

Put Meditation as Priority Number One

Rice Lake, Wisconsin — September 14, 2014

Welcome, friends, to this second session of the second day of our three-day workshop. This meditation workshop here is primarily to learn about the best method of meditation to achieve our goal of finding and going to our true home which lies within ourselves where we get into our true original form which is totality of consciousness. There is only oneness and one total being, and we are part of that being. To discover that, to realize that, to become that through meditation is the purpose of this meditation workshop. I would like to know how many in this audience have already been initiated by a master on the Surat Shabd Yoga, the yoga of attention on sound? Most of you are already on it. What am I wasting my time then? I wanted to have a special session with those who are already initiated and those who are already initiated if they are staying on until tomorrow, tomorrow evening. At 4:00 tomorrow I would like to have a special session for half an hour with those already initiated, so some little more intensive meditation that they been already practicing. And then we will have a deeper meditation for half an hour from 4:00 to 4:30 tomorrow. Those who are not initiated don't need to be present at that session. But when they get initiated, next time we have that intensive meditation session, they can join us.

Yesterday, we did meditation after practicing two little exercises, doing two little exercises about the orange juice experiment which showed us that we can put our attention wherever we like. If we like to put our attention behind the eyes, we can do that. We can put our attention anywhere in the world — anywhere inside, anywhere outside. Yogis put their attention on the lower chakras; we can put our attention on the higher chakras. In order to have a progressive experience, it is good to go from the gate to stage one, stage two, stage three. But if you have already done the journey before, sometimes it becomes very easy to move and skip to other stages.

While we are in the physical body, our reality is this physical world. We have created this physical world around ourselves to make it real. We didn't create it to have an illusion. We created it to be a reality. Our consciousness never operates to create illusions. It uses the process of illusion to create reality. So that's why the only thing real for us today is the physical body and the physical world around us. So that is why we meditate in this body. If we found out that the body is merely a projection from an earlier inner self, we wouldn't do anything in this body. We wouldn't even meditate. So that is why we proceed from one reality to another reality, not from one illusion to another illusion. Although the process by

which the reality has been made is the same as making an illusion. So that's just a process. But we create an experience of reality. What is real? If you ask this question what is real actually, then nothing is real. Because if reality means that which never changes — which is a good definition, something that never changes — then you will see everything around us is changing. Everything! The whole universe is changing around us. We are changing. Our life is changing. We go to higher levels of consciousness, they change. We go to our true home, they change. Then what is real? The only thing real which does not change is the experiencer of all these: the Self, the True Self, which is creating around itself all the experiences and experiences changing experiences. But the self that is experiencing never changes. So that's why the only true reality that way would be our own self, and everything around it is unreal.

But we make it look real in order to enjoy it, in order to make it an experience of reality. So reality is being created by us by the Self, in this series of levels of consciousness that we can create and in which we can have different experiences. So to discover the self is what is what we really need to find true reality. True reality is finding your own true self, the self around which all experience comes around. Now the true self, does it have some form which we can grab quickly and find out where is it? Yes. When we say that let us do meditation on the sound, the sound comes from the true self, the sound comes from our true home. The sound does not come from somewhere here. The sound which we call sound changes, but the sound is not our true self. The sound comes from the true self. We can use the sound to reach the true self. And therefore, this meditation in which we can capture the sound within us is sound that is not created by an outside source and heard by these ears but is sound that resounds from the self, coming right where the self is. That's the sound that can take us back. Because we are then approaching the self directly.

The resonance, the vibration, the resonance, and all the different terminology we are using to define sound, those are all being defined for a sound that is coming directly from our own conscious self where we are sitting. It does not come from right or left side. It does not come from above or below. It's coming from exactly where we are: behind the eyes. So that is why, if we want to practice this Surat Shabd Yoga, the yoga of the attention on the sound, we look for that sound which comes directly from our own self and is not generated from anything outside. That is a key to discovering the true sound! So, we can have so many kinds of sounds, and they can be misleading to us, because we can think that these sounds — because we can hear them in meditation — are true sounds. If you are enclosed in a quiet place, you can even hear the sound of your breathing, you can hear the sound of your heartbeat. There was a Japanese meditator, and he was examining if there's some place in this world where there is no sound. Because he found that some sound exists everywhere. So, he — in Tokyo, in an ashram near Tokyo — he built a sound-proof little chamber, and he made sure no sound from outside could come in, and the air supply for the oxygen that

we need was put through filters so that sound was filtered out before the air would come in — just completely soundproof. I visited him, and I entered that. I said, “Have you ever seen quietness like this?” and he said, “Never. Every time I get in, my heart beats so loud.”

