

Brother Satyananda
Spiritualizing Home and Family Life
Lake Shrine Temple
November 6, 2011

Brother started the service with a prayer. Close your eyes and feel within you and all around you God's loving presence. "Heavenly Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, our guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, we bow to you all. Oh Beloved God, my ultimate happiness comes from Thee. From the fountain of love, in communion and prayer, I will discover Thy love within and feel Thy love in all. *Aum*, Peace, Amen."

Brother mentions that we are all seeking love and we all make the same mistake thinking that love comes from around us and not from within us. It's beyond our imagination to conceive that we could be a powerful generator of divine love, Cosmic Divine Love and yet this is the truth. This is the ultimate truth.

If we really want long lasting sustained love beyond dualities of the ever-changing conditions around us, it is important to seek it within. This is the common message of prophets and saints of all religions throughout all the ages. Our Guru says that the true fountain of love to really sustain us comes from meditation. We can feel inspiration...it passes...it comes and lifts us up and then it drops us flat. And we'd say, "Lord, where did she go?" The way to find that love and to keep it flowing is in meditation.

In meditation we set aside all distractions of our thoughts, feelings, our normal emotional drama and we sit in the stillness. Out of stillness comes a quiet beauty. That is the beginning of God's presence. And in this peace we can get to feel this throb of God's heart, God's pulsing heart, right within us! God's omnipresent pulsing heart is right within us ever throbbing with love. If we take this truth into our meditation we will find ourselves completely attuning our heart and mind to this great Cosmic Heart of God.

In the stillness of body, heart and mind inwardly feel the silence throughout of God's Cosmic Heart, the great fountain of Divine Presence that dwells within you. As we create...as we create a deepening stillness of body, heart and mind, we become aware of an intimate moment with God. Feel now in this stillness a special intimacy with God within. Feel yourselves silently communing.

The theme of this morning's service is to the families and youngest generation around here. Brother wants to talk about families and children and *Spiritualizing Home and Family Life*. This is good for parents, for parents to-be, for grandparents...it's good for all of us. One of the most touching stories in the *Bible*...stories of Jesus is the story of Jesus greeting the little children. "Suffer the little children to come unto me..." Jesus liked to hang out in Galilee when he wasn't making trouble in Jerusalem. It was his hometown...it wasn't really his hometown but it was where all his friends lived and his first disciples lived and fished on the Sea of Galilee. And so Jesus felt at home, he felt safe and welcome there. On one particular day he'd

been out with the crowds and he was known for his healing. He would touch people and heal them. Great crowds and throngs were gathered around him, pressing in, the *Bible* says, upon him.

Then after he left he walked away and went to Peter's house. Peter and Daniel had a courtyard and that people kind of dissipated and Jesus went into the courtyard. Then it is said in both the *Books of Mark and Luke* that mothers with little children started coming forward. Evidently they had been kind of pushed out by the crowds and mothers wanted their little children to have contact with the Rabbi and the Master. So they began to come into the courtyard and the disciples tried to push them out saying: "Don't disturb the Master. He doesn't have time for the little children." And of course, Jesus, according to Luke rebuked his disciples. "And they brought young children to him that he should touch them and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased and he said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for such is the Kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, ye shall not enter therein.' And he took the little ones into arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them."

That's a sweet picture painted, isn't it? This is the Jesus of compassion that we like to hold in our hearts and minds. Jesus is actually delivering two important messages here through the *Book of Luke*.

The first one is that there is an equality of souls here: souls in little bodies and souls in big bodies...they all deserve equal time. So Jesus is saying equal time folks for the little ones, you know. Bring 'em on; I have time now, let's do it! Then he takes them in his arms and he gives them all the attention. Of course, he loves them dearly.

The second message is to the disciples that you as adults are so complex and all of your human nature. You need to simplify and if you do you'll find yourself more in communion with God. So simplify your complex human adult nature and become more childlike in this way and you'll find yourself closer to God.

