

Brother Ritananda
The True Meaning of Resurrection
Lake Shrine Temple
April 1, 2012

The topic today is: *The True Meaning of Resurrection*. We are the soul. We have a body, we have a mind but we are the soul. Until we realize that, not just believe it, not just know it intellectually but experience it...realizing it within.

A lady went to a department store to return some items she'd bought and the sales associate who was helping asked her name. She had recently remarried and hesitated. She started to go through the credit cards in her wallet to see under which name she'd made the purchase. The sales associate was very patient but finally said that the question had been not meant to stump her and promised the next questions would be easier.

Until we have Self-realization, the identification with these bodies and all the delusions, habits, moods and desires that create the limitations, we don't realize who we truly are. All the scriptures of the world tell us that we are made in the image of God. We know as it says in the "Autobiography of a Yogi" [AY] that God is not sitting in some antiseptic corner of the cosmos; He is described as omnipresent, omniscient, and infinite. Gurujī describes God as: "*Ever new bliss, ever conscious, ever new joy.*" We are made in that image and that joy, that bliss, that infinite love, is our divine birthright.

The simple formulae that Gurujī brought us throughout the world is devotional meditation, plus right activity. Right activity has been expounded throughout the scriptures for thousands of years. The *yama, niyama* mentioned by Patanjali are thousands of years old. Lord Krishna in the "Bhagavad Gita" lists 26 ennobling qualities of the soul that are at least 5,000 years old. The ten commandments are more than two thousand of years old. What was lost in the Dark Ages was the science of religion, the science of yoga meditation, which is part of Paramahansaji's mission to help reintroduce *Kriya Yoga* meditation to mankind. That combination of devotional scientific meditation, plus right activity, is the airplane route to realizing who we truly are. We can reclaim our divine birthright, the infinite, ever blissful consciousness.

Again, the topic for this morning's service is *The True Meaning of Resurrection*. Next week we'll observe Easter and honor the life and

resurrection of Jesus Christ. Throughout his life, Christ had a world role to play. He was a world guru. He manifested many miracles throughout his life, culminating in his resurrection.

Brother explained that he grew up in a faith that taught that there was God, there was Jesus and then there was all of us. If we didn't accept Jesus we would burn in hell eternally. That was not God's intent for the message of why Jesus' life played out as it did. His message was that what I have accomplished you, too, can accomplish. Christ said: "*Have I not said that ye are gods?*" We are made in the image of God. He realized the truth that the intense identification with the body, the delusions, the distractions and so forth, are constantly agitated and that makes us oblivious to the soul within. It makes us oblivious to God's presence within and without everywhere.

Through self effort, through meditation, through right activity, we can regain that awareness and then we can use that power of the soul, which is unlimited, to meet all life's demands, tests and trials. That is what Jesus did. He had many difficult tests in his life and he overcame them all and ultimately he overcame death. We can do the same. We are made in that same image of God. That same sea of divinity that was and is in Jesus is in every single one of us. That is his message. If we make the same effort he did to realize that divinity we can become what he is, a realized Son of God. The true meaning of resurrection is a very deep subject.

The late Brother Turiyananda served at the Lake Shrine for decades. Before a service like this he would say: "Put on your hard hats and fasten your seat belts, we have some rocky terrain to cover." It's true!

Brother began with the Bible passage that explains what took place on the original Easter morning when Mary Magdalene went to visit the sepulcher where Jesus' body had been laid. When she got there she found that the stone had been rolled away and Jesus' body was missing. She ran to his apostles to tell them and they all ran to see for themselves. They didn't really believe her but saw that she was telling the truth. The stone was rolled away and the body gone. They were distraught. The disciples went back to their house because they couldn't be discovered as disciples of Jesus because then they too would be crucified.

Mary stayed and wept outside the tomb. At one point she looked up and she saw two angels in white. One was sitting at the head of the stone slab

where Jesus' body had been and the other at the foot. The angels asked her: "Woman, why weepest thou?" And she answered: "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." Just then she realized that someone was standing behind her. She turned but she didn't recognize the person. It was Jesus! Great ones have the ability to prevent others from recognizing them. Jesus asked her the same question: "*Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?*" Mary thought he was a gardener and had a role to play in moving Jesus' body and she said: "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou has laid him and I will take him away."

