

# THE VOICE from BEYOND THE VOID



## Words of Guruji

The two main hindrances or impediments to God realisation are the impurities of the mind and the attraction or repulsion towards the different worldly objects whose thoughts occupy our mind. Once they are eliminated, concentration on and constant remembrance of God will be facilitated. The God realisation will happen only by intensely clinging to the Lord through meditation and prayers. God does not want that he should be one of the many objects of love. We have to love him solely. To realise the Lord, He should be our only goal and it should never be diluted or modified. This process should not come after elimination of our impurities etc. as the process of elimination may take along time and even several births. If only we grasp the feet of the Lord tightly with all our impurities and pray to Him, all the impurities will vanish by themselves. For this purpose we should have intense love for this goal.

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Issue 20:  
01 April 2018

*To a sadhak:  
How long are you going to read more and more books? By going on reading "How to swim?", will you be able to swim? When actually you begin to swim, do you do it as per the books?*

*As far as I am concerned, I do not swim at all. I float. Floating means no will of my own. Whenever and wherever the divine current takes, is okay.*

### **Disclaimer:**

*The views expressed in the various articles in this newsletter do not necessarily represent Swamiji's views. The views are authors' own.*

## On MEDITATION AND REALISATION

Source: **Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda**

Insights of Swami Brahmananda on Meditation and Realisation have been reproduced below. Our humble gratitude to Sri Ramakrishna Mission for granting permission to reproduce content from their publications in our newsletters. The current article includes extracts from "A Guide to Spiritual Aspirants".

### CONVERSATION AT BENARES, 1921

Question: Maharaj, I am practising japam and meditation, but I have not yet acquired any taste for these.

Somehow or other I am struggling on. What must I do?

THE SWAMI: Is it possible to have that taste in the beginning? No. Struggle hard to attain it. Concentrate all your energies on its achievement, and never for a moment pay heed to other matters. Apply yourself whole-heartedly to it and to it alone. Onward, onward! Never be satisfied with your present state of mind. Try to create within yourself a burning dissatisfaction. Say to yourself "What progress am I making? Not a bit." Sri Ramakrishna used to say to the Divine Mother "Mother, another day is gone and I have not seen Thee!"

Every night before you go to bed, think for a while how much time you have spent in doing good deeds, how much again in doing useless things; how much time you have utilised in meditation and how much you have wasted in idleness. Make your mind strong through Tapasya (austerity) and Brahmacharya (continence).

In rich men's houses they keep a Darwan (porter) whose duty is to prevent thieves, cows, sheep, etc., from entering the compound. The mind is man's Darwan. The stronger the mind becomes, the better. Mind has also been compared to a restive horse. Such a horse generally takes the rider along the wrong path. Only he who can hold a tight rein and check the horse can go the right way. Struggle, struggle on! What are you doing? Is everything achieved by the mere wearing of the Gerua cloth (ochre-coloured cloth of the Sannyasin) or by renunciation of hearth and home? What have you realised? Time is flying. Do not waste a single moment. You will be able to work hard only another three



or four years at the most. Afterwards both body and mind will become weak and infirm and you will not be able to do anything. What can be achieved without diligence?

You are thinking, "Let us first of all have yearning, faith and devotion; then we shall do our Sadhana (spiritual practices)." Is that possible?

Can we see the day without the break of dawn?

When the Lord comes, love, devotion and faith follow Him as His retinue. Can anything be achieved without Tapasya? Brahma at first heard "Tapas (meditate), Tapas (meditate), Tapas (meditate)." Do you not see what a severe Tapasya even the Avatars (Incarnations of God) had to perform? Has anybody gained anything without labour? Buddha, Sankara and others what tremendous austerities they practised in their lives! What burning renunciation they possessed! What severe Sadhana they performed!

Real faith cannot be had in the beginning. First realisation, then faith. But at first the Sadhaka (aspirant) has to pin his faith blind faith" it may be to the precepts of his Guru (spiritual teacher) or of some great soul; then only can he advance toward the goal.

Do you not know the parable of the oyster as told by Sri Ramakrishna? The oyster floats about on the surface of the sea with its shell wide open, just for a little drop of the Swati-rain (rain falling when the star Swati or Arcturus is in the ascendant). As soon as it gets a rain drop, it dives down to the ocean-bed and there forms a fine pearl. Like the oyster, you too should be up and doing and then dive deep into the ocean of meditation.

