



## **In this newsletter**

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Abiding in Christ – Gururaj (Part 1 of 3)

This month we have an article from my visit to Fargo, North Dakota to teach meditation. We also have reflections from one of our Knoxville meditators regarding their first weekend retreat. Please don't forget that there is still time to register for the Thanksgiving course in Columbia, IL.

Namaste, Vidya

## **Restful Alertness**

Article by J. Shane Mercer, The Forum (Fargo, ND)  
09/08/2008

It was hard to miss the irony.

Individuals lay quietly on the floor at a beginning meditation class at the Spirit Room on Thursday as the throaty grumble of classic automobile engines intruded. The first night of the three-session class just happened to coincide with the last Cruisin' Broadway event of the year. Nothing like good old American horsepower to horn in on one's quest for inner peace.

But it certainly didn't seem to hurt attendance. The place was packed, with more than 45 people taking part in the class led by Vidya Anderson, president of the American Meditation Society. Anderson, a resident of Pennsylvania, is in Fargo this month in conjunction with numerous meditation events at the Spirit Room.

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While practices that could come under the title "meditation" are practiced by people of many different religions, Anderson says the meditation she teaches is "not a religion in any way; it's a practice." "It's a very simple and easy process of letting the attention be turned within and allowing oneself to go into a deep state of relaxation," Anderson says. She likes the term "restful alertness."

Erin Brachman of Fargo was at Thursday's session. She'd never practiced meditation and was looking for "an escape from my to-do list" and a way of "clearing my mind." Tyler Leverington runs cross country and track at North Dakota State University. He was at the session because he says meditation has been shown to help long-distance track performance.

Thursday's session began with a discussion between Anderson and the class. She talked about how she came to meditation after developing an ulcer. And she distinguished meditation from contemplation as one might do using a poem or passage of scripture, saying "in meditation, you're letting go of thought." After the discussion, the class laid down on the floor and began tensing certain muscles and then releasing them. She urged those attending to begin, as she put it, "gently watching the breath." Anderson admonished the group to gently turn the thoughts back if they found the mind "traveling." Later, she gave a mantra, a phrase, to focus on. The idea was not to say the mantra, but to silently repeat it in the mind. During the class, she emphasized being as opposed to doing.

Anderson, who holds a doctorate in psychology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, says that typically we are "trying" in our daily lives. We try, for example, to get good grades in school. But meditation is completely different. "It is a letting-go and allowing process," she told the class. During meditation, physiologically "everything slows down," Anderson says. The breathing and heart rates slow, and the brain waves in the two hemispheres of the brain become more synchronized. Anderson also says meditation increases alpha waves in the brain, which are associated with relaxation.

The effects of meditation over time include what Anderson calls a "lightness of living." "Instead of taking myself so seriously, I'm able to laugh at myself," she says. "I'm able to keep my sense of humor." Meditation also makes one more caring and concerned for others around them. Anderson says those who meditate become sick less frequently. Anderson says that the meditation she

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teaches doesn't compromise one's particular faith. She says these are "tools that one adds to" one's life, and if you're a Christian, "you maintain your integrity as a Christian." The same goes for a Hindu, she says. Bill Boelter, pastor at Olivet Lutheran Church in Fargo, says meditation is something that "a Christian can certainly be involved in." He says meditation can help clear the mind of "clutter," helping one focus on things that are important by clearing the mind of things that are not.

Bob Ona, senior pastor at First Assembly in Fargo, says that there are various kinds of meditation. There are examples of significant Christian figures who benefitted from meditation, he says. And there are "scriptural examples of meditation" that Christians are to emulate. But he also says there are some types of meditation in which Christians should not engage. If the goal of the practice is to bring one to a state in which the individual is void of conscious thought and of any consciousness of God's presence, then that should be avoided by the Christian. "A distinctive of Christian meditation is it's not essentially an emptying of the mind. Really, the gist of meditation for the Christian is to get in the presence of God and hear from him," Ona says. "So it is a directing of the self toward God, which is different from the forms of meditation that enjoin people to empty themselves without having any object of their meditation." Anderson says for individuals worried about meditation opening them up to something spiritually nefarious, she has taught thousands of people and that that has not been her experience.

In the meditation process, the individual is "in the driver's seat," she says. "You're in complete control." In fact, Anderson sees the meditative practice as a way of meeting deep and basic longings within human beings. "We can have five Ph.D.'s, but does that make us calm?" she asked the class Thursday. "The only place joy can be found is within ourselves."

Readers can reach Forum reporter Shane Mercer at (701) 451-5734.

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### Reflections on the Tennessee Retreat

Cool morning walks, mist and sunlight,  
Wet feet  
Three ducks flying

Bells call us in,  
The gong carries us in -  
Many breathers, one breath

Friendship and fellowship, Found in a glance,  
In a game,  
In a meal,  
In a moment

Gifts given.  
Gifts received -  
Namaste

~ Casey Sams

### Canadian Meditation Society Thanksgiving Course Reminder

Victoria, British Columbia

October 22nd - 26th, 2008

See [website](#) for details of this and other upcoming retreats.

