

Brother Satyananda  
To Be Victorious in Life  
Phoenix Temple  
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God is giving us the power to endure and overcome. We all face challenges in daily life. We believe in the power of positive thinking and in Self-Realization Fellowship [SRF] we teach more. We teach the power of spiritual thinking. Spiritual thinking is very vital because it goes beyond resources of our normal human lives. It begins to tangibly draw upon a new resource, that is, our divine selves, our unity with our Cosmic Source.

We need to open ourselves to this resource, to make it available, to open the doors, the channels. It's not just a matter of blind faith but understanding the Cosmic Laws behind it. This is why our guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, and the Great Masters that have come from India with these teachings, teach us these spiritual principles. Then when we go to the well of stillness in meditation every day, we find affirmation and personal proof that these laws do exist. These principles are real. They do operate in our daily lives.

As we begin with meditation and direct perception from the stillness, we take that confirmation of truth into our daily lives and we can feel resonating all around us these Cosmic Truths. It brings a whole new dimension into the world of existence. This is the power of spiritual thinking and spiritual living.

If we look closely at the picture of Bhagavad Krishna on the altar we see at the centerpiece of his crown a peacock feather. There is an interesting story from ancient times as to how the feather got there and what it symbolizes. We know that Krishna grew up as a little boy in a small village called Brindaban in North Central India. There are many folklore tales about this. Along the Yamuna River he lived with a step family. His beloved mother, Yashoda Ma, had a little ritual that she would perform every now and then with Krishna. That would be to bathe him, rub him down with oils and then dress him in special little outfits. As she was bathing and dressing him, she would tell him ancient stories. Krishna loved all the attention that he would get from his mother and he also loved the exciting stories. In the scriptures it's written that one time, Yashoda Ma bathing the little boy, Krishna, while rubbing him down and massaging the oils into his body, was telling him about a very exciting tale of a well-known lord general in the astral world, Kartikaya, and how brave he was. How he would ride into victorious battles on the back of a peacock.

As she was telling this story, Krishna got all wrapped up in the fantasy of this Lord Kartikaya and how brave he was, along with the fantastic image of him riding into battle on the back of a peacock. That day Yashoda dressed young Krishna all in blue with a little blue silk sash on his head. She took him out under a tree in the yard, telling him to play quietly and not to run off. Around Brindaban in those days there were peacocks. [Brother interjected that he grew up in an area where there were peacocks and imitated their cries late at night and in the early mornings.]

It is said that drawn by the spiritual vibrations of this little boy, the peacocks started wandering nearby, then jumping over the fence and gathering around. Krishna was thinking about the peacocks, so he got up and started mingling among them. They allowed him to pet their necks and stroke their backs. Then a large peacock came into the yard. It was much larger than the rest. Krishna went over and stroked its neck and put his little arms around its neck. Before the peacock knew it, Krishna had thrown his leg around it. He was sitting astride the peacock. It is said that the peacock felt the thrill of the divinity of the little boy, Krishna. It threw out its chest and opened up its tail feathers to the full fan.

We now have this image of the little boy, Krishna, dressed in blue riding around the yard astride this large peacock in full dress. Then it's said that his mother came out and was astounded at what she saw. Krishna looked over and waved and called out: "Look Mom, I am the Lord Kartikaya riding on a peacock to victory." It is said that for a brief moment Yoshida Ma did not see her little boy anymore but the incarnation of Lord Vishnu with his many arms. Then she knew the full mission of righteousness that her son had in the world at that time. It is said that Krishna took a little feather from the peacock as a gift and put it in his head sash. From that time forward he wore a peacock feather even as an adult, including his years as a king.

The peacock in India is a symbol of victory, not just in battle of war but in the battle of daily life. Krishna says in The Bhagavad Gita [Chapter II, Verse 23 & 24]: "No weapon can pierce the soul; no fire can burn it... The soul is immutable, all-permeating, ever calm, and immovable – eternally the same."

