

GOOD MORNING... ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Yesterday was Seva Saturday for this month** — As you may have read in our e-newsletter, we made special appeal last week for devotees to come and help meet a landscaping requirement from the City of Tucker. That was done, and then some! Fifteen people were here to do that and other work! Our next Seva Sat will be on Sept 8th. Join us as you can that day, and serve as you are able and is practical for you.
- **Please plan to attend next weekend's Retreat** on Karma Yoga, both Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday the 20th, the Retreat program will start at 10am and end at 4:30p. There is a change of plan about Lunch: it will be provided; you will not need to bring your own lunch. **Swami Chandrashekharaandaji**, Head of the Portland, OR Vedanta Society, will lead Saturday's gathering; there will be a reception and potluck supper for him after Arati that evening. On Sunday morning the Swami will speak on "The True Joy of Living."
- **Swami Bodhanandaji** will speak with us in Sept. this year, and **Swami Yogatmanandaji**

will come for his annual visit at the end of Nov.
(introduce both swamis)

- **Bookshop note: Cash will be accepted** for purchases only on Sundays, and on Tues. and Wed. evenings, before and after class. On other days of the week, please bring a check to buy books.
- **Also, note that your Center will be closed in August** — no activities except evening Arati. This will be our routine, each summer.

CHANT • WELCOME • TOPIC

July is a month for study of Karma Yoga, a spiritual path leading to the abandonment of selfishness. As a karma yogi, you practice offering your actions and their results, as well as your perceptions, thoughts, and feelings to the Divine Presence.

Even before fully knowing this Presence, you hold firmly to the belief that the Presence *is* within each person or other living being that you interact with or serve. Working and abiding in this spirit, you are increasingly able to release attachment to your activities and their results. This yields the freedom and contentment promised by Karma Yoga.

“Even a little practice of this yoga will save you from the terrible wheel of rebirth and death ...” — Sri Krishna, Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 2

The topic for this morning’s talk is —
Abandoning Selfishness

Sri Ramakrishna: *“...selfishness comes, unknown to us, from no one knows where.”* — Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, p. 314

Albert Einstein: *“A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a ... prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”*

Swami Abhedananda, a direct disciple of Ramakrishna: *“The moment... that we realize that this body is a part of the universal body, that this intellect is a part of the cosmic intellect, and that the knower of mind, senses, and body is not any one of these, but stands outside, and that this knower is our true self,*

then we let the body work with full consciousness that we are neither actor, worker, nor doer, and we remain untouched by the consequences of our actions. The one essential thing is never to forget that the work done by mind and body is, in reality, not performed by the true self, but by nature.” — Doctrine of Karma, pp. 82-3

Swami Ramakrisnananda: “The word ‘selfishness’ is not always understood. When by self I understand the body or the little self and do something for that self, I am selfish. But there is a Self, which is beyond this physical body. When I do something for that Self, that is worshipping God. He who lives in that higher Self is never selfish. Try to feel God inside yourself and you will overcome all selfishness.

When you live constantly in the presence of that Divinity, the ego loses its power, but so long as the ego rules a (person, that person) is a bond-slave. All your anxieties and worries come from egotism and selfishness. Let go your little self and they will all disappear.” — A Dedicated Life, p. 162

HOW DO WE LET GO OF THAT LITTLE SELF?

Swami Yatiswarananda, a vice-president of Ramakrishna Order:

“For every one step forward spiritually, you must take two steps forward, morally and ethically.” — Instruction to P. Griggs, who became our beloved Swami Yogeshananda

Morally and ethically, selfishness is both gross and subtle. At the outermost level, it can be eating more food than you need. At the innermost, it may be clinging to bliss.

The *Upanishads* declare that your True Self is covered by five sheaths (*koshas*). Because each of these five layers of awareness is a unique, but distorted reflection of the Self’s perfect radiance, it has its own peculiar patterns of selfishness.

This morning we’ll discuss those five koshas, and how you experience them. We’ll review what the quotes above, and other teachings, say about how to abandon the selfishness associated with each of the koshas.

Adapted from the Yogapedia website

The *Koshas* are a way to talk about your everyday, relative reality — they are an integrated system of 5 five layers of awareness that hide the *Atman*, your true Self. This system starts with the physical body and moves inward to the core of the self.