Because when you try to maintain complete quiet outside, every little sound can be heard. Your heartbeat can be heard; your breathing can be heard; your blood circulating in your veins, in your arteries, can be heard. So many sounds are being generated within the system — within our own body. So therefore, when we close our eyes and meditate to listen to any sound, it is not the true sound. It is not the yoga of Surat Shabd. It is not the yoga of attention on sound. The yoga of attention on sound means you go to a place where you can hear the sound of the self. The sound of the self, the sound of consciousness itself lies in the center. Because people come to me and say: “We have been told that there is a right ear sound, there is a left ear sound, this is positive sound, this is negative sound. The brain is like that. Right wing, left wing. This is the intuitive brain. This is the real rational brain. This must be the good one and the bad one.” I said: “They may be good or bad, but they are not the sound that you hear from the self.” The sound that you hear from the self is right in the center where you feel you are, where you belong even at this stage. Eventually you will find that where you are has never changed. That location has never changed. The entire experience of different worlds, entire experience of moving around everywhere — it’s the experience going around you, and you are always still in one place, and that is here and now. All other things are added on to it. But this you only realize when you discover your true self. Till then the mental worlds that we create...the three worlds of the mind, the physical, the astral and the causal, these worlds create so much experience outside. Experience of travel. It’s like when we drive a car, we think the trees are moving around us. But the trees are not moving. We are moving, but the trees remain still. And the trees start moving we still think the trees are moving or we think our car is moving. So, it depends if the stillness of the self is already there. The stillness of the self, that the self never moves, the self never changes. It is always the same. All experiences around it alter and change, and this can be found out by your listening to the true sound of the self.

We, of course, can hear other sounds, which is good for practice. It’s good to hear any sound which is inside, just to be able to withdraw your attention inside. But does not mean that that is the sound of the self. Even other sounds can help, provided they’re inside. Supposing you start listening to the sound of your breathing, and your breath work is such that you are constantly listening. In some types of meditation, like *pranayama*, they do meditation on the breath itself, calling the breath *prana*. Prana literally means life, life force. Prana does not mean breath; it means life force. Because people lived — because they could breathe and have a heartbeat — therefore prana was also used for breathing. But when pranayama was used, the word pranayama in yoga, it was not supposed to be breathing exercises at all. It was supposed to be concentrating on the life force which is

consciousness. It was supposed to be concentrating your attention on the self. But people who have been doing pranayama, thinking it's just a breathing exercise to put your attention on the breath in order to get attention within, they get used to it so much that they take a long time to get back to go back to find out that the true prana, the true life force, the true consciousness is somewhere else and breathing was merely a physical thing happening on the physical body on which they were paying all the attention. It takes longer for them to pull up attention.

I have so many friends of mine who have done different kind of yogas. In fact, all the people who have done different yogas, I hear from them, me included, that we were thinking that putting any attention anywhere was good enough. We'd make a little picture outside, put attention on the picture. The picture becomes our focus. We don't go within at all. We are constantly outside on the picture. Even by closing our eyes we are still on the picture. So, the picture does not help. We make a little pattern on the wall. People used to...I did that kind of meditation: draw a little circle and a little spot in the middle, concentrate on that. It improved my concentration, but it's all outside. It never led me to any discovery of who I am, who I am truly, where my soul is, where the truth is. The truth lies inside, and that is the point where we withdraw our attention. So, there are these two misgivings amongst people which I'm clarifying: that the sound — the yoga of attention on sound, Surat Shabd Yoga — does not require you to do anything else except to withdraw your attention to your own self from where the ultimate sound vibration, whatever you call it, is coming from. It's a continuation of the process of devolution of consciousness through various levels of experiences right up to the physical. It starts from there, continuously comes there, never breaks! Everything else breaks.

