

# Gita Chanting

## Led By Swami Krishnanandji

5/01/06

Swamiji said that the devotees were more fortunate to be attending the Igatpuri Janmotsava as compared to the programmes being held in any other place.

Speaking about the importance of Gita chanting Swamiji said that Sw. Vidyananda one of the surviving direct disciples of Guruji (initiated by Guruji in 1936 and who built many of the residential schools in Ranchi) often asked him to read the Gita. He himself being trained in the traditional Indian sanyas system was well versed with the Gita. But to Sw. Krishnanandji reading the Gita was a waste of time. **Sw. Vidyanandji told him, it does not matter whether you understand the Gita or not, with time you will start knowing the verses.** Several years later, when Sw. Krishnanandji had gone to USA he thought why not give it a try. He took the cassettes for Gita chanting from the Chinmaya mission. He would play a few verses, then join the chanting and recite the verses. In a few weeks of time something strange started happening to him. The verses possessed him and would not leave him. The verses continued to chant themselves within him superconsciously. Soon Swamiji decided to give some amount of time to each chapter in the weekends. He would start a new chapter and by the grace of Guruji and the grace of Krishna he completed the entire Gita chanting. Now it has become a part of his being. Even at night if he gets up his subconscious is digesting the verses of the Gita day and night. He was amazed at the power of the mind. It is said in Chapter 8 the best way to leave the body is to take the name of the Lord and if the verses keep on coming to his mind day and night, then part of his job is already done.

**Sw. Vidyanandji also layed stress on Japa.** He has reached a stage of blessing that the mantra goes on in him. God has blessed him so, that God is chanting the mantra in him and he is hearing it.

Each subject is treated in so many different chapters in different ways eg. Restlessness and peace of mind. Instead of searching back and forth Swamiji

decided why not put it all together and made a complete alphabetical index of the Bhagwad Gita. This has been for him a joy and a privilege. Bhagwad Gita is the unparalleled ode to the universe.-----

Intoned in ----sleeping memories --- inner sanctum of the soul.

It is time to look back and see what has happened to our lives and to the world in this last one year. Starting with the tsunami on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004 in South India, to the earthquake in Poonch, an enormous amount of suffering karma has been brought to our country. The people affected may have been innocent in this life but they had to work out the past karma of previous lives. Many direct disciples of Guruji, Ananda Ma, Sw. Bhaktanandji, Sailsuta Mata, all passed away. Sw. Sachitanandji one of the direct disciples in India left his body on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2005. He had a charming little ashram in ---- near Purulia. Some of the best meditations of Sw. Krishnanandji's lives have been in his ashram. Of the three surviving direct disciples of Guruji in India now only 2 are left – Prafull Hazare and Sw. Vidyanandji.

Floods in Mumbai, Gujrat, Orissa, West Bengal and all these other tragedies are happenings that had been predicted. Guruji had predicted that the years from 2004 to 2014 would be full of turmoil. We have heard Ma describing how when she was visiting India and was at Babaji's cave, she saw in her vision a dark cloud. This was the period of dark cloud that she saw. But she also saw that the dark cloud vanished and peace was restored. When Swamiji saw the pictures of Katrina in USA sent to him by internet, the pictures reminded him of the dark clouds seen by Ma in her vision. One interpretation of this is that this is the cleansing period; the cleansing by nature; to usher in the new yugas – times are changing. Just as Krishna had come to the world to clean the world similarly all this is Divine Mother's plan. But all this tragedy is not meant to weaken us, but to take us more closer to God. We have a role to play in the personal tragedy and in the community tragedy. **Ask yourself what is your role in all this?** It is ultimately because we have forgotten God. Therefore we bring upon ourselves a tragedy to remind us of our place in creation.

In one of His talks Guruji tell us how we can bring God into our lives. No matter what you do, God should always be in your thoughts even when you want to buy a special dress or buy a car. Until you fulfill your desires your mind will not rest. In the same way your mind should not rest until it is with

God. **Transmute your desires and get into the mental habit of whispering to God night and day.** 'Night and day I look for Thee'. Practice the presence of God – by continuously talking to God. Mental whispers develop dynamic power to reshape matters. You do not realize the power of mental whispering.

