

Brother Satyananda
Balancing Your Material and Spiritual Life
Lake Shrine Temple
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"I will fearlessly follow the truth that flows from the stillness of my meditation." That's where the truth comes from. We know it well. Our Guru always advises that if we want the truth to flow we need to find that stillness in meditation first. We have learned well that the mind and the emotions tend to confuse and mislead us. They are not always trustworthy but the truth that flows from the stillness within we can always trust. If you want to learn to always trust yourself for the guidance that comes from within, seek stillness first in meditation. Stillness in meditation starts with physical relaxation. This is good for us and this is good to teach your teens, children and grandchildren. If we want them to learn to meditate and if they want to meditate, teach them first to relax. Kids love it! We can say: "Inhale the breath, tense the body gently and completely. Now exhale the breath and relax." Have them do it several times and we can get their bodies and ours to relax and free of tension that naturally build. Then we sit quietly with the children and say: "Now Let your body really relax." Do some deep breathing with them and each time they exhale tell them "relax your body completely" and then we see that even small children can meditate for thirty-seconds. Yeah! They can be really still. Then we can go through the process again with them, maybe once or twice, and then tell them that whenever they feel angry or feel frustrated or upset they can tense inhale and exhale and relax. That's when the truth begins to flow.

Our guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, said: "The only purpose in life is to find God. You came to play your part on this stage in time, to fill the role that you were designed for in the divine drama. But the essential part of your role is to think of the Lord and to do His will, not yours." Intriguing and interesting instruction..."to play the role we were designed for." That sounds like there's a plan for us and also for us to align ourselves with God's divine design, God's divine purpose.

What does this mean? How do we do this? Brother went on to say that since it's still early in the year he'd wanted to spend some time looking at our sense of purpose and our thinking forward in the coming months of what we will do; what we will plan; what we will accomplish; what we will achieve. He said that it's good to take a look at our roles in life; our sense of identification as individuals. Probably all of us here fall into the category of what we often call 'old souls'.

What is an old soul? An old soul is someone who has been on the rounds of earthly incarnations many times. We teach reincarnation...not just one life but many life experiences until we reach our perfection, our oneness with God. We may not remember but there is often a sense of having done this before and things that don't completely satisfy in this life like maybe they satisfy our family and friends. Old souls have been around for a long time and the oldest of soul is the avatar. The one who has gone through all of these cycles of incarnations, has realized the true purpose in life and has achieved it and then come back to share with others who are also yearning.

Our Guru at Mother Center during his lifetime, looked around at the veteran spiritual men and women

in his discipleship circle and he said: "I have lived the lives of all of you." The guru avatar has lived the lives of all of us and remembers them. So we have lived many lives on earth. How many? Hundreds? The Guru says: "Thousands!" For thousands of cycles of incarnations we have been mothers, fathers, single parents, lived a quiet peaceful life and been in the midst of war and conflict. We have also lived lives of quiet boredom. We've lived lifetimes of fooling around. We've lived all of these experiences in lives before.

The ancient teaching from India is that gradually the soul grows weary and wants something more. In fact, the symptom or sign of an old soul is that there are things of this world that don't really have a sustaining ability keep his interests or arouse desires that friends and family around are very passionate about. They may be interesting but we're not really so passionate about it. There is the sense of aspiring for something more. When one looks around it is not found here and that's when one begins to see the spiritual journey.

Brother went on to say that when he was speaking to the Italians a few years ago, he asked if all of them had come here to fulfill great earthly desires and ambitions? Their response was: "No! No! No! He then asked: "Did you want to be a famous soccer star?" Again the response was: "No! No! No!" "Did you to be a famous tenor?" "No!" "Your name in on the marquee in La Scala?" "No! No!" "Would you like to have a villa on the Mediterranean?" "No!" Did you incarnate to be the world's greatest lover?" Brother indicated that there was a pause and then said: "They were thinking." Then responded: "No! No! No!"

Paradise is for sale! Just in case anyone is interested, an Italian movie star is selling his Mediterranean villa on an island. You can get a whole island for \$25m. It has 33 rooms. A reporter asked him why he was selling. The movie star said: "It's time to let someone else enjoy paradise." He's bored with his earthly paradise and is willing to give it up for someone else to enjoy for a while. Hollywood, as we know, offers it's fifteen minutes of fame. Crossover Latin artist, Ricky Martin said: "I've had lots of ups and downs in this music business. I've played to a hundred thousand in a huge stadium and to fifteen people in an empty club. I try to be optimistic but it's not always easy but it's great!" Up and down. He had his fifteen minutes before the world and he learned that for fifteen minutes the world will adore him. Then he said: "It was fun but it's over."

