

Attached are notes from Sr. Preeti's talk at SRF's 2017 Convocation taken by a devotee from Washington DC. Where the notes say insert, a longer version of a story is provided taken from another source where Sr. gave a shorter version. Thanks so much DC Steve!

2017 Convocation ~ Sister Preeti

Prayer: Embracing the World with Compassion and Understanding

Sister Preeti began by greeting devotees with "Namaste", spoken in a number of different languages. She noted that the subject of prayer is a life changing topic. You search for a deeper and better prayer. Our personal journey is discovered with prayer. The topic means embracing and holding mankind close and experiencing that closeness: seeing God in all people and feeling your oneness with all people. Concentrate on what we have in common.

We are physically and spiritually like Adam and Eve in relation to God. We have just one purpose for incarnating: to find God. The God spark in us as soul is potential perfection. Life is a struggle for joy along the way. As we struggle, we should work on being less judgmental and more compassionate.

Everyone is a miniature God. We can't ignore Him there as compassion. The horrors of the world are overwhelming. There is a tendency to look away from disturbing things. We should be motivated to pray for people. Live a Godly life and everyone around you will be helped. Praying is a part of this. We are our brother's keeper. How many others can you help? We must be God's Divine agents to love and help others. What is the meaning of prayer? It is the world's greatest wireless connection. He that acts without words is better than the opposite. Sister related a version of the following story.

(INSERT) "A fellow was stuck on his rooftop in a flood. He was praying to God for help. Soon a man in a rowboat came by and the fellow shouted to the man on the roof, "Jump in, I can save you." The stranded fellow shouted back, "No, it's OK, I'm praying to God and he is going to save me." So the rowboat went on. Then a motorboat came by. "The fellow in the motorboat shouted, "Jump in, I can save you." To this the stranded man said, "No thanks, I'm praying to God and he is going to save me. I have faith."

So the motorboat went on. Then a helicopter came by and the pilot shouted down, "Grab this rope and I will lift you to safety." To this the stranded man again replied, "No thanks, I'm praying to God and he is going to save me. I have faith." So the helicopter reluctantly flew away. Soon the water rose above the rooftop and the man drowned. He went to Heaven. He finally got his chance to discuss this whole situation with God, at which point he exclaimed, "I had faith in you but you didn't save me, you let me drown. I don't understand why!" To this God

replied, "I sent you a rowboat and a motorboat and a helicopter, what more did you expect?"
(END INSERT)

Sister Preeti related a shorter version of this story that ended, "God did send help, He sent YOU!" She repeated this a number of times during her talk as she pointed to the devotees in the audience.

Master's prayer for world peace is practiced during our healing service twice a day with the Prayer Council following meditation. Our prayers counter negative karma. The Worldwide Prayer Council emphasizes: "Your personal efforts can do much to bring greater harmony among the nations of the world. Prayer is the most potent force in the world. We must believe in the power of prayer and perseverance. For example, St. Augustine's mother prayed for him for a long time while he lived a worldly life. He became a great saint.

Guard against falling prey to discouragement. Be persistent. When things look like they aren't going well, keep on keeping on. We are ashatria-spiritual warriors. We need to use our power. Through our prayer, we actively counteract negativity from world events.

Sister Preeti said that prayer led to her going from a householder to a monastic. She felt a call, but needed reassurance and asked for reassurance. She contacted the SRF Admissions Council. Their response gave her that reassurance, and she entered the ashram.

Dag Hammarskjold knew the power of prayer when he said, "Man has reached a critical point in history, and to avoid the consequences, we need to pray. "

We need to pray for the condition of world leaders and ourselves. We need to pray all the time and keep at it. Dag Hammarskjold also said, "Prayer is a dynamic manifestation of love." Ma talked with us about how to handle periods of dryness. She told us, "If you want God, pray for it. It will come." We think we may know what trite phrases mean. We need to pray to understand meaning.

We should pray when we see sad faces, when we see distressing or sad faces. The prayer of St. Francis was:

"Lord make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy

O divine master grant that I may
not so much seek to be consoled as to console
to be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love”

If you contact God in yourself, you will know that He is in others. Only spiritual consciousness that is the realization of the Self in others can save the world. There is no chance for peace without it. Thomas Merton said, “If you want a life of prayer, the way to get it is by praying.” Guruji says to call for help and have trust and attunement.

Sister Preeti said that she had to pray regarding the preparation of this talk. She was experiencing a problem with the sequencing of scatter thoughts and how to organize them. Mrinalini Mata gave her a mini satsanga and told her to relax, trust in God, and pray. She followed this guidance, and her thoughts rearranged themselves into the right order. Pray and pray with deep concentration and devotion. Sister told the story of seeing a guide dog walking with a woman who was blind. A squirrel ran right across the dog’s path. The dog completely ignored the squirrel and kept on walking and guiding the woman. She told us that if a dog can be trained to ignore a squirrel, we should be able to ignore distracting thoughts during meditation.

Again, sister reminded us that if you are dry, pray for devotion. “Make my heart pure by all surrendering love for Thee. Purity of heart is essential for contact with God.

Sri Yukteswar talks about the stages of the heart in The Holy Science. The clean or pure heart is the highest state.

(INSERT) The Five States of the Human Heart - To attain that perfect love is a gradual process of evolution. Swami Sri Yukteswar, guru of Paramahansa Yogananda, describes how the human heart with its feelings and emotions progresses through five different states. [See The Holy Science (pp. 77-86) by Swami Sri Yukteswar, published by Self-Realization Fellowship.]

The dark state of the heart - Most human beings are in the first state, in which feeling is scattered and diffused outwardly in desires for material things. This is called the dark state of the heart, in which one's consciousness is directed solely to the outer creation, in complete obliviousness of the Creator.

The propelled state of the human heart - After many incarnations, there comes a time when we grow dissatisfied with mere things, when the experiences of this world leave us empty. We yearn for a higher truth, a deeper understanding of life. When we begin to search sincerely for that experience, we have entered what Sri Yukteswarji calls the propelled state of the human heart. That is, we are propelled by our inner dissatisfaction to seek something more than the superficial experiences and pursuits of the senses. In this state, we eventually find a spiritual teacher or teaching that can show us the way to the Infinite.

The steady state of the human heart - As our upward evolution continues, we enter the third stage: the steady state of the human heart. In the steady state one's propelled restlessness is gradually transformed, through self-control, into the calm will to persevere on the path.

The devoted state of the human heart - By remaining steadfast in our spiritual practices, we come to the fourth state, in which God becomes a reality to us through direct perception. This is called the devoted state of the human heart.

The pure state of the human heart - As we deepen that devotional contact with God, the dross, the lower inclinations that prevent us from being receptive to the presence of God, falls away. We then reach the highest level, what Sri Yukteswarji refers to as the clean or pure state of the human heart. One feels not just devotion for God, but true union with Him. As two human beings who are deeply in love can intuit what each other is thinking and feeling, in divine communion between the soul and God there is a continuous, infinitely more intimate interchange of love and caring." (END OF INSERT From The Holy Science.)

Often in our thoughts and prayers, we want something first and ask, "My will be done". We need to surrender and pray, "Thy will be done."