

24/08/08

On Confidence and Enthusiasm
Sw. Shuddhanandji (for Janmashtami)

Swamiji led the chant 'In the land beyond my dreams'. The earth is so full of imperfections but when we are in the land beyond our dreams there love is not limited to human weaknesses and attachments. If only you could take the ark of silence to go to the land beyond our dreams.

Yesterday we said instead of going into the house of senses let us go into the land beyond our dreams. This we perceive as we practice more and more silence. More discipline is necessary. If we are a little lazy we do not get the full benefit. There is a 50% loss if we talk a little bit even when walking around the campus or when in our rooms. Try doing it and you will find the benefit of maintaining silence. Tell yourself that during long meditation you will be going to have a talk with God. Today this is a 2 hr. appetizer (morning session 6.30 to 8.30 a.m). Then from 11 to 2 p.m. will be the soup and the real feast is from 4.30 p.m. to 12.30 a.m. If you have an enthusiasm today you will tell yourself I am going to have a glimpse of the divine as I have never before had. Guruji has said on those special occasions of the birth of an avatar there is great rejoicing in all three worlds – physical, astral and causal. The Gods are also celebrating. We can experience that joy of celebration if we are silent externally and take that silence within.

*'In the land beyond my dreams
Where no clouds come,
And golden dreams dwell,
I sit by life's well,
In the land beyond my dreams.'*

How beautiful is the land beyond my dreams. I sit by life's well – the eternal source of God. Visualize that you are sitting beside him and seeing him creating all those three worlds from the well. We are sitting and watching him creating the world.

*'Heart to heart meeting,
Spirit and soul's greeting,
In the land beyond my dreams.'*

There should be deeper love. We know each other superficially. There is a mask on the soul as we see each other through our limited interactions. When we react from soul to soul it is possible to interact deeply.

*'The ark is waiting
And I am dreaming.
Of the land beyond my dreams.
In the ark of silence,
Silently we go,
To the land beyond my dreams.'*

Right now we are only dreaming. The ark is actually waiting for us.
Guruji adds,

*'Where no sorrow comes, nor death dare enter
In the land beyond my dreams.
To this paradise the ark will rise
To the land beyond my dreams.'*

It is a place where no sorrow comes, not even death can enter. It all finally depends on what we want.

As I mentioned yesterday, we will just dwell on these two qualities – ‘confidence’ and ‘enthusiasm’. Enthusiasm means promptness. Ma said in one of her letters – One of the many blessings that come to devotees is the never ending confidence and enthusiasm for making positive changes in their lives. How? Through daily meditation. Wanting to change plus having the faith that you can do so – indicates that there is spiritual awakening within you.

Progress can be greatly hastened if you constantly and consciously develop these qualities. Be more enthusiastic about improving yourself by improving your noble qualities ---- Visualize the new you. The gold medalist in the Olympics was asked how did he achieve success in the Olympics and he said that he would visualize his target and visualize that he was achieving success and winning the gold medal. When you visualize you get energized. You may be very far from the target but slowly you start working towards it. Always visualize the ‘new you’. In that way you become the ‘new you.’

The progress requires two things: 1. Visualization 2. Practical application.
Reinforce the noble qualities within you and root out the inherent inharmonies within you. Destroy the inharmonies. Do both and meditate and then we will develop enthusiasm and confidence and this deepens our relation with God. Retreat’s success depends on our personal relation with God. When we reinforce our good qualities and destroy our bad qualities it takes us closer to God. If we make it more intimate we can deepen our meditation. If we do not concentrate on this we cannot meditate properly because what we meditate on must be supported by our outer behavior. Then you feel soul satisfaction.

Then if 10 to 15 years later someone asks you would you have taken some other path if you were now taken back in time by these 10 – 15 years you will say – “No, Never”. Sr. Gyanmata was asked if she had ever thought of going away from the ashram. She said, “No, not for a split second. I knew what I wanted long before I came. I did not come for honour, nor for pleasure, nor for favour. I came for God.” Blessed Guruji said we could create for ourselves a better and brighter future not a dark, pessimistic future where everything is dull and God alone knows what will happen to me?

You can energize your sadhana by reading once again, “Undreamed - of Possibilities.” Often it happens that we enter the path with all of the enthusiasm but with a lot of inner battles we become discouraged.

Sw. Vishwanandji often says that Daya Ma had such an enthusiasm when she joined the ashram at the age of 17. Now 94 years later she still has the same enthusiasm. Others normally start becoming cynical, nothing will happen things will just go on.

Remember the incident in ‘Autobiography of a Yogi’ when Guruji went with his father to meet Sw. Pranabanandji in Ranchi.