This is what the world has to offer. It promises to offer success but just a little; happiness but not too much all at once. Now we understand that our earthly roles are not lasting. They are not secure. We cannot find security in this world of duality and change. As the cartoon character Ziggy said: "As soon as I get used to a change, then it all changes." That's what happens, isn't it? You're secure and happy in your family and then the kids grow up and they don't need mommy any more. You're secure in your job and then you get downsized. A position that once had meaning, purpose, that you loved to do and did well, no longer exists.

When we identify closely with these mortal roles, eventually we experience crisis. In this world of duality and change it's inevitable, it's natural. Aren't these the ABC's of life? Isn't this what you want your children to know? And you also want your children to know that there is only one remedy for this, only

one fix.

We need a new identity, a new attitude, a transcendent attitude. One that has lasting meaning and purpose. One that aligns us with the transcendent values. Something that the world cannot rudely rip away and this is what our guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, teaches. He offers this transcendent identification of the soul.

As a young man, Brother said he was studying at a university in San Diego. He said that he went through his mid-life crisis early in life when he was about twenty-three years old. He realized that the world wasn't presenting what he wanted. The first steps that he took on his spiritual path was not a search for God but a search for meaning; a search for purpose. He wanted a lasting purpose; something that would really fire his rockets to get his boosters going. As he began read philosophy and as he gradually migrated into metaphysics he began to realize something. He realized that he was not a student of the university but a student of the universe. He realized that the university didn't have what he wanted to learn. He wanted universal knowledge, reception and understanding. He then arrived at a conclusion that he found thrilling. He realized that as a student of the universe, a seeker of truth, he was on a cosmic quest and began to embrace this search for truth. Then he found a teaching that started to answer all of his questions and found the teacher whom he could follow. He made a choice to become a student of that teacher. Then he made a commitment and became a disciple. Out of that discipleship began to grow a new understanding and realization of God, the Great Cosmic Lord of the Universe, and he became a devotee.

Brother said that therefore he has one role in life, one identity and that he is first and foremost a soul on a cosmic quest. A soul on a journey, a spiritual adventure. It is his essential identity and his primary role in life. It maybe intangible to other but it's very real to him and his monastic life is a formal declaration of that quest. That is how it is represented to him. Everything else that he does as a minister, as a councilor, as a lecturer, as a friend, are duties that he performs with love and care but they are not his primary role. His primary role is a soul on a quest, a spiritual adventure.

When he goes to the market for some food, he said he's a divine adventurer going shopping. That's who he sees himself to be. Also, when he stands up to lead a service at Temple, he's a soul on a spiritual quest leading a service and giving a lecture. This is his primary identity in life through all the activities that he performs.

Our Guru counsels us to pray: "Lord, teach me to play my part in this drama of life with an immortal attitude." Brother said that he sees himself in this way -- with an immortal attitude. Also that this is how he sees each one in the congregation. That each one has a secret identity and that he knows that. Someone may be a single mom with two kids and three jobs, frustrated, without time to meditate but she has a secret identity. She is a soul on a journey, on a spiritual quest, and that he knows this and that how he see each and everyone.

He went on to say that it almost taps into the American psyche of a secret, super hero. Like the one that

has a secret identity with a special mission in life to fight evil. That's the way we are, isn't it? We have this secret identity, this special self, that is on a soul journey and it is our ultimate purpose in life.

So this is your ultimate purpose in life, even though it is a secret and others may not know, it can be very real to us. It can become our primary role and identity, if we consciously choose, accept and embrace it. When we do...when this becomes our primary role in life and our primary identity, then by juxtaposition the rest becomes a passing dream. It is easier to accept change without pain, sorrow or loss. When things that are happening in life come to an end we don't find ourselves grieving; we don't find ourselves crying, begging and praying that it not end. We recognize that it is time for a passage; a time for things to change. A new adventure is waiting. "I am an immortal on a divine quest. There is something more that is coming ahead." We can find ourselves transitioning through the changes in life without sorrow, without grief. So we have an immortal attitude to adopt; a secret, spiritual identity that can be ours and that can serve us well through the changes of life.

How do we do this? How do we accomplish this? When we go to a mall it can be overwhelming with all the stores and shops when we're looking for the special shoe store that's there having a sale. What do we do first to find that shop? We go look at one of these mall maps, don't we? When we look at the mall map the first thing we look for is the red "X...You are here"! Before we can get to where we want to go you gave to know where we are. Then when we know where we are we can see and find where we need to go.

It's the same when developing a new sense of identity. We just simply start from where we are now. We take the moment that we have. It's not like we have to wait for something to happen or create conditions that don't exist. We simply take what we have right now, where we are right now and begin to take steps from there. We may be on a winning streak or we maybe spiraling out of control. Today maybe sweet or it may be totally insane. The external conditions don't matter, they don't matter. It only matters whatever life is right now. There are no outer conditions as prerequisites. The world does not validate this. It is something that has to come from inside. Something that we have to recognize and adopt even if we have tried many different things and nothing seemed to work. Even if nothing...no attitude, no identification, no role...has been completely sustainable to our satisfaction, be open to try this transcendent approach. We will find that something very real begins to grow from within us. Something that has a power of its own. It is something that is totally independent from outer conditions. It is something that we create. Out of the stillness of our meditation flows truth.