Then Jesus said: "*Mary.*" And she recognized him. She must have made a move to take the dust of his feet or touch him in some way because Christ said: "*Touch me not because I am not yet ascended unto my Father. Go and tell my brethren that I ascend unto my Father and their Father and to my God and their God.*" In his commentary on this Bible passage, Paramahansaji wrote: "*All things are possible unto God and His great devotees. In the resurrection of Jesus we have the assurance of our Creator that God-realized devotees, if they wish, can find not only immortality of the soul but also of the body.*"

Brother said that he didn't know about us but to him immortality of the body was not very appealing. If we have a choice he doesn't think that many of us would want to hang out in a physical body throughout eternity. In this world of duality, there are so many trials, sorrow and suffering. From the AY we understand this principle that the body is a useful tool but that who we truly are is the soul, the spirit within, the eternal spirit.

While a young child was at daycare the family cat, unfortunately, got hit by a car and killed. The mother didn't think that her 4 year old son would understand and that it would cause him suffering, so she disposed of the remains before he got home. She figured the child would be so distracted that he wouldn't necessarily notice the cat was not there. A few days later he did notice and asked his mother where the cat was. She answered saying, "Billy, the cat died but it's all right because it's gone to heaven with God." With a puzzled look on his face, Billy responded: "What would God want with a dead cat?" Ultimately we reach that same point. The immortality of the body is not very appealing.

Continuing with Guruji's comment on the Bible passage: "*The whole drama of Jesus' life was a testament to the supremacy of man's spirit over matter. He had*

willingly incarnated in a human form, partaking of its inherent limitations, to show matter-bound souls the way to conquer every form of delusion imposed on them by the overreaching power of Cosmic Satan.”

Christianity refers to Satan; in Indian scriptures it's referred to as *maya*, delusion. It is delusion that tricks us, so to speak, into identifying so intensely with the body that we become oblivious to who we truly are...to God's presence within...are oneness with God. We never lose it; we just have to improve out knowing.

Guruji goes on to say: *“Jesus’ resurrection demonstrated consummation of that victory over cosmic Satan. ‘The last enemy shall be destroyed is death.’ [1 Corinthians 15:26].”* Master said earlier that Jesus' message was that what he accomplished we, too, can accomplish and that even we can and will triumph over death. That is how we can immortalize the physical body and reclaim our divine birthright.

“Resurrection means ‘to rise again.’ Though restoring life to a deceased body, as Jesus did for Lazarus, is in deed one form of resurrection, what Jesus evidenced after his crucifixion was much higher. It was the resurrection of the soul into oneness with Spirit—the soul’s ascension from delusory confinement of body consciousness into its native immortality and everlasting freedom.” The true meaning of resurrections is right there. It is the soul's ascension from delusory confinement of body consciousness into its native immortality and everlasting freedom.

Paramahansaji goes on: *“Lazarus and others whose bodies were raised from the dead by Jesus gained new life, new opportunity for spiritual advancement; but Jesus’ resurrection lifted his consciousness beyond all relativities of vibratory creation and merged his Self with the transcendental Father, Absolute Spirit.”*

It is interesting that Christ told Mary not to touch him because he was “not yet ascended to his Father”. He said this because he knew that there were definite steps that had to be completed before his resurrection was complete. He had referred to this in the days or weeks before his crucifixion. He was in the temple and the Pharisees were hassling him and Jesus said: *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* He wasn't referring to the stone temple structure. He was referring to his body. He wasn't referring to three twenty-four hour periods but to three distinct

efforts or processes needed to resurrect his soul and, once again merge in that Oneness, Absolute Spirit, the Father.”

Those three phases, those three processes, to liberate the soul are to resurrect the soul from the physical body, the physical limitations, into the astral body and astral plane. That is the first effort. The second step or effort, is to resurrection the soul from the astral, as fine and beautiful as it is, it is still separate from God; that is, to resurrect the soul from the astral body to the casual body. The third and final step of the resurrection is to resurrect the soul consciousness from the causal body into Oneness with Spirit.

Through his effort and spiritual advancement, Jesus had intuitively perceived how the soul had transcended into the body in the first place. In the beginning God wanted to share his bliss with others, with us and so He willed creation into manifestation. From that oneness with God we are made in the image of God, individual, but one with God ascended from that oneness into the causal body, into the astral body and eventually, into the physical body. Jesus knew intuitively that that process had to be reversed. That he had to ascend that ladder of consciousness to once again achieve that conscious oneness with God. He had to untie the three knots of consciousness that had limited his consciousness from the physical, astral and causal bodies.