So this dual message of Jesus to his disciples is reflected in our Guru's commentary in *The Second Coming of Christ*, a two-part New Testament scripture and commentary by our Guru that is available in our Book Rooms. Our Master says that Jesus loved children and wanted to be near and close to them but then he says that our adult human nature is a combination, a complex combination of, what he calls the Adam and Eve nature...the Adam and Eve principle.

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden have a certain simplicity, a certain purity. Then after leaving the symbolic garden and engaging in all of life and its activities, we have become, over incarnations, we have become complex human beings. This is what disturbs our meditation, right?

You sit down and you close eyes and it's not simple at all. We have made it very, very complex and God cannot get through the forest, the jungle, of our thoughts and feelings. Master says: "Pure reason or Adam and pure feeling, Eve, reunite in Soul-Consciousness. The two are no longer so differentiated. In liberation for bodily identification they are perfect children of God made in the one and the same world image as their Divine Creator. So we want to strive for

mental and emotional purity that is liberating from our complex desires and worries. As we do this, as we simplify our nature, we can draw closer to God.

Brother thinks it's simple and we can boil it down to a common denominator that when we find ourselves motivated by complex desires ...lots of conditions...lots of expectations...we're confusing and deluding ourselves. If we say what is the principle of truth here? What should be my primary motive in this particular situation, you'll be able to condense your complexity into a central simplicity. And you'll find yourself all of a sudden inwardly guided. This is the beauty of being simple like a child. So we reduce our lives, our thoughts and our behaviors down to simple terms.

Brother remembers a story with Daya Mata. She greeted...she loved to greet little children. He was told this story of her greeting a small boy. A single mother was going to visit and Daya Mata had agreed to see her just for a few minutes to greet her and her son. Of course, she wanted Daya Ma's blessing on her son. Before...as she was dressing the little boy before going for the visit she said to him, "I want you to behave yourself and I want you to be a good boy. And when Daya Mata, she's a wonderful woman...when she greets you she's going to do this. [Brother puts his hands together in pranam] It's a spiritual greeting. And if she does this, you do this to her." The little boy puts his hands together and nodded. And she says, "Now just remember what ever she does, you do, too." You can figure this one out.

They go into the Mother Center main hall...Mount Washington...and Daya Ma comes down and she walks up and greets the mother and she says, "Oh, how wonderful, what a nice little boy!" And she bends over and she pranams and the little boy pranams back and then she reaches over with her finger and she touches him on the forehead. And he looks up and then he reaches up and touches her on the forehead. As she said according to the mother...Daya Mata said, "Oh, to be blessed by a little child." Isn't that sweet!

So spiritualizing family life. Every couple has their first child and of course their greatest ambition is to be the perfect parent. Then by the time the second child comes their expectations are not quite so high. They just want to survive the second kid and not do anything drastically wrong. But I can assure you that through God's laws and universal magnetism, that soul was attracted to you. It is also attracted to your style of love and caring. It's a perfect match. You know, we want a manual. There's no manual for parenting but it's built in...it's programmed. As all part of this structure of creation it's no accident that the soul that came to you is yours now. You are taking care of that soul for God. That soul was attracted to you because your love and caring...your style of parenting...is what it needs. Just because there's some tension or conflict as the kid grows up doesn't mean there's a mistake...somebody made a big mistake up there. No mistakes...no mistakes. That is why, you know...that combination, that dynamics in the relationship with your desire to love and care, to nurture and look after, to guide and protect, that parental instinct manifesting through you is exactly what that soul needs. So have confidence in that...that is a truth.

Brother doesn't think perfection is even a word we need to mention when it comes to parenting. The word he really likes to use is **personal authenticity**. It really is the most important thing because who you are being authentic to your personal truth is going to express to the child what

it needs in all situations. So he thinks parenting...good parenting...starts with this personal authenticity.

A question that a woman asked in *satsanga* comes along in different forms. It is simply this. "My daughter used to meditate and read Guruji's teachings but since her twelfth birthday she has stopped. How can I get her interested again?"