“Sometime after Swami Pranabananda had visited Ranchi, I accompanied my father to the Calcutta house where the yogi was temporarily staying...

The body of Pranabananda, which had appeared so well and strong during my amazing first visit to him in Benares, now showed definite aging, though his posture was still admirably erect.

"Swamiji," I inquired, looking straight into his eyes, "please tell me the truth: Aren't you feeling the advance of age? As the body is weakening, are your perceptions of God suffering any diminution?"

He smiled angelically. "The Beloved is more than ever with me now." His complete conviction overwhelmed my mind and soul. He went on, "I am still enjoying the two pensions—one from Bhagabati here, and one from above." Pointing his finger heavenward, the saint fell into an ecstasy, his face lit with a divine glow—an ample answer to my question."

The soul is ever youthful, that is what we are when we are identified with spirit. No condition of deterioration of the body will be seen but for that we need to make the effort. We have to slowly pull ourselves. We can't settle down saying 'This is where I am.' Enthusiasm can be felt by us – no one can give it to us.

Hold on to the infinite soul possibilities. Visualize, dream of it, think of it and then we realize we can actually do it and with effort we find we can do it. Normally and naturally the mind will settle down lazily. Keep on waking it, and then it will again go and sit down. Again you have to pull it up. Night and day meditation controls the mind. If you only try to control the mind without meditation it is not possible.

Tell yourself I will not dwell on thoughts of inadequacy, unworthiness. Disciples often get discouraged by constant discipline. It feels as if it is not possible for me. It is hard work. It takes a lot of discipline and hard work. It often feels it is not possible for me. It is hard work. A lot of discipline and hard work will be required. And then again it makes us feel we are hopeless. I am worthless. Guruji never allowed the disciple to entertain any thought of negativity and worthlessness. Guruji is not a tyrant. Then why is he demanding this? Because he wants us to be free, full of joy, bubbling with energy. He doesn't want us to live in self created darkness, self pity with the thought that nobody loves me.

You have to just charge yourself. However bad the circumstances still never accept defeat, never say I cannot do it. I am not fit for it, I can't do. Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji says the cause for this negativity is mental and spiritual laziness. We want to remain in our comfort zone. We think we are comfortable but actually we are not comfortable. We will be comfortable only if we are in love with God. Sw. Sri Yuktेशwarji has said in the Autobiography of a Yogi, *"Forget the past,"... "The vanished lives of all men are dark with many shames. Human conduct is ever unreliable until anchored in the Divine. Everything in future will improve if you are making a spiritual effort now."* That is the secret of being enthusiastic.

If one's confidence has become dimmed the best way is to go directly to the Beloved One. Pray for healing for any regrettable actions of the past. Any failure, bad behavior creates a deep influence on our subconscious mind and we find ourselves in a mood. The positive things influence our mind. Forget that you had such and such thoughts, that you did these things that you are unworthy of being on the spiritual path etc. Forget it. This is maya. First go to God, confess, cry to him, tell him everything. Ask for his help to solve the situation. There is none more sympathetic, for he knows how difficult it is to surmount his maya. Tear aside the glittering veil of the cosmic motion picture – we cannot therefore see the truth, because even the curtain of maya is so attractive that we don't feel like removing it.

After committing sins life after life we awaken and tell ourselves ‘there is something wrong. Things are not as they appear to be.’ Then we search and finally reach the guru. We have already struggled a lot and have finally reached such a bright path. We did not reach here casually. May be after incarnations of mistakes we have reached here, let’s not waste time.

Some days we feel God’s love or we may see God’s light and then we don’t want to take our eyes off or if we are hearing the Om sound and we don’t want to come out of that state, or don’t want to talk to anybody or we feel great joy which is not dependent on outer conditions. But all this is a glimpse and then we come back to the ordinary state. So we need to go on practicing. We often forget because of maya so we need constant reminders.

One of Sr. Gyanmata’s rules was ‘See nothing, look at nothing, but your goal ever shining before you.’ Or else we get distracted by outer conditions. It requires constant rejuvenation, meditation, time to time seclusion. Make special effort to practice seclusion. If possible tell yourself that after 9 pm every day I will not talk to anyone.

One important psychological point: God’s love is so all embracing that no matter however large our sins he doesn’t turn away from us. With ever trusting faith in him put your problems before God and mind that you do not take them back again. After confessing we take back our burdens and keep on harping over it again and again. We keep on dwelling on it. Remember now it belongs to the past. It doesn’t belong to you anymore. All that Guruji wants is that you glean the valuable lesson from it and then determine not to repeat it. Or else otherwise there is a feeling of guilt, inadequacy that you are not upto the mark. Once given, forget it now, don’t bring it back.