This also relates to the three *gunas* in the Indian scriptures. The three *gunas* are the essential creative and motivating qualities of Cosmic Nature (*Prakriti*). God exists beyond creation but He created Cosmic Nature. This whole creation is God’s physical manifestation. It is His body. It is the *gunas* that hold it into existence and allow it to operate. Those *gunas* are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *Sattva* is the good, uplifting or elevating mode; *rajas* is the activating mode keeping creation in motion and *tamas* is the evil or gross mode.

In the “Bhagavad Gita” Lord Krishna says: “*All action in universally engendered by the attributes (gunas) of primordial Nature (Prakriti or Cosmic Nature)....Deluded by the attributes of primordial Nature, the ignorant must cling to the activities engendered by those gunas.*” So as long we are deluded by those *gunas*, we are related to the body with all its limitations and have forgotten that Infinite Power, Infinite Bliss and Infinite Dweller, that is within us and is our true nature.

Lord Krishna goes on saying: “*The gunas inherent in Prakriti--sattva, rajas and tamas--imprison in the body the Imperishable Dweller. [Brother interjected, imprison the soul in the body]...Having transcended the three modes of Nature--the cause of physical embodiment--a man is released from the sufferings of birth, old age, and death; he attains immortality.*” That’s the process.

When Jesus said to Mary Magdalene: “*Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father,*” he had not fully completed those three distinct efforts or steps. He hadn’t finished the limiting or entanglement of the *gunas* with the three bodies. Until he was completely resurrected he didn’t want any contact, any physical vibration, of this gross material nature to touch his resurrected body, which was in a very spiritualized state but wasn’t yet free of all the attributes of the *gunas*.

As we progress in meditation, we will intuitively perceive, as Jesus did, how the soul descended into the body, through the causal, astral and physical and how we have to reverse that process. Again, we are only half way through.

How does the consciousness get from the physical to the astral, from the astral to the causal and from the causal to that oneness? This is described in detail in the Indian scriptures. It is through the three channels. It is also mentioned in Revelations. There it is referred to as the seven candles--the seven *chakras*...the spiritual centers in the spine and it talks about the staffs, the spine, so to speak. The first effort of resurrecting soul consciousness from the physical to the astral goes through one of those channels. Those channels are named in the Indian scriptures as: *sushumna, vajra, chitra* and *brahmanandi*.

The first step to resurrect our soul consciousness from the physical to the astral is to take the consciousness through the *sushumna*. Then to resurrect our soul consciousness from the astral body to the causal body we transition the soul consciousness through the *vajra* and *chitra*. Lastly, to make that final effort, we transition or take our soul consciousness from the astral to the causal, to the oneness with God, through the *brahmanandi*.

If that’s not confusing enough, all of it relates to the spiritual eye. Even though many people may not have meditated in this life, through efforts of past lives, they have seen the spiritual eye. The spiritual eye is the golden

hallow with the blue orb inside and a white, tiny five-pointed star. Many people may see the white, the gold or the blue as related to the resurrection covered in today's Gita passage.

Lord Krishna said: *“He attains the Supreme Effulgent Lord, O Arjuna, whose mind, stabilized by yoga, is immovably fixed on the thoughts of Him. At the time of death a yogi reaches the Supreme Effulgent Lord, if with love and by the power of yoga, he fully penetrates his life force between the eyebrows (the seat of the spiritual eye), and if he fixes his mind unwaveringly on the Being who, beyond all delusions of darkness, shines like the sun--the One whose form is unimaginable, subtler than the finest atom, the Supporter of all, the Great Ruler, eternal and omniscient.”*

On commenting on this Gita passage, Paramahansaji says: *“By taking his consciousness through the spiritual eye, the yogi enters the reality of his fleshly body as divine light, the resurrection of flesh into the Infinite Christ and God. In deep meditation on the inner spiritual eye, one can experience this transcendence: By consciously withdrawing the life energy and consciousness from the senses and muscles and nerves, one can perceive the sublimation of the body into the rays of the spiritual eye, transforming the consciousness of flesh into the consistency of light. The light of the body is resurrected into the Cosmic Christ Light, the mind into Cosmic Consciousness, the human will into Divine Will, the mortal life into Eternal Life; the joy of the soul into the Bliss of Spirit.”*

It may seem far out but Christ mentions it at one point. He said: *“If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”* When we open the spiritual eye, we realize the unreality of body. That it isn't solid flesh but that it is composed of Divine Light. That Divine Light is composed further of the different rates of the *Aum* vibration. We cannot just believe it or just understand it; we can experience it. We can realize it through our self efforts in meditation.

