's mind. Left alone for a long period of time, a person may become mentally unbalanced. When a person is forced to live in isolation or in solitary confinement, without friends or companions, he tends to become abnormal, if not insane.

Those who do not have opportunities for self-expression withdraw into themselves and become increasingly self-centered. As self-centered people withdraw more and more, their egocentricity increases, making them more and more antisocial and unpopular. They become intolerant of and insensitive to other people's interests and opinions. Their egotistic self-concern leaves them no time to think of the outside world. Unwanted and unwelcome everywhere, they are forced to live in their self-created social isolation. Egocentric persons demand love and acceptance from others, but forget that in order to receive love and acceptance, they must be lovable and acceptable.

Science teaches us that we can understand the universe only in terms of relatedness, that elements are nothing in isolation, that even an atom has significance only in some pattern of organization. Carbon atoms, for example, become charcoal when related in one way and become diamonds when related in another. Wherever we turn, whether in the field of physics, chemistry, biology, or psychology, we find that isolation is untenable and relatedness is essential. An isolated atom is meaningless, whereas a related atom is the building block of nature. A person who disregards the law of relatedness and cooperation disrupts the social harmony; while one who abides by this law contributes to the cause of social harmony and peace.

Even Freud would say that we are influenced psychologically by our friends and relatives, and in the same way we influence others. This fact calls upon us to become free, warm, and cooperative.
personalities. Too few of us realize that what the law of gravity is to the stars and the sun, the law of relatedness is to human beings, and that what attraction and repulsion are in space, approval and rejection are in human society.

The primary joy of life comes from the acceptance, approval, and companionship of our neighbors and friends. The need of fellowship is as deep as the need of food. When we are accepted, appreciated, and needed by those who know all about us, we get the first taste of peace and self-satisfaction. Devoid of friendship and fellowship, a person becomes irrelevant in this universe, running from loneliness to loneliness.

Marks of a True Friend

A true friend is known by certain marks. An ancient text says: *One who stands by you in times of famine, political revolution, and in the court of law is a true friend.* True friendship is utterly selfless. Such selflessness has four aspects: responsibility, care, respect, and knowledge. To care for a person implies feeling responsible for his total well-being—not just for his physical existence. The need for care and responsibility denotes that friendship is an active concern and not merely passive cordiality.

Responsibility is not a duty imposed upon one from outside but a response from within. The words responsibility and response have the same root: *respondeo,* that is, to answer, to be ready to respond, to promise in return. Without respect for and knowledge of the loved person, love deteriorates into domination and possessiveness. Respect is not fear and awe. In keeping with the root word *resipere,* that is, to look at, respect denotes the ability to see and know a person as he or she is, to be aware of his or her individuality and uniqueness.

True friendship is tolerant. Tolerance is the positive effort to understand another’s beliefs, practices, and habits without necessarily sharing or accepting them. True friendship between two persons honors and leaves intact the freedom of each. Voltaire’s dictum, *I do not agree with a word that you say, but I’ll defend to the death your right to say it,* is for all ages and places the perfect utterance of the ideal of tolerance. When we force our friends to conform to our convictions, we violate their rights.

True friendship is always honest and sincere. As Emerson in his essay on friendship says:

A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may think aloud. I am arrived at last in the presence of a man so real and equal that I may drop even those most undermost garments of dis-simulation, courtesy, and second thought, which men never put off, and may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another. Sincerity is the luxury allowed, like diadems and authority, only to the highest rank, *that* being permitted to speak truth, as having none above it to court or conform unto.

In true friendship there is no place for fear. Fear in friendship comes only when there is a selfish motive. A true friend will always trust you; you won’t have to prove yourself to him in order to hold his loyal friendship. As the saying goes, *never explain what you do to anyone. Your friends don’t need your explanation and your enemies won’t believe it.* A true friend will never say behind your back anything that he would not say to you in person.

The most enduring foundation of true friendship is the spiritual kinship between two persons. A true friend is one who not only wishes us well here but also hereafter. Such a friend inspires us in the path of God, shields us from all vices and temptations, intercedes on our behalf with God, and prays for our spiritual welfare. On the other hand, the person whose company makes us forget God, and arouses in our mind worldly propensities, can never be called a true friend, however pleasant or likable that friend may be.