Paramahansa Yogananda comments: "As an immortal child of God, death cannot kill you, nor can birth in this fleshly cave completely inhibit the transcendental power within you. By the soul you must redeem the soul, that no matter where you are, you have at your command the irresistible divine powers of mind and will to vanquish every obstacle in your path!" To find the soul you must redeem the soul.

During the fall of 1939, Paramahansa Yogananda gave a series of lectures that are transcribed in this little booklet entitled: To Be Victorious in Life. Brother's points are drawn from this booklet. It was interesting that in the fall of 1939 Nazi Germany invaded Poland and the beginning of World War II. A spiritual master is aware of these momentous events of the world and the direction they are leading. Brother personally believes that Master's messages to the congregations in Los Angeles was to encourage everyone to have an inner victorious attitude that would lead to victory in life, as well as victory in battle.

The first key point that Yogananda brings up in the booklet is: know who you are as an immortal soul. The film star Kirk Douglas likes to tell a story at Hollywood parties. He said that as a younger man, famous for his films, he was driving to his desert home in Palm Springs one day. Being a cool guy, when saw a hitchhiker along the side of the road with his backpack, he pulled over and picked up the young man. The young man jumped in, threw his pack in the back, took a drag from his water bottle, then turned around and saw the famous face from the silver screen. He looked at Douglas and said: "Hey, man, do you know who you are?" Douglas says, "You know, that's a good question we should ask

ourselves every now and then.”

Paramahansa Yogananda has the best answer to that question. He says, “You are an immortal but you must believe that you are an immortal.” We must believe that we are not just these mortal bodies that come from oblivion and end up in oblivion. We are not confined by these mortal frames and the limitations of this world. We are unique divine beings on an amazing soul journey. Our bodies may be born and pass away but our essential spirit self never dies.

This essential self -- I am -- I exist -- I am aware -- I experience -- free from the body, free from the events of the world, free from the drama, this essential consciousness is the soul. It is not defined by a body that is born and dies. It is an immortal self. It is able to transcend at death and go beyond. So we have an immortal self on a divine journey. It isn't always easy because of this identification with ourselves and our world to assume that we are immortals and that this immortality business is not just a kind of nice wishful thought. We must reverse that assumption. We need to assume our immortality; assume our divinity. This is something that we can do. We can make this assumption just as easily as we can make the reverse.

So make a conscious assumption now. “I AM AN IMMORTAL BEING EVERY DAY, EVERY MOMENT OF MY LIFE.”

Brother explained that his has been his perspective for a long time. That he adopted it early because he desperately needed it. He couldn't stand his life and who he was, so he adopted this cosmic perspective of himself and his world, his creation and his purpose. So when he goes down to the market for milk, he says he's not just a sixty year old man going to the market to buy some food but that he's a cosmic being on a divine journey...a spiritual adventure and happens to be buying milk. It can be that way, can't it? We can make it that way! We can turn an ordinary mortal mundane, ordinary life into something adventurous and we may find that it actually is a greater truth.

This taps into the American level of superheroes, doesn't it? It's like everyone wants to have a secret identity. We don't need confirmation from the world. It won't give it! It can be our true identity and does not have to be a fantasy. It is actually a dose of reality.

While the world's positive psychology is teaching self-esteem, SRF is teaching something deeper, which Brother called soul-esteem. Master says: “By the soul you must redeem the soul.” We can in this way assume our immortality. We are using this as a foundation truth and then build upon it with our constant affirmations throughout the day. And we're diving into meditation and gradually gaining a greater realization of it. All of us who meditate regularly can give the same testimony, that we begin to feel the reality of this truth within us. There is a growing strength, a growing shift from our mortality to our divinity. This is something that happens naturally.

So consciously accept this as a secret identity. We'll find that it personally empowers and energizes us.

From To Be Victorious in Life Master says: “You have come into this world without knowing what marvelous faculties you possess and most of you live without trying to, scientifically, develop your potential.”

We want to awaken this awareness, this immortal nature, by soul assumption and then we want to reaffirm it in meditation and discover in stillness and silence that we are the immortal soul. I AM, I EXPERIENCE, I EXIST. I AM NOT LIMITED OR DEFINED BY BIRTH AND DEATH.