Now this relates to the resurrection again. That first effort when we resurrect our soul consciousness from the physical body into the astral is through the *sushumna*. Then it goes out of body through the gold in the spiritual eye. Second step is to resurrect our soul consciousness from the astral through the *vijra* and *chitra* into the causal body through the blue in the spiritual eye. Lastly, we resurrect our soul consciousness from the causal body into oneness with Spirit through the *brahmanandi*, the white star in the spiritual eye. This is all a very evolved, detailed and technical

explanation of the true meaning of resurrection. The good news is that we won't be tested on it. We don't even have to have a thorough understanding of it. We don't have to take notes on making this resurrection, this transition.

Brother went on to tell a story about two Canadians from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan who needed a break from the long, hard, cold winter. They decided to go to Australia. They boarded the plane with their down jackets, woolen hats and snow boots. When they landed in Sydney the first thing they did was make their way to a pub. They were sitting in the pub with still wearing the winter clothing and the locals wondered where they were from. One of the locals went over to ask.

When asked the first Canadian says: "Saskatoon" and the second Canadian added: "Saskatchewan." The Aussie nodded his head and went back to his friends and when questioned as to where they were from, he answered: "I don't know. They don't speak English."

Just like the Aussies who did not understand the Canadian brothers, we may not understand all the intricacies of the *gunas*, the spiritual eye, the resurrection. It will not put us at a disadvantage when the time comes and we will never figure these things out with the mind. The mind, as powerful as it is, is finite and the finite cannot contain the Infinite. As we progress our intuition grows and through intuitional perception we will realize, we will grasp, the direct perception of the truth of everything we need to know and what we need to do when we need it.

Guruji in the "Second Coming of Christ" (Discourse 75) he explains: *"It is impossible with the mere intellect to comprehend fully the intricacies of the astral and causal passageways to liberation and their correlation with the spiritual eye. They are gradually revealed to intuitive perception by the practice of Kriya Yoga. What is important is to be so absorbed in the spiritual eye and divine bliss of meditation that when the time comes to leave the body, through the blessings of God and guru the yogi knows how to take his soul through the spiritual eye and the spinal centers and break out of jail of embodiment into the freedom of Spirit."*

The only detail we need to remember is that although Christ was able to accomplish all these things, they can all be traced back to one thing. Love...Divine Love...that yearning, wanting, striving for God. If we can hold on to that love in spite of all life's test and trials, we will be successful. We

have to be! We are made in the image of God. We all have to made it back to Him. It is not a matter of if; it is a matter of when, which is determined by our efforts. Again, it is a very simple formulae that Guruji gave us...devotional, scientific meditation with right activity.

In today's Gita commentary, Guruji goes into detail saying: *"Everyone, eventually, has to ascend to free the soul into the divine kingdom of higher consciousness after death, and thence into its origin in the Infinity of Spirit. There is only one escape and that is to commune with God. This requires not only conscientious continuity in practicing esoteric meditation methods of transcendence, but also the application of the equally essential Christlike principles of morale and spiritual behavior, which provides the substructure enhancing, supporting and making firm the devotee's gains in meditation."* That's the formula right there: devotional scientific meditation, plus right activity, which has been expounded for thousands of years.

Guruji continues: *"The foundational steps of the yoga science enumerated as yama and niyama by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras, and the soul qualities of the devotee advancing in God-realization set forth by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, merge in harmonious illumination of the way of Christ perfection taught by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount and other discourses. These emissaries of God speak with a united voice that the way to ascension is to love all, forgetting oneself in selfless service and upliftment of others; to disengage oneself from attachments to the senses, to possessions, and to the emotions that keep one body- and ego-bound (anger, fear, lust, greed); and to love God supremely and meditate so deeply that one can at will enter the ecstasy of superconsciousness--the portal to the final states of ascension in Christ (Kutastha Chaitanya) and Cosmic Consciousness (Sat-Chit-Ananda)."*

Guruji goes into detail but again, it is a very simple formula...devotional, scientific meditation, plus right activity. Right activity means to overcome the attachments to possessions, to emotions, to wrong habits of thoughts. That is something we have to work at every day. It never happens automatically. It will never fall into our laps. Conscious, deliberate, willful acts are the way of overcoming these attachments that keep us body and ego bound.

The father of a little boy was being sent to Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. The man's wife and son were seeing him off at the airport. The little boy had a tight hold of his father's leg screaming and crying, "Daddy, don't

go! Daddy, please don't go!" His screaming created a huge scene. The people on the waiting to board the plane didn't know what to do. Finally, the mother told the little boy that if he let go of daddy, she would take him out for pizza. The boy immediately stopped crying, let go of his father's leg, stepped back and said: "Goodbye, Daddy." Although he had an attachment to his father, he had a greater attachment to pizza.

