

SPIRITUAL ESSENCE

My humble salutations to all my fellow travellers on the path who have gathered on this auspicious occasion again.

Our Master has said that where there is a gathering of his associates there is his temple and has asked each of us to make our individual selves to be the temples in turn. The temple naturally should be one where the divine vibrations are felt and that would mean our heart should be vibrating the divine every second of our existence. This as we all know is the aim of our practices including meditation. Remembering Him again and again and having intimacy with Him, I understand now after reading a few articles of Rev. Lalaji Maharaj, is called Dayami Tavajja in Sufi terminology. He says that his Master commands that there is no other intimacy and attention than this. If this thing is achieved, there is no need for any other thing. What is there in the name for this practice; it is the practice that is important.

In order to arrive at this condition it is necessary that our mind has to be controlled. It has been my experience that many aspirants repeatedly ask me about the thoughts that visit them and torture them during meditations and otherwise. We are all aware this topic has been addressed by the Master himself and he has given a complete analysis of the problem and how to tackle them. It would be impertinent on my part to repeat them as I am sure you are all aware of the same. The problem has also been addressed to in many of the books of the Institute.

I think the problem arises from our identifying ourselves with the mind and its states. Masters' advice to ignore the thoughts that arise during meditations is in fact a call to ignore our conscious attention to the thoughts had during meditation. The supposition of the divine light given at the beginning of meditation works at the sub conscious level through out and the ways in which the sub conscious works is not known fully though considerable research is going in this area. The manner in which we can use the sub conscious mind through subtle suggestions in the field of education is going to determine the

effectiveness of value based education. Our ancients knew much in this field and moral education for the infant started prenatally and during the childhood through stories carrying divine messages involving where necessary the religious beliefs. The ways in which Prahlad son of the asuric Hiranyakashipu learnt moral principles and the way in which Abhimanyu son of Arjuna of the Mahabharata learnt martial arts prenatally are some examples I recall in this connection.

Many genuine experiences had during meditations are doubted by the aspirants entertaining the idea that perhaps it is all their imagination. Critical study of our condition is necessary however. But when we have not given any suggestion that we will be seeing an elephant or a swan or a lotus and if such a symbol appears on its own to think it may be due to imagination is not proper. It is here most of the times the mind plays its trick. It is not therefore said that all experiences are to be taken without question but the extra activity of the mind needs to be curbed. I remember a psychologist whose good name I unfortunately do not remember urged us in 1960's to lose our mind and come to senses or wisdom. I may say that the most important thing we should have in our spiritual evolution is the courage to stop identifying with our minds, so we may align with our Spiritual Essence.

When we lose our minds along with all its assistant sensory and motor organs we do, indeed, come to our essence. This is when the charioteer holds the reins of all the ten horses even as described in Vedic literature. It is then the present moment of our lives becomes infinitely richer and more satisfying. We are able to access deep peace and inner stillness, even amidst chaos and confusion. We feel more connected to our guidance from the Master felt in the heart, as we inhabit a clear space within us, uncluttered by thought, in which abundant insight and creative inspiration are easily received.

In this process we recognize that we are not our mind. Our essence which is in communion with the Master is self luminous and the mind is only a small candle reflecting that luminosity. If the mind is silenced through various purification processes we undertake it starts reflecting the Essence in us perfectly and becomes moon like. We also understand when the mind is purified it becomes a

valuable tool even to comprehend matters far beyond the intellect. The identification of the perfect mind with intellectual excellence is one of the blunders of human thinking down the ages. Our minds when perfected learn the art and science of understanding and methods of wisdom in a natural manner not requiring the help of the intellect at all. That is why Masters have always asked us to go beyond the intellect pursuit.

If we do not choose to lose our mind during meditation or we do not adhere to the advice given by the Master to ignore the thoughts during meditation it means that we allow our mind to run the show. Left to its own devices, our mind will keep us busy not only during meditation or purification process or prayer but all the 24*7*365 hours and every second in that, with its incessant thinking. Most thoughts are useless distractions from the one thing that really matters- the work or task of the present moment whether it be meditation or prayer or reading or hearing the Masters' voice. When we just keep quiet attending to our task on hand and live in the present the rattle ceases and we have control over our mind. It is then we get to decide how and where to direct our own attention and we can choose to engage our minds when it is helpful to do so. This is a practical way developing our will and special will too.

By adopting the method of ignoring the thoughts during the meditation and at other times we stop practicing spellbound thinking. Spellbound thinking is one way our mind maintains control of our thoughts, and activates our negative emotions. Many of the aspirants who write to me about their thoughts and ideas during meditation and in their lives are bound by their thoughts as if they are spell bound. If they have contemplated over their thoughts they would have seen that they are:

- i) Repetitive and automatic;
- ii) negative, judgmental; and
- iii) focused on regretting the past
- iv) Or worrying about the future. And so on.

Some of the aspirants have been reporting the same thoughts for decades. They should realise that their thoughts are distressingly limiting them and whatever be the origin of such thoughts they are to be ignored totally. But the misfortune is that these thoughts that cause trouble in the mental plane are a result of childhood experiences which are unpleasant or traumatic if not the products of past lives samskaras. These are to be purged and any conscious attention can only be strengthening them. The methods of the Master alone if implicitly followed can give us relief.

During the purification process irrespective of adopting any method given by the Master it is generally reported that

- i) They feel highly restless. I can say that the moment one feels bad one should realise that an old habit has recurred. One may feel guilty, fearful, anxious, sad, angry, resentful, or just uneasy. These thoughts are so habitual that we sometimes are not even aware we are thinking them. Our negative emotions are our best signal to know that we are on an old trap. It is only when we adopt the process of just ignoring the thoughts that we can come out of them or else we will be battling with them through the entire period of purification which really means that we are not thinking of purification at all.
- ii) While cleaning if we find ourselves dwelling on something that happened in the past that bothers us, it is likely that it is about the same incident or series of incidents that our mind revisits on a regular basis.
- iii) When we find ourselves worrying about some future event it is the same habit of mind which wanders away from the present. Worry is catastrophic thinking; it is about imagining the worst possible outcome to a current or future situation. Thanks to the cultural feed of notions of security and safety our minds tend to excel at catastrophic thinking.

Once we recognize that we are engaging ourselves in these types of thinking it is necessary that we should remember the present. In the present we were either attending to meditation or purification or prayer. We should gently revert back to that present refusing to indulge in the patterns of thinking developed in the past. Once we come to the present moment our mind has not much to do except to

attend to the task on hand. Mind then has nothing to do and that is the precise reason why it is so fond of keeping us stuck in the past or dwelling on the future. It is not uncommon for us to hear many aspirants who gather on these auspicious occasions to talk about what they call their experiences in earlier congregations or their contacts with Masters and the advanced persons. This type of input grants to the aspirants the stuff with which they engage themselves during meditations and instead of thinking of the present where they are deriving divine grace get into their rut of old habits of thinking. It is necessary that we should live in the present and be totally oriented to the grace that is oozing from the ever loving Master.

We should be vigilant and willing to bring our attention every now and then back to the present. Our mind is clever and tricky. It will look for new ways to capture our attention and regain control. It is necessary that we should be gentle with ourselves. It is important to refrain from criticizing or judging ourselves during this process, for that is just the way for the mind to sneak through the back door.

During the remaining three days of the Basanth celebrations I request the aspirants to keep firm grip on the goal they have chosen and be in the thought of the Master.

Pranams.