

## **Brother Satyananda – “The Spiritual Gardener”**

**Fullerton Temple, July 10, 2011**

Open the floodgates of your soul. This implies there's a great reservoir of spirit within us. But it does us no good unless we know how to draw from it. You can access it through meditation. We feel it through epiphanies and moments of peace, but meditation is the way to bring it into our daily experience. If we really want to draw from it then we need to meditate daily. Body limiting thoughts keep the floodgates closed.

“My dear, do you like gardening?” These were the first words Ma spoke to Brother. Bro. replied “Oh yes, Ma.” His first assignment was to supervise gardening at Mother Center. Ma told Bro. “My dear, this is exactly what you need at this stage of your evolution. Learn to feel for the needs of each plant, then your compassion for people will grow.”

The secret of gardening is to know the needs of the plant... the sun, watering, soil, when to fertilize, when to prune, etc. If we can understand the needs of individual plants, we can become successful gardeners.

A bonsai master told me not to dominate and control my bonsai plants – then to wait and see what the plant gives back. We have this relationship with nature; we can assert our will, but we need to wait for the growing intelligence in nature to give back.

The living intelligence in nature is wonderful. If you understand the relationship and understand the life behind it, you will become a good gardener. This interaction with plants is part of the joy of gardening.

Brother learned to recognize the vitality of plants. A plant will tell you a lot by how it looks. Ma was teaching him a greater lesson.

When Brother was minister-in-charge of Fullerton Temple he'd get there early enough on the weekends to go exercising, and he'd always go visit this beautiful tree (a *Chorisia speciosa*). On this particular Sunday morning he went looking for the tree as it usually blooms in June and July. When he got to the location of the tree he found it wasn't there. He hoped it had died of disease but suspected it had been removed.

A tree dies very slowly and you can train yourself to be sensitive to the vibration. You can train yourself to be sensitive to the needs of plants. Out of this comes a sensitivity to the universe.

Brother did an experiment at Mother Center on the east and west porches. He planted Zinnias in two planters. (He pointed out that dwarf zinnias attract butterflies). One set of plants he held in his hands and prayed for them with personal love. He would give care to both porch plants, but on the east porch he welcomed the plants, talked to the plants, and felt love radiating from his hands onto the plants. One day he had to remove the plants. The west porch plants were healthy. When he went to the east

porch, he saw how healthier the plants were that he gave love to. They had ten times as many buds and the roots filled the planter.

This proved to Brother that we have a symbiotic relationship to everything around us. As he became more sensitive to plants, he found his sensitivity to people grow and he was becoming more sensitive to people's needs. He paid attention to people's eyes, face, voice and then body posture and gesture. He learned to tell if a person was in pain. He can tell if there is depression or pain in a person. He learned to become more sensitive to the state of being of the people in his life. As he asked questions and people expressed themselves, there would grow in his heart a feeling, and if the feeling became strong, he would give counsel that was on target.

Sensitivity that grows. We can become more aware. We can nurture growth.

Brother witnessed Ma write correspondence for prayers and help. She would close her eyes and take a locket of Master's hair and put it to her spiritual eye. Then she would give dictate advice to the secretaries.

If we take the time and allow ourselves to feel deeply for others, we will know how to act. You can't force a plant to grow. All you can do is provide the right conditions. You can't force a person to love you. You can wait and provide the right conditions.

The most we can do is to create a nurturing environment and wait. We can strive to offer them the love of God.

Our love can be selfish and we have expectations, attachments, and conditions. This is why there is so much conflict. Human love is filled with expectations that humans can never understand.

If we really want to love humans then we have to mix human love with the love of God, which is detachment. If you want to harmonize relationships, you need to give the love of God. There needs to be some detachment. Let the relationship evolve. Your need to allow self-expression. Add your own love and a healthy dose of detachment. God's love is human love mixed with non-attachment. Respect free will. We can express our concerns and wishes, but we need to respect free will.

Encourage others to be the best they can be, but at the same time respect their ability to screw things up! Parents should honor this kind of free will.

Lord, show me how to have your love flow through me. Show me the real needs of those around me.

This is the gardener-plant relationship. We prune; we water; then we step back and let them make mistakes.

In Master's poem on friendship from Songs of the Soul (pg. 84), he equates gardening and friendship:

"Ah, friendship – flowering, heaven-born plant!

Nurtured art thou in the soil of measureless love,

In the seeking of soul progress together  
By two who would smooth the way, each for the other.  
Watered art though by attentions of affection  
And the tender dews of inner and outer sweetness  
Of the selfless heart's inmost devotion."

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From a book on defining language a woman uses, Brother gave a few examples of phrases and how women define them in a relationship:

"Fine" – This is the word women use to end an argument when they feel they are right and you need to shut up. Never use "fine" to describe how a woman looks. This will cause you to have one of "those" arguments.

"Five Minutes" – This is really a half hour. It is equivalent to the five minutes that your football game is going to last before you pay attention to her again, so it's usually an even trade.

"Nothing" – This means "something" and you should be on your toes. Usually signifies the beginning of an argument that will last "Five Minutes" and will end with the word "fine".

"Go Ahead" (with Raised Eyebrows) – This is not an invitation, but a dare. One that will result in a woman getting upset over "Nothing" and will end with the word "Fine".

"Thanks a lot" – Most men stupidly think it means the same as "thanks". Thanks a lot is usually followed by a sigh. And she will usually respond with "nothing".

"Go Ahead" (with normal eyebrows) – This means "I give up" or "do what you want because I don't care". You will get a "Raised Eyebrow Go Ahead" in just a few minutes, followed by "Nothing" and "Fine", and she will talk to you in about "Five Minutes" when she cools off.

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When Brother was head of gardening at Mother Center, he would walk around the grounds outside to check the plants around the fence. An elderly man would often greet him and try to talk to him, but Brother was "too busy" to stop and talk to an old man. One day the man spoke to Brother and told him that Master always stopped to talk to him. "Master's eyes always made you feel that you were really special and really important. This is a really good man and he cares for me." After that conversation, Brother always stopped to talk to this man! God is always there—intelligent God in everything there is.

Avatar – fathomless compassion or all life.

We can feel God interacting with us even through strangers.

Recognize opportunities to share the message and presence of God. God is always there, everywhere. In everything we do. In everyone. We will become more aware of people plants and animals.

If we become more sensitive, we will become more aware. Our love for God will grow.

Comments that were ordinary and routine become Holy. An ordinary life becomes a holy life. We need to take the time and make the effort. Take each person as they are and bring out the best by giving love for who they are.

The channel is always blessed by what flows through it.

In this way, we can nurture and grow even in the most difficult and challenging situations.

Ma said, "Our Master took each person and brought out the best of each person by giving love and understanding."