

How to Pray by Sw. Shuddhanandji

All of us know intuitively that we are divine beings. But we must remember that we are not human beings wanting Divine experience, but we are divine beings having human experiences. We are often experiencing and going through human experiences. We still have not experienced the state of Satchitananda but the state we are in right now is not our real state.

Until we find satchitananda we will keep on searching and evolving step by step into higher states. During this course of evolution as we keep on finding what we don't have we keep on demanding and God answers these prayers. Remember every prayer demand is answered by God. Guruji once said, "What is wrong with the world? It is – that people don't know what they are missing." We just keep on asking for little little things. We ask for one particular problem to be solved or one particular desire to be fulfilled or this particular disturbance to be removed. We finally come to a stage where we recognize through evolution what we are missing. Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji says what we are really looking for is the satchitananda. We accept that we are in a highly unnatural state right now. Occasionally we get a glimpse of that satchitananda – and then we continue to be in a 'swabhavik' (natural) state. But this is an unnaturally natural state. This is not our real state. When all ignorance is removed, then we go inside and feel fulfilled, we are perfectly happy, complete, there is nothing more to be gained. Right now we realize intuitively or understand intellectually but we have not attained it. Let me explain this to you through a story.

In a school children were enacting the Ramayana. Children had been given a particular role to enact. On the day of the play the child playing the role of Hanuman fell sick and so that role was forcibly given to another child. The teacher tried hard to make that boy Hanuman. The boy whose name was Gopal was most disinterested and frightened. But on the day of the play he put on the costume and mask of Hanuman and came on stage. As soon as he came on stage the audience began to laugh and started screaming – Hanuman, Hanuman. The boy's face turned red with shame. He thought the teacher has caught me and fooled me into becoming Hanuman. So he began to shout, "No, No I am not Hanuman. I am actually Gopal" and the whole drama got spoilt.

I felt very inspired with this little story in Calcutta last Sunday. Whatever role we have to play on the stage of life we must do it sincerely and cheerfully. If we spoil the show, the stage manager will not let go of us and we will have to keep on coming again and again till we do not learn to play our part well. We are given a role as per a divine plan, as per creation, our sanskaras, our habits, our sadhana. The soul has come into this world with an agenda, to work out some left over desires and to get rid of some excess baggage. If we don't want to play the role properly, if we create new desires, feel miserable, blame everybody and think there is no God then we are not playing our role properly. If that boy had the correct understanding, he would not think that people are laughing at me and making fun of me and he would have been happy playing his role. We may be playing a humble role or a world shaking role, it doesn't matter. The aim is to do our best only to please God and lead a life with the right attitude.

3-4 days back there was a thought in the Spiritual Diary on Happiness:

April 21: Happiness: In a time of misfortune I heard Thy voice, saying: “The sun of my protection shines equally on thy brightest and thy blackest hours. Have faith and smile! Sadness is an offence against the blissful nature of Spirit. Let My life transforming light appear through the transparency of smiles. By being happy, My child, thou dost please Me.”

Remember this is only a play, internally be always happy with joy even when doing a difficult role – it won't touch you. Be like the drop of water on a lotus leaf – without any attachment, so that any moment when God says, ‘come home’ you can leave everything and go away. Remember the story of how when the chariot came to take Tukaram to heaven, he asked his wife to come along with him. But his wife was busy in the kitchen and so she missed the opportunity of going to heaven with Tukaram when the chariot came. So live in such a way that any moment that God calls you should be ready to go home. That is true vairagya. We should play our role in such a way that however difficult may be our role, whatever the challenges, we should always be happy and any moment that God says, ‘come home’ you should be able to leave everything and go away. It is easy to talk about such a state, but practicing it is difficult. The way Guruji asked the devotees to stay – be awake and ready.

In the discourse 56 of the Second Coming of Christ explaining Luke 12:35 – 48 Guruji has written:

“Keep your spiritual will ready and concentrated within on the lights, or stars, in the spinal centers by which you can lead your consciousness from finite body identification to the Infinite – sending your consciousness and life force through these centers of light into Spirit...

When the cosmic consciousness comes and knocks at the gates of the devotee's intuition, it must be expectantly received with devotion. Those devotee servants of God are blessed with eternal emancipation when the Cosmic Consciousness arrives in their consciousness and finds them diligently alert with wisdom and watchfulness, ready to receive God and disband ignorance...

