

THE VOICE from BEYOND THE VOID



Words of Guruji

Daily you sit at home – for one or two hours a day and watch your own thoughts. Thoughts will stop. Continue to watch in that vacant soonya. Slowly a tremendous silence will develop. Be fully alert and continue to watch – otherwise again thoughts will come up.

In that unconditioned silence you may or may not hear a sound like Om. Practise this for first year and continue. In that silence when the mind is empty and you are a watchful thoughtless witness – you will ultimately see what is your real form and your relationship with the world. All miseries will disappear and only ananda will remain.

To keep silent is the direct door to Realisation. Try to talk less in office and house.

[Source: Extracted from the handwritten notes to a disciple during 1995-2005]

Inside this issue:

Poem written on Swamiji's Birthday	2
On Surrender [from handwritten notes of Swamiji in 2004]	3
What is Jivanmukti?	4
Guruji on Viveka Chudamani	6
Extracts from a letters by Guruji to a disciple	8
Memories of our Gurudev	9
Guruji's talk with Disabled Children	10

Issue 9:
01 July 2015

The main thing is when once with the grace of the Guru we have chosen and are going by a path, go with full faith as the Guru is guiding. Never try to analyse, discuss or compare with any other methods - however temptingly they are advertised. The least doubt about our path will lead to a disaster and a lot of wastage of immense amount of time and effort.

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in the various articles in this newsletter do not necessarily represent Swamiji's views. The views are authors' own.

The flame of the forest

Poem written on Swamiji's Birthday—06 May 2014; By Geetha Ravichandran

This poem was dedicated to Swamiji on his birthday 06 May 2014. Swamiji is like the wish fulfilling tree. But could there be anything better to wish for than be a flower on that grand tree! I think all of us, his disciples are to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare "the darling buds of may". The beautiful Palash - the flame of the forest which reminds one of the eternal flame that is Swamiji is the immediate inspiration for this.

The flame of the forest

The leaves have fallen off
And the bare trunk stands stately
Braving the scorching sun.
The buds that have sprouted
Open, to set aflame the branches
In a riot of saffron-red.
The blossoms are nourished
By the deep relentless roots
That prise the earth
Till it yields its bounty.
Every bloom has been
Crafted with tender care
To toss the light
That has been melted
Into its fragile petals
Just for the sheer joy of it.

On Surrender [from handwritten notes of Swamiji in 2004]

By Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

The day we recognise from our heart, that I am nothing, my entire body and mind is being used by the Lord as the instrument of His will – the surrender starts. When once we surrender – no reaction to sorrow or sufferings – we can't ask Him, "What are you doing, Lord?" So leave off doership. No action is done by me. I am a witness. Where the action is not done by me, I am not concerned with the good or bad results. They are also left to the Lord. We reach the witness state.

Bhagawan was asked which is most excellent or important verse in Gita. He said, "Verse no 61 in 18th Chapter." If we understand and practice, it is surrender.

We surrender our false sense of individuality and know that everything is done by the Totality.

Surrender as per Bhakti cult consists of six parts:- [As per Ramanuja]

1. To accept what all God ordains [say a transfer to an unpleasant place]
2. Never try to remedy any event or happening and then work against the will of the Lord
3. Firm faith that Lord will protect you
4. On every crisis, you openly call on HIM to help you
5. Completely put yourself under His control
6. Absolute helplessness and knowledge that my own efforts are futile

Without seeking every minute actively His grace we, of ourselves can do nothing, nothing.

Attention of Readers:

Volume 1 of the Selected Works of Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj was released on his birthday, 06 May 2015. The volume includes Revered Swamiji's Fragrant Flowers, Musings of A Himalayan Monk, Jivanmukti, Living Happily forever, Answers to Basic Spiritual Questions of Sadhaks and Pearls of Wisdom Sublime.

The foreword of the first Volume has been written by Sri Sri Sri Jayendra Puri Mahaswamiji, Padasevaka Peethadhipathi of Sri Kailash Ashrama Mahasamsthana, Rajarajeshwarinagar, Bangalore.

What is Jivanmukti?

Extracts from the Book JIVANMUKTI (Liberation - Here and Now)

We all want unlimited happiness and work for it. The means adopted to attain it are different for different people.

Some think that happiness lies in getting rich and earning a lot of money, some in sexual enjoyment, some in acquisition of house-property and possession of things capable of increasing their comfort and enjoyment, some in marriage and having children, etc. All people work hard to attain happiness by adopting one or the other of the means described above but happiness eludes them more often than not as all these instruments for happiness result ultimately in causing misery and unhappiness. On the contrary, unforeseen accidents and calamities which we had never dreamt of face us all of a sudden. In despair people cry out "Lord, why all this to me? What have I done to deserve this suffering!"