So it's kind of hot and cold...off and on. We see that in the kids. Sometimes they love it and they're with it and sometimes they totally do not. Our Guru used to give lectures across the United States and one of his topics was "How to Change Others?" People would come wanting to know how to change everybody around them and then listening for a few minutes they suddenly realized that it was all about changing themselves.

It's the same thing with spiritualizing family life. It starts with you. It starts with your spiritual life. It starts with your regular spiritual practices in home life. So if you want other to meditate, you meditate regularly. If you want others in your home to study and pray, you study and pray regularly. If you want others to make time for God, you need to make time for God on a regular basis. As you do this, the magic is it begins to build order and harmony within the home. The harmony of the vibration of your own spiritual practices and the order of your regularity is like preparing a vegetable garden for seeds to sprout. That's all you can do. You can't even plant the seeds; you just prepare the soil. God plants the seeds and then they get nurtured that way. It's like growing a garden.

This is spiritualizing home life. So your own dedicated spiritual practices in the home have a tremendous influence. It sets the example. It creates a vibration.

Brother still remembers his own mother and she used to have an early morning *Bible* study. She was a closet Christian Scientist, if there is such a thing. She was very quiet about it. She didn't advertise it. She was very quiet. She would get up very early in the morning, about 5 am, and she would just sit in the corner of the master bedroom...there was a little sitting room just off the master bedroom. She would sit there and she would quietly study the scriptures. She didn't advertise it; she didn't talk about it; she didn't say that she was doing it or broadcast it to others in the family but we in the family...four boys...always knew where mom was at five in the morning. There was more than once, when you know...we knew that we could go to her at that time. If we wanted a little bit of attention from mom, we could go and we could sit with her. She would do her study but we would sit with her. As we got a little bit older and if we needed a little bit of comfort or attention or if we wanted some honest talk or if we wanted intimacy, we knew that 5:30 was the time. We knew that she would be there. If we needed forgiveness, we knew that she would be in the mood.

As he was jotting this down for the lecture this morning he realized something for the first time. Everywhere she had her little corner...her study...there were always two chairs. He thinks now that she wanted us to come. He didn't know it then but that chair was there. Maybe she was hoping we would come. Our own regular spiritual practices...they speak louder than words.

There is no such thing as instant spirituality in the home. It has to be dynamic and if your meditation space is private, let your study and prayer space be family space...public space. There's a benefit to that. Even if others don't join you, you're there and they know it. And the regularity establishes a sense of order not only in your life but in their lives, too. They may not talk about it, and they probably won't. He never talked about it with his mother...he never did. Yet, all these years later...she got me...she's still around. But he remembers it just like it was yesterday. So it made an impression on him. It stuck with him and it will stick with your children and your grandchildren, as well.

After hearing one of Brother's presentations on family life a man in Minneapolis tried it out and he told Brother later that he moved his spiritual study session out of his bedroom and into the kitchen...at corner of the kitchen bar top. This is where the family central is. He put out a few little books and he staked out his space...and he had his little books. He would sit there and drink coffee in the morning before going to work or something like that. He would be reading. His two teenage daughters would be there talking and talking, "Oh, what are you doing, Dad?" "Oh, I'm reading a book of Yogananda." "Ugh, weird!" Yeah, they'd talk about boys and complain about boys. "What are you reading, Dad?" "I'm learning how to understand about boys." "Really!" He said they gradually accepted him. They didn't really include him in their conversations but he had his little corner. He was carrying on his spiritual activity. Then he said one month I traveled for business for a couple of weeks. I just left the little books over there. I was keeping my corner because I didn't want it taken over. I was talking to my wife on the phone while I was on the road and she said, "You know, Breanne has been reading one of your little yoga books." He said, "Really!" "Yeah, that's interesting."