Never say I am a sinner. I am a child of God – because of the atmosphere or the company you may have committed an error but it now belongs to the past. It is finished. What we concentrate on most strongly that becomes our greatest reality. Your habitual thoughts determine your existing consciousness. If your consciousness is on lower thoughts then you become negative. Let your consciousness dwell on what is positive in others and in yourself. Don’t concentrate on the faults of others either. We have to change that attitude. Meera Ma (Mrinalini Ma’s mother, who was also a sannyasini) who had a very strong will and was a very strong personality played a strong role in making the Holywood temple. She was once told by Guruji – Always work with the virtues of other people. Try to bring out that quality of others which is good, try to encourage others. Don’t keep on hitting at it with the hammer or he will determine to do that again and again. Slowly he will improve. Sometimes it is good to give straight forward instructions, not always a sugar coated statement. Like Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji was always candid. If somebody tells me my weakness in a sweet way it is always better. Guruji will train us how; sometimes we have to take scolding and sometimes through love. But we must ourselves practice self discipline, then Guruji will not have to do it; he will be always very happy with us.

When Sw. Anandmoyeeji was working on the construction of the temple he would meditate by keeping Guruji’s photograph on the chair in front of him. He would simply say – Guruji please help me and then begin to meditate. One day Guruji told him – if you keep on like this you will get where you want to go. He understood that Guruji liked this idea of tuning in with Guruji. Guruji has promised –

When I Am Only A Dream - By Paramhansa Yogananda

*I come to tell you all of Him,
And the way to encase Him in your bosom,
And of the discipline that brings His grace.
Those of you who have asked me
To guide you to my Beloved's presence –
I warn you through my silently talking mind,
Or speak to you through a gentle significant glance,
Or whisper to you through my love,
Or loudly dissuade you when you stray away from Him.*

*But when I shall become only a memory, or a
mental image, or silently speaking voice,
When no earthly call will ever reveal
My whereabouts in unplumbed space,
When no shallow entreaty or stern stentorian
command will bring from me an answer –
(Swamiji quoted from here onwards)
***I will smile in your mind when you are right,
And when you are wrong I will weep through my eyes,
Dimly peering at you in the dark,
And weep through your eyes, perchance;
And I will whisper to you through your conscience,
And I will reason with you through your reason,
And I will love all through your love.***
When you are able no longer to talk with me,
Read my Whispers from Eternity;
Eternally through it I will talk to you.
Unknown I will walk by your side
And guard you with invisible arms.
And as soon as you know my Beloved
And hear His voice in silence,
You will know me again more tangibly
than you knew me on this earth plane.
And yet when I am only a dream to you,
I will come to remind you that you too are naught
But a dream of my Heavenly Beloved;
And when you know you are a dream,
as I know now,
We will ever awake in Him.*

But often we draw the curtain and don't want to listen. Then Guruji becomes silent. Then Guruji must be told scold me when you want to.

More problems may come, more difficulties may come. Sometimes we seem to have more difficulties, more challenges than previously so that we can work out our karma very fast and reach the divine home faster. Tell yourself ‘All right Guruji is silently working, he is trying to liberate me, he is working faster. That is why even when we become sick, when even thinking of God at that time becomes difficult, have faith that Guruji is working to help you out. Instead of praying, ‘free me from this difficulty,’ tell Guruji ‘Do what is best for me but also give me the strength to bear this difficulty.’ Focus on what is positive within ourselves and others. The future creating now; and make God your love. Remember the assurance – Keep on like this to the end of your life and your future is secure in God. If you keep on then the divine love will become the bed rock of our existence.

In Part IV – The Value of Scientific Techniques of Meditation given in the little booklet by Daya Ma, ‘Intuition: Soul-Guidance for Life’s Decisions’, Ma has written:

There are definite scientific principles that must be applied in the search for God. These are the principles of yoga, which in India have been researched, practiced, and proven for centuries...The science of religion is based on laws that never change.

I have had people ask, “Why should my relationship with God be governed by so many rules? Can’t I simply be guided by my own intuitive feelings on the spiritual path?” In answer I say, “By all means be guided by your intuition, but first be sure that it really is intuition, which comes from attunement with God, and not just your subconscious desire to do what you want to do.”

Erroneous self-determination is a pitfall for many people. First follow the science; learn to realize God through proper application of the methods of yoga. When you know Him beyond any doubt – when you can be so even minded that through all of life’s experiences you retain an attitude of blissful devotion to God, of constant self-surrender at His feet – then there is the possibility of your spiritual endeavors being guided by intuition, not before.

The great masters have shown us the steps that they themselves took to reach God-realization. Anyone who has common sense will follow them rather than try to forge their own way. Why would you want to “reinvent the wheel”? You have freedom to do so, of course, but is it not more logical to take the path that has already been proved to lead to God, rather than spending years, perhaps incarnations, trying to find your own way through laborious trial-and-error experimentation?