True friendship cannot be taken for granted. It is like a plant that requires nurturing and caring without which it withers and dies. The saint-poet Bhartrihari warns us:

A king is brought to ruin by evil counsellors; an ascetic by moving in society; a child by being spoilt; a priest by not studying the sacred writings; a family by the wicked behaviour of children; good manners by bad habits; modesty by strong drink; agriculture by neglect; affection by absence from one’s household; friendship by want of love; possessions by careless management; and money by waste and prodigality.

True Friendship Is Rare

True friendship is rare. For example, in politics there is no such thing as permanent friendship or permanent enmity but only permanent interest. Business similarly is all self-interest. In social exchanges friendship is a matter of convenience. So it is said there are three kinds of friends: best friends, guest friends, and pest friends. Mark Twain aptly says: “If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man.” Again, it is said that it takes both an enemy and a friend, working together, to hurt you to the core—the one to slander you and the other to bring you the news. Most so-called friends are fair-weather friends, who gather around a person in his good times to flatter and cheer him, but vanish when he meets with difficult days. Self-serving and insincere, they remain friends as long as they can use him for their self-interest. With their worldly propensities and craftiness, such friends prove to be enemies to a person on the spiritual path. In all countries and at all times, the company of such worldly friends has been the cause of moral and spiritual downfall to the seekers of God. The *Bhagavad Gita* graphically describes how slowly and silently this downfall comes:

When a man dwells on objects, he feels an attachment for them. Attachment gives rise to desire, and desire breeds anger.

From anger comes delusion; from delusion, the failure of memory; from the failure of memory, the ruin of discrimination; and from the ruin of discrimination, the man perishes.

There is nothing more ruinous to a person than the company of a bad friend. Bad company is the breeding ground of all sins and vices. This is so “because it causes lust, wrath, delusion, loss of memory, loss of reason, and, finally, the total wreck of the man.”
The **Mahabharata** points out:
You have no desire for a thing until you know what it is like. It is only after you have seen it, or heard of it, or touched it, that you get a liking for it. Therefore, the safest rule of human conduct is not to take, touch, or see whatever is likely to taint the imagination.7

So Narada declares, “By all means, avoid bad company.”8 Bad company fans the flames of passion. “These propensities, though at first like ripples, acquire the proportions of a sea by reason of bad company.”9

Sri Krishna in his last message says:
A mental wave is never produced by anything that has not been seen or heard. So the mind of a man who controls his senses is gradually stilled and is perfectly at peace…. Thus the wise man should shun evil company and associate with the holy. It is these who by their words take away the attachment of the mind.10

These are the cold, hard facts of life, however unpleasant and pessimistic they appear to be. True friendship is indeed so rare. So Swami Vivekananda says:
In happiness, in misery, in famine, in pain, in the grave, in heaven, or in hell, who never gives me up is my friend. Is such friendship a joke? A man may have salvation through such friendship.11

**The Only True Friend**

The reality of the everyday world is not what we think or imagine it to be. Human nature is changeful and frivolous, and human greed seems to have no limit. Self-interest is pervasive and human ingratitude endemic. The lips that praise you today may curse you tomorrow. The heart that is full of love now may become full of jealousy later. If you lend money to a friend, you run the risk of losing both money and friend. In his last message, Sri Krishna says:

Brothers, wives, fathers, and friends, who were very near and dear to the heart, are all instantly alienated and turned into foes by even an insignificant sum of money. Even the least amount of money upsets them and inflames their anger, so that they immediately part company, and all at once abandoning cordiality they rival and even kill one another.12

Sri Sankaracharya in his **Coupletson Renunciation** tells us:
So long as one is able to earn wealth are one’s relatives attached to him, but when after this he gets decrepit due to old age, no one inquires about his welfare even in his own house…. As long as life remains in the body, so long do people in the house inquire about one’s welfare, but when the body falls off and the life-breath goes out, even the wife gets frightened of that body. Worship the Lord, worship the Lord, worship the Lord, O thou fool.13

In the words of Sri Ramakrishna:
True knowledge makes one feel: “God, You alone do everything. You alone are my own. And to You alone belong houses, buildings, family, relatives, friends, the whole world. All is Yours.” But ignorance makes one feel: “I am doing everything. I am the doer. House, buildings, family, children, friends, and property are all mine.”14

