

- **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 Chandrashekharaandaji**, Head of the Portland, OR Vedanta Society, will visit with us on that Saturday and Sunday to offer his wisdom on Karma Yoga.
- **Swami Yogatmanandaji** called yesterday to let us know he will come for his annual visit on the weekend of Nov. 30-Dec. 1! (introduce)

- **Bookshop note: Cash will be accepted** for purchases only on Sundays, and on Tues. and Wed. evenings, before and after class. 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

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

Hi everyone,

Got into Trabuco this afternoon and I cautiously say that Swami is doing a lot better, all things considered. They started him on a cannabis oil treatment (~~Baba Salve – Riek Simpson Oil~~) and it has helped remarkably with his body pain and he is taking a lot more food. I see a lot more strength in him that last weekend. The doctor visited a few days ago and was surprised at his condition, saying that he doesn't see a person in which death is imminent.

Swami is still sleeping a lot and (is) bedridden ~~on a catheter~~, but today he was able to get into a wheelchair and they took him on a short stroll outside.

He is able to have small conversations and enjoys having visitors. Ravi and Subu were both here today. The monks are taking great care of him and he has nature documentaries to watch, and the nightly readings that usually happen in the library are being conducted in his bedroom. There's a harmonium in the room as well, so it seems there is some devotional singing, as well. Next week there will be blood tests to check the kidney function and a reevaluation of the situation. There is some talk of ending the hospice, but only if the kidneys have improved. That being said, the level of care and attention will remain, I expect.

So, I think we are all surprised - especially Swami!
Jai Ma, Zach

TOPIC OF TODAY'S TALK:

Your Spiritual Father's Guiding Hand

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.

This morning, let's talk about your relationship with your Father —

When you were a small child, did you ever walk with your father on a path that was narrow or uneven? Weren't you more comfortable — less likely to fall — when he held your hand?

If you held his, you might let go at just the wrong moment and take a tumble. When he held yours, that wrong moment was the time when he gripped your hand more tightly, making sure that even if you stumbled you would keep your feet.

Sri Ramakrishna used this relationship as a metaphor, encouraging us to offer our “hand” to our spiritual father. Religious literature is rich with this personalization of the Divine Presence, from the Hebrews' God the Father to the Incas' Tata Inti. Our cultural celebration of Father's Day seems a natural time to discuss the Divine Being's paternal aspect. This morning, we will explore the Fatherhood of God.

Here's a fine example of that fatherhood, from Ch. 6 of *Bhagavad Gita*. Arjuna asks a question that may have crossed many of our minds:

ARJUNA: *Suppose a man has faith, but does not struggle hard enough? His mind wanders away from the practice of yoga and he fails to reach perfection. What will become of him then?*

When a man goes astray from the path to Brahman, he has missed both lives, the worldly and the spiritual. He has no support anywhere. Is he not lost, as a broken cloud is lost in the sky? This is the doubt that troubles me, Krishna, and only you can altogether remove it from my mind. Let me hear your answer.

KRISHNA: **No, my son.** *That man is not lost, either in this world or the next. No one who seeks Brahman ever comes to an evil end. Even if a man falls away from the practice of yoga, he will still win the heaven of the doers of good deeds, and dwell there many long years. After that, he will be reborn into the home of pure and prosperous parents.*

A very reassuring promise! What else has your spiritual Father given you?

You have a garment, as it is called in *Bhagavad Gita*, your “spacesuit” to wear in this environment of time, space and causation. It allows you to “translate” the fields of vibration in which you are immersed into an experience of name and form.

That's what your body itself is: A highly complex system of vibration that allows you to be • conceived • born • grow into an adult • sustain yourself as a participant in this apparent reality of name and form • in many cases replicate yourself, and then • when its particular usefulness is exhausted, your garment drops away ...

That you learn to make a world of name and form out of Universe's infinite fields of vibration, and then interact with your world and Universe and all they contain, is an incredible feat of power.

Yet, that achievement comes at the expense of a kind of hypnosis; we become entranced with the world's appearance and with our bodies.

This combination weaves a "veil" over the truth of the matter - in Sanskrit, Maya - which conceals the Truth of who and what we are!

WHAT? Why would your Father do that?

- "Whatever exists has a reason; find that reason." — *Swami Vivekananda*
- *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras: Ch2, Sutra 21*: "The object of experience (the Universe) exists only to serve the purpose of the Atman." (Remember, you ARE that Atman — *tat tvam asi!*)
- *Chandogya Upanishad*: "Although I am One, I shall become many ..."

- *Holy Mother's story* about the “birth(s)” of the Universe

Compassion of the Father:

He sends his Sons and Daughters to lead you back Home. They tell you who They are, if you seek them and believe in Them.

Bhagavad Gita, Ch 9, V17:

Sri Krishna said: “I am the father of this universe, the mother, the support, and the grandsire. I am the object of knowledge, the purifier and the syllable Om”

BG, Ch 8, V 4

“Physical nature is known to be endlessly mutable. The universe is the cosmic form of Brahman, and *I am that Lord represented as the Atman, dwelling in the heart of every embodied being.*”

From Ch. 9 again “Maya makes all things: what moves, what is unmoving... that is why the world spins, turning its wheel through birth and through destruction.

Fools pass blindly by the place of my dwelling here in the human form, and of my majesty they know nothing at all, who am the Lord, the soul.”

New Testament, John 17, 20-22:

Jesus Christ said to his Father: 20 “I do not ask (your blessing) on behalf of (my disciples) alone, but for (all) those also who believe in Me ...; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one ...”

Summary of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, with emphasis on the role and attributes of the Father — Luke, Ch. 15.

The compassionate Father of this parable is different from the Father of the Old Testament Prophets, as we see in these selections from —

The Book of Isaiah Ch1:V2-20

New International Version (NIV)

Isaiah says:

2 Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth!

For the Lord has spoken:

And then he quotes the God the Father he knows:

“I reared children and brought them up,

but they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” ...

15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I hide my eyes from you;
even when you offer many prayers,
I am not listening.

Your hands are full of blood!

16 Wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds out of my sight;
stop doing wrong.

17 Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.

Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.

18 “Come now, let us settle the matter,”
says the Lord.

“Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.

19 If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the good things of the land;

20 but if you resist and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword.”

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Oy vey es mir! O woe us me in that Presence! I
sing to Him: *O Father, take my hand. Pull me on.
Draw me near. Fill this Heart!*

As we often do, we'll let Swami Vivekananda have the last word about our relationship with God the Father:0

SV: CW 1:9

(The) Vedas proclaim not a dreadful combination of unforgiving laws, not an endless prison of cause and effect, but that at the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and (energy), stands One "by whose command the wind blows, the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth."

And what is His nature? He is everywhere, the pure and formless One, the Almighty and the All-merciful. "Thou art our father, Thou art our mother, Thou art our beloved friend, Thou art the source of all strength; give us strength. Thou art He that beareth the burdens of the universe; help me bear the little burden of this life."

Thus sang the Rishis of the Vedas. And how to worship Him? Through love. "He is to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than everything in this and the next life."

Q&A & Commentary — CLOSING CHANT