That devotee is a worthy servant who keeps his bodily and mental house well guarded with wisdom, allowing no opportunity for the thief of ignorance suddenly to break through his consciousness and steal his spiritual qualities. Just as a stealthy thief is unable to take by surprise a watchful servant, so also the faithful devotee remains at all times ready for any sudden, subtle coming of the “Son of man,” a manifestation or experience of the Christ Consciousness, or realization of the infinite Christ Consciousness, or realization of the infinite Christ Consciousness as incarnate in the body as the soul, the divine Self through whose emergence and intuition God is realized.

The true devotee is always patient and persevering, devotionally prepared for the Divine Visitation, no matter when it comes unannounced; but the fitfully wise devotee, sometimes attentive but then slipping into restless inattention, often misses the opportune moment of spiritual manifestation. That servant who is unceasingly faithful and constantly wise and watchful is made master by the Lord God of the spiritualized bodily and mental house, with the duty of overseeing the servant-senses, controlling and sustaining them with the proper dole of the meat of wisdom....

But the careless and whimsical devotee does not meditate dutifully every day, thinking that his lapses matter little because of a delay in the manifestation of God-consciousness. Sensing no immediate need to resume his laborious spiritual obligations, he rather momentarily regresses and ill-treats his servant-senses and insults and misuses the maidens of his fine feelings to enjoy sense objects and thereby become drunk with delusion. Because of the devotee's intermittent worthy endeavour, the innate Christ Consciousness may come someday to manifest consciously to him; but

finding him spiritually negligent and unheeding, will instead separate and go away from the careless consciousness. That devotee, whose devotion had erstwhile given him some contact of God but which was now lost through negligence, becomes classes with the unbelievers who never have God-communion.

The devotee who intuitively felt God's will and did not prepare himself to obey that will and to meet the divine tests in order to do so, shall find himself lashed by self-doubts and the acute remorse of losing God after finding Him. But that devotee who errs because he is yet unmindful of the joyous fulfillment of God's coming will suffer less. Much watchfulness and spiritual sanctity is required of devotees with wisdom, just as men expect much from responsible social leaders." (Highlighted portion referred to by Swamiji). So when we are least expecting at that time God comes like a thief in the night. But if we are not attentive, if our consciousness is not ready then we are unable to catch him. But then that is the way we grow.

Some day we go in a deep state. We suddenly feel relaxed, joyful in consciousness. Then we feel, 'now this is a good state to be in' but in 5 minutes we reach the normal state. The normal state that you are in now is a little less than normal – even otherwise it is an unnatural natural state. Our natural state is happy satchitananda. But we are often tensed, disturbed and this is an unnatural natural state. How difficult it is to play our role with joy, with happiness. So take the help of the stage manager.

The thought in the Spiritual Diary, last Sunday says:

April 20: Prayer: The superconscious law of success is put into operation through man's prayers and by his understanding of the Lord's omnipotence. Do not stop your conscious efforts or rely wholly on your natural abilities, but ask divine aid in all you do.

- Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, "Scientific Healing Affirmations"

Go through the last ten day's thoughts expressed on Prayer and the next set of thoughts expressed on Happiness in the Spiritual Diary. Concentrate on simple points and you gain a lot. Little things make a lot of difference.

So what are the two important things to be remembered:

1. To make a prayer
2. To understand God's omnipotence.

This comes only by experience, not by intellectual understanding but by understanding it with your whole being. Don't depend only on your abilities and at the same time don't stop making an effort yourself. Use your will power to bring about the required change. That brings us to the question – how to develop your will power?

As a child we have an unthinking will; the child obeys his parents with an unthinking will. In the next stage the child starts asking questions, and only if he feels that the answer is agreeable to him then only he will do a particular thing. That is why he keeps on asking 'Why, why, why?' and parents get fed up. It is very important to give time to the child and answer his questions. If the parents are too busy and do not have time to answer and explain to the children then the child searches for the answer here and there and develops his own opinion and goes astray. Youth have a lot of energy, a lot of enthusiasm and they do not know how to focus this

energy, so they are constantly dashing their will against so many things. They want to experience so many things.

The third stage is the wisdom guided will. Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji told Guruji, 'allow me to discipline you.' As long as his will was attuned to the Guru's will it would be guided by the divine will. When we are not guided by the guru's wisdom guided will, then we don't think deeply about the purpose of life.

Read Kaivalya Darshanam for the esoteric 7 stages of life. (**Chp.1 Sutra 13 – This universe is differentiated into fourteen spheres, seven *Swargas* and seven *Patalas*.**)

They are:

1st loka: *Bhuloka* – lowest sphere of gross material creation, always visible to everyone.