### AMS Thanksgiving Retreat

There is still time to register for the Thanksgiving retreat!

This Thanksgiving we will come together to chant, meditate, do meditation walks and experience the silence within ourselves while we study Gururaj's teachings.

We are returning to Toddhall Retreat and Conference Center which is located on 45 acres of beautiful land that offer scenic views and a relaxing and

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peaceful setting. It is located in the bluffs overlooking Columbia, Illinois, conveniently close to metropolitan St. Louis and only forty-five minutes from the St Louis airport. Bus and train terminals are twenty-five minutes away. There are wild turkey, deer and a wide variety of backyard birds. You may use the meditative labyrinth, visit the butterfly garden and natural prairie-grass preserve, or walk the wilderness trail.

The sleeping rooms may be single or double occupancy. Each room has a private bath and individually controlled thermostat. All linens are provided.

Hearty home-cooked meals are served cafeteria style in a communal dining room. There is an enclosed private space for those wanting to remain in silence after the silent morning walk or during any mealtime.

### **Registration**

The retreat begins with dinner Nov 26th and ends after lunch on Sunday, November 30th. The greatest benefit is received by attending the full 4 day retreat. We also welcome individuals who can only attend for a few days. Please arrange for your flights to arrive in the early afternoon on Wednesday and leave late on Sunday afternoon. This will simplify transportation to and from the airport. If you are flying, please notify Pashya: 314-388-0495 and she will help you coordinate airport limos with others who are flying. You will receive a confirmation letter with further details after you register.

To register, please click [here](#) to open the form. You may type on the form, print it, and send it to Sutriya at the address provided. Registration is due by **November 1st.**

### **Course Pricing**

Full Course (4 days)

Single Room \$456

Double Room \$364

### Day Rates

Single Room \$114

Single Room \$91



## Abiding in Christ

*US-81019*

Question: Guruji, Paul said in Romans, "Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus." What is this mind that was in Christ Jesus? Jesus said, "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me." What is the nature of this abiding?

Gururaj: Christ was devoid of mind, but Jesus had a mind. Mind is nothing else but a collection of your impressions and experiences. So here, to abide in mind does not mean the mind that we normally know of; it means consciousness. Abide in that consciousness, for then only shall you know me. How else can you know me if you do not abide in my consciousness, for my consciousness is universal. It is made of the stuff the entire universe is made of. When you abide in that consciousness, you become that consciousness. All theologies say, as Jesus-Christ-- also said, you come to me. Through me you reach the Father. In other words, man must reach the stage of Christhood, reach that consciousness, or as we term it, reach that state of awareness, where you start abiding spontaneously in that consciousness. Now, the question would arise, "How do we become aware of that consciousness?" What is that consciousness? Is it a physical entity? Is it composed of any matter? What is that consciousness? Is that consciousness definable? At its highest level it is indefinable, indescribable, ineffable. But there are stages to consciousness. There are stages, and certain stages can be defined where you are aware of the consciousness. That is what some people term "cosmic consciousness," where you still remain apart. Where the true abiding has not yet taken place, but a form of knowingness has taken place. Where you know of that consciousness. Your rational mind is pleased. You are using the left hemisphere of your brain to analyze that there is something far greater than me. And what I am experiencing with my mind, portrayed through the left hemisphere of the brain, is just not enough, for the left hemisphere of the brain is forever in turbulence. So the brain is the physiological counterpart of that mind. While the right hemisphere, the non-analytical side of our brain, is the one that is connected to that superconsciousness.



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When Christ refers to mind, he refers to manifestation, the manifestation of the Father in the form of mind. Now, mind has always been equated with the analytical side of oneself, and that is a fallacy. For you can approach and reach

the state of mind that knows of no analysis. So the mind has these two major parts: one analyzes, rationalizes, and the other doesn't. Part of the mind analyzes because it is patterned, it is programmed, and in that patterning and programming analysis takes place. The other portion of the mind is totally unpatterned. It is as free as the wind. It is as open as the sky. It has no patterning and no conditioning.

So to reach that abode one has to go beyond patternings. In Sanskrit we say one rises above samskaras. So from bondage one reaches freedom. Freedom can only be reached when there are no patternings, when there are no conditions. And that is the mind that man reaches. That is the mind man is capable of at any given moment, with proper spiritual practices. So when one reaches that unconditioned level of the mind, one becomes at-one-ment. Atonement: at-one-ment with that level where no analysis is required, but just a sublime experience of joy exists. Yet you are conscious of experiencing the joy. That is the highest level man can reach as long as he is in this process of evolution. There is still a stage further that we will talk about as we go on.