You have no self-reliance. Personal exertion is an indispensable factor for success in the spiritual life. Do something for a period of at least four years. Then if you do not make any tangible progress, come and take me to task.

Japam and meditation are impossible unless you transcend the limitations of Rajas (excessive activity) and Tamas (inertia or lethargy). Afterwards, you have to rise even above Sattwa (illumination) and attain the high spiritual plane from where there is no return.

How difficult is the attainment of a human birth! Yet it is only in this human birth that God-realisation is possible. Strive hard in this life and reach that state from which you will not have to come back.

The mind is to be raised, step by step, from the gross state to the subtle, then to the causal state, still further to the Great Cause (Mahakarana) and finally to Samadhi (highest illumination). Resign yourself fully to the Lord. He is everything. There is nothing besides. Verily all this is Brahman." Everything is His and His only. Never be calculating. Is self-surrender possible in a day? When that is achieved, everything is achieved. One must struggle hard for it.

Life is eternal. The span of man's life is at most a hundred years. Give up the pleasures of these hundred years, if you want to enjoy eternal life and, with it, eternal bliss.

## Notes from Chapter 5, Bhagavad Gita

### What is the Goal?

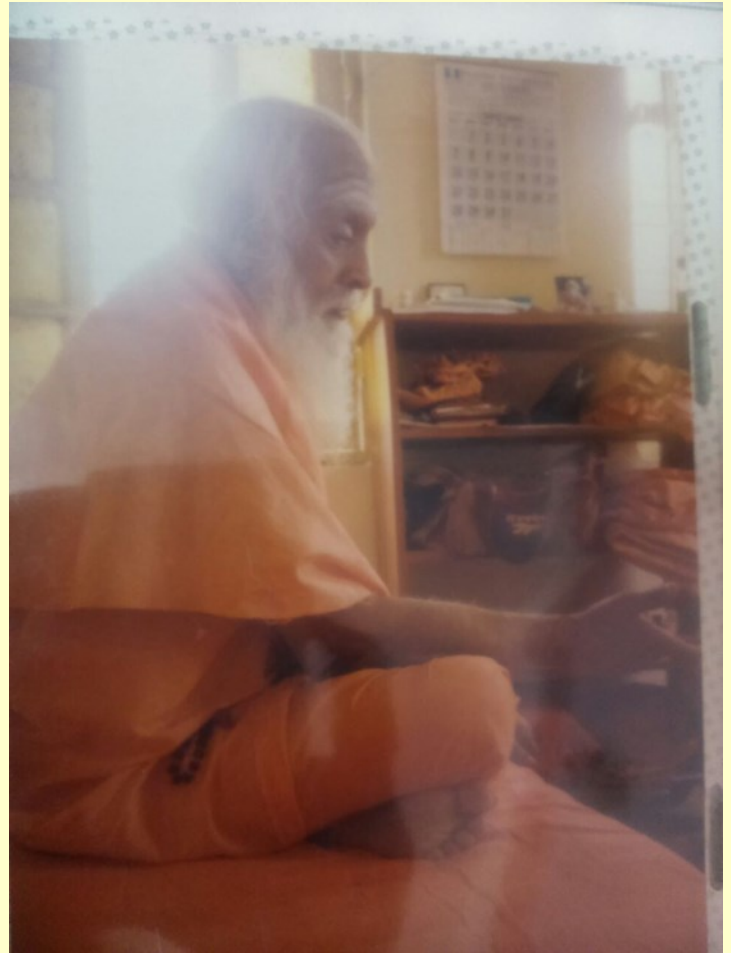
- Mind absorbed in the Supreme, Self fixed in that
- Find happiness within, delight within, light within
- Plunge into depths of infinite bliss and become one with That
- Attain Self which is supreme, unchanging and infinite
- Eternal peace, liberated from sense pleasures and with controlled mind

### What is the sadhana to be done to reach your goal?

- Not acting nor causing action
- Establish mind in impartiality
- Endure agitation that arises from desire and anger and cut it off
- Controlled thought
- Expel outside contacts
- Meditation / pranayama
- Understand and see clearly the nature of I and mine. The recognition has to be there. I and mine are never there but seem to exist. To have clarity of mind is practice.
- Ideas such as “doer”, “act” or “should” cease to exist
- Perform actions without being the doer
- Abandon attachment and all actions of body, mind, intellect and senses should only be towards self-purification
- Dispassion towards objects of senses
- Learn to control physical tendencies of the body. Even if the mind is thinking, try and avoid getting into action for anything – whether listening, touching, etc. Understand with vairagya or dispassion. Speed of vasanas are very strong. One should give into them.

