

GOOD MORNING... ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **July 4th Celebration** — This coming Thursday, July 4, there will be a Special Arati at 6pm, followed immediately by readings and reflections on Vivekananda, and freedom of the soul: a brief talk on the Swami followed by songs and short readings by the congregation (no more than 5 mins. each, please). Then a potluck supper, with fireworks, poppers & sparklers after dark.
- **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.
- **Swami Yogatmanandaji** called recently 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 • TOPIC

June has been 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.

*“He alone is worshipping God
who serves all beings.*

The living God is within you.

The living God is within you.

*Let all our passions and emotions go up unto
Him. They are meant for Him, for if they miss
their mark and go lower, they become vile; and
when they go straight to the mark, to the Lord,
even the lowest of them becomes transfigured.
All the energies of the human body and mind,
howsoever they may express themselves,*

have the Lord as their one goal ...” Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda – Vol. III P. 97 – 98

Visitor: “The English people always exhort us to be active. Isn't action the aim of life then?”

Sri Ramakrishna: "The aim of life is the attainment of God. Work is only a preliminary step; it can never be the end. Even unselfish work is only a means; it is not the end.”

The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna – P. 453

Your Bhakti-Karma Cocktail

A close friend of this Center takes a daily “cocktail” of drugs to treat his Parkinson’s Disease. Cocktail has become a common term for a prescription of two or more medicines. We’re going to give the word a “Godward turn.”

Sri Ramakrishna once said to some visitors: Go and enjoy the world. When you are sick of it, come back to me. I have the cure. As we read elsewhere in his Gospel, Ramakrishna’s prescription for his cure often was a “cocktail” of Bhakti and Karma.

This morning, we’ll explore the connection between the deep reverence that comes from the regular practice of Bhakti Yoga, and the abandonment of self-centeredness that arises from Karma Yoga.

What is the essence of Karma Yoga? Karma means action. In Ch. 2 of *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna says, “*Perform every action with your heart fixed on the Supreme Lord. ... Seek refuge in the knowledge of Brahman.*”

Yet how can we fix our hearts on a Supreme Lord we do not know? We can't, of course. Therefore, Ramakrishna tells us to practice Bhakti along with Karma.

What does he mean by Bhakti Yoga? The Master said: “*If a man repeats the name of God, his body, mind, and everything become pure. Why should one talk only about sin and hell, and such things? Say but once, 'O Lord, I have undoubtedly done wicked things, but I won't repeat them.' And have faith in His name.*”

How do we arrive at this faith, which is the **fruit of reverence and love** for the Lord? We ask for it — we ask to be freed from the imprisonment of duality and immersed in the non-dual state of pure love for the Divine Presence:

Master's prayer - Mother Kali is His “Ideal” conception of the Divine Presence.

Ramakrishna said: “*To my Divine Mother I prayed only for pure love.*”

I offered flowers at Her ... Feet and prayed to Her: 'Mother, here is Thy virtue, here is Thy vice. Take them both and grant me only pure love for Thee. Here is Thy knowledge, here is Thy ignorance. Take them both and grant me only pure love for Thee. Here is Thy purity, here is Thy impurity. Take them both, Mother, and grant me only pure love for Thee. Here is Thy righteousness (dharma), here is Thy unrighteousness (adharma). Take them both, Mother, and grant me only pure love for Thee.'"

**Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 7,
"Knowledge and Experience"**

Sri Krishna: "Devote your whole mind to me and practice yoga (meditation). Take me for your only refuge. I will tell you how by doing this, you can know me in my total reality, without any shadow of doubt. I will give you all this knowledge, and direct spiritual experience besides. When a man has that, nothing else in this world remains to be known.

(Yet,) Who cares to seek for that perfect perfect freedom? One man perhaps in many thousands. Then tell me how many of those who seek freedom shall know my total truth? Perhaps one only. (Why not you?)

My prakriti is of eightfold composition: Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, and ego. You must understand the behind that, and distinct from it, is that which is the principal of consciousness in all beings, and the source of life in all. It sustains the universe.

Know this my prakriti, united with me: the womb of all beings. I am the birth of the cosmos, its dissolution also. I am He who causes; no other besides me. Upon me the worlds are held like pearls strung on a thread.

I am the essence of the waters, the shining of the sun and the moon: OM of all the Vedas, the word that is God. It is I who resound in the ether, and am potent in man. I am the sacred smell the earth, the light of the fire, life of all lives, austerity of the ascetics.

Know me, eternal seed of everything that grows: the intelligence of those who understand, the vigor of the active. In the strong, I am strength, unhindered by lust and the objects of craving: I am all that a man may desire without transgressing the law of his nature.

You must know that whatever belongs to the states of sattwa, rajas, and tamas proceeds from me.

They are contained in me, but I am not in them. The entire world is deluded by the moods and mental states which are the expression of these three gunas. That is why the world fails to recognize me as I really am. I stand apart from them all, supreme and deathless.

How hard to break through is this, my Maya, made of the gunas! But he who takes refuge within me only shall pass beyond Maya; he and no other.”

DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS.

Regular Closing prayer