

Make Your Meditations Come Alive

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(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.)

An important part of our sadhana is seeing God in all people and all conditions. We'll begin with a healing affirmation:

"Whatever conditions confront me

I know they represent the next step in my unfoldment.

I will welcome all tests

because I know that within me

is the intelligence to understand

and the power to overcome"

How does the affirmation start off? "Dear Father". We are seeing Him as loving, kind, and dear. A father who would never do us harm.

Then, "Whatever conditions confront me". Now, it's starting to get a little tense.

We can breathe more freely when he says, "I know they represent the next step in my unfoldment. This makes sense of the conditions in which we find ourselves. It might actually have been sent by God. It may be something that will give you greater strength. Another possibility is the conditions might not just be there by accident. They might be the result of our own karma.

Master points out where in the past we mistakenly used our free will, our free choices.

"I will welcome all tests." Now we can all agree that that's just going too far. "Welcome?" That just doesn't make sense.

Then Master says, "Because I know that within me is the intelligence to understand and the strength to overcome. "

We can be victorious. Isn't that what we're all looking for? We're at a point where we know the purpose of life. There's only going forward. We must strive and bring forth that strength and intelligence within us.

We also know that those are doors leading to the Divine Intelligence and the joy we're seeking. We're not only seeing God in all conditions but in all people as well. (Maybe you thought, maybe I can just skip over the latter about seeing God in all people.) That might be a little more difficult. Substitute the word "people" for "conditions".

"Whatever people confront me, I know they represent the next step in my unfoldment."

It might be the case more often than not. When any person complained about a difficult person to Master he would say, "If that person didn't exist, I would have to create someone just like him."

When dealing with a person you consider difficult, ask yourself first, "Do I have a problem or am I the problem. Why is this person in my life? Is this something I can change? What does this require? Can I be loving? What does being loving mean? Can it also mean being perfect?"

During summer day camp one little girl was using her will power. She was nine years old. She meditates every day. Whenever there is free time in school she looks for a quiet place to meditate. On one occasion there was another child being bullied by a student who was much bigger than she was.

She went up to the bully and said, "Don't tease her, tease me. I know who I am. You don't."

This was a tiny little girl, the smallest in her camp. Hearing that story, I know that the future of YSS is in good hands.

Sharing kindness is always important along with strength and courage, as Brother Jayananda was talking about with you. We need to do whatever is the right thing depending on the situation. Maybe it means that we respond humbly. We know what it takes. It also may mean resisting.

We all face a great variety of daily problems and events. We find the scope for the development of good judgment as we face them. We aren't just responding to a list of rules, then. We start to gain an understanding through attunement. We need to learn what to do and how to act because when we leave here, Divine Mother will not ask about the other person and what they did to us.

She's just going to ask one question. "How did you respond?"

And when the other person shows up, she will ask him, "Why did you treat him like that." So we just need to look at did we act in a way that is pleasing to Her.

St. Therese de Lisieux faced many instances of mean spiritedness in the convent. There was one particular nun who was really mean. She was mean and intolerable to everyone. St. Theresa wrote, "I continued to treat this sister as if she were the person I loved most in the world. And in prayer, I told Jesus of all of her virtues. Jesus wants us to reach his inmost sanctuary and see the beauty of that."

One day, the nun said to Therese, "Tell me what it is about me that attracts me you much?"

She explained, "I told her that I saw Jesus hidden in the depths of her soul, Jesus, who makes the bitterest potion taste sweet. I always told her that it was good to see her. "

Because of her sweetness to this nun, the other nuns assumed that this was St. Theresa's best friend in the convent. That was another step in her unfoldment. Now this doesn't exist in our ashrams... ever. (Laughter)

It is common in our ashrams for us to routinely e-mail each other. I was exchanging emails with a brother monk about a particular matter. Often when we write, we start with, "Dear Brotherji".

After a certain point one email reply of his omitted the first "r", and read, "Dear Botherji".

I emailed back. I realized we hadn't gotten to the bottom of this matter.

I wrote back to him, "I hope I'm not being a bother to you."

It was a mistake. There was no problem.

Let's all be a "brotherji" or "sisterji" to each other.

