

Brother Balananda

Keys to Deepening Our Meditations

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Brother started with a story from his own life; he loved to hike the Chiricahua Mountains in Southern Arizona, often by himself. He had found a beautiful spot at about 10,000 ft, set up his tent and watched a spectacular sunset; he encountered a cute little mole that eventually became courageous enough to come from its tunnel and nibble on the grasses. Even in his sleeping bag, he could still hear the mole tunnel underneath him. It was a beautiful, peaceful night. Then the thought came. "Once again, it is time to change your life." Five months later, he was in the ashram.

"Do you like the trend of your life? If not, change it." (P.Y.)

Our topic is how to deepen our meditations, and there are 4 major points.

1. Keep in mind: Tempus fugit. Time flies.

The problem is - we are thinking we will be living forever in this form. We are coasting along, drifting through life. Bro. Anandamoy said that all the while we are being cut to pieces in the machinery of Maya. Master too warned, "Your life is partly gone, and you don't know how much time is left; still you are procrastinating, dreaming that you will live forever. In that attitude all your todays will turn into yesterdays without any worthwhile achievements. So when you make up your mind to do something, do it!"

Mrinalini Ma counsels, "It's so sad. So many devotees say, 'I'll make a greater spiritual effort when I find the right woman or the right man; I'll meditate more deeply when I find the right home or the right job, when the kids are through school, or when the mortgage payments are over.'" And then with such a sense of urgency in her voice, she added: "Lifetimes ebb away. Love God now!"

Brother served for about a year as lay disciple at the Hollywood Ashram when Brother Bhaktananda was there. During those 12 months, one brahmachari and 3 lay disciples passed on! Brother mentioned to Br. Bhaktananda "I have to make hay now" and Br. B responded, "that's the only attitude to have."

Daya Mata also reminded us, "If you knew at this moment that you would soon die, what would you do?" She answered her own question and said: "I know, because I've faced that crisis several times. You would be thinking just one thought: 'I'm going to die.' And you would feel such an urgent need for God that you would instantly realize that nothing else is important."

All the thoughts that run through our mind as we sit to meditate are minions of Maya, keeping us from going deep. We must finally learn to concentrate on the Techniques Master has given us. The Techniques work! What does not work is us.

## 2. Having many short meditations throughout the day.

What is our mission in life? to find God. Don't take a coffee break, take a Kriya break! Brother was at the dentist once and started to meditate, bringing a smile to his face. The dentist was wondering why he would smile and got interested in meditation.

Master advised us, "In my Yogoda school in Ranchi, India, I used to spend all my free time roaming around the grounds, here and there sitting awhile to meditate, until my mind was drunk with God. That is the only way to find Him. Don't waste your time."

Rajarsi used to meditate before and after everything he did, maybe for 5-7 minutes. That keeps the consciousness on a high level. It is actually easier to meditate all the time than to wait after a full day to finally sit down and try to meditate.

After Brother had surgery for his broken back, he was unable to sit for any length of time during his recovery. He figured out he could do as much as 6 Kriyas at one time, and do them 18 times with intervals to get to 108. He would walk around the Lake Shrine, find hidden nooks and places for the next set of 6 which all added up to so much joy that he said to Divine Mother, "may I have the next dance?" and Divine Mother answered, "my, what an audacious little devotee you are!"

Just 5 minutes - weaving the thought of God into your life throughout the day.

## 3. Introspection

Master advises us to check - am I behaving morally and spiritually? We have to learn to behave, pure and simple. A devotee once asked Daya Mata in a satsanga how she could come closer to Divine Mother? Ma answered, "How do you get Divine Mother to respond? that's very simple, just become more divine. And that begins with yama/niyama, the first 2 of Patanjali's 8 steps to union with God."

## 4. Practicing the Techniques exactly how Guruji taught them.

Yoga is a science like mathematics, but as in any science there has to be adherence to the right method to get the results. The most important Techniques are Hong Sau, Om and Kriya where we are speaking directly to God. It takes a while to learn them correctly. Often we think our practice is correct, but it is not. Over time we forget details, and we do our own thing.

A fellow monastic once complained to Brother that he had no results with the Techniques. Brother asked him to sit in meditation for 3 minutes doing Hong Sau; after that, he would snap his fingers to indicate the end, while observing the younger monk. After the 3 minutes the man opened his eyes and

looked at Brother. First error - your eyes were straight but they must remain "riveted" at the spiritual eye during meditation. Did you do the 20/20/20 exercise before starting? No. Your hands are in your lap - they should be palms-up in the correct position. There's a reason for that, it is a mudra.

We tend to think itate, and don't meditate. Brother Premamoy counseled to review the lessons on the Techniques again and again. He said, " Our memory is like a cloud--always changing shape. We think we are practicing the techniques correctly, but after some time we unconsciously modify them slightly. And then we are surprised when we don't get the proper results.

The way I got around this problem was to pull all the review lessons for the techniques--8A for the Recharging Exercises, 23A for HS, 30A for the OM Tech. and Kriya Lesson 7A for Kriya. I put them in a separate binder and reviewed them once a month, at the rate of one technique per week. I did this month after month, year after year until I learned how to control the life force. Until I could keep my concentration riveted on the breath, until I could hear the astral sounds in the right ear, until I could feel the currents rise and fall in the spine, until my heart was invaded with such joy. Then, finally, I knew for certain that I was doing the techniques correctly. And I just put the binder away up on the shelf."

Ultimately, Master advises us all, "Doubt or no doubt, restless or calm, result or no result, keep meditating daily; but try to increase the depth of it, and you will get results. If you meditate deeply for eight years, you will never give it up. If you increase the depth of meditation and feel the joy more and more, unwholesome sense pleasures will gradually lose their appeal for you as you compare them to the delightful taste of meditation. After the negative state of silencing the mind is reached, meditation gives positive conscious contact with God as ever new joy, light and the cosmic sound of Aum."

Master is an Avatar, he knows the way to God, we don't. Follow him "lamb-like" as Sri Yukteswar advises.

Homework! Pick any one of these 4 points for a month and work on it.