

## EASTER RETREAT 2010, IGATPURI INAUGURAL ADDRESS, Sw. Amaranandji

It is good to pray before you start anything. When you get up you pray, you pray before you eat, when you are bathing pray, when you are driving in the car pray, just before sleeping pray. So you are protected.

Retreat means going back within. Look at today's thought in the spiritual diary:

***April 02: Compassion: O Lord of Compassion, teach me to shed tears of love for all beings. May I behold them as my very own – different expressions of my Self. I easily excuse my own faults; let me therefore quickly forgive the failings of others. Bless me, O Father that I not inflict on my companions unwelcome criticism. If they ask my advice in trying to correct themselves, may I offer suggestions inspired by Thee.***

*- Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, "Whispers from Eternity"*

Today is Good Friday. Christ was so compassionate. Pray - May I behold them (the erring) as my very own. This is what we are here for. To become more compassionate. Isn't it true that we try to forgive our own faults but we should quickly forgive the faults of others and ask for their upliftment. We are not supposed to inflict criticism on others and if the others ask for criticism or advice then give them constructive criticism inspired by God - something that we can think about during the retreat.

The nine R's of retreat:

**1). Relax:** Learn to relax. It is time to relax, both the body and the mind. Don't think of too many things. Take it easy.

**2). Read** something. Review your lessons. Go through them. This is the time to spend a little more on Master's lessons once more – just a little bit everyday. Feel happy knowing, remembering the words of the Premavatar. Spend time in his company.

**3). Recharge:** Recharge yourself by taking in more oxygen. Here there is more place to walk around. You don't this kind of environment around your house. Do your energization exercises – morning, evening, any other time. Think of one Swamiji in America he would exercise even 10 times in the day. Anywhere you see

him he would be exercising. At other times a few of the exercises not all, but in the morning and evening he would do all the exercises. Spend a lot of time recharging yourselves.

**4). Rejuvenate:** Rejuvenate the cells, you can be joyful, keep smiling. When you are exercising keep smiling – then more positive energy comes into your body cells. There is a difference that you will feel – first when you are doing grudgingly, unwillingly the cells are tired. But when you are joyful, when you are willing, more energy comes in. more force will come in through the will. When you are willing you can do things but if I give an assignment and there is no will, then there is no energy.

When Guruji came to give lectures, the first thing he would ask the audience would be, “Are you awake and ready?” and everyone would have to say, “Yes.” Go upto the well, climbing up and down; unless you are a heart patient, then don’t do too much. Just walk around.

**5). Respect your Rules:** Right time. Be punctual, show enthusiasm. Always be the first one in class. Bring a pad, write down, it is very helpful.

**6). Reflect and Review:** write down your reflections, meditate more, and contemplate. Write down your thoughts; they are very helpful. Whenever Guruji would be travelling he would fill up pages. It flows in, it comes from There. You do not know what potentials you have. You can draw from the Infinite. Fill up the diary you have brought. Fill up the book before you go. See what wonderful thoughts flow into you. Be happy, be joyous.

**7). Rejoice:** Sunday, we will be rejoicing.

**8). Resurrect:** We resurrect, a sudden change is taking place, that is why you are here and we chose these three days.

**9). Receive:** The sudden change coming around you.

So remember to Relax, Read, Recharge, Rejuvenate, Respect the rules, Review, Rejoice, Resurrect, Receive, Write.

I have been transferred to Noida. There will be retreats there every month and 2 in the month of May. Come and participate. You will find a change in yourself. We are trying to recharge that place. Gururji never went to Noida so we have to do that work. A cold breeze blows in from U. P. Gaziabad in the North.

While you are here, sit down and introspect. What did I do yesterday. Think. Forget the office and everything. If it comes to your mind what you should have done, what to do, to suggest, or to advice or ask to be forgiven - introspect.