The same message is repeated by the Master in a song:
Remember this, O mind! Nobody is your own; vain is your wandering in this world. Trapped in the subtle snare of maya as you are, do not forget the Mother’s name. Only a day or two men honor you on earth as lord and master; all too soon that form, so honored now, must needs be cast away, when Death, the Master, seizes you. Even your beloved wife, for whom, while yet you live, you fret yourself almost to death, will not go with you then. She too will say farewell and shun your corpse as an evil thing.15

The following story, *The Three Friends of Man*, beautifully illustrates who is our only true friend. In a small village there lived a pious man, virtuous and honest. One day he received a summons from the king to appear before him for judgment. The king was known for his eccentricity, unpredictability, and cruelty. The pious man became very much disturbed and afraid. He had never done anything wrong or unjust, and so he wondered how he could receive a summons like this.

The pious man had three friends: his best friend, his next best friend, and his least intimate friend. He went to his best friend, explained his fear and distress to him, and asked him to come with him to the king’s court. His best friend, standing inside the front door of his house, heard the whole matter and said, “I am afraid I cannot accompany you to the king’s court. I can only say good luck to you, my friend,” and he closed the door in his friend’s face. The pious man became terribly disappointed to realize that one whom he had always regarded as his best friend would desert him and leave him out in the cold.

He then went to see his next best friend, told him the whole problem, and made the same request of him. This friend said, “I know you to be a good man and I could never imagine your doing anything wrong. I’ll come with you up to the palace gate, but I do not intend to enter the palace and stand before the king, because he is unpredictable and may decide to put me in jail along with you.” The pious man became disappointed for the second time.

Sad at heart and disillusioned about human nature, he went to his least intimate friend, from whom he never expected any help. When this third friend heard of his problem, he said to him, “I do know you to be an honest man and also I am certain that you are incapable of doing anything wrong. Do not worry, my friend, I will go with you to the court of the king and testify to him about your honesty and goodness.” The pious man was greatly surprised at this pledge of support from a friend to whom he had never paid much attention.

The pious man in the story represents a human individual in distress; the king, death; and the summons, the call of death. The palace gate stands for the graveyard. The best friend represents money and possessions. They say good-bye to a person at death and never come out of the house to accompany him. The next best friend represents his relatives and friends. They accompany him only up to the graveyard and then leave his dead body there. The least intimate friend, to whom he never paid much attention, is

See *True Friend*...page 9
Mark Twain Quotes

- It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.
- If we would learn what the human race really is at the bottom, we need only observe it in election times.
- Action speaks louder than words but not nearly as often.
- Repartee is something we think of twenty-four hours too late.
- Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please.
- The man with a new idea is a crank until the idea succeeds.
- Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.
- No sinner is ever saved after the first twenty minutes of a sermon.
- Be careless in your dress if you must, but keep a tidy soul.
- There are several good protections against temptation, but the surest is cowardice.
- Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it.
- When we remember we are all mad, the mysteries of life disappear and life stands explained.
- Name the greatest of all inventors. Accidents.
- A habit cannot be tossed out the window; it must be coaxed down the stairs a step at a time.
- The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up.
- How empty is a theory in the presence of fact!
- One of the most striking differences between a cat and a lie is that a cat has only nine lives.
- Patriot: the person who can holler the loudest without knowing what he is hollering about.

And also from Benjamin Franklin

- He does not possess wealth; it possesses him.
- Contentment makes poor men rich; discontentment makes rich men poor.

Old Jokes and Riddles

- What goes up but never comes down? Your age!
- Aging gracefully is like the nice way of saying you’re slowly looking worse.
- The older we get, the earlier it gets late.
- Never criticize someone until you have walked a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you’ll be a mile away, and you’ll have their shoes.
- Two men meet on opposite sides of a river. One shouts to the other, “I need you to help me get to the other side!” The other guy replies, “You are on the other side!”

Charles Mathias

**One of our staff questioned the suitability of this quote appearing in *Global Vedanta*. The reader is reminded of the famous story from the *Mahabharata*: The time had come for the Pandava brothers to depart the world. Yudhishthira found that his four younger brothers and his wife had been put in hell. That being the case, Yudhishthira preferred to go to hell over heaven. (Of course, in the end, all of them, and even a faithful dog, ended up in heaven.) –ed.

