



Love knows no reward. Love is always for
love's sake.

(Swami Vivekananda)



LOOKING INWARDS (The highest form of love)

Love for love's sake? To us ordinary human beings, it seems like a most difficult task to love unconditionally. Let's ask ourselves honestly when was the last time we spoke lovingly to a family member when they were rude to us, or the last time we didn't judge an action of a sibling. How about when we blame someone for not doing something for us without stopping to think if we are being selfish? Is rudeness, judgement, blame, selfishness justified with our loved ones? If we cannot love each other without petty emotional upheavals, can we assert that we truly love? Swamiji tells us that true love is that love that is only for love's sake. It has giving not asking or taking as its key ingredient. He adds that true love causes bliss and never pain. When we can give of ourselves wholly without any expectations or self-importance, we can say we have succeeded in loving unconditionally.

The Editorial Team

The Triangle of True Love (Swami Vivekananda's Views), by Harish Dhyani from Mumbai

We have all heard of a love triangle – now, let's see what Swamiji spoke about when he symbolised love as a triangle.

The first angle is that love asks for nothing – it gives everything. In ordinary relationships, the person who truly loves will expect nothing from the other. Even from God, a person who truly loves will not beg – rather he/she will accept God's will without question. A beggar's love is no love at all.

The second angle of the triangle of love is that love knows no fear. Swamiji spoke of mothers who find sudden strength to snatch a child from the jaws of a tiger. True Love knows no fear. It conquers all evil. According to Swamiji, the fear of God is the beginning of religion, but the love of God is the end of religion. All fear has died out and there is just pure unconditional love that the worshipper feels.

The third angle of the love-triangle is that love is its own end. It can never be the means. The man who says, "I love you for such and such a thing", does not love. What is the end and aim of love? Love itself is the goal as there can be nothing higher than love.

Swami Vivekananda himself was the embodiment of love – he could be tough and firm at times but his brother disciples, his own disciples and all those who were blessed to know him felt his unconditional love for them.



(No expectation)



(No fear of rejection)

Previous issues of VIVA newsletters (in both English and Hindi) can be accessed at <https://viva.rkmm.org/>



VOL No. 3. Issue No. 2 VIVA NEWSLETTER (ENGLISH MONTHLY)

Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

Practical Spirituality for All

Why expectations cause misery, by Rahul Kharwade from Pune

Expectations can stir a complex dance of emotions within family and friends, often leading to either blissful fulfilment or, regrettably, a sense of disappointment. When we anticipate someone meeting our expectations, it brings immense joy. However, the flip side is that unmet expectations can breed misery. The issue lies in the magnitude we assign to our expectations, creating a mental image of their fulfilment. Sometimes, the people involved are unaware of the expectations placed upon them, adding a layer of complexity.

Individuals within the same family or background may have divergent perspectives and actions, shaped by the unique wiring of their brains. This diversity can make it challenging to consistently align with someone else's expectations. The crux of the problem often lies in communication — the gap between what is expected and what is understood. It's crucial to realize that what might seem significant to one may not carry the same weight for another.

The simplicity of accepting differences and embracing open communication can alleviate the misery caused by unmet expectations. Rather than viewing expectations as rigid demands, we can strive to see them as flexible threads weaving through the tapestry of relationships. By acknowledging these differences and communicating openly, we can transform the narrative from one of distress to a celebration of the unique qualities that make each relationship special.

MOVEMENT – VIVA Events and Updates

1. VIVA Showcase – To showcase the activities of VIVA and get participation of the local community, a public function was organized with the help of the local press. About 150 people participated from diverse backgrounds. The event was held on December 25, 2023.

2. Winter Workshops at VIVA – VIVA had another round of winter workshops for children from the 4th to the 9th of January 2024.

This time we were privileged to have the children of the Arth Foundation joining in as participants. The younger children aged approximately between 8-12 years joined in sessions on 'awakening of possibilities.' The children learnt Swami Vivekananda's fundamental ideas about self-confidence and courage through stories and art.

The older children aged approximately between 13-16 years participated in sessions on 'effective and empathetic communication', using role plays, discussions and group work. This group learnt the importance of active listening, active observation, proper speech etiquette while dealing with people among other things.



Revered Swami Shantatmananda addressing the gathering on December 25, 2023.



The day of the grand finale of the winter workshops for children of the Arth Foundation. The children are seen here with mentor and founder Mrs. Neelam Sood, other teachers from the Arth foundation and the VIVA faculty.

Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

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3. Youth Connect – On January 12, 2024, the birth date of Swami Vivekananda, VIVA launched 'Youth Connect', a program to be conducted every Sunday for the youth. This program will provide a platform to read and connect with Swami Vivekananda to discuss, relevant present-day problems and solutions and to calm the mind through guided meditation. Subsequently, the first session was held on Sunday, January 21, 2024.

4. Facilitator's Development Workshop - This was held for teachers of Kendriya Vidyalaya on the primary school value program, 'Awakening' at VIVA on Saturday, January 20, 2024.



Revered Swami Shantatmananda interacting with the youth on the inauguration day of the 'Youth Connect.'



Images from the Awakening Teacher's training

ASK SWAMI SHANTATMANANDA

A reader writes:

Is unconditional love possible for ordinary people like us?

Swami Shantatmananda replies:

Unconditional love is possible only for spiritually evolved people. If you truly love God then that love would flow as unconditional love for others.

What Girish Chandra Ghosh, famous dramatist from Bengal and a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa (fondly, 'Girish Babu') thought of Swami Vivekananda (Source: A Diary of a Disciple by Sharat Chandra Chakravarty)

One day Swami Vivekananda was engaged in discussion of the Vedas with a disciple. Girish Babu interrupted by questioning whether out of all the teachings of the Vedas, Swamiji had found any way out of the profound miseries of the country, the wailings of grief, all the starvation, the crimes of adultery and the many horrible sins. Girish Babu painted over and over again the horrid picture of society. Swamiji listened, quiet and speechless. The thought of the sorrows of his fellowmen caused tears to fall and in order to hide his feelings Swamiji rose and left the room. Girish Babu then told the disciple that he didn't honour Swamiji for his knowledge but that he honoured him for his great heart which made him retire weeping at the sorrows of his fellow beings. Girish Babu said later that their Guru, Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, had for this reason only declared Swamiji greater than all others in spiritual competence.

Swami Vivekananda insisted that what we need to cultivate is patience, purity, perseverance and above all Love.



Girish Chandra Ghosh

READER'S SECTION

Dear readers, what emotions do you feel when you see the picture on the left? Please title your email 'Answer to Reader's Question' at the email address given below.



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