When we go to sleep, there is a break in the experience. The wakeful experience goes. We lie in bed, close our eyes and a dream experience starts. Sometimes we forget the dream experience. But always we have dream experiences. Most of them we forget. But the dream experience shuts off the experience of the wakeful stage but does not shut off the presence of the same self in the dream that was the self in the wakeful state — with no break at all. There is never any break in the self, no matter what state of consciousness we are in. So, when you come to realize that, then you find that the sound we are talking of is our own self. The sound we are talking of is a manifestation of our own consciousness. It is the same thing which is coming down all the way without break. Other things break; this one does not break. So, if you could ride on the sound that you can catch as a sound, as an audible sound in the physical body, you will be able to ride all the way back home. That's why I consider this yoga to be the very best for self-discovery and for going to our true home, that you catch the sound, which is an expression of your own self here, your own consciousness, and hold on to it.

It may sound like other sounds. To start with it does sound like other sounds. The sound that is the first starting sound can be sound like bells — Big Bell — or the bells toll in the churches, the bells that we use in temples, the bells that we use elsewhere. Its sound is resembling that. That is why we are using them. We didn't just think of a bell in a temple or a church out of nothing; we thought of it because we could hear it inside, and that is a key to discovering our self. We thought church, temple, mosque. These are house of worship, house of discovering God and therefore we put the same things there. We put bells there to ring there for the same purpose for which we could go in and see where the bells ringing inside. The bell sound is the initial sound that has a pull in it and pulls you toward your self, pulls you to the real self which you are discovering which is going to have experience of a journey to higher levels of consciousness. So therefore, the other sounds, I call them practice sounds. You can hear sounds like a train moving. You can hear sounds which is just a whistling sound. You can hear sounds which are like a drumbeat sounds. You can hear sounds which are like a truck passing over a bridge or a waterfall. Similar sounds. There are five or ten sounds like these, which one can easily hear in just trying to put your attention behind the eyes. When these sounds come, they can come from either side. They come from the left side, right side, and just because the intuitive side is on the right side, they recommend, the mystics have recommended start off with the right side. It does not mean that that is the sound that is going to take you anywhere. A friend of mine told me he has been listening to sounds from the right ear for fifteen years. Nothing happened. I said nothing happened because you stuck with the right ear. You never went to the right spot. If you stick to the right ear, how will you go in? If you stick to the left ear, how will you go in? When you hear the inner sound, you do not remember your ears. You don't remember which is your left ear, which is your right ear. You forget both your ears, you forget your body. So, we can't be taken in by ritualistic things like this. Use the right ear. Use the left ear. The real sound comes from within. But while that is happening, there are sounds which are being created, close to the eyes, close to the...because of the blood flow around us. Most of this — they are physiological sounds — but they can be heard. They are not sounds being created outside and being heard from outside of the eardrum. They are internal sounds being heard by the audio system inside. So that is why we use them for practice only. If you can't hear any other sound, bell sound or something that pulls you, you hear any sound to practice being within. Why is it necessary to practice being within? Because we are now changing the very direction of flow of our attention.

All our life we have been using our attention to flow out, from the self out through the body onto other things outside. We have never used a technique to withdraw us back. Withdrawal of attention is different, totally different from focusing attention on something. The tendency to focus attention on things is so strong in us that even when we try to withdraw attention we are still trying to focus on something in front of us. That is because we are so used to focusing attention on things. Withdrawal of attention means that pulling

your attention to where you are, thinking of nothing but who/where you are, who you are. And to make it simpler, to make this meditation exercise simpler, these Perfect Living Masters have found an easy device. He said instead of trying to focus your attention anywhere, just imagine you are there, which you already are. But if you imagine that this body of yours is not you, this body of yours has an upper part called the upper part of the head, that you have eyes behind which there is space. Just imagine that you are sitting there in the center. Not seeing yourself sitting there. Imagine you are there, imagine you are there. Forget how big you are, how small you are. Just imagine that this is a body in which you are sitting behind the eyes. And if you can sit there and can hear a sound, try to catch the sound. If you hear sounds coming from the sides, hear them just to learn how to hear the sound while being present in the head.