Quotes from Mark Twain

Charles Mathias
the memory of his good deeds, performed with selflessness for the benefit of others. The memory of his good deeds becomes his sole support in his fearful, solitary journey hereafter. Such a memory is his only true and trusted friend. *The Bhagavad Gita* (II.40) solemnly declares this fact and says:

In this [selfless action] no effort is ever lost and no harm is ever done. Even very little of this dharma [selfless action] saves a man from the Great Fear.16

The memory of a good deed is like the messenger of Truth that escorts the soul to the realm of Truth.

**Notes**


8. Ibid., p. 33 (*Narada Bhakti Sutras*, Sutra 43).


15. Ibid., p. 316.

WHEN GOD DWELLS AMONG MEN

III

What is the eternal relationship between God and the soul? Devotees speak of it in various ways. The Vaishnavas, who are great lovers of God, say that, through eternity, souls remain distinct from Him; that even upon attaining perfection they do not become one with Him. Because of this distinction, souls are able to enjoy certain special relationships with Him, some of which are identical with those existing between human beings, such as relationships between master and servant, friend and friend, mother and child, lover and beloved. It is quite possible that there are other relationships which we cannot conceive of since God’s mind is infinite and the soul, in its perfection, is also infinite.

It was mentioned before that the perfected souls dwell in heaven in companionship with God before they are reborn on earth when He is incarnated. But where is heaven? When thinking of it we usually raise our eyes; that, however, does not prove anything. We might as well look down, for below us also is the same starry universe and the same infinite space. Where, then, is heaven? It is everywhere.

The Hindu scriptures say God dwells with His devotees, the perfected souls, in Goloka or in Vaikuntha. The meaning of Goloka is “world of light.” Where indeed is that wonderful world? It cannot be one of the stars shining in the sky, however bright, for the light in question is not material—it is pure light, spiritual light. And it cannot be a part of space, for it is infinite light. Vaikuntha means “beyond all ignorance.” Where ignorance is, there is doubt, but the world or pure light has no darkness in it, and therefore no doubt. The world of light is everywhere—that is its “location”—and if we had the eyes to see beyond darkness and doubt, we would certainly perceive everywhere the infinite light of God.

In Vaikuntha or Goloka souls dwell in eternal relationship and communion with God. We can form a vague idea of the nature of such communion by observing the intimate relationships of men. When a mother clasps her child to her heart, both she and the child forget their separate individualities to a great extent and feel a deep sense of union. This suggests the close communion of the soul with God. We cannot express in words what the relationship would be should a soul love God as a child loves its mother and dwell eternally with Him; we can only contemplate that relationship by plunging into the depths of our own consciousness. If we could feel this mother-and-child relationship in its utmost purity and profundity, we would assuredly have an idea or the relationship between God and the soul, between the divine incarnation and his close disciples.

While some disciples belong to the “inner circle,” others, as it were, stand at a little distance. Yet he chooses these too and loves them, and they in their turn accept and love him. However, there is a special relationship between him and the few who are closest to him. With them it is not a question of how God is to be found but of their recognition of Him as a divine incarnation and of their remembering their relationship with Him.

After they are established in this knowledge and feel that they are living not in time but in eternity, forever related to this eternal God, they become ready to carry on the mission for which the Lord has been incarnated. That mission should not be understood as the mere spreading of the message, though, as already stated, the message is impregnated with tremendous illuminating and redeeming power. Those who fulfill the mission of the divine incarnation can scarcely express in words what they do.

Their eyes are opened; they see the divine light in everyone. Were it otherwise they might, in ignorance, think that mankind needs enlightenment; but as it is they can never be degraded to the egotism of thinking that men, who are the very embodiments of God, need salvation at their hands. So these illumined ones do not concern themselves excessively with the salvation of the world, and they do not speak the language of salvation. They also, like their divine master, find a few who are close to themselves, and they in their turn transmit to their disciples the power which the divine incarnation brought to earth. In their associations with others is also an element of their divine master’s playfulness.

I believe that so long as this core of playfulness lasts, religion remains healthy, but when it disappears religion degenerates. As long as it lasts there are no hard tasks, no long faces, no stooped shoulders in religion, but rather the consciousness that this is God’s world, that He created it out of Himself, is sustaining it, and may destroy it at any time as part of His play. Knowing this, the disciples cannot become unduly serious about their mission.