We want to use the complete motivation of our love for God to renounce all limiting attachments but we still won't be perfect. We will never be perfect in this world of duality and we have to make peace with that imperfection. Brother reason for mentioning this was because a lot of people keep beating themselves up and that can lead to discouragement. Discouragement leads to people saying that since they're not making any progress it is not worth the effort and that they stop trying. That is delusion, *maya*! We should never allow ourselves to be discouraged. The ego, the bad habits, will come back and the thoughts of bad habits that we thought were dead years ago may rear their ugly heads again. Counter them by mapping out some game plan to cultivate opposite good habits, along with affirmations that affirm those opposite good habits. Pray to God and Guru for help to overcome them. No matter what, keep moving forward! NEVER GIVE UP! That is the key.

Guruji says: "*Perseverance is the whole magic in spiritual success.*" It is not perfection but **perseverance**. Never succumb to discouragement. It's okay if we fall from time to time but we must pick ourselves up and continue on. Don't expect the world to be perfect; don't expect others' behavior to be perfect and don't let anything disturb our peace of mind, our consciousness. We must be responsible and be in control of our own consciousness.

As Guruji said: "*Turn the wheel of life instead of being run over by it.*" If we are expecting perfection from others and the world, we will constantly be disappointed and discouraged. Don't look for perfection outside of ourselves or even within ourselves. We are striving to be the best we can. We are striving to change and that's good enough. Make peace with the imperfection but it doesn't mean, like somebody said, "If we don't have to be perfect, let's party!" Though we won't be perfect we need to manage more self-control and discipline.

A man's favorite meal was chitlins and he enjoyed them three times a week. Every time he did by that evening his foot was on fire with pain. So he went to the doctor and the doctor confirmed his suspicions that the pork had produced gout. When he got home his wife asked what the doctor had said. Flopping down on the couch and taking off his shoes, he said: "The doctor said I would have gout three times a week." He needed a exercise a little more self-discipline then that.

True meditation is defined as communion with God. In the beginning meditation is the practicing of these techniques...cultivating concentration, practicing devotion and so forth. The same thing with resurrection. The true meaning of resurrection is the establishment of that conscious oneness with God, although there are many resurrections along the way.

Guruji said: *"What is the meaning of resurrection? To live again, to rise, to renew life. Resurrection means any beneficial change to an object or to a human being."* That is how we are going to resurrect the soul...through baby steps. EFFORT! EFFORT! EFFORT until we attain that oneness with God. Picking ourselves up when we fall and keeping on. "The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker." Helen Keller said.

We need to challenge ourselves. Resurrection is not only achieved by the mighty shoves of great heroes in meditation but the aggregate tiny pushes of every sincere effort. Every effort when we meditate, when we serve others, pray and keep the mind positive, uprooting bad habits is propelling us along this path towards Self-realization.

Guruji advised us not to take life too seriously and not to let the world get our goat, our peace. Don't get run over by the world and, moreover, don't become overly discouraged when we fall temporarily.

A class in the Trinity Evangelical College in Deerfield, Illinois were having a discussion about teaching strategies. During the discussion an Indian student stood up stating: "Life is not a problem to be solved. It is a mystery to be lived." The instructor thinking the comment was a perfect illustration of the classic conflict between the Eastern and Western religion and philosophy asked that student if he was quoting from an ancient Indian scripture or proverb. The student said: "No, Sir, I read it on a coffee mug this morning." It is the same thing with the spiritual path. Don't make it too

complicated. It always come down to that yearning, wanting, striving for that perfect love and infinite bliss that is our birthright.

Brother closed with the following words from Paramahansaji: *“Resurrect your soul from dreams of frailties into the light of eternal wisdom. What is the method? Meditation, exercise, relaxation, self-control, right diet, fortitude, and an undaunted attitude of mind. Do not acknowledge defeat. To acknowledge it brings greater defeat. You have unlimited power; you must cultivate that power--that is all. Meditation is the way to resurrect your soul from the bondage of the body and all your trials. Meditate at the feet of the Infinite. Learn to saturate yourself with God. Your trials may be great, but your greatest enemy is yourself--your ego. Your real Self is immortal; your trials are mortal. They are changeable, but you are unchangeable. You can unleash eternal powers to shatter your trials. When you receive, or realize by meditation the omnipresence of God, you can develop your mental powers by serious application. Your mental powers will then expand and your cup of realization will be big enough to hold the ocean of knowledge.”*