

SATSANGA BY SW. SHUDDHANANDJI 150109

Today Thursday is the day of long meditation. After prayer we will have one session of meditation of 45 minutes and in the second period we will discuss a few points on how to intensify our sadhana and deepen our meditation.

Though it is a day of long meditation we have less meditation so do whatever is possible from your routine in this short time; you can continue the rest of your meditation at home.

Make special effort to see that now we are focused only on God and Guruji's presence. Don't let the mind go anywhere. Concentrate the mind only on God and Guruji's presence. When we work that way to be in the presence of God and Guru then we can switch off all worldly thoughts and all identification with the world. Plus be relaxed and receptive. If we are tensed then we are not receptive to the blessings of the Guru and the blessings reflect and go away. Keep the mind and body relaxed and light. Mentally practice you are detaching yourself from all the world. You are bathed, you are charged, you are comforted in the Divine Presence. (meditation for 45 minutes after chanting).

Let us start with today's thought from the Spiritual Diary. Many of you know of my normal practice of starting the satsanga with a thought from the spiritual diary. We will dwell on it and it will be the topic of today's satsanga.

January 15: Obedience: Obedience to the guru is necessary for attunement with his wisdom. It is not slavery to follow the wish of a God-realized guru, because his wish gives independence and freedom. A true guru is the servant of God, carrying out his plan for your liberation. Realize this, and you will always obey, until you find perfect freedom in Spirit.

- Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, "Yogoda Magazine"

Today's topic is not very pleasant to hear – Obedience. We want to be free, we don't want to have to obey, to be controlled by somebody. Obeying a guru does not make you a slave but it gives you independence and liberation. It is a very difficult concept because we normally like to do what we like as per our desires, sanskaras and incarnations of habits. All these mould our thoughts and we feel the way I am behaving is natural. This is what I am. However if it is not in accordance with the Divine Principles it will give us misery, not joy; it will give us mental turmoil, restlessness. We think if I keep doing what I am doing I will be happy. We think this is really good and it will make me happy. After we satisfy that desire we find something is missing; there is something more. But when we follow the Divine Plan of God as given by the Guru we feel peaceful and comfortable inside. We find a divine joy. We have a peaceful existence. Once we understand that then we want to follow the Guru. Guruji gives an example of a movie. God is projecting on the screen of delusion with the beam of Om. Guruji says:

BE GOOD; TURN TO THE BEAM.

Let us just take this today. Why not just turn to the beam and get away from all motion pictures? Why do we first have to be good?

Right from birth we have had many choices. With birth we got free choice. The playground is set, the rules are given and now it is up to us how to play. When we do our own play or modify things, the umpire tells us: 'No, do things properly, this is not the way'. The Umpire is guiding us

how to play properly and the Umpire constantly gives us chances to play again and again incarnation after incarnation until we pray perfectly.

Guruji speaks about various types of yoga practices as outlined by Patanjali: the eight steps of yama, niyama, asana, pranayam, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, Samadhi. Yama tells us what is good for us to do and niyama tells us what is not right for us so what we should avoid. We must not do what we have to do gritting our teeth but understand and do. Thousands of people do not follow the yama and niyama. Many others by just following the ethical and moral codes of conduct are finding internal peace but if you remain satisfied with that you are not solving the purpose of life. Why are you here, what is the purpose for which you are here. You may reason – I have not done anything wrong, I am satisfied, I am content.

Remember there are two stages to the problem:

1. Be good.
2. Turn to the beam.

It is because when the whole leela started God thought – ***Ekoham Bahusyam: 'I am One, let me become many,'*** and God became particles of individualized beams playing with each other. There was a division in the consciousness of God and Sat became Om. The vibrations formed by the positive and negative interactions at thought level gave rise to the outward force that pushes everything to the periphery (Apara prakriti – maya). The ingoing force Divya Prem (Divine Love) of God is pulling everything back towards God. Interaction between the two is the Om vibration. That is the beam. When you turn to the beam you realize everything is coming from that beam. Guruji likened it to a horror movie. The audience are shouting and screaming; while the movie operator is sitting and reading a novel; he has seen the movie many times, he is no longer interested in the movie. Guruji would often fight with God. He would say – God, you created us; we did not ask to be created; You are happy in your joy; you created the dream but are not involved with this dream. You made all this but you are happy and untouched by all this.