Master says this very simply and Daya Mata repeats this often. She said: “Master told us, always be proud that you are a child of God.” We want to be humble in our daily life and manage the ego but Master says that we can be proud that we are children of God. This is soul-esteem! There is a sense of identity; there is a strength; there is a sense of pride and wellbeing in who we really are. We find that this informs and enforces all our noble and spiritual dreams. It makes us strong and able to fulfill our highest purposes.

The first point of this lecture to be victorious in life is to embrace our immortality...let it be our divine assumption about ourselves.

The second point that Master made in this lecture is the importance of constantly moving forward with positive actions. That is, not being lazy about our spirituality so that we are creating the divine assumption but that we don't let it rest on a shelf somewhere in the back of our consciousness. We need to make it active. We must activate it...put it to work by being fearless in approaching things and when we feel afraid or unsure, affirm this immortality and let it become a natural, living resource for us.

Yoganandaji in his lecture uses the example of a growing plant. He said that a plant is always pushing forward with new growth. It is a natural impulse of the organism to regenerate itself and to be constantly maximizing its surrounding resources to put forth new growth. The brutal desert is the most inspiring example of that process. Even in the middle of a drought these plants have tiny growth buds at the ends that are not very green but in spite of the heat and the dry sand they are finding some moisture and putting forth a little new growth. This is inspiring!

We, too, want to have this impulse for renewal and learn to invest the lessons of life into new initiatives so we learn to maximize the resources around us to be able to move forward in making progress and growth in spite of difficulties. So keep designing, keep building, keep creating and keep renewing.

The following is a poem written by a popular entertainer:

“I Have to create;  
I Have to make something grow;  
I Have to write something;  
I Have to say something;  
I Have to put something out.

It is not a need to prove anything.  
It is who I am.  
It's just my way of life."

That's Bette Midler. So to activate the law of success we must be active. Master says in this lecture series: "Many individuals think great things but do not act on them. However, it is the activity that creates the greatest. All action begins with thought, which is action of the plane of consciousness. To be manifested thoughts must be charged by dynamic will by concentration and perseverance to rouse the indomitable power of the mind. Thus, to think greatest, is the first step, but then you must empower the idea with will and set in motion the corresponding course of action."

That is really practical spiritual advise. Master is defining the process. So we want to use our imagination to dream and envision. This is so important for teens and young adults. They are often full of all kinds of fantasies -- What life could be? What we will be? What role will we choose? What kind of lifestyle will we have? -- They all these dreams going on and they are very important but dreams are useless if we don't act on them.

This is where we need to make additional effort because today's world, today's Internet is today's fantasy. It's just too much of a fantasy world. We can live in a fantasy world and think it's real. So we want to be able to separate the entertainment from the reality of our purpose here.

Use imagination, use vision, dream but then, as in the second step, use the intellect to design and plan. Start bringing it down to a practical level, to something that can be implemented. Bring the dreams down to a design...create a design, create a plan...and then power up the will and put it into action...it's the dreaming, it's the designing, it's the action. That's the full cycle that produces victory; that produces success. We need all those components and we need to bring them to bear on a noble purpose.

Decide on a noble purpose; dream about it and then design...our life, our world, our environment, our strengths, our attributes...what we can do and what we can make and then once we have a practical design begin implementing one step at a time.

Brother repeated the quote of Master's: "Many individuals think great things, but do not act on them. However, it is the activity that creates the greatness."

In SRF we do not worship the Hindu deities but we do honor the cosmic forces that they represent. In the pantheon of Hindu deities there are three principles: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. These are worshiped in some tangible form through Hindu ceremonies but from ancient times they are symbols of very real cosmic forces. Lord Brahma represents the power of creation in this universe...the power to manifest, the power to create. Vishnu represents the force of sustaining, that is, of preservation. Everything that is created needs to be preserved in order to flourish. Shiva represents the cosmic force of disillusion. Things that we see all around us that are decomposing, falling apart and decaying, yet, going back into the earth again.

