

## **GOOD MORNING... ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Next Saturday, Feb 8** - Chandi hymns recited in English @ 9am, and Seva Saturday from 10am to 2pm
- **Sunday Feb 9 - The Fruits of Spiritual Practice** w/ Raj Chawla. Raj is a long-time member of our congregation; he will speak about how he came to Vedanta, his relationship with Swami Yogeshananda, and how his spiritual practice over many years helped him during a recent, serious health crisis.
- **Friday Feb 14th @ 7:30pm:** Reception & Potluck Supper for Sw. Nirakaranandaji
- **Saturday Feb 15th and Sunday Feb 16th: Weekend Retreat w/ Swami Nirakarananda**
  - **Feb 15 Saturday**, starting at 10am:  
**How to Deepen Your Spiritual Life,**

based on "**Five Stanzas on Spiritual Practice**" by Adi Shankaracharya (in the Chapel). **Schedule:** morning session 10am-12:30pm; lunch break from 12:30-2pm; afternoon session 2-4:30pm - **Sunday Feb 16**, 11am-noon, Swami Nirakarananda will speak on the **Life and Achievements of Shankaracharya**

**CHANT • SONG • WELCOME • TOPIC**

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

## **Perfect Equanimity — a poem by Hafiz**

*“Look how a mirror will reflect  
with perfect equanimity  
all actions before it.*

*There is no act in this world  
that will ever cause the mirror  
to look away.*

*There is no act in this world  
that will ever make the mirror  
say, ‘no.’*

*The mirror, like perfect love,  
will just keep giving of itself  
to all before it.*

*How did the mirror ever  
get like that, so polite,  
so grand, so compassionate?*

*It watched God.*

*Yes, the mirror remembers  
the Beloved looking into itself  
as the Beloved shaped*

*existence's heart and  
the mirror's soul.*

*My eye has the nature of God.  
Hafiz looks upon all  
with perfect equanimity,  
as do my words, dear.*

*My poems will never  
tell you no, because  
the Mirror is not like that,  
and if God ever hits you  
with a don't — He has  
His fingers crossed,  
He is just fibbing  
for your own good.*

This morning we will read and discuss Hafizi's poem, line by line. We'll then tie his ecstatic declaration to the teachings of Sri Krishna, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Swai Yatiswarananda.

In Chapter 13 of Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna speaks of Hafiz's mirror this way:

*“The supreme Brahman in this body is also known as the Witness. It makes all our actions possible, and, as it were, sanctions them. It is the Infinite Being, the supreme Atman. He who has experienced Brahman directly and knows it to be other than Prakriti and the gunas, will not be reborn, no matter how he has lived his life.”*

Hafiz’s poem encompasses all of what Krishna says here, and speaks of it from the perspective of what Sri Ramakrishna called **vijnana** (special knowledge).

The Master said this state of awareness is *beyond and above* both jnana and bhakti. It combines them both, seeing only unity and perfection in the glory of God’s creation.

Everything is filled with consciousness, is actually **made** of consciousness: this is Brahman appearing to us as Shakti (Ma).

Example: Sri Ramakrishna doing worship in the Dakshineswar Kali Chapel ... (*Expound*)

***(Read the poem, expounding it line by line from this viewpoint.)***

Swami Vivekananda wrote, in his *Song of the Sannyasin*:

*There is but One — The Free — The Knower  
— Self!*

*Without a name, without a form or stain.*

*In Him is Mâyâ dreaming all this dream.*

*The witness, He appears as nature, soul.*

*Know thou art That, Sannyâsin bold!*

*Say — "Om Tat Sat, Om!"*

You can attain to this realization and state of being, through practice of meditation.

Swami Yatiswarananda, a Vice President of the Ramakrishna Order and Swami

Yogeshananda's guru, said —

*"The effect of meditation is inevitable. You are bound to get results if you practice japa with devotion, or even without it, for devotion will follow. Continue your practice regularly ... You will find peace..."*

*Meditation in the primary stage is like waging a war with the mind. With effort, the restless mind has to be brought under control and placed at the feet of the Lord*

*...*

*Go slowly, then gradually intensify your effort. Through regular practice, the mind will become steady and meditation will be easier ...*

*Just as after a deep sleep a man feels refreshed in body and mind, so will you feel refreshed after meditation and there will follow an intense experience of happiness ...*

*Meditation is not such an easy matter ... (Yet,) unless you meditate, you cannot control the mind, and unless the mind is controlled, you cannot meditate. But if you think, 'First let me control the mind and then I shall meditate', you will never succeed. You must steady your mind and meditate at the same time.*

. . .

*If you wish to realize God, practice the spiritual disciplines with patience and perseverance. In due course, you will be enlightened.”*

Then, you too will be able to say —

*My eye has the nature of God.*

*Like Hafiz, I look upon all  
with perfect equanimity,  
as do my words, dear.*

**Q&A & Discussion**

**CLOSING CHANT**