When your mind and will are attuned to divine will, you do not have to move a finger to bring about the required change. All the salient aspects of Swamiji's life have been achieved through that attunement. Simply attune your minds to God develop the habit of whispering to God. You must take care to control what you are thinking and what you want. Sometimes you get what you are thinking of. Some saints have Vak Siddhi. Such saints have to have perfect control of their feelings, thoughts and words.

In the Bhagwad Gita there are several verses dedicated to practicing the presence of God. In Chapter 8, Vs 5 Bhagwan Krishna says that –

**'Lastly he enters my Being who thinks only of Me at the hour of his passing, when the body is abandoned. This is truth beyond doubt.'**

And in Chapter 8, Vs 7 Bhagwan Krishna says –

**'Therefore, remember Me always, and engage thyself in the battle of activity! Surrender to Me thy mind and thine understanding! Then without doubt shalt thou come unto Me.'**

That is the purpose of our sadhana.

**Gurujī used to say it does sound contradictory to ask one to Master the mind and to ask one to surrender the mind. He explained thus – Master your life so that you can surrender it to God.**

He and I are one, there is no way in which I can escape Him or He can escape me. I have to surrender to Him within me, and give up the notion he is somewhere outside of me.

In the next verse Chapter 8, Vs 8, 9,10 Bhagwan Krishna says –

**'He attains the Supreme Effulgent Lord, O Partha (Arjuna), whose mind, stabilized by yoga, is immovably fixed on the thought of Him.'**

**'At the time of death 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.'**

If I see Him everywhere in all circumstances, then I know that I will never lose sight of Him, nor He will ever lose sight of me.

In Chapter 9, Vs 26 says –

**‘The reverent presentation to me of a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, given with pure intention, is a devotional offering acceptable in my sight.’**

A child when given anything runs to his mother and gives that thing to the mother. He shares whatever he gets with his mother. The same way, whatever God gives you, take it to Him and show it to Him.

The next verse in Chapter 9, Vs 27 says –

**‘Whatever actions thou dost perform, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), whether in eating, or in observing spiritual rites, or in gift bestowing, or in self-disciplining – dedicate them all as offerings to Me.’**

Master your lives so that you can give it to God. Ego awareness makes us feel we are the doers. **View the whole world as God’s drama going on. He is giving me a fantastic show to look at and enjoy.** Cultivate a relationship with Him.

Chapter 9, Vs 22 says –

**‘To men who meditate on Me as their Very Own, ever united to Me by incessant worship, I supply their deficiencies and make permanent their gains.’**

We don’t have to be perfect. We just have to go to Him for everything that we do. Go to him like going to a mother, He will then supply our deficiencies and make permanent our gains.

These verses of the Gita have become so much a part of Sw. Krishnanandji’s mind that he has to just think of a topic and his mind starts mentally scanning the chapters of the Gita and find something there to support those thoughts.

Chapter 10, Vs 9 says –

**‘Their thoughts on Me. Their beings surrendered to Me, enlightening one another, proclaiming Me always, My devotees are contented and joyful.’**

Talk about him, sing about him, sing to him. Direct each offering to him without fighting with each other.

Sw. Vidyananda’s favourite verse is the one in Chapter 18, Vs 57 –

**‘Mentally dedicating all actions to Me, considering Me as the Supreme Goal, employing buddhi-yoga (union through discriminative wisdom), continuously absorb thy heart in Me.’**

But we are warned in Chapter 18, Vs 58,

**‘With heart absorbed in Me, and by My grace, thou shalt overcome all impediments; but if through egotism thou wilt not heed Me, thou shalt meet destruction.’**

Surrender to God, make Him a part of your daily life, be with Him throughout the day. How?

One very important way of practicing this is japa yoga. This can be an excellent practice during the period of retreat to continuously mentally chant the name of God.