IV

In addition to his disciples, whether of the more intimate or the less intimate groups, many others come to an incarnation of God, and these too receive His blessings. Everyone, in fact, is filled according to his capacity to receive. Even those benefit who, though contemporaneous with him, do not know him personally. How great, then, must be the benefit to those who do behold him!

It is said that when a divine incarna-
tion is present on the earth in his physical body, whoever sees him attains salvation. Looking upon a divine incarnation is the same as looking upon God Himself. Whoever sees a divine incarnation will not have to be born again. Such is the belief. Does it seem unreasonable to you? But the incarnation of God is a profound mystery. Do you think it a small event when God chooses to come down to our level?

The divine incarnation remembers and feels without interruption that he is the Infinite One who has taken a frail human body. He shows that he remembers this even while he dwells among men. Can you understand this profound truth? When God is born, even when he is a child, all those who come in contact with him feel no longer like ordinary men. They are infiltrated by a new power that regenerates and uplifts them. If you have seen a saint and observed the atmosphere he creates around himself and the miracles he performs, you will have some understanding of what a divine incarnation can do.

When I first visited the monastery of the Order to which, through the grace of God, I belong, and gazed upon the illumined faces of the great Swamis, the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, I wondered that such beings could ever exist on earth. They appeared entirely different from any men I had seen—free, completely free. Until I looked upon them, I had no idea of what freedom meant. Seeing them, I knew that nothing in this universe could in any way obstruct or hurt them. They had gone beyond all possibility of being affected by anything adverse or evil. No fear, no ignorance, no limitation was in them but rather infinite confidence, peace, and joy. I thought I had entered another world.

And, indeed, it is another world. There the atmosphere is different. We feel it even in our physical reactions. Our very appearance begins to change, our blood circulates in a different way, we breathe differently. If our mind is not pure enough, if we have not developed any spiritual instincts, the presence of such men is intolerable; even physically we find it hard to stand, the very breathing becomes difficult because the air seems too rarified, as in a high altitude. However, for those who are ready, the atmosphere of the saints is a blessing. Strangely enough, though living in time, in their presence we seem to be living in eternity. The eternal suffuses the consciousness of time, and we feel united with that which is unchanging and all-fulfilling.

Though mine was not the good fortune of seeing a divine incarnation, I have had the privilege of knowing some very highly illumined persons. From this experience I can judge what the presence of a divine incarnation must be: what joy, power, and peace, what sense of truth and illumination it must mean. Such consciousness comes not only to the more or less intimate disciples of a divine incarnation but also to others.

There was a man, illiterate and low-born, living near the gate of a temple in which an incarnation of God dwelt. He noticed that people came to the temple with troubled faces, but departed filled with joy. So he made inquiries and was told that whoever visited the saint in the temple experienced this change. One evening he made his way into the sacred precincts and found the great teacher alone. Kneeling at his feet, he said, “Sir, I see people come here full of misery, but when they leave, their worries have vanished and they are filled with heavenly joy. I too crave this blessing.” The teacher’s heart was touched and he blessed him, saying, “Yes, you too shall have this.” I have heard that the man became a true devotee and in his dying hour was deeply absorbed in the consciousness of God.

All feel that tremendous uplifting power in the presence of a divine incarnation. How shall we know that God exists? How can we learn what God is? By reading books or through philosophical reasoning? These means are all good and necessary, but they are not enough. We may have a fireplace and a quantity of wood, but without fire we cannot have a blaze. Words, reasoning, knowledge—all are useless unless the spark of divine fire is there. Seeing a divine incarnation, we become convinced that God is real, and a spark of fire is communicated to our heart. Whatever we do with earnest sincerity becomes so much fuel cast into the blaze.

Some may say, “We have never met a divine incarnation. How then can we obtain that spark?” Here we are face to face with another mystery of divine incarnation. If God is incarnated, from whence does he come into our realm? From heaven? We have asked ourselves where heaven is and have found it to be everywhere. So when we think about God’s descent to the earth and His being born as a human being, and when we ask from whence He comes, we already know He must come from Vaikuntha, the world of light which is everywhere. He is in me, in you, in everything that exists, and when He is born as a man, He does so by emerging from our own hearts. How then can we say there is no spark of the divine fire within us?