The laws are known; depth in meditation comes from their patient, steadfast application. It is like learning to play the piano. Success is unlikely through unscientific “hit-and-miss” attempts. Before you can play a Rachmaninoff piano concerto, you need to know where the right keys are, and then gradually become skilled by diligent daily practice. It is the same with meditation. It requires application of the scientific steps of yama, niyama, asana, and a continuous determination to persevere in your practice of pranayama techniques until the thoughts become completely still. Through Hong-Sau your mind and breath become perfectly synchronized; it is as if they become forged into one razor-sharp sword that suddenly severs the inner fetters that were binding you. The mind becomes free and clear. You feel within yourself the presence of God just behind this physical form, behind all life. Such marvelously thrilling perceptions come when you practice the science of meditation.

We have to find fault with our own way of following the rules of meditation. Always keep the eyes at kutastha. If not trained then even after years you will find your mind is restless. Sw.

Bhaktanandaji has said in his talk “Ways to deepen your meditation” – that our eyes should be riveted at the kutastha. Riveting is a strong process of joining metals – the iron may break but the rivet does not break. Practice daily for five minutes during meditation just sitting with eyes at kutastha and no movement – then we get mastery over the body, mind etc. By why is all this so difficult?

God has given us the maya. He is the culprit. He is even praising it and calling his maya – divine. Because it is a cosmic hypnosis. God has hypnotized us all with his magic show – it is very difficult to overcome it. It is only based on three gunas – sattva, rajas and tama with so much of interacting sceneries. But he also has his mercy, compassion. He says whosoever surrenders to me he will rise above my maya.

In **Chp. 7, Vs. 14** of the **Bhagwad Gita**, it is written:

*daivi hy esa gunamayi mama maya duratyaya
mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam taranti te*

It is difficult indeed to go beyond the influence of My divine cosmic hypnosis, imbued with the triple qualities. Only those who take shelter in Me (the Cosmic Hypnotizer) become free from this power of illusion.

It is hard to banish cosmic hypnosis and its entrancing phenomena, even after its influence has been detected, without constant prayer to its Maker: God. A hypnotized person is unable to escape from the potent spell until he has obtained the help of the mesmerist. When a subject learns, through the comments of others, that he is acting like an automaton, he should himself try to overcome the irrational influence. If he finds himself powerless, he must implore the aid of the hypnotist in dissolving the spell.

Ordinary people are unable to escape from the triply delusive realm of maya, and their only hope for freedom is in beseeching the aid of the Cosmic Magician: God.

Experiments of psychologists prove that a hypnotized person may be made to experience any bodily sensation even though no sensory stimulus is present and may be made to think, feel, will, and act according to the directions of the hypnotist.

A hypnotized man may pleurably swallow salt or quinine with the firm conviction that it is sugar; and may make the motions of swimming while on a dry floor, believing that he is surrounded by the coolness and splash of the water. By suggestion he feels chilled during warm weather; and, during a simple walk, thinks that he is riding on a train or flying in an airplane. He may be made to hear music in a silent place, to see colours and scenes and persons without their objective presence, and to smell a roselike fragrance around a skunk! He may be directed successfully to read the thoughts of others; to review forgotten scenes in the earlier parts of his life; and while blindfolded, to read the pages of a book. In other words, a hypnotized person is partially or totally amenable to the suggestions of a mesmerist; the individuality of the subject becomes submerged in his subconscious mind and does not appear so long as he is responsive to the hypnotist.

It does not befit man, the image of God endowed with free choice, to act mechanically under the influence of the cosmic dream and to behave like an automaton under the spell of cosmic hypnosis.

Legends and tales, couching in illustrative narratives probably every conceivable quandary that has played on the human mind, abound in the ancient spiritual lore of India. “Has the

overpowering delusion he inflicts on those He has created?” Certainly the Lord incarnate in a fully liberated being takes on something of the cosmic hypnosis in order to interrelate with His mortal contemporaries. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, his feelings were not a feigned struggle, they were a real test.

To underscore the power of delusion, a tale is told of an experiment agreed to by Lord Vishnu: Narada, one of the immortal rishis – and sometimes referred to as a divine trickster for the discomfiting situations he often engendered in order to test the gods (he is called kalahpriya – mischief maker to bring to the surface some hidden strength or lesson and not out of mischief) – suggested to Vishnu an unusual demonstration: “Lord, do You realize how potent the delusion is that You inflict on mortals? Would You not know better about its force if You applied it on Yourself?”

Ever ready to satisfy the questing heart of the devotee, Vishnu responded: “Narada, what do you want Me to do?”