**Check out how much you have been in the presence of God, by filling an introspection chart at the end of the day by just putting tick marks.**

Benjamin Franklin used to do this and St. Ignatius, became a saint by just the habit of introspection.

**6/01/06**

In the Guru stuti, we say,

**‘Moksha mulam Guru Krupa’**

The grace of the Guru alone will be the cause of our liberation. **Whole purpose is to find a way to get His grace.**

How can we do that? **By obeying His instructions.** If you find the word ‘obey’ harsh then say ‘follow’. Guru does not demand anything. To follow or not to follow is up to us. The better we follow, the more sincerely we follow, the more grace he gives us all our lives.

Practicing the techniques is a part of ‘getting the grace’.

There are many paths, many gurus, and the grace can be obtained by whatever technique the Guru has given to us. If He has given us a mantra, or a service to perform according to our temperament, follow that. Guru guides each person differently according to the need. In our parampara, the system of sadhana or technique is called the ‘kriya yoga’. Practically in the lessons, our Guru Paramhansa Yogananda, gave us many techniques to follow, but the basic ones are Energisation exercises, Hong sau, Om technique, and Kriya Yoga. Someone asked, that there are so many techniques, that if we practically follow all of them the whole day will be over.

**Guruji expected us to follow the above four regularly and faithfully.** The other techniques can be followed once in a while when we have some extra time for meditation, or when we sit for long meditation. Try out and see how it works.

There are four factors connected with the working of the body:

1. Our mind with the feelings and thoughts
2. The breath i.e. physical inhalation and exhalation
3. Prana which keeps body alive
4. sex force.

All these are closely interrelated and controlling these consciously is the goal. If one is controlled all the others get controlled and if one gets excited all are disturbed. Controlled life is hence of great importance. To succeed in any of the techniques your life must be controlled and the techniques enable us to slowly, gradually control these factors. In each technique some or the other of the factors are involved. For e.g. In Hong sau – 20-20-20 breathing only breath is involved. That will lead to the control of the other three. He said he would briefly go over all the three techniques and the principles involved.

Energisation Exercise:

Take care of the body and prepare the mind.

**Remember to have a wave of tension and relaxation.**

**Do not go to that high level of tension that the muscles pain and not such a low level of tension that it is of no use. The muscle should become hard when tensed.**

(For the ‘West’ – mind is a consequence, not the reason. Experiments have been performed where they scanned the brain of a person and then asked the person to lift a pen in the right hand and saw the flow of blood in the part of the brain responsible for the right hand. The second time they asked the person to mentally lift the pen in the right hand without actually doing it. The brain scan revealed flow of blood to the same side of the brain just the same. )

The energisation exercises are not ordinary physical exercises. They are an example of Guruji’s grace on the disciple. When Swamiji first started out on the path, he thought Guruji had simply formulated those simple exercises for lay people who were not much interested in physical exertion. Then when he did the double breathing exercise with tension with eyes at the kutastha he saw a large spiritual eye. He then realized that it was much easier doing the

other kind of exercises, but it takes real effort to do the energisation exercises correctly.

In all the techniques body is used as a 'crutch' to push the prana. Purpose is to concentrate and get to know what is prana. We don't even have a clue. So Guruji says tense and relax the body and slowly you will get to know what is prana. That is why they say it is easier to progress faster when we have our physical bodies – than when we are in the astral or causal worlds (because we can use the body as a crutch).

One who could control the whole universe and had no need to control His prana – Guruji used to daily perform these exercises for our sakes.

The Hong sau technique is a technique of concentration. It is an important technique for us to concentrate the restless mind and focus it on God.

Chapter 6 of the Bhagwad Gita mentions how to lead a balanced life.

Chapter 6, Vs 26 says –

**Whenever the fickle and restless mind wanders away – for whatever reason – let the yogi withdraw it from those distractions and return it to the sole control of the Self.**

In the verses 26-27 Guruji advises how the practicing devotee whose mind is restless, should firmly and with kindly patience, bring the wandering mind back like a charioteer controlling the excited stallions.