Eventually those sounds will mean nothing, and the real sound will come from within yourself. It will be like a resonance, like surround sound, which they say will be surrounding you like it's all everything on all four sides of you. And it can resemble — to start with — something like bells. Then the bells become louder and with bigger peals. A bell can be *tin tin tin tin* (small bell)...or it can be *tung tung*...or it can be *tongggggg*...and the peal goes on growing. As you approach that bell and as you listen to it attentively, the peal increases. Ultimately it becomes one peal, and then it changes. It doesn't look like a bell, because we are used to a bell which has *dong dong* on it, the sine curve on it. And this comes without the sine curve. It stretches there. That's the time where it will lift you up into the next higher plane of consciousness and your body will have withdrawn attention. Your attention will no longer be in the body; it will have completely gone up, and you will feel...first you might feel that you are dead — died — you might feel that you don't have a body. But a new body will appear, the one which is...you are working with in which you are aware. Your sense perceptions will become so clear. Your eyesight will improve — no glasses needed. Everybody can see better than 20/20. Even blind people can read there, and you can read the finest print that you like. That is all part of your own apparatus inside provided to you in the next body. Physical body is hiding all that.

So, when you are able to pull your attention there, with nothing else but to hear the sound, but to hear the sound and to hold on to this position, where you feel you are inside, you use the repetition of words. Repetition of words — *simran/mantra* — is to hold your attention behind the eyes so you can hear the sound. When the sound can be heard, you can give up the repetition altogether. Repetition is not needed when the sound starts pulling you up, and you can identify that the sound is coming from within. You are moving closer and closer to yourself, and other experiences start opening up in front of you. When other experiences come, don't follow them, because the moment you follow them you go back to that state. And they are only coming because you are holding onto the center. It is a common mistake we make that once something extraordinary happens we go after it, we

go follow it and then we drop back to the earlier situation. So, if you can hold onto the center with the sound, you'll get all the successive experiences one after the other. Let's try.

Let's try. Now you have to try first the repetition like we did yesterday. The repetition. As soon as you can hear some sounds inside, drop the repetition and catch onto the sound. Those who are initiated will use their mantra given by their masters. Those who are not initiated can use a temporary mantra created by themselves expressing love for somebody. Close your eyes. Imagine this body of yours is your house in which you live. It has several floors. The lowest floor is right where you are sitting down at the bottom. As the floors rise, you are on the sixth floor behind the eyes and that's the place where you will always meditate. That is your meditation chamber. So, go and imagine you are sitting in the middle of this meditation chamber. And you can examine that the house, this body-like house around you on the sixth floor — that you are sitting on top of your throat. You are sitting on top of your body, and the ears are around you and the eyes are in front of you, your hair is on top of you, and you are sitting relaxed...totally relaxed. No tension. The body has nothing to do with it. There's no pressure on the body or the head or the eyes. You are using your imagination to sit behind the eyes in the center of the head, and whatever comes in front, look at it but don't follow it. If any sounds come, listen to the sounds attentively, but don't move towards them. If the sound comes from the top, listen while you are sitting relaxed in the center. Sound comes from the right: listen from the center. Sound comes from the left: stay in the center and listen to it. If two sounds come, pick up the one coming from the right or above and drop the other. And if a sound seems to be around you, pick up that and listen to it attentively. Put all your attention on the sound when the sound comes. Meanwhile, keep on repeating the words. If the sound disappears, go back to repetition. And when the sound comes, drop the repetition and listen to the sound.