Combined practice of karma yoga and raja yoga takes you deeper into yourself.

As you recognize each of the koshas that make up your being, you come ever closer to the true Self.

As described in the Upanishads, the five koshas are:

1. *Annamaya* kosha (food) - This outermost kosha feeds the physical body and sustains the other koshas.
2. *Pranayama* kosha (energy) - This kosha regulates the flow of prana (life-force energy) through the body. Yoga practices allow you to directly interact with this kosha.
3. *Manomaya* kosha (mind) - Manomaya is the kosha that contains and controls thoughts and emotions. Yoga practices affect this kosha, also. You can calm your mind by withdrawal from the senses, concentration, and meditation. **Mention yamas and niyamas!**
4. *Vijnanamaya* kosha (intuition - buddhi - mirror of the heart - conscience) - This kosha connects you to a deeper level of intuitive knowledge and inner wisdom. You gain access to this kosha through yoga practices of purification: study, prayer, contemplation, and meditation.
5. *Anandamaya* kosha (bliss) - The deepest layer, this kosha is made of sattva — ecstasy, love and joy.

Our tradition believes this kosha immediately “surrounds,” yet still actively disguises, the true Self. (Sattva as the “3rd robber” ...)

What is The True Self?

Nisargadatta Maharaj says:

“You are so small that nothing can pin you down. It is your mind that gets caught, not you. Know yourself as you are, a mere point in consciousness, dimensionless and timeless. You are like the point of the pencil, (yet) by mere contact with you the mind draws its picture of the world. You are single and simple, the picture is complex and extensive. Don't be misled by the picture, remain aware of the tiny point, which is everywhere in the picture.”

Selfishness of each kosha:

Annamaya - Excessive love of anything that sustains or adorns the body: food, clothing, shopping and window-shopping. Attitudes: looking down on people who use food stamps, not wanting to give to beggars

Pranamaya - Exaggerated need for “personal space” — mansions, grand activities such as formal dress parties, big vacation trips, or pilgrimages. Who lives by the river or at the beach or the lake? (living near water is auspicious for the prana).

Mark Twain said, *“I am opposed to millionaires, but it would be dangerous to offer me the position.”*

Manomaya - *“Selfishness is one of the more common faces of pride. 'How everything affects me' is the center of all that matters - self-conceit, self-pity, worldly self-fulfillment, self-gratification, and self-seeking.”* — Ezra Taft Benson (LDS)

“I have been complimented many times and they always embarrass me; I always feel that they have not said enough.” — Mark Twain

Vijnanamaya - Insistence on being “right” — the world must match my vision of it — exaggerated pride of learning (esp. spiritual “knowledge”):
“Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live.”
— Oscar Wilde ... *“If there is one thing I dislike, it is the man who tries to air his grievances when I wish to air mine.”* — P.G. Wodehouse

Anandamaya - Clinging to bliss — indifference to the suffering of others — spiritual pride —

“There are no grades of vanity, there are only grades of ability in concealing it!” — Mark Twain

HOW TO OVERCOME OUR SELFISH WAYS:

“To feel much for others and little for ourselves; to restrain our selfishness and exercise our benevolent affections, constitute the perfection of human nature.” — Adam Smith

“As selfishness and complaint pervert the mind, so love with its joy clears and sharpens the vision.” — Helen Keller

We win purification by the unrelenting power of reason — “manana” — (science has found the mind is very “malleable”), our daily and moment to moment spiritual practice, and the power of love:

From **Swami Vivekananda’s *To A Friend***
(poem translated from Bengali)

*... Love selfless is the only resource --
Lo, the insects teach, embracing the flame.
The base insect's blind, by beauty charmed,
Thy soul is drunken with the wine of Love;
O thou Lover true, cast into the fire
All thy dross of self, thy mean selfishness.*

...

*Ay, born heir to the Infinite thou art,
Within the heart is the ocean of Love,
"Give", "Give away" — whoever asks return,
His ocean dwindles down to a mere drop.*

*From highest Brahman to yonder worm,
And to the very minutest atom,
Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love;
Friend, offer mind, soul, body, at their feet.*

*These are His manifold forms before thee,
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?
Who loves all beings without distinction,
He indeed is worshipping best his God.*

**Q&A and conversation —
regular Closing Prayer**