When God becomes incarnated, we contribute a part of our own self to make the incarnation. He not only assumes our nature but also comes out of the core of our own being! He is the Soul of our soul, and by the very act of springing from our heart, He causes a stirring within our depths. If a divine incarnation is born even in an obscure corner of the earth, He does so by creating a profound stir in the hearts of beings. Thus, when divinity incarnates, we, who are otherwise ignorant, participate in the accomplishment of this great mystery, the incarnation of God.

To think that God is separate from us is neither true nor intelligent. Swami Vivekananda said, “After all my experience, this is the conclusion at which I have arrived: there is only one God—He that exists in all these infinite forms; there is no other God.” When I apply this idea to the mystery of divine incarnation, I cannot but conclude that it is out of our own hearts, out of the very center of our being, that He comes. The contemporary generation is bound to be affected by the incarnation of God.
But when historians trace the spirit of a divine incarnation, they say that even a century before his appearance signs of his advent become manifest in the struggles of lesser men to express truths found afterward to be aspects of his life and message. Then, in the divine incarnation, these are fully embodied, so the divine incarnation is in evidence even before he appears on earth, and long after he vanishes from it. Therefore, he can truly be said to dwell among men previous to his birth and for generations, sometimes for centuries, after his death. There is a belief that the power of a divine incarnation persists for five centuries. I do not know to what extent this belief can be supported, but it is in no sense incredible. To him who is the Eternal, the Infinite One, centuries are nothing.

If the power of a divine incarnation lasts through many centuries but gradually wanes, the various generations coming within the span of those centuries do not participate to the same degree in the blessings of the divine incarnation. Those who are contemporaneous with him become illumined easily, but ages after his passing, a time comes when his light seems to vanish from the earth. Darkness settles down, and it is long before the light flashes forth again. If we compare the dark periods with the periods when the world is flooded with the light of a divine incarnation, it is easy to understand how the light lessens the struggle of men in gaining illumination.

Do you realize how much effort is necessary to attain a little knowledge, how persistent is the pattern of our personality, and how very difficult it is to break it? Of course, we seldom try to destroy that pattern, because it supports our ego. As long as we have the slightest desire to enjoy the ego—be it in the name of the senses, the mind, or the spirit—the limitations of our personality will persist. Only he who has given up all desire for enjoyment, gross or subtle, can change his personality. Without complete renunciation, a person struggles for many years, only to find himself almost the same in the end. For a time he may seem to change, but the old habits, doubts, and impressions return. Though this sounds pessimistic, it is no more so than the facts concerning the operation of any law.

But if we are fortunate enough to come in contact directly or indirectly with a divine incarnation, or even if we live after his departure while the inner movement of his special earthly manifestation continues, many extraordinary changes take place in us without any effort on our part.

Sri Ramakrishna expressed this in a beautiful way: When we travel on a river our boat must follow the river’s winding course; but if a flood comes and the whole countryside is inundated, there is no longer any need to follow the river’s course—we can go straight to our destination!

That is exactly what happens when the presence of a divine incarnation is with us. Whether his presence is still manifested through his own physical body or not, we feel it and experience a great change. I admit that those who take advantage of it consciously are more benefited than those who do not, but even the ones who are unconscious of this tremendous power active among them, will be blessed; everyone, in greater or lesser degree, will share in this divine blessing.

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**NO PRIVILEGE!**

**THE TEACHINGS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**

[We owe thanks to the anonymous person who compiled the teachings of Swami Vivekananda presented here. The source of these teachings is a lecture delivered by the swami in London in the year 1896 entitled “Vedanta and Privilege.” We found this compilation in the May 1945 issue of *The Voice of India*. The original lecture can be found in the complete works of Swami Vivekananda or online at: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Complete_Works_of_Swami_Vivekananda/Volume_1/Lectures_And_Discourses/Vedanta_And_Privilege]

The idea of privilege is the bane of human life. Two forces are constantly at work, one making caste, the other breaking it; one creating privilege, the other destroying it. And whenever privilege is destroyed, light and progress come more and more to a race.