(Pause for meditation)

How many of you were successful in hearing a sound? That's a pretty good number. Very good. That's pretty good. Any sound that you hear is good for practice sounds at this time. Now all we have been doing by way of meditation since yesterday and what we did now, is all mechanical. Just a mechanical method. It does not take us very far. Sorry to say that. What we have been doing does not take us very much on the spiritual path. In fact, it takes you nowhere on the spiritual side. It's only a preparation. It's only a way to know how to do meditation in a proper way from the mechanical side, purely how to use the body, how to use the body to find the right place to be there. But the essential part of meditation, which really leads to success was missing. Now what was missing was we meditated without love and devotion. Without love and devotion you get no spirituality, you get mental experiences, you get other kind of experiences. Nothing will take you beyond the mind without love and devotion. That's the origin from beyond the mind, from the spiritual self.

Love comes from there, and devotion comes from love. And therefore, unless we have love and devotion in our meditation, it remains a mechanical exercise. And people have been doing it like we did forty years, fifty years, with no result. I meet them and...

There's a colleague of mine, in Punjab, India, and he has a foundry. He has a working house next to his business, next to his factory. And he's a very old disciple of Great Master. Just passed away now. But he was my colleague. We got initiated about the same time. And he is very good in hosting Satsangs — hosting discourses by Masters in his house. He has a big house. And he has a big lawn...big lot of land on which he can hold big Satsangs. And big crowds come to his house for Satsang. And almost all the Masters have come to his house that we know of. Even of different lineage. And Great Master himself has been to his house. So, he's a very special friend of mine. One of the Masters was visiting his house, and I was taking a friend of mine from the United States to visit the different places. I took him to the old Dera where I got initiated. Then I said you must meet this man, because Master is giving a discourse there. I took him there. And this friend of mine...after some time...we had lunch there after Satsang...he said to me: "I have a question to ask you." I said, "Yes, what can I do for you?" He said, "You and I both are initiated by the same Master, and that is more than 40-50 years ago. [This conversation took place some years ago.] And we are both initiates of the same Master. We've both been taught the same teaching. We both meditate the same way. How come you seem to have got something out of it, and I got nothing in all these years of meditation? I have followed the instructions. I do two and a half hours meditation every day," which made me squirm, because I haven't done two and a half hours properly. But he has done two and a half hours regularly, and he has kept his house, and he has not eaten any meat, not taken any alcohol, no drugs, and he has done meditation regularly, followed a very good moral life, not told lies and not done anything that was wrong according to society and according to his conscience. Yet he said, "I didn't get any result. Can you tell me why?" I said, "My friend, you knew all these Masters. One is sitting in your house right now. Why don't you ask him? Why didn't you ask the Great Master himself, that I am making no progress, which you are supposed to do?" He said, "I did ask him." "What did he say?" "He smiled and he said, 'Do your meditation with love and devotion.'" I said, "Then what did the other masters say?" "They smiled and told me the same thing: 'Do your meditation with love and devotion.'" "Now why are you asking *me* this question? I asked him. "Because," he said, "I heard you answering other people's questions. Maybe you have learned all the answers by heart and you can answer my question also." I said, "I have learned nothing by heart. When somebody asks me a question, it's a secret way in which I give answers. But I can share it with you. I immediately check with my Master, 'What is the correct answer?' Whatever the Master says is the correct answer, I give it. It's not my answer. It's the Great Master's answer. So that's why I'm using this technique for a long time. He said, "Then go ask Great Master my question." I said, "He's not available all the time. It takes time." He said, "How long will it take?" "Just about six months. He sometimes