Guruji tells us - Why not be like God? Aloof from all turmoil; all duality? This is the dilemma of life. Very few people want to listen. They reason – 'I cannot yet really want to give up all this; I want to enjoy the show first. I want to continue to play for some more time.' Incarnations pass away. And we keep on thinking – let us postpone a little bit. You start getting more and more involved. The delusive power of maya is so strong. We get strayed, maya sucks us up. We get caught up and spend incarnations running around in the show. On the other hand the saints want to follow the Divine Plan and so they are full of joy. In the last chapter of Autobiography of a Yogi Guruji has explained the purpose of why we are here. ***"The Hindu scriptures teach that man is attracted to this particular earth to learn, more completely in each successive life, the infinite ways in which the Spirit may be expressed through, and dominant over, material conditions."***

In the Vedas it is mentioned that we are unique beings. Each one has a specialty. We have to manifest that uniqueness – that is the purpose of creation – to manifest Spirit. In the process of manifesting however we get caught up in playing, creating more and more desires; and then we get filled with anger, resentment, jealousy, fear, greed etc. The basic purpose of creation is to manifest that special characteristic of God. Everyone is dear to God. When creating you, he only thought of you; no one else. Each one of us is very special to God. Sw. Anandmoyeeji once said that during convocation a person came to him with lots of problems, completely beaten by the world and he asked for advice. Now Lake Shrine is very beautiful; the natural beauty and spirituality there enhance each other; the natural beauty

brings out the spirituality and the spirituality brings out the natural beauty. Sw. Anandmoyeeji told the person that before I give you any advice, go around the Lake Shrine 2 or 3 times and only think – ‘God Loves Me’. Nothing else. Make two or three rounds enjoying the beautiful surroundings. The man returned after some time. He said, “Swamiji, what a miracle you have performed. I feel so comforted, so peaceful; I have forgotten all my problems.” Swamiji said, “I haven’t performed any miracle. The miracle was in the affirmation that you were making: God Loves Me.”

The second point we said was: Turn to the Beam. That means connecting to the Om vibration. Each vibration has different strata. In his talk on affirmations, Sw. Anandmoyeeji quotes Sw. Yuktेशwarji from the Autobiography of a Yogi (Chapter 15):

*All thoughts vibrate eternally in the cosmos. By deep concentration, a master is able to detect the thoughts of any mind, living or dead. **Thoughts are universally and not individually rooted**; a truth cannot be created, but only perceived. The erroneous thoughts of man result from imperfections in his discernment. The goal of yoga science is to calm the mind, that without distortion it may mirror the divine vision in the universe.*

When we think a particular thought we are attracting the vibrations connected to that thought, and we are connecting to that stratum of vibration. A fully outgoing thought has the grossest vibration. A completely inward thought has the subtlest vibration. When we connect ourselves to a thought we connect universally; we are not aloof. Through our thoughts we are connected to the whole universe.

An affirmation like – ‘God loves me’ is at a very high level. God is love. This simple thought gives more comfort than erudite reasonings. Sw. Anandmoyeeji gave this simple though very subtle affirmation to the person. The person was very responsive and receptive. So he experienced a tremendous benefit. Sometimes we experience great spiritual blessings at once. Sw. Anilanandji another senior monk, describes in the convocation how when he first attended convocation he attended the talk given by Sw. Bhavanandji. And right in the beginning Sw. Bhavanandji said: Let us take a minute off to tune in with the divine vibrations and feel God’s presence. And Sw. Anilanandji immediately felt that divine love, that divine peace and joy even as a beginner. We all have felt that divine response sometimes very fast. Some devotees just enter the hall and their whole being gets saturated with the divine presence; they feel comfortable and at peace.

Suppose we are accustomed to connecting at a lower level we are always in a state of turmoil, we are moody, bored, full of misery and then we are in a lower strata. When we connect to a higher strata we are full of energy, bubbling with joy, even minded, hating no one, wanting to help everyone. If we are in the lower strata we are discouraged. But when in the higher strata we take every difficulty as a challenge. If right now your mind is habitually dwelling on the lower strata we do not want to go higher. What should we do then?