We see the struggle between the two forces all around us. First there is the brutal form of privilege: that of the strong over the weak. Then there is the privilege of wealth: if a man has more money than others, he wants to have advantage over them. A subtler and more powerful privilege is that of the intellect: knowing more than his fellows, a man claims more privilege. Last of all and worst, because most tyrannical, is the privilege of spirituality. Thinking they know more of spirituality, of God, some persons claim superior privileges. They say, “We are the messengers of God. Bow down and worship us, ye common herd!”

None can be Vedantists and at the same time claim privileges, whether material, mental, or spiritual. Absolutely no privilege for anyone! The same power is in all men, one manifesting more, another less. The same potentiality is in everyone. How can there be any claim to privilege? All knowledge is in every soul, even in the apparently most ignorant—one only has not manifested it. Perhaps he did not have opportunity; possibly environments
were not suitable; but given a chance, he will manifest it. So the idea that some men are born superior to others has no place in Vedanta. Place all under the same circumstances and see whether or not the same intelligence manifests itself.

There never were and never can be any special messengers of God. All beings, great or small, are alike His manifestations, their difference being only in the degree of manifestation. The same eternal message, eternally given, comes to them little by little. The message is written in their hearts—it is there already—and all are struggling to express it. Some in suitable circumstances, give better expression to it than others, but as bearers of the message, all are one. What claim to superiority can there be? The most ignorant man, the most ignorant child, is as great a messenger of God as any that ever existed, and as great as any yet to come, for the infinite message is imprinted once for all in the heart of each. Wherever there is a being, it contains the infinite message of the Most High. The work of Advaita Vedanta, therefore, is to break down all privileges.

A gigantic effort was once made to preach Vedantic ethics in India, and it succeeded to a certain extent for several hundred years. Historically, those years were India’s best. I refer to the Buddhist attempt to destroy privilege. Some of the most beautiful epithets addressed to Buddha are “the breaker of castes,” “the destroyer of privileges,” and “the preacher of equality to all beings.” Yes, he preached this one idea of equality.

This practical side of Vedantic morality is as necessary today as ever—perhaps it is even more necessary—for, with the extension of knowledge and power, demand for privilege has become tremendously intensified. The idea of God and the devil, of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, contains a good deal of poetry, but the difference between God and the devil is only the difference between unselfishness and selfishness. The devil knows as much as God and is as powerful as God, only he has no holiness—that makes him the devil. Apply this idea to the modern world, where excess of knowledge and power, without holiness, makes devils of human beings. Because privilege is claimed today as never before in the history of the world, Vedanta wants to preach against it, to destroy this tyranny over the souls of men. Vedanta wants to teach the sameness of all beings—same-sightedness—for that alone will counteract the terrible intensification of privilege in the present age.

Those who have studied the Gita will recall this memorable passage: “The wise look with an equal eye on a brahmana endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and an outcaste. Relative existence has been conquered, even in this life, by those whose minds are firmly fixed in sameness; and since Brahman is one and the same in all, and is pure, they are established in Brahman.” This passage represents the gist of Vedantic morality—same-sightedness. But how is same-sightedness to be attained? It is the subjective world that rules the objective. Change the subject, and the object is bound to change; purify yourself, and the world will be purified. This one thing requires to be taught now more than ever before. We are becoming increasingly concerned about our neighbors but decreasingly so about ourselves. Why should I see evil in others? I cannot see evil unless I am evil. Unless I am weak, I cannot be miserable. Things that made me unhappy as a child, do not do so now. The subject changed, and therefore the object had to change. We shall laugh at all the things we now consider causes of misery and evil when we arrive at that wonderful state of equality and sameness which Vedanta calls attaining to freedom.

The sign of approaching freedom is more and more sameness and equality. In misery and happiness, the same, in success and defeat, the same—such a mind is nearing the state of freedom. A mind that breaks into waves at the approach of every little trouble, at the slightest provocation or danger, in what a state it must be! How can one speak of greatness or spirituality when such changes come over the mind? This instability of the mind must not be permitted. We must ask ourselves how far we can be acted upon by the external world, how far we can stand against the forces of the world. When we have succeeded in preventing all the outside forces from throwing us off our balance, then only have we attained to freedom, not before. That is salvation, that is freedom. And it is to be attained here and now, not somewhere else or in the future.