### What are the attitudes or characteristics of a yogi or a jnani?

- Indifferent to the pairs of opposites
- Senses are conquered
- “I am not the doer, even a fraction I don’t do,” – so he should think whether seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing.
- Offering his actions to Brahman
- Abandoned attachment
- Seeing same atman in everything – cow, elephant, outcaste. Why? Because the Lord is the base of all beings.
- Even minded: Not rejoice upon attaining pleasant, nor shudder while encountering what is unpleasant.
- Doesn’t seek contentment through pleasures of contact
- Delight in the welfare of all beings



It is important to learn how to see, then, everything will come alright. Because of shraddha, everything will come.

## **What is needed to be done urgently by us in this life?**

**Dictated by Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj [08 May 2014]**

We get a dream while asleep. We find ourselves transported to a different part of the world and have a different body or vocation. Still I have the conviction in the dream also that it is the same 'I' which was awake in a different body a few minutes back even though you might not remember the details as to what you were in that birth, etc. I am talking to a good number of people in the dream where I treat some as my enemies and some as my friends. I undergo a lot of misery due to the illness of my wife and some of the soldiers who are rebellious but plotting against me. I am myself beset with various painful ailments. So long as I am in the dream, all the miseries and sorrows look very very real to me. I fight wars in the dream. However, all the while the real I which was present in the waking state also remains motionless having never done any activity and have been never subject to any ailments of any nature. How can a living and loving energy like the Atman can have any pain or miseries, etc. All the miseries took place only in the dream which was unreal and never existed.

We only imagine that we are human beings, each one distinct from the other and also from God; having mutual friends or sworn enemies and a life of our own, different for different people. This is again a big cosmic dream where the Lord is having a mega dream in which he is the only artiste who has taken all the billion roles of human beings, reptiles, worms, the sun and the rivers, the mountain with its peaks and the moon and all the flora and fauna, the stars and everything else in the galaxy. You, the loving and living energy who is in all the billions of people are the only truth; the rest all with its lovers and enemies, men and women, are all a non existing entity. When once each one has taken a part we think we are all separate entities. You are the only truth and rest is all a drama where each entity have forgotten its origin and identified itself with the drama role with all the attendants, miseries and sorrows.

There is no use of requesting the God to amend your drama by removing particular miseries or to give you a promotion. There will be a thousand more sorrows to come. You should show a disinterest to the drama, which we call the world and request the Lord to take you out of the drama itself. Each one of us is a thought of that Supreme entity called God acting the role of a human being. Can a thought really have miseries and pain? We have to become one with the parent fire namely the Atman or the Lord and thus get out of the drama by merging with that Lord. That is the sure remedy for the entire malady of this life to be eradicated forever. You are wise. You can ponder over it when you have time. Having known this, by the direct experience how can I be affected whether I live or leave. I do not know, I may live for a hundred years more if the Lord wills so or for just one more minute. The pot may stay for a long time or it may fall down and be broken to pieces within another two minutes. What does the space inside the pot care whether the pot stays or is broken into pieces now. I am not sermonising. I have only written as prompted by my Divine Mother. Be brave and always have your eyes glued towards the goal. If you are going to be involved in the unreal and the non existing duties towards father, mother, sisters, etc. till your seventieth year, what happens to your own redemption? Are you going to do sadhana from your eightieth year? Ponder over all these for it is not too late. Do not become a prey to sentiments which are in themselves untrue.



