

THE TREASURE BOX IS YOURS TO OPEN

January is a month for study of Bhakti Yoga — a spiritual path of reverence and devotion.

Here's what to expect this morning:

- a short guided meditation
- a talk of about 30 minutes
- then, we'll finish with our usual Q&A and conversation

"He who is the Lord of the Universe will teach everyone. He alone teaches us, who has created this universe; who has made the sun and moon, men and beasts, and all other beings; who has provided means for their sustenance; who has given children parents and endowed them with love to bring them up. The Lord has done so many things - will He not show people the way to worship Him? If they need teaching, then He will be the Teacher. He is our Inner Guide. " — Sri Ramakrishna

Chant OM, then guided meditation

The Sage who created the Svetasvatara Upanishad said this about what he found in his deepest contemplation:

"There the sun shines not, nor the moon and stars, nor does the lightning illumine, much less this earthly fire. He alone shining, everything shines after him. By his light all this universe shines!" — Chapter 6, Verse 14

You, as a spiritual aspirant struggling to make a little

progress in life, could easily have this reaction to the Sage's ecstatic affirmation:

"Can I — a seemingly isolated individual, making my way forward from day to day as best I can — truly share in Svetasvatara's FULL realization of this glorious truth that unifies all experience in shining bliss?"

Happily, in a number of remarkable, timeless promises, the Great Teachers of many traditions say, *Yes, you certainly can*. This morning we will review and discuss those promises, and why they were made so confidently:

This is the Treasure Box!

EXPLAIN RAJA MHJ AND THE TREASURE BOX

Let's talk about your current situation, in these three categories:

- Successes and gifts you've had so far in life
- Challenges to your continued progress, and
- Obstacles — those habits that, while they persist, can "freeze you in place."

SUCCESSSES & GIFTS:

- **HUMAN BIRTH**

Auspicious! May not seem like it; yet in time we each seem to find that this is so!

- **ATTRACTION TO SPIRITUAL LIFE**

— Ye have not chosen me, I have chosen you!

AND TO RK-SD-VK VEDANTA TEACHINGS

- Swami P: *Those who "stick on" are here by the direct will of Sri RK.*

- **COMPANY OF HOLY PEOPLE**
(nuns & monks of RK Order, and others)
PERHAPS INITIATION BY A QUALIFIED GURU
— Swamiji's definition of bija mantra
- **MAKING IT A PRIORITY TO COME HERE THIS SUNDAY MORNING**

— to bathe in the sattvic atmosphere of this inspiring Chapel. According to VK, just sitting in this place increases your sattva — that's the real reason for keeping you here for an hour this morning!

Sattva helps you feel that all-important peace of mind in which spiritual knowledge spontaneously arises within ...

Arises within? Yes, it does not come from out here; VK says you already contain everything needed to manifest and understand the highest spiritual truths. *“Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity...”*

At best, what you hear this morning is nothing more than a reminder of the Divine Wisdom that is your birthright!

Yet, since that is true: Right this minute, what obscures your awareness of that bright, shining Self?

What disturbs your peace of mind and keeps you from sustaining the clear, clean, pure sense of well being with which you're filled when you leave here on a Sunday, or after a class?

THESE ARE OUR CHALLENGES

- Habits of mind and action: WE LEAK!
 - Sri RK's parable of the farmer and the holes:

Knowledge, awareness arise; we feel them and yet they seep away

- Doubt and fear ride in on the backs of seemingly “innocent” activities and thoughts
 - *Therefore: Regularity of spiritual practice is absolutely necessary*
 - Living ethically — Yatiswarananda story
 - The Unquestioned Priorities of our daily routines:
 - There is a sense that, "I really must (fill in the blank) ...
- OR
- "I just can't take time to..."

OBSTACLES

- Lack of belief in yourself: Swamiji on this
- Fear that you are too "sinful," too worldly to make spiritual progress, that you don't deserve anything better. **This is a racket!**

COUNTERWEIGHTS — THE TEACHERS' STUPENDOUS PROMISES: REASSURANCE, AND HELP WITH CHALLENGES, OBSTACLES

— Three of Christ's promises:

- "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."
Mathew 7:7
- *Luke 11:11* "... If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will you give him a stone? or if he

ask a fish, will you give him a serpent? ..."

- "Come to me, for my yoke is easy and my mastery is gentle, and you will find rest for yourselves."

— Swami Prabhavananda, introduction to Bhagavad Gita

"An Incarnation of the Godhead and, to a lesser degree, any theocentric saint, sage or prophet is a human being who knows Who he is and can therefore effectively remind other human beings of what they have allowed themselves to forget... That if they choose to become what they potentially already are, they too can be eternally united with the Divine Ground."

— Sri Krishna:

- On the method of Karma Yoga: *"If you can understand and follow it, you will be able to break the chains of desire which bind you to your actions... Even a little practice of this yoga will save you from the terrible wheel of rebirth and death."* — BG, Ch 2
- And on your wicked, shameless days of yore: "Though a man be soiled with the sins of a lifetime, let him but love me, RIGHTLY RESOLVED, in utter devotion, I see no sinner, that man is holy. Holiness soon shall REFASHION HIS NATURE to peace eternal..." — BG, Ch 9
- "In every age I come back to deliver the holy, to destroy the sin of the sinner, to establish righteousness.

- He who knows the nature of my task and my holy birth is not reborn when he leaves this body: He comes to me.” — *BG, Ch 4*

Swami VK on Consciousness and its manifestation in us:

"Chitta... Is the mind-stuff, and Vrittis are the waves and ripples rising in it when external causes impinge on it. THESE VRITTIS ARE OUR UNIVERSE." —
from VK's introduction to RAJA YOGA

It follows that if you deliberately change your VRITTIS — if you intentionally replace tamasic and rajasic vrittis with sattvic vrittis — you will change the very nature of your universe.
(EXPLAIN, including Patanjali)

Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi:

Her teachings almost all practical examples of this principle; thinking about everyday actions differently: Broom thrown in the corner, etc. Today: when driving, replace rajasic "auto response" with compassionate thought.

Mother: "Peace of mind, forbearance, my dear — these are the two most important things." As you learn to quiet the vrittis through spiritual practices, you naturally achieve peace of mind. Still the vrittis completely, your Universe disappears! SAMADHI!

Can you do these things? In these Stupendous Promises, Sri RK says Yes.

- RK: "If you practice a little, someone will come

forward to help you."

- What does Sri RK mean by "practice a little?"
- Sri Ramakrishna said to Narendra (SW VK), "Time is too short in this life, days are shorter still. There is no time for anyone, they are all busy winning bread. But once or twice a year if they take three, four or twelve days off and do sadhana sincerely, if they cry for God for three days and three nights sincerely, God must reveal Himself to them..." ...
Just 3 days and nights ... !
- Also: One sincere tear! Take one step toward God ...!

Finally, a proof that Divine Wisdom — your radiant true Self — is everywhere:

This is from the biography of Thomas Merton — a Trappist monk: On March 18, 1958, on the corner of Fourth and Walnut streets in Louisville, Kentucky, Merton had this vision:

"In the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race ... there is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun."

THOU SHINING, EVERYTHING SHINES

The Isha Upanishad starts with this well-known verse; we will close with it:

Om
Purnamadah Purnamidam
Purnat Purnam-udachyate
Purna-sya Purnam-adaya
Purnam-eva Vashishyate
Om shanti, shanti, shanti

Om.

That is full; this is full.

This fullness has been projected from that fullness.

When this fullness merges in that fullness,
all that remains is fullness.

Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!

Q&A & Commentary — CLOSING CHANT