It is these three lords of Cosmic Forces that we recognize as being part of our dual world. It is said in ancient scripture that there once was a great debate among these three lords of the universe as to who was the greatest and most influential of them all.

Brahma said: "I've been invested with this unique power of creativity and I can create anything. That by far is the greatest power." Vishnu said: "Well, yes, but if you haven't noticed, something that you create doesn't last very long, if I don't sustain it." Brahma had to admit that there was truth to that and then Shiva laughed and said: "Both of you are kind of crazy because anything that you create and sustain, I can destroy!"

They started talking and agreed to test this out to see who really is the most powerful. According to the story, Brahma started creating. He started manifesting new worlds, new universes, and beautiful things that would come out of seemingly nothing. Then his creations started to wither and fade; he realized that his creations were not self-sustainable. Then Vishnu stepped in with his magic wand, his cosmic force, and everything that Brahma had created began to renew, regenerate, reproduce, began to live and have a life of its own. Brahma realized the importance of Vishnu's role.

Then Shiva entered in and he began to destroy things. They began to fall apart. They exploded and disintegrated. As that began to happen, Brahma would go within and feel this need, this urge, to create again. And he began creating again. Then the three realized the wisdom of Naryana, the great cosmic formless lord of all, that really the greatest force was their combined forces. The greatest force was all of them working together...creating, sustaining, dissolving and recreating again as a cosmic cycle.

This is a very good story that has a lot to teach us because it is a reminder for us that we live in a world of change and even our best intentions, our dreams, our designs, our actions have a season and we are subject to that. That there is a time for creating and growth and expansion. There is time for sustaining and nurturing and there is a time for destruction. We see it in our efforts; we see it in our lives but then the destruction must lead to rejuvenation and new creation. This is the whole message.

As we look at the realities of our lives, we don't want to be hopeless about it. We don't want to end with the end of that cycle because the cycle wants to begin anew. That's apart of the completeness of the picture. So we want to have a holistic view, as spiritual men and women. We want to participate in the full cycle and it's renewal process.

Brother said he'd been journaling for many years, keeping track of his experiences, observations and insights and in the process affirming the truths of our Guru in his own unique way. This is encouraged so we can come up with our own individual truths. Brother calls his journal "my personal scripture, my personal therapist." In doing so, we have the Guru right there with us. He talks to us through the process of such positive introspection.

There is a little sanskrit phrase that Brother uses every now and then in his journal. It is "Brahma,

Vishnu, Shiva, Om!” He said that he’d write the words all running together...Brahmavishnushivaom... To him it reflects the simple profound meaning that all these forces are at work constantly in his life. It’s not something that he can control. They are laws that operate.

Master says: “Learn the rules of the game of this universe and you will become successful.” Brother went on to say that he knows that there is a time of creation, a time of sustaining and a time for dissolution and he sees these patterns in his daily life. Also, that he can apply them in a practical way. If sees that if he had initiated something and it doesn’t seem to be flourishing, there needs to be energy put into the preservation of what has been created. It is very possible that when we create something very valuable, then neglect it. It needs our preservation and needs our nourishment. Yet, if he’d been nourishing something that he had put into motion and in spite of all his efforts it begin to dissolve he accepts that it is the season...the time for this thing to dissolve and to be no more.

Then the cycle begins again and Brother explained that he tries to feel within himself this new regeneration, this genesis and regenesis, where it is time to recreate. “Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Om!”

He went on to say that it is a cool concept and something that we can actually use in our daily lives. Brother has reduced his personal truths to sutras. One sutra is: “Nothing is permanent in this world of change but there is always the dream for renewal.” That is not an intangible goal. It is not! It’s a teaching of truth and it can strengthen us because this is the critical point when something we’re passionate about begins to be destroyed and we can’t control it. Isn’t that true? Things come to an end and it’s not fair. It’s unjust...it should last forever...and we always find, yet each and everyone of us finds, that when we accept the dissolution and we embrace the new creation, what happens? Something better comes. This is God’s plan. This is God’s law. We cannot remain the same. Everything that we create has some imperfection. It’s good but it needs to be improved. If we have this undaunted spirit of regenesis we will find that the next generation will be better than the previous one. This is the law! This is the blessing of God.