**No matter how many times restlessness invades the mind, the yogi should guide the mind towards Self Realization.**

In Chapter 6, Vs 33 Arjuna (master of concentration) says –

**O Madhusudana, owing to my restlessness, I do not behold the permanent enduring effect of the equalizing yoga that Thou hast related to me.**

In the next verse he says –

**Verily, the mind is unsteady, tumultuous, powerful, obstinate! O Krishna, I consider the mind as difficult to master as the wind!**

The devotee in deep despair says how am I to control the breath and to control the mind. By scientific yoga.

**Cultivate the habit of peace. First of all we should desire peace. If we find our happiness in T.V. shows, attraction of opposite sex, new new foods, new demands in the consumer market you can't have peace.**

As long as u don't have those things in the market you want them and when you have them you are dissatisfied.

We thus develop unnatural mortal habit of restlessness. We enjoy restlessness. If it were not so, you and I would not be here.

**Ask and pray for peace. God teach me how to become more peaceful.**

**Teach me how to want to become more peaceful.**

We are not interested in peace. We don't have the experience of it, we feel it must be something very boring. You and I present here today have been given a taste of that peace by Guruji, and yet we show an unconditional love for Guruji by asking Guruji to give us new sensations and new experiences – then I will meditate.

Chapter 6, Vs 35-36 says –

**The blessed Lord said:**

**(35) O Mahabaho (“mighty armed” Arjuna), undoubtedly the mind is fickle and unruly; but by yoga practice and by dispassion, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), the mind may nevertheless be controlled.**

**(36) This is My word: Yoga is difficult of attainment by the ungoverned man; but he who is self-controlled will by striving through proper methods, be able to achieve it.**

**Dispassion is as important as the practicing part.**

**Whole life has to be controlled, controlled, controlled.**

**Entertain no desires even for swarga, swargaloka, not even dreaming of the joys of sainthood.** Dispassion doesn't come so easily. It requires the grace of God. If God would reveal Himself to us now, you would feel such an overwhelming love, you would want nothing else. You would tell Him, 'now please don't leave me.' That brings 'vairagya'. Swamiji said - "Everyday I was outside the ashrama people were telling me 'go and join the ashrama'. When I went there, then I suddenly developed 'vairagya'."

**In the Hong sau technique practice you should never give up the practice of 20-20-20 breathing if you really want to master the mind. Go up to the count of 20.** Then you will see you have such control over your diaphragm and breath. It will help you in your kriya as the deep diaphragmatic breathing will become very easy.

**Also do not forget to tense and relax the body 5-6 times and then the inhalation with tension, throw the breath out, wait and see what your breath is going to do.** Then watch the breath coming, going, coming, going. Practice by looking at somebody else how to breathe. Chest going up and down and then turn the attention to your own mind and watch your breath. Next thing to watch are the thoughts. What leads to Self Realization is when the mind starts saying 'Hong' and when the exhaling mind vibrates to 'sau'.

That is the most difficult part of the technique. This is mind. Now you make sure you practice the more difficult task of not letting the mind go here and there. If you try only to sit long the mind will have its way. Hours will go by and nothing will happen. What is meant by Self Realization?

Total awareness of what is happening. For an earnest seeker to be free of thoughts and feelings, to **begin by watching the flow of thoughts, go deeper and watch thoughts and watch yourself watching the thoughts.**

When the bliss comes – the soul's pure nature will flow. Breath, thoughts, controlling them, disciplining them.

**At the end of the Hong sau practice again take a deep breath and consciously throw it out. Then watch how long it stays out.** If you perform Mahakumbhak three times if you have been performing Hong sau deeply then the breath stays out for long.

Om technique directs the mind towards sound aspect of God. It makes the mind vibrate to Om. You hear a number of sounds during the Om technique. We have to concentrate on the loudest sound and keep the mind hearing that sound long till we go deeper and deeper. In the last step merge into the loudest sound. That brings the experience of cosmic consciousness and forgetting body consciousness. Bliss is one of the aspects which will be felt. Closing statement – Go to Abhyasa vairagya.

Never give up. God and Guru is with us.