All the above about strata etc. was theoretical. Now let us see what we can do practically. Be good; turn to the beam. How can we be good? - By learning to behave. What is behaving? – knowing what we ought to do, when we ought to do. What is right behavior? – behaving according to common sense. What is common sense? – that which is very uncommon. When intuition develops something within us tells us this is the right behavior. We normally suppress our inner feelings, our inner conscience which tells us what you are doing is wrong. But we

rationalize, suppress it and continue to do what we want to do. And then we find we are miserable. We have to then overcome another round of psychological problems, like guilt, shame etc. To avoid all that: Be good and turn to the beam.

Surrender to the beam. Admitting I was wrong is not easy and enjoyable. How to turn to the beam? Through kriya – at once; quickly; as fast as we want to. It depends on how fast we want. During the Ahmedabad Janmotsava I was quoting Ma's letter in which she has spoken about how Guruji said to one disciple who was seeking His blessings: God's blessings are there, my blessings are also there; only your blessings are required. In April 1980 Sw. Anandmoyeeji had come to Bombay and at that time I was working as a volunteer. Then a few months later I went to Ranchi and went over to see him. And I kept on pestering him again and again 'Swamiji, please bless me.' At that time Swamiji quoted the same thing: God's blessings are there, my blessings are also there, only your blessings are required.

We will get what we want deep down in our consciousness. As we follow Guruji we find we have overcome that particular drawback that was troubling us. How to bless ourselves? By detaching ourselves from the ego and attaching ourselves to the beam. The simplest way is by practicing the Om technique. Om technique is the simple method of getting rid of the ego and filling it with God consciousness. Om technique is a wonderful way of turning to the beam. Even at other times go on sensing, merging in and pouring our love to the Om vibration. The more we are in Om the more free we will be from ego.

Do the other techniques also deeply. Some devotees are still not doing Om. They do Hong sau, and even while they are doing Hong sau, Om just comes in and they feel a tremendous peace. But then they start analyzing, what is this, is it Om? They are filled with doubt and also maya prevents them. Enjoy it, don't analyze it. Be like a little child; if you think too much you lose it. Just enjoy the flowers, if you begin to weight its petals, and count how many petals are there, and what is the shape of each petal you lose the beauty. When you get up in the morning or sometimes in the middle of the night, practice Om technique. Try to stay as long as you can in the Om vibration, remain in that. Om is father, mother, everything. It is God, it is your real nature – Satchitanand. Remind yourself I am not this body, not this ego; I am just playing this little drama.

Once a devotee said to Guruji, 'I got so much of joy earlier in my meditations; now it is all gone'. You were given a glimpse of that joy. Now you have to make it your own by chitta shuddhi. You cannot just retain it; it cannot stay because you do not have the capacity to retain it. To retain it, go on improving, be better behaved, meditate deeper. Then you can become better instruments, better receptacles. It is a difficult process; it requires patience. Again and again go on trying to go deeper. Often we get tired, frustrated and feel that for months and years I have been going on with no effect. Let's leave it now. Don't listen to this voice. Every little effort we make whether we know it or not, we realize it or not; we are making progress. It is like going through a dark tunnel, when there is darkness all around and we can't see the light at the other end. But with every step we are going closer and closer to the light. But if we just sit down we won't get anywhere. Don't question why this darkness, why is Guruji asking me to do this or

that. That is where obedience comes in. Why obedience? Why do we not spend that time when we are unable to go deep in meditation in doing something which is more useful? Guruji explained that with the story of the anchorite Bhadrak and the drunkard. The anchorite had been meditating for years hoping for powers from God. But when Narada told him that God would come only when he had finished passing a thousand elephants through the eye of a needle he was exasperated. He thought 'who has ever heard of passing elephants through the needle. Probably there is no God; probably I have just been wasting time doing my meditation, which has no meaning. I might as well enjoy all those things in life and concentrate on worldly goals which I have until now neglected for meditation.' Narada was horrified at this reaction. On the other hand when the drunkard was told of God coming after passing a thousand elephants through the eye of a needle he was enthusiastic with joy because he felt anything is possible for God and he was hopeful that God would come any minute now. Then Narada realized why God said that the drunkard was a greater devotee.

Sometimes things may seem logical and you may wonder why I am being asked to give this up. Don't argue, just obey the Guru. Do your meditations twice daily whether you feel the results tangibly or not. There are times when it is difficult; when we do not feel like doing them, we can give a thousand reasons for not doing them; we can reason for not doing them. Don't justify; just follow the guru. At times it takes a lot of strength. The time we feel we are not making enough progress that is the time we are making maximum progress. Remember that is the time we are making maximum progress. That time we are burning away so many sanskaras and getting purified. In the lower state you were just wandering away aimlessly. When you followed the Guru sincerely you made progress.