is not available.” “Six months? Give me six months to ask this question?” The reason why I said six months was because I was returning to the United States the next day, and my next visit was after six months. After six months, I went back to him, and I said, “I found the answer. It’s the same answer every Master gave you. Do your meditation with love and devotion. But you told me you were doing meditation. You never mentioned love and devotion. That’s why nothing came out of it. Ultimately to go to the spiritual side, to be pulled by a Master who is operating from the spiritual heights, beyond Brahmand, beyond Par Brahm, into Sach Khand, into true home, we have to work with love and devotion. That’s why a meditation devoid of love and devotion is just a mechanical exercise. It doesn’t give you much. It will give you some but not much. It does not give you real spirituality, which, according to me, spirituality is when you discover your own self, true soul and not your mind, your universal mind — that I don’t call it spirituality. So, you can get other things but not the truth about your own self. So I said, “Now try. Same thing you have been doing but put in effort at love and devotion.” He said, “How do we put love and devotion? It should come from the Master.” I said, “Yes.” But I said, “Have you read Soami Ji’s teachings about love and devotion?” He said, “I did read, but it’s long ago.” I said, “He says, *Jhooti sachi kar bhakti.*’ Even if you pretend to love and devotion, it’s good enough. Even if you have no feeling of love and devotion, pretend that you have, and you will recognize and suddenly you will have real devotion in you. So at least that everyone can do. We can pretend to be devoted. We can pretend to have love. We can express our love in the same pretended way, like we do with human beings here. Try the same method. At least talk about it. At least have a conversation. If you are doing meditation and knowing that the Master is there listening to you, at least do something. If nothing, cry. Or protest. Do something. But show your love and devotion in the manner that you can. Now try it out.” So, I am going again. I come in six months to check out. Because I have to report back to my Master what happened to you. So, I came back to United States, I went to India, and I visited him. He was a good friend of mine. And I said, “What progress?” He said, “I made more progress in these six months than in forty years. Just with one addition to my meditation. It was a very essential part I was missing on that.”

So that’s why meditation without love and devotion it does not make that difference. I want you to have a little sampling within yourself of this meditation with love and devotion. We will do a lot more tomorrow, and those who are already initiated I want to have an intensive meditation experience with them from 4:00 to 4:30 tomorrow. Otherwise, we’ll all of us do meditation with love and devotion today just for examining this principle, what difference it makes to us. Try it now. Close your eyes. Go back to the meditation chamber in the sixth floor of this building you call your body. Sit there in the center. And express your love and devotion in any way you can. Master’s listening to you. Master knows what you are doing.

(Pause for meditation)

How many of you were able to express your love and devotion to the Master during this session? Very good. How many of you enjoyed this session? See? It's changed. The whole experience of meditation changes just with one addition of the true nature of meditation, which is love and devotion. That's what pulls you in to the top. The shabd, the sound, becomes love and devotion above the mind and becomes pure experience of true love above the mind. And we say: God is Love. We are talking of the consciousness itself having inherent experience of love in it. It has created the many for a greater experience of love. It has created the many souls because of the experience of love. It has created the many experiences for the experience of love. It has created all these pairs of opposites — the duality, the world of duality — to experience love. The whole basis of the devolution of consciousness to experiences is really rising from the power of love and the experience of love. So that is why it is so important if you want to go up to the top that meditate with love and devotion.

We will continue this meditation tomorrow again. And meantime you can practice on your own also. It's not necessary to only meditate when we are here together. You can meditate where you are. Meditate in privacy. You can meditate in groups. You can meditate anywhere to practice. Because we are so attached to things outside...we are so...we have created so many obligations outside of ourselves, we say we have no time, we have no time. We don't have a priority of meditation. According to me, in our life we have so many things to do. I have been doing jobs which involved almost three times that I would be able to do for a single job. But priority was meditation first, everything afterwards. Don't skip on this, even if you just skip on something else. Then you are giving it the highest priority. Our priorities are low. "Okay, I have no time today. I'll do it tomorrow. Tomorrow I have no time, I'll do it later. I don't know...when I retire, I'll do more meditation. When you have this kind of priority, what role have you assigned to meditation in your life? Nothing. Put it as Priority Number One and put everything else underneath it, and all the things you put underneath it will be better served and better done. All the jobs you are doing will be better done if you make this Priority Number One. It effects everything. It effects your whole life; it effects your efficiency; it effects your clarity. Meditation gives you a clarity of thinking, clarity of acting which nothing else can be. So therefore, it's not a waste of time. It's a useful thing for life as a whole. So please use this meditation in a high priority.

We will continue the meditation tomorrow. I'll start the interviews and one-on-one meetings with those who have already asked for that. Thank you very much.

<https://youtu.be/n7H6SXRPGpk>

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