I do know the idea is universal. In the Fall SRF magazine, there are excerpts from an article called "The Power of Nice". Most of us don't mean to be inconsiderate; we're just so busy starring in our own movie that we don't realize that they are starring in theirs. We don't realize that we are supporting actors. We may think everything revolves around our particular point in the Bonaventure ballroom.

We play many roles in our movies; sweet, supportive friend, office trouble shooter, drama queen, loving supportive daughter. Write down five ways to improve your roles. It comes back to the most basic law of right human behavior.

Master said, "Change yourself, and you will change thousands."

Recently, SRF was invited to participate in the Parliament of Religions. A few of our monks and lay people attended. One of the attending monks noted that among the free literature that SRF/YSS offered was a copy of Daya Mata's pamphlet, "How to Change Others."

That is the one that the most people took. They took more of this little pamphlet than any other hand out.

Then he said, "They were in for a big surprise. Ma said that the first rule on how to change others is change yourself."

The brother said, "There's a good chance that if we had gone around to different trash containers, we would have found a lot of those pamphlets".

Sometimes life's conditions are anything but fun, especially if there is a terrible condition caused by serious disease in the body. We hardly need to be reminded that we are living through a disturbing time. We're often scared to read the news in case we read that someone has been a victim of some mindless violence.

Mrinalini Mata did check in on the news in order to know what was going on in the world. She said that those involved in the violence were often those most in need of prayer. It is her spirit that we should all conspire to emulate her and give much as much love as we can to those in need. Pray for love, understanding, and healing that we might help our loved ones. The world will get through these trying times. The secret is to just keep on trying, never giving up. Remember that difficult people and conditions represent the next step in our unfoldment. If we keep trying, with the guru's ever present help, we'll find that understanding and acceptance to help us to get through.

In the word, "guru", "gu" means darkness. "ru" means that which dispels. The guru is nothing more and nothing less than the dispeller of darkness.

Our recent President, Mrinalini Mata once said, "That is how gurudeva was with us, and that is the relationship he wants you all to have with him; that you might approach him as the dearest, divine friend. "

Guruji used to tell us, 'I don't care the slightest how many times you stumble and fall on the spiritual path. I am watching one thing. I want to see how many times you pick yourself up.: Each time you make a mistake in sadhana You may become careless, slothful, forgetful, indifferent, that is all right, my child. But know that I never become careless, slothful, or indifferent with you.'"

Master would say that we need to rouse that sleeping God within us. We need to be a warrior, not a worrier. See how changing just one letter changes the meaning. Then, whether people and conditions seem difficult, we go forward. We have to develop our faith in God and guru ourselves, and know that we're going to get through it with their help. We can depend on them even though mountains come crashing down.

There is a Chinese Proverb that goes something like this...

A farmer and his son had a beloved stallion who helped the family earn a living. One day, the horse ran away and their neighbors exclaimed, "Your horse ran away, what terrible luck!" The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

A few days later, the horse returned home, leading a few wild mares back to the farm as well. The neighbors shouted out, "Your horse has returned, and brought several horses home with him. What great luck!" The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

Later that week, the farmer's son was trying to break one of the mares and she threw him to the ground, breaking his leg. The villagers cried, "Your son broke his leg, what terrible luck!" The farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

A few weeks later, soldiers from the national army marched through town, recruiting all the able-bodied boys for the army. They did not take the farmer's son, still recovering from his injury. Friends shouted, "Your boy is spared, what tremendous luck!" To which the farmer replied, "Maybe so, maybe not. We'll see."

When something happens in life, you may say, "I have no idea what any of that means, but intuitively, I know something is there." I know that if we follow these teachings and align ourselves with the great masters who sent these teachings, we will know what that something is.

I am reminded of a story told in the ashram. Brother Premamoy was in charge of our beginning training. There is a wonderful article by him in SRF magazine. He said, "There were many times on the spiritual path when I couldn't figure it out. I said, 'Well, Divine Mother, I don't know why this is happening to me, but you do'. Then a calm and peace would settle over me as I surrendered to Her. That surrender is often the greatest intelligence and wisdom we can have."

It is a challenge to see guruji in all people and all conditions. As many of us know, the difficulties involved can be huge, but it's also the lessons in all of them. It is not just about having tests, but also about seeing the beauty and the loving hand of God in all things which can exist, even in the most trying times. The following story explains.