2nd loka: *Bhuvarka* – sphere of electric attributes, conspicuous by the presence of fine matters only; also called *Sunya*, the Vacuum Ordinary.

3rd loka: *Swarloka* – sphere of magnetic aura, the electricities. This sphere, being characterized by the absence of all the creation (even the organs and their objects, the fine material things), is called *Mahasunya*, the Great Vacuum.

4th loka: *Maharka* – the sphere of the Atom, the beginning of the creation of Darkness, *Maya*, upon which the Spirit is reflected. This the connecting link is the only way between the spiritual and the material creation and is called the Door, *Dasamadwara*.

5th loka: *Janarka* – the sphere of spiritual reflection, the Sons of God, wherein the idea of separate existence of Self originates. As this sphere is above the comprehension of anyone in the creation of Darkness, *Maya*, it is called *Alakshya*, the Incomprehensible.

6th loka: *Taparka* – the sphere of the Holy Spirit which is the Eternal Patience, as it remains forever undisturbed by any limited idea. Because it is not approachable even by the sons of God as such, it is called *Agama*, the Inaccessible.

7th loka: *Satyarka* – the foremost sphere of God – the only Real Substance, Sat, in the universe. No name can describe it, nor can anything in the creation of Darkness or Light designate it. This sphere is therefore called *Anama*, the Nameless.

We are now in *Bhuloka* the grossest vibration. We should find the purpose of life, recognize the subtle things in nature realize that this gross body is made up of finer light and energy which are expressing through the body. We have to go within and go deeper. Until then we are living on the surface.

We should be spiritual scientists; not be satisfied getting into the rat race, on the fast track, reach fast to the top and find nothing there. Then we realize that I am not the solid body, I am not the senses. I am something much more beautiful than this – and obtaining that takes a lot of effort, a lot of discipline and a lot of help from God.

After the experience in Cosmic Consciousness in Serampore Guruji went over to Sw. Sri Yukteshwar and asked him – (Pg. 146 of Autobiography of a Yogi:)

“I want to know, sir – when shall I find God?”

“You have found Him.”

“Oh, no, sir, I don’t think so!”

My guru was smiling. “I am sure you aren’t expecting a venerable Personage, adorning a throne in some antiseptic corner of the cosmos! I see, however, that you are imagining that possession of miraculous powers is proof that one has found God. No. One might gain the power to control the whole universe – yet find the Lord elusive still. Spiritual advancement is not to be measured by one’s displays of outward powers, but solely by the depth of his bliss in meditation.

“Ever-new Joy is God. He is inexhaustible; as you continue your meditations during the years, He will beguile you with an infinite ingenuity. Devotees like yourself who have found the way to God never dream of exchanging Him for any other happiness; He is seductive beyond thought of competition.

“How quickly we weary of earthly pleasures! Desire for material things is endless; man is never satisfied completely, and pursues one goal after another. The ‘something else’ he seeks is the Lord, who alone can grant lasting joy.

“Outward longings drive us from the Eden within; they offer false pleasures that only impersonate soul happiness. As God is unanticipatory Ever-Newness, we never tire of Him. Can we be surfeited with bliss, delightfully varied throughout eternity?”

God is that joy which we get – something out of this world but also relevant to this world. We don’t have to leave the world, be aloof, sit in the mountains and forests. God is not found outside but found within. Even Gururji wanted to go to the Himalayas and sit in unbroken silence but Ram Gopal Majumdar told him:

“Young yogi, I see you are running away from your master. He has everything you need; you should return to him.” He added, “Mountains cannot be your guru” – the same thoughts that Sri Yuktishwar had expressed two days earlier.

Often when we start practicing meditation our relatives and family members think – O, now he is meditating, he will leave everything and go away from the world.

But Gururji has said, in the AOY, Pg. 147 –

“I do realize now that I have found God, for whenever the joy of meditation has returned subconsciously during my active hours, I have been subtly directed to adopt the right course in everything, even in minor details.”

It is not that we are experiencing God when we are meditating alone. When you are involved in an activity, concentrate on that activity wholeheartedly, but from inside in a subtle way we to remind ourselves to be calmly active and then God guides.

What should we pray for?

Let us make a mission statement for our spiritual life. It should be:

To love God above everything else and to play my role to the best of my ability only to please God.

