

## SAYINGS OF SWAMI SHANTANAND SARASWATI

### Meditation

The whole of our mind has for so long been associated with the outer world that it has quite forgotten the existence, let alone the language of the inner world. The moving mind looks for happiness in getting and experiencing things. These do not suffice for when the mind has one thing it immediately rushes after another. The still mind finds happiness in everything. The kingdom within or the heaven within is the reservoir of peace and bliss. Dive in with devotion and swim around gently in that blissful heaven that is within you.

When we go into meditation we reach a spiritual world where quietness prevails like that of a deep, undisturbed ocean. There is no movement – no waves, no currents – everything is absolutely stationary. This is the meditational world. When we look out from such a spiritual world our own being or Self is seen in everything and nothing else remains.

The ultimate end of meditation is to reach total immobility, or the profound stillness, which is very deep. No meter can measure it -- it is without end. It is not necessary to remain in this state for a long period. Most of the time spent during meditation is in preparation to lead one to this state. The stillness itself is the real experience of meditation.

In a diamond mine, thousands of tons of stone are cut 300 feet below the ground. It is brought up, broken into pieces, processed, washed and then spread out to try. Thousands of people are engaged in picking over these small stones and looking at them. All this process goes on and ultimately they may find about 100 grams of diamonds. This also happens in meditation – so you will have to give half an hour simply to get just a few moments of contact with the Self, and it is worthwhile because you do get a diamond – the real force, the most valuable precious material of anybody's life.

The whole universe is divided into two – I and the rest! This is the world of division and we live in this world of duality. The method of meditation is to lead us from duality to unity. This method is not the end. It is like a rope through which we can go into the well or come out. Once the necessary is accomplished, the rope is left behind. The mantra is not unity, it only leads to unity where the world of division disappears. This unity is the Absolute, Known as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. Once we reach there, a miraculous alchemy takes place, and the being is charged with energy just as one gets a car battery charged for further use. If, in meditation, after sounding the mantra, we start looking for anything, maybe a sound or substance, we undo the meditation. Even talking of “appreciation” is duality. In deep meditation we don't even appreciate the peace, truth, bliss or consciousness; we in fact become peaceful, truthful, blissful and conscious of the Self. One must give up all ideas of appreciating anything about the mantra. The mantra will naturally settle down into that unity where there is no activity and no division.

When one sits for meditation in a still position, there may be distractions outside and these distractions will attract the mind. Pay them no mind. Apart from the outer distractions, there are internal riots! These keep going on in the mind; it keeps returning to certain things that it wants to do – it is simply presenting different “files” for your consideration! When you are almost still, you can give more energy to these files, so your mind tries to get you to look at them. In fact this is not the time for them, so make

a resolution – tell the mind that this is not the time for those files – “When I have finished my meeting with the Self, then I will surely attend to them!” Then attend to those files later, resolving those questions which seem to be bothering the mind. This is the way – order him – he will follow your commands provided you do command. Make a resolution, let him stay at the gate, and ask him not to allow any files to be presented to you because this is not the time. You will see them later on. And then attend to them later on.

In meditation one is just One. One becomes the Self. The method of meditation is only a process by which this is made possible.

The causal or spiritual level of rest, which is profound stillness or total immobility, is in the realm of the Absolute. Since the causal realm cannot be described, one learns about it from its effects. One can see it in the activities and dispositions of those who provide themselves with spiritual rest. There are three prominent features.

First, they show love and affection towards everything they encounter. All activities are initiated with love, and then held and nourished with love till they come to their fulfillment. All relationships with individuals or activities, direct or indirect, are illuminated and guided only by love and affection.

Second, their ideas, intentions or motives are pure and simple. Purity and simplicity widen the horizon, and they think and work for the whole of humanity and only through the laws of the Absolute. The divisions of groups, races or nations disappear and only natural laws are employed. Their thoughts naturally encompass the whole of the human family, and its intrinsic goodness.

Third, the physical movements of such people are tuned to the natural rhythm, and the result is simplicity and economy of movement. They never rush into any situation, are never agitated, and perform all actions in an efficient, sublime and refined way. Whatever they do will emerge from stillness, be held in stillness, and again submerge in the same stillness which they experience in this great total immobility. This is an ideal or a standard for the common man to aspire to, if he somehow awakes to the need to improve his state.

In the spiritual world there are books to give you knowledge, but more knowledge doesn't make you a Realized Man. You need experience. Unless you go on the path, knowledge of the path is useless. What books can't give you, a teacher can. But above all, although you can get almost anything from others, Realization you must experience yourself.

