



Here is Vivekji's summary of main points that came out of the Mississauga class on The Dark Knight. A fine example of the dynamic and unique approach that CHYK has to teaching and exploring Vedanta. These principles permeate existence, and there is no limit to the examples that can be explored in modern times – the classes show that once you peer through the spiritual lens, you can see Vedanta everywhere.

"So, Dark Knight eh? Since our discussion how many have watched this powerful movie? For both those who have seen it and those who have not, watch it again and please keep the following Total Thoughts in mind..."

Total Thoughts (October 20, 2008):

Dark Knight

- Dark Knight presents a polarization of the epic Good vs. Evil fight - in the course of presenting this battle, the following topics were discussed to help draw the distinction between Batman and the Joker: dharma vs. adharma, discipline vs. chaos, detachment vs. attachment, selfless interest vs. selfish interest
- Batman wears his uniform to be able to serve as an ordinary citizen vs. the Joker wears his uniform to draw attention to himself or in other words exercising his ego
- Batman shows no fear in living or dying and remains quiet about this the entire movie vs. the Joker presents himself as fearless yet is scared in many situations (i.e. bank scene at the beginning)
- Batman has the ideal attitude of 'whatever doesn't kill me makes me stronger' vs. the Joker adopts the compromised attitude of 'whatever doesn't kill me makes me stranger'
- Batman had a tragic past yet ever lived in the present vs. the Joker also had a tragic past yet was forever talking about his scars (emotionally and physically)
- Batman exerts himself not to kill anyone exemplifying unity vs. the Joker freely takes lives exemplifying division
- Batman always acts independently (strength of body and mind) vs. the Joker who is always seeking help (weakness of body and mind)
- Batman always used his money and business clout effectively for the sake of others (i.e. fundraiser for Harvey Dent) vs. the Joker who did not (i.e. burning his money)
- Batman gave up everything to pursue more and discovered this within himself via studying/living in a Monastery - only when he learned to take care of himself was he able to take care of others - similar to Prince Siddharta who became Gautam Buddha
- Batman did not want to be Batman forever meaning he wanted Gotham City to raise itself vs. the Joker shows he was not happy with the money, nor the gangs, and never would be
- Batman served the city for the sake of service vs. the Joker openly states that if one is good at something they should not do it for free

- Batman never resorted to guns vs. the Joker and all other parties (police and criminals) did indicating the latter always took the easy way out
- Batman was disciplined in his fighting (slow and hard strikes) vs. the Joker was maniac in his fighting (fast and scattered strikes)
- Batman was affected but unswerved upon the death of Rachael Dawes vs. Harvey Dent who lost his balance and became Two Face teaching how purpose (detachment) must come before the personal (attachment)
- Batman never indulged regardless of the opportunity to (i.e. never rebuilt Wayne Manor, reading the newspaper on the ship amongst the ballerinas, threw the champagne away at the party, etc.)
- Batman was not subject to absolute power corrupting absolutely (i.e. giving the power of sonar to Lucius and then destroying this)
- The Joker claimed to be 'a man of his word' but lied many times (i.e. where Harvey Dent and Rachael Dawes were)
- The Joker claimed not to be a planner or schemer yet right from the start of the movie all of his actions were premeditated (i.e. when making the announcement to the people on the ferries he was reading off a piece of paper)
- The Joker claimed that chaos is fair - chaos is fair in the sense that everyone loses (i.e. dislike everyone) - true fairness is where everyone wins (i.e. like everyone)
- The Joker claimed that people are innately evil yet did not believe this otherwise he would not have had a third detonator for the ferries - Batman had complete faith in people which is why he pursued the Joker and not the people on the ferries
- The Joker was not a psychotic, rather a deeply egotistical personality in that he was offended when people referred to him as a freak, scum, etc.
- The Joker is symbolic of how powerful and subtle negative company (dussanga) is in how he pushed Harvey Dent into becoming Two Face - the Joker however failed to sway Batman who is symbolic of positive company (satsanga) into believing they were the same (i.e. dialogue in the holding cell and roof top)
- After Two Face fell further into his character he stopped respecting the decision of his coin (fate and fairness) and forced his intention by flipping his coin until desired (i.e. letting the Joker live vs. killing Morone by killing his driver)
- Two Face could not forgive 'the world' for his loss and acted out of revenge thereby creating only more loss (i.e. an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind) - Batman never reacted, rather acted (i.e. turned the other cheek)
- Rachael Dawes had a limited vision of the purpose and service Batman represented hence why she could not understand why Harvey Dent turned himself in as Batman and Bruce Wayne allowed this - Alfred unsuccessfully tried to make her understand this by saying that Batman was being more than a hero
- The Citizens of Gotham City were of a limited vision as well hence why they were willing to give up Batman to potentially stop the Joker - one of the title lines 'You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain' applies to this limited vision in that Batman knew what was best for Gotham City and acted accordingly yet was judged oppositely - Batman was the difficult welfare which gross minded people could not understand (i.e. amputating a limb to save the body)
- The Citizens of Gotham City were innately good in that they were consciously imitating Batman and not the Joker who forced others to be like him - this angered the Joker who then started killing such imitators - moreover the detonators on the ferries were not pressed contrary to what the Joker expected and proclaimed
- Should Batman have limits? Should Batman compromise?
- Should Batman have killed the Joker? If yes, would he still be different than the Joker?
- Is Bruce Wayne's persona Batman? Is Batman's persona Bruce Wayne? Are either/both needed?
- Could the total sonar be compared to God in that it was omnipresent and omnipotent and no individual could handle such power?
- No mention of God was depicted at all - still God is implied in that Batman was inspired to live a life of service to others meaning the vision of Oneness was within (i.e. Swami Chinmayananda's altar was his lecture halls)"