He came back and he didn't ask her anything about it. She didn't say anything to him but the parents regular checked their profiles on Facebook and one day they found Breanne's Facebook was mostly quotes of Yogananda from the little book on the kitchen countertop.

You know, you have to kind of dig to see the results but they're there. These kids are making it there own. They're kind of drawing from their environment and they are instinctively gathering the truth. The soul recognizes it and they start to incorporate it into their own lives in their own ways.

So spirituality in the home starts with your daily practice both in private and community family spaces. This is the formula. If we want spirituality in the home we need to begin to cultivate it in our own regular practices.

So quality time can evolve as children grow. We don't quite know what to do but instinctively as parents we relate to the kids. We can start with story time. Little kids love story time. We can tell the stories from the SRF...Self-Realization Fellowship...Lessons. Every Lesson...162 ...every single Lesson has a story. Master put in a story in every single Lesson. These are stories that he told during his lifetime. Sri Daya Mata said to some of us that Master never told the same story twice in the same way. He was always having fun telling stories. Some he brought through from his childhood, some he made up and some of the stories you can find in parables and books around the world. He drew from other cultures, as well. Of course, every story has a sort of moral or a teaching that goes with it but you can start with a story.

Brother likes to tell stories. He tells stories of Krishna...He doesn't read them. He doesn't read them when telling the stories. He just tells them and enjoys the telling. You can do the same thing. You can be creative about it. Get the kids involved!

Gradually the story telling can evolve into story telling and truth teaching. You know, combining it...the two together. This is the way the great masters of all religions have done. This is their common formula...story - teaching. You can do the same.

So add a little bit of teaching to the story and then let it evolve from there...a little bit of discussion about the truth in our own lives. Let it evolve a little bit more...a little bit of silent time together for prayer. Even evolve more and let the silent time be a little meditation.

You see you're doing it yourself and you're introducing it to the kids according to their expanding capacity. Not making them sit longer than they are able; keeping them engaged in some useful spiritual activity and, of course, one of the most important things is quality spiritual time with you. That's what they want more than anything.

But you can bring God into that quality time with you and it makes it doubly comforting. When kids are having trouble...especially 10, 12, 15, tweens, teens...affirmations are really good. Kids love affirmations.

You know, their minds are going through all kinds of crazy thoughts. They don't even know what to think. All kinds of thoughts are coming and they're just entertaining it all, talking it out, trying out all kinds of different ideas. Inject some affirmations especially when a child is suffering.

They've been hurt, you know, they've been jilted, lost a boyfriend, lost a girlfriend, lost a baseball game, a football game...feeling down. "You are what you think. You are the sum total of your daily thoughts." You can say these things to them. "How about if we entertain a new thought and we say this together." Then you just start repeating.

Brother did this at Perth, Australia while he was on tour. They had a long weekend and had two meetings scheduled...bookend meetings scheduled with the teen group. Early in the program...we held teen group...fifteen kids. They were really receptive and really open. Some of their friends were there. They started talking about spirituality in our daily lives and how they make it dynamic.

One handsome young guy was surrounded by girls. He confessed that he'd just been nominated as a team captain for his soccer...soccer team. He was very proud of this. Everybody congratulated him and then he confessed that he was afraid because tomorrow was their big first game. He was the captain and that scared him. So we started talking about how he could face this challenge. Brother said, "Let's introduce an affirmation. Let's say, I am strong. I am good. God is with me. I will be victorious." So that sounds cool!

So we started saying this as a group together for this kid. "Adrian is strong. Adrian is good. God is with him. He will be victorious." We were all repeating it together. And then the meeting was over. Of course, as the weekend went on everybody wanted to know who won. We got together on Sunday afternoon and Adrian, who hadn't been there but he showed up. Everybody said, "Adrian, what went on?" The smile on his face was so big he couldn't get away. He said, "It was awesome! I was repeating that all the time and every time a fearful thought would come in, I'd feel anxious, uncertain, I could replace it with that thought...I am strong. I am good. God is with me. I will be victorious."