Sages and Saints like Vasishtha and Adi Sankara have found that because of the wrong identification of the Self with the Body-Mind complex, each person considers himself as the doer of all actions (KARTA) and the experiencer of their fruits (Bhokta). This false identification results in considering oneself as a bound, limited and finite individual, which in its turn leads one to miseries, sorrows and sufferings. A child does not know that a bulb and the electricity in it are not one unit. All differences in age (from date of manufacture), capacity (wattage), form, colour, place of origin (manufacture) and mortality (due to breakage etc.) belong to the bulb and electricity in all the bulbs is only one continuous stream of energy. Similarly the unhappy people are ignorant that even though the bodies (bulbs) are different and subject to birth, old age and death, the consciousness in all the bodies is one and the same. It is the mind which creates the false impression that each one is an individual entity by identifying the Self with the bodies. This is clear from the fact that during sleep when the mind ceases to work, we are not aware of either the body or the individuality. Then we revel in the bliss of the totality of undifferentiated consciousness. Similarly, pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, happiness and suffering are all mere thoughts and fabrications of the mind due to the false identification of the Self with the Body-mind complex. Anyone who realises the truth through Self-Enquiry (questioning WHO AM I?), annihilation of the mind (the NO-MIND STATE called MANO-NASA) etc. is able to delink his self from the body and identify himself with the Supreme Consciousness (SAT-CHIT-ANANDA) and thus gets liberated from this illusion resulting in cessation of sorrows. This state of liberation is called MUKTI and many believe that this state of perennial bliss can be attained only after death as a result of a lifetime of spiritual practice (Sadhana).

Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa says "Why speak of God realisation in the future? It is here and now - only the veil that hides it has to be destroyed. When the veil falls to pieces THAT which eternally IS

shines forth - the ONE, self-luminous." The philosophy of Non-dualism (Advaita Vedanta) preached by the Upanishads as also sages like Dattatreya and Adi Sankara promises liberation while still alive and not necessarily only after death. This liberation while living is called Jivanmukti and those who have attained it are called Jivanmuktas. If liberation or mukti is to result only after death, many would not be inclined to believe in it as nobody will be able to verify whether it really happened or not, while on the other hand liberation while yet living is capable of direct verification. The one who is able to perceive the one Eternal Being only in all the individual beings is called a Jivanmukta.

While Bhagavad Gita has not used the term "Jivanmukta" as such, some scholars believe that the other terms STHITA PRAJNA (steadfast in wisdom) and GUNATITA (one who has transcended the three modes- Sattwa, Rajas and- Tamas) are identical with JIVANMUKTA- the one who is aware of his identity with the Supreme Brahman which is immanent in all beings in an undifferentiated manner.

The same idea regarding the essence of Jivanmukti has been forcefully brought out by Adi Sankara in his "SARVA VEDANTA SARA SANGRAHA" thus:-

"I am the Supreme Being (Brahman), I am the Brahman, I am the Brahman, I am the Consciousness, I am the Consciousness. The one who is fully convinced of this and remains as such is a Jivanmukta."



Guruji on Viveka Chudamani [Method to be liberated]

By Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj—narrated in Ghazipur in July 2013

There is a method which alone can entitle you to become liberated. It seems to be quite easy provided we follow it strictly. This is told in Viveka Chudamani of Adi Sankara. He says:

अतीताननुसन्धानं भविष्यदविचारणम् ।

औदासीन्यमपि प्राप्तं जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम् ॥ 433 ॥

atītānanusandhānam bhaviṣyadavicāraṇam |

audāsīnyamapi prāptam jīvanmuktasya lakṣaṇam || 433 ||

These are the characteristics of a jivanmukta. You have this you will come in the category of liberated soul, liberated while alive. What are they?

1. **Atita Anusandhanam:** Never ever think of the past. Past is already gone. There are friends of mine who had retired about 25 years back and they will tell me how 40 years back they had some ICS bosses and how they had the guts to stand against them when they wanted their draft to be changed and they said, “Sir, I have written what I know. You can amend it as you want. I will not amend it. I had guts to tell him. He really appreciated me.” So like that now, who appreciated, who didn’t appreciate, whatever happened 40 years back is nothing to do today. This is how we bring to memory the past sufferings, the past insults, past enmities or hatred and we are reveling on that. Never bother, leave them away. And half your worries will be over. Because you are thinking of the past and again you are reveling all those sufferings result in your suffering again. Why should you suffer twice for the same thing? Now there is no reason at all. It has nothing to do with you now.
2. **The second is what should I do with the future thoughts- thoughts regarding my future: bhaviishyad avicharanam.** Bhavishya means the days to come, the future. Avichara means not to ponder, not to think of it. As far as future is concerned, you never know what is going to happen the next minute. Whatever you think it may all happen 100% wrong because the future planning is not at all in your hands. It is in the hands of the highest totality. So we do not know what it has in store for us in the future. So never think of the future. What is the question of planning for the future? What are you planning? You are planning based on what exists today. Your son is 5 years old and so now you are planning at the end of 25th year he should be an MBA and then he should get the best job. But you never know your son will be a rascal in USA where he is now studying. He will never bother about you or he would have never bothered of his institution and never passed any exam. And you are planning for him. So never think of the future you never know what will happen. Don’t think of the past, don’t ponder about the future?

