Dear Readers,

The Vedanta Kesari is one of the oldest cultural and spiritual magazines in the country. Started under the guidance and support of Swami Vivekananda, the first issue of the magazine, then called Brahmvadin, came out on 14 Sept 1895. Brahmvadin was run by one of Swamiji’s ardent followers Sri Alasinga Perumal. After his death in 1909 the magazine publication became irregular, and stopped in 1914 whereupon the Ramakrishna Order revived it as The Vedanta Kesari.

Swami Vivekananda’s concern for the magazine is seen in his letters to Alasinga Perumal where he writes: ‘Now I am bent upon starting the journal.’ ‘Herewith I send a hundred dollars…. Hope this will go just a little in starting your paper.’ ‘I am determined to see the paper succeed.’ ‘The Song of the Sannyasin is my first contribution for your journal.’ ‘I learnt from your letter the bad financial state that Brahmvadin is in.’ ‘It must be supported by the Hindus if they have any sense of virtue or gratitude left in them.’ ‘I pledge myself to maintain the paper anyhow.’ ‘The Brahmvadin is a jewel—it must not perish. Of course, such a paper has to be kept up by private help always, and we will do it.’

For the last 104 years, without missing a single issue, the magazine has been carrying the invigorating message of Vedanta with articles on spirituality, culture, philosophy, youth, personality development, science, holistic living, family and corporate values.

Over the years, production and publication costs have gone up manifold. A non-commercial magazine like this can continue its good work only with the generous financial support and active assistance of well-wishers.

Hence, we appeal to our readers and admirers of Swamiji to support us by donating to the following schemes:

PERMANENT FUND
To become self-supporting

To establish the magazine on firm financial footing we need ONE CRORE RUPEES for the Permanent Fund. Please contribute generously.
Names of the donors will appear in the magazine.
Once a year, please sponsor at least one page in one issue of The Vedanta Kesari.

In a year (12 issues including a Special Issue) we need 600 pages to be sponsored. If you sponsor more pages, it will help us reach the target faster and enhance overall quality. The sponsor’s name will appear in the margin of the page.

**Sponsorship per page:** Rs. 1000/-

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Please gift a copy of The Vedanta Kesari to school, college, university, and public libraries.

This will take India’s timeless spiritual and cultural heritage, and the message of Vedanta-Ramakrishna-Vivekananda to a wider section of youth. You can select any library in India, or let The Vedanta Kesari choose one.

Name of sponsors and libraries enrolled will be published in The Vedanta Kesari.

**Gift Subscription per library:** 500/-

Library will receive the magazine free for 3 yrs.

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1. You can send donations either by Cheque/DD/MO or Bank Transfer or Online Payment.

2. **Cheque / DD / MO** in favour of: ‘Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai’

   **Post Address:** Sri Ramakrishna Math, # 31, Ramakrishna Math Road, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004.

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c) Please give your PAN Number for donations ₹10,000 and above.

d) All donations are exempt from Income Tax under section 80G of the [Indian] I.T.Act, 1961.
What is Shraddha?

The Elements of Shraddha

- Faith in oneself & one’s capacities
- Positive ‘can-do approach’
- Positive belief in one’s future
- Viewing oneself as a ‘creator of one’s destiny’

> Explore this framework...

Coming up in the next three issues...

SERIES 2: ISSUE 2:
Developing shraddha in oneself

SERIES 2: ISSUE 3
Expanding one’s circle of shraddha

SERIES 2: ISSUE 4
Harnessing the power of shraddha

To preach the doctrine of Shraddha or genuine faith is the mission of my life...
Exploring the elements of Shraddha...

**Faith in oneself & one’s capacities**

Case: A team leader asks for volunteers for new college event

This is something we’ve never done. But, I think we can do it. Why not try!

I don’t think I’m that creative. I won’t be able to do it... No point volunteering

**Positive ‘can-do’ approach**

Case: To meet the increasing demand of the international market, the management realizes that they need to double production at high speeds

It’s impossible!! We don’t have the staff, nor the funds to do it

We can do it... with a little bit of redesign of our processes, I’m sure we’ll find a way

**Viewing oneself as a ‘creator of one’s destiny’**

Example: A housing society is facing constant power cuts. After repeated complaints to the authorities, no steps have been taken. At a meeting, two strong views come up:

What can we do! We are at the mercy of the authorities! We just have to wait...