He said, "I was feeling so good when I got to the field and we said it together...the whole team was saying it together. We are strong. We are good. We will be victorious." And he said, "You know, nobody could stop us. I have never had an experience like that before." He said, "This stuff works...it's very energizing!" All they need is one experience of an affirmation that works and they will be hooked.

So remember that example speaks louder than words and your regular spiritual activity in the home has a powerful influence.

The longer Brother is a minister, the more he honors free will and free choice. It was given by God to each one of us. Parenting should not deny this. Parenting should somehow encourage it. So his advice for parents often is: don't force, don't pressure, don't manipulate. We are tempted because we are afraid for the kids, but don't force, don't pressure, don't manipulate. This produces consequences not result. Firm guidance is needed, yes, and if a child becomes destructive or self-destructive then intervention maybe required. So he's not saying be hands off. Be watchful and apply what is need but always try to favor free will and free choice.

Brother believes generally that a home environment that offer and honors free will and respects the individual's free choice will be produce maximum harmony and love. It's a formula and it works.

Brother remembers some years ago now that at Mother Center...if you've visited there you know the lawn area there where we have our Guru's Wishing Well. It's a little shrine that he established. Some of us monks were outside talking in between meetings and we looked over on the lawn by the Wishing Well and all of a sudden saw two little owls...baby owls...on the lawn. They were kind of strutting around like this looking important but they didn't know where they were going. We thoughts the owls must have fallen out of the nest way up in the deodar trees and wondering if they were okay. So one of the monks said, "Gosh, I wonder where the parents are?" We walked down on the lawn started to kneel down on lawn and look at the owls. All of a sudden swoosh! Oh, that's where they're are! They almost took off part of his scalp. Then from another tree "whoo, hoooooo." The little guys were down there kind of strutting around the lawn learning to get along but mom and dad were watching.

Brother's been up to Point Dume in beautiful North Malibu where the cliffs come right down to the sea. He loves that place where the cliffs meet the ocean! If you spend just a little bit of time...not much...and stand near the cliffs it drops off...there's no fence...you'll see the

families come up. Some of the families have little ones. Oftentimes the parents are hands off. They are just letting the little ones run around and walk and they kind of watch. As they get close to the edge they follow them closely and then they get maybe a little too close, they grab them. I've seen that over and over again.

The parents seem to instinctively know that their needs to be this combination of freedom of choice and free will and also protection. That is a balancing act of protecting presence and encouraging free will to discover. Brother coined a word he thought... a phrase he calls "protective empowerment". How's that? PP...protective empowerment. That helps to guide and also helps to facilitate the development of free will and free choice.

Some of the best spiritual parenting comes from grandparents. Brother thinks grandparents have a kind of like a lock on this protective empowerment thing. They went through this stuff with their kids...they worried about them, they pressured, manipulated them. It doesn't work. Well, so you have grandparents that are kind of like in a whatever state and whatever isn't so bad. Because they're not trying to control, they're not trying to pressure. They spoil them a bit and maybe that's not so good but then what are grandparents for. But they have the wisdom to say let the parents do the worrying and I'll do the loving and they tend to encourage free will and free choice. So grandparents are very good at this.

If you observe, you'll be able to see that no matter how small a child is that there are both good qualities and bad qualities. They're there. Later on the kid hides it. As we get to be adults we disguise ourselves. We don't show our essential qualities but in a small child it's right up front. There's a road map for life right there. They are reacting and behaving and stuff like that. If you as a parent observe carefully, you will be able to see central core qualities that the soul has brought with it into this incarnation and these qualities are at the foundation of their behavior for the rest of their life. They don't change that much.

So what you see in a little kid...in his behaviors or her behaviors...is, to one degree or another and in more complex forms, what you're going to see in them throughout life. If you look at the little ones and if you see kindness, caring, generosity, peacefulness...you, also, might see impatience, selfishness, vanity, moodiness...pay attention. Because as a parent one of the greatest things you can do for a soul is to encourage good qualities and to discipline and teach self-discipline on their levels.

