

Vedanta Society of Providence

Newsletter Wednesdays 2021

Website: <https://www.vedantaprov.org>
Facebook: www.facebook.com/VedantaProvidence
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/vedantaprov>
Blog: www.vedantaprovidence.blogspot.com

Newsletter Sept 29

As of Sunday September 12th the standard September to June schedule has resumed.
This schedule includes: twice daily meditation sessions (morning and evening), chanting, readings, Sunday service, Tuesday classes and Friday classes.

Important: In-person Attendance to all Programs is welcome -ONLY IF –
👉 **You are fully vaccinated and you agree to wear a face-mask.**

Upcoming Programs

Thu Sept 30: Swami Abhedananda's Birthday – Special chant in the morning; birthday song and bio reading after the evening Arati singing.

Sat Oct 02, Noon to 8:00 pm Day-long Silent Meditation. One must get in between 11:30a-noon. The doors will close at noon. One can meditate as long as one wants. One can read or walk in the building lobbies. No phone, no internet, no talking. Veg lunch, snacks, tea-coffee etc will be there.

Sun Oct 10, 11:00 am-7:00 pm: DURGA PUJA. Ritual worship, singing, lunch Prasad, Video, Dance, Lecture, Sankirtan. **Limited attendance. Attendees have to register by emailing providence@rkmm.org.** All 12 years or older must be fully vaccinated. Those who are not vaccinated because of being not 12 yet, should get tested couple of days prior.

Sat Oct 30, 9:30 am to 6:30 pm: Daylong Spiritual Retreat. Swami Sarvapriyananda will be giving this retreat on 'Awakening to Non-duality'. Prior Reg required. Reg starts from Oct 1st. Fee 20 \$. Limited seats available. Register by mail, in-person at the office before the classes or on our website.

Attending Programs at Vedanta Society in Person:

Entrance door remains open for limited times as follows: **(Full Vaccination and Face Mask Mandated)**

- Tue & Fri lectures
6:45 – 7:35pm

- Sun services
4:45 – 5:05pm (From Sept 19 onwards)
- Morning meditation
5:45 – 5:55am
- Evening meditation **(Except Sunday)**
6:45 – 7:15pm

For a personal meeting with the Swami, please seek an appointment by emailing:
providence@rkmm.org

Blogs: Many interesting new blogs have been posted on our blog-post:
<https://vedantaprovidence.blogspot.com/>

Past Events

Sun Sept 26, 10:00 am-Noon: At Annisquam Village Church, 820 Washington St, Gloucester, MA 01930

Special Service to Commemorate Swami Vivekananda's lecture at that Church in Aug 1893 . The program had talks by Swami Yogatmananda, Rev Sue Koehler-Arsenault, Singing of songs about Vivekananda and lunch.

Attendance in-person was kept limited due to pandemic (60). 20+ devotees connected with Vedanta Society participated.

Daily Schedule

- Morning**
- 5:45 – 6:45 AM:** Meditation
 - 6:45 – 7:00 AM:** Chanting followed by a short reading from *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*
 - 7:00 – 7:20 AM:** A short ritual worship/Puja. Open to all, but one must enter before 5:55 am
- Evening** *(Except on Sundays)*
- 7:00 – 7:15 PM:** Aarti (devotional music), with a short reading from 'Uniqueness of Sri Ramakrishna' by Swami Bhuteshananda
 - 7:15 – 8:00 PM:** Meditation. Open to all. but one must enter before 7:10 pm

Weekly Schedule

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| Fri. Oct 01 | 7:00 – 8:30 pm: Arati, Meditation. Study Class on 'Stories from Srimad Bhagavatam' |
| Sun Oct 03 | 5:00 – 6:30 pm Sun service lecture on NON-DUALITY IN JUDAISM by Swami Yogatmananda, followed by the vesper service. |
| Tue. Oct 05 | 7:00 – 8:45 pm: Arati, meditation and Regular class on 'Sri Ramakrishna and His Divine Play' |

