

Bhagirathi

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Center Sponsors Talk by Swami Tyagananda of Ramakrishna Vedanta Center of Boston

Swami Tyagananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center, Boston, delivered an enlightening lecture at UMass Dartmouth on March 26, 2001. Sponsored by the Center for Indic Studies, the lecture was titled, **Living in the present moment.**



Swamiji began by explaining how artificial partitioning of time into past, present and future has created an enormous challenge for us: we constantly seem to be either immersed in the past or thinking about the future. As a consequence, the present is too fleeting. To get out of this trap, Indian sages since Vedic times have defined the human being as trichotomous consisting of body, mind, and spirit. While the body and mind are made of matter (the latter being subtle whereas the former is gross) and are subject to the ravages of time, the spirit is pure consciousness, is immortal, and only it is the true self.

1. Face your past, including the bitter, unpleasant situations, learn from them and thus bring the past to the present
2. Death is the biggest reason we are so absorbed with the future. However, since the spirit is immortal and is the true self, there is no reason to fear death. Once you are prepared to die at any moment, you are released from the grip of the future.
3. While living in the present,
 - a) Lead a moral and ethical life
 - b) Live a religious life, i.e., one where you acknowledge some form of transcendent reality
 - c) Develop inner strength

Finally, the very concept of time is viewed differently in the Indian tradition. A question such as when did the world begin may be very legitimate for a student of Western philosophy but in the context of Indian philosophy, it is fallacious because Indian sages have considered time as a product of creation.