## **Tips to overcome fear, despondency, anxiety, boredom, sorrow, etc. during Sadhana** **Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj, January 2011**

- Do not be ambitious and expecting results for your actions / sadhana in material / spiritual sphere. Do not complain, evaluate, demand, fret and fume about your so called progress. Just do your part and try to accept whatever comes to you from GOD naturally during your sadhana. This is full surrender. After surrendering we forfeit all rights and let go things. Then only Lord will step in. As long as you are expecting and looking for results or progress, the Divine will not manifest. This is a Law.
- For most of your available time, think of GOD - Satata Smarana i.e. continuous remembrance. Do Japa (mental) incessantly as far as possible and on all occasions while walking, eating, etc.
- Surrender is the key word. Your only and intense prayer for at least 5 or 10 minutes should be for Lord's grace. The intense prayer for at least those 5 to 10 minutes is surrender. Absolute subjugation of ego for 15 minutes is possible definitely. Surrender wholly to the divine and be happy with the certainty that GOD will do everything in HIS own time.
- In spite of the above sadhana specifics, if negative feelings / thoughts overtake you, you must not yield to them, but reject out rightly every time such thoughts arise. If not possible, do Mantra Japa and intense prayer to GOD to get you out of the negative energy field.
- Any duty of the world which is thrust upon by circumstances should be done with minimum interest (avoid too much involvement day and night) and maximum efficiency. Do not try to improve over techniques or efficiency. Do your best and do not worry if you are not up to the standard, in performing those duties.
- Be indifferent to and renounce the world internally. Always depend only upon Lord for each and everything in your life and never on any external agency however intimate it may be.



- Keep yourself happy in all circumstances. Even in any adversity, learn to laugh often and force yourself to be happy. Imagine or remember some very good jokes and laugh freely. A spiritual sadhak should always have a care-free and smiling countenance.



- Never think of the future. It is a sheer futile imagination and it is all in the hands of the Cosmic Director. Past is already gone. Never think of it. Remain happily in ever present. If the present is full of suffering, remember it will be very soon a past incident as 'present' can not remain.
- Have patience and faith in the Lord as if it does not matter if you succeed after million years. Every minute, have such enthusiasm / zeal as if you are going to get moksha in a few minutes.
- Finally, there is only one point agenda for you i.e. God Realisation or Atma Sakshatkara which is already there in you, but only to be re-discovered. This should be your top priority in life and therefore everything else should be secondary for you. Constantly dwell on this and do not cultivate desires and wants for this and that. Live with minimum requirements. Also diverting your mind to do this or that or trying to learn things not conducive and outside the Path, which is Vikshepa, should be shunned. In short, Live your life in GOD only.

May you have abundant grace of the Supreme Lord and have Self-Realisation in this very birth.



**Photos of Guruji**



## Grace

By Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

One has to make a lot of effort to ensure a constant remembrance of God through prayers and meditation or to resort to Self-enquiry or other methods in Jnana path or Bhakti path (path of devotion). When a person fails in his academic or professional examinations by falling short of the minimum marks required, a moderation committee of examiners may decide to give him a grace mark of one or two out of compassion and make him pass. Similarly in the spiritual path too no amount of Sadhana alone will get us to the destinations. Grace of the Guru, Grace of the Supreme Lord and Grace of the Self (Atma Kripa) alone will take us to the destination. In the removal of vasanas too, the grace of the Guru and the grace of the God play a very important role. It is our efforts to do japa, prayers etc. and to obey instructions of the Guru which invoke the Grace. Our efforts alone will not be capable of removing the vasanas without the Grace factor.

From the time you are born the Grace begins to work. Our birth, our upbringing and education, marriage, daily food, every item in life is due to His Grace only. The more we recognize and thank him with real feeling from the heart, the more we get it. The wind of grace is always blowing. But through prayers and meditation our antenna is unable to catch that Grace. Even in those cases when some people became the recipient of Grace in this birth without doing much of a Sadhana at all, it is quite probable that such people have done quite a lot of Sadhana in their previous births.

The one who prays to the Supreme Lord for Grace is verily the Self and the one to whom one prays is also the Self. Hence the one who prays for Grace must get it as he himself grants it from the other end. Ultimately there is neither the giver of grace nor the receiver. The only 'one' remains. The grace is also part of the dream. When we come out of the cosmic dream where the reality alone plays all the roles, the latter alone remains and not you or I. Where was the Grace and from where did it come? It was only from Self to Self.

God does not show his grace or existence openly. Hence, he makes the ray of grace being deflected through a Guru. Hence, Guru's grace and God's grace are one and the same. There is no essential difference between God's grace and Guru's grace.

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**Timings:** Morning: 8-11am; Evening: 4-6pm

**Getting there:** Auto drivers can take you from Ramanasramam gate. Some numbers of auto drivers: Pasha: +91 9442809982; Seenu: +91 9486274689; Grandhi: +91 9962180975