### **Atman and Param-Atman**

Atman is universal, constant, all pervasive, light and conscious. All that is not Atman is limited, unstable or transitory, partial, heavy, dark and not conscious. With Viveka (discrimination between what is real and unreal, between the permanent and the impermanent) one sees Atman everywhere in everything at all times. A wise man, one with Viveka, treats everyone as himself and sees the Self in everyone. He is always awake, just, full of love and happiness all the time.

We do not see or understand that the changes take place in our nature and not in Atman. Atman is not subject to change. One who understands this becomes very light and walks in freedom without carrying the load of the world. He is one who enjoys the drama in its true sense and never associates himself with the characters of the drama. Our job is simply to watch and enjoy.

The Absolute is the embodiment of love, knowledge and devotion. It is limitless in every sense and its door is always open. The universe is one and full of love and everything is motivated by love. Let love flow without hindrance from any direction.

To be able to acquire universal grace constantly all one needs to do is to keep one's inner door open, open in the direction of the Absolute. The universal grace of the Absolute permeates the universe so it is available all the time. If the memory of the universal grace is kept alive, then it forms a connection and allows one to be receptive to grace all the time.

### **Good Qualities**

The collection of good qualities is essential. The good qualities are these: (1) One should always love to speak the truth so that there is no disparity between what one thinks, what one says and what one does. There should be complete correspondence between ideas with activities. (2) Cultivate the love of people, encouraging them in turn to express their love through certain types of activity. (3) Be magnanimous in dealing with those around you.

There is a Sanskrit verse which says that, if one learns to understand that one is part of the universe and one has equal status with everyone else, then give to others what you would like given to you. What pleases you should be made available for the pleasure of others – or do as you would be done by!

We should cultivate the habit of never thinking of the defects of others, nor our own. Our attitude should be to overlook and ignore them. Let good thoughts prevail.

It is quite possible to get for a few pence a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, which holds the philosophy of liberation, but the essence and truth and knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita cannot be bought even for a million rupees. That truth or knowledge is only available if one practices three-fold work. The first is trust, faith. With faith one should prepare oneself and take to the work, in service of the Absolute. The second is the sincerity with which one attends to the work or knowledge which is being given, and one tries to understand and put the whole thing into practice again and again. The third is discipline to gain control over the senses and the mind. Control over the senses and the mind is essential, otherwise the disciplines are lost in due course.

Through your beneficial and holy efforts, let your own fullness see the fullness of the Param-Atman, and let the practice, the practitioner and the object of practice merge together to form a single identity. Then the world as such disappears and the Param-Atman appears in its place.

### **True Freedom**

A man who owns a small estate, on acquiring a bigger one, feels freer because he can manipulate more resources than he was used to. But this is not real freedom. Real freedom is achieved by realizing that you are one with Truth, Consciousness and Bliss and so not attached or identified with anything at all. That is true freedom.

The mind is never satisfied with what it has, and always desires something quite different. While a poor man envies the comforts of the rich and wants to be rich too, a rich man is weary of his anxieties and envies the carefree sleep of one who has nothing. A sick man worries about getting well, only making his sickness worse, while a man in good health worries that he may get ill. The mind also has a tendency to

live more in the past and the future than the present. This combination of dissatisfaction with the present and the perpetual desire for something different in the future causes perpetual unhappiness. The remedy is to see, with the eye of true knowledge, the same thing in everything, and that same thing is Param-Atman. Then the outlook becomes balanced and unified, unrest giving place to tranquility.

### **True Renunciation**

The creation is such that everything has a purpose and must fulfill its function; so it must keep circulating, it must be used. Use everything, and give up the idea that you are renouncing. Don't hold on to anything in this creation; that can only be done by this final renunciation of giving up the idea that you have anything. In fact, you have nothing. Everything is of the Absolute, everything is permeated by the Absolute; you use whatever you need, and the rest simply belongs to Him. This is true renunciation.

True knowledge is made available to everyone, to show that all this beauty is really the creation of your own Self. It is free to be enjoyed and to give the bliss which is what you really want. Don't attach yourself to anything because, the moment you do, the bliss will disappear. The creation is totally free; there is no bondage whatsoever. You can appreciate everything in this creation and be happy. You need not be attached and miserable, trying to be free. You are free and you are made free, and a free man knows that everyone is free.

What we have to give up is the desire to benefit from our actions – and not the actions themselves. If we give up actions but continue to indulge in desires, then we would be simply pretending to give up. Before undertaking an action, an ordinary worldly man always tries to assess what benefit would accrue to him as a result. But a Realized Man undertakes it as a matter of duty, with no desire for its consequential benefits.