Let’s do something to transform this situation and solve the problem once and for all...

**Positive belief in one’s future**

Example: A new course is being offered in an emerging field. A group of students are considering whether to apply or not...

Sounds good... but will take long before career options in this field open up in India

It’s not for me... Such courses are meant for students from the few top colleges of the country

This is the future.. It is a great opportunity for me... I must take it up!! Let me start preparing
Shraddha is the foundation of all great achievement...

... in scientific endeavours

Scientific pursuits begin with having shraddha in a theory/hypothesis, in the scientific process, and in the belief that an answer will be found. Further, shraddha at every stage of the journey makes it possible to persist & sustain despite many obstacles & difficulties.

For example, in the 1960s, physicist Peter Higgs predicted the existence of a particle with properties that can hold the universe together & give it substance. The scientific community had initial faith in this & experimented. Over the next 40 years, they sustained their faith through several failed attempts, to observe & find the particle. Finally, in 2013, a team of scientists at CERN, found experimental evidence & observations to prove its existence through their ambitious Large Hadron Collider experiment.

... in building societies

There are two pathways by which a community can look at its own development. One is to constantly seek help from outside and in the process become dependent on the outsider, and lose shraddha in themselves. The other harder path is one of demonstrating faith in the individual’s & the community’s ability to solve their own problems. Through this pathway society becomes much stronger and creates a sustainable future.

For example, Bunker Roy, who started the Barefoot College saw rural people as ‘professionals’ in their own right (and not as weak, illiterate people who need help), with tremendous knowledge, and the willingness to learn, find their own answers & build their own lives.

He worked with the rural women and trained them to become hands-on solar engineers. One 55 year old grandmother, who got trained solar-electrified a village – the first in Afghanistan. Since then, she has solar-electrified 200 houses & they haven’t collapsed. Three such women have trained 27 more women and solar-electrified 100 villages in Afghanistan.

... in nurturing arts & culture

When we have shraddha in our own culture, we are able to build on the achievements of the past, and add to the creative achievements of a group of people. But, when we don’t have shraddha in our own past, we abandon our traditions and culture, and instead try to adopt an alien culture.

One especially powerful example can be seen in early 20th century India, when British Art was heavily promoted throughout the country. At that time, inspired by Sister Nivedita, artists Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Asit Haldar & others took up the agenda of creating a new modern art for India – which was not a copy of the West.

This group went on to become pioneers of the Bengal School of Art - a new Indian style of painting based on the core values & principles of ancient India, and leveraging the themes, methods & practices of modern art practice. This heralded a new era in Modern art in India.

... in intellectual & creative pursuits

Often, creative people have a vision or an insight into future trends/ideas. However, when they combine this vision with shraddha, they are able to act upon it & realize it in their lives.

A sterling example is Walt Disney, who never asked ‘why’, he always began with ‘why not’ - let’s do it.

He was the first to synchronize sound in a cartoon visual & the first to make a full feature length animation film. By acting on his vision he created history. Because he had faith in the destiny of animated films like no one else, he was willing to put his future on the line, and take the chance.
EACH ONE OF US CAN EMBARK ON THE POSITIVE CYCLE OF SHRADDHA

APPLICATION EXERCISE:

Take up any career goal or student goal and apply the above model into that goal

EXAMPLE
Study Goal: “Studying for the IAS entrance exam”

1. I begin by saying, “Yes, I can do it”

2. I engage with all aspects of the exam with a positive attitude, for example,
   — I choose my subjects carefully
   — I plan my study schedule well and carry out my plan in full earnestness
   — I learn new approaches to make my study process more effective
   — I challenge myself by setting targets and asking people to test me

3. I am able to take on more difficult aspects of the exam preparation, targeting my weak points, etc.

4. With every passing day, I am motivated to study more, study better and give my 100% to meeting this goal.

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Share examples of your experiences of trying out these practices, on www.vivekanandaway.org
Any questions that come up in your mind while doing so, can also be discussed here.