So as we begin to meditate, the good feeling we have when we meditate is our soul. Who we are. We are attune with that truth. As we meditate it becomes more real in the stillness and we can give birth to a new sense of identification. We have felt it. We have experienced it but have we embraced it. We read about it and are inspired by the words of other. We are inspired by the God connection that others have but have we embraced it for ourselves. It remains a potential until we embrace it and say: "This is my identity. This is who I am. This is my primary role when all other duties have passed." When all things have transitioned out this will remain with us. This is our reality.

Brother said this is his reality and that he has embraced this for the past thirty-five years. And over the years it has become more and more real as he works with it. It is something that is not dependent on the outer conditions of life having had chances to test it because life, even in an ashram, changes. He knows the roles and duties can change, the outer experiences and conditions can change, yet this sense of the immortal attitude of identifying himself as a soul on a cosmic quest does not change. It stays with him and is very sustaining. It is very strengthening, allowing him to feel secure in the midst of insecurity. As a result the world cannot threaten him any more.

Once we embark on this quest there is something transcendent that is real and sustaining to us. The magic is on the inside. It is not from the outside. The magic is on the inside and we're all here today because we've already learned that and that is why he can speak in this way. We can draw from the inner experiences that we have had. The taste of God that has been given. We are all here today because we have experienced God. We have had a transcendental experience. Something that said that this is real and we know it is. Don't let it be buried by all the details and pettiness of this mortal life.

Keep this living contact growing with in you. Let it feed your faith and you can say, although other may not believe or others may not even know or understand, that you know that you've something more real inside of you than any of the outer experiences. You can build on this and as you build on it, it's like a seed that has been planted...a spiritual perception of God...in a dream, in a moment of peace, a moment of answered prayers, a healing experience. These little things that come to each one of us as proof that we can take this proof and work with it.

It is important to embrace this cosmic concept as our essential self, a foundation of truth. When we do it begins to come alive from within and we can affirm it for ourselves in our hearts and minds. Jesus said to his disciples: "Ye, are the light of the world. Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before man, that they may see your good works and glorify your father, which is in heaven."

Our Master in his commentary says: "Just as lighted candles are not meant to be covered by bushel baskets but put on candlesticks to shed their light, so also souls are lighted with the inherent presence of God that they may with the illumination of wisdom and goodness, enlighten spiritually darkened lives. Good persons should not hide their soul qualities. They ought to engage in good actions among men so that human darkness may be obliterated."

When we embrace a cosmic identity, even though we do not know it completely or have discovered it completely, we yet embrace it's potential personally. We begin to activate spiritual qualities. We begin to create a glowing presence within us that is the light of God. The beautiful thing is that we are opening a new channel for God to flow within us by creating this opportunity for ourselves. This is where the true spirituality of our being begins. Because if we seek spiritually and yet at the same time deny our spirituality, we are still in conflict and we cannot receive. We need to let go of the darkness, embrace the light and it's power and let it begin to shine from within.

One of the legacy stories from the Phoenix Temple, where Brother was minister for about five years, is about the first disciple of Gururji's in Phoenix. Her name is Anna Coates. She was a good friend of Sri Daya Mata. Our guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, gave a lecture series in Phoenix, Arizona during the 1930's. Anna Coates was inspired and felt she'd find what she was seeking when she went to hear Master lecture. She was deeply moved by his presence. She approached the Master in the hall after the lecture and asked for an interview. Master told her to come back tomorrow, that they would talk. Brother said he had Anna Coates' written testimony that she had composed the following and he went on.

The next day she came back to the theatre. The theatre manager let her in but there wasn't anybody there. She had expected to see others. She walked into the dimly lighted theatre and sat down a few rows back from the stage. While she was waiting she heard Master's voice behind the stage curtain and when he parted the curtain and stepped onto the stage there was this light that shone through the curtain. She said she thought that there was a stage light that was shining because Master came out she could see his form clearly. The curtain closed behind Master and the light was still there. She said that as Master walked across the stage the light was with him and as he walked down the steps towards her, she realized that the light was coming from him. That Master was that light. She wrote that the sacredness of that moment was hard to describe but she realized that here was a human being so pure that he actually generated light. It was something that helped her realize that Master was her guru. That he was the one she wanted to follow.

Bhagavan Krishna in the Gita says: "The Lord is the light of all lights, beyond darkness. The Lord of all is seated in the hearts of all."

Brother closed with the following affirmation:

"I am a divine being on a cosmic quest. I am a source of light in the darkest night. My Lord, I will live today with the attitude of an immortal."