“Attachment is not easily renounced when one is enveloped in delusive feelings,” Narada said. “Why don’t You go into the body of a mother sow and see what it is like to care for a family of piglets.”

Vishnu lightly accepted the proposal, but prudently added: “If you find Me staying in the sow’s body longer than six months, it will be for you to release Me. After chanting an invocation, pierce the body of the sow and I will come out.” Vishnu thereupon disappeared from Narada’s sight into the body of a wild mother pig.

Six months passed – eight months, ten months, twelve months! In vain Narada awaited Vishnu’s return by His own accord. Finally armed with a javelin, Narada approached a rock cave where the sow lived with her young ones. When the mother sow observed Narada approaching with a spear, she bolted inside the cave with her family. Standing in the entrance way, Narada pleaded: “Please, Lord, come out.” To which the sow replied, “Go away, Narada, don’t bother Me.”

As prearranged, Narada then chanted. At the end of the invocation, the mother sow reluctantly emerged from the cave. A voice from within her said: “Throw the javelin at Me, Narada!”

Narada complied, and Vishnu laughingly sprang out of the dead sow’s body. “Oh, Narada, it felt awfully nice feeding those little piggies! How potent, indeed, is My delusion! I promise you, even the greatest among sinners who, counseled by a noble guru unceasingly seeks Me as the Immutable Spirit, will soon have a purified soul and be liberated.”

God has made it so complex, so alluring, so attractive. You can blame God and tell him – I am not the culprit, you are. Then we enjoy being in that state so much that we don’t want to come out of it. We pay through joys turning into sorrows, we get tired, we question and go searching for God. In Chapter 34 of the Autobiography of a Yogi, Babaji has promised:

"After a silence, Babaji added, 'Repeat to each of your disciples this majestic promise from the Bhagavad Gita: "Swalpamasya dharmasya, trayata mahato bhoyat"—"Even a little bit of the practice of this religion will save you from dire fears and colossal sufferings."

So we are on a great path and we will keep on doing our duty, keep on surrendering our actions at the feet of Guruji. Then we will develop confidence and enthusiasm as we meditate regularly and go on following Guruji’s teachings. One of the shlokas of the Bhagwad Gita, Chp 4, Vs. 39 says:

sraddhavam labhate jnanam tatparah samyatendriyah

jnanam labdhva param santim acirenadhigacchati

The man of devotion who is engrossed in the Infinite, who has controlled the senses, achieves wisdom. Having obtained wisdom, he immediately attains supreme peace.

Sw. Shantanandji says, that Sw. Shyamanandji, the first General Secretary who was brought to the Yogoda by Daya Ma and who made the organization in India so strong (until then it was in a pitiable state) would often quote this verse. Sw. Shantanandji is also often heard quoting this verse. Thus the man of devotion who has controlled the senses attains peace which is beyond our understanding. He attains a peace which surpasseth all understanding, a peace which gives rest to all our systems. We have nothing at all to gain or nothing to lose; we have attained that kind of everlasting peace. What do we need – devotion – bhakti. Deep wisdom leads to devotion and deep devotion naturally leads to wisdom. In the Holy Science, Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji has said **Chp. 3 Sutras 5, 6:**

Sraddhaviryasmritisamadhyanushtanat tasyavirbhava - 5

Svabhavajpremnaha vegativrata shraddha - 6

Aum is heard through cultivation of Sraddha (heart's natural love), Virya (moral courage), Smriti (memory of one's divinity) and Samadhi (true concentration).

Sraddha is intensification of the heart's natural love.

What is heart's natural love? It is within all of us, and not just given to some great souls like Yogananda. All of us are potential Yoganandas. It is only a difference in quality not in kind. This thought gives us so much of hope. How to develop that heart's natural love? If you associate with the Guru then he will liberate you.

In **Chp. 3, Sutras 7, 8**, Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji says:

Sraddhasevitsatguroh svabhavajopadeshapalane viryalabha – 7

Sarva eva gurvah santapharaka sanshaychedaka shantipradayaka

Sat tatsangaha brahmavat karaniya viparitmasat vishvadvarjaneeyam – 8

Moral courage (virya) arises from Sraddha, directing one's love toward the guru, and from affectionately following his instructions. Those who remove our troubles, dispel our doubts, and bestow peace are true teachers. They perform a Godlike work. Their opposites (those who increase our doubts and difficulties) are harmful to us and should be avoided like poison.