Jesus showed the potentiality of man to go beyond the patternings that cause all the miseries in the world. For miseries are nothing else but the various patterns: names, shapes, forms. So that is why we try to modulate, regulate, and change the analytical mind by listening to the words of wise men or by reading good books. Thereby we do some form of repatterning. But that is not enough. That is not enough. That can only lead you to a certain stage, a necessary stage. And then we make that jump.

Through spiritual practices we make that jump from the left hemisphere of the brain to the right hemisphere. And that is the hemisphere where billions and billions of cells are lying dormant. The right hemisphere is totally awake, but dormant in the sense that it cannot communicate with the left hemisphere. The true awakening only comes in man when he can make that jump into the unknown. So the spiritual path is the path of the one who is brave and prepared to jump into the unknown--to take that leap. For all your karma yoga, all your actions in life, which are normally termed "right action," all the

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thinking processes we go through, which is normally termed "right thinking," is but a preparation only. It is the preparation to give you the courage to make

that jump into the unknown. For Divinity, to your analytical mind, is an unknown quantity.

So many religions tell you to believe. Believe this and believe that and believe this. You accept it in good faith, and yet you know nothing of it. I never tell a person to believe. That was good in certain periods of history. Jesus taught mostly to the peasant classes, the ordinary layman, the fisherman. For them that path was totally necessary. And all beliefs--if strong enough--can be materialized.

But today man's mind has changed a lot. He has succeeded in developing a lot of the left hemisphere of the brain. He has become more analytical. When I get initiation forms from America, for example, there are very few initiates, or those who want to be initiated, that don't have a degree behind their name. People have become very education conscious, and their minds have started inquiring and probing. So if I tell you, "Believe in this," it will not be accepted. The teaching for today and perhaps for the next centuries to come, for generations and generations to come, is not to say "believe," but to say "experience." Experience it! Don't believe in it, but know it! For experiencing is knowing.

Now, when I say experiencing, I do not mean these flash experiences one gets. You see stars and you see lights and you see colors and things like that. It only means that you are experiencing certain layers of your mind at deeper levels. You are perceiving substances, matter, substances which the normal eyes cannot see, and which you have now started seeing with the inner eye, or the third eye, as some would commonly call it. The ajna chakra is being opened. But this is no true sign of spirituality. It is good to have those experiences. They could be encouraging. But true spirituality can be had without any of the flashiness that's involved. It is not necessary. So here we enter into the unknown area that we call the divine, and we start experiencing or bringing back to our conscious mind--in a limited quality or a limited quantity—



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that which is divine. And by bringing divinity to our conscious mind, to the analytical mind, we spontaneously start practicing it. That means not believing in God, but living God. That means living God. But that is not the totality.

The totality only comes when all experience ceases. For who is there to experience? You have to do it on your own. A teacher only guides, shows you the way, shows you the path. That is what gurus do, that's all they do. But you have to go solo. You have to walk on your own feet, and you need help. A child needs help when he starts walking. You hold his hand until he gets used to walking, finds the balance, the legs become stronger, and the child starts walking on his own. But you have to walk yourself.

This is what is meant by "abide in me." To abide in that consciousness, that vast consciousness that comprises the relative universe. Therefore he was the son of the Father. Therefore he is regarded to be the personal god. This applies to Krishna and Buddha and Mahavir and all of them. The impersonal God personalized for a purpose. Now, how is this done? How is this done? We have said in other talks that this universe is but a manifestation of the impersonal, like the fire giving off heat and yet not creating the heat. It is its nature. So the impersonal has to be personalized so that your mind could have some perception, could have some conception. For how could you conceive of divinity, which is abstract, the unknown, without having something to focus upon? So these great masters have become points of focus. Through the concrete we reach the abstract.

*--- When Gururaj spoke of abiding in Christ, he did not speak of the man, Jesus, but of the all-pervasive consciousness that is the sum total of all the energies of the universe. That Source, from which we all have come and to which we all must return, is embodied in the great teachers such as Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, and Gururaj, who have come to show us the way. One derivation of the word "religion" is "to bind back;" to bind back from the individualized egoic mind to the universal energy, and beings such as Gururaj come to shine the light on the path that they, themselves, have walked before us. Nevertheless, we, ourselves, must walk it. Therefore, Gururaj taught that each human being is his or her own religion.*

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*Gururaj was a universalist whose principles are inherent in the core of the world's major religions. The essence of his teaching was this: If you are a Christian, be a better Christian; a Buddhist, be a better Buddhist; a Moslem, be a better Moslem; but more than that, be a better human being.*

*This satsang is so beautifully rich and full that, rather than cutting or*

*excerpting it, we have divided it up into three parts that will be continued over the next two newsletters. As we read, study, and enjoy this satsang together, may we further unfold our awareness of this consciousness that, through Gururaj, we have been so blessed to receive.*

*~ Sutriya*