"This kindness in you is a wonderful quality. It is an essential strength of yours if you nurture it and practice it, it will bring you great happiness. This anger that you express, if you don't discipline it in yourself it's going to bring you great sorrow and great sorrow for others." Talk to them this way. You might think they won't understand but they do. If you say it over and over and over again, then they will understand more about themselves later on. Your words will remain. You are planting important seeds.

Our Guru said that once a mother gave a baby to him and he said, "I almost dropped the child because I realized he was a murderer in a past life." A little innocent baby and Master holds him and see the whole vast panorama of incarnations.

Brother loves christening with little children. There are families there and the defining moment of the christening is...just like Daya Mata did with the little boy...you place a blessing on the forehead. They don't use the *tilak* paste because it's a moving target. But they have the prayers, invocations, and then a christening blessing. With the christening blessings when the minister gives it to the baby it is kind of a defining moment for their personality. Because the way they let a stranger touch them tells you a lot about the child. Sometimes, you know, the child is just relaxed. You can see the eyes going straight up and seeing the whole thing. Sometimes they hide and try to get away and they look away...you have to kind of sneak up on them to give it to them. Brother remembers with this one kid. He was kind of nonchalantly watching him as he was doing the ceremony...looking kind of bored. Then it came time to give the christening blessing and the parents brought him up. As Brother went up to him all of a sudden the baby realized: "He's going to touch me. I don't want him to touch me." You could see that anger starting to build in his face and he was going to howl. So Brother put my hand down and looked at him and said...you could see in his eyes that they were blazing with anger..."You are not going to touch me." And Brother said, "I am going to touch you." "You touch me and I'm going to scream." "You are not going to scream." Brother and the baby were eyeball to eyeball. And Brother said, "Who's going to blink first." Oh, everybody around was saying oh isn't that sweet the minister and the baby... They had no idea of the drama that was going on. Finally, it was eyeball to eyeball and Brother was just willfully waiting for him and then he dropped his eyes and looked away and Brother had won. It was almost like okay, let's get this over with.

We have these little bodies but powerful wills and souls. Some of these traits need to be disciplined. Master teaches discipline first and then lovingly teaches people to discipline...these little children to discipline themselves.

Master says, "Habits are grafts on our real nature which is ever free spirit. In my childhood I used to get very angry but when I made up my mind not to, I never again gave into anger. If I hadn't used my will I wouldn't have been able to accomplish that or anything else in this life."

Be an example of spirituality in your home, share your practices by practicing regularly and opening. Keep feeding and nurturing the home environment for protective empowerment. Encourage virtue and teach self-discipline of bad habits and steadily mentor children during quiet and intimate moments.

A closing story: Mrs. Kaglioni comes to visit her son, Anthony, for dinner. Anthony lives with a female roommate, Maria. During the course of the meal mama can't help notice how pretty Anthony's roommate is. She is suspicious of the relationship between the two and gives her son a long, disapproving stare. Reading his mom's thoughts, Anthony says to her, "I know what you must be thinking but I assure you, Mom, that Maria and I are only roommates. We each have our own separate rooms. We are just friends." Pretty Maria smiles and nods, mama is not convinced.

About a week later Maria comes to Anthony saying...Maria says to Anthony, "Ever since your mother came for dinner I've been unable to find the silver sugar bowl. You don't suppose she took it, do you?" "Well, I doubt it but I'll email her just to be sure." So he sends his mom an email. "Dear Mama, I'm not saying that you took the sugar bowl from my apartment and I'm not

saying that you didn't take it. But the fact remains that it has been missing ever since you were here for dinner." Love, Antonio

The next day Antonio receives an email response from his mama: "Figlio mio, I'm not saying that you do sleep with Maria and I'm not saying that you don't. But the fact remains that if she was sleeping in her own bed she would have found the sugar bowl." Oh, mama mia!