The man whispered, "God, speak to me."

And a meadowlark sang. But the man did not hear.

So the man yelled, "God, speak to me!"

Thunder rolled across the sky. But the man did not listen.

The man looked around and said, "God, let me see you."

A star shone brightly. But he noticed it not.

And the man shouted, "God, show me a miracle."

And a life was born. But the man was unaware.

So, the man cried out in despair, "Touch me, God, and let me know that you are here!"

Whereupon God reached down and touched the man.

But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

Moral: Don't miss out on a blessing because it isn't packaged the way you expect.

Source Unknown

Master often said, "Now I discover God everywhere. Each gust of my prayer opens a new entrance to the vastness of Thy presence."

The ultimate goal is the state of samadhi where we don't just believe that one thing. This is what our Master teaches, not only the right attitudes and the yamas and niyamas, but the techniques that lead to the ultimate perceptions of this truth and that constitute the greatest power over our indestructible soul.

Ma told us, "Each of us needs time for deep meditation to partake of the indescribable peace and sweetness of God's presence. It is in the crucible of our daily experience that we learn that every hardship that comes will serve to strengthen us. Devoted meditation and cheerful, dutiful action — thereby we shall reclaim and manifest our omnipotent divine soul-nature. "

Perhaps you have experienced this. You feel that you are in a difficult place, or after meditation something happens to disrupt your peace. These are God given opportunities to learn to reclaim our divine soul nature. When you can hold the consciousness of God within you in truly difficult experiences, that is when you know you have God within.

Guruji said, "God helping God: That is what the world is all about, so that in the end we realize something so unfathomably. At the end, in the heart of the creator there is one Consciousness drawing everything back into Himself. All of the misery, fears, and difficulties in life are but catalysts attempting to bring us back to God."

There is a footnote in "The Autobiography of a Yogi". Buddha asked why a man should love all persons equally. "Because," the great teacher replied, "in the very numerous and varied life spans of each man, every other being has at one time or another been dear to him."

We are part of that universal family. God in essence is just masquerading as various human beings. Our guru knew that each person was a part of his own self.

To summarize, Mrinalini Mata compare the states of dharma and adharma to the highest steps of the eightfold path. After achieving the states of deepened awareness one attains the next step, Dhyana, or true meditation. Dhyana is the conception of the magnitude of God as not only experienced within this little body temple, but as His universal or cosmic manifestation. Dhyana is the conception of the magnitude of God as not only experienced within this little body temple, but as his universal or cosmic manifestation. In other words, if we are concentrating on the state of dharana on God's love, we feel it as a bursting feeling of deep satisfaction and love within the heart and within the mind. However, in the deeper state of dhyana, we see: "Oh! That love is not just something that God is giving to me. His love is that which is sustaining and flowing through all human hearts, through all expressions of creation—indeed it is that universal force which is slowly and gradually unseen by human eyes, drawing all creation back into his divine heart."

"Again, these interior experiences overflow into our everyday life. One who has attained that state in meditation can no longer make any distinctions between any human being as a naughty or good child of God: or being different in appearance and form, as having black, white, red, yellow, green, purple, whatever color skin you want to talk about! Such distinctions that human beings make as to race, caste, nationality—one can no longer feel these at all because he sees God in all universal nature, that universal form, dwelling in all. He experiences that God in every breath of the breeze and every leaf of every tree, in the sky, in every created living form, in every atom. And so he attains perfect understanding of, a perfect sense of harmony with, all of God's creation. "SRF Magazine Spring 2018*

We must find God within our own selves as well. Master, in describing the results said, "Finding Thee within in, I shall find Thee without, in all people and all conditions. You will see Him behind the beauties of nature, in the love, kindness and goodness of people, and also in all of the difficulties of life...but finding Him you will find the happiness you are seeking."

Affirmation (For group: Again, I know we will bring out the Divine Power within us.)

"Whatever conditions confront me

I know they represent the next step in my unfoldment.

I will welcome all tests

because I know that within me

is the intelligence to understand

and the power to overcome"

Jai Guru!

*Self Realization Magazine is available through the website (Bookstore) : <https://www.yogananda-srf.org/> or YSS (Yogoda Satsanga Society) can be reached through <https://www.yssfindia.org/>
