

2017 Convocation ~ "Calmness: Spiritual Strategy for Overcoming Life's Tests"

Brother Anilananda

(DISCLAIMER: These notes are our best attempt to capture the essence of what was said at this class. There is always a degree of human error involved when taking notes and we have transcribed them to the best of our ability.)

How is a devotee to respond to the mass negativity in the world? In The Second Coming of Christ, Discourse 19 John 34--42, Christ says, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. Say not ye. There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors."

God already planted in our souls all these beautiful qualities that impact our influence on fellow beings around the world. The actions of each individual leave electromagnetic etchings in his brain and in the ether. The overall quality of civilization is based on what citizens do. Master tells us that one moon is more lustrous than all of the stars. One Superconscious soul can influence the masses more than the masses can influence each other. The goodness of one soul can effectively neutralize mass karma of millions. What one sows in the ether, others will surely reap.

I can send out vibrations of positive thoughts and feelings. We can increase the critical mass of all of this goodness. When we face divisive polarization, we must develop understanding. We can contribute to the positive.

Where did all of this divisiveness come from? It started at the beginning of creation. There was love and joy. Creation was the vibration of thought into the astral. There was a physical vibration of two forces: ignorance and repulsion goes out, love and attraction comes back. Time and space impact the particles. All of this obscures spirit. The force going out is repulsion - the power of delusion. Its job is to divide. The force of attraction is harmonious. It binds together. We have ignorance and understanding. Understanding comes from love. Attraction brings harmony.

How do we respond to polarization? Guruji said the first thing is to develop a culture of love. Love is thy strength and greatest ally. If we never get angry at life's reverses- or at their human instigators we will be able to see our way more clearly.

Brother told a story about a devotee who received a court summons which would result in her

child being taken away. Her friend told her that she would be unable to come with her to court, but that she and her prayer group would pray for her. The devotee reported that from the beginning, she felt infused and surrounded by a sparkly, tingly energy. The judge asked to see the child in his chambers. “We flew home together, my boy and me”, she proclaimed.

We must realize the subject of the yugas, as Sri Yukteswar reports in *The Holy Science*. There are 24,000 years of cycles: 12,000 and 12,000 down. We’re going up. (We just passed the bottom.) The dark age of Kali Yuga has long passed.

Men require loving help, one from the other. Mrinalini Mata said, “Sometimes all we can do for others is to encourage them to smile. “ I can help someone to be calm by being kind to them. We should not be living from the lower emotions, anger and fear, but with a center of calmness. The Gita’s first chapter has an illustration of the chakras and their powers. These have a great impact on how we’re feeling.

One’s center of consciousness can move up and down the spine. Each chakra has positive and negative powers. What determines whether the powers acting in the centers will be positive or negative? The spiritual person lives in the upper chakras. A person may be in a positive state of mind, but when the consciousness comes down, the powers become proportionately perverted. Powers in the chakras perceive the influence of the senses, of our actions and our personality.

To achieve evenmindedness, we must lift the consciousness to the higher centers. Indulging in negativity lowers the consciousness to the emotions of anger and fear and gives our tests undue tenacity. We must live from the soul’s center of calmness. But how are we to maintain evenmindedness when confronted by life’s tests?

If you think about something disturbing, ask yourself, “What can this teach me about my sadhana?” If something horrible has happened, no matter how horrible, God has allowed it to happen. There is a lesson in there somewhere.

A person was dying of Lou Gehrig’s disease. He engaged only in meaningful conversation. His friends reported that he was like an angel, radiant, without a trace of bitterness. One said, “ I felt that I was in the presence of a saint. He had allowed this devastating experience to purify him.

Another devotee, 40 years ago, was ill and bed ridden. He couldn’t eat or move. He couldn’t see the spiritual eye, he could only look there. He started moving through the tunnel. He had a tremendous sense of well-being. He came out of it saying he was completely healed, and that he knew God would take care of him.

A devotee was serving as a psychologist in a prison. He was the last one in the office, when a security guard called to ask him to come upstairs. There was a person on drugs who was behaving violently. Master's words came to him. "If you are ever in trouble, look at the spiritual eye and chant Om. Feel the great peace." He went upstairs after looking at the kutastha and feeling the peace. The troubled person calmed down.

As Sister Gyanamata advised, he deliberately forsook this emotional upheaval and decided to be calm. The decision lifted his consciousness up.

In Finding the Joy Within, Ma talks about developing an understanding heart. She explains that moods are something from past incarnations. If we react quickly and unreasonably, maybe there's a mood from a past life.

In Chapter 2, Verse 7 of the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna asks, "With my inner nature overshadowed by weak sympathy, with a mind in bewilderment about duty, I implore Thee to advise me what is the best path for me to follow. I am Thy disciple. Teach me, whose refuge is in me."

A devotee reported a habit of moodiness. She said that she was married, with a child. There is little time for sadhana and much moodiness. She could feel negative emotions surfacing. She dropped to her knees and shouted, "I can't do this anymore. I need you mother. Please change me. She completely surrendered. She recalled, "I surrendered to God, and then in that moment, there was miracle after miracle.

Another devotee had just taken kriya, but was overwhelmed that every night in diksha everything went wrong. Through it all, she would go to the center and practice kriya, but every night she gave all of her strength to get through it all. She added, "If it were not for kriya, I would have killed myself."

Sometimes, we can find evenmindedness from chanting. Swami Smaranananda advised to ask yourself, "Do I really want to behave this way. Master tells us to beware of judging others falsely in Lesson 44. We make assumptions. We try to imagine other people's motives.

Brother reported that his twin brother wanted him to leave the ashram. He made a list of all that his brother said regarding why he should leave. "What I missed was that I was unaware of his feelings", he said. My brother admonished, "But we were in the womb together. " I didn't know what he was feeling. That was the real reason we were having difficulty. The important thing is that we love one another. We came to an understanding.

Sri Yukteswar said that by calmness, try to feel the feelings behind others' emotions. When we express ourselves and our words are appreciated, dopamine activates the reward neurons in

the body, making us feel empowered. Courtesy, whether agreeing or disagreeing, mark the person who knows how to behave. Sincere, sweet words are nectar to thirsty souls.

In 1973, Mrinalini Mata was asked at the last minute to do a satsanga that Ma had been scheduled to do. Everyone was looking forward to hearing Daya Mata. At the beginning of the service, all looked around for Ma. Mrinalini Mata came out from behind the curtain and looked at Ma's chair. She went over and sat down. She stated, "I know how you feel, but guess how I feel..."