

Brother Ishtananda – Sunday, October 24, 2010

The Final Final Lecture in Hollywood

“Going Beyond the Concept of I”

Bottom line – why we practice devotion, why we behave, why we meditate: “When this I shall die then will I know who am I.” ~ PY

What did Master mean when he said, “I killed Yogananda a long time ago.”

What is your concept of I? Is it the body? Is it the mind? Is it the feelings? Ours is a conglomeration – we usually think of an I as all these things.

Are we the body, thoughts, feelings? Of course not. We are the soul. We are pure consciousness.

What is the destructive quality that separates who we really are from these other aspects of being?

The soul does not participate in the workings of human nature. The soul is the observer, the witness, the pure awareness.

Why is going beyond I the basis of the spiritual life? All suffering comes from the concept of I. All bliss consciousness comes from the soul. What do you want?

We experience the world through the hazy lens of the concept of I. All of our preconceived notions and our likes and dislikes. If we remove “I” then we can see the world as it is.

How do we get beyond the concept of I? Sister Gyanamata said, “the little self has the soul by the throat.”

1. Love – when we love we break out of the concept of I, the self.
2. Selfless Service – Bro. Premamoy used to say, “we have I problems.”
3. Devotion
4. Inquire “who am I”
5. Through meditation with a specific objective of getting through the concept of I.

Brother Bhaktananda would talk about getting into the stillness. God is the goal, but the immediate goal of meditation is the stillness. This is the purpose of our meditation techniques – especially Kriya. Go up and down the spine – riding the currents up and down the spine – even after you do your kriyas.

The stillness is so enjoyable when everything is quiet inside.

Enter the silence as often as possible and remain there for as long as possible. Stop thoughts. Silence is a healing calm.

Silence is the immediate goal of our meditations.

You have to renounce the stillness – this was an epiphany Brother Ishtananda had. It confused him.

I enjoy the stillness –who enjoys it? “I.” If we create a concept and hold onto it, we are still in the “I.”

How do you renounce the stillness? How do you go beyond the stillness? Sri Yukteswar said, “Give up the vain idea of separate existence.”

Krishna: the feeling of I as a separate sense must be given up if you want to understand self.

Krishna said there’s only the one consciousness.

Sunlight goes everywhere. You can take a magnifying glass and keep the rays focused into one area. If you remove the glass, the rays spread out again. We take the glass and focus on very little things. What if we removed the magnifying glass of the mind? Then the rays spread again.

We need to remove the magnifying lens that creates that concept of I.

The great ones have the ability to remove this so the consciousness can spread.

Why should I take a little thought of the earth and deny the whole universe belongs to me?

Can you see how we might want to renounce the stillness if it creates an “I-ness?”

The stillness is a doorway to the universal consciousness. We need to go through the doorway and not just stand in the doorway.

If we make the effort to go through the door, who is making the effort? It’s the “I.” So how do we do it?

It’s our attitude. We need to relax, surrender, let go.

Cultivate the attitude of relaxing and surrendering.

Our consciousness is a part of the universal consciousness. There’s a natural pull of that consciousness to its source, as there is a natural pull of a wave back into the ocean.

Attitude of surrender and letting go is what is going to allow us to remove the lens and do through the door.

Focus on our real nature – unity of spirit.

God wants us with Him. We are dear to Him! He is pulling us back to Him. If we let go and surrender, we will attain that divine consciousness.

Put God in charge of your life. You will find the confines of the little self dissolving.

This is very subtle, beyond concepts. Sit with it.

Gain conscious passivity... a deep state of peace, as found in deep meditation. You may understand logically, but the only way to understand is through your own experience in meditation.

Go into the arms of the divine consciousness. This is the highest goal anyone can attain.

“All pleasure, all knowledge, all power divine, belongs to the man who has surrendered the mind.” ~
Krishna

When ending his talk, Bro. Ishatananda thanked the congregation for all the support over the 11 years he was minister in charge in Hollywood. He then quoted this Native American expression: “The white man’s word for goodbye is a lie because there is no separation in the spirit.”