

Swami Smaranananda - "Rising Above Suffering"

Encinitas Temple

Sunday September 16th, 2012

Swamiji spoke on rising above suffering. He said that for him, he is not fully Realized, that there is something blocking him from this and being one with God. Being a monastic he has renounced all his desires, so his desires have been removed, so what's left? Three things;

1. Suffering, 2. Service, and 3. Meditation. He mentioned that some people choose more suffering than service and meditation in their lives...he said that it is important not to feel guilty or have inferiority complex if you have a lot of suffering and trials in your life, it just means you are a brave Soul to take on all the suffering. He said after a weekend, people say "again Mondays!" (in a frustrated/negative way) instead of saying (yay) again Mondays!!!! This is because people are so busy doing so much on the weekends, instead of being with God that when Monday comes they are exhausted.

The second point he made that he said has been a huge revelation for him was that suffering and happiness can go together. That just because you might be suffering does not mean we can't be happy. Pain AND Joy can coexist. He mentioned the Cosmic Chant: When Thy song flows through me." We cultivate the ability to separate ourselves from the negative aspect of life (sorrow, sickness, death, blame etc.) and allow God's song to flow through us by our sadhana. We need to cultivate inner joy and face everything from that platform of joy within. Master used to seek solace by going to His Gurus ashram. Swamiji said we can go there all the time: Kutastha.

His third point: It is all God's Love at work. Creation is permeated in delusion, but deeply rooted in Love. He said everything is in this world to draw us back to God: good and bad. He said that there is a purpose to suffering, that it can be good. He gave example of cutting his hand. If one cuts their hand, you have that pain/sensation and immediately attend to the injury. If there was no suffering it could lead to a larger and larger problem. Same with life; any suffering or problem is there to draw attention to the cause; physical, financial, emotional etc, so that we can identify the cause and take care of it immediately.

Forth point: Guru's hidden help. Guruji is always helping us whether we realize it or not. If we can surrender our lives to Him, then He is in control and everything is taken care of.

Swamiji told a story about a man who went to doctor because he had ringing in his ears. The doctor gave him medicine, and told him he would be better in 15 days. The man asked the doctor if the ringing in his ear would be gone in 15 days, and the doctor said: no, but you will get used to it."

Suffering will always be there, that is just how this world is set up, but we can use it to get to God.

Another story: A man went to barber to get his hair cut. The barber and the man got into a discussion about the existence of God. The barber argued that there is no God, because there is so much pain and suffering in the world. The man tried to tell him that there is a God, that is loving and forgiving and everything good, but barber would not hear it, still he stuck to his belief that there is no God.

The man dropped it, and plus (Swamiji said) you don't want to argue with a barber that is cutting your hair. When this man left the barber he saw a man with long, dirty, matted, shabby hair, and he brought this man to the barber. He said to the barber, "you know there are no barbers in the world" and the barber said : "what are you talking about im right here im a barber." The man kept on" no, there are absolutely no barbers in the world" and the barber said, "that is not true I AM A BARBER and I am standing right here..." So the man went and got the person with shabby hair and said "look if any barbers existed, this man would not have this shabby, dirty hair!!" And he proved his point to the barber that just because this man doesn't actually go to the barber doesn't mean that barbers do not exist. Similarly just because we don't seek God, doesn't mean he does not exist.

His last point was: Why me?? He asked if we had ever asked this question, and said next time we ask "Why me?" to then ask ourselves two questions:

1. "Lord, why NOT me?" Are we such perfect beings that we have not brought some of our suffering on ourselves?
2. "Why me...for these gifts and graces." To have gratitude for our many many blessings. Realizing that there are millions of people that do not know where their next meal, clothing, shelter etc will come from, when we have an abundance of these things. How many times have we said "Why Me" when we have accomplished something worthwhile, when we have successes or joys, when do we say Why Me, for these blessings??