3. **What about the present: There are various problems which I have to face, should I not think of them? Audaseenyam:** You just ignore them. How? Udi means up above. Utgam means the source from which it comes up, like the Ganges or other rivers. So Ud means always means up above. Aseena means to be seated. Udaseana means you do not sit in the midst of your problems and try to solve them. You just go above them all. And then you be a witness, you don't think of how to solve them. Once you ignore them, then automatically the problems will solve themselves.

These are the characteristics of a person who has attained his liberation while alive. So even if you do this much, then what will happen?

Why do you think of the future, because you have got desires. All the desires will go. If you never think of the future, then that means there is no question of any thing of the future at all. And you will have no desires. So the desires go away. And think of the past means you want to be again and again be involved in the present worldly activities which will again begin to take you down as if in a whirlpool. On the contrary, don't bother about the present, then, you will not be drowned in the sea of the present complexities of the problems of your life. And the same think holds for the future because it is unnecessary. It is an exercise in waste because you never knew of the future and what is the use of planning. Leave it. That is all. [Article to be continued in the next newsletter].

[Note: This is the transcript of a casual conversation between Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj and a devotee at Ghazipur in July 2013. This was recorded. Certain minor modifications are made in this transcript to make the meaning clear to the reader].



Extracts from letters by Guruji to a disciple

Everything happens by the Will of God only. You need not poke your nose in it or give advice to others. Let anything happen but keep your attention on God or Atman. Do not be curious about what all happens in the world and gossip about them. God does not require any advisers or agents to help Him.

Make God as the head of your family and leave all cares to Him. Never worry about anything. Whatever is to happen, has to happen and our HEAD is not going to fall down. God's wisdom is far superior to ours and let us never question it. We should take life lightly leaving all burdens, strife, stresses, etc. to Lord's care. When we live laughing, everybody will laugh with us. When we weep, we will be weeping alone. Lord's name is the best friend in our life.



Cling to the Lord's feet by remembering him constantly and chanting his name and mantra. All vairagya towards world and intense love for Lord when they develop you have the ability to reach God Realisation in this very birth. Constant remembrance of the Lord is the only key to the highest happiness.

Memories of our Gurudev



Guruji's talk with Disabled Children

Recorded in Ghazipur, July 2013

Swamiji was invited to speak at the Spastic Children's Institute in Delhi. It was a huge institution caring for more than a thousand handicapped children. Since it was not possible for such a large group to assemble. One hundred children were selected to meet with Swamiji who affectionately gave them bananas.

Before Swamiji could address them he agreed to privately speak with two children upon their earnest request. The 18 year old girl and the boy who appeared slightly younger said that they had heard from nearly 20 or 30 mahatamas in the past nearly two years but each one spoke on a topic of their choice. They asked Swamiji if he would be willing to talk to them on a topic of the children's choice. Upon Swamiji's consent they asked him, "Among billions of people why are we chosen by the Lord to be born with disabilities. We also disregard the idea that we were sinners in the past which may have been the cause for handicap in this life because we have not committed any sins in this birth and even pray for the wellbeing of all humanity."

Swamiji responded by telling them about the game of poker which is popular in the US. He said that you could never tell from the face of a man that he had a bunch of useless cards. In the game such a person is called poker faced. The man who shuffles and deals the cards has no idea who will get what cards because it all depends on chance. People may get the best cards but if they play shabbily they will lose but another may get all bad cards but he may play so brilliantly that he will win.

In response to their question, Swamiji told the children, "Like in the game of poker, in the same way, on what ground God has given you this handicap I cannot say. It is just like the dealer of cards who doesn't know what cards he is dealing. But you can play so well that you can become an international figure. Now for instance Hellen Keller who was deaf, mute and blind overcame huge hurdles in life and inspired thousands. Similarly there was a Japanese man who had no hands and did everything with his feet including eating. He also painted brilliantly with his feet and his paintings went for huge amounts of money. So it doesn't matter what cards you have but how well you play them."