When you pray, tell God to teach you to love Him unconditionally, wholeheartedly, all consumingly and if God has placed us on this stage with an unfulfilled agenda, tell him to help you to carry it out to the best of your ability. If you feel frustrated, angry, unfulfilled, fearful, if you are beset with self pity, or false pity, tell him so. If you are angry tell Guruji, I am angry. Be humble within. Ask Guruji to change your avagun (weaknesses and flaws) from within. When we become a little complacent we feel I don't need to go to God for simple things. I can achieve this myself. That means we are developing false pride. On the ghats of Dwarahat, there is a sign – *savdhani hati, durghatna ghati* (as soon as your attention goes slack, there is a certainty of some mishap). Some mishap or problem will then surely come. Don't think, O, in that area I am strong, I don't have to do anything more.

Many people seek God but for various reasons. I am seeking God for wealth, or for health, or to solve problems in my personal life. It may be that in the beginning we often come to the spiritual path seeking relief from some affliction. Bhagwan Krishna has said in his interpretation of the the Bhagwad Gita, 'God Talks to Arjuna', Chp. 7, Vs. 16:

“The afflicted, the questers for wisdom, the cravers for power here and in the hereafter, and the wise – these, O Arjuna, are the four kinds of righteous men who pursue Me.”

Here the Gita enumerates the four kinds of virtuous actors in the earthly drama who, to a lesser or greater degree, follow the wishes of the Cosmic Dreamer. All performers of good actions, whether their motives are selfish or unselfish, are travelling slowly or swiftly on the path of liberation. They are unlike the persons who by evil actions walk the tortuous path of bondage. Most people in distress seek God, though with the selfish desire of banishing physical or mental ills. They pray to God for money or the healing of sickness for themselves or dear ones, or for some personal advantage such as avoiding a business failure or winning a lawsuit. Finding temporary relief by the grace of God and by good karma or by the power of prayer, they then easily forget Him. But other persons, undergoing even slight suffering in this life, receive super conscious intimations of memories of all the sufferings of past lives. Knowing themselves capable of violent moods and foolish actions, and fearing the consequent pain and misfortune, such men make up their minds to find God as the permanent relief from all grief. These devotees, heeding the spiritual injunctions of a God-realized guru, embark on the path of yoga (divine union) through which they can learn to commune with God.

Men of inconstant wisdom again and again seek divine aid during affliction, then revert to their interest in material solaces. Yet, even though their prayers are for selfish benefit, such men are performers of spasmodic good actions that remind them of God. They are on the right path.

The second class of people are those who unconditionally seek wisdom in order to realize their divinity and to solve the mystery of life. They use their innate endowment of free choice to good

purpose and are therefore better men than the previously mentioned selfish seekers of God. It is natural that the Lord responds more eagerly to unconditional supplicants for His love than to favor-seekers!

The third class of people are those seek complete fulfillment, which must, necessarily include the Giver along with His gifts. Such seekers look for God's help in attaining wealth, friends, health, power; they also practice yoga to attain bliss and all-fulfilling spiritual power in this life and in the beyond after death. In a balanced way they are trying to find a good life as well as divine realization.

The fourth class of men are the sages, defined in the next verse as the greatest of all. Their goal is not the acquisition of knowledge, nor do they seek the Lord for any ulterior purpose; they have already attained steady wisdom and divine communion. Such souls, liberated from the temptations and attachments of delusion, perpetually united to God within their hearts, unconditionally love Him. They live for Him, act for Him, and commune with Him, just to respond to His love and to revere Him willingly as a son naturally loves his father.

So as per the above interpretation Guruji says that there are 4 types of people:

1. Those who are afflicted and seek solution to their mental, physical, social problems.
2. Those who want to understand why are things happening the way they are happening, how is creation working, etc. He is a *jignyasu*.
3. One who wants power in this world or hereafter – like the asuras whom we hear of in the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata; Ravana was a Shivbhakta. He performed intense sadhana powers. He was a bhakta but he got lost.
4. The fourth is a gyani. He is actually one with God. Then there is no difference between God and his devotee, he loves God not expecting anything from God – God says, 'such a devotee is dearest to me.'

Yet it is not wrong to ask something from Guruji; but we have to grow. We must realize that we cannot do anything without his help. One of the devotee was saying, 'I don't know how Guruji helped me during that tense period of my life. I would have never managed to do any of those things that I did. Guruji helped me get over that phase of my life.'

We should not depend on our own abilities but we should also not stop our efforts – to play our role properly only to please God.