We should bear in mind that, whatever the Creator has given to the world, He has “given it up” to the world. He no longer asserts any ownership over it. We also should cultivate the habit of using and enjoying it as His gift and not our own property. This attitude will correct our evil tendencies, and then the practice of devotion or meditation will begin to bear fruit.

Attachment means to consider as ours what really belongs to God. Our body, our house, our wealth, our sons, etc. Give up this feeling and you rid yourself of all your troubles. Do not think that the world around you is insubstantial. Rather it is your feeling of attachment to it that is insubstantial. Whatever is happening around you is right. What is wrong about it is the view you are taking of it. If you could correct your viewpoint, you would be happy.

We must carry the idea that we own nothing. Everything has now become God's; we are using everything with His permission, and not as owners. This helps with the elimination of the individual ego – then the pure realization of the Self develops.

Giving up can be done mentally and intellectually at all times and in all conditions. In this, there is no question of today or tomorrow, or of one or two days a week. Practice giving up all the time. You must consider the body, the mind and the intellect as belonging to the Param-Atman, and as offering all these to Param-Atman. This is what giving up means.

## Death

The following teachings from the Bhagavad Gita tell us how to deal with death: (1) Forget the past. Do not fear the future either. Devote the present to Param-Atman. A devotee of Param-Atman never perishes; (2) for two half-hour periods of meditation a day, give up all duties and obligations; surrender yourself completely to the single care and protection of Param-Atman. He will save you from all evil consequences, and therein would lie the end of all your worries. (3) One who sees Param-Atman in everybody and everything in Param-Atman – to him Param-Atman never becomes obscure and he never becomes obscure to Param-Atman.

We fear death because, under the influence of Maya, we have forgotten our Selves. And it is this forgetting of the divine Self which makes for us all the troubles we get. It is not God who is the maker of our troubles.

After constant meditation and work on oneself, the adept starts to realize that a man is not just flesh and bones: he has a soul, he has consciousness, and he is bliss. When he has realized this fully, everything becomes simple for him. Whatever he does, the way he moves, the way he talks, reflects the dignity of Atman, which is pure consciousness and bliss.

In one of the scriptures it says, “This body is only flesh and bones; cease to be attached to it.” Transfer your attachment to the Atman. Because Atman is part of the Param-Atman, there is no difference between the two. Both are able to cut worldly bondages.

Being part of the Absolute, the individual is fundamentally all knowledge, fundamentally all joy. Surrendering oneself to God removes illusion. Then True knowledge dawns and we realize there is no death for us, that no knowledge is hidden from us and that the fullest joy is always with us.

## The Present

There is a Sanskrit verse in which it is said, “The Absolute is here in the present. See, enjoy and communicate with Him, and do not bother your head with the past or the future.” You cannot bring the past to life, you cannot tailor the future as you want. Both things are beyond the control of the individual, so we should not bother our head least about the past and the future. With the memory of the Absolute we should try to make use of the present with all the glorious things that the Absolute offers in the present moment.

The present is always lit, because it is the presence of the Absolute, and the light of the Absolute falls on the present. There is nothing to worry about or fear in the present. Past and future are very dark, and that is where the fears are, and it is only fears of some sort that drag individuals to the past or future. Whenever you find that we are travelling towards the darkness of the past or future, come into the light of the day – the light of the present.

It has been observed in the scriptures that the wise man behaves like a child, not that his actions are childish, but because of his wisdom he is alive to the present. The child is neither bothered by the past nor does it hanker for the future. The wise man who behaves like a child is always filled with bliss. He is not influenced by the deeds of the past or by expectations of the future. He is always in bliss and free.

### **Darkness and Light**

There can be no darkness without light. Do not be afraid of the darkness, there is light beyond it. If there is total darkness, then even a small light will shine out. But when the place is completely illuminated, the small light appears very insignificant, almost negligible. When you feel you are lost in darkness, this creates fear, but do not be afraid, because there is light shining beyond it. Have full faith in it – that there is light and that will remove your fear completely.

If we give some time to reading holy books, some time to thinking of Param-Atman, then our wisdom matures; darkness no longer frightens us, and we attain supreme happiness. Not only this, but we begin to radiate happiness, which affects our surroundings as well as those around us.

### **Resolve**

In the end it is up to the individual to decide once and for all that he is going to love only the truth and leave the rest. And he must stand by it. Only then is transformation possible