Synopses of Past Classes:

Stories from Srimad Bhagavatam (Fridays)

Sept 24 Class 63

Story of Daksha

Because Sri Rudra did not show respect to Daksha, who thought himself to be the most prominent figure, he was very angry with Sri Rudra and cursed him. Nandiswara, an ardent follower of Sri Rudra, counter-cursed Daksha and his admirers there, more fiercely. That prompted Bhrigu, a Vedic Scholar, to curse Sri Rudra and his followers in a worse manner. Many years elapsed in this way and Daksha's enmity towards Sri Rudra went on increasing. Sati was caught in the middle of her father's fierce hatred towards her husband and her own affinity to her parents and family. We must remember the importance of reconciliation. When a tiff or misunderstanding occurs, we should not hold onto the anger. If we hold onto it, it will go on increasing and the mind won't be able to turn towards anything higher. Attachments function the same way as anger, namely they do not allow us to see the truth. Thus, Sati could not accept the sane advice of her husband Sri Rudra. The impediments to our spiritual life--evil tendencies, anger, lust etc.--continue to grow unless we conscientiously eliminate them. Likewise, the good feelings when purposely cultivated through meditative practices, grow too. As aspirants, we must weed out thoughts that impede our spiritual life and counteract them with thoughts of love.

Law and Morality – Sun, Sep 26

Immanuel Kant was obsessed with finding a universal moral law. According to him whatever is done as duty is moral. The Utilitarians discussed morality in the light of utility. The idea of rationality in morality has been prominent. Throughout history, debates over the basis of morality have been raging. Finding a universal morality valid at all times, for all circumstances, has been elusive. Logician-mathematician Kurt Gödel concluded that there is no rational basis for rationality. In the Brahma Sutra, it is stated that logic depends on who is using it, in what circumstances, and how intelligent the person is. Legal arguments depend on the skills of the lawyer. The Kathopanishad notes the difference between what I like and what is right – which is a good basis for moral behavior. People have different ideas of what is right. Learning to separate what we like from what is right requires training because likes and dislikes have a strong hold on us. There would be no need for law on a deserted island. Law is necessary to curb the opposite of moral tendencies. Tyranny takes place when religion colludes with politics. The Mahabharata states that the intention to help is moral and the intention to hurt is immoral. We must do our duty irrespective of the consequences. Swami Vivekananda said that Advaita alone explains morality because the same Self is in all, so when I hurt someone, I am hurting myself.

Sri Ramakrishna and His Divine Play

Tue Sep 28, 2021: "Sri Ramakrishna & His Divine Play" by Swami Yogatmananda

The Master as a Guru: Conclusion

Page# 632 - 633

While Sri Ramakrishna was like us in that he experienced disease, bereavement etc., He was completely different from us in that He had no identification with body. We create an illusory

dividing line between “I” and the “world”. Our suffering is rooted in this distinction that Sri Ramakrishna was completely free from. The purpose of His life is to impart this knowledge to others.

Sri Ramakrishna could use the body to its greatest capacity because He wasn't attached to it and had no desires for selfish enjoyment. We are perfect on the inside but we live in the delusion of imperfection and seek perfection outside. Our desires color our perception and distort our understanding. Being devoid of such desires and delusion Sri Ramakrishna could clearly see things around Him, store and retrieve them very efficiently, when needed. Swami Vivekananda too read so much and had so much knowledge on variety of subjects that he stored and retrieved very efficiently. They could do it because their minds were clear of clutter that is caused due to worldly desires. Less selfish the person, better is the learning.

Sri Ramakrishna used His keen observation to cite examples from our day-to-day life and explain abstract truths. For example, to illustrate the Sankhya concepts of Purusha (conscious but inactive principle) and Prakriti (unconscious but active principle that becomes active due to Purusha) He used the illustration of rural weddings of the olden days where the wife manages all wedding arrangements while the husband smokes hubble-bubble but provides implicit support to all the arrangements.