

Holy Mother's Assurances

Vedanta Center of Atlanta

Br. Shankara

June 9, 2019

GOOD MORNING... ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Yesterday was Seva Saturday** for this month. Thanks to the few who braved the rain and got some work done around the Center.
- **On Sunday June 23rd**, starting promptly at **11am** we will hold the **Annual Meeting of the Congregation**: There will be reports from your Chairman and Treasurer, and from the Resident Minister; followed by election of Board Members. We will then retire to the Monastery for a catered lunch; *RSVP required — you will find a link in your e-newsletter and on the Center's website.*
- **July 4th Celebration** — On Thurs., July 4 at noon there will be a brief talk on Swami Vivekananda, followed by songs and short readings by the congregation. We'll then have a potluck lunch on the sunporch and outdoors, or in the monastery, depending on the weather.
- **Please mark your calendar for a weekend Retreat** on the 20th and 21st of July. **Swami Chandrashekharanandaji**, Head of the Portland, OR Vedanta Society,

will visit with us on that Saturday and Sunday to offer his wisdom on Karma Yoga.

- **Bookshop note: Cash will be accepted** for purchases only on Sundays, and on Tues. and Wed. evenings. At other times, please bring a check to buy books.
- **Please note that your Center will be closed in August — no activities except Arati.** This will be our routine, each summer.

CHANT • SONG • WELCOME • TOPIC

Update on Swami Yogeshanandaji, who is now in hospice care at the Trabuco Monastery. This was sent yesterday afternoon by Zach Wiles:

Hi Everyone,

It's about 4 pm here and I'm sitting with Swami. He is still with us, but he is peaceful and ready to go. Yet, he still has a small appetite for juice and cookies. The morphine is affecting his mind but he still has his trademark charm. He speaks in short phrases and goes in and out of sleep, but I can tell he appreciates small gestures like holding his hand and adjusting his covers.

The monks and attendants are very attentive. Besides the caregiver, there is an informal vigil of brothers trading watches sitting by his bed. And he is still making jokes.

He must be adjusted in bed every two hours to avoid bedsores.

“You’re all amateurs” he smirked as two swamis and I were hamfistedly (it that a word?) trying to roll him on his side. “Hey, we’re doing this for free, you know!” I retorted.

(Swami) Sarvadevananda is here this weekend and spent some time with him. A small trickle of visitors comes in to say hello and drop off sweets.

I think later I will move the small shrine from his room into this room; it’s very simple, with a picture of his guru.

The atmosphere is very calm, serene and timeless - save (for) the constant whirring of the oxygen machine in the corner.

He has absolutely no fear or regret and is patiently waiting (and slightly complaining in a joking way) to be recalled back to God.

More later... Jai Ma — Zach

Second welcome ...

June is a month for study of Bhakti Yoga. A bhakti yogi (bhakta) establishes a devotional relationship with God through study, prayer, ritual, and worship. As a bhakta, you practice giving every action, thought, emotion, perception and tendency “a Godward turn.” All your energies and attributes, both positive and negative, are offered to the Divine Presence. Your prayer is for self-surrender and, ultimately, union with your Belovèd.

Today's topic is ...

Holy Mother's Assurances

The affectionate term Holy Mother refers to Sri Sarada Devi; she was Sri Ramakrishna's wife and spiritual counterpart, and his first disciple. She lived from 1853 to 1920. After the Master passed away in 1886, Holy Mother carried on his ministry, serving as guide and inspiration for his new monastic order, and for numberless disciples.

Holy Mother was the ideal disciple, nun, wife, teacher, and mother to her many spiritual children. The Master said that Holy Mother was an incarnation of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, art, wisdom and learning. Yet, she did not write books or play a musical instrument.

Instead, Holy Mother served others so simply and humbly that many took this Mistress of the Universe to be an ordinary village woman. Inwardly, she regarded the whole world as her own, and every living being as her child. Holy Mother loved and accepted everyone.

Many of her close disciples recorded their conversations with her.

As spiritual aspirants, we can all take great solace in the memories they left for us. Here are a few of Holy Mother's assurances, to which we will add others for our discussion this morning:

- My child, you are my own. Truly you are my very own.
- **Disciple:** Those who receive your blessing now are fortunate indeed. What will happen to those who come later?
Holy Mother: What do you mean? Shall they not receive it? God is everywhere, all the time. There is the Master; by his mercy everything will be done. Is it not so in other countries?
- He who has really prayed to the Master even once has nothing to fear. By praying to him constantly, one gets ecstatic love (prema bhakti) through his grace. This prema, my child, is the innermost thing of spiritual life.
- You see, my son, it is not a fact that you will never face dangers. Difficulties always come, but they do not last forever. You will see that they pass away like water under a bridge.
- Those who have come here and think of the Master, will certainly see their Chosen Ideal one day.

If they are not able to do so during their lifetime, they will at least have his vision at the moment before their death.

- **Swami Premananda:** Who has understood Holy Mother? She does not reveal the slightest trace of the power in her. The Master showed the power of knowledge. But what do you see in here? Even that power is effaced. But with all that, what great power she possesses!

Hail, Mother! Hail, Mother! Victory unto you, the fountain of all power! The poison we dare not swallow, we push to her. And Mother welcomes it. What infinite power! What immeasurable compassion! Hail, Mother! How insignificant we are! We did not even see the Master behaving that way. How much he tested people before he accepted them!

And what do you find here? Strange. Surprisingly strange. She gives shelter to one and all. She eats food offered by everyone and digests it all. *Mother! Mother! Hail, Mother!* Remember her infinite compassion in pleasure and pain, in prosperity and adversity, in scarcity and epidemic, in war and turmoil. *Hail, Mother! Hail, Mother!*

- **Yogananda** (*about Holy Mother at Vrindavan*): We were all surprised to see the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna unified with her. We realized that the Master and the Mother were in essence one... The Master told mw many times that there was no difference between his body and that of the Mother. ...

I have heard from Yogin-Ma and Golap-ma that the Mother at times openly spoke of herself as Radha. At Vrindavan, through the Mother's grace, I could understand and appreciate the divine lila of Krishna.

- Keep a picture of the Master before you, and know for certain that he is always with you... Shed tears and sincerely pray, "O Lord, draw me towards you, give me peace of mind." ... Have devotion to the Master, and whenever you are in distress, speak it out to him."
- There is no need of rituals in offering food to the Master. The Mantra one gets from one's guru is enough for everything."
- You may think of me as Radha or in any other way that appeals to your mind. It will be enough if you think of me even as your mother.
- I shan't be able to turn away anybody if he addresses me as Mother... If anyone begs me by

calling me “Mother,” I shan’t be able to contain myself.

- I know whether you are making spiritual progress or not. How can you understand it? You’ll achieve everything, you’ll achieve everything!

Most obstacles in worship are not external; they are internal. They will gradually fall off one after another by taking the Master’s name and by meditation. Do your duty. Don’t pay attention to whether the blemishes of the mind are persisting or not.

- **Disciple:** Mother, did you come with all the Incarnations?

Holy Mother: Yes, my son.

Qs & conversation • CLOSING CHANT