

GOOD MORNING... ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Please mark your calendar for a weekend Retreat** in mid-July. **Swami Chandrashekharanandaji** of the Portland, OR center will visit with us on a Saturday and Sunday, to offer his wisdom on Karma Yoga. Exact dates and schedule TBD; they will be announced soon online & in your E-news.
- **Seva Saturday for this month** is Sat, **May 18th**. Please note that date — it's the 3rd Saturday of the month rather than the usual 2nd Sat — and join us sometime between 10am and 2pm. This is an excellent way to demonstrate your dedication to the Center and its success.
- **Also note that your Center will be closed in August — no activities except Arati.** This is now our routine for each summer.

CHANT • SONG • WELCOME • TOPIC

May is a month for study of Jnana Yoga (Advaita Vedanta). As a jnana yogi, you practice discrimination, reason, detachment, and *satyagraha* (insistence on Truth). The goal is

freedom from limitation (*mukti*).

Our teachers say that all miseries in life are caused by seeing *inaccurately*. An earnest and persistent jnani may break through this misapprehension (called Maya) and see only the Divine Presence everywhere, in everything and everyone.

When we learn to see *accurately*, what will we see?

Swami Vivekananda said: “Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter. ...

“Each (one of you) is only a conduit for the infinite ocean of knowledge and power that lies behind mankind. ...”

The word Jnana means Knowledge — spiritual wisdom, born of realization, that is beyond our ability to think or speak about it. Yoga means both union and detachment. Therefore, the illumined jnana yogi is one with the deepest Truth of her or his being, and detached from the limitations of Maya (our apparent, relative reality).

Swami Vivekananda gave a number of lectures here in the West, on Jnana Yoga and how to

practice it.

In this morning's talk we will explore and discuss some of what Swamiji said, and how his teachings can be integrated into our daily lives.

Let's start with this, from Swamiji:

“Jnâna (knowledge) is ‘creedlessness’; but that does not mean that it despises creeds. It only means that a stage above and beyond creeds has been gained. The Jnâni (true philosopher) strives to destroy nothing but to help all. All rivers roll their waters into the sea and become one. So all creeds should lead to Jnana and become one.

Jnana teaches that the world should be renounced but not on that account abandoned. To live in the world and not to be of it is the true test of renunciation.

I cannot see how it can be otherwise than that all knowledge is stored up in us from the beginning. If you and I are little waves in the ocean, then that ocean is the background ...”

And about these “little waves,” the Swami said: “All souls are playing, some consciously, some unconsciously. **Religion is learning to play consciously ...**”

“The same law which holds good in our worldly life also holds good in our religious life and in the life of the cosmos.

It is one, it is universal. It is not that religion is guided by one law and the world by another. The flesh and the devil are but degrees of difference from God Himself ...”

“The real Existence is without manifestation. We cannot conceive It, because we should have to conceive through the mind, which is itself a manifestation. Its glory is that It is inconceivable. We must remember that in life the lowest and highest vibrations of light we do not see, but they are the opposite poles of existence.

There are certain things which we do not know now, but which we can know. It is due to our ignorance that we do not know them. There are certain things which we can never know, because they are much higher than the highest vibrations of knowledge. But we are the Eternal all the time, although we cannot know it. Knowledge will be impossible there.

The very fact of the limitations of the conception is the basis for its existence.

For instance, there is nothing so certain in me as my Self;

and yet I can only conceive of it as a body and mind, as happy or unhappy, as a man or a woman. At the same time, I try to conceive of it as it really is and find that there is no other way of doing it but by dragging it down; yet I am sure of that reality.

"No one, O beloved, loves the husband for the husband's sake, but because the Self is there. It is in and through the Self that she loves the husband. No one, O beloved, loves the wife for the wife's sake, but in and through the Self." And that Reality is the only thing we know, because in and through It we know everything else; and yet we cannot conceive of It.

How can we know the Knower? If we knew It, It would not be the knower, but the known; It would be objectified. Wherever there is life, with it there is death. Life is the shadow of death, and death, the shadow of life. The line of demarcation is too fine to determine, too difficult to grasp, and most difficult to hold on to ..."

"Each soul is a circle. The centre is where the body is, and the activity is manifested there. You are omnipresent, though you have the consciousness of being concentrated in only one point.

That point has taken up particles of matter and formed them into a machine to express itself. That through which it expresses itself is called the body. You are everywhere. When one body or machine fails you, (your) centre moves on and takes up other particles of matter, finer or grosser, and works through them. (And this is) is man.

And what is God? God is a circle with circumference nowhere and centre everywhere. Every point in that circle is living, conscious, active, and equally working. With our limited souls only one point is conscious, and that point moves forward and backward.

The soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere (limitless), but whose centre is in some body. Death is but a change of centre. God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, and whose centre is everywhere. **When we can get out of the limited centre of body, we shall realise God, our true Self ...”**

“Seek the Highest, always the Highest, for in the Highest is eternal bliss. If I am to hunt, I will hunt the lion. If I am to rob, I will rob the treasury of the king. Seek the Highest.

Oh, One that cannot be confined or described!
One that can be perceived in our heart of hearts!

One beyond all compare, beyond limit,
unchangeable like the blue sky! Oh, learn the All,
holy one I Seek for nothing else!

Where changes of nature cannot reach, thought
beyond all thought, Unchangeable, Immovable;
whom all books declare, all sages worship; Oh,
holy one, seek for nothing else!

Beyond compare, Infinite Oneness! No
comparison is possible. Water above, water below,
water on the right, water on the left; no wave on
that water, no ripple, all silence; all eternal bliss.
Such will come to thy heart. Seek for nothing
else!” ...

**“Thou art Our Father, our Mother, our
dear Friend. Thou bearest the burden of
the world. Help us to bear the burden of
our lives. Thou art our Friend, our Lover,
our Husband, Thou art ourselves!”**

**Conversation/Commentary and
Regular Closing prayer**