The final point that our Guru makes in little book To Be Victorious...it’s not really the final one because Brother said he only read about half way through when he was preparing for the service. He suggested everyone check out the rest of the book themselves.

This point this morning is an important one; Don’t take opposition personally! Brother said he thought everyone got it but he’d talk at us about it anyway.

Master says: “It is inevitable in this world of relativity -- light and darkness, good and evil -- that whenever you try to expand, you will meet enemies. This holds true in all endeavors. The minute you try to accomplish anything, there is resistance.” Master is not saying that the noble dreams and ambitions are going to happen only for a few holy people nor that only those with bad karma or bad attitudes are going to meet opposition. He is saying that it is inevitable that all noble dreams will ultimately meet the harsh realities of this world.

This is part of the cycle. When we dream and initiate there is going to be opposition. There are going to be challenges. Accept it! It's nothing personal. It feels personal. It feels like there are people out there to get us and just throw negation all over our plans. Bogus! There are universal laws in order that are a part of this world of duality and change that naturally repulse what we're trying to do. It doesn't mean we shouldn't do them. It doesn't mean we shouldn't dream and start again.

This is the teaching of the Masters. The teaching is not to give up when we do something noble, something important and something passionate. Don't give up. Don't take it as a sign or feel the opposition of the world, even the plotting and conspiracy of a few people, against us. This is not a sign from God that we should quit. This is not a sign from God that our dreams are not worth achieving. Don't look for outer signs in the universe. It will only abuse. It will only create chaos. We'll be totally uncertain and we won't be able to take action. Find the answers within. Find the strength and guidance from within.

Look at the Masters in our meditations and feel the power of Their gaze and smile blessings us. Look to that, not to the complainers and the criticizers. They will only limit our efforts. They will always be there. We may win over a few hearts but there will always be a few we don't but don't pay any attention to them. This world needs good people; this world needs spiritual people with spiritual endeavors. This world needs our noble dreams! Don't give up and we will see that we have the look of God within our hearts. That our full noble, original, creative ideas are very much apart of God's plan. He's counting on all of us. We cannot afford to be weak. We need to be strong.

In this way we will find that we are gaining new strength. It is through Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Om and the regenesis that we can strengthen and our dreams grow. We have this infinite capacities within us and through the teachings of the Masters. We can find this infinite power that can gradually grow into soul-esteem. Our immortality does not die.

Brother explained that of all the counseling he does as a minister, there is one thing that stands out above all else and, that is, to give encourage-ment. He said sometimes he can give good advice and sometimes it's not so good but every time he gives encouragement he feels something in his heart and he knows it's good. "You know you're a good person. You have noble dreams. Don't let them die. You can do this. You can overcome this. It's not going to last forever. Be strong!" The feedback Brother said he gets is: "You are the voice of the parent I always wanted but never had." He said that it's cool and sad at the same time.

We all need this voice coming from somewhere in our environment. We desperately wanted it from our spouse or family or kids, but do we get it? Good Luck! That's why spiritual community is so important folks! That's what spiritual family is all about and if we want to grow a strong spiritual family and if we want to get the most and give the most, give unconditional encouragement. Don't critique others people's dreams and ambitions. Don't critique their friends. Just say: "You can do it! I believe in you. You are really a good person. You're really fine and this is really a good design and you ought to get started with it. Keep your dreams alive. Put your prayers behind it and I'll add my prayers."



It is so simple and we can all do it when we have a community that empowers each other...encourages each other. It is a very important quality because our biological families don't know how to do this. We can teach our kids and grandkids and they can learn something special but if we practice it in our spiritual community, we'll find that this place becomes a wonderful resource...a sense of support and when we come to meditate, we'll feel it along with the vibrations of the Masters. We will walk away feeling that something has been given; something has been imparted. It is much more than we had expected. Brother advised that each one take this to heart and keeps these things in mind because the world needs good, strong, spiritual men and women.

"Mama, look, I am the Kartikaya riding to victory on the back of a peacock."