

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Truth Is One, Paths Are Many

BY STEVE

On a recent Saturday morning, our group, eighteen strong, journeyed from campus to Yogaville, otherwise known as Satchidananda Ashram. Our journey was not far—a little more than an hour's drive from Lynchburg to the ashram. An ashram is a form of religious community that comes out of the South Asian dharmic traditions. It is a place of study and practice organized around the teachings of a particular guru—Swami Satchidananda, in this instance. “Swami” is an honorific title meaning “teacher.” “Satchidananda” is his spiritual name, given to him by his guru (another word for teacher). His name, in fact, is a short phrase: sat-chit-ananda, which means “truth, consciousness, and bliss.” According to Hindu philosophy, sat, chit, and ananda are one. This essential oneness is Brahman, known as Supreme Consciousness and Absolute Reality. Individuals obtain liberation (moksha) when they realize that Brahman is all, Brahman is one. Sat-chit-ananda points to the blissful experience of living truth that characterizes self-realized persons. Thus we can understand Swami Satchidananda as a teacher of truth, consciousness, and bliss.

One of Swami Satchidananda's favorite sayings—“Truth is One, Paths are Many”—is written on the gate we walked through on our way to LOTUS (Light of Truth Universal Shrine). LOTUS is sometimes described as a monument to interreligious understanding. Indeed, we had traveled to Yogaville because of our shared interest in religious and spiritual diversity. On the lower level of LOTUS is a series of displays about different religious and spiritual paths. In that place we shared meditation practice with members of the Yogaville community. Some members of our group lingered afterwards to read the descriptions of the various paths and examine the artifacts, such as a cross, a statue of Krishna, and a copy of the Qur'an. It was a comparative religions class manifesting before our eyes in this sacred space.

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The Chaplain's Corner is a newsletter published by the Spiritual Life Center (SLC) at the University of Lynchburg. We share campus concerns (only with permission), updates, spiritual life events, and activities. Current and previous issues are on the SLC page of the University website - go to Link in signature (www.lynchburg.edu/spiritual-life) and click on "Newsletter."

Truth Is One (cont.)

Yogaville in so many ways is an ideal location for engaging in first-person experiential meaning-making and truth-seeking precisely because of its commitment to diversity in its various forms. In fact, if this were a space of argument, I would argue that religious diversity necessarily entails all of the other forms of diversity, such as race, class, gender, and sexuality. I say this because hardened boundaries of exclusivity—those borderlines where we and they stand in stark opposition—can soften and become fluid in religiously plural situations. As Swami Satchidananda teaches, “In order to have a better world, a more peaceful world, we must learn to love, respect, and honor every human being. Celebrate and enjoy the diversity because you recognize the underlying unity.” Love, respect, and honor—or fostering a sense of belonging—require leadership and cultivation. They are practices—what we do, both individually and as members of a community—rather than mere words that we say. Truth is one, paths are many. Sat-chit-ananda. Find your path and walk into bliss.

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For more information about the Spiritual Life Center, including info on our student groups, go to our webpage - link in the email signature. You can also visit our Linkt.ree (Link is in email).

Upcoming Interfaith Holidays

November 12
Diwali (Hinduism)

November 26
Guru Nank's Birthday (Sikhism)

Dates to Remember



Food | Dance | Music

**Sunday, November 12, 2023
5:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Hall Campus Center - Memorial Ballroom**

Weekly on Sundays in Snidow Chapel:

- 11 a.m. Worship with Church of the Covenant
- 4:30 p.m. Roman Catholic Mass

Watch our social media regarding the
COFFEE CHAT WITH THE CHAPLAINS
Held on Tuesdays from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. at
the Spiritual Life Center (500 Brevard St.)