We all go through dry periods. In the beginning we find great joy on the spiritual path and we feel this is how it will go on. Slowly the enthusiasm goes down, meditation becomes dry and tedious. And we feel – Oh I hate to meditate. We feel tired even thinking of meditation. This dry period comes again and again from time to time. No one can escape that. Why? Sw. Anandmoyji says, 'If right from the beginning your spiritual practice is all nice, if you are feeling God's presence then we will think "Good, I am such a great disciple, I am making rapid progress and our spiritual ego will become strong. By giving us a dry period God puts us in place. Don't think so much about yourself. I gave you a lollipop, don't think you have reached great spiritual heights.

We start with a lollipop – soon after reading the Autobiography we feel very inspired. That enthusiasm can again be regained by practicing regularly until that spiritual consciousness becomes our own. Obeying then comes naturally. The way Guruji explains in the Autobiography (Chapter 12):

"When I had abandoned underlying resentment, I found a marked decrease in my chastisement. In a very subtle way, Master melted into comparative clemency. In time I demolished every wall of rationalization and subconscious reservation behind which the human personality generally shields itself. The reward was an effortless harmony with my guru. I discovered him then to be trusting, considerate, and silently loving. Undemonstrative, however, he bestowed no word of affection.

My own temperament is principally devotional. It was disconcerting at first to find that my guru, saturated with jnana but seemingly dry of bhakti, expressed himself only in terms of cold spiritual mathematics. But as I tuned myself to his nature, I discovered no diminution but rather increase in my devotional approach to God. A self-realized master is fully able to guide his various disciples along natural lines of their essential bias.

My relationship with Sri Yukteswar, somewhat inarticulate, nonetheless possessed all eloquence. Often I found his silent signature on my thoughts, rendering speech inutile. Quietly sitting beside him, I felt his bounty pouring peacefully over my being."

Even just touching the feet of his Guru would fill him with an indescribable thrill. Guruji overcame the natural inclination of the ego to be in charge. He was in control of the ego and then he found actual freedom. When you do what you feel like doing then you are not actually free. You are bound by natural impulses, ego etc. The Guru's wisdom takes you higher. Our vivek shakti (discrimination) gets purified. Just as in accounting we need to seek the sign of approval, Guruji found his Guru's silent sign of approval. That is the level to which Guruji can bless us. Open your hearts and minds to Guruji. Allow him to transform you. Once some devotees went up to Guruji and asked him, "How is it that Rajarsi Janakanand made so much of spiritual progress so soon." Guruji said, "That is because he knows how to listen."

Take life as per Guruji's orders and your life will be changed completely. The supreme example is that of Rajarsi Janakananda. He started on the path in Kansas city. He was a multimillionaire, who started with a zero. He made himself into a multimillionaire. But before he came on the path, he was a nervous wreck. Even during the meetings he could not sit still; he would be restlessly walking around. The first time he met Guruji and immediately he fell into stillness. In the first practice of Kriya he went into Samadhi. He surely had practiced it in a previous incarnation. When a great avatar comes he brings along with him other souls who have been associated with him in past lives.

Lahiri Mahasaya also did not meet his guru Babaji until his time of meeting in Ranikhet because he was destined to do some work. God wanted Rajarsi Janakanand to set an example of how a person who can be successful in the material world can also be a success in the spiritual life and you don't have to leave the material world. Rajarsi Janakanand continued to help in the spiritual life. He gave a large part of the donations required to establish the Ranchi ashram and other ashrams silently. How? Just by listening to the Guru. I want you to dwell on concentrating on how to walk in the footsteps of the Guru and with Guruji's blessings your life will be transformed. In the recent years and recent months you have seen great upheavals. Guruji will teach us how to stand unshaken amidst the crack of breaking worlds. Stand unshaken by being with the beam. Not to get emotionally involved, because then we will have to come again and again to play our role perfectly. But we must pray for friendship, for peace, for harmony especially when people are doing all sorts of things. We have to learn to be divine warriors, be very strong, and be courageous, by radiating love, peace and harmony and by sending vibrations of peace. We don't have to just keep on dwelling on the negative things, become heartbroken and depressed. Be joyful and even minded even in the midst of negativity. Be not discouraged and practice positivity.