(Read the explanation from Pg. 67 to Pg. 75 of Holy Science)

The natural inclination of the heart quality is to turn to the source with faith. It is not just superficial belief. We have come from our cosmic home. We want to go back to that cosmic home. We are surrendering only when we have confidence. Only when we realize that God will not let go of us then we surrender. In the beginning our surrenderance is occasional. Then we can serve mankind with God consciousness. Until then we serve with an egoistic tendency (to achieve our liberation). We only want to give of ourselves completely to Guruji without expecting anything in return. Then the energy is purified, the mind is purified, the breath gets purified and creates the path for love for God.

Now let's prepare for meditation. Remember the following points.

Try to be relaxed.

Don't be very tensed. Feel eager the way you will be eager to meet a friend after 10 years. With the expectation that God is going to reveal himself to me; not in the physical form but with his divine manifestations – he may give us his peace divine.

Open yourselves to God with the feeling 'just I am there, and God is there.' Get into reverential devotion. Hours may pass and you will not realize.

In group meditation it could be possible that one goes deep while another doesn't. Then the positive vibrations of the positive devotee go to the restless devotee. If you find you can't go so much deep within then you practice more techniques. Then you can enjoy more stillness and devotion. Keep the mind alert, creative, don't let it go to sleep – especially in the second half. Don't say, "God I won't pronam to you just internally but also externally" (by letting my head nod in sleep).

Change the position of the legs or sit in a chair. Those with cough can sit in the inner room or in the attic so as not to create disturbing vibrations.

Practice kriya silently especially in group meditations.

When lifting the armrest lift up carefully; open your eyes slowly get settled and then close your eyes instead of adjusting your armrest with eyes closed and hitting out at neighbours.

Learn to pick up and put down the armrest silently.

If you get up once during the meditation don't come back again. Change your positions during chanting and bhajans.

Come with a lot of enthusiasm and joy. You are not coming to fight though we may often have to do that. Sometimes we get unimagined experiences that we had never expected. Imagine as a little child how the Lord used to dance around with the gopas.

The vibrations created here with devotees meditating here for so many years are so good that with a little effort you can get the best out of this long meditation. Don't be satisfied with just giving your second best.

In Mumbai:

Guruji has given us the most wonderful way of celebrating by going deep and getting into the stillness. That is the best way to celebrate. Then we perceive spiritual consciousness by stepping aside from the normal outer mode of consciousness and perceive divine communion with the divine. That is the best way to celebrate.

We have to do our part in attempting to control the mind and to become relaxed in order to get maximum benefit; relax the body, mind and cast away all material thoughts – just I and God alone exist. No other consciousness. Go inside, surrender body, mind energy and then we become receptive. All that is required is to become receptive. Guruji has said that Self Realization is knowing in body, mind and soul, it is improving our knowing that God is within us. On such occasions when great avatars come on earth – in our physical world as well as in the astral and causal worlds there is great celebration and so a great joy permeates the atmosphere. If we slightly go in we can perceive that joy. That is why we have long meditations in December for Christmas and in January for Guruji's birthday besides having for Janmashtmi. But we need to remind ourselves – only I and God is there, only I and Guruji is there. Daya Ma is now with us with her special blessings. Attune in to her presence. Practice the techniques – do them silently, especially kriya should not even be heard by the neighbor and when using the armrest – pick it up smoothly without creating any vibrations of restlessness. If the body is tired or unwell meditate outside on the ground floor. Be interiorized even during the break or do the energisation

exercises; stretch yourself. Hold on to what you have gained in the first half of the meditation to be able to go deeper in the second half.

Daya Ma has said “When I see people whose minds are troubled by frustrations and problems I feel pained. The reason for these frustrations is forgetfulness of God. Strive to fill yourself with the consciousness of God. A time will come when you will feel so complete. Then you will find at the end of the trail the Divine Beloved is there waiting for you; if you unceasingly communicate with God in your heart and mind.

So any time you find the mind wandering bring it back patiently. Command the body – “don’t move. Keep still.” Keep the spine straight as though hanging loose around the shoulders. Keep the eyes gently lifted at the kutastha and check them from time to time. When the eyes go down there is a tendency to go into the subconsciousness; the alertness is gone; but don’t keep eyes at kutastha in a tense way. So learn to be relaxed at the same time be alert. All the time only effort brings tension. That is why we have islands of relaxation e.g. chanting (when we relax) then meditation, energisation exercises then meditation.

This is also a very joyous occasion – a time when we feel the presence of divine. Imagine you are meeting a long lost friend after 15 years; now only 2 – 3 days are left for him to arrive. May be in this very meditation we may experience God, may be in this very meditation, we can more tangible feel God. It is not a struggle to meditate then, it is a joy; but discipline is required. We must neither allow restlessness to come in, nor go to sleep. We must keep trying, bring the mind back again and again and we may suddenly find we have succeeded and our enthusiasm will suddenly increase. During all acts be one with all the others.