In the Autobiography of a Yogi, Gururji has said:

***"I have long exercised an honest introspection, the exquisitely painful approach to wisdom. Self-scrutiny*** (keep looking what are you thinking now and know you should correct that), ***relentless observance of one's thoughts, is a stark and shattering experience. It pulverizes the stoutest ego.*** (your ahankara – give a good bashing to your ego) ***But true self-analysis mathematically operates to produce seers.***" (in saints that wisdom comes when you are sit quietly). In India for many introspection has been done. Be critical of yourself, look into the mirror of your self. Analyze it. Not a day passes when I don't look into my own mental mirror. And I don't spare myself. Anything I have done I admonish myself severely. I scold myself, why did I make such a stupid remark. I hurt his feelings, I should not have talked so much. Then I am free from the flaws. Then only I will become more perfect, more flawless in the spiritual mirror. That is an asset in the Kingdom of God. You must not make yourself into an antique. Ask yourself, "Am I developing bad habits or better habits? Am I more positive, smiling more sincerely from my heart? Am I improving every day? Am I decorating the Kingdom of God." Some pieces of furniture are so beautiful that they do not require any more work to be done on them. No more cleaning. The time will come, when God sits, the Guru sits on that piece of work. All great saints have chiseled their lives with wisdom and love. Wisdom and love come from the soul. A prayer used in the SRF is:

"Give us food, health and prosperity for the body, efficiency for the mind and love and wisdom for the soul." Love and wisdom are soul qualities."

Things are deeply changing, they are never the same. Change yourself forever. Wisdom, love and meditation will help you to become a perfect, psychological instrument so that you can serve better. The reason you are here is not for yourself but that you may serve others. Introspect. This week during introspection, I am emphasizing on the first shloka of the Bhagwad Gita:

“Gathered together on the battlefield of my life are my good and my evil traits. What did they?”

Let me review my thoughts and actions for the day. Are they leading me to my goal? How did I behave? Was I mean, did I cheat? Often we are not aware.

For me it is difficult to tell a lie. Even if I joke, I go and tell them at once “No, no, I was only joking.” Ask yourself. Are you unkind? Grabbing things only for yourself? Introspection is a healthy practice as long as you don’t dwell too much on your weaknesses. Don’t start worrying about it. Don’t replay. Quickly write on a piece of paper and forget it. Find out how you can help somebody, what more you can do for that person. Often you do not introspect till you are plunged into depression or you are so guilty that you hate yourself. Ask? Am I loving myself? I am not doing so that is why I am unhappy and depressed. That is a misuse and abuse of introspection.

To concentrate on defects defeats the purpose of your introspection. Throw them out, change, change. First reform yourself. You can help others. You are not your flaw. Aim of introspection is to recognize your innate character. You are gold, covered with mud, so you cannot see the purity of the soul. If you have done something wrong you do not have to go around telling everyone about it or they will take advantage of it. See what is unattractive and correct it. Never call yourself a sinner. Past is past. Correct yourself and then whatever you did does not belong to you any more. Forget it. “Sin no more” – Christ said. Hold to the thought that you are forgiven. It does not mean ego. As God accepts you, accept yourself. It is not ahankara.

Chants carry Guruji’s vibrations. Guruji says, “Come sing with me” in the CD – Songs of my soul. He doesn’t say, “Come listen to me.” Don’t just say, “Such a nice voice.” Chant yourself. Listen to all the classes of the monks. Review Hong Sau, Om, Kriya. Long meditation is good for all of us. Tell yourself it will be good. This will be a good place to make a good beginning.

Daya Mataji has said that it has taken us 8 million lifetimes to be on this path. (some lives as a stone, as water, plants. Then we became human beings. Now we are hankering to go back to God. We do japa yoga, yagnas, we pray to different

Gods, and then we come to a Paramahansa Yogananda who gives us Kriya Yoga. We have asked for Kriya Yoga and then it has come to us.

It is easy to sit and sing bhajans, to play a CD, mind is not involved. But in Kriya Yoga and the techniques you have to learn to control the mind and keep the spine straight. It is more difficult to follow yama, niyama etc. I have often repeated this story: Mrinalini Ma says that in America when a child is born and the mother starts giving him solid food, she also gives the baby a little bit of chocolate. The baby refuses, so she forces a little bit of chocolate. The mother continues to force the baby until the baby can no longer stay without the chocolate. Similarly you have to keep on forcing yourself to do the techniques.

Don't say, "if not in this life, then in the next life. I am going to come again and again." That is not the attitude of a yogi. It is a defeatist attitude. Why come back and go through all the struggles of life again. The goal is to do "More and better."