In the beginning we all come to the spiritual path with reasons such as affliction, disappointment, etc. but then we realize we have a Divine friend in Guruji, now I can ask him for anything. Mrinalini Mata says, Guruji would often ask her, "Tell me now, if you have any desires left, and I will fulfill them for you." And Mrinalini Mata would say, "No Guruji I don't want anything." That is a very difficult state to attain. We think in a businesslike manner – if we have God we can ask him to get for us anything.

We need to pray for God's love and to be able to play our role to please God.

Guruji was once with some devotees and the phone rang. It was Durga Mata who was calling from a public booth. She said, she had lost the car keys and could not find them. So Guruji prayed loudly to help others understand – “Divine Mother, Durga has lost her keys. Is it alright for me to ask you to help her to find the keys?”

Don't think it is a small matter, should I ask or should I not ask Divine Mother. Honestly tell Divine Mother, this is a small thing. If you think, it is all right for me to ask this prayer, then I will ask for it, or else let me know that it is not right for me to make such a prayer.

We have to open our hearts and prepare our consciousness to receive God's answer.

In an auditorium, there were so many unwanted guests, the gate crashers that there was no place for the invited guests. Guruji gives the above example and says, “In our temple of God we have allotted a lot of place to the gate crashers, who are forcefully occupying the place – the bad habits collected over incarnations and who don't want to leave. We have to make place for the good habits, but there is no place.”

So through regular practice of morning and evening meditation we have to evict the unwanted people and so create a channel, a base for God. You cannot do that by thinking or imagination alone. Some good habit we may be wanting but cannot bring it in. Only by regular practice of meditation can we bring in that habit. Use the slogans which the political parties use, every time you miss your meditation – “nahi chalega, nahi chalega” (this will not do, this will not do).

Instead of remaining at the grosser level, rise higher. Energy keeps us engrossed in outer things. You have to withdraw the energy from the senses to be raised higher within. Reading and listening to remind ourselves but mainly you can do this by meditation.

Many times when you meditate, you do not feel any joy, or calmness etc. The mind is still restless. You feel if I have to struggle in meditation, what is the point in meditating. Remember when in meditation you feel gladness, warmth and lightness, then God is responding to you and consoling you and uplifting you. But when you feel darkness, heaviness and dryness then God is cleansing your soul and preparing you in humility for the bliss. It is an essential phase in your development. You have a wrong preconceived notion that every day I should feel joy in meditation and should feel uplifted. We must make the effort in the same way every day no matter what the result. When God gives is right handed blessing he gives bliss. But when he gives his left handed blessing he is beating you, disappointing you, making you more strong so that you make rapid progress. You cannot understand God's way of doing things. Just tell him ‘Please walk with me and take me any way you want, no matter what happens.’ Remember the chant – In the valley of sorrow, a thousand years or until tomorrow,

But I will wait to see, only you, you, you, just you.

This makes us feel, as if we have to grit our teeth, bear with it. This is our idea of patience. That is sad patience. Have a joyous patience.

One of the devotees told me that he used to feel very sad when singing this chant and he would not sing it because he felt it would put him in a sad mood.

But then look at the 2nd line which says,

My heart is aflame, my soul is afire,
Just for you, you, you, just you.

This shows that I am on fire for God. Is it not a paradox, being in joyous expectation, being on fire for God, demanding his presence and being patient? If God does not answer, we leave it. You come today or you come after 1000 years, I don't mind. The purpose of life is to go back to our innate natural state. If you don't learn the lesson in one life, then God catches you again and again and sends you on the stage, till you haven't learnt your lesson. God keeps on giving a chance to even the most evil person. You must fight with God like Guruji did, saying, "You created this mess, and put me here without asking me, now you get me out of this mess."

If there is some quality we lack, if we easily get angry, or we have not practiced unconditional love, or we have some prejudice against someone or the other, or we like some but do not like some – then our vibratory level is not enough to hold God and He will not come. I will now tell you two small stories to explain this point:

During the Christmas long meditation, Guruji would actually see Divine Mother and talk to her. Then suddenly in the midst of the talk he would call out to Her and say, "O Mother, don't go away, don't go away." And then in order to bring realization in the devotees he would loudly say, "I know Divine Mother you are going away because of the subconscious material desires of the devotees gathered here."

We need to develop. Our hidden subconscious material desires need to be removed. We may only get a glimpse, but we can't keep the joy and love for God for a long time because we have to develop to a higher level.

Excitement, even from a lot of joy is a restless expression and cause vibratory disturbance. You should constantly keep on developing. Whatever your problems, be sincere and straightforward and tell the Guru everything honestly. If the channel is open, then the mental microphone is working.