I felt a deep sense of joy in this long meditation. Beloved Ma has also mentioned in her letter that by regular meditation we get an increasing confidence and enthusiasm. Swamiji then read out Ma’s message: (I have been unable to get a copy of that message. If I get it later I will mail it separately.)

There is this conflict in daily life; on one hand we want to meditate long and deep but the pull of the day to day duties prevents us from meditating long and deep. Conflict is on how to do both – go into deep silence and also perform our duties. Bhagwan Krishna compassionately advocated a balanced path of meditation and righteous activity. We surely want to reach our goal and also quickly and the only path is the one of balanced meditation and right activity. When this balance comes then we reach the goal of life – This is the main message of Bhagwan Krishna. Not only through meditation do we develop our spiritual nature though that is very important. But we have to develop inner spiritual qualities. At the same time duties are important and we have to learn through them – self discipline, discrimination and unconditional love. Control over self, what thoughts to allow to come and most importantly to develop unconditional love in our relation with others and whatever we do is to develop unconditional love. To express deep love for God is understandable but the good actions we perform is also to be able to love others.

Love is not static, it is very dynamic, to be expressed in various ways. We also need to develop various facets of love through outer activity. All that which happens is for our spiritual growth and not just our sadhana and studying Gururji’s teachings but everything is for our onward

journey towards Self realization. Once we understand things this way then even if the conditions are disturbing; even when things are not smooth we will take it in our stride. This is the agenda I need to fulfill for this life and so I have been placed here with these particular people in these particular situations. Things don't change but then understanding comes. Then we should tell Guruji – "Guruji please help me; let me understand what I am to learn from this situation and often it can be condensed into three things: discipline, discrimination and unconditional love.

The basis for this is deep meditation, regular meditation. This will help us to develop self confidence and enthusiasm to be able to change things in life e.g. the confidence to attain God we need confidence and enthusiasm. Then you feel I can reach God. God attainment is possible for me. That is not very easy in the beginning. You get the feeling it is not possible for me because I have so many weaknesses. How can you overcome this doubt? Not by imagination but by regular meditation. It is then that confidence and enthusiasm comes. Ma's letter brings out the essence of why sadhana why discipline is necessary and that wanting to change and the faith that I can change is a sign of spiritual awakening. Then we develop the confidence – Yes, I can do it and if these qualities come in you day by day then it is a sign of spiritual awakening. Other spiritual experiences are not a very good yardstick. Develop 'shraddha' for the guru. Shraddha is a very deep subject. Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji has said in the Holy Science: (quoted above)

Watch out for the 'natural inclination'. Natural love is naturally within us and it pulls us back to the source and directs us to the source and is in all of us not just in a few. If we have 'shraddha' we want to go back home. If you want to go on playing then you don't have 'shraddha'. If you still want to enjoy the joys of outer world then we don't have the wisdom to turn to the source. (See the Bhagwad Gita quotation Chp.4 Vs. 39 quoted above).

What does 'tatpar' here mean? It normally means 'utsah' (enthusiasm). Guruji has said that here it means engrossed in the Infinite (root meaning 'en theo' – in God). That is a godly quality. We normally think enthusiasm is different from spiritualism. One who is spiritual is always ready for anything, enjoys everything. Whenever Sw. Vishwanandji talks to the monastics and ashramites he always stresses one point. He says, "When Daya Ma first came to the ashram at the age of 17 she was full of fire, full of enthusiasm. Now even at the age of 94, she still has the same enthusiasm. (Continuation of quotation from Autobiography on Sw. Pranabandji quoted above). That shows as we grow older even if the body may give trouble the consciousness is not affected. That we develop by regular meditation. So be more enthusiastic, picturing a new you by reinforcing your noble qualities and root out the inherent inharmonies within you. Progress can be greatly hastened if you constantly cultivate your good qualities and remove the inherent weaknesses. All that you have to do is to strengthen your noble qualities.

But then that is where the struggle is. One part of us wants to hold on to our bad qualities. Sr. Gyanmata has said (in a letter dated June 19, 1940 – The Guru Disciple Relationship:

...Look into your heart, look back over your life, and tell me if you have ever persisted in any action that you absolutely felt no desire to do? No. When we really do not want to do a thing, we simply don't do it. When any action is persisted in, it is not simply a matter of habit, though habit counts. If you look closely you will have no trouble in discovering the red thread of desire. You wanted to do it, no matter what the consequences.

Whenever I think on this point, there comes to mind an experience I had in La Jolla. On a certain day, in a moment of intense feeling, I saw myself confronted with two courses. I felt within me the power to take either. I said to myself that I was free to choose – and I chose the lower, to my undying regret. It represented what I most wanted to do, in spite of clear vision and understanding. Whatever you do or don't do, dear girl, resolutely and honestly face yourself.