If I ask one of our priests in India if he believes in Vedanta, he answers, “Certainly, that is my religion, my very life.” “Very well, do you admit the equality of all life, the sameness of everything?” “Of course I do.” But the next moment, when a man of low caste approaches, the priest jumps aside to avoid him. “Why do you jump?” “Because his very touch would pollute me.” “But you were just saying we are all equal, that there is no difference in souls!” “Oh, for a householder that is only a theory. When I retire into a forest, I shall put it into practice.”

If one of the eminent men of noble birth and great wealth in England is asked if he, as a Christian, believes in the brotherhood of man, since all come from God, he answers in the affirmative. But in a few
No news is good news?
Not necessarily.

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, most Vedanta centers are either closed to the public or have greatly curtailed their activities in an effort to protect their members and friends from contracting the COVID-19 disease. We have received almost no news items. As reported earlier, many centers are providing an online presence.

Some day this nightmare will end and all these Vedanta centers look forward to serving their members as usual.

In lieu of news this issue, we are pleased to provide, for the convenience of our readers, a list of all the North American Vedanta centers. Unless designated by an asterisk, all centers, or subcenters, are officially affiliated with the Ramakrishna Order of India. An asterisk (*) indicates a "private" center. Kudos to the Vedanta Society of Southern California for compiling this list which appears on their website.

Arizona
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Phone : 480-656-7230
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Vedanta Society, Berkeley
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Vedanta Society of Sacramento
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Email : society@vedantasacto.org
Website : www.vedantasacto.org

Vedanta Society of California
309 Monterey Road
South Pasadena, California 91030
Phone : 323-254-1546
Website : www.sfvedanta.org
**BOOK REVIEW**

*How to Get Along with Others*

Using Common Sense and Ancient Hindu Wisdom:
A Practical Guide to Trouble-Free Living

By Swami Bhaskarananda
Publisher: Viveka Press
11 chapters, glossary and index
128 pages
Soft cover, $9.95

[This review appeared in the October 2020 issue of *The Vedanta Kesari* for the Indian edition of this book. Reprinted by permission.—ed.]

The subtitle says it all—"A Practical Guide to Trouble-Free Living"; there is nobody who could resist such a guide since life today, being more complex and stressful than ever before, requires more guidance than at any other time in human history.

The book consists of eleven chapters with intriguing titles. As a sample: ‘How to Get Along With Your Spouse’, and ‘How to Get Along With Your Family Members’ as well as ‘How to Get Along With Those Who Are Not Members of Your Family’. These three chapters by themselves cover the entire gamut of the people the average human being has to encounter through the course of his/her life.

The book is based on Sage Kapila’s method of interpreting human behaviour with the help of the gunas (Preface). The initial chapter explains the concept of the three gunas, a part of every human being’s mental and emotional make-up. Subsequent chapters give detailed descriptions of possible behaviours with personal examples, followed by antidotes to conflicts, which lead to peace, understanding and co-operative living with both family members and outsiders.

The book has been written with a great deal of humour, wisdom, and a deep understanding of the human predicament and is a real guide to steer us through the difficult and sticky situations all of us find ourselves in from time to time. The virtues of kindness, non-interference, tolerance, the wisdom of seeing only the good in others while turning a blind eye to the bad, are extolled and made to seem easy to follow. Swami Bhaskarananda has shown how, by using our common sense and fellow-feeling, we can defuse potentially explosive situations and steer our way through turbulent waters to a safe and peaceful haven and emerge relatively unscathed.

This book should be made compulsory reading for college students who are on the brink of starting real life so that they arm themselves against disillusionment and unhappiness.

—Reviewed by Prema Raghunath

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Swami Adiswarananda (1925–2007), a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, was the head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York from 1973 to 2007.

Swami Ashokananda (1893–1969), a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, was head of the Vedanta Society of Northern California in San Francisco from 1932 to 1969.

Swami Bhaskarananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, is the editor-in-chief of *Global Vedanta* and, since 1974, the leader of the Vedanta Society of Western Washington, Seattle.

Charles Mathias, a devotee of the Vedanta Society in Seattle, is a gifted cartoonist and artist. The cartoons contained in this issue of *Global Vedanta* are his contributions.

Swami Satprakashananda (1888–1979), a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, was the head of the Vedanta Society in St. Louis, Missouri from 1937 to 1979.

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), was the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and founder of the Ramakrishna Order. In 1893 he brought the universal teachings of Vedanta out of India and introduced them to the rest of the world.