One of the reasons why people do wrong and foolish things is because in a moment of great emotional stress they forget everything and everybody – except themselves and their own wrongs, real or fancied. A little unselfish thought taken for those they really love would save them...

So do regular sadhana and turn to God and Guru – they will be able to help us – the disease is so deep rooted that only a spiritual doctor can diagnose and correctly uproot it if we follow him and listen to him and have faith in what he is doing for us.

How does your confidence get shaken?

All those things that you have done in the past, the bad decisions that you have made, the bad thoughts that you have entertained – when we dwell on them you feel I am not fit. I cannot make spiritual progress. I will never make it, because I have so many weaknesses. When you are continuously engaged in battle we are exercising a lot of discipline. We think O, I have to practice so much discipline. Then mental laziness comes in and we give up. In the Autobiography, Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji has said:

"Forget the past,"... "The vanished lives of all men are dark with many shames. Human conduct is ever unreliable until anchored in the Divine. Everything in future will improve if you are making a spiritual effort now."

Guruji has quoted that this above line is his most favourite passage from the Autobiography of a Yogi. Forget the past, but how?

God put us in this difficult situation. He created the maya. Yet he is very compassionate. He has to be. He put us in this difficult situation. If he isn't compassionate, who will be? (The extract from the Bhagwad Gita and the story of the piggies above.)

So God has promised us that even if you are the greatest of sinners, if you take shelter (prapatti) in me you will soon have a purified soul. Even if we are on the lowest strata of consciousness, even if such a person follows the voice of the Satguru, and keeps meditating then their souls will get purified. If we love God with all our heart he removes all our karma.

So with ever trusting faith in him, place your burden before him, but remember that you do not take it back again. So remember, if we have done something wrong we go to Guruji and tell him. But then we often take our burdens back with us.

What does Guruji want? Does he want that you confess and then it is over. It is not so simple. Learn the lesson from it. We did something, we got pain, sorrow; learn that from it, and don't repeat it again. Sometimes we are a little bit dull, we don't learn our lessons quickly and we keep on repeating those mistakes. We are all dull in some things and sharp in some things. That creates the differences in personalities. So we have to learn the valuable lessons and don't repeat them. If we analyze them scientifically we progress. Be more scientific, then discrimination develops with clear understanding.

I have covered this same letter of Daya Ma in Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Igatpuri and now here. Ma has given so much in this letter.

What we concentrate upon becomes our greatest reality. Then we keep on talking about it. If we are meditating night and day then during the day all our activities should be concentrated on God because what we concentrate on becomes our reality. Then we step back a little during an incident and analyze the incident from each angle and learn our lessons. Sw. Anandmoyeeji has said that during kriya you don't just feel the currents but one of the other benefits is that we get back to memory what happened in the past, why it happened and our understanding develops. Then we have to apply ourselves and reinforce the divine qualities. Ma says, "Concentrate on the 'now'". If you keep on dwelling on the past and wonder how you will cover up so much in the future then you are in day dreaming mode, but if you are making the right effort then you are living in the present.

There is nothing like spiritual or non spiritual and we are only getting closer to God on the spiritual journey. Then you can guide your life rightly. Then you get an answer of unconditional love from God and Guruji and that gives a great boost and you realize – I can make it because God and Guruji love me. When we make mistakes God seems very far, Guru seems very far. You feel He doesn't love me, He has left me. So even if you are at the lowest level of consciousness and do not give up making effort, then know that Guruji loves you, God loves you. His love has been given unconditionally to all – a common man doesn't realize Krishna's love. Guruji explains that Krishna's love was a divine love rising above human desires. It is very difficult to explain to the common man how Krishna's love was much higher than carnal love. As we do sadhana we will realize what is that supreme love between soul and spirit.

***"Where is there pure loving love,
Where is there truly loving me,
There my soul longs to be."***

That is the natural desire in all of us to enjoy that pure divine love. It enriches our life. Guruji told Ma, ***"When I have left this body, only love can take my place. Be so drunk with the love of God and give that love to everyone."*** We are so happy to be in the Yogoda family where we can attain that kind of love tangibly. It is not impossible for us to attain it through meditation and right activity. As we feel more love we are able to express more love externally. Our svadharma is to actually restore our consciousness in divine consciousness and it is done directly through meditation and indirectly through other activities. When you are in the world doing sadhana and trying to do all the worldly actions is necessary – we cannot achieve that by just running away into a forest. Bhagwan Krishna was in the state of God consciousness even when doing worldly duties. Not to withdraw from the battle but to go on fighting without losing heart and if we